

**'Indian Architecture' and the Production of a
Postcolonial Discourse: A Study of *Architecture +
Design* (1984-1992)**

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Abstract

'Indian Architecture' and the Production of a Postcolonial Discourse: A Study of *Architecture + Design* (1984-1992)

An unprecedented production of discourses on contemporary Indian architects and architecture occurred in the 1980s. Published in a period of political transition and conspicuous new cultural production and debate in many fields, four decades after India's independence from colonial rule in 1947, these architectural discourses have become privileged references that have shaped but also limited perception of late-twentieth century architectural production in India. While subsequent writers have addressed some of these limitations, the small but growing critical literature in this field still exhibits many of the same problems of representation. Despite problematising the construction of 'Indian architecture' in colonial and postcolonial discourse, these critiques have nevertheless taken for granted (as in the more popular and professionally oriented discourses of the 1980s) the existence of a pan-Indian community of architects, united in their search for a collective identity. Such monolithic perceptions of contemporary 'Indian architecture' have yet to be interpreted with regard to the conspicuous contexts in which they were produced — that is, from an 'Indian' point of view.

Through a selective focus on a particularly productive *site of discourse* in 1980s India, I investigate complexities that have not yet been examined in the formation and reproduction of a dominant consensus on the *identity* of contemporary Indian architecture. The argument draws attention not only to the *agency* of particular contemporary Indian architects in the construction of this identity, but also the relativity of *region* in the architectural production of India during the 1980s. Specifically, I focus on an influential architectural magazine, *Architecture + Design* (*A+D*) that began publishing in 1984 from a dominant region of architectural production, Delhi. I provide an account of the manner in which history, context, agency and agents, came together at a point in time, within this architectural magazine, as a complex set of historically

constituted social relations, to authorise and sustain particular viewpoints about contemporary Indian architecture. Using the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the *field of cultural production*, I relate issues of dominance and marginalisation observable in the production of this particular discourse on contemporary Indian architecture to the space of the positions held by its producers. Despite its avowed agenda of viewing contemporary Indian architecture differently in the 1980s, I argue, the selection and judgement of exemplary contemporary work deemed worthy of discussion in *A+D* as 'Indian Architecture' functioned (and continues to function) through established categories of perception and appreciation.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give my consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the Barr Smith Library of The University of Adelaide, being available for loan and photocopying.

Signed: _____ Shaji K. Panicker

Date: _____

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*Dedicated to the loving memory of my grandfather,
Shri Velayat Kalarickal Balakrishna Panicker*

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1: Overview

Contemporary Indian architects and their architecture were the focus of an unprecedented wave of publications—academic, professional, and popular—in the 1980s.¹ The point of departure of this thesis is the claim that this published discourse and its production have conspicuously shaped and limited perception of late-20th century architectural production in India. Through a critical reading of past and present discourses on the architecture of India, and a focused case-study of a particularly significant facet of this conspicuous discourse production in the 1980s, I investigate dynamics and complexities in the formation and reproduction of a dominant consensus on the identification of contemporary Indian architecture during the 1980s that have not yet been rigorously examined. This *identification*—both in the sense of the *act of identifying*, and in shared assumptions and objectifying principles that *identify* a particular characteristic or group of characteristics—was carried out not only with respect to certain architects and their architecture, but also with respect to certain regions of architectural production in India.

¹ Please refer to “Index-1” of this thesis.

The study focuses on the magazine *Architecture + Design (A+D)*, which began publishing in 1984 from one such dominant region of architectural production, Delhi. Using the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production,² I relate issues of dominance and marginalisation (observable in the discourses of contemporary Indian architecture) to the 'positions' held by the producers of such discourses in this particular 'field of cultural production.' Specifically, I examine the manner in which history, context, agency and agents, come together at a point in time within the magazine *A+D*, as a complex set of historically constituted social relations, to authorise and sustain a particular sense of reality about contemporary Indian architecture. The analysis focuses on how the producers of *A+D* used that particular representation to either reinforce or oppose a previous set of notions formed in the preceding colonial and postcolonial eras of architectural developments and discourses. Through such a focus, this study also attempts to analyse and understand this particular discourse in a novel manner that offers better insight into the relationship between 'architecture' and the production of discourses about it. Following Bourdieu, I take critical discourse analysis to yet another level of scrutiny; I examine how certain agents, with internalised dispositions guiding their actions (thus *misrecognising* the underlying power relations which serve their actions), further utilise discourse in their specific capacities, and with specific interests to either challenge or maintain the structure of a dominant field of discourse.

1.2: Background

The current study, its aims and objectives, have emerged from continuing interests first explored in an earlier Masters dissertation, as well as critical reflection upon my experience of conducting that earlier research.³ My Masters dissertation was an effort to understand regional qualities in the works of a couple of selected young-generation architectural firms in India, who had established their practices in Mumbai and Bangalore in the early 1990s. These

² Pierre Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*. US: Columbia University Press, 1993.

³ Shaji K. Panicker. "Critical Regionalism in Contemporary Indian Architecture." Master's Dissertation, University of Newcastle, 2003.

firms were deliberately selected following a literature review that revealed a conspicuous problem in discourses on contemporary Indian architecture produced (or researched) during the 1980s. These discourses concentrated heavily on pan-Indian surveys of post-independence and contemporary architecture, as also on certain select figures or ‘activists’ of architecture (such as Charles Correa, B. V. Doshi and Raj Rewal).⁴ Further, in their attempts to conduct pan-Indian surveys of post-independence and contemporary architecture, these discourses rarely ventured beyond a particular ‘architectural belt’⁵ comprising of certain regions such as Chandigarh, Delhi, Ahmedabad, and Mumbai. These regions and certain protagonists from these regions were held as authentic representatives of post-independence or contemporary Indian architecture.

As well as being limited in their representations of architectural developments in India since independence, these discourses were further limited in their ideological projects; the (mostly formalist) descriptions of selected architectural works in these discourses can be collectively subsumed under the category, ‘the search for identity.’ It is a hinge around which many of these discourses constructed narratives and developed concomitant categories of perception and appreciation regarding contemporary Indian architecture.

Even though I managed to fulfil (at least partially), through my Masters dissertation, a desire to look beyond certain dominant ‘activists,’ and marginalised representations of contemporary Indian architecture, a few disconcerting observations and questions lingered: What was it about contemporary Indian architecture that caused such a sudden explosion of literature on the subject in the 1980s? Why was the question of identity in Indian architecture of paramount importance even in contemporary interpretations? Why were discourses of contemporary Indian architecture focused only on select Indian architects and select regions of India? Who decides what is a legitimate exemplar of contemporary Indian architecture and

⁴ Refer to “Appendix-1” of this thesis.

⁵ A G Krishna Menon. “Interrogating Modern Indian Architecture.” *Architecture + Design* xvii, no. 6 (2000): 24-28.

why? Distilled from the questions generated after my Masters research, I developed the main question for the current study: How was a dominant consensus about late-twentieth century Indian architecture formed, maintained and sustained through discourses of contemporary Indian architecture?

While a small body of literature,⁶ largely restricted to professional magazines and conference proceedings, has made critical inroads to the problematic conditions created (or reproduced) by the above-mentioned discourses, their observations of dominance and marginalisation in representations of contemporary Indian architecture are supportive of my findings as well. However, the ideological bases on which these recent studies have constructed their criticisms are limited in providing a holistic account of issues such as marginalisation and dominance perceived in architectural discourse. I identify at least two prevalent and problematic modes of analyses, through which these studies have tried to either critique or explain the problems in discourses of contemporary Indian architecture, and the field of architecture in India during the 1980s.

Firstly, some of these studies seek the ultimate meaning of texts within the texts themselves, or within some sort of ahistorical 'essence.'⁷ The other mode of analysis prevalent in recent studies is what can be described as external modes of analysis, in which the texts are taken to represent the world-view of the producers of the texts.⁸ Apart from such limitations, a couple of

⁶ K. T. Ravindran. "Contemporary Architecture: An Uncomfortable Glance at the Mirror." *Architecture + Design* 14, no. 1 (1997): 26-28; Prem Chandavarkar. "The Politics of the Background." *Indian Architect and Builder* 12 (1999): 68-71; Swati Chattopadhyay. "Expedient Forgetting: Architecture in Late-Twentieth Century Indian Nationalist Imagination." *Design Book Review*, no. 43(fall) (2000): 16-29; Kurula Varkey. "The Essence of the Indian Tradition: An Interpretation." *Architecture + Design* xvii, no. 4 (2000): 98-117; Menon. "Interrogating Modern Indian Architecture.;" Ritu Bhatt. "Indianizing Indian Architecture: A Postmodern Tradition." *Traditional dwellings and settlements review* 13, no. 1 (2001): 43-51; and K. R. Sitalakshmi. "Theoretical Constructs: Towards a History of Contemporary Indian Architecture." *Architecture + Design* XX, no. 3 (2003): 32-38.

⁷ Varkey. "The Essence of the Indian Tradition: An Interpretation.;" Sitalakshmi. "Theoretical Constructs: Towards a History of Contemporary Indian Architecture."

⁸ Vikramaditya Prakash. "Identity Production in Postcolonial Indian Architecture: Re-Covering What We Never Had." In *Postcolonial Space(S)*, edited by Gulsum Baydar Nalbantoglu, Wong Chong Thai, 39-52. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997; Chandavarkar. "The Politics of the Background.;" Menon. "Interrogating Modern Indian Architecture.;" and Chattopadhyay. "Expedient Forgetting: Architecture in Late-Twentieth Century Indian Nationalist Imagination."

assumptions in such studies further complicate the matter. Firstly, such studies assume the existence of a unified community and voice of Indian architects with regards to issues and concerns purportedly believed to be afflicting contemporary Indian architecture. Secondly, such studies a determinate structure to the *field* of architecture in India during the 1980s. While the discourses on contemporary Indian architecture are the premise on which these studies have constructed their observations and critiques, they fail to recognise architecture or its discourse as embedded fields of cultural production, and that the structure of such fields is always a contested one. Also missing in such accounts is a critical analysis of the reception of those discourses by interested agents and groups, including the authors and readership of these earlier discourses, themselves.

1.3: Agency of architectural discourse

Because the focus of this study is on architectural discourse and how it constructs and is constructed by dominant forces within the larger field of architecture, I identify a couple of recent critical studies conducted on the agency of architectural discourse and the reading of 'texts' as key theoretical reference points. Specifically I discuss a paradigm shift in the study of architectural discourse through the work of Panayotis Tournikiotis and Greig Crysler.⁹

Tournikiotis' study on the historiography of modern architecture written by nine historians, explicitly refrains from examining the discourses as functions of the cultural, economic or political conditions in which they were produced. Tournikiotis is also not interested in questioning the actual production of built space narrated by the discourses.¹⁰ In trying to objectify the relationship between the subject and the object (the reader and the discourse), Tournikiotis engages in the 'reading context' that is, in deciphering the meaning discourses

⁹ Tournikiotis, Panayotis. *The Historiography of Modern Architecture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999; Crysler, C. Greig. *Writing Spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism, and the Built Environment, 1960-2000*. New York and London: Routledge, 2003.

¹⁰ Tournikiotis. *The Historiography of Modern Architecture*. 5.

produce when read in a different period or context by different readers.¹¹ While this mode of questioning is arguably justifiable, it still stands the risk of inventing (while arguing not to do so), yet another narcissistic metaphor—reader-text—to find the ultimate ‘truth’ in the discourse. Tournikiotis’ understanding of the reproduction of knowledge can be considered thus as a tautological reading which while relating works only to themselves aspires to find or rediscover a binding theme which is the basis of all the literary constructions he investigates. Thus, analyzing the writings, written by their authors with their particular individual agendas, will only mean indulging in a (reductive) theoretical activity that will not be able to address the *practice* of discourse itself.

While Tournikiotis’ study demonstrates an extreme extent to which the previously discussed ‘internal analysis’ may be taken, I consider Crysler’s study closer to the intentions of the current study. However, I also identify at least two points on which my study differs from Crysler’s approach. The first point is about the theoretical model in Crysler’s study, and the second is with regards to the choice of a sample for case study, that is, the approach of the study.

Crysler’s study focuses on issues of relationality, interdependency, and interdisciplinarity within the ‘spaces of knowledge,’ which he examines in five academic journals connected with architecture and the built environment. Crysler’s study is largely based on Foucault’s approach to discourse analysis, but develops this by drawing on theories of representation and the sociology and political economy of knowledge. Following Paul Rabinow, Crysler further confirms that the categories of perception and appreciation are a politically produced relation that sustain and reinforce boundaries between disciplines and the social worlds they construct. From Tournikiotis’ focus on a purely textual and theoretical analysis of the discourse itself as an *object* of investigation; to Crysler’s approach that engages in the contextual analysis of the discourse as a

¹¹ Ibid., 6.

“spatial practice,” there is clearly a paradigm shift in the area of discourse analysis.

However, Crysler’s mode of thinking extends solely to the symbolic system, that is, to the space of knowledge separated into discrete and instrumental specializations, through a determinate domain of academic production, ‘discourse.’¹² Consider, for instance, a concluding point in Crysler’s analysis of the journal *Society and Space*:

Although *Society and Space* represents an increasingly broad range of positions, it has managed to avoid representing them as non-communicating sub-specializations that are merely juxtaposed in a pluralist relationship with each other. What makes the journal unique, not only from the others in this study, *but in the realm of academic production per se*, is the consistent attention that is given to how and why theoretical debates change.¹³

Thus Crysler’s analysis of the regulated system of differences and dispersions, within the journals, is limited to one and the same distribution of the points of choice—that is, one and the same ‘realm of academic production.’ Crysler’s ‘realm’ has its theoretical basis in Foucault’s ‘field of strategic possibilities’ (or ‘field of discourse’), which is a construct through which Foucault rightly posits that a work cannot exist by itself, that it is always in an interdependent relationship with other works to which it is united. However, Foucault’s theory gives little importance to external cultural determinants that exist beyond the field of discourse for the explanatory principle of each of the discourses in the ‘field of strategic possibilities.’ Such a cognisance is consciously rejected by Tournikiotis in his study, and is only partially realised in Crysler’s research. The very logic of the *normal* functioning of discourse—in its construction of objects, events, sequences of events recognised by particular social groups as real or serious, hides far more complex mechanisms (not only social and historical, but also cultural) through which the established order is reproduced, and the dominant group maintained.

¹² Crysler. *Writing Spaces*. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 177, (my emphasis).

1.4: Methodology

It is clear that any theoretical tool that might improve understanding of the problems inherent in the recent historiography of Indian architecture needs to enquire firstly, as Crysler's study demonstrates, into the socially and historically constituted institutional framework which sustains the practice of discourse. Secondly, this tool must also extend to the active dimension, that is, to the system of agents of discourse production. Agents of cultural production such as discourse are *interested* agents, who, through the mediation of relatively autonomous dispositions constituting their embodied histories, both constitute, and are defined by, a broader socio-political field, and its field-effects. The consideration of such two-fold analysis of cultural production in a social setting is of paramount importance in the works of Pierre Bourdieu.

Set against two modes of analyses, 'subjectivism' and 'objectivism,' that dominated sociological studies of the 1970s, Bourdieu's study attempts to transcend the limitations set by both modes of analyses.¹⁴ Subjectivism, or phenomenological analysis, proposes to understand the social world through the primary experience and perceptions of individuals. Objectivism on the contrary engages in a systematic and objective understanding of the social structures that inform practice, without considering it necessary to account for individual human consciousness and agency. Thus objectivism ignores the 'objectivity of the subjective.' Recognising that social life is objectively grounded and conditioned, but objective conditions affect behaviour in large part through the mediation of individual beliefs, dispositions and experiences, Bourdieu's novel approach considers this intrinsically double nature of social reality as the basis for a better understanding of social structures.

Bourdieu's theory of what he terms as *reflexive sociology*, although primarily concerned with sociology, is essentially a theory of practice that attempts to understand the relationship between systems of thought, social institutions and

¹⁴ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*. 3.

different forms of material and symbolic power.¹⁵ With concepts such as *habitus* (a system of internalised and historically produced dispositions that mediates between social structures and practical activity) and *field* (the functioning and composition of social space across a society), Bourdieu's theory seeks to explain that human agents not only act according to the historically and socially situated conditions of particular *fields*, but also through their *habitus*. In Bourdieu's theory, the *habitus* is a product of history that "produces individual and collective practices — more history — in accordance with the schemes generated by history."¹⁶ Through further constitutive concepts of the theory such as *doxa*, *interest* and *capital*, Bourdieu explains how *thinkable* possibilities orient the *interests* and actions of agents (within and through a particular *habitus*) such that they often engage, through positions that reflect their specific *capital* (economic, educational, social, symbolic, cultural, intellectual renown, etc.), in struggles to change the structure of a *field* at any given time.¹⁷

Problematic representations propagated in the existing literature on contemporary Indian architecture, have been articulated, we will recall, on a smaller but growing critical literature on the topic. These critiques see such representations as either sinister intentions of 'Western' domination, or conveniently offer to understand them as consequences of larger political and identification problems. But such critiques and their variations are inadequate to answer one basic question—that is, what were the conditions (of dominance and marginalisation, for instance) at the time these discourses were produced, within the field of architecture in India itself?

1.5: Approach

As noted above, the perceptions of contemporary Indian architecture formed during the unprecedented production of discourse on Indian architecture during

¹⁵ Kim Dovey. *Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form*. London, New York: Routledge, 1999. 35-37.

¹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu. *The Logic of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990. 54.

¹⁷ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*. 29-73.

the 1980s, have yet to be understood from an ‘Indian’ point of view.¹⁸ In this regard, the present study contributes substantially to this nascent area of investigation. While I have distinguished the ‘reflexive sociological’ approach of my study from that of Crysler’s discourse analysis, in the methodological framework outlined above, I make a further distinction in terms of the range and choice of case-study materials used in this study. This also answers the question: how do I propose to provide an account of the internal affairs of the field of architecture in India and its various ‘players’?

In his analysis of the role that texts play in determining the built environment, Crysler investigates five internationally renowned journals, connected with architecture and the built environment. He rightly considers his standard literary samples (which he calls ‘*sites of discourse*’) as “not only part of a matrix of wider institutional forces,” but also as “institutional structures in themselves.”¹⁹ Situating itself in the context of scholarly journals, Crysler’s study is an important contribution to studies of architectural discourse, in that it focuses on a largely unexamined area of discourse production—academic journals. Such a focus allows Crysler to observe and analyse discourses whose producers share research methods, theoretical sources, and other devices implicitly understood by all in the academic circles.

Although the point of departure of my study is the unprecedented production of discourse(s)²⁰ on contemporary Indian architecture, the focus of my study is *not* specifically on those discourses (which can be considered, following Bourdieu, as *privileged references*) or on well-established international journals of architecture and the representations of contemporary Indian architecture in them. On the contrary, I have chosen a locally published, and

¹⁸ Menon. “Interrogating Modern Indian Architecture.”

¹⁹ Crysler. *Writing Spaces*. 10.

²⁰ I use the term ‘discourse(s)’ to include not only the previously mentioned books, monographs and exhibition catalogues produced on post-independence or contemporary *Indian* architecture, but also articles and papers published conference proceedings, and in academic journals and professional magazines such as the one selected for the current study, *A+D*. Although all of them have assisted in different degrees in the production of discourses on contemporary Indian architecture, they are different *sites* of discourses in terms of their production and consumption values compared to say a magazine or journal of Indian architecture. A discussion of the complexities inherent in and between their positions within the field of architectural discourse is beyond the scope of this research.

predominantly locally read, *magazine* of Indian architecture—*Architecture + Design* (henceforth *A+D*). My choice of a professional magazine as opposed to academic journals is also encouraged by Crysler’s own admission to the challenges and possibilities one might be exposed to in studying a professional magazine:

If anything, I would have liked to cut my cross-section in more than one direction, so that it could pass through not only the major critical theories in scholarly research in the built environment disciplines since 1960, but also travel in the other direction, connecting theoretical discourses to those in professional trade publications and mass circulation magazines that also deal with building and urban space...

However, a study of professional magazines is beyond the scope of this study. The number of such journals is large, and the issues they define are sufficiently complex to require a separate study in itself.²¹

Now considered as just another magazine of Indian architecture, lacking a critical voice and compromised by the pressures of advertising and clichéd presentation,²² my specific argument for the selection of *A+D* is that it occupied an important position in the 1980s within a dominant region in the field of architecture in India—Delhi. Here I shall briefly outline *A+D*’s position during the 1980s.

With the assassination of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984, the ensuing atrocities on the Sikh community (especially in Delhi), escalating communal violence between Hindus and Muslims in places such as Ahmedabad and Ayodhya, and secessionist claims from ‘extremist’ groups in Punjab and Assam, an extraordinary importance was given to the project of Indianisation within the cultural and socio-political atmospheres of India

²¹ Crysler. *Writing Spaces*. ix.

²² In this regard, I recall the combined expressions of shock and curiosity from certain individuals when, while interviewing them, they were informed of my focus. Interestingly, some of these individuals, such as A. G. K. Menon, were key participants and contributors of texts within the first decade of *A+D*’s publication.

during the 1980s.²³ This resulted in many institutionalised set-ups and state-sponsored events such as the world-touring Festival of India exhibitions. In all such affairs, Delhi not only functioned as India's political centre, but also as the cultural and socio-political locus where both international diplomatic schemes and national insecurities could be planned, nurtured, hidden, contested or reformed. Indeed, Delhi was the locus of accumulated social energy during the 1980s in India. The commencement of *A+D*'s publication from Delhi in 1984, just a few months after the assassination of Indira Gandhi, also coincides with the period of intense literary activity associated with contemporary Indian architecture. Most of the agents and agencies associated with(in) the first decade of publishing in *A+D* were also simultaneously linked, either directly or indirectly,²⁴ with the parallel production of discourses on contemporary Indian architecture. In this context, I examine selected discourses from *A+D* within the first decade of its publication.

Having proclaimed *A+D* as a legitimate representative of architecture and built environment of postcolonial India, (and being published with also an imaginary international audience), the producers of *A+D* necessarily carried out reports of events and surveys of architects ('subjects' in *A+D*'s terminology), to showcase contemporary architectural developments in India. Although there is a concentration of writings on various issues of architecture and the built environment, such as energy conscious architecture, traditional wisdom in architecture, focus on architecture of neighbouring and foreign regions such as Sri Lanka, the (then) USSR, Kuwait, etc., considering the scope and time frame of the current study, I focus my attention on event-based discourses and subject-based discourses in the first decade of *A+D*'s publication. Such a concentrated focus will help in understanding the complex ways in which a dominant consensus about contemporary Indian architecture

²³ India's social, political and cultural affairs in recent history are well addressed, critically, in Partha Chatterjee, ed. *State and Politics in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997; Partha Chatterjee. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993; Sunil Khilnani. *The Idea of India*. London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1997; Amartya Sen. *The Argumentative Indian*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2005.

²⁴ Either by way of providing 'friendly advise,' or 'critical insights,' 'inspired criticisms,' or by letting the generous use of primary data such as photographs and personal correspondences, libraries and other facilities situated within supportive institutions, etc.

was formed, challenged, maintained and sustained, by certain agents and agencies functioning²⁵ from certain dominant regions of architectural production such as Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Chandigarh.

While the current study makes no pretension to provide a comprehensive account of the field of architecture in India during the period under consideration (more or less the decade of the 1980s), it nevertheless, provides a compelling case of the dynamics of the field in operation from a dominant region during the period, and a way of understanding it through Bourdieuan tools.

1.6: Scope and Limitations

A study of this nature could have involved, as in Crysler's study, more than one magazine of architecture. Although a comparative analysis focusing on two or more magazines of architecture published from different regions of India (for instance Delhi-based *A+D* and the Mumbai-based *Indian Architect & Builder*) would have been desirable, the sheer magnitude of information from more than one magazine could have undermined the very intention of the current study. The very idea of a comparative study runs the risk of academically creating region-specific camps from where interested agents contest or agree with matters concerning contemporary Indian architecture. It is the contention of this research that such academically created hermetic camps, even if they exist in reality, are transcended and often work in congruity in the discussion or debates regarding pan-Indian themes connected with agents and agencies situated in the larger field of Indian architecture. Corresponding to or contesting with also globally disseminated knowledge of (contemporary) Indian architecture, such a study on two or more magazines of architecture would risk being a futile exercise in pigeonholing stacks of localised criticisms and articles on and about contemporary Indian architecture.

²⁵ By using the term 'functioning' I make a further distinction in understanding the position of certain architects and architect-educators, who may not belong to the dominant regions—in terms of being born and brought up in the cultural and socio-political contexts of those regions—but who have made those regions their habitat for pursuing their specific interests in the field of architecture.

Further, the complicated situation of magazines published from different regions with different sets of producers and commentators, their individual professional and cultural associations, trajectories, etc. demand a larger and more vigorous study, employing, perhaps multiple theoretical tools. Such a study is certainly beyond the constraints of both time and scope of the present thesis. Nevertheless, concerns gleaned from other magazines and journals are corroborated in the present study to understand the scopic extent of such concerns.

Also, it could have been prudent to look at the magazine *A+D*, which is still in circulation, in the present era or since India's economic liberalisation policies in the early 1990s. The rapid developments in the past decade, specifically in the fields of IT (Information Technology) and tourism, not to mention the realities of hi-tech international terrorism, have transformed the aspirations of millions and created new issues in the imagination of India, while simultaneously catapulting India to a high echelon in the map of global reckoning.²⁶ It would have been interesting to see the discourse produced in the magazine about the exciting phase of contemporary Indian architecture during this particularly interesting period. However, again, both limitations of time and space, and appropriate theoretical tools have held me back from such an enquiry.

1.7: Outline of the Thesis

Being a study that must necessarily understand the historical institution and institutionalisation of assumptions and values through knowledge, which are subsequently shared, contradicted, reproduced or transformed as per the actions of interested agents and agencies in future, there are clearly two distinct parts to this study. In part-I, I identify the historical formation, institutionalisation and reproduction of certain dominant categories of perception and appreciation regarding 'Indian' architecture (and art). I examine

²⁶ Khilnani. *The Idea of India*.

such concerns in and through reviews of selected discourses and critical scholarship relating to the colonial, postcolonial and contemporary architecture of India. In part-II, I proceed to conduct a thorough but selective analysis of discourses produced in the first decade of *A+D*'s publication through Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical approach explained earlier.

Chapter 2 of this study is focused on colonial writings about Indian art and architecture. Although colonial articulation of Indian architecture, beginning with James Fergusson's influential *The History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*,²⁷ may be well known to the student of Indian architecture, dominant themes and categories have been restated, institutionalised and thereby reinforced in many later accounts. Through the lens of certain 'metaphors,' which were (and still are) used by the West to understand India, I show how the same metaphors may give clues to understanding the formation of certain hegemonic notions regarding Indian art and architecture during the colonial period. Further, it is important to revisit such reproductions in order also to understand the emergence of critical voices within colonial discourse itself and the transformation of knowledge regarding Indian art and architecture.

Chapter 3 focuses on the emergence of postcolonial discourses on Indian architecture following its confused and paradoxical representation under colonisation, evidenced for instance in the debates over an authentic style for the architecture of New Delhi in the early years of the 20th century.²⁸ Based on

²⁷ James Fergusson. *The History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*. London: John Murray, 1899.

²⁸ For such critiques, I have relied on the established scholarship in the following works: Robert Grant Irving. *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker, and Imperial Delhi*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981; Philip Davies. *Splendours of the Raj: British Architecture in India, 1660 to 1947*. London: John Murray, 1985; Norma Evenson. *The Indian Metropolis: A View toward the West*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989; Thomas R. Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989; G. H. R. Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture: Continuity, Controversy and Change since 1850*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1989, and Peter Scriver. *Rationalization, Standardization and Control in Design: A Cognitive Historical Study of Architectural Design and Planning in the Public Works Department of British India, 1855-1901*. Delft: Publikatieburo Bouwkunde Technische Universiteit Delft, 1994.

indigenous texts²⁹ of art and architecture of India, the critical views of late colonial writers such as Havell and Coomaraswamy were instrumental in influencing the further focus on traditional treatises of Indian art, sculpture and architecture in the work of art historian-scholars such as Stella Kramrisch and Partha Mitter in the post-independence/postcolonial years.³⁰ In reviewing such literature in the context of the current study, I show how these studies—pursued through carefully chosen theoretical approaches that aimed to transcend Western notions of Indian art and architecture—not only perpetrated an East-West dichotomy in post-independence discourses of Indian architecture, but also consistently reproduced dominant notions of Indian art and architecture.

Following a discussion of the mid-20th century writings of Kramrisch and Mitter, the relatively more recent interpretations of colonial architectures and colonial discourse by scholars such as Anthony King,³¹ Thomas Metcalf, G. H. R. Tillotson and Norma Evenson are then examined. This cluster of late 20th century scholarship belongs to a group that is increasingly helping us to realise that both colonialism and orientalism have become internalised in the theorisation of the postcolonial. Using relatively recent developments in cultural and social theory, a further body of postcolonial scholarship has developed in this vein. Evidenced in the works of scholars such as Peter Scriver, Vikram Prakash, Jyoti Hosagrahar and Swati Chattopadhyay—especially with regards to the discussion of architecture in colonial India—such late-20th century scholarship has brought colonial writings and architecture into various critical frameworks to evaluate them as narrative or discursive devices/practices set within complex socio-cultural contexts. While their work is commendable in unearthing unexplored facts, the present analysis

²⁹ By indigenous texts, I am referring to traditional treatises of Indian architecture written in Sanskrit such as the *Shilpa Shastras*, the *Manasara*, *Mayamatam*, and the more popular, *Vastu Shastra*.

³⁰ Partha Mitter. “Western Bias in the Study of South Indian Aesthetics.” *South Asian Review* 6, no. 2 (1973): 125-36; Stella Kramrisch. *The Hindu Temple*. 2 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976; Partha Mitter. *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977; Partha Mitter. *Indian Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

³¹ Anthony D. King. *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment*. London, Henley and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976.

reveals the problematic tendency of this postcolonial studies group to reconfirm, through evermore-dogged persuasion and descriptions, the reception, diffusion, and standardisation of essentialised Western knowledge and power in the naïve and backward Indian colonial social order. I discuss such postcolonial anxieties toward the end of chapter 3.

Running parallel to the resurgence of scholarship and publication on the architecture of colonial India, a distinctive set of discourses about contemporary Indian architectural practice also emerged in the latter part of the 20th century. However, before embarking on an in-depth discussion of selected discourses from this set, chapter 4 examines the context of the 1980s in India during which these particular discourses on contemporary Indian architecture were produced. I discuss the interrelatedness of global and local political, cultural and social factors, and also those related to the field of architecture, during the 1980s in order to understand the particular ‘Indian’ context in which these discourses on the contemporary architecture of India were published.

Chapter 5 surveys the specific discourses on contemporary Indian architecture produced during the 1980s. Two sub-discourses or genres are apparent, concentrating either on certain Indian architects and their works, or on pan-Indian surveys of post-independence and contemporary architecture. I focus on selected examples of each genres to reveal, firstly, the various narratives through which certain architects were consecrated as the legitimate representatives of contemporary Indian architecture, thus creating the issue of dominance and marginalisation; secondly, to begin to understand how a field of architecture in India got consolidated in terms of certain dominant issues that were (and still are) pursued with variable interests.

Chapter 6 draws part-I of the thesis to a close with a discussion of a handful of recent studies that have problematised the representation of Indian architecture (colonial, postcolonial and contemporary) and which have partially articulated the driving concerns of the current study as well. Specifically, I focus on and highlight the limitations in these previous critiques, further articulating the continuing problems with the representation of Indian architecture inherent in

the production of discourses about it, both historiographical and critical. While I identify at least two prevalent modes of analyses that have prevented such studies from providing a holistic critique of the representation of contemporary Indian architecture, my reading is also aimed at identifying the particular agents—architectural critics, architects and architect-educators—who were interested in undertaking such critical observations. This is important as it has a direct bearing on one of the foci of this study—that is, the field of architecture in India during the late-20th century.

Part II of this study is then mainly concerned with the problem of representation through architectural discourse, and a way of examining such a condition with regards to discourses of contemporary Indian architecture. Chapter 7 examines shifting paradigms in the analysis of architectural discourse. I discuss the approaches in two recent studies conducted on the nature and agency of architectural discourse—one by Panayotis Tournikiotis and the other by Greig Crysler. Focusing on the limited possibilities afforded by the theoretical tools employed, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production is introduced as an additional tool to understand architectural discourse as an embedded cultural production.

Chapter 8 explains the main components of Bourdieu's theory: concepts such as *field*, *habitus*, *doxa*, *interest*, different types of *capitals*, etc. Following Bourdieu, I further proceed to posit architectural journalism as a *field of restricted production* within the field of architecture, by which I explain the relatively autonomous (with regards to the economic and political determinations of a particular period) status of sites of discourse such as architectural magazines and journals.

Chapter 9 proceeds with a background history of the nominated exemplar of architectural journalism investigated as the primary case-study of this thesis: the architectural magazine *A+D*. I further outline a method of mapping and analysing the discourses published within the first decade in *A+D*. Having decided, within the constraints of both space and time, to examine selective discourses from *A+D*, the analysis is then focused on event-based discourses

and subject-based discourses in *A+D*, which are undertaken in chapters 10 and 11 respectively.

In the event-based discourses (chapter 10), I analyse the discourses surrounding the following events in *A+D*: The 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture (and events connected with this high-profile institution), the architectural exhibitions and related events of the world-touring Festival of India project (1985-86), and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) international design competition (1985-86). Through a critical reading of letters, debates, discussions and articles connected with such events and their reports in *A+D*, I identify at least two parallel ‘struggles’ within a dominant region in the field of architecture in India—thus challenging the view held by recent studies about the existence of a determinate ‘community of Indian architects’ during the 1980s.

Firstly, we come across a struggle by a relatively younger generation of post-independence architects and architect-educators in Delhi against the hegemonic status of a previous generation of post-independence architects and architect-educators; and secondly I show a ‘silent’ struggle pursued by certain members from the same younger generation against the regional and professional dominance of certain other members from both the younger and older generations of post-independence and contemporary Indian architecture. While both these struggles were carried out with an implicit aim to be the legitimate representatives of contemporary Indian architecture, I show how such struggles only consolidated and reproduced with increasingly clear distinctions, the structure of the field of architecture in India. Those interested in conducting or reporting post-independence and pan-Indian architectural developments in parallel discourses of contemporary Indian architecture, only faithfully (and perhaps helplessly) represented such distinctions.

Subject-based discourses occurring in the first decade of *A+D*’s publication are the focus of chapter 11. Through this particular set of discourse, I analyse the ways in which the producers of *A+D* not only selectively represented contemporary architectural practices in India, but also felt it necessary to frame

them in certain categories of perception and appreciation. In such representations, I highlight certain implicit 'rules of the game' followed and employed by the producers of *A+D* in their focus on marginal 'subjects' and highly consecrated 'subjects' connected with contemporary Indian architecture. I show how such rules were implicitly adjusted to and reflected the prevalent conditions of dominance and marginalisation in the field of architecture in India. In a discussion of this analysis, I also identify how the producers of *A+D*, even in their focus on the architecture of recognised marginalised regions through prevalent categories of modernism and/or traditionalism, reproduced certain Orientalist notions and perceptions of the entire socio-cultural order of which architecture was considered a product. Thus the aim of representing marginalised architecture, not only reinforced the legitimacy of dominant notions and perceptions of contemporary Indian architecture (practiced by certain protagonists from the dominant regions), but also, almost unconsciously, reproduced notions of Indian architecture, society and culture, which can be located in India's colonial past and later pre-independence nationalist imaginations.

In chapter 12, the concluding chapter, I articulate the significance of this thesis in understanding, more comprehensively, the formation, maintenance and sustenance of a dominant consensus about the identification of late-twentieth century contemporary Indian architecture. Although the comments and recommendations made in this chapter lie outside the critique of *A+D*, I restate how the site of discourse, *A+D*, which functions from a dominant region of architectural production in India, reveals at least two simultaneous struggles with regards to the legitimate representation of contemporary Indian architecture.

A critical account of such struggles, to which my thesis makes a small but timely contribution, is needed to dispel not only predominant perceptions about contemporary Indian architecture, but also that of the 'Indian' architect and architectural critic. As I argue in this final chapter, the field of architecture and its discourse production (or any cultural production) and diffusion can only be fully understood if one treats it as a field of competition, where the

very power to exercise legitimacy with regards to representation and cultural consecration is at stake. Thus we understand how such a system then works, through a field of restricted production such as architectural journalism, not only “to fulfil a consecration function,” but also as a system that is employed by interested and *knowing* agents (both regional and global) “to reproduce producers of a determinate type of cultural goods, and the consumer capable of consuming them.”³²

³² Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*, 121.

PART I

Problems of Representation in Discourses on Indian Architecture

Chapter 2

Colonial discourse

2.1: Introduction

The historiography of Indian architecture that continues to sustain architectural debate and pedagogy in India today is still largely founded on the writings of 19th century British scholars directly or indirectly engaged in the colonisation of India. This chapter surveys selected discourses from the colonial period of India's architectural historiography to show how certain categories of perception and appreciation regarding Indian architecture (and art) were formed, institutionalised and even challenged in the colonial period. Focusing on the works of colonial writers such as James Fergusson, E. B. Havell and A. K. Coomaraswamy, and discussions from existing criticism on this scholarship, I show not only how Orientalist notions have continued to influence perceptions about Indian architecture even in postcolonial discourse (the focus of the next chapter).

2.2: Early representations of Indian architecture

The historiography of Indian architecture, like the buildings of the Raj themselves, is one of the more tenacious legacies of cultural production in India under British colonial rule. Considered primary among colonial scholars of Indian art and architecture is James Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (1876). It is generally accepted that Fergusson's book was the first comprehensively written account of Indian architecture.¹ Involved in his family's indigo factory in Bengal, the young Fergusson shifted his interest to documenting examples of old Indian buildings in the 1830s. Consistent with the prevalent tendency of travelling Europeans to "discover...the exotic lands of the [British] empire,"² Fergusson travelled extensively in the Indian peninsula between 1835 and 1842 with a dogged determination of documenting, as extensively as he could, "the historical development of Indian architecture."³

Before and during the time Fergusson embarked on this self-imposed monumental task, selective representation of Indian monuments and landscapes was prevalent under what is generally known as the "picturesque" genre of landscape painting in the late-18th century European imagination.⁴ Artists such as William Hodges, and later, Thomas Daniell and his nephew William Daniell, through their aquatints, had popularised certain aspects of

¹ Fergusson has a number of essays on the topic to his credit apart from the publication of *The History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*. Before Fergusson's seminal work, Ram Raz had published *Architecture of the Hindus* in 1832, and Henry Cole had written about architecture of Kashmir in 1869, and architecture of Mathura and Agra in 1875. It may be noted that by Indian architecture, I mean the endogenous traditions of Indian architecture as recorded or reproduced by colonial and later writers of Indian architecture. Peter Scriver. "Stones and Texts: The Architectural Historiography of Colonial India and Its Colonial-Modern Contexts." In *Colonial Modernities: Building, Dwelling and Architecture in British India and Ceylon*, edited by Peter Scriver and Vikramaditya Prakash, 27-50. London and New York: Routledge, 2007; Tapati Guha-Thakurta. *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004; Jyoti Hosagrahar. "South Asia: Looking Back, Moving Ahead — History and Modernization." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 61, no. 3 (2002): 355-69.

² Guha-Thakurta. *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, 5.

³ Fergusson. *The History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*. vii.

⁴ Guha-Thakurta. *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, 5, 7.

colonial and, historic Indian architecture to their late 18th century British patrons.⁵ Further, with regards to colonial architecture in India, the aquatint representations were quite in accordance with the then prevalent Georgian taste for the exotic. Popular amongst the British, these aquatints indeed became or inspired the manuals for a style known as the Georgian Indian style.⁶ For such travelling artists, the project of recording and representing the cultural products of an alien society could have been more of a cultural curiosity (perhaps in repudiation) that was sustained by a lure of the exotic.⁷ Or, unbeknownst to themselves, it could have been a part of imperialism's various commercially profitable ventures. Although the "picturesque" was a filter through which exotic views of India's topography could be popularised, it had become a dominant frame through which the primeval and the mysterious, the wild and the unexplored, the timeless and the stagnant qualities of India could be imagined, and "packaged."⁸

Submitted already to such "compulsions of the 'picturesque,'" Fergusson's project was nevertheless pursued through a "self-consciously scientific mode of reasoning" which ran parallel with the development of disciplines such as geology during the early 19th century.¹⁰ Fergusson's project is also considered as part of a larger ethnographic mission to improve understanding of distant cultures that were now within the expanding purview of European imperialism. Such knowledge was equivalent to power, as much scholarship has argued within the 'discursive' paradigm of critique attributed to Michel Foucault and Edward Said in the cultural politics of European colonial domination.¹¹ This argument compulsively informs even recent postcolonial scholarship that paradoxically aims to transcend such a simplistic account of postcolonial complexities.¹²

⁵ Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*.

⁶ Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*.

⁷ Evenson. *The Indian Metropolis*, 83. Guha-Thakurta. *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, 8.

⁸ Guha-Thakurta. *Monuments, Objects, Histories*. 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰ Scriver. "Stones and Texts." 29.

¹¹ Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. 7-8. Guha-Thakurta. *Monuments, Objects, Histories*. 14.

¹² Scriver and Prakash, eds. *Colonial Modernities*. 4.

Pursued through and satisfying various interests, Fergusson's project gave birth to the very subject of Indian architecture.¹³ Limited as it was in the larger ideological framework in which Indian architecture, and civilisation, was "ordered," Fergusson's project also for the first time outlined a general history of Indian architecture based on religious divisions and a racial divide between "Aryan/Dravidian," and "Sanskritic/non-Sanskritic" cultures. Thus we find categories such as Hindu architecture, Buddhist architecture, Jaina architecture, Tamil Hindu or Dravidian architecture and modern Hindu architecture (the stylistic variations found between "Hindu" and "Muhamaddan" architecture), etc. Apart from this, Fergusson also theorised his understanding of the various styles of Indian architecture under a general notion of progressive decline that was attributed to the entire Indian civilisation, in particular the 'southern Indians.' Contrasting south Indians with the Egyptians with their 'lofty' ideas and aspirations, for instance, Fergusson wrote:

The Egyptians had great and lofty ideas, and a hankering after immortality, that impressed itself on all their works. The southern Indians had no such aspirations. Their intellectual status is, and always was, mediocre; they had no literature of their own—no history to which they could look back with pride, and their religion was, and is, an impure and degrading fetishism. It is impossible that anything very grand or imposing should come out of such a state of things [in south India]. What they had to offer to their gods was a tribute of labour, and that was bestowed without stint. To cut a chain of fifty links out of a block of granite and suspend it between two pillars, was with them a triumph of art.¹⁴

Having conferred a mediocre intellectual status to the south Indians, it was only expected of Fergusson to see its evidence in the architecture of south India. Thus architecture, in Fergusson's accounts, became "the mirror of history, civilization, and morals; the relative 'perfection' of its form and design was made the decisive marker of its antiquity and 'Aryan' racial pedigree."¹⁵

¹³ Guha-Thakurta. *Monuments, Objects, Histories*. 15.

¹⁴ Fergusson. *The History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*. 341.

¹⁵ Guha-Thakurta. *Monuments, Objects, Histories*. 17-18.

He also further distinguishes architecture in south India from that in the north of India in terms of the idea of progressive decline:

In some parts of the north of India matters have not sunk so low as in the Madras Presidency, but in the south civil architecture as a fine art is quite extinct, and though sacred architecture still survives in a certain queer, quaint form of temple-building, it is of so low a type that it would hardly be a matter of regret if it, too, ceased to exist, and the curtain dropped over the graves of both, as they are arts that practically have become extinct.¹⁶

Such controversial speculations and claims about Indian civilisation and its architecture (perhaps not so controversial at the time), in the earliest comprehensive account of Indian architecture, were to guarantee academic debate for successive generations of commentators of Indian architecture. With further incursion into the Indian landscape, many buildings and building types became more accessible to the British, and their interest in Indian monuments remained sustained for a century. The next section will elaborate on the influence of Fergusson's claims in forming hegemonic categories of perception and appreciation, and their institutionalisation, with respect to Indian architecture.

2.3: Hegemonic categories and institutionalisation of representations

The commercial and political stances of the British in India underwent a major transformation in the second half of the 19th century in the aftermath of the first large-scale resistance to European colonial intervention in India. The suppression of the Rebellion of 1857-58—referred to variously as ‘The Mutiny,’ by imperial historians, or the ‘First War of Independence,’ by nationalist historians—in which much of North India had risen against the army and interests of the British East India Company, had led to the imposition of direct crown rule on the Indian colony in 1858. With this political change

¹⁶ Fergusson. *The History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*. 385.

the British were transformed from traders in India to rulers of India. We have observed that late 18th century interest in Indian architecture was sustained by a simultaneous romantic lure of the ancient, the picturesque and the exotic, and resulted in respective visual representations. However, the late 19th century interest in Indian architecture persisted through scholarship based on determinist scientific and systematic approaches. Contemporaneous events of the time such as the founding of such fields of interest as Indology and Sinology, and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), not only sustained the interest in such formal visualizations, but also helped in the development of a definitive linear history of Indian architecture.¹⁷ Art historian James Fergusson belonged to this second generation of late 19th century British enthusiasts of Indian art and architecture. It is in this second generation's scholarship that the first categorisations of selective Indian architecture appear in print. This section briefly traces dominant themes of such categorisations that architecture in India was subject to. Furthermore, it is imperative to discuss the subsequent institutionalisation of such frameworks carried out through various agencies of the imperial machinery.

Ronald Inden in *Imagining India* considers the various "curious metaphors" used to describe India by most European writings during the colonial period and also in subsequent Euro-American scholarship.¹⁸ These metaphors ranged from that of "India as a female, Indian thought as a dream, caste society as a centrifuge, and of Hinduism as a jungle or even a sponge."¹⁹ Pursued under the rubric of Indology or South Asian studies, Inden further demonstrates how 'Orientalist' writings have exercised hegemony under various circumstances over a substantial period of time, serving one or the other metaphor. For the purposes of this subsection, it may suffice to understand the institutionalisation of the larger theme(s) in or through which Indian architecture was described in

¹⁷ Drawing attention to the immense contribution of photography in such a project, Vikramaditya Prakash has argued that the colonist's objective use of this medium – a new invention at the time – was instrumental in its colonial hegemonic project of "fix[ing]" India (or Indian architecture) into "stereotypical brackets." Vikramaditya Prakash. "Between Objectivity and Illusion: Architectural Photography in the Colonial Frame." *JAE* 55, no. 1 (2001): 13. Also see Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*, 145-6 for the role of photography in the ethnographic study of India.

¹⁸ Inden. *Imagining India*, 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

colonial architectural historiography. The individuals who belonged to and indulged in such discourses were more or less contemporaneous with or followed James Fergusson. Yet, it is Fergusson who is widely referred to in later colonial and postcolonial accounts of Indian architecture.²⁰ Fergusson's text was dialectically placed in a position where it is seen to have initiated the particular field of colonial Indian architecture.

Some of the 'hegemonic' ideas perpetrated by Fergusson and his contemporaries, must also be understood within the ideological atmospheres prevalent during the period of their writings. Several scholars have tried to unravel the project of mid-19th century architectural critics and historians. Peter Collins has argued that the project of historicizing, for scholars such as Fergusson, was analogically modelled on the principles of geology and comparative anatomy. These were revolutionary scientific developments of that period.²¹ According to such an analogy, through both reason and comparison, material fragments of past architecture found in excavation sites could be used by the architectural historian to reconstruct past architecture with a high level of certainty. The immense importance given to the categorisation of ornamentation and details in the discourse under consideration is understandable now. According to the analogy provided by Collins, this was to assist the future historian to differentiate, taxonomically or stylistically, between building fragments—and hence buildings—that might be unearthed in excavations.

Such thinking also explains Fergusson's bias, consistent with many scholars of his generation, that everything great in architecture had already been established/accomplished by the Greeks or the Romans.²² The Greeks and the

²⁰ According to Jyoti Hosagrahar, Fergusson's influence in the later writings and teachings of the history of architecture in India cannot be ignored. "Much has been written and published since [Fergusson wrote his book], but even today, although his book does not serve as the primary text, Fergusson's choice of buildings, framework, and approach remain central to the teaching of South Asian architectural history." Hosagrahar. "South Asia: Looking Back, Moving Ahead," 356.

²¹ Peter Collins. *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture: 1750-1950*. Montreal & Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1965. 131-2.

²² It is interesting to read Fergusson's breathless rally in justifying that the excavated works of sculpture/architecture unearthed, in what is known as the Gandhara monasteries, have such

Romans were already thought to have laid out the classical principles in art and architecture. It was the contention of such scholars that western classical principles of form or ornamentation therefore, can be used as benchmarks against which any architecture—contemporary or antiquarian, European or Indian—could be judged. Specifically with respect to his ethnologically driven theorisation of architecture in India, we have seen how Fergusson’s views were likewise consistent. Fergusson’s views were so convincing that even subsequent (early 20th century) apologists of Indian art and architecture, such as E. B. Havell, Vincent Smith and Hermann Goetz—despite their efforts to dismantle Fergusson’s many assumptions—continued, for instance, to find even worthier reasons for the ‘decadence’ of south Indian architecture.²³ It is under such assumptions that architecture in India was also measured. Much of the text belonging to such discourse also generalises such a biased attitude and extends it to the imagined degradation of the entire Indian civilization.

In spite of Collin’s argument, Fergusson and his generation’s thinking reflect one consistent line of thought, particularly with respect to Indian architecture. It is the implicit and unquestioned belief in the unworthiness of original Indian architecture (whatever it might have been). Whatever appeared ‘remarkable’ in Indian architecture was obviously regarded as a result of some foreign influence—preferably Greek or Roman. Furthermore, the relative formal simplicity of such early Indian architecture was considered as the creative epitome of an ‘uncontaminated’ Aryan race—a European-Aryan race really, according to Vincent Smith’s fantasy²⁴ with which contemporary post-Renaissance European architecture had also lost touch. In fact according to this theory, architecture in India had also, like in Greece, deteriorated after achieving the high standards of perfection between the 3rd century BC and AD 5th century. According to Smith’s theorisation of India’s history, it can be

western influences, considering that the only proof he had was some names of Bactrian kings and their successors inscribed in the coins that were also unearthed during the excavation. Fergusson. *The History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*. 184.

²³ Mitter. “Western Bias in the Study of South Indian Aesthetics,” 129-30. There was, however, one exception. The Frenchman, Gabriel Jouveau-Dubreuil published his work on Dravidian architecture in 1914 and “brought order to the study of South India’s temples, which he classified by chronology and style [...]” Cited in Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. 50.

²⁴ Inden. *Imagining India*. 185.

argued that the entire project of British colonial architectural writers aimed to seek its own history in the antiquity of India's heritage and subsequent 'degradation.' This also explains the missionary zeal of the British in trying to 'preserve' and 'improve' Indian architecture, along with the civilisation in general.

Thoughts about Indian architecture, in this vein persisted amongst a generation of apologists—from historians and art scholars, to engineers and architects alike—who followed Fergusson in the late 19th and early 20th century. Yet, paradoxical as it may sound, the critical stance of these early 20th century scholars was quite different from those of Fergusson's. A general disagreement with Fergusson's history of Indian architecture and an interest in Indian crafts tradition dominated the scholarly pursuits of these scholars, which was also supported by a range of institutional(ised) processes. This attitude also reflected the implicit interest in the Gothic Revival and a romance of pre-industrial society with its idealised craftsmanship that was prevalent amongst the British artistic intelligentsia of the late 19th century.

Towards the early 20th century in India, this resulted not only in debates for an appropriate hybrid style (Indo-Saracenic, for instance) applicable to the official architecture of a waning empire, but also in criticisms against the 'poverty of design and detail' in the utilitarian architecture of the Public Works Department (PWD) of British India.²⁵ The PWD was one of the institutionalised agencies established by the British in the mid-19th century. In fact, most of the colonial machinery, reflecting the mixed intentions of a missionary zeal and/or institutionalised governance—such as law courts, bureaucratic government structures, insurance companies, trading houses, schools and colleges, museums, libraries, clubs and gymkhanas—were introduced in India in the mid-19th century.²⁶ Some of the famous art schools and technical schools in India owe their prominence and establishment to the frenetic institution-building activity of the British in the mid-19th and early 20th

²⁵ See for instance, Samuel Swinton Jacob's criticism against the 'stereotyped conventionalities' in the works of the PWD in Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*, 72-3.

²⁶ Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*. 71.

century India. A forum for expressing architectural ideas and critiques was also introduced in 1865 in Mumbai. Called the *Bombay Builder*, this architectural journal recorded the major redevelopments of Mumbai during the time, especially with regards to government architectural works.²⁷ It could be a reason why architectural debates were mostly Mumbai-centric during the period.

Furthermore, with an expansion in the engineer-dominated Public Works Department, the architecture of British India also catered to utilitarian needs such as railway stations, police stations and jails, cantonments and civil buildings for building up the armature of British dominance. As Peter Scriver has demonstrated—specifically in the case of the PWD—there were mechanisms of rationalisation, standardisation and control, by which the British regime not only ensured its own safety in India, but also augmented the institutionalisation of design knowledge and practice for decades to come.²⁸ Thomas Metcalf's *An Imperial Vision* records this relationship between institutionalised knowledge and the resulting architecture, and architectural discourse, during the colonial period.²⁹ Metcalf argues that even by sympathising with and promoting selective Indian crafts tradition, the apologists of Indian art and crafts traditions were merely exhibiting and fulfilling a larger political objective—that of the power to represent, and hence, to control India.³⁰

After the events of 1857-58, debates over the correctness or appropriation of traditional Indian architecture continued amongst the British scholars of Indian architecture. The events of 1857-58 are also considered as reasons why the British in India loosened their adherence to classicism in architecture and attempted to find a new imperial style to represent its dominance in India. Based on hybridity, it was a stance, which could appease both an injured self-confidence and an aggravated Indian colony.

²⁷ Evenson. *The Indian Metropolis*. 84.

²⁸ Scriver. "Rationalization, Standardization and Control in Design."

²⁹ See chapter 5 "Arts, Crafts, and Empire," in Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. 141.

³⁰ Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. 162.

In this regard, the appropriation of the so-called ‘Indo-Saracenic’ style of architecture is particularly interesting. As subsequent scholarship has demonstrated, this hybrid style developed enthusiastically by British architects and engineers to cast imperial architecture in, was also replicated by the Indian elite of the period almost unquestioningly. The Indo-Saracenic (or ‘Indian Saracenic’)—a diverse blend of Indian, Islamic and western gothic design ideas—was initially a term used by Fergusson to denote Islamic architecture in India.³¹ However, after crown rule was imposed, this term took on a notoriously fashionable value. This style manifested itself in built forms for the British administration and other public buildings in regions as disparate and varied as Mumbai, Ajmer, Allahabad, Baroda and Chennai in the late 19th century.³² A group of highly motivated British architects/engineers such as William Emerson, R. F. Chisholm and Charles Mant, to name just a few, were the enthusiastic practitioners of the diverse formal representations of this ‘style.’ Further, as Tillotson has shown, the development of this style (and other styles fashionably labelled as the Indo-Deco by subsequent scholarship) had an ‘impact’ on native Indian taste through royal patronage.³³ This resulted in palatial and institutional buildings that spread indiscriminately—as a standard model—on the varied Indian landscape.³⁴ It could be argued that the choice of architecture by certain Indian royalty during this period was a direct continuation of the hybrid approach to architectural style long established by the imperial Mughals in India. Despite the paradoxical involvement of British architects, and engineers in many of these hybrid designs, however, a more reactionary tendency has been emphasised in more popular accounts, which have depicted these hybrid buildings as an expression of resistance to the imperial architecture of the British.³⁵ The balance between ‘impact’ and

³¹ Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. 46.

³² *Ibid.*, 48.

³³ The choice of over-simplifying words such as ‘impact’ conveys a too reductive reading of the phenomenon. Such continuing discrepancies are found throughout the postcolonial 20th century scholarship.

³⁴ Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. 48.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. Also see Jan Morris and Simon Winchester. *Stones of Empire: The Buildings of the Raj*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983; and Philip Davies. *Splendours of the Raj: British Architecture in India, 1660 to 1947*. London: John Murray, 1985.

reistance, and invention versus continuity, in this Indo-Saracenic tendency remains a matter for debate.

Running through such debates about the appropriateness of Indian architecture, directly or indirectly connected, with or without changing political agendas, was a perception that Indian classical architecture had degraded beyond repair.³⁶ This degradation, according to the prevalent theories, could be stopped or corrected only by reviving the ‘authentic’ crafts traditions and architectural traditions of India.³⁷ This late 19th and early 20th century ‘revival’ of the Indian crafts tradition, interestingly still borrowed its ideological and chronological validity from Fergusson’s historical theory of Indian architecture. Furthermore, to put such ‘corrections’ in place, design knowledge was selectively appropriated from the different varieties of traditional craft/architectural expertise that native India (or Indians) offered. Either due to increasing political attention, or due to the implicit adherence to Fergusson’s categorisations, such appropriations and the scholars/engineers who propagated them, concentrated mostly on the northern, western and central regions of India.

The perception of the early 20th century British architects and scholars about the loss and subsequent appropriation of Indian arts/crafts/architecture tradition, was equally advanced, through a “structure of super-exploitation” by the active participation of native craftsmen and artisans as well, who might have been unaware of such a perception in the employment and imagination of the colonial scholars.³⁸ An increasing number of educated Indian architects and/or draughtsmen were also actively involved in advancing such a perception in their own limited ways within the architectural profession at the time. Further, because of the direct involvement of most of the British scholars as leaders in/of the prominent art schools, such knowledge also spread through institutions of art and architecture.

³⁶ Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*, 64.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 86.

³⁸ Arindam Dutta. ““Strangers within the Gate”: Public Works and Industrial Art Reform.” In Sriver and Prakash eds. *Colonial Modernities*. 114.

The next section deals with the resistance—both within the British scholarship as well as through the native protagonists or apologists of Indian art and architecture, as was briefly mentioned before—against Fergusson and his contemporaries’ late 19th century scholarship on native Indian architecture. By now we have familiarised ourselves with some of the key agents of such a resistance, such as E. B. Havell, Vincent Smith, Hermann Goetz, John Lockwood Kipling, Swinton Jacob, F. S. Growse and A. K. Coomaraswamy. I now briefly discuss the writings of a couple of scholars from the group; E. B. Havell and Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy. Challenging Fergusson and his generation of writers, these scholars tried to interpret Indian art and architecture through symbolism and indigenous aesthetics. However, as we will see, the debates generated by Fergusson’s discourse within the colonial period itself, while contesting his claims or his categorisations, only transformed them within what was possible within the larger ideology of progressive decay attributed to India, its citizens, and their cultural products. Their project of such ‘apologists’ of Indian art and architecture was highly influential in the continuation of scholarship based on traditional and indigenous texts of Indian art, sculpture and architecture by art historians such as Stella Kramrisch and Partha Mitter, to name a few, in the postcolonial years.

2.4: Critical voices in the late colonial writings

The mid-19th century interest in Indian crafts traditions coupled with the development of distaste for industrial art in mid-Victorian Britain, reinforced yet another missionary project of the British Empire in India—that of preserving India’s crafts traditions. This was also initially, a commercially profitable venture for the British, against which some of its own scholars remained critical.³⁹ Despite contending ideas and issues, mid-19th century in India witnessed the establishment of art schools in the three presidency capitals—Madras (now called Chennai), Bombay (now called Mumbai) and Calcutta (now called Kolkata). Heading these schools and their curricula were

³⁹ Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. 157.

some of the key enthusiasts and scholars of Indian arts and crafts traditions: E. B. Havell, R. F. Chisholm, John Griffiths and John Lockwood Kipling. Throughout the late 19th century (and despite sometimes less-than-energetic support from the government), these scholar-pedagogues nevertheless drove the project of preserving Indian traditions through the occasional enthusiastic support by the affluent and the royal in India.⁴⁰

However, at the other end of the spectrum, as Tillotson has shown, the combined effects of both the widespread contempt for Indian civilization and the Westernisation of the Indian elite, had created an atmosphere in which the sustenance of the older native styles was no longer felt necessary by the ruling classes of, predominantly, north and central India. It was considered more prestigious to construct palaces in classical architecture instead.⁴¹ Such accounts of the exchange and adoption of cultural goods in British India between the mid-19th century and late 19th century certainly point to the shifting tastes and values in the perceptions of both the coloniser and the colonized.⁴² Under such a condition, it can be argued that the project of reclaiming India's past traditions, especially with respect to art and crafts including architecture, had begun with these late 19th century crafts enthusiasts. This project also ran parallel with the scholarship of Fergusson, which continued its hegemonic status even after Fergusson's death in 1886.⁴³

Furthermore, imperial architecture under the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon (from 1898 to 1905) saw a frenetic activity of building in variants of the so-called "Indo-Saracenic" style. Curzon was a highly motivated individual sympathetic to the cause of the crafts enthusiasts. Being simultaneously committed to the growth and legitimacy of the Empire, at times Curzon took personal interest in

⁴⁰ Ibid., 159.

⁴¹ Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. 41-2.

⁴² One such example at that time was the revival of the Indian craftsmen by the engineer Swinton Jacob. Working for the Maharaja Ram Singh of Jaipur as an executive engineer for public works, Jacob's direction and supervision of the Albert Hall museum in 1883-84 directly involved the native designers and stone-carvers, giving them ample decision-making opportunities. Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. 69.

⁴³ In fact Fergusson's ethnographic theories regarding Indian architecture got yet another impetus in 1910 when his friend James Burgess published a revised and enlarged edition of the *History of Indian and Eastern architecture*.

choosing or polishing the style to make sure it fulfilled its imperial role.⁴⁴ By the early 20th century—at least within the first two decades of it—many buildings for imperial governance continued to be designed in the Indo-Saracenic style. According to Metcalf, this style was, by then “mastered as an architectural style for the Raj.”⁴⁵

The first half of the 20th century witnessed a polarisation of views regarding imperial politics. While many anticipated the end of British dominion in the Indian subcontinent, an opposing faction perceived the possibilities of a permanent imperial supremacy. This has been shown to be evident in the extraordinary attention paid to the revival of Indian crafts traditions in the major schools of art established by the British, and the debates about an ‘Indic’ style for the new capital of British dominance in India—New Delhi.⁴⁶ With regards to architectural discourse of the period, as Peter Scriver has observed, there was a “strong polarization of interpretation...between the essentialist materialism of the colonial discourse on Indian architecture, and the central issue of stylistic representation in the design of ‘modern’ buildings in colonial India.”⁴⁷ A related distinction between the presumed ‘timelessness’ of the Indian architectural tradition and the self-conscious modernity of Britain’s building and engineering efforts in India was reinforced institutionally by a division of agency, in the colonial technocracy, between the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) with its mandate to conserve India’s tradition-built past, and the engineer-dominated Public Works Department (PWD), with its mandate to build and improve colonial-modern India.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. 199-210.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁴⁶ The complexities and ironies surrounding the design of New Delhi as the capital have been discussed extensively by a wide range of late 20th century scholarship—especially by such scholars as Irving, Davies, Metcalf, Tillotson and Evenson. It is therefore redundant to rehash the established scholarship regarding this particular era of colonialism in British-Indian architecture. It may be sufficed that two camps actively debated over the nature of architecture in New Delhi. One camp included prominent authorities of Indian crafts traditions such as Havell and Coomaraswamy rallying for employing ‘native master-builders’ in the building of the capital. And the other camp, represented by the Government of India itself, Lord Curzon, and the chosen architects for building the Delhi capital complex, Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, felt that only a wholly Western and classical form would be helpful to represent Britain’s reassuring dominance in the Indian subcontinent. Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. 219.

⁴⁷ Scriver. “Stones and Texts.” 48.

⁴⁸ Peter Scriver. “Delimiting Architecture in the Construction of Colonial India.” Paper presented at the 21st Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia

Amongst the above-mentioned Indian art and crafts enthusiasts, the art historian E. B. Havell is a key figure in championing the revival of the Indian craftsman and architecture. Havell was one of the first few who took issues with Fergusson's classification of Indian art and architecture into various periodic 'styles.' In his *Indian Architecture*, first published in 1913 (and in his subsequent publications), Havell not only criticised the judging of Indian aesthetics by Western standards but also expressed his disagreement with those who suggested that everything worth considering in Indian art or architecture was introduced by some foreign influence.⁴⁹ For instance, in the context of the debates surrounding the choice of an architectural style for the design of Delhi by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, Havell charged that variations of the Indo-Saracenic "had been nothing but a 'make-believe Anglo-Indian style.'"⁵⁰ By extending his criticism into the early 20th century, Havell provided impetus to a fledgling array of scholars writing in a similar critical vein.

Havell's self-motivated project of "rejecting entirely" Fergusson's claims about Indian architecture—specifically Fergusson's "classification of styles and some of the chronological estimates"—nevertheless, by Havell's own admission, relied heavily on Fergusson's, and on Fergusson's disciple and friend, James Burgess' chronological facts.⁵¹ Attacking most of Fergusson's chronology of Indian architecture, which was based on constructed religious and ethnic divisions of the Indian society in general, Havell proposed an alternative reading of ancient and native architecture of India. Havell's proposal was based on comparative symbolism. As Partha Mitter has noted, Havell was the first one to suggest that "Hindu" architecture employed a hierarchical principle in decoration, each part henceforth playing a big role in

and New Zealand, Melbourne 2004. Peter Scriver. "Empire-Building and Thinking in the Public Works Department of British India." In Scriver and Prakash eds. *Colonial Modernities*, 69-92.

⁴⁹ Refer to the 'preface' in volume 2 of E. B Havell. *Encyclopaedia of Architecture in the Indian Subcontinent*. 2 vols. New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2000 (The Millennium Edition).

⁵⁰ Quoted in Scriver. "Stones and Texts." 46.

⁵¹ Havell. *Encyclopaedia of Architecture in the Indian Subcontinent*. Vol. II, Preface, vii.

the overall “spiritual” unification of architecture.⁵² In what now reads like a tenacious effort in the point-by-point deconstruction of Fergusson’s claims, Havell’s project may be considered as a meticulous variation of the colonial imagination. Like his contemporary Coomaraswamy, Havell’s scholarship was also based on the essential notion of ‘India’ as an eternal, unchanging and stagnant agency whose cultural productions were largely ahistorical variants of the mythological structure (of ‘Hindus’ for Havell) with which the entire Indian civilization was associated.

The late 19th and early 20th century years are sometimes considered as a period in which nationalism, as an implicit ideology was increasingly infiltrating artistic thought in India.⁵³ Raja Ravi Varma’s artistic ventures in south India and the Bengal school of art established by the Tagores in West Bengal, are considered as pioneering efforts of such early nationalist movements in Indian art. A. K. Coomaraswamy, another apologist of traditional Indian aesthetics in art and architecture and a contemporary of Havell, has been considered as a nationalist with regards to architectural and artistic scholarship of the Indian subcontinent. However, because of his background (mixed-parentage—half Sinhalese and half English—and raised in England), Coomaraswamy’s position is a contested one with regards to the history of colonial writings about Indian architecture.

Coomaraswamy, had since 1908, begun to write about the “Aims of Indian Art.”⁵⁴ Between 1909 and 1913, the years Coomaraswamy spent in India, he became highly interested not only in the spiritual, religious and metaphysical aspects of Indian life, but also developed critical viewpoints about India’s politics and art in the early 20th century. One of his early criticisms, for instance, was directed against the South Kensington Museum in Britain. The museum, in 1875, possessed about twenty thousand Indian items that were classified around the same time.⁵⁵ Writing in 1910 about the display of Indian

⁵² Partha Mitter. *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. 250.

⁵³ Lang et al. *Architecture and Independence*. 121.

⁵⁴ Coomaraswamy. *Aims of Indian Art*.

⁵⁵ Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. 144-5.

items in the museum, devoid of respect for traditional values or “expression of Indian thought and feeling in art,”⁵⁶ Coomaraswamy complained that the situation was no better in India either, especially, in the schools of art in both Bombay and Madras. Coomaraswamy inaugurated his focus on traditional or indigenous architecture in India by a scholarly study about Indian architectural terms gathered from traditional literature and architectural texts of India. His almost independent effort at recreating ancient Indian architecture and urban environment is nevertheless perceived to have projected an idealized Indian society in the past.⁵⁷ This was similar to the view held by Coomaraswamy’s contemporary, Havell, and previous scholars, which directly or indirectly assumed that art and architecture in India had deteriorated, and therefore, was in need of a face-lift. Perhaps driven by nationalism, Coomaraswamy also held that the only way out of such a problem was to revert to the lost traditions themselves in modern practices.

In their varied approaches towards the perceived common problem of a crisis in Indian art and architecture, Havell and Coomaraswamy represented the sustained vigour characteristic of such scholarship during the time. Moreover, their scholarship also indicates a growing awareness of the processes of colonisation (and its influence) on art and architecture in India—both in the mind of the coloniser and of the colonised. The productive endeavour of these early 20th century “self-appointed guardians of Indian civilization,”⁵⁸ relied on, and sometimes implicitly subsumed the ideological assertions laid out by Fergusson and the romantic idealists such as Hegel and James Mill. Finally, we have also seen how their efforts along with contemporaneous events such as founding of art schools, consolidation of the PWD and debates about the choice of an imperial style of architecture, set up the process of institutionalisation both within architectural pedagogy and the profession. The scholarship established by Havell and Coomaraswamy was influential for a range of contemporaneous and postcolonial studies, which similarly drew their scholarship from the various ancient literatures of architecture and fine arts in

⁵⁶ Quoted in Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. 161.

⁵⁷ Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*. 129.

⁵⁸ Evenson. *The Indian Metropolis*. 84.

India. Some of them, for instance Stella Kramrisch's *The Hindu Temple*,⁵⁹ first published in 1946, provide more convincing theoretical explanations based on ancient texts, and have indeed become seminal texts in their fields.

Despite the primary intention of correcting the misrepresentations of Indian architectural traditions, such critical stances within the colonial scholarship nevertheless continued to emphasise original principles of Indian art or architecture. Such early episodes of resistance to the hegemony of the 19th century colonial discourse on 'Indian' architecture only helped in consolidating a field of architectural discourse centred on the appropriateness of 'Indian' architecture. As Arindam Dutta has shown, such a "peculiar parallelism" of resistance within the colonial discourse and actual architectural production only suggested "a surrogate story of competition between colonial and native capitalists...such that the [local] artisan could both become the flashpoint of nationalist contestation and produce the required continuum of authority through which a new nationalist class could legitimize its power."⁶⁰ Dutta's Marxist interpretation of the uses of labour and capital by the Department of Science and Art (DSA)—a body governing art education throughout the British Empire—demonstrates how local artisans (the colonised) and practices were utilised through a "structure of super-exploitation" to maintain the power relation between the coloniser and the colonised. Understanding such digressions within the colonial discourse is necessary for the current study, as they point to the historical formation of a field of struggle with regards to the authenticity of Indian architecture and its representation. As we will see in the following pages, such a struggle continued (and still continues), with evermore-critical digressions, to engage in debates about postcolonial, modern, or contemporary Indian architecture.

⁵⁹ Kramrisch. *The Hindu Temple*.

⁶⁰ Dutta. "'Strangers within the Gate.'" 114.

Chapter 3

Postcolonial discourse

3.1: Introduction

Following the chronological order outlined in Chapter 1, this chapter focuses on the postcolonial discourses on Indian architecture. Critical stances undertaken on the representation of Indian architecture within the colonial scholarship itself (evidenced in the works of late colonial writers such as Havell and Coomaraswamy), were instrumental in developing a field of discourse centred on the traditional treatises of Indian art, sculpture and architecture in the post-independence/postcolonial years as well. In this regard, this chapter reviews the influential works of art historian-scholars such as Stella Kramrisch and Partha Mitter. Within the larger question of this study, this review will help us to see how this specific scholarship not only perpetrated an East-West dichotomy in post-independence discourses of Indian architecture, but also consistently reproduced dominant perceptions about Indian art and architecture.

Following this, the chapter discusses the relatively more recent interpretations of colonial architectures and colonial discourse by scholars such as Anthony King, Thomas Metcalf, G. H. R. Tillotson and Norma Evenson. This body of

scholarship which emerged in the 1980s have shed new light in the theorisation of colonialism and orientalism with regards to colonial Indian architecture. Such concerns are further being explored in the recent works of scholars such as Peter Scriver, Vikram Prakash, Jyoti Hosagrahar and Swati Chattopadhyay. Such late-20th century scholarship, which through various critical frameworks, has tried to evaluate colonial architecture as narrative or discursive devices/practices set within complex socio-cultural contexts, as I show in this chapter, has continued the problematic tendency to reconfirm the reception, diffusion, and standardisation of essentialised Western knowledge and power in the Indian colonial social order. Such postcolonial anxieties are discussed toward the end of this chapter.

3.2: Rewriting *Indian* art and architecture and continuing East-West dichotomy

In the last chapter, we have seen how E. B. Havell and A. K. Coomaraswamy amongst others paved the way for a better or deeper appreciation of Indian arts and architecture. Despite their nationalistically biased idealisms, the scholarship of such early 20th century “apologists” of Indian art and architecture did have a direct impact on subsequent generations of art historians, both European and Indian. As early as 1946, the Austrian born and educated art historian of South Asian Art, Stella Kramrisch wrote *The Hindu Temple*,¹ a seminal work in two volumes and still regarded as an authoritative text with regards to the temple architecture of India. Stella Kramrisch had studied under Joseph Strzygowski at the University of Vienna and although her most influential work remains *The Hindu Temple*, her career spanning interest in Indian arts and crafts had her painstakingly chronicle many Indian archaeological treasures. In *The Hindu Temple*, Kramrisch draws the intellectual framework from a range of Vedic and other ancient Sanskrit texts to construct an idea of the Hindu temple as a symbol of manifestation—the concrete shape of *the* Essence. Kramrisch occasionally also borrows from the scholarship of Coomaraswamy as well, who had in the first instance started the

¹ Kramrisch. *The Hindu Temple*.

process of finding the intentions of Indian art and architecture within indigenous and ancient texts.

Kramrisch was very much a part of the Bengal art movement, for it was Rabindranath Tagore who had invited her in 1921 to join Kala-Bhavan as a teacher of art history. She is credited as having introduced trends in European art, such as Impressionism and Cubism, to the early 20th century Indian artists of the Bengal School. Kramrisch was also actively involved in a 1922 exhibition, invited by Rabindranath Tagore in Kolkata, which featured works of Bauhaus artists such as Johannes Itten, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky.² Kramrisch belonged to an age in which artists in Europe—especially in places such as Austria and Germany—were searching for an alternative to western empiricism in art. In this period, a range of artists including Kandinsky, Malevich and Mondrian were seriously engaged in reading ancient Indian texts such as the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.³ The Indian artists and architects, while following on the ideological stance provided by the likes of Havell, Coomaraswamy and Kramrisch, continued to be simultaneously influenced by Western trends in art and architecture of the period which began to infiltrate Indian culture through books and journals.

On the other hand, amongst the international apologists of Indian art and craft such as Kramrisch herself, the interest leaned towards the symbolic and formal simplicity of folk art and architecture, as found in the rural art forms of India. These were supposed to have the same ancient and timeless qualities of a civilisation that had become increasingly corrupt with time—a sentiment that echoed the ideological underpinnings of the late 18th century orientalist writers. This is evident in Kramrisch's publications in German journals about the 'simple' and 'pure' paintings of Sunayani Devi, who was the niece of

² Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*. 163. Also see Partha Mitter. "Reflections on Modern Art and National Identity in Colonial India: An Interview." (henceforth Mitter, "Reflections") In Kobena Mercer, ed. *Cosmopolitan Modernisms, Annotating Art's Histories*. London: Institute of International Visual Arts and The MIT Press, 2005. 29.

³ Partha Mitter suggests that this ideological turn among European artists may have its roots in Nietzsche's sustained attack on the ideas of positivism and empiricism based on Cartesian rationality in the late 19th century Europe. Mitter. "Reflections." 30.

Rabindranath Tagore and an untrained artist.⁴ This search for a primitiveness in art (and architecture), as Partha Mitter has argued, was a phenomenon of the modern West—a “counter-modern rather than an anti-modern tendency” which was inherent in modernism, and existed as a questioning alter ego.⁵ Thus, according to this argument, Kramrisch’s work also predominantly demonstrates the search for a European perfectionism—a European identity—in the rural or the ancient works of the Indians.

Despite a general distrust in Western rationality amongst the Western apologists of Indian art and architecture, and a decline in the pervasive racism which characterised 19th-century European thought, the early 20th century scholars such as Kramrisch can still be seen as continuing the East-West dichotomy in art and architectural discourse of the period. While Partha Mitter’s critique of Kramrisch’s role in the construction of ‘Indian architecture’ is persuasive, a critical appreciation of Mitter’s own, often neglected stand on Indian art and architecture developed through the 1970s, is also crucial to understand the historical development of the discourse of Indian art and architecture.

Partha Mitter’s *Much maligned monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art*,⁶ was first published in 1977, thus predating, and largely anticipating the escalation of post-colonial cultural criticism addressing India and other ‘non-western’ contexts that followed the publication of Edward Said’s paradigm-shifting study of *Orientalism*,⁷ in 1978. As early as the mid-1960s during his tenure as a Research Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge, with a degree in history from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) London, Mitter had begun research on the “Western bias in the study of south Indian aesthetics.”⁸ In the preface to the 1992 edition of *Much maligned monsters* Mitter reiterates that his “own contribution has been not only to trace misrepresentations of Hindu art throughout history but, more importantly, to

⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁶ Mitter. *Much Maligned Monsters*.

⁷ Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

⁸ Mitter. “Western Bias in the Study of South Indian Aesthetics,” 125-136.

challenge the validity of applying Western classical norms for appreciating ancient Indian art.”⁹

Mitter considers his work as postcolonial¹⁰ in that his major works critically examine the implicit and continuing deployment of Western canons and aesthetic principles—especially by colonial writers of Indian art and architecture—to judge the traditional art and architecture of India. Mitter believes that although the modern canon had destroyed much of the classical canon by the 1920s in Western thought, it nevertheless claimed the same universality that classicism sought before the modern movement. It is this ‘universality,’ that is implicitly assumed in judging the art and architecture, colonial or modern, of the so-called Third World countries, that Mitter’s work has consistently challenged.

Mitter wanted to be an artist after his graduation in 1965 with a degree in art history, but because of lack of funding he re-enrolled as a research student under the art historian Ernst H. Gombrich. Gombrich’s views on the understanding of art, especially painting, as a culturally infused mindset which is historically achieved by stereotyping stylistic conventions, has been highly influential in Mitter’s first work. According to such a theoretical approach, there cannot be any absolute standard by which one can or must judge any work of art. Each work of art must be judged on the basis of its own conception in time. Calling Gombrich the “most important art historian of the last sixty or seventy years,” Mitter’s praise is qualified, however, by the concern that Gombrich’s critical stance about European art was nevertheless based on his conviction that “European art and civilisation were superior to other traditions.”¹¹ Although Gombrich never strayed away from his focus on western art and mainly on male artists, he did encourage Mitter to begin his quest by studying Indian collections in the West.¹²

⁹ Mitter. *Much Maligned Monsters*.

¹⁰ Swapna Sathish. “‘My Work Is Post-Colonial’.” *The Hindu Magazine*, Sunday, February 6 2005.

¹¹ Mitter. “Reflections.” 45-6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 46.

Imbibing his mentor Gombrich's theoretical ideas, Mitter's first book, *Much Maligned Monsters* chronicles European reactions and views of Indian art and architecture from the 16th to the 20th century, with many interesting and valuable examples. Using such an approach, Mitter, for the first time, traces the changes in European perceptions about Indian art and architecture and relates them with developments within European cultural changes as they unfolded during the same period. Mitter's work was also a first with regards to the almost herculean task of bringing into consideration a wide array of Indian art stretched across five centuries along with the intrinsic difficulty in dealing with such a subject.

Mitter's analysis of the colonial artists (and architects) during the late 19th and early 20th century, and their works, suggests a modern or postcolonial predicament—in that they worked towards the same goal implicitly dictated or inspired by both the burgeoning nationalist leaders as well as the colonial and postcolonial art historians such as Havell and Kramrisch. Colonial artists, for instance those of the Bengal art school, were often encouraged to discard hybridity and embrace authenticity (the essential or the spiritual) of Indian art. Both the European art historians and the cultural nationalists, with differing ideological stances, desired an art (and architecture) that rejected any Western or colonial influence. According to Mitter, both attitudes invariably pointed at 'primitivism' as a global art movement in the 1920s. However Mitter warns that such a conclusion may be attained not by merely concentrating on the study of art objects and "the tracing of styles," but also by looking at "the broader issue of hybridity and cultural crossovers" inherent in art works of the colonial period.¹³ Using Gombrich's theoretical approach in his earlier studies, Mitter shifted to Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony for his *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India 1850-1922* to drive home the point that "dominant groups don't always need to use force to win popular consent."¹⁴

Mitter's consistent attack on positivist approaches challenged both the notions of a universal canon and universal rationality. In this respect, Mitter's works

¹³ Ibid., 30-1.

¹⁴ Ibid., 47.

pre-empted and sometimes ran parallel with an increasing number of postcolonial studies. While most of these postcolonial studies are increasingly based on post-structuralist approaches, especially after Edward Said's highly influential *Orientalism* (1978), Mitter remains critical of such approaches. For Mitter, post-structuralist arguments tend to reduce the stereotyping of the other in most colonial enterprises to unequal power relations inherent in such encounters. Mitter, who considers the 19th and 20th centuries as the "real core period of colonialism" however, calls for a more historical grounding of postcolonial studies with the abject realisation that western cultural dominance, was created in the last three centuries because of "the added equations of power and ideology."¹⁵ According to Mitter, it is necessary to "restore the religious, cultural and social contexts" of Indian art, if any increased understanding is to result from its critical interpretation.¹⁶

It can be argued that the search for such identifying factors of Indian art, still hints at the subconscious desire for restoring the identity of Indian art against either the colonising or the modernising forces. Such forces in Mitter's extensive works, in spite of the colonised subject, are ambiguously theorised either as factors that have changed Indian art, or factors that have eroded Indian art forever, indirectly presupposing an authentic, and hence timeless Indian art. Even the title of one of his books, *Indian Art*,¹⁷ reflects not only Mitter's unchallenged and long established position as an eminent art historian, but also his authoritative belief in the existence of a pan-Indian identity in the diverse art forms of India.

Thus, despite the extensive and highly original works of Mitter with respect to Indian art (and some aspects of Indian architecture as well), we see the continuation of an underlying East-West dichotomy even when theoretical approaches are consciously chosen to both analyse and discount the same. Mitter's theoretical approach also reflects a shifting focus of European and American scholarship in the 1960s—the development of a critical

¹⁵ Ibid., 34.

¹⁶ Mitter. *Much Maligned Monsters*. 286.

¹⁷ Mitter. *Indian Art*.

interdisciplinary perspective on the interdependent and cross-cultural affects between the coloniser and the colonised in the various processes of colonisation. As will be examined in the following section, similar theoretical issues were articulated in the parallel work on colonial urban development by the sociologist, Anthony D. King.

3.3: Critical thinking in representations of *Indian* architecture

We have seen that the SOAS in London was a hub of oriental studies in the second half of the 20th century and provided the necessary intellectual atmosphere for the academic growth of history students from India such as Partha Mitter. We have also noted that Mitter's scholarship, since the 1960s, relied increasingly on the study of 'hybridity' and 'cultural crossovers' during the colonial period. Themes of hybridity and cross-cultural engagements, what Greig Crysler terms as a "recuperative discourse" focusing on traditions outside the West, were on the increase in Euro-American scholarship in the 1960s.¹⁸ In the 1960s, a need among the fraternity of American and European scholars to develop academic research to initiate and inform developmental programs in fields such as economics and urban planning.

Post-Second World War decolonisation processes along with a growing dissatisfaction with the universalising ideals and experiments of architectural modernism had also added interest to the study of "third world" countries, their cultures and rural settlements etc. Two seminal texts from the late 1960s indicate this shift in focus: Paul Oliver's edited collection, *Shelter and Society*,¹⁹ and the highly influential *House Form and Culture*²⁰ by Amos Rapoport. These books were published when both Oliver and Rapoport held influential positions within prestigious schools of architecture in London, pedagogical contexts in which both were involved in developing programs in

¹⁸ Crysler. *Writing Spaces*. 90.

¹⁹ Paul Oliver, ed. *Shelter and Society*. London: Barry and Jenkins Ltd, 1969.

²⁰ Amos Rapoport. *House Form and Culture*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Books, 1969.

architectural education catering to the influx of students from developing countries.²¹

In the late-1960s and 1970s therefore, and contemporaneous with Partha Mitter's scholarship on Indian art, we find another influential interdisciplinary scholar dealing with colonial Indian architecture and urbanism, Anthony King. King's interest in colonial India aimed to provide "an understanding of the social, political and especially, cultural processes governing a type of urban development" by developing "appropriate theoretical and methodological tools."²² King's research was part of a larger study he identified as "colonial urban development." Based on comparative analysis through interdisciplinary engagements, King's highly empirical investigations go hand in hand with theoretical development. In the preface to his *Colonial Urban Development*, King informs how his research and research method could benefit various academic disciplines;

For the sociologist and historian, the case study shows how the power structure inherent in the dominance-dependence relationship of colonialism influenced urban development in the colonial society. For the anthropologist, geographer, architect or planner, it provides an ideal laboratory for comparing the cultural forms of the European immigrants with those of the indigenous population. For the student of man-environment relations, it demonstrates how behaviour produces environments and environments influence behaviour.²³

King finds this highly interdependent process—of empirical investigations and theoretical development—increasingly valuable for cultural/political studies that deal with localisation and/or globalisation issues.²⁴ However, it is interesting to note King's emphatic contention that for 'the anthropologist,

²¹ Oliver was the Head of the Department of Arts and Art History at London's Architectural Association, School of Architecture; and Rapoport was a visiting professor at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University of London. Crysler. *Writing Spaces*. 90.

²² Anthony D. King. *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment*. London, Henley and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976. Preface.

²³ King. *Colonial Urban Development*. Preface.

²⁴ Anthony D. King "Globalized Localities or Localized Globalities: Old Wine, New Bottles?" Paper presented at the The Culture and Politics of Place, Locality and Globalization, Departments of Anthropology and Philosophy, University of California, Santa Cruz. 2000. 1.

geographer, architect or planner,' the colonial sites where his tools can be applied for analysis, are akin to an 'ideal laboratory.' Despite maintaining this hegemonic attitude identified earlier in this research with most late 19th and even early 20th century scholarship, King's method is highly important. His multidisciplinary approach, which began in the early 1970s with the intention of mapping paradigmatic patterns in colonial empires, reflects a sociological interest that subsumed the discipline of 'architecture' within the larger colonial built environment of India, curiously focused yet again on the northern region of India. King's "broad-band, bottom-up readings of the colonial built environment as a form of pattern language"²⁵ anticipated the research method later adopted and developed, both theoretically and critically, by a body of postcolonial studies specifically focused on various aspects of architecture during the colonial period in India.

Among a range of publications that included exhibition catalogues, journal and magazine publications, monographs and a book on contemporary Indian architecture in the 1980s, a set of at least ten books concerned solely with the architecture of colonial India also emerged in print. For the purposes of this research, here I will discuss three books (not necessarily in a chronological manner), which were published in the same year—in 1989. G. H. R. Tillotson's *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*, Norma Evenson's *The Indian Metropolis* and Thomas Metcalf's *An Imperial Vision* are the texts chosen here for discussion.²⁶ Tillotson's work assesses the "effects [of British architecture in India] on the indigenous tradition" of India.²⁷ Norma Evenson's *The Indian Metropolis* investigates the creation of four metropolitan cities by the British in India – Madras, Calcutta, Bombay and New Delhi. Finally Metcalf's *An Imperial Vision* looks at "the relationship between culture and power as expressed in architecture during the heyday of European colonialism" in India.²⁸ When read collectively, these books record the development of concerns about the identity of "Indian" architecture through late 19th Century.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*; Evenson. *The Indian Metropolis*; Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*.

²⁷ Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. Preface.

²⁸ Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. Preface.

Metcalf concentrates primarily on a particular colonial style of architecture—the Indo-Saracenic—developed after the first incident of Indian Mutiny against the British in 1857. His *An Imperial Vision* records, with a considerable depth, the political role of such an architectural style during the waning years of the British Empire in India. Tillotson's book is "a study of the changes in India's architectural tradition and in Indian taste that occurred in response to the influence of British architecture in India and the policies of British imperial rule."²⁹ With some political undertones, Tillotson extends an implicit concern for *identity* to contemporary 20th century architectural explorations by observing "India's more thoughtful architects," and their attempts "to revive Indian architectural values."³⁰ Tillotson challenges the contemporary approaches by well-established architects from the Delhi-Ahmedabad-Mumbai regions in their specific attempts to "transform" Indian tradition—both in their practice and writings—in their self-proclaimed rejection of the Modern movement in Indian architecture.³¹ Tillotson sums up by saying, "an educated Indian might be forgiven for being unsure whether he will find a greater self-respect in continuing to follow Western tastes or in returning to his heritage."³²

Norma Evenson's *The Indian Metropolis* considers the four major cities—Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and New Delhi—created by the British in India as "instruments of cultural change in India."³³ A result of over twenty years of research, drawing substantially on professional discourses recorded in local journals and the primary accounts of both British and Indian agents of urban development during the colonial era, Evenson's study has a more socio-cultural angle than Tillotson's. Evenson concentrates primarily on the importation of Western concepts and institutional values in the fields of urban development and architecture. For Evenson, this expansion of British planning

²⁹ Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. Preface.

³⁰ Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. 137.

³¹ Tillotson's championing of architectural heritage against the development of contemporary architecture, was criticised as a 'fatuous exercise' by one reviewer. Satish Grover. "Review of G. H. R. Tillotson, *Tradition of Indian Architecture*." *Architecture + Design* VII, no. 7 (November-December 1990): 104-06.

³² Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. 146.

³³ Evenson. *The Indian Metropolis*. vii.

and design practices in the Indian subcontinent, especially in the four metropolitan cities, provided “a theatre for the demonstration of European architectural planning concepts.”³⁴ Indeed, as Evenson states in parenthesis, her study “forms part of the history of Western architecture and urbanism.”³⁵ The book also offers multicoloured insights, to some length, about the contradicting cosmopolitan lifestyles of the people through its use of images illustrating the texts.

Indeed for Evenson, India (or Indian cities) is a ‘theatre’ that allows her to see the development of Western architectural and planning concepts. Her book explores such a concern even in the contemporary urban planning schemes initiated in the post-independence Nehruvian phase. Pushing her enquiry to the urban landscape of post-Independence India, in the final chapter of her book—“The Architecture of Independence”—Evenson also identifies a selection of architects thought to be struggling between the edifices of modernism established by Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn in the Indian subcontinent, and the “search for a national design” incorporating traditional concepts of Indian architecture.³⁶ Evenson’s panoramic study has certain parallel with Anthony King’s study of colonial urban development. King’s view of Delhi as an “ideal laboratory” can be likened to Evenson’s idea of the metropolitan “theatre” of colonial social and urban design history.

Seen as a collective whole, this late 1980s postcolonial scholarship has enriched the critical discussion of colonial architectures by not necessarily recording them as purely chronological historical events or moments, but by looking at them within the very contexts and debates that produced them. They are indicative of an increasing focus on considering architecture as a complex and hybrid field of cultural production that operates within and through a wider socio-cultural, political and historical arena in the social space of everyday living. In Tillotson’s and Evenson’s books, the thesis even extends to

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ These include Charles Correa, Shivnath Prasad, Ranjit Sabikhi (the Design Group), Raj Rewal, Kuldip Singh, and the sculptor-turned architect Satish Gujral. Evenson. *The Indian Metropolis*. 225.

postcolonial implications of the East-West dichotomy.³⁷ It is also interesting to note that all three of these books, although mainly concerned with the colonial architecture of India, were also published in the late 1980s—a decade that, as noted previously, witnessed a conspicuous surge of publishing activity focused on contemporary Indian architecture.

3.4: Postcolonial anxieties in contemporary discourses about the identity of Indian architecture

Critical approaches to the historical interpretation of the colonial and contemporary conditions of Indian architecture in the period of the late 1980s are being further explored, by both Indian and foreign scholars in a further generation of scholarship influenced by most recent postcolonial studies. Appearing almost a decade later, this most recent literature in the field has engaged in a deeper inquiry—theoretically inflected but empirically grounded—into the complexities inherent in the discourses of postcolonial Indian architecture. Prevalent among these complexities is a postcolonial anxiety about its identity.

In an exemplary contribution to this most recent critical literature, Jyoti Hosagrahar, articulates anxieties about the identity of Indian architecture in a critical review of the role of historiography in contemporary architectural education in South Asia.³⁸ Hosagrahar's survey confirms the view that the canons and formal frameworks of the British colonial historiography of Indian architecture remained firmly established in contemporary curricula:

Much has been written and published since [Fergusson wrote his book], but even today, although his book does not serve as the primary text, Fergusson's

³⁷ By way of book reviews, at least two of these books—by Tillotson and Evenson—also offer critical insights by their reception in the dominant group of the field of architecture in India. The reviews of these two books appeared in the influential Delhi-based magazine *A+D* in 1990-1991, implicitly demonstrating the positions of the reviewers and the issues at stake within the field of architecture in India. A comprehensive discussion of such issues is carried out in part II of this dissertation. This is mentioned here so that the reader appreciates the Bourdieuean idea of 'privileged references,' that will be employed in that later analysis and discussion.

³⁸ Hosagrahar. "South Asia: Looking Back, Moving Ahead," 356.

choice of buildings, framework, and approach remain central to the teaching of South Asian architectural history.³⁹

Hosagrahar's broad scoped and ambitious essay, studies the beginnings and inherent problems of architectural education in South Asia revealing certain discrepancies across the five countries in question—Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh—but clearly focusing on India. From the influence and need of the British in the initial setup of architectural schools in India, to the accreditation of such schools by institutions in Western Europe, Hosagrahar argues that the architectural institutions in India more or less indulged in borrowing curriculum from the West. The reductive teaching of Indian architectural history, according to Hosagrahar, is already plagued by the irremediable categorizations of colonial writers resulting in the marginalization of Indian architectural history. Furthermore, Hosagrahar laments that such a focus ignored a plethora of building types that emerged in the nineteenth century colonial India.

With respect to architectural education, her essay further illuminates that courses on contemporary theory and architecture in India, although energetically pursued, are rare in the more than hundred schools of architecture that follow a regulated curriculum. Even though new and enthusiastic approaches in the imparting of contemporary knowledge about Indian architecture have been undertaken, the revised canon about Indian architectural history continues to be steeped in “a message of ancient and medieval greatness.”⁴⁰ Hosagrahar lists contemporary reasons for the same, amongst which she briefly mentions the role of institutional bureaucracy (the control of architectural education by the All India Council for Technical Education—AICTE), amongst a range of issues including teaching instruments and methods.

The concern voiced by Hosagrahar is supported by a new generation of architectural educators like the Delhi-based architect, Anand Bhatt. Bhatt uses

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 360.

a fundamentally different media—the internet—to publish essays and comments from a host of enthusiastic and well-established architects/architectural critics and academics like A. G. K. Menon, Prem Chandavarkar, Gita Dewan Verma, Kulbhushan Jain, Madhavi Desai, Nalini Thakur and Akhtar Chauhan. Bhatt seeks to use the internet to change the “nature of architectural discourse” and to make it “a grassroots, multidisciplinary education in collective reality.”⁴¹ Although the website notes that, “[a] plurality of voices are heard online,” it laments that “curiously many of the traditional venues are silent about the changes that are occurring.”⁴² Bhatt’s current involvement in trying to reach out to the larger body of students of architecture in India, is however still very Delhi-centric. Indeed, its worry about “the traditional venues” being “silent” is based on its own conviction of a restricted modernity, whereby, architectural discourse (and hence architects and architectural academics involved in it) occurring in Delhi alone—the “collective reality” where Anand Bhatt operates from—has modern and hence emancipating qualities. The implications of such new ventures within the dominant group of the field of architecture in India will be discussed later in detail. We will return to Hosagrahar to carry on the current line of discussion.

Hosagrahar’s article also discusses the teaching of postcolonial architecture of South Asia. She argues that although some architects like Geoffrey Bawa, Charles Correa and B. V. Doshi enjoy a privileged status with regards to the architectural profession both in South Asia as well as in the West, their works are not studied in courses on architectural history. Hosagrahar attributes this unequal importance to “privileged” architects of South Asia and the lack of contemporary theory courses in architectural education, to the “brief discussions of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in South Asian architectural history.”⁴³ Part of the problem, according to Hosagrahar lies in the way the discipline of architecture continues to be defined in architectural institutions across the subcontinent. Except a few schools, most of the other

⁴¹ Cited in one of the pages of its website, <http://mail.architectxturez.net/>

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Hosagrahar. “South Asia: Looking Back, Moving Ahead,” 362.

institutions have a “technical bias” and consider architecture as a form of engineering, and therefore having “minimal intersections between art history and architectural history.”⁴⁴ Moreover, briefly highlighting a recently growing phenomenon in leading schools of architecture in India, of hiring “faculty with a second professional degree to teach undergraduates,” Hosagrahar attributes the lack of critical historical studies in schools to the more prevalent presence of unqualified (to teach history), but professional architects and their teaching methods.

Hosagrahar’s study is a long narrative about the origins and problems of architectural education in the subcontinent, and the dilemma of ‘moving ahead’ while ‘looking back.’ In addition to raising pertinent issues about architectural education, Hosagrahar highlights hitherto unknown facts about some schools of architecture in India, briefly touching upon the emerging new schools of architecture in the country as well. For instance, Hosagrahar mentions the emergence of new schools with a self-consciously confident agenda of improving the standard of architectural education, such as the TVB School of Habitat Studies (TVB SHS) in New Delhi. However, in mentioning the agenda of the TVB SHS, Hosagrahar does not dwell into the constitution of such new schools, or what drives those schools to (need or want to) function differently than the other older schools; and if they do function differently, who are those that are responsible for such an initiative. Further, it is quite reasonable to ask how and why some architectural education institutions in India continue to have a ‘technical bias’? Or, can the consecration of certain select architects in the subcontinent, and also lack of contemporary theory courses in architectural education in the region, be simplistically attributed to a negligible importance given to South Asian architectural history in architectural institutions of the region? Hosagrahar’s essay is valuable nonetheless for the awareness it attempts to articulate of certain problems that persist both at the discourse level (architectural historiography) and the institutional level (architectural education) in the production of architectural knowledge in India today.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ It must be noted that Hosagrahar speaks through the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (JSAH), an American journal with a predominantly Euro-American focus, which

The various colonial institutional agencies or machinery, and the intricate manner in which the entire apparatus worked, was based on shared convictions and values of the period. Such processes worked towards consecrating certain assumptions; either about those institutional agents and agencies, or about the cultural goods such as architecture, produced through them. Such processes, which, as we have noted earlier, developed in the discourses of Tillotson, Metcalf and Evenson, have surfaced again in resurgent postcolonial discourses that aim to transcend distinctions between the postcolonial and the contemporary. In a critical re-assessment of the “progressive institutionalisation of [architectural] discourse in the bureaucratic field of the colonial state,” Peter Scriver has analysed the role of the ASI along with the other “scientific department” of the Government of India apparatus, the Public Works Department (PWD).⁴⁶ Scriver summarises the project of ASI, as one, which by “stripping away the hybrid accretions of time and the everyday cultural life of [heritage] buildings,” “was effectively embalming the living tradition of Indian architecture and forcibly laying it to rest.”⁴⁷ Scriver articulates the considerable control of the ASI over the authenticity and interpretation of India’s architectural heritage. This was clearly differentiated from the mandate of the Public Works Department (PWD) “to develop a modern (European) architecture in India tailored appropriately to Britain’s evolving imperial criteria.”⁴⁸ Indeed, considered in the light of this argument, “[t]he very idea of a ‘modern Indian architecture’ was problematic” for the

only recently (since 2000), has expanded outside its focus to include the non-West. Greg Crysler, who in *Writing Spaces*, analyses *JSAH* along with five other “influential” journals, notes that *JSAH*’s concern about “foreignness” had begun in the 1990s, but its expansion only meant “becom[ing] international by expanding “naturally” from an epistemological and geographical core.” Crysler further argues how this stance only suggested that *JSAH* would allow an international dialogue “between scholars who share similar training, conceptual apparatuses, professional standards and indeed, the same language.” In other words, *JSAH* encouraged articles that were mostly products of, and aligned with the “protocols of a US-based academic culture.” According to Crysler, a drastic paradigm shift occurred in this ideology of difference in 2000 after Zeynep Çelik became the editor and announced that “she planned to undertake a survey of how architectural history is taught in different places around the world.” Crysler. *Writing Spaces*, 41, 42, 47. Hosagrahar’s 2002 essay must be seen in this light.

⁴⁶ Peter Scriver. “Delimiting Architecture in the Construction of Colonial India,” 419, 422.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 422.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

colonial regime and its architectural writers.⁴⁹ Scriver's essay highlights this "constructed distinction" between "Indian" and "modern" architecture.⁵⁰ Scriver's analysis of ideological and institutional *practices*, sifts through the finer grains of available archival materials to gain a better understanding of the colonial discourse on architecture, and its conceptual legacies for later scholarship.⁵¹

In a similar vein, Vikramaditya Prakash has analysed what can be considered the role of photography in the 'embalming' function of the ASI that Scriver posits. Prakash analyses how the colonist's objective use of photography, a new invention at the time, was instrumental in its colonial hegemonic project of "fix[ing]" India (or Indian architecture) into "stereotypical brackets."⁵² Prakash further demonstrates that the same medium—photography—was used by the "affluent (non)colonised subjects, like S. Ram Singh" to create "hybridized and illusionist images" in order to "reinvent [themselves] in more contemporary and potentially threatening ways."⁵³ This, as Prakash argues, perhaps also helps in propagating, by way of a mimic "multivalent, ambivalent, and highly negotiated" worldview, "a veiled threat to the dominant."⁵⁴ Prakash's argument must be traced back to a 1997 essay with the title, "Identity Production in Postcolonial Indian Architecture: Re-Covering What We Never Had."⁵⁵ Taking the case of Charles Correa's celebrated project Jawahar Kala Kendra (JKK) in Jaipur, Prakash puts both Correa's own description of JKK and the material existence of JKK in perspective, and argues that such identity productions in discursive practices do not in any way reflect the idea of an authentic Indian identity. Prakash argues that the

⁴⁹ Ibid., 421.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 420.

⁵¹ Ibid., 423.

⁵² Prakash. "Between Objectivity and Illusion," 13. One may even extend this argument, in the wake of the monographs and books on Indian architects and architecture discussed earlier in this section, that the use of photography, even in contemporary postcolonial architectural historiography of India, among other things, reflects the undeniable existence (and maintenance) of the same hierarchy of constructed legitimate objects of study.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁵⁵ Prakash. "Identity Production in Postcolonial Indian Architecture," 39-52.

architect's construction of a postcolonial identity, in fact, often masks the undeniable negotiations between the universal and the particular.⁵⁶ Prakash,

Correa's design does not dissolve the question of the Indian identity. It simply disorients it, uses it and casts it aside, inhabits it and critiques it. In other words, it parodies the impossible stereotype "Indian" by suspending it within distancing quotation marks.⁵⁷

The only way out, as Prakash suggests towards the end of the essay is to suspend a parodic veil that would "reveal by concealing [...] the unfathomable depths of the "truth" of our "identities.""⁵⁸ The use of photography by S. Ram Singh in the colonial period and Correa's architecture in the postcolonial period, by Prakash's argument, are similar projects which by creating hybridised and illusionist images or architecture, are essentially reinventing themselves with a desire to resist hegemonical cultural tendencies. The consistent argument in Prakash's scholarship is centred around a more rigorous re-examination of case study materials—"negotiations" that situate colonial or contemporary processes in architecture within the universe of their occurrence, and also extend to include generally neglected discursive practices, which are the result of and connected to such situated practices.

Swati Chattopadhyay develops a similar vein of critique in her essay "A Critical History of Architecture in a Post-Colonial World: A View from Indian History."⁵⁹ Redressing the "defining ideas that have shaped [Indian] architectural history," Chattopadhyay identifies "a false opposition between formal and social analysis". Britain's colonial project of architecture in India was situated, she argues, within a larger "power struggle that linked the world together and formed the intellectual and social consciousness of the emerging disciplines of the nineteenth century."⁶⁰ In Chattopadhyay's ongoing research

⁵⁶ Ibid., 50-51.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 52.

⁵⁹ Swati Chattopadhyay. *A Critical History of Architecture in a Post-Colonial World: A View from Indian History*. <http://architronic.saed.kent.edu/v6nl/v6nl.05a.html>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

she “examine[s] buildings as part of a larger landscape.” In the case of the black-town/white-town dichotomy in colonial Calcutta, for example, she argues, that “despite the desire to draw clear boundaries” between the two towns by the colonial rulers, a “hybrid spatial order”—a “blurring of boundaries,” as she defines it, often occurred which belied the notions of difference that colonial society desired to maintain.⁶¹ Chattopadhyay’s Foucauldian-Saidian paradigm essentially views architecture as an embedded practice that serves a larger political motive.

In another essay, Chattopadhyay uses a similar approach to analyse the results surrounding an important international architectural competition held in Delhi in 1986—the design of Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA).⁶² Chattopadhyay’s article connects two disparate events stretched across a period of a decade in the recent history of India—the revival of controversy surrounding the Babari Masjid at Ayodhya in 1984 (and its eventual demolition by Hindu fundamentalists in 1992), and a cultural complex, the IGNCA, planned as a memorial to Indira Gandhi in 1985. The internationally publicised mosque controversy was an example of the extraordinary symbolic capital that can be invested in architecture as a focus of social and cultural politics. The IGNCA project was the outcome of the first international design competition to be staged in India since its independence from the British. Chattopadhyay argues that while the demolition of the mosque was considered a ‘political act,’ the IGNCA competition was considered as an architectural problem and was pursued as such masking, according to Chattopadhyay, the sole purpose of the IGNCA—“as a didactic space to instill deeply problematic notions of nationhood and citizenship.”⁶³ Chattopadhyay posits that the guidelines for the IGNCA competition supported and perpetuated a notion that was part of an early pre-independence “nationalist myth,”⁶⁴ yet observes that

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Chattopadhyay. “Expedient Forgetting,” 16-29. The Arts Centre was publicised by the Government of India as a memorial to the late Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, who was assassinated in 1984.

⁶³ Ibid., 29.

⁶⁴ According to the myth, “One did not have to reject India’s Muslim, or even British, colonial heritage once it could be seen as absolved and absorbed by the force of “Hindu”/Indian spirituality.” Ibid., 24.

the results of the competition told a different story. Despite favouring popular Indian symbolism and metaphor, an Indian architect Gautam Bhatia's scheme was considered second best to the American Ralph Lerner's first-prize winning design scheme. Chattopadhyay argues that Lerner's design scheme was considered for the first prize because it "connect[ed]" to the existing spatiopolitical diagram [then] used by the Indian government. The objective was to connect to the existing institutions in its symbolic arrangement, so that as a memorial to Indira Gandhi the Arts Centre would become an inextricable part of the larger governmental infrastructure."⁶⁵ Chattopadhyay reflects on the obvious contradiction,

For a design event so keen to define Indian cultural identity, and for an Indian architectural community suffering from a profound inferiority complex in its inability to measure up to "Western" architecture, one would imagine Bhatia's project would be seen as a new lease of imagination. But Bhatia's project was instead read as a critique of the competition itself.⁶⁶

Thus, through "selective amnesia," as Chattopadhyay argues, officials associated with the IGNSA competition prepared the elaborate guidelines of the competition such that they would allow, through architecture, a transformation of essentially British imperial legacy (designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker in Delhi) into a democratic ideal of a new nation with new unifying myths. Chattopadhyay locates such a conflict of interests in the political milieu of the 1980s in India. She notes that the competition was held during "a wave of Raj nostalgia" with obvious interests for the tourism industry, but at the same time, the political centre at Delhi was also coming to terms with increasing secessionist claims and separatist movements in regions such as Kashmir, Punjab, and the Northeast.⁶⁷ In such an atmosphere, it was necessary, Chattopadhyay argues, not only to reinforce "a model of a nation grounded in an imagined Hindu antiquity," but also to "use the colonial edifice as an exemplar of how "foreignness" could be subsumed under the projected

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

view of Indianness.”⁶⁸ Chattopadhyay’s article posits how Orientalist notions about India (and its arts and architecture), and pre-independence nationalist myths created out of such imaginations, were appropriated, through architecture, to suit the political need of a transformed social and cultural order, such as the one that existed in the 1980s in India.

In Chattopadhyay’s article we find certain ‘officials’ and a ‘community of Indian architects,’ both equally concerned about and ‘keen to define Indian cultural identity’ through the design of the IGNCA.⁶⁹ Even if the sole purpose of the IGNCA, as per Chattopadhyay’s thesis, was to construct particular notions of a national identity, the question remains whether both the ‘officials’ and the singular ‘community of architects’ in India shared and understood, amongst other issues of architectural representation, such an overarching concern at that time. Given the unprecedented focus on certain Indian architects and their architecture through monographic and pan-Indian discourses of contemporary Indian architecture at that time, was the IGNCA competition (and the agencies connected with it), isolated from the consequences of such a discourse production—that is from issues of dominance and marginalisation within the field of architecture in India? Chattopadhyay’s article, in finding reasons for the reproduction of particular perceptions about Indian architecture within larger political frameworks and initiatives of the postcolonial Indian state, provides only a partial explanation to the intention of this competition and its results. It completely ignores the complex social and institutional frameworks that authorised and sustained such a dominant consensus in the first place (as is evidenced in the competition guidelines and explanations of the result). It also pays little attention to the crucial active dimension, that is, to the system of agents within such a production.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁹ Held in Delhi with the involvement of various recognised individuals from the architecture and cultural fields of India, the IGNCA competition was a highly publicised event in the mid-1980s. Even after the competition, discussions and debates about the competition and its results were carried out in national journals and magazines of architecture.

A recent book edited by Peter Scriver and Vikram Prakash, charts the critical development of this line of scholarship focused on architecture and building in colonial India and Ceylon.⁷⁰ Some of the scholars discussed here including Scriver, Prakash, Hosagrahar and Chattopadhyay, have come together along with a group of established and young scholars from American, European and Australian contexts in this latest attempt at ‘better understanding’ the architecture and built environment of colonial South Asia. In this latest venture, there is a conscious rejection of the view of the building scene of colonial South Asia as merely a provincial theatre—a theme, which, as discussed in the previous section, runs through much of the established literature of the previous two decades on the colonial architecture of India.

Using multiple theoretically and metaphorically engaged ‘framing’ devices to observe “colonial modernities,” Scriver and Prakash contend that modernising efforts of Britain in colonial India and Ceylon—specifically in the fields of architecture and engineering—were both “engaged in and mediated by the *peculiar* theatrics of the colonial-modern situation.”⁷¹ For the editors, the following frameworks allow a critical interpretation of “the roles of building and dwelling in processes of cultural construction and re-production” in colonial India and Ceylon: an ‘architectural frame,’ architecture as frames of practice, frames of discourse, institutional frameworks, and last but not the least, domestic frames of practice.⁷²

Recognising their inherent limitations as a group of scholarship essentially situated in Western academia, the editors claim that this latest offering of critical study on the architecture and built environment of colonial India and Ceylon, enables a “more productive engagement...in the broader academic project of postcolonial inquiry.”⁷³ Indeed, as a theoretically geared collective study that promises to engage “between and beyond” the “material and representational registers” of architecture as a medium by which Britain

⁷⁰ Scriver and Prakash, eds. *Colonial Modernities*.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 6 (my emphasis).

⁷² See chapter 1 “Between Materiality and Representation” in Scriver and Prakash, eds. *Colonial Modernities*. 3-25.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 25.

intervened in her erstwhile colonies, this book offers valuable insights into the peculiarities of a metaphorically re-invented “colonial-modern” social space. It is a different matter that such peculiarities may not be peculiar for those belonging to the socio-cultural space of South Asian regions that such scholarship focuses on. Considered in this light, it can be argued that such scholarship only speaks of and speaks to a dominant Western academic establishment.

Despite framing complex theoretical constructs and embellishing existing postcolonial studies with fine-grain socio-cultural facts, the intention is still to view the ‘peculiar’—odd, strange, weird, unusual, irregular, abnormal, uncharacteristic, atypical, curious, eccentric⁷⁴—‘reception’ or ‘negotiation’ of Western modernism in the West’s other, the East (in this particular case, South Asia). Such renewed attempts and efforts by these scholars only reinforce the previous ‘Orientalist’ gaze ever more strongly (even while claiming not to do so), thus securing an academic eternity for themselves and their interests. Despite inherent, perhaps unavoidable problems, these studies offer multiple viewpoints to view and understand historical processes and contexts behind our understanding of the colonial Indian social space through architecture. Furthermore, the intricately developed theoretical tools employed by such studies begin to offer ways of better understanding architecture and its discourse. Such late-20th century developments in discourses about the colonial period of architecture in India did not emerge in a vacuum. They must be seen as part of a continuing wider international debate begun in the last decade of the 20th century.

One of the earliest instances in this regard is the 1999 essay by Sibel Bozdogan, titled, “Architectural History in Professional Education: Reflections on Postcolonial Challenges to the Modern Survey” published in the *Journal of Architectural Education* (JAE).⁷⁵ In this essay, Bozdogan calls for thinking

⁷⁴ These variants of the word ‘peculiar’ are only a right-click away on the mouse in the usual MS Word application.

⁷⁵ Sibel Bozdogan. “Architectural History in Professional Education: Reflections on Postcolonial Challenges to the Modern Survey.” *Journal of Architectural Education* 52, no. 4 (1999): 207-15.

architecture as a complex field created not only through “historical connections, exchanges and confrontations,” but also by the architect’s own agenda and the larger historical, ideological and political contexts.⁷⁶ To do so, Bozdogan offers two basic principles to keep in mind; first, “not to lose sight of the *provisional nature of identity politics*” in postcolonial critiques of architecture, and second, “not to lose sight of the *absence* of any necessary and/or automatic connection between the work of art/architecture and its politics (original emphases).”⁷⁷ Bozdogan’s principles in effect try to reduce the idea of “difference” in postcolonial architectural discourse by embracing the idea of diversity and hybridity. This trend of approaching architectural history by embracing the non-monumental and non-western traditions in world architecture, as Bozdogan further informs, can be seen to have accelerated after Spiro Kostof’s 1985 book *A History of Architecture*.⁷⁸

In another influential study undertaken during the late-1990s, Abidin Kusno focuses on the postcolonial architecture of Indonesia, and proposes to understand architecture as a political force by locating the argument of his study “within a much larger historical, political and theoretical context.”⁷⁹ In *Behind the Postcolonial*, Kusno compiles “fragments” composed of “disparate series of actors and circumstances in more than one time period” in a comparative manner “under various themes that allow architectural events...to be understood as involved in the making of Indonesian political cultures.”⁸⁰ The previously mentioned *Writing Spaces* by Greig Crysler demonstrates, echoing both Bozdogan and Kusno, how in the context of space and architecture and their discussions in publications, the postmodern desire is increasingly to analyse “buildings and urban spaces in relation to wider social and historical conditions.”⁸¹

⁷⁶ Ibid., 208.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Spiro Kostof. *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

⁷⁹ Abidin Kusno. *Behind the Postcolonial: Architecture, Urban Space, and Political Cultures in Indonesia*. London: Routledge, 2000. 5.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Crysler. *Writing Spaces*. 2-3.

Parallel with such theoretical advancements in recent postcolonial studies connected with colonial Indian architecture, one also notices the continuity of Orientalist categorizations (developed in colonial architectural scholarship) in publications of books and monographs discussing contemporary architecture in India. This almost baffling coexistence of paradoxical approaches in writing about the architecture of a nation—played out, in two opposed tactics of: “fixity and fantasy”⁸² as witnessed in the colonial and some postcolonial writings, and, in the high interpretive science approach as witnessed in the recent postcolonial studies—forces one to wonder, like Prakash does in his essays, if it stems from the implicit desire to fix some kind of identity about “Indian” architecture. Following the discussions developed in this section, one also wonders at the fetishist approach in postcolonial historiography towards the history of Indian architecture itself—as if history, or the gaping holes within, demands to be filled with the scholarly imagination of each successive generation. Occasioned primarily because of such baffling conditions, the current study attempts to provide (not with a desire to challenge or transcend) *an account* of the accounts (the practice) of the discourse of contemporary architecture in India.

As noted before, the ideological stand of recent postcolonial studies in the context of architecture in colonial India, sometimes, escapes or even avoids the fact that architecture, and issues within it, as a cultural production within a region, is also maintained and sustained by a set of dominant agents and agencies, who, it can be said, belong to a specific *field*⁸³ of architecture. Situated within regions of supposed architectural contestations (material or discursive), these agents and agencies are themselves involved not only in promoting or reproducing such debates for their own survival in the *field*, but also in disseminating that knowledge through international associations and

⁸² As Homi Bhabha explains in “The Other Question,” in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Padmini Mongia. London: Arnold, 1996. 47; “The taking up of any one position, within a specific discursive form, in a particular historical conjuncture, is thus always problematic – the site of both fixity and fantasy. It provides [an] ‘identity’ that is played out – like all fantasies of originality and origination – in the face and space of the disruption and threat from the heterogeneity of other positions.”

⁸³ A Bourdieuean tool for understanding complex processes of representation, the concept of field will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 8 of this dissertation.

collaborations. While studies such as those of Prakash and Scriver have been attempting to pursue such a thread of research with regards to the period of colonial architecture in India, no study exists that attempts to understand such processes within the more recent contemporary architectural history of India. In this regard, the current research is an attempt to focus on such considerations of agency in the production of discourse about the late-20th century architectural history of India. It is important in this context to briefly describe the decade of the 1980s in India and its paramount significance for the concerns voiced in the current research.

Chapter 4

Architecture and the juggernaut of cultural production in the 1980s

No cultural products exist in isolation, but are related to their social conditions of production. Architecture can be likened to a cultural goods business that, like any other business, pursues an economic profit by catering to the demand of an already converted clientele. In this regard, it will be helpful to articulate a few concepts from the chosen theoretical approach for this study, that is, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production (which will be elaborated in greater detail in part-II of the current thesis). According to Bourdieu, a cultural goods business in pursuing an economic profit also accumulates *symbolic capital* in the process. A symbolic capital may be understood, to quote from Bourdieu, as "economic or political capital that is disavowed, misrecognized and thereby recognized, hence legitimate, a 'credit' which, under certain conditions, and always in the long run guarantees 'economic' profit."¹ This 'economic' profit whose currency is symbolic capital is responsible for most acts of consecration that take place efficiently in a field of cultural production. The efficacy of all acts of consecration with which the field of architecture in India was consolidated during the 1980s is such a case

¹ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*. 75.

in point. The accumulation of such symbolic capital, through symbolic goods and associated acts of consecration, must further be understood within wider socio-historical processes. Since the focus of this dissertation is on a particular timeframe of history—the 1980s and after—we can use this as a springing point to understand the consolidation of a dominant position of certain agents, agencies and regions, in the field of architecture in India. This will also help us to understand the disparity in regional coverage of contemporary Indian architecture during the 1980s. Furthermore, as will be discussed presently, Delhi may be considered as the locus of accumulated social energy with regards to the field of cultural production in India in the 1980s.

The 1980s present an interesting phase in contemporary international (mostly European and North American) architecture. Over the previous two decades, Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966) and *Learning from Las Vegas* (with Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, 1972), among other polemics, had problematised modernism in architecture and introduced postmodernism through the pseudo-historical revival in architectural practice. Paradoxically, with the publication of Hal Foster's *The Anti-Aesthetic* (1983), postmodernism in architectural theory represented a critique of the same populist concept that informed postmodern architectural practice.² In this atmosphere, a pressing need was felt across the fraternity of practising North American and European architects and architectural theorists to make sense of the emerging architecture in the developing (predominantly postcolonial) world and determine its place within the global framework. This trend may well have been aided by Le Corbusier's and Louis Kahn's architecture in the Indian subcontinent in a not so distant past. As the joint Indian and Canadian authors of the first book-length critical survey of contemporary Indian architecture to be published argued,

Little has been published about design activity in the developing world. This discussion is a contribution to the thorough, region-by-region assessment of contemporary global architecture that is *begging* to be undertaken. It is our

² Ritu Bhatt. "The Significance of the Aesthetic in Postmodern Architectural Theory." *Journal of Architectural Education*, 53, no. 4, 2000, 229-38.

conviction that such an assessment would do much to renew the passion for the act and the art of building with which the current Architecture of Europe and North America has lost touch in its present state of complexity and confusion.³

[my emphasis]

Having experienced the international climate of shifting architectural thoughts between the two to three decades before the 1980s, many foreign-educated/trained Indian architects returned (in the 1960s and 1970s) to set-up their practices in places such as Delhi, Ahmedabad and Mumbai. These cities were centres of intensive new growth and development in the post independence years. While some of the following names are now famous internationally, most of them are nationally consecrated as pioneers or ‘Third World activists’ in the development of the post-independence ‘contemporary’ Indian architecture. The Delhi based, relatively younger group of architects included Raj Rewal, Ajoy Choudhari, Ram Sharma, Ranjit Sabikhi, Satish Grover and C. P. Kukreja (co-founders of *A+D*). Another group of returnees, often categorised as the second generation of post-independence architects in India, included individuals such as B. V. Doshi, Hasmukh Patel, Charles Correa and Anant D. Raje who had similarly set up practices in the western regions of India (in Ahmedabad and Mumbai).

Nehru’s vision of a scientific India based on emulating the West for notions of both progress and modernity had created a “neoliberal doxa,” according to an article by Rohit Chopra.⁴ During the Nehruvian years, a national and country planning act was instituted, resulting in the setting up of many institutions—sometimes within established schools of architecture—and governing bodies, to carry out comprehensive planning programs in the country.⁵ Notions of higher and foreign education were perceived to bring with them both “educational capital and economic capital” guaranteeing ‘prestige’—with a direct consequence that “an individual with such qualifications was perceived

³ Vikram Bhatt and Peter Scriver. *After the Masters: Contemporary Indian Architecture*. Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., 1990. 7.

⁴ Rohit Chopra. “Neoliberalism as Doxa: Bourdieu's Theory of the State and the Contemporary Indian Discourse on Globalization and Liberalization.” *Cultural Studies* 17, no. 3/4 (2003): 436-7.

⁵ For details, consult Evenson, *The Indian Metropolis*. 183-4.

as working in the service of the nation.”⁶ In the light of this argument, the generation of foreign-returned architects, therefore, had multiple advantages over those educated in India. They were consistently being involved in architectural projects connected with nation-building activities. Further, their teaching commissions in schools of architecture, involvement with development programmes at both the urban and grassroots levels, and their commitment to writing about such concerns—such activities, in hindsight, promoted the institutionalisation of what *Indian* architecture meant to them.

What also resulted from such processes was a field of architecture that was becoming increasingly consolidated in key urban regions of northern and western India—Delhi, Ahmedabad and Mumbai in particular. Further, these architects had returned to a transitional phase of Indian politics. The Nehruvian ideals of a Modernist/Western influenced secular nationalism—which did assist the foreign-returned architects in Nehru’s larger project of nation-building—had given way (late 1960s through the late 1970s), to a growing ambivalence about the notion of secularism itself. This change which occurred during the Indira Gandhi phase of politics—specifically noticeable in the outcome of the 1977 general elections⁷—led to a regional assessment of what constituted the real India or *Indian*.⁸ A barrage of events—both national and international in scope—focused attention on the seemingly paradoxical watershed of political and cultural affairs associated with Indira Gandhi and India during the time. Politically, the Congress party led by Mrs Indira Gandhi had to reinvent itself after its massive loss to a coalition Janata (people’s) party—that included Jan Sangh, an offshoot of the Hindu communalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in the 1977 elections.⁹ When Mrs Gandhi was sworn in as the Prime Minister of India for the fourth time after regaining office in 1980, the division between the centre and the states was obvious as opposition parties ruled most states. Furthermore, Hindu communalism was on the increase resulting in a seemingly benign wave of

⁶ Chopra. “Neoliberalism as Doxa,” 436.

⁷ Tariq Ali. *The Nehrus and the Gandhis: An Indian Dynasty*. London: Picador, 2005. 193-5.

⁸ Khilnani. *The Idea of India*. 179-84.

⁹ The imposition of a state of emergency throughout India in 1975 and the subsequent almost dictatorial rule by Indira Gandhi is regarded as the most potent reason for the crumbling of the Congress in the 1977 elections.

new temple building, as well as the more sinister but historically familiar phenomenon of Hindu-Muslim riots, in most regions of north India. Using a range of constitutional powers available to the Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi's frenetic moves to impose an overall Congress majority in the country after the 1980 elections, only increased regional fears resulting in a permanent tension between the states and the central authority. Dictated by a will to survive, the ruling Congress party was increasingly becoming a coalition party with competing economic interests. It had vague or no principles left except the retention of power and the preservation of the status quo.

During this period and possibly related to the rise in Hindu communalism, there was a marked shift, in the architectural context, towards more traditional (*Vedic* and *Shastraic*) and vernacular ways of building which were being re-evaluated by both users and professionals as capable of offering potentially more pragmatic solutions to the perennial problems of housing and climate in India.¹⁰

A string of events—in hindsight, cosmetic in nature—was staged during the early 1980s to both distract the nation's attention from the decay of the ruling party—the Congress—and to present a more forward-looking and dynamic nation: the Asian Games (also known as Asiad) in Delhi (1982), meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of State in Goa (1983), and the Non-Aligned Summit (1983). Two of the above events—the Asiad and the Non-Aligned Summit—were high-profile spectacles that enabled the capital to take centre-stage, giving the reigning Congress party a much needed political lift. Furthermore, these events also nurtured a neo-patriotic notion of *Indianness* to a level that was developed and consolidated as a *doxa*¹¹ during the Rajiv Gandhi era of

¹⁰ Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*. 251.

¹¹ A Bourdieuan term, it refers to an unquestionable orthodoxy that establishes itself across social space in its entirety, from the practices and perceptions of individuals to that of the state and social groups within it. Once established, a *doxa* operates as if it were an objective truth. This term will be explained in detail in chapter 8 of the current research in the context of a discussion of Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical insights into the understanding of social and cultural practices. The current study employs many of Bourdieu's theoretical tools to understand the reproductive and representative nature inherent in the practice of architectural discourse.

politics in India in the second half of the 1980s and associated Festivals of India (1985-1987).

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 75
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 1: Cultural extravaganza of Asiad '82 (source: *India Today*, December 15, 1982, pg. 63.)

The “Asiad ’82,” was such a success that it assumed the status of a benchmark of organisational excellence.¹² This potpourri of Indianism was not only an attempt to distract the nation’s attention from the chaotic internal struggles within the ruling Congress party at Delhi. According to many observers, it was also in large part the result of a calculated political move by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi.¹³ As part of his political initiation, as Gandhi heir apparent, the task of organising the Asian Games was given to her son, Rajiv Gandhi. Rajiv was primarily filling in a political “void” created by the accidental death of his younger brother, Sanjay Gandhi.¹⁴ The preparations for the 1982 Asian Games had begun two years earlier involving Gandhi in close liaisons with architects, builders and accountants, and in “spending large sums

¹² For instance, the popular weekly *India Today* claimed that the “Asiad ’82 will undoubtedly go down in history as India’s greatest organizational triumph.” *India Today*, December 15, 1982. 56. The opening events of the IX Asiad in Delhi were of such nature that one of the spectators was reported to have acclaimed, “Simply unbelievable...it’s the first time Indians have handled such a complicated ceremony with such masterly genius. It’s also the first time you can go home proud of being an Indian.” *Ibid.*, 63.

¹³ Indira Gandhi’s politically oriented son, Sanjay Gandhi, had died in an air accident in 1980. Sanjay Gandhi was also his mother’s closest political adviser. With his loss Indira Gandhi initiated Rajiv Gandhi, her elder son into politics. It is further not surprising then that Asiad ’82 was inaugurated on the 19th of November 1982—Indira Gandhi’s birthday.

¹⁴ Nicholas Nugent. *Rajiv Gandhi: Son of a Dynasty*. London: BBC Books, 1990. 48.

of money.”¹⁵ Among the major projects under his aegis was Raj Rewal’s much-celebrated Asian Games Village—a project won through design competition at the time—which was built to accommodate athletes and officials of the Games. Designed “to communicate a sense of place to visiting competitors,” relative to his stridently ‘modern’ earlier work, Rewal made a conspicuous concession to the faint cultural agenda of reframing a contemporary Indian identity by employing a geometricized vernacular character for his Asiad Village. It was based on patterns derived from vernacular Rajasthani architecture and intricate *mohallas* and *galis* of Old Delhi.¹⁶ Most of the visitors to the Village reportedly described it as “one of the best of its kind in the world.”¹⁷

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 76
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 2: Asiad Village, view (source: *After the Masters*, p. 60.)

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁶ Bhatt and Scriver. *After the Masters*. 60.

¹⁷ *India Today*, December 15, 1982. p. 59.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 77
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 3: Asiad Village, plan (source: *After the Masters*, p. 62.)

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 77
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 4: Asiad '82 mascot—Appu the elephant—made of flowers paraded through the ground (source: *India Today*, December 15, 1982. pg. 65)

Asiad '82 also coincided with the introduction of colour television in India—ushering in the age of televisions and satellites in the country. In a rare feat of several architectural achievements and civil engineering, Delhi was transformed during the two-year period preceding the event. Many new hotels, fly-overs and rail links were built to cater to traffic and aid domestic travel during the Games, five brand-new and state-of-the-art stadia were created, twelve existing stadia were renovated, and the Asiad Village was built. The total estimated cost of the project was US \$842 million and Delhi, *India Today* commented, “resembled a giant excavating site” during the two years.¹⁸ This unparalleled sporting fever in India, as we have seen, was also politically motivated—but the ripple-effect of the event had larger implications for the overall cultural status of India. Just before the Games opened, the Tourism Ministry, taking advantage of India’s multi-faceted heritage as well as promoting the many resort areas, presented its first-ever tourism policy in the Rajya Sabha—the Indian Parliament. Many hotels, such as the Ashok Yatri Niwas, were commissioned by the Tourism Development Corporation in Delhi to provide accommodation for visitors to the capital.

NOTE:

This figure is included on page 78 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 5: Ashok Yatri Niwas, New Delhi. Architects: Jasbir Sawhney and Associates (source: *After the Masters*, p. 152.)

¹⁸ *India Today*, November 30, 1982. p. 26.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 79
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 6: Steady rise of foreign exchange earnings from tourism (source: India Today, December 15, 1982. p. 75.)

Although the events of the 1980s allowed a large concentration of architectural creativity in Delhi, in the post-independence years—specifically after the 1960s—Delhi had already overtaken Bombay as the “creative centre of modern architecture.”¹⁹ Architects such as (in no particular order nor strictly based in Delhi) Joseph Allen Stein, Achyut Kanvinde, Anant Raje, Shivnath Prasad, Ranjit Sabikhi, Charles Correa, Raj Rewal, and Kuldip Singh had all designed buildings in the city with varying degrees of influences. The identified influences for these architectural creations—from Le Corbusier to Louis Kahn and from Brutalism to Vernacularism—have been debated endlessly in architectural discourses attempting to place contemporary trends in Indian architecture in a global framework.²⁰ Such influences, according to most of the discourses, had an underlying search for a national architectural identity. Whether or not this search was a conscious decision by the agencies involved in the architectural production—the debates regarding the same nevertheless promoted a doxa of *Indianness* in the practice of contemporary Indian architecture.

Institutional processes sponsored directly or indirectly by the government further reinforced the formation of such a doxa. The inauguration in 1984, of the non-governmental organisation, the Indian National Trust for Architectural

¹⁹ Evenson. *The Indian Metropolis*. 236.

²⁰ Evenson. *The Indian Metropolis*; Bhatt and Scriver. *After the Masters*; Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*.

and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) was one significant instance. Now a prominent institution, INTACH's main objective was to restore and conserve the neglected art and cultural heritage of India. Considerably supported by Rajiv Gandhi, INTACH's list of trustees included himself as the chairman, Pupul Jayakar (vice-chairman and India's cultural tsarina), and members such as L.K. Jha (economist), Professor M.G.K. Menon (physicist and policy maker), Dr Kapila Vatsyayan (scholar of Indian classical dance and involved with the Ministry of Education, department of Arts and Culture, Government of India), Madhavrao Scindia (son of the last ruling Maharaja of Gwalior, Jiyajirao Scindia, and at the time, Congress candidate in Gwalior), designers Rajiv Sethi and Martand Singh, and Bilkees Latif (wife of Maharashtra's high-profile governor Idris Hasan Latif—one time chief of Air Staff of India).

NOTE:

This figure is included on page 80 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 7: The 1984 INTACH meeting chaired by Rajiv Gandhi (source: *India Today*, April 15, 1984. p. 84.)

Individuals of such eminence, from cultural gurus to political movers and shakers—the cultural ‘zealots’²¹ as Bourdieu would call them—not only assist in generating or reinforcing the symbolic value of a particular organisation or institution, but also maintain a particular universe of belief that simultaneously produces products or takes actions and the need for those products or actions. At the time of INTACH's institution, Rajiv Gandhi was already popular as the future leader of India. A few months later, in December 1984, in the aftermath

²¹ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*. 82.

of Indira Gandhi's assassination, Rajiv Gandhi would triumphantly win the elections and be officially elected as the prime minister of India. Similarly, the other members and their positions (described in parentheses) not only were prominent and consecrated individuals in their respective fields, but had come together in the singular belief of preserving and consecrating a certain *Indianness* in the various and varied cultural goods of India, past and present; thus creating a universe of celebrants and believers who give meaning and value to a belief. It is not that such a universe of congruent interests was not in existence previously, however, it appears to have become more prominent in the 1980s with the already established locus of accumulated social energy in places such as Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad. In the light of the preceding historical context, it can be argued that the period of the 1980s provided a fertile *site*, for both the Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad constituencies of "leading" Indian architects to construct—and teach—within the prevailing paradigms of modern/traditional or modern/postmodern thoughts, their own notions of appropriate "Indian" architecture.

These were also the times when as Carol A. Breckenridge has observed, "new fault lines in civil society were created."²² Breckenridge is reflecting on the times since the mid-1980s in India, when her book *Consuming Modernity* was first conceived. After Indira Gandhi's assassination, the era of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi—apart from curbing rampant violence occasioned by the assassination—witnessed unprecedented privatisation and the denationalisation of industry. In fact this tumultuous phase in Indian history is considered significant in the implementation of economic liberalisation policies of the early 1990s. Consecutively, by the late 1980s, many multinational and transnational corporations were allowed to conduct business in India, heralding life-style changes in a growing middle-class and increasingly consumerist population. However, Breckenridge also contextualises such developments within controversial events such as the Babari Masjid (mosque) dispute which resurfaced in 1984 (and culminated in the violent demolition of the mosque by Hindu fanatics in 1992), the controversy surrounding publication of Salman

²² Carol A. Breckenridge, ed. *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995. vii.

Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in 1989, the Mandal Commission Report that problematised and politicised notions of caste, etc. These events not only made explicit severe rifts in India's body politic, but also had deep effects in the communal life of many Indians. Those living in regions that were politicised using such issues had to bear at times the effects of large-scale communal violence also. Ironically, Ahmedabad and Delhi, where seemingly comfortable contestations and research on contemporary Indian architecture and its identity were conducted, were regions of such unfortunate communal violence.

The efforts of the foreign-returned architects (and those influenced by their thoughts) got further leverage in and through a series of architectural exhibitions held between 1985 and 1987. Raj Rewal and Ram Sharma from Delhi, working actively with the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) in Delhi, helped curate the first Festival of India Exhibition on Indian architecture, which was held in France in 1985. A result of this exhibition was a substantial catalogue *Architecture in India*, published by Electa Moniteur.²³ In 1985, an international architectural design competition, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) was held by the Indian Government's Department of Arts. To coincide with the IGNCA, an exhibition 'Kham: Space and the Act of Space,' was also held in New Delhi. Seven years later, in 1992, the IGNCA published a book about the competition, titled, *Concepts and Responses*.²⁴ In 1986, an exhibition called 'Golden Eye,' attempting to bridge the gap between the past and future of India's (then perceived) dying craft industry and involving internationally recognised architects and designers, was held in New York. Mumbai based architect Charles Correa conceptualised the second Festival of India exhibition, held in Russia in 1987. Called 'Vistāra – The Architecture of India,' this exhibition also resulted in the publication of a richly produced catalogue.

²³ Catalogue. *Architecture in India: A Festival of India Publication*, Paris: Electa Moniteur, 1985.

²⁴ *Concepts and Responses: International Architectural Design Competition for the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts*, New Delhi. Edited by Razia Grover. Ahmedabad: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in association with Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 1992.

The 1980s were thus conducive in the field of architectural production as much as within the larger field of cultural production in India, for the *publication*—or the “making of public meaning” (and hence *belief*)²⁵—about an *Indianness* of things, architecture included. Not surprisingly, perhaps, it is precisely during this period that a new architectural magazine *Architecture + Design (A+D)* was founded and commenced publication (in Delhi in 1984), with an overt ambition to document and promote an emergent new Indianness in the contemporary architecture of the country. It was also during this same period research was conducted for a number of monographic and pan-Indian studies of contemporary Indian architecture that would be published before the decade was concluded. The next chapter reviews the scope and discusses the investigative stances of this impressive volume and range of new discourses on contemporary Indian architecture in the historical context of the exceptional cultural production of the 1980s in India that we have just outlined in the present chapter.

²⁵ Hélène Lipstadt. “Can ‘Art Professions’ Be Bourdieuean Fields of Cultural Production? The Case of the Architecture Competition.” *Cultural Studies* 17, no. 3/4 (2003), 408.

Chapter 5

Investigating contemporary Indian architecture

5.1: Introduction

This chapter surveys two sub-discourses or genres of discourse regarding contemporary Indian architecture. While the first one concentrated either on certain Indian architects and their works, the second genre was focused on pan-Indian surveys of post-independence and contemporary architecture. A close reading of selected examples of each genre will help in understanding the various narratives that consecrated certain architects as the legitimate representatives of contemporary Indian architecture. While this reading will reveal the issue of dominance and marginalisation in the representation of contemporary Indian architecture, we will also begin to understand how a field of architecture in India got consolidated in terms of certain dominant issues that were (and still are) pursued with variable interests.

