

Critique

Indianizing Indian Architecture: A Postmodern Tradition

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Since the 1980s a tendency to Indianize architecture has emerged in the works of prominent architectural practitioners in India. What makes this development postmodern as well as distinctly Indian is the rhetoric of mythical symbolism that has accompanied it. In this article I analyze two architectural productions: *Vistara*, a catalogue for the Festival of India; and the Jawahar Kala Kendra, the Center for the Arts and Crafts, Jaipur, by architect Charles Correa. Both productions have been very popular, and it is useful to take a closer critical look at them, not so much to find faults, but to reveal some of the latent biases and assumptions such cultural productions engender.

Postmodern architecture in the West is characterized by a distinct nostalgia for the past whose references to history are openly and candidly ahistorical. Brightly colored building facades, pasted columns and pilasters, broken Greek pediments, and arbitrarily chosen building ornamentation adorn the so-called "Po Mo" buildings. This approach of embracing history (while mocking it) emerged as a critique of the earlier banality of modernism of the 1960s. Buildings such as Michael Graves's Public Services Building in Portland, Oregon, Philip Johnson's AT&T Building, and Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia exemplify such a stylistic revival. Proponents of postmodernism have claimed that through a return to the decorative and scenographic, buildings become more communicative.

In India this version of postmodernism has manifested itself in the works of prominent architectural professionals such as Hafeez Contractor and others who have used historical elements to create fancy housing estates filled with French and continental villas for India's nouveau riche. But another tendency has also emerged that deserves serious

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consideration. This is evident in work by prominent architects such as Charles Correa, B.V. Doshi and Raj Rewal who make serious claims to be searching for an Indian identity buried under layers of history. This rhetoric centered on identity has shifted the discourse of Indian architecture from the quasi-scientific social concerns of the early postindependence period to a culturally based search for “Indianness.”

This shift was initially coincidental with a shift in cultural policy during the 1980s, which broadly stated a desire to incorporate India’s past into planning and architectural design at the national level. This included a conscious recognition of culture in all aspects of development, such as preservation of cultural heritage, establishment of organizations such as crafts museums, organization of Festivals of India, increased spending on tourism, and so forth. By then it had come to be recognized that India’s blind embrace of modernism had marginalized traditional modes of arts and handicrafts. By linking itself to the modern sector of production and construction, the architectural profession in India (initially dependent on the Royal Institute of British Architects) had also come to marginalize the products of craftsmanship in the traditional sector. Yet under the guise of using modern materials, building construction continued to be based largely on traditional labor-intensive methods, such as the use of bamboo scaffolding and the carrying of cement to the highest stories on the heads of male and female laborers (FIG. 1). In fact, the Indian cityscape is full of building forms derived from high-tech materials, the surfaces of which conceal the traditional methods of an earlier mode of production.

The discourse on the building of a modern India prided itself on its mediation between the binary oppositions of continuity and change, traditional and modern, regional and international, handicraft and technology, and so forth. However, when prominent architectural professionals began their inner search for an Indian identity in the 1980s, most (perhaps quite inadvertently) resorted to an imagery of sym-



FIGURE 1. “Landscape, Old Delhi.” © Raghu Rai/Magnum Photos from India: A Celebration of Independence © Aperture, 1997, p.112

bols, myths, and magic diagrams culled from ancient Indian treatises (FIG. 2). This imagery conforms not only to the stereotypical Western “Orientalist” understanding, but to a postmodern eclecticism common in the West. In this article, I will analyze two architectural productions that exemplify this approach: *Vistara*, a catalogue for the exhibition on Indian architecture prepared for the Festival of India held in Britain, France, Japan and the U.S. between 1983 and 1986; and the Jawahar Kala Kendra, the Center for the Arts and Crafts, Jaipur, by architect Charles Correa.¹ The choice of these case studies allows me to analyze the formation of this Indianized Indian identity, first through a critique of the textual and visual rhetoric produced in a context outside of India, and then through a study of the influence of this rhetoric upon actual building production in India.

VISTARA: A POSTMODERN NARRATIVE

Vistara is the title of the exhibition on Indian architecture prepared for the Festival of India held in Britain, France, Japan and the U.S. between 1983 and 1986. The exhibition presented a narrative of the history of architecture in India. It invoked Indian themes, Sanskrit and Hindi titles, and included traditionally neglected vernacular architecture and buildings from the colonial era in an unconventional, pluralistic approach (FIG. 3). Well-known proponents of Indian architecture such as Charles Correa and Ashish Ganju were involved in the creation of this manifesto.

The very title of the exhibition and its catalogue, *Vistara*, suggested a spiritual interpretation of Indian architecture as a series of epiphanies. Indeed, the various epochs of Indian history were presented as a succession of myths — the myth of the Vedic period, the myth of the Islamic period, and the myth of the Modern period — matched to underlying formal ideograms which purportedly reflected the “deep structure” of the society of the time. The Vedic times were characterized by the world of the nonmanifest: buildings generated by magic diagrams called *vastu-purusha-mandalas*. The introduction of Islam was seen as having caused a fundamental shift from the metaphysical to the sensual and hedonistic, as represented by the *char-bagh*, the paradise garden. Finally, the coming of the Europeans in the seventeenth century was presented as bringing in reason, science, progress and rationality.² The parallels between these changing myths and Thomas Kuhn’s shifting paradigms are obvious. Just as the idea of shifting Kuhnian paradigms questions a positivistic science progressing to a better knowledge of the world, the exhibition was based on a historical narrative of Indian architecture that avoided being either progressivist or historicist.³

The presentation categories, which proceeded more or less chronologically, were given Sanskrit titles such as “Manusha,” “Mandala,” and “Kund-Vapii,” which seemingly related the entire structure of the exhibition to a coherent

FIGURE 2. B.V. Doshi's rendering of a housing complex in the form of a miniature painting exemplified the approach of prominent architectural professionals in their search for an Indian identity in the 1980s. (From C. Kagal, ed., *Vistara: The Architecture of India*, Bombay, Tata Press Limited, 1986, p.201.)

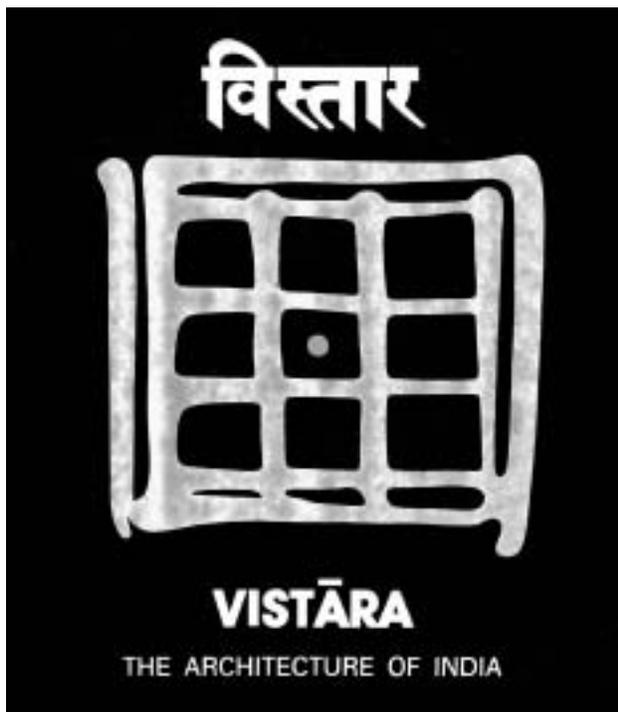


FIGURE 3. Cover page of the *Vistara* exhibition catalogue. (From C. Kagal, ed., *Vistara: The Architecture of India*, Bombay, Tata Press Limited, 1986.)

