

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ARTS,
A CRITIQUE OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION

by
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A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

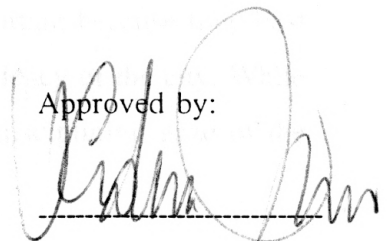
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ACKN ABSTRACT

The design competition for the Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts was held in India in 1986. The site was located in New Delhi and the centre was conceived as a place where all art forms of India were combined in a single cultural complex.

In the midst of acclaim received by the Indian government for launching this competition, majority of people failed to understand its hidden ambiguities. The cultural centre was located on a paradoxical site. On the one hand the centre symbolized the celebration of Indian arts and music, and on the other hand it was located in the part of the city that was built by the British and was inherited by India as colonial legacy.

The thesis explores this paradoxical situation. The space of the city commanded the architecture to respond to its order, imposed a discipline on the site of the cultural centre. In other words, the architecture to emerge on this particular site was already governed by the 'norms' of the city that were prescribed by the British. In context of change due to decolonialization, such a tendency of the city to *discipline* architecture was brought into question.

The first part of the thesis analyzed the city of New Delhi in terms of Michel Foucault's power mechanisms. The latter part of the thesis, used post-colonial theory in order to expose Foucault's limitations to represent the dynamics of contest and change in context of decolonialization. The end of the thesis presented the critique of two of the winning entries of the competition; First prize winner Ralph Lerner's entry and second prize winner Gautam Bhatia's entry. These two entries were important because they best represented an opposition in their approach to the disciplining tendency of the city. While Lerner was *confirmative*, Bhatia provided an *opposition*, to the disciplining gaze of the city.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank a number of people who have made possible the completion of this work. Not all of them have been named here; by no means does this undermine their support and help.

CHAPTER I- INTRODUCTION

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I would also like to thank all my friends who have helped me make this thesis a reality and have continuously offered me support.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE CULTURAL CENTRE AND THE DESIGN COMPETITION

The design competition for the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) in New Delhi was held in 1986. This thesis is an analysis and a critique of this design competition. The critique of the competition is based on understanding important architectural, urban and cultural issues underlying the program.

The site for IGNCA was located in New Delhi. The center was conceived as a place where all art forms of India were combined in a single cultural complex. The aims of the center were to serve as a major resource center for the arts, to undertake research in arts and humanities, to provide a forum for creative and critical dialogue through performances and conferences. Though initially the center would focus attention on India, it will later extend its horizon to other civilizations and cultures. The IGNCA was visualized as a center encompassing all arts, especially in their dimension of mutual interdependence, and interrelationship with nature. The arts would comprehend the fields of creative and critical literature; heard and written; the visual arts ranging from architecture, sculpture, painting and graphics to film photography; and the performing-arts of music, dance and theater, in their broadest connotation. The tribal, rural and urban arts would be included in the dimensions of both antiquity and contemporaneity.¹

The jury for the architectural competition for IGNCA comprised of James Stirling, Fumihiko Maki, Olufemi Majekodunmi, Achyut P. Kanvinde, Balkrishana V. Doshi, Kapile Vatsvayan, Habib Rahman and Geoffrey Bawa (Reserve Member). The jury awarded the first prize to Ralph Lerner, USA. **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION** prize was shared between Jourda et Perraudin, Partenaires, France, David Jeremy Dixon, UK, and Alexandros Tombazis, Greece.

¹ Indira Gandhi National Center of Arts, *Architecture + Design*, Vol. III, No. 2, Jan-Feb 1987, p.16.

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¹ Indira Gandhi National Center of Arts, Architecture + Design, Vol. III, No. 2. Jan-Feb 1987. p.16.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

In order to develop a critique based on the architecture of the city, the thesis presents an overview of the ideology of power underlying the plan of New Delhi. The British employed the city as a vast machinery of power, where architecture and the buildings became instruments to perpetuate power. New Delhi was conceived by the British as the capital of India and was established as such in the early part of the twentieth century. The city was designed by the British architects Sir Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker. First and foremost the city embodied in it the spirit of British sovereignty. The discussion of the city becomes important as it forms the discussion of the site for the cultural centre. The city itself comprises the larger site in which the cultural centre is located. The end of the analysis of the city leads into the specific of the particular site of the competition and the meaning embodied in it.

Since independence in 1947, New Delhi has been the capital of free India. The power as well as the buildings have changed hands from the British to the Indians. The spaces of dominance like the Viceregal Lodge, the Secretariat, the Parliament House have come to be identified as symbols of free India. These buildings have become the center of control and exercise of democratic power in the country.

In order to generate a critique the first part of the thesis deals with the analysis of the city of New Delhi in terms of Michel Foucault's power structures. The analysis of the city explores the idea of the site as not only geographical piece of land but something that embodies in it much of cultural and political meaning. The discussion of the site forms an important basis for the critique of the entries and the program of the competition. The study demonstrates how the site for IGNC is located at a curious intersection of culture and power.

The competition happened in quite a paradoxical situation. On the one hand the centre symbolized the celebration of Indian culture, and on the other hand it was located in the part of the city that was built by the British and was inherited by India as colonial

legacy. The latter part of the thesis deals with understanding and analyzing the post-colonial predicament whereby the relevance of the colonial city is questioned. The analysis of the city leads into exploring the post-colonial situation in India. The post-colonial predicament is extremely important in this study as the colonial encounter has put into crises the very definition of 'culture' in Indian terms. The dilemma that has arisen out of inheritance, where it is difficult to establish a definitive idea of culture. Several post-colonial theorists have pointed to the difficulty of demarcating in clear terms the aspects that were once 'native' or 'colonial' as these have become deeply embedded or mingled with the post-colonial culture as a result of colonial inheritance.

Post-colonial theoreticians have argued over the importance of the colonialist encounter. Some want to ignore this period and want to go back in some way to the pre-colonial ideas when actually impacts of colonialism have permeated the nation very profoundly, while the others call the colonial encounter the definitive moment in Indian history and tend to do away with any notion of pre-colonial as non-existent, though this is not entirely true as well.

This discussion of the site and the implied meanings and paradoxes embedded in it form the basis of the critique of the competition entries. Although to some extent, the critique of the city and the site is almost dissolving the premise of the competition as futile, the critique of entries is important as it demonstrates in concrete terms any attempts by the architects to address the larger issues confronting the site. The critique of the first two entries became significant in this respect as it illuminated a similar dilemma; one that conforms to the city and the other that provides an alternative viewpoint to the city.

The critique does not simply intend to pull apart the whole idea of the competition and its entries but to generate a critical argument based on important architectural, urban and cultural issues addressing the competition. In reality, the thesis is the critique of the premise of the architectural competition. The critique is really based in the meaning implied by the site for the proposed cultural complex and a near total failure of the

program formulators and promoters to understand the idea of a cultural centre as not only a repository of research but also as a symbol of Indian culture itself. The critique also involves a critical look at the adoption of European institutions of knowledge that continue to serve the purposes of domination for the post-colonial government. This does not imply that the thesis is going to result in the disentanglement of European institutions because such a desire to return to pre-colonial past is simply in vain. The purpose of the critique is to prevent false consciousness from getting out of hand and adopt a much more critical view of the inheritance of European means into the practices of the post-colonial nation. Michel Foucault has provided the basis for criticism. For him criticism does not mean simply that things are not right. *"It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest....to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such."*² This study's main focus is a similar unmasking of assumptions and thought that led to the formation and the actual building of IGNCA.

This all does not mean that the holding of the competition was without any achievements at all. Firstly, it is commendable that the government decided to hold an international design competition for the nation's most prestigious cultural centre. The fact that an architect from abroad was chosen as the architect for the project itself points to the fairness of the whole process. The decision to hold an international design competition is also commendable for the fact that the government had realized the chaotic job done by some local architects in this part of the city and had felt the need to indulge in the process of an architectural competition in order to set an example for the architecture to come.

This thesis should not be read as a political commentary or political critique. There is definitely a political overtone to the study, but one must not forget that the prime focus

² Foucault, Michel. "Practicing Criticism", Michel Foucault: Politics Philosophy Culture, Lawrence D. Kritzman (ed.), Routledge: New York and London, 1988. p.154-155.

of the study is an architectural critique though the implications do run over into the fields of politics and culture. This should not be mistaken for a larger critique of the regime during the holding of the competition. The focus of the study primarily is to catch an institution in action and reveal the crises of post-colonial culture implied by its conceptualization. Although the study does not directly focus on the role of an architect in Indian society, it certainly is an underlying matter of attention. Whether the architect is considered and accepted as an ideologist in the society or there is no room for the architect to assume that role is the key question underlying the thesis.

The thesis becomes important in its attempt to re-establish the role of architecture in the society and the fact that architecture along with other arts always refer to some larger issues regarding culture. A work of architecture constitutes a part of the realm of cultural production and thus, it arises out of cultural preconditions. Had there been an attempt to address the issues in the competition and had the program been flexible enough in allowing a detour from the architecture of the city the results would have been far more illuminating. The thesis also reasserts the importance of a work of architecture grounded in its site for which the site requires a critical understanding.

In the creation of New Delhi the buildings and the architecture became instruments for exercise of power of the British colonizers. This power relationship was a work between the British colonizers and the natives or the colonized in India. In order for the power relation to be effective there was a constant interaction between the colonizer and the colonized. In the process each one created knowledge about the other.

² DeBauze, Giles. *Foreigning*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988, p.25.

³ *Ibid*, p.27.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

POWER:

Michel Foucault has carried out a profound investigation of power mechanisms in the society. He negates a popular postulate that power is a property won by a class. Instead Foucault shows that *"it is less a property than a strategy, and its effects cannot be attributed to an appropriation but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings; it is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the "privilege", acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but an overall effect of its strategic positions."*³ In brief, power is not homogenous but can be defined only by particular points through which it passes.

Foucault shows that the state also appears as an effect of a series of interacting structures which constitute a 'microphysics of power'. Foucault says *"Power has no essence; it is simply operational. It is not an attribute but a relation: the power-relation is the set of possible relations between forces, which passes through the dominated forces no less than through the dominating."*⁴

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³ Deleuze, Gilles. Foucault, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1988. p.25.

⁴ Navak, Ganesh S. "Self-Other in Indian Post-Colonial Space", presented at a cultural symposium on

⁴ Ibid, p.27. University, March 11-13, 1993

COLONIALISM: FOR THE REST OF

Colonialism can be seen as the Self seeking the Other through its repression and its domestication. It is the direct outcome of post - Enlightenment rationality, aligning knowledge with power, travel with domination. In this process the Orient has become a terrain for the growth of Imperialism and power: a power which is not only territorial but manifest in the imposition of a universal science and history....Colonialism imposed the linear time structure of modernity on native sites: a 'Universal Time' centered in the West, based on Enlightenment and Reason.⁵

Through colonialism, the colonizers were able to impose a Western World view, based on Enlightenment and Rationalism, on the native culture. They imposed a technology of power based on models in the West. The colonizers created a mechanism for supervising and hierarchizing society. In the case of India the whole country was brought under one power structure. This administrative structure was based on a system of hierarchy and rank. In India the British employed two forces for the maintenance and exercise of power: the army and the civil services. They were largely responsible for setting up of establishments based on disciplinary techniques like military cantonments, boarding schools and public offices having a system of hierarchy and ranks. The whole country was divided into districts, which formed the basic unit of administration.

The citing of these examples of British initiatives to establish disciplinary and hierarchical systems brings forth their larger intention to bring the whole country under one administrative structure. By means of these mechanisms, the state accustomed its people to order and obedience. One can explicitly find Foucaultian concepts at play here, '*the distribution of individuals in space*', '*linear time*' whose moments are integrated one upon the other, and '*the composition of forces*'.

⁵ Nayak, Ganesh S. "Self-Other in Indian Post-Colonial Space", presented at a cultural symposium at Kansas State University, March 11-13, 1993.

BACKGROUND FOR THE RESEARCH

Michel Foucault's Discipline & Punish has become an important basis for this research. Foucault has given an analysis of power and its allocation in society. In the course of this book he discusses how power has been implemented throughout history, from being a spectacle during the times of monarchy to the modern day institutionalizing of power in disciplinary mechanisms. His work has been used to analyze the architecture of the city of New Delhi which was essentially a manifestation of the power of the Empire.

It became important to understand, what the power meant to achieve or what were its effects. Foucault states that the mechanisms of power "*are simply not 'negative' mechanisms that make it possible to repress, to prevent, to exclude, to eliminate; but they are linked to a whole series of positive and useful effects which it is their task to support.*"⁶ Foucault has shown that power is not simply synonymous with repression, that it not only creates the ones 'who possess' power and those 'who do not possess' it, but its effects are far more complex and far more useful too. Power creates a technology or a mechanism of control, the aims of which are to channelize the forces in the society in a much more orderly, hierarchical manner to ensure more productivity. Further, Foucault asserts that it is in fact power that produces knowledge and "*power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations*".⁷

Most of Foucault's means of power consolidation find a translation into the city of New Delhi like the spectacle of power, hierarchizing of individuals, panoptical construction of space and the instrumentality of knowledge. As the study proceeds, the relevance of Bentham's Panopticon will become clear and to an extent it will form the

⁶ Foucault, Michel. Discipline & Punish; The Birth of the Prison, Vintage Books: New York. 1979. p.24.

⁷ Ibid, p.27.

basis of the analysis of the city and the critique of the site itself. The '*structuring of space*' and the '*making visible of material*', two aspects of Foucault's description of the Panopticon in Discipline and Punish will form the basis of understanding the site and its location at the intersection of power and knowledge.

The analysis of the city illuminates the problematics of post-colonial culture and the complication of issues. As the thesis proceeds from the analysis of the city into the specifics of the site, post-colonial authors like Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Asish Nandy, Ania Loomba and many more have been used to analyze and understand the shortcomings and ineffectiveness of Foucault's ideas and the reasons for search of an alternative. Although none of the post-colonial authors stated above have written about architecture attempts have been made to apply their implications to the critique of the site and the competition entries.

CHAPTER 2: NEW DELHI : CITY AS REPRESENTATION AND INSTRUMENT OF POWER

New Delhi was established in 1911 as the capital of British India. The British designed the new city as the political center of the Empire on a historically strategic site. The city as conceived was a manifestation of power. Underlying the creation of New Delhi was the intention of the rulers to bring India under one administrative and political structure. The penetration of power in the country was achieved through the underlying mechanisms of control

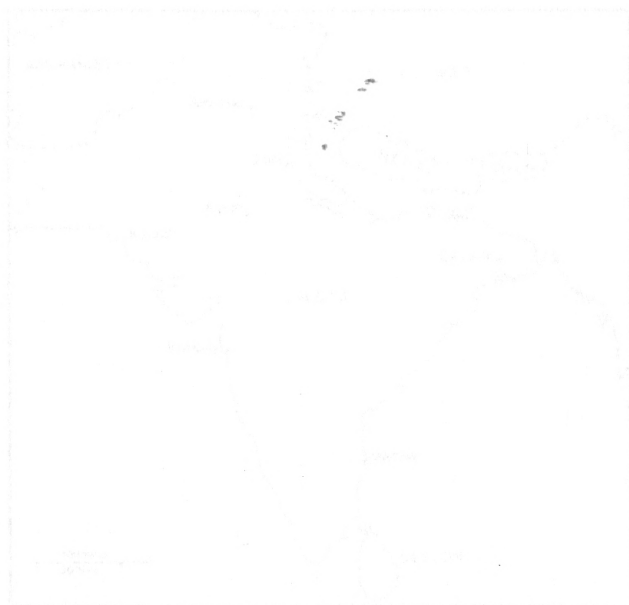


Figure 2.1 Geographical location of Delhi in the Indian subcontinent

based on hierarchical systems of ranks and establishment of disciplinary institutions. These mechanisms formed the instruments for surveillance and the perpetuation of power.

This chapter is a Foucaultian analysis of New Delhi, undertaken in order to understand how architecture in this city became an instrument for the perpetuation of power. Michel Foucault becomes an important basis for this study as he was interested in the political nature of architecture. He said that architecture became political at the end of the eighteenth century. Clearly he did not mean that architecture was not political in nature before this time. He only meant that from the eighteenth century onwards architecture was more clearly a function "of the aims and techniques of the government of societies." There was an increasing political concern of what a

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NEW DELHI : CITY AS REPRESENTATION AND INSTRUMENT OF POWER

problems that they raised, and the particular government rationality that was to apply to the whole of the territory." Foucault's

¹ Foucault, Michel, *Space, Knowledge and Power: The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow, (ed.), Pantheon Books, New York, 1984, p.239.

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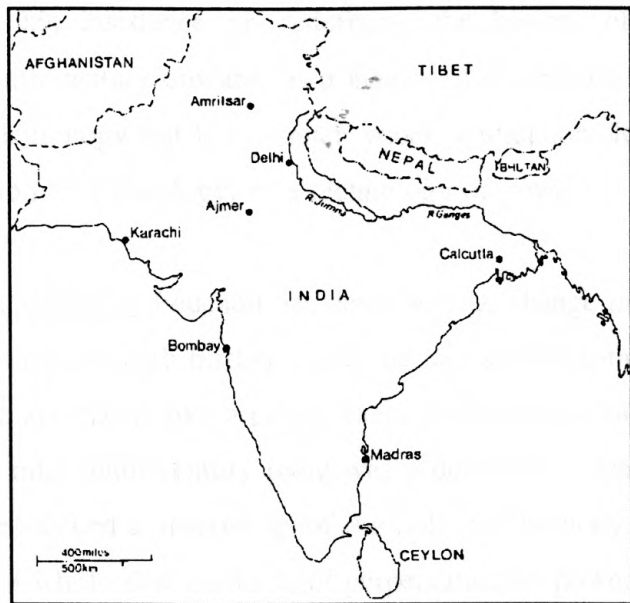


Figure 2.1-Central Location of Delhi in the Indian subcontinent.

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⁸ Foucault, Michel. Space, Knowledge and Power, *The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow, (ed.), Pantheon Books: New York, 1984. p.239.

relevance to this study derives from his insistence on redefining the history of architecture, especially from the eighteenth century onwards as a history of *techne*. For him *techne* does not only mean hard technology but has a much wider application. It applies to the state apparatus as a function of technology, or a technology of power.

In his seminal work, Discipline and Punish, Foucault has described the change in the techniques for the perpetuation of power through history. Until the late seventeenth century power was consolidated through spectacles like a public execution or rituals of the monarch. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth century there was a decline in such spectacles. The decline of the spectacle marked a slackening of the hold on the body. With the decline of the spectacle arose a whole new methods of perpetuation of power based in surveillance and observation of individuals whose aim according to Foucault was the soul of the individual as opposed to the body.

This chapter examines New Delhi in a Foucaultian light of the technology of power. Although the parallels between Foucault's power structures and the structuring of the New Delhi's plan may not be literal or so concrete, they can certainly be inferred. As this study reveals, New Delhi was precisely an architectural reproduction of the 'pyramid of power' existing in the city or for that matter the 'pyramid of power' in India. While doing a Foucaultian analysis of New Delhi, there are several readings that can be brought forth. One can clearly find the consolidation of power through more than just one particular method. Power is consolidated through the spectacle created by the buildings and the ceremonies; by the hierarchical layout of the city based on ranks and social status; by being analogous to the Panopticon schema; and by the underlying links between power and knowledge.

Foucault states that the microphysics of power "*are not simply 'negative' mechanisms that make it possible to repress, to prevent, to exclude, to eliminate; but that they are linked to a whole series of positive and useful effects which it is their task to*

support ⁹. In the context of the city the mechanisms of power are not simply negative but generate a dialogue between the rulers and the ruled. It benefits the rulers by producing a knowledge of its citizens by placing them under surveillance and by disciplining them. In the monuments and the layout of New Delhi the subject remain in a symbolic gaze of the rulers and the manifestations in stone remind them of the power of the Empire.

THE BRITISH IN INDIA

Interest in trade brought the English East India Company to India in 1608. In the early years the British had little interest in Indian political affairs - much less in the possibility of ruling the entire nation. By 1784 the British parliament had been made responsible for the governance of India through the East India Company. Calcutta became the first capital of British India at the beginning of the nineteenth century by which time the company had expanded rule over the eastern provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The British used their military tactics and technological advantage to extend their control over the subcontinent. The weakening of the once powerful Mughal Empire further helped the British to gain control over the country. By the 1850s the British had gained control from Bengal in the east to Indus in the west, and from Kashmir in north to Comrin in the south. As mercantile interests gave way to political ambitions, the primary objectives of the British shifted to internal unification and modernization. Growing nationalism and the first war of independence in 1857 precipitated the matters and the British Parliament passed an act transferring the company's rights in India to the British Crown. From then until India's independence in 1947, the subcontinent came under direct rule of the British Monarch.

MECHANISMS OF CONTROL

The British in India were largely responsible for the setting up of establishments based on disciplinary techniques like the military cantonments, boarding schools and even the public offices based on the system of hierarchy and ranks. The British in India

⁹ Foucault, Michel. Discipline & Punish, p.24.

provided a rare instance of an all-India empire in the history of India. Never had there been an empire signifying unity of political control and administrative cohesion. Qualitatively, the process was unique in terms of principle and organization, in approach and mode of operation. Indeed the rise of the British power in its first phase during the eighteenth century was a result not so much of wars, conquests and annexations, as of peaceful penetration through the prevailing system which conferred rights to collect land revenue and administer justice, law and order that went with it.

Of the several instruments of territorial integration, the political system, the framework of law and civil administration were most significant. The evolution of the Indian army and the system of communications which developed with the growth of science and technology, acquired added significance and acted as reinforcements from about the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. The spread of Western education and the Indian press created conditions for a social base to sustain government and administration, conditions which were conducive to both continuity and change from within the existing institutional frame itself.

The Political System

The political system which developed in India under British rule was essentially civil in character. The system which so developed under its government and administration was organized mainly on three levels, namely, the controlling authorities in London, the supreme or central government and subordinate presidencies in India, and the Indian states held in varying degrees of subjection to the paramount power.

Law and Legislative Authority

A general system of judicial establishments of police, as well as a legal system and legislative authority applicable in common to all classes and conditions of people in the British territories constituted a cohesive force. It provided, in the course of time, the institutional mechanisms to link legislators with their constituents for the purpose of

political stability. The judicial and police establishments provided a unified institutional mechanism to enforce sustained political loyalty to the paramount authority.

Civil Administration and The Public Services

The importance of administration as an integrating force under the British rule lay in the confidence it created among the people by its determination to establish a reign of law and its capacity to ensure peace and tranquillity. India, under the British, was divided into a number of districts with each being the basic unit of administration. It was governed by the District Officer who performed a number of roles as the collector-judge-magistrate. The District Officer dispensed justice in his role as Magistrate and attended to the revenue in his position of Collector.

