A Semiotic Analysis of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban as Text: A Saussurean Perspective

Naira Khan[*]

Abstract : In a sense semiotics subsumes linguistics and can serve as an analytical tool for sign systems that convey meaning, much like language. The term 'text' in semiotics refers to anything which can be 'read' for meaning — the perceived world is considered to be 'social text' (Chandler 2002). Architecture is an inherent form of social text — the visual language of society. In this paper, the chosen text is the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban or the National Parliament House of Bangladesh built by architect Louis I. Kahn. A Saussurean semiotic analysis is conducted on the selected text to read it for meaning by identifying the signs within the text, their respective signifiers and signifieds, and analaysing the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations therein. The signifiers show how they connect to the signifieds and establish communication via the text, which in turn serves to valorise the text. From an apparent view linguistics and architecture appear to be on two ends of a spectrum, but as presented in this paper, there is a deep connection between the two — architecture can be considered to be a socio-cultural language, and linguistics as we know is the 'study of language' and this connection is further deepened under the ubiquitous umbrella of semiotics—the study of signs.

Keywords: Semiotic analysic, Text, Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, Sociocoltural language

1. Introduction

In broad strokes, language is considered to be the complex system of communication that human beings employ in order to communicate: to convey what is on their minds. However, the view of language can be broadened to embody more than that which the human vocal apparatus produces on neural command.

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[*] Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Dhaka

It encapsulates a plethora of diverse means of expression, which in the field of semiotics has been termed as 'text' (Chandler 2002). Although the term text appears to privilege primarily written texts, in semiotics a 'text' is any system of signs in the form of words, images, sounds and/or gestures. More broadly, the term text is used to refer to anything which can be 'read' for meaning, whereby the perceived world is considered to be 'social text' (Chandler 2002). Architecture is an inherent form of social text and one of the greatest means of visual expression — the visual language of society. Architecture embeds, embodies and reflects the culture of a society. Therefore, analyzing this visual language can prove valuable insights into the elements of a society.

Since the person who creates the work of architecture ingrains the text and controls it, they have certain aspirations as to what they want to say and what they want perceived – this leads to a problem of the signifier (that which denotes) and the signified (that which is denoted) - the two key components of the sign in the Saussurean tradition (Chandler 2002). As semiotics is the study of different systems of signs, it is concerned with the nature of signs and the rules governing their behaviour within a system. It is therefore involved with signification, or the production of meaning, which is accomplished via the relation between the signifier and the signified. Hence semiotics provides the perfect tool with which a "linguistic analogy" can be transposed to architecture in order to study the visual language of society and conduct a structural analysis, drawing clues into the cultural elements that incite, inspire and drive society.

For this paper, the chosen piece of text is the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban or the National Parliament House of Bangladesh located in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka and credited to architect Louis I. Kahn. The paper is structured as follows: with an introduction in section §1 and a description of the methodology of analysis (§2), section §3 describes the chosen piece of text with the identification of signs within, section §4 focuses on the semiotic analysis of the signs within the chosen text from a structural point of view, section §5 summarises the findings with concluding remarks.

2. Methodology

In conducting a semiotic analysis of the chosen text - the Jatiya Sangsan Bhaban, this paper follows the Saussurean as well as the structuralist method, in the form of syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis respectively. It should be mentioned, that no such endeavor has been undertaken previously as to our knowledge and hence just as the limitations faced were presented in the absence of prior examples, similarly, this analysis will be a useful example providing diversified information for anyone in the fields of linguistics, semiotics and/or architecture.

3. Identifying the Text

In the following a brief theoretical and historical prelude is given of the text, its maker and key elements in the development and articulation of the text followed by an identification of the primary signs of the text in terms of their signifiers and signifieds.

3.1 The Text: Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban

The Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban or the National Parliamentary House is located in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka and houses the Parliament of Bangladesh. It was built by the renowned architect Louis I Kahn, and architect and design critic who served as a professor at Yale University and University of Pennsylvania respectively. The work of the American architect Louis I Kahn, or 'Professor Kahn' as he was fondly referred to in Dhaka, is recognized as one of the major innovations in architecture in the second half of the 20th century (Ashraf and Haque, 2002). Kahn received the commission for the project in 1962 and continued working on it till the last days of his life in 1974 (Khan and Khan, 2001). The building is his last and largest project, and one of the largest legislative complexes in the world.

The structure of the complex comprises two aggregation set on a north-south axis, and was the original overall plan for Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Lawns and lakes separated the two aggregations, and a network of rectilinear and diagonal elements of buildings, landscape components and pathways set in hierarchic and serial order was arranged. Different versions were considered but the general configuration remained the same. The Citadel of Assembly which forms

the southern group was a centralized volume flanked by smaller attending forms. The Citadel of Institutions or the northern group was formed of a vast courtyard like space around which smaller groups of buildings were arranged. After 1971, this courtyard formation creating a cluster of institutions was revised to include the National Secretariat in the form of a series of box-like buildings forming a virtual wall (Ashraf and Haque, 2002).

3.2 Identification of Signs within the Text

The following identifies particular signs that are significant in the text. However, it must be noted that in a complex text such as the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, there is a panoply of innumerable signs arranged in various layers on many different levels of meaning. Hence, the analysis is restricted to the very basic prominent and dominant signs that are inherent in the synthesis of meaning in the text: signs without which the text is incomplete in meaning. Each sign is postulated in terms of its type, signifier and signified. The complexity of the text in terms of signifieds often renders signs to overlap.

For the identification of these signs the text is divided into three levels:

- First Level: how the building is set
- Second Level: the exterior of the building
- Third Level: the interior of the building

3.2.1 First Level

On the first level, the primary signs from the entire complex are identified. Here, the composition of the complex can be divided into two parts:

- Nature – representing the signified of the deltaic landscape

- Built form – representing the signified of the process of 'dig and build'

I) Nature

1. Sign   :   The Water

    Type   :   *Symbol / Icon*

    Signifier   :   Elongated lakes and canals separating the built structures appearing to be connected

Signified :   The surrounding water body is present as a semblance of a river: continuous and flowing, extending yet vanishing, its calm and extent capture the river in spirit.

2.   Sign   :   <u>The Green</u>

Type   :   *Symbol / Icon*

Signifier :   Vast green fields

Signified :   The vast extent of green --- uninterrupted, uncluttered --- is the metaphor of our landscape, representing the signified of the greenery of Bengal as well as the vast expanses of green paddy fields.

II) Built form

3.   Sign   :   <u>Steps (leading up to the water)</u>

Type   :   *Symbol / Icon*

Signifier :   Marble and brick steps that lead up to the water

Signified :   The steps leading to the placid waters are signifiers for our signifieds of the "ghats" - the edge condition that is inherently present at the banks of rivers. This edge condition is carried back into the ghats and the water around the building.

