

MODERNITY IN PRINT:
MARG Magazine and the Negotiation of Aesthetics, Democracy, and Modern Life

Aashvi Trivedi

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Committee:

Vikramaditya Prakash

Nicole Huber

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Abstract

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Aashvi Trivedi

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Vikramaditya Prakash

Department of Architecture

This thesis examines the magazine *MARG*, founded in Bombay in 1946 under the editorship of Mulk Raj Anand and devoted to art, architecture, planning, and cultural history, across the first fifteen years of Indian independence between 1946 and 1961, during which the newly sovereign nation confronted the immense labour of reconstruction and sought to translate political freedom into durable forms of collective life. Throughout these years the magazine functioned as an educational project that rendered the specialised knowledge of architects, planners, and art historians intelligible to a broad reading public, and that consistently presented the built environment as a matter of public and democratic concern, so that questions of housing, domestic life, museums, urban planning, and cultural heritage were repeatedly bound to larger

discussions of citizenship, social responsibility, and democratic participation. Situating the publication within the Nehruvian commitment to planned development and within Anand's evolving humanism, the study traces the manner in which *MARG* cultivated informed readers capable of engaging critically with the transformations that were reshaping India, while drawing upon the first fifteen volumes and combining a close reading of editorials, essays, and articles with sustained attention to the drawings, photographs, plans, and page design through which a pedagogical and aesthetic language was gradually composed. In approaching the magazine as a site of transnational intellectual exchange in which contributors writing from positions at once internal and external to India held divergent visions of modernity in productive tension, the thesis argues that *MARG* sustained an understanding of modernity as something that had to be learned, practised, and inhabited, an understanding that found its fullest articulation in the magazine's presentation of Chandigarh as a documentary record, a pedagogical instrument, and a cultural manifesto through which the assimilation of international modernism into a national vision of urban order was carried toward completion.

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Introduction

The years surrounding Indian independence constituted one of the most ambitious periods of political, social, and cultural transformation in the history of the subcontinent, a period in which the end of colonial rule in 1947 conferred sovereignty upon a newly constituted nation while confronting that nation with the immense practical labour of reconstruction. The violence and displacement of Partition, the integration of the princely states, the expansion of democratic institutions, the pressures of rapid urban growth and acute housing shortages, the demands of industrial development and educational reform, and the creation of new administrative structures together required sustained intervention across many sectors of public life. Independence therefore amounted to far more than a constitutional event, since it initiated a prolonged process through which political leaders, civil servants, educators, artists, architects, planners, and intellectuals sought to define the social, cultural, and institutional foundations of a democratic India. Questions concerning citizenship, education, public culture, housing, and the organisation of everyday life acquired a particular urgency during these decades, as the nation attempted to translate the achievement of political freedom into durable forms of collective life.

This thesis examines one influential cultural institution that participated directly in these debates. Founded in Bombay in 1946, *MARG* emerged as one of the most significant magazines devoted to art, architecture, planning, archaeology, museums, regional cultures, and public education in post-independence India. Under the editorship of Mulk Raj Anand, the magazine assembled an extraordinary range of contributors that included architects such as Otto Koenigsberger, Jane Drew, Maxwell Fry, Pierre Jeanneret, and Le Corbusier, together with art historians, museum professionals, critics, educators, administrators, and writers. Through essays, editorials, architectural drawings, photographs, plans, maps, and special issues, *MARG*

introduced its readers to contemporary debates concerning architecture and planning while promoting wider discussions about culture, citizenship, education, and national development. Published at a moment when new institutions were being established across the country and new visions of collective life were being actively debated, the magazine occupied a distinctive position within the intellectual culture of the period.

This study argues that *MARG* functioned as an educational project through which architecture, art, planning, and cultural history were presented to a broad reading public during the first decades of independence. The magazine consistently sought to explain specialised knowledge to readers who were not necessarily architects, planners, or art historians, encouraging them to understand the built environment as a matter of public concern. Questions of housing, museums, domestic life, urban planning, cultural heritage, and architectural design were repeatedly connected to larger discussions concerning citizenship, social responsibility, and democratic participation, so that the significance of the magazine extended well beyond its role as a record of architectural and cultural activity. Its pages reveal a sustained attempt to cultivate informed readers who were capable of engaging critically with the transformations that were reshaping India during the middle decades of the twentieth century.