The Indian Army

The British military organization developed in India served not only as an instrument of conquest but also assisted in civil administration and the maintenance of internal security. It therefore supported political stability, a function which, though not directly related to wars and annexations, was none the less vital to sustained territorial integrity.

The Indian Surveys: Topographical and Revenue surveys

The contribution of Indian surveys consisted not only in the preparation of maps and in providing knowledge of local geography for military operation and political control, but also in the collection of data for descriptive memoirs containing, besides a narrative of each survey, carefully digested statistical, historical and antiquarian information for social, economic and cultural purposes. While the maps facilitated the development of communications as a means of physical control, the study of Indian antiquities brought into focus the importance of Indian art and literature, religion and culture. The object of the revenue survey was to ascertain all revenue-paying districts and to show the limits of every village.

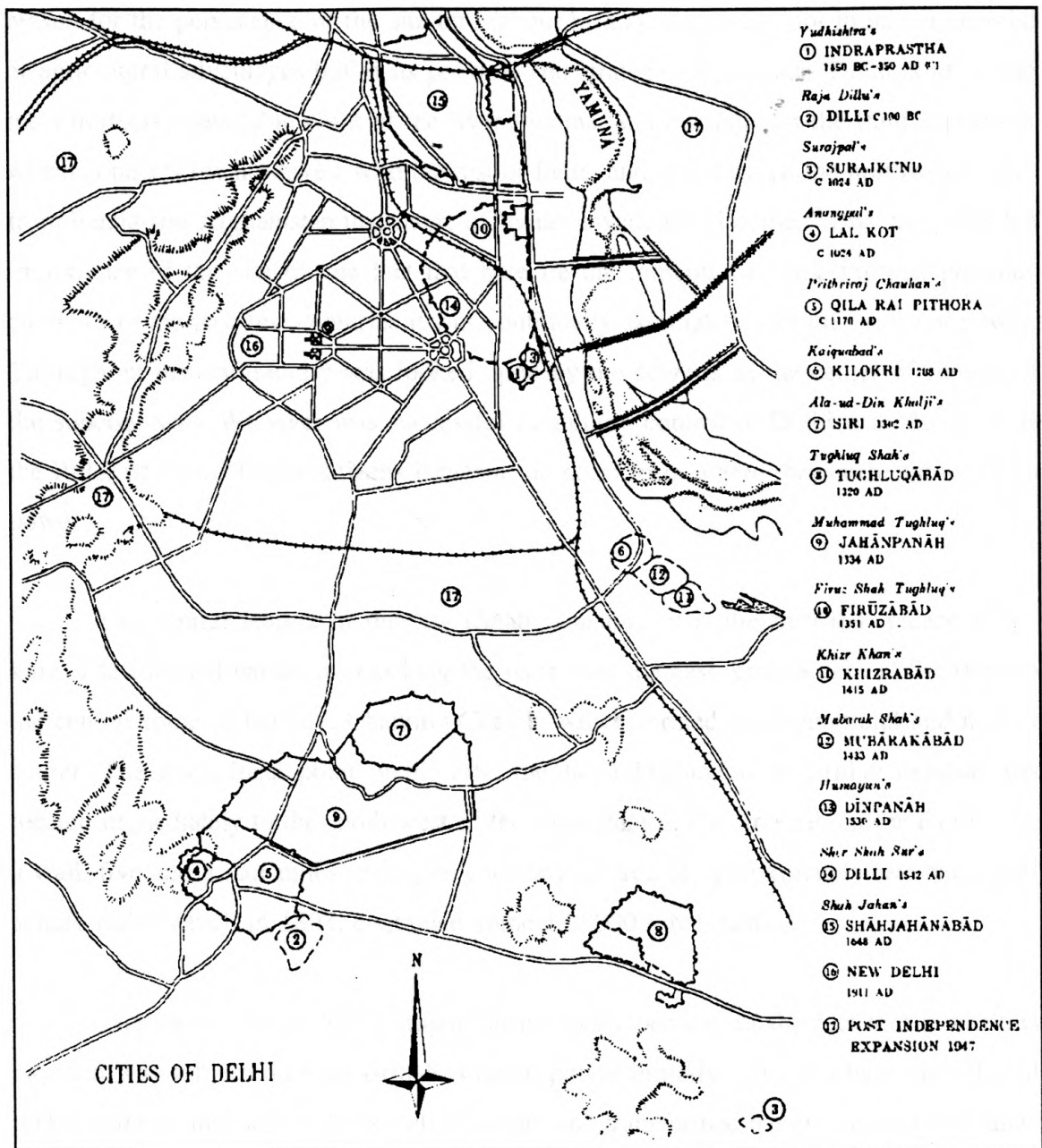


Figure 2.2-The cities of Delhi from 1450 B. C.

DELHI

Delhi was built in 1648 as a fortified city, with its wall running along the Jamuna river on the east, and below the slope of the Ridge along the north and west. The river and the ridge formed natural defenses. In fact it was the strategic location of Delhi which had made it a capital city of some empire or other during the course of its history. The

reason for the persistence of the site throughout history was found not in its commercial or agricultural advantages but in its political and strategic importance. Delhi is set in the most northerly navigable point of the river Jamuna, and lies athwart the Punjab corridor which connects the northwest with the rest of India, and it is through the northwest passes from Persia and Afghanistan that many of India's invaders had come.¹⁰ One can judge the importance of the site by the fact that here lie the remains of some thirteen previous cities. Over the past few centuries it was continually associated with the center of power. Throughout history the city was looked upon by the citizens as the center of control of the subcontinent. Whoever was successful in gaining control of Delhi was also seen as the Ruler of India. To the citizens it meant the point from where they were subjected to power.

The central feature of the city (Shahjahanabad) was the fortified palace of the king. The fortified palace overlooking the river onto the east, gave access at the front to the central spine of the city, Chandini Chowk, which formed its commercial and market center. The main focal point of the city, the Jama Masjid or the Friday mosque was located immediately to the south-west of the royal palace. Circumscribing the entire city, a wall, five and a half miles in length, enclosed an area of approximately two and a half square miles which in 1803, contained some 130,000 inhabitants.

The native city becomes important primarily because of the fact that it was this city that was subjected to the British colonial power initially. This is where the colonial power came to intersect with the native culture and transformed the city in course of time. The result of this contact between the colonizers and the colonized were reflected in the changes the city underwent after the mutiny in 1857.¹¹

¹⁰ Irving, Robert Grant. Indian Summer; Lutyens Baker and Imperial Delhi. Yale Univ. Press: New Haven & London, 1981. p.2.

¹¹ The Mutiny was the first major uprising against the British in the Indian Army. Indian soldiers in the army were instrumental in this major uprising in the nation.

Having lost control in 1857 as a result of the mutiny, the British regained control of Delhi after a few months. The inhabitants of the city were expelled and the soldiers and the cantonment were moved from the existing cantonment north-west of the city into the center of the city. As an obvious result the fort was overtaken by the British army. The former stronghold of the Mughals was now occupied by the British and the fort was converted into living quarters for the army. "Where is Delhi?" asked Ghalib in 1858. "By God it is not a city now. It is a camp. It is a cantonment. There is neither Palace, nor bazaar, nor the canal."¹²

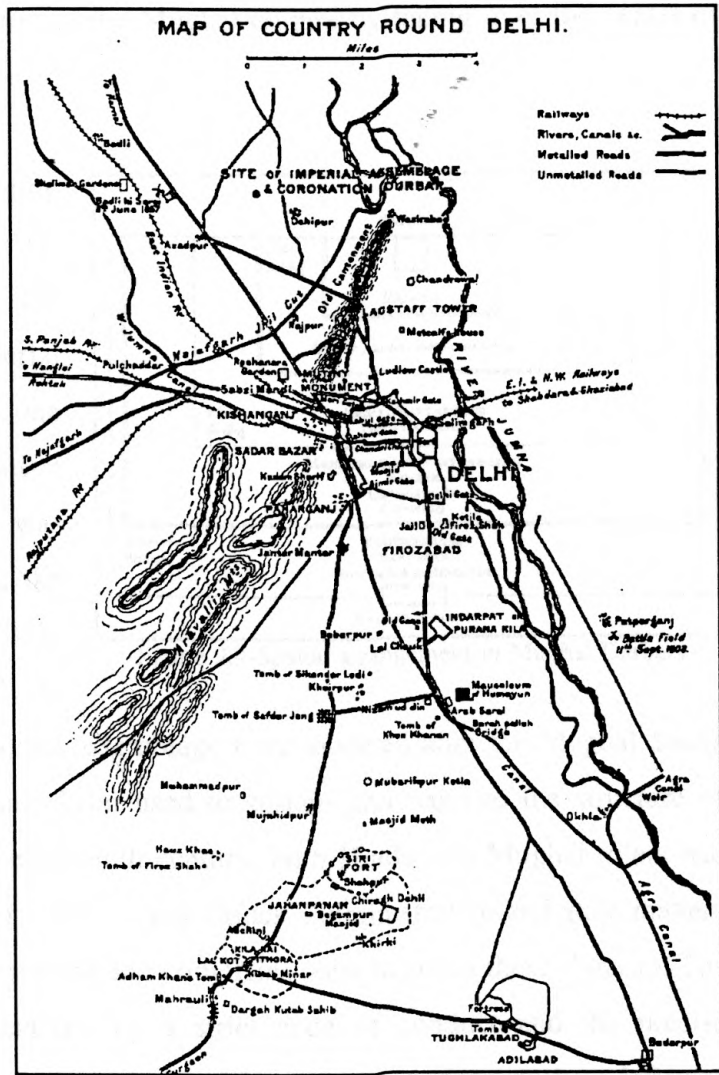


Figure 2.3-Map of Delhi region

The taking over the fortified palace was not only a military ritual but more importantly a political ritual. It was in a Foucaultian sense a political ritual in which power was manifested. It was a ritual in which power was eclipsed and restored over the subjects of the native city. It was a ritual which marked the execution of the history of the city. It attempted to erase the memories of the past empire existing in the city. More

¹² Ghalib, Mirza. "Military Security and Urban Development: A Case Study of Delhi 1857-1912". by Narayani Gupta, *Modern Asian Studies*, 5, I, 1971. p.77.

specifically it marked the execution of the Mughal empire by taking over the center of their power.

The basis for the emerging colonial culture and the capital city, New Delhi, was laid during the holding of the three imperial assemblies in Delhi. The first one held in 1877 proclaimed Queen Victoria as the Empress of India, was followed by assemblies marking the coronations of King Edward VII in 1902 and King George V in 1911. As

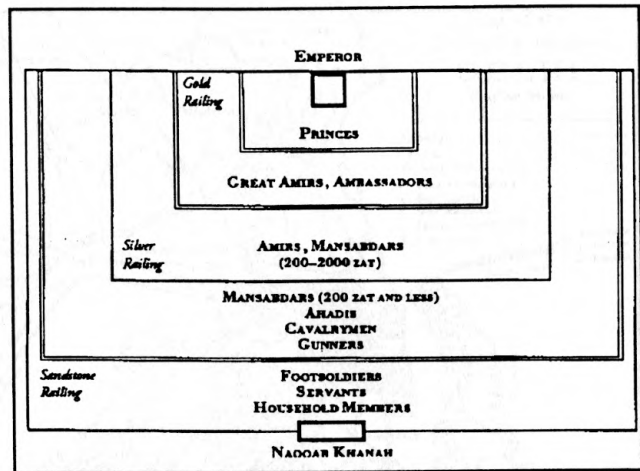


Figure 2.4-Spatial arrangement in Mughal Darbars

pointed out by Jyoti these ceremonial assemblage were modeled after the Mughal courts or *darbars*. *Darbars* had originally been used to sustain and validate the structure of society in Mughal India. By the eighteenth century, both Hindu and Mughal rulers had adopted the custom of holding of these courtly rituals. Administrative and state matters were attended to, awards were bestowed and complains were heard in these *darbars*. The entire ritual of audience was marked by a strict code of conduct and the precise observance of rules and regulations. Even the spatial arrangement of the *darbars* followed a well established rule. Relative placement of people and objects was used to symbolize their relationship to the ruler. The British adopted the *darbar* for similar purposes as a means of strengthening the ties with the people.

By adopting the Mughal model of *darbars*, the British not only intended to place the Queen's authority over the Mughal throne, but also attempted to link themselves to India's past by carrying on the Mughal tradition through these assemblies. Bernard Cohn states, "*a theory of authority became codified, based on ideas and assumptions about the proper ordering of groups in Indian society, and their relationship to their British rulers.*"

*In conceptual terms, the British, who had started their rule as 'outsiders', became 'insiders' by vesting in their monarch the sovereignty of India."*¹³

IMPERIAL NEW DELHI

King George V announced the transfer of the Indian capital at the Durbar celebrating his coronation as Emperor in 1911. The viceroy at the time, Lord Hardinge, had supported the decision saying that Delhi was intimately associated in the minds of the Hindus and that of the Muslims as well. By this time Delhi had developed the three essential component parts of the colonial city in India, the 'native city', which was the old part of the city largely inhabited by indigenous population, the 'cantonment', which housed the military establishment and the 'civil station', which was largely inhabited by bureaucrats and officials of the government.

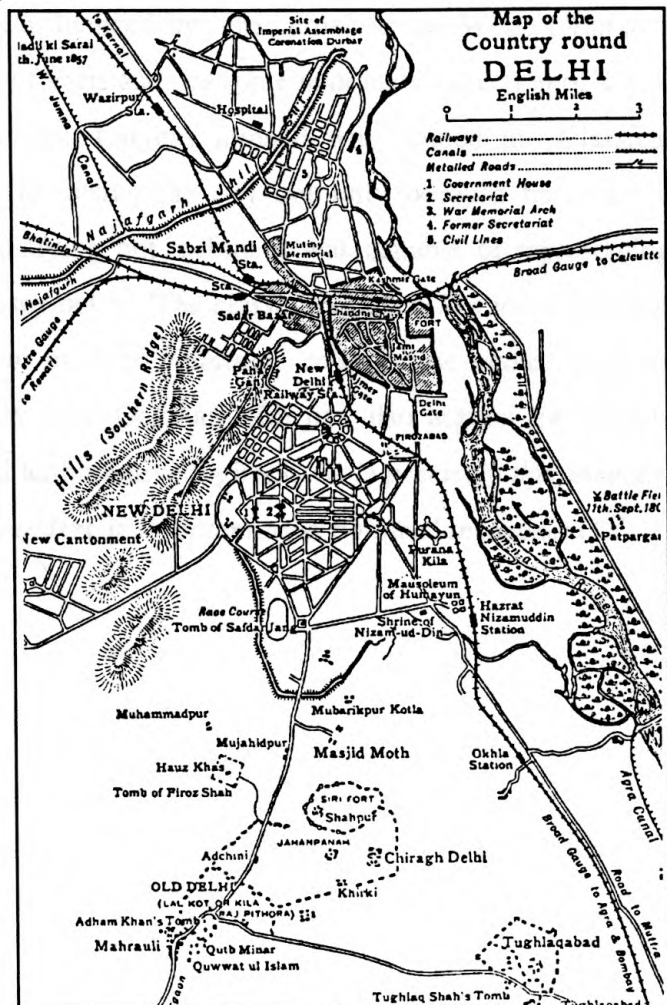


Figure 2.5-New Delhi in Delhi region

The new capital became an expression of colonial power. What was noteworthy was how political authority took shape in stone and how these colonial buildings helped shape the discourse on the empire. The architecture drew both upon European classical styles and upon those of India's past, particularly those associated with the Mughal

¹³ Cohn, Bernard S. "Representing Authority in Victorian India", *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (ed.) Cambridge University Press: London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney, 1983. p.165.

Empire. The new capital city was designed by the British architects Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker. The layout of the city was based on a geometrical plan made of a system of hexagonal grid and visual axes. For Lutyens New Delhi reflected the concept of Imperial supremacy. Lutyens was influenced by other cities in the West: L'Enfant's plan of Washington, Haussman's plan of Paris and the contemporaneous erection of a new Federal capital at Canberra in Australia. Lutyens himself was trained in Classical architecture employed its principles to design the city not only because he found it interesting and most aesthetically satisfying but to him it was capable of representing British sovereignty As Cristopher Hussey put it: "*The classical Orders, like those societies that have successfully employed them in their buildings, connote the authority of an autocrat....*,"¹⁴ a feature also noted by Joan Ockman who has also argued the linkage between the classical architecture and authoritative regimes, "*It is precisely this inherent aspect of order in classicism which renders it so potent as a political instrument.*"¹⁵

¹⁴ Hussey, Christopher. The Letters of Edwin Lutyens to his wife Emily. Clayre Percy and Jane Ridley (ed.), Collins: London, 1985. p.228.

¹⁵ Ockman, Joan. The Most Interesting Form of Lie, Oppositions, Spring 1981: 24. p.39.

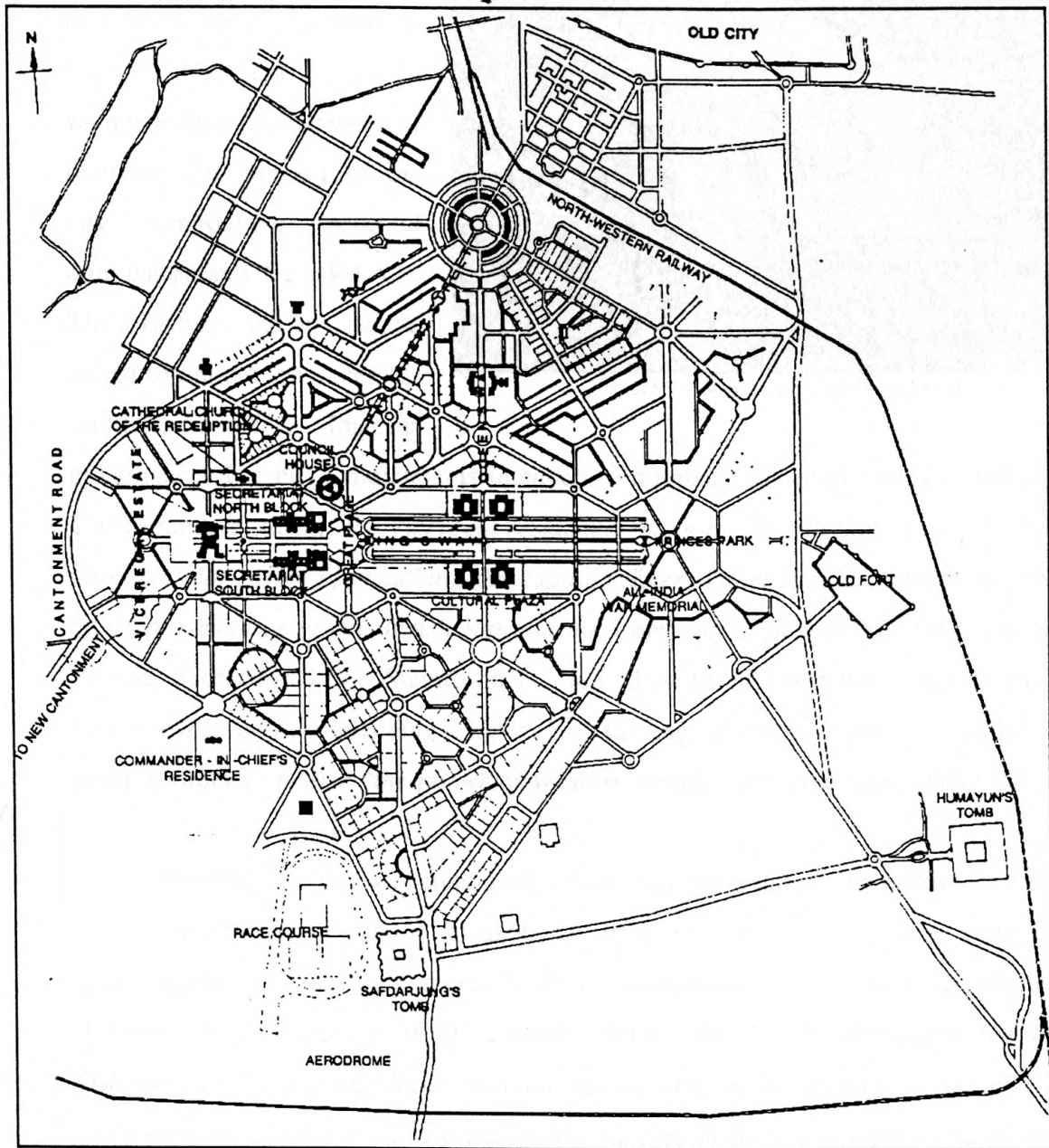


Figure 2.6-Layout plan of New Delhi

SPECTACLE OF POWER

The New Delhi Town Planning Committee responsible for the planning of the Imperial city acknowledged the necessity of realizing the concept of the city, embodying peaceful domination and dignified rule. The British Indian capital aimed to uphold the venerable tradition of Imperial



Figure 2.7-Aerial view of New Delhi

governance. The city's monuments intended to dominate the monuments of past rulers. The committee stated, "*the Viceregal residence, flying the British flag, should be the first object in view when approaching the capital....Every effort should be made to create a city representative of the British Raj and the worthy of the King-Emperor.*" The King's Private Secretary, Lord Stamfordham, felt that the Government House must be "*conspicuous and commanding.*" He wanted the capital city to impress upon the native mind in order to realize "*the power of Western science, art, and civilization.*"¹⁶

The Imperial city was thus deeply rooted in symbolism. The pursuit of a system and symmetry was symbolic of Britain's efforts to impose order and unity in the subcontinent, while the monumental scale of the avenues and the buildings implied the stability and permanence of the Empire. Irving states, "*the domes and the towers fashioned by Lutyens and Baker rose on Raisina Hill, bright against the sky above city and plain, they had seemed to proclaim the success of British discipline and power.*"¹⁷

¹⁶ Irving, Robert Grant. Indian Summer, p.72, 73.

¹⁷ Irving, Robert Grant. Indian Summer, p.340.

The city created an elaborate spectacle through its monumental architecture and the glorious ceremonies of the monarch. In an age where the spectacle of torture and the display of violence in the public executions had been done away with, the ceremonies and the architecture became symbols of the triumph of the monarch. In this spectacle of power, subjection was achieved on a symbolic level. Power is exercised through the images created by the spectacle. The spectacle appeared as a means of unification. As Debord states, "*The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.*"¹⁸ Though intended to overawe the population and reinforce hierarchical order or bring a sense of community among the citizens, the spectacles were also the production of the field of knowledge. It was through these spectacles that the citizens were informed of their rulers, because for an effective power relation it was important not only for the rulers to gain knowledge of their subjects but at the same time for the citizens to be equally knowledgeable of their rulers.