4.   Sign   :   <u>Plaza</u>

Type   :   *Symbol / Index*

Signifier :   An elevated brick-paved voluminous plaza

Signified :   The Plaza tells us about the building and the magnanimity of a public entry for a public building.

The voluminous plaza in the warm color of red brick is a gargantuan welcome mat.

The expansiveness of the entry allows it to function as a platform against which the green field is a stage for public activity with the city as the backdrop.

The steps double as the seats of an amphitheater.

5. Sign   :   <u>Dormitories</u>

    Type   :   *Symbol*

    Signifier :   Low height red brick structures facing, encompassing the assembly building on one side separated from it by water

    Signified :   Residing at a place of purpose.

                        The poetry of brick architecture – the geometry of form, the deep shadows the earth hugging ambiance and the articulation at the arch with the concrete tie is a resonation of the terracotta traditions of Bengal.

6. Sign   :   <u>The National Parliamentary House</u>

    Type   :   *Symbol*

    Signifier :   The gargantuan mass of concrete and marble that occupies the central space of the entire scheme.

    Signified :   The Assembly Building signifies many things on many levels.

                        It is a symbol of democracy and pride.

                        It is the articulation of the parliamentary system as a concrete statement.

                        It symbolizes where the voice of the nation is held.

                        It is the point of culmination of the entire complex.

                        It is a building for the people, of the people and by the people.

                        It represents the place and its people.

                        It is also representative of all the signifieds in the following two levels.

3.2.2 Second Level

On the second level signs are identified from the exterior of the building comprising:

7. Sign   :   <u>Concrete and Marble</u>

Type   :   *Symbol / Index*

Signifier :   Concrete walls consisting of reinforced concrete poured at five-foot intervals marked by horizontal and vertical two feet wide strips of marble.

i) Signified   :   <u>of concrete</u>

- ♦ Five feet module of concrete is indicative of the maximum daily feasible pour

- ♦ The bareness of the concrete signifies echoes of antiquity and density of meaning through simplicity

- ♦ Difference in colours asserts the presence and importance of the building as the centre

- ♦ The ruggedness of the concrete symbolizes masculinity

- ♦ It signifies the limitation of building technology

ii) Signified   :   <u>of marble</u>

- ♦ The strips of marble mark each joinery hiding it

- ♦ It also monumentalizes the uneven seam of two poured concrete walls, by revealing the scope of construction

- ♦ It is a human inscription – a mark of Bengali craftsmanship and its limitations

- ♦ It serves to break rainwater and impede the formation of moss

- ♦ It complements the bare concrete by ennobling it

- ♦ It indicates ties to the marble inlays of Mughal monuments and to some extent a lithified representation of bamboo framed walls (Kahn 1968) (Haque 2002)

- ♦ The delicateness and elegance of the marble signifies femininity

♦ The marble provides a sense of rhythm to the structure in an explicit tempo

♦ The regularity of the interventions provides rhythm to the edifice-an aspect concerned with its motion through time -- the building pulsates in a recurring time pattern.

♦ The inception of the gleaming white rock sets the tempo of the building making it rhythmic in nature whereby the regularly recurring ivory beats are explicit and not implied.

8. Sign   :   <u>Double Skin</u>

    Type   :   *Symbol / Index*

    Signifier :   The inner walls of the building are encased by an outer shell resulting in two skins+

    Signified :   The inner wall marks the boundary of inhabitable space.

                The outer wall signifies that ours is a country of glaring sunlight and driving rain. It is representative of the orders of wind, sun, rain and light.

9. Sign   :   <u>Openings (on the outer skin)</u>

    Type   :   *Symbol / Index*

    Signifier :   The exterior shell is perforated by an abrupt polyphony of basic Euclidian shapes i.e. circles, squares and isosceles triangles of different inclination with an appearance of being stenciled out from it.

    Signified :   The perforations break up the solidness of the other shell to keep in sync with the climate of this region. They make possible the influx of weather elements into the interior.

                The delta appears once again as the gigantic perforations that envelope the building creating cavernous spaces of shadows in response to climate – a surreptitious form of 'landscaping' the building.

This landscaping is in a phenomenal sense – allowing nature – the sun, wind and rain – to 'invade' a man-made form, erode its cover make it porous and finally repossess it.

It allows for the dynamics of the weather and nature to be visible within the building.

3.2.3 Third Level

On the third level, the interior of the building is considered. Given that the building is arranged concentrically the following signs are key from the entries to the central core:

10. Sign   :   <u>Administrative Entry</u>

    Type: *Symbol*

    Signifier :   An entrance in the form of a tunnel underneath the mosque

    Signified :   This entrance signifies the importance of the mosque by placing it at the entry and above it whereby people enter the building underneath the mosque, asserting the signified of entering a 'religious atmosphere', Asserting a spiritual aspect of centrality as that which is found in a temple. Entry is also downplayed as one of mere functionality.

11. Sign   :   <u>Presidential Entry</u>

    Type   :   *Symbol*

    Signifier :   An entry that lies cardinally opposite the administrative entry on the north side. It is a grand entry that has the full height of the building and is done in marble.

    Signified :   This entry signifies a grand reception of dignitaries and heads of state, where their entry is considered to be ceremonial.

    It also signifies hospitality and graciousness in terms of reception.

12. Sign   :   <u>Prayer Hall</u>

    Type   :   *Symbol*

    Signifier :   The prayer hall is a simple form with a square plan, corner turrets and blank walls with light streaming in through the corner turrets. It twists away from the main axis in the direction of Kiblah. It is placed at the entrance.

    Signified :   The prayer hall signifies a number of things:

- ♦ The importance of religion and spirituality in the lives of the people

- ♦ The major religion of the nation

- ♦ Spirituality as an inherent part of the transcendent nature of assembly

13. Sign   :   <u>Light wells</u>

    Type   :   *Symbol / Index*

    Signifier :   A light filled spatial container as structure

    Signified :   In Kahn's own words, "If you see a series of columns you can say that the choice of columns is a choice of light. The columns as solids frame the spaces of light. Now think of it just in reverse and think that the columns are hollow and much bigger and that their walls can themselves give light, the voids are rooms and the column is the maker of light and can take on complex shapes and be the supporter of spaces and give light to spaces. I am working to develop the element to such an extent that it becomes a poetic entity which has its own beauty outside of its place and composition. In this way it becomes analogous to the solid column I mentioned above as a giver or light."(Tying 1984). Thus the cylindrical light wells again signify an aura of spirituality at the absence of traditional motifs and as they are made up of natural light and they also indicate the climate conditions outside.

14. Sign   :   <u>Shadow-play of Light and the Absence of Light</u>

    Type   :   *Index*

    Signifier :   Natural light brought into the interior or through various perforations.

    Signified :   These are indications of the climate and weather conditions and are used to transform the building to one that belongs to a tropical climate. The enigmatic translucency of light constantly keeps one in touch with the exterior from the innermost spaces. One can clearly feel when the sky is overcast or a stray cloud is passing by, the time of the day and even the time of the year.

15. Sign   :   <u>The Street</u>

    Type   :   *Symbol / Icon*

    Signifier :   A seven story high discontinuous ambulatory that envelops the central chamber and connects the peripheral structures to the central core. It has benches and street lamps at regular intervals.

    Signified :   The ambulatory is the iconic representation of a 'street' – The absence of formality in the street is a way of life of the people of the region.

                   The absence of formality of piazzas, foyer, prayer hall, marks the difference of the nature of the places that are developed in this part of the world- the nature of street on the other hand generate from a deeper meaning.

                   The shades and shadows, the climates, the meetings, the passing through of the street and the coming to it, is the way of life here.

16. Sign   :   <u>Central Chamber</u>

    Type   :   *Symbol*

    Signifier :   An octagonal space located at the centre of the building that is a hundred feet high amphitheatre of three hundred seats arranged in pairs.

Signified :   This space by its very nature is a symbol as it was built for purposes on a level of abstraction that are fundamentally human-made and artificial.

It is located centrally as the culmination of the purpose of the building.

17. Sign   :   <u>The Interior as a Whole</u>

Type   :   *Symbol*

Signifier :   The central chambers, the peripheral structures and the ambulatory

Signified :   All the structures are designed to form a whole to signify a 'city within a city'. The 'street' is an integral part of the city – a never-ending walkway via which people go to different places for different purposes – to the mosque to pray, to the dining facilities to eat etc.

This concludes the identification of the signs within the text and the following section proceeds to commence semiotic analysis in terms of syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis.

4 Reading the Text: Semiotic Analysis of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban

One of the primary applications of semiotics is textual analysis, whereby it is characterized by a concern with structural analysis. Such structural analysis involves identifying the constituent units in a semiotic system and the structural relationship between the respective units i.e. oppositions, correlations and logical relations. In other words, it involves the selection and combination of signifiers and their consequential meaning.

Saussure was 'concerned exclusively with three sorts of systemic relationships:

♦   that between a signifier and a signified;

♦   those between a sign and all of the other elements of its system;

♦   and those between a sign and the elements which surround it within a concrete signifying instance'. (Silverman 1983)

He pointed out that meaning arises from the differences between signifiers and that these differences are primarily of two kinds:

1.   syntagmatic: concerning positioning

2.   paradigmatic: concerning substitution (Saussure 1974)

These two dimensions are usually presented as two 'axes'[4] that correspond to two forms of mental activity (Barthes 1967):

1.   The axis of combination

2.   The axis of selection

1. Axis of Combination

Saussure emphasized the theoretical importance of the relationship of signs to each other. Structuralists study texts as syntagmatic structures. The syntagmatic analysis of a text, verbal or non-verbal, seeks to establish the 'surface structure' and the relationships between its parts. The use of one syntagmatic structure instead of another within a text influences meaning (Chandler 2002). The study of syntagmatic relations reveals the conventions or 'rules of combination' underlying the production and interpretation of texts, for example, the grammar of a language. The axis of combination is then the horizontal axis in the analysis of a textual structure: the plane of the syntagm. Textual analysis on this axis is known syntagmatic analysis (Chandler 2002).

4.1 Syntagmatic Analysis of the Chosen Text

In order to conduct a syntagmatic analysis of the chosen text, the syntagmatic structures in the text are identified and described in terms of conceptual, spatial or sequential relations and how these arrangements influence meaning: how one signifier relates to another.

4.1.1 Conceptual Relations

Conceptual relations rely on the conceptual structure of argument of description as found in exposition (Chandler 2002). Although such structure is not inherent in terms of visual texts, in the selected text certain aspects of conceptual relations can be denoted as described below.

4.1.1.1 Three Part Structure

The basic three-part structure of expository text includes: introduction-main body-conclusion (Chandler 2002). This three-part structure is

found in a very interesting manner in terms of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, whereby the introduction is the maker's philosophies and its sublimation into the concrete form of the text constitutes the main body. However, the conclusion of the text has been left up to the readers of the text whereby each person can draw their own conclusion- however the main-body is articulated in a manner to limit the scope of conclusions to be drawn in order to avoid confusion in terms of 'reading' the text.

4.1.1.2 Structural Closure

Structural closure gives the impression that the text is 'complete' – an impression of the ground having been covered, of all the questions having been answered, of nothing important having been left out. Although it is a misleading concept, closure suggests mastery of the material through its control of form (Murray 1978). In the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, although the text involves many layers, structural closure has been achieved at different levels in that many an aspect of the structure has not been left open for guess work. This has been achieved by keeping the text simple: by keeping the signifieds represented restricted to a basic few and the signifiers used are starkly simplistic. Hence, the maker's aim was to say less but mean more: density of meaning through connotations of simple signifiers and fewer signifieds. The text does not draw up all kinds of jargonistic theories of architectural discourse. Architectural discourse, to a great extent, is subjective – it is subject to time, it is subject to change, it is subject to opinions – it is subject to a number of elements that can prevent a text from being transcendental. The chosen text steps away from these theories and addresses the basics of the place, the climate, the people, their beliefs, their way of life – timeless constants that provides the text with structural closure of timeless value. By limiting the structure to more real and definitive entities, it is possible to attain structural closure not once but time and time again. Often textual structures frame the issues and guide the readers towards the author's resolution of them (Chandler 2002). Such an aspect can be found in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in terms of the mosque being woven into the fabric of space of the text:

♦   The people needed a place to pray

♦   The politicians wanted a mosque as a prominent part

♦ The maker wanted to represent the spiritualism of the religion, the faith of the people.

All these issues were resolved by simply creating a space that was off set from the overall symmetry of the text to signify a respectful direction towards Mecca, where the floor itself represented prayer rugs and where this space was placed at the entry to mark its importance. Light wells of natural light illuminated it, providing an atmosphere of sanctity and sacredness

4.1.1.3 Seamlessness

Seamless textual unity suggests that the text has less obvious 'loose ends'. While for the existentialist, there are always loose ends in the interpretation of experience, in terms of expository texts 'loose ends' are considered to be 'out of place'; stylistic seamlessness, unity and coherence are expected: 'in a finished work... the flimsy scaffolding is taken away'. A sense of the argument as being 'coherent' reinforced by a cohesive structure (Chandler 2002).

Such an illusion of seamlessness can be found in the use of materials in creating the chosen text, whereby each module of concrete is actually representative of the limitations of building technique and the marble strips used are intended to hide the joints the so called 'loose ends'. Hence, the limitations were thus transmuted into a seamless form not only in terms of structure but also from an aesthetic point of view as the glazed marble perfectly complements the Spartan concrete ruggedness and provides the text with a sense of rhythm by scaling it. Often textual structures can be seen as reflecting a maker's attempts to create worlds whose completeness, order and clarity demand a recognition of them as somewhat more absolute, more objective, more 'real', then the dynamic flux of everyday experience. Makers first fragment that which is experienced as seamless and then, by the usage of various conventions, seek to give an impression of the seamlessness of their creation. Such formal seamlessness implies an imitation of the existential seamlessness and hence the 'authenticity' of lived experience (Chandler 2002).

Formal seamlessness in this sense is also present in the chosen text as found on many levels, perhaps most obviously in the representation of 'nature' as opposed to built form.

The two parts that constitute the 'nature' are:

I. The green - The green lawns that encompass the complex are mowed and structured grass pieces that represent the unkempt green fields of agricultural Bengal.

II. The water - The water present on the complex is representative of the water bodies of our river-run country, thus, although the river in terms of reality is a live entity in the lives of the people, the lakes and canals here is an overt formal and seamless sublimation.

Another aspect of seamlessness is in terms of textual exclusion – what has been denied, hidden or excluded for the text to appear to tell 'the whole truth'(Kress et al 1996). This compels one to question the 'truths' that have been embedded in the text:

1. It is an assembly building made 'for' the people and this truth is expressed as people flood the grounds, surround it and make it their own.

2. It is meant for this region – this truth is expressed in the duality of water and green.

3. It is meant for the climate of this region – the double skins, deep porches and openings are a testament to this truth.

4. It is a building with a purpose and as it fulfills this purpose the truth of functionality is expressed every time an assembly takes place.

In terms of textual exclusion, we must point out that this is an aspect which is to be accepted as the milieu of the architectural critic well versed in architectural discourse. It is beyond the interpreter, as an architectural text such as the Jatiya Sansad Bhaban communicates with its readers through simple constant truths, however in terms of architecture it is also a mature piece embodying an innumerable number of layers recognizable to an architect but which does not concern the lay observer.

4.1.2 Spatial Relations

Spatial syntagmatic relations work through the juxtaposition of constituents. Spatial relations include such orientational aspects as:

- ◆ above/below

- ◆ in front/behind

- ◆ close/distant

- ◆ left/right

- ◆ north/south/east/west

- ◆ inside/outside (Chandler 2002)

Such structural relations are not considered to be semantically neutral. In terms of visual texts Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen identify three key spatial dimensions:

- ◆ left/right

- ◆ top/bottom

- ◆ centre/margin (Chandler 2002)
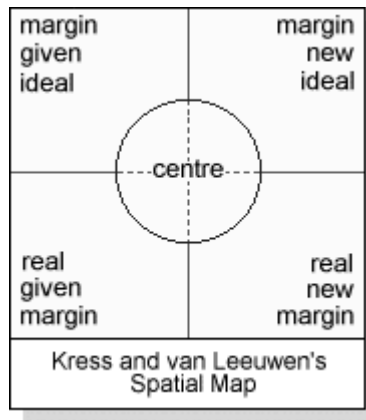
(Source: Chandler '02: 66)

Here, left/right is associated with the horizontal axis and top/bottom with the vertical axis, which are not considered neutral in visual texts.

4.1.2.1 Horizontal Axis: left/right

Cultures within which the directional orientation of written texts proceed on a horizontal axis from left to right are said to view visual texts in the same way. Kress & Van Leeuwen relate the left-hand & right-hand elements of a visual image to the linguistic concept of 'the

Given' and 'the New' said to have originated from Hallidayan linguistics.

'For something to be new means that it is presented as something which is not yet known, or perhaps not yet agreed upon by the viewers, hence is something to which the viewer must pay special attention'.(Kress et al 1996)

Although in the chosen text horizontal arrangements in terms of left-hand and right-hand signifiers are not found, however there is definitely a play of signifiers in representing 'the Given' and 'the New' simultaneously. For example, in the street like ambulatory it is 'Given' in that it emulates a street in scale and also in appearance - it has street lamps and benches in the manner of street, but it is 'New' in terms of how it is placed. It is inside a building and hence functionally it doubles as a street and a corridor. It is an interesting balance of the 'Given' and the 'New'. A given street runs in a straight line with buildings lining its sides. This street is circular, it is a never-ending loop with the 'Given' lining both sides, hence the given spatial relation in terms of the function of a street is present as people come to the street and then via the street they go to their respective space ordained for diverse functions i.e. cafeterias, offices, mosque etc. Hence the ambulatory is an elaborate corridor inside a building that metaphorically claims to be the 'street' of the 'city within a city'(Khan and Khan 2001).

4.1.2.2 The Vertical Axis: top/bottom

The vertical axis of composition also carries connotations. For one signifier to be located 'higher' than another is consequently not simply a spatial relationship but also an evaluative one in terms of their relation to the signifieds for which they stand. Vertical stratification can be found in terms of orientational metaphors such as up vs. down where the up is considered to be of higher value. Vertical stratification is one of the key dimensions in the chosen text and can be found in many of the signs. In the chosen text such stratification can be found in terms of verticality in case of entries:

1) The General Entry: This entry is for the general mass – the common people. It is above the administrative or office-goers' entry and is considered to be of higher value as it represents

the common populous to be more important as it is a text that speaks of democracy.

2) The Administrative Entry: The office goers enter underneath the tunnel and hence their entry to the building is considered to be of lesser value than the common people for it is the common people who have voted them into power. Hence by placing the general entry above the people, the masses are placed higher whereas the official entry is mundane and functional.

3) The Presidential Entry: Another entry is situated at the north side. This entry has vertical stratification in terms of the fact that the entire entry has the full height of the building. Here, however, higher represents grandeur rather than higher value as the reception of dignitaries and heads of states has been made ceremonial and grandiose.

Vertical stratification is also found in the mosque, with it being placed above the entry representing higher value. In terms of the building itself we find the central chamber - the place of assembly constitutes a volumetrically higher nucleus representing the most important space in the building in terms of functionality. The central chamber is projected upwards, has a pyramidical soaring effect, erupts from the interior skywards, whereby the visual effect is of eight gigantic circular holes that loom high over the building and stare out at the city signifying a place of immense importance – a place where the voice of the nation is held. It is the only part of the interior space that has expression outside thereby asserting its presence as the crux of the building. In terms of the entire composition of the complex: it is built on excruciatingly flat land providing the complex with an alpine topography whereby the Assembly building constitutes the highest peak, looming high over the surrounding residential areas proclaiming a place of higher value. However, the syntagm of higher value requires presence of all the constituents whereby dispersal will obliterate meaning and value.

Kress and van Leeuwen also proclaim that where a text is structured along a vertical axis, the upper and lower sections represent an opposition between 'the Ideal' and 'the Real' as the lower section represents 'down-to-earth' entities whilst the upper part tends to be concerned with abstract or generalized possibilities (Kress et al 1996).

This is directly applicable to the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban where a syntagmatic relation can be found between built-form vs. nature parallel to up vs. down, whereby the 'down' or 'nature' represents the more real entities of the region i.e. the greenery and the rivers and the 'up' or built-form represents idealistic abstract concepts such as 'institution of assembly', 'religion', 'reception', 'democracy' etc.

### 4.1.2.2 Centre/Margin: central/peripheral

This is the third key spatial dimension stated by Kress and Van Leeuwen where the composition of some visual texts is based primarily on a dominant centre and a periphery. 'For something to be presented as Centre means that it is presented as the nucleus of the information on which all the other elements are in some sense subservient. The Margins are these ancillary, dependent elements.' (Kress et al 1996). In the selected text centrality is the key syntagmatic dimension. Centrality is found in the whole complex as well as in the scheme of the building on many different levels.

In terms of the whole scheme of built forms the building is separated from the dormitories not only in terms of height but also in colour where the supporting structures of red encompass the bare concrete building. However, centrality is established through the syntagm of the building and the dormitories as the latter creates the building as a centre and thus helps identify the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban as the centre of the scheme: One supports the other and one does not have meaning without the other. This centrality can be found as a sublimation of architectural schemes of our ancestral heritage marked by ancient (Buddhist) monasteries. The chosen text has also been rendered unique in the world as a parliamentary building as it is for the first time that such a building has dormitory functions around it, and this scheme is seen as a sublimation of the scheme of the ancient monasteries – residing at a place of purpose, being close together and having some kind of composition to it.

In the selected text the residing function is in such a way that it creates a centre through function as well as composition. This is achieved by making the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban the dominant structure in terms of the view from any aperture of the surrounding structure, hence from every opening, from every entry, the dominant view is that of the building – the central structure that stands to remind everyone of their

purpose of being there, providing a sense of purpose. The dormitories are houses of apertures that are constantly looking at the building, framing the building so that the residents are made to look at the centre. The centre being the purpose is part of the composition – the dormitories are holding the composition together by giving something the status of being the centre and at same time it is highlighted through visual aspects of height and colour.

At the next level, centrality arises from how the building itself is arranged or assembled. The building is arranged like an octagon (appx) in the sense that in the cardinal 4 directions there are spaces of different functions: the mosque, the presidential entry, the debating chamber, the dining facilities. In 45 degree shifts to the cardinal axis there are four spaces of similar functions: the office buildings. Hence in terms of composition we find, there are 4 dissimilar spaces in terms of function but if we rotate 45 degrees the functional spaces become similar. This suggests that the composition is pivoting around an obvious centre. The composition is done around a centre as it shifts along the centre. It is not a shift on the X axis or the Y axis, its done in a radial movement that serves to dissolve the axes: presence of a radial geometry proves presence of a centre.
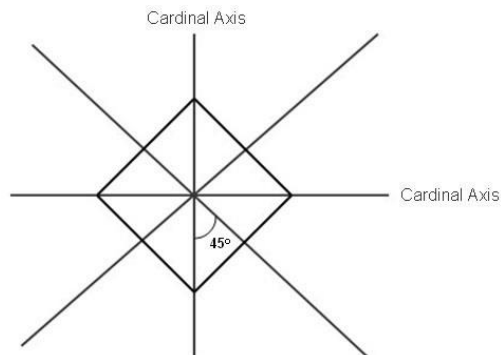
The centre is also highlighted by the primary circulation being in a loop around the central core: The 'street' inside the building is in the form of an unbroken loop i.e. an ambulatory. Hence movement is in the form of discontinuous ambulation and thus movement revolves around a centre indicating its existence. Whatever structure is looped is given the status of being a centre. The loop identifies that movement is around something. If we remove the centre then we wouldn't have a

loop, we would have a central space. Hence, the centre is defined not by being in it or claiming it to be the centre but by simply revolving around it continuously. If it was linear, then movement would be along a straight line as one would go out and come back along the walk way. In case of the Assembly Building, one can keep moving in the same direction and arrive at the desired location as the movement is ambulation in a non-linear direction.

The centre is also identified in terms of importance of function. It is the most important function of the building and thus once again the centrality is reinforced. Perhaps the most overt statement of the presence of a center is in terms of placing it higher than the rest of the building. Thus the centre is depicted visually as the highest point of the building visible from afar. Therefore, the concept of a centre is denoted on many different levels:

1. Composition creates a centre.

2. Direction of movement creates a centre.

3. Importance of function creates a centre.

4. Vertical stratification creates a centre.

In case of peripheral structures, the entire complex consists of peripheral structures that are marked by a separation of colour, medium and height – these are the residing functions or dormitories mentioned earlier. In terms of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban itself the creation of the centre leads to differentiate its periphery and the structures that line it. The concept of centre/margin is related to the fundamental perceptual distinction between figure and ground, as selective perception involves 'foregrounding' some features and 'backgrounding' others. The concept of 'figure' and 'ground' in perception derives from Gestalt psychology, whereby, confronted by a visual image, we seem to need to separate a dominant shape as the 'figure' from what we relegate to the 'ground'. In terms of visual texts the figures tends to be located centrally.[37] In the chosen text the figure is delineated by the huge proportions of space designed as the foreground, in the form of green-lawns, the water and the red plaza. The massive amount of foreground centralizes focus onto the building defining it as the figure.

4.1.3   Sequential Relations

Sequential relationships are based on sequences of syntagms (Chandler 2002). Sequential syntagms brings us to narrative which may even underlie certain aspects of spatial structures. Some theorists claim that narrative is a 'deep structure' independent of the medium (Stern 1998). Semiotic narratology is concerned with narrative in any mode - literary or non-literary, fictional or non-fictional, verbal or visual – and tends to focus on minimal narrative units and the 'grammar of the plot'. The most basic narrative syntagm is proclaimed to be a linear temporal model composed of three phases - equilibrium-disruption-equilibrium. This in turn has been described as 'chain' of events that have: beginning, middle,end. This 'chain' of events has been innovatively described by Philip Larkin as 'a beginning, a muddle and an end', however not necessarily in that order as the muddle may not be the middle (Chandler 2002). This brings up the question of what exactly is a muddle or disruption. In terms of the chosen text and its interpretation a muddle may be constituted by two things:

- ♦   that which is confusing

- ♦   problems that require resolution

In case of the former, in the chosen text, as it is a built form, a complex structure, a product of architecture, it is bound to have a plethora of layers whereby some aspects are self-evident and some may be confusing. In terms of that which is confusing it is important to see whom it is confusing for. In other words a text such as this will obviously have certain levels and elements that will elude the general populous as these were not meant for them. These are the elements that are important to the specialist, the architect and not the general people. That which is evident to the specialist or the architect will obviously present a muddle to the general people, because that which eludes the general observer is supposed to do so. The text will generate different reactions and different interpretations in terms of what it narrates according to 'who' it narrates to:

- ♦   It is designed to play a certain effect on the mind of the parliamentarian as to how one enters the building, how they go via the 'street', how they sit inside, how they spend time inside.

- ♦ It has a different effect on the mind of the people who come to the premises for purely recreational purposes, never to enter the building.

- ♦ It also has a certain effect on the minds of the people as to how they view the text as a natural part of the city scape.

To an architect however, the text has many different layers open to interpretation and analysis. As a piece of architectural philosophy it will express in tiers the architect's philosophy of life, perceptions and architecture. These will only narrate themselves to architects or people with such specialized knowledge and these were not meant to be self-evident to the general people. Thus, that which is self-evident and that which is not, lies in the layers of the text in accordance to whom the observer is or the person reading the text. This, however, is not supposed to follow one string, for if it did then we would have a considerable problem as that would mean that the observer or the reader and the philosopher or meaning-maker have to think in one mind. Not only is this impossible, but even if it were possible it would result in a considerable loss of density in meaning as we find: connotative interpretations of a text by the reader often serve to enrich meaning production. In terms of resolving the muddle – a text may not have the 'chain' in the sequence mentioned but a text cannot be simply muddle – muddle – muddle –.[44] There should be certain narrative units that are shared: certain perceptions that are held true and clear in meaning to the maker and the reader – they should share certain things that 'speak' to them. In our chosen text, what is evident or the 'equilibrium' is what should be clear to everyone and what is a muddle is actually 'selective clarity' rather than a muddle as it represents a muddle to some but is narrating to others.

In terms of the muddle being a problem we find there are many aspects in the text which narrate the resolution of a muddle—perhaps the glowing example can be given in terms of the building materials whereby limitations in technology led to innovation and extemporization resulting in an 'equilibrium' that not only resolved the muddle but made a poetic statement through density of signifieds and is a narrative of human inscription on the building. The principal narrative syntagm is the narrative of the 'Assembly'. The text may be centered on the function of the assembly chamber however it is not

one building with one function. In order for the 'Assembly' to come together and function properly a number of units were required along with the main central chamber. These were:

1. the offices   spaces of generic function
2. the dining facilities
3. the debating chamber   spaces of specific function
4. prayer space

All these spaces were juxtaposed sequentially around the central chamber serving in turn to anchor them and complete the syntagmatic relations. However, the sequential syntagms were not random in that they were arranged in a manner where the non-repetitive functions were aligned on the cardinal axes while repetitive/generic functional spaces were wedged in between creating a non-linear centralized loop of sequential syntagmatic relations in the form of: repetitive (office) – non-repetitive (mosque) – repetitive (office) – non-repetitive (dining) – etc. -- A collection of heterogeneous spaces sublimated into a homogenous whole.

Fig: Plan at 68 feet level
1   Garden entrance hall   5   Minister's lounge
2   Assembly hall   6   Cafeteria and recreation
3   Court of ablution   7   Offices
4   Prayer hall

(Source: N.R. Khan)

Another sequential relation found in terms of juxtaposing syntagms is in the concentric juxtaposition of the primary syntagms of the building where sequencing is in terms of concentricity:

I.   the central chamber

II. the ambulatory

III. the peripheral structures
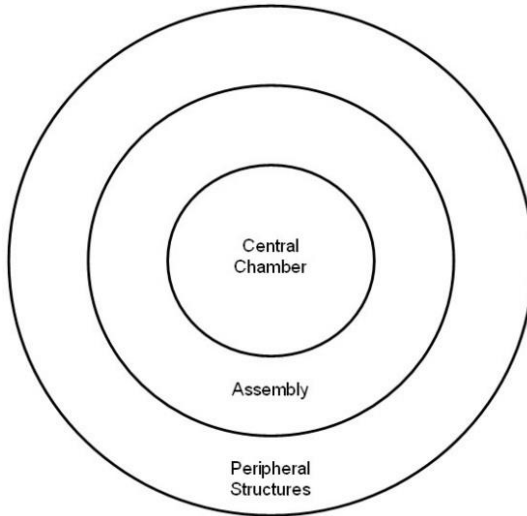
All these sequential syntagms, however, ultimately dissolve at the deep structure level to produce a text that is omni-directional and multi-faceted. In case of 'what is narrated' in the text, we find, different aspects narrate different things. For example:

♦   The 'double skin' and the openings are a narrative of our climate.

♦   The building materials as we have denoted earlier are a narrative of the limitations and scope of construction.

♦   The lawns and canals are narratives of our deltaic landscape. etc.

We must also denote that there is a danger of taking the analogy of a text in terms of a narrative too far as a built form can tell a story but it is not supposed to. When a building tells a story it becomes rich in

meaning and thus comes to life. However, the primary criterion of a built form is not to simply tell a story or to narrate something and hence not every aspect can be found to be narrative.

4.1.4 Syntagms in the Text

Having explored possible syntagmatic relations within the text, we now proceed to identify some of the basic syntagms. One of the most interesting syntagms of the text is an interactive syntagm whereby as a person approaches the building they see the plaza against the green, and then the building; and as one approaches the plaza part of the building vanishes underneath the plaza; and then as they walk up the plaza the building reappears and is viewed against the water. This definitive play of movement, of the building vanishing and reappearing or changing in proportion is deliberate and designed and carries different meanings:

I. Syntagm of the building against the green and the plaza→ relation of nature to built form

II. Syntagm of plaza and building as it disappears→ a gesture of welcome as the building is humbled by the people.

III. Syntagm of the building against the water→ relationship of water and built form, how it arises from primordial things. This interactive syntagm is perhaps the only deliberate <u>linear</u> syntagm created through spatial organization between the people and the building rather than within the building.

Other syntagms include:

IV. green ↔ water

V. (green + water =) nature ↔ built form

VI. water ↔ built form

VII. concrete ↔ marble

VIII. concrete ↔ brick

IX. assembly building ↔ dormitories

X. central chamber ↔ ambulatory ↔ peripheral structures

XI. central chamber ↔ mosque

Hence from the above it can be noted that syntagms are created by the linking of signifiers from paradigm sets which are chosen on the basis of whether they are conventionally regarded as appropriate or may be required by some syntactic rule system (Chandler 2002). This brings up the other of the two axes or mental activity.

2.   Axis of Selection

This is a structural term for the 'vertical' axis in the analysis of a textual structure: the plane of the paradigm. Textual analysis is based on this axis is known as Paradigmatic analysis. Paradigmatic analysis seeks to identify the various paradigms which underlie the surface structure of a text. Thus paradigmatic analysis seeks to identify the various paradigms or pre-existing sets of signifiers which underlie the manifest content of texts. This aspect of structural analysis involves a consideration of the positive or negative connotations of each signifier as revealed through the use of one signifier rather than another, and the existence of 'underlying' thematic paradigms (Chandler 2002).