The importance of such a project becomes clearer when it is situated within the broader ambitions of the post-independence state. Throughout the late 1940s and the 1950s, national reconstruction was guided by a commitment to planned development and to state-led social transformation, and under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru the Indian government invested heavily in education, scientific research, infrastructure, industrialisation, public institutions, housing, and urban development. Planning acquired an importance that reached beyond economic policy and became closely associated with the construction of a democratic and

socially progressive nation, while the creation of schools, universities, museums, cultural academies, community centres, housing programmes, and new cities reflected a wider conviction that institutions could play an active part in shaping public life and in expanding the opportunities for participation within a democratic society.

Nehru repeatedly described independence as the beginning of a much longer process of national construction, since political freedom alone could not guarantee the success of the democratic experiment, and the future of the nation depended upon the formation of citizens who were capable of participating in public life and of contributing to the institutions through which the country would govern itself. Questions of education, culture, scientific inquiry, social welfare, and public responsibility therefore occupied a central place within his vision of national development.

This vision found one of its most eloquent expressions in Nehru's address on the eve of independence, in which the emergence of the nation was framed within an expansive moral and historical horizon.

“At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.”¹

In this articulation, political sovereignty appeared inseparable from an ethical commitment that extended beyond the boundaries of the nation, and the language of freedom carried within it a sense of obligation toward humanity at large, suggesting that the realisation of democracy within India bore implications for a wider global order. The awakening of the nation was thus imagined as part of a larger historical movement toward justice and collective well-being, within which the destinies of peoples remained deeply interconnected.

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, “Tryst with Destiny” (speech, Constituent Assembly of India, New Delhi, August 14, 1947).

“And so we have to labour and to work, and to work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. Peace is said to be indivisible, so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.”²

Mulk Raj Anand and the Responsibilities of Culture

Many intellectuals and cultural figures shared these concerns, even where they differed in their political commitments and in the solutions they proposed, and among the most influential of them was Mulk Raj Anand, whose career as a novelist, critic, editor, and public intellectual was shaped by a sustained commitment to the social responsibilities of culture. Having spent much of the interwar and wartime years in Britain, Anand moved within a wide network of writers, artists, architects, anti-colonial activists, and political thinkers that included figures such as Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, E. M. Forster, and George Orwell, and these years exposed him to some of the most important intellectual and cultural debates of the period concerning democracy, education, modernity, social reform, and the place of culture in public life.

Shortly before his return to India, writing from Bloomsbury in 1945, Anand described his collection of essays, *Apology for Heroism* as “a very tentative introduction to the humanism which I have been evolving for myself through the jig-saw puzzle of my Indian upbringing and my Eur-Asian experience.”³

The humanism that Anand tentatively named emerged as an ethics forged in strain and incompleteness, grounded in lived experience more than in doctrine, and it carried the imprint of a generation that had been compelled to think through violence, displacement, and the

² Nehru, “Tryst with Destiny.”

³ Mulk Raj Anand, *Apology for Heroism: A Brief Autobiography of Ideas*, 3rd ed. (Arnold-Heinemann Publishers India, 1975), 7.

disintegration of inherited certainties while continuing to hold to the possibility of collective renewal. What Anand gestured toward was a form of belief in humanity that remained provisional, conscious of its own limits, and shaped through an ongoing negotiation between personal history and historical upheaval, marked by an insistence on articulation and on the necessity of speaking even where conclusions remained unsettled, as though the act of expression itself participated in the making of a future that had yet to take form. In the preface to the first edition, published in 1945, he writes,

“I have tried, as far as possible, to be honest and to put down the reasons for the kind of worship of humanity in which I have come to believe. I am well aware that I have yet to work out the fuller implications of this humanism.[...] I can plead that the struggle from which they have arisen has not been easy, in view of the crises in which I and my generation have been involved. Only, there is a future, especially for India. Anyhow, nature abhors a vacuum. And one must say one’s say, if only by way of an apology for heroism.”⁴

For Anand, the figure of the intellectual occupied a position of particular urgency within this emerging humanist framework, and his faith in the force of radical thought had been shaped through direct encounter with the charged political atmosphere of the interwar years, when ideas appeared capable of moving beyond abstraction into collective action. The memory of moments such as the British General Strike of 1926 lingered as evidence of a historical conjuncture in which intellectual conviction and mass mobilisation could converge, generating the sense that thought carried within it the potential to reorganise social and political life, and this earlier optimism, grounded in the perceived efficacy of intellectual labour, continued to inform his understanding of the responsibilities borne by writers, critics, and artists in a world undergoing profound transformation.