The city plan had been derived by developing two major axes originating from the Viceroy's Palace. The principal axis called the King's Way led in the east direction toward the river Jamuna, through the old fort, the site of the first city built in Delhi. The other axis led in the north-east direction to the already existing Mughal city of Shahjahanabad, which was a present seat of power of the locals. Terminating the axes onto these major monuments of previous cities not only signified the reach of the power to the existing parts of the city but more importantly signified the eye of the rulers over the whole historical course of the city.

The city's vast open spaces and its tree lined avenues were new to the existing urban landscape in and around the Delhi region. These tree lined avenues intended to impress upon the minds of the native Indians who had until now lived in densely packed cities. The perspectival nature of the space was further enhanced by trees and waterways. Other major avenues in the city were similarly lined with trees which led the vision in a linear direction usually towards the center of power.

¹⁸ Debord, Guy. The Society of the Spectacle, Zone Books: New York, 1994. p.12.

The architect employed the perspectival construction as an effective and appropriate means to signify the city guided by 'rationality' and 'reason' of the west. The city based in perspectival construction also symbolized the demystification of the indigenous culture based in myths and superstitions. It was truly an attempt by the British to bring India out of this cloud of mystery into a modern concept of space and time. As discussed later it was through this perspectival construction and manipulation of space that power was

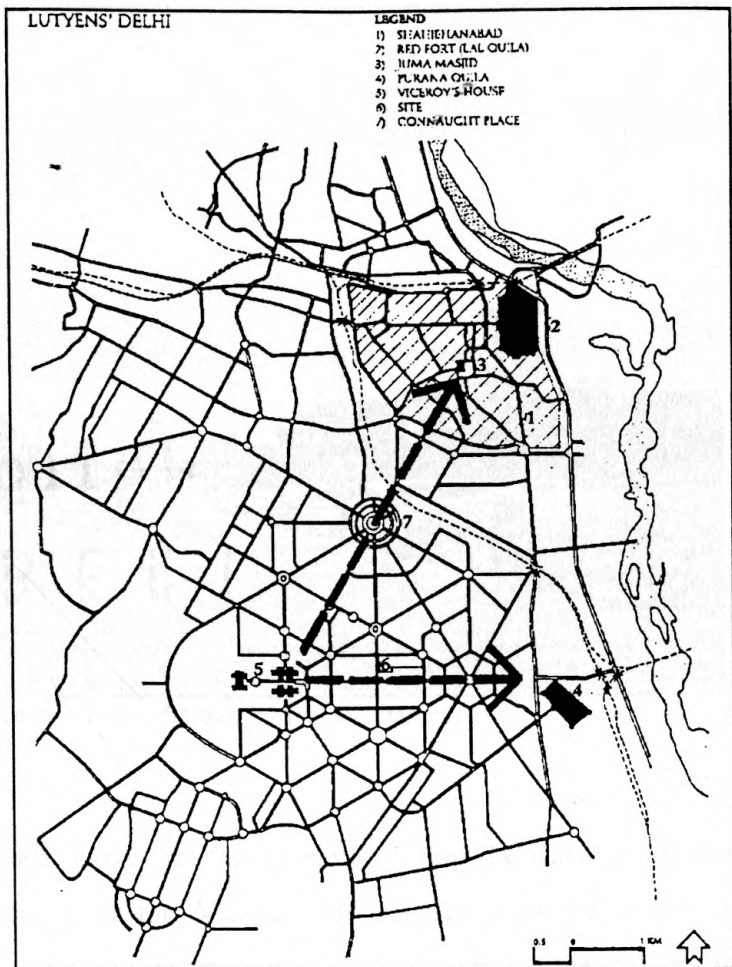


Figure 2.8-Lutyen's Delhi with the primary visual axes

transmitted effectively. Robert Byron described the dramatic effect of the approach to the Viceregal House from King's Way as follows:-

Before his eyes, sloping gently upward, runs a gravel way of such infinite perspective as to suggest the intervention of a diminishing glass: at whose end reared above the green tree tops, glitters the seat of government, the seventh Delhi, four square upon an eminence - dome, tower, dome, tower, dome, red pink, cream, and washed gold and flashing in the morning sun.¹⁹

¹⁹ Byron, Robert. New Delhi, Architectural Review, Vol. LXIX, No 410, January 1931. p.1.



Figure 2.9-Viceroy's Palace flanked by the Secretariats

The elevation of the palace above the rest of the city atop the Raisina hill was suggestive of the supreme position of the Viceroy. He reigned supreme above all inhabitants in the city. Lutyens' use of symmetry and perspective implied the stability of the empire. Each architectural piece was firmly fixed as an integral part of a singular composition. The idea of permanence was clearly conveyed through the architecture.

These subtle techniques of spatial arrangement used by the architect refer to non-corporal methods of subjection in a Foucaultian sense. In this scheme power exercised on the subjects is conceived as a strategy. By creating the city based on a definite system and symmetry, it was conceived in opposition to the old city which apparently lacked either of the two. This opposition with the indigenous brought forth the dissymmetry between the indigenous and the colonial or in other words the dissymmetry between the subjects and their rulers. The spectacle rooted in symbolism was instrumental in recognizing who are powerful and who are the weak. It was through the manipulation of symbols that the powerful were able to reinforce their authority.

In describing the spectacle of torture, Foucault states that the masses watching the execution are not merely spectators but become a part of the whole scene. They watch in front of their eyes the power of the monarch at work. The description of the inaugural ceremony given by Irving below shows how the subjects were involved and interested in observing these ceremonies. In fact they were actively involved in this power play. They did not remain mere spectators. It was their presence that brought into light the dissymmetry between the dominating and the dominated. The presence of the masses rendered the ceremonies complete in terms of theater of power and, "*linked the absolute power of the monarch to the lowest levels of power disseminated in society*".²⁰

New Delhi, especially the Central Vista, became the stage for the enactment of the ceremonies of the empire. A fortnight's festivities marked the inauguration of New Delhi in February, 1931. The Viceregal Palace, although already occupied for fourteen months, nevertheless captured the spotlight. During the fortnight's festivities, the Viceregal couple Lord and Lady Irving presided over banquet, formal reception, garden party and investiture ceremony. The ceremonies were known to exceed even those of the King of Britain in grandeur. Robert Irving described one of the inaugural ceremonies.

Welcome sunshine broke through the prevailing wintry gloom on February 10 to grace a brilliant spectacle of imperial pageantry, the unveiling of Herbert Baker's Asokan columns, gifts of the four Dominions. Massed bands, trumpet fanfares, and a thunderous thirty-one-gun salute heralded the arrival of the Viceroy's carriage and scarlet clad bodyguard. Nearly five thousand guests, including Dominion representatives, the Commander-in-Chief, and Lord Hardinge had assembled in Government Court, while hundreds of Indian clerks and chaprassis jockeyed for position on the Secretariat rooftops....Lord Irvin described the pillars as emblems of common loyalty to the sovereign of an empire which eschewed uniformity of customs and preserved diversity within unity....Speeches concluded, the four representatives simultaneously pressed electric buttons, draperies fell from the pillars, a fanfare sounded, and bands struck up "God Save the King."²¹

²⁰ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.215.

²¹ Irving, Robert Grant. Indian Summer, p.342.



Figure 2.10-New Delhi: Inaugural ceremony

The British in India gave extreme importance to these ceremonies. As Foucault states, "*Not only must people know, they must see with their own eyes*".²² Subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence or ideology but could be, calculated, organized or meticulously thought out yet could be subtle and devoid of any violence.²³ The ceremonies combined into one symbolic the taking over of an ancient throne and at the same time the setting up of a new state.

Ceremonies, though short and infrequent, were a powerful medium of conveying a message to the masses and reminding them time and again of the existence of the monarch, in order to reiterate the presence of the monarch. Architecture on the other hand remained a permanent reminder not only to the citizens who live in the city but also to the future citizens of the city. Architecture also signified the desire of the creators for the immortality of the Empire. By ritualizing the spectacle through architecture and ceremonies the monarch restored the sovereignty by manifesting it at its most spectacular.

²² Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.58.

²³ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.26.

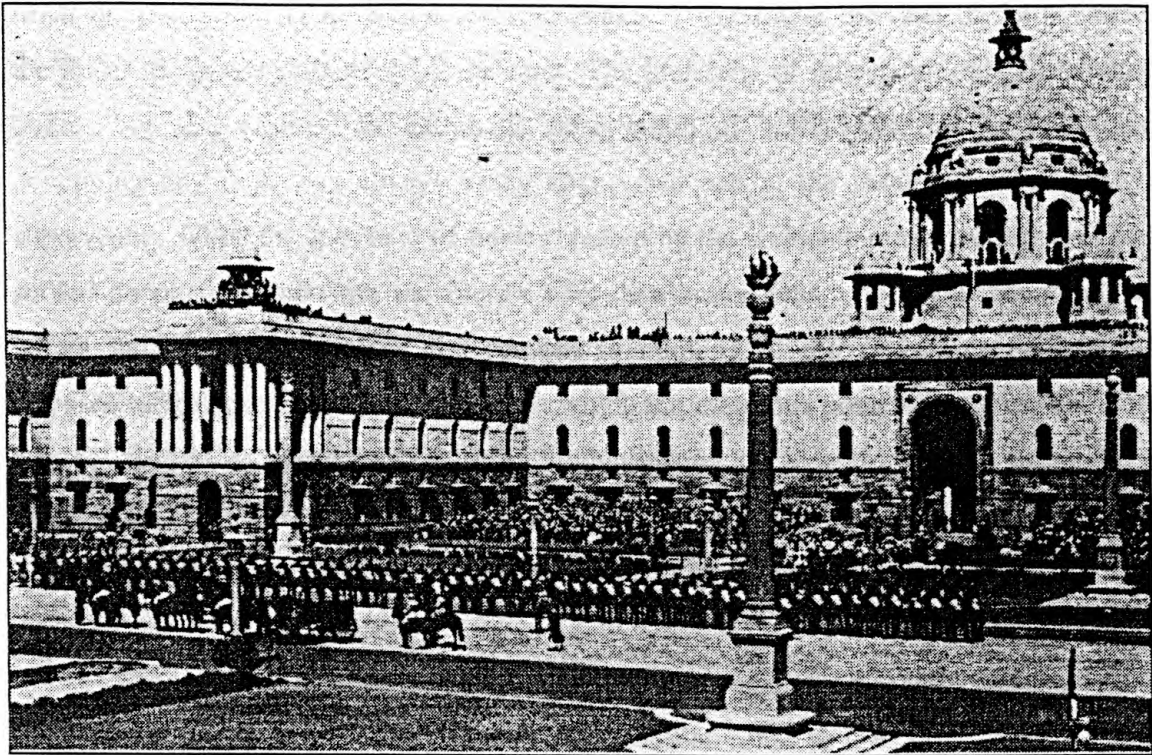


Figure 2.11-New Delhi: Inaugural Ceremony

In her account of the Imperial city, Hosagrahar Jyoti used the metaphor of a theater to describe the city. She argues that colonial urban planning projects were often theaters of colonial domination. Every event, symbol and building is a part of a greater design, a subcomponent of the stage setting and role assigning crucial to the administration of the colonial city. As described earlier the British borrowed the Mughal tradition of the *darbar*, the public ritual that served to strengthen the bond between the Emperor and his people. Jyoti's account becomes particularly true as the strict hierarchical and the codified nature of the plan is revealed.

HIERARCHICAL NATURE OF THE PLAN

For Foucault, the hierarchical distribution of individuals was a result of disciplinary systems. The hierarchy consisted of a pyramid of power with the concentration of power at the apex of the pyramid. In New Delhi this apex of power was occupied by the Viceroy. Each position in the pyramid was defined by 'rank'. "*The unit is.... neither the territory (unit of domination), nor the place (unit of residence), but the*

rank: the place one occupies in a classification...."²⁴ The lower the rank in the pyramid, the lesser the power possessed by the rank. The hierarchy of power not only distributed bodies but also ensured an automatic observation of individuals, for an individual occupying any rank was always being supervised and at the same time was always supervising. While the spectacle of power created by the architecture and ceremonies was rooted deeply in symbolism the hierarchical distribution was a concrete technology to locate individuals and ensure the smooth functioning of the power mechanism. As opposed to the spectacle of ceremonies in which the more one possesses power, the more one is marked as an individual or individualization is 'ascending', in a hierarchical arrangement on the other hand individualization is 'descending'. As power becomes more anonymous, those on whom it is exercised tend to be strongly individualized.

The layout of the city resulted in a sort of 'analytical space', a term borrowed from Foucault. It can be termed 'analytical' in a Foucaultian sense as it is a disciplinary space. Foucault says, "*discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space....Discipline organizes an analytical space.*"²⁵ While Foucault is referring to distribution of individuals in direct disciplinary systems like the army and the police, it applies well to the colonial culture prevalent in the city.

*Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed....Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using.*²⁶

Atop the Raisina hill, the highest point in the city, stood the Government House. East of the 'Government House' were two large offices accommodating the Imperial

²⁴ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.145.

²⁵ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.143.

²⁶ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.143.

bureaucracy, the north and south blocks of the 'Secretariat'. The remaining area was allocated entirely to the residential and institutional needs of the government and its accompanying network of roads. In 1919 the circular 'Council Chamber' was integrated in the acropolis. The Viceregal palace formed the center of the whole spatial layout. It became the origin of all important axes and the radials. *"Every single building and vista reflect the hierarchy of the society which built it and at its centre stands the focus of the entire city, Viceroy's House, the supreme fount of political, cultural and social patronage."*²⁷

In the British Indian hierarchy, the viceroy, as representative of the Crown, resided at the pinnacle of authority. All others in the British Indian Empire were ranked in respect to him. The head of the government is located prominently on the highest knoll; on his left i.e. to the north of the Viceregal Palace is located the head of the religious system, the church; on his right i.e. to the south of the Viceregal Palace is located the head of the of the military institution, the commander-in-chief. Thus the triangle connecting the heads of these

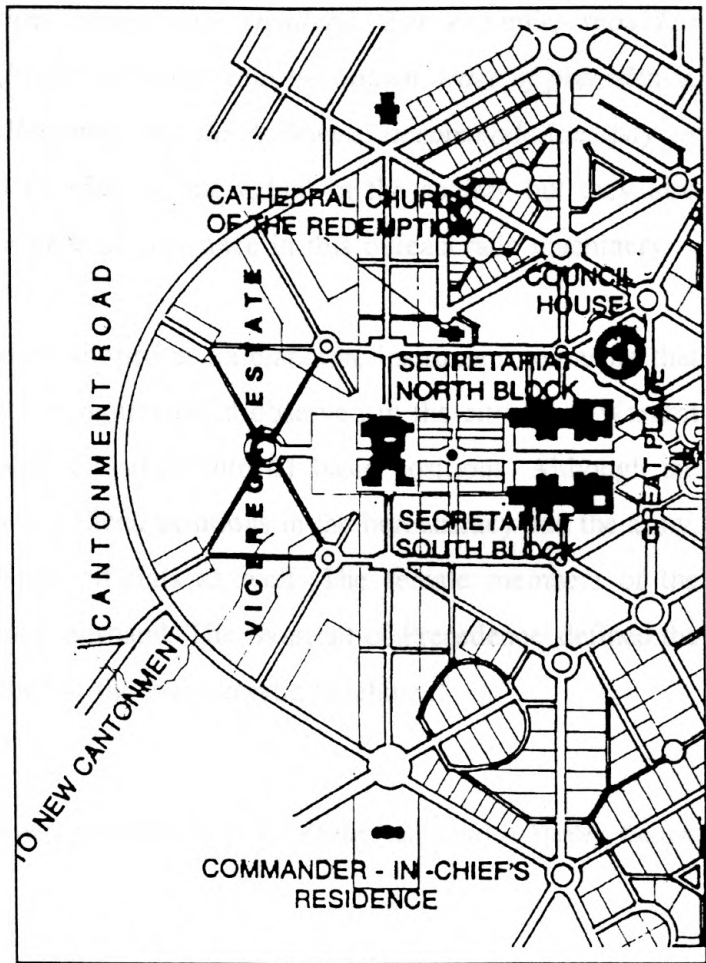


Figure 2.12-Prominent position of the Viceregal Palace, Commander-in-Chief's residence and the Church

²⁷ Davies, Philip. Splendours of the Raj, John Murray: London, 1985. p.227.

three primary institutions of civil government, the military organization and religion occupied the key position in the capital.²⁸

As compared to the social stratification in the traditional Indian cities which was based on a system of caste and was hereditary, the stratification in the capital city was much more the result of the occupational rank or position one held in the city. The rank, bureaucratic and military became the determinant for one's position in the city. Every member of the city was socially located. As King states, "*This was not simply for informal, social reasons so that each actor knew 'where he stood' in relation to others in the hierarchy. Much more practical issues were involved. For example, should a newcomer arrive whose designated role did not fit into the known order of precedence, difficulties were experienced in allocating him the 'relevant' accommodation, pay or allowances.*"²⁹ Not only did ranks position an individual in the society but they also served as punishment or reward for one's performance in this bureaucratic machinery.

'Warrant of Precedence' was developed as an elaborate instrument to ensure that the official hierarchies were known, recognized and observed in the city. The 'Warrant of Precedence' lists some 175 roles, classified into 61 basic positions. Although the 'Warrant' only applied to the holder of official positions in the bureaucracy and the army, it acted as a reference point for non-officials as well. The female members of the community acquired the status of their husband. The 'Warrant of Precedence' defined the role and the position of each member of the bureaucratic machine.³⁰

²⁸ King, Anthony. Colonial Urban Development, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, Henley, Boston, 1976. p.253.

²⁹ Ibid, p.241.

³⁰ For example, the following table lists a few positions defined by the 'Warrant' in order of their ranking:-

1. The Governor General and Viceroy
4. Commander-in-Chief
11. President of Legislative Assembly
14. Chief Commissioner of Railways, General Officers Commanding, Officers of the rank of General

See King, Anthony. Colonial Urban Development, p.242.

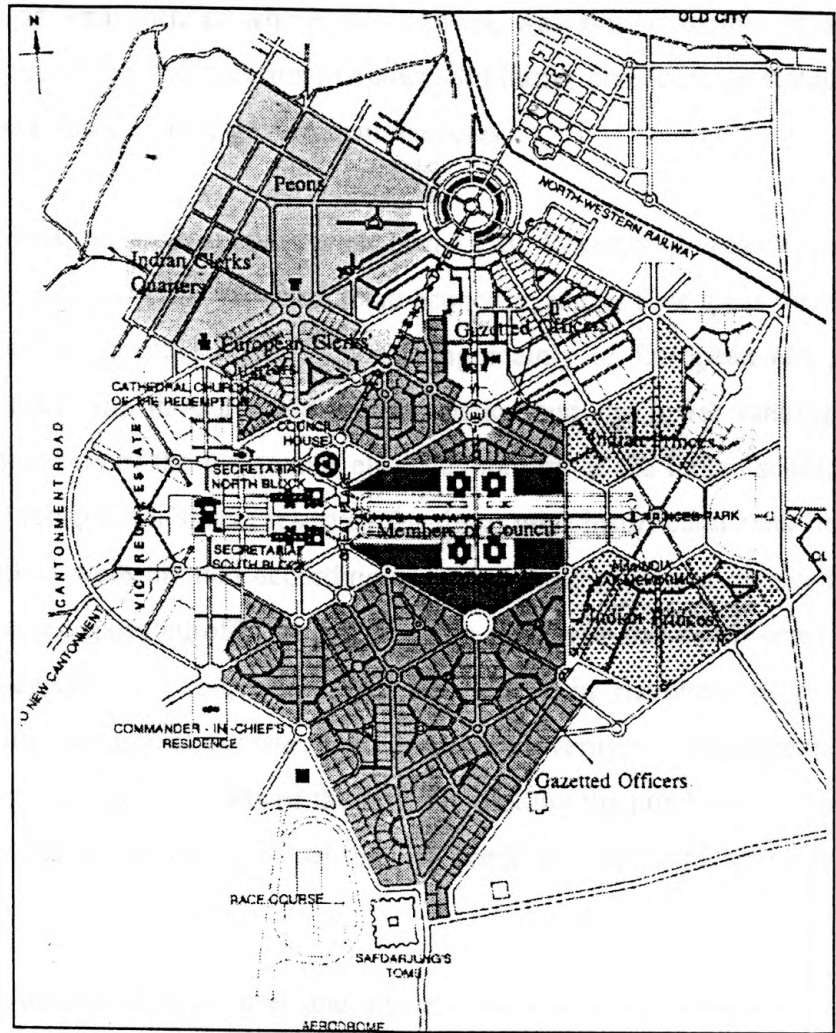


Figure 2.13-Areas designated according to an officer's rank

However, the occupational rank was not the sole factor determining one's position in the city. Distinctions were made between Europeans, Indians and Anglo-Indians. This did not prevent certain Indians from having a comparable status to higher-ranking Europeans. Educated Indians who were highly westernized in their attitudes and behavior occupying senior government positions or belonging to nobility were highly respectable in the colonial culture of the city. However, other things being equal such as rank, seniority or socio-economic status, Europeans had precedence over Indians.

The next most important distinction was between those occupying official roles in the government and army, and the 'non-official' community. While the army had their

own system of ranking, an army officer whose official rank was similar to that of a government official was none the less inferior in status. Similarly, considerable status differences existed between the different government agencies.

A closer look reveals the socio-spatial layout of the city. Residential areas were allocated according to occupational rank, race and socio-economic status. Five areas were created accordingly: first for 'gazetted officers', consisting mainly of European elite; second for European 'clerks'; the third for indigenous 'clerks' and the lower ranking officials; the fourth for members of the indigenous elite, the nobility of the Indian states; and the fifth area was a non-official space, reserved for those with insufficient rank or status.³¹ Even the land plots were allotted according to status. Ruling princes received between four and eight acres, gazetted officers between two and three-and-a half acres, and Members of the Legislature, one-quarter acre. Residences of members of the Viceroy's Council lined the ceremonial avenue while heads of Government departments were within the inner ring and the finer parts of the city. On plotting the numbered ranks from the 'Warrant of Precedence' on the layout of the city, some idea of the hierarchy is revealed.

1. York Place
(Ranks 8-24; Additional Secretaries and above)
2. Hastings Road
(Ranks 8-26; Major-Generals and above)
3. York Road
(Ranks 8-42; Deputy Secretaries and above)
4. King George's Avenue
(Ranks 42-43; mainly Deputy Secretaries and above)
5. Dupleix Road
(Ranks 36-46; Lieutenant Colonels and above)

The hierarchy was not only a determinant in ones position in ceremonies but in social gatherings as well. This resulted from the rigid social structure of the city where

³¹ King, Anthony Colonial Urban Development, p.224.

rank was an overriding factor, which made every individual aware of his position which ensured a strict code of conduct both on and off work. In this hierarchy, power was exercised on every member, without involving any violence or force. Rather it is exercised as a strategy where power invests them, is transmitted through them; it exerts pressure on them. Each member became a component part of the power mechanism.