4.2 Paradigmatic Analysis of the Chosen Text

In conducting a paradigmatic analysis of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, it can be denoted first of all, that in a text such as this it is nearly impossible to isolate units as single signs and each part is syntagmatically related to another in the whole composition in order to form a meaningful whole. As each sign has in itself a myriad of aspects it is difficult to postulate a paradigm set without changing the entire composition. Hence the analysis is limited to changing certain paradigmatic aspects in order to determine what influences or invests meaning through its presence or absence instead of substituting the whole sign. Therefore, the paradigmatic analysis will primarily consist of a modified version of the commutation test where instead of paradigmatic sets of substitutional signs paradigmatic aspects of the existing signs will be postulated with the resultant difference in meaning. The paradigmatic analysis follows the three levels in which the signs were identified (§3).

4.2.1 First Level

1.   Sign   The Water

                             Paradigm Set

                             reflecting pool

absent signifiers	pond
	rushing stream
	a number of small pools
signifier present	Elongated lakes and canals separating the built structures appearing to be connected

Difference in Meaning: From the above paradigm it can be identified that the key aspect of the signified is the illusion of the continuous flow of the rivers as opposed to the stagnancy and disconnectedness of a number of disjointed pools. Another aspect is the quiet composure of the majestic rivers of Bengal rather than the restless rush of small streams or fountains.

2. Sign	The Green
	Paradigm Set
	flower gardens
absent signifiers	bushes
	tree gardens
	artistic landscaping
signifier present	Vast green fields

Difference in meaning: Bengal is not identified by jungles or flowers, hence, the primary aspect of the signifier is to represent the signified of the green fields of Bengal – the unembellished, uninterrupted velveteen of greenery that defines our deltaic plane.

3. Sign	Steps
	Paradigm Set
absent signifier	absence of steps
signifier present	Marble and brick steps that lead up to the water

Difference in Meaning: Absence of steps or the 'ghats' would affect the signified of the 'river' considerably. Rivers in this country have been more then just communication routes; they have been the "address" of a place that is at its edge. The edges-- the starting and ending of land

and water-- their duality, their tension, their symbiosis - this anthropological link is recreated in the edge conditions at the steps.

4.   Sign   Plaza

                               Paradigm Set

     absent signifiers   smaller proportions

                               marble steps

signifier present   An elevated brick-paved voluminous plaza

Difference in Meaning: We find the key aspects for the signified to be articulated are in terms of volume as well as the material and its colour, where by the material subdues the public entry and yet its proportions signify its importance. The height or elevation places value on the structure and provides an ideal setting for public recreation.

In terms of the higher built forms on the 1st level it is too complex to conduct a paradigmatic analysis of the structures of the MP hostels and the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban due to the infinite paradigms which will render the analysis nonsensical.

5.   Sign   MP Hostel

                               Paradigm Set

     absence of housing

                               housing of marble

     absent signifiers   houses tiered higher than the Assembly Building houses are placed in a line facing away from the Assembly Building

     signifier present   Low height red brick structures facing, encompassing the assembly building on one side separated from it by water

Difference in Meaning: The key aspects as we can identify paradigmatically is residing in a place that is imbued with a sense of purpose achieved by making the assembly building the central focus of view point and also by placing importance to it by making the surrounding structures diminish in size and humbler in usage of materials.

6. Sign   Assembly Building

                            Paradigm Set

    absent signifiers   an assembly hall

                            an assembly building that is not the centre

    signifier present   The gargantuan mass of concrete and marble
                            that occupies the central space of the entire
                            scheme

Difference in Meaning: By removing the assembly building as the focus
or depriving it of its importance it ends up obliterating the entire
scheme of the capital complex.

4.2.2 Second Level

7. Sign   Concrete

                            Paradigm Set

    granite

    absent signifiers   marble

                            brick

                            stone

                            [such a paradigm set can be endless]

    signifier present   Concrete walls consisting of reinforced
                            concrete poured at five foot intervals marked
                            by horizontal and vertical two feet wide strips
                            of marble

Difference in Meaning: A change in the material leads to changes in the
signified on many different levels as the primary statements have been
made by using the rugged texture of concrete and by keeping it
absolutely bare thus placing emphasis on the subdued, muted,
simplistic appearance of a structure that is monastic in terms of its
ominous presence. Colour of concrete is also meaningful as contrasted
with the surrounding structure.

8. Sign   Marble

                            Paradigm Set

                            tiles

absent signifiers	mosaic
	granite
	glass
signifier present	Concrete walls consisting of reinforced concrete poured at five foot intervals marked by horizontal and vertical two feet wide strips of marble

Difference in Meaning: the marble perfectly complements the bare concrete in texture and colour in adding a touch of elegance that no other material could have provided. The connection with Mughal architecture would also be lost in the usage of other materials. Complete absence of the marble would result in bare and ungainly joineries and the concrete ruggedness would become too overpowering. The structure would be devoid of the remarkable human inscription representative of the craftsmanship of the people of this region and its limitations. The duality of masculinity and femininity would be lost.

9. Sign	Double Skin
	Paradigm Set
single skin	
absent signifiers	solid skin
	glass outer shell
signifier present	The inner walls of the building are encased by an outer shell resulting in two skins

Difference in Meaning: we find that in keeping with the 'orders' of the signified the key aspects are:

- presence of an outer shell: order of rain

- opacity of the skin for protection from the glare: order of sun

- porousness: order of wind and light

Absence of the outer shell will deprive the text of the signified of the building being true to the climate.

10. Sign   Openings

                         Paradigm Set

absent signifiers   glassed paneled perforations

                         absence of openings

signifier present   The exterior shell is perforated by an abrupt polyphony of basic Euclidian shapes i.e. circles, squares and isosceles triangles of different inclination with an appearance of being stenciled out from it

Difference in Meaning: If glass is used then the invasion of the atmospheric aura is broken off, forming a closed glass-box atmosphere which creates a sharp disjunction with the environmental elements. Absence of openings once again creates the claustrophobic solid outer shell rendering it redundant, and destroying the signified of the 'orders' along with the severance of the dialogue between the interior and the exterior thus resulting in the loss of the expression of the delta in the 'landscape' of the building.

4.2.3 Third Level

11. Sign   Administrative Entry

                         Paradigm Set

                         an entry of grand proportions

                         an entry that does not go through the tunnel

absent signifiers   an entry in the form of a simple door.

                         an entry that was not made subservient to the mosque or any other structure

signifier present   An entrance in the form of a tunnel underneath the mosque

Difference in Meaning: Thus we find that each of the options obliterates the signified whereby entrance of the office-goers has been made functional, subdued and subservience is observed to higher power both of secular and spiritual forms.