⁴ Anand, *Apology for Heroism*, 7.

This commitment to intellectual intervention remained inseparable from Anand's acute awareness of his own position within overlapping structures of power and belonging, and as an Indian working within metropolitan British contexts he confronted the asymmetries that shaped access to voice, authority, and recognition. That recognition sharpened his sense that the intellectual could not remain confined within national or imperial frameworks and that the very condition of intellectual work demanded an orientation toward a more expansive and egalitarian horizon. He writes,

“...unless [the British] see to it that intellectuals everywhere enjoy equal rights of citizenship, so that chauvinist nationalism can break down and give place to a fraternity of men with new ideas. For who should be more universalist in his outlook than the intellectual, the poet? And isn't there already through the shrinking of the world, through improved communications and the spread of science, an emerging world civilization, the need for world brotherhood at least in the minds of the few avant garde intellectuals?”⁵

This commitment to an expansive intellectual and ethical horizon was accompanied in Anand's thought by a deep appreciation for the density and complexity produced through the entanglement of ideas across cultures and geographies. The circulation of ideas across borders, accelerated by new forms of communication and intellectual exchange, fostered the conditions for a more capacious understanding of the human, one that could sustain an emergent vision of equality grounded in shared values of justice, freedom, and collective dignity.

Within this enlarged field, Anand located the work of the writer as inseparable from the broader crisis of modern existence, and the writer's task, as he conceived it, drew upon memory and imagination as the mediums through which the fragmentary experiences of a life could be gathered and rearticulated into a more comprehensive engagement with the human condition.

⁵ Anand, *Apology for Heroism*, 52.

Such an approach held the personal and the social together within a continuum in which private feeling and public reality remained in constant and productive tension.

Anand understood that such an engagement risked discomfort within certain literary traditions that preferred restraint or formal detachment, yet for him the urgency of the present demanded a more direct encounter with the conditions that shaped human sensibility, and literature became a site through which the contradictions of modernity could be apprehended and worked through, guided by a commitment to grasping the depth of what he perceived as the central crisis of his time.

“The problem, then, that I tried to face as a writer was not strictly a private, but a private-public problem. And as my media as a writer were the memory and imagination, and the substance of my work, the whole of my varied experience, the theme of my work became the whole man and the whole gamut of human relationships, rather than only one single part of it. Such an approach to the human crisis is suspect among many who do not like a philosophic taint in the novel and abhor all forms of prophecy and speculation like the plague. But whatever apologies European middle-class writers may have to make for including philosophic, social, or moral as well as personal, cause, within the radius of their inspiration, I am not called upon, in the face of my own individual experience, to offer any excuses for going straight to the heart of the problem of our time, the problem of human sensibility in the present complex, the tragedy of modern man.”⁶

Carrying this intellectual and ethical fervour, Mulk Raj Anand returned to India in the closing months of 1945, animated by a sense of responsibility toward the unfolding project of a democratic nation, and his return was shaped by an aspiration to participate in the making of a society that could translate the ideals of humanism into institutional and cultural form. Anand’s intellectual commitments found resonance with the vision articulated by Jawaharlal Nehru, whose leadership offered a framework through which democracy could be conceived at once as a political system and as a broader civilisational ethos.

⁶ Anand, *Apology for Heroism*, 78–79.

The decades that followed independence were marked by the immense challenge of translating these aspirations into lived reality, and the violence and displacement of the Partition of India cast a long shadow over the early years of the nation, producing conditions of grief and instability even as the work of institutional formation began in earnest. Within this fraught context the Nehruvian state undertook an ambitious programme of planning that sought to reorganise economic, social, and cultural life through interventions in infrastructure, education, demographic management, and governance, and these efforts carried the weight of a complex inheritance, since the structures of colonial rule continued to shape the possibilities and the limitations of postcolonial transformation.

India's emergence as a sovereign democracy unfolded within a rapidly shifting international environment, in which newly independent nations across Asia and Africa entered into a shared historical moment, and this period witnessed the consolidation of new forms of global alignment alongside the rise of the United States as a dominant geopolitical force. In response to these conditions India participated actively in international forums such as CIAM, UNESCO, the Bandung Conference, and the Asian-African Conference, seeking to articulate an identity that extended beyond economic development to encompass a cultural, philosophical, and ideological presence on the world stage, and through these engagements it positioned itself as a nation invested in shaping an international discourse grounded in cooperation, mutual understanding, and ethical responsibility.