PANOPTICON SCHEMA

While the hierarchy of ranks was used as a means for a general layout the city plan, what becomes important is the actual construction of the three dimensional space. The system of ranks arranged the city socio-culturally which ensured the location of individuals in the city. However it was the transmission and instrumentalization of power through the construction and manipulation of the three dimensional space that is particularly important for an architectural analysis of the city such as this. As opposed to the idea of a plan or the hierarchical layout which is out of human perception without the aids of diagrams or maps, the three dimensional space is in direct relation to human perception, and it is in the realm of this space that power was exercised over the individuals in New Delhi.

For the purpose of this study, the city of New Delhi can be compared with Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon was a prison which acted as an empty shell or the chassis for the machinery of power. The moment it was filled up of inmates in the cell and the watchman in the central tower, power came into play. Each individual became a component part of this machinery. As opposed to 'spectacle' which involved the making visible of the apex of the hierarchy of power, the 'monarch', the Panopticon relied on the visibility of the subjects of power while making the guardian of power, the 'watchman', invisible. With spectacle there was a predominance of public life and a sense of unification. On the contrary, talking about the Panopticon, Foucault states, *"In a society in which the principal elements are no longer the community and public life, but on the one hand, private individuals and, on the other, the state, relations can be*

regulated only in a form that is the exact reverse of the spectacle....Our society is one not of spectacle, but surveillance; under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth....³² New Delhi too was a creation of an empty shell of the power machinery. It was a machinery of power where every citizen and the monarch once placed in the city became a component part of the purpose of the city,

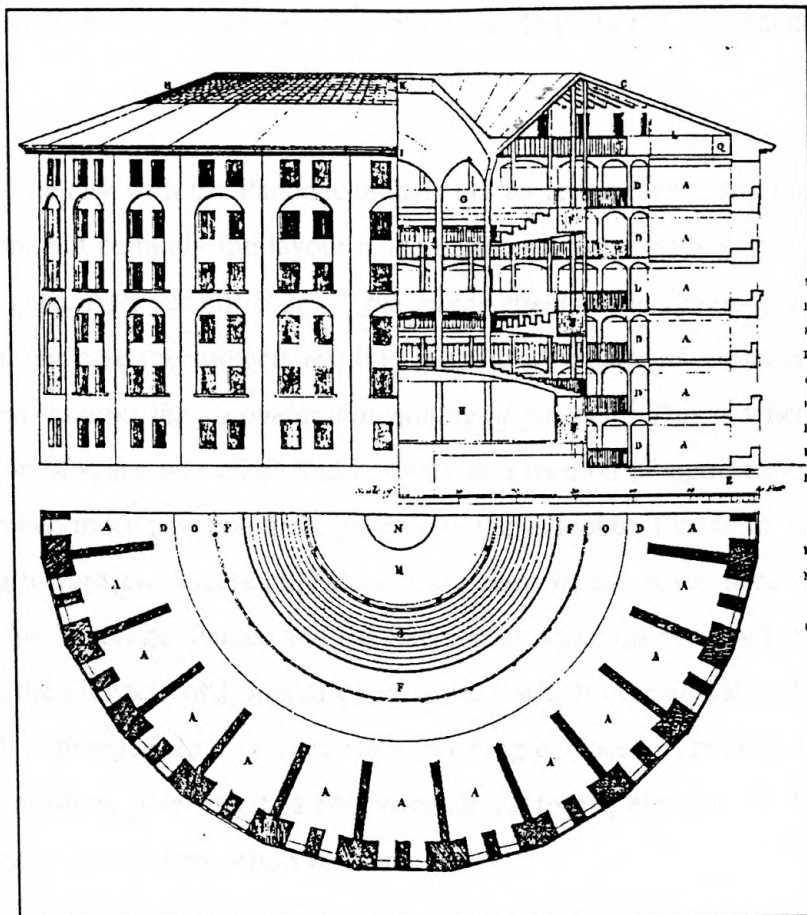


Figure 2.14-Panopticon designed by Jeremy Bentham

which was the perpetuation of power. Although the city was based in hierarchical distribution of individuals, everybody resided in a homogeneous space of power. Power influenced individuals homogeneously throughout the city as in a Panopticon.

The Raisina hill with the Government House became a sort of the central tower of the Panopticon while the rest of the city especially the King's Way or the ceremonial pathway became the space of observation. The King's Way extending between the Government House and the All India War Memorial, with open ground in all directions was a space where a person was immediately intimidated by its vastness. On entering this space nothing else is visible but the Acropolis in one direction and the War Memorial in

³² Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*, p.216-217.

the opposite direction (though now, one can see a lot more buildings in the immediate proximity).

This comparison of the city with the Panopticon does not by any means imply that the city is a sort of a prison. But certainly the layout rendered the subjects residing in the city under a self-imposed gaze. As Foucault states, "*the major effect of the Panopticon; to induce in the inmate (in our case the subjects residing in the city) a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.*"³³ This is where the perspectival construction of space was employed not only as a method of signification but in order to impose a much more psychological gaze upon the onlooker. Placed in the Central Vista and looking toward the Viceregal Palace, the palace stands at the horizon or the infinity of vision. The Viceregal Palace and the Secretariat buildings provided the acropolis of the new city, the pinnacle of Imperial glory toward which ceremonial paths and processional routes all converged. In a perspective everything is placed in relation to the vanishing point. The vanishing point exerts a hold over all the formal elements in the space. The vanishing point is the unified origin of form.

Nowhere is this more visible in the city than the Central Vista. Every architectural element in and around the King's Way is placed in relation to the supreme vanishing point of the city, the Viceregal Palace. The Secretariats flanking the Viceregal Palace further emphasize the importance of this point of origin of the city by framing the view. Although physically separated, all elements in the city especially in the Central Vista seem to originate from this point. This is where architectural elements, vistas and landscape extend, intersect and interpenetrate geometrically and conceptually. By its very nature the space incorporated an onlooker as a part of the composition. One can realize being in midst of this space of dominance. The viewer is placed in a direct relationship with the symbols of the Empire around him.

³³ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.201.

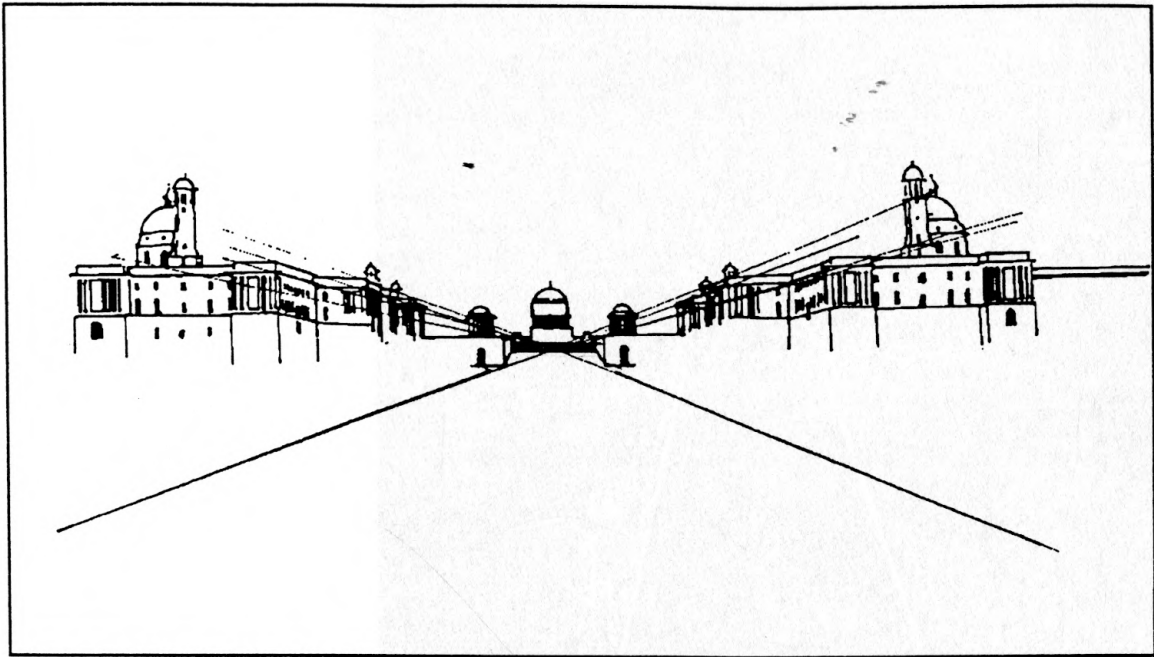


Figure 2.15-The Viceregal Palace as the Supreme Vanishing Point of the spatial composition

What is most curious about this analogy is not the creation of a similar power machinery or the Viceregal palace as the origin of the city, but most importantly the self reversal achieved by the means of the spatial construction based in perspective. This insistence on the perspectival space and Panopticon comparison derives from Brunelleschi's experiments with the perspective. In his experiment with the perspective of the Baptistery of San Giovanni in Florence Brunelleschi demonstrated that the 'point of view' coincides, in terms of projection, with the 'vanishing point': both are situated at the intersection of the perpendicular sight line and the picture plane. By placing himself behind the vanishing point Brunelleschi discovered that actually there is an unseen eye that looks from the vanishing point onto the viewing subject. This unseen eye is nothing but the viewer's eye but it is the opposite of the seeing eye as it looks back at the subject. *"the subject in the experiment is reduced to the position of a voyeur. But a singular kind of voyeur, one who discovers that he is himself being looked at, and from the very spot from which he himself looks...."*³⁴

³⁴ Damisch, Hubert. The Origin of Perspective, MIT Press: Cambridge and London, 1994. p.128-129.

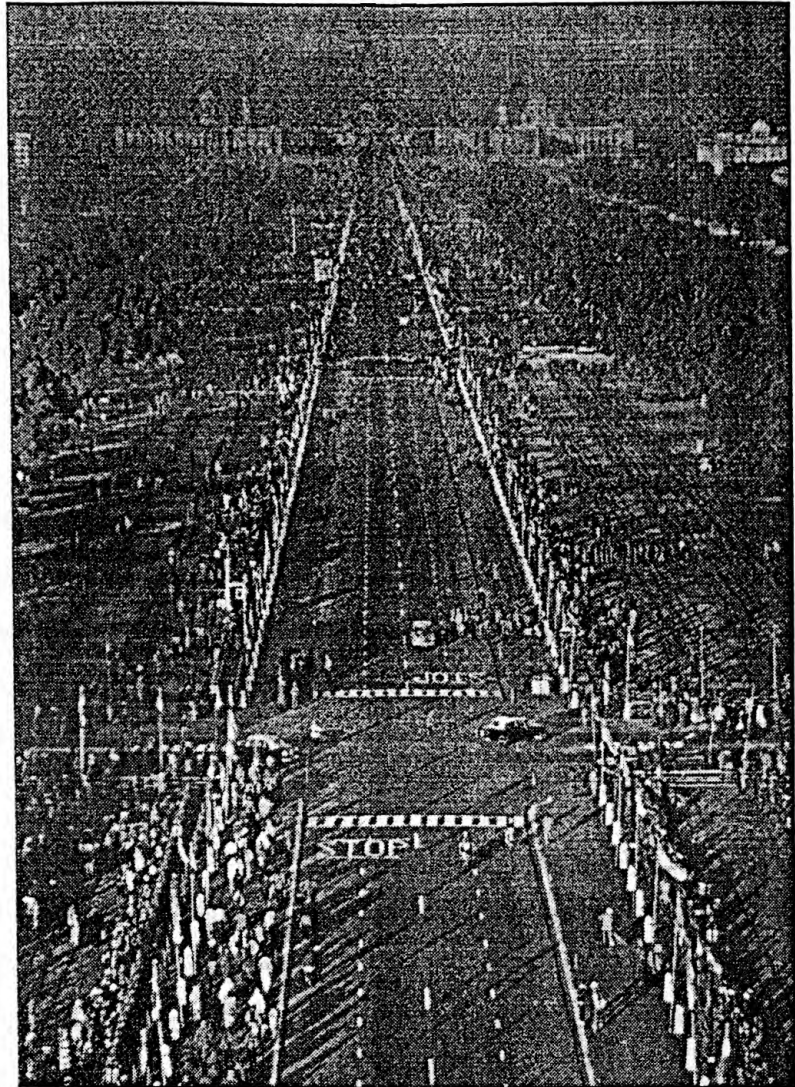


Figure 2.16-Central Vista

In a Panopticon, the constant visibility of the inmate and the invisibility of the watchman achieved the role reversal or the role amplification for the inmate. The inmate himself assumed the responsibility for the constraints of power, he played both the roles, he became the principle of his own subjection. He himself played the role of the inmate and the watchman. This is what is achieved in New Delhi by the means of the perspectival construction of the space. By placing the Viceregal Palace on the horizon or at the vanishing point, an onlooker experiences a similar role reversal in the midst of the spatial composition. The onlooker is in a sense at two places at the same time. Though

this does not result in a concrete method of self surveillance, one certainly assumes the responsibility of both being influenced and exerting the influence.

The subject looking at the whole composition is observed by his own eye coinciding with this supreme vanishing point that is the Viceregal Palace instead of the eye of the oppressor, an idea that comes very close to the operating mechanism in the Panopticon. As in the Panopticon, the viewer is caught in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers, "*He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.*"³⁵ However, the placing of the Viceregal Palace at the terminus of the King's Way does not imply 'the end' but the beginning of what lies beyond. Although it achieves a reversal and amplification of the self, it implies the unattainable other side.

There is something utopian about the Panopticon. It is utopian because it is the creation of an ideal space that alone is capable of exerting influence over individuals. A Panopticon does not rely on any physical instrument apart from architecture and geometry to exert control over the individuals. Like the Panopticon, New Delhi is also the creation of a structured space. The power is transmitted by an inherent order underlying the construction the city. The space in the city itself exerts a control over the subjects by its persuasive nature. By the manipulation of the space alone the city has been able to give in Foucaultian terms "*the power of mind over mind*".³⁶ The visibility of a guard or the monarch is rendered useless. As in a Panopticon it is an objectification of space. In the construction of the city this is achieved by the manipulation of space, in a Panopticon this is achieved through the creation of a science of observing the individuals.

³⁵ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.202-203.

³⁶ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.206.

ESTABLISHING LINKS BETWEEN POWER AND KNOWLEDGE

The Panopticon was based in this idea of role-reversal or the role-amplification of the inmate, which ensured the smooth functioning of power. As already described this was achieved in New Delhi by the means of the perspectival spatial construction. Also underlying the Panopticon was the making visible of knowledge as the inmates constituted the body of knowledge whose observation was essential for power to function. Not only can this knowledge be derived through a constant surveillance over the bodies of inmates but through scholarly research and discipline as well. Scholarly discipline is a similar unmasking or the making visible of material. Scholarly discipline is therefore a specific technology of power.

The British employed this technique effectively not only in New Delhi but the whole of India, for India became for them this immense source of knowledge, acquiring of which was imperative for the functioning of power. The importance of Orientalist discourse for the purpose of Western domination is well known. As pointed out by Edward Said, "*Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient- dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.*"³⁷ The purpose underlying this discourse was the maintenance and propagation of power in a more effective and informed way. As stated earlier the British attained dominance in India not only because of its military might but by the establishment of institutions and a whole system for the dissemination of power to the lowest ranks of the society. In order to do so, the British developed means to obtain knowledge about the physical makeup of the geographical terrain as well as the arts and culture of the people. They aimed to be informed not only of the military or economic make up but surveying the civilization down to its origin. Bringing such a discourse into play marked the power relationship as a two way process where the rulers were always aware and informed of their subjects,

³⁷ Said, Edward W. Orientalism Pantheon Books: New York, 1978. p.3.

*"Power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production."*³⁸

Hence the British developed over time not only institutions but the whole sensibility that believed knowledge is seeing - panoptically. The British in India displayed not only an ardent interest in the exercise of power, but also a keen interest and attention to Indian arts and sciences. Nowhere was this more tangibly embodied than in the proposed "cultural plaza" in the heart of New Delhi. New Delhi's other main processional route, the Queen's Way originated from the railway station and led due south through the intersection with the King's Way eventually to the Anglican cathedral (unbuilt). At the junction of the two avenues,

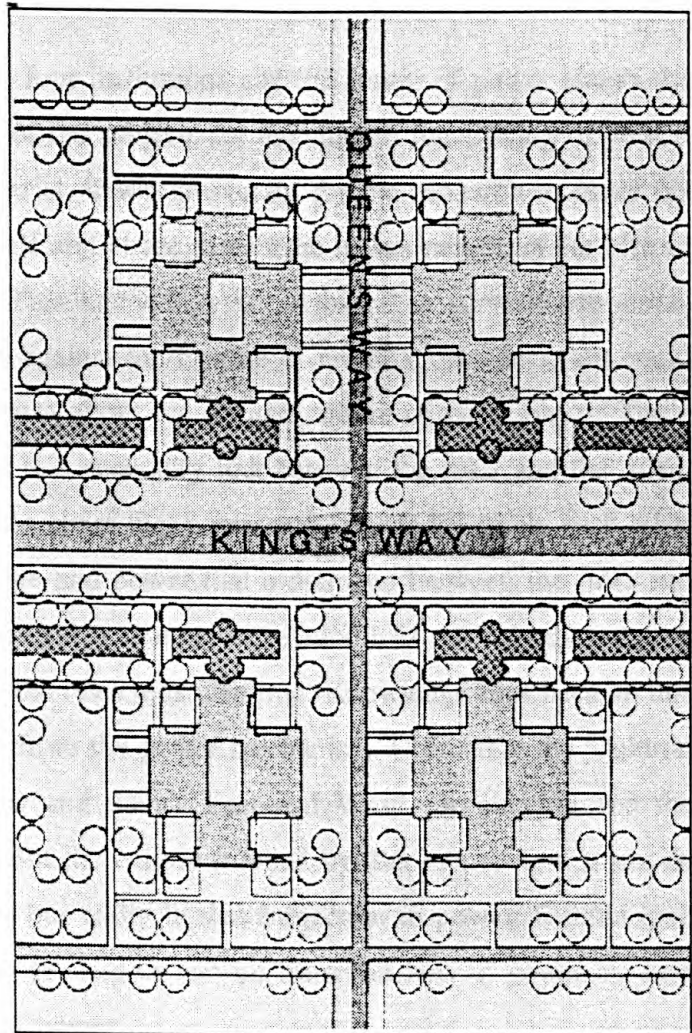


Figure 2.17-Lutyen's "Cultural Plaza" at the intersection of King's Way - Queen's Way crossing

four large buildings were proposed to form a cultural or intellectual plaza: the Oriental Institute, a national library and record office, an ethnological museum, and after 1918, a war museum and a medical research institute. The intellectual plaza aimed to intertwine the East and the West in a repository of Indian art and an archive of British rule, museums to explore comparative racial history and to celebrate British and Indian

³⁸ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*, p.194.

victories, and, not least, an institute of Western technology and philanthropy for the conquest of Eastern Disease. Only a fragment of one building in Lutyen's ambitious scheme - the Record Office - is all that ever rose to his design.

The proximity between these four institutions and the center of power shows the importance of obtaining knowledge of the subjects for the smooth functioning of power. For an effective power relation to exist, it was important for the monarch to make his subjects knowledgeable about himself and at the same time it was necessary for him to obtain knowledge of his subjects. This knowledge is not based in surveillance alone, which tries to uncover conspiracies against the Empire or unmask offenders, but could also be scholarly and intended to learn about the art and culture of the subjects. These institutions were aimed at providing this necessary link between the ruler and the ruled. The plaza further embodies Foucault's claim that power and knowledge imply each other and it is this link between knowledge and power that a dialogue between the ruler and the subjects is created. Further it shows that in a power relation it is not only the subjects who are affected by their rulers but the reverse is also true. Knowledge thus became this specific tool which was inseparable from the power mechanism. Ultimately the 'Cultural Plaza' lies at the intersection of 'us and them', 'East and West', 'dominating and the dominated' or 'culture and power'. But the culture implied by this intersection is not an idea of culture in a liberating sense but really in this subjection to power. Culture here is implied as a much more one way process or viewed from this lens of power because culture lends itself to the purpose of power.

This European discourse was often an alienated vision of the Orient and removed from reality. The alienation of this discourse happened primarily because of two reasons. Firstly, the discourse was always dependent on Europeans' vision of the Orient, in the process as pointed by Said, "*In the system of knowledge about the Orient, the Orient is less a place than a topos, a set of references....*"³⁹ This imaginary nature of Orientalism was also brought forth by Nezar Alsayaad as he points out, "*The colonizers themselves*

³⁹ Said, Edward W. Orientalism, p.177.

internalize a preexisting image of the colonized that in many ways was never really transformed, precisely because contact with the colonized occurred in the conditions constructed by the dominant."⁴⁰ Orientalist text became the primary reference in order to know about the Orient. Knowledge passed on from one text to another, what mattered was that it was there, to be repeated and echoed. This pan-optic gaze over the knowledge defined the very image of the Orient. Even the art and culture, matters that were not directly political were subjected to the panoptic vision. Another aspect of Orientalism was its attempt to homogenize the colonial subject. As Tanika Sarkar has pointed out "*it constructs a necessarily monolithic, non-stratified colonised subject who is, moreover, entirely powerless and entirely without an effective and operative history of his/her own. The only history s/he is capable of generating is necessarily a derivative one.*"⁴¹

Thus, every element of the city: architecture, ceremonies of the empire, spatial construction or the importance of knowledge are a part of a larger constellation of things, with each equally supporting the purpose of the other. The ceremonies of the Empire were not only grand spectacles but were based in a strict code of conduct underlying which was the rigid hierarchical structure of the society and at the same time these ceremonies produced a field of knowledge of the rulers. The hierarchical structure of the society not only served the purpose of the ceremonies but ensured each individuals location in the city as well as a mechanism of observation of bureaucrats and officials both off and on work. Space lend itself to the larger purpose of the city, the transmission of power. Finally, the production of a field of knowledge of the rulers and obtaining knowledge of the subjects was the underlying principle which ensured the power as a two way process.

⁴⁰ Alsayaad, Nezar. "Urbanism and the Dominance Equation: Reflections on Colonialism and National Identity", Forms of Dominance, Alsayaad, Nezar (Ed.), Avebury; Aldershot, Brookfield, Hong Kong, Singapore & Sydney, 1992. p.3.