A legitimising notion or idea about architecture is constructed not only through the material production of architecture, but also by its symbolic (re)production through publications, exhibitions, competitions, teachings etc., which, in turn,

contribute to the (re)production of a particular architectural identity. The construction of contemporary Indian architecture in architectural discourses of the past three decades is a case in point. In the previous chapter we observed several diplomatic and socio-cultural initiatives undertaken by the Indian state in the 1980s: the Asian Games in Delhi, the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of State in Goa, the Non-Aligned Summit in Delhi, the Festival of India project (and associated architectural exhibitions), the institution of INTACH, and the IGNCA international design competition. We observed how the socio-political context of the 1980s, through such state-sponsored activities, also accorded selective significance to various regions and individuals and agencies within those regions with respect to the field of architecture. This only helped in enhancing the symbolic capital of certain architects and architect-educators already invested with an educational capital (associated with an overseas education or training), such as B. V. Doshi, Anant Raje, Charles Correa and a comparatively younger generation group that included Raj Rewal, Ranjit Sabikhi, Satish Grover and C. P. Kukreja. With this background, the current chapter continues the discussion on the discourses of contemporary Indian architecture that emerged in parallel with the postcolonial discourses of Tillotson, Metcalf and Evenson discussed earlier.

The discourses of contemporary Indian architecture, apart from consecrating certain individuals as ‘activists’ of contemporary Indian architectural practice—if they may be so described—also introduced categories of perception and appreciation inherent in the cognitive mechanism of reproduction. Once set in motion, the divergent and antagonistic approaches pursued within and through the set categories of ‘viewing’ contemporary architecture in India, also set up ‘games’ of recognition, formulated in the name of a claim to universality of things *Indian*. Through certain selected discourses of the period, the current chapter will aspire to illustrate certain main players in such games in which the notion of Indianness itself was at stake. These issues would haunt the discourses of contemporary Indian architecture for more than three decades, until economic liberalisation policies undertaken by the Indian government (in the early 1990s) would challenge the very structure and dynamics of such hegemonic constructions.

Despite the fact that it could undermine the very theoretical approach this research adopts—that is, a critique of reductive representations—it is beyond the limitations of the current chapter to include all the existing discourses of contemporary Indian architecture. What is nevertheless attempted here is to highlight the chronological development of discourses as they have made their presence felt in the academic and professional domains, thenceforth becoming *privileged references*. The discourses selected here may be categorised into two sets: (1) monographic representations concentrating on the practice of certain contemporary Indian architects, and (2) pan-Indian surveys of contemporary architectural practices in India. Further, while in terms of hardbound books, such discourses number no less than ten, in terms of journal or magazine articles and academic theses, they exist in a considerably larger quantity. Five book-length monographs concentrating on the works of three architects from India—Charles Correa, B. V. Doshi and Raj Rewal—and the discourses surrounding these, are discussed in the first section.

5.2: Activists of contemporary Indian architecture

5.2.1 Charles Mark Correa

The first book to hit the ‘market of symbolic goods,’ so to speak, was the 1984 Mimar publication on, and under the title, *Charles Correa* with an essay by Sherban Cantacuzino.¹ *Charles Correa* is a chronicle of Correa’s works, situating him as an exceptional Third World architect working between the tenets of international Modernism and Third World conditions. The monograph was the first one in the series titled “Architects in the Third World” begun by *Mimar Books*. In fact Mimar may single-handedly be held responsible for presenting the first monograph on an Indian architect. Mimar published two more monographs after the well-received *Charles Correa*. Having sold out the first edition, a second edition of *Charles Correa: Architect*

¹ Charles Correa and Sherban Cantacuzino. *Charles Correa, Architects in the Third World*. Singapore: Concept Media, 1984.

in India was published in 1987 with a revised essay by Cantacuzino and additional essays by Hasan-Uddin Khan, and one by Charles Correa himself.² There is a notable development in the second edition of *Charles Correa*. Apart from Cantacuzino's revised essay which reinforces Correa's position as a Third World architect situated between international currents and Third World realities, the second book, at least in one instance in an essay by Khan, also situates Correa within a set of "Indian architects of [Correa's] generation" who were influenced by Le Corbusier. Correa is shown to be discussing Corbusier and Chandigarh with "fellow architects Achyut Kanvinde, Balkrishna Doshi, Shivnath Prasad and others."³ While works of Charles Correa, along with contemporaries such as Balkrishna Doshi, Raj Rewal and a few others, had been receiving varying attention since the 1960s in various national and international journals, an attempt at presenting a cohesive publication under the life-and-work genre on any of the architects had never been made before the Mimar publication on Charles Correa. Series editor Hasan-Uddin Khan notes in the revised edition of *Charles Correa*,

This completely revised edition thus owes some of its recognition to the style we developed with our later books, as well as to a remark made about the old edition by Sir James Richards who said that it was "more like a magazine than a book in presentation".⁴

Richards' comparison of the book's first edition with a magazine is notable when one considers the evolution of *MIMAR* as a magazine of architecture established only three years before the publication of *Charles Correa*. In the 'theme introduction' of *MIMAR*'s first issue of 1981, editor Brian Brace Taylor posits the magazine as a 'glimmer of hope' in the perceived problematic condition in architecture resulting from the encounter of "Western industrialised societies" with "traditional cultures of societies on the path of

² Hasan-Uddin Khan, Charles Correa and Sherban Cantacuzino. *Charles Correa: Architect in India*. Edited by Hasan-Uddin Khan. Rev. ed, *Architects in the Third World*. [London]: Butterworth Architecture, 1987.

³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, "Acknowledgements."

progress.”⁵ The term ‘western industrialised societies’ with inherent notions of progress and advancement in comparison to other (read ‘Third World’) cultures and societies *on the path of progress* reflects the continuing dissemination of already problematic concepts such as ‘modernism’ and ‘postmodernism’ in architectural discourses of the time. The specific title of the series in which *Charles Correa* was conceptualised, “Architects in the Third World,” only reinforces such a viewpoint of *MIMAR* magazine. It can be argued that the title suggests either a coalescing move, or a challenging stance towards contemporaneous and increasing excursions of ‘western’ scholars into the non-western arena of architecture. Pursued under hegemonic categories of modernist and later, postmodernist ideologies, the function of architecture in non-western cultures became the subject of investigation for many scholars and associated institutions since the 1960s. Occasioned also because of Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn’s works in the Indian subcontinent, indeed in many discourses of such nature, the architecture of the Indian subcontinent, with the added predicament of postcoloniality as discussed previously, became the springing point of discussions.⁶

When *Charles Correa* was first published in July 1984, Correa had just been awarded the Gold Medal for Architecture of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). It is important to take account of the debates that this event generated within the pages of the RIBA Journal (*RIBAJ*), to understand the wider institutional forces that not only assisted in the publication of *Charles Correa*, but also consolidated Correa’s esteemed position within the field of architecture in India. In a profile on Charles Correa, the *RIBAJ* had noted as early as in February 1984 about “Her Majesty the Queen’s” decision to award the esteemed award to “the Indian architect.”⁷ Towards the end of the profile, Peter Murray, editor of *RIBAJ* at the time, also added excerpts from *Charles Correa* that was to be published a month or two later by *Mimar*. Murray

⁵ Brian Brace Taylor. “Theme Introduction.” *Mimar* 1981, 24-25.

⁶ Alison and Peter Smithson. “The Function of Architecture in Cultures-in-Change.” *Architectural Digest* (April 1960): 149-50., and John Winter. “India and Pakistan.” *Architectural Digest* (April 1960): 151-57.

⁷ Peter Murray. “Charles Correa.” *RIBAJ* (February 1984): 16-18.

presented Correa, “both as a master of light and shade, of space and climate, as well as an activist with a concern for the underprivileged in the Third World.”⁸

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 89
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 8: Prince Charles and Correa, *RIBAJ* July 1984. Note the caption under the top-right photograph: “Casson presents garlands on behalf of Aga Khan”

The Gold Medal, which was instituted by the RIBA, was awarded on the institute’s 150th anniversary. 1984 was also the year that celebrated a Festival of Architecture in Britain. *RIBAJ* noted,

In the year of the Institute’s 150th anniversary the Gold Medal went not, as might have been supposed, to an establishment figure, but, for the first time, to an architect representing the Third World.⁹

Indeed, the importance of the Festival of Architecture, coupled with RIBA’s awarding of the Gold Medal on its 150th anniversary to an architect ‘representing the Third World,’ did not go unnoticed. This event stirred up a case of disappointment within the pages of *RIBAJ*, as one critic noted,

It is time that you were taken to task for presenting wilful or ignorant propaganda. I am referring specifically to your statement that this year’s Gold

⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁹ “Charles Mark Correa.” *RIBAJ* (May 1984).

Medallist, Charles Correa, is representing the Third World. Correa does not represent the Third World...Correa represents a tiny, immensely rich elite in India, for whose whims and fancies he caters, holding up to them the mirrors of fashion, not unlike architects all over the world...The correlation between the Gold Medal and the Third World is yours and may not have been in the minds of the Gold Medal Committee...the Committee members should leave their comfortable capsules and consider giving the medal (if it would be of any value) to people like Hassan Fathy (Egypt), Kintee (*sic*) Shah (India), even John Turner (UK).¹⁰

To this editor Peter Murray replied,

Some of the press reports concerning the award of the Royal Gold Medal to Charles Correa have suggested that there is disappointment in some quarters that, in this Festival Year, the medal did not go to a British architect...Because of the common history shared by the various professional groups in Commonwealth countries, and the link with the RIBA, there is much that we can learn from each other...perhaps it is Correa's greatest gift that he has been able to communicate in a most striking manner the role of the professional in the Third World.¹¹

Three years later, in 1987, Kenneth Frampton also noted the “considerable astonishment” in the “Anglo-American establishment” when Correa was awarded the esteemed Gold Medal.¹² Regardless of the controversy surrounding the event, Correa was indeed awarded the Royal Gold Medal, catapulting him into the arena of the ‘Anglo-American establishment’ as a morally and intellectually committed representative of the Third World. The two disparate events alone—the Royal award, followed by the *Mimar* book—discussed here, by no means, occasioned Correa's ascendancy in the international discourse arena of architecture. These must, nevertheless be considered as extraordinary and internationally situated legitimising instances

¹⁰ Peter Winchester. “Ignorant Propaganda.” *Letters section, RIBA* (July 1984): 13.

¹¹ Murray. “Correa: Architect in the Third World.” Editorial.

¹² Kenneth Frampton. “The Fate of Man and Architecture in the East.” *Mimar* December 1987, 60-63.

of Correa's consistent involvement with(in) Anglo-American discourses that focused on the Third World and issues of urbanisation and regionalism within such regions.

By the time Correa received the RIBA Gold Medal, in 1984, it had been more than a decade since he was conferred the Padmashree National Award (1972), one of the highest civilian awards instituted by the Government of India. And as early as 1961, Correa had won the first prize for a low-income housing project in a nation-wide architectural competition held by the Gujarat Housing Board. At that time it had been only four years since Correa had begun his own private practice in Mumbai. In the mid-1960s, Correa, along with structural engineer Shirish Patel and planner Pravina Mehta, prepared a master plan for Mumbai in an attempt to restructure the fast urbanising city. The ideas that were first published in *The Times of India* and later in a special issue of the influential magazine *MARG*, were eventually adopted by the Government of Maharashtra. The institution of CIDCO (City and Industrial Development Corporation) in the mid-1970s was a direct result of Correa and his team's efforts, and Correa was voluntarily consecrated as the Chief Architect for the new city. In the late-1960s, Correa was invited, along with twelve other international architects, by the Government of Peru and the United Nations to design a low-cost housing project in Lima. In 1974, the *TIME* magazine nominated Correa as one among 150 individuals around the world representing New Leadership in their respective fields. And as if justifying the magazine's nomination, between the mid-1970s to mid-1980s, Correa held various international and national leadership positions. These included Consultant to U. N. Secretary-General for HABITAT, Consulting Architect for the Government of Karnataka, Chairman of the Housing Urban Renewal & Ecology Board of the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority, Consultant to U. N. University, Tokyo, and Chairman of the National Commission on Urbanisation, Government of India.¹³

¹³ Khan, et al. *Charles Correa*. 160.

Beginning from 1959 in the *Architectural Review* (published from London), Correa's works have been published in various national and international journals. Including the *Architectural Review*, the journals listed in the 'bibliography'¹⁴ of *Charles Correa* include: *Architectura* (Roma), *Architectural Design* and *Daily Telegraph Magazine* (London), *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Record*, *Design & Environment*, *Progressive Architecture* and *Architecture Plus* (New York), *Architecture Aujourd'hui* and *Arts & Technology* (Paris), *Casabella* and *Spazio e Societa* (Milano), *Art & Architecture* (Tehran), *Process Architecture* (Tokyo), *Journal of the Indian Institute of Architects*, *Inside Outside* and *MARG* (Mumbai), and *Mimar* (Singapore). The impressive range of coverage in journals, some of which were, and still are, undoubtedly influential in terms of their authorship, referent ability, subscription, circulation and readership, illustrates explicitly the consecration of an Indian or, in the historical context, a 'Third World' architect in the global arena of architectural discourse. Apart from such coverage, Correa himself has been a consistent contributor to some of the national and international magazines and journals of architecture listed before. Correa's first international publication, "Corbusier in Chandigarh," an article that posited Corbusier's works as "of considerable benefit to India," was published in the *Architectural Review* as early as 1964.¹⁵ Correa eventually served as the Indian correspondent for that magazine, publishing one more article titled "Programmes and priorities" in 1971.¹⁶ Between 1959 and 1985, Correa wrote no less than 34 articles for various national and international seminars, conferences and magazines, journals and newspapers.¹⁷ Soon after publishing the revised edition of *Charles Correa* in 1987, *Mimar* published a book authored by Correa called *The New Landscape: Urbanisation in the Third World* in 1989, which had Correa's own ideas about urban issues in the 'Third World.'¹⁸ Connected with such a publication spree is also Correa's steady involvement within international architectural pedagogy. This not only helped Correa in constructing his own creative projects but also assisted him in

¹⁴ Correa and Cantacuzino. *Charles Correa, Architects in the Third World*. 121.

¹⁵ Charles Correa. "Corbusier in Chandigarh." *Architectural Review* (June 1964): 404-12.

¹⁶ Charles Correa. "Programmes and Priorities." *Architectural Review* (December 1971): 329-31.

¹⁷ Khan, et al. *Charles Correa*. 164.

¹⁸ Charles Correa. *The New Landscape*. Bombay: The Book Society of India, 1985.

occupying an esteemed position, comparable to, and sometimes diminishing, the positions of the other doyens of Indian architecture (such as B. V. Doshi and Raj Rewal) within the field of architecture in India.

Between 1949 and 1955, Correa received his tertiary architectural education entirely from the West—B.Arch from the University of Michigan, and M.Arch from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As a student, a range of influential architectural thinkers of the time including Buckminster Fuller, Walter Sanders, Lawrence Anderson, Steen Eiler Rasmussen and Kevin Lynch influenced Correa. Hassan-Uddin Khan suggests that Kevin Lynch, who was developing his themes for *Image of the City*¹⁹ in the late 1950s, might have triggered Correa's interest in urban issues, resulting, three decades later, in the publication of Correa's own *The New Landscape*.²⁰

Correa's involvement with architectural pedagogy early in his professional development, both nationally and internationally, is also a contributing factor in better understanding Correa's position as an Indian architect well poised between and within contesting discourses of modernity and tradition prevalent during the period. Soon after completing his own degree, Correa was invited back to teach at MIT, in 1962, as the Albert Bemis Professor, in the Department of Architecture. Teaching a graduate studio course at MIT, which focused on urban issues connected to "land tenure, location and land use," as Hassan-Uddin Khan points out, deeply influenced Correa. Upon his return to Mumbai in the mid-1960s, as previously mentioned, Correa along with a couple of colleagues drafted a Master Plan that necessitated a redefinition of Mumbai city. Correa's subsequent trajectory that saw him in leadership positions across a wide variety of urban and architectural institutions and related government bodies has already been mentioned before. Between 1974 and the mid-1980s, Correa held the following academic positions: Bannister Fletcher Professor at the University of London (May 1974), Visiting critic, Graduate School of Design at Harvard (fall 1974), Visiting critic, J.J. School of

¹⁹ Kevin Lynch. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, London: The M.I.T. Press, 1960.

²⁰ Refer to Hasan-Uddin Khan's essay on the 'early work' of Charles Correa in Khan, et al. *Charles Correa*. 18-19.

Architecture, Mumbai (July-October 1976), Arthur Davis Visiting Professor, School of Architecture, Tulane University, New Orleans (fall 1979), Visiting critic, Department of Architecture at MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts (spring 1981), Visiting critic, School of Architecture, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (spring 1982), Visiting critic, Columbia University, New York (spring 1984), and last but not the least, as Nehru Professor, Cambridge University, U.K. (1985).

Such an impressive trajectory of professional development as Charles Correa's showcases the arrival of a contemporary Indian architect in the international architectural establishment and discourse. Implicitly such a sustained process sets up, for all the agencies involved—architects, authors, publishers, journals, associated institutions, etc.—a legitimate authority to both consecrate and accumulate a symbolic value. To illustrate such a point, I shall briefly discuss a 'critical review'²¹ by Kenneth Frampton, of the Mimar book *Charles Correa*, which appeared in the *MIMAR* magazine in 1987, three years after the book's publication.

Curiously titled "The fate of man and architecture in the East," Frampton's review advocates the thesis that "it is in the East rather than the West that the fate of man will eventually be decided."²² Never mind the marked division of the East and the West, obvious in the title itself; it can be argued that the title of Frampton's article is reminiscent of late 18th century writers of Indian architecture besotted with the magic, mystery or misery of India. However, Frampton, in reviewing *a book* about Charles Correa and his works in the late 20th century, further indulges in a blatant, almost prophetic, generalisation of the *fate of man*, and architecture, in the East. Such notions abound in Frampton's four-page long review. In the beginning itself of the review, Frampton states that the emerging power of the East has a vitality that has been arrogantly ignored by the West—thus situating Correa and his architecture, as an Eastern case in point. For Frampton, Correa's presence seems to "spontaneously emanate" a "charismatic intelligence." Positing Correa as "an

²¹ Frampton. "The Fate of Man and Architecture in the East." 60-63.

²² *Ibid.*, 63.

Arendtian man of action and speech, rather than a McLuhanesque figure preoccupied with the image,” Frampton nevertheless lists four paradigms that seem to inform Correa’s architectural imagination—“Fatehpur Sikri, Jaisalmer, Jaipur and last, but not the least, the ubiquitous *maidan* or green sward of the traditional Indian village.”

Frampton’s review celebrates Correa’s works in so far as Correa resorts to “transferring” or “transforming” architecture “embedded in the tradition of Indian culture.” It is only when Correa seems to be experimenting with “westernised” architectural concepts, especially in housing schemes, that Frampton finds his works “all the more unfortunate” for the sensibilities of the Indian condition. However, in reviewing Correa’s architecture for leisure and relaxation, for instance the Bay Island Hotel in Port Blair, Frampton notes, “it would be hard to find any modern, all timber building which would be capable of equalling its elegance.” Invoking Correa’s own notions of timelessness and universality perceived to be embedded in the idea of the Indian *mandala*, Frampton compares Correa to Aldo Van Eyck, and posits his own recognition at the time, that the “occidental project of the Enlightenment has reached its historical dead-end.” This abject inference expresses Frampton’s own cynicism at the time with the condition of Anglo-American architecture that was perceived to have ended with the Modern movement in architecture. For Frampton then, Correa has not only “situated himself on the world stage without relinquishing any of his earlier intellectual and moral commitment to the plight of the Third World,” but also represents the project of Modernism appropriated to cultures and traditions of the East. To be certain, while critiquing the increasing division between science and nature in Western traditions, Frampton’s essay promotes the view that such a division can be bridged. For Frampton, whose own notion of Critical Regionalism provides certain ‘criteria’ for reclaiming nature against universalising technoscientific forces advanced by the West,²³ Correa, ‘an architect of consummate ingenuity’

²³ Kenneth Frampton. “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance.” In *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, edited by Hal Foster, 16-30. Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1983. Also, Kenneth Frampton. *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1985.

from the East, represents such a resistance.²⁴ Sounding less polemic, Frampton would write a similar essay for yet another monograph on Charles Correa published in 1996 featuring new projects and an extended bibliography.²⁵

Frampton's 1987 essay in *MIMAR* joins ranks with contemporaneous studies undertaken by William J. R. Curtis and Dan Cruickshank that appeared in an issue of the *Architectural Review* in the same year.²⁶ Before discussing Curtis' and Cruickshank's essays, it is important to contextualise them within Cruickshank's introduction to this particular issue of the *Architectural Review* which was dedicated especially to Indian architecture. The August 1987 issue of the *Architectural Review* is a particularly pivotal site of discourse in that it is the second²⁷ international publication of its kind that attempted a comprehensive survey of contemporary Indian architecture within constructed categories of architectural thought prevalent in Western discourses at the time. The following paragraph from Cruickshank's introduction must also be appreciated in the context of increasing contradictions and complexities perceived in Anglo-American architectural establishment occasioned since the publications of *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, Learning from Las Vegas* and *The Anti-aesthetic*.

Throughout the world architects are attempting to evolve a contemporary architecture that shows the respect for history and tradition that was abandoned during the pioneering frenzy of the Modern Movement and yet is capable of fulfilling the demands of late twentieth-century society and reflecting its aspirations. This search has, in the West, produced much grotesque and self-conscious architecture in which historic references are used superficially and

²⁴ The brief biographic note attached at the end of the review not only informs and legitimises Frampton's own position, but reflectively, also propagates the importance of *MIMAR* as a site where such critical discussions can be undertaken, "Kenneth Frampton is a trained architect from the U.K. where he was once editor of *Architectural Design* magazine as well. Chairman of the School of Architecture at Columbia University in New York, he is one of the foremost historians and critics of modern architecture in the world today. This critical review was written specially for *MIMAR*." Frampton. "The Fate of Man and Architecture in the East." 63.

²⁵ Kenneth Frampton and Charles Correa. *Charles Correa*. Bombay: The Perennial Press, 1996.

²⁶ William J. R. Curtis. "Modernism and the Search for Indian Identity." *Architectural Review*, no. 1086 (1987): 33-38, and Dan Cruickshank. "Variations and Traditions." *Architectural Review*, no. 1086 (1987): 51-58.

²⁷ The first one being a catalogue resulting from the 1985 Festival of India, *Architecture in India: A Festival of India Publication*. Paris: Electa Moniteur, 1985.

ironically. But in India, where there is a greater continuity between past and present, there is the promise of a more sophisticated and authentic synthesis between old and new and indications that a genuine architectural future may be found by reference to the past.²⁸

The next sentence of Cruickshank's introduction is even more interesting:

In many ways this Indian search can be seen as a direct continuation of that search for a modern architecture which began in Europe in the very late nineteenth century and which was overwhelmed in the 1920s and '30s by the emergence of the Modern Movement.²⁹

Note particularly the argument in the above sentence advanced by Cruickshank. It is highly reminiscent of the stance taken by most 20th century apologists of Indian art and architecture. Consider for instance, Vincent Smith's interest in the formal simplicity and antiquity of India's architectural heritage, not to mention its imagined subsequent degradation (refer to chapter 2). After finding post-Renaissance European architecture problematic, Smith's project essentially aimed to locate the cultural roots of an imagined superior European-Aryan race, considered as a given at the time as the backbone of everything morally and aesthetically remarkable in the Indian civilisation. Smith was thereby seeking Europe's own history in the antiquity of India's art and architectural heritage. In Cruickshank's introduction, although such a stance is not apparent, it can be argued that the gaze merely shifts to accommodate, what Cruickshank states as, an 'urgency of the task'—the task, that is, of negotiating a middle-ground between Western Modernism and Indian tradition.

Appearing within the framework drawn by Cruickshank, Curtis' essay considers Charles Correa 'pivotal' in the story of 'Indian Modern architecture.'

²⁸ Dan Cruickshank. "India." *Architectural Review*, no. 1086 (August 1987): 13/8.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Curtis' essay offers a group of contemporary Indian architectural practices³⁰ that were either added to or reinforced by Cruickshank's later essay.

Simultaneously judging and fixing the gaze on certain selected practices from India, Curtis' conclusion reads thus,

The *best* recent architecture in India may contain relevant hints for the developing countries. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the uncritical adaptation of Western models is no real solution, as these are often inadequate to climate and culture: the results tend to be alien and alienating. But the answer does not lie in the superficial imitation of local traditions either, as it fails to update what is substantial about the past, and does not address what is pressing in the present. The hope is to make a relevant synthesis of old and new, regional and universal. The *best recent Indian work* is so challenging because it is open to the tests of the future as well as the grandeur of the past (emphases mine).³¹

Architectural Review's own comments at the end of Curtis' essay, when it focuses on three Indian architects—Raj Rewal, B. V. Doshi and Ashish Ganju—is worth noting,

On the following pages the AR looks at six recently completed (or nearly completed) projects by three architects. These show the achievements of a thoughtful synthesis of what is *relevant in Western Modernism* with what is *essential in Indian traditional building* and, *if flawed in some respects, these projects do promise great things to come* (emphases mine).³²

Following *Architectural Review's* dedicated 1987 theme of showcasing Indian Modern architecture, or Modern Indian architecture as editor Dan Cruickshank's abstract puts it, Cruickshank's essay also "discusses the work of some architects whose work is representative of the current search for an Indian architecture..."³³ Cruickshank's essay, while introducing a few more

³⁰ The architects or architectural practices who feature in Curtis' essay include Ranjit Sabikhi (the Design Group), Raj Rewal, the collaborative practice of Stein, Doshi and Bhalla, Satish Gujral, Anant Raje, B. V. Doshi,

³¹ Curtis. "Modernism and the Search for Indian Identity," 38.

³² Comment, *Architectural Review*, no. 1086 (1987): 38.

³³ Cruickshank. "Variations and Traditions," 51.

Indian architects and critics,³⁴ concentrates mainly on the works of the following architects: Uttam Jain, Raj Rewal, Charles Correa, B. V. Doshi, K. T. Ravindran, M. N. Ashish Ganju and Ashok Lall. Following up on both these essays, by Curtis and Cruickshank, Juhani Pallasmaa wrote an essay titled “Tradition and Modernity: the feasibility of regional architecture in post-modern society” in the *Architectural Review* the following year.³⁵ Pallasmaa offered to expand the themes developed in the previous discussions by Curtis and Cruickshank around architecture in the Indian sub-continent, by including ‘regional activity in the developed world.’ The paradoxical effacement of difference inherent in any universalising intent is clearly reflected in Pallasmaa’s essay when he states,

All great art tends to be regional for the simple reason that it is open to interpretation and, consequently, can echo any cultural conditions. All great art is the common property and heritage of mankind.³⁶

As an example to prove his point, Pallasmaa mentions the intellectual exchange between Europe and the Eastern regions such as Japan and India. The influence of traditional Japanese architecture in Frank Lloyd Wright’s works and Le Corbusier’s architecture in the Indian subcontinent, Pallasmaa implies, influenced architects such as “Tadao Ando and Charles Correa and many others” from the regions. These architects and their works are, therefore, according to Pallasmaa, representative of the “strongest contemporary traditions.”

Contested either through issues of Third World identity, feasibility or universality, we have just observed how not only certain select architects and regions—Charles Correa and India (Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Delhi especially) in this case—get represented and reinvented, but such a process

³⁴ Cruickshank’s offering include: “Delhi-based Cambridge and AA-educated Romi Khosla,” A. G. Krishna Menon—”another Western-trained Delhi-based architect,” K. T. Ravindran, M. N. Ashish Ganju, Laurie Baker and Malay Chatterjee, apart from some of the names from Curtis’ earlier essay. Ibid.

³⁵ Juhani Pallasmaa. “Tradition and Modernity: The Feasibility of Regional Architecture in Post-Modern Society.” *Architectural Review*, no. 1095 (1988): 27-34.

³⁶ Ibid., 31.

also sustains and maintains a confederacy of like-minded issues involving authors, institutions, journals, books and publishers. It is then not surprising that such a confederacy also influences future monographic studies such as Curtis' book on B. V. Doshi,³⁷ Brian Brace Taylor's focus on Raj Rewal,³⁸ Frampton's book on Charles Correa,³⁹ and James Steele's renewed focus on Doshi.⁴⁰ To complete the loop on the doyens of contemporary Indian architecture and associated discourses, the following sections will briefly discuss Curtis' monograph on B. V. Doshi, and Brian Brace Taylor's book on Raj Rewal.

5.2.2 Balkrishna V. Doshi

When Curtis' article "Modernism and the Search for Indian Identity" appeared in the August 1987 issue of the *Architectural Review*, his monograph on B. V. Doshi was already in the pipeline to be published.⁴¹ Curtis' outwardly conventional monograph is introduced as "an interpretative essay which puts the architect in historical perspective."⁴² But in the body of his essay, Curtis situates Doshi thus:

Doshi's quest for an authentic architecture blending old and new, regional and universal, has relevance beyond India. In many other areas of the Third World, architects are grappling with the problem of how best to modernise yet maintain a core of cultural identity. Doshi's work does not provide recipes for doing this but it does suggest that the [Third World] architect must avoid both international and national stereotypes. The aim should be to transform, not to imitate or to reproduce.⁴³

³⁷ William Curtis. *Balkrishna Doshi: An Architecture for India*. New York: Rizzoli, 1988.

³⁸ Brian Brace Taylor. *Raj Rewal*. London: Mimar Publications, Concept Media Ltd., 1992.

³⁹ Frampton and Correa. *Charles Correa*.

⁴⁰ James Steele. *The Complete Architecture of Balkrishna Doshi: Rethinking Modernism for the Developing World*. Mumbai: Super Book House, 1998.

⁴¹ As Curtis informs: "This book was put together at the end of 1986 and the beginning of 1987..." Curtis. *Balkrishna Doshi*. 9.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 9.

Despite outer similarities in the framework adopted in Curtis' book on Doshi and the Mimar book on Charles Correa published four years earlier, the monograph on Doshi differs significantly from *Charles Correa*. The Mimar book, as we have noted, chronicles Correa's works as, primarily, works of a Third World architect negotiating between international currents and Third World living conditions. Correa is seen as a prime exemplary of a contemporary Indian architect; it is only in the revised edition of the book that Khan situates Correa within a group of architects in India who were similarly influenced, primarily by Le Corbusier's works in India. Both the books, in cataloguing Correa's works, nevertheless pursue an underlying line of argument that advocates a rejection of Western influences in the search for authenticity in Third World architecture. Such a stance, which was supported by the Mimar publication, was further reinforced in Kenneth Frampton's essay on Correa that appeared in a 1987 issue of the *MIMAR* magazine. Both these instances, along with the awarding of the Royal Gold Medal and Correa's own long-term involvement in the international circuit of architectural education, paradoxically, situated Correa increasingly in the larger international arena of architectural establishment.

Curtis' monograph on Doshi attempts to showcase the 'synthesis' of Western influences with Doshi's own "myths and ideas" gleaned from his culture.⁴⁴ While the publication of Correa's original monograph must be seen in the light of his consistent involvement with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture since 1979,⁴⁵ Curtis' 1988 book on Doshi, on the other hand, resulted from Curtis' own fascination with 'old, dormant civilization' in, as opposed to against, international currents of globalisation. It is interesting that Curtis quotes from E. B. Havell and Paul Ricoeur in the beginning of the book on B. V. Doshi. Choosing Havell's quotation which posits India as an old civilization that had inherent transformative characteristics supported by its philosophy and religion, from Ricoeur, Curtis chose to highlight Ricoeur's idea of the paradox between 'becoming modern' and '[returning] to sources'—"how to revive an

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁴⁵ Katherine A. R. Bartsch. "Re-Thinking Islamic Architecture: A Critique of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture through the Paradigm of Encounter." PhD, University of Adelaide, 2005. 231.

old, dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization...⁴⁶

Considered in the light of Frampton's version of Critical Regionalism that borrows the same paradox of Ricoeur to articulate selective 'points' in advancing an attitude of resistance to universalising tendencies in architecture,⁴⁷ Curtis' stand may be posited as more inclusive of regional transformations in architecture. In this regard, both Curtis and Frampton offer instances where selective architects, and their works, from the Third World regions are appropriated to fit essentially 'Western' frameworks.

It is through one such framework that Curtis investigates Doshi's "search for an architecture of authenticity based upon a philosophy of life."⁴⁸ Having set up this task, Curtis' narrative on Doshi, more than just fulfilling a life-and-work genre, is also poised precariously on the edge of a legend of Doshi aimed at serving Curtis' 'search for a modern Indian architecture.' Doshi, in Curtis' imagination, is portrayed as a quintessential Indian seeker of "a guiding truth"⁴⁹ throughout his experiences—from being a student of Le Corbusier, to his later projects. According to Curtis, this 'seeking' culminates (for himself, and in Doshi) in a realisation of fundamental constants relating to "climate, human scale, patterns of settlement, and spiritual value" in Doshi's own tradition.⁵⁰

Curtis' 'historical perspective' vis-à-vis Doshi's architecture is an attempt at situating Doshi within the various encounters, both professional and cultural, within the regional and the universal, which have continued to influence Doshi's architecture. Despite advancing the critical concept of synthesis between essentially modern or postmodern western influences and traditional Third World (Indian) values, Curtis' monograph on Doshi retracts to, and indeed advocates a discourse of the Third World resistance against cultural homogenisation.⁵¹ In this respect, Curtis' monograph on Doshi is similar to those on Charles Correa. The books on Correa—especially the revised *Mimar*

⁴⁶ Curtis. *Balkrishna Doshi*. 6.

⁴⁷ Frampton. "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance."

⁴⁸ Curtis. *Balkrishna Doshi*. 168, 171-72.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

edition and Frampton's similar version—celebrated the architect and his works, heralding the architecture thus produced as a return to the “inner beauty”⁵² or the “primordial stimuli”⁵³ of architecture as is perceived to have existed in traditional Indian architectural treatises and methods. In both these accounts, Correa is seen as a pioneering Third World exemplary who works against the “stylistic superficiality of Post Modern pastiche.”⁵⁴ Note the striking similarities, between Cantacuzino's and Frampton's discourses on Correa, and Curtis' conclusion of the long essay on Doshi and his architecture,

In much recent writing on architecture there is the tacit assumption that cosmopolitan centres in the West are generating the waves behind which the rest of the world should follow if it is to remain “up to date”. It is a model that makes no distinction between fashion and substance, and which remains totally ignorant of everything beyond the United States, Western Europe and Japan. The irony of this situation is considerable, for it is precisely at the moment that *a regression into superficial stylism is afflicting the West* that an architecture of substance is emerging in some areas of the Third World (emphasis mine).⁵⁵

In Curtis' book, there are also instances where the driving factor of the romance of India seeps through the critical account. For instance, despite his research being conducted during a period of intense communal violence between the Hindus and the Muslims in regions such as Delhi and Ahmedabad,⁵⁶ an Orientalist construction of a ‘quiet’ Indian village does not seem to escape Curtis' attention in the 1988 book on Doshi. Curtis,

The book was written in ideal circumstances: a verandah in Delhi, and a quiet nook in Ahmedabad. I am grateful to my hosts in both cases. From the second place, it was possible to glimpse water troughs, monkeys and peacocks. When writing became tedious, I had only to step onto a terrace to see camel carts and peasants on their way to the city.⁵⁷

⁵² Khan, et al. *Charles Correa*. 16.

⁵³ Frampton and Correa. *Charles Correa*. 28.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁵ Curtis. *Balkrishna Doshi*. 46.

⁵⁶ Breckenridge, ed. *Consuming Modernity*. vii.

⁵⁷ Curtis. *Balkrishna Doshi*. 9.

The search for ‘appropriate Indian architecture’ through historical and cultural influences sets the stage for yet another monograph on B. V. Doshi by James Steele.⁵⁸ Published much later than the books on Correa, and Curtis’ 1988 monograph on Doshi, Steele’s 1998 version of “the complete architecture of Balkrishna Doshi” attempts to “[rethink] modernism for the developing world.”⁵⁹ Steele’s account of Doshi and his architecture appeared a year after India celebrated fifty years of independence from the British, and two years since Frampton’s *Charles Correa* was published. It is significant to note the historical importance accorded to the year 1997—the fiftieth anniversary of India’s independence—which happens to separate these two discourses with respect to the two towering personalities of contemporary Indian architecture, Charles Correa and B. V. Doshi.

Steele’s version of Doshi’s ‘complete architecture’ depicts eleven projects by Doshi. Only three of them—Husain-Doshi Gufa (1992-95), National Institute of Fashion Technology (1997) and Bharat Diamond Bourse (1998)—do not appear in Curtis’ book, because of the obvious reason that those projects were not realised or even conceptualised when the book by Curtis was published. James Steele’s account of Doshi’s works follows the obligatory servitude in such hagiographic accounts to situate them within notions of modernity and tradition in search for an authenticity of regional architecture (as evidenced in Juhani Pallasmaa’s essay discussed earlier). However, Steele’s version, while charting the development of Doshi’s various influences, is nevertheless, an attempt at a more critical viewpoint. Steele’s commentary on the selected architectural projects of Doshi, also takes into account the viability of using certain materials and borrowed typologies in the climatic, cultural and socio-economic conditions of the region in which the projects were realised.⁶⁰ Such a critical observation is largely missing in Curtis’ earlier version, where the chosen projects are firstly examined under formalist, typological or analogical

⁵⁸ Steele. *The Complete Architecture of Balkrishna Doshi*.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Title.

⁶⁰ See for instance Steele’s extended critique of Doshi’s Aranya Low-Cost Housing Scheme that won the 1996 Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Steele. *The Complete Architecture of Balkrishna Doshi*. 115-129.

lenses, and then valorised as either representing Doshi's influences from his 'mentors' Corbusier and Kahn, or his later synthesis of essentially Western and Eastern ideas. Writing a decade later in the late-1990s, Steele of course had the advantage of hindsight.⁶¹

Steele promotes Doshi as "one of the most visionary leaders of a generation who have been searching for a continuous strand in the long history of Indian architecture."⁶² Despite Doshi's comparatively (to Correa) similar involvement within international circles of architectural education and numerous advisory positions,⁶³ and the enviable close associations with two of the "most formative architectural thinkers"⁶⁴ of 20th century architecture—Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn—it is indeed intriguing for James Steele to note that "there has been a surprising lack of commentary on Doshi..."⁶⁵ Locating Doshi in the wider international arena of like-minded but not-so-popular architects, Steele provides explanation for such a 'lack of commentary' in the conclusion. Curiously missing in the global 'anonymous' group that Steele situates Doshi in, and hopes to gain popularity for, are such already internationally consecrated Indian architects as Charles Correa and Raj Rewal:⁶⁶

Balkrishna Doshi has a much larger following in India than he does internationally, despite the fact that he has realised over one hundred large-scale projects over his long career. There is no denying that he is something of a cult figure among certain architects around the world, primarily because of his concerted attempt to establish a truly appropriate contemporary vocabulary of built form for his country, but generally his work is not widely known. Because of the extent of his commitment, he can be considered along with surprisingly few others, past and present, who have attempted to do the same thing for their own countries or extended identities and have achieved the same degree of relative global anonymity for their efforts: Hassan Fathy, Sedad Hakki Elden,

⁶¹ Regarding the same Aranya Housing project, Curtis, for instance notes towards the conclusion in his earlier book, "So far it is too early to judge how the Indore project will turn out." Curtis. *Balkrishna Doshi*. 84.

⁶² Steele. *The Complete Architecture of Balkrishna Doshi*. 7.

⁶³ Refer to the 'biography' and 'bibliography' sections of Curtis. *Balkrishna Doshi*. 173-179.

⁶⁴ Cover interior. Steele. *The Complete Architecture of Balkrishna Doshi*.

⁶⁵ Steele. *The Complete Architecture of Balkrishna Doshi*. 7.

⁶⁶ The reader will be aware that monographs on both the architects were already in print when Steele's book on Doshi was published.

Abdel Wahed el-Wakil, Rasem Badran, Geoffrey Bawa and Jimmy Lim among a handful of others.⁶⁷

Between Curtis' and Steele's respective monographs on B. V. Doshi, Mimar published a monograph on Raj Rewal,⁶⁸ arguably the third doyen of contemporary Indian architecture to emerge from the intensive architectural discourse within and about India of the 1980s and early 1990s. The next subsection will briefly discuss Mimar's construction of Raj Rewal, to triangulate and conclude the present discussion of monographic representations of contemporary architectural practices in India in recent discourse.

5.2.3 Raj Rewal

Distanced from his slightly older compatriots such as Charles Correa, Anant Raje, Achyut Kanvinde and B. V. Doshi, Raj Rewal is often placed in the second or third generation of contemporary Indian architects that include the following: Uttam Jain, Ranjit Sabikhi, Ajoy Choudhury, Satish Grover, Kamal Mangaldas and Kuldip Singh.⁶⁹ While it is not the intention of the current study to provide a list of contemporary architects, or their works, featured in discourses on contemporary architecture of India, it is a necessary exercise to understand the historical development of an apparent confederacy, in discourse, of contemporary Indian architects and their works. Developed within or through the objective categories of perception and appreciation set in the first instance by interested agencies (such as discourses on, and by, Correa or Doshi), not only certain names and their regional or professional associations, but also architectural works, are accorded meaning and value by processes of "commentary and commentary on commentary."⁷⁰ For instance, the very position in which Brian Brace Taylor, author of the Mimar monograph *Raj Rewal* and editor of the MIMAR magazine at the time, situates

⁶⁷ Steele. *The Complete Architecture of Balkrishna Doshi*. 186.

⁶⁸ Taylor. *Raj Rewal*.

⁶⁹ Bhatt and Scriver. *After the Masters*. 20-21; Taylor. *Raj Rewal*. 10; Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*. 287-291.

⁷⁰ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*. 111.

Rewal amongst others becomes the springing point of discussions regarding Rewal's architectural works. Taylor posits,

...Rewal, like his slightly older compatriots...and his contemporaries...is one of a group of professionals who have either been educated or have worked abroad (or both) and who have therefore come to take a critical look at the issues of *Indian modernization* and *Indian traditions*, with an informed awareness that an appropriate combination of the two must be found for contemporary India (emphases mine).⁷¹

Taylor's epigrammatic conviction is interesting; that when professionals, after their education or work experience 'abroad' (read progressive Western institutions) eventually return, it is almost as an imperative (*therefore*) that they 'take a critical look' at issues of modernisation and tradition in their own regions or societies. It can be understood that such statements are part of a continuing division perceived between scientific progress and nature (cultural traditions)—particularly valid at the time when discourses such as these were aimed at either learning from or obfuscating most so-called 'Third World' regions. Taylor's own stand as the editor of the *MIMAR* magazine at the time, and his theme introduction in the first issue of the magazine, are instances where the straight-forward division between the Third World and the progressive west, despite being academically pursued, gets blurred.

However, Taylor's discourse on Rewal, while following the gaze set-up by earlier discourses on Charles Correa, and found later in that of B. V. Doshi, is slightly different from both these discourses. Belonging to a different generation from both Correa and Doshi, Rewal's architecture has been situated between Brutalist tendencies and (neo)-vernacularism in the few available discourses attempting a pan-Indian survey of contemporary architecture.⁷² In *Raj Rewal*, a direct (and subjective) correlation between tradition and modernity as perceived in Rewal's architecture—and propagated by Rewal

⁷¹ Taylor. *Raj Rewal*. 10-11.

⁷² Bhatt and Scriver. *After the Masters*. 21; Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*. 287-289.

himself—is forged not only by the text, but also by accompanying images. In explaining Rewal’s reference to historical and regional architectural typologies and archetypes, the Mimar book on Rewal in association with Rewal himself, employs a recurring theme of image-juxtapositioning—another mechanical method of objectivity—that, in a singular composition, alludes to both history and context. Selected and presented side by side with some of his celebrated architectural projects, by Rewal himself in the first instance,⁷³ the appropriation of images of the past—depicting settlement typologies, streetscapes, traditional motifs, etc.—infuse meaning between form and space (figures 9, 10, 11 and 12). Satisfying the ideological end propagated by Rewal, such notions are further reproduced by commentators such as Taylor and Romila Thapar⁷⁴ in the same book.

NOTE:

This figure is included on page 108 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 9: Image appearing in Rewal's essay depicting Rewal's take on borrowing from the past. This particular image illustrates how Rewal reinterprets the urban morphology of Jaisalmer (Rajasthan) in his own project of the Asian Games Village. *Raj Rewal*, p. 26.

⁷³ Raj Rewal. “Evolution and Metamorphosis.” In Taylor. *Raj Rewal*, 25-34..

⁷⁴ Romila Thapar. “Tradition and Change.” In Taylor. *Raj Rewal*, 19-24.

NOTE:

This figure is included on page 109 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 10: Another set of images from the same essay depicting Rewal's borrowings, this time from an Afghan village formation, in his project, the Institute of Immunology. Rewal supports this in his text: "...I have looked at the traditional architecture of north India, which has close affinities with that of Iran, central Asia, and the Mediterranean basin, to explore the underlying principles that could have relevance for our time." *Raj Rewal*, p. 26, 27.

NOTE:

This figure is included on page 109 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 11: Correlation between gateway in Jaisalmer and 'gateway' in the Asian Games Village. *Raj Rewal*, p. 32.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 110
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 12: Correlation between an 'ancient jali work' and structure of the Hall of Industries--modern jalis. *Raj Rewal*, p. 33.

It is not that such an emphasis on local character and cultural specificity is absent in discourses on Correa and Doshi; in those discourses, such a method is utilised to forge an ideological break from the modernist baggage of Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn in contemporary Indian architecture in its search for an authentic language. Rewal, being a younger generation architect, is considered to have shed the strict adherence to modernist architectural ideology, and have come, according to one account, “several steps closer to doing straight vernacular.”⁷⁵ In positing so, Rewal is placed amongst another set of younger generation architects mentioned earlier such as Uttam Jain, Kamal Mangaldas, Ranjit Sabikhi and Ajoy Choudhury—all operating from either Mumbai, Ahmedabad or Delhi. The affinity with vernacular traditions is a theme, which in discourses on Correa and Doshi, emerge only towards the later part of their careers—their formative experience being considered as

⁷⁵ Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*. 21.

negotiating a middling ground between the modernist ideologies of Le Corbusier or Kahn, and Third World realities.

Such notions get further leverage through discourses by the Third World protagonists or ‘activists’ (such as Correa, Doshi and Rewal) themselves, whose voices are inevitably provided a space in such hagiographic discourses. For instance Rewal in an essay that follows Taylor’s and Romila Thapar’s essays, notes,

It is important for developing nations which are following in the footsteps of industrially advanced countries to learn as much from their mistakes as from their accomplishments. At this stage it would be well to pause and contemplate: industrialization can be utilized in a different manner than has been the case generally during the last century, which was characterized by a mistaken division between the fine arts, the decorative arts and utilitarian objects. The distinction was that fine art has no practical use, decorative art no symbolic meaning and the utilitarian object no pretensions to beauty. This attitude has been the root cause of much of the banal architecture of the last 50 years.⁷⁶

Rewal’s commentary on the historical context within which he situates himself, only substantiates and hence provides impetus to the earlier essays by Taylor and Thapar discussing more or less similar issues. However, Rewal’s commentary springs from his own internalisation of such issues that had a cultural and academic currency at the time—either in (and through) Western institutions of architectural education and discourse, or as discursive structures informing most of his contemporaries such as Correa and Doshi within certain architectural establishments in India. Even when contested, such categories or modes of thinking become hard to relinquish and continue to reproduce themselves through further discussions or commentaries. This is particularly illustrated by Taylor’s own observation later in the essay,

If it is true that Rewal has, consciously or unconsciously,
introduced...references to historical architectural monuments, through a

⁷⁶ Taylor. *Raj Rewal*. 34.

traditional vocabulary of forms, spaces, scales or geometries, then it might be legitimate to ask: are these perceived as such by society at large, by the man-in-the-street, or primarily by those initiated into such vocabularies?...In my view, the specificity of these references is not perceived by the most of Indian society, and hence reflects rather hermetic cultural dialogue among specialists.⁷⁷

Indeed, Taylor's momentary critique of a specialist "hermetic cultural dialogue" evaporates in the discussion of 'enigmatic goals' that Taylor perceives in Rewal's most recent architectural projects. In particular, Taylor finds Rewal's notion of infusing an Indian *rasa* in modern rationalist architecture (for India) rather ambiguous and enigmatic. Not disagreeing completely with Rewal's explanation for his own works of architecture, Taylor is concerned, nevertheless, that,

In the hands of other, less talented architects than Rewal, the sandstone and concrete, the references to historical spaces and building typologies could devolve into a superficial language.⁷⁸

While critiquing the 'superficial language' of postmodernism, in the last paragraph of his conclusion Taylor makes an even more prophetic suggestion. Reminiscent of Frampton's 1987 review of *Charles Correa* in *MIMAR*, Taylor suggests,

Only radical change in the social and economic structure of modern India will allow the cultural messages found in the work of Raj Rewal and his contemporaries to be heard and understood. Only then can one hope to see re-established an identity of social and cultural values.⁷⁹

The 'cultural messages', which as we have seen, are formed by, and inform, discourses on cultural products and those who produce them, such as architecture and their architects in the present case (which apparently impart

⁷⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

such messages). In fact, in all the discourses of Correa, Doshi and Rewal, discussed here, there is an attempt by the authors (working through and within institutional or institutionalised agencies) to identify a generation of contemporary Indian architects who were perceived to be negotiating either difference or synthesis in their architectural works through the objective division of tradition and modernity. An implicit reactionary stance against a 'degenerative' postmodernism in the Anglo-American architectural establishments notwithstanding, such discourses have nevertheless provided primary data with regards to architectural developments outside the North American and European circles. However, situating a few Indian architects within, what constitutes, primarily, a hegemonic discourse of architectural modernity has its own ambiguities and limitations. Firstly, and because of the various predicaments occasioned by commentaries, and commentaries on commentaries, on colonialism, postcolonialism and modernity, the selected few architects are positioned either within a close-knit community of like-minded architects within India, or shown to be sharing a global camaraderie with a few architects in their respective regions. Furthermore, the discourse inevitably considers architecture as an agency historically influenced by, and capable of influencing or solving future social and cultural problems and changes, perceived to be a given in a Third World situation. By not so complex translation, hence, such architects are then promoted variously as visionaries, cultural messengers, or as Charles Correa is considered—an 'activist'—of such a necessary and 'radical' change.

The emergence of monographic discourses on Correa, Doshi and Rewal can be traced back, as discussed in chapter 4, to the need felt across the fraternity of Euro-American architects and architectural theorists in the 1980s to locate the emerging architecture in the developing world within a larger global framework. Collectively, such monographic discourses, along with parallel discussions of pan-Indian architecture undertaken during the same period (1980s-1990s), reproduce and consolidate categories of perception and appreciation regarding contemporary architecture in India. While instances of journalistic explorations regarding contemporary Indian architecture can be found since the 1960s, it is only in 1990 that a comprehensive account in the

form of a book was released. *After the Masters*⁸⁰ was followed, seven years later in 1997, by another book *Architecture and Independence*.⁸¹ Appearing in the 1990s, but substantially researched in the 1980s, these two books remained the only comprehensive accounts of contemporary Indian architecture for more than a decade. These books, along with critical reviews on them, are discussed in the next section.

5.3: Surveys of contemporary Indian architecture

5.3.1 Contemporary Indian architecture: *After the Masters*, and *Architecture and Independence: The search for Identity – India 1880 to 1980*

In 1990 a book titled *After the Masters: Contemporary Indian Architecture* was released by an Ahmedabad based publishing company Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd. The authors, Vikram Bhatt (an Associate Professor of Architecture at McGill University, Montreal) and Peter Scriver (a Doctoral student at the Technical University of Delft) had attempted to provide, arguably, the first account of post-independence architecture in contemporary India. Aware of the increasing cataloguist and journalistic forays on pan-Indian architecture, beginning with Electa Moniteur's catalogue *Architecture in India*, connected with the Festival of India in Paris 1985, and the previously discussed 1987 issue of the *Architectural Review* which focused on post-Independence Indian architecture, the book, indeed, begins with the question that it purports to answer, "Why a book on contemporary Indian architecture (emphases mine)?"⁸² The justifications that *After the Masters* offers, reflects on one hand the wonder that 'a land of ancient culture' holds despite 'predominating issues such as poverty and overpopulation,' and secondly, it reflects the period discussed briefly before, in which the book was conceived,

⁸⁰ Bhatt and Scriver. *After the Masters*.

⁸¹ Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*.

⁸² Bhatt and Scriver. *After the Masters*. 7.

Little has been published about design activity in the developing world. This discussion is a contribution to the thorough, region-by-region assessment of contemporary global architecture that is begging to be undertaken. It is our conviction that such an assessment would do much to renew the passion for the act and the art of building with which the current Architecture of Europe and North America has lost touch in its present state of complexity and confusion.⁸³

While romantic notions of India abound in the introductory chapter titled “India: Problems and Prospects,” these are nevertheless contextualised within the historical and universal situations in which, as the book asserts, architectural activity is always occasioned. For instance, the chapter maintains the ‘remarkable presence of the past in modern India.’ Further, ‘ritual, religion and living craft traditions,’ the ‘perennial sources of inspiration’ to Indian architects, ‘descend from a cultural heritage of genius and beauty.’ Indian architects are perceived as attempting to embody ‘identity and meaning in design’ through such sources of inspiration.⁸⁴ Three historical references—the architectural experiences of Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn in the Indian subcontinent, and those of the earlier period of British imperialism—are considered as ‘starting points’ for the discussion of contemporary Indian architecture in *After the Masters*.⁸⁵ *After the Masters*, as the title suggests, offers to examine architecture in India in the aftermath of the tripartite historical starting points, and specifically “through examples of architecture built since the departure of those Western master-builders from the Indian scene.”⁸⁶ Resembling in intent a range of similar studies carried out during the time by scholars such as Norma Evenson, William J. R. Curtis, Dan Cruickshank, Sherban Cantacuzino, Hasan Uddin Khan, and Brian Brace Taylor, and reflecting (on) similar concerns, “information and insights,” provided by an impressive list⁸⁷ of Indian architects-educators interviewed for the book, *After the Masters*, indeed, is a watershed in the history of discourses regarding contemporary Indian architecture. Advancing simultaneously its

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Refer to ‘Acknowledgement’ in Bhatt and Scriver. *After the Masters*.

scopic framework, and what the project of contemporary Indian architecture is or should be for the late twentieth century Indian architect, the book claims,

Despite the continuing commitment of many Indian architects to the image and functionalist planning principles of modern architecture, archaic techniques invest their buildings with a *visceral quality* of execution, *at once youthful and timeless* (emphases mine).⁸⁸

At once indicative of the obligatory servitude to orientalist notions about India, it is a struggle in discourses such as *After the Masters* to situate the ‘evolving’ ‘architectural expression of India’ within a global reality. However, a reflective glance on its own scholarly intent, albeit ambiguous, is also offered intermittently in the book. For instance, the introductory chapter ends with the following note of intent from the authors,

Our attempt at an impartial appraisal extends to the historical context from which the architectural expression of India is evolving. From our external perspective it appears that certain presumptions regarding the cultural history of India and its contacts with other cultures in the modern age, have introduced intriguing but possibly inappropriate dynamics into the development of its contemporary architectural expression. Our explanation for the present lies in a more accurate appreciation of both historical and temporal context—a global, rather than an ethno-centric reality.

Being the first book to consider contemporary Indian architecture, *After the Masters* has received many critical reviews, a few of which will be briefly discussed here. Almost a decade later, architect-educator A. G. Krishna Menon, in an article titled “Interrogating Modern Indian architecture,” which appeared in *A+D*, briefly surveyed discourses on (contemporary) Indian architecture resulting from the cultural and architectural exhibitions of the 1980s that were sponsored by the Indian government. In his article, Menon notes that *After the Masters* is an “influential text among students largely on

⁸⁸ Ibid., 7.

account of the paucity of books on Indian architecture.”⁸⁹ Critiquing *After the Masters*, which he considers an ‘orientalist historiography,’ Menon bemoans that the book did nothing more than catalogue fifty-two architectural projects “under the rubric of four, by now tired, categories,” from the familiar ‘architectural belt’ of India.⁹⁰ Except Tillotson’s *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*, for Menon, none of the other discourses (including *After the Masters*) “broke new ground in the understanding of Indian architecture.”⁹¹ Particularly irked by the above quoted intent provided by the authors in *After the Masters*, it is also interesting to note Menon’s own reactionary stand,

What is reprehensible in this statement of intent is how explicitly these authors discount ‘ethno-centric reality’ in their assessment of the architecture of India: this is the problem of orientalist historiography. No [Indian] architect however, paid heed and consequently, no one found [*After the Masters*] ‘fatuous’.⁹²

While deriding the intention of *After the Masters*, Menon also takes a position different from his colleague, architect-educator Satish Grover (co-founder of the magazine *A+D*) who had in a 1990 issue of *A+D*, found Tillotson’s *Tradition of Indian Architecture* ‘fatuous.’⁹³ Menon’s position is interesting as it is at once critical of foreign writers writing about Indian architecture and also Indian architects reviewing those writings. Menon similarly, although moderately, critiqued the other book under consideration here—*Architecture and Independence*.

Norma Evenson, who had earlier attempted a more concise critical survey of post-Independence Indian architecture in the later chapters of her 1989 urban historical survey, *The Indian Metropolis* (section 3.3 above), reviewed *After the Masters* in 1992 in *The Journal of Asian Studies*.⁹⁴ Clearly having a stake herself in the emerging discourse regarding contemporary Indian architecture,

⁸⁹ Menon. “Interrogating Modern Indian Architecture,” 27.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 26.

⁹² Ibid., 27.

⁹³ Grover. “Review of G. H. R. Tillotson, *Tradition of Indian Architecture*.”

⁹⁴ Norma Evenson. “After the Masters: Contemporary Indian Architecture.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 51, no. 1 (1992): 189-90.

Evenson commended *After the Masters* in its first attempt to summarise a “number of issues relevant to architecture in contemporary India.”⁹⁵ A similar complicity of engagement is evident in Hasan Uddin Khan’s 1993 review of *After the Masters* in *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*. Associated with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and author of *Charles Correa* (and later editor of *MIMAR*), Khan indirectly situates himself through his review within a confederacy of like-minded commentators, brought together through certain institutional set-ups. For Khan, they collectively indulge in exploring the ‘themes’ of locating regionally diverse contemporary architecture and their cultural identity within a global framework:

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, which deals with Muslim-specific building; writers such as Brian Taylor, William Curtis, Romi Khosla, Ken Yeang and Sumet Jumsai; and publications such as the (now defunct) international quarterly *Mimar* and India’s *Architecture & Design [A+D]* all explore these themes. Despite numerous seminars on [cultural identity in architecture] and publications, this is the first book on India that tries to knit examples of built works into some kind of architectural paradigm.⁹⁶

Following the introductory chapter of Bhatt and Scriver’s *After the Masters*, fifty-two projects are organised according to a range of approaches summarised in four sections (‘four, by now tired, categories’ for Menon); “Roots and Modernity,” “Alternatives for a Developing India,” “Architecture and the Market Place,” and “Emerging Architecture.” *After the Masters* was an attempt to look closely at emerging architecture—and architects—of India who had, as the book claims, “since the 1970s...emerged from the shadow of the many foreign masters – from the Persian designer of the Taj Mahal to America’s Louis Kahn...”⁹⁷ The primary research for the book was conducted in the mid-1980s.⁹⁸ The over-arching, if understated focus of the book is the

⁹⁵ Evenson. “After the Masters: Contemporary Indian Architecture,” 189-90.

⁹⁶ Hasan Uddin Khan. “After the Masters: Contemporary Indian Architecture.” *The Journal of American Oriental Society* 114, no. 2 (1994): 313(2).

⁹⁷ Bhatt and Scriver. *After the Masters*. 8.

⁹⁸ Interview with Peter Scriver, June 2005.

contentious issue of ‘identity’ that was perceived to have preoccupied many of the contemporary Indian architects interviewed at that time.⁹⁹

This implicit theme of identity and architecture was subsequently foregrounded in a more wide-ranging survey of India’s postcolonial architectural history that also attempted to connect it more substantially with its colonial pre-history. Jon Lang, Miki and Madhavi Desai’s voluminous *Architecture and Independence: The search for Identity – India 1880 to 1980*¹⁰⁰ appeared seven years after *After the Masters*. Despite the authors’ critical overview of their own scholarly intentions and limitations, *Architecture and Independence* remains to this day—both in its scope and coverage—an unassumingly comprehensive account of India’s colonial and postcolonial architectural history. The ‘preface’ to the book, both clarifies, and mutes future critical reviews on the following issues,

This book is *a* history of architecture in India and makes no pretence of being *the* history of architecture. It is neither comprehensive in its focus nor in its geographic breadth. Like any history it is a product of its times and its concerns are, therefore, biased by our present understandings and the issues considered important now. It has been written at a period when the colonial history of India, as interpreted by the Cambridge School of historians and by Indian scholars, is being restudied and when the systematic analysis of the symbolic nature of architecture is in its infancy (emphases in the original).¹⁰¹

Alluding to both the steady growth of postcolonial scholarship focusing on the Indian subcontinent and to the ‘infancy’ stage of commentary on pan-Indian architecture—occasioned, arguably, by *After the Masters*—the context in which *Architecture and Independence* strives to situate itself is simultaneously global and local,

...we have focused on identifying the general principles which describe and explain the use of buildings to convey specific meanings, and have illustrated

⁹⁹ Bhatt and Scriver. *After the Masters*. 8-9.

¹⁰⁰ Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, xv.

them with buildings which show the range of ways in which such meanings have been communicated across India in different geographical and subcultural contexts.¹⁰²

Menon, who found *After the Masters* ‘reprehensible,’ is more sympathetic towards *Architecture and Independence*.

[*Architecture and Independence*] has had a muted impact because of the weightiness of its contents...Its great value, however, is in the encyclopaedic survey it offers of the architecture of India in order to identify the ‘general principles’ which describe and explain the use of buildings to convey specific meanings, and to have illustrated them with the diversity of regional examples.¹⁰³

Despite the above observation, Menon finds in both the books both a penchant for defining pan-Indian categories and themes, and a desire to be intelligible to a broad audience—local and global—problematic. According to Menon, this two-fold intent not only excludes many regional narratives, but also brings into enquiry a desire to be accessible to, as *Architecture and Independence* posits, “a broad range of students and scholars across the world rather than to write strictly for an Indian market.”¹⁰⁴ Menon suggests that a development of regional but critical narratives must be undertaken by Indian architects to avoid the ‘pernicious trap’ of orientalist categorisation set by books ‘written almost exclusively by foreign authors.’¹⁰⁵ Menon’s own efforts in either explaining or trying to transcend the ‘pernicious trap,’ is laborious and circuitous, and hints, nevertheless, at the existence of a pan-Indian ‘deep structure’ that seemingly unites the diverse contemporary architecture of India.

...there is clearly a need to reconsider the prevalent strategy and methodology of architectural theorizing—both in the East (where little theorizing takes place) and in the West (from where much of it emanates) from its focus on pan-Indian

¹⁰² Ibid., xvii.

¹⁰³ Menon. “Interrogating Modern Indian Architecture,” 27.

¹⁰⁴ Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*. xvii.

¹⁰⁵ Menon. “Interrogating Modern Indian Architecture,” 24-28.

themes to examining more regional, context-specific architecture of India. It is perhaps from such a process of accumulating diverse empirical data that it would be possible to understand and define the synoptic ‘essence’ of contemporary architecture of India that has eluded the critics so far.¹⁰⁶

Although a steadily growing number of books on similar topics have been published in between and since then, the publication spree of the 1980s and 1990s regarding architecture in India, was indeed unprecedented. It invokes questions, in hindsight, about the processes that were then at play, and the discourse(s) about this particular ‘non-western’ arena of contemporary architectural developments that these publications served to (re)produce even decades later. Menon’s own discourse originating from a non-western arena, despite being an original attempt to take stock of such writings, coils back in its own subaltern desire to define a pan-Indian essence in Indian architecture. It is therefore perched precariously on the edge of reproducing narratives that it wishes to transcend or reconsider.¹⁰⁷

One can note from these publications that while the 1980s seemed to focus on individual architects and their versions of Indian architecture, in the 1990s the gaze shifted and expanded to pan-Indian contemporary architectural explorations. These efforts, by foreign authors and publishers, to try to depict architects and architecture in India through books and monographs, may be considered as an expansion of the very “Western” boundaries that forced them to look for meaningful architecture outside their regular domain of investigations. To “renew the passion for the act and the art of building,”¹⁰⁸ as Bhatt and Scriver justify their project, the West had only to look further—into the architecture of the developing world.

The project of historicizing architecture in the Indian subcontinent—either through monographic narratives or pan-Indian journalistic investigations—

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰⁷ A more comprehensive discussion of Menon’s position in the context of an identifiable field of architecture in India, and particular struggles within it, is carried out in chapters 10 and 11 of the current study. It is also for this reason that Menon’s critical reviews are discussed here.

¹⁰⁸ Bhatt and Scriver. *After the Masters*. 7.

while implicitly critiquing the postmodern condition, selectively valorise or deplore modernist experiments (with obvious cultural and regional underpinnings) as practiced by the non-western architect in his/her regional/cultural situation. As can be clearly seen, the stance is already doubly problematic. Such discourses, firstly, claim the death of an authentic modernist tradition—the historical dead-end of Enlightenment—as Frampton argues.¹⁰⁹ Secondly, they fix their ‘critical’ gaze on the global dissemination of what amounts to variants of modernism, claiming a legitimate understanding of architectural tradition of a particular region. Thus claiming an expertise in both notions of western ‘progress’ and non-western ‘stagnant’ traditions, such discourses celebrate and make public (literally, through *publication*) certain architects and their architecture, along with their professional and cultural achievements and associations (fig. 13).

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 122
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 13: Two illustrations from *After the Masters*. While the caption for fig. 4.5 is itself descriptive, fig. 4.7 has the accompanying text: "An absurdly literal interpretation of [attempting to fulfil the suburban ideal of the upper middle class] is Yashwant Mistry's whimsical megastructure constructed in Ahmedabad in 1987; tower of single family bungalows, red tiled roofs and all, stacked up almost twenty storeys high." *After the Masters*, p. 143.

Pursued through theoretically derived excesses or opinionated insights, this creates, to borrow from Pierre Bourdieu, a *field of struggle* in which, not only the consecrated architects (along with authorising agents and agencies) try to maintain their esteemed positions, but other interested agents also (“other, less talented architects,” as feared by Taylor for instance), consciously or

¹⁰⁹ Frampton. “The Fate of Man and Architecture in the East.”

subconsciously, compete for the kind of honour and recognition—the *position*—accorded to the consecrated architects. An active process that consistently reproduces knowledge and practice, this process also involves, along with the interested agents, their professional affiliations and associations, and hence connected institutions and agencies of architecture. Since these institutions and agencies of architecture are physically situated in certain politically demarcated regions of India, such regions gain prominence and ultimately, albeit implicitly, get consolidated thus as geographical regions where critical debates in both the practice and discourse of architecture are generated. However such implicit and localised processes of struggle for recognition are not made easily available to lay readers of monographic discourses on select architects or pan-Indian narratives of architecture. Limited as they are by their characteristics, monographic and pan-Indian narratives of Indian architecture comprise only a portion of the local *field of struggle* in which knowledge is continuously challenged and reproduced through discourse.

To understand such localised processes of knowledge representation and reproduction and their congruency or not with globally disseminated knowledge, the empirical component of the current research focuses (in part II) on an influential architectural magazine. *Architecture + Design (A+D)* was established in 1984, in Delhi, and published continuously through the subsequent decade of major discursive activity in the field of contemporary architectural production in India. As the undisputed leading architectural magazine in India on the ‘national’ scale it assumed, during its first decade of publication, *A+D* involved many of the agents discussed above (both local and global) acting variously as editors, editorial board members, and regular contributors of letters, articles and critical reviews connected with Indian architecture. To focus intensively on *A+D* will offer, firstly, a much-needed review of context-specific discourses of Indian architecture. Secondly, such a study will also help to improve understanding of the processes of knowledge representation and reproduction, through discourse. *A+D* was a potent field of struggle; persistently contested and redefined by individuals and groups of varying interests corresponding to their positions within the larger field of

architectural production in India. The enabling and constraining factors revealed through changes and shifts in this sub-field of architectural knowledge-production can also be better understood through such a study.

However before embarking on the theoretical approach of this study and a detailed analysis of discourses within *A+D* through such an approach, it is also important to take account of a small body of contemporary scholarship that has made critical inroads to the problematic conditions with regards to the representations of contemporary Indian architecture identified in this study. Largely restricted to professional magazines and conference proceedings, the critical insights if not theoretical ones (such as Menon's previously discussed critique of *After the Masters*), available from such studies have also significantly influenced the current research. It would be prudent to understand certain assumptions and theoretical limitations in these existing critiques of discourses of contemporary Indian architecture. The next chapter charts such contemporary critiques, and their inherent problems. It also identifies at least two prevalent and problematic modes of analyses in existing critiques.