One of the most significant expressions of this orientation emerged in the formulation of the Non-Aligned Movement, which took shape in the years following the Bandung Conference of 1955, and this initiative reflected an effort to imagine a Third World, a geopolitical community that could navigate the polarised landscape of the Cold War without subsuming itself within the

ideological frameworks of either bloc. It proposed a mode of alignment rooted in autonomy and collective solidarity and oriented toward the pursuit of peace and dialogue across nations, so that the postcolonial world sought to assert its presence as a moral and intellectual force capable of reconfiguring the terms of global engagement.

Within this historical and intellectual frame, Mulk Raj Anand continued to articulate and disseminate a humanist vision through a range of literary and critical forms, positioning himself as an active participant in shaping the cultural consciousness of post-independence India, and his writing during the first two decades of independence reflects a sustained engagement with the evolving identity of the nation and with its place within an increasingly interconnected world. In his 1967 essays published under the title *Is There a Contemporary Indian Civilization*, Anand returned to the question of how India might be understood as a civilisational project in formation, advancing the idea of synthesis as a central and often fraught organising principle.

For Anand, India's historical experience offered the grounds for such a synthesis, even as he remained attentive to the tensions and inadequacies that marked its realisation, and his reflections engaged closely with the legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru, whose vision he both supported and critically extended. Anand identified within the Indian middle class a deepening crisis, shaped by insufficient educational grounding and by a weakening of moral and intellectual rigour, conditions that threatened to undermine the very ideals upon which the nation had been founded, and in returning to humanism as a guiding framework he reaffirmed his belief that the Nehruvian project retained the potential to cultivate a more integrated and ethically grounded society, provided that its underlying principles could be meaningfully enacted.

“Even to the complete cynics, it is already apparent that a new pattern is emerging, in which some part of the operative values of the past, described above, may be worked into organic relation with the empirical and deeper needs of today, if the intelligentsia can be awakened.[...] this new Indian orientation seems to be

rooted in a broad humanist philosophical attitude which, though not clearly stated, forms the inner basis of the "socialist pattern of society", that is accepted, by and large, as the goal of India's progress. And its essence lies in the democracy which has been deliberately preferred as the instrument of change."⁷

Anand's own intellectual mission thus became inseparable from this broader horizon, and he conceived of the work of the writer and the thinker as deeply pedagogical, oriented toward the production and circulation of knowledge in forms that could reach and shape a wider public.

[...] we have to avoid, if possible, the meaninglessness that has come from the vulgarisation of culture in the West, through the cynicism bred by a routine civilisation, making armaments through fear and hatred and keeping up its morale by the lowest excitements of the tribalist passions of the cold war. The lack of the high standards of the creative life, in the education of the individual, the absence of emphasis on moral and human values, as much as hidebound customs and conventions, can make life meaningless for human beings.[...] The peril, which faces the human personality in India, or, indeed, in many parts of Asia, can only be met by the inheritance of the vast stores of knowledge, through an expanding education, which may create integrated individuals, with a capacity for insight.⁸

Founding MARG

The most important institutional expression of these concerns would become *MARG* magazine. Established in Bombay in 1946, the publication provided Anand and his collaborators with a platform through which architecture, art, planning, education, archaeology, museums, and cultural history could be addressed within a common intellectual arena, and across the following fifteen years the magazine developed into a forum where questions concerning democratic citizenship, domestic life, housing, urban planning, cultural heritage, and architectural production could be discussed together, revealing the extent to which these subjects were understood as interconnected aspects of post-independence reconstruction.

⁷ Mulk Raj Anand, *Is There a Contemporary Indian Civilisation?* (Ministry of Culture, 1963), 107–8.

⁸ Anand, *Is There a Contemporary Indian Civilisation?*, 124.

MARG can be understood as a product of democratic India's early intellectual optimism, shaped by a constellation of individuals whose trajectories traversed national, disciplinary, and ideological boundaries. Established in 1946 in collaboration with Anil de Silva, Otto Koenigsberger, and Minnette de Silva, among others, the journal emerged at a critