A City of Historical Layers and Consciousness: Spatial Analysis of Delhi in Sam Miller's *Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity*

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Abstract
British journalist Sam Miller's 2008 *Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity* is an adventurous compilation of what he experienced while touring the Delhi urban space. The book chronicles rarely explored spatial layers of the city which, he writes, 'was of Sultanates and Mughals, of Djinns and Sufis, of poets and courtesans, is now a city of cybercafes and shopping malls, of Metros and multiplexes. It is the past and it is the future.'[1] As Jean Roudaut 'consider[ed] the city as a text where, beneath a clear meaning, a thousand buried and murmuring words reside', Delhi's urban surface is visibly conscious of its past rich with political, social and cultural layers.[2] In this article, I argue that travel writing about Delhi space relies on the foundational understanding that the spatial spirit of the city is rooted upon consciousness of past living in the present. I will undertake a geocritical analysis of Mughal and Imperial spatial and architectural heritages and ruins of Delhi narrated in Miller's travelogue.
Keywords: Geocriticism, Urban Delhi, Walking Tour, Richness and Ruins of Past, Spatial Identities.

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[1] Sam Miller, *Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity* (Gurgaon: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 1.

[2] Bertrand Westphal, *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, trans. R. T. Tall (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 159.

Introduction

The authenticity of referential or social places in both fiction and non-fiction accounts of a space narrative determines the main difference between both genres. However, according to French critic Bertrand Westphal, this separation based upon the validation of represented places is insignificant. He states, "answering this question leads us to consider a particular aspect of the link between the referent and its representation, probably the least interesting aspect: the relative degree of verisimilitude of the representation— potentially high in strict reportage, medium in a travelogue, and low in a purely fictional story. Such gradations seem irrelevant."[3]

The British journalist Sam Miller's 2008 travelogue on Delhi, titled *Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity*, narrates his adventurous journey through the capital city of India. Miller served as a journalist in Delhi for British Broadcast Company during the 1990s. He again came back to the city in the earlier decades of the twentieth century and explored many unexplored layers of the city. In an interview, Miller explains the structure and narrative contents of his work:

> We will find I had been to places in Delhi that most people do not go to. Certainly, most English-speaking reasonably well-off people do not tend to go to these places. I walked through it, seemed the best way of capturing that rather than sort of going to the obvious famous places or talking to the obvious famous experts on the city. I tried something that was just a little bit different.[4]

For this compilation of Miller's series of walking through what he observes as the real and deep face of the city of Delhi.

> I went throughout the whole city... This There was a spiral throughout, it took to every corner of the city, and it was fantastic for me. I have worked for years as a journalist and always believed there was a story down every street and in Delhi I found it to be true and everywhere I found fascinating stories.[5]

The historical identity of the city of Delhi has been stated by Miller in the prologue that he wrote for the travelogue. He explains that the city "has been scoffed at, coveted, decimated, lionized, demolished and rebuilt."[6] Keeping in his mind this specific identity of the city, he prefers the walk the city as it

[3] Westphal, *Geocriticism*, p. 119.
[4] Penguin India, 'Sam Miller talks about *Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity*', *YouTube*, 13 February (2009). At https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OghPScUGCV4. Accessed 3/03/2022.
[5] Penguin India, 'Sam Miller talks about *Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity*', 4:36.
[6] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 1.

enables him to tread the untold and unwritten places and experiences of the city. The travelogue substantiates the advantages of the walking method, as the author narrates the deep and immense stories of the city spread on its street, back lanes, markets, monuments, sprawling authoritarian zones, and ruins.

Apart from the visible spatial layout and its infrastructural and architectural design, the city of Delhi moves on its deep-rooted social and cultural layers. Each spatial experience of a travel writer is a socially evolved result being produced at that particular temporal point. This phenomenon, which happened to Miller also, leads to describing a place, especially the urban place, as a social product. This article is, therefore, an analysis of Miller's narrations of the Delhi urban space which he arranged using the spiral walk method. The observations in the following sections are conducted with a qualitative method of textual analysis and are incorporated with some spatial theories.

Historical Richness of Metropolitan Delhi

In many parts of his account, Miller stresses an ideal statement about the visible identity of Delhi: that "it has everything that is old and everything that is modern."[7] This phenomenal proximity and convergence of past, present, and, more curiously, the impending future, of the city made the author think of it as a unique urban place. Miller reaffirms this spatial quality: "Delhi, the city of Sultanates and Mughals, of Djinns and Sufis, of poets and courtesans, is now a city of cybercafes and shopping malls, of Metros and multiplexes. It is the past and it is the future. It is my home."[8] Miller is keen to write about the evolutionary changes, as well as the destruction, that some of the structural identities of the city face now. He shows his will to heed stories and myths, and to hold on to memories that he has about these heritage symbols. He says,

> I am very interested in how the modern and the ancient work together... I think we need to celebrate some of the smaller ruins and not just the big famous ones. I think it is important to put those in a modern context and make sure they are integrated into the modern city rather than … that is the part of nostalgia.[9]

Miller's love for this antique-modern merging of the capital city could also have tempted him to experience them closely by choosing the walking

[7] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 4.
[8] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 1.
[9] Penguin India, 'Sam Miller talks about *Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity*', 6:24.

method through the city. Again, Miller expresses this walking experience as it would enable him to know the historicity of the city more deeply: "The historicity of urban fabric can be illustrated by a short walk in any old city anywhere in the world, where buildings and street patterns of various past periods stand side by side. Even newer cities have an inherent historicity: their creation is rooted in historical processes and concepts."[10] Such a social-spatial tour has convinced Miller that the present spirit and consciousness of the city of Delhi still has been considerably influenced by its past laying on its present.

In his essay 'On History in Travel', Hilaire Belloc lays out three conditions of a traveller that affect their engagement with regional knowledge and space:

> The first is to travel with no knowledge of history at all; this might create a deeper impression of particular sights because we are not distracted by historical context; the second, is to visit a place having read a good deal about it, which allows us to concentrate on the details, of the architecture, for example, but at the cost of that deep impression of seeing something for the first time; the third, and the 'best', is 'to take travel in connection with general history', with a synoptic view of history in mind rather than guided by 'official or conventional history'; for Belloc, this would be the worst way of regarding history in travel.[11]

Out of the three ways of approaching a space, Miller's method is most similar to the second type outlined by Belloc. It is evident in many parts of the travelogue that Miller started to walk through Delhi after gaining a standard historical reading experience about the city, as well on drawing on his previous visit to the area.

In a similar vein, the Albanian novelist Ismail Kadare discusses the richness of the past being explicitly visible, for instance, throughout the city of Gjirokaster situated in the south of Albania.[12] "One can walk around it over the roofs and sometimes look down on the tips of minarets. In other words, depth seems to be surface." Likewise, monuments recall the royal heritage of Delhi, its architecture, partly ruined structures echoing the depth of a rich past and spatial layout reflecting the historical significance of the place. All of these have visibly created the potentiality of the past upon the

[10] Ali Madanipour, *Design of Urban Space: An Inquiry into a Socio-Spatial Process* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), p. 38.
[11] Hilaire Belloc, *Places* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), pp. 22-23.
[12] Westphal, *Geocriticism*, p. 140.

surface of the present city. Like the Urdu poet Mir Taqi Mir's praise of the Delhi streets as arranged like "the album of a painter," the Mughal and colonial architectures and spatial designs have beautifully painted the surface of the city.[13] "Beautiful jharokhas (windows), chattris (umbrellas), small decorative balconies, fluted columns, well-designed chabutras (platforms), traditional baithaks (drawing rooms) and marble floors were the features of the Mughal architectural styles."[14] These appealing symbols of Mughal spatial aesthetics dwell even now, though with faded attractions and ruined states, merged with the contemporary movement of Delhi.