Indian philosophy.⁴ Categories like “Mandala,” “Manthana,” and “Islam” further served to accentuate the distinction between “Islamic” and “Hindu” architecture. This distinction is a legacy of English historians, who used it in an initial effort to come to terms with the bewildering variety of architecture on the subcontinent. Ultimately, the categorization of Indian architecture as Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist, and so forth can be traced back to James Fergusson, whose pioneering *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (1876) turned these from merely stylistic descriptions to operative categories.⁵ Architecture, for Fergusson, was fundamentally a “racial art.”⁶ Thus, structural clarity, simple rhythms, and large expanses of walls were not attributes of Islamic buildings, but of the very races that built them (FIG. 4). Similarly, a Hindu mind considered to be mysterious, metaphysical, and transcendental was supposed to have created the complex Hindu forms (FIG. 5).

Though such distinctions made stylistic sense, their attribution to religion fundamentally influenced the perception of architecture in India. For instance, any building that represented a mixture of elements from both the styles was necessarily seen as a confluence of two thoughts. Fatehpur Sikri near Agra serves as a case in point: here a whole political history of the construction of the building complex was based on a simplified reading of its architectural styles.⁷ Similarly, Datia Palace was projected as the mirror image of



FIGURE 4. *The expansive courtyard of Fatehpur Sikri embodies the stereotypical image of Islamic architecture in India. (Photo by author.)*

Diwan-i-Khas — for here a powerful Rajput king used the architectural syntax of Islam (domes, colonnades, structural clarity) to reinforce the classic *mandala* plan of Hindu mythology.⁸ The point is that such readings have simplified complex political realities, and served only to reinforce an already overdrawn Hindu vs. Islamic polarity.

It is important to point out that what was largely a stylistic confluence of two building traditions — a trabeated one, with a plastic aesthetic, from the Indian subcontinent; and an arcuate one stressing surface decoration and simple volumes, developed in Central Asia — was given the status of a religious and political statement. Such a reading also concealed the fact that almost all formal Indian architecture of the present millennium is a product of that confluence, including such Mughal masterpieces as the Taj Mahal and the Pearl Mosque, as well as later Rajput palaces. To call such architecture “Hindu” or “Islamic” is to reinforce an incorrect and anachronistic understanding.

A further negative effect of the simplified distinction between Hindu and Islamic architecture has been a consistent depreciation of Hindu art and architecture in comparison to the Islamic within Western scholarship. In *Much Maligned Monsters*, Partha Mitter pointed out that while Islamic art in the form of Mughal paintings and architecture was acceptable to Europeans, and even found admirers, Hindu art still presented problems of accommodation to Western aesthetics.⁹ Most particularly, Mitter attributed the resistance of Western historians to Hindu iconography and the profuse ornamental sculpture of South Indian temples to a fundamental Classical bias in the historical tradition of Western art.¹⁰

In picking up the discursive classification between Hindu and Islamic architecture, *Vistara* merely reversed Western judgements and accorded the qualities of mystery and transcendence a positive value. For instance, in the introduction to the section entitled “Mandala,” Correa wrote,

“For us in India, the answer goes back thousands of years. To the Vedic seers, the manifest world was only a part of their existence; there was also the world of the non-manifest.”¹¹ Despite the overt regard, the many references to mythic heritage (with its attendant themes of timelessness and ancient wisdom integrating all intruding civilizations) only helped reinforce the underlying reductionist image of the “Indian” mind as mystery-loving, nonmaterialistic, transcendental, and so on (FIG.6). Furthermore, the production of *Vistara* managed to transform and commodify “nonmanifest” phenomena into consumable entities.

The misrepresentations embedded in the history of architecture in India can be attributed not only to the Orientalist biases and interpretations of English historians, but also to discursive definitions embedded in the discipline of architecture in the nineteenth century. Thus, much of the discussion of architecture in India has been limited to historic monuments such as temples, mosques and palaces. The *Vistara* exhibition and catalogue fell into this same historiographic mold. Thus, while its categories traced shifts in the succeeding myths and paradigms of formal architecture — i.e., from Vedic to Islamic to colonial — all “unselfconscious” architecture was lumped together in a single ahistorical category (“Manusha”). In this way such important traditional and



FIGURE 5. *The sculpted walls of the Khajuraho Temples embody the stereotypical image of Hindu architecture in India. (Photo by author.)*

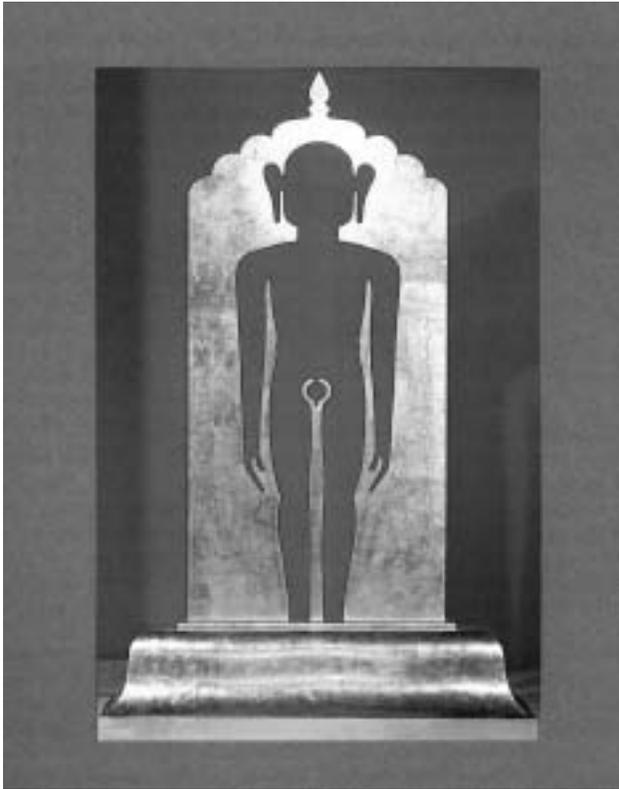


FIGURE 6. Central to the exhibition stood Purusha — a large-scale replica of an ancient Jain icon representing man in his two principal aspects: human and cosmic. (From C. Kagal, ed., *Vistara: The Architecture of India*, Bombay, Tata Press Limited, 1986, p.7.)

informal housing productions as the round huts of Banni, Kutch, squatter settlements in Bombay, and the urban shrines of Jaipur were seen as timeless and unchanging (FIG.7). Cut off from the larger formal argument of succeeding myths, they continued to represent a marginalized front within the larger discourse on Indian architecture.

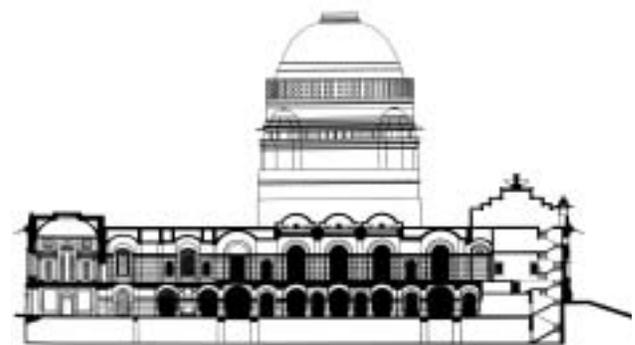
Furthermore, biases in reading political content into stylistic choices were apparent in the section on colonial architecture. In particular, *Vistara* praised buildings by architects such as Chisholm, who made explicit efforts to inte-

FIGURE 7. Squatters in pipes, Bombay. The *Vistara* exhibition lumped all nonformal architecture together in a single category. (Photo from Charles Correa, *Bombay*, The Perennial Press, 1996, p.171.)