⁴¹ Sarkar, Tanika. "Rhetoric against Age of Consent: Resisting Colonial Reason and Death of a Child-Wife", Economic and Political Weekly, September 4, 1993. p.1869.

POST-COLONIAL NEW DELHI

India regained its independence on 15th August 1947. New Delhi was retained as the capital of the newly formed nation. The power changed hands from the British to Indians. The government of India adopted the city as the capital city and for all practical purposes the power continued to be exercised in the country from this seat of power. The Viceroy's Lodge was converted the residence and office of the president of the Indian republic, the secretariat buildings were converted into the office of all important ministries of the nation including the office of the Prime Minister. The circular Council House became the Parliament of India. In the course of time various other ministries and offices were added in this part of the city. These included the headquarters of all the armed forces of the nation.

Not only did the city continue to remain the bureaucratic centre but also the ceremonial centre. The rituals of the nation like the 'Republic Day Parade', 'Beating of the Retreat' as well as the welcome of international guests are held here. Every year on 26th January there is a march-past of the troops. The procession begins from the Rashtrapati Bhawan (originally the Viceregal Palace), goes down the Rajpath (originally known as the King's Way) where the President takes salute. Three days after the Republic Day, 'Beating of the Retreat' ceremony is held on Vijay Chowk (originally called the Great Place). The city continues to act as the ceremonial and symbolic centre of the nation. The new independent nation so much in need of symbolic construction, of creating a sense of unity and a sense of identification with the new abstract entity, the nation, capitalized well on the city for this purpose. The city became the site for the rituals of the new nation and its symbolic construction.

The shell of the city has been retained as the capital city continues to be the bureaucratic center of the whole city. Not only has the shell been retained, the government elites continue to reside in this part of the city. Ranks in the government or military machinery still determine for one's position in the city, though the larger size of the apparatus has forced to spill over into other parts of the post independence city. New

Delhi continues to be a city of bureaucracy. The men are status-conscious because of their jobs; the women because of their husbands.

In the course of time the city also developed as the center of national and international politics. All the embassies of foreign countries were built to the South of the city. Even the houses representing all the states of the nation were located nearby. Thus the city continues to serve the purpose of power play in the nation. As of now this part of the city not only remains the bureaucratic and political center of the city but is largely developing into the commercial hub of the Delhi region, with Connaught Place and its environs fast expanding into a business and commercial district. The commercial development is spreading rapidly towards the Rajpath. As a matter of fact except for the Central Vista and its adjoining area the city has been largely engulfed by commercial establishments all around. Due to recent year developments the capital city has been engulfed by the larger city and has been reduced to just another part of the city. However the fact that the Central Vista still remains a controlled realm of building activity just goes on to show that this part of the city still remains subject to power in spite of all the chaotic development.

It is important to realize that the city was inherited by India as a colonial legacy. Over time the city has become extremely popular with the local populace and is a major tourist attraction in the Delhi region. However the city is just a part of the larger baggage of things inherited by India and assimilated into the Indian culture as a result of colonialization. In fact the city and its symbols form the image of the free nation by virtue of its importance in national and international politics. As Nezar Alsayaad has pointed out that especially after independence of formerly colonized nations, the people cease to perceive colonial history as colonial and start absorbing the colonial heritage into their own.⁴² However, as a conclusion it is imperative for the purpose of the analysis of this city that even though New Delhi was inherited by India as colonial legacy, the

⁴² Alsayaad, Nezar. "Urbanism and the Dominance Equation: Reflections on Colonialism and National Identity", p.21.

purpose of the city has largely not changed. The retention of this shell of power further reiterates Joan Oakman's point of view that the inherent aspect of order in classicism makes it potent as a political instrument. The creation of the space lends itself to any form of authoritative regime. Though Oakman's claim refers to the style of architecture, the city was a shell or the chassis of a machinery as in the Panopticon which made it an instrument of power. Even though the power changed hands from the British to the Indians, from monarchial to democratic, the city continues to perpetuate the sense of power and centre of control, through its inherent aspect of space based in the perspectival construction and the creation of centers of knowledge.

CHAPTER 3: CULTURAL PREDICAMENT

This is the case in the racial problem, and the nations are
noting from underdevelopment, in order to get on the road toward
modernization it is necessary to return to the values of the
past, but here we reach the very heart of the problem, and it comes
up in the form of a dilemma, or a paradox circle. The first dilemma
relates to power and struggle in education, which is by now well
known through the work of Freire, and the second, personality, is that
the people were not only inhibited by the social experience and culture
fundamentally by the socialization of personality that the culture
and has given rise to. Hence, it is not just a matter of introducing a
new or a profound personality, and in effect, it is to give it order
to become a social reconstruction. Hence, the paradox, on the one
hand, it has to start with the social and cultural, and on the other
hand, and avoid the social and cultural conditions before the
personality, but in order to take part in modern
civilization, it is necessary at the same time to take part in
scientific, technical, and political civilization, something which very
often requires the pace and complete adoption of a whole cultural
package. This is the paradox, how it became modern and to return
to sources, how it came on a downward evolution and take part
in universal civilization.

THE SITE FOR ISNCA

The preceding paper has touched the outline of the site and identified the
issues affecting the site itself. Cultural inheritance, as a spatial structure and functional
space are factors embedded in the site. While the first two, cultural inheritance and
Orientalism, are the "past" in the cultural predicament, the third, the social nature
of a "habitation," is a spatial space through an actual architectural form, as well as
being the first one. Personality, embedded in the structure that it gives a site, and the
site as a physical **CHAPTER 3: CULTURAL PREDICAMENT**
cultural and political readings.

Two terms, "site" and "habitation," have acquired importance in the context of this
chapter. These terms are defined here in a generic manner through the structure of space

¹ Edward T. Hall, *Cultural Dimensions and National Cultures, History and Truth*, trans. Charles A. Weinley, Bloomington, Northwest University Press, 1981, p. 278, 279.

Thus we come to the crucial problem confronting nations just rising from underdevelopment. In order to get on the road toward modernization, is it necessary to jettison the old cultural past which has been the raison d'etre of a nation? The problem often comes up in the form of a dilemma or a vicious circle. The fight against colonial powers and struggles of liberation were, to be sure, only carried through by laying claim to a separate personality; for these struggles were not only incited by economic exploitation but more fundamentally by the substitution of personality that the colonial era had given rise to. Hence, it was first necessary to unearth a country's profound personality and to replant it in its past in order to nurture national revindication. Whence the paradox: on the one hand, it has to root itself in the soil of its past, forge a national spirit, and unfurl this spiritual and cultural revindication before the colonialist's personality. But in order to take part in modern civilization, it is necessary at the same time to take part in scientific, technical, and political rationality, something which very often requires the pure and simple abandon of a whole cultural past.... This is the paradox: how to become modern and to return to sources: how to revive an old, dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization.⁴³

THE SITE FOR IGNCA

The preceding chapter has enabled the critique of the site and identification of the issues addressing the site itself. Colonial inheritance, Orientalist discourse and Panoptical space are features embodied in the site. While the first two, colonial inheritance and Orientalist discourse have resulted in the cultural predicament, the third, site in the midst of a Panoptical or perspectival space, though an actual architectural idea is not separable from the first two. For clarity of analysis, the discussion that follows is divided into the site as a physical location in the city and the site as a conceptual idea embodying certain cultural and political meanings.

Two terms, 'culture' and 'nation', have acquired importance in the course of this chapter. These terms are defined here in a generic manner though the specifics of post-

⁴³ Ricoeur, Paul. *Universal Civilization and National Cultures, History and Truth*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley, Evanston: Northwest University Press, 1965. p.276-277.

colonial predicament are tackled later in the chapter. This chapter adopts Raymond Williams' definition of culture. According to Williams, once 'culture' meant "*primarily, the tending of natural growth*", then it came to mean "*a general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole*". It also came to mean "*the general body of the arts*" and later came to mean as "*a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual*".⁴⁴ On the other hand 'nation' is a modern form of power structure based on European models, "*Nationalism is an ideology of mass-organization seeking geopolitical identity, and the modern nation-state is an amalgam,....of the polis and the imperium.*"⁴⁵

The site for the proposed IGNCA complex measuring 10.10 hectares flanks one side of the historical intersection of Rajpath and Janpath (the King's Way and the Queen's Way) at the foot of the Capital Complex. As already stated in the previous chapter this intersection was envisaged as a "Cultural Plaza" in Lutyens' original plan of New Delhi. The four buildings originally proposed by Lutyens as symmetrical blocks on each side of the intersection were the Imperial Record Office (now known as the National Archives), the National Museum, a National Library, and an Oriental Institute. (the Imperial Record Office was the only one that was built) The IGNCA, when built will be one more step towards realizing the original concept of the cultural node in Lutyens' plan. According to the architectural guidelines of the complex the built form of the IGNCA has to relate directly to the

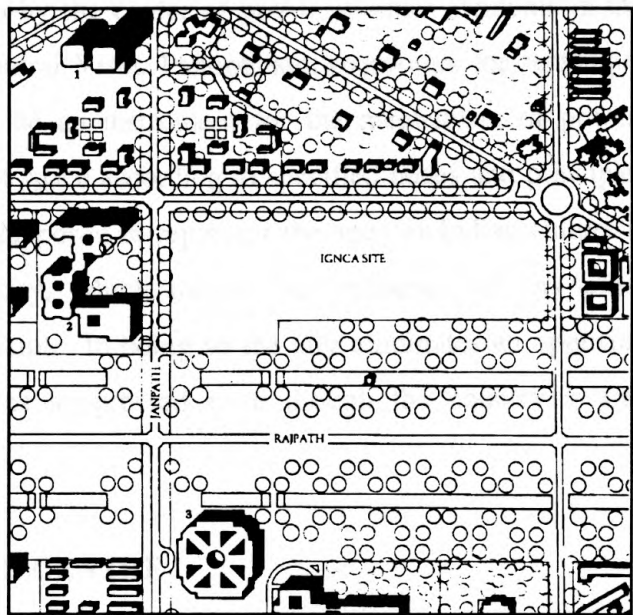


Figure 3.1-Site for IGNCA at the intersection of Rajpath and Janpath

Imperial Record Office (now known as the National Archives), the National Museum, a National Library, and an Oriental Institute. (the Imperial Record Office was the only one that was built) The IGNCA, when built will be one more step towards realizing the original concept of the cultural node in Lutyens' plan. According to the architectural guidelines of the complex the built form of the IGNCA has to relate directly to the

⁴⁴ Williams, Raymond. Culture and Societyp xvi.

⁴⁵. Simeon, Dilip. "Tremors of Intent: Perceptions of the Nation and Community in Contemporary India", Oxford Literary Review, Vol 16, p 226.

existing National Archives building and the National Museum, and these two buildings are the major determinants of height and set-backs in their immediate proximity.

The site is located in the midst of panoptical or perspectival space where the supreme vanishing point of the city, the Viceregal Palace, exerts hold over it geometrically and conceptually. This space lends itself to the transmission of power. The site is thus a part of this structured space which is subject to control from the center of power. It is a part of the homogeneous space of power where only the supreme vanishing point takes importance over all the other elements of the city. Architecturally, the site is as much subject to this control exerted by the center of power as other elements in the city especially those located in the Central Vista. Panopticism represents the technique of the city where architecture has to be an instrument for the mechanism of power. Architecture has to obey the ordering of space according to specified codes and principles of spatial manipulation. A site that is supposed to represent the apex of Indian culture is controlled by the pinnacle of the city, which makes the eminence of any other architectural element in the city impossible. In being so the city eliminates an opposing *gaze*. The *gaze* of the native remains suppressed even though the country is free politically.

THE SITING OF THE CULTURAL CENTRE

The site is based in the idea of Orientalist discourse. The earmarking of the cultural centre on its site is not much removed from the original purposes of the Orientalism because it implies a similar institutionalization of culture. The site is situated where power and knowledge are joined together. Orientalist discourse enabled the European power to reign successfully over their colonies. It was purely a mechanism meant for the purposes of creating a repository of information of the 'Orient' for Europe which involved the display and research of artifact and materials pulled out of their context. Like Orientalism the cultural centre is also based in a certain *will* or *intention* to understand and make knowledge visible. Talking of Orientalism Edward Said said,

"*Orientalism....as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world.*"⁴⁶
"Our" in this quote refers to the academics of the West but can also be appropriated with the one assuming power or the dominant role in this discourse. Likewise the siting of cultural centre was an interpretation of culture presented by the men in power. As Orientalism was dependent more on the West than on the Orient, the IGNCA is also dependent more on the men in power and their interpretations of culture.

Here knowledge is not viewed as an ideal; it is rather seen as an instrument. Embodied in the site is the reduction of knowledge to a tool or means to perpetuate power. The subject of knowledge, 'culture', itself is reduced to the status of an instrument of perpetuating power and has become the subject of interpretation and representation of power. Culture does not really come to signify the idea of humanity in a much more liberating or emancipatory way but really lends itself to the mechanism of the state. The cultural centre is really established in order to enhance the image of the political regime. The culture centre is also an attempt by the programmers to miniaturize culture into a single location in order to make it more comprehensible. As discussed later such an attempt to miniaturize culture into an institution leads to its homogenization. Although knowledge has been increasingly instrumentalized and become subject to the men in power, this study to an extent also reveals at the same time the divorce of knowledge or the truth of things from the men in power.

The instrumentalization of knowledge has raised some important questions: Is knowledge just the result of a power relationship and thus viewed from the lens of authority alone or can it assume a far more liberating and important role in society which does not necessarily make it subordinate to the mechanism of the state? Is culture also subject to this power and does it further lend itself to the perpetuation of power or is it a free entity in itself which can take its own course and is free from the normalizing and standardizing forces of the society? Though these questions are extremely relevant to the

⁴⁶ Said, Edward. Orientalism, p.12.

discussion, the scope of the thesis prohibits complete answers, but points the way to limitations and possibilities.

The features of the site described above demonstrate how 'knowledge as power', a colonial legacy, is still operable. The physical subordination of site to the panoptical space and the instrumentality of knowledge are features that make the site belong and fit well into the Foucaultian notion of the city. However, due to the process of decolonization the site also belongs to the baggage of colonial inheritance.

The site is located in the city inherited by Indians as colonial legacy. The city has become not only a popular place in the nation but the city forms the very image of India as it is the site of events of national and international importance. Nezar Alsayaad has pointed out that especially after independence of formerly colonized nations, the people cease to perceive colonial history as colonial and start absorbing the colonial heritage into their own.⁴⁷ For example, the English language and the game of cricket are some of the things that have been ingrained in Indian culture. Colonial inheritance is an extremely important issue as this has put into crises the origin of things and practices. The origin of inherited practices has become irrelevant; what has instead acquired importance is their acceptance. Features have become internalized or have been adopted by the post-colonial nation in a manner that even the criticism of which is problematic because they have become a part of Indian consciousness.

As colonial legacy, the city always presents itself as a dilemma. Nobody really knows to whom it belongs and what it signifies. One incident particularly illuminates this dilemma of acceptance of the inherited city. During the time the competition for IGNC was launched there was a proposal to establish a statue of Mahatma Gandhi instead of the canopy which used to hold the statue of King George V in New Delhi and had been lying vacant on removal of the King's statue after independence. The proposal was to remove

⁴⁷ Alsayaad, Nezar. "Urbanism and the Dominance Equation: Reflections on Colonialism and National Identity", p.21.

the canopy because it signified the imperial reign and replace it with the statue of the Mahatma. Though the scheme was finally abandoned due to opposition, it demonstrated some confusion in the minds of the government officials. The void of the canopy itself was the strongest signifier to the end of colonial rule and there was no further need to do any more as its removal could bring the whole city into question. On the one hand the city was labeled as a reminder of colonial reign and on the other hand it became the site of the cultural centre.

CHOICE OF THE SITE

The important question then becomes: how appropriate is it to locate and build the cultural centre in and on an inherited ground. The reason for the choice of the site for IGNCA has remained unclear in the minds of the program formulators and administrators. The repeated justification given for the choice of the site is to complete Lutyen's unfinished project.⁴⁸ However, this desire to complete an unfinished part of the city have some very important implications especially in the context of the cultural centre. There is an underlying disjunction in the relationship between the city and the site for the cultural centre: the siting of the cultural centre in the colonial city signifies colonialism and its impact as the definitive, constitutive moment in Indian history. This attempt, to complete an unfinished part of Lutyens plan, is questionable because in the process, the administrators and the city planners have turned a blind eye to the implications of architecture for the culture. They have adopted a model setup in the early part of the century ignoring a very important phase of Indian history which saw the independence of India and its way to nationhood. In the course of transition of the nation from colonized to an independent state, virtually everything has changed. The government changed from monarchical to democratic; the status of the indigenous changed from colonized subjects to citizens of a free nation. It becomes extremely important to realize

⁴⁸ This was stated by an official at the IGNCA responsible for the building project in a letter to the author. Stating the reason for the choice of the site he said that it was their endeavor to complete the unfinished project of the 'Cultural Plaza'.

that with regard to the course of events in the nation and the city, features like this particular site have redefined their meaning and are thus awaiting a critical understanding.

This redefinition in the meaning of the site has problematized the relationship between architecture and the city. The work belongs to the site; if the site were to change so would the interrelationship between the site and the work. Aldo Rossi believes that buildings are not neutral as they are the repository of the history that has touched them and must be interpreted in terms of their relationship with the city. This study extends his claim to the site; the site in the context of the cultural centre is not neutral and lends itself a priori to the purpose of power transmission.⁴⁹

The arguments presented henceforth do not imply that because of the inherited character of the city, it should cease to be a site for any architectural projects in the future. But the cultural center is of utmost importance and for it the site is certainly questionable. The cultural centre assumes the role of utmost importance because ideally it could have signified the emergence of new architecture and also provided the platform for some issues regarding the cultural identity of India to be manifested architecturally. But that possibility has been eliminated a priori by siting the cultural complex amidst the capital city. Architecturally, the city and its architecture form the master text which the cultural center refers to. A stance outside of the implied meaning of the city is not

⁴⁹ Aldo Rossi suggests a kind of qualitative relationship between monuments and the city whereby the value of any urban element is measurable in terms of its capacity to express or sum up a particular cultural, political, and historical context. He states, "*architecture presents itself as a vast cultural movement....it needs to be realized, to become part of the city.*" He also speaks of the importance of a particular site. For him the singularity of the *locus* can trace the relation of architecture to its location and "*thereby its connections to, precise articulation of, locus itself as a singular artifact determined by its space and time, by its topographical dimensions and its form, by its being the seat of a succession of ancient and recent events, by its memory.*"

Rossi, Aldo. The Architecture of the City, The MIT Press: Cambridge: Massachusetts and London. 1992. p.107-113.

possible because the city is imposing or forming the context for the cultural centre. Even though the IGNCA would be built physically in the city, it would in a sense, be displaced from the site because of a certain slippage or disassociation in the relationship between the city and the cultural centre. This also arises from the fact that the city is so deeply embedded in the principles of spatial construction and power organization of the West that it is virtually impossible to let the cultural centre be free of these impositions. Here again the intention is not to ignore the colonial past but certainly not view it as the constitutive moment for the definition of post-colonial culture and the nation.

This disjunction has resulted in the dilemma for the participating architects in the competition: whether to abide by the city and use it as the determinant for the architecture of the complex, or to explore an institution of Indian culture, even if this requires the marginalization of the city and its ordering principles. What to address; the tendency of the city to normalize or standardize every element, or the aim of the centre to open up the possibility to address change and transformation in lieu of the recent historical events. The paradoxical situation is aptly described by Paul Ricoeur in the opening quote of the chapter.

This study's insistence on the sitelessness of the cultural centre comes from the fact that Foucaultian notion of power mechanism which lend itself so easily to the colonial city can no longer be pursued. This does not mean that such an analysis is no longer valid or it should be dismissed. Rather there has arisen the need to represent the dynamics of change. In the course of history that saw the independence of India and the status of New Delhi as the capital of free India such an analysis can no longer be pursued not only because Foucaultian ideas lend easily to European power structures but also because of its onewayness in power depiction. In the course of the transition of India from colonial to post-colonial, Foucault limits himself for not being able to represent the dynamics of the contest and change. He pays little attention to the internal dynamics and power relations of colonized societies, and thus elevate to hegemonic status the strategies and protocols of the colonial power.

A Foucaultian analysis of the city similarly elevates the city to a dominant position such that it wipes out the gaze of the native. The city, in accord with Foucault's theory of power, denies the native the ground from which to utter a reply to colonialism's ideological aggression. Although, this doesn't mean that the study is searching for direct reply to colonialism's ideological aggression, it is trying to open up possibilities of resistance. The focus of this study is to extend Foucault's ideas in order to provide the possibilities of resistance, thus being able to balance the representation of power in context of change and transformation that formerly colonized nations like India have undergone.

POST-COLONIAL CULTURE

The disjunctions resulting from siting of the cultural centre and the dilemma of inheritance constitute problems of post-colonial culture. These practices reflect on underlying reality of the post-colonial culture. In order to understand the cultural center, it is imperative to understand the term 'culture' as culture becomes the subject of exploration. A lot has been written about this term and obviously this is not the right place to generate a lengthy discussion nor is this the prime focus of the study. However, what has acquired importance is the relationship of power and culture in constituting the post-colonial culture in India.

While defining culture for the context of this study, one has to keep in mind, the fact that in order to talk of Indian culture it has to be defined in an Indian context. The reason, that this term has acquired peculiarity in Indian context is because the culture has evolved as an overlap of different cultures. These not only differed in their origin but in their entirely different world views which has led to the present predicament of the post-colonial culture. As Spivak has described, imperialism's epistemic bellicosity decimated the old culture and left the colonized without the ground from which they could utter confrontational words.⁵⁰ The problem arises due to the impact of colonialism on the local

⁵⁰ Parry, Benita. "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse", Oxford Literary Review, Vol 9, Nos. 1-2, 1987. p.42-43.

culture such that it has become difficult to define 'culture' in pre-colonialist or post-colonialist terms. Clearly today, one cannot deny the deep impact of colonial times on the Indian culture. Traits of British colonialist culture permeate the roots of the independent nation. Elements from the colonialists have been so deeply ingrained that India without them is unimaginable and unthinkable. To deny their impact or simply to ignore it would be foolish and much removed from reality. The point is that decolonization has not resulted in an escape from the colonial discourse. This is not, however, to say that the colonial encounter is the definitive, constitutive moment in post-colonial societies such as India. As Ania Loomba and Suvir Kaul have correctly pointed the objections to theorists who concentrate on colonial encounter in allegedly disproportionate ways, "*whose analyses isolate colonial society and culture from its previous history and who thus elevate to hegemonic status the strategies and protocols of the colonial powers*"⁵¹, because such a stance erases or chooses to ignore the culture as an overlap of the colonial and the indigenous. Truly speaking any theoretical separation of the pre-colonial, the colonial, and the post-colonial cannot help to understand the complexity of culture.