There is a narration in the travelogue about a building structure in the city built by the British Raj. Embodying the Imperial architecture and currently run as a commercial hotel, it still maintains a colonial ambience. The aura of the hotel brings into Miller's mind the hold of the empire upon India and the exotic approach of the earlier upon the latter's culture and space. Miller describes the hotel:

> The Imperial has had a makeover and is dotted upon by many regular visitors to Delhi, particularly the British. It somehow represents India of the Western imagination, a land of maharajas and high tea. Unlike the other luxury hotels of Delhi, it is unashamedly backwards-looking, and well, imperial… The staff are dressed in Imperial costumes of startling complexity and tidiness… The Imperial is for me the last gasp of the Empire, a pastiche of the past, bottled and conserved for future generations.[15]

The visitors and customers of the Imperial Hotel, thus, enter into the third space of hyper-real ambience. To create this spatial phenomenon in the hotel, the temporal confluence of the past and present has been used simultaneously. "Simultaneity in space as a value causes a specific quality in space creation. For instance, a space that is created from the simultaneity of two old and new spaces will create a new circumstance for the user which has got its own qualitative aspects."[16] The complexity of such places in Delhi are also due to this temporal convergence. For instance, the legacy of the old

[13] 'Beauty lost in progression-Shahjahanabad', *Architecture Photography India*, 12 September (2018). At https://architecturephotographyindia.wordpress.com/2018/09/12/beauty-lost-in-progression/. Accessed 11/06/2022.
[14] 'Beauty lost in progression-Shahjahanabad'.
[15] Miller, *Delhi,* p. 4.
[16] Alireza Memarian and Navid Niazkar, 'The Lost Space of Architecture in the Context of Urban Lost Space', *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology*, vol. 3, no. 5 (2014), p. 314.

glory of the hotel amalgamates with the present imaginative realm it creates. The preservation of such Imperial and Mughal structures in their intact design and architecture in many parts of the city made its surface a hyper-real version of its past.

Likewise, Miller describes Agarsen's Baoli, a well-constructed building seven centuries old. He listens to the mythical narrations related to the well and experiences its architectural features:

> Hidden away behind the construction site … is Agarsen's Baoli, central Delhi's oldest building. Six thousand years old and built by the uncle of the Hindu god, Lord Krishna, according to its watchman. A mere seven hundred years old, according to historians, Agarsen was probably a thirteenth-century chieftain and a Baoli is a rectangular step-well. Through a padlocked gate opened by taciturn, bidi smoking watchman, I climbed up onto a large plinth from where a one hundred stone steps lead down to the bottom of the well.[17]

Different mythical narratives, as in the case of Agarsen's Baoli, have been bounded by many monuments and other historical constructions located in Delhi. Mostly, there are conflicts between the validity of such narratives and the archaeological studies linked with these historical identities, as it happened between the mythical narrative and historical data of the reservoir built by King Agarsen. Today, the engineering used to build the well attracts its visitors, especially when it is linked with the mythical narrative mentioned above. Bertrand Westphal explains this temporal relevance of space through his concept of geocriticism, wherein its historical visibility is being linked with the present. "This present time of space includes a past that flows according to a stratigraphic logic. Examining the impact of time on the perception of space is, therefore, another aspect of geocriticism."[18]

Miller's following description of Shahjahanabad, mostly known as Old Delhi now, also establishes this inseparable spatial bond with the layers and identities of its past. He portrays the ruining state of royally built Mughal identities of the place:

> I was now deep inside Old Delhi, a city of many names purani Delhi, the Walled City, Shahjahanabad, all of it now a minuscule part of this ever-expanding megalopolis… A century ago, the walled city enclosed all of Delhi. Today, it is the kind of place that gets referred to in great books as an ancient warren, a maze of streets, labyrinth, a

[17] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 47.
[18] Westphal, *Geocriticism*, p. 137.