Chapter 6

Continuing problems in contemporary discourses

6.1: Introduction

Confirming the eternity of academic debate, the resurgent interest in the architecture of colonial India, and the unprecedented focus on contemporary Indian architecture during the late-20th century have further introduced a small body of scholarship directed against both representations. This chapter discusses a handful of recent studies that have problematised the representation of Indian architecture (colonial, postcolonial or contemporary). The current study being partially influenced by such recent critiques, this closing chapter of part-I of the thesis discusses certain assumptions and theoretical limitations of these existing critiques. Two modes of analyses are identified, which as I argue, have prohibited these recent studies from conducting a holistic analysis of issues such as that of domination and marginalisation in the representation of contemporary Indian architecture.

In chapter 3, we charted the ebbs and flows of critical thinking in previous scholarship on Indian architecture. As was observed, the 1960s gave rise to a new line of critical enquiry that began to delve deeper into the complexities

inherent in the discourse of Indian architecture—especially colonial Indian architecture. Contemporary developments in this line of critical scholarship, have increasingly considered the provisional nature of their own critique. We have already visited selected texts belonging to this group of postcolonial scholarship, by historians and scholars such as Jyoti Hosagrahar, Peter Scriver, Vikram Prakash and Swati Chattopadhyay. We have noted that the voices of these scholars effectively emerge from western institutions, or institutionalised agencies, such as journals and conferences of architecture. Attempting to express or resolve problematic conditions accrued over time in architectural historiography connected mainly with the colonial era of Indian architecture, such studies emphasise the understanding of architecture as an embedded cultural practice. However, as noted before, such an ideological shift, arguably because of its originating premise, continues to build its various theses on an implicit attribution of universality to concerns afflicting architecture—thereby maintaining the status quo of the centre and the periphery, the West and the East. Unavoidable perhaps, through academically created periodizations of investigations such as the colonial or the postcolonial, however, such well-intentioned studies have helped enhance the understanding of architecture as a complex discipline—continuously in a state of *flux* between the centre and the margin and between the agendas of the architect and/within various social, academic, economic and political contexts.

One of the aims of the current study is to critically explore and investigate the various ways—particularly through the discourse of architecture in publications and architectural institutions—in which this “flux” occurs, reproducing pre-existing convictions and also becoming in the process, established and unquestioned belief systems. However, the historical point of departure for such a critical engagement in this study, influenced by the above-mentioned postcolonial studies, is on the postcolonial and specifically late-20th century field of architecture in India. A small body of contemporary scholarship,¹ within which Menon’s previously discussed critique of *After the*

¹ Ravindran. “Contemporary Architecture: An Uncomfortable Glance at the Mirror”; Chandavarkar. “The Politics of the Background”; Chattopadhyay. “Expedient Forgetting”; Kurula Varkey. “The Essence of the Indian Tradition: An Interpretation.” *Architecture +*

Masters can be located, has commented upon the issues of marginalisation and dominance connected with the discourses of contemporary Indian architecture (a few of which were the focus of the last chapter). However, none of these studies have attempted to understand the dynamics of the practice of architecture or its discourse in late-20th century India. The current study being partly influenced by such critical commentaries and the previously mentioned contemporary postcolonial studies, it will be helpful to examine in detail inherent limitations and continuing problems in such recent critiques with regards to a holistic understanding of both architecture and the field of architecture in late-20th century India.

In chapter 3 we also briefly introduced continuing problems of centre and periphery. These were illustrated in the localised ventures of Anand Bhatt, the Delhi-based architect who employs the internet to drive concerns regarding perceived problems in contemporary Indian architecture and its historiography. Involving a few mostly Delhi-based interested academics and architect-educators, the concerns voiced by such agents (and associated agencies), furthermore, allude to a dominant group actively engaging in such discursive practices in the field of architecture in India. This group engages simultaneously in and with global and local discourses, through consecrated or self-appointed caretakers and spokespersons of contemporary Indian architecture. Neither notions of locality nor political boundary inherent in concepts such as nationhood any longer confine the discursive reach of such local agents and agencies. They are situated in the in-between spaces of the global and the local, mitigating and reproducing knowledge according to varying interests and for interested agencies.

Functioning from within, what can be defined as a field of architecture in India, nevertheless, the above-mentioned agents and associated agencies thus provide further impetus or data to external research and researchers. Finding themselves in a contested space of hegemonic discourses concerning Indian

Design xvii, no. 4 (2000): 98-117; Menon. "Interrogating Modern Indian Architecture"; Bhatt. "Indianizing Indian Architecture: A Postmodern Tradition"; and Sitalakshmi. "Theoretical Constructs: Towards a History of Contemporary Indian Architecture."

architecture, as we saw in chapter 5, it is the very struggles within this field of architecture that hold explanations missed by the few existing critiques. As this thesis argues, analysing such a field of architecture may help in better understanding processes that have assisted in a sustained and quasi-religiously maintained representation of Indian architecture itself. Previously introduced critical studies such as Chattopadhyay's analysis of the 1986 IGNCA design competition, with their promise to situate architectural practices and discourses within ever-widening contexts, bypass or ignore the minutiae of such internal struggles. It is the contention of this study that the enabling and constraining processes of representation (within India or by outside agencies) must also include such internal struggles within the field of architecture in India for a more comprehensive critique of representation.

6.2: Agents and agencies of discourse concerned with contemporary Indian architecture

Apart from the recent incursion into the cyber-space of internet-based discourse occasioned by Anand Bhatt's initiative, many of the previously mentioned localised agents have consistently published opinions and viewpoints about and on Indian architecture, or one another, in national magazines and journals of architecture since the 1980s. However, beginning from the 1990s, an ideologically different issue was being discussed in localised sites of architectural discourse such as *A+D*. This resulted from and followed the tide of publications in the mid-1980s that focused on understanding the course of contemporary Indian architecture and architects within a global framework. The viewpoints of the agents, in keeping with the traditional/modernist category of objectification that characterised discourses of the period, have also challenged the delimited focus on contemporary Indian architecture by the publication spree of the 1980s and 1990s. An abject realization of the historical anomaly with regards to the marginal representation of contemporary Indian architecture and architects in the recent architectural history of India has been one of the recurring concerns in such critiques. While the few recent observations bemoan such a condition in the

recent architectural historiography of Indian architecture, none of them have provided thoroughly studied explanations for the same. Since the architectural magazine *A+D* is the focus of the case-study undertaken in part-II of this research, we shall concentrate on a few instances of such *internal* discourses, if they may be so described, primarily in this particular magazine of architecture.

In a 2003 issue of *A+D*, K. R. Sitalakshmi from the School of Architecture and Planning in Chennai, sadly observes with respect to postcolonial architectural criticism in/about Indian architecture,

...whether it be a historiography that is hegemonic or a criticism of a historiography that is hegemonic, the same *holy cows*² are worshipped or maligned.³

Sitalakshmi's is one of the many voices that have continuously surfaced since the 1990s questioning the hegemony of certain Indian architects, and hence regionally located architecture, in the contemporary architectural historiography of India. In another issue of *A+D* in 2000, A. G. Krishna Menon, director of the TVB School of Habitat Studies in Delhi, shares a similar viewpoint.⁴ In an article entitled, "Interrogating Modern Indian Architecture," Menon points out that,

[a]rchitects and the few critics who have written about the architecture of India have viewed a select few practitioners from the 'architectural belt' of the country and identified their works as interpreting the zeitgeist, but have felt uncompelled to explain it, and the theoretical principles governing their works.⁵

As was briefly discussed in the previous section, Menon sardonically defines the 'architectural belt' as the Chandigarh-Delhi-Ahmedabad-Mumbai axis of

² The "holy cows" being certain architects in India, and in the Indian subcontinent in general, who have been represented in most architectural discourses concerned with contemporary Indian architecture; B V Doshi, Charles Correa, Raj Rewal, Achyut Kanvinde, Geoffrey Bawa etc.

³ Sitalakshmi. "Theoretical Constructs," 32-38.

⁴ Menon. "Interrogating Modern Indian Architecture," 24-28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

architectural practice in India. According to Menon, this architectural belt got reinforced as predominant regions of contemporary architectural explorations in the country by the two Festival of India exhibitions held in the mid-1980s, in France and the erstwhile USSR. In a 1999 issue of the *Indian Architect and Builder* (IA&B)—a Mumbai based magazine, architect (and academic) Prem Chandavarkar also points out the extraordinary predominance of architectural discourse “centered on three cities—Delhi, Mumbai, and Ahmedabad” and further argues that “even when post-modern doubt, in the 1980’s, began to rock the earlier convictions, this region still occupied centre stage.”⁶ Curiously titled, “Politics of the Background,” Chandavarkar proceeds to give a brief account of post-Independence architectural developments in south India. Like Menon, he suggests a couple of conventional reasons as to why and how the northern or western regions of the country tended to dominate architectural discourse in India:

The reasons for this phenomenon are, no doubt, complex, and beyond the scope of this analysis. If one may speculate, perhaps it is due to the fact that these cities lay on a geographical belt that was in the foreground of the nationalist struggle for independence, and therefore inherited a historical impulse to define the new Indian identity. Or perhaps, it is just because the first architecture schools and the initial concentration of architectural practices occurred in this region.⁷

In their informed, yet limited speculations for the predominance of architectural discourse in select regions of India, both Menon and Chandavarkar illuminate possible zones—geo-political, ideological and institutional—where the reasons may lie for the perceived marginalisation. In fact, Chandavarkar posits an additional psychoanalytical reason why the discourse about identity in Indian architecture dominant in the north and west-Indian architectural circles, did not ‘penetrate into south India.’ It was not, according to Chandavarkar, due to a lack of interest, but because architects in south India,

⁶ Chandavarkar. “The Politics of the Background.”

⁷ Ibid.

...did not appear to feel the need for identifying with public discourse on the subject. While they had theoretical interests, they made little attempt to publicly declare theoretical or ideological positions. They sought, and received, little publicity.⁸

Prem Chandavarkar is the director of the Bangalore based firm Chandavarkar and Thacker—one of the older established architectural offices in south India set up in the 1950s. Chandavarkar presents himself as the voice of the marginalised with respect to contemporary Indian architecture. Chandavarkar's stand on the issue and his interesting claim about architects in south India is a revealing instance of the struggle for recognition in a field of architecture to be discussed in greater detail in the concluding chapter of the present study. In the 1998 issue of *A+D*, A. Srivathsan, a professor in the Chennai School of Architecture and Planning, highlights the issue of the “[c]ontemporary architectural history of India still rall[ying] around a few ‘heroes’.”⁹ Srivathsan's article laments the lack of “research works” in the fields of architectural history and theory undertaken by architectural institutions across India.¹⁰ In a 1997 issue of *A+D*, K. T. Ravindran, then a faculty member teaching urban design in Delhi School of Planning and Architecture, wrote a provocative article titled, “Contemporary Architecture: An Uncomfortable Glance at the Mirror.”¹¹ Pointing to “our indigenous heroes,” Ravindran dealt with the use of the term “contemporary” with regard to architecture in India practiced by “university trained architects.”¹² “Stemming from auto analysis, as much as from *a view from the inner ring of professional practice in Delhi* (emphases mine),”¹³ Ravindran's article may be considered as the first in a series of articles that appeared in Indian journals and magazines of architecture—particularly in *A+D*—which employ a critical, self-reflexive

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ A Srivathsan. “How Relevant Is Research in Architecture?” *Architecture + Design* XV, no. 1 (1998): 64-65.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ravindran. “Contemporary Architecture.”

¹² Ibid., 26.

¹³ Ibid.

voice, gauging the author's position as both a critical writer and practitioner of architecture.

A sense of achievement, celebration, and ongoing hope have characterized the way we have recorded contemporary architecture in India since independence. In the form of books, festival catalogues, exhibitions and magazine articles, we have continuously reaffirmed our chosen directions, and invented our own indigenous heroes, and substituted the edifices of our contemporary architecture with their glamorised portraits. Gold medals, awards and honours provide the spot lights and once again we recoil into a cultural inversion as a reaction to retain our location in the periphery of the global debate in architecture.¹⁴

While Ravindran is scathing in his remarks about the stance taken not only by architectural writers and critics in India, but also architectural institutions and agencies like architectural publishing, architectural competitions, awarding committees and their selection criteria, foreign authors and critics of architecture are given no less scathing treatment:

The definition of what is legitimate Indian modernism has often been left to critics from the developed world, who make patronizing journalistic forays into India or those theoreticians who inversely complement themselves (forgive me Frampton) by recognizing the third world modernism as the only sign of survival of a style they have long discarded.¹⁵

Ravindran's article, in intent, calls for the redefinition of contemporary architecture as one that is "set free from all 'isms' and stylistic categories. According to Ravindran, contemporary architecture must mean one that inquires into the nature of architecture as "an aspect of the dynamic, living, and changing conditions that determine the content of our actions."¹⁶

All these discourses occurring in Indian magazines/journals of architecture point to the issue of centrality and marginalisation in the case of contemporary

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 27.

¹⁶ Ibid.

architecture and its representation in India; their concern however, seems to rest on claiming back the authority for legitimising what can be or not defined as *Indian* architecture—timeless, modern or contemporary. Further, there is also the time-tested and reinvented desire to question the usage of western canons to understand contemporary architectural production in India.¹⁷ The field of architecture *in* India covered by such discourses is, however, limited and submitted already to the reproduction of a pre-existing dominant structure. Pursued excitedly by architects and scholars belonging to the dominant structure in both local and international magazines and journals of architecture, these debates also hint at the selective reception, appreciation and appropriation of such studies within the field of architecture in India. At least two problematic approaches can be recognised in such critiques which continue to hold back a holistic understanding of the practice of architecture and its discourse in late-20th century India.

Firstly, in some of these studies, we find an approach that may be termed as internal analysis. That is, the ultimate meaning of texts is sought within the texts themselves, or within some sort of ahistorical ‘essence’ as the basis of the literary constructions of Indian architecture. Such approaches dictate the works of architect-educators such as Kurula Varkey¹⁸ and K. R. Sitalakshmi.¹⁹ The other mode of analysis prevalent in recent studies is what can be described as external modes of analysis. Through external modes of analysis, the texts are taken to represent the world-view of the producers of the texts, such that, that particular world-view then operates as a homogeneous structure available for analysis or critique. Menon’s and Chandavarkar’s essays discussed here along with Prakash’s²⁰ and Chattopadhyay’s²¹ attempts to visit postcolonial identity constructions and negotiations in Indian architecture, reflect such an attitude.

¹⁷ Historically, the anxiety about descriptions of Indian architecture through western canon can, as has been discussed earlier, be traced to the writings of a generation of late 19th and early 20th Century French, South Asian, and American scholars who consistently aimed at transcending the Fergusson approach to Indian architecture.

¹⁸ Varkey. “The Essence of the Indian Tradition.”

¹⁹ Sitalakshmi. “Theoretical Constructs.”

²⁰ Prakash. “Identity Production in Postcolonial Indian Architecture.”

²¹ Chattopadhyay. “Expedient Forgetting.”

The limitations of such studies in giving a holistic account of the problems in contemporary Indian architectural historiography can thus be located in their approaches. Apart from recounting certain historical details, these studies do not engage in the complex network of social relations that make the very existence of those discourses possible, or maintain and sustain the field on which such discourses are directed. Further, as this thesis argues, the process of discourse production of the 1980s entailed an active participation by both external agencies (foreign authors, research centres, institutions, etc.) and internal agencies (Indian authors, architects, architect-educators and institutions, research centres, etc.).²² While the ideological stances discernible in these discourses may be criticised as essentially springing from the ‘West’ and debated ad-infinitum with respect to the ever-problematic issue of identity of/in/for contemporary Indian architecture, it is of paramount importance to understand the involvement and positions of the internal agencies also in the production and reception of those discourses. In this regard, the preceding critical review of such studies further revealed at least two tacit assumptions made with regards to the understanding of these ‘internal affairs,’ if it can be so described.

Firstly, such studies assume the existence of a unified community and voice of Indian architects with regards to issues and concerns purportedly believed to be afflicting contemporary Indian architecture. The differences of opinions within this unified community are considered no more than necessary deviations allowable within a larger concern with the *identity* of contemporary Indian architecture. This concern is itself conspicuously understood and accepted, as such, by all within the unified architectural community and the larger social structure in which they were situated.

The second problematic mode of analysis which I identify with the existing discourse on contemporary Indian architecture is tacitly tied to the first assumption. This is the attribution of the *field* of architecture in India during the 1980s as a determinate structure. While the discourses on contemporary

²² One has only to go through the ‘acknowledgement’ page in any of the discourses on contemporary Indian architects or architecture produced during the 1980s to realise this.

Indian architecture are the premise on which these studies have constructed their observations and critiques, they fail to recognise architecture or its discourse as embedded fields of cultural production, and that the structure of such fields is always a contested one. Also missing in such accounts is a critical analysis of the reception of those discourses by interested agents and groups, including the authors and readership of these earlier discourses, themselves. Such problems, which continue to problematise understanding of contemporary Indian architecture, can be seen explicitly, for instance, in Chattopadhyay's analysis of the IGNC A competition results discussed in chapter 3.

6.3: Concluding remarks

Georg Iggers points out that the “rise of history in the nineteenth century as a scholarly professional discipline has to be seen in the context of the colonial domination of the non-Western peoples.”²³ With the decline of formal colonialism, a primarily Western-centered history increasingly began including discourses of those that were or had been under one colonial rule or the other. Part I of the current study, has tried to present this change with respect to the history of Indian architecture. 19th century writers of architecture like Fergusson belonged to a mixed colonial mentality that admired but mostly admonished, the architecture, arts and crafts of India. In their undoubtedly awe-inspiring thirst for knowledge, the first writers on Indian architectural and artistic traditions categorised what they saw according to their understanding (mainly through established canons of Western classical architecture) of what art or architecture should be. Further through colonial interventions of the English language and institutions, approaches like Fergussons' may arguably reflect their contempt for Indian civilisation made famous by Thomas Babington Macaulay's 'Minute on Education.'²⁴

²³ Georg Iggers. “Historiography from a Global Perspective.” *History and Theory* 43, no. February (2004): 146-154.

²⁴ Tillotson. *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. 38.

In the beginning of the 20th Century, however—during the waning years of the British Empire in India—this approach also underwent significant changes, as there was a renewed interest in Indian architecture. This was the result of an increasing number of British apologists of Indian architecture, who began to question the legitimacy of judging traditional values of Indian architecture through established western canons.²⁵ Metcalf confirms that this “process of reappraisal” resulted from the “waning” of “European self-confidence” after WWII.²⁶ Writers from the subcontinent like A. K. Coomarswamy who cultivated such thoughts, belonged to this growing generation of not only European and American writers, but native scholars as well who demanded to view Indian art and architecture on its own terms. Indeed, this attitude extended well into the second half of the 20th century in the postcolonial scholarship of writers like Partha Mitter.

We have also come across recent paradigm shifts that have occurred in the critical reassessments of historical and colonial architecture in India. Much of the mid- to late-20th century postcolonial scholarship, as discussed here and in in chapter 3, has been trying to evaluate deeper and richer meanings associated with the historical processes that established colonial scholarship. Ranging from a critique of the writings or of architecture as projects driven by colonial power relations, to the non-apologist analyses of the historical conditions within the wider network of social space that produced those writings and architecture, the intentions of the resurgent phase of postcolonial architectural discourse can be seen to be drifting clearly towards fine-grain analyses of the in-between-nesses of the inherent differences. We are now better informed, for instance, about the historicity of Fergusson’s writings. Agent and agency, influenced as they were with the *discovering* of various forms of architecture in the Indian subcontinent, were also assisted to a substantial degree, by and within various institutional contexts like the ASI and PWD. Further, as the scholarship reveals, such processes worked in tandem with new developments of the time like photography. The analyses of such processes in the latest brand of postcolonial scholarship allow for a better appreciation of the ultimate

²⁵ Metcalf. *An Imperial Vision*. 50.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

objects of the narrative—namely, colonial *architectures*. Further, being critically aware of the transient nature of architecture and its discourse, the current postcolonial discourse about *architectures* in India, by the very methodologies it adopts in its analyses, is increasingly becoming uncomfortable in forming essentialist notions about the practices of architecture in India. Some of these methodologies, and their inherent problems, will be further elaborated in part II of the thesis so as to understand the implications of the methodological tools employed in the current research.

Chapter 4 considered the historical importance of the two decades following the 1980s with respect to the political and socio-cultural developments in India. This chapter was deemed necessary to understand both the local and global contexts in which the unprecedented publication spree on select Indian architects and pan-Indian architecture emerged during the period. As the following chapter 5 tried to critically re-examine, the intentions of a few of these discourses reveal a heavy reliance on preformed categories of perception and appreciation even when dealing with ‘contemporary’ Indian architecture. Necessitated at the time by international currents, and indeed with help from Indian architects and scholars educated through the same discourse, we have noted how the most rudimentary glance on contemporary practice of architecture in India cannot escape essentialist notions connected with orientalist interpretations of India and things *Indian*—architecture including. Such discourses, despite exposing many contemporary Indian architectural practices and architecture in the international stage, have felt compelled, nevertheless, to interpret and sometimes resort to aphorismic suggestions toward a pan-Indian essence governing such practices and the resulting architecture. This reinforces the near impossibility of having a non-Western discourse of architecture that can bypass the recognizable dualisms or protocols of scholarly research established in/by the West. Problematic also by their embellished characteristic of being privileged references, such discourses continue to fuel further debates on the validity of undertaking such studies in the first place.

Chapter 6 returned to the problems of marginalisation and dominance associated with the discourses of contemporary Indian architecture identified earlier in this research. However, here we have focused on a few recent critiques that have noted such problematic constructions of contemporary Indian architecture in late-20th century discourses of Indian architecture. In this last chapter of part I, we discussed certain assumptions inherent in such critiques and their limitations in providing a holistic understanding of late-20th century architecture in India and its discourse.

Since the critical gaze of this study is particularly focused on selected discourses within the Indian architectural magazine, *A+D*, it is of paramount importance to understand the methodological tool adopted for what amounts to a critical discourse analysis. Being wary of the limitations in both internal and external modes of analyses identified briefly in this chapter, the first chapter (chapter 7) in part-II of this thesis further investigates the problems and prospects of historicising architectural discourse. A novel theoretical approach is explained in the subsequent chapter, which might improve understanding of the problems inherent in the recent historiography of Indian architecture. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 then engage critically with selected discourses from *A+D*'s first decade of publication.

PART II

The Production of an Architectural Discourse: A Critical Analysis of *Architecture + Design*

Chapter 7

Sites and historicity in architectural discourse production

7.1: Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the agency of architectural discourse and the problem of representation. This first chapter of part-II of the thesis examines shifting paradigms in the analysis of architectural discourse. In this regard, two recent studies conducted on the nature and agency of architectural discourse—one by Panayotis Tournikiotis and the other by Greig Crysler—are discussed in this chapter. Focusing on the limited possibilities afforded by the theoretical tools employed in these studies, this chapter introduces Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production as an additional tool to understand architectural discourse as an embedded cultural production.

7.2: Sites of discourse

Academic discourse is produced in a variety of "sites." As Greig Crysler enumerates, these include "seminar classroom," "academic conference hall," "books and articles" and their pedagogical extensions. Crysler's important

study, *Writing Spaces*, focuses in particular on the “site” of “scholarly” journals.¹ According to Crysler, scholarly journals are “not only part of a matrix of wider institutional forces,” but “they are also institutional structures in themselves.”² Crysler explains how this works. Journals are sites where academics and interested authors build their reputation and authority on various topics of interest. Further being affiliated with certain Schools of Architecture or research bodies, their writings in journals, act “as marketing devices for generating new admissions, fundraising tools for alumni, and a means to consolidate” their own “inner-circle” of interested academics (and students) and research bodies.³ By doing so, both journals and the scholars who write in them create a form of mutualism (or a *symbiotic* relationship) which helps to secure a complex system of “cultural capital” that more often than not translates into an “economic capital” beneficial to both.⁴ This is endorsed and reproduced by the organisers (“academic gatekeepers”) of the journals, through various selection processes and formatting criteria in the restrictive spaces of journals. Such an act also helps reflexively in endowing authoritative and intellectual powers, apart from constructing (or destroying) reputations of scholars who “comment publicly on each others’ research [...] through book reviews and articles that refer directly or indirectly to the “value” of a scholar’s work in the field it addresses.”⁵ Further, being “the fastest and more direct means of publication,” compared to books, journals are a site of discourse, that allows us to gauge the speed of changes in “intellectual trends and innovation.”⁶

While Crysler’s approach enables a sharper critical understanding of the field of scholarly writing within reputed journals, it is doubtful if such an approach can help us understand the “matrix of wider institutional forces” to which he refers.⁷ This intricate matrix operates not only through reputed scholarly journals and institutional establishments—as Crysler rightly demonstrates—

¹ Crysler. *Writing Spaces*. 10.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

but also through and between the many different and often seemingly unconnected fields of the academy and profession—traceable ultimately, as this research will try to explore, to the larger field of cultural production, where the processes of power and distribution (hence reproduction) are more complex.

The present study focuses on an Indian architectural magazine *A+D*. It is necessary to distinguish between the sites of such discourses (journals versus magazines) for a better understanding of the associated values of judgment and recognition allowed or pursued through such sites. For instance, amongst these relatively local sites of architectural discourse, academic or professional journals are generally devoted to the dissemination of academic or professional discourse. Such sites of discourse (such as journals of the Council of Architecture, the Indian Institute of Architecture, or Delhi's School of Planning and Architecture) represent knowledge relative to the position of the respective authors within dominant schools or institutions of architecture in India. Because of such localised subsistence, the reach of such sites of discourse is yet again limited to subscription by interested architectural firms, schools or institutions of architecture, whose members (academics, practicing architects, students) may also be accredited to the institutions publishing the journals.

Architectural magazines, on the other hand, are mass circulation publications, which deal with buildings and urban space in various ways. Apart from advertising professional trade, such magazines are also consistently involved in advertising the previously mentioned sites of large-scale discourses—either through book reviews or critical discussions. Magazines of architecture, like magazines concerned with current fashion or cinema, can be either subscribed to or bought from a local bookstand. Magazines such as *A+D* may also combine a few characteristics of a professional journal such as publishing critical articles or essays, and carrying out surveys such as that of the state of architectural education or the architectural profession, etc. However, magazines are not restricted to representing, or being represented by, an academically pursued theory or a professionally instituted concern. Magazines

of architecture reflect and report popular trends in architecture (and interior design) at both the regional, national and international levels. Such a site of discourse can therefore be regarded as part of popular culture, which constitutes a large proportion of a given population as opposed to an elite or an academically oriented culture. Because of its essential nature of reporting current and popular trends in architecture (theorised or otherwise), such sites of discourse also act as filtering lens for academic researches interested in theorising or surveying current architectural trend or practices. Thus, similar in many ways to academic architectural journals, the magazines of architecture define a far more complex system of cultural capital, and also help in advertising the creation and the holders of such a cultural capital to a larger lay-audience.

However, to undertake such a study on and of the complex nature and agency of discourse, and to suggest a suitable tool to analyse it as a form of cultural production, we need to take into account recent developments in the field of critical discourse analysis, to which Crysler's study is one offering.

7.3: Historicity and the study of architectural discourse

In order to better understand the role of historical contexts in the writings of discourses about Indian architecture, one may begin by admitting, with Panayotis Tournikiotis, that there are neither facts nor architecture, but “only histories, in the plural, and concealed within all of them [there] is a vision of the future to which their authors do not admit.”⁸ The contemporary critical reappraisal of previous writings on Indian architecture that was discussed in the last chapter, which seemingly focused on the issue of identity in contemporary Indian architecture, may be analysed in this Foucauldian sense. The authors who wrote about Indian architecture presented it not as it was, but saw it as a relationship between what it was and what it is—attempting simultaneously to conceive the meaning of Indian architecture in the past and

⁸ Panayotis Tournikiotis. *The Historiography of Modern Architecture*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1999. 237.

also projecting that meaning into the future—into *their* future. Considering the historical discourse, thus, as a discursive practice—a practice that according to Foucault “systematically forms the objects of which it speaks”⁹—it can be argued that the authors are essentially asking: *what should Indian architecture be like in the future?* The analogy presented here with Tournikiotis’ stance in his *The Historiography of Modern Architecture*, to be sure, tries to objectify the relationship between the subject and the object.

In his study of the *historiography*¹⁰ of modern architecture Tournikiotis examines the history of modern architecture expounded by nine particular historians. But, as Tournikiotis clearly states, his study only examines the “written architecture, and only from the point of view of the historian” in question.¹¹ He explicitly abstains from examining “histories as functions of the cultural, economic, or political conditions in which they were written, or as functions of the actual production of built space”¹²—what Tournikiotis terms as “historicity;”

a conception of history that sees all social and cultural phenomena as very closely bound up with each specific historical reality.¹³

Even in the ‘deliberate removal’ of the importance of the larger historical and social conditions responsible for the generation of the history texts, Tournikiotis’ study nevertheless demonstrates a critical enquiry directed against the fetishisation of history by historians—one of the building blocks to the understanding of the historicity that Tournikiotis himself speaks of later. Tournikiotis’ analysis examines the significant role that the written projects of historians then become as objects in themselves “accessible to us regardless of the conditions in which they were written,” and the meaning those texts

⁹ Panayotis. *The Historiography of Modern Architecture*. 5.

¹⁰ Or as Tournikiotis explains, the “discourse of the historians of modern architecture.” Panayotis. *The Historiography of Modern Architecture*. 4-5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 261.

produce when read in a different period or context by different readers.¹⁴ Tournikiotis is more interested in what he refers to as “the reading context” (the present)—“the relationship that develops between the text and its readers” regardless of the historical and social conditions in which those texts might have been written.¹⁵ Thus Tournikiotis is interested in defining what the texts *are*, by “juxtaposing their implicit intentions against their explicit aims so as to determine their true status.”¹⁶ While this mode of questioning is arguably justifiable, it still stands the risk of inventing, while arguing not to do so, yet another metaphor—reader-text—to find the ultimate ‘truth’ about the matter.

Through such a stance, Tournikiotis invites enquiry into the legitimacy of his own understanding of the texts, since he is also aware of the nature of the historical texts in creating multiple meanings in different ‘reading contexts.’ Furthermore, his choice of texts—the historical discourse—again poses similar problems. Tournikiotis examines the “mode of existence or the *being* of the histories of the modern movement without attempting to define anything that *ought-to-be* or *ought-to-be-done* (original emphases).”¹⁷ But in doing so, his own “criteria of exclusion”¹⁸ not only establishes, implicitly, what historical discourse is, and *ought-to-be* (by investing them with his own understanding of a particular “dimension of historical interpretation,”¹⁹ which he believes that such discourses should have), but also consecrates the texts thus selected as key interpretations of the modern movement.

Tournikiotis’ understanding of the reproduction of knowledge is a tautological reading which while relating works only to themselves aspires to find or rediscover a binding theme which is the basis of all the literary constructions he investigates. Thus, analyzing the writings, written by their authors with their particular individual agendas, will only mean indulging in a (reductive) theoretical activity that will not be able to address the *practice* of discourse

¹⁴ Ibid., 6.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹⁷ Ibid., 6.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 7-8.

itself. Reductionist logic, as we have just understood, presupposes that the fundamental problem *must* lie somewhere else, detached, and not explicitly within the problem itself. Further, it aspires for a universalising, unrepresentable, but *underlying* (and/or overarching) truth with its obvious intention of painting the apparent problem as a problem in isolation, and therefore iconic. This methodology, as is the case with Tournikiotis' study on nine art/architectural historians, is therefore consciously rejected in the current research.

While the present analysis will also indulge in, what Tournikiotis calls, the “warps and woofs of the...texts themselves,”²⁰ to understand the practice of discourse, it will also investigate the objective structure (and structuring) of the discourse along with the containing and constraining actions, which the interested agencies like editors, authors, readership and institutionalised influences, bring with their texts, either in an *interested* or in a *disinterested* manner. Recent research in the field of historiography has shown an acute awareness of the problem of and with the *writing of history* or *written history*.²¹ Tournikiotis explores “the manner in which the historical discourse has been enunciated and the degree to which, ultimately, it has been the vehicle for a specific and fully fledged point of view – in other words, a theory.”²² From Tournikiotis, to Crysler, then, the focus has clearly shifted from a purely textual and theoretical analysis of the discourse itself as an *object* of investigation, to the contextual analysis of the discourse. In Crysler's view, discourses should be approached as “spatial practices,” which “also define, and are defined by, the shifting networks of cultural, educational, and political institutions, as well as metropolitan, national, and international contexts in which the participants (and objects studied) are located.”²³

²⁰ Ibid., 237.

²¹ Ibid., viii.

²² Ibid., ix.

²³ Ibid., 189.

7.4: Methodological considerations

As Crysler demonstrates in *Writing Spaces*, research in the field of critical discourse analysis is increasingly shifting its focus to issues of relationality, interdependency, and interdisciplinarity within the ‘spaces of knowledge.’ According to Crysler, the boundaries of such spaces of knowledge, according to Crysler, are defined by “the social, representational, and spatial practices,”²⁴ associated with the object of study (for instance journals/magazines or teaching of historical architectural narratives). Crysler investigates five international journals, which he refers to as “sites of discourse.” These sites of discourse range from journals focused purely on architectural history (*JSAH* and *Assemblage*) to journals which have their focus on “communities defined according to ‘shared cultural values’” and primarily located “in the rapidly industrializing nations of the ‘third world,’” like *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*,²⁵ to those which are “concerned with large-scale spatial units of analysis such as the national territory, the urban region or the locality” (egs. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* and *Society and Space*).²⁶

Theoretically, Crysler’s investigation falls within the paradigm of “major critical theories in scholarly research in the built environment disciplines since 1960.”²⁷ These include Hayden White’s influential *Tropics of Discourse*,²⁸ and Rabinow’s critique of Foucault’s system of power. Parallel approaches may be found in the contemporaneous studies of Bozdogan and Kusno discussed briefly before. Crysler’s investigation is limited to well-known and internationally recognized journals cutting across the built environment disciplines. He considers journals as “not only part of a matrix of wider

²⁴ Crysler. *Writing Spaces*, 189.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, ix.

²⁸ Hayden V. White. *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

institutional forces,” but also as “institutional structures in themselves.”²⁹ The analysis then is devoted to the dissemination of academic discourse in and through journals and the “hierarchies of success”³⁰ based on knowledge and power that are played out by authors/academics through journals in larger academic institutions like schools of architecture. Crysler further demonstrates how journals, when read as an “archive of communication” also allow us to understand “how [and why] collective voices emerge, and become prominent or fade into obscurity and disappear” within an established area of knowledge, creating “distinctive temporalities or representations of time.”³¹

The current research falls within the same field of investigative analysis as Tournikiotis’ and Crysler’s, but morphologically and theoretically bends and blends in more with Crysler’s research. But the current research departs substantially from Crysler’s research at three distinctive fronts. The significance of the current research lies within (and because of) the following three approaches—the first two being methodological in nature, and the third one in the adopted theoretical approach.

On the first front, while Crysler investigates well-established journals of international repute, the focus of this research is an analysis of a commercially published *magazine* of architecture—*A+D*—widely read by both students and professionals in India but little known internationally. However, representations of Indian architecture in international journals/magazines cannot be ignored. Therefore, representations of “Indian” architecture in well-established international journals will be analysed to understand, in comparison with the selected national *magazine*, the chronology (and also the *historicity*) of development of certain ideas regarding the representations of “Indian” architecture.

The format and organisation of knowledge in any architectural magazine or journal is determined not only through collective conventions of knowing and

²⁹ Crysler. *Writing Spaces*, 10.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

understanding, but also through the organisation of ideas or themes into sections that help in the general advancement of logic in the magazine or journal. These sections, which are really different spaces of writing, are categorised according to their narrative genres. Building further on Crysler's method of approaching the various spaces of writing within the five journals he investigates, a similar approach is employed in the current study to analyse the various types and genres of writing in the selected site of discourse, *A+D*.

The following seven narrative genres of writing—the 'editorial,' 'life-and-works,' 'architecture-of-a-region' or 'focus-on-a-city,' 'building-type-study,' 'critical-discussion,' and 'interview-with-architect/architectural theorist' are found in the first decade of *A+D*'s publication. The sections—at least those that the producers of *A+D* tried to maintain consistently in the initial decade of its publication are: 'Editorial,' 'News,' 'Letters,' 'Awards,' 'Spectrum' (in which appeared articles concerning history or critical analysis, often by young and upcoming architects or architectural scholars, debates and interviews), 'Focus of the Issue,' 'Building types study,' 'Discussion' (similar to the 'spectrum' section), and 'Book reviews.' Some sections are given more importance and gather further emphasis when an image from the section is printed on the cover, or when allotted a larger space (both in terms of scope and pages). They are also given importance by printing their titles on the cover page (Figures 14 and 15) along with the main imagery.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 152
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 14: Example of an issue of *A+D* (vol V no 3 March-April 1989)

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 152
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 15: Example of an issue of *A+D* (vol XXII no 1 January 2005). Note the change in the design of the logo. By this time *A+D* had begun publishing on a monthly basis

Apart from the main sections of *A+D* such as 'Focus of the Issue' or 'Building Type Studies,' there exist the generally ignored spaces of writing; sections such as the 'news' and the 'letters' sections. Crysler fleetingly mentions the

“extended interaction between the editors, “blind” readers and contributors” that a journal necessarily follows as a specific set of protocols in selecting and publishing articles.³² While it may arguably hold true in the specific case of ‘journals,’ magazines or trade journals such as *A+D* on the other hand do not necessarily have such strict and well-defined protocols of production. However, a critical look at what is published in the news section and the letters section—what may be termed as the *silent spaces of writing*—in spite of, and in conjunction with the other spaces of writing in the magazine does allow us to better understand the maintenance (and sustenance) of the subtle economy of representation conducted through the arguably unintentional network of relations within the various spaces of writing in *A+D*. I use the term ‘silent spaces of writing’ both to denote the relative marginal allocation³³ of space to such sections within *A+D*, and also as a tool which allows us to explore the subtle processes of consecration and legitimacy carried out through such spaces.

For the purpose of further clarification, the news section of the silent spaces of writing may be understood as providing information through three conduits of announcements: the ‘recent past,’ the ‘present,’ and the ‘forthcoming’ events. All the information through the three conduits appears in print because they are obviously (more or less consciously), deemed important to be presented as ‘news’ by the producers of *A+D*. In the case of the ‘recent past’ events, these have already happened and are therefore already valued through institutional consecration or professional discussions and debates. In the specific case of the ‘present’ events, these are presently considered important by and for the concerned agencies within the field of architectural production in India, reflecting more directly a collective understanding of such events. In the case of ‘forthcoming’ events, these are deemed as important events in the future, therefore worth mentioning upfront. The importance of forthcoming events, it can be argued, is also based on the prevalent conditions. The prevalent condition of any event (recent past, present or forthcoming) in fact, is also

³² *Ibid.*, 12.

³³ While the news and letters sections hardly occupy a page or two in most issues of *A+D*, in some issues of *A+D* one or both the sections are not present at all.

judged, almost unwittingly, by the associations that particular event carries or is imagined to carry (in the future) at the moment of its publication.³⁴

Similarly, the letters section—the other silent space of writing—consists of the following ‘types’ of letters: letters of clarification, letters of (re)commendation which more or less include suggestions, and letters of consecration and legitimation.

On the second front, this study builds on Crysler’s study of journals, as “writing spaces” or the product of the “textual practice of writing” which is “also about ‘spaces of writing’ as the social and institutional context in which writing takes place.”³⁵ Departing from the focus on “middling modernists” in Paul Rabinow’s book *French Modern, Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*, Crysler’s study focuses on “the administration, institutionalisation and representation of scholarly research” carried out by “specific intellectuals who operate at the upper reaches of scholarly discourse.”³⁶ While both Rabinow’s and Crysler’s approaches are arguably consistent in so far as they consider the logic of practice that operates not only through historically specific sites of discourses but also through a wider dominant arena of social and historical factors which (in)form historically specific and dynamic fields of the discourses, Rabinow’s thesis is closer to the intentions of the current study. However, the current study does not qualify its objects of study as belonging to a certain intellectual group of scholarship or situated at a certain level of scholarly discourse. In doing so, the study will stand the risk of getting trapped in the same socio-cultural taxonomies whose *historicity* and *field* it is trying to dissect and understand. In the context of the field of architecture in India during the 1980s, the specific theoretical or methodological approach in which the current study departs from Crysler’s study is discussed in the next chapter.

³⁴ These associations could be endorsements from the government (as in the case of certain national and international level architectural competitions), involvement of consecrated individuals (as in the case of jury members for certain awards or competitions), ascent of an individual or a group within the field of architecture in the social and cultural ladder of distinction (as in the case of conferring of national or state awards and titles by national leaders or institutions), and so on and so forth.

³⁵ Crysler. *Writing Spaces*, 9.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Chapter 8

Theoretical framework and approach to the case-study

8.1: Introduction

Further elaborating on the particular theoretical aspect of Crysler's adopted methodology—specifically his construct, 'spaces of knowledge'—that this study departs from and develops, this chapter discusses the main components of Pierre Bourdieu's theory. Some of these have been briefly introduced before; however concepts such as *field*, *habitus*, *doxa*, *interest*, different types of *capitals*, etc. demand a larger space to understand their implications for studies of this nature. Following Bourdieu's concept of a *field of restricted production*, this chapter further proceeds to denote architectural journalism as such, with the tacit understanding that this particular field of restricted production is necessarily located within the larger field of architecture. Such a theoretical construct will help in better understanding the relatively autonomous status (with regards to the economic and political determinations of a particular period) of sites of discourse such as the case-study of this particular study, the architectural magazine *A+D*.

8.2: Crysler's 'spaces of knowledge'

The pre-existing dominant structure in the field of architecture, which gets reproduced in discourses of Indian architecture, is formed through complex and historical interaction of various fields—architectural, political, social, cultural and economic (to name the least and most relevant). In chapter 4, we have seen how the 1980s witnessed a heightened consciousness of national identity (or lack of it) in the wake of political unrest and indeterminacy. A number of events—ranging from the political, to cultural and even sporting—either coalesced or staged nationally and in the international arena during this period, exhibited a seemingly neo-nationalistic attitude. As is demonstrated in the current study, with regards to contemporary Indian architecture, certain events in the 1980s, and associated architectural discourse, consolidated a *field* of 'Indian' architecture that increasingly came to be recognized and associated with some select individuals, architecture, and architectural institutions from specific regions of India. Due to complex processes of professional, academic, cultural and political consecration, such agents and agencies of architecture (and associated regions), increasingly gained dominance in architectural discourses at the national level.

Such individuals, who were mostly western-trained, had actively participated in the immediate post-independence Nehruvian influenced nation-building years. This allowed them to be involved with(in) various institutions such as those connected with urban planning, architectural education, schools of architecture, government or non-government organizations concerned with matters of architectural heritage, etc. Furthermore, these agents and agencies of architecture belonged to regional zones in India that were historically considered to assimilate foreign influences in their cultural products—and indeed had examples in both art and architectural heritage to prove so. Politically or economically important regions such as Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Mumbai gained further significance through the tourism industry, which was being developed with the other cultural and political events in a parallel manner. In keeping with the same attitude, such regions were

considered adequately equipped, or actively engaged in resolving the postcolonial predicament regarding identity in Indian architecture as well.

Agents, who were both dominant in and familiar with the local architectural discourses, were also well versed in prevailing global discourses of architecture. They also had, and maintained, connections with academic and other institutions of architecture at both the local and global levels. It can be argued that western scholarship's excited foray into the Indian subcontinent in the 1980s found a rather easy access to, and examples from regionally concentrated and already consecrated sets of agents and agencies connected with contemporary Indian architectural practice.

Contributing to the prevalent hegemonic discourses of modernism and post-modernism in architecture, the unprecedented publication of discourses concerned with Indian architecture during the latter half of the 1980s, have had a more universal appeal, at least in terms of circulation in libraries and architectural institutions worldwide. In the context of Crysler's method, these may be considered as 'sites' of large-scale discourse. Furthermore, they become subjects of endless references and debates in classroom discussions, academic seminars, conferences, book reviews, papers and dissertations, etc. Because of being such privileged references as well, through such sites of discourse one can observe, and analyse to an extent, an explicit exhibition of not only the dominant figures and institutions of architecture in India, but also of the limited regional focus in such explorations. The field of architecture *in* India covered by such discourses is, however, limited and submitted already to the reproduction of a pre-existing dominant structure. However, *A+D*, a magazine published essentially from a dominant place (Delhi) in the field of architecture in India, is a more potent site to examine and evaluate, the dynamics of shifting alliances and contesting issues carried out by interested agents and agencies of architecture situated within a larger field of architecture in India. Further, architectural magazines such as *A+D*, being mass circulation publications, deal and are involved in complex ways with architects, architecture, architectural pedagogy, urban space and professional trade.

To understand the situated nature of architectural discourse in such multi-level socio-historical complexities, the current study employs a novel theoretical tool to focus on the very *practice* of discourse within and through such complexities. Further, being intellectually indebted to Crysler's study, it is appropriate that the theoretical departure from *Writing Spaces* and development of certain analytical tools be understood in the context of Crysler's adopted methodology.

As previously mentioned, Crysler's work is situated in Foucault's understanding of the institutional nature of discourse and its situatedness in the social realm as a dynamic and changing structural system. Foucault's understanding of discourse has undoubtedly been influential for the development of cultural theory in general.¹ However, such a scientific and analytical endeavour still seeks the explanatory principle of discourse within the field of discourse itself, or as Foucault would define it, in the 'field of strategic possibilities.' This field of strategic possibilities is isolated and divorced from the conditions of its production and utilisation—the universe of possibilities—ultimately resulting in a sort of internal analysis that remains inadequate for a holistic understanding of cultural productions. Consider Crysler's conclusion,

In the case studies I have undertaken...I have explored writing and discourse as spatial practices. Each of the journals not only constructs an image of the world through the writing they publish; *they are also social and institutional worlds in themselves*. These practices of representation constituted diverse "spaces of knowledge" and communities of method whose readers and writers share research methods, vocabularies, theoretical sources, styles of writing (all of which are embedded with particular cultural assumptions). They also define, and are defined by, the shifting networks of cultural, educational, and political institutions, as well as metropolitan, national and international contexts in which the participants (and objects studied) are located (my emphases).²

¹ Sara Mills. *Discourse*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. 7.

² Crysler. *Writing Spaces*, 189.

Appearing in the *Architext* series begun by Thomas Markus and Anthony King, Crysler's work is necessarily situated within the aims of the series—which is to “bring together recent debates in social and cultural theory and the study and practice of architecture and urban design.”³ Crysler's methodology accounts for the specific contributions that representations of legitimacy through discourse make in “defining the boundaries of...spaces of knowledge,” that is, in the exercise and perpetuation of power through discourse. Crysler's study argues that discourse and professional practice “comprise a mutually dependent, rather than opposed, condition, thereby linking the politics of space to the politics of writing.”⁴ The study offers by engaging with theories of representation, globalisation and the sociology and political economy of knowledge, a critical framework to understand the production of discourse and how it affects the built environment. Analysing reformulations and shifts in theoretical approaches in the journals, and to understand how disciplines are constituted, Crysler goes so far as to suggest an ‘opening-up’ of disciplinary categories by allowing ‘professional interdisciplinarity.’ This, as Crysler maintains, is a necessary step in the present age of globalisation where, echoing Arjun Appadurai, Crysler states, “the categories of “world,” “territory,” “nation,” “city,” “settlement,” “architecture,” “room,” and “body” are increasingly difficult to separate...”⁵

Briefly considering a term the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu developed, Crysler rightly considers scholarly journals as defining “a complex system of *cultural capital* (emphases mine).”⁶ However, the complex institutional framework within which Crysler examines the five journals, in conclusion is reduced to an understanding of a historical development of ‘some of the most important discourses’ across the built environment disciplines in the journals. While ‘linking’ the politics of space with the politics of writing the study avoids the importance of the accumulation of non-economic goods and resources—the variety of material (physical, economic) and non-material (cultural, social) forms of interchangeable *capital*—that allow such a

³ *Ibid.*, ii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

‘defining’ practice in the first instance. Moreover, within such a complex system, which may be compared to a game following Pierre Bourdieu, Crysler’s study also ignores the objective positions of producers—or ‘participants,’ as he calls them—(of say, discourse) in terms of their strategies and trajectories based on their ‘feel for the game.’ Such a view while taking into account the fact that social life is materially grounded and conditioned, nevertheless ignores that material conditions affect behaviour in large part through the mediation of individual beliefs, dispositions, and experiences. Crysler states,

My goal in this study is to understand collective ways of knowing and understanding. I am less interested in the statements of individual authors than in the groups of ideas those statements define when they are examined together with others.⁷

This Foucauldian influenced structuralism constructs the objective relations, which structure practice and representations of practice. Thus for Crysler in the above quote, immediate communication is possible if and only if agents provide ‘collective ways of knowing and understanding’—that is, if agents are objectively harmonised in their practices and interpretations. Thus Crysler feels compelled to find in the system of texts itself, provided for by the five chosen journals, the basis of its dynamics.

[T]exts have a determinate effect on how we understand, imagine, and act in relation to the world around us. Texts and writings play an instrumental role in shaping the critical and imaginative space in which members of a built environment profession — architecture, planning, urban design — operate.⁸

Thus, this constitution of ‘spaces of knowledge,’ for Crysler, as a system of objective relations is independent of individual consciousness and wills. It is then not surprising when Crysler, in his critique of “the segmentation of critical thought about cities, urban and architectural space into non-

⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁸ Ibid., 4.

communicating subspecializations,”⁹ in the five journals is able to “identify why some [journals] have become self-referential and internalised, and why some others are more changeable, anti-foundational, and open-ended.”¹⁰ In order to form a better interdisciplinarity between various disciplines of the built environment, Crysler suggests that we must ask, “how, and upon what terms, does this interdisciplinarity operate?”¹¹ Crysler traces such interdisciplinary forms of knowledge to “the intentions of a technocratic and imperialist “state apparatus”” intensified in the expanding post-Second World War university system.¹² The questions Crysler asks—the conditions of the possibility of interdisciplinarity amongst various subspecialised disciplines of the built environment—is answerable, for Crysler, through academic discourse which makes use of shared terms and ideas defining operations and limits.

8.3: Order of reality

Crysler’s thesis, following a Foucauldian paradigm, argues that texts play an important role in determining the built environment—in the way we perceive, imagine and act “in relation to the world around us.”¹³ For Crysler, discourse as a *textual practice* not only constructs objects, but also events into narratives which are recognised by particular social groups as “real” or serious. Implicit in Crysler’s structuralist mode of analysis is a tacit understanding that the categories of perception and appreciation are a politically produced relation, which sustain and reinforce boundaries between disciplines and the social worlds they construct. This mode of analysis, although illuminating one of the major bases of the efficacy of interdisciplinarity, yet extends solely to the symbolic systems—or as Crysler puts it—to the space of knowledge separated “into discrete and instrumental specializations,” through a determinate domain of symbolic production, ‘discourse.’ Despite acknowledging the historically and socially situated nature of discourse, such an analysis does not extend to the active dimension—to the system of agents—of discourse production.

⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 191.

¹¹ Ibid., 3.

¹² Ibid., 2.

¹³ Ibid., 4.

For a better understanding of the immediate submission that categories of perception and appreciation elicit from individuals who produce such discourse, one must also acknowledge it, as Bourdieu describes, as “the product of the agreement between, on the one hand, the cognitive structures inscribed in individuals by both collective history (phylogenesis) and individual history (ontogenesis) and, on the other, the objective structures of the world to which these cognitive structures are applied.”¹⁴ The shared terms and ideas that construct the social world, hence legitimate knowledge, function as such only for *those* ‘participants’ who are predisposed to participating in them. Such an awakening of “deeply buried corporeal dispositions, outside the channels of consciousness and calculation,”¹⁵ is not explicitly apparent in discourse or ‘groups of discourse’ as Crysler’s study demonstrates. So while discourse rightly constructs a particular reality—that is a particular *sense of reality*, or ‘*doxa*’—the participants who participate in constructing such a reality neither submit mechanically, nor through a conscious consent to such an order (in both sense) of reality. The *doxic* submission of participants to the structures of a social order, and hence to the recognition of legitimacy, must also account for the specific capital and particular interests the participants bring to it.

While Crysler’s “interrelated field of knowledge”¹⁶ recognises that no discourse can exist outside the relations of interdependence which link it to other discourses, it analyses the regulated system of differences and dispersions, within the journals, through the options springing from one and the same distribution of the points of choice (made by Crysler)—that is, one and the same ‘field of strategic possibilities,’ to return to the Foucauldian conception of discourse latent in Crysler’s project. However, the very logic of the *normal* functioning of discourse—in its construction of objects, events, sequences of events recognised by particular social groups as real or serious, hides far more complex mechanisms through which the established order is

¹⁴ Pierre Bourdieu. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Cambridge, Oxford: Polity Press, 1998. 55.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Crysler. *Writing Spaces*, 15.

reproduced, and the dominant group maintained. What appears as real or self-evident in discourse, is not constituted by discourse alone, but as Bourdieu elucidates, “has quite often been the stake of struggles and instituted only as the result of dogged confrontations between dominant and dominated groups.”¹⁷ Furthermore, the form and direction of change depend also on “the balance of forces between active social agents who have entirely real interests in the different possibilities available to them as stakes and who deploy every sort of strategy to make one set or the other prevail.”¹⁸

Defining, Crysler’s ‘field of knowledge,’ following Bourdieu, as, inseparably, a field of positions and a field of position-takings, I argue that such an analytical formation may help in a better understanding of the complex mechanisms through which the reproduction of a social order or system occurs. Such a formation will not only allow for considering the field as the constitution of a system, as Crysler’s research demonstrates, but will also permit to analyse the ‘struggle’ and associated contradictions, engendered through the generative, unifying principle of the ‘system.’ Bourdieu’s theorisation despite having several affinities with Foucault’s understanding of systems of power, nevertheless, differs substantially from it in ways that offer a more revealing understanding of the specific cultural practices we are concerned with in the present study. The next section will elucidate some key concepts from Bourdieu’s theorisation, in the context of the Indian ‘condition’ discussed so far—in order to better understand and situate the intentions of the later sections in the current chapter.

8.4: Bourdieu’s *Reflexive Sociology*

‘Reflexive sociology’ as conceived by Pierre Bourdieu, is a theory of practice that attempts to understand the relationship between systems of thought, social institutions and different forms of material and symbolic power. Although primarily concerned with the problem of the objectification of society in

¹⁷ Bourdieu. *Practical Reason*, 57.

¹⁸ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*, 34.

sociological inquiry, it has wider application as an approach to the analysis of systems of ‘practice’ in general. Bourdieu’s theorisation is set against two modes of analyses that dominated sociological studies of the 1970s. Subsuming a range of studies under ‘subjectivism’ and ‘objectivism,’ Bourdieu’s study attempts to transcend the limitations set by both modes of analyses. Subjectivism, or phenomenological analysis, proposes to understand the social world through the primary experience and perceptions of individuals. Individuals, in such a mode of analysis are granted a charismatic existence or essence, and set outside the social world that influences their consciousness. Objectivism on the contrary engages in a systematic and objective understanding of the social structures that inform practice, without feeling necessary to account for individual human consciousness and agency. Thus objectivism ignores the ‘objectivity of the subjective.’ Recognising that social life is objectively grounded and conditioned, but objective conditions affect behaviour in large part through the mediation of individual beliefs, dispositions and experiences, Bourdieu’s theory considers this intrinsically double nature of social reality as the basis for a better understanding of social structures.¹⁹

8.4.1 *Field and Habitus*

Bourdieu posits a dynamic sociological model in which the human agent recognizes her unavoidable presuppositions (beliefs that develop into a *position*) in her conditions of social setting. Thus recognising, the agent is also, consciously or unconsciously, aware of the structural laws that (in)form the setting. Further, being aware of her *position*, the agent or the actor *acts*, in what Bourdieu refers to as *position taking*, more or less consciously within those very laws of the settings, in an authority of *agency*, to secure or change (an extension of security) the actor’s position within that setting. This setting—the functioning and composition of social space across a society—is the dynamic social milieu, which Bourdieu terms as the *field* (which is a correspondence between the field of positions and the field of position

¹⁹ Ibid., 4.

takings), and the unavoidable presuppositions that form the *habitus* of the actor. The relations between the positions of agents who inhabit a field determine the structure of the field at any time. This two-fold analytical feature in Bourdieu's model aspires to "relate to each other two sets of relations, the space of works or discourses taken as differential stances" based on a universe of belief, "and the space of the positions held by those who produce them."²⁰ By such a formulation, Bourdieu proposes to go beyond both internal analysis (formalist or hermeneutic, and hence subjective) and external objectivist explication (typical of modern sociology) for understanding cultural practices. In Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, the notions of *field* and *habitus* are paramount, in that *field* (economic, educational, cultural, etc.) allows one to account for the hierarchically organised structures of any social formation, while *habitus* explains how certain practices and perceptions are generated within fields so that they become durable and transposable 'practical sense' (*sens pratique*)—a 'second sense' almost like a 'reflex'—over time.

Habitus, in Bourdieu's theoretical model, is an abstract concept and can be formally defined as resulting from socialization (within and *without* a particular society), which forms unavoidable presuppositions, endowing individuals with *dispositions* at a level below consciousness. In other words, *habitus* is a system of internalised dispositions that mediates between social structures and practical activity, being shaped by the former and regulating the latter. Bourdieu developed the notion of *habitus* to distance himself from structuralist thought, which in its adherence to a deterministic truth of a social structure, excludes from its social explanation the significant role of the 'subjects'—the active individuals with their dispositions, aspirations and expectations—who form the social structure. A particular habitus is circumscribed by a group's homogeneity and can be regarded as a system of dispositions that endure across social space in particular and homogeneous environments shared by groups of people. Operating as a worldview within a group, the habitus becomes the basis for enacting that worldview through the practices of the different fields. What is *thinkable* within a habitus for a group

²⁰ Pierre Bourdieu. *Homo Academicus*. Translated by Peter Collier. Cambridge, Polity Press: Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1989. xvii.

reflects the limits of the habitus, which according to Bourdieu is set by *doxa*, which we encountered briefly before. The following sub-section offers a fuller explanation of this key term in Bourdieu's lexicon and its particular applicability to the present study of recent discourses of Indian architecture.

8.4.2 *Doxa*

Doxa can be better defined as “an unquestionable orthodoxy that operates as if it were the objective truth—across *social space in its entirety*, from the practices and perceptions of individuals (at the level of habitus) to the practices and perceptions of the state and social groups (at the level of fields).”²¹ *Doxa* which is habitus-specific, subsumes a range of contradicting choices—for instance, radical or conservative, activist or conformist, traditional or modern, regionalist or postmodern, etc.—that are *thinkable*, common sense, and accepted by all as self-evident within a particular habitus. Specific opposing terms are chosen here because in the context of Indian architecture discourses tend to operate in this fashion most of the time, as we have seen in part I of the current study. Corresponding to any *habitus*, there is thus a limit to the possibilities ‘allowed’ in the realm of the thinkable—that is within the ambit of what does not challenge the *doxa*. A *doxic* adherence results because of the very fact that the *unthinkable* does not, indeed cannot, exist in a *doxa*. To quote from Bourdieu, “[i]n the social world, words make things, because they make the consensus on the existence and the meaning of things, the common sense, the *doxa* accepted by all as self-evident.”²²

However, what is thinkable, or accepted by all as self-evident within a specific *habitus* may not be so for those not inhabiting the same *habitus*. However, the order of logic according to which the *doxic* is designated, or the type of practice that falls under *doxa*, will be common to various *habitus*es. The more variable the objective structures in their impact across a society, the less likely is the occurrence of structural consistency across the *doxa* of various *habitus*es.

²¹ Chopra. “Neoliberalism as Doxa,” 421.

²² Bourdieu. *Practical Reason*, 7.

However, in a determinate social formation, such as the period of the 1980s in India, the stabler the objective structures and the more fully they reproduce themselves in the agents' dispositions—that is, the stabler the circle of reproduction, the greater the extent of the *doxa*, of that which is taken for granted. The sense of reality, *doxa*, in this sense is really a sense of limits, which results from “a quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles or internalised structures of organization”²³—through which the established order tends to naturalise its own arbitrariness.

Because the agents' aspirations have the same limits as the objective conditions of which they are the product, *doxa*, a particular point of view, is also the point of view of the dominant in a social space.²⁴ In the 1980s, as we have witnessed in chapter 4 of the current study, the dominant classes within both the Indian state (and specific regions such as Delhi and Mumbai) and the various fields of social space (especially the political and cultural) within it, had an interest in defending the integrity of a *doxa*. This *doxa*, which attempted to reforge the notion of *Indianness* as a kind of cultural and national capital by creating an implicit consensus about the identification of *Indianness* (in architecture as well as in other fields of cultural production), also linked it with the project of national development.²⁵ These, as we have seen, were displayed also through acts and institutions of heritage conservation and cultural exuberance—essentially, preserving the past and hence reproducing the objective categories instituted in the past in the stride towards development. With varying degrees of contradictory and complimentary attitudes inherent thus in acts of adherence to such a *doxa*, various institutional and constitutional actions were taken, and many alliances forged, to maintain such a *doxa*, thus tending towards orthodoxy.

It will not be wrong to think of *doxa*—natural attitude—hence as a politically produced relation. Yet, relegating *doxic* adherence with which the dominant

²³ Pierre Bourdieu. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1977. 164.

²⁴ Bourdieu. *Practical Reason*, 57.

²⁵ Chopra. “Neoliberalism as *Doxa*,” 435.

impose their domination, as a political order, would be according the state the legitimacy to do so. Bourdieu warns against such creationist reductionism,

Indeed, essentially, what is problematic is the fact that the established order is *not* problematic; and that the question of the legitimacy of the state, and of the order it institutes, does not arise except in crisis situations. The state does not necessarily have to give orders or to exercise physical coercion in order to produce an ordered social world, as long as it is capable of producing embodied cognitive structures that accord with objective structures and thus of ensuring the...doxic submission to the established order.²⁶

Thus, objective categories (structuring structures) are the basis of subjective social categories (structured structures), which are mental categories, that inform a matrix of countless representations and actions across various fields in the social space, which in turn help to reproduce the objective categories. In effect, according to Bourdieu, such a circle of reproduction reproduces a wider power relation between the dominant and the dominated (which produce such a classificatory system) not only in a particular field of cultural production—such as the field of architecture—but also within a universe of fields in the social space, by perpetrating, what Bourdieu calls, *méconnaissance*—a misrecognition, or false belief. Bourdieu states; “systems of classification which reproduce, in their own specific logic, the objective classes...make their specific contribution to the reproduction of the power relations of which they are the product, by securing the misrecognition, and hence the recognition, of the arbitrariness on which they are based.”²⁷ Bourdieu suggests that any understanding of a social system must take into account the significance of an agents’ subjective self-understandings based on false beliefs or misrecognition, and the role they play in maintaining the power and privilege of dominant classes. This particular experience is evident in the discourses of Indian architecture discussed in part I, particularly during the 1980s, when notions of Indian architecture—traditional, stagnant, modern, regionalist, etc.—were deployed in postcolonial or contemporary discourses, to construct both the

²⁶ Bourdieu. *Practical Reason*, 56.

²⁷ Bourdieu. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 164.

social position of the architects and certain institutions and of the authors themselves; thus reproducing the larger power relations inherent in and through terms such as the ‘West’ and the ‘East,’ ‘Third World region’ or ‘globalisation,’ of which those discourses and associated institutions from where they emerged were the product.

8.4.3 Interest or *Illusio*

Inherent in Bourdieu’s theorisation is also a tacit recognition of *interest* that agents within and through a particular *habitus* bring in either pushing back or defending the limits of a *doxa* within a field or across different fields. However, departing from a simplistic understanding of *interest* used in sociology—that is, that there is a reason in what agents do which can be found—Bourdieu posits a more rigorous notion, *illusio* (a Latin word derived from the root *ludus* or game) or *investment*. Considering a field as analogous to a game, Bourdieu posits that *illusio* “is the fact of being caught up in and by the game, of believing...that playing is worth the effort.”²⁸ *Illusio* is therefore also an investment that an agent makes in the stakes of the game in which she participates because of an interest that, as Bourdieu considers, has been “imposed and introduced in [her] mind, [and] in [her] body, in a form called the feel for the game,”²⁹ which is the *habitus*. While the notion of *habitus* deals with the relation between agent-dependent and agent-independent aspects of social life, with the notions of *doxa* and interest or *illusio*, Bourdieu attempts to understand the relation between mind-dependent and mind-independent aspects of an agents’ social life. Tied with interest in Bourdieu’s model is also the notion of disinterestedness, which according to Bourdieu, is only a camouflaged interest and is crucial in understanding firstly, the dominant and dominated positions in a field and the seemingly disinterested actions by agents who are radically opposed to everything that interests the dominant in a field. Bourdieu considers disinterested acts or acts of disagreement exhibited by the opposing agents as hiding a tacit agreement about the object of

²⁸ Bourdieu. *Practical Reason*, 76.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

disagreement. Secondly, when thought through the concept of *habitus*, Bourdieu offers a more complicated reading of disinterestedness. According to Bourdieu,

...there are disinterested forms of behavior which do not have as a principle the calculation of disinterestedness, the calculated intention to surmount calculation or to show that one is capable of surmounting it.³⁰

Bourdieu considers the logic of interest in most practices in the cultural domain, misperceived as logic of disinterest. This attitude to misperception, that is characteristic of archaic economy where exchange is regulated by self-interested strategies and tacit calculations, according to Bourdieu, is precisely what legitimates most cultural practices also. Bourdieu proposes to bridge the opposition in Marxist influenced understanding of modes of production, where strictly economic interests, as defined in the field of economic transactions, is set in opposition to symbolic interests such as ‘spiritual’ or ‘cultural.’ Bourdieu clarifies,

In fact, in a universe characterized by the more or less perfect interconvertibility of economic capital (in the narrow sense) and symbolic capital, the *economic calculation* directing the agents’ strategies takes indissociably into account profits and losses which the narrow definition of economy unconsciously rejects as *unthinkable* and *unnameable*, i.e. as economically irrational.

8.4.4 Economic, Symbolic and Cultural capital

The notion of interest as discussed above, in an economy of practice, is not reducible to material interest alone. We have seen how notions of *doxa*, interest or *illusio*, and disinterestedness, when thought through the concepts of *field* and *habitus* in Bourdieu’s theorisation, account for the cognitive aspects of the exercise and reproduction of class-based power and privilege. However,

³⁰ Ibid., 86,87.

there are symbolic and cultural aspects—the socially structured situation—in the social world, which inform cognitive and motivating aspects, and therefore must be taken account of for better understanding. These are what Bourdieu calls, an *economy of practices*. Bourdieu posits that calculations of interest must extend to “all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation — which may be ‘fair words’ or smiles, handshakes or shrugs, compliments or attention, challenges or insults, honour or honours, powers or pleasures, gossip or scientific information, distinction or distinctions, etc.”³¹ In effect, Bourdieu’s theorisation posits that power exists not only in the form of material or economic capital, but also in the form of symbolic capital, which, because they are conceived as priceless or worthless, is perceived not as power. Furthermore, Bourdieu states that in the social space of ordinary living and also in specific cultural practices, such a power is consistently utilised as a source of legitimate demands on the services of others, whether material, or symbolic, while being considered not as power at all. It is precisely this misrecognition of power in the form of symbolic capital—that works efficiently as power—that Bourdieu brings into the ‘economic calculation’ to better understand cultural practices in the social world.

One can appropriate Bourdieu’s thoughts in the context of the generation of intellectuals, architects and architect-educators in India’s post-Independence era (refer chapters 4 and 5). These agents because of their definition within such a *habitus*, which they did not produce and in which they were born, were already predisposed to notions such as patriotism, service to the nation, piety, simplicity, virtue, gratuitousness, and associated tacit reactions such as insinuations, reproaches, silences and avoidances. Such notions, in interested agents, are provided legitimacy also by the accumulation of symbolic capital (and hence symbolic power) in the form of prestige and renown through institutionalised establishments such as schools of architecture, or teaching assignments in prestigious institutions of architecture. When cultural products

³¹ Bourdieu. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 178.

(such as architecture or discourse on architecture), born out of such disinterested exchanges of the mind-independent kind (in the sense that it is not *consciously* thought of as an interest by the agent) and pursued through the field of cultural production, architecture, are rewarded (for instance by the state or by professional accreditations and awards), it indeed helps in the constitution of symbolic capital for the agents (which hence become durable dispositions for them).

Moreover, the ideology of an architectural work in most of the discourses on contemporary Indian architects and architecture constructs the architect as the ultimate source of the value of the architectural work. It evades the fact that a publisher or author (agents) in representing that work of architecture (in agencies such as books or magazines) simultaneously exploits the labour of the architect, and consecrates the cultural product, which the agent has ‘discovered.’ However this right to consecration also depends on the hierarchy of the agent’s own position—the more consecrated she is, the stronger she has the right to consecrate a cultural product. Thus, an agent who risks the symbolic capital she may have accumulated in promoting a not-yet-discovered work of architecture by a relatively unknown architect or architectural firm, can succeed (in the economic sense) only with a practical knowledge about the overall functioning of the cultural field in which cultural products such as architecture (and the connected architectural discourse) are produced and circulate. However, this symbolic capital, which functions under the pretension of not doing what it does, through prestige and authority as well as through publications and exhibitions, participates in the imposition of a particular value; thereby guaranteeing further profit (in the realms of both symbolic and, economic capital as well) from such an operation in the long run.