grate traditional Indian elements into contemporary architecture and so produce an “Indian style,” while denigrating the efforts of talented architects such as Lutyens, who struggled to redefine his Classicism in the context of India (FIGS.8,9). Indeed, *Vistara* called Lutyens’s incorporation of Indian elements “an architectural pastiche involving superficial transfer.”¹² Racist rejection of Indian architecture should have earned Lutyens criticism, but to discredit his work purely on these grounds, with no appreciation of its architectural qualities, could only indicate an inconsistency in the criterion of judgment. It is further interesting that *Vistara* chose to venerate the arrival of Europeans on the Indian subcontinent as bringing an age of reason, science, and industrialization. Quite ironically, such a view promoted the colonization hypothesis of an irrational and mysterious India brought to a new age through a contact with Europeans.¹³

In hindsight, *Vistara*’s pluralistic approach — the idea of using underlying myths and Sanskrit titles to capture and present the shifting discourses on Indian architecture — can be interpreted on two levels. On the one hand, it placed the catalogue in the larger postmodern discourse on myths, memory,



FIGURES 8(TOP), 9(BOTTOM). Senate House, Baroda; and Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi. *Vistara* praised such buildings by Chisholm, while denigrating the efforts of Lutyens, who was struggling to redefine his classicism in the context of India. (From C. Kagal, ed., *Vistara: The Architecture of India*, Bombay, Tata Press Limited, 1986, pp.103,104.)

and identity in the West.¹⁴ On the other, it represented a critique of earlier universalist values blindly borrowed from the West, and offered a statement of renewed confidence (however stylistic) in Indian values. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that *Vistara* classified rationality and modernity as a “myth.” This placed the whole enterprise of the exhibition yet again within a larger postmodern discourse and made it more acceptable to a Western audience. With its criticism of positivism and rationality as universal values, the exhibition discarded the idea of historical progress. Myths were simply shown to have replaced each other, with new ones born, assimilated, digested, and finally transformed into new architecture.

This critique has thus far focused on the contention that several stereotypes about Indian architecture went unquestioned in the conception of the exhibition. The distinction between Hindu and Islamic architecture was reiterated; the idea of Europeans introducing an age of reason was cast as a major theme; and the discussion of traditional architecture promoted the image of a timeless and unchanging India. On that front, *Vistara* has emerged as an iconic representation of how “notions” and “images” of Indian built form have recently been perceived, categorized, and congratulated in the West. As a part of the “exhibition” of India, the catalogue was structured to fit within a larger discourse on architecture and on India, and helped promote certain long-standing Western stereotypes, biases and misconceptions. However, the story presented by *Vistara* was also the very same history that architects were seeking to construct to legitimize their agendas within the profession in India.

JAWAHAR KALA KENDRA: NINE-SQUARE HOUSE OF CULTURE

The context for the production *Vistara* was not just the overt Festival of India, but also the construction of a historical narrative that would serve to legitimize specific architectural agendas in India. A case in point is the Jawahar Kala Kendra, a state-sponsored institution, designed by architect Charles Correa, built in the city of Jaipur, and devoted to the preservation and promotion of traditional arts and crafts. In this structure the agendas presented in *Vistara* are used to formalize theories about an Indian architecture. The building’s design is based on a theme of myths embodied in the nine-square plan of *vastu-purusha-mandala* (with one of its squares wittily “misplaced”) (FIG. 10). The nine squares presumably also reflect the nine-square plan of the city of Jaipur. Each square in the building is thus associated with a specific planet and myth: for instance, the northern square, called the Mangal Mahal, or the palace of Mars, expresses power and houses the administration; while the central square signifies the creative energy of the sun and houses an open-air theater.