> tangled web… Most of the elements of Shah Jahan's city are still visible.[19]

Shahjahanabad, named after Mughal king Shah Jahan's making of the space as a walled city, presently occupies the reflection of its eventful past through the iconic monuments like the Red Fort, and fading glories of its royal edifices, streets and commercial markets. Like Miller prepared for his Delhi narrative, anyone who acquires a standard knowledge about Old Delhi would become immersed in her direct experience of the place, in its deep and rich spatial aura which echoes its past remnants. The historical layers of the space are mostly filled with architectural and structural ruins recalling the visual aura of the city's heritage. Miller identifies many of the unread structures and exposes their unidentified or neglected values. He, as Jean Roudaut states in *Imaginary Cities*, experiences their worth as he "consider[s] the city as a text where, beneath a clear meaning, a thousand buried and murmuring words reside."[20] Miller experiences the compressed nature of the past and present of Old Delhi being synchronized on the surface of the space, though the elegance and beauty of many of the identities of its glorious history are now in a faded state. Their remaining beauty and elegance are obstructed by a "maze of streets, labyrinth, a tangled web."[21] Out of this conceptualization of the walled city of Delhi explained through Miller's travel there, one's inference would be that "the general idea of interweaving multiple pasts with the present to produce a diachronic sense of place is a common aim among modern travel writers who travel with one foot in the present and one in the past."[22]

Miller takes a special interest in bringing out the fading richness of the historical structures of the city into his narrative. Since most of the visual layout of urban spaces in the world has no replica of the city of Delhi (in terms of showing a symphonic balance between heritage symbols of space and its infrastructural sprawl), Miller, arguably, developed a curiosity about the historical aspect of Delhi space. "As modern cities become more like each other, or indistinguishable from filmi representations, the literary

[19] Miller, *Delhi*, pp. 112-13.
[20] Jean Roudaut, *Les villes imaginaires dans la littérature française* (Paris: Hatier, 1990), p. 10.
[21] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 113.
[22] Paul Smethurst, 'Travel Writing and the City', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Literature and the City*, ed. Jeremy Tambling (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 751-766, 753.

traveller increasingly finds landscapes and cityscapes of the past the most rewarding places to visit."[23]

Reliving Imperial Space: Spatial and Architectural Identities of Lutyens' Delhi

The Imperial architecture Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens' design of the Imperial Delhi attracted glaring attention due to its showcasing of the western style of making a capital city and creating spatial segregation between the ruler and the ruled. Miller portrays this essential quality of Lutyens' Delhi in his narrative. Revealing the motive behind creating such an architectural and spatial layout, the then-British Secretary of State for India pointed out, "The Government House should be a building which will stand out conspicuous and commanding. As one approaches New Delhi the first object to come on view should be Government House flying the British Flag. The buildings should not be dominated by the Jumma Masjid and the Fort nor dwarfed by the Ridge."[24]

In the travelogue, the above-quoted features of Imperial Delhi, which includes Raisina Hill and Rajpath particularly, are asserted by Miller's direct experience of the place. The art historian Ernest Havell commented on Lutyens' city as a make-believe capital region.[25] Miller, though the ruling predecessors of his native country designed New Delhi, was struck by the ghostly broadness and authoritarian infrastructure of the area. He explains the striking aspects of the Imperial infrastructure in Lutyens' space:

> There is something eerie, inhuman, about the whole area. Authoritarian, like Nuremberg, declaimed one writer about Delhi. I find its silent emptiness even more striking. Here is a huge, landscaped, open public space in the centre of one of the biggest cities in the world, and it is desolate. No one is here, except for eme. It is as if Clemenceau's prediction had come true and I was visiting a ghost city.[26]

Havell's attribution of Imperial Delhi as a make-believe space is justified by Miller's narration of it as a haunted place. It is further asserted by Miller's detail of the place carrying the colonial layout. "The most striking feature of all is the amount of empty space on the plain below Raisina Hill. A huge

[23] Smethurst, 'Travel Writing and the City', p. 765.
[24] Satish Sharma, 'Imperial Delhi: Imagined, Imaged, Iconicized', *India International Centre Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 2 (2006), p. 29.
[25] Sharma, 'Imperial Delhi', p. 31.
[26] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 73.

broad avenue sweeps up from the east. It is as if a runaway has been laid in central Delhi, so wide and flat and deserted that it is a daunting place for a solitary walker."[27]

According to Miller, the Imperial space always reminds the ruled the authoritative hand of the ruler. The political agenda of this place, along with its aesthetic value, surges on its visible layers, and Miller got a spatial impression carried out by both elements. However, the militaristic atmosphere of the place could be a disturbing element of the latter. As Satish Sharma explains,

> Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy, saw the new capital as the assertion of 'an unfaltering determination to maintain British rule in India'. A city built for eternity as a present-day Rome, it was a Male, Militaristic space: a space that could be, and still is, the perfect backdrop for militaristic displays of power.[28]

Mental mapping of place is one of the areas of study in geocriticism. As Miller details the orientating directions of the area, the reader of his narrative can develop an imaginative map of the place, even without having a chance to experience the place directly. Miller writes:

> I marched to the end of Mandir Marg, …reaching a junction where I was faced with a choice. On the right: Willingdon Crescent, both a genuine arc of a circle, and central Delhi's greenest road, sandwiched between the Ridge and the vast, overgrown compound at the back of Rashtrapati Bhavan. On the left, Imperial Delhi: the palace itself and new city built by and for the British- and a few carefully chosen Indians… The heart of British New Delhi has three huge rectilinear government edifices, and, to one side, a whimsical, circular afterthought. Those three main buildings are built on a vast plinth created by simply slicing off the top of what was once Raisina Hill, as if it were a hard-boiled egg…[29]

As cited above, the spatial consciousness is created for the reader of Miller's narrative in which Imperial Delhi could be easily segregated from the rest of the city thanks to the architectural and spatial layout of the earlier. Particularly, the spatial position of edifices and their layout upon Raisina Hill asserted the consciousness of control of the ruler over the ruled. Rifat Alihodzic and Domen Zupančič summarise, "In a dynamical sense, a tower standing in an empty field or a ceramic vase on a table are centres of visual energy sending their vectors in all directions and thereby surround

[27] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 71.
[28] Sharma, 'Imperial Delhi', p. 29.
[29] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 70.

themselves with a tension-loaded field that spreads and gradually peters out in empty space."[30]

The symbolic geometry behind the design of Imperial space, along with its nobility and broadness, was thus intended for "creating straight sight lines, which were not just about picturesque or dominating views, but were also about crowd control and the clean lines of fire needed to control riots."[31] Further, selecting a vacant space, which has an uninterrupted far stretching sight through King's Way towards India Gate, and keeping it anti-pedestrian with its broad roads, established a spatial control over its people. The design of architecture of the place also contributed much to adding the severity in creating this authority,

> Set on a hill with a 'commanding view' and built to be higher than the Jama Masjid …, the building of Imperial New Delhi was about wielding command over a land and its people. It was about marginalizing the memories of the Mughals and constructing 'an Anglo-Indian Rome ... one size larger than life', an eternal Imperial city which would 'reflect Rome and be comparable to Constantinople'. An imperial, monumental scale, an overt opulence and unrestricted visibility were considered essential to dominating the monuments of India's earlier empires.[32]

Similar to the infrastructural and architectural motives which helped immensely to establish an authoritative look of Rome and Constantinople, the design of the Imperial Delhi also made it convenient for the British to assert their rule over the entire state. New Delhi was, thus, converted into a powerful ruling space of the world. Herbert Baker, a designer of the Imperial Delhi along with Lutyens, reveals the British objective behind the spatial layout of the capital city that it "must not be Indian or English or Roman. But it must be Imperial." He saw it as a "sacred space" and talked of the buildings as "Temples."[33]

The architectural adaptation of the Imperial place owes a great deal to a British-Mughal-Indian combination. The intention of the British officials behind this mixed composition in the design of the area was that the British rule must be positioned as the most powerful and authoritative among all other ruling groups of the country. It was also intended to show that Indian

[30] Rifat Alihodzic and Domen Zupančič, 'The Importance of Vertical Buildings in Perception and Memorising the City', *E3S Web of Conferences*, vol. 33, no 01031 (2018).
[31] Sharma, 'Imperial Delhi', p. 30.
[32] Sharma, "Imperial Delhi', p. 30.
[33] Sharma, "Imperial Delhi', p. 29.

contribution to science and technology is weak and, consequently, the British skills could contribute to better construction of the capital city. This could also enable them to assert their power and they used them to establish a capital region of Imperial rule in the country. Sharma states, "The visual conspicuousness was necessary to demonstrate the superiority of Western culture over the Indian and to project the 'power of Western Science, Art and Civilization with an architecture that represented the intellectual progress of those that are in authority."[34]

After the description of the motives behind Lutyens' making of Imperial identity in Delhi, Miller hints at about his view of The Presidential Palace, originally built as the Viceroy's house, and its adjacent buildings:

> At the western end are the great looming ministerial buildings of North and South Block, and barely visible, as if shamed by the power of bureaucracy, is the presidential palace, set far too far back to provide the sense of 'awe and majesty' that the British had intended. Edwin Lutyens, the chief architect, had wanted the palace to sit alone on the of the hill- but he had been persuaded to allow the secretariats to share that position.[35]

The feeling of awe and majesty in the presidential palace, while looking at it even from a far place, gives it a theatrical effect. The spatial layout helped to get "the singular panoramic view of a wide-angle lens and successfully created the monocular illusionism of frontal theatre."[36] As mentioned earlier, the spatial separation between the ruler and the ruled is one of the imperial objectives of the area as there had no visual obstruction to view the Presidential Palace from any point of Rajpath laying as far stretched linear pathway. The deliberately wide and vacant road between the house and the rest of the city further generates political authority and power. "It was built to be visible from miles away and designed for the natives to point to, as the 'Residence of the Lord Sahib'. Ceremonial and militaristic spaces were an important element in invoking an imperial identity and creating the spectacular awe that would lead to the manufacturing of native consent—the consent to be ruled."[37]

Apart from this area described above, the Lutyens' Building Zone, known as New Delhi LBZ, was also designed by the British authorities by making it a living space for their officials and staff geographically placed

[34] Sharma, "Imperial Delhi', p. 29.
[35] Miller, *Delhi*, pp. 71-72.
[36] Sharma, "Imperial Delhi', p. 30.
[37] Sharma, "Imperial Delhi', p. 30.

away from the common people's settlement in the other part of the city. In Miller's view, the residential houses and bungalows in LBZ have the same infrastructural goals as of the Viceroy's House.

> It is this Delhi of bungalows that seems to glow with authoritarianism, for it is here that many of the most powerful people in the country live, a large number of them cut off from the rest of India… The LBZ today is one of the most tangible vestiges of a dying British empire in India, a place which was deliberately designed to exclude the ruled.[38]

The ambience of the area, conveying an authoritarian nature in construction and barring spatial acquaintance with the public life in the city, is carried out in the present ruling system of the state also. Miller narrates this phenomenon:

> The trappings of those last days of authoritarian rule have survived in a VVIP culture which is deeply divisive. And LBZ is the epicentre of that culture, where democratically elected politicians can retreat into their rent-free or low-rent compounds, where they can intrigue you to get an even better Bangalore, where they can escape from their constituents, where they can avoid being reminded of the lives of the poor… It encourages the powerful to believe themselves omnipotent as if they were gods or belonged to a different species from their fellow Indians.[39]

One can therefore infer from the design of LBZ by its officials and its contemporary usage by the state representatives and ministers, that both spatial and ideological objectives of Imperial history have been absorbed by such places. Making LBZ the abode of the Indian politicians in the post-independent scenario of the country, thus, have intense spatial influence: Residing in the British-designed buildings and spatial infrastructure has been considered the safer method by politicians to abstain from the threat of the common people of their state. Regarding this influential element of spatial design and architecture, the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche states, "in architecture, the pride of a man, his triumph over the gravitation, his will to power, assumes a visible form. Architecture is a sort of oratory power by means of the form."[40] Taken psychologically, Kathryn Jane Jeffrey, a