The feature identified by Breckenridge and van der Veer as "internal Orientalism" remains the most problematic feature of post-colonial predicament. Though India has become independent politically, this does not necessarily imply that it has become free of its colonial past. Many other post-colonial authors also point out this feature as it has become difficult for both Indians and outsiders to think about India outside of Orientalist habits and categories. The result is that the cultural basis of public life has been affected by ideas of difference and division that have colonial and Orientalist roots. The heritage of orientalism has affected many aspects of Indian life, ranging from the nature of vernacular fiction to the practice of modernization theory by social scientists. "*Whether it is the matter of language and literature, communalism and the census, or caste and*

⁵¹ Kaul, Suvir and Loomba, Ania. "Location, Culture, Post-Coloniality", Oxford Literary Review, Vol 16. p.4.

social science, orientalist theory casts its shadow over cultural politics in post-colonial India even though the specific politics of colonial domination are no longer relevant."⁵²

Another important aspect of transformation due to colonialism was that it shifted sources of power from palaces and religious shrines to colonial institutions, which served the needs of the empire. This is probably the greatest impact of the colonial period that has continued to be practiced by the post-colonial nation which is of extreme relevance to this study. As a result the nation has acquired the political and administrative systems introduced by the British and these have become ingrained in the post-colonial nation. The fact, that these practices or systems have been adopted from the British is forgotten. It is precisely this 'orientalist shadow' that looms large over this competition and particularly the site for the cultural centre.

Authors such as Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha have helped illuminate the position of the colonized natives. These authors have attempted to present more complex versions of culture. Spivak inspects the absence of a text that can answer one back after the epistemic violence of the imperialist project, and seeks to develop a strategy of reading that will speak to the historically-muted native subject. The story of colonialism, which she reconstructs, is of an interactive process where the European agent in consolidating the imperialist Sovereign Self, induces the native to collude in its own subject(ed) formation as other and voiceless. Gayatri Spivak would refer to the site as the silencing of the subaltern because the very possibility of any expression of the indigenous culture architecturally is marginalized or repressed.

Homi Bhabha on the other hand, through recovering how the master discourse was interrogated by the natives in their own accents, produces an autonomous position for the colonial within the confines of the hegemonic discourse, and because of this enunciates

⁵² Breckenridge, Carol A. and Veer, Peter van der. "Orientalism and the Post-colonial Predicament", Orientalism and the Post-colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia, University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 1993. p.11.

a very different 'politics'. Bhabha contends that when re-articulated by the native, the colonialist desire for a reformed, recognizable, nearly-similar other, is enacted as parody. For in the 'hybrid moment' what the native re-writes is not a copy of the colonialist original, but a qualitatively different thing-in-itself, where mis-readings and incongruities expose the uncertainties and ambivalences of the colonialist text and deny it an authorizing presence.

One can argue that the placing of the cultural centre in the city inherited by the British is a move meant to caricature the colonial era. Referring to the interaction of English text (the Bible) and the natives, Homi Bhabha wrote that the intentions of the colonialists were not always reciprocated by the natives as this interaction resulted in a sort of 'hybrid', which was in essence trying to undo the onewayness of the English text. Bhabha says, "*Hybridity is the sign of productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal.... It is not that the voice of authority is at loss of words. It is rather, that the colonial discourse has reached that point when, faced with the hybridity of its objects, the presence of power is revealed as something other than what its rules of recognition assert.*" Bhabha's *hybrid* certainly marks the colonial domination as a two way flow of power and asserts how the production of the colonial subject mocks the colonial discourse as it can never really 'de-other' the 'other'.⁵³ The argument does not imply that the colonized possess colonial power, but that in understanding and interpretation of the colonialist text (in this case the city itself) they pervert and distort the colonialist text. Since the colonized are never able to acquire the actual meaning of such a text they can merely transform it to suit their purposes. Although there is a certain degree of truth to this one cannot at the same time classify the repeated uncritical adoption of the idea of institutions and many other practices as mere 'caricature'. At the same time Bhabha's claim itself makes the colonized incapable of creating an alternative text as every construct would be a hybrid.

⁵³ Bhabha, Homi. "Signs taken for Wonders", The Location of Culture, Routledge, 1994. p.112.

A brief description of the events and political atmosphere during the time the IGNCA was conceived illuminates how the political regime was employing culture to enhance its image and arouse the sentimentality of the citizens. The conception of the IGNCA happened at a time when India in some terms entered the postmodern era. It can be classified as post-modern primarily because of the thrust on the modernization of the country through technological means. The country was introduced to the information and computer age. During this time, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi emphasized on the modernization of the nation by means of improved technology and communications. Television stations sprouted throughout the nation. Elaborately planned 'Festival of India' exported Indian culture to the West while 'Apna Utsav' (our festival) presented the culture within the country. It was a period that saw the gradual letting of the economy to free trade. More significantly there was an attempt to arouse nationalist spirit through carefully staged state-sponsored events, on television and radio. Representations of freedom struggle aimed at evoking nationalist feelings appeared on television. So much so that even the commercials aimed to evoke nationalist sentiments. It was in a sense the reduction of the culture into consumable images. Arts and culture came to packaged, miniaturized and transported not only abroad but in the country as well. These images were often masking the reality of bloody uprisings and terrorism in the country. In other words there was a renewed effort to arouse the feeling of nationalism and patriotism in the citizens. The tendency was to homogenize the nation through the images portrayed on TV and radio. The state through controlled TV and radio, were trying to evoke the nationalist movement and recall the colonialist period so as to define or rather discover the nation. Ania Loomba talking about the films being televised during the time points out, "*Each of these films ties in with a certain kind of writing of Indian history that attempts to smoothen the jagged edges of nationhood-which have become increasingly rougher since independence.*"⁵⁴ The 'Festival of India' abroad demonstrated how culture and its artifacts were being increasingly used for the purposes of power. The 'Festival of

⁵⁴ Loomba, Ania. "Overworlding the 'Third World' ", Oxford Literary Review, Vol. 13, 1991. p.169.

India' which were held all over the world resulted in the commodification of culture, as culture became the object of display and exchange.

Hence the argument carried out demonstrates that it has become virtually impossible to define *culture* in clear terms in post-colonial India. The definition has become confused and entangled. From 'the realm of human life', it has come to signify the increasing influence of polity on the culture of the people.

The choice of the site in midst of New Delhi is another example of confusion on the difference between the *nation* and *culture*. It is important to distinguish between these two ideas as it is to an extent their intermingling that has given rise to this confusion. Although the city remains the site of national and political significance, the image it enhances is of the nation and not necessarily of culture. This is primarily because the city has become the site for the ceremonies of the nation and display of military might. This is not to disregard the symbolism of the nation or the capital city.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The discussion of the program and its critique is an important part of this thesis. First of all it is important to realize that the site itself forms the integral part of the program and the paradoxes in the site are shared by the program itself. The competition program becomes important for this critique as it formed the medium of communicating to the architects the idea of the cultural centre itself. The architects entries were based on their interpretations of the program.

Here it is important to give a brief introduction of the architectural program of the centre as the architects have used their skills in maneuvering the immense program in arranging the different divisions of IGNCA. The IGNCA consists of five divisions envisioned in a manner which emphasizes the interdependence of the conceptual, theoretical, textual, historical and the practical, the contemporary and the creative. The five divisions of the centre are:

- a) **Indira Gandhi Kala Nidhi** - a division for the national information system and data bank for humanities and the arts supported by a reference library.
- b) **Indira Gandhi Kala Kosha** - a division for research studies leading to publications of glossaries, fundamental texts and encyclopedias on the arts.
- c) **Indira Gandhi Janpada Sampada** - a division for folk and tribal arts, a core study collection and facilities for documentation, dissemination, and demonstration/display.
- d) **Indira Gandhi Kala Darshana** - a division which provides forums and venues for the creative expression and manifestations, events and encounters.
- e) **IGNCA Sutradhara** - the nodal division for policy making, administrative coordination and servicing for the entire IGNCA complex.

The Sutradhara will be the administrative and data processing centre of the entire IGNCA complex. This administrative component, is central to the functioning of the IGNCA. Kala Nidhi will have two functions: search for, and storage of, materials and data pertaining to the art and culture of India. Dissemination of the information stored in Kala Nidhi will require further processing or research which will be carried out by

scholars in Kala Kosha. Facilities for research including accommodation will be shared between Kala Nidhi and Kala Kosha. Kala Darshana and Janpada Sampada are complementary; while Janpada Sampada will mainly devote itself to the non-formal and less-institutionalized creative manifestations, Kala Darshana will cater mainly to more formal presentations. Performances, exhibitions of the arts, multimedia presentations will be carried out in Kala Darshana. The experimental theater shared by Kala Darshana and Janpada Sampada will be the venue for the evolution of new forms and revival of old ones. Janpada Sampada will deal with living traditions which are largely oral. It will undertake the gathering of primary information through field researchers. The construction of the building will be carried out in three phases. Sutradhara and Kala Nidhi will be built in the first phase and Kala Kosha and Janpada Sampada in the second phase. The last phase would involve the construction of Kala Darshana.⁵⁵

The program document failed due to a number of reasons. Most importantly the program failed to tackle the larger meaning of the city and its link with power. It presented an uncritical vision of the city without any attempts to venture out into the meaning of the city as a result of inheritance from the British after decolonization. It ignores the very fundamental issue that is the link between power and its manifestation in the making of the city. Instead the program focus on the eclectic nature of architecture in New Delhi where Lutyens and especially Baker borrowed elements from indigenous architecture, Mughal architecture in particular. There is no attempt to describe the actual construction of space and its purpose of power transmission.

Even more significant than the programs misleading description of the city was its inability or refusal to shed light to the very purpose of the institution and its relevance for culture. The program didn't attempt to venture out into the predicament of post-colonial culture where it has even become problematic to define '*culture*'.

⁵⁵ See IGNCA International Design Competition Dossier.

CONFINEMENT OF CULTURE

The Cultural Center comes close to the modern day museum in its content and its functions of preserving and researching art and culture. But this adoption of the museum model has to be done in a very critical and careful manner. Douglas Crimp has pointed out the museum is an institution of confinement and awaits a critical thinking about it as suggested by Foucault. Foucault analyzed modern institutions of confinement such as the asylum and the prison. To extend his thought the Cultural Centre is also an institution of confinement- meant for the confinement of culture. This confinement has some important implications. As a result of institutionalization 'culture' has become a tool and a commodity. It has become an object of exchange just as the art has become a commodity owing to its confinement in the museums. Another important implication of institutionalization of culture is the elevation of culture to high culture. As a result of this institutionalization, the culture of the people becomes the property of a few and their interpretations, because ultimately as the museum has shown this leads to the removal of the culture from any social context.

This comparison of the cultural centre with the museum is appropriate because it is very similar to an Orientalist Institute in terms of its programmatic structure. The cultural centre also involves the display of artifacts pulled out of their context. Like an Orientalist Institute which involved this ransacking of Eastern cultures and their artifacts to be displayed and researched in Europe, the museum also ransacked art through a intense process of selection and displayed objects in a similar siteless ground.

For the colonialist, the confinement of culture became imperative in order to understand it and make it comprehensible. But, as Orientalism has demonstrated, the possibility of a discourse outside its bounds is eliminated from its very inception. Even for Indians the Orientalist text has become the set of reference. Ultimately an institution which is meant to explore and research its subject has become the very source of its confinement. The authority of the institution is omniscient and omnipresent. The result of such an institutionalization apart from the lost connection to the site also transforms

the vision of an observer. As in the museum the art becomes recognizable with an author's stamp. Such an institution invariably creates self-referentiality, even when it is not implied. The process of cultural production becomes internalized thus losing connection with the site of their origin.

If on one hand this thesis is opposing the sitelessness of the cultural complex, on the other hand its concern is the sitelessness of the arts in the centre. The centre is envisaged as the place where arts could be produced and carried on but in the process of this confinement by the institution and it loses its connection with the context of the site where it is supposed to be produced. This is especially true for the tribal arts for which the centre has a large section, as these are so deeply connected to the places the tribes originate from. Works of art and culture are subjected to different institutional techniques like classification and methods of production in order to represent a coherent whole. However, it is important to recognize that the artifacts on display are only a part of the totality and hence to prevent the institution from substituting the totality to which these originally belong. Spatially and temporally detached from origin and function, these merely signify derived associations. It should be emphasized that culture exists '*out there*' to be experienced and realized which does not necessarily need the mediation by an institution. This kind of universalisation and institutionalization leaves the heterogeneity of other discourses aside and produces an easier politically correct brand of cultural studies.⁵⁶

The discussion presented henceforth does not imply that there should not be a cultural center and that there are no benefits to be derived from such an institution. Surely there is fair good intention in the creation of the cultural center. India does require such repositories of information and research which are very few because how much ever these institutions may transform its content, they have also resulted in their preservation and prevented them from being extinct. The thesis is trying to convey that such a large

⁵⁶ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Neocolonialism and Secret Agent of Knowledge", Oxford Literary Review, Vol 13. p.226.

monetary and concrete building exercise should not be carried on without considering some important urban and cultural implications not just in a physical and built sense but also at a conceptual level, emphasizing again the need to critically adopt such institutionalization as it results in the homogenization of its subject.

To summarize, this chapter brings to light a few facts. The site of IGNC A forms an important link and understanding it points to underlying disjunctions; the siting of the cultural centre acknowledges the colonialist era as the definitive constitutive moment in Indian history. The cultural centre in the midst of the space of power also raises questions about the link of the state and culture and the use of culture and its artifacts by the state in the enhancing of its own image. Finally, the adoption of European models of institutions and their relevance in the absence of the colonial rule is brought into question.

The key question that this chapter addresses for the entries of the competition is; Is it possible in the midst of this disciplinary space to turn the '*gaze*' back to its origin? Is the subversion of the city possible through the entries of the competition or, the only answer to the domination of the city, is to abide by it and make architecture subordinate to the mechanism of power? The last chapter on the critique of the two winning entries demonstrate the architects response to the site and implied answers to the above mentioned questions.

CHAPTER 4: CRITIQUE OF ENTRIES

To an extent, the preceding discussion on the different perspectives on the entry
the whole process of the competition is being. It is on the one hand, one of the main
against the inappropriate siting of the national centre, on the other hand, it is an
the realities in a post-social nation. Here the alternative does not necessarily suggest
escape but rather a realization or a desire to think critically. This itself could lead to
something more meaningful and transform the subject position. The negative level is
an *emancipation of the subject position*.

It is worth to note that the competition process cannot be regarded completely and
that the critique is much beyond significant. The critique which follows particularly
analysis by the jury members to confront the predominant of the nation and culture. This
chapter deals with the actual analysis and critique of the competition entries. Since the
concerns here is a search for attitudes and theories, rather than an evaluation of nation,
the critique does not provide an alternative winner but rather points towards an appropriate
mistake in the light of the discussion carried out so far. In awarding the prizes, the jury
unanimously decided on Ralph Lertzer as the first prize winner as he met all the design
requirements. The jury appreciated Gastón Bhatia's informal approach thus awarded him
with the second prize.¹⁴ One notable mention is that the first two entries represent a

¹⁴ *Journal of Architecture*, 1998, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 10. *Journal of Architecture*, 1998, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 10.

¹⁵ *Journal of Architecture*, 1998, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 10. *Journal of Architecture*, 1998, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 10.

CHAPTER 4: CRITIQUE OF ENTRIES

¹⁶ *Journal of Architecture*, 1998, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 10. *Journal of Architecture*, 1998, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 10.

¹⁷ *Journal of Architecture*, 1998, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 10. *Journal of Architecture*, 1998, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 10.

To an extent, the preceding discussion on the site and its embodiment has erased the whole process of the competition as futile. If, on the one hand, the argument holds against the inappropriate siting of the cultural centre, on the other hand it demonstrates the realities in a post-colonial nation. Here the alternative does not necessarily imply an escape but rather a realization or a desire to think critically. This itself could result in something more meaningful and transform the subject position. "*The negation leads to an emptying of the subject-position*".⁵⁷

It is in this light that the competition process cannot be rejected completely and thus the critique of entries becomes significant. The critique which follows demonstrates attempts by the architects to confront the predicament of the nation and culture. This chapter deals with the actual analysis and critique of the competition entries. Since the concern here is a search for attitudes and theories, rather than an evolution of solution, the critique does not provide an alternative winner but rather points toward an appropriate message in the light of the discussion carried out so far. In awarding the prizes, the jury unanimously decided on Ralph Lerner as the first prize winner as he met all the design requirements. The jury appreciated Gautam Bhatia's informal approach thus, awarded him with the second prize.⁵⁸ One notable mention is that the first five entries represent a

⁵⁷ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography", In Other Worlds, Methuen: New York. p.209.

⁵⁸ *The programme lays stress in the historical growth of Delhi which has been the capital of various rulers, each of whom had his own citadel in what is now the present city of Delhi. Although situated within such a strong historical context, it is hoped, in time the Centre will dissolve into the cultural and architectural canvas of the area....During the judging of the entries by the Jury common points had been scrutinized: a) land utilization, particularly the organization of activities in relationship to one another, to road arteries and to the Central Vista; b) the relationship of the total urban form to the immediate environment; c) the relationship of landscape within the site to landscape without; d) vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems; e) reference to the local and regional context and f) the symbolic image of the concept.*

Kanvinde, A. P. "Responses", Concepts and Responses, IGNCIA in association with Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd. : Ahmedabad. p.39.

From the outset one scheme stood out during every stage of assessment, and was unanimously chosen for the First Prize. It is the belief of the Jury that this design meets all requirements and that this proposal, when built, will be as significant as the great building achievements of India....In awarding the Second Prize the Jury appreciated the project's original and informal approach. For their positive

diversity in their approach to the site and the program for the competition and the jury certainly needs to be commended for this. Each of the first five entries demonstrate how each one differs in their knowledge and preferences of current architectural discourse.

The schemes by the first prize winner Ralph Lerner from U.S.A., the second prize winner Gautam Bhatia from India and one of the third prize winner David Jeremy Dixon from U.K. presented a wide range of ideas and varied approach to the site and the program. The jury for the competition unanimously decided on the first prize as it best presented adherence to the program and the site. Bhatia's and Dixon's scheme demonstrate alternative readings of the site and the program making their schemes relevant to this discussion. While Lerner strongly adhered to the city and the program, Bhatia and Dixon offered an opposition in their approach. Ralph Lerner adhered to the architecture of the city by presenting a design in continuation to the architecture of Sir Edwin Lutyens. Gautam Bhatia attempted to break away from the bounds of the city and offered a metaphor of a city by the banks of a river while David Jeremy Dixon opposed the city through the invisibility of the complex. As compared to Bhatia, who was able to oppose the city by dissolving the order imposed and creating a condition of sitelessness or placelessness, Dixon attempted to make his architecture invisible by setting it back from the streets and concealing it behind thick foliage cover. Dixon and Bhatia both counter the *gaze* of the city; one by relocating the site out of the reach of the *gaze* and the other by making invisible to the gaze. The architects represent three extremes in their views towards the architecture of the city and the need to incorporate it in the design of the cultural centre. Their schemes best represent the disjunction pointed out in the previous chapter; whether to abide by the city and use it as the determinant for the architecture of the complex; or to explore an institution of Indian culture, even it this requires the marginalization of the city and its ordering principles. What to address; the tendency of the city to normalize or standardize every element, or the aim of the centre to open up

yet diverse proposals the Jury decided to divide equally the Third Prize among the three remaining finalists.

Doshi, B. V. "The Jury Report", Concepts and Responses, p.34-35.

the possibility to address change and transformation in lieu of the recent historical events. Although it is appropriate to discuss all the three entries in the light of the preceding discussion, the scope of the study and limitations of time do not permit the critique of all these. This chapter presents a detailed critique of Lerner's and Bhatia's scheme. This discussion aims to show the relevance of each entry in light of the preceding discussion, hence, it is not meant to undermine any architect's approach.

The following critique is divided into two. The first part contains architectural analysis in terms of each entry's relation to the space and their subordination to the city. The second part discusses the theoretical and conceptual implications of each of these entries. The relation of each project to the city frames the discussion, as it clarifies each architect's approach to the city and his attitude towards the site and its embodiments.

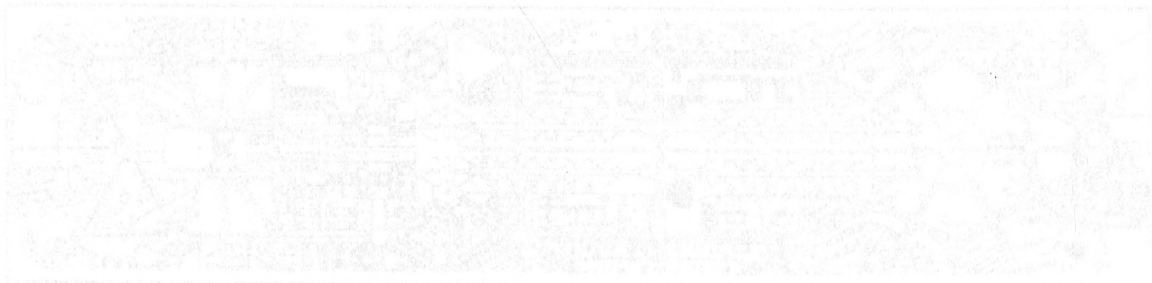


Figure 4.1 Ralph Lerner's scheme inserted into the city plan

The plan drawn for New Delhi by Edwin Lutyens and the two other plans which include the use for building Gandhi National Centre for Arts, adhere to the Central Vista project as a medium and a method for the planning of the city planning tradition. The first tradition of the urban environment, quality, and a visually open, unobstructed organization of the various building and spaces of the city. The second tradition views the city as an extensive garden in which blocks are considered as individual entities inside which a higher degree of informality is possible than with the first tradition. In New Delhi, the governmental buildings, axial vistas, and street pattern follow the first tradition, while the centrally placed blocks and generously spaced free-standing buildings match the second.

The architectural part of departure for our project is the practice of these two traditions. Together they suggest an ensemble of buildings and

* For more details, see [Dixit, 2004](#)

THE CITY CONTEXT: SUBORDINATION TO PANOPTICAL SPACE

Foucault states, "At the theoretical level Jeremy Bentham defines another way of analysing the social body and the power relations that traverse it; in terms of practice, he defines a procedure of subordination of bodies and forces that must increase the utility of power while practising the economy of the prince. Panopticism is the general principle of a new 'political anatomy' whose object and end are not relations of sovereignty but the relations of discipline."⁵⁹ It is this process of subordination that becomes significant in terms of the following critique. What is important to understand is the tendency of the city to control, almost *discipline* architecture itself. This *discipline* of architecture resulted in the creation of the order in the Panoptical space. The evaluation of the entries is carried out in the light of each architect's acceptance or refusal, to make his work subject to this *disciplining gaze* of the city.