Correa has claimed that the inspiration for the building was derived from the cosmic diagram of the nine-square



FIGURE 10. Plan of Jawahar Kala Kendra, showing the “misplacement” of one of nine squares in the mandala. (Courtesy of the office of Charles Correa, architect, Bombay.)

vastu-purusha-mandala (FIG. 11). He described *mandalas* as “square diagrams subdivided symmetrically about the center, creating series of 4, 9, 16, 25 . . . up to 1,024.” Although they may form the basis for architectural plans, he also noted that *mandalas* are “not plans; but that they represent energy fields.”¹⁵ Furthermore, he explained that the Jawahar Kala Kendra makes a very specific reference to Sawai Jai Singh’s design for the old city of Jaipur.

*Maharaja Jai Singh, who founded the city, was also a renowned astronomer. . . . In the planning of Jaipur, he embarked on a truly extraordinary venture. He sought to combine his passion for the latest tenets of contemporary astronomy with the most ancient and sacred of his beliefs. The plan of the city is based on a nine-square mandala corresponding to the navagraha or nine planets. The void in the central square he used for the palace garden. (Because of the presence of a hill, a corner square was moved diagonally across.)*¹⁶

Similar to Sawai Jai Singh’s plan in which one square is slightly shifted, Correa dislocated one of the nine squares of his plan (even though there is no hill in sight). By shifting the northeastern square (which houses the auditorium) diagonally, he allowed a space for the entrance. Correa claimed these design gestures were not mere transfers of imagery, but transformations of a deeper order. Much like the references in *Vistara*, the story of symbolic references is meant to impart “Indianness” to the design.

At a very basic level the correspondence between the *mandala* and the plan of Jawahar Kala Kendra is very evident: they both have nine squares.¹⁷ It is known that Hindu tem-

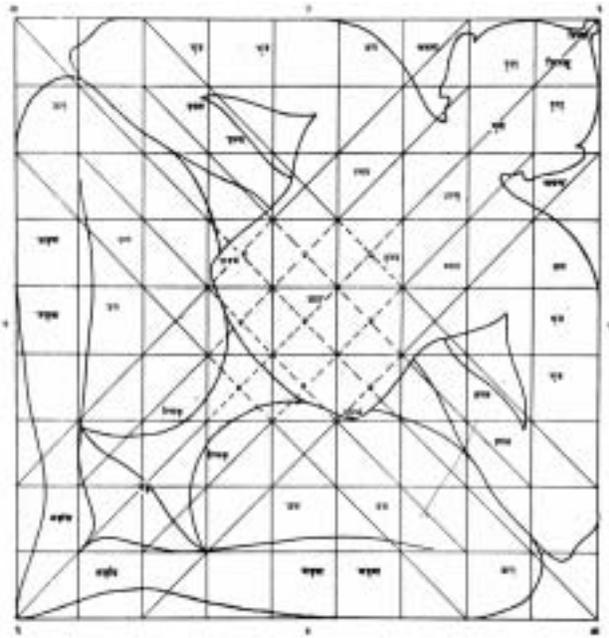


FIGURE 11. Vastu-purusha-mandala. Hindu temples are based on mandalas, but the relationship is ordinarily an approximation. Mandalas represent the ideal, unmanifest order of cosmos, while temples are particularized, manifest embodiments. (From C. Kagal, ed., *Vistara: The Architecture of India, Bombay, Tata Press Limited, 1986, p.37.*)

ples are based on *mandalas*, but the relation is normally one of approximation. Thus, if *mandalas* represent the ideal, nonmanifest order of cosmos, temples are particularized, manifest embodiments of *mandalas*. In fact, as material manifestations of an order that must by definition remain ideal, the plans of the temples are actually derived by geometric displacements that ensure that temple walls do not occupy the ideal geometry of the *mandala*.

Correa's reference to the *mandala* functions in just the opposite way. By making a literal reference, Correa's plan easily corresponds with the nine-square diagram. It is easily readable, comes with a simple message, and is up for display — much like Robert Venturi's billboards. Furthermore, identifiable stereotypical "Indian" elements, such as *jharokhas* and Jain paintings, decontextualized from their original sources, are recontextualized in the Indianized postmodern interiors of the building (FIG. 12). With its bright Indian colors and oversized billboards, the building is literally designed for the camera.¹⁸ The calculus here is the same as in advertising: its fundamental focus is imageability, playing the game of grafted simulation — a game that allows it to be completely oblivious to the real needs of those whose traditions are displayed in it. Thus, the Museum of Indian Culture becomes a classic theme-park building. Without having to interact with the complexities of Indian cultural history, its design allows visitors to consume all aspects of Indian culture in one visit.



FIGURE 12. Krishna in Ketu, Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur. The architectural symbolism employed in the building is displayed as if on a billboard. (From Charles Correa, *Bombay, The Perennial Press, 1996, p.229.*)

Another aspect of the search for Indianness, and a condition of postmodern thought in architecture in general, has been the latent theme of the autonomy of architecture.¹⁹ In the Jawahar Kala Kendra it is very evident in the stress on the formal aspects of architecture. Most particularly, the singular emphasis of the building on displaying its names — its semantics and syntax, and its lack of interest in social, economic and functional issues, make it an ideal case for postmodernism.

AFTERWORD

From the above two analyses, it is evident that the history presented to the West in *Vistara* was the very story architects needed to legitimize their architectural agendas within the profession in India. From this angle, the perpetuation of the stereotypes that underlie the exhibition, and that surface in the images of the Jawahar Kala Kendra, are no longer simplifications that make the narrative more contextual for the West; rather, they are evidence of appropriation of history to "create a tradition," as Eric Hobsbawm has discussed in *The Invention of Tradition*.²⁰ The theme of myths as a criterion for describing and evaluating buildings is an illustration of one such "invented postmodern tradition." In colonial histories it has been seen as crucial to discuss paradigms and stereotypes, which help legitimize the ideological and political posi-

tions. One thus finds that even in postcolonial revisions the same stereotypes are used to pave the way for new ideological landscapes — new *vistaras* — that appropriate the past to create a program for the future.

This critique is particularly pertinent in the context of contemporary debates about the impossibility of representing the “self” and the “other.” Both the modern and postmodern representations of Indian architecture are invariably tainted with ideological agendas. Both undo the very premises they claim to seek. There is nothing that can be claimed to be truly Indian or truly Western — both legitimate the Other through unequal power relationships. What happens when we begin to accept the integral nature of these binary categories? Can we ever undo their politics? Can we ever grasp anything called a pure “authentic” tradition? Or, are all references to tradition bound to be mere “inventions”?