[38] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 74.
[39] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 74.
[40] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Antonym Ludovici (Hertfordshire: Woodsworth Editions Limited, 2007), p. 54.

neuroscientist from New Zealand, writes in the book *Conscious Cities* that we are "creatures of the place we are in."[41]

However, taken on the practical level, the everyday practice of urban places and structures can be attained by the conservation of such imperial regions and their structures and utilizing them without leaving them abandoned. Though the visible structure and building objectives of the imperial space are not changed, they can be evolved with the run of a modern urban space like Delhi through its regular and pragmatic uses.

Ruining Identities of Historical Layers

More than the sprawling modern infrastructure and facilities being spread through the city of Delhi, Miller has, both dutifully and interestingly, created a special bond with the historically relevant structures and identities of the city space. His attraction to the historical identities of Delhi could also be juxtaposed with his habit of memorizing his experience with the places he had been to while he stayed in the city earlier. For instance, Miller's memory and experience involving the fading glory of Old Fort, known as *Purana Qila,* is evident in his narration. Though the fort has now turned into a decayed and abandoned structure, Miller is expressive about his memory of the rush of tourists into the fort.

> Depressed, his wife and son are today the only permanent residents of the fort. At night, security guards let them in and out; the son is a student, the wife a teacher, all trying to conduct normal life from this most abnormal of abodes. It is a quiet place at night, the priest admitted. There had been an evening 'sound and light' show a few years ago, but most tourists preferred a rival event at the more famous Red Fort two miles to the north. In his father's time, he told me, for a few months, at the time of partition, the Purana Qila had been the busiest, most densely populated place in all of Delhi.[42]

Miller is more impressed with the ruining structure of Old Fort than the structural and political relevance of Red Fort, though more tourists are attracted to the latter situated about two miles away from the earlier. The reason for this spatial attachment by the author would be his willingness to show the relevance of such historically important but presently underrated spatial identities of the past of the city. Instead of narrating about the much-

[41] Michael Bond, 'The Hidden Ways That Architecture Affects How You Feel', *BBC Future*, 6 June (2017). At https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20170605-the-psychology-behind-your-citys-design. Accessed 3/04/2022.
[42] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 92.

visited monuments and past identities of the city, Miller's narrative method is partly a complaint and mourning about the negligent and ruining state of many structures like Old Fort. This approach by the author could be also because of his conceptual demand to both public and authorities for restoring the structural glory of many partly damaged monuments and ruins of the city. While philosophically considering such ruins in making an impact on a personal level, Bertrand Westphal's statement can be relevant that "the ruins remind us of a city's diachronic identity, and hence of its depth."[43]

Miller appeals to not categorise these ruining monuments and historically relevant but negligent spots in the city as a lost space, because not too many people take interest in visiting a lost space.[44] He desires them all to be recorded and given adequate conservation and restoration strategies by governing authorities. To conclude, the author demands that the countless presence of unnoticed ruins, which can be counted as gems in the historical perspective, in both visible and covered places in Delhi have to be added as tourist destinations in the city. This city cannot untie its consciousness with layers of its past, as Miller states:

> This city is littered with ancient ruins; so many that it is easy to become blase about them. One modern gazetteer lists more than a thousand. In the park near my home, I have found several more unlisted buildings, almost certainly dating back to the fourteenth century. One of them is a cathedral-like structure three stories high, peeping over the trees. Anywhere else, I can't help thinking, this beautiful, forgotten building would be a major tourist attraction.[45]

[43] Westphal, *Geocriticism*, p. 140.
[44] Memarian and Niazkar, 'The Lost Space of Architecture in the Context of Urban Lost Space', p. 318.
[45] Miller, *Delhi*, p. 227.