12. Sign   Presidential Entry

                            Paradigm Set

                            an entry of brick steps instead of marble

        absent signifiers   a plain door of minimal height

                            a simplistic entry

signifier present   An entry that lies cardinally opposite the
                            administrative entry on the north side. It is a
                            grand entry that has the full height of the
                            building and is done in marble

Difference in Meaning: As the resultant signified is to be an entrance
made celebratory by grandeur any change either in terms of materials
or proportions deprives it of the required articulation.

13.   Sign   Prayer Hall

                            Paradigm Set

                            a mosque that is not placed at the entry

        absent signifiers   a detached traditional mosque outside the
                            building

                            a small prayer room

        signifier present   The prayer hall is a simple form with a square
                            plan, corner turrets and blank walls with light
                            streaming in through the corner turrets. It
                            twists away from the main axis in the
                            direction of Kiblah. It is placed at the
                            entrance.

Difference in Meaning: First of all we find that the placement of the
mosque at the entry and above it is extremely important in terms of
the signified as this denotes the value of that which it symbolizes, the
second aspect of paradigmatic importance is the mosque in its full
volume being woven into the building, creating an inherent 'umbilical'
link to the Assembly chamber and thereby interlocking the two to
represent the abstract deep structure signified - the 'transcendence of
Assembly'. The absence of traditional motifs is also important in that it
places emphasis on the essence of spiritualism or the importance of

substance over form. The twisting away from the cardinal axis asserts its presence as a voluminous unit of immense importance in the fabric of space of the entire composition.

14. Sign   Light wells

                       Paradigm Set

                       concrete illuminated columns

   absent signifiers   strobe light columns

   signifier present   A light filled spatial container as structure

Difference in Meaning: If there were solid columns, they would destroy that which has been achieved with light as structure – the atmosphere of spirituality. However, it is also significant for the light to be natural light akin to flooding in of light in a temple.

15. Sign   Shadow-play of Light and the Absence of Light

                       Paradigm Set

                       artificial lighting

   absent signifiers   closed structure obstructing natural light

   signifier present   Natural light brought into the interior or through various perforations

Difference in Meaning: Artificial lighting as we have seen deprives the structure of its spiritual aura, but most importantly the obstruction of natural light severs the tie, the dialogue between the interior and the exterior and destroys the signified of the building being true to its place and climate.

16. Sign   The Street

                       Paradigm Set

                       a low height corridor

   absent signifiers   a linear walkway

                       segregated corridors and passages

   signifier present   A seven story high discontinuous ambulatory that envelops the central chamber and

connects the peripheral structures to the central core. It has benches and street lamps at regular intervals.

Difference in Meaning: Thus we find that the two most important aspects of the ambulatory is its non-linearity or discontinuity – an aspect that is imperative for the dimension of centrality on which the whole composition is based, the other aspect is the height or proportions which is required to identify the ambulatory as a 'street' within a 'city'—an inherent part of the way of life of the people of this region.

17. Sign	Central Chamber
	Paradigm Set
	an assembly room that does not constitute the central core
absent signifiers	an assembly hall of humble proportions
	a detached assembly hall on one end and all the other functions on the other end
signifier present	An octagonal space located at the centre of the building that is a hundred feet high amphitheatre of three hundred seats arranged in pairs.

Difference in Meaning: It is obvious that the building was created for and composed around the Assembly Chamber – a fact that is asserted by it constituting the central core with all else arranged peripherally around or in relation to it. The gargantuan proportions also serve to denote its presence and importance as the core, as the Assembly room pierces through the centre of the building and is the only part that has expression on the outside.

18. Sign	The Interior as a Whole
	Paradigm Set
absent signifier	the whole composition can provide hundreds and thousands of combinations and permutations of the existing parts.
signifier present	The central chambers, the peripheral structures and the ambulatory

<u>Difference in Meaning</u>: Any change will overthrow the carefully balanced deep structure signified of the entire whole whereby each part has evolved to fit in the place it occupies in the syntagmatic relations created – the resultant whole becoming a symbolic 'city within a city.'

This concludes the paradigmatic analysis, which also concludes the semiotic analysis of the text, whereby such an analysis has served as a tool to 'read' the chosen text and explore its signifieds, how they are articulated through different signifiers, and how the signifiers in turn relate to each other.

5. Limitations and Future Work

While the current study presented in this paper is a novel one, its primary limitation is that it is purely a structural analysis following the Saussurean tradition, and subsequently inherits the inherent constraints therein. As the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban is a massive text to begin with, the Saussurean perspective provides a convenient starting point given its focus on formal systems rather than on processes of use and production. However, such a purely textual analysis is considered functionalist, and relatively more conservative in comparison to a Peircian analysis. The latter goes beyond the internal textual organisation and engages with the social context of interpretation (Chandler 2002). If one visualizes semiotic analyses to be spherical in shape, then the Saussurean analysis can be thought of as the core of the sphere with the Peircian analysis forming the next layer of the sphere. In the context of the chosen text a Peircian analysis involves a larger undertaking that was beyond the scope of the current study. However, the analysis presented in this paper presents a solid stepping stone in which a Peircian analysis would be the logical next phase of the study and would constitute the roadmap for further analysis of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban as a future undertaking.

6. Conclusion

Semiotics is the study of sign systems and as such any language is considered to be a system of signs that are arbitrarily given meaning. Hence in a sense semiotics subsumes linguistics and can serve as an analytical tool for sign systems that convey meaning much like language

does. This paper focuses on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban as the chosen piece of text conducting a semiotic analysis to read the text by identifying the signs within the text, their respective signifiers and signifieds, and further analaysing the relations between them through syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis. The analysis led to the emergence of patterns of nature and culture, and showed that the signifiers that have been used in the text represent signifieds that pre-existed the signifiers. The primordial signifieds have found a new representation in the text imbuing it with a quality of timelessness and monumentalizing it. However, the signifieds are still obtainable in that the process is reversed by conducting a semiotic analysis. The pre-existent signifieds connected subliminally to the signifieds already present in the minds of the people of the place and thus communication via the text was established and this in turn served to valorize the text.

From an apparent view linguistics and architecture appear to be on two ends of a spectrum, but as presented in this paper, there is a deep connection between the two whereby architecture proclaims itself to be a socio-cultural language and linguistics as we know is the 'study of language' and this connection is further deepened under the gargantuan umbrella of semiotics—the study of signs. It also deepens the understanding of any built form by exploring the deep structure in terms of the plethora of cultural elements embedded in it instead of merely conducting a structural autopsy. By centralizing the importance of meaning, thought and culture in language study, semiotic analysis can cross several boundaries and have tremendous influence on allied fields when close associations are made within those fields thus opening up several avenues of analytical study.

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