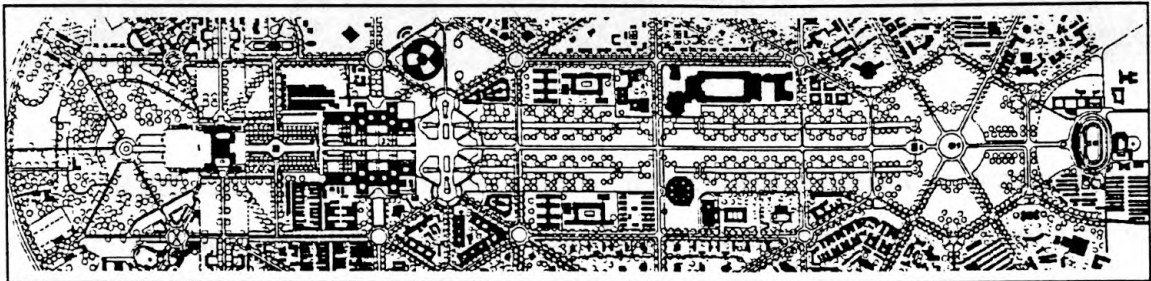


Figure 4.1-Ralph Lerner's scheme inserted into the city plan

The plan drawn for New Delhi by Edwin Lutyens and the present plan, which includes the site for Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts adjacent to the Central Vista, present an unusual and somewhat paradoxical pairing of the city planning traditions. The first tradition relies upon monumentality, axuality, and a visually clear hierarchical organization of the various buildings and spaces of the city. The second tradition treats the city as an extensive garden in which blocks are considered as individual parterres inside which a higher degree of informality is possible than with the first tradition. In New Delhi the governmental buildings, axial vistas, and street pattern stem from the first tradition, while the heavily planted blocks and generously spaced free-standing buildings recall the second.

The architectural point of departure for our project is the juncture of these two traditions. Together they suggest an ensemble of buildings and

⁵⁹ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*, p.208.

exterior spaces conceived on the monumental scale of the capital, yet designed in concert with spaces in and adjacent to the Centre of an intimate scale conducive to group activity and individual reflection. The resulting combination of large civic spaces and smaller sheltered places enables the complex both to assert the cultural and artistic achievements of a diverse and complex national heritage, and to foster dialogue among groups representing various arts, regions, and levels of society.⁶⁰

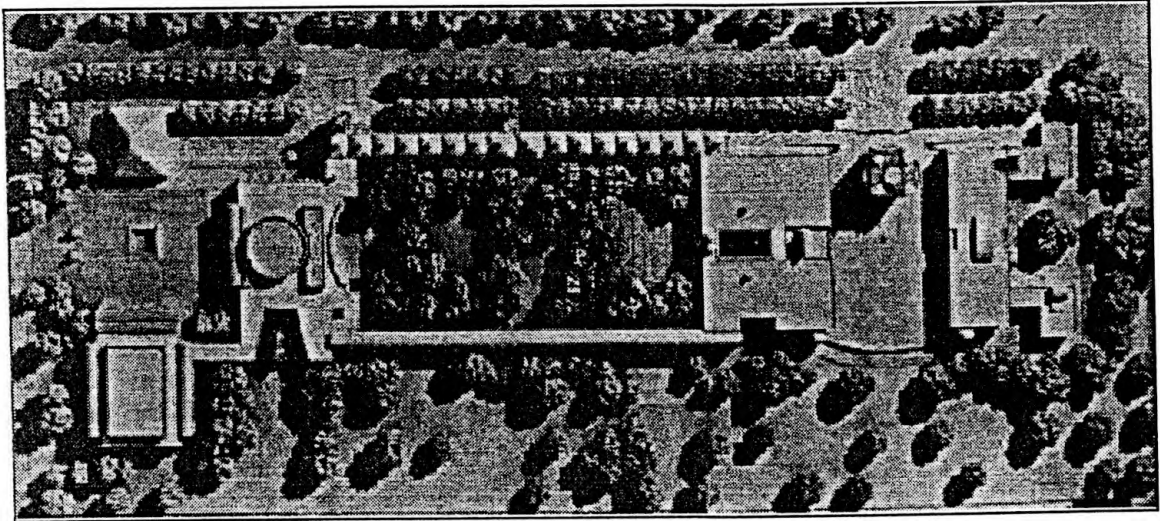


Figure 4.2-Model View, Ralph Lerner

Ralph Lerner's design for the IGNCA complex was conceived in continuation of the design principles of the colonial city. Lerner's first step towards relating to the immediate city was the direct translation of the major axes of the city into his building. As the site lies at the intersection of the two major axis of the city, Janpath running in the north-south direction while Rajpath running in the east-west direction, Lerner recreated these two axis in his complex with the primary axis in east-west direction parallel to the Central Vista.

Along the main east-west axis he has distributed all of the programmatic divisions of IGNCA and the five courts. Beginning from the east the first part of the site is occupied by the Kala Nidhi and Kala Kosha. The Indira Gandhi Court to the west of this section is occupied by the free standing administrative centre, Sutradhara. The Central Court is surrounded by Janpada Sampada to the east and the Kala Darshana to the west.

⁶⁰ Lerner, Ralph. Concepts and Responses, p.42.

"Each of the Centre's five components function either independently or in direct concert with the other components."⁶¹

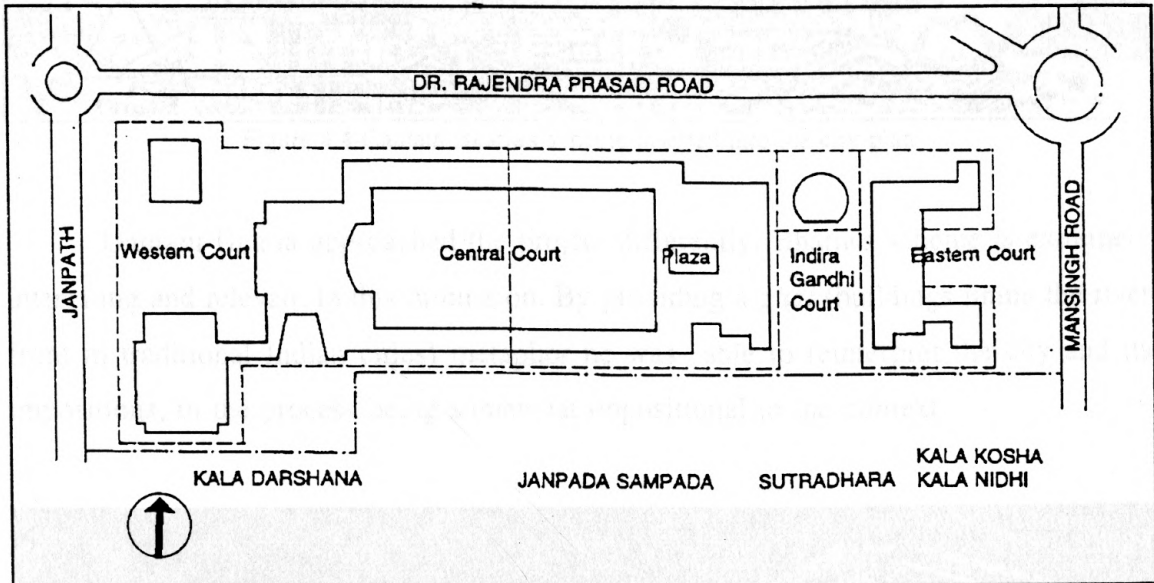


Figure 4.3-Programmatic divisions in Ralph Lerner's IGNCA

Architecturally, his site strategy has resulted in the creation of five major courts ranged along the longitudinal axis of the site parallel to the Rajpath, and in a series of smaller courts which lend identity to the secondary areas of the Centre. Lerner's project keeps the city alive. His project becomes subordinate to the existing city by recreating its axes and establishing a hierarchical flow of spaces.

⁶¹ Lerner, Ralph. Concepts and Responses, p.43.

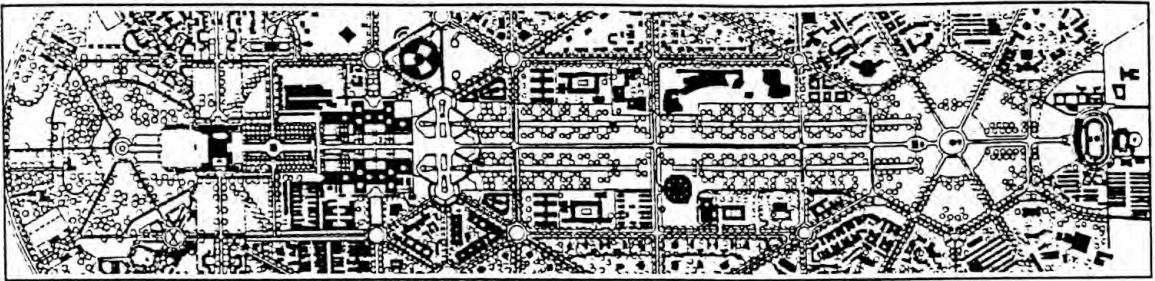


Figure 4.4-Gautam Bhatia's scheme inserted into the city plan

Gautam Bhatia approached the project differently. Bhatia's scheme is extremely interesting and relevant to this discussion. By providing a *ghat* (buildings lining the river front in traditional Indian cities) metaphor he was able to reinterpret the city and its impositions, in the process being somewhat oppositional to the context.

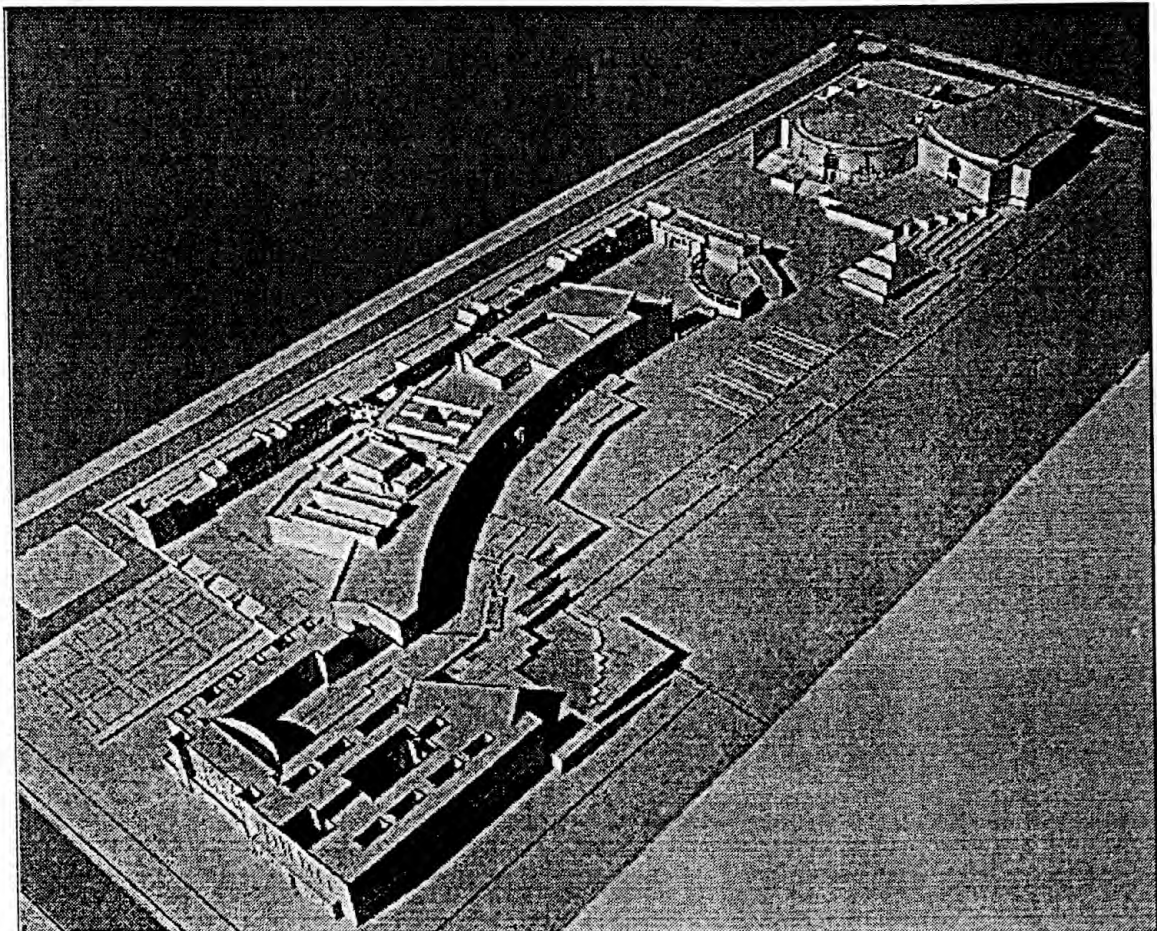


Figure 4.5-Model View, Gautam Bhatia

The immensity of the building programme and its diversity of function has led us to think of the IGNCA as a small city. The expression of this idea related the city to that most ancient reason for human settlement - a river. For its flow of urban movement and for its vital position in the larger city of New Delhi, Rajpath is seen as a river, and our city takes the form of a journey along the river, using the symbols that it implies: the streets, the squares, the ghats lining the riverfront that is Rajpath.

The architecture evokes these symbols of a city beside a river through associations and illusions: buildings are viewed as a kind of stage set awaiting a cultural scenario: major shows, retrospectives, open air exhibitions. A variety of partially sheltered indoor spaces flow into semi-outdoor areas and then to completely outdoor places, allowing for flexibility of use. Radical transformations may occur in one particular space depending in the needs of its users or upon specific occasion.⁶²

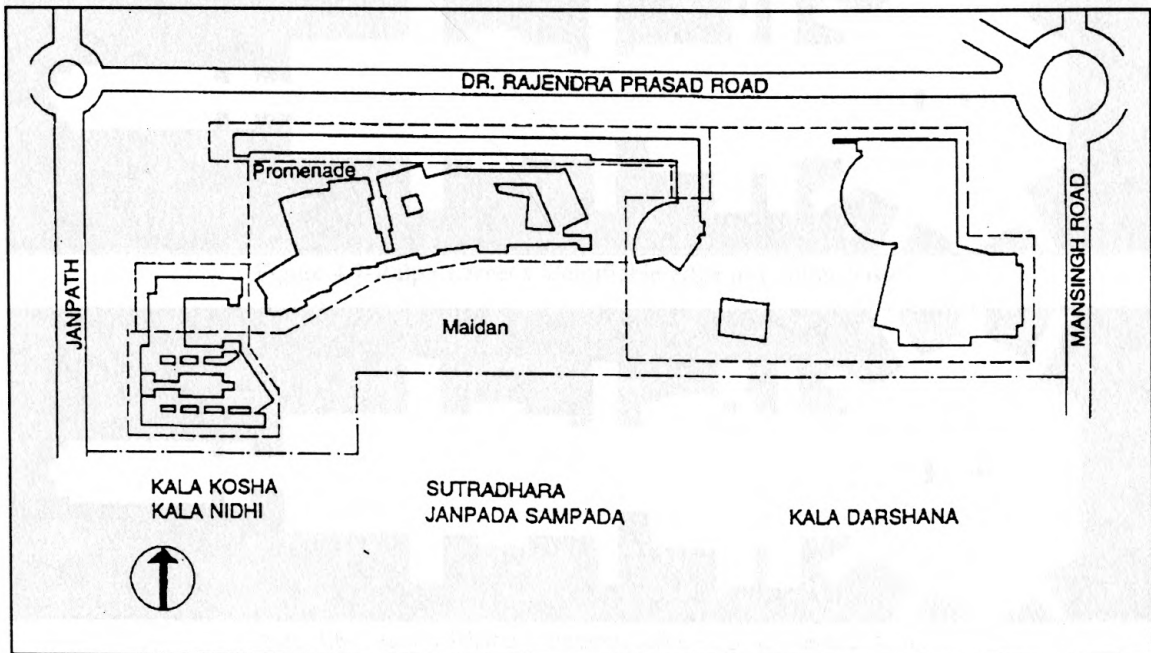


Figure 4.6-Programmatic divisions in Gautam Bhatia's IGNCA

Bhatia's site strategy and the organization of divisions, differed greatly from that of Lerner. The Kala Nidhi and Kala Kosha occur at the west end of the site opposite the National Archive building. The performing arts display or Kala Darshana are located in the east end and adjacent to the *maidan* (open ground). The Sutradhara provides a slender

⁶² Bhatia, Gautam. Concepts and Responses, p.56.

edge along the north end of the site while the Janpada Sampada occupies the central position along the symbolic river.

By creating an archetypal city on the banks of a river he was able to achieve more than mere continuation of tradition, but the dissolution of the order and symmetry underlying the spatial construction of New Delhi. Though he has himself never stated so, by making his scheme asymmetrical Bhatia implied the marginalization of the city.

EDGE ARTICULATION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CENTRAL VISTA

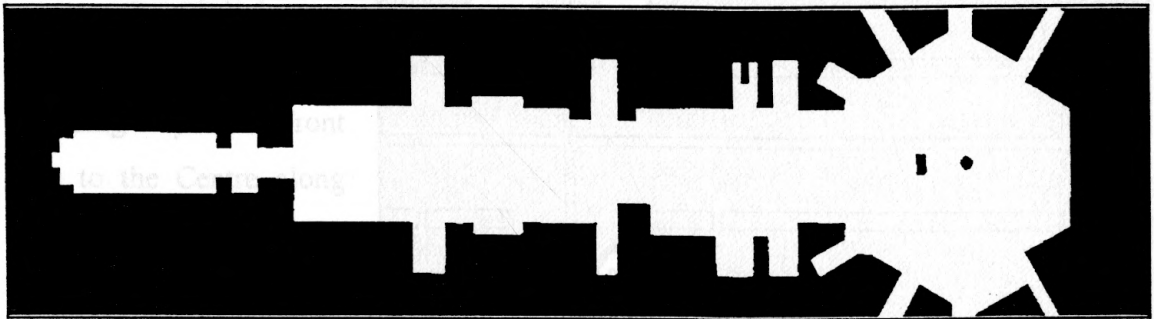


Figure 4.7-Ralph Lerner's identifiable edge in Central Vista

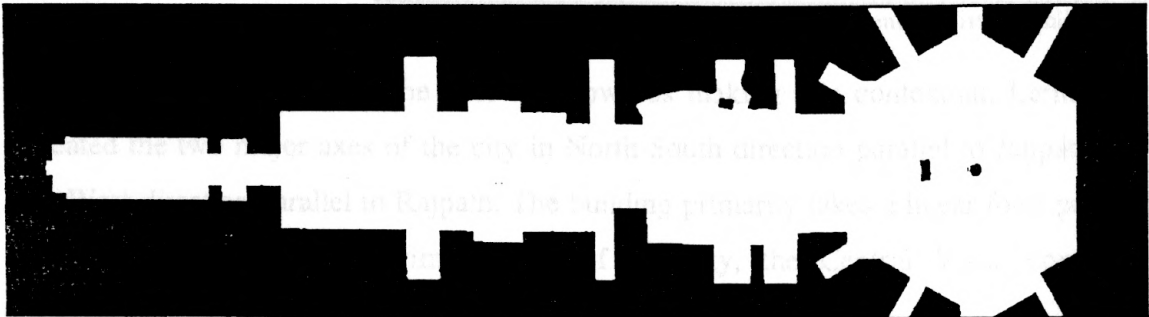


Figure 4.8-Gautam Bhatia's unidentifiable edge in Central Vista

The articulation of building edges is the direct means of subordinating architecture into the physical space of the city. The building edges in the Central Vista define the status of architecture in the Panoptical space. In the Central Vista the articulation of building edges has made architecture identifiable and recognizable. All the buildings emphasize the linearity of the Vista by their clear, straight edges. In other words, the definition of the building edges has given form to the primary void of the city. Because

of IGNCA's crucial location in the Central Vista, each architect's treatment of the edges and the relationship with the Central Vista void illuminates his attitude towards the city and the belonging to its order. The articulation of edges is thus, an instrument of analysis for understanding the connection of the complex to the existing space.

At its boundaries Lerner's project presents a uniform building frontage towards Rajpath, and becomes the third element in the cultural plaza providing a symbolic front door to the Centre along Janpath. Creating well defined edges he emphasizes and aids the linearity of the Central

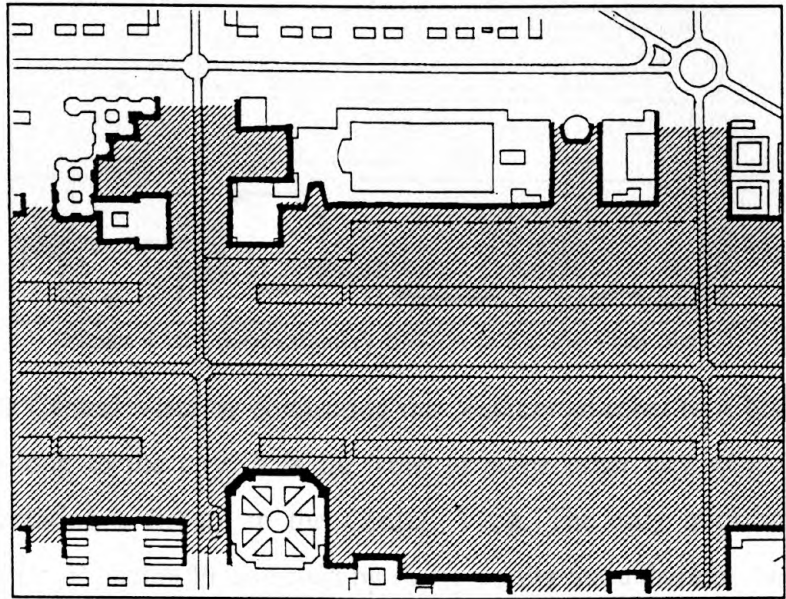


Figure 4.9-Ralph Lerner's IGNCA in Central Vista (detail)

Vista. As already mentioned the first step towards making this contextual, Lerner has recreated the two major axes of the city in North-South direction parallel to Janpath and East-West direction parallel to Rajpath. The building primarily takes a linear form parallel to the Central Vista. The primary void of the city, the Central Vista, continues uninterrupted and is further emphasized by his building.

Contrary to this, Bhatia has not defined clear edges. His scheme also takes a somewhat linear form in the east-west direction due to the linearity of the site. Bhatia's curved wall edge of the Janpada Sampada allows the Central Vista to extend into the complex but this is not meant to create a continuation. The *maidan* or the open ground adjacent to the Vista is like a fissure rather than complementary to the Central Vista void.