Thus rewarded and reconstituted, as briefly discussed above, it is also possible for symbolic capital to be converted back into economic capital. The interconvertibility of symbolic and economic capital (hence power) justifies, for Bourdieu, their sociological treatment as different forms of the same thing—power. Such a process, which Bourdieu, using a geometrical metaphor, relates to “a double half-rotation returning to the starting point, i.e. a

conversion of material capital into symbolic capital itself reconvertible into material capital,”³² also constitutes symbolic and cultural goods for acts of disinterestedness—thus becoming real principle of and for practices, and for discourse on those practices. Thus symbolic capital, which as Bourdieu reckons, is a “*disguised* form of physical “economic” capital, produces its effects so far as it “conceals the fact that it originates in “material” forms of capital which are also...the source of its effects.”³³ Furthermore, these forms of capital cannot function as capital, and hence as power associated with them, unless a tacit understanding of wealth as the primary instrument responsible for both the institutional setup and mechanical functioning of a particular field, thereby also capable of appropriating the profits from it—that is, an understanding of capital through the more general economic sense of ‘investment’ and ‘profit’—is already established. The necessity of understanding economic and symbolic capital through the above mentioned economic apparatus, and to explain “the objective relations between the system of economic production and the system producing the producers”³⁴ through education and cultural practices, allows Bourdieu to construct, finally, the concept of cultural capital.

Cultural goods or products, which constitute cultural capital, are distinct from economic or material goods in that one can “consume” them only when one is capable of apprehending their meaning. In this sense, architecture (and its discourse) as a cultural product has meaning only for those who possess the necessary schemes of appreciation and understanding—which are inculcated either through the family, or an architectural education and training, or through the objectification effects of discourses on architecture. Thus cultural capital is the ensemble of cultivated dispositions that constitute such schemes of perception and appreciation in agents or groups of agents. While cultural capital exists not only in the form of incorporated dispositions in agents or groups of agents, Bourdieu stresses on the specific consideration of academic qualifications in the incorporation of cultural capital; “academic qualifications

³² Ibid., 179-180.

³³ Ibid., 183.

³⁴ Ibid., 186.

are to cultural capital what money is to economic capital.”³⁵ Bourdieu likens academic qualifications to money, in that both have fixed values, which, “being guaranteed by law, [are] freed from local limitations...and temporal fluctuations.”³⁶ Further, the educational system in a move to minimise the “obstacles to the free circulation of cultural capital” institutes the same value to all holders of a particular academic certificate or degree. Finally, the lasting relations of domination between individuals, groups and classes, defined thus by such a cultural capital, are further legitimised by the law, which employs its own symbolic force by recording and legitimising, for instance, the distinction between the position and the person, the power and its holder.

The accumulation of cultural capital in an individual begins from the family itself, and takes the form of an investment of time thereafter—which returns dividends either through education (in school and university), or through social contacts such as those established by the “marriage market,” and through the professional field. Thus cultural capital exists in an incorporated state and reveals itself through many almost unconscious gate-keeping mechanisms instituted in almost all the evaluative practices established by professional bodies (such as examinations, hiring of professionals, etc.), and even in the social courtship practice of marriage. For instance, with respect to the French educational system, Bourdieu’s analysis shows that the evaluative criteria followed by teachers rely heavily on language and style—both of which more than any other aspects of educational performance, are dependent on a student’s cultivated family background, and hence cultural capital. While it is beyond the scope and necessity of the current study to list them all, it may suffice to say that Bourdieu’s rigorous analysis of cultural capital takes into account the task of legitimation of the established order in the social space through a vast network of objective mechanisms and relations.³⁷

Bourdieu’s calculation of interest (and disinterestedness) which, as we have seen above extends to all forms of material and symbolic, cultural and

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 187.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 189-190.

economic goods, rests on a tacit understanding of the state bureaucracy. Bourdieu reckons that “one of the major powers of the state is to produce and impose (especially through the school system) categories of thought that we spontaneously apply to all things of the social world — including the state itself.”³⁸ In the context of the current study, although the considerable involvement of the Indian state behind the consecration and constitution of acts of disinterestedness is recognisable, it would be pedantic to accord to the Indian state the status of the ‘universe’ that rewarded acts of disinterestedness to individuals.

Rohit Chopra has appropriated Bourdieu’s theory of state to the particular post-economic liberalisation era in the Indian society, specifically in the cultural, educational and economic fields, for understanding “why a consensus about the positive effects of globalization and liberalization could have established itself as a dominant discourse across Indian social space.”³⁹ Specifically, Chopra employs Bourdieu’s late-writings on neoliberalism, essentially targeted towards globalisation and the ‘tyranny of the market,’ along with his theory of the state, with associated key concepts common in Bourdieu’s extensive range of study, to understand certain social, educational and economic processes in the post-1990s Indian society. Chopra’s article is doubly significant for the current study; firstly it is perhaps the only existing discourse that examines contemporary discourses about an important aspect of post-economic liberalisation Indian society, and secondly, it does so by utilising selected theoretical tools from Bourdieu’s work. The next section will think through Chopra’s argument as a salient example of a Bourdieuan analysis of economic and cultural production in contemporary India in order to further sharpen our understanding of the utility of this tool to the present analysis of the production of contemporary Indian architectural discourse.

³⁸ Bourdieu. *Practical Reason*, 35.

³⁹ Chopra. “Neoliberalism as Doxa,” 419.

8.5: Neoliberalism as *doxa*: rethinking the Indian state and its mechanisms across the social space

At the outset, certain parallels could be drawn between Chopra's article and the current research—Chopra tries to understand how a consensus on the beneficial effects of globalisation established itself as a dominant discourse in the post-1990s Indian society; the current study attempts to understand how a consensus on *identification* (in both senses) of contemporary Indian architecture established itself as a dominant discourse in post-1980s architectural discourses concerned with Indian architecture. The mandatory historical consideration of the Indian society under investigation—from the colonial period to the post-Independence era—in Chopra's article, has affinities with some issues that have been discussed so far in the current study. As has been discussed in part I, deterministic scientific and systematic approaches, along with the founding of science-based and technology-based fields such as Indology, and technical institutions such as the ASI and the PWD, sustained not only the colonial power but also the colonial interest in Indian art and architecture in the late 18th and 19th centuries. In the colonial period, as Chopra elucidates, “[s]cientific knowledge and learning...operated as an arena in which the supremacy of the West could be contested, yet this contestation meant accepting, to a significant extent, the categories of classification proposed by the colonial state with regard to the scientific-technological educational field.”⁴⁰ This, as we have seen in part I of the current study, was clearly exhibited in the writings of Fergusson and later by such ‘apologists’ of Indian art and architecture as Havell and Coomaraswamy, who despite their attempts to challenge Fergusson's approach, followed, nevertheless, the need for a rational division of India's history for a better appreciation of its arts and architecture. Counter claims such as those made by Havell and Coomaraswamy, found a scientifically approached and created mythological structure in Hinduism that explained the spirituality and timelessness of Indian art and architecture. As we have seen, such approaches were also coincidental with the founding of schools of art and architecture in India during the period—thus channelling such discourses through institutional

⁴⁰ Ibid., 434.

conduits as well. Although a novel way of looking at *things* “Indian,” such a stance was also readily accepted and reproduced by the Indian elite—the majority of who were Hindus and belonging to the higher castes. Chopra explains,

What also needs to be highlighted here is that the *nomos* of the educational field in colonial India was also shaped at the moment of its inception by a majoritarian — Hindu, specifically Brahmanical and upper-caste, middle class and above, educated, English-speaking — discourse.⁴¹

Nomos is a Bourdieuean term that seeks to explain the regulative principle—the fundamental law—that not only structures a field but also orders the functioning of the field.⁴² Being the constitutive structure of a field, *nomos* can neither be explained “in terms of [the] internal forces” within the field, nor be “questioned from within the ambit of the field.”⁴³ Without going into much detail, let us consider Bourdieu’s explication,

...once one has accepted the viewpoint that is constitutive of a field, one can no longer take an external viewpoint on it. The *nomos*, a ‘thesis’ that, because it is never put forward as such, cannot be contradicted since it has no antithesis. As a legitimate principle of division that can be applied to all fundamental aspects of existence, the thinkable and the unthinkable, the prescribed and the proscribed, it must remain unthought. Being the matrix of all the pertinent questions, it cannot produce the questions that could call it into question.⁴⁴

Nationalist movements in the second half of the 19th century sought to challenge the notion of the British supremacy and its scientific-technological superiority by positing the Indian civilisation and its essential cultural value systems as incorruptible by external forces. This, as Partha Chatterjee has argued, created and perpetrated a distinct scheme of thought invested in two

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Pierre Bourdieu. *Pascalian Meditation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997. 96; Chopra. “Neoliberalism as Doxa,” 427.

⁴³ Chopra. “Neoliberalism as Doxa,” 427.

⁴⁴ Bourdieu. *Pascalian Meditation*, 97.

domains through which anti-colonial nationalism could challenge the imperial power; an inner domain where the colonised had authority over the cultural and spiritual values of India, and an outer domain of state economy, science and technology, held on firm ground by the colonists.⁴⁵ Accordingly, for the colonised, the outer domain could be gained control of by accepting the notion that science and technology were guarantors of progress and power, while they can rest assured that no outside agency could ever gain access to, or violate the inner domain and intricacies of the Indian culture.⁴⁶ While Chatterjee's argument could be valid for the period before Independence, during the immediate post-Independence years, this division was not so defined; in fact the very idea of a science and technology based progressive India, distinctive ideology of the Nehruvian years, was seen as a mere extension of the cultural ingenuity of the Indian civilisation—that is, the inherent ability to transform and change.⁴⁷ Chopra agrees, that a “scientifically developed and socially progressive India was visualized as an embodiment of a timeless Indian ethos.”⁴⁸ Thus, while India became an independent nation, the drive to modernise India maintained and “*preserved continuities* with the *nomos* of the cultural, educational and economic fields shaped in the colonial era.”⁴⁹ It is under such conditions that the Indian state has been rethought in Chopra's article. It is particularly significant for the current thesis to take account of Chopra's Bourdieu-inflected reading of the Indian state, as this will be key to understand the discourses produced by a generation of architects and architect-educators who have continued shaping the field of architecture in India according to the *nomos* inculcated in them, and the fields through which they operated, during their formative post-Independence years in India.

Chopra identifies four factors through which one can analyse the “key changes as well as continuities in the functioning of educational, cultural and economic capital in independent India...”⁵⁰ Firstly, the idea of Indianness, as a kind of

⁴⁵ Chatterjee. *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 6.

⁴⁶ Chopra. “Neoliberalism as Doxa,” 434.

⁴⁷ Gyan Prakash. *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999. 202.

⁴⁸ Chopra. “Neoliberalism as Doxa,” 435.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

‘cultural and national capital’ that increasingly came to be linked with the ‘project of national development’ during the Nehruvian years; secondly, the framing of the first factor in accordance with socialist goals of the time; third, the emphasis on an English-medium based higher education; and fourth, the cultural capital associated with an overseas education. As previously discussed, the newly independent Indian state exerted an extraordinary importance to scientific and technological knowledge and pursued them through educational policies and other politically instituted schemes such as the five-year plans etc. Notions of progress and development were tied to such schemes and this was the only way, it was perceived, that the postcolonial Indian state could feel at par with the rest of the developed or developing countries in the world. While such schemes would help the notion of scientific progress at the urban level, it would also work at the grassroots level by eradicating illiteracy, improvising agricultural productivity and hence in the general improvement of various indigenous industries—thus guaranteeing social equity. This explains the setting up of many scientific and technological institutions for higher education during the period.⁵¹ Further, and connected to the value attached to notions of science and progress, scientists, engineers, architects, doctors etc. were similarly designated higher values in the social space. Tied to the idea of progress, individuals with qualifications from such highly consecrated institutions of education such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), many engineering (which in many cases included a department of architecture) and medical colleges were “perceived as working in the service of the nation.”⁵² Education from such institutions not only guaranteed educational, cultural and economic capital, but also translated into a symbolic capital with inherent hierarchies of symbolic power recognised (not as power) across the social space of ordinary living. Chopra,

It is almost a truism to state that this designation of the value of scientific or technological education has been ‘taken up’ by Indian society in the post-independence era, especially by the economically privileged classes. A number of current indicators bear testimony to this including: the intense competition

⁵¹ Ibid., 436.

⁵² Ibid.

for seats in engineering and medical colleges, especially the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs); the steady mushrooming of private engineering and medical colleges with variable facilities and infrastructure; and the willingness of the lower-middle, middle- and upper-middle socio-economic segments to spend large sums of money on private tuitions to prepare their children for entrance examinations to these institutions, and to admit their children to private engineering or medical colleges at considerable cost.⁵³

Coupled with such an emphasis on scientific and technological education, is the importance accorded firstly to gaining such higher education over and above primary schooling, and secondly in the establishment of instructions in the English language medium in such higher education institutions. Chopra rightly posits that fluency in the English language is considered a prerequisite for obtaining a “quality” higher education in India.⁵⁴ Fluency in the English language is generally translated into cultural capital, but coupled with the cultural capital accumulated through higher education diplomas or degree certificates, such a capital then is also translatable into economic capital in the long run. Another significant component that influences cultural capital is the value attached to an overseas educational or training qualification. Indeed, as Chopra points out, such a mind-set traditionally instituted during the colonial period, has continued even during India’s post-independence era (despite the geographical shift of such flows from Britain to the USA). Chopra reiterates, “An overseas education in independent India promises a kind of cultural capital that an education from even a top-quality Indian institute cannot provide.”⁵⁵ Further, as Chopra points out with respect to the issue of India’s ‘brain-drain’—associated with qualified (from Indian institutions of learning) Indians migrating to prestigious institutions of learning or profession in the United States—sets up a system of consecration,

The gain in capital promised by migration to the US also reaffirms the value of Indian scientific and technological qualifications, since the high quality of

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 437.

education at Indian institutions places one in an extremely good position to garner a scholarship or fellowship for higher studies abroad.⁵⁶

Chopra distils a ‘pattern’ from such observations and posits that the educational, and the related economic and cultural fields, in India since the colonial period and especially in the post-independence era, have privileged certain economic elites, whose privilege has been further sanctioned and endorsed by the Indian state ‘in the name of the nation.’ This mind-set, inculcated in the Indian elites—those who benefited from the educational, cultural and hence economic capital—has been instrumental in furthering such notions even in decades after independence—even in the era of globalisation and economic liberalisation. So, while Nehruvian socialist tendencies have taken a backseat during this post-1990s phenomenon, “the rhetoric of national progress and development is preserved in the equation.”⁵⁷ While rejecting socialist ideologies and adopting neoliberal policies, the Indian state in its desire to participate in a globalised economy, still preserves and promotes its subjects “to acquire global capital, whether by working in India or overseas.”⁵⁸ Chopra identifies the change in doxa from the immediate post-independence era to the era of globalisation and economic liberalisation,

In newly independent India, working in a scientific or technological capacity *in India* was enough to mark one’s contribution to the nation and to social justice. This was the *doxa* of the educational or professional field in its incarnation then. In globalized India, contributing to the inflow of foreign exchange is seen as sufficient for realizing the dreams of national development and prosperity. This is the *doxa* of globalized India.⁵⁹

Chopra’s article is a critique of the Indian state’s reckless institution of neoliberal policies perceived as creating irreparable divisions in the social structure—a far cry from the Nehruvian goals of social equity. Chopra’s reading is an important in the context of the historical period under

⁵⁶ Ibid., 438.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.,439.

consideration in the current study. As has been discussed in Chapter 3, the decade preceding the era of globalisation and economic liberalisation in the Indian social space—the 1980s—had already started witnessing the effects of global flows of knowledge and capital, consolidating previous dominant structures and forging new international alliances in almost every field of cultural production. If architecture can be considered as a field of cultural production, we have witnessed how the field was constituted, necessarily as a profession to begin with during the colonial period and consolidated into pockets of regionally concentrated—primarily Mumbai- and later Delhi-based—dominant agents and institutions in the post-independence era. As mentioned before, the current study looks at this particular historical decade in the *field of architecture* in India through the medium of a magazine of architecture. Through such a ‘case study’ analysis, this study aims to understand how a consensus on identification of contemporary Indian architecture established as a dominant discourse during the period under consideration. Specifically, we will aim to see how such a consensus might have developed and perpetrated through agents and institutions belonging to one of the dominant regions of architectural production in India, Delhi. Such a focus, specific to a particular historical and regional case such as the 1980s and Delhi in India, in the current study, is also influenced by a recent essay by H el ene Lipstadt, who considers the viability of labelling architecture (identified as an “art profession”), as a Bourdieuean *field* of cultural production.⁶⁰

H el ene Lipstadt argues that an architectural “field” can be imagined if it is so constructed for “a precise historical and national case.”⁶¹ In her detailed analysis of the architectural competition as a “field effect,” Lipstadt claims that it “overcomes” the confusion of defining “architecture” itself as a field of cultural production, as it essentially means that one is observing and analyzing a “analytical relevant trait”—which is architecture competition in her case—and hence establishing a “relational difference to other comparable institutions

⁶⁰ Lipstadt. “Can ‘Art Professions’ Be Bourdieuean Fields of Cultural Production?” 390-418.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 395.

or individuals.”⁶² This means the identification (by differentiation) of the characteristics that are unique to architectural competition (with its various agencies and/or institutions), in that when an architect engages in an architectural competition, s/he more or less enjoys a degree of autonomy enjoyable only by those in the artistic and literary fields.⁶³ Lipstadt distinguishes the “profession” of architecture from other “pure” fields of cultural production like literature and painting in that architecture, as a field, does/can not exist autonomously.⁶⁴ Furthermore, she claims that stripping the title of “profession” from architecture could “bring to light the conflict and contradictions that mark the existence of a field.”⁶⁵

The stand this research takes is similar to Lipstadt’s. Lipstadt, with her intention of understanding architecture as a field of cultural production, following Bourdieu, calls for the denial of the “symbolic imposition”—profession—which tends to ‘obliterate’ precisely that which could be revealed when one begins to observe architecture as a field.⁶⁶ This, as Lipstadt explains is needed to begin to set the limits to the *field*—notwithstanding that these very limits are dynamically evolving/changing entities. Bourdieu himself defines the field as a state of “a stake of struggles,”⁶⁷ and therefore, either long-lasting or temporary. The complexity of the *field* of the practice of discourse begins to make sense when Bourdieu explains (which is also very specific to the nature of this particular research);

The manuscripts a publisher receives are the product of a kind of pre-selection by the authors themselves according to their image of the publisher who occupies a specific position within the space of publishers. The authors’ image of their publisher, which may have oriented the production, is itself a function of the objective relationship between the positions authors and publishers occupy in the field. The manuscripts are, moreover, coloured from the outset by a series of determinations (e.g. ‘interesting, but not very commercial’, or ‘not

⁶² Ibid., 390, 395.

⁶³ Ibid., 396.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 395.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 393.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*, 42.

very commercial, but interesting’) stemming from the relationship between the author’s position in the field of production (unknown young author, consecrated author, house author, etc.) and the publisher’s position within the system of production and circulation (‘commercial’ publisher, consecrated or avant-garde).⁶⁸

I begin therefore, following Bourdieu, by positing architectural discourse as a diffuse, but institutionally dependent and more or less institutionalized medium of *restricted* production (dependent on the historicity of institutions as much as on the historicity of architectural works).

8.6: Architectural Journalism: a field of *restricted* architectural production

The *practice* of architectural discourse that happens through a particular site of discourse (*A+D* in the present case) may further be considered as a field of restricted but dynamic architectural production. In a field of restricted architectural production such as architectural journalism, the stakes of competition between agents are largely symbolic, involving prestige, consecration and architectural celebrity. In such a case, economic profit is not explicitly agreed upon or pursued by the producers of discourse. The hierarchy of authority therefore is based not necessarily by the difference in economic capital interested agents may possess; it is however based on the symbolic profit that agents display (say, by showing a complete disinterestedness about some issue, or by posing as someone who has no profit in agreeing with or fighting for a particular cause or issue, etc.).

The field of restricted production, architectural journalism, may not explicitly conform to the economic and political conditions of a particular period—and therefore can be seen to possess a relative autonomy with respect to its economic and political determinations. Furthermore, the symbolic goods operating through the site of discourse situated in this field of restricted

⁶⁸ Ibid., 133-134.

production, such as *A+D*, do not depend on a broad audience. However, their symbolic power which is constantly in a state of flux, is nevertheless sustained by a vast but often geographically limited and heteronomous social apparatus—involving individuals and institutions such as architectural departments in universities, or schools of architecture, the architectural educational system, architects and architectural critics/writers, libraries, literary and art histories; and events such as architectural competitions, architectural award ceremonies, architectural or cultural exhibitions, and so forth.

Thus, the field of restricted production is situated within such a ‘heteronomous’ form of cultural production, which includes the larger field of architectural production in India and abroad. It would be naïve to assume that the changes or actions taken within *A+D* or its journalism are exclusively a product of a conscious arrangement between the producers of the magazine and its audience (readers). The autonomous (that is, the internal) changes within *A+D*, when undertaken depend for their outcome on the correspondence they may have with the dominant and dominated positions (and position-takings) of individuals, and their relationship to certain events in the larger field of architecture in India and abroad. These become apparent not by a particular direct association or defining categorisation, but by the repetitive techniques and norms of the game of recognition and consecration available at different moments to *A+D* within its own spaces of writing.

The relationship maintained by both the producers—restricted (autonomous) and large-scale (heteronomous)—of symbolic goods, depends very directly on (1) the positions the large-scale producers occupy within the larger field of architectural production and (2) on the related value and circulation of symbolic goods associated with their positions. According to Bourdieu, this dynamic struggle of hierarchisation between the autonomous and the heteronomous principles of interested agents, are really the effects of similar relationship, or ‘homology,’ between the two principles (autonomous and heteronomous), and may not be explicitly expressed or available to the lay

reader.⁶⁹ Bourdieu explains that such relative similarities of position, despite having profound differences in condition between the dominant and the dominated classes, are not only the basis of partial alliances, but can also produce misunderstandings and bad faith. These similarities of relationship and position, within the spaces of writing in *A+D*, reflect both the space of positions and the correlative position-takings occupied by agents in the space of architectural production, and positions of interested readers in the space of consumption.

These similarities may give rise or provide impetus to ideological issues—the concern for instance, with what may or may not be considered as authentic and traditional or contemporary ‘Indian’ architecture. Such ideological issues, therefore, are not a direct result of the producers and their products (writings and images mainly) but are produced automatically when oppositions (opposing viewpoints or correspondences) at different levels are juxtaposed, superimposed or merged within and across the several volumes and issues of *A+D*. Such homologies are potent indicators therefore of not only the space of the struggle between the positions and position-takings of interested agents, but also of the specific physical and geographical locations from where such struggles generate and are distributed within the larger field of architectural production in India. Such a process, clearly discernible in *A+D*’s first decade of publishing, not only helps in establishing and conserving the capital of symbolic goods, but also ensures the reproduction of agents who have in them instilled, to borrow once again from Bourdieu, “categories of action, expression, conception, imagination, perception, specific to the ‘cultivated disposition’.”⁷⁰ When available to an interested reader or researcher, the frontier of such similarities may be more or less clearly discernible in different periods across the limited period of publication under consideration.

⁶⁹ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*, 44.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

Chapter 9

A brief history of *A+D*: position and position-takings in a field of restricted production

9.1: Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief background history of the chosen site of discourse, *A+D*. Keeping in mind the extraordinary decade of the 1980s with regards to the field of cultural production in India (discussed in part-I of this study), in this chapter we will see how the producers of *A+D* clearly wished to claim, for *A+D*, both the market of symbolic goods, and the authority of representing them within the field of restricted production—architectural journalism. Thereafter, this chapter will extract two sets of discourses, from the corpus of literature available within, roughly, the first decade of *A+D*'s publication, to be focused in the subsequent chapters. Such a mapping of discourses within *A+D* will help us to engage (in the later chapters), in a critical discussion of the relational interdependence of discourse with the social space of various agents and agencies, and issues of interest in the first decade of *A+D*'s publication.

9.2: Background

In chapter 4 we learnt why the decade of the 1980s presents itself as an interesting period not only with regards to socio-cultural and political changes, but also with respect to a *field* of architecture in India. In this field of architecture, the consolidation of a dominant group of agents and agencies operating from select regions of India such as Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, and Chandigarh, also seems to have accelerated during the 1980s. Contemporaneous proliferation of discourses (or research on those discourses) connected with contemporary Indian architecture during the period only helped to reinforce the positions of the dominant agents and agencies within this field of architecture.

The recent success of events preceding Mrs Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984, such as the Asian Games in Delhi (1982), meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of State in Goa (1983), and the Non-Aligned Summit in Delhi (1983) had catapulted the image of India, and Indira Gandhi, into international recognition. To maintain such recognition even after Mrs Gandhi's death, the next elected Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (Indira Gandhi's son) put to fruition certain events conceptualised during Mrs Gandhi's tenure. Highly influential among them was the Festival of India project. Conceptualised essentially to present the changing image of India to the Western world, the Festival of India project, from 1985 to 1987, brought together various producers of cultural goods—from architects and designers to film-makers and high-profile business houses. Also conducted in Mrs Gandhi's memory in 1985 was India's first-ever international architectural competition held in Delhi—the IGNCA design competition. Internationally recognised architects and designers were either invited, or arrived of their own accord in India in connection with the Festival of India project and/or the IGNCA design competition. Delhi, and the dominant group of agents and agencies connected with the field of architecture in India were both significantly catapulted to higher levels of legitimacy; with the result that what constituted Indian architecture and who could best constitute it thus, became the object of

struggle to gain both access to, and attain a reasonable position in the field of architecture in India.

A+D, a commercially published trade journal, exclusively (or so it claimed) devoted to the profession of architecture in India, was launched precisely during this interesting period of the mid-1980s. Delhi-based architects Satish Grover and C. P. Kukreja, who had conceptualised the architectural magazine in the early 1980s, began publishing it as a bi-monthly magazine in November-December 1984. The positions of the two founding architects of *A+D* merit some attention here since they were both responsible for creating the magazine as a ‘forum’ where the tradition and heritage of India could be discussed along with contemporary architectural ventures in the country. In hindsight, at least as can be discerned from the first decade of its publication, one predominant intention and interest of *A+D* (and the agents involved)—many a times, supported by concurrent socio-cultural and political events—remained the post-project evaluation, or indeed, appropriation of an *Indianness* in the varied practices of craft, design and architecture in India.

Both Grover and Kukreja belonged to the generation of foreign-returned or foreign-influenced architects of the late 1960s in India. Despite the fact that critical reassessment of the Modern Movement in architecture—especially in Third World architecture—was increasingly forthcoming in architectural discourses of the period, this period was still fresh with Le Corbusier’s and Louis Kahn’s Modernist architectural experiments in Chandigarh and Dhaka respectively. Indeed, the featured articles on the founding architects, Grover and Kukreja themselves in *A+D* exhibit not only the intentions of the founding members of *A+D*, but also hint at the prevalence, in wider architectural circles (especially in the Delhi-Ahmedabad-Mumbai regions), of such an attitude towards assessing architectural practices in India.

It is generally accepted that many architects (foreign-returned or local) in India, from the 1950s to 1970s, were either inspired or disillusioned with Le Corbusier’s and Louis Kahn’s architectural ventures in the Indian subcontinent. Satish Grover was no different. One of the prevalent ideas

amongst architectural thinkers in India at the time was that architecture and architectural community in India had regressed into a convenient stupor following the ‘masters’ (Corbusier and Kahn) works in India. Grover was also amongst those who constituted and contributed to this architectural discourse and intelligentsia that had developed in the Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad architectural circles. Grover graduated from the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, in 1966 and before graduation, had some work experience in an architectural firm in London—Sir Hugh Casson Conder and Partners. Grover formed his own office, Grover Architects Pvt. Ltd., in 1975; his office has to its credit architectural projects not only in India, but also in the Middle East and in South-East Asia. Before his untimely death in 2005, Grover held positions as a Professor of Architecture at the Delhi SPA, and also variously as lecturer and/or design-examiner at the Punjab University, Schools of Architecture in Ahmedabad and Mumbai, as well as the IITs at Delhi and Kharagpur. In 1989, he helped found, along with architects C. P. Kukreja, Ranjit Sabikhi and Mansinh M. Rana, the Sushant School of Art and Architecture in Gurgaon, and remained a life-long member of its governing board. The school was and is still supported by a leading business house in Delhi, called the Ansals Group.

As per an article on Grover and his architecture (written by his student) that appeared in a 1992 issue of *A+D*,¹ Grover’s search for an *Indian* vocabulary in his own architectural practice resulted in a recourse to adopting revivalist tendencies. Grover’s revivalist approach and ‘a sense of history’ were centred on Buddhist and Hindu architectural iconography, motifs and ethos. The employing of traditional motifs and imagery to buildings constructed with modern materials and techniques, constituted for Grover the notion of an Indian architecture. In the article on Grover, his disenchantment with the Modern Movement and increasing appreciation of India’s architectural history seems to be the primary theme. The projects are all discussed around this primary theme (curiously called “theory” in the article). For instance, at a particular point in Grover’s career-graph—in the design of an Indian Buddhist

¹ Jagan Shah. “Satish Grover: A Sense of History.” *Architecture + Design* IX, no. 4 (July-August 1992): 19-39.

temple near Pattaya in Thailand—the *theory*, apparently, “matures.”² The article describes that “Grover now felt that he had at last found his moorings in an ‘Indian’ architecture that had long eluded him.”³ In addition to his architectural practice, and clearly inspired by the writings of the likes of E. B. Havell and Percy Brown, Grover had published two volumes on the architectural history of India in the early 1980s; *Architecture of India: Buddhist and Hindu* (1980), and *Architecture of India: Islamic* (1982).⁴

The article on C. P. Kukreja on the other hand, has no direct allusion either in a forced sense of Indianness being ascribed to his works or as perceived in the architect’s approach.⁵ Nevertheless, the hidden desire to find the elusive notion of Indianness—real or imagined—does surface in the article. Kukreja had developed a multi-disciplinary office under the banner C. P. Kukreja and Associates since 1972. Incorporating different disciplines⁶ with their respective directors, Kukreja himself held the position of the Managing Director of the firm. The multi-disciplinary architectural consultancy firm was in fact, during the time, one of the largest offices in India in the architectural profession led by an architect.⁷

Kukreja’s architectural education included graduation from the Delhi Polytechnic in 1959, a diploma in Town and Regional Planning from the University of Melbourne, Australia, and a Masters in Architecture from the University of Manitoba, Canada, in 1965. During his stay in Australia Kukreja had also increasingly become aware of the importance of climate in architectural design. This had subsequently led to the publication of a book, *Tropical Architecture* in 1978. After completing his postgraduate education in Canada, Kukreja worked for two years in an architectural firm in London

² Ibid., 32.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The books are still widely read by students of architecture in several schools of architecture in India, as part of their history reading.

⁵ “Urban Aesthetics: A Unique Synthesis of Form, Function and Art Characteristic of C. P. Kukreja and Associates.” *Architecture + Design* IX, no. 1 (January-February 1992): 30-55.

⁶ These were the associated fields of building construction such as structural engineering, urban planning and architecture, electrical engineering, and services, development and town planning.

⁷ “Urban Aesthetics,” 31.

before returning to India. In India, he worked in partnership with M/s Chatterjee and Polk for a while before setting up his own firm. It is with Chatterjee and Polk that Kukreja learnt how to manage a multi-disciplinary office.⁸ In the article, Kukreja considers the decades of the 1980s and 1990s as periods of “golden opportunity” for Indian architects “to give shape to modern buildings based on traditional Indian planning concepts and features.”⁹ While there is no text in the interview that expresses Kukreja’s notions about *Indian* architecture—except a passing reference, in reverence, to B. V. Doshi and his architecture, *A+D* in its introductory passage concludes nevertheless,

After having spent years working at breakneck speed, he (Kukreja) would now like to sit back and spend more time in the analysis of elements of Indian design that along with his planning experience will lead to a greater maturity in designing buildings that constitute the real ‘Indianness’ in architecture.¹⁰

It can be argued that both architects, by the time they had decided to found *A+D*, believed that they had developed a sense of *Indianness* in their respective architectural practices. Moreover, they were also involved variously in teaching, writing, and practicing architecture, with the added advantages of having local and foreign experiences and connections. Their own need to conform to and maintain a *sense of Indian identity*—which was the prevalent *doxa* at the time across most fields of cultural production—would have indeed been consolidated all the more with the efforts of an older generation of more famous foreign-returned architects such as B. V. Doshi, Raj Rewal and Charles Correa, who were considered as prominent ‘activists’ within the field of architecture in India.

With competition from the only existing architectural magazine during the time, *Design*, Grover and Kukreja, with active support from Media Transasia (India) Pvt. Ltd.¹¹ (headed by Kukreja’s friend J. S. Uberoi), were surely

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 33.

¹⁰ Ibid., 30.

¹¹ Media Transasia (India) Pvt. Ltd., the Indian office of the Bangkok based magazine-publishing giant, Media Transasia Limited, was eager to start an architectural magazine in

encouraged and motivated enough to launch a forum which would enable them to report and record examples of architecture and architectural practices in India that they thought best represented the contested notion of Indianness. *Believing* themselves to be active participants in the project of Indianising contemporary Indian architecture, it is not surprising to see therefore, an article on them each towards the end of the first decade of *A+D*'s publication. With its glossy, new production values—which far exceeded the previously accepted low-tech norms of the Indian print media—and a self-confident editorial¹² agenda that proclaimed to shed new light on a neglected field, *A+D* was influential in both pre-figuring and re-producing the discourse development regarding Indian architecture in books such as *After the Masters*.¹³ The inaugural editorial of *A+D*, by the first editor, Manjulika Dubey, stated,

In a country which offers such an impressive variety of publications, in terms of subject and audience as well as language, it is odd that *there is no professional journal* to serve the communication needs of architects. The gap becomes all the more curious when one considers the richness and diversity of India's architectural heritage alongside the quantum and dynamism of contemporary work.¹⁴ [my emphases]

Dubey's inference that *A+D* was a pioneering venture, was somewhat disingenuous, however, for it was certainly not the first postcolonial "professional journal" to claim responsibility for representing architecture and the built environment in postcolonial India. A magazine *Mārg* had been founded in 1946 by the writer Mulk Raj Anand. Published from Mumbai *Mārg* not only meant 'pathway' in Sanskrit, but was also an acronym for Modern Architectural Research Group, directly inspired by, the MARS group (1933-

India and had approached C. P. Kukreja with the idea, who in turn involved Satish Grover also in the venture. Email correspondence with Razia Grover: 25 April 2006.

¹² The editorial was mostly driven by Satish Grover, since neither Manjulika Dubey—the editor for the first five issues of *A+D*—nor Razia Grover were directly associated with architectural professions. Email correspondence with Razia Grover: 25 April 2006. Furthermore, the editorials were a consistent feature only till vol VIII, no. 2 March-April 1991 issue of *A+D*, after which 'editorial' disappears for a while.

¹³ During the writing of *After the Masters*, *A+D* was one of the few valuable resources with respect to identifying new projects in postcolonial India. Interview with Peter Scriver, June 2005.

¹⁴ Editorial by Manjulika Dubey, *Architecture + Design* I, no. 1 (November-December 1984).

1957), the contemporary British lobby of modernist architects and planners of the same name that was the accredited English branch of C.I.A.M. Mārg's founder editor, Mulk Raj Anand, envisaged the magazine as a loose encyclopaedia of the arts of India. Indeed with his nationalist ideals that feared the loss of cultural identity in the wake of independence from the British colonialism, Mulk Raj Anand intended *Mārg* to be a pathway that could help to rediscover the pride and identity of postcolonial Indians. Revived in the 1990s and true to the intentions of its founder editor, *Mārg* continues to have a broad cultural and historical perspective, reporting trends and developments in music, classical dance, fine arts and architecture of India and abroad. *Mārg*'s impact on architectural journalism and other cultural productions like art, music and dance cannot be ignored; however it is beyond the scope of the current research to engage in a wider discussion of a magazine with such a multidisciplinary focus.

In addition to *Mārg*, *The Indian Builder*, exclusively devoted to the building industry had started publishing in 1953. Published in Mumbai by Builders Publications of India, a body constituted within the Builders' Association of India (BAI), and edited by Patwant Singh, *The Indian Builder* was intended to be a medium that would help highlight the "colossal Building Industry" of India in the 1950s.¹⁵ Various institutions such as the Ministry for Works, Housing and Supply of India, and the BAI endorsed *The Indian Builder*. The first issue of *The Indian Builder* also had a letter of encouragement and motivation from the editor of the London based publication, *The Builder*, Ian M. Leslie. *The Builder*, whose motto from its inception in 1842 was "to cover and to unify all the professions and crafts which go to make up the industry of building," was 110 years old at the time. By forging an alliance with it *The Indian Builder* set itself out as an ambitious and motivated project of recording the architecture of a young independent nation. When Leslie wrote to Patwant Singh, the British journal had incorporated both *Architecture* and *The British Architect*. Four years later in 1957, in a similar act, but subverting the builder-architect relation, *The Indian Builder* was incorporated into another magazine

¹⁵ Editorial, *The Indian Builder*, January 1953, 1.

called *Design; incorporating Indian Builder*. *Design* was subsequently published and edited in Delhi by Patwant Singh.

Design was arguably the first architectural journal of independent India. It was a pioneering and highly ambitious project of its time that not only aspired to cover architecture and urban planning, but also the visual arts, graphics and industrial design in India. Under Singh's lively and opinionated directions, *Design* remained the most influential architectural journal of postcolonial India in the 1950s and 1960s providing a key source of information for later accounts of post-independence architecture-in-India. Ex-editor of *A+D* (September-October 1985 to May-June 1993) Razia Grover maintains that while *A+D*'s initial role models were *Architectural Record* and *Architectural Review*, *Design* was the only influential journal of its time (with)in the Indian context whose "fearless" journalism *A+D* desired to emulate.¹⁶ *Design* stopped publishing in 1988. Patwant Singh's role as the strong-voiced editor and publisher of *Design* till the gradual demise of the magazine merits some attention, because, as previously mentioned, the period witnessed the assassination of Indira Gandhi, India's Prime Minister at that time and a spell of political and social turmoil in the country. As we will see, the vacuum created by *Design*'s absence was filled by *A+D*. An anecdotal incident from the early 1970s may be presented here to get a glimpse of Patwant Singh's socio-cultural position during the mid-1980s. In an interview conducted by Sharon Church, artist Arline M. Fisch mentions Patwant Singh and his influential group in Delhi.¹⁷

Through the World Crafts Council, I had a letter of introduction to the editor of an Indian design magazine. It turned out his house was right behind the hotel I was staying in, and I was invited for afternoon tea. It turned out that he had a salon every afternoon. It was incredible, marvelous, because all these people

¹⁶ Email correspondence with Razia Grover: 25 April 2006.

¹⁷ The interview was conducted for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution (part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project For Craft and Decorative Arts in America).

kept arriving – all these business people, and design people, and architects just kind of dropped in at Patwant Singh's house in the late afternoon for tea.¹⁸

Even during the anti-Sikh riots following Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984, Patwant Singh's 'salon' functioned as the meeting point of the politically engaged Punjab Group aimed at influencing the government machinery to put an end to the anti-Sikh demonstrations in Delhi.¹⁹ The events associated with the anti-Sikh riots indicate a shift in Patwant Singh's position. Increasingly after the mid-1980s, Patwant Singh, a Sikh himself, started writing vigorously about his community. Beginning in 1985, Patwant Singh edited and wrote the opening essay for a book, *Punjab: The Fatal Miscalculation. The Golden Temple* in 1989, and *Gurdwaras in India and Around the World* in 1992, followed *Punjab: The Fatal Miscalculation*. His personal memoir, *Of Dreams and Demons* was published in 1994 followed by *The Sikhs* in 1999. Singh's latest book *Garland Around My Neck* was published as recently as 2001. Almost the entire focus of these writings was on Sikhs or Sikhism. It is apparent that the political and social unrest following Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984, contributed to this shift in Singh's commitments and the subsequent demise of the *Design* magazine as well. Though still in print when *A+D* started in 1984, the inaccurate reflections of ex-*A+D*-editor Razia Grover on this suggest that *Design* had effectively "closed down some years earlier."²⁰ Further, as A. G. Krishna Menon has pointed out, *Design* was "primarily addressing a Delhi centred constituency" and that its "impact on influencing

¹⁸ From Google's cache of <http://archivesofamericanart.si.edu/oralhist/fisch01.htm> as retrieved on 16 Nov 2005 09:45:22 GMT. Fisch, part of the American delegation, was on her way from Australia to Istanbul where the World Crafts Council's 1972 meeting was being held. The Australian lecture-workshop tour, which included Tasmania, Perth, Adelaide and Alice Springs, was organised by Maria Gazzard, the head of the Craft Board of Australia at that time. Fish had to stop over in Delhi for a few days because for her "it seemed like such a long trip from Australia to Istanbul." Maria had given Patwant Singh's introduction to Fisch and had written him a note that she was coming. Patwant Singh sent a note to the hotel Fisch was staying in, inviting her to his afternoon tea.

¹⁹ Retrieved from Google's cache, <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?p=110633&sid=da357ac0a9bec8c2bea74158f29395fa>. In this particular account Sheila Gujral, wife of India's ex-Prime Minister I. K. Gujral, recounts the anti-Sikh events of 1984 while paying tributes to the late Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora and his commitment towards the Sikh community in India. Further accounts of the political leaders and other eminent individuals (including Patwant Singh) who deposed before the Nanavati Commission created for assessing the events of 1984 may be found in <http://www.witness84.com/latestnews/witnesses/>.

²⁰ Email correspondence with Razia Grover: 25 April 2006.

public opinion was...minimal.”²¹ These are the possible reasons why the inaugural editorial of *A+D* wondered, “it is odd that there is no professional journal to serve the communication needs of architects.”²² With such an obvious ‘gap,’ if it may be called, in the field of restricted production—architectural journalism—the founders of *A+D* would have found it opportune to derive the maximum advantage for both *A+D*’s survival and a desire to be recognised as the foremost magazine of architecture in India. The very fact that *A+D* began publishing from Delhi further reinforces this argument.

9.3: Mapping architectural discourse in *A+D*: 1984-1992

If one observes retrospectively, within the first decade of publishing *A+D* had managed to map out the agents and agencies who, because of certain accumulated cultural and symbolic capitals resulting from the events of the mid-1980s, contested (or were used to contest) the legitimating authority of representing ‘Indian’ architecture. Mapping out, as it were, the discourse that appeared in the several issues of *A+D* in the first decade of publishing, one can observe the following:

- (a) A clustering of certain events in time and a multiplication of discourse, such as interviews and specific articles or reports, either leading to a particular event or following it;
- (b) A more or less consistent use of specific spaces of writing to variously report, discuss, comment, and critically review specialised fields within the built environment;
- (c) A consistent coverage of architects through the ‘life-and-work’ genre; and last but not the least,
- (d) At least fifteen issues exclusively devoted to specific themes or topic.

The specific scope and focus of this thesis do not justify an extensive critical analysis of everything published in *A+D* during the first decade. Furthermore, it is not the intention to argue that *A+D*, as a site of discourse, was singularly

²¹ Menon, ‘The Contemporary Architecture of Delhi: A Critical History.’ Available from <http://www.architecturez.net/+subject-listing/000179.shtml>. Accessed on March 31, 2006.

²² Editorial by Manjulika Dubey, *Architecture + Design* I, no. 1 (November-December 1984).

responsible for the project of Indianisation in Indian architecture, at a certain moment in time. This retrospective case-study, focuses on the historical conditions (both global and local) involving certain events, institutions, individuals, and the discourses surrounding them, that appeared within *A+D* from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. In that decade of major cultural and ideological changes in India preceding the era of economic liberalisation, there was a noticeable agenda that *A+D* communicated through its editorial column—the voice-piece of editor Razia Grover, wife of the late Satish Grover.

Throughout the current research, architecture is treated as a cultural good created out of an efficient functioning of complex systems and networks constituting various interested agencies. The objective division of architecture in India into categories of tradition and modernity was consistently employed in the first decade of *A+D*'s publication. However, these categories of perception and appreciation are doubly bound to the historical context of the larger field of architecture in India and abroad. Being linked to a situated and dated social universe, these categories become the subject of usages which re themselves socially recognised by the positions of its users (including architects). The users in turn, work through the constitutive dispositions of their *habitus*, which allows them to make (and hence reproduce) aesthetic choices made available by the same categories. The social universe of the mid-1980s in India was witness to a series of cultural events that, while permeating through various fields of cultural production, consolidated such a *habitus* for future users or interested agents from various fields. Furthermore, these events were often geographically associated with or located in regions such as Delhi, Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

In the light of the above discussions, and *A+D* being a Delhi-based publication, it becomes all the more pertinent to analyse the magazine during the first decade of its publication. This will not only reveal an active field of architecture and the dominant agents and agencies engaged in it, but will also help us understand how the struggle between the dominant and the dominated within this field, was often reflected within or, sometimes, because of the

agency of *A+D*. such struggles pursued a single objective—that of the legitimate right or authority to represent Indianness in issues concerned with architecture and design in India. Thus, *A+D* is transformed into both a site of discourse and an agency, which while reflecting the individual or group ambitions and struggles within the field of architecture in India, in fact reproduces notions of legitimacy with respect to issues such as identity in Indian architecture. Although this was achieved in a far more complex manner than stated, for the purpose of a critical analysis, at least two ways of analysing them can be constructed.

Firstly, an event-based analysis may be devised, in which certain historical events (both national and international) and their representation in *A+D*, will be closely analysed. Amongst the coverage of several architectural events or events that had some bearing on architecture in *A+D*'s first decade of publishing, clearly three events—the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Festivals of India, and the IGNCIA international design competition—stand out as cases that could be best analysed in the context of the current study. These events in which interested agents and agencies were involved due to specific interests of those events and projects, were capitalised as opportunistic moments by *A+D*. By carrying out reports, through articles, debates, essays and letters on such events or their results, or by even merely reporting them as 'news,' *A+D* directly reproduced significations and partial alliances accorded to and inherent in those events or their reports and reporters. However, it is in the extended relationships between such discourses, their writers or subjects, and the way they appear or not in clusters, or overlapping each other, across several issues and volumes of *A+D* that the producers of *A+D* unwittingly reinforced such significations and partial alliances. Being situated within the locus of the dominant field of architectural debates—Delhi—reflectively, by reproducing such a selective group and their struggle for recognition and authority within its pages, *A+D* also helped in setting the constraints, both geographical and field related, with respect to discourses regarding contemporary Indian architecture.

Secondly, an architect-focused or subject-based discourse analysis in which *A+D*'s coverage of obscure to relatively well-known architects and their works, and the dedication of some entire issues to specific architects (subjects) will be analysed. By relying on either already consecrated architects and writers—in terms of their cultural and symbolic capital—or on architects and writers perceived to hold the same in the future, the previously mentioned objective categories are deployed and reproduced, either in skilfully masked ways or through transfigured indigenous categories in *A+D*. For instance, one of the recurring concerns in *A+D*'s coverage of Indian architects, is the formal and spatial negotiations—that was perceived to be carried out by the architects in focus—between Indian traditions, either against or in the process of overcoming, a universalising Western modernism. In maintaining such a concern, *A+D* not only created in one stroke, both resemblances and differences, replicating and reinforcing themselves in the parallel discourses about Indian architecture, but also helped impose legitimate categories of perception and appreciation. We shall see how objective categories which are produced through a complex social universe and certain events in it, are reproduced by a site of discourse such as *A+D*, eventually becoming notions used by architects and critics either to define themselves or their adversaries.

It must be emphasised here that the discussions of discourse that appeared in *A+D* during the first decade of its publication do not follow a strictly chronological order. It is not the intention of the current study to list or analyse the development of historical events chronologically, connected or not with Indian architecture, as represented in each issue of *A+D*. By analysing discourses centred on concurrent events (or events producing concurrent discourses), and discourses on certain subjects based on the socio-historical, political or environmental imperatives that produce them, this research evades a couple of constraints imposed by a strictly chronological discourse analysis. These are, firstly, of plainly recording them as unconnected historical events, and secondly, of forging a relation or connection, which may or may not exist between such discourses. The objective relationship between discourses appearing within a decade of *A+D*'s publication depends on the objective

relationship between producers of those discourses and on the subjects that the discourses focus on.

Chapter 10

Event-based discourses in *A+D*

10.1: Introduction

This chapter focuses on the discourses surrounding the following events in *A+D*: The 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture, the architectural exhibitions and related events of the world-touring Festival of India project (1985-87), and the 1986 IGNCIA international design competition. Through a critical reading of discourses surrounding such events within *A+D*, we will come across at least two parallel ‘struggles’ in a dominant region, Delhi, within the field of architecture in India. While these struggles were carried out with an implicit aim to be the legitimate representatives of contemporary Indian architecture, I argue that such struggles only consolidated and reproduced with increasingly clear distinctions, the structure of the field of architecture in India, influencing parallel and future discourses on contemporary Indian architecture.

As previously discussed, the frontier that separates the field of restricted production, the magazine *A+D*, from the field of power within the larger field of architecture in India—the frontier of similarities or homologues—presents itself as the most potent site for a critical analysis. The founding of *A+D*, as we have seen, was in the anticipation (or ignorance) of the sanction of a real or

supposed (international) audience. In this situation, and for a sustained production and circulation of symbolic goods, it becomes mandatory for the producers of *A+D* to not only forge, but also maintain a relationship with agents and groups of agents occupying (or imagined to be occupying in the future) significant positions in the larger field of architectural production.¹ One such space of writing, which represented such a frontier of similarities or homologies within *A+D*, was the Editorial Board description. It is important to understand the Board's background in *A+D*, as changes within it in the first few years of *A+D*'s publication were connected to the 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture. We will see how such an event, having no direct connection with *A+D* whatsoever, nevertheless influenced its spaces of writing—specifically its editorial board.

10.2: *A+D*'s Editorial Board

Within the first decade of *A+D*'s publication, one of the consistently reproduced spaces of writing, if it may be so described, is the editorial board description. The information about the Editorial Board, occasioned because of the institution of *A+D* itself, was generally provided in the left-hand corner of the contents page. Although seemingly a very formal organizing category devised to provide editorial suggestions (as in any architectural magazine or journal), the function or contribution of the editorial board was never clearly stated in *A+D*, and remained ambiguous until it was completely dropped in the September-October 1993 issue of *A+D*. In hindsight however, the only discernible function of the editorial board seems to be that of providing signification to *A+D* for its survival in the field of restricted production—architectural journalism.

¹ The significations available within the cultural field at a given moment, in turn, are related to the specific cultural hierarchy of degrees of consecration connected with present or historical events. These associations were consistently reinforced and reproduced within the various spaces of writing in *A+D* throughout the period under consideration.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 204
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 16: 'The Editorial Board' in the first issue of A+D. Missing on the top-left corner is the photograph of architect B. V. Doshi, who was also a member. A+D, vol I, no. 1 (November-December 1984).

Consider, the “Editorial Board” illustration that appeared in the inaugural issue of *A+D* (Figure 16). The following members (in anti-clockwise direction) are shown: B. V. Doshi, Uttam C. Jain, Mahendra Raj, Mansinh M. Rana, Ranjit Sabikhi, Rosemary Sachdev and Balwant S. Saini. A brief biography of each of these architects is also provided in the same page. While showcasing agents with their brief biographies who constituted the editorial board at the time is a *normal* activity by a fledgling magazine—this action of *signification* activates, in that moment, the ensemble of homologous purposes and geographical foci inscribed in and through the positions of those thus represented. In this particular case, the ensemble of the positions of those constituting the editorial board is directly suggestive of the objective definition of the agents’ practices (in India and abroad) and of the symbolic products (architecture, lectures, articles, books, etc.) resulting from them.

The brief descriptions of those constituting the editorial board not only legitimises their belonging to the dominant group in the field of architecture but also activates a particular *habitus*, to some degree based on collective understanding, by the interested agents, of objective categories of perception and appreciation, and the geographical reach and extent of such a *habitus*:

Architect B. V. Doshi (whose picture is curiously missing in the above illustration²), associated with both Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn during the 1950s and 1960s respectively, was already a consecrated and world-renowned Ahmedabad-based doyen of contemporary Indian architecture; Uttam C. Jain—Mumbai-based upcoming architect and editor of the *Journal of Indian Institute of Architects (JIIA)* at that time—also, subject of *A+D*'s focus, as a “Modern Traditionalist” in the same inaugural issue; the renowned structural consultant, Mahendra Raj; Mansinh M. Rana—a student of Frank Lloyd Wright, who retired as the Chief Architect from the Government machinery of CPWD (also friends with Satish Grover, C. P. Kukreja and Ranjit Sabikhi); Ranjit Sabikhi—associated with the SPA, Delhi, for more than 16 years at that time and one of the first winners of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1980; Rosemary Sachdev—Melbourne University graduate settled in India after marrying architect Jasbir Sachdev—also involved in teaching with SPA at one point; and finally, Balwant S. Saini—Professor of Architecture at the University of Queensland, Australia at that time, with “long-standing interest in the problems of building and planning in the developing countries.”³

Implicitly, such a signification is also suggestive of the dominant sites of architectural discourse production in India; regions such as Delhi, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, and Mumbai; schools of architecture such as SPA at Delhi and School of Architecture at CEPT, Ahmedabad; and finally the site of *A+D itself*, which helps reproduce such associations. Once constituted thus on the same page, in a single composition, such a stance gives *A+D* the freedom and authority to quote, address, showcase, announce, and publish variously from the cultural and symbolic goods produced, or cultural and symbolic capital accumulated by those thus constituted—and use such associations either to mobilise a particular issue, or address another, dictated as per its shifting foci in the future.

² I obtained this data from the office of *A+D* in Delhi. My question as to why was Doshi's photograph cut from the only inaugural copy of *A+D* they had at their disposal was never clearly answered. However, one of the staff imagined that it must have been cut for use in some other article on/by Doshi. This still remains a curious observation nevertheless, as only Doshi and Uttam Jain in the editorial board illustration were ‘outside’ the Delhi-camp of architects and architect-educators, which dominated the editorial board composition then.

³ “The Editorial Board.” *Architecture + Design*, vol. I, no. 1 (November-December 1984): 6.

Thus, the editorial board functioned as a 'site' in which not only the importance of those constituting the board was highlighted, but also reflectively, such a stance constituted a much-needed significance to *A+D* itself. In two subsequent issues of *A+D* in 1989, (volume V, nos. 3 and 4), three notably significant individuals were added on to the editorial board. Charles Correa and Ravindra Bhan became members of *A+D*'s editorial board in the March-April issue of *A+D* (volume V, no. 3., figure 17.), and the Pakistani architect Kamil Khan Mumtaz joined the board in the May-June issue (volume V, no. 4., figure 18.).

NOTE:

This figure is included on page 206 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 17: 'News' section, *A+D*, vol V, no 3. (March-April 1989).

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 207
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 18: 'News' section, *A+D*, vol V, no. 5. (May-June 1989).

The importance that Mumbai-based Charles Correa brought to contemporary Indian architecture during the 1980s need not be restated here. His inclusion, along with the Delhi-based landscape architect and ecological planner Ravindra Bhan, was in effect replacing the position rendered vacant by three outgoing members from the board—Uttam C. Jain, Mansinh M. Rana and Rosemary Sachdev. At the time Ravindra Bhan was involved in the preparation of the Human Settlements Perspective Plan for India's Union Territories, the Andamans, Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands. One of the many development schemes structured under urban, human settlements, environment, heritage and conservation issues of the Rajiv Gandhi government since the mid-1980s, this particular scheme of preserving the island environment of the Union Territories was constituted under the Island Development Programme. With the aim of devising “an appropriate style of architecture” for the islands, the project involved mainly Delhi-based architects and planners such as Ram Sharma, Romi Khosla, A G Krishna Menon and

Ravindra Bhan.⁴ Bhan was also involved in the conservation and planning of the Ayodhya Ghats, and in Shakti Sthal, a memorial dedicated to the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

While the inclusion of Correa and Bhan into the editorial board can be understood and justified thus, it is curious to note the inclusion of the Lahore-based architect Kamil Khan Mumtaz in the editorial board of an Indian architectural magazine. As mentioned above, although completely unrelated to the Aga Khan Award for Architecture that had significantly influenced world architecture since the late-1970s, we will see how the discourses surrounding the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in *A+D*, apart from creating significations and partial alliances across various spaces of writing in *A+D*, also influenced the inclusion of the Pakistani architect Kamil Khan Mumtaz.

10.3: The Aga Khan Award for Architecture and *A+D*'s editorial board

Set up in 1977, the aim of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture was not only to promote architectural excellence by encouraging building rooted in cultural and psychological aspirations of Islamic regions around the world, but also to broaden awareness of the vitality of diverse cultures in the Islamic world. Architecture that used local resources and appropriate technology in innovative ways was considered for the reward—the only two governing criteria being that the project must have been completed within the past twentyfive years,⁵ and be located in the Islamic world or intended for use primarily by Muslims. Although the latter part of the criteria was debatable (and was indeed questioned in the pages of *A+D* itself⁶), the institution of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture brought together, with the active involvement of His Highness

⁴ “News & Letters.” *Architecture + Design*, vol. II, no. 5 (July-August 1986): 11.

⁵ This criterion underwent some modifications later. According to a 2001 monograph by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture all the considered projects must have been completed and in use for a minimum period of one year and a maximum period of twelve years. Kenneth Frampton, Charles Correa, and David Robson. *Modernity and Community: Architecture in the Islamic World*. London, Geneva: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., and The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 2001. 6.

⁶ See ‘Comment’ on the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in *Architecture + Design*, vol. VII, no. 1 (January-February 1990). 74-76.

The Aga Khan, experts from different parts of the world that had any representation of Islamic culture in or through them.⁷ For instance the 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture's nine-member Master Jury—also presented as a news item in *A+D*⁸—included the following: Professor Mahdi Elmandjra (Morocco), economist and member of the Club of Rome and Professor of International Affairs at Rabat University; Abdel Wahed El-Wakil (Egypt), noted architect; Hans Hollein (Austria), architect and Professor at the Academy of Applied Arts and head of the Institute of Design in Vienna; Zahir ud Deen Khwaja (Pakistan), architect and planner and former director of planning in the Capital Development Authority, Islamabad; Ronald Lewcock (Australia), architect and Professor of Design in Islamic Cultures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Fumihiko Maki, noted Japanese architect and professor at the University of Tokyo; Doruk Pamir (Turkey), architect and teacher; H Soedjatmoko (Indonesia), rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo, and Robert Venturi, the influential American theoretician, architect and planner.

As part of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture initiative, a Regional Seminar on Architecture was held at Dhaka in December 1985. Sponsored by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, the main objective of the seminar was to form a

⁷ The Aga Khan Award for Architecture featured three times comprehensively (in the “awards” section) in the first decade of *A+D*'s publication, primarily because these awards are given at the interval of three years. The 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture was covered in vol. III, no. 3 (March-April 1987) issue of *A+D*, the 1989 event in vol. VIII, no. 1 (January-February 1990) issue, and the 1992 event in *A+D*'s vol. IX, no. 6 (November-December) issue. The 1986 and 1989 events were featured along with excerpts from the report of the Master Jury connected with each event. The 1992 Aga Khan Award for Architecture event, in comparison, did not receive the same degree of attention despite *A+D*'s recognition that “the general character of the 1992 awards indicates a definite change from the last cycle.” (“Awards” section. *Architecture + Design*, vol. IX, no. 6., (November-December) 1992. 130.). The ‘change’ in the ‘general character’ was the Award's recognition of efforts by architects in the developing world in finding solutions to practical problems in such regions, in contrast to its clear intention previously of rewarding contemporary architectural explorations, either undertaken for Islamic communities across the developing world, or in strictly Islamic regions. *A+D*'s relatively frugal coverage of the 1992 Aga Khan Award for Architecture event is all the more interesting considering the facts that the Ahmedabad-based Indian architect, Bimal Patel, was one of the recipients of the prestigious award, and B. V. Doshi—one of the ‘doyens’ of contemporary Indian architecture—was one of its jury members. The other jury members included Frank Gehry (architect, USA), Renata Holod (Professor of Art History, University of Pennsylvania, USA), Fumihiko Maki (architect, Japan), Adhi Moershid (architect, Indonesia), Azim Nanji (Professor of Religions, University of Florida, USA), Ali Shuaibi (architect, Saudi Arabia), Dogan Tekeli (architect, Turkey), and Said Zulficar (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Paris).

⁸ “News” *Architecture + Design*, vol. II, no. 4 (May-June 1986): 18.

declaration for developing a regional architecture in the South Asian region. The convening committee of this seminar comprised of six architects—Zahir-ud Deen Khwaja and Kamil Khan Mumtaz (Pakistan), Locana Gunaratna (Sri Lanka), Uttam C. Jain (president of the Indian Institute of Architects at the time, and also a member of *A+D*'s editorial board) and Romi Khosla (India), and Shah Alam Zahiruddin (Bangladesh). The group met at Fatehpur Sikri on 22 and 23 March 1986 to draw a declaration that was aimed to promote a culturally relevant contemporary architectural practice in the South Asian region—very much in line with the larger initiative of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (figure 19.).

NOTE:

This figure is included on page 210 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 19: The group at Fatehpur Sikri. From left to right: Uttam Jain (president of the Indian Institute of Architects, and a member of *A+D*'s editorial board at the time), Romi Khosla, Kamil Khan Mumtaz, Shah Alam Zahiruddin, Zahir-ud Deen Khwaja and Locana Gunaratna. 'News' section, *A+D*, vol II, no. 4 (May-June 1986). p. 18.

This coming together of architects held as representatives of the profession in their respective regions, was in the single institution of, and belief in an idea—development of contemporary architecture in the South Asian region. It can be seen as an act that served the larger debate (or *doxa*) about the relevance of Modernism in Third World (South Asian) regions, and architectural identity of

such regions. It also served the symbolic enterprise of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, captured quite suggestively in the above photograph in *A+D* (figure 19.). In fact, while the Aga Khan Award for Architecture was the primary event, auxiliary events connected directly or indirectly with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, such as the Regional Seminar in Dhaka, forged specific partial alliances and served not only the regional discourse media, but also interested agents within such regions. For instance the Regional Seminar in Dhaka, including the above photograph, was covered comprehensively in the news section of *A+D*.

Furthermore, in and through such partial alliances, the symbolic power thus granted to such individuals translated easily into symbolic and cultural capital *for* the individuals—who were already endowed with a certain symbolic, cultural and economic capital to be included in such partial alliances in the first place. The Lahore-based Kamil Khan Mumtaz was trained at the Architectural Association, London in the 1960s. Similar to the decision taken by many Indian architects who had returned to India after their studies abroad, Mumtaz had returned to Pakistan to commence his own architectural practice, and to teach. Between 1966 and 1975, Mumtaz headed the National College of Arts in Lahore—the former Mayo College that had been directed in the late-19th century by John Lockwood Kipling, the father of the famous author, Rudyard Kipling, and one of the key advocates in British India of the anti-modernist ideals associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement in the U.K. As well as lecturing widely in Europe and Asia, Mumtaz was also part of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture’s Steering Committee from 1981-83. In 1985, his *Architecture in Pakistan*, was published by Mimar Books—an extensive 5-page review of which was carried out in a 1986 issue of *A+D*.⁹ Mumtaz was also the president of a Lahore-based non-profit society called ‘Anjuman Mimiran,’ formed in 1989 to promote research and study of building traditions and practices in Pakistan. The society held annual seminars in which intellectuals from various fields including architecture, and regions, such as India, Bangladesh, Iran, Turkey and Central Asia (Uzbekistan, USSR), were

⁹ Mira Seth. “Architecture in Pakistan.” *Architecture + Design* II, no. 1 (November-December 1986): 83, 85, 87, 88, 90.

brought together with an aim to raise the standards of architectural design and building construction in those regions. Thus, with professional development and interests comparable to most foreign-returned Indian architects of the time such as Charles Correa, Kamil Khan Mumtaz can be placed in league with Third World architects or ‘activists’—who were considered as pioneers in negotiating, through both practice and teaching, the then perceived and prevalent local/global or traditional/modern predicament of architectural identity in their regions.

Kamil Khan Mumtaz’s inclusion in *A+D*’s editorial board in 1989 also followed a significant historical decision between India and Pakistan. Since independence in 1947, the political efforts by both India and Pakistan to secure peace in the contested region of Kashmir had (and still have) failed to make any major breakthroughs, despite occasional promising developments. Primarily aimed to avoid any major military confrontation between the two countries—especially after the 1972 war—leaders of the two countries, Indira Gandhi and General Zia ul-Haq initiated strategic diplomatic measures in the early 1980s. These were further reinforced in the late-1980s by the changed leadership of India and Pakistan, Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto respectively. In December 1988, India and Pakistan signed three bilateral agreements: (a) Prohibition of attack on each other’s nuclear installations and facilities, (b) Cultural cooperation, and (c) Avoidance of double taxation on incomes derived from international civil aviation transactions between the two countries. Seen in this light also, although not connected directly to the political determinations of the two countries, it is then not surprising to understand *A+D*’s (opportunistic) inclusion of Mumtaz into its editorial board. Thus in culturally cooperative exchanges as above, politically determined and maintained boundary conditions that reflected continuing tensions between India and Pakistan during the time, are masked or misrecognised. The overarching issue of architecture in the Third World regions coping with the hegemonic modernist tendencies, served further also by the ambitious project of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, only helped in sustaining such misrecognition for interested agents and agencies.

As we have noted, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (along with events connected directly or indirectly with it such as the Regional Seminar at Dhaka), was a prominent institution, especially in the early- and mid-1980s, that not only created significations and partial alliances by its own agency but also allowed architectural magazines such as *A+D* to reproduce them within its pages. However, within the first decade of *A+D*'s publication, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture was only one amongst several other events that gave opportune moments for *A+D* to take positions, and also to reproduce significations within the field of architecture in India. The other two prominent events, the 'Festival of India' exhibitions and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) international design competition, and discourses surrounding them form the focus of the next two sections. In conjunction with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, such events from the mid-1980s to late-1980s, I argue, consolidated a *habitus* of like-minded ideas and agents within the field of architecture in India, that cut across national boundaries, and connected institutions and various interested agents and agencies in varying acts of *doxic* adherence.

10.4: The 'Festival of India,' in *A+D*

The 'Festival of India' was part of a larger political and strategic initiative aimed both at presenting a rich image of India to the world, and at reconsolidating the instability of the Congress party, especially in the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination. Pupul Jayakar, the Chairman of the Festival of India's Indian committee described the event as floating "oil lamps in tiny boats on a river, for an instant to illuminate the ripples on the water and the rapt faces of those who participate in the launching; to awaken sound, colour, mood, flavour, laughter; to set before the mirror of attention times past and times present..."¹⁰ Touted as the most ambitious and aggressive diplomatic initiative undertaken by any Third World country up to that time, and largely funded and produced by non-government institutions and business

¹⁰ Inderjit Badhwar (in Washington), Madhu Trehan (in New York), and Sunil Sethi (in New Delhi). "Passage to the West." *India Today* June 15 1985. 46.

houses,¹¹ the Festival of India project had been in gestation since Indira Gandhi's visit to the USA in 1982. Subsequently, in 1984 a Festival of India Directorate was set up, with its own under-secretary, director and director-general, and also involving prominent policy makers from the cultural and tourism industries. It was granted independent offices in New Delhi's Vigyan Bhavan. The festival committee in India included successful businessmen such as Aditya Birla and Sanjay Dalmia, and also prominent individuals from the cultural field such as the filmmaker Girish Karnad and architect Charles Correa, in addition to the 'high priestess of culture,' Pupul Jayakar.

Cashing in on the recent successes of British and American films with Indian themes such as *Gandhi*, *Heat and Dust* and *A Passage to India*, the immediate concrete benefits from the Festival of India project were perceived in the areas of tourism, books, movies, investment and trade. Niranjana Desai, India's Washington based minister counsellor for culture, and the festival's chief impresario in the USA, asserted, "These [the above mentioned benefits] are the things we want but cannot get till we alter our image. We are still trapped in the *Heat and Dust* and *Indiana Jones* syndrome. We have to show that India is not only exotic but contemporaneously exotic as well as modern and competent."¹² Desai's views only echoed festival Chairman, Pupul Jayakar's conviction, "[The festival] will be a demonstration of our ancient culture exploding with contemporary advancements in science and technology."¹³ The 18-month long touring festival (from May 1985 to September 1986) not only included exhibitions of India's cultural aspects such as food, music and clothing, but also heritage and craft aspects such as sculptures and miniature paintings. A festival of Indian cinema and a festival of science showcased contemporary culture and progress in India. This first Festival of India exhibition resulted in the catalogue *Architecture in India*, published by Electa

¹¹ *India Today* reported, "Indian industrialists have also enjoined the donation effort: the Tatas, Birlas, Mahindras, Mallya of United Breweries and Hindustan Lever have been permitted by the Government to remit up to Rs 50 lakh each in foreign exchange to fund the massive show..." Ibid., 53.

¹² Ibid., 47.

¹³ Ibid., 57.

Moniteur.¹⁴ Similarly in 1987, a second Festival of India exhibition called ‘Vistāra – The Architecture of India,’ was held in the erstwhile USSR. Conceptualised by the Mumbai-based architect Charles Correa, this exhibition also resulted in the publication of a catalogue. Indeed, the cultural significance of the festival and the symbolic and cultural values the agents and agencies involved in it created for themselves, and for each other, could not have been forged any better by the Festival of India project.

Producing a series of discourses on Indian themes, the festival’s impact on the American print media, from the *New York Post* to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, from *Vanity Fair* to the *Washington Post*, was unprecedented, inspiring *USA Today* to proclaim 1985 as “unquestionably the year of India.”¹⁵ Indeed, in such a situation, it was only prudent on the part of *A+D* to include, within its spaces of writing, aspects of the festival that connected with the field of architecture in India. Two such events, the Indian *mela* project in France, and the Golden Eye exhibition in the USA—both held under the aegis of the Festival of India project—were represented in *A+D* either as recollections of agents involved in the projects, or as reports and interviews conducted on certain key issues and agents involved in the projects.

10.4.1 The Indian *Mela* project

While the Festival of India was being held in the USA, it was simultaneously being held in France—in fact Rajiv Gandhi, the prime minister of India at the time, visited Paris in June 1985 to inaugurate the festival from the base of the Eiffel Tower before leaving for the USA.¹⁶ Delhi-based architects Raj Rewal and Ram Sharma, in active involvement with the Delhi School of Planning and

¹⁴ Catalogue. *Architecture in India: A Festival of India Publication*, Paris: Electa Moniteur, 1985.

¹⁵ Badhwar, et al. “Passage to the West,” 49.

¹⁶ The only difference between the Festivals of India in the USA and in France was that unlike the festival in USA, which was largely funded and produced by interested business houses and institutions, the festival in France was a government-to-government effort with a pronounced emphasis on the performing arts. Further, Indira Gandhi and the French president Francois Mitterand initiated the concept of the Festival of India in France; it however took effect after Indira Gandhi was assassinated, and Rajiv Gandhi made the new prime minister of India.

Architecture (SPA), helped curate the French Festival of India Exhibition. For the inauguration ceremony, the kilometre-and-a-half stretch between the Eiffel Tower and the Palais de Chaillot, known as the Trocadero, was transformed into a site for an Indian *mela* (literally, a fairground in Hindi). The project of the *mela*, which had begun in earnest in August 1984, was also conceived to serve the Socialist inclination of France at the time that wished a people-oriented inaugural event for the Festival of India rather than an elitist congregation. The Ahmedabad-based designer Dashrath Patel was designated as the in-charge of the project; its technical directorship was handed to the Delhi-based architect and architect-educator A. G. Krishna Menon.¹⁷ Menon's critical recollection of the *mela* as an experiment in exhibition architecture was published in *A+D* four months after the *mela* was staged in Paris.¹⁸ Using "common, minimal and impermanent" construction materials such as textile, pith, bamboo and jute, the overall expression of the *mela* was "intended to be disciplined and unselfconscious."¹⁹ The inaugural *mela* lasted for two days and two nights of the 7th and 8th June 1985, creating an 'alchemy' of sensory experiences—from India's culinary aspects to music and dance, where as Menon recollected four months later, the boundary between the participating spectators and intermingling performers was often blurred.²⁰

Menon's article, while uncovering the planning processes and agencies involved for the Indian *mela* in Paris, reads as a defensive statement provided just in time before any negative criticism of the project could appear in print. The very choice of the subtitle, "An experiment in exhibition architecture," while posing as an innocent or a disinterested text ('*an* experiment') aiming to serve the interested student of (Indian) architecture or a building-type study (exhibition architecture), is simultaneously a self-conscious polemic directed against those who could potentially challenge either Menon, his association with Dashrath Patel, or the notion of the transient *mela* that represented India in a western world. At the time of writing the article, Menon was architect-

¹⁷ Earlier in this study, we have encountered Menon's critical writings about the notion of contemporary Indian architecture and issues of marginalisation that such a notion generated.

¹⁸ A. G. K. Menon "An Indian Mela in Paris." *Architecture + Design* (November-December 1985): 82-7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

planner and the managing partner of the Chennai based architectural firm Pithavadian and Partners. He was also a visiting faculty in the Department of Urban Design in Delhi's School of Planning and Architecture. He was simultaneously involved with INTACH on preparing a number of studies on urban conservation. Since 1990, Menon has been involved with a new school of architecture in Delhi, called the TVB School of Habitat Studies (of which he has been the director since 1995). Notions of simplicity, cost-efficiency, and teamwork (participation), and reflections on the legitimacy and success of the mela, professional ethics and professional commitment are often used in the article intermittently to either add to the knowledge about the mela or exhibition architecture, or as a defensive stand. Consider the following three extracts from the article;

Perhaps each one of us can recall in our professional lives the unsought necessity that demands our fullest commitment, which then compels us to do the job as well as possible. The means become an end in themselves. While each of us in the group had second thoughts about the *mela*, once we agreed to associate ourselves with it, we felt that costs should be kept to a minimum.

But the twain [the Indian and the French construction teams] did meet and one of the satisfying proofs of this was the comment of the head of the French construction crew who admitted at the end of it all...that we had taught him that the purpose of work was primarily a creative experience rather than mechanical execution. And we in turn experienced the satisfaction of being involved in a cultural situation where almost nothing was left to chance and one planned and executed one's objective—human or material—as programmed, and they meshed together as expected.

Whether it was teamwork or the truly interdisciplinary approach—in the quest to find meaning in an exercise we initially questioned—and whose broader concepts we still debate—we nevertheless learnt many lessons which had their reward in the final success of the *mela*.²¹

The Ahmedabad-based designer Dashrath Patel, who was entrusted with the project of The Indian mela, had assembled a multidisciplinary group in which

²¹ Menon. "An Indian *Mela* in Paris."

Menon functioned as a technical director involving structural and space planning. Patel—a painter, photographer, ceramicist and exhibition designer—was associated with the National Institute of Design at Ahmedabad since its inception in 1962, and was awarded the prestigious Padma Shri award by the Indian government in 1981. Also deeply committed to working with craftsmen, Patel had worked with Menon on several projects before the Indian *mela*, such as The Theme Pavilion for Agri Expo of 1977 and the Vishwakarma Textile exhibition, both held in New Delhi. For Menon, the veritable position of himself and his alliance with Patel—specifically with respect to exhibition architecture and planning, and generally with respect to the authority of representing *Indianness*—was worth defending, especially in the context of a contemporaneous exhibition of Indian life being held in the USA.

Undertaken single-handedly, yet again as part of the parallel Festival of India initiative in the USA by a more popular designer, Rajeev Sethi, ‘Aditi: a celebration of life,’ was held at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington. It was the precursor of Sethi’s more controversial and heavily funded project conceptualised for the festival in the USA, ‘The Golden Eye.’ An unconventional exhibition that showcased Indian life cycle, ‘Aditi’ coincided with the Smithsonian’s Folk Life Festival. Effectively, both the exhibition and the Folk Life Festival tried to recreate and convey several popular Indian melas, selectively representing thus India’s folk cultures (figures 20 and 21). Sethi’s cultural entourage represented vignettes of Indian folk or village life and consisted of acrobats, monkey-men, balladeers, toymakers and drumbeaters.²²

²² All these performers underwent orientation programme at New Delhi’s Ashok Hotel before the real exhibition. Part of their orientation included meticulous noting-down of their eating habits, introduction to the American currency and the American Constitution, as well as for the Indian producers, coordination with their colleagues in America on the necessity of providing Indian-style lavatories for the performers!

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 219
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 20: Rajasthani puppets (Aditi exhibition). From *India Today*, June 15, 1985. p. 53.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 219
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 21: Itinerant acrobats of Rajeev Sethi. From *India Today*, June 15, 1985. p. 55.

Controversial from the start, the conceptual framework of Sethi's 'Aditi' project was not very different from his more controversial, the 'Golden Eye' project. Therefore, 'Aditi' must also be seen in the light of Sethi's 'Golden Eye' project that became the object of debates in wider circles of India's cultural intelligentsia.

10.4.2 'The Golden Eye' project

Also a part of the Festival of India in America, the Golden Eye project was a joint venture between the Cooper Hewitt Museum, New York (a branch of the Smithsonian Museum) and the Handicrafts and Handlooms Exports Corporation of India Ltd. Undertaken by Rajeev Sethi as an attempt to revitalise certain crafts tradition of India that were perceived to be dying, two hundred and sixty five Indian craftsmen worked under eleven international designers, combining the skills of the traditional craftsmen with modern designs by the international designers. The intention was to produce modern consumer items for daily usage. The eleven international architects and designers chosen for the project included the president of Britain's Royal Academy of Art Sir Hugh Casson, Italian designer Mario Bellini, German architect Frei Otto, Jack Lenor Larsen, architect and designer Bernard Rudofsky, American fashion designer Mary McFadden, architect Charles Moore, Italian industrial designer and founder of the design group 'Memphis' Ettore Sotsass, Hans Hollein, graphic designers Ivan Chermayeff and Milton Glaser. These architects and designers were invited to visit India and use traditional materials and skills to create their own designs. A range of symbolic goods presenting a collage of traditional Indian crafts and their techniques was produced thus—from Ettore Sotsass' dining room complete with flooring and chandelier reflecting Indian themes, to Mario Bellini's cane gazebo, marble couches and a sandstone bench; from Charles Moore's Benares-inspired wooden desk which opened to reveal an imaginary city on a river, to Bernard Rudofsky's witty and practical designs for shoes and designs for wooden

tables inlaid with brass and traditional Warli folk paintings.²³ With an eye clearly on the commercial market, Sethi's idea was to transform Indian craft from insignificantly perceived or valued curios to beautifully designed consumer goods with a brand value. Sethi asserted,

'Made in India' need not mean shoddiness or exploitation. We can remove this stigma by using designers and raising the quality of the merchandise...Five years from now, this part of the world will have very little industry other than micro-processors and the building industry of interiors will be on its last legs. When that takes a turn, India can meet the designers' before China, Korea, Japan or Italy.²⁴

The Golden Eye project raised several issues amongst Indian designers; from the viability of inviting western designers to recreate orientalist notions about India, to the notion of long-term financial benefits for Indian crafts and craftsmen, if any, resulting from the heavily invested project. For instance, the architect, sculptor, muralist and painter Satish Gujral exclaimed, "It is nothing but an extension of colonial slavery. To start with, a foreign designer cannot be expected to collect more than superficial impressions about a traditional craft in a few days. Moreover, it's sacrilege to transpose the medium of traditional crafts." The painter M. F. Husain found the entire enterprise of Pupul Jayakar, and hence the Festival of India questionable, "[Jayakar] only thinks anything which is 5,000 years old is art," while another distinguished painter Krishen Khanna offered, "There's nothing wrong per se in wanting to show your culture abroad...but it's how we do it that matters. You simply cannot have an indigestible inundation of India. There is such a thing as a surfeit of culture."²⁵

Stirring up controversy and being associated with architects and designers of world repute serving the larger initiative of the Festival of India, the Golden Eye project became the object of interest and debate in *A+D* as well. An extensive 13-page report on the Golden Eye, including an interview with

²³ For a complete range of the symbolic products resulting from the Golden Eye project, see "Golden Eye." *Architecture + Design* II, no. 4 (May-June 1986): 37-48.

²⁴ Madhu Trehan. "Festival of India: The Golden Eye." *India Today* December 15, 1985. 97.

²⁵ Badhwar, et al. "Passage to the West," *India Today* June 15 1985. 55, 57.

Rajeev Sethi, followed by a critical reflection on the project by freelance designer Laila Tyabji, were carried out in *A+D*'s May-June 1986 issue.²⁶ Issues such as the 'negation of a cultural tradition,' in the ambitious 'cross-cultural exchange' involving internationally famous architects and designers, were raised in the interview with Sethi. Tyabji had worked on the exhibition display, graphics and costume design of the Golden Eye; her critical reflection, as an insider, while raising similar issues, concluded thus,

In the meantime, Golden Eye is a jog to jaded perceptions and sensibilities; a small, necessary, even if somewhat expensive reminder that beauty and the skill of human hands is frontierless, intangible, ever capable of extension—and the craftsmen working on it seem to have found it a joyous experience too.²⁷

The report on the Golden Eye project was published in an issue after *A+D* had published Menon's previously mentioned article on the Indian mela. Four or five months since the project of the Festival of India had simultaneously begun in the USA and in France, it was timely indeed for Menon to consolidate his position as an active member of the project, as well as distance himself and his associate Dashrath Patel, specifically from the contemporaneous exhibitions Aditi and the Golden Eye by Rajeev Sethi. In several parts of Menon's article, there are pointed remarks that indicate the conceptual difference between Menon and Patel's, and Sethi's representation of India in the Western world. Articulated as a polemic of representation, and implicitly directed also as a critique of the projects of Sethi, Menon asks, "What is a *mela* in India and what could constitute an Indian *mela* in Paris?" Menon sought to provide the following answers,

...there is no singular experience of an Indian mela...What emerged was the possibility of identifying the common constituent elements of a mela and reordering or 'choreographing' an event, a happening as it were, in Paris...Prominent among these considerations was the need to avoid the

²⁶ "Golden Eye" *Architecture + Design* (May-June 1986), and Laila Tyabji. "Reflections on Golden Eye." *Architecture + Design* II, no. 4 (May-June 1986): 49-50.

²⁷ "Golden Eye." *Architecture + Design* (May-June 1986), and Tyabji. "Reflections on Golden Eye," 50.

‘performing monkey’ syndrome, whereby the exotic Orient is expected to, and willingly ‘entertains’ the Occident in numerous cultural exchange programmes...A number of dances were of a participatory nature, such as the Garbha dance of Gujarat, and with the mingling of the other performers with the audience the distinction between the two was often blurred. Ultimately, there were no ‘performing monkeys’!²⁸

A year later in *A+D*’s January-February issue (when the Festival of India had officially ended in the USA and in France), Menon further provides, in three paradigms, a “critical appraisal of the ideologies” behind the revival of crafts issue generated during the Festival of India initiative.²⁹ In hindsight, the article is really a critique of Sethi’s Golden Eye project, and a theoretically advanced argument justifying, indirectly, Menon and Patel’s position with respect to the larger project of crafts revival, as occasioned by both the Indian mela and the Golden Eye projects a year and a half earlier. The ‘three schools of thought,’ Menon posits, developed essentially from Nehruvian socialist concerns with respect to the crafts tradition of India: from a capitalist model of development where a craft would be developed if it generated high per capita income; to a focus on design development through technocratic scientific design, following a ‘value-free rationality’ with the future of the craft in mind and finally; to an integrated approach, combining the best of both the previous paradigms, “generally developed in response to the exigencies of existing circumstances, having a socialist bias,” as Menon clarified.³⁰ The third paradigm, for Menon, “begins to explicate an indigenous web of realities of both problems and solutions, unexplored and thoughtlessly ignored by designers.”³¹ What follows is a calculated series of moves by which Menon both criticises the Golden Eye project and categorises it into the first capitalist paradigm of post-independence craft revival development:

²⁸ Menon. “An Indian *Mela* in Paris.” 82, 87.

²⁹ A. G. K. Menon. “Design, Designers and Revival of Crafts: Three Paradigms.” *Architecture + Design* III, no. 3 (January-February 1987): 77, 79, 83, 85.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

But it must be understood that primarily income-generating, export-oriented projects like Golden Eye are ultimately exploitative of the poverty and vulnerability of the crafts people, and have invariably resulted in their progressive dehumanization and brutalization...[The few represented industries] only reflect an epicene, elitist expiation of guilt for parasitical involvement in one's culture and people.³²

Through the second and third examples, Menon firmly posits Dashrath Patel as an enlightened contemporary designer (as opposed to the 'capitalist,' Rajeev Sethi) trying to articulate the better of both the first and the second paradigms in his concern for the revival of traditional craft of India. Indirectly, and being associated with Patel in several exhibition projects, Menon positions himself alongside Patel in a "humane understanding of the complex realities of the crafts situation" in India.³³

Collectively, through both the articles appearing in the same site of discourse *A+D*, albeit separated by a year, Menon sought to drive a singular objective—the right to legitimacy in the representation of things 'Indian.' While *A+D* presented itself as a site where Menon's critical review of the mela, and his latter article could be published, *A+D* was also an active site of discourse operating from Delhi—the hub of activities connected with the Festival of India and the site where the Indian committee of the festival itself was based. Therefore, the larger debates regarding what could be represented as an 'authentic' Indian culture and who could best represent it thus, between architects or designers, or through particular alliances between various institutions and groups—agents and agencies involved actively in the project of the Festival of India—were subtly played out within the various spaces of writing in *A+D*. Menon's articles as represented in *A+D*, are a potent indicator of such a process, which for a lay-reader, are not explicitly visible in or, arguably, even followed *by* *A+D*. Yet, the very fact that the articles were published in *A+D*, transforms *A+D* into an active site of discourse that reproduces—at a point in time—not only debates about authentic Indianness in

³² Ibid., 79.

³³ Ibid.

culture and/or architecture of India, but also those, who hold themselves and like-minded individuals, to be worthy of taking part in such debates. In this respect, *A+D*'s struggle for the right to be a legitimate representative of 'Indian' architecture is allied with not only Menon's specific objective, but is also homologous to the larger initiatives or interests of the Festival of India, and its high-profile agents such as Jayakar and Correa. Thus the struggle in the field of culture—that, as we have seen, readily dispersed into the specific fields of cultural production such as crafts revitalisation and architecture—to gain authority or legitimacy with regards to the question of identity conservation and reproduction, is unwittingly reproduced within the spaces of writing in *A+D*.

In the Festival of India initiative, we can identify two sets of producers of symbolic goods. Firstly, the heteronomous or large-scale producers of symbolic goods, such as Pupul Jayakar and the coterie of high-profile agents involved directly or indirectly with the Festival of India, such as Charles Correa, filmmaker Girish Karnad, industrialists Aditya Birla and Sanjay Dalmia, and the ensemble of eleven world-famous architects and designers engaged with Sethi's Golden Eye project. Secondly, the autonomous or restricted producers of symbolic goods such as the architect/critic Menon, designers Patel and Sethi, and the artists Satish Gujral and M. F. Husain; and the site of discourse where all such associations come together, *A+D* itself.

Being a site of discourse in a field of restricted production—architectural journalism, such a process of reproduction is really a relationship maintained by both the producers—restricted (autonomous) and large-scale (heteronomous)—of symbolic goods. This process of reproduction is necessarily stretched across the various spaces of writing in, and across the many issues of *A+D*. Further, as previously discussed, the homology between the two principles (autonomous and heteronomous) of production, sometimes temporarily suspends the differences between the dominant and the dominated, or notions such as the West and the East, producing variously, partial alliances and misrecognitions. While reporting on the event itself along with a critical review is reflectively according importance to the event, and to its own agency

in the process, the forging of further significations and silent alliances inherent in the struggle for recognition and legitimacy needs to be observed in the extended and often unconscious processes followed by *A+D* through its various spaces of writing.

In many instances in *A+D*—specifically in its silent spaces of writing such as letter and news sections—such homologies play out reflecting both, the positions and the correlative position-takings of agents in the field of architectural production, and positions of interested readers in the space of consumption. In the letter section of the November-December 1986 issue of *A+D*, a letter from a Kuwait-based architect Ghazi Sultan regarding his view of the Golden Eye was published. The letter, while critiquing the ideological foundation of a project such as the Golden Eye (conceived by a ‘Third World’ designer), also suggested that Golden Eye should have published a reference book on the crafts of India along with an exhibition catalogue. Siding himself with the Third World issues made famous in the field of architecture by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture during the time, Sultan commented,

As an outsider, I can’t help feeling that quite often we, in the Third World, dig our own graves by not quite early establishing the framework for our efforts’ success... Besides the flashy and famous, it would have been to India’s advantage to promote the talents of some of its own distinguished designers, as also to promote the goods where the markets are, by inviting a few architects/designers from those areas... That, unfortunately, was not done.³⁴

A seemingly regular subscriber to *A+D* in Kuwait, Sultan was an avid follower of the contemporary architectural scene in India as represented through *A+D*. As early as in the May-June 1986 issue of *A+D*, *A+D* had published a letter of commendation from Sultan,

Thank you very much for the book by Charles Correa *New Landscape*. I can’t but agree that this is what the Third World should do—and I hope it does. Its practical commonsense approach is refreshing and to the point.

³⁴ “Letters’ Section,” *Architecture + Design*, vol. III, no. 1 (November-December 1986): 11.

Your *A+D* has improved immensely. Can't congratulate you enough on the direction the magazine has taken. Keep up the good work.

I would suggest that you seriously consider including in the magazine: (a) a section on Indian art and its relevance to architecture, (b) a section on vernacular architecture of India, (c) publish some of the outstanding projects built in the West.

Otherwise, I think you are getting THERE!³⁵

It may be mentioned here that the decision to include or not a letter for publication rests solely with the producers of *A+D*. What may be capable of publicising the extent of *A+D*'s influence—the expansion of readership—would doubtlessly be considered for publication. An expansion of the space of influences and endorsements—the metaphoric transcendence of both ideological and geographical boundaries and differences—not only helps in reaffirming the *illusio*³⁶ of the producers of *A+D*, but also helps in advertising its own legitimacy in the field of architectural journalism in India. The inclusion of this letter from Kuwait represents such a case. Ghazi Sultan commends *A+D* for having introduced Charles Correa's *The New Landscape* to the readers and notes that Correa's book is refreshing in its 'commonsense approach' to solve housing and urban problems of the Third World regions. Sultan goes on to commend *A+D*'s progress, and closes his letter with a few suggestions.

Implicit also in this letter is a pointer to the extent of influence and interest generated by *A+D*'s coverage of specific materials—in this case, the review of Charles Correa's book *The New Landscape*. While publishing letters of commendation is a common activity in any magazine, and is an explicit act of self-signification, a greater impact is achieved when another letter is published by the same reader several issues later in the magazine. In this particular case, firstly, the interested reader's location—Kuwait—reinforces *A+D*'s outreach

³⁵ "Letters' Section," *Architecture + Design*, vol. II, no. 4 (May June 1986): 17.

³⁶ In the game analogy employed by Bourdieu to explain the functioning of a field of cultural production, the term *illusio* denotes the interests, investments and libido that agents bring to a game (field) when entering into it voluntarily.

in terms of readership. Secondly, the publishing of another letter by Sultan regarding his ‘outsider’ viewpoint about the Golden Eye project, not only increases *A+D*’s subscription value while positioning Sultan as a devoted reader, but also gives currency to issues such as Third World architectural identity and the interests or debates it generates across a wider audience. Indeed, following Sultan’s first letter, in the next page itself (in its news section) *A+D* reports about the announcement of the Master Jury for the 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture in Geneva, Switzerland. This is the same page in which the previously discussed photograph (figure 4. in the previous section), of the meeting at Fatehpur Sikri, of the convening committee for the 2nd Regional Seminar for Architecture also appears.

While exhibitions are cultural events not necessarily specific to architecture alone, an event concerned with architecture—the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) architectural competition, produced a set of similar significations and partial alliances, often overlapping with respect to their effects, within the various spaces of writing in *A+D* during the same period. In this international competition, notions of “continuity with tradition,” along with “modern attitudes to form and space” were some of the main judging criteria by a jury composed of highly influential and international architects.

10.5: The IGNCA competition in A+D

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 229
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 22: Cover, *A+D*, Vol III, no. 2, January-February 1987.

First announced as a news feature³⁷ in *A+D*'s January-February 1986 issue, the IGNCA international design competition was covered extensively a year later.³⁸ The January-February 1987 issue of *A+D* has on its cover the monochrome model of the winning scheme by the American architect, Ralph Lerner. Provided on the cover are also the names of the rest of the winners of the competition (figure 22.), which are also featured with the drawings and models of their design schemes inside the issue. Conceptualised in the memory of Indira Gandhi, the IGNCA was visualised as a centre “encompassing all art, specially in their dimension of mutual interdependence, interrelationship with nature, function, daily life, societal structures, world view and cosmology.”³⁹ The IGNCA competition was announced and inaugurated on Indira Gandhi's

³⁷ The news section of this issue announced a call for entries for a forthcoming international design competition “to select a suitable design for the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts.” The news also carried information regarding the seven-man jury for the judgment of the design entries along with details of important dates and the prize money to be won. “News” section, *Architecture + Design*, Vol II, no. 2 (January-February 1986). p. 9.

³⁸ “Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts.” *Architecture + Design* III, no. 2 (January-February 1987): 15-39.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

birthday, 19 November 1985. The symbolic value accorded to the event was further increased using ritualised gestures involving the usual romance of India's antiquity and spiritual ideals. This was also reproduced faithfully by *A+D*,

The elements — fire, water, earth, sky and vegetation — were brought together. Five rocks from five major rivers...were composed into sculptural forms: These will remain at the site as reminders of the antiquity of Indian culture and the sacredness of her rivers and her rocks.⁴⁰

Razia Grover's editorial for this particular issue is entirely devoted to the IGNCAs awards. The editorial reconstructs the significance of the IGNCAs competition event, and its winning entries, variously as: (a) a historic moment in India's post-independence architectural scene; (b) an event through which one witnessed 'conscious attempts' at creating a contextually relevant modern architecture (Lutyens' design of New Delhi) that also respected continuing architectural traditions or heritage of India; (c) as a lesson in 'presentation techniques' for students of architecture (in India), and finally; (d) as an exercise in 'consolidating' a cohesive identity of the 'Indian architectural community.' Reflecting on the international nature of the IGNCAs competition, the editorial considers 'the last two major encounters India had with the international scene...with Corbusier and Kahn,' as events that had left 'bitter-sweet legacies.' For the editorial, the nostalgia of a golden past irretrievably lost during years of colonisation by the British, and further complicated by Modernism's passage to India via Corbusier and Kahn, necessitated a timely need to reinvent, albeit cautiously, both India's post-independence architectural community and its identity. As the editorial consistently reiterates, the IGNCAs competition event provided such opportunities for both architects and contemporary architecture in India. Grover,

⁴⁰ The article goes on to list the other symbols and symbolisms associated with the IGNCAs such as the logo of the project—four intertwined swastikas, and the planting of five trees considered most significant in the Indian civilisation, etc. *Ibid.*, 17.

Having been witness to the year-long exercise and seen its outcome on display, it appears the time was ripe for the country to go through, on its own, the process of exposure to and acceptance of world-wide architectural ideas—an exercise, however, that we should embark on not too frequently and with care...Colonization had surgically severed India's architectural profession, then in its infancy, from its roots. And the 'masters' who were called in to perform, single-mindedly and somewhat arrogantly pursued their passion of modernism on a new playground.⁴¹

The jury for the competition consisted of some very recognised figures of both international and Indian architecture, such as Fumihiko Maki, James Stirling, Olufemi Majekodumni (representative of the International Union of Architects), Achyut P. Kanvinde, Habib Rahman, Balakrishna V. Doshi (Chairman of the Jury), and Reserve Members Geoffrey Bawa and Frei Otto (who was also a participating member in the Golden Eye project). Initially, Charles Correa was also involved in the project but was dropped from the list by the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who chose Achyut Kanvinde and B. V. Doshi instead.⁴² Also involved in the project were two of India's reigning cultural technocrats such as Pupul Jayakar and Kapila Vatsyayan.⁴³ However, in the final composition of the jury, Jayakar was replaced by the reserve member, Habib Rahman. Kapila Vatsyayan was the founder-director of the IGNCA and had conceptualised the exhibition *Kham: Space and the Act of Space*⁴⁴ mounted in New Delhi to coincide with the inauguration of the IGNCA. Two of the original jury members were also simultaneously involved with contemporaneous international events: the Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki was a member of the Master Jury for the 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture, while Pupul Jayakar, as we know, was the Chairman of the Festival of India project's Indian committee at the time. The IGNCA international design competition was conducted as per the rules and regulations

⁴¹ Editorial. *Architecture + Design*, vol. III, no. 2. (January-February 1987): 7.

⁴² Tania Midha. "IGNCA: Designer's Dream." *India Today* December 15, 1986, 86-87.

⁴³ "News" section, *Architecture + Design* (January-February 1986), 9.

⁴⁴ With a cross-cultural focus (Vedic, Chinese, American Indian, Mexican, African and Mesopotamian texts), 'Kham' emphasised the universality of the manifestations and containments of 'space.' For more details, read, "Kham: Space and the Act of Space." *Architecture + Design* III, no. 2 (January-February 1987): 65-72.

prescribed by the International Union of Architects (UIA) and UNESCO. The competition was approved by the UIA, whose representative, Majekodumni, was also included in the jury.

A+D, in this case, and in most such cases of representing or reporting events acts as an agent of consecration. While partaking in the competition for the power to grant cultural consecration, the producers of *A+D* consistently reinforced the magazine as a system for reproducing producers of a determinate type of cultural goods. Simultaneously, it also reproduced a readership capable of comprehending such cultural goods through cultivated tastes and imaginations. Consider for instance the passing pointers, in the editorial, directed to both professionals and students of the discipline: “Although we have, in this issue, presented the first five award-winning schemes for readers to form their own opinions, as indeed they must, the merits of the award deserve reiteration.” Focusing on students in particular, the editorial contends: “Let us...learn from [Lerner], as often, out of sheer laziness we consider presentation techniques but a means of deception.” Further lessons are directed towards the profession in India (read Delhi): “The Indian architectural community has surely reached a stage of maturity when it should, with one voice, welcome the results of its first...international competition.” Even after the coverage of the event in *A+D*, Grover continued to work on the recommendation made by the jury to publish an illustrated book of the IGNCA competition submissions. Her efforts resulted in a catalogue that was published by the Ahmedabad based publishing company, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd. in 1992—seven years after the actual event.⁴⁵ In the introduction to this catalogue, Kapila Vatsyayan similarly constructs the importance and the significance of the competition, for “young students and the architectural community as a whole.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Concepts and Responses: International Architectural Design Competition for the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi*. Edited by Razia Grover. Ahmedabad: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in association with Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 1992. Started in 1982 by Bipin Shah and Mallika Sarabhai in Ahmedabad, Mapin had established itself as the publisher of illustrated books on art, culture and living traditions of India. Just two years before publishing the IGNCA catalogue, Mapin had published the first book on contemporary Indian architecture, *After the Masters*.

⁴⁶ See “Introduction” in *Concepts and Responses*.

Commending the ‘meticulously planned’ year-long exercise of organising the IGNCA design competition as one of the extraordinary triumphs of the Indian architectural community, the editorial goes on to posit that the community “has surely reached a stage of maturity.”⁴⁷ This ‘maturity’ is corroborated by the fact that the second winning entry of the competition was by a relatively young Indian architect, the Delhi-based Gautam Bhatia. A recently foreign-returned architect at the time with a M-Arch degree from the University of Pennsylvania, with many travel grants including prestigious ones such as the Fulbright and the Graham Foundation grants to his credit, Bhatia’s chosen field of study was in fact medicine. Failing medicine, he had decided to study architecture instead. Upon his return to India and struggling to find a niche in the existing field of architecture, Bhatia aimed his sardonic sense of humour against contemporary architectural expressions in India and the Indian nouveau-rich in general; his most stringent observations about post-Independence architecture in India appeared much later in the form of a book titled *Punjabi Baroque and Other Memories of Architecture*.⁴⁸ During the IGNCA competition, Bhatia was more involved with writing about architecture than in its practice, as *India Today* reported, “Bhatia has no major building to his name so far and has had all the time for critiques on “Punjabi Gothic” and “Bania Baroque” architecture.”⁴⁹

Implicit in A+D’s idea of maturity of the Indian architectural community is also a desire to distinguish such a community from the older generation or community of Indian architects.⁵⁰ The younger architectural community which

⁴⁷ Razia Grover. “Editorial.” *Architecture + Design* III, no. 2 (January-February 1987): 7.

⁴⁸ Gautam Bhatia. *Punjabi Baroque and Other Memories of Architecture*: Penguin Books India (P) Ltd., 1994.

⁴⁹ After winning the second prize of Rs. 5 lakh, Bhatia, unsure of what he would do with such a big prize money, stated, “Maybe I’ll fund my way through another attempt at medicine, maybe I’ll use it to fund my planned audio-visual spoof on Delhi, maybe I’ll rush down to the first Maruti showroom.” Quoted in Midha. “IGNCA: Designer’s Dream,” 86-87.

⁵⁰ In this regard, I quote from an email correspondence with Razia Grover, where she recalls the rise of the ‘younger crop,’ in the field of architecture in India: “...when the magazine started it was Kanvinder, Correa, Doshi, Mahendra Raj, Anant Raje, Stein, Hasnukh Patel, and of the next generation it was Raj Rewal, Ranjit Sabikhi, etc. These were the stalwarts then. Until the younger crop came about, who were the writers too—Sanjay Prakash, Prem Chandavarkar, A. G. Krishna Menon, Ashok Lall, Gautam Bhatia.” Email correspondence with Razia Grover. 25th April 2006.

was simultaneously and variously engaged in teaching, writing and in the practice of architecture, included the Delhi-based architects and architect-educators such as Satish Grover and C. P. Kukreja, who were the founders of the magazine *A+D*, and others such as Ashish Ganju, K. T. Ravindran, and Rajat Ray. Thus Bhatia was also very much a part of the Delhi group of new generation architectural intelligentsia.

As is apparent, the younger group of Indian architects considered itself as the legitimate new-age defender and representative of Indian architecture. Further, being predominantly situated in Delhi—the locus of India's socio-political and socio-cultural energy during the time—this group had clearly inherited the recognition and perceived predicaments of post-independence architecture in India associated with an older generation of 'stalwarts' such as Charles Correa, B. V. Doshi, Raj Rewal, and critics and writers such as Patwant Singh (editor of *Design*) and Mulk Raj Anand (founder editor of *Mārg*). Opportunities in consolidating such a position were available throughout the mid-1980s for this group. For instance, the several architectural exhibitions and catalogues occasioned because of the Festival of India project, or the IGNCA, were conceptualised in some of India's premier architectural institutions such as Delhi's School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), or the School of Architecture in the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT), Ahmedabad. Most of the above mentioned architects were also actively engaged in teaching in these schools of architecture; almost all the Delhi-based architects taught at Delhi's SPA at one point or the other in their careers—thus engaging directly or indirectly, critically or not, with prevalent notions such as a legitimate identity in Indian architecture, etc.

In this sense, Razia Grover's editorials in *A+D* had an agenda, ostensibly, by her own account, influenced by her husband Satish Grover. The agenda was that of representing the collective voice of this young generation of architects trying to supplant the older generation in the field of architecture in India. Thus according to *A+D*'s editorial on the IGNCA, the Indian architectural community—from its obvious marginalisation during the colonial period, and from the general confusion about its position during post-independence

Modernist interventions in Indian architecture—had finally matured in the current generation of young Indian architects, represented by Gautam Bhatia. Accordingly in the editorial with references to the younger ‘mature’ generation, Bhatia’s project is commended first, before the qualities of Lerner’s winning entry are discussed.

The IGNCA...being an open international competition, has sown seeds of a far more open-ended dialogue. That in this competition an Indian has not been the winner should not be lamented. But that he has come very close to it is certainly a matter of pride. It is a sign of the fact that Indian architects are past their infancy and can confidently compete with the best in the world under the most stringent of regulations. Congratulations Gautam Bhatia!⁵¹

Furthermore, Bhatia’s involvement with *A+D* had begun since *A+D* started publishing. He was one of the closest monitors of *A+D*’s development; in the second issue of *A+D* itself, Bhatia’s letter had appeared in *A+D*’s letters section along with seven laudatory letters by well-established professionals and academics in India and abroad.⁵² Bhatia’s letter provided a long list of critical comments and suggestions to improve the magazine’s contents and “critical assessment.”⁵³ *A+D*’s decision to include the long letter from Bhatia can be read as *A+D*’s naivety in presenting its own shortcomings at that time. However, by exhibiting this perceived struggle in the restricted field of production, architectural journalism, dominated by the Patwant Singh edited magazine *Design* for more than three decades in Delhi (a position that *A+D* desired to achieve), *A+D* publicly represented its position in the dominated side as, to borrow from Bourdieu, “the [newcomer], who [sought] discontinuity, rupture, difference, revolution.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ Grover. “Editorial.” *Architecture + Design* III, no. 2 (January-February 1987): 7.

⁵² These included Peter Serenyi, the then chair of the department of the History of Architecture of Northeastern University in Boston, USA; Rajnish Wattas, a Chandigarh based architect; S. S. Bhatti, Principal of the Chandigarh College of Architecture; B. Kambo, ex-chief town planner and architectural advisor to the government of Rajasthan; K. C. Sharma, the director of Horticulture department, New Delhi Municipal Committee; and architects Ravindra Bhan, Gautam Bhatia and Satish Grover from Delhi.

⁵³ “Letters Section.” *Architecture + Design* I, no. 2 (January-February 1985): 10.

⁵⁴ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*, 106.

By the time *A+D* carried out its coverage of the IGNCAs competition results in 1987, it had already established itself—in alliance with, as we have noted, the young group of Delhi-based architects—as a dominant site of architectural discourse in India, within the field of restricted production, architectural journalism. Considering these discussions and returning to *A+D*'s editorial on IGNCAs, it is then no surprise that Bhatia's first runner-up position in the IGNCAs competition, provided opportunity for the producers of *A+D* to return the favour to Bhatia—himself a newcomer in the field of architecture.

Implicitly allied with the younger generation of Delhi-based architects, *A+D* nevertheless safeguarded the jury's decision (of awarding the first place to a foreign entry)—which was necessarily represented by an older generation of India's architectural and cultural doyens such as Doshi, Rahman, Kanvinde and Vatsyayan. This safeguarding of potentially conflicting interests is, arguably, in the knowledge that such a decision by the jury was bound to create controversy in the Indian architectural circles. In fact, *A+D* validates its understanding in the letters section of the following issue itself. In its March-April 1987 issue, *A+D* published a letter of both clarification and justification, regarding certain issues raised by the IGNCAs results, by the President of the Indian Council of Architects, J. R. Bhalla.⁵⁵ Bhalla informs that some of the registered competitors questioned the suitability of Lerner's scheme and suggested that competition regulations had been flouted and ignored. In all 'fairness,' however, and justifying the 'competency and integrity' of the jury, Bhalla condemned the press that purportedly used the opinions of certain competitors to criticise the first international architectural competition held by India.⁵⁶ Bhalla's letter aims to justify the jury's decision while urging the architectural community in India to respect and understand the international nature of the IGNCAs competition.

Following Bhalla's letter, however, *A+D* published another letter concerned with the IGNCAs event by another relatively younger generation Delhi-based architect, Paul Appasamy. While supporting the celebration of the "spirit of

⁵⁵ J. R. Bhalla. "IGNCAs." *Architecture + Design* III, no. 3 (March-April 1987): 10.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Lutyen's Imperial Delhi" in Lerner's winning scheme—very much in conformity with the brief of the competition—Appasamy, nevertheless attacks the conceptual aspects of the scheme. Appasamy considers the winning design a 'manipulation,' which entails "a loss of meaning, of content, in the inspiration drawn from India." Appasamy considers this lack of understanding 'depressing' especially in the context of contemporary India, which in his own words, is "the world's largest democracy trying to retain and sustain its ancient culture in a modern context."⁵⁷

In its main coverage of the IGNCA competition event, *A+D* as a dominant site of discourse had to deal with conflicting interests and the significance accorded to the event both in (and for) the architectural community of India, and through media diffusion. While necessarily allied with the Delhi-based group of architects who saw themselves as new representatives of architectural issues in India, *A+D* nevertheless had to ascertain and indeed maintain the position of the dominant but older generation of architects and cultural representatives in the country. Apart from that, in keeping with its promise of representing contemporary architectural developments in India, *A+D* had to include, once in a while, voices from regions and architectural groups not so dominant compared to the Delhi group of architects. The necessity of being a unified voice of the architectural communities in India was felt even more so in the case of the IGNCA event because of its international significance. Thus, in addition to other possible functions, *A+D*'s coverage of the IGNCA event also reflected the struggle for dominance between agents within the field of architecture in India. Further, through its various spaces of writing, the producers of *A+D* aimed at safeguarding a determinate structure of relationships of symbolic domination, existing in the field of architecture. In other words, the producers of *A+D*—necessarily belonging to the younger generation of architects in Delhi—constituted, in and through the IGNCA event coverage, the means for obtaining or safeguarding the monopoly of the legitimate mode of practising, what may be now termed as a definitive category, 'contemporary Indian architecture.'

⁵⁷ Paul Appasamy. "IGNCA." *Architecture + Design* III, no. 3 (March-April 1987): 10-11.

Two articles published as reviews of the IGNCA competition project, demonstrate the above complexities and contradictions within the field of architecture in India and within *A+D* itself at the time. They also reflect both the limits of the field and the limits of representation within *A+D*. Appearing after the main article on the IGNCA award winning projects, one of the reviews was by Roger Connah, a freelance writer and designer, then based in Delhi as the supervising architect for the new Embassy of Finland (designed by Raili and Reima Pietila, and which was under construction then in Delhi). The other review was by the Bangalore-based architect Prem Chandavarkar, a partner in the Bangalore-based architectural firm Chandavarkar and Thacker. While the two reviews can be read as soon as one finishes reading *A+D*'s report on the winning entries, and indeed they are a logical extension of *A+D*'s report on the event itself—it is the agency of the writers (Connah and Chandavarkar) and their reviews that, on closer inspection, begin to reflect interests and dispositions of agents within a field of cultural production such as architecture. In this regard, it is significant that we appreciate the geographical locations of these writers, for it does reflect, to a degree, the limits of the field of architecture in India during the mid-1980s. However, these two instances of reviews alone are not sufficient pointers to the complexities inherent in the production of discourse vis-à-vis a field of architecture in India. A history of positions that the agents Connah and Chandavarkar occupy, and a history of their dispositions must also be taken into account to better appreciate their reviews of the IGNCA competition.

10.5.1 Roger Connah's review

During the time of the review Roger Connah was in India as a freelance writer and designer, with teaching commissions at the Jamia Milia Mass Communications Institute in New Delhi, and at the National Institute of Design (NID) in Ahmedabad. He was closely involved in the designing of two major exhibitions that coincided with the IGNCA awards in New Delhi—*Kham: Space and the Act of Space*, and the *Satish Gujral Retrospective*. With degrees

both in architecture and literature, Connah had worked for eight years in close association with the Finnish architect Reima Pietila before coming to India. He had also lectured in Aesthetics and Literature at the University of Helsinki and Jyvaskyla. Currently he is a Visiting Lecturer at the Stockholm Royal School of Arts.

Connah's first article in *A+D* appeared in its September-October 1986 issue.⁵⁸ Titled "Eclectic Games or Trivial Pursuits," Connah's article is a design review of three embassies built between 1984 and 1986 in Delhi; the Embassy of Finland by Raili and Reima Pietila (1986), the Embassy of Belgium by Satish Gujral (1984), and the Embassy of France by Paul Chemetov, Borja Huidobro and Raj Rewal (1985-86). Connah, while critiquing postmodern tendencies in architecture—observed in the three projects located in Delhi—longs for either the glory of pre-colonial Delhi or the romance of a fading empire; "The Mughal and Islamic traditions are splendidly represented in Old Delhi whilst the pink caresses of Lutyens are an architectural must for any visitor." Connah writes in conclusion,

These are certainly eclectic times where restraint no longer means consistency and excess no longer means inconsistency. Instead we either learn more of the nuanced use and abuse of world architecture, or then deny the provocation of meanings offered us. Both are ways forward despite the resistance to a super-mannerism which the salvage operators of modernism support. Come back Mr. Lutyens. All is neither forgiven nor forgotten.⁵⁹

Clearly positioning himself as a *disinterested* outsider, Connah similarly provides five readings of the winning designs of the IGNCA competition. Of these, two readings will be discussed here, as they articulate the two major divisions within which Connah reads the five winning entries. He conceives the five winning entries as "a set of readings available in architecture today" within a modernist and a postmodernist paradigm.(fn) Connah situates the

⁵⁸ Roger Connah. "Eclectic Games or Trivial Pursuit?" *Architecture + Design* II, no. 6 (September-October 1986): 64-76.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

Indian submissions within the modernist paradigm, while international submissions are located within the postmodern realm.^(fn) However, the crux of the review, for Connah, is in the understanding that the paradigm shift in the competition's entries reflected the ambiguity of paradigmatic codes prevalent at the time in world architecture. Connah is doubly critical of this paradigm shift, since postmodern tendencies in architecture, for him, are a contamination of the purely modernist tradition.

Connah suggests that the fact that Ralph Lerner's design was chosen as the outright winner reflected in turn the jury's privileging of the tendency it represented at the time. Yet, as Connah argues, the winning entry was followed by Bhatia's entry for the competition—a design that integrated regionalist typologies and symbolism in a modernist vocabulary, yet resisted a blind reproduction of Lutyens' architecture in Delhi. Thus, while Lerner's transparently Lutyenesque design had no hidden surprises, Bhatia's scheme with the riverine plan and *ghat* symbolism, and with an intentional deflection from Lutyenesque vocabulary, had plural and diverse meanings—as 'plural and diverse as India itself' in Bhatia's own words. Reflecting on the ambiguous state of architectural judgement and the reason why only a handful of Indian schemes (including ones from C. P. Kukreja, Raj Rewal and Romi Khosla) were selected and only one considered for a prize, Connah postulates that Bhatia's second-place winning scheme had deflected just enough from a strictly Lutyens' type to "still hold sway within the general sobriety" of the advertised design criteria. Connah reasoned, "[i]t is not that [the other entries] are necessarily bad architecture: they merely do not conform to the discourse privileged by contemporary architecture."⁶⁰

Furthermore, Bhatia's 'contamination' of a purely modernist paradigm and his lesser reliance on Lutyenesque formal or aesthetic qualities in architecture, reflected a 'healthy anxiety' for Connah. This was necessarily in opposition to the 'Indian orthodoxy' that relied heavily on borrowed modernist tendencies in architecture at the time. Thus, for Connah, Bhatia represented the new and

⁶⁰ Roger Connah. "Please Mr. Lutyens, Hold My Pencil." *Architecture + Design* III, no. 2 (January-February 1987): 35.

confident generation of architects in India, who were willing to experiment with form, image and sign, with an anxiousness to change the prevalent and borrowed modernist-infused attitudes in Indian architecture. However, this was not only reflective of Indian architecture or Indian architects and their attitudes. According to Connah, such a paradigm shift, of which he was also critical, operated on consensus and institution and was a universal development in architecture.

Thus, for Connah, the competition winning results were only schemes that more or less indicated the state of affairs with regards to universal contemporary architecture. His review, while generally critical of postmodern tendencies in architecture, neither postulates a particular direction or a set of directions *for* contemporary Indian architecture, nor advocates who the legitimate practitioners of such an attitude are, or should be. For Connah, at that point in time, and despite being involved directly or indirectly with events concerning Indian architecture, contemporary Indian architecture was only a strand of undecided and ambiguous movements in the larger scene of global architectural developments. His disinterestedness momentarily disappears when he seems to be promoting the new generation of architects' works in Delhi as opposed to the older modernist stalwarts. However, by immediately locating such developments as part of a global movement in architecture, Connah returns to tell the story of contemporary world architecture:

Thomas Kuhn has got an awful lot to answer for. In his ever-quoted, ever-revised book 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions' he discussed the way science shifts from a current set of beliefs, which he terms a paradigm, towards another set of beliefs or confidences. This is known as 'paradigm-shift' and operates on the consensus of knowledge and institution. To me today in the late twentieth century we have what appears to be a clear paradigm-shift in architecture. Both in the East and the West.⁶¹

⁶¹ Ibid., 33.

10.5.2 Prem Chandavarkar's review

Starkly different in opinion and intention, if not in focus and content, is Prem Chandavarkar's review that follows Connah's text in the same issue of *A+D* (Chandavarkar, 1987). Chandavarkar graduated from Delhi's SPA, and subsequently completed a Master's degree in 1982 at the University of Oregon in the United States. His Masters thesis was a critical analysis of the concept of architecture as a symbolic language. Chandavarkar specifically examined some of the analytical models that recent architectural theory had borrowed from theoretical linguistics and structuralism. During the time of the review, Chandavarkar had only recently returned to India from the USA, and was made an associate in the Bangalore-based architectural firm, Chandavarkar and Thacker. The review brings to light Chandavarkar's own scholarship with regards to symbolism in architecture. Titled, "Where do we go from here?" Chandavarkar's point of departure in the review is Nehru's 'scientific determinism'-infused post-independence modern Indian architecture that had little time or consideration for the past in its path to progress. Allusions to Le Corbusier's design for Chandigarh—a result of the Nehruvian period in India's history—are strategically invoked throughout the review. For Chandavarkar, the 'Corbusian tradition' had deeply influenced Indian architecture for the first three decades since independence. The crux of Chandavarkar's review is a perceived need for a post-independence identity for Indian architecture; one which would radically depart from 'orthodox modernism.'

But now we find ourselves in an era where we are searching for connections with our history and culture, and questioning the assumptions and methods we have used for the past few decades.⁶²

While critical of Corbusian influence in Indian architecture in the first three decades since independence, Chandavarkar's brief history of contemporary

⁶² Prem Chandavarkar. "Where Do We Go from Here?" *Architecture + Design* III, no. 2 (January-February 1987): p. 36.

Indian architecture also critiques certain revivalist attempts to ‘Indianise’ architecture. Particularly, Chandavarkar finds problems with the use of certain tired north Indian precedents such as Jaisalmer and Fatehpur Sikri to define a pan-Indian identity in architecture. Chandavarkar posits that while such precedents offer ‘powerful images’ their literal overuse only results in a pastiche. While Chandavarkar argues that the connections between traditional architectural forms or typologies and contemporary culture must be made ‘at a more theoretical level,’ implicit in his suggestion is also a need for including, if at all necessary, more regionally diverse prototypes or precedents from India. Chandavarkar’s review is a regional discourse that aims to take stock of the precedents, in terms of attitudes and theories, distilled in the winning entries of the IGNCA competition. Through such an undertaking, Chandavarkar hopes to provide a solution to the perceived postcolonial issue of identity in contemporary Indian architecture. Alluding to the significance of the IGNCA competition—the first international design competition held by independent India—Chandavarkar writes,

An event such as this is a confluence of ideas, opinions, and attitudes, not normally observed, and therefore, it seems a worthwhile exercise to scan the prize winning entries: to take stock of where we are in Indian architecture today, what precedents this competition may set, and what directions, we may select for the future.⁶³

The review locates the three third-place winning entries of Jourda et Perraudin Partenaires, Jeremy Dixon and Alexandros Tombazis, within a ‘in search of typology’-attitude; the second prize-winning entry of Gautam Bhatia within a ‘type as symbol’-attitude; while Ralph Lerner’s first-prize winning entry for Chandavarkar reflected a ‘beyond symbolism’-attitude. For Chandavarkar, the third-prize winning entries reflected the same Corbusian attitudes to orthodox modernism, with a few weak references to either context or history. For instance, the one attempt made in the search for types in Indian architecture amongst the three third-prize winning schemes—in Dixon’s scheme, which

⁶³ Ibid.

Chandavarkar thought was ‘typological’—missed a ‘true connection with history.’ Chandavarkar suggested,

If typology is to have a true connection with history, the sense of type, like the sense of history, should be contextual. Just as it would make no sense for contemporary Indian culture to search for connections with foreign history, the search for types in Indian architecture should begin with Indian types.⁶⁴

It is in this respect that Chandavarkar differentiates and defends the second- and first-prize winning entries. Bhatia’s and Lerner’s designs were chosen as the second- and first-prize winning schemes respectively, precisely because, according to Chandavarkar, they “[did] not look beyond the country that they [were] designing for.”⁶⁵ Bhatia who invited the jury to imagine Rajpath as a river and his scheme as a city that fronts this river, used further symbolic features such as the street and the *ghats* lining the riverfront in his scheme. Thus for Chandavarkar, Bhatia used the ‘typology of the traditional Indian riverside city’ as a symbol. Chandavarkar concludes his discussion of Bhatia’s scheme thus,

The typology of the city is used to create a microcosm of society. Architecture seems to be faced with the necessity of creating a general, coherent, and self-sufficient symbol of culture.⁶⁶

Finally, for Chandavarkar, Lerner’s scheme was the winner because it responded to the immediate physical context while ‘maintaining necessary connections with history.’ Defending Lerner’s use of types inspired by India’s regional architectural diversity such as the Lingaraja Temple in Bhuvaneshwar, the Keshava Temple in Somnathpur, and the Brihadeshwara Temple in Tanjore, Chandavarkar cautions that such an attitude may not be “construed as an attempt to endow religious significance on the Indira Gandhi National

⁶⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Centre for Arts.”⁶⁷ Rather, they are an attempt in using types as representing a larger India—not just the often used and tired prototypes from Jaisalmer or Fatehpur Sikri. Further, in contrast to Bhatia’s scheme, Lerner’s design did not appear as a ‘heavily loaded’ gesture with symbolic meaning. For Chandavarkar, there was no explicit ambition to show ‘Indian’ ‘culture’ in Lerner’s design. Lerner “begins with the immediate surroundings, and bases his analysis on the juxtaposition of the typologies of monumental urbanism and the garden as found in Lutyen’s Delhi.”⁶⁸ While implicitly critiquing Bhatia’s scheme as an unnecessarily ‘grand design’ that tries to forge a pan-Indian cultural symbolism, Chandavarkar praises Lerner’s more contextual approach that employs symbolism through ‘recognizable’ types and thus goes beyond symbolism to maintain ‘a general sense of tradition.’

Chandavarkar believes that the role of the Indian architect in the 1980s—three decades after independence, and in the desire to depart from ‘*our* Corbusian traditions’—must not be driven only by sensitivity to history. Implicit in Chandavarkar’s message to Indian architects is that they must also learn, as Lerner had demonstrated, how to address the ‘precise demands of the present.’ Specifically, Chandavarkar’s review presents a foreign architect’s design for an Indian project as an example in intelligence, humility and maturity that contemporary Indian architects must learn from. Indulging in creating ‘public symbols and myths’ selectively borrowed from traditional, mostly north-Indian precedents perceived as indicative of a larger India, as in Bhatia’s scheme, is authorising a ‘heroic role’ to the architect—as a “privileged and public interpreter of ‘history’ and ‘culture’.”⁶⁹ For Chandavarkar this is a problematic venture, because no Indian architect or group of architects, or his or her regional associations and influences, can claim to best represent a pan-Indian cultural identity in architecture.

Chandavarkar’s shorter review is a discourse structured to find a direction or a set of directions *for* contemporary Indian architecture. Chandavarkar also

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

strives to ascertain the role of the Indian architect in the mid-1980s. This as we can see, is intentionally different from Connah's discourse, with its focus on the development of world architecture. Furthermore implicit in Chandavarkar's review are undertones of issues such as domination and marginalisation in the field of architecture in India, where north-Indian historical precedents or Delhi-based architects are perceived as more privileged than their comparable counterparts in the rest of India. At the surface, Chandavarkar's formal architectural education in Delhi before his graduate studies in the United States, and his direct induction into a south Indian based architectural firm upon his return, could seemingly be considered as plausible reasons why Chandavarkar implicitly alludes to notions of marginalisation in his 1987 review of the IGNCA. Such notions, in Chandavarkar's writings, would develop into a stronger polemic a decade later. For instance Chandavarkar's 1999 article, "The Politics of the Background,"⁷⁰ is an essay on the development of post-independence architecture in south India. However, in this essay Chandavarkar's argument hinges on the identification of Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad as the north Indian sub-regions where the search for identity in Indian architecture gained prominence. This, as Chandavarkar shows, was subsequently reproduced in discourses about contemporary Indian architecture:

An example of this perceived dominance can be seen in a book [*After the Masters*] published in 1990, where out of a total of fifty two projects covered, which were to be broadly representative of contemporary Indian architecture, forty one were by architects based in one of these three cities.⁷¹

Chandavarkar's 1999 article is a direct pointer to the issue of marginalisation and can be taken as indicative of a particular position taking by Chandavarkar with respect to the field of architecture in India. However, Chandavarkar's post-1990s position had more sympathetic supporters such as architects A G Krishna Menon and K. T. Ravindran, and from a younger generation of architectural critics and researchers such as A. Srivathsan and K. R.

⁷⁰ Chandavarkar. "The Politics of the Background," 68-71.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Sitalakshmi. All four of these individuals have voiced their concerns regarding issues of marginalisation in contemporary Indian architecture or architectural discourse. Significantly, each of these critics is a south Indian—two of them, Menon and Ravindran, based in Delhi, while the rest of them operating from south Indian cities Chennai (Srivathsan and Sitalakshmi) and Bangalore (Chandavarkar). While Chandavarkar's voice regarding such issues is stronger in the 1999 article, in raising similar issues in the 1987 review of IGNC competition, when he had only recently returned from the United States, his voice is restrained. There are only undertones of concern regarding the issue of marginalisation in contemporary Indian architecture or the issue of who might legitimately (re)interpret Indian culture and tradition in architecture. The implications of this instance, in conjunction with Chandavarkar's 1999 article and the event-based discourses in *A+D* discussed previously, allow us to distil some key points regarding the extent of the field of architecture in India and that of the dominant and the dominated groups within it during the mid-1980s. These will be further elaborated below.

10.6: Opportunistic interviews

This section discusses three key interviews with well-established foreign architects that *A+D* carried out opportunistically within its pages. I call them opportunistic because these interviews occurred in conjunction with certain events that we have discussed earlier in this chapter, specifically; the Golden Eye exhibition project in India (connected with the Festival of India) and the IGNC competition. These opportunistic interviews must be differentiated from the general interviews that *A+D* carried out along with its coverage of Indian architects and their works. While general interviews reflected a consistent editorial agenda, arguably, they also involved planning in advance with regards to the choice of the architect and the issues to discuss. On the contrary, interviews with foreign architects or designers depended firstly on the availability of those architects from their primary commitments in India, and secondly, on their availability within the geographical and economical reach of *A+D* and its correspondents. Furthermore, opportunistic interviews could not

have been possibly planned in advance because of the very fact that these were opportune moments in time, which the producers of *A+D* seized with their available resources and associations. Thus, considering its location in Delhi and a self-imposed position as the leading architectural magazine of India, interviewing and representing visiting foreign architects in India was indeed an opportunistic undertaking by *A+D*.

As we know, associated directly or indirectly with the events discussed in the previous segments, several interested and well-established architects from Europe and America visited India during the mid-1980s. By way of both influence and colluding interests, the younger generation of architects based in Delhi as well as the older generation 'stalwart' architects were directly or indirectly involved with such events. Implicitly allied with both but leaning more towards the group of younger generation architects in Delhi, the producers of *A+D* had a stake in events of national and international importance. They were consistently involved in either pursuing or reporting on these events, or in carrying out extensive debates regarding issues resulting from the events.⁷² In this respect it can be said that *A+D* was used as a forum by its producers and participants, as claimed in the inaugural editorial. This forum, as is the contention of this study, while zealously addressing architectural issues within India—especially Delhi—and abroad, helped construct the younger generation architects' own creative project according, firstly, to their perception of the available possibilities afforded by the categories of perception and appreciation; and secondly, to their predisposition to take advantage of or reject those possibilities in accordance with the interests associated with their positions in the field of architecture.

⁷² In her email correspondence, Razia Grover fondly remembers the many people she was encouraged to meet by her late husband Satish Grover in connection with *A+D*. "We [Razia and Satish Grover] would be invited to all seminars, etc and established a wonderful rapport with architects from Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and all the international architects who came to India. Anyone who knew them would send them to us and like Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, we met James Stirling, Cantacuzino, Fumihiko Maki, Geoffrey Bawa, and of course all the people we met and became great friends with through the Aga Khan Award seminars in Nairobi, Cairo, Colombo, Kathmandu, Dacca. Satish [Grover] went to Malta and Samarkand too." Email correspondence with Razia Grover. 25th April 2006. Grover's recollection explicitly refers to events associated with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and the people she and her husband, and understandably most of the new generation architects in Delhi, met in connection with the award seminars held in Third World regions.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 249
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 23: Group photograph with Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown. From left to right—Ashish Ganju, Razia Grover, K. T. Ravindran, Robert Venturi, Romi Khosla, Ashok Lall and Denise Scott Brown. *A+D*, vol II, no. 2 (January-February 1986). p. 9.

Between its November-December 1985, and July-August 1987 issues, *A+D* published interviews with at least three of the visiting designers and architects—Frei Otto, Fumihiko Maki and James Stirling. *A+D* also reproduced an informal discussion with Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, who had visited India in November 1985 (figure 23). Delhi-based architects K. T. Ravindran, Ashish Ganju, Ashok Lall and Romi Khosla were the participants in this discussion. Two of the interviews were conducted by Indian architects: Frei Otto was interviewed by Rajeev Bhatia, and James Stirling by Sunand Prasad and Satish Grover. The Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki's interview was by the freelance writer and designer Roger Connah (whom we encountered in the previous segment).

Significant differences can be observed between the interviews conducted by Indian architects and by Roger Connah, considering the fact that Connah's interview of Maki appears between the interviews of Otto and Stirling. Firstly, and quite significantly in the interview by Connah, there is no explicit, or implicit, desire to understand the visiting architect, Fumihiko Maki's notions about or thoughts on Indian architecture. Connah also does not seem to be straining to foreground discussions based on an implicitly assumed Western supremacy, in terms of either architectural production or the importance generally awarded to agents of Western architecture by Indian architects. Positioning himself as a commentator of world architecture, we have seen how

a similar review of the IGNC A competition by Connah was published in *A+D* an issue later.⁷³

The usual questions regarding the architect's influences, associations, works in progress, and the relevance of the works in the present and future—the necessary conventions of an interview, predominate the enquiry in all the three interviews. However, specifically through the interviews of Otto and Stirling, we shall see how concerns and issues about Indian architecture were put forward in the form of questions to the visiting architects, to extract answers that, as I argue, more or less satisfied the deep-rooted intentions and convictions of the interviewing Indian architects. Further, these interviews are a medium through which we can also understand how individual concerns or queries reflected a particular *doxic* adherence permeated through *habitus* and shared by all those having a stake in the struggle for recognition within the field of architecture in India during the period.

10.6.1 Interviews with Frei Otto and James Stirling

The interview with the German architect Frei Otto, who visited India for Rajeev Sethi's Golden Eye project as well as the IGNC A competition (he was a reserve jury member along with Geoffrey Bawa), was featured in the November-December 1985 issue of *A+D*.⁷⁴ Frei Otto, sixty years old during the interview, and already famous for designing innovative structures mimicking nature (involving tensile structures, all-compressive grid-shells as well as pneumatic structures), was involved in theoretical research at the Institute for Lightweight Structures (IL) in Stuttgart, of which he had been the director for more than two decades. Titled 'Nature's Apostle,' the interview was conducted by Rajeev Bhatia, a recent SPA graduate who had studied

⁷³ Connah. "Please Mr. Lutyens, Hold My Pencil."

⁷⁴ "Nature's Apostle." *Architecture + Design* II, no. 1 (November-December 1985): 65-68, 70-71. This is the same issue of *A+D* in which the previously discussed Menon's article about the Indian mela in Paris was also featured.

under Otto in 1983 as part of the ‘practical training’ component of the graduate course in architecture at the SPA.⁷⁵

Bhatia opens with four queries addressing Otto’s design schemes for the Golden Eye project, his current projects, influences and the relevance of his work in the present and in the future. Employing the conventions of an ‘interview,’ Bhatia also uses these questions to express his own feelings of veneration for Otto and his works. Bhatia’s next question invokes the topic of Third World building activity. Since the ‘bulk of building activity’ is concentrated in Third World regions, he wonders in what way Otto perceives the technology he helped develop to be specifically applied to these areas.⁷⁶ The importance accorded to the Third World built environment and building activity, especially in the ‘post-modern’ Western architectural circles of the 1980s, was significant in the institutionalisation of several international collaborative practices. As we have seen, interested agents and agencies representing different stances often intersected and *acted* through such institutional(ised) collaborations. With respect to the specific case of the field of architecture in India, such collaborations or partial alliances got constructed through larger socio-political and socio-cultural initiatives including the international Aga Khan Award for Architecture, and nationally constituted events such as the Festival of India projects and the IGNCAs competition. Thus, despite Bhatia’s unconscious categorisation of Western technology versus Third World development in the query, such a *doxic adherence* also implicitly anticipated a set of *thinkable* responses from Otto. In fact most interested agents and agencies (‘Western’ or ‘Third World’) involved in such

⁷⁵ The architecture course in the SPA in Delhi, like the majority of schools of architecture in India, has what is known as a ‘practical’ or ‘professional’ training component in the 4th year of the 5-year graduate course. Students generally spend a semester working in established architectural offices of their choice, and are often paid by the architectural office for the term they spend there. While students are encouraged to choose their architectural offices or architects, they do not necessarily gain access to their desired office—either due to their competency, which many architects and architectural offices use as gate-keeping mechanisms, or due to sheer non-availability of appropriate positions in the chosen architectural office. Students are supposed to keep a logbook of their work experience, and also records of drawings and projects handled in the office—on which they are graded through a viva-voce. As can be guessed, working in well-known architectural offices or under a well-known architect often translates into a higher educational capital, translated further, in this particular case for instance, into the natural choice of the interviewer.

⁷⁶ “Nature’s Apostle.” *Architecture + Design*, 70.

collaborations had to submit to such a *doxa* before being involved in the first place. An extract from Otto's response shows how he was equally reflecting such a *doxic* adherence,

I would like these [Third World] countries to make more and better self-building houses, at low cost and of a high cultural standard. Of course this does need training, but it would be foolish to import European plans, technology, material and even the laws of social housing. One should study one's own local patterns—even though it is not an easy task to get at the roots.⁷⁷

The next question from Bhatia, as a logical extension of the previous query, is pointedly concerning the state of architecture and architects in India. Bhatia asks, "You mean architects in India and other Third World countries are proceeding in the wrong direction?"⁷⁸ Again, the implicit intellectual or technological servitude to a Western viewpoint, or assertion in this case informs Bhatia's seemingly ingenuous query. This is despite the need perceived by the younger generation of Delhi-based architects during the time, a group in which Bhatia was also located, to precisely overcome such an attitude. Implicitly the query is posed to seek a direction *for* contemporary Indian architects, and by logical extension, contemporary Indian architecture, from a representative of the Western world or architecture. While the concern with the search for an appropriate architecture for India, exhibited by the younger generation of architects in India at the time, is clearly reflected in Bhatia's query, the agency of *A+D* transforms the interviewer and the magazine itself, into representatives of the very group they are allied to. Otto's cautious yet anticipated response (in the context of his previous reply), once again throws the question back to Bhatia, at once reinforcing and encouraging the attitude of the younger generation of architects in India who were necessarily aligned with Otto (and who were indirectly responsible for his being in India) in such a mode of thought and action. Otto responds:

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

I would not say that architects in these countries are going in the wrong direction. Only they must find their own vision of the future. It is wrong to look to other countries and to imitate their solution—or to be too proud to learn and rely solely on oneself and be left with unsolved problems.⁷⁹

As if to finally extract an answer that could potentially provide a confirmed list of architects in India working within the ideological kit provided by Otto in the above response, Bhatia asks the final question related to Indian architecture; “What do you think of some of the current architectural work in India?” Yet again taking a cautious stand, Otto provides an answer that situates contemporary architecture in India within a larger world perspective. Otto’s stand can surely be understood with the above two responses—that of being highly cautious of forming a viewpoint on a particular architect or group of architects in India. But it is Bhatia’s persistent pursuit of a definitive answer from Otto that highlights the implicit struggle for recognition and consecration pursued by the group of Delhi-based young generation architects. With a not so encouraging response from Otto, Bhatia leaves the Third World region- or India-related queries and returns to questioning Otto’s own pursuits and personal beliefs.

Bhatia’s amateurish queries to Otto provide slight but clear indications to the prevalent categories of perception and appreciation. Otto’s interview also allows us to understand the position takings of *A+D*’s producers in the context of the active and dominant group within the field of architecture in India. The next interview to be discussed here—that of James Stirling—was conducted by Satish Grover himself (one of the founder-producer of *A+D*), and a London based Indian architect Sunand Prasad. The interview is placed in the writing space called ‘Discussion’ in the July-August 1987 issue of *A+D*.⁸⁰ At the time of the interview, Satish Grover had already published two volumes on Indian architecture (on Buddhist and Hindu, and Islamic architecture), and was a professor at the SPA, Delhi. Sunand Prasad had been trained at Cambridge and at the Architectural Association in London. Prasad had been recently (April

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ “Stirling Stuff.” *Architecture + Design* III, no. 5 (July-August 1987): 36, 37, 41, 43-45, 49.

1987) involved as a consultant for the exhibition *Le Corbusier: Architect of the Century* and wrote the Indian section for the exhibition catalogue. During the time of the interview Prasad was in India researching on a couple of books *Havelis*, and *Traditional and Contemporary Urban Morphology*.

The interview is structured into seven segments: Humanistic Considerations, Use of the Vernacular, History, The City and Architecture, On India and the Role of Symbolism, and finally on Architectural Education. Prasad, who wrote the preface to the interview, drove much of the enquiry under the segment Humanistic Considerations. This was a component to clarify Stirling's position on humanistic considerations while engaging with architecture based significantly on 'hi-tech' structure and technique, as for instance in his Stuttgart Museum and the Olivetti Training School. Grover and Prasad conduct the rest of the segments of the interview jointly, and most of the questions are posed to extract Stirling's own comments regarding the debates that surrounded some of his architectural creations.

However, there are certain segments in the interview, such as Use of the vernacular, History and the one on India and the role of symbolism, where queries are posed to seek Stirling's view on objective divisions prevalent during the time such as vernacularism, modernism and postmodernism. Significant points raised and answered amongst these are the relevance of history, critique of the Modern Movement, Stirling's position in relation to architects such as Robert Venturi and Michael Graves, Colin Rowe's influence on Stirling as a teacher, etc. Throughout the interview Prasad is seemingly content in asking general queries expected in an interview of this sort, along with the consideration of the specific context of Stirling being in India in the first place. Stirling's specific replies to each query are not the object of critical enquiry here, but are nevertheless, necessary for considering the intentions of the queries. Consider the following sample of questions asked by Prasad in the joint interview;

- Q. 18: Do you think that there is a fundamentally new sensibility regarding history and the critique of the Modern Movement, not only in your work, but also at large?
- Q. 24: Is it not a tragedy that town planning and architecture are regarded as two separate hermetic entities nowadays?
- Q. 31: Would you like to be building in India?
- Q. 35: How did you prepare yourself for judging the IGNC A competition? (Stirling was one of the jury members of the IGNC A competition)
- Q. 38: What do you think they should teach in schools of architecture?
- Q. 44: Do you have some favourite projects of your own?⁸¹

Prasad's queries neither antagonise over the state of architecture in India, nor do they hint at extracting a judgemental comment or response from Stirling regarding the quality of contemporary architecture in India. Even the one question posed to Stirling about his role as a jury member for the IGNC A competition, was inserted in between Grover's volley of queries regarding India and the role of symbolism. On the other hand, Grover tries to contextualise the questions around issues perceived to be problematic in Indian architecture or Indian architectural history (Grover's own expertise). In fact, in the interview, there are certain instances where Grover seems to pose himself as the outright spokesperson of Indian architecture—sometimes of India itself. Consider the following questions from Grover;

- Q. 13: You've used one word which is creating a great deal of debate in India today—vernacular—which has different interpretations. What did you mean by it?
- Q. 22: In the history of Indian architecture, there are very few examples of so-called secular architecture because of our historic traditions in which secular architecture was always impermanent in relation to religious architecture. Fifteen years ago, the study of history concentrated on temples, mosques, etc., and these are the buildings

⁸¹ Ibid., 41, 43-45.

which have survived. When you talk of relating aspects of history to the contemporary situation, how would you deal with this problem?

- Q. 32: Do you agree that the volume of work being done in India today is incomparable to any other time or any other place?
- Q. 34: So you are saying that there's a certain kind of maturity that we [Indian architects] have yet to achieve in this framework of contemporary architecture and that we haven't absorbed enough of history to achieve this?
- Q. 36: May I add one other word, symbolism. In Indian architecture it has often been a more important objective than the architecture itself. And in the brief for the IGNCAs, symbolism is also mentioned. How important a role does this play in Western architecture?⁸²

Grover engages Stirling with certain queries that not only do not have any direct relation with Stirling or his works, but in fact are specifically related to the field of architecture in India, or the state of contemporary Indian architecture perceived by Grover at the time. Often Stirling is at pains in answering such questions. For instance in responding to question 32 above, Stirling exclaims,

I really do confess that I'm not knowledgeable. The Indian architects who come to England are always the same and I do know three or four of them well—but beyond them I don't really know the work of the less internationally reputed Indian architects who are probably doing the vast majority of the new building works.⁸³

Stirling goes on to admit that whatever little he does know about Indian architecture is further complicated by his own biased 'taste' in design, and provides a general overview of what he thought one needed to produce quality architecture. Grover's question 34 is even more interesting. It reflects the need to be 'mature'—to come of age—with regards to resolving contemporary architectural issues in India. We have already come across the notion of

⁸² Ibid., 37, 41, 44.

⁸³ Ibid., 44.

maturity of the architectural community in India voiced in the IGNCA editorial by Satish Grover's wife, Razia Grover. Razia Grover had posited that the Indian architectural community had 'surely' reached a stage of maturity during the IGNCA competition. Satish Grover's reiteration of the same concern during Stirling's interview showcases a consistent anxiety felt by the community of architects that both Razia and Satish Grover implicitly are referring to—that is, the young Delhi-based generation of Indian architects. As we now know, Satish Grover also belonged to the same group of Delhi-based architects and architect-educators. Therefore it can be argued that his queries also reflected the general perceptions of this specific group of architects in India about contemporary Indian architecture.

Finally, Grover's question 36 reminds Stirling of the important aspect of symbolism in contemporary Indian architecture, that the IGNCA competition brief also stipulated. While Grover generalises a perceived condition regarding the use of symbolism in 'Indian architecture,' he asks Stirling about the role of symbolism in Western architecture. Grover's search for an *Indian* vocabulary in his own architectural practice has been discussed earlier in this chapter (section 7.1). Grover's own notion of contemporary Indian architecture relied on 'a sense of history' that selectively employed Buddhist and Hindu architectural iconography, motifs and ethos as identifying features of 'Indian' architecture. A design methodology not necessarily shared by everyone in the group of contemporary Delhi-based architects, Grover's query arguably reflects an anxiety about his own position vis-à-vis contemporary Indian architecture. At the same time it also reflected the general anxiety felt during the time by interested agents within the Indian architectural community. The desperate need to evolve out of Corbusian traditions (as perceived by Prem Chandavarkar) or out of slavishly employing symbolism connected with historic Indian architecture; that is, the need to be modern or postmodern, yet reflect (traditional) Indianness in the search for an authentic identity in contemporary Indian architecture—was surely the *doxa* that operated in the field of architecture in India during the time.

The above interviews along with Menon's articles discussed in the discourses surrounding the Festival of India project, and Connah and Chandavarkar's reviews of the IGNCAs competition's winning entries, provide us with a snapshot of the extent of the field of architecture in India—and that of the dominant and the dominated groups within it during the mid-1980s. As we know, during the mid-1980s in India, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Mumbai were the loci of the accumulated social energy with respect to various fields of cultural production including architecture. These regions therefore represented themselves as sites from where the dominant within the field of architecture in India operated. These regions, with their interested agents and institutions, were also the source of the efficacy of all acts (and struggles) of consecration within the larger field of architecture in India. To gain access to the dominant group, and to become one of them, or challenge them, one had to operate from these regions. Thus the strategies of the agents and institutions that are engaged in such position-takings—such as acquiring legitimacy to represent contemporary Indian architecture or to suggest directions architects in India must take to produce more identifiable contemporary 'Indian' architecture—depend on the position the agents and institutions occupy in the structure of the field.

The position of agents such as Menon, Bhatia, Grover and Connah and institutions such as Delhi's SPA and Ahmedabad's School of Architecture in the CEPT, is constituted on the basis of the distribution of specific symbolic capital, institutionalised or not. Further, their position is also constituted through the mediation of the dispositions constituting their *habitus*, which are relatively autonomous with respect to their position. For instance cultural representatives such as Pupul Jayakar and Kapila Vatsyayan, designers such as Dashrath Patel and Rajeev Sethi, and older generation architects such as Kanvinde, Doshi, Correa and Habib Rahman constitute various positions across different fields of cultural production, depending on the dispositions available within the same *habitus*. As discussed in chapter 8, a particular *habitus* is circumscribed by a group's homogeneity and can be regarded as a system of dispositions that endure across social space in particular and homogeneous environments shared by groups of people. We also know that

operating as a worldview within a group, the *habitus* becomes the basis for enacting that worldview through the practices of the different fields. The Festival of India project and its various components, and even the IGNC A competition project are prime indicators of such an active *habitus* in operation during the mid-1980s—especially in Delhi. These characteristics empower interested agents, and hence reflect through their discourse, the degree to which it is in their interest to preserve or transform the structure of this distribution and thus to perpetuate or subvert the existing structure of the field.

Specifically with respect to gaining the authority over the issue of identity (re)production in Indian architecture, we have already come across Menon, although a south-Indian, as an active Delhi-based agent. Chandavarkar on the other hand is based in Bangalore, much further from the real struggles within the dominant group in the field of architecture in India. However, his desire to be associated with them, yet again showcases the struggle firstly to belong to the dominant group of the Indian architectural community, and secondly to advise, and by the same logic, to have authority in positing what Indian architects should and should not do in their search for an identity for contemporary Indian architecture.

10.7: Summary and discussion of event-based discourses in A+D

Apart from the above three main events—the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, the Festival of India and the IGNC A competition—that *A+D* reported through its various spaces of writing, there were other miscellaneous events of mostly national importance that reflected more directly the voice and the dominance of the younger generation of Delhi-based architects or their partial alliances. These were also consistently covered by *A+D* in its journalism, reproducing; firstly, further significations with respect to the same objective categories of perception and appreciation—modernity and tradition—within the aegis of contemporary Indian architecture which the events served by their institution; and secondly, the significance accorded to

the Delhi-based group of architects and architect-educators agents and agencies in their individual and collective desires to be the legitimate representatives of contemporary Indian architecture. It is beyond the scope of the current study to carry out extensive event-by-event analyses of all such discourses.⁸⁴ However, observations of such discourses chronologically in *A+D*—along with the critical analyses of the discourses surrounding the selected three events in this section—provide the following four conclusive points for the current section regarding *A+D*'s position in the field of architecture in India during the mid-1980s:

- (a) Architects belonging to the Delhi-Ahmedabad-Mumbai regions dominated the field of architecture in India during the mid-1980s.

- (b) The older generation of architects (mostly from the same regions as above) are consistently involved in architectural events of state, national or international importance (such as in competition juries, award ceremonies, state, national and international recognitions, etc.). On the contrary, the younger generation architects (mostly Delhi-based) are involved in debating, critiquing and discussing issues, or in forging new alliances with respect to contemporary Indian architecture through the objectifying categories prevalent during the time. However, while the positions of the older generation of already consecrated architects and architect-educators remained largely unchallenged, the younger generation indulged in charting, as it were, new directions for contemporary Indian architecture. The phase of contemporary Indian architecture inherited by the younger generation from the older generation, was necessarily perceived as now in the hands of a 'mature' community of post-independence architects.

- (c) While a *doxa* of identification (in both senses of *identification*⁸⁵) of contemporary Indian architecture dictates much of the discourses, this *doxa* is further pursued through the particular objectifying categories of modernity and

⁸⁴ For a more comprehensive list of articles published in the first decade of *A+D*'s publication, the reader may refer to the index provided at the end of this study.

⁸⁵ Refer 'Overview' in chapter 1 (Introduction).

tradition in Indian architecture. It is observed that agents and agencies with a particular *habitus* driven by the same *doxic* adherence often formed partial alliances and accorded symbolic value to events and their discourses, while simultaneously consecrating themselves and others within the alliances. These were further reproduced in *A+D*, as a site of discourse operating from the locus of accumulated social energy during the period—Delhi; enhancing in the process *A+D*'s own signification, as well as the symbolic and cultural capital of the interested agents and agencies.

(d) While struggle for recognition and legitimacy to represent contemporary Indian architecture understandably dictated the positions and position-takings of interested agents within the field of architecture in India, it is observed that this struggle was more apparent amongst individuals situated within a homogeneous group defined and differentiated by geographical boundaries. Actively pursuing issues connected with contemporary 'Indian' architecture, these agents unwittingly, and through the agency of *A+D*, created a centre and margin—the dominant and the dominated groups—within the field of architecture in India. Then present, and future discourses of contemporary Indian architecture, pursued either by interested agents from the field of architecture in India or from collaborative practices involving foreign agents and agencies, further derived, represented and reproduced information already circumscribed by the existing field condition.

Thus the event-based discourses in *A+D* provide us with the condition of the field, and related field-effects in respect to architecture as a specific field of cultural production in India during the mid-1980s. The next chapter on subject-based discourses in *A+D* will provide us with variations of the objectifying categories namely, modernity and tradition, through which the producers of *A+D* surveyed certain architects and their works. There are several aspects of such a coverage—from a regional focus to focus on lesser-known to famous architects—through which the producers of *A+D* strived to cover what they thought were the legitimate practitioners of contemporary Indian architecture within the period under consideration. However, at least two issues of *A+D* were exclusively devoted to specific subjects and were published as 'special

issues.’ The idea of specialising particular subjects explicitly consecrated extraordinary significance to those themes and subjects. However, it also allowed interested agents and agencies involved in those special issues (either in or through production, editing and contribution), to forge their individual or collective struggles, from their respective positions, for the monopolistic power to impose legitimate and prevalent categories of perception and appreciation vis-à-vis Indian architecture.

Chapter 11

Subject-based discourses in *A+D*

11.1: Introduction

Through a focus on subject-based discourses in *A+D*, this chapter analyses the ways in which contemporary architectural practices in India were not only selectively represented in *A+D*, but also framed in particular categories of perception and appreciation. The focus on marginal architects or architectural firms (subjects) and highly consecrated ‘subjects’ connected with contemporary Indian architecture in *A+D* was implicitly adjusted to and reflected the prevalent conditions of dominance and marginalisation in the field of architecture in India. These not only reinforced the legitimacy of dominant notions and perceptions of contemporary Indian architecture (practiced by certain protagonists from the dominant regions), but also, almost unconsciously, reproduced notions of Indian architecture, society and culture, which can be located in India’s colonial past and later pre-independence nationalist imaginations.

Subject-based discourses in *A+D* relied largely on the objective division of tradition and modernity in the post-independence architecture of India. Tradition and modernity were perceived during the 1980s as definitive categories through which Indian architects must necessarily practice

architecture, and describe its various issues, in order to negotiate and establish an appropriate post-independence identity. In the previous chapter we have seen how these constructed categories, working through the agency of certain events of national or international importance reproduced in *A+D*, influenced the positions and position-takings of individual agents and agencies belonging to the dominant or dominated groups within the field of architecture in India. We have also seen certain limits (both taxonomical and geographical) of such struggles. These have, essentially, provided us with a snapshot of the field of architecture in India during the 1980s, that this study is trying to understand.

However, while such struggles were implicit in the previous chapter, through a different set of discourses, the producers of *A+D*, *by and through A+D's own agency*, provided occasions for interested agents and agencies to further consolidate or challenge the positions of their allies and competitors. A primary space of writing that pervades during the first decade of *A+D's* publication (and even later) is the discourse produced through, what can be called, the 'life-and-work' genre. Through this genre *A+D* reported on and documented works of selected architects from the regional diversity of India (and abroad). While these architects may be considered as 'subjects' for the sake of analysis here, it is firstly, the objective classifications pursued by writers through the agency of *A+D* in these subject-based discourses, and secondly, the interests and values associated with the particular positions of both the writers and their subjects in their individual or group struggles within the field of architecture, which are the foci of this chapter.

The primary objectifying categories through which *A+D* focused on architects in general are apparently the variants of the modernist versus traditionalist theme. Further by capitalising on the positions of the subjects, writers and commentators, *A+D* sought to consistently forge its implicit agenda of supporting the younger generation architects in India, for accession to legitimacy with respect to the representation of identity in contemporary Indian architecture. However, the imperative to cover contemporary 'Indian' architecture necessarily meant that the producers of *A+D* had to extend *A+D's* gaze beyond regions such as Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Chandigarh,

which were traditionally associated with post-independence architectural creativity, and devise new ways of categorising regionally different architectural practices. Despite its desire to integrate in the field of architecture the various socially, culturally and geographically different producers and consumers of architecture, we will see how *A+D* implicitly reproduced the importance accorded or not, to specific regions within India regarding post-independence architectural creativity—thus indirectly assisting in consolidating the positions of the dominant within the field of architecture in India. In its first decade of publishing, *A+D* focused on little-known, to relatively well-known subjects—that is, on subjects of marginal value, as well as on at least two highly consecrated ‘subjects’ of Indian architecture. The first section in this chapter discusses, through selected discourses, *A+D*’s focus on relatively lesser-known, or often ignored architectural practices of India.

11.2: Representation of marginal subjects in *A+D*

The ‘structuring structures’ through which the producers of *A+D* focused on individual architects and architectural firms of ‘little-known,’ ‘ignored,’ and ‘relatively well-known’ status¹—that is of relatively marginal value, are evidently pursued through a combination of the following: (a) through the title of the article or essay itself (which at times reflected *A+D*’s regional consideration as well), (b) through particular questions in the interview of the

¹ My use of such categorisations, it must be clarified, is drawn from the survey of existing literature on post-independence or contemporary Indian architects. By architects and architectural firms of ‘little known’ status, I mean those individuals and firms located in and around consecrated regions of architectural creativity such as Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh and Delhi, that have had marginal representation so far in pan-Indian surveys of contemporary architecture. Appearing in the first decade of publication in *A+D*, these include the Chandigarh-based architectural practice of Satnam and Namita Singh, and the Goa-based architect Sarto Almeida. The category of ‘ignored’ architects and architectural firms is derived from *A+D*’s own recognition of such architects and their practices as ‘ignored’ in its pages. These architects and architectural firms belong to the eastern and southern regions of India that have had a relatively marginal or no representation in existing discourses of contemporary Indian architecture. In this regard, in *A+D*, we come across at least four architectural practices from the southern region and one from the eastern region of India. By the term ‘relatively well-known’ status, I mean those architects and architectural firms who belong to consecrated regions such as Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Delhi, and who have managed to attract occasional attention in discourses of contemporary Indian architecture such as magazine articles or pan-Indian surveys. In *A+D*, we find Uttam Jain, Hasmukh Patel and Anant Raje, as examples of such relatively well known figures of post-independence and contemporary Indian architecture.

subject, (c) through descriptions of architectural works of the subject, and (d) through the interests and values associated with the particular positions of the writers, implicitly misrecognised as interests and values by both the writers and by the producers of *A+D*. In the coverage of such ‘subjects’ and their architectural works, through the combination of structuring structures (a), (b), (c), and (d), *A+D* at times explicitly reproduced the objectifying categories of modernity and/or tradition through which contemporary architectural practices were judged during the time. In this section, *A+D*’s coverage of five architects and architectural practices belonging to the consecrated regional axis of perceived post-independence architectural creativity in India are discussed first. This is followed by *A+D*’s coverage of architectural practices in regions usually overlooked or ignored in discourses of contemporary Indian architecture.

11.2.1 Uttam Jain, a Modern Traditionalist

An example of the way in which *A+D* began a process of categorisation through the title is evident in an article in *A+D*’s inaugural issue itself. The inaugural issue of *A+D* in 1984 focused primarily on the Mumbai based architect Uttam Jain, who was also an editorial board member of *A+D* at the time. The front cover of this particular issue bears an elevation-sketch of a project by Jain (Neelam Cinema in Balotra, Rajasthan), and surrounding the image are the defining titles “Modern Traditionalist,” and “The design philosophy of Uttam Jain” (Figure 24). The issue of categorisation must be understood in the context of a connected and relevant issue, that of the *position-taking*² by *A+D* through this particular focus on Uttam Jain.

² We have already covered certain main aspects of *A+D*’s position-taking earlier in this chapter (section 7.1).

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 267
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 24: Cover of the inaugural copy of *A+D* (Vol I, no 1, November-December 1984). Note the caption surrounding the main image, “Modern Traditionalist—the design philosophy of Uttam Jain”

While *A+D*, a Delhi based publication, had well established and ‘famous’ architects working privately (such as Achyut Kanvinde, Raj Rewal and Shiv Dutt Sharma) and through government machinery of the PWD (such as Habib Rahman) within Delhi itself, the producers of *A+D* decided to dwell on the “design philosophy” of Uttam Jain, a lesser-known Mumbai based architect, of the generation then only in mid-career. This focus even ignored the, by then famous, practices of stalwart Mumbai and Ahmedabad based architects such as Charles Correa, Anant Raje and B. V. Doshi (another editorial board member at the time). While Jain was not entirely an obscure figure in the field of architecture in India,³ the symbolic value attached with Jain and his works, and hence Jain’s cultural capital, was evidently not comparable to that of certain older generation architects who were already famous even in the ‘western’ circles of architecture (from where most of them had achieved education and/or training). Furthermore, and more importantly, Jain also did not belong

³ Apart from being on the editorial board of *A+D*, Jain was also the editor of the *Journal of Indian Institute of Architects (JIIA)* during the time. Jain had recently delivered the keynote address at the National Convention of the RAIA (Royal Australian Institute of Architects) in Brisbane.

to the Delhi-based group of young architects with which, as we have seen earlier, the producers of *A+D* were necessarily allied to.

This is a curious stance by *A+D*, in a very consciously designed and timed inaugural copy—for it also contains an obituary to Indira Gandhi on a translucent page (figure 25). By employing such a focus in its inaugural issue, *A+D* necessarily promised an expansive territorial coverage from the start vis-à-vis Indian architecture.⁴ This stance may be construed as pushing back into the past *A+D*'s rival magazine *Design* and thereby trying to 'date' *Design*'s journalism. Jain's works had been consistently attracting attention in *Design* since 1962. Jain's projects mainly dealt with educational buildings and tourist facilities, predominantly in regions of Rajasthan and Gujarat, and employed regional materials and techniques of building construction. However, *Design* never aimed to define Jain's "design philosophy" or provide a legitimate category through which his work could be judged.⁵ Jain's work was presented by and in *A+D* as *the* ideal marriage of tradition and modernity—the turning point, or indeed, the turning page in the course of contemporary Indian architecture (figure 24)—that may or could be achieved in the quest for an appropriate architecture *for* India. *A+D*'s categorical definition aimed to identify what was more or less a superficial and the most visible characteristic of a set of Jain's works, with the hindsight of those already documented and published by *Design*. Thus, this imposition of a legitimate category can be read as a markedly different strategy adopted by *A+D* in opposition to the position of the *Design*, the magazine it was trying to supersede.

⁴ Apart from focusing on a Mumbai based architect, the editorial issue also had a feature on the Madras (now Chennai) School of Architecture and Planning.

⁵ The titles of articles employed by *Design* while featuring Jain's works such as; "School at Kuha near Ahmedabad" [*Design* 6 (1962 May): 18-21.]; "3 recent projects by Uttam Jain" [*Design* 10 (1966 Nov.): 21-[26].]; and "Two factory buildings by Uttam Jain" [*Design* 12, no. 1 (1968 Jan.): 17-[20].] mainly documented the projects executed by Jain – concentrating on the building type that it was featuring and not on the architect or his philosophy of design as such.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 269
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 25: Obituary to Indira Gandhi on a translucent page in the inaugural issue of *A+D*.

This implicit adherence to descriptions of architectural works based on prevailing objective categories of perception and appreciation, became a norm for the producers of *A+D* to report on contemporary architects and architecture of India. Whilst variations of the predominant objective divisions—that of tradition and modernity—were perceived as being practiced by some of the more famous older generation architects of India (such as B. V. Doshi and Charles Correa), by choosing to focus on a younger Mumbai-based architect, Uttam Jain, it can be argued that *A+D* necessarily had to forge a direct and different symbolic association—“modern traditionalist”—to include Jain in the dominant group represented by older generation architects.

This ‘grouping’ of little-known architects and their works within the predominant modern/traditional trend carried out by the more famous architects, was also actively pursued by publishing or presenting, in a disinterested manner, symbolic accreditations and recognitions through and in the different ‘spaces of writing’ within *A+D*. For instance in a stance similar to the inaugural issue, in its Nov-Dec 1986 issue, *A+D* focused not on a consecrated architect or an architectural firm, but the structural consultant, Mahendra Raj

(who was also on *A+D*'s editorial board at the time).⁶ Raj had worked with architects such as Charles Correa and Raj Rewal on projects of national importance and demanding structural dexterity. An example that shows how symbolic accreditations and recognitions help in the process of consecration is seen in *A+D*'s March-April 1987 issue, which published a letter from Charles Correa. Correa wrote:

Congratulations on your cover story! Mahendra Raj is that rare professional: an extraordinarily brilliant and creative mind, coupled with total integrity and dedication to work. The chronology of his structural designs is really the history of contemporary Indian architecture. I can't imagine a more apt subject for your journal.⁷

With this in mind, consider the following text from Bourdieu that shows how a structure of a field of cultural production is unwittingly maintained by the dominant:

In and through the games of distinction, these winks and nudges, silent, hidden references to other artists, past or present, confirm a complicity that excludes the layperson...Never has the very structure of the field been present so practically in every act of production.⁸

The decision of the producers of *A+D* to include a focus on Jain and his architecture in *A+D*'s inaugural issue can be seen as an act that brought to existence, in the public realm, a relative newcomer in the field of architecture in India. By refusing to feature anyone from the more recognisable proponents of 'appropriateness' in contemporary Indian architecture—that is from the older generation of Indian architects—it can be argued that the producers of *A+D* wanted to provide the younger generation of Indian architects an accession to legitimate difference. Consistent with such an attitude, we have seen earlier how certain agents in their desire for an exclusive legitimacy to

⁶ *A+D* focuses on Raj's 'structural poetry' in vol. III, no. 1, November-December 1986 issue.

⁷ "'Letters' Section." *Architecture + Design* (Mar-Apr 1987): 11.

⁸ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*, 109.

(re)present Indian architecture, necessarily indulged in struggles against their own or their peers in the various spaces of writing in *A+D*. Thus the producers of *A+D*, who belonged to the younger generation of architects in Delhi, through *A+D*'s agency, helped in consolidating such struggles to push back into the past the previous generation of architects and their achievements—while necessarily including them occasionally to also maintain continuity with the consecrated figures in the field of architecture.⁹

11.2.2 Hasmukh Patel as a pioneer of Modern architecture in India

The November-December 1985 (vol. II, no. 1) issue of *A+D* similarly focused on an Ahmedabad based, and relatively well-known architect Hasmukh Patel. The writers Miki and Madhavi Desai (co-authors, with Jon Lang, of *Architecture and Independence* published in 1997) pursue a defining label for Patel who is considered “a pioneer of Modern architecture in India” in the title itself.¹⁰ Gaining a diploma in architecture from the Department of Architecture, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Vadodara in 1956, Hasmukh Patel went to the USA to pursue a Masters degree from Cornell University. In 1961 Patel returned to work under an Ahmedabad based architect, Atmaram Gajjar. Patel eventually took over Gajjar's Ahmedabad office. The interesting period of the early 1960s in Ahmedabad—the city's historical associations with Le Corbusier and some of the stalwart Indian architects such as Kanvinde, provides the backdrop to the Desais' story about Patel's formative years in the city.

When Hasmukh Patel started his practice, the Modern style of architecture had already been chosen for the city of Ahmedabad. Except for some chaste buildings in the International style by Achyut Kanvinde, architects in Ahmedabad had shown a sustained and clear preference for the Corbusian

⁹ While Balkrishna Doshi's inclusion in the editorial board from the start is such an example, *A+D* would carry out a special issue on Doshi much later—only in the January-February 1989 issue.

¹⁰ Miki and Madhavi Desai. “Deft Designer: meticulous planning and crisp detail underline the work of a pioneer of Modern architecture in India.” *Architecture + Design* II, no. 1 (November-December 1985): 14-16.

Brutalist style since the fifties, when Le Corbusier himself had designed no less than four projects in the city.¹¹

Sifting through the narrative of obvious influences, the Desais argue that, “Patel’s...work, however, has never been subservient to any style.”¹²

Consequently, Patel became one of the noted architects who got involved in the development of the local vocabulary for Brutalist architecture. All the same, since he was not so rigidly trained in any one particular style, his choices were prone to modification and deviation. Thus, what we perceive in the initial phase of his career is his own interpretation of Brutalist architecture, and the influences of certain western architects, to whose work he had been exposed while studying in the USA, especially Mies van der Rohe and the Austrian architect Harry Seidler.¹³

The Desais locate Patel’s recent architecture in an urban culture, where stylistic borrowings from Brutalism (in Patel’s use of materials in their purest forms), or attention to detail, cost effectiveness, and a conscious breaking away from conceptual symmetrical designs, etc. are considered necessary tools and influences through which Patel negotiates in his architecture, the “relationships between the inside and outside, spatial experiences, and...his love for detailing.”¹⁴ Further, Patel is presented not as a high-end architect, but as an architect consciously aware of working in a context dictated by the economical, cultural and traditional factors of India—where, in Patel’s own words, “[o]ne cannot take anything for granted in a country like ours. An architect must be on his toes all the time.”¹⁵ In other words, Patel is represented as an architect working indirectly in the service of the society (and hence, nation). Similarly, Patel’s involvement with architectural pedagogy, and in professional and public bodies at the city, state and national levels, are

¹¹ Ibid., 14.

¹² Ibid., 15.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

portrayed as Patel's untiring support and commitment to the architectural profession. The Desais finally conclude the article thus,

Hasmukh Patel's buildings project him as an architect giving the society architectural images necessitated by its emulation of western urban models. His latest designs are strong as well as popular images that are assured of a firm rooting in our urban culture.¹⁶

Whether or not there has been a stylistic subservience in the architecture of Patel is debatable. However, what is more interesting in such a subjective concern is the mute desire against such subservience in the eyes of the writers—explicitly visible in the concluding lines of the article. Implicit in such a portrayal is firstly, a conscious understanding by the writers, of the prevalent objectifying categories of 'viewing' contemporary Indian architecture—and secondly, a desire to present another viewpoint of their own, necessarily adjusted to express their own current positions and future position takings. It can also be read as an implicit stance taken by the writers, to endow the subject with the recognition deemed deserving for inclusion in the consecrated group of architects within the field of architecture in India. Thus, for the Desais, Patel comes across as an architect who, like the world-renowned figures of Indian architecture such as Doshi, Correa and Rewal, had similarly returned to India to work in the economic, traditional, cultural and environmental contexts of India.

A brief understanding of the positions and associations of the writers will help us to understand why *A+D* could include such an article in the first place. Miki and Madhavi Desai, graduates from the Ahmedabad School of Architecture, had both studied in the United States prior to their setting up an architectural practice in Ahmedabad. The Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) and, especially the School of Architecture within CEPT at Ahmedabad are synonymous with the career of B. V. Doshi (who had helped in establishing the school in 1962). Doshi's associations and his involvement

¹⁶ Ibid.

in the School guaranteed the School both symbolic and cultural capital, and as such the institution has remained a dominant site of architectural pedagogy and discourse since its inception.¹⁷ Graduates from the School continue to have in them instilled both symbolic and cultural capitals in being associated with a prominent institution of architectural pedagogy. Miki Desai is now a professor in the School of Architecture, Ahmedabad, while Madhavi Desai is an adjunct faculty at the same school. When they wrote the piece, Hasmukh Patel had held the positions as the Director of the Ahmedabad School of Architecture and as Dean of the CEPT.

Similar to the positions taken by A. G. Krishna Menon, Gautam Bhatia and to an extent Prem Chandavarkar, the Desais, with their accumulated symbolic and cultural capital, were necessarily engaged in making a name for themselves in the field of architecture in India. Their associations with their alma mater, and with figures such as Doshi and Hasmukh Patel, in conjunction with the need fostered by *A+D* to represent contemporary architecture in India, was an opportune moment for the Desais to portray their own reading of Patel's architecture. The need for an architectural language that transcended both Corbusian vocabulary and an unsympathetic appreciation of the Indian context, inform Desais' article on Hasmukh Patel and his architecture. As we can see, the Desais' reading was necessarily adjusted (either in agreeing with or contradicting) to the prevailing objectifying categories through which contemporary architecture in India was represented. Suited to the interests of the younger generation of Delhi-based architects, the Desais, and Hasmukh Patel, such an article then reflects the existence of an objective harmony with regards to certain concerns and issues prevalent across the field of architecture in India.

¹⁷ The association with Le Corbusier earlier in Doshi's career, Doshi's passionate pursuit of *Indianness* through mythological and 'subconscious' imaginations later in his own architecture, as also his pioneering efforts in the field of architectural education in India were definitive points in terms of educational, symbolic and cultural capitals, that helped Doshi attain an esteemed position in the field of architecture in India. Further, due to Doshi's own position, foreign architects and educators such as Joseph Allen Stein, Benjamin Polk, Bernard Kohn, Christopher Benninger, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown and Christopher Alexander maintained a constant link with the Ahmedabad School of Architecture.

11.2.3 Chandigarh's Second Generation architects

Consistent with such an initiative, in the following issue (vol. II no. 2, January-February 1986), *A+D* published an article on a Chandigarh based architectural practice run by Satnam and Namita Singh. The author, Rajnish Wattas, necessarily situates the Singhs' architecture in "Le Corbusier's territory," in the voice of a younger generation of emerging Indian architects,

As the pioneers who participated in the inception and planning of the city along with the plenipotentiary master, Le Corbusier, bow out and fade away into a well-earned historical glory, the younger professionals are taking up new challenges.¹⁸

Although the Singhs are shown to have 'tremendous regard' for Corbusier's rational architecture in the city, the article posits them as informed critics of Chandigarh's 'regimented bye-laws and monotonous urban design.' Regarding a particular project by the Singhs, the article even suggests that Singhs' architecture is "perhaps subconsciously reminiscent of Louis Kahn's vocabulary of architecture."¹⁹ However, as with the positioning of Hasmukh Patel in the previous issue, there is a mute desire to characterise the Singhs' sensibilities as critical of the architectural legacy they were born into—that is of Corbusier's modernist ventures in Chandigarh. The explicit categorisation of the Singhs, as belonging to the second generation of Chandigarh-based architects, is an implicit reminder of the first generation's struggle against the strong Corbusian (or Kahnian) influences. Tying down the Singhs' consideration of certain traditional concepts in contrast to the Modernist paradigm (of which the article seems to be a critique), Wattas observes in a particular project by the Singhs,

¹⁸ Rajnish Wattas. "Chandigarh's Second Generation Architects: A New Look in Le Corbusier's Territory." *Architecture + Design* II, no. 2 (January-February 1986): 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

A variety of covered areas, semi-covered pavilions, open-to-sky courts and arcades framing distant views enact a drama of space and light akin to that in Fatehpur Sikri, a monument from which Namita draws great inspiration.²⁰

In another instance Wattas quotes from the Singhs directly to reinforce that it was also in the interests of the architects to transcend the imperatives of a Corbusier influenced modernist vocabulary with little or no consideration to ornamentation in design,

Look at the way people ornament their *havelis* in the old cities, especially in Rajasthan. They feel so house-proud—so what’s wrong with decorating something you love, as long as you do not reverse the order of priorities in a building.²¹

The Singhs are also positioned against a general category of ‘modern Indian architects’ who are thought to be uncritical in their emulation of ‘western concepts’ in architecture. In conclusion, Wattas outlines the future for the the Chandigarh based practice of the Singhs:

They also voice their concern about the present day trend of those modern Indian architects who emulate western concepts with total disregard for local climatic and social factors...Although this architect couple—at their comparatively young age—already have much to look back on with satisfaction, there are vast horizons ahead beckoning the best of their talents and energies...And if these second generation architects of the city can absorb the best of Chandigarh and yet evolve beyond it—that indeed would be their best tribute to the landmark city that has created them.²²

Although specifically devoted to a Chandigarh-based architectural practice and their search for an appropriate Indian architecture, Wattas’ article represents the judging of regional architecture against the well-critiqued and internationally famous projects in India by Western ‘masters.’ Wattas’ article

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 22.

²² Ibid.

gains more currency because of yet another obvious situation—which as I argue, was implicitly understood by both Wattas and the producers of *A+D*. Chandigarh is a region that in architectural discourses (and memory)—both national and international—conjures strong associations with identity negotiations regarding the appropriateness of Modernism in Third World regions. Such a precondition then becomes a backdrop in which Wattas and *A+D* can easily construct a new generation of architects, and their perceived struggles to overcome the dictates of modernism that Chandigarh, and India, is purportedly inundated with.

11.2.4 Sarto Almeida, an authentic regionalist

Another article, similar in its intentions to the ones discussed above, forged a stronger defining category for the subject in focus. Similar to the focus on Uttam Jain, the May-June 1987 issue of *A+D* focused on a relatively unknown figure in the field of architecture in India—the Goa-based architect Sarto Almeida.²³ The author, Gerard da Cunha, a graduate from Delhi's SPA, is based in Goa.²⁴ da Cunha considers the 'important influence' of B. V. Doshi, under whom Almeida had worked for six years, as a definitive training moment in the architect's life. Doshi's influence, according to da Cunha, instilled in Almeida and his architecture, a 'self-conscious striving for contextual relevance through the modernist idiom.' In locating Almeida's influences and commitment, and the architectural atmosphere of Ahmedabad, this article has parallels with the previously discussed articles by the Desais and by Wattas:

It was a time when Ahmedabad was considered the Mecca of Indian architecture. Corbusier and Kahn had just built there and had left behind a very strong influence on the professional fraternity. Well-known architects were frequent guests to Ahmedabad and to [the Vastu-Shilpa Foundation]. Life

²³ Gerard da Cunha. "An Authentic Regionalist." *Architecture + Design* III, no. 4 (May-June 1987): 14-28.

²⁴ Gerard da Cunha's projects in Goa during the time included private residences, low-cost houses, and a few tourist bungalows.

revolved around architecture and, as Almeida says, “we lived more in the rarified spirit of exploratory heights than on food and drink.”²⁵

The complex issue of marrying the traditional with the modern, a prevalent concern during the time, is also perceived in the ‘best’ of Almeida’s work. da Cunha portrays Almeida as a crusader ‘armed’ with a modernist vocabulary, striving for ‘the reparation of regionalist values’ in contemporary Indian architecture:

The best of Almeida’s work today reveals a conscious strain of an authentic regionalism. Although the changing social and economic order demands simultaneous changes in architectural crafting, Almeida persists in searching for an idiom which will truly reflect the traditional and the modern, although he admits how difficult this is and how elusive the vernacular can be.²⁶

Knowing that da Cunha was associated with Delhi for his formal education in architecture, it was in the interest of *A+D* to engage him in its larger project of covering contemporary Indian architecture. The project which aimed at the publication of—or ‘making public’—regionally diverse contemporary architectural practices in India, in this particular case, extended its gaze beyond the usual Delhi-Ahmedabad-Mumbai-Chandigarh axis. To be true, if compared with the previous articles by the Desais and Wattas, da Cunha’s article is also consistent with familiar associations—with respect to names, institutions and themes such as Ahmedabad, Le Corbusier, Kahn, Doshi, the Vastu-Shilpa Foundation. da Cunha’s own background in Delhi’s SPA only completes the circle of associations generally implicit in most of *A+D*’s articles aimed at highlighting the works of lesser-known architects from the regional diversity of India. With respect to the objectifying theme of modernity and tradition, in this particular case pursued through the term ‘authentic regionalist,’ da Cunha strives to introduce yet another stylistic convention. However, deviating from the pan-Indian framework of the Desais and Wattas, da Cunha is interested in addressing the specific region in which the architect in question is located, and

²⁵ da Cunha. “An Authentic Regionalist,” 14.

²⁶ Ibid.

its 'authentic' representation through architecture. Such claims, as we will see in the last two sub-sections of this particular section, begin to get stronger as the focus of *A+D* shifts from consecrated regions of architectural practice in India.

11.2.5 Anant D. Raje, building on tradition

In articles dealing with subjects relatively well-known within Indian architectural circles, *A+D*'s focus mainly involved an interview with the subject. For instance, in the November-December 1987 issue (Vol IV, no. 1), *A+D* focused on the Ahmedabad based architect, Anant Raje.^{27A} A comparatively well-known architect within the dominant architectural circles of India during the time, the article on Raje is titled, "Building on Tradition: the lessons of history guide an architect's interpretation of building design for modern times." Raje, a graduate from the Mumbai J. J. School of Arts in 1954, had worked in the Philadelphia office of Louis Kahn between 1964 and 1968. After returning to India, Raje was subsequently invited to work in Ahmedabad by his 'close friend' B. V. Doshi. Having deeply imbibed the design philosophy and formal language of Louis Kahn during his years in Philadelphia, Raje subsequently gained widespread recognition for the highly respectful but original extensions he designed for the IIM campus Kahn had been building at Ahmedabad (with Raje and Doshi's assistance) up to his untimely death in 1974. Raje was also (and still is) a visiting faculty of various schools of architecture in India and abroad.

Raje was interviewed by an Ahmedabad based architect Rajinder Puri. Graduating from the Ahmedabad School of Architecture, Puri subsequently did his post-graduation in Minimum Cost Housing from Canada's McGill University. At the time of the interview, he was involved with B. V. Doshi's housing and human settlements research cell, the Vastu Shilpa Foundation.

²⁷ Rajinder Puri. "Building on Tradition." *Architecture + Design* IV, no. 1 (November-December 1987): 14-31.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 280
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 26: Cover, *A+D* Vol. IV, No. 1, November-December 1987

This particular focus on Anant Raje showcases yet another body of work where an Indian architect from a consecrated region—in this case Ahmedabad—is ostensibly struggling to be free of the constraints of Modernism (either Corbusier- or Kahn-influenced) in the desire to produce contextually relevant architecture. Documenting Raje’s independently designed buildings (dining halls and kitchen, Management Development Centre, Staff Housing and Married Students Housing) for the IIM project, *A+D* sought to differentiate Raje’s approach from Kahn:

Compared to the Homeric dimensions of Kahn’s buildings, Raje’s design is on a more human scale where the skills of the craftsman and builder have been fully exploited to result in a subtle and diffused, rather than an empirical statement of architecture.²⁸

Raje’s Kahn-influenced ‘subtle and diffused statement of architecture’ is corroborated by also documenting recent works by him at the time such as the Galgabhai Farmers’ Training School in Palanpur (1983) and the ATIRA staff housing project in Ahmedabad (1984) (both in the state of Gujarat), and the

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) building at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (phase I was completed in 1987, at the time of this A+D focus). The national award winning IIFM project consists of a trabeated structural frame that reappropriates Kahn's formal and material oeuvre in the Indian subcontinent, through however, reinforced concrete and load bearing walls. This is deployed throughout the periphery as a uniting structure for a conglomeration of self-contained cuboidal volumes. (image) Although subsequent narratives on Raje's work have located his influences, specifically with regards to the IIFM project, in the historical town of Mandu in Madhya Pradesh as well, this particular focus on Raje in A+D does not make such a specific claim. The only place where Raje seems to have imbibed some 'tradition' is in his use of the street metaphor for the MAFCO project in New Mumbai. Raje is portrayed as an Indian architect undoubtedly influenced by Kahn, yet striving to find an architectural vocabulary of his own. The title 'Building on Tradition' may well have been rewritten as 'Building on the Tradition of Louis Kahn' as there is hardly any overt reference to Indian tradition or traditions in Puri's essay (Figure 26). Yet, the brief synopsis of the focus on Raje in the contents page concedes the inherent paradoxes of that putative guest:

Raje is...the proud inheritor of Kahn's legacy in India, and apart from the IIM where he has built independently of Kahn, his major projects derive inspiration from the master and from Indian tradition.²⁹

Nevertheless, while Raje himself hardly provides any cue concerning his search for identifying 'Indian' characteristics in his architecture, the questions he is posed implicitly crave responses addressing prevailing concerns about the course of contemporary Indian architecture and its identity. For example, the third question Raje is posed begins thus:

In India, music traditions like the gharanas have survived even to this day, whereas architectural institutions have died down. Can you say something

²⁹ Contents. *Architecture + Design* IV, no. 1 (November-December 1987): 5.

about the lessons you drew from working with Kahn, who is now considered to be an institution himself?³⁰

This question demonstrates an indirect method of hinting at and hunting for answers that would at once cater to, in this particular case, the issues of; (a) a loss of architectural traditions, (b) a search anew for an Indianising architectural identity, and (c) a need to critically review ‘western’ influence in the contemporary architecture of India. Dealing with an already consecrated subject (with an implicit understanding that he could be a potential future Indian ‘master’), provided opportunity for both the correspondent, Puri, and *A+D*, to extract responses regarding the future course of architecture and architectural education in India. Two queries from the interview directly correlate to such an internalised understanding: (a) “Having been involved in teaching architecture in India and abroad, what directions would you give to young architects?” and (b) “I would like you to comment on the state of architecture in India and its future. As we know, we have been going through a series of phases in the last two hundred years or so, and some very strong schools have emerged.”³¹ Thus in such articles, notwithstanding the theme of modernism and tradition being implicitly served, subjective musings such as the architect’s negotiation with, or of, a particular style are kept at a minimum. The architect or the subject is generally engaged in a larger discourse concerning the current and future course of Indian architecture, architectural profession and pedagogy, etc.

11.2.6 *A+D*’s eastern focus

While the five architectural practices discussed above were all from regions generally well-represented with regards to debates about identity in contemporary Indian architecture, *A+D* also focused at least three issues in its first decade on architectural practices from regions in India that were generally overlooked, or insufficiently covered by major past and parallel discourses of

³⁰ Puri. “Building on Tradition,” 14.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

contemporary Indian architecture. Concerns about marginalisation in the magazine's coverage were raised early on. In the May-June 1986 issue, for instance, *A+D* published a letter from one Raja Gupta from Bhubaneswar, capital city of the eastern state of Orissa in India, who pointed out:

A couple of issues of your journal *Architecture + Design* which I have had the privilege to read, has made me aware that its contribution to present day Indian architecture is outstanding...I feel, however, that eastern India, with its heritage of traditional architecture and its contemporary works, fails to receive proper attention in your journal.³²

Clearly responding to the letter, *A+D* focused in the same issue on a Kolkata based architect Dulal Mukherjee and the issue of the marginalisation of discussion about the architecture of Kolkata and the eastern regions of the country:

The question has often been asked why contemporary architecture of eastern India receives little mention as compared to that of the northern and western regions...That a void exists is unquestionable, and some of the reasons for it have been presented in the following discussion...³³

Under the heading "Calcutta's Gordian Knot," *A+D* describes a discussion between architects Ranjit Mitra and Dulal Mukherjee, and a couple of individuals from the housing and accounting sectors, namely, Sailapati Gupta and Sukhomoy Bose. These individuals debated about Mitra's observation of a 'real crisis' in architecture in Kolkata. Interesting points emerge, especially from Mukherjee. Mukherjee differentiates the north-west region from the eastern part of India in respect not only to historical background and climate, but also to the "effect of the foreign architects who have worked there."³⁴ Mukherjee elaborates,

³² Raja Gupta. "Eastern Lacuna (in the "Letters' Section")." *Architecture + Design* II, no. 4 (May-June 1986): 17.

³³ "Calcutta's Gordian Knot: A Discussion on the Impasse Confronting the State of the Art in the Metropolis of Eastern India." *Architecture + Design* II, no. 4 (May-June 1986): 20-22.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

The progress in north-west India today owes a lot to Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn having worked there. Perhaps [the eastern region] also needed a ‘guru’. One person coming over to Chandigarh meant a lot—the architects, who were young at that time, were influenced by Le Corbusier and are the ones who have made the change possible there today.³⁵

With regards to architectural pedagogy and exposure of students to the architectural profession in eastern regions, Mukherjee sounds equally disheartened:

Yes, the students who come [to Kolkata] for training or otherwise have a very scrappy knowledge of the subject. They have not been sufficiently exposed to the profession. This is largely because institutions like the Bengal Engineering College do not allow their professors to practise, so they become fossils.³⁶

At one point Mukherjee even advises that students “should not train in Calcutta—they should go to places like Ahmedabad, Baroda, Chandigarh or Delhi.”³⁷ As is explicit from the above discussion, it was indeed perceived that only a foreign intervention—essentially a ‘Western’ involvement—could propel the architectural profession out of its stupor (in the marginalised regions), and inject meaning and symbolic values to subsequent architectural creations (and their creators such as Mukherjee). While the explicit consecration of architectural agents and agencies, and their significance within the field of architecture in India, are reproduced through the discussion, implicitly the discussion also concedes the existence of a dominant group of architectural agents and agencies within the field of architecture in India. However, *A+D*’s agency in representing such a structure does not end there. After the discussion, *A+D* focuses on the works of Mukherjee, calling him a ‘Valiant Contender,’ and reproducing similar concerns voiced by him in the previous ‘knot’ discussion:

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 21.

³⁷ Ibid., 21.

Asked about the shabby state of architecture in Calcutta, Mukherjee blames history...Above all, the exposure that Calcutta's architects have had in terms of reputed architects designing for this city has been negligible. He regrets that not even a nationally famous architect, leave alone a Corbusier or a Kahn, has ever been asked to design in Calcutta, for if any of them had, he feels it would have given Calcutta's architecture a much needed shot in the arm.³⁸

Hinting at the pervasiveness of a dominant group of architects and architectural institutions within the field of architecture in India, the article refers to Mukherjee's responses again,

[Mukherjee] also blames the regional schools of architecture and the local chapter of the Indian Institute of Architects for not promoting adequate activities to create a larger interaction with the rest of the country. He himself has now begun travelling whenever time permits, primarily to increase his own exposure, gain confidence and to learn to work with newer materials and techniques.³⁹

If through Mukherjee's article *A+D* implicitly reproduced the dominant structure of the field of architecture in India, in a couple of other issues, *A+D*, while similarly extending its gaze beyond the usual regions of architectural production, further consolidated such a structure. If *A+D* focused only once on the eastern part of India, it is noteworthy that within its first decade of publication, *A+D* focused at least twice on contemporary architectural practices in the south of India.

11.2.7 *A+D*'s southern focus

Unlike the focus on a contemporary 'Valiant Contender,' from eastern India, both articles on south Indian architectural firms in *A+D* rely on historically

³⁸ Ranjit Mitra. "Valiant Contender: Determination and Grit Mark an Architect's Struggle to Excel Himself." *Architecture + Design* II, no. 4 (May-June 1986): p. 24.

³⁹ Ibid.

well-established and recognised architectural firms from the region. While relying on established architectural firms from the region as opposed to ‘discovering’ new practices, may arguably exhibit a constraint caused by A+D’s geographical location, the most striking feature about the articles on the south-Indian architectural practices, are the titles that frame the articles. Such a framing in A+D becomes significant to analyse when considered in the cognisance, by the producers of A+D, of the neglect of south India in discourses of contemporary Indian architecture. Evidence of this is explicitly expressed in the contents page, in the brief about A+D’s second article.

The South is frequently neglected in the mainstream of modern architecture in India. Nevertheless, some of the oldest architectural practices belong to this region, and these firms have been quietly but diligently pursuing their own creative course.⁴⁰

The first article is on a Bangalore based architectural firm, Chandavarkar and Thacker, written by a Bangalore based architect, Edgar Demello. The firm, Chandavarkar and Thacker was formed in 1963 by Tara N. Chandavarkar and Pesi Thacker, and had established itself as a pioneer in providing a multi-service architectural consultancy in south India in over a span of two decades.⁴¹ Titled “Sentinels in the South,” the article is followed by Demello’s interview with Thacker. Himself a graduate from Delhi’s SPA and having subsequently worked in the Netherlands and Austria, Demello necessarily situates Chandavarkar and Thacker’s Bangalore-based architectural practice within a larger discourse of ‘Modern Movement,’ and the movement’s influence in India.

In the sixties there were only a handful of architects practising in Bangalore and a new awareness had to be created in tune with the language of the Modern

⁴⁰ Contents. *Architecture + Design* IV, no. 5 (July-August 1988): 5.

⁴¹ We have already encountered one of the new-generation partners of this firm earlier in this study—Prem Chandavarkar. In the article, Demello mentions the association of a ‘new-generation of architects,’ in Chandavarkar and Thacker: “A new generation of architects, Vasuki Prakash, Sanjay Mohe, Dev Bildikar and Prem Chandavarkar, as associates of the firm, are giving a new impetus and evolving a language based on an innate understanding of traditional forms in the context of contemporary materials and values.” Edgar Demello. “Sentinels in the South.” *Architecture + Design* III, no. 5 (July-August 1987): p. 18.

Movement. Corbusier was already in Chandigarh and Kahn was arriving in Ahmedabad, but to the average client, architecture, in spite of India's rich heritage, only meant the assemblage of a group of rooms. Chandavarkar and Thacker were responsible for introducing to the region new forms and technologies that were adaptable to existing lifestyles.⁴²

Even while maintaining, like the Desais did in their article on Hasmukh Patel, that the architecture of Chandavarkar and Thacker "has never been obsessed with the question of style," Demello feels compelled to seek in Chandavarkar and Thacker's architecture, an architectural language appropriate for India,

Each project has been treated solely in its own right, looking at its specific requirements. Since one is working in the Indian context it is hoped that an architecture specific to India will result from this attitude even if stylistic variations are found across the firm's range of projects.⁴³

Demello continues such a pursuit in the interview as well. The line of questions below demonstrates Demello's pursuit of responses relating to stylistic, functional, or ideological influences, and the relevance of essentially western concepts of architecture in the works of Chandavarkar and Thacker:

In India, Corbusier and Kahn have influenced a whole generation of architects in the fifties and sixties. Since you were so closely exposed to the Masters, were you in any way influenced by them, and what guided the development of your architectural sensibilities?

While executing your designs you must have been influenced by the ideas of the Modern Movement. How did you incorporate these into the traditional set-up?

The so-called International Style is slowly being replaced by the more regional approach. Increasingly, architects are rediscovering our past heritage and the ingenuity in the planning of older cities, their emphasis being on the individual.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

Do you think we can draw upon those models to mould our fabric in way that is more habitable?

During your earlier days there must have been a strong movement to rid the architectural vocabulary of all things colonial. Would you like to comment on the upsurge of neo-colonial styles of building in the city today?⁴⁴

While the Modern movement and its later critiques in western architecture are unwittingly considered influential in the development of the firm's architecture, the firm's rooted-ness in Indian architecture or architectural concepts, however brief, is pursued towards the end of the interview. Demello's third question (above), strategically shifts the focus to the firm's efforts in 'rediscovering' the traditional Indian concepts in architecture and urban planning. As an afterthought, it is soon followed by a question about neo-colonial statements in Indian architecture—that is, on a strand of postmodernist ventures prevalent in Bangalore at the time. Following on from the responses to both the questions—Thacker essentially maintaining the firm's belief in respecting regional sensitivities in a modernist vocabulary not relying on postmodernist inflections—Demello's last question together with its response, are particularly interesting. They not only reflect the influence of the Festival of India project on the fraternity of architects across India during the period, but also demonstrate the prevalence of a consensus amongst them regarding what is or should be appropriate for Indian architecture, and for India in general.

Demello: The Festival of India and other exhibitions have created an awareness in people about the Indian design approach and spatial planning systems. How does one, as a teacher, impart this knowledge to students so as to inculcate in them a real indigenous response to design?

Thacker: The Festival of India showed the architecture of the past and the present. Though technologically, it showed two different periods in time, spiritually it showed the soul of India, for spiritually the past and present have

⁴⁴ Ibid., 19, 20.

not changed. Is what I would like to tell my students, “Discover for yourself the spirituality that created the past, and in it you will also find the future.”⁴⁵

Thus Demello manages to find an architectural vocabulary in Chandavarkar and Thacker’s works that conformed to the prevalent objective divisions of modernism and tradition. Yet being also aware of the south’s marginalisation in architectural discourses related to contemporary Indian architecture, Demello necessarily labels the ‘mature firm of designers,’ Chandavarkar and Thacker, as ‘sentinels’ in the south of India. For *A+D*, and for Demello through his association with *A+D*, the south Indian architectural firm was a watcher or a distant observer of the debates about appropriate Indian architecture carried out by dominant agents and agencies of architecture in India. In and through such a framing, as we can see, is also an implicit understanding (by both the dominant and the dominated) of the concentration of such dominant agents and agencies of ‘Indian’ architecture within regions such as Delhi, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad and Mumbai in India. Such an understanding then dictates the distinguishing features of similarly successful agents not situated within the dominant regions of architectural production within India.

Such a mode of framing is consistent in *A+D*’s second south Indian focus issue. Titled, “The Old Guard,” the article by *A+D*’s Chennai-based correspondent at the time, Sujatha Shankar, featured three ‘prominent’ and ‘long-established’ architectural firms of Chennai (Madras): Pithavadian & Partners (established in the 1920s), Chitale and Son (established in the 1930s) and C R Narayana Rao (established in the 1940s).⁴⁶ However, before we discuss Shankar’s interview with members from the three architectural firms, it is of paramount importance that we analyse Shankar’s introductory text that precedes the focus on the architectural establishments. For it is in this text that Shankar articulates the distinguishing aspects of south India (as opposed to the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁶ Sujatha Shankar. “The Old Guard.” *Architecture + Design* IV, no. 5 (July-August 1988): 19-28, 31-39, 42-53.

northern and western regions of India), in terms of both historical development and a particular socio-cultural ethos. Her first paragraph sets the tone:

The city of Madras, located on the Coromandel seaboard, has not had turbulent events to dot its chart of history. The resultant socio-cultural milieu reflects the dignified ethos of a quiet and simple people. Not surprisingly, the architecture of Madras echoes these temperate qualities.⁴⁷

The ‘turbulent’ events that Shankar alludes to are the pre-British-colonialism historical cultural incursions into the north Indian and western Indian landscapes by the Greeks, the Turks and the Mughals. Through unavoidable processes of acculturation and socio-cultural intercourse inherent in such invasions, the cultural landscape and cultural products of the northern and western regions of India had undergone irreversible transformations over time. It had also apparently changed the socio-cultural ethos of the people in those regions, as Shankar specifically points out the opposites found within the socio-cultural ethos of the people in the south. Thus the northern and western regions of India are associated in Shankar’s text, as regions historically having to deal with issues of identity in the various ‘turbulent’ waves of cultural infringement. The regularity of such cultural invasions had also transformed the people of those regions into complex, vigilant and aggressive representatives of Indian culture, as opposed to the ‘dignified ethos of a quiet and simple people’ in the south. Thus in Shankar’s text, the south developed throughout history as literally an uncorrupted civilisation, a process which, according to Shankar, was to continue even in the post-independence years.

In the years following Independence and in the newly liberated spirit of freedom, a generation of Indian architects on the threshold of their creative careers were deeply influenced by the visionary works of Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn. History deemed that the South be untouched by this exposure and influence. This fact has provoked strong, opposing viewpoints...[some south Indian] architects contend, perhaps not unjustifiably, that had there been an architect of that calibre—an intellectual giant with powerful ideas—in the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 19.

Southern region, there might have been a catalyst reaction to set creative minds in a new direction.

The counter viewpoint expresses concern at the superciliousness of the ‘Corbu-influenced’ or the ‘Kahn-influenced’ mind and maintains that adapting to and Indianizing a Western school of thought need not be the only architectural solution. After all, the South has always been uncorrupted, free to choose its directions and to create its own vocabulary in the context of its environment.⁴⁸

The nascent voice of Tamil dissidence notwithstanding,⁴⁹ Shankar’s text also conveys the prevailing viewpoints of south Indian architects, one of which resembles the stance of the Kolkata-based ‘valiant contender,’ Dulal Mukherjee. The marginalised representation of contemporary architecture of south India is attributed, by a section of south Indian architects, to the absence of a western architectural ‘intellectual giant’ in the region; whose presence could have, through catalytic reaction—as it did in the northern and western regions of India—boosted contemporary architectural creativity in these regions.

While the first viewpoint has undertones of a regionalist resistance, the second viewpoint converges more with a neo-nationalist approach to architectural design, where western concepts could be ignored altogether in searching for an appropriate Indian architecture. A. G. Krishna Menon, whom we have encountered numerous times throughout the current study, has voiced similar concerns regarding contemporary Indian architecture. Not surprisingly so, as he is one of the main voices of the first architectural firm that Shankar’s article focuses on—Pithavadian & Partners. In keeping with the scope of the current study, we shall concentrate on Shankar’s interview with members of this particular firm while briefly reflecting on her focus on the other two firms from south India.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁹ K. M. De Silva. *Regional Powers and Small State Security: India and Sri Lanka*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995.

Pithavadian & Partners has a colonial history—it was known as Jackson & Barker (after a RIBA Fellow, Jackson, and a civil engineer, Barker, who established the firm in 1922). The firm was taken over by another Fellow of the RIBA, Major Harold F. Prynne in the early 1930s. J. E. Davis and M. A. Riddley Abbot joined the firm in 1945, and the firm was renamed as Prynne, Abbot & Davis. Soon afterwards, Major Prynne retired and an Australian R. Kiffin Peterson joined the firm in 1949. Abbot was killed in an air crash in the early 1950s. Bennett Pithavadian who joined the partnership in 1954, went on to be the sole proprietor of this firm on the retirement of two of the remaining partners, Davis and Peterson. Inherited from a colonial enterprise the foreign educated architect Bennett Pithavadian remained the sole proprietor of the firm until 1972, when he took on A. G. Krishna Menon, P. T. Krishnan and J. Subramaniam as partners. The firm was renamed as Pithavadian & Partners. While P. T. Krishnan had soon started his own practice, Pithavadian and Subramaniam, and Menon, managed the firm from Chennai and Delhi respectively. Menon and Subramaniam are the principal voices representing Pithavadian & Partners in Shankar's focus on the firm in *A+D*.

Structured under various themes such as 'Western concepts and Indigenous resources,' 'Traditional versus Modern,' and 'Post-modern and the Search for Identity,' the interview is represented not as a set of questions and answers, but as a set of responses from the architects. Primary amongst the respondents Menon and Subramaniam, is the voice of Menon, who not only engages with the issue of marginalisation of the south, but also seems to drive his own and prevailing notions of representation in Indian architecture. Further, his own positions (and voices) as a south Indian located and functioning from Delhi (that is, North India, with its dominant set of agents and agencies) are reflected in a number of his responses. For instance, consider Menon's response to the issue of finding a satisfactory balance between slavishly resorting to western concepts and utilising indigenous resources,

A lot of architects are seriously wondering how to Indianize their western experiences....Therefore, instead of being inspired by Corbusier or Kahn, we're trying to find out what is Indian Architecture in 1988....I see the influence of

western masters such as Corbusier and Kahn as both good and bad. They dominated the profession and in a way, the North has been corrupted by their influence. Whereas here in the South, my feeling is that we were more concerned with the nature of reality because we weren't greatly influenced by outside forces. But buildings in the South are stamped because they are not Corbusier or Kahn influenced and therefore, do not show an 'awareness'. But I do feel that the South has to get into more of a dialogue with the others.⁵⁰

The 'others' Menon is referring to (and implicitly citing himself as such), are presumably both the dominant agents and agencies of architecture in the 'North' of India, and the western concepts or proponents of architecture with which the 'South' was relatively 'uncorrupted.' Strong divisions between the 'North' and 'South' block, as it were, are apparent in Menon's response. However Menon, as a privileged insider, goes a step further in pointedly critiquing certain precedents and prevailing attitudes of the dominant figures of contemporary Indian architecture in their search for an 'Indian' architecture:

The problem that all of us face in modern architecture is that we've got to adapt to it in a few months, a year or whatever the gestation period of the project is. So we take shortcuts, we abstract, we symbolize, we tend to generalize, and a process that took centuries is sought to be compressed into months which is very difficult....In the search to make Louis Kahn Indian you do concrete arches and use all kinds of gimmicks.⁵¹

Despite sounding apprehensive of postmodern tendencies in contemporary Indian architecture (note also the veiled attack on Anant Raje's Kahn influenced IIFM project in Bhopal), Menon encourages a restrained postmodernist attitude in the following response:

Yes, the Post-Modern wave has had an influence on India...because we're so western oriented. But, if we are inspired by our roots we might be able to

⁵⁰ Shankar. "The Old Guard," 20.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

mitigate its influence....I'm quite sure that we can successfully go Post-Modern within our particular context.⁵²

Menon further clarifies the philosophy of the firm (and his own) in the practice of architecture—one that necessarily mediates between traditionalist and modernist ideologies, yet has its firm footing in a client oriented and an economy oriented or pragmatic practice. However, in citing an example of how the agency of structural engineers is incorporated within the firm's practice, Menon yet again resorts to pointed remarks aimed at certain dominant individuals from the 'North' and their architecture. In the specific case below, one can easily discern the remark being aimed at Raj Rewal's 1971-72 Permanent Exhibition Complex project.

On the other hand, there can be a structural engineer who is so dominating that you have foolish buildings. You look at them and wonder why they are built the way they are except to prove that it could be done. There are several such buildings in Delhi which are considered fantastic examples of how the North has better architecture than the South.⁵³

Rewal's Permanent Exhibition Complex project in Delhi essentially incorporated two large exhibition halls—the Hall of Nations and the Hall of Industries. The renowned structural engineer, Mahendra Raj assisted Rewal in the unique three-dimensional space frame design of the exhibition halls, which resembled a 'truncated pyramid' according to an account. While it was proposed initially to construct the project out of prefabricated concrete parts, considering the enormous costs the project could have incurred, and a lack of specialist building contractors in India at the time, the entire structure was built, incredibly, by pouring reinforced concrete *in situ*. As Brian Brace Taylor remarked in 1992, it was indeed "the first time a structure of this nature has been realised in this manner."⁵⁴ Menon's pointed remark to such a response that ignored all pragmatic considerations—social, financial, technical and

⁵² Ibid., 21.

⁵³ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁴ Taylor. *Raj Rewal*, 13-14.

cultural—in trying to forge a perceived authentic example of adopting modern Western technology transfer to contemporary Indian architecture reflected the ensuing debates about such issues during the time.⁵⁵ However, by incorporating the debate to express a difference in attitudes in architectural practice between the North and South of India, Menon, the south-Indian Delhi-based critic, politicises such an issue within a larger framework of the legitimacy of such architectural response with regards to expressing ‘Indian’ progress.

Similar responses regarding the historical influences of the ‘North’ and the relative insulation of the ‘South’ from such influences, if not so politically driven or pointed in their observation as Menon’s, intermittently suffuse Shankar’s interview with members of the other two architectural firms from south India—S. L. Chitale and Son, and M/s C. R. Narayana Rao. For instance, under the heading “Flamboyant Architecture vs Limited Vernacular,” S. L. Chitale observes:

I think North India definitely has a rich culture in terms of Mughal influence on buildings. This did not filter to the southern region and here, the vernacular was limited to religious buildings and not so much to other types of monumental buildings...certainly, there was more exposure in the North as compared to the South. In the past eighty-odd years in the North, there has always been exposure to western influences externally as well as internally.⁵⁶

Choosing to disagree with his father, Kapil Chitale’s disingenuous observation nevertheless distinguishes the ‘people in the North’ from other regions of India:

That kind of influence or exposure doesn’t have much effect on vernacular architecture. One major reason for this kind of awareness is that people in the North are far more conscious of ethnicity. If you take the Buland Darwaza, Diwan-e-Khas, Diwan-e-Am—they are not temples, they are not mosques, but

⁵⁵ Ibid., 14-15.

⁵⁶ Shankar. “The Old Guard,” 32.

they are still monumental. This kind of monumental building does not exist in any other part of the country, as far as I know.⁵⁷

C. N. Raghavendran, son of C. R. Narayana Rao and a partner in the firm started by his father, makes a similar claim, “In Madras there have been no strong architectural works which have provided a stimulus as they have done in northern and western India.”⁵⁸

Menon’s views are highlighted here because of his own interesting position as the Delhi-based voice of the south-Indian architect—as projected in the interview—involved, and hence conversant with, the architectural explorations of the dominant agents and agencies within the field of architecture in India. Such a condition becomes all the more interesting when we consider the agency of *A+D*—a Delhi-based publication—that publishes such a viewpoint in its focus on contemporary architectural practices in the south of India. Even while representing the postcolonial insecurities of south Indian architectural firms, so to speak, *A+D* only reproduces, even more strongly, the dominance of the north Indian—or the Delhi-based—group of architects and architectural agencies.

Apart from covering such relatively marginalised ‘subjects’ of Indian architecture in the first decade of its publication, *A+D* also covered the relatively well-known figures in contemporary Indian architecture, such as Achyut P. Kanvinde, B. V. Doshi, Charles Correa and Raj Rewal. However, it dedicated an entire special issue firstly to Le Corbusier and his architecture in India and secondly, to the Ahmedabad-based doyen of contemporary Indian architecture (and one-time close associate of Le Corbusier), B. V. Doshi. The next section discusses these special issues of *A+D*.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

11.3: Representation of highly consecrated subjects in A+D

This section discusses *A+D*'s coverage of two highly consecrated figures connected with post-independence and contemporary Indian architecture—Le Corbusier and Balkrishna V. Doshi. In focusing on highly consecrated subjects of architecture, the methods through which the discourse is pursued in *A+D*, over and above the three structuring structures mentioned in the previous section, are: (d) through 'special' issues devoted entirely to certain 'deserving' subjects, and (e) through an implicit understanding of the positions and significance of both the writers or reporters of the subjects, and the subjects themselves.

11.3.1 Le Corbusier in India

Le Corbusier's birth centenary was the occasion when the producers of *A+D* decided to carry out a special issue on the highly consecrated 'Master' of 20th century architecture. Many Indian architects (primary amongst them, B. V. Doshi), who had directly or indirectly followed the master's design ideologies, had left a legacy of Corbusier's legitimate spokespersons within the dominant regions of architectural production in India. The debates surrounding Le Corbusier's architectural genius and his works elsewhere and in India are distinguishing features of this particular issue. Further, being allied with the younger generation of Indian architects, it was also an occasion for *A+D*, to feature the thoughts, through a few representatives (mostly from Delhi), of young generation architects in India. As we know, the implicit desire by the younger generation to occupy the dominant position of the older generation dictated many positions and position-takings within the field of architecture in India. In either ways—in representing India's legitimate inheritors of the Corbusian tradition, or in representing a new generation of critical thinkers in the field of architecture in India, such a focus on the highly recognised international figure Le Corbusier was bound to be 'profitable' for *A+D*. Thus, for *A+D* only a special issue could justify such a focus, which would reflect on

the present Indian ‘architectural consciousness’ regarding the Master, his works, and the debates surrounding them. Razia Grover’s editorial establishes the grandness of the project in the first paragraph itself,

This year, the birth centenary of Le Corbusier is being celebrated all over the world in various ways which recall the life and work of a man who is unequivocally referred to as the architect of the century. Although in his lifetime his views were often challenged and rejected, Le Corbusier was also sought, envied and admired across the continents. A colossus with many talents, he was truly a rebel of his times who stood by his convictions and often suffered because of it. In India, however, he received unstinting recognition of his genius. And in Chandigarh was realized many a frustrated Corbusian dream. In the years that followed, the developments in Indian architecture pursued the path of Le Corbusier’s vision. And it is only recently that architectural consciousness has been stirred to recall and draw upon the rich legacies of its own past.⁵⁹

Forty years on since the master’s exit from India, and considering a generation of architects influenced by him, for *A+D* it was indeed time to carry out “conversations with some of those who were lucky to have been closely associated with Le Corbusier” to “reveal insights into the personality of the man...”⁶⁰ However, more importantly, for *A+D*, this special issue also gave an opportunity to advocate more strongly the prevalent *doxa* about a consensus on the identification of contemporary ‘Indian’ architecture. References to the prevailing objectifying categories of modernity and tradition notwithstanding, Grover’s editorial speaks to an imagined international audience, and hence seems consciously modest in its imposition of a particular strong agenda. Nevertheless, the time-tested orientalist metaphor of India as a ‘melting pot’—similar to the notion of an all absorbing ‘sponge’—frames *A+D*’s insistence on informing the imagined international reader about an identity of Indian architecture in its continuing tryst with history and its various influences.

⁵⁹ Razia Grover. “Editorial.” *Architecture + Design* III, no. 6 (September-October 1987): 7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

With the current shift in architectural thinking which places regionally appropriate forms in high priority to the universalism of Le Corbusier, his lessons for India are understandably being reassessed. India can boast of having been a magnificent studio where architectural history was made. But could we really afford those indulgent exercises? Today, economy of scale and building methods which are sympathetic to our own culture are being increasingly espoused. Perhaps, we are still too close to Le Corbusier to arrive at any conclusions. But, as has been the pattern in India, hopefully his legacy too will be assimilated into the melting pot to enrich the essence of what can only tentatively be called an 'Indian' architecture.⁶¹

This special issue, with the header of "Corb Centenary" in all the pages focusing on Le Corbusier, carries articles by Sunand Prasad (whom we have encountered before in section 8.4), Rajnish Wattas, Rodrigo Perez de Arce, Ranjit Sabikhi and P. L. Varma. It also contains interviews with two of Corbusier's well-known spokespersons in India—B. V. Doshi and Aditya Prakash. An interview with V. P. Arora, the incumbent Chief Architect and Secretary of the Union Territory, Chandigarh, follows the interviews with Doshi and Prakash. Apart from the above interviews, *A+D* also interviewed at least two architects from Delhi—K. T. Ravindran and Satish Grover—to represent the voice of the younger generation of Indian architects regarding their stand on Le Corbusier's works and influence in India. The issue ends with two articles from Kurula Varkey and Charles Correa—Varkey's small essay revisits notions of an Indian essence while Correa's essay was borrowed from another source. We shall briefly discuss certain key points from the essays and the interviews so as to understand how this special issue of *A+D*, while focusing on or showcasing different aspects of Le Corbusier's life, his architecture and the unmistakable influence he had on a generation of architects in India, was simultaneously engaged in delineating a particular future and a particular identity for contemporary Indian architects and architecture.

⁶¹ Ibid.

The first article in this special focus is by Sunand Prasad, titled, “Le Corbusier in India.”⁶² This fourteen-pages uninterrupted article (there is no scope for advertisements or announcements in between) is, in fact, one of the longest articles in *A+D* during the first decade of its publication. If we recall, Sunand Prasad was involved in the July-August 1987 issue of *A+D* along with Satish Grover in interviewing yet another architectural figure of international repute, James Stirling (see section 8.4). As was mentioned in that context, at that time Prasad had written the Indian section of an exhibition, *Le Corbusier: Architect of the Century*, which was held at London’s Hayward Gallery. The article that features in this special focus on Le Corbusier in *A+D* is extracted from the London exhibition catalogue. The article consists of a six-page essay, and in the remaining eight pages, descriptions of eight of Le Corbusier’s works in India.

In an introductory section titled ‘Before Le Corbusier,’ Prasad briefly outlines the post-independence state of architecture in India in an unapologetically ‘orientalist’ frame of view:

‘Architecture in India is still a living art, practiced on the principles which caused its wonderful development in Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries; and there, consequently and there alone, the student of architecture has a chance of seeing the real principles of the art in action.’ (Fergusson, 1876)

By the time independent India came to build Chandigarh, the first new city in the country since Jaipur (1728), architecture was a dying rather than a living art. In a hundred and fifty years or so of British rule, the high architectural tradition, or rather traditions...had withered away along with several other aspects of culture, leaving traumatic lacunae in the cultural memory which will take a long time to fill. Furthermore, nothing had really taken the place of the old architectural traditions.⁶³

Prasad’s uncritical evocation of Fergusson’s perception of Indian architecture only highlights the traumatic loss of a lively old tradition during colonial rule.

⁶² Sunand Prasad. “Le Corbusier in India.” *Architecture + Design* III, no. 6 (September-October 1987): 14-27.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 15.

Such a trope is not very alien to the prevailing notions regarding authenticity in Indian architecture. Prasad further utilises this disingenuously to showcase Le Corbusier as the harbinger of a modern tradition to the perceived lacuna in Indian architecture. Yet, the essay paradoxically posits Le Corbusier's involvement with India as 'a part of the cataclysmic encounter of...the Third World with the West.' Prasad's undecidedness in the essay to take a position with regards to either revivalist tendencies in Indian architecture or the adoption of modernist tradition only reflects the prevailing debates about contemporary Indian architecture. Not being directly associated with the dominant in the field of architecture in India, the Cambridge and Architectural Association educated, and London-based Prasad, projects himself as a *disinterested* observer of India's architectural affairs from a distance. Prasad's essay accords historical importance not only to Le Corbusier and his architecture in India, but also to their possible, positive critiques in the future—in other words, Prasad's essay provides an academic eternity to the ever-contested topic 'Le Corbusier in India':

In studying Le Corbusier in India one comes upon a number of intriguing correspondences....There are also parallels between the rhetoric of Nehru...and of Le Corbusier....In the vast arena in which different civilizations meet—and one often forgotten truth about Le Corbusier in India is that it is a part of the cataclysmic encounter of what we now call the Third World with the West—a number of coincidences are inevitable. One day, with a lot more work, we may come to know which of these reveal the way things work and which obscure.⁶⁴

Apart from discussing the historical conditions that brought Le Corbusier to Chandigarh, and his involvement in Ahmedabad, the essay notifies the reader about prevailing critiques of Le Corbusier's works in Chandigarh. Interspersed with Le Corbusier's own polemic about his works in India, the essay strives to provide a critique of Universalist modernism while deconstructing the notion that Le Corbusier's architecture represented 'Indianness' in any manner.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 19.

In the meantime, the evidence suggests that Le Corbusier's work in India is best understood as a continuation of his own *oeuvre* rather than as a distinct, Indian, body. All these buildings could quite easily have been in other — not even necessarily climatically similar — parts of the world. That is precisely the clue to their *acceptance*. India at independence was a nation with an ancient civilization but strangely without a past in the sense of an active, self-confident cultural memory to guide a rebuilding; more accurately, its rulers chose not to deploy the culture that did exist. Victorious nationalists imported foreign culture, an act that derived its legitimacy from a belief in the universalism of science. And Le Corbusier delivered.⁶⁵

Over and above the previous article, Prasad also introduces a proposal for the re-urbanisation of Chandigarh in the same issue of *A+D*.⁶⁶ Forwarded by a Chilean architect settled in London, Rodrigo Perez de Arce, the proposal uses the case study of Rome to understand how monumental architecture could gather meaning and richness when placed within an urban order. In introducing the proposal, Prasad, suggesting a revivalist approach, concludes,

The real lesson here is in method and imagination and a willingness to offer intuited images rather than just words and statistics. We need to do such exercises; learning from Shrirangam or Fatehpur Sikri, Jaipur or Shahjahanabad, instead of Rome.⁶⁷

If Prasad's views reflect the ambiguity about deciding what course contemporary Indian architecture—through the example of Chandigarh—must take in the future, an article by Ranjit Sabikhi titled, "The City of the Future" clearly projects an optimistic future for Chandigarh.⁶⁸ Sabikhi's article, represented in *A+D*, is an extract from a paper he had presented at a seminar 'Cities in India,' which was coordinated by Satish Grover, and held in the USSR as part of the Festival of India initiative. Sabikhi's article recognises the

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Rodrigo Perez de Arce. "The Re-Urbanization of Chandigarh: A Critical Fantasy." *Architecture + Design* III, no. 6 (September-October 1987): 38-41.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 38.

⁶⁸ Ranjit Sabikhi. "The City of the Future." *Architecture + Design* III, no. 6 (September-October 1987): 42-43, 45.

contrast between Chandigarh and traditional Indian cities, and in fact, holds this as the reason for its acceptance by the majority. For Sabikhi, Chandigarh's "sense of order, cleanliness, peace, and better living conditions" are positive attributes when compared to the "older cities" in India where "due to over-intensive use and lack of conservation and proper maintenance [they] have become crowded and dirty and...centres of squalor and chaos."⁶⁹ Furthermore, for Sabikhi, Chandigarh did more than just provide better living conditions for its inhabitants through modernist planning. Le Corbusier's designs in Chandigarh also provided a timely motivation to the architectural profession in India in its perceived state of mediocrity.

Nevertheless, the Chandigarh laboratory acted as a much needed stimulus to Indian architecture at a time when much of its professional capabilities and achievements had gone into decline.⁷⁰

It is in the concluding section of his article that Sabikhi endeavours to answer his question, 'Chandigarh: Relic or City of the Future?' Orientalist notions of India are again utilised by Sabikhi, as by Prasad, to both explain the positive acceptance of Chandigarh by its residents and to secure the city in the future discourses of Indian architecture. Note also the liberal use of a consecrated name such as Charles Correa—whose essay is also included in this special issue—to attribute symbolic value to such a prevalent notion,

Through history India has been subjected to many foreign invasions and it has been influenced by many cultures brought in from abroad....Ours is the vast 'blotting paper' phenomena that Charles Correa refers to and perhaps over time as he suggests Chandigarh will become part of the Punjabi ethos and Le Corbusier be acknowledged as the greatest Indian architect of them all!⁷¹

Sabikhi, who had played a central role in coordinating the IGNCA competition the year before, further uses the example of Edwin Lutyens' design for New

⁶⁹ Ibid.,43.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 45.

Delhi, to provide a compelling evidence of such a process of historical acculturation.

[Corbusier's] experience in India draws to mind a somewhat similar set of pressures that were inflicted on another architect some forty years earlier. Edwin Lutyens when he came to design New Delhi refused to acknowledge anything of value in the traditional Indian architecture that he saw around him. Yet his buildings and the city of New Delhi are absorbed into the Indian landscape. They are part of our heritage of Indian architecture and have found total acceptance.⁷²

Finally, while considering the design of Chandigarh as a moment in history, which could possibly influence the future course of architecture in India, Sabikhi ends the article by invoking the quality of timelessness in Corbusier's architecture at Chandigarh,

The buildings are no longer as elegant as when they were built. Time and lack of maintenance have taken their toll. But the patina and the stains on the ageing concrete lend the Capitol Complex the grandeur of ruins—much like the ruins from the ancient past that haunted Le Corbusier all his life.⁷³

Thus escaping both, a critical enquiry into the functioning of the city in the present, and the seduction of prevalent post-modern critiques of Chandigarh, Sabikhi projects Corbusier's designs as timeless relics, which, despite premature and often critical observations, will potentially be 'absorbed' into the Indian landscape in the future. Sabikhi's article is followed by 'personal impressions'⁷⁴ of P. L. Varma, one of the key figures along with P. N. Thapar, who was responsible for engaging Le Corbusier along with Pierre Jeanneret, Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry (all members of the CIAM) in the project of Chandigarh. Being closely associated with Le Corbusier, Varma's article presents interesting vignettes from Corbusier's own life as well as his

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ P. L. Varma. "Corbusier's Brave New World: Personal Impressions." *Architecture + Design* III, no. 6 (September-October 1987): 45, 48.

experiences of Indian life. Varma equates Corbusier to an Indian *sanyasi* or a hermit sage, and hence easily able to connect with the ‘spiritual appeal’ of India,

His habits were simple—he ate dinner with a fisherman living close by whom he then rewarded by designing a mural on the wall of his house, and he swam three times a day in the ocean under the blue Mediterranean sky which provided him the environment to meditate. Here, he lived in self-imposed discipline, not very different from that of a *sanyasi* in India, who lives a life of a recluse in a forest....Le Corbusier lived a serious life unfettered by the superficial pleasures of present-day society. Such pleasures, to an Indian seeker of truth, are ephemeral and destructive of human happiness.⁷⁵

Varma’s recollections, in effect, pay rich tributes to Corbusier, who is considered a ‘friend,’

These few words have been written in the memory of Le Corbusier to commemorate his birth centenary—a tribute to a man from a friend. The universality of Le Corbusier’s spirit cannot be expressed in mere words. *Corbusier has become a principle* from which the rest of the world can learn (original emphases).⁷⁶

Following Varma’s ‘personal impressions,’ *A+D*, under the title “The Acrobat of Architecture,”⁷⁷ published interviews with two prominent figures from older generation of Indian architects who were also closely associated with Le Corbusier in India. These interviews are followed by an interview with the Chief Architect of Chandigarh, and interviews with two Delhi-based architects representing the younger generation of Indian architects. The first interview is that of B. V. Doshi, irrefutably the most dedicated, devoted, and famous Indian student and follower of Le Corbusier. The accompanying image could not have been more apt (Figure 27.).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁷⁷ “The Acrobat of Architecture.” *Architecture + Design* III, no. 6 (September-October 1987): 54-55, 58-59, 62-63, 65-67, 69-72.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 306
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 27: Doshi following Corbusier's footsteps. *A+D*, vol. III, no. 6, September-October 1987. p. 54.

In fact *A+D* borrowed this interview from the catalogue of 'Vistāra – The Architecture of India,' the Festival of India exhibition, which was held in the USSR the same year. Conducted by Carmen Kagal, the interview illuminates B. V. Doshi's formative years in architecture where his associations with, and influences of two towering personalities of 20th century architecture—Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn—are mobilised to understand the western architects' brief but highly productive association with Doshi, and with India. Consistent with Varma's views, Doshi also considers Le Corbusier in high regard—first as a teacher and then as a colleague, and a warm-hearted friend later, who, contrary to his projection as an arrogant genius, in Doshi's own words, "gave the ordinary man dignity" through his architecture.⁷⁸ Feelings of awe, inspiration and devotion run throughout the 4-pages long interview as

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

Doshi systematically constructs Le Corbusier's architecture of joy, and differentiates it from "Lou's" (Doshi's friendly address to Louis Kahn) architecture of serenity and meditation—both having influenced Doshi's own independent architectural projects later in India, catapulting him to the esteemed position as a master of modern Indian architecture.

In contrast, the following interview with professor Aditya Prakash who had held the position of the principal of the Chandigarh College of Architecture, provides not only a critique of Corbusier's designs in Chandigarh, but also posits Corbusier as an arrogant genius who was lucky to bag the Chandigarh project that would bring him unprecedented international recognition.⁷⁹ In the interview, which is conducted by Rajnish Wattas, Prakash nonetheless regards Corbusier's scientific approach to design as a fresh lease on life that enriched the architectural education of many Indian architects. However, a sense of despair and even betrayal prevails as Prakash points out the many pitfalls in Corbusier's design of Chandigarh that were unsympathetic to "Indian culture," which Prakash himself set to undo through his sustained involvement in framing the city's byelaws. Although designed with an egalitarian population in mind, one of the important lessons to learn from Chandigarh, for Prakash, was in the more effective integration of economic systems of the society for which a city was being built.

And last of all, the economic systems of a country should be integrated with the building of urban systems. The city should grow, keeping in mind the existing

⁷⁹ Vikramaditya Prakash, Aditya Prakash's son, has similarly espoused such a stand as recently as in 2002. In his *Chandigarh's Le Corbusier*, in a surprising twist of identity politics, Vikramaditya Prakash challenges the famous notion 'Le Corbusier's Chandigarh,' and reclaims the city by situating Corbusier as an actor in the much larger nation-building activity of the 1950s. Being raised in the city and witness to the architectural machinery (in which his father, architect Aditya Prakash was also involved) orchestrated by Corbusier—Prakash feels it is high time that the city was reclaimed from the 'master.' Prakash's postcolonial stand is reflective of similar postcolonial studies begun since late 20th century which are increasingly utilising tools to view the practice of architecture in a wider social, cultural, and political arena. Notions of identity in such studies are quickly challenged, and then suspended to demonstrate the problematic condition of (re)claiming an identity for oneself. In the context of the current study, it can be further argued that Prakash's stand in *Chandigarh's Le Corbusier* exists because of the fact that the opposite notion still persists amongst architectural historians and their scholarly works worldwide. Refer Vikramaditya Prakash. *Chandigarh's Le Corbusier: The Struggle for Modernity in Postcolonial India, Studies in Modernity and National Identity*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002.

socio-economic pattern of a society. The city is built for everybody, not for a few. Limiting a city for a fixed number of people never works. It should be an open-ended system. It would be desirable to decentralize the growth of a city by creating a system of growth where people are naturally pulled away in other directions. But in no way can you restrict a city to a few and claim that others have no right to come there.⁸⁰

Although both Doshi and Prakash celebrate Le Corbusier's involvement with India, and specifically with Chandigarh, the latter is more critical of Chandigarh's failure, and of Le Corbusier's limited understanding of the Indian culture, which caused it. In contrast, consider Kagal's query about Le Corbusier's knowledge about Indian philosophy, to which Doshi responded, "I doubt very much that he had really read Indian philosophy. Basically people who are philosophers don't have to study religions or faith.... These people are not only psychic, but at a certain level of creativity the intuitive level becomes universal."⁸¹ Thus, for Doshi, the devout Indian student of Le Corbusier (whose psychic and intuitive qualities Doshi would identify himself with in the future⁸²), Corbusier's genius was universally applicable to any civilisation or culture. Such an interview then becomes a symbolic good (which will guarantee a symbolic value in the future) that *A+D* opportunistically selects and represents in its pages. In the following interview with V. P. Arora, the incumbent Chief Architect and Secretary of Chandigarh, notions of Chandigarh's positive reception get further mileage. Arora, who was the city's Chief Architect at the time, is extremely candid in supporting Corbusier's many schemes in Chandigarh, as he considered them scientific and hence on their eventual way to success in the future. Rajnish Wattas' (the interviewer) consistent pursuit of a response agreeing with Chandigarh's failure in many

⁸⁰ "The Acrobat of Architecture," *Architecture + Design* (September-October 1987), 65.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁸² Doshi himself would reach this 'certain' 'universal' 'level of creativity,' admittedly on the night of June 17, 1992, when his psychic and intuitive levels would soar high to connect cosmic forces and mythological stories only to provide the rationale for his unconventional design for the Bharat Diamond Bourse project at Bandra, Mumbai. For an interesting read of Doshi's surrealistic account of the Bandra project, read Balkrishna Doshi. "Legend of the Living Rock." *Architecture + Design* X, no. 5 ((September-October) 1993): 51-54. Also reproduced in James Steele. *The Complete Architecture of Balkrishna Doshi: Rethinking Modernism for the Developing World*. Mumbai: Super Book House, 1998. p. 181-85.

aspects as a city draws flak many a times from Arora. Consider the following dialogue for example,

Wattas: There is a common opinion that Chandigarh is vastly over-scaled, that is, its roads, its open spaces and the building blocks lack the intimacy and human warmth that is typical of our traditional settlements. Do you agree that Le Corbusier did not quite absorb or appreciate our vernacular values in architecture and planning, or are they, in fact, contrary to the planning of a modern city?

Arora: While I may agree with you that Chandigarh is different from our typical traditional settlements, I do not agree that Le Corbusier did not absorb or appreciate our vernacular values in architecture and planning. The planning of Chandigarh is relevant to its time and both scientific and technological developments have been given due regard. I may point out that our traditional settlements were developed in an age when greater emphasis was placed on human interaction and man's role was significant in society. In today's machine age the vehicle plays an important role in communication. Understandably, the scale of the street is different and is sometimes criticized for lacking in human warmth.⁸³

Arora similarly deconstructs any notion of Chandigarh as a failed city in Wattas' queries, forcing him to ask the last question, the response to which is yet again equalled in opposition by Arora.

Wattas: Do you still feel that Chandigarh is indeed the model of the ideal Indian city that should be emulated for similar development to be taken up in the rest of the country?

Arora: Chandigarh is an ideal Indian city when the objective is a similar one, that is, for an administrative city, open to all kinds of knowledge. If that be the case, I would certainly recommend Chandigarh as a model.⁸⁴

⁸³ "The Acrobat of Architecture." *Architecture + Design* (September-October 1987): 69.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Thus, a series of such, largely positive representations of Chandigarh as a modern city, and hence Le Corbusier as its successful designer, in the imaginations of those associated directly or indirectly with both, constitutes a major section of *A+D*'s special issue on Le Corbusier in India. *A+D* chose to place, after Arora's interview, interviews with two Delhi-based critics of Le Corbusier and his works in India. K. T. Ravindran (interviewed by Madhu Pandit) and Satish Grover (interviewed by Swati Chattopadhyay) essentially represent the young and more 'mature' generation of Indian architects—the critical voice of *A+D*—who, free of the weight of personal or regional associations, carefully dissect various socio-historical, -economic and -cultural factors in assessing Corbusier, his architecture, and their combined relevance in post-independence and contemporary Indian architecture. We shall consider some of the responses from both Ravindran and Grover to better appreciate a general disagreement of the younger generation of Indian architects with the older generation regarding, in this case, the reception of Corbusier and his architecture in India. We shall see how this special issue on Le Corbusier occasions a moment for the interested young representatives of contemporary Indian architecture to challenge more strongly the hegemonic notions of the dominant within the field of architecture in India—and how *A+D* as an interested site of discourse, operating from a dominant region, helps them in such a struggle.

The first interview is of K. T. Ravindran, who at the time was involved in teaching urban design at Delhi's SPA. Highly critical of Le Corbusier, Ravindran's comments are a direct attack on firstly the importance accorded to Le Corbusier's limited works (in terms of their regional distribution) in India and, secondly, on Corbusier's overall design philosophy itself and its application in the Indian context.

I don't think he has been fundamental to the architecture of this country at all. Rather, his work is pretty isolated in a few places, namely Ahmedabad and Chandigarh. It hasn't affected life here [in Delhi] in any manner except through the people who have copied him, and that too primarily in stylistic terms; they've just skipped his basic philosophy — a philosophy which I do not agree

with at all. He stood for a certain type of ‘socialist philosophy’ which assumed that technological advancement was a means of progress, a choice which was inappropriate for a country like India.⁸⁵

Ravindran attacks Le Corbusier on many fronts—from his neglect of socio-cultural contexts to being a naïve dreamer, from being responsible for supporting a capitalist economy that functioned “in the garb of industrialized socialism,” to having trained a generation of loyal ‘copyists,’ etc. When asked if the ‘Corbusian hangover’ was felt extraordinarily in India because of the dominance of a generation of architects who were trained under or directly influenced by Le Corbusier, Ravindran decried,

Very correct. Many of the people who have been copying Corb...are now leading the profession, and have been trained abroad; besides, there was this eagerness to take orders from the white man, which continued on in the field of education too.⁸⁶

It can be said that Ravindran’s attack was not only directed against Le Corbusier or his works in India in particular, but also towards those who were loyal followers of Le Corbusier’s ‘style.’ Unuttered references to architects such as Doshi, Correa, Shiv Nath Prasad, Rajinder Kumar, etc.⁸⁷ are obvious in Ravindran’s disapproval. Being consecrated figures of contemporary Indian architecture, Ravindran maintained that the followers of Le Corbusier had also influenced architectural pedagogy—thus forcing their acquired value system on younger generations of Indian architects as well. Despite the dominance of such a group of post-independence architects, and their works within the field of architecture in India, Ravindran considers architects and architectural works in India inspired by Le Corbusier as inconsequential. Ravindran’s greater concern is about the uncritical acceptance of Le Corbusier’s town planning concepts in planning new cities in India. Ravindran seems wary of this

⁸⁵ Ibid., 69.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 70.

⁸⁷ For a detailed description of architectural works inspired directly or indirectly by Le Corbusier, consult Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*, 223-226.

becoming a norm and thinks it was time that the younger generation of Indian architects question such prevalent ideologies,

The only saving grace is that the architecture that's been produced out of this has not been of very great consequence. It hasn't altered the lifestyle of the people....What I am saying is that if you build one Mill-Owner's Association Building and leave it unoccupied, it doesn't affect the life of Ahmedabad city — if you build a Shriram Centre which looks like a Corbusian shadow, it doesn't effect the life of Delhi city. But the more important impact which Corbusian concepts had is on town planning which in this country has been reduced to an unspeakable low level.⁸⁸

If Ravindran's views about Le Corbusier and his concepts, thought through the historical socio-economic and socio-cultural contexts of India are contemptuous at many levels, the following interview of Satish Grover emphasises the role of history and India's own architectural heritage and traditions in deciding whether Le Corbusier's architecture is of any merit in the Indian context. As we know Grover, apart from being a professor at Delhi's SPA at the time of the interview, was also one of the producers of *A+D*. Further, he had already published several books on India's Hindu, Islamic and Buddhist architectural history. In fact, when asked if Le Corbusier's experience in India was harmful or beneficial for Indian architects, Grover attributes his own position as a historian of Indian architecture to Le Corbusier's involvement with India.

For me, personally, it was good, but in a negative sense, for the reports of [Le Corbusier's] arrogance, combined with the unquestioning subservience given to him by all those concerned with the building of Chandigarh made me sit up and enquire into India's past to find out whether we did not have our own traditional principles and theories of design that could contribute to the city planning and architecture of a resurgent and independent India.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ "The Acrobat of Architecture," 70.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

Subservience to the West—the ‘white man’ in Ravindran’s account—is also a concern shared by Grover. For Grover, the unabashed reliance on the ‘white gods’—Lutyens and Le Corbusier (and perhaps Louis Kahn as well)—had retarded the acquisition of knowledge, and more importantly, the confidence level in Indian architects with regards to ‘our timeless’ architectural heritage and traditions. This, for Grover, had unfortunately led to little or no concern regarding a consensus about the feasibility of past traditions in solving contemporary problems in Indian architecture.

My discovery of our varied and timeless traditions convinced me that had we not passed on the trusteeship of our architectural heritage meekly from one white god (Lutyens) to another, and instead, had we taken the trouble to delve into our own traditions (much as Jai Singh did in building Jaipur), we would have produced a far more meaningful and relevant system of city planning and architecture — less grandiose though it may have been.⁹⁰

After reading the positive responses about Chandigarh and about Le Corbusier in India, Ravindran’s and Grover’s views indeed present the exact opposite of almost all thoughts expressed previously in other articles and interviews—especially by those involving the first generation of (dominant) Indian architects. By publishing such an interview, and involving one of its producers, *A+D* partakes in representing the voice of the younger generation of Indian architects. The priority accorded to ‘youth’ in terms of having the ‘last word’ in this discussion—in the fact that these two interviews are presented towards the end of the special issue of *A+D*—and to the associated need for change and originality expressed by Ravindran and Grover, illustrates a specific law of change in the field of architecture. Both Ravindran and Grover condemn Corbusier and his relatively recent association with India and certain Indian architects into a distant past, thus ‘dating’ such a moment in India’s history of architecture. However, simultaneously, both of them also believe in the eternal presence of an Indian culture or Indian tradition—one that is thought to be capable of providing continuous support to contemporary problems as well.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

This cohabitation of themes—of modernity and tradition—that is used to both appreciate and condemn Le Corbusier’s involvement with India and Indian architecture, only represents the canonisation and neutralisation of such concepts in the thinking of both older and younger generation of Indian architects at the time. However, as we have also seen, it is in the specific deployment of such normative modes of thought that interested agents, from both the older and younger generations, at once become contemporaries and out of phase in their struggle for the legitimate representation of contemporary Indian architecture. The final essay included in this special issue of *A+D* by Charles Correa convincingly demonstrates the continuation of such normative thinking.⁹¹

Correa’s essay “Chandigarh: The View from Benares” is strategically divided into two sections; the first section is a poetic, reaffirmation of Corbusier’s incredible status as a consecrated figure of 20th century architecture and of his work’s influence on Indian architects and architecture, while the latter larger section, in contrast, is a point-by-point yet, sympathetic deconstruction of Corbusier’s architecture, and the highly popular notion of Chandigarh as a futuristic city. A few extracts from the essay will illustrate Correa’s unusual ‘view.’

[Le Corbusier’s] buildings were great gestures, evocative of our past: not the Hollywood image that permeated Edward Stone’s Delhi embassy like a cheap perfume, but a truer India, an India of the *bazaars* — sprawling, cruel, raucous, with a dimension all its own.

In part it was the extraordinary decibel level at which Le Corbusier’s buildings came at you. Compared with the bland *sotto voce* tone of most 1950s architecture, his had the brutal, primordial (yet aelegant, urbane!) thunder of Stravinsky in the concert hall. Thus, the ramp of the Ahmedabad Mill-Owner’s building, stretching out like a great hand to pick pedestrians up off the road; the (unbuilt) governor’s residence in Chandigarh with its incredible silhouette (“I

⁹¹ Charles Correa. “Chandigarh: The View from Benares.” *Architecture + Design* III, no. 6 (September-October 1987): 73-75., was not written specifically for *A+D*, but was borrowed from *The Le Corbusier Archive* XXII, 9-14. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1983., where it first appeared.

am a Governor's Palace!")); and the Sarabhai house in Ahmedabad, using barrel vaults similar to those in the Jaoul houses in Paris and yet so totally different in expression — a masterwork as complex, as amorphous, and as open-ended as a banyan tree, as an Indian joint family, as India herself.⁹²

After leading one to believe that Corbusier's architecture in Chandigarh and Ahmedabad truly catered to Indian sensibilities and even represented 'India herself,' Correa contradicts his own viewpoint,

Then again, however fine the perceptions of Le Corbusier about the visual world, his Chandigarh buildings were never really concerned with the Indian psyche. After all, he was a Mediterranean man, and the Capitol buildings were part of that astonishing series of consecutive steps that make up his *oeuvre complete*. Thus, both as an architect and as a person, Le Corbusier remained one whose deepest instincts were intensely European.⁹³

Criticising Corbusier's planning for Chandigarh Correa noted,

Certainly Chandigarh, as a town plan, never was the brave new world that Nehru presumed it to be. Far from being a futuristic city, it isn't even a contemporary one; it is positively feudal in its ironclad separation of rulers and ruled, in the caste-riddled pattern of its sectors, and so forth.⁹⁴

Correa derides Le Corbusier similarly for his architecture of Chandigarh through most of the middle sections of the essay. Towards the end however, he reserves a more sympathetic voice to the Master, who had undoubtedly inspired a generation of "naïve and innocent" Indian architects, including Correa himself. The essay concludes with a rhetorical question: will Le Corbusier be regarded in future as perhaps 'the greatest Indian architect of them all'?

⁹² Correa. "Chandigarh: The View from Benares," 73.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

For its countries like India that *live* with the past all around and accept it as easily as a woman drapes a sari that are also the most impatient to invent the future....

India is an ancient land. Over the centuries there have been other new cities like Chandigarh and other prophets like Le Corbusier: Fatehpur Sikri, Patrick Geddes, Edwin Lutyens, Golconda, Mandu. Today many of them are not perceived at all as foreign elements but as an integral part of the Indian landscape....For this timeless civilization has never fretted over labels like old and new, indigenous and foreign; it establishes affinities far more fundamental than that. And Hinduism has developed a truly amazing pluralistic schema where new and old, light and dark can coexist, be absorbed, endure....

India as blotting paper. Who knows? A hundred years from now, perhaps Chandigarh will also fit seamlessly into the Punjabi ethos; perhaps it will be perceived as a famous old Indian town, and Le Corbusier will be acknowledged...as the greatest Indian architect of them all?⁹⁵

This compelling proposition depends on all-too familiar orientalist notions about India and the Indian civilisation in general. But Correa's skilful essay, in counterpoint, suggests that the jury is still out on Le Corbusier, and by implication, on Correa's own position with regard to the 'master modernist' and his place in Indian architecture. Thus, taking a neutral stand on Corbusier and his architecture in India, Correa at once allies himself with both the younger and the older (his own) generation of architects in India. It is therefore not surprising to see the younger generation architect Ranjit Sabikhi borrow from this particular essay of Correa to share a similar viewpoint. Despite belonging to the older generation, Correa's stand is perceptively different from his own contemporaries, for instance, Doshi's, who due to his direct association with Corbusier, and in spite of some reservations, feels more obliged and comfortable in supporting Corbusier at most fronts. Although none of these major essays were written specifically for *A+D*, it can be argued that the producers of *A+D* nevertheless implicitly perceived a struggle for recognition within and between the older and younger generations of architects in the 1980s in India; and therefore, had no difficulty in acquiring permissions

⁹⁵ Ibid., 75.

from the respective authors to reproduce their interviews or essays in the special issue dedicated to Le Corbusier.

While *A+D* covered the dominant figures in the field of architecture in India such as Doshi, Correa, Rewal and Raje within its first decade of publication, it devoted special issues to Le Corbusier and Doshi alone. Having covered Le Corbusier—perhaps necessitated by the occasion of Corbusier’s birth centenary—it was only normative to dedicate a special issue to the most deserving of Corbusier’s Indian ‘disciples’—B. V. Doshi.

11.3.2 B. V. Doshi, a master of modern Indian architecture

In its vol. V, no. 2, January-February 1989 issue, *A+D* devoted its entire focus on B. V. Doshi’s architecture. Rajinder Puri, an architect in Doshi’s office and Professor Kurula Varkey, Dean of the Ahmedabad School of Architecture, CEPT, at the time, and one of the earliest associates of B. V. Doshi, assisted *A+D* in producing this special issue. *A+D* also acknowledges Doshi, William Curtis, Vikram Bhatt and Attilio Petroccioli among a range of assisting agents, for photographs borrowed for this particular issue on Doshi. The magazine cover shows Doshi walking down in a contemplative mood in the landscape of his own office called “Sangath” (Figure 28.).

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 318
of the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 28: Cover, *A+D* Vol. V, No. 2, January-February 1989

The editorial—also entirely devoted to Doshi, begins with the ever-elusive question, “What is ‘Indian’ today?” Through a narrative matrix designed to pay tribute to Doshi, the editorial proclaims him as “one of the masters of modern Indian architecture.”⁹⁶ Doshi’s importance in the larger field of architecture in India is clearly established in the editorial, which, towards the end, finally wishes to applaud “an architect who can truly be said to have been guide, philosopher and friend to all who have been associated with him.”⁹⁷ In addition to a separate focus on Doshi’s buildings and projects where seventeen of his architectural projects are showcased, a section called “Reflections: on Doshi, the man and the architect,” provides a unified voice from several individuals (mainly from the field of architecture) reinforcing the legend of Doshi. It may be recalled that the book *Balkrishna Doshi: an architecture for India*⁹⁸ by the historian William Curtis (discussed in chapter 5) was already in circulation when *A+D* decided to devote an entire issue to Doshi. Further to this already conspicuous presence then, ‘Reflections’ included endorsements from leading educators and architects based in the Ahmedabad-Delhi circles.

⁹⁶ Razia Grover. “Editorial.” *Architecture + Design* V, no. 2 (January-February 1989): 7.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Curtis. *Balkrishna Doshi*.

These included Professor Kurula Varkey, Neelkanth Chhaya (Professor at the Ahmedabad School of Architecture, CEPT), Delhi based architect Ranjit Sabikhi (also a member of *A+D*'s editorial board), structural engineer Mahendra Raj (another editorial board member of *A+D*), surprisingly, a neuro-anaesthesiologist based in Ahmedabad, Dr. Preeti Mehta, and an upcoming Ahmedabad-based architect Nimish Patel who had studied under Doshi at the Ahmedabad School of Architecture, CEPT. The following achievements of Doshi are endorsed; a pioneer of modern Indian architecture that successfully inculcated Indian ethos (Chhaya); an Ahmedabad based architect successfully developing an integrated urban aesthetic in Ahmedabad (Sabikhi); an architect having an eye for tectonic aesthetics in his buildings (Raj); a designer of spaces that reverberate with tradition and modernity (Mehta); and a unique teacher with an unconventional approach to architectural education (Patel).

Over and above such qualifying statements touching aspects of Doshi's various professional commitments and achievements, the special issue contains three major texts: two of these, "Between Notion and Reality," and "City of Jaipur," are by Doshi himself, and the third one entitled "Themes and Ideas" is by his one time close associate, Kurula Varkey.⁹⁹ The first article by Doshi is a reflective discourse aimed at identifying eight distinguishing features of traditional Indian architecture, which Doshi apparently discovered during his 'search for an expression of Indian architecture' in his own practice. In this article, aware of the symbolic value his works had gathered over the years, Doshi muses briefly over his life's enriching experiences,

The early part of my life was spent in villages and small towns. Consequently, I still carry with me the memories of these villages, towns and their communities. However, over the years other factors have added another dimension to these memories and they have become the main weaving thread of my life's fabric.

⁹⁹ Balkrishna V. Doshi. "Between Notion and Reality." *Architecture + Design* V, no. II (January-February 1989): 20-23., , Balkrishna V. Doshi. "City of Jaipur." *Architecture + Design* V, no. II (January-February 1989): 96-104., and, Kurula Varkey. "Themes and Ideas." *Architecture + Design* V, no. 2 (January-February 1989): 28-35.

The conscious and unconscious pull towards past and present, towards East and West and this is what makes my practice richer.¹⁰⁰

Doshi's second article on the city of Jaipur is a study that Doshi's Vastu Shilpa Foundation conducted for the planning of a new town in Jaipur. With this article, *A+D* began a new series that was to focus on cities in India.¹⁰¹ Two years earlier, Doshi had presented the study on Jaipur in the Vistāra exhibition, which was then being held in the USSR as part of the Festival of India initiative. Another closely related part of the Festival had been a seminar called 'Cities in India,' coordinated by Satish Grover. Six papers were presented on Indian cities including Doshi's paper on Jaipur, Ranjit Sabikhi's paper on Chandigarh (discussed in the previous section), and Satish Grover's paper on Fatehpur Sikri.¹⁰² Further, soon after the article on Jaipur, *A+D* published a postscript to the special issue, by Doshi himself, which as per *A+D* was "excerpted from a paper written in 1979 by William Marlin, "Through the Doors of Doshi," and from Doshi's own statement of November 1988, "Memory, Association and Timelessness.""¹⁰³

The above network of implicitly influential associations notwithstanding, it is in the eight-pages long article by Kurula Varkey entitled, "Themes and Ideas,"¹⁰⁴ that we find certain 'constants' 'which underlie Doshi's theory of design.' Although perceived by Varkey, by implication, for both Varkey and for the producers of *A+D* these constants may provide answers to the perennial questions about identity and authenticity in contemporary Indian architecture as well. While it appears like an agenda implicitly followed by *A+D* in association with Varkey, within less than five years, *A+D* would publish yet

¹⁰⁰ Doshi. "Between Notion and Reality," 20.

¹⁰¹ At the end of the article, *A+D* notified the readers, "This study on the 'City of Jaipur' by B V Doshi beings a series on 'Cities in India' to be published in forthcoming issues of *A+D*."

¹⁰² The other cities covered were Mohenjo-daro by Shireen Ratnagar, Varanasi by Pria Devi, and Calcutta (Kolkata) by Ashish Maitra.

¹⁰³ Balkrishna V. Doshi. "Postscript." *Architecture + Design* V, no. II (January-February 1989): 105.

¹⁰⁴ Varkey. "Themes and Ideas."

another issue (not a special issue, however) with its major focus on constructing a slightly modified avatar of Doshi.¹⁰⁵

The focus on Doshi in the January-February 1989 issue of *A+D* by one of his own associates—Varkey, if not any different from the prevailing international discourse surrounding Doshi's architecture, has the added distinction of being written by someone who had closely witnessed, and was involved with Doshi's professional undertakings and design methodology early in his career. Born in Kerala in 1945, and having graduated in architecture from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur in the 1960s, Varkey came to Ahmedabad in 1968 to join Doshi's office. Varkey eventually became a senior designer in the firm and was involved directly with Doshi on several important projects during the early and mid-1970s, including the often-quoted and famous, Indian Institute of Management (IIM) project in Bangalore.¹⁰⁶ Varkey also taught at the Ahmedabad School of Architecture, CEPT, from 1974 to 1977, after which he moved to the University of Nairobi. In early 1987, Varkey returned to take up the directorship of the School of Architecture at Ahmedabad, and maintained the position until his tragic death in October 2001. It is important to briefly note the specific position of the Ahmedabad School of Architecture, through whose agency, individuals such as Doshi and Varkey gained further symbolic capitals for themselves and for the institution they were involved in.

As we know B. V. Doshi was instrumental in the establishment of the School of Architecture in Ahmedabad in 1962. At that time, Doshi had recently returned to India after working with Le Corbusier. For Doshi, there were new ideas and concepts with regards to architectural education to be tried out in the Indian context. Ahmedabad Education Society, a premier organization established in 1935 and involved in education at all levels had agreed to sponsor the School. It was also thought to develop a campus offering programmes in related disciplines such as planning, building and construction technology, interior design, landscape architecture, environmental issues, and

¹⁰⁵ "In Focus: Balkrishna Doshi." *Architecture + Design* X, no. 5 (September-October 1993): 16-67.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Varkey, 2003.

so on. In view of the need to create a structure that would utilize the synergy generated by integrating diverse disciplines, the Ahmedabad Education Society, in close association with Doshi, established the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) in Ahmedabad. It was registered as a separate public charitable trust and a society in 1994.

Until recently CEPT operated as an autonomous academic institution with full freedom to develop its academic programmes and award diplomas at the end of various programmes of study recognized by the State of Gujarat and the statutory Regulatory body—the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE). CEPT has recently affiliated itself to a state University and thus its programmes now lead to bachelor's and master's degrees. In addition, CEPT has a 'research and development unit' set-up to offer its faculty expertise and other resources to public and private bodies and undertake assignments on a professional basis. Such an institutional set-up enables the students to work on a wide variety of projects. Despite such advancements within the regulations and guidelines set by the AICTE, CEPT still desires to be an autonomous institution as is hoped for in its website, "It is hoped that an autonomous status will be granted to CEPT soon." Under Varkey's leadership, and also because of Doshi's consistent involvement, the national and international importance of the School of Architecture and CEPT were greatly enhanced. Varkey was instrumental in applying and propagating his thoughts on historical and cultural continuity of 'Indian' architecture and his belief in the need for a contextually appropriate architecture.

With such implicit responsibility and accountability on Varkey's shoulders, his article strives to mark a different territory untouched by the already circulating discourses about Doshi or his architecture.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ It is indeed interesting to note that in his acknowledgements, Varkey provides no indication of having ever contacted or spoken to William Curtis. Varkey, "I regret there are no detailed footnotes. But I wish to acknowledge the work of Richard Lannoy, Gaston Bachelard, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Juhani Palasmaa, Andre Malroux, Le Corbusier, Ananda Coomaraswamy, The Vedas...and of course B V Doshi, all of whom [or] which have influenced this writing." In, Varkey. "Themes and Ideas," 35.

To the first generation of architects building in independent India, trained in the industrialized West and equipped with the spirit and language of the functionalist tradition, this [search for the essence of the Indian ethos] has not been an easy task.¹⁰⁸

Doshi's search for the 'essence of the Indian ethos' reflected for Varkey the shared ideology of a generation of post-independence Indian architects, who were either trained or educated in the West, and returned to 'discover anew the ethos of India.' Varkey would articulate these notions further in another article titled, *The Essence of the Indian Tradition: An Interpretation*, published more than a decade later in *A+D*.¹⁰⁹ Varkey's argument for maintaining a historical continuity in Indian architecture in the wake of modernist tendencies and post-modernist elemental pastiche remained consistent through more than a decade of his writings about Indian architecture. In the 1989 special issue of *A+D* devoted to Doshi, Varkey similarly drives his own passionate concerns, arguably in gestation at the time, about the various issues generated because of a fear of losing one's identity in architecture, as well as in the Indian society at large.

To discover anew the ethos of India, assailed by myriad alien influences, and challenged by dramatic and demanding changes in the formulation of a modern, scientific society has been a long and arduous voyage. To reinterpret anew a contemporary India, to invent a language of the present, albeit rooted in the past, has been the real challenge—and every period must necessarily reinvent its own vocabulary to maintain its vitality...The traditions and practices adopted in Indian architecture in the past have been largely lost to our generation...Clouded by a set of sun-screens hiding functionalist-modernist-European conceptions of space, and with our minds and senses benumbed by a

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰⁹ In this 2000 article, Varkey goes on to list eight basic 'psychic-cultural attitudes' or constants that, as Varkey admits, are the result of his personal recognition of the "constants inherent in the Indian notion of built space and the sifting of numerous variables that are period expressions or styles." Kurula Varkey. "The Essence of the Indian Tradition: An Interpretation." *Architecture + Design* 17, no. 4 (2000): 98-117.

narrow-minded rationalism, we attempted to retrace our beginnings and departures. Indeed, we had become strangers in our own land.¹¹⁰

Clearly a crusader for Indian architecture, Varkey, like the early 20th century apologists of Indian art and architecture, considered the past traditional practices of Indian architecture ‘lost to our generation’ due to the ‘[assault] by myriad alien influences.’ Varkey’s article in *A+D*, through the example of Doshi’s architecture, is really about reclaiming those lost architectural principles and values of India using available modern methods and techniques in architecture. Doshi’s architecture, for Varkey, happened to conveniently exemplify satisfactory and intelligible results of such a search by an individual belonging to the first generation of post-independence Indian architects working in the service of the nation. Thus, it can be argued that Doshi’s architecture allowed Varkey, and *A+D*, firstly, to promote and reproduce values and concepts perceived to have guided Indian architecture in the past, and, secondly, to also provide suggestions for the future course of contemporary Indian architecture. Yet, in this focus, Doshi is essentially portrayed as a modern Indian master who was rediscovering ‘themes’ that are ‘central to the Indian sensibility’ through his search for the essence of the Indian ethos:

The themes that gradually take shape in Doshi’s work are those that are central to the Indian sensibility. It has been his strength not to interpret them in a traditional language, but to find a language contemporary in its manifestations, and to express this at varied scales of building, from the dwelling to the city. He does not always arrive at a resolution rationally or consciously; often the understanding springs from the sensorial subconscious and a vivid imagery, all of which does not make it any less potent or valid.¹¹¹

In the September-October 1993 issue of *A+D*, with its focus yet again on Doshi and several of his recent projects, however, we find the producers of

¹¹⁰ Varkey. “Themes and Ideas.” *Architecture + Design* V, no. 2 (January-February 1989): 28, 29.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

A+D engaged in projecting a seer-like image of B. V. Doshi. It must also be noted that in this particular issue the editorial board description is completely absent, and so is the name of Satish Grover from the Managing Editor position that he shared with C. P. Kukreja. While Kukreja retained the position, even the editor had changed in this issue—from Razia Grover to Madhu Madhavi Singh. While internal differences warranted such changes in A+D,¹¹² considering the mechanism of print production, it is likely that the same team of producers that produced the earlier issue on Doshi had planned this particular issue as well.

The introductory essay by Muktirajsinhji Chauhan, another close associate of Doshi, sets the tone for this renewed focus on the modern master of Indian architecture.¹¹³ In this brief, one-page essay, Chauhan charts the development of Doshi's career since the 1950s. Chauhan claims to write “not as a polemist, nor a critic or scholar, but as a medieval apprentice who has overstayed in the master's workshop.”¹¹⁴ Clearly aware of Varkey's position and essay before him, Chauhan's humility in calling himself an ‘apprentice,’ it can be argued, allows him to construct this distinct image of Doshi as an oracle. Implying complete admiration for the master, Chauhan further posits, “[f]ortunately for the apprentice, this is one master who refuses to age as an architect and is instead, reborn each moment.”¹¹⁵

Chauhan's essay is predominantly based on Doshi's most recent works at the time, specifically, the National Institute of Fashion Technology project (NIFT) at Delhi and the proposed Bharat Diamond Bourse project (BDB) in Mumbai. Aware of Doshi's increasing fascination with mythological stories, mythical forces and imaginations in his later works, Chauhan, like Varkey before him, strives to remove Doshi from prevailing discourses that saw him as merely a modern Indian master who had adopted prevailing trends of Corbusian-inflected Modernism:

¹¹² Email correspondence with Razia Grover. 25th April 2006.

¹¹³ Muktirajsinhji Chauhan. “The Architect as Oracle.” *Architecture + Design X*, no. 5 (September-October 1993): 19.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

When Doshi confronted and adopted tenets of Modernism, both in his architecture and life (thinking, beliefs, outlook), he had unconsciously buried his own being, till then shaped by his growing up in Indian conditions. This is to say that a recognition of the presence of grey areas, duality, paradoxes, etc., was all there, but only at an unconscious level. It was not recognized as a valid body of knowledge and beliefs. At the conscious level, black and white Modernist dichotomies reigned supreme.¹¹⁶

Chauhan posits Doshi as an exemplary “Indian” architect, who had in youth and under western influences forgotten to learn lessons that India with its multiple complexities and paradoxes had to offer. However, Doshi in his later career, with influences from contacts such as the cultural guru Rasikbhai Parikh and “intense person” Louis Kahn, had become “conscious” such of complexities that existed at the unconscious level.¹¹⁷ This is where Chauhan differs from Varkey, for whom Doshi was still searching some essence of the Indian ethos. Being aware or enlightened thus in Chauhan’s interpretation, Doshi had begun to imbibe such mystical qualities in his architecture, to the extent that Chauhan calls Doshi’s search as “the search of a spiritualist, a mystic,”¹¹⁸ thus conferring on Doshi an oracular quality clearly avoided by Varkey before him. Finally, in conclusion Chauhan locates Doshi’s new avatar furthest from international-style Modernism, or from the influences of Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn. Chauhan posits that the recent mystical and ‘unconscious’ turn in Doshi’s thinking have created a contemporary Indian architecture rooted in the past, as it wished to be:

Perhaps in the last ten years, Doshi has journeyed deep into the hidden dimension of space, and space now speaks to him, communicates with him in an entirely different, deeper and more meaningful way. So it is that the National Institute of Fashion Technology and Bourse sites spoke to him and revealed themselves at the unconscious levels he is now able to penetrate consciously. The crystalline rock at Bandra and the sacred tank of the village at Delhi

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

revealed their past to him, and like in a planchette, through him formed themselves as they wished.

Doshi is indeed their architect but only oracularly.¹¹⁹

Chauhan's essay is followed by Yatin Pandya's five-pages long essay. Another associate of Doshi like Chauhan and Varkey, Pandya in this essay tries yet again to get a handle around Doshi's architecture by posing "six key principles of design which find wide ranging resolutions" in Doshi's architecture. Pandya's essay situates Doshi's latest projects in a reworking of similar 'underlying' points identified by Doshi in "Between Notion and Reality," and by Varkey in "Themes and Ideas"—both of which appeared in the previous special focus on Doshi.

In effect, this 1993 focus on Doshi adds yet another symbolic value and dimension—that of an oracle—to Doshi's already esteemed position, situating him higher than any of his contemporaries such as Charles Correa or Raj Rewal. Further, Pandya's six key principles continue to locate Doshi's most recent and remarkably different projects, such as the Hussain-Doshi Gufa, the NIFT and BDB projects (when compared to his works of the 1970s and early 1980s), within a uniting oeuvre of Doshi's architectural achievements.

11.4: Summary and discussion of subject-based discourses in *A+D*

In this chapter we have seen how *A+D* included a symbolic good—an article, debate or interview—on a recognised or recognisable subject, within the first decade of its publication. Such an inclusion also involved members of the dominant group (with which the subject may or may not be closely or directly associated). Implicitly reproducing the dominant categories of perception and appreciation in such endeavours, this can be seen as a calculated position unwittingly undertaken by the producers of *A+D*. *A+D*'s focus on the dominant regions and their relatively lesser known 'subjects' of architecture, is

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

particularly interesting in this regard. *A+D*'s consecration of Uttam Jain as a 'modern traditionalist' in its inaugural issue, the Desais' categorical assertion that Hasmukh Patel's architecture followed no prevalent or anticipated precedents (similar in intentions that dictated Puri's interview with Anant Raje), are arbitrary values imposed on certain architects, their architecture, and their positions. However, the articles on Jain, Patel and Raje implicitly strive to provide recognition to these architects by locating them within the same group of consecrated architects who were comparatively more famous with regards to contemporary and post-independence Indian architecture. In contrast, Almeida's architecture in da Cunha's article, and the Singhs' architecture in Wattas' article, necessarily belonged to the new generation of architects in post-independence India. The unconditional recognition of the struggle within the field of architecture in India—that of the need to transcend the dated ideologies of an older generation of Indian architects, informs the initiatives of both da Cunha's and Wattas' articles, *and* of *A+D* which published the articles.

This objective harmony between the agents' dispositions, in their propensity and capacity to engage themselves in the struggle for recognition through their current positions, ensures their membership within the dominant group of the field of architecture, in future. In such a condition, each move by the interested agents and agencies is based on an unconscious evaluation of the objective chances of profit (not necessarily an 'economic' profit). For instance, for *A+D*, the production of such informed readership could potentially translate into an increased amount of subscription and hence readership. For the correspondents, the publication of their articles or interviews could potentially endow them with the symbolic value necessary to augment their current positions and future position takings. Indeed, at least in one instance, that of Miki and Madhavi Desai, their article becomes a symbolic good whose value ascertains a profitable career in the field of architectural discourse. It is not surprising then, that more than a decade later, the Desais, through their esteemed institutional set-up also, are involved with Jon Lang in the publication of a comprehensive account of Indian architecture in *Architecture*

and Independence.¹²⁰ For the ‘subjects,’ who are represented through categorical distinctions and stylistic considerations (or negotiations) of their architecture, such a representation guarantees further reproduction in parallel and future discourses of contemporary Indian architecture.

Thus, such an ‘economic cosmos,’ if it can be so described, guarantees symbolic value and profits to the interested agents and agencies in the future. However, in the process, the same economic cosmos creates, and establishes a *doxa* regarding a consensus of like-minded issues and concerns regarding, as in the case of the current study, notions of contemporary architecture in India. Such a *doxic adherence*, which can never be explicitly admitted by all involved, ensures that interested agents and agencies necessarily feel compelled to carry out discussions, interviews and debates within variations of the same objective categories of knowledge and thought invested and endorsed through their particular institutionalised positions. The cases of *A+D*’s eastern and southern focus indicate such a condition, where dissident voices expressing postcolonial marginalisation, nevertheless reinforce not only prevailing themes of difference in the larger social and cultural structure, but also prevalent categories of observation and judgement specific to the consideration of contemporary ‘Indian’ architecture.

As we know, the claim and search for a national identity in architecture permeated and reproduced itself in and through many sites of architectural discourse concerned with contemporary Indian architecture in the mid-1980s. Through the examples provided above from such a site of discourse, *A+D*, we have seen the implicit and explicit manifestations of such concerns, and the struggle for recognition by interested agents, and *A+D* itself, in its coverage of both obscure and relatively well-known architects in India. Further, we have also become aware of particular boundary conditions, both in terms of the geographical distribution of the field of architecture in India and that of the dominant within such a field, that *A+D* helped to reproduce within its pages. *A+D* focused and mobilised such boundary conditions with more force,

¹²⁰ Lang, et al. *Architecture and Independence*.

allowing interested agents to forge their struggles more strongly when showcasing the works of prominent and already internationally famous contemporary architects from India. For instance, by focusing explicitly on the architecture of such professionally related doyens of post-independence and contemporary Indian architecture (also related by way of the symbolic value attached to post-independence Indian architecture), Le Corbusier and B. V. Doshi, *A+D* only highlighted the symbolic distinction already attributed to these individuals with regard to discourses of world and Indian architecture.

Chapter 12

Conclusion

Analysing a decade of publishing in *A+D* has revealed important clues not only about the perceptions of both late-twentieth century Indian architecture, and the field of architecture in India during the period, but also about discourse production more generally. I have demonstrated through this thesis that the perceptions of contemporary Indian architecture are not constructed by discourses of the 1980s alone, but its formation also involves the active and complex participation of interested agents and agencies (however *disinterested* they might seem, or claim to be) within the field of architecture in India, who have real stakes in *believing* in, and in constructing, contradicting or reproducing legitimate views of contemporary Indian architecture.

In the context of the chosen site of discourse—the architectural magazine *A+D*—we have seen how its conception in the early 1980s (and particularly the month and year *A+D* eventually began publishing from Delhi), was itself an opportunistic act by at least two young generation, overseas educated and trained Indian architects. However disingenuous their claim, they envisioned *A+D* to be independent India's first architectural magazine. Tapping in on events such as the globe-trotting Festival of India project, the IGNCA international design competition, and the involvement of certain Indian architects in the grand Aga Khan Award for Architecture project, the time was

indeed opportune for the producers of *A+D* to forge a particular agenda and direction for the magazine and for themselves.

We have seen how *A+D*, through its coverage of the above events, provided a site for individuals and groups belonging to a dominant region within the field of architecture in India, to implicitly wage a war of words in their struggle to be the legitimate representatives or spokespersons on issues thought to be confronting contemporary Indian architecture. Such a struggle was waged at two parallel and often contradictory levels. Firstly, we have become aware of a struggle, by both older and younger generations of Indian architects, against viewing Indian architecture through Western ideological frameworks. The complicity of the community of architects in India in this struggle for dismantling Western perceptions of Indian architecture is therefore justified. However we have also come across a parallel struggle waged by the younger generation of Indian architects. This struggle was directed against the hegemonic discourses of modernism (and its variants) through which certain members of an older generation of Indian architects and their works were predominantly discussed. At stake in this struggle was the consecrated position of the older generation architects with regards to discussions of contemporary Indian architecture.

I consider these struggles intrinsically contradictory because even in rejecting or challenging the modernist discourses of contemporary Indian architecture or its older-generation practitioners, the younger generation engaged in borrowing from yet another strand of Western ideology (in and through which most of them attained their positions)—postmodernism. Such a contradiction is perhaps best evident in the discourse of the IGNCA competition within the pages of *A+D*. While Ralph Lerner's winning project is *diplomatically* praised (the jury members comprised of intellectuals and architects from the older generation), it is in fact Gautam Bhatia's second-place winning entry that is the object of serious attention in the pages of *A+D*. Bhatia's project, which was perceived to have employed a postmodernist attitude, represented a state of 'maturity' in contemporary Indian architecture for the producers of *A+D* and its commentators. This 'maturity' was reached by way of not abiding by the

specific requirements of the design competition (framed by the older generation), but by overcoming them through a postmodernist reading of symbolism and metaphor, which was not necessarily agreed upon by the older generation of Indian architects and cultural gurus.

What also emerges as a subtext in the analyses in part-II of the study is a *silent struggle* within the larger *field* of architecture in India. This struggle involved both the dominant figures of contemporary Indian architecture (operating from dominant regions such as Delhi and Mumbai), and certain individuals associated directly or indirectly with the usually marginalised regions of architectural representation in India.

The dominant agents include individuals such as Satish Grover, C. P. Kukreja, Gautam Bhatia, and Uttam Jain, and older generation stalwarts such as B. V. Doshi, Charles Correa, Anant Raje and Raj Rewal, who operated from consecrated and dominant regions of architectural creativity and debate in India such as Delhi, Ahmedabad and Mumbai. We know that these individuals, either individually, or through their associations and partial alliances, were engaged in being the legitimate representatives of contemporary Indian architecture.¹ We also know how *A+D* reproduced such associations and partial alliances through ‘news’ and ‘letters,’ chosen writers, interviewers, architectural projects and critical reviews, etc.

Actively pursuing issues with regards to contemporary Indian architecture within such a dominant structure of the field of architecture in India are also individuals such as A. G. Krishna Menon, K. T. Ravindran, Prem Chandavarkar, Dulal Mukherjee, Sujatha Shankar, K. R. Sitalakshmi and A. Srivathsan. These agents of Indian architecture are distinguished from those above by their associations with marginalised regions of architectural representation with regards to discussions of modern and contemporary Indian

¹ Their associations with institutions such as the SPA in Delhi, or CEPT and the School of Architecture in Ahmedabad, only further assisted in increasing the symbolic value of both themselves and the associated institutions. Further, their teaching assignments in such institutions also helped in reproducing prevalent and dominant notions of Indian architecture in successive generations of students enrolled in these institutions.

architecture. Despite being associated with or involved in the dominant structure within the field of architecture in India (except for Chandavarkar, Mukherjee, Sitalakshmi and Srivathsan), we find how in and through the agency of *A+D*, these individuals also strived to critically reflect upon the issues of marginalisation and dominance in their narratives about contemporary Indian architecture. Finding themselves in such dual and often contradictory positions, these agents simultaneously support and critique representations of contemporary Indian architecture either through prevailing schemes of perception and appreciation or through a subaltern consciousness.

Thus we find Menon involved in Delhi as an extension of a south-Indian architectural firm, allying himself with a consecrated designer such as the Ahmedabad-based Dashrath Patel, in a struggle to be a legitimate spokesperson of Indian architecture during the highly ambitious Festival of India project. Years later and as the Director of a new school of architecture (the TVB School of Habitat Studies in Delhi), Menon also engages in critiquing the selective representation of post-independence Indian architecture. Chandavarkar, having associations with both the northern and southern regions of India, in a different magazine of architecture, strives to provide a reason for the marginalisation of south Indian architects and architectural firms. Menon's critique of the regional 'architectural belt' of India; Ravindran's sardonic remark on dominant figures of contemporary Indian architecture as 'our indigenous heroes;' Sitalakshmi's take on them as 'holy cows;' Shankar's 'dignified, quiet and simple' south-Indian people; *A+D*'s use of headings such as 'valiant contender,' 'sentinels' and 'old-guards' to focus on architectural practices from the acknowledged marginalised east- and south-Indian regions; all these point to an implicit regional struggle waged by agents who, dictated by their *habitus* and positions, saw themselves as representatives of such marginalised regions.

However, caught up in the 'game'² of legitimising and contemporarising Indian architecture even nonconformists such as Chandavarkar, Menon and

² Bourdieu. *Practical Reason*, 77.

Ravindran cannot escape the framing device, which consecrates and sustains them (because they function within it), as much as it is set up time and again to paradoxically view that which is outside the frame. Thus, the extent of the framing device, or the possibilities afforded by the dominant categories of perception and appreciation, inscribed firstly in the *habitus* of individuals such as Chandavarkar and Menon through a certain trajectory, provides them with dispositions to either take advantage of or reject those possibilities.

However to take either one or both the stances, these agents necessarily have to act in accordance with the interests associated with and afforded by their positions in the ‘game’—and more often than not, we find such individuals taking advantage of such possibilities in a *disinterested* manner (for instance, Chandavarkar who is not interested in the ‘heroic role’ of the north-Indian architect), thus preserving the established power relationships in the field of architecture in India. Thus, through the agency of *A+D* we find that even though it avowed in its inaugural editorial to represent contemporary developments in ‘Indian’ architecture in its entirety, and provide a platform for Indian architects to voice their concerns, dominant groups such as the Delhi-based architects and their agendas, ideas, and institutions were consistently reproduced, even as they were occasionally challenged. Such a condition persisted because the state of the system of possibilities to view Indian architecture, offered by history, and perpetuated by the political, socio-cultural and diplomatic initiatives of the Indian state during the 1980s, also determined what is possible and impossible within the field of architecture in India.

Apart from such factors, an ‘economy’ in the very practice of architectural journalism, understood as a field of restricted production within a larger field of architecture, also contributes to the reproduction of dominant categories of perception and appreciation. Through a focus on *A+D*, we have seen how a publisher or author (agent) in representing a particular work of architecture in discourse, simultaneously exploits the labour of the architect, and consecrates the cultural product, which the agent has ‘discovered.’ However this right to consecration also depends on the hierarchy of the agent’s own position—the more consecrated she is, the stronger she has the right to consecrate a cultural

product. Thus, an agent who risks the symbolic capital she may have accumulated in promoting a not-yet-discovered work of architecture by a relatively unknown architect or architectural firm, can succeed (in the economic sense) only with a practical knowledge about the overall functioning of the field of architecture, in which cultural products such as architecture (and the connected architectural discourse) are produced and circulate. However, this symbolic capital, which functions under the pretension of not doing what it does, through prestige and authority as well as through publications and exhibitions, participates in the imposition of a particular value; thereby guaranteeing further profit (in the realms of both symbolic and, economic capital) from such an operation in the long run.

In all such struggles, between different generations of dominant agents and agencies, or between dominant and dominated agents of Indian architecture, an implicit adherence to, indeed a belief in the consensus on the identification of *Indianness* in contemporary Indian architecture runs as a unifying *doxa*. This *doxa* which was arguably formed when the very idea of a unified Indian nation was recovered from the colonial rule, and reinforced through nationalist and post-independence nation-building ventures, is perceptibly less apparent in discourses of colonial and the immediate postcolonial architectures of India. Freedom from colonial rule and feelings of patriotism resulted in discourses that targeted the misrepresentation of Indian art and architecture through western eyes. With advancing post-independence years, and perhaps because of the confirmation of Delhi as the political centre, demands of regional and political autonomy from several quarters of the Indian state began surfacing steadily. Such an obvious dichotomy between the centre and several margins was often punctuated in and masked by grand nation-building projects and events. Considered in this light, the whole idea of India, and of Indian architecture, is thus a suspect from the start. However, the *doxa* of such a formation persists, and therefore in discourses of contemporary *Indian* architecture, the struggle to see or forge *who* and *what* represents it best and *how*, eludes, indeed evades, the need for a question of *why* in the equation.

And necessarily so, as is the compelling finding of the present thesis. The question of ‘why’ could seriously undermine the very integrity and project of the discourse, and not to mention the various kinds of capital at stake of those interested in legitimising a particular notion of contemporary Indian architecture. Being caught up in a game, as it were, a *belief* in the game is the first requirement to be even involved in the first instance. Thus, while relentlessly pursuing an idea of contemporary Indian architecture, issues of marginalisation and dominance, even though acknowledged, are quickly masked in returning to the idea of contemporary Indian architecture. This idea of contemporary Indian architecture, time and again, is sought to free ‘Indian’ architecture from colonial formations, or postcolonial and post-independence interventions of ‘Western’ influenced viewpoints.

A change, and its direction, in this state of the system of possibilities afforded by discourse, depends also on the interests that orient agents. This is evidenced by the agenda of the younger generation of architects in India, and resistance by certain south Indian architects functioning through or within the same group during the 1980s. Such (often disinterested) interests are a function of the position of the agent—the position itself based on his/her specific *capital* and the mediation of the dispositions constituting his/her *habitus*. Thus depending on such interests during the 1980s, as with the monographs and parallel discussions on Charles Correa, B. V. Doshi and Raj Rewal, the result of the IGNCAs competition and *A+D*’s categorisation of marginalised ‘subjects’ of Indian architecture, we saw that the change was sought neither towards new and innovative possibilities of viewing contemporary Indian architecture, nor towards the most secure and established ones (either formed in the colonial discourses, or in the postcolonial discourses on the works of the older generation architects). This change was in fact directed towards the *newest* possibilities among those which were already well recognised, such that the stylistic categories to select and discuss contemporary architecture in India functioned (and still function) through established categories of perception and

appreciation—thus ensuring the “sad eternity of academic debate,”³ as evidenced by my own study.

³ Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*, 111.

Appendix 1

List¹ of discourse(s) on Indian (art and) architecture produced in the last four decades.²

The 1960s

- Alison, and Peter Smithson. "The Function of Architecture in Cultures-in-Change." *Architectural Design* (April 1960): 149-50.
- Winter, John. "India and Pakistan." *Architectural Design* (April 1960): 151-57.
- Correa, Charles. "Corbusier in Chandigarh." *Architectural Review* (June 1964): 404-12.

The 1970s

- Correa, Charles. "Programmes and Priorities." *Architectural Review* (December 1971): 329-31.
- Kramrisch, Stella. *The Hindu Temple*. 2 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976.
- Mayer, Peter B. "Patterns of Urban Political Culture in India." In *The City in Indian Politics*, edited by Donald B. Rosenthal, 59-67. Haryana: Thomson Press (India) Limited, 1976.
- Rosenthal, Donald B. *The City in Indian Politics*. Haryana: Thomson Press (India) Limited, 1976.
- Mitter, Partha. *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.

The 1980s

- Irving, Robert Grant. *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker, and Imperial Delhi*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981.
- Taylor, Brian Brace. "Theme Introduction." *Mimar* 1981, 24-25.
- Correa, Charles. "Chandigarh: The View from Benares." In *The Le Corbusier Archive*, 9-14. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1983.

¹ Excludes the references from *A+D*. The list of publications in *A+D* from 1984 to 1992 is provided in "Appendix-2."

² Despite the categorization of these discourses according to the decades in which they were produced, it is not impossible to think that research for the discourses of the 1990s, could have been conducted in the 1980s. Similarly, the discourse published in the 1980s would have had research conducted for them during the 1970s. What I wish to emphasise here is the concentrated impact in and on both national and international imagination of Indian architecture (colonial, postcolonial, modern or contemporary) that such an unprecedented publication spree affected.

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Appendix 2

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