In an insightful piece published in the Spring 2001 issue of *TDSR*, Ananya Roy offered the possibility of discussing the modern through the trope of tradition, which she claimed to be inherently inauthentic. She argued for an epistemological framework in which the categories of the modern and the postmodern can be accepted as always incomplete and always contested. In doing so, she suggested that the future can be made possible through the impossibility of remembering an authentic past.²¹ If so, the questions that surface are these: Can Indian architects indeed draw upon their past (however impossible it might be to remember it)? Would it allow them to make claims to their cultural heritage without falling into the traps of legitimating stereotypes? Is there an epistemological framework that will allow us to distinguish a “more appropriate” embrace of history and tradition from an inappropriate one? In answering this question, it may be possible to create the space for a new *vistara* for architecture in India.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. Also see R. Bhatt and S. Bafna, “Post-Colonial Narratives of Indian Architecture,” *Architecture + Design*, Journal for the Indian Architect, Vol.12 No.6 (Nov.–Dec. 1995), pp.85–89.
2. C. Correa, “Introduction,” in C. Kagal, ed., *Vistara: The Architecture of India* (Bombay: Tata Press Limited, 1986), p.8.
3. T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
4. Kagal, ed., *Vistara*, p.5.
5. J. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Far Eastern Architecture* (London: J. Murray, 1876), however, later recognized the simplification that such classification entails. In a lecture given to the Royal Society of Arts entitled, “On the Study of Indian Architecture,” Fergusson said, “I learnt that there was not only one Hindu and one Mohammedan style in India, but several species of class; that these occupied well-defined local provinces, and belonged each to ascertained ethnological divisions of the people.” Reprinted in J. Fergusson, *On the Study of Indian Architecture* (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1977), pp.5–6. However, it was not long before architectural historians were casually writing about two fundamentally different architectures in India, each identified with a religious community. See, for example, B. Fletcher’s *History of World Architecture on the Comparative Method* (London: Scribner’s Sons, 1899), pp.889–909.
6. Fergusson, “Introduction,” in *On the Study of Indian Architecture*, pp.3–49.
7. *Vistara*, pp.80–83. The tradition of studying Fatehpur Sikri as a confluence of Hindu and Islamic styles was criticized in an issue of *MARG* entitled “Akbar and Fatehpur Sikri,” Vol.38 No.2 (Bombay, 1986). This approach was found to be too simplistic to define the profusion of styles in Akbar’s palaces. Fatehpur Sikri’s eclecticism was attributed to several factors: the formative character of the Mughal court, Akbar’s support for experimentation in the arts, and his fascination with his Timurid ancestry. Furthermore, some authors have suggested that the British projection of Fatehpur Sikri as a representation of the Akbar’s religious tolerance was politically motivated. Its role was to legitimize British rule over India. See, for example, T. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
8. Kagal, ed., *Vistara*, pp.84–85.
9. P. Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).
10. P. Mitter “Western Bias in the study of South Indian Aesthetics,” *South Asian Review*, Vol.6 (Jacksonville, FL: South Asian Literary Association, 1973), pp.125–36.
11. Kagal, ed., *Vistara*, p.33.
12. *Ibid.*, pp.105–6.
13. *Ibid.*, p.94.
14. This is particularly true of the architectural discourse of the late seventies and eighties in the West, which was dominated by Aldo Rossi, Robert Krier, Leon Krier, Robert Venturi, Charles Jencks, Charles Moore and so forth. See, A. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982); C. Jencks, *What Is Post-modernism?* (London: Academy Editions, 1987); K.C. Bloomer and C.W. Moore, *Body, Memory, and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); R. Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966).
15. C. Correa, “Public, Private and Sacred,” *Architecture + Design*, Vol.8 No.5 (1991), p.92
16. *Ibid.*, p.96
17. In 1978 Kulbhushan Jain, a professor at the School of Architecture, Ahmadabad, proposed that the plan of the city of Jaipur was significant because it was based on the nine-square *mandala*. He also stressed its importance because in practice it embodied a secular adaptation of the underlying cosmic principle. K. Jain, “Morphostructure of a Planned City: Jaipur, India,” *Architecture + Urbanism* (August 1978), pp.107–20.
18. V. Prakash, “Identity Production in Postcolonial Indian Architecture: Re-covering What we never Had,” in G.B. Nalbantoglu and C.T. Wong, eds., *Postcolonial Space(s)* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), pp.45–50.
19. It may seem paradoxical to assert that the recognition of the autonomy of architecture is an aspect of the postmodern discourse and a search for Indianness. It must

be pointed out that this awareness for the “cultural” has replaced the earlier emphasis of the sixties on the “social” role of architecture. Most architects today are concerned with addressing issues of cultural meaning, which manifests itself in a preoccupation with visual and iconic aspects of architectural form. It is this emphasis on the visual

that has led to an increased autonomy of the architectural object.

20. E. Hobsbawm, “Inventing Traditions,” in Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

21. A. Roy, “Traditions of the Modern: A Corrupt View,” *Traditional Dwellings and*

Settlements Review, Vol.12 No.2 (Spring 2001), pp.7–13. See also the other articles in the issue, several of which were originally presented as papers at the IASTE 2000 conference in Trani, Italy, organized around the theme “The End of Tradition?”