Ideally one could enter the complex, be in the centre without actually entering the built part of the complex. He has not emphasized on the continuation of the visual corridor but rather developed an arbitrary relationship not governed by any ordering system or principle. Bhatia

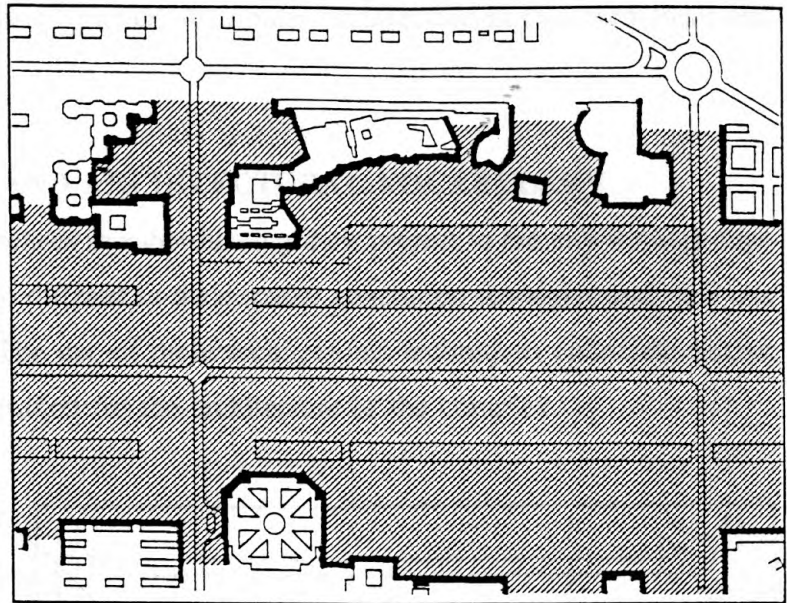


Figure 4.10-Gautam Bhatia's IGNCA in Central Vista (detail)

acknowledges the void of the Central Vista by connecting the *maidan* adjacent to it but in no way does his void belong to the city. It is the void of some other city which belongs to nowhere, thus creating a fissure in the Central Vista. The only uniform frontage he presents is along Dr. Rajendra Prasad road by lining up the Sutradhara or the administrative center of the complex. Even this frontage seems a mere illusion as this order dissolves immediately on passing through the slender administrative center into the promenade. On entering the promenade, the built form appears to flow freely with no association to the surrounding built form.

Lerner's is another project that lends itself to the Supreme vanishing point of the city in the Panopticon schema. His subordination to this Panoptical space happens by means of attachment to the 'integrated system' of the city. His architecture is "*linked from the inside to the economy and to the aims of the mechanism in which it was practised.*" Although the prominence of this architecturally integrated system lies in the Viceregal Palace, the functioning of this system is that of a network of relations top to bottom and laterally, "*this network 'holds' the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another.*" Lerner's project renders the city complete;

it subordinates to the apparatus of 'power', distributes architecture in this permanent and continuous field.⁶³

SPATIAL GENERATION AND ARCHITECTURAL VOCABULARY

Apart from their differences in subordinating their project to the city through edge articulation, the architects also differed in their spatial generation strategies and their use of architectural vocabulary. The use of these architectonic techniques enunciate further the architects' source of inspiration for the architecture of the complex.

Lerner has used symmetry as a strategy of spatial generation. While the whole remains symmetrical along its primary axis, parts are also symmetrical along the secondary axes. Symmetry was a spatial

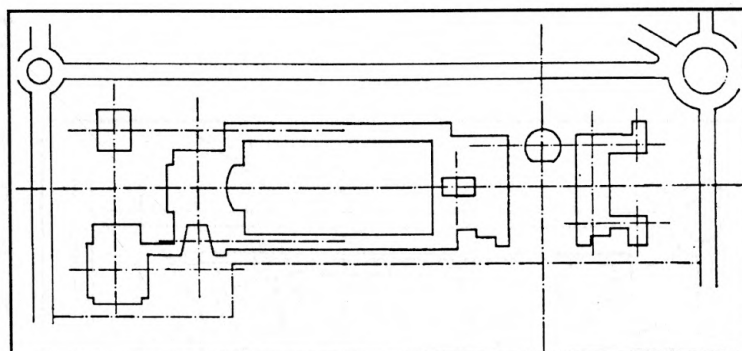


Figure 4.11-Ralph Lerner's axial plan

strategy used in the colonial city as a demonstration or representation of disymmetry of the rulers and the ruled. The question then becomes - when such a disymmetry between the rulers and the ruled no longer exists, how justified is it to use this architectonic means of power representation? This does not suggest that the use of order and symmetry as techniques of spatial manipulation is obsolete, but in the case of the cultural centre these techniques make it belong to larger constellation which certainly is problematic. Because in this city the use of such spatial strategies does not happen alone. Such use immediately make the work belong to the larger constellation of the city.

Lerner's project can be appropriately termed as hierarchical and orderly. His scheme is clearly based in an idea of establishing hierarchy of divisions and assigning them a ordered arrangement. Each division of the centre is clearly separated internally and

⁶³ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.176-177.

thus establishes an order in the functioning of the centre. He keeps the city alive by establishing a disciplinary or rather a hierarchical space and thus making the complex functionally efficient, not only in terms of linkages and hierarchies but also in regards to the process of construction and phasing. Without any doubts Lerner's project was the most techno-economically competent solution out of the winning entries. Clearly one should not undermine Lerner's effort and meticulous approach. In his desire to obey the city Lerner makes the program appear insignificant as his architecture is governed by the larger order of the city. The order in his architecture is derived from an imposition where architecture has to respond in a certain way, to which the program or the 'content' of architecture becomes secondary.

In comparison, Bhatia escapes or eludes these techniques in order to generate a decentered composition. His building comes out of a decentred composition where each division establishes its own axis and thus its own center. Arbitrary shifts in axes

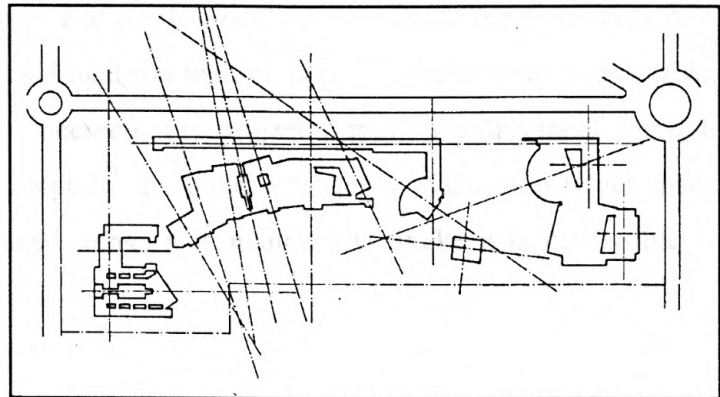


Figure 4.12-Gautam Bhatia's decentered plan

are skillfully used to recreate the gradual accretions of a traditional city. His is an infinite composition. In this attempt again he eludes the city by denying its centre.

In New Delhi architecture signified the desire of the creators for the immortality of the Empire. By ritualizing the spectacle through architecture and ceremonies the monarch restored the sovereignty by manifesting it at its most spectacular. In New Delhi ceremonies and architecture joined hands in creating a spectacle. In contrast Bhatia desires to reduce architecture to mere backdrop where events unfold, "*buildings are viewed as a kind of stage set awaiting a cultural scenario*".⁶⁴ For him each field of knowledge (the

⁶⁴ Bhatia, Gautam. Concepts and Responses, p.56.

programmatic divisions of IGNCAs) reveal itself to be contradictory, unsystematic representation which does not necessarily need to lend to a unified whole. It is for this reason that the different divisions in his building seem dissociated and thus present themselves as mere occurrences or images.

Bhatia's design consisted of a fragmentary approach as he desired to give each division in the centre an architectural autonomy. In a city where individual divisions of various institutions are masked behind the whole, where there is generally the tendency to subordinate to a larger whole, this was Bhatia's second step in negating the city where the site physically existed. Not only did he make his city fragmentary but fragments stemmed without any single point of origin or axial centre. Bhatia's disorder or the lack of order is not one of incongruence. Rather it is one that manifests the fragments of a great number of possible orders in a dimension without law or geometry- an unorderable, heteroclitic dimension. As it is conceived, his project implies displacement through decentering and subversion. In a Panoptical space that arranges spatial unities which make recognition possible, he has arranged things in a manner that make it impossible to identify or recognize.

Though the use of architectural vocabulary is not a major concern of this critique it is important to realize the implications derived from each architect's use of vocabulary.

*The architecture of our project draws upon a number of distinct architectural traditions to determine formal responses to varying site and functional strategies. As the Indian cultural heritage embraces a wealth of building conventions and types, so the Centre architecturally displays a number of traditions within the structure of its unified spatial strategy.*⁶⁵

Lerner has made a conscious attempt at establishing a continuity of tradition in an area where historical precedent cannot be ignored, as emphasized in the brief. However, his attempt to combine the various architectural traditions of the city is certainly

⁶⁵ Lerner, Ralph. Concepts and Responses, p.42.

questionable. Firstly, it should be stated that such a synthesis of various architectural principles is not only a rather ambitious project but is never realized in a deeper sense. Any attempt for such a synthesis results in mere stylistic manipulations. This is not to say that there are no commonalities between architectural traditions. His scheme is just another familiar example of contemporary architecture's reversion to an eclectic conservatism. As Joan Ockman states in another context, "*to reconstruct in a literal way a stylistic past whose societal preconditions no longer exist - makes its claim to represent a serious architectural vision or urbanistic program more than highly questionable.*"⁶⁶

This doesn't mean that Bhatia doesn't arouse any historical associations. Although he provides an Indian metaphor of a city along a river bank, it is in no way to provide symbols of any particular style of architecture in order to recreate the past. Bhatia's is a typological translation of the city, he makes no attempt at an iconological translation. His is a pristine idea of a city devoid of any bias. The architect, though fully aware of the symbolic connotations of the *ghat*, has used it instead for its neutrality and as a basic idea of human settlement. Bhatia's vocabulary is entirely neutral and empty. It is his belief that such an idea provides points of departure in the creation of something new.

Bhatia's architectural vocabulary or rather his use of no-vocabulary becomes relevant in lieu of the post-colonial culture in India. No longer is it possible to provide an idiom of India's past architectural styles as such an approach not only results in mere eclectic manipulations but also gives rise to problems of over-emphasis to a particular period of history.

⁶⁶ Ockman, Joan. "The Most Interesting Form of Lie", p.39.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Both the schemes considered so far have some important urban and cultural implications. While Lerner's approach can be appropriately termed as *conformitive* or even *conservative*, Bhatia's can be termed as *oppositional* and *critical*. Lerner's acceptance and the use of inherent order of the city and his will to fit his scheme into the larger constellation of the city certainly implies that he regards the city as the major determinant for the shape or form of architecture. Irrespective of the changes in the history and culture of the city he does not deem possible the negation or the marginalization of the city. While Lerner acknowledges Foucault's version of the city and wants to strengthen the power inherent in the city, Bhatia remains congruent with post-colonial authors in extending the colonial city and its unidirectional approach in power depiction.

Bhatia's treatment of the cultural centre as a small city is a rather curious and thoughtful stance. The consideration of the centre as a city was not as a replication of the New Delhi model or a miniaturization of New Delhi, his city was situated elsewhere beyond any specific example. As a first step in his design he was able to transport the site elsewhere beyond New Delhi. He almost reduced the city of New Delhi as a far away scene thus, freeing his scheme of New Delhi's impositions. The centre turns the *gaze* back to its origins. Bhatia comes close to Bhabha's theory that the native resistance in the midst of this city is limited to its returning the look of surveillance as the displacing gaze of the disciplined.⁶⁷ His centre becomes the act of transgression in the city of discipline and compliance. He achieves the *return of the gaze* by reinterpreting the city. He does not view the city as an ordering principle. Rather the city appears to him as a symbol eternal to humanity. He dissolves the symbols associated with power and reinscribes their meanings in the redefined city. Thus, Bhatia's architecture is critical in the sense that it resists being absorbed into the order of the city.

Perhaps, Bhatia has captured best the aspect of sitelessness. However by granting his project a siteless character he does not want it to become a free floating signifier but

⁶⁷ Parry, Benita. "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse", p.41.

creates a more profound and meaningful proposition. Being rooted in the absence of place - his project captures the disjunction of the competition. Unlike other works of architecture and art that float freely and relate to neither a particular time nor any specific city, the siteless character of his project makes the centre infinite, extending beyond boundaries of time and space into the realm of cultural production. By penetrating or opposing the gaze of the city he breaks the state of "being conditioned", he changes the status of the institution from mere instrument to an object.

In contrast, Lerner doesn't indulge in any exploration into the implied meaning of the site or any regard to the disjunctions embodied in the site. His mere acceptance of the city planning traditions makes his stance towards the institution questionable. He tends to believe that buildings are neutral and can thus, become a repository for any programmatic needs irrespective of the order and laws inherent in them. His project keeps the utopia of the city alive even though clearly the need is to move beyond and consider the embodiments of the site, the history and meaning of the city. For him, the content of architecture is meaningless as it should lend itself to the homogeneity of the city. He clearly suppresses the meaning of this particular institution and its content, '*culture*, itself which needs reinterpretation and separation from the idea of power and its representation alone. Though Lerner grants the institution extreme attention and importance not requiring any introspection, he does not do so in order to open up a dialogue or expose it. For him an institution of culture existing in a space of power is acceptable. "*The architecture reiterates the role of the Centre whose purpose is to encompass all arts across boundaries of time, region, and social grouping.*"⁶⁸

Bhatia makes another momentous assertion; that culture extends beyond the limit and bound of any specific city and hence does not require a specific site or thus a specific relation to its context. For Bhatia culture extends beyond time or space, thus he does not find the need to refer or relate to any specific city or any specific period of the history alone. As already discussed Bhatia's is a typological translation of the city, he makes no

⁶⁸ Lerner, Ralph. Concepts and Responses, p.42.

attempt at an iconological translation. In doing so he exposes an institution of culture. Although Bhatia does not negate an institution or imply its deconstruction, he certainly question the practices and the principles in which the institution is embedded and try to dissolve its link with power or the mechanisms of the state. In the process, he grants autonomy to culture and perceives its role far beyond the link with power alone. For Bhatia, culture returns the *gaze* of power.

Lerner and Bhatia present two ways of confronting reality. Two forms of representation appear. In one case reality is based in the time and space of the past, one whose societal preconditions no longer exist, and in the other beyond any time and space projected into the realm of the imaginary.

New Delhi was a city based on a definite system and symmetry and was conceived in opposition to the old city which apparently lacked either of the two. This opposition with the indigenous brought forth the dissymmetry between the indigenous and the colonial. In other words the dissymmetry between the subjects and their rulers. The spectacle rooted in symbolism was instrumental in recognizing who are powerful and who are the weak. Bhatia no longer feels the need to continue the emphasis on such a dissymmetry because there is ideally no longer such a divide existent today. Thus for him, the city is not necessarily a receptacle of power but extends beyond mere instrumentality. The immediate context does not acquire importance over the idea of a city which is influenced and transformed by history continuously; similar to culture which also negates any kind of homogenization. In this context, the pristine idea of humanity refers to culture itself which is continuously transformed and affected by history and events.

The difference in Bhatia's approach does not mean that his building is politically opposed, but he did not feel the need to be under the same compulsion as Lerner to make a consistent display of power. Bhatia did not adopt any of the architectonic means to display or represent power. Centre, axis, homogeneity, representation itself were unidentifiable in his scheme. Lerner on the other hand continued and adopted all the

symbols or the architectonic means of power transmission, axially, centre, unified composition and representation. If Lerner's is an exhibition of total architecture and total design, Bhatia attempts to dissimulate all reference to any controlling idea. In the utopian city of power Bhatia's is a heterotopic creation,

Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy "syntax" in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to "hold together.".... Language is ruined, the common aspect of place and name has been lost.⁶⁹

His projects point to some slippage or disjunction, objects not in collusion but collision where meanings are not singular; ideas gain strength from collision rather than collusion. Elements always seem to float freely in the absence of a clear centre. This could be Bhatia's readings of contemporary culture through out the world but it acquires relevance in context of the post-colonial situation in India. 'Slippery ground', 'transience', 'elusiveness', 'multiplicity of meanings' characterize the situation. His project attempts to dislocate and de-regulate meaning, rejecting the symbolic repertory of architecture as a vessel of power alone. The project aims to unsettle both context and history.

⁶⁹ Foucault, Michel. The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences, Random House: New York, 1973. p.viii.

The first part of the argument is that the... (faint text)

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study are... (faint text)

The critique of the architectural entries has helped illuminate the imbalances of power. While there are objections to theorists, and in this case, Lerner's scheme, who concentrate on the colonial encounter in allegedly disproportionate ways, at the same time Bhatia's approach is not entirely able to undo the effects of the colonial encounter.

For Lerner, the normalizing nature of the city remains the great instrument of power. "*The power of normalization imposes homogeneity....*"⁷⁰, in the process realizing that any opposition or marginalization of the city is not possible. Even though the city changes its course in history, the inherent order of the city cannot be overcome. His project is an example "*whose analyses isolate colonial society and culture from its previous history and who thus elevate to hegemonic status the strategies and protocols of the colonial powers.*"⁷¹ Lerner's allegiance to the city cannot simply be dismissed as naive or irresponsible. He illuminates the position, that it is virtually impossible to rewrite the city and its ordering principles, thus implying that an escape from the colonial past is not possible. For him, the only answer to the predicament of the colonial city is continued obedience.

Bhatia's approach too is bound in an inescapable situation. Talking about the work of Subaltern Studies group, Spivak said, "*All the accounts of attempted discursive displacements provided by the group are accounts of failures. For the subaltern displacements, the reasons for failure most often given is the much greater scope, organization, and strength of the colonial authorities.*"⁷² It is a similar failure that Bhatia encounters by inscribing his project in the midst of the colonial city. The only possibility of action he offers lies in the dynamics of the "*disruption of this object and relinking of the chain.*"⁷³

⁷⁰ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*, p.184.

⁷¹ Kaul, Suvir and Loomba, Ania. "Location, Culture, Post-Coloniality", p.4.

⁷² Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography", p.199.

⁷³ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography", p.198.

His scheme needs to be evaluated vis-a-vis the key question raised in the previous chapter; that is, to examine if there is any possibility of denying the city its dominant position from the site of the cultural centre; does the siteless character of his scheme provide a solution, as a possibility of *returning the gaze*? It becomes a matter of scale and studying whether such an oppositional stance to the city can bring about a real change and a redefinition of a new order in the physical space. Clearly, such an approach stands as a nucleus, representing an alternative approach but does not really bring about any change in the physical ordering of the city. It does not result in the rewriting of the larger order but becomes a limit on to itself. In the colonial city where architecture symbolizes power, his scheme becomes architecture against itself. A theory such as his based in resistance cannot consider itself immune from its own system. Such an approach continues to remain an imaginary or fictitious construct. This arises from the fact that architecture is only partial or fragmentary in the larger totality of the city. The large scale adoption of such an oppositional stance as a strategy of *returning the gaze* could lead to a state of utter anarchy and fragmentation. Only as long as this approach remains singular can its value be recognized.

However, Bhatia asserts the role of architecture in creating a critical dialogue and not accepting any given situation unquestionably. In the process, he expresses his desire to make architecture more critical and dialogical. He extends his architecture beyond what is merely apparent. Even when it is perceived as "failed", his work offers a theory of change. Referring to Foucault's idea of *discourse*, Bhatia's scheme works more in a dialogical fashion as it continues to transmit and produce power without any change to the reality of the city but at the same time also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.⁷⁴

Thus, such a failure refers back to the initial subject; that is, the relevance of the panoptical space in context of post-colonial culture in India. What has become important to realize is that even though the country has changed form monarchical to democratic

⁷⁴ Foucault, Michel. History of Sexuality.....p ?

power structures, the use of this space is maintained. Formal attributes of symmetry and axially, and psychological aspects such as the role reversal or the role amplification experienced by an onlooker tend to convey a formidable and immediately recognizable message.

This reasserts Foucault's notion of the Panopticon, "*that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it....Power has its principles not so much in a person as in....an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up.*"⁷⁵ The panoptical space functions in a universal manner. It serves 'colonial' as well as 'post-colonial' power with equal effect. Its purpose cannot be disrupted by mere removal of symbols. The removal of the empty canopy or its replacement by the statue of Mahatma cannot help resolve the dilemma of the inherited city. Such alterations cannot make the city capable of any ideological or functional performance. The thesis affirms the refusal to the "normative" but warns against "false negations".

Thus, the acknowledgement of the value of an alternative viewpoint, at the same time a realization of its limitations is necessary. Such a strategy, remains illusory if it is not aware of its own limits. By creating an offense in the city of *discipline*, the offender becomes an important individual to know. In its limited manner, the presence of the native subject is brought forth. Though the opposition to the panopticon can happen only in a limited manner, to indulge in such a exercise can alter the perception of the city. If the city cannot be countered physically, it can be brought into question at a conceptual level. This doesn't mean that this should become a large scale idea of the city where everything is opposed to the original order. What this means, is to recognize that urban intervention in such a situation can only happen on a limited part of the city and not by an adoption of opposition as a single basic idea of the city.

⁷⁵ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.201, 202.

Talking of the experimental value of the Panopticon and its function as a privileged place for experiments on men, Foucault states, "*The Panopticon may even provide an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms.*"⁷⁶ Thus, an oppositional stance must be looked at as an instance of self-supervision because the city, through its history has itself provided an opportunity to indulge in a self-critical exercise. The efficient functioning of any mechanism requires an exercise of introspection, a self-examination from time to time, in order to adjust and relate to the demands of change. Every period suffers a moment of crisis or reckoning in which it becomes self-conscious as a period. This introspection thus becomes a particular moment in the study of the city and as such gives rise to a possibility of resistance. Such an exercise, in as much as it helps to investigate dominant position of the colonial, also illuminates or provides an opportunity to look onto oneself and recognize the ambiguities in which one continues to operate. The strategy thus appears to subvert the city, not in order to seal it in its own image but in order to open it; to open its closed system, to rethink its universal techniques in terms of 'contradictions'-in short, to challenge its master narratives with the "discourse of others". Only by giving an opportunity to an oppositional or critical stance can the city be perceived differently. In other words, even if the positive effects of resistance seem marginal, its value becomes important in order to be able to concentrate on the study of the city, not only as 'repressive', but also as 'supportive' to a possibility of illuminating the subaltern.

⁷⁶ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, p.204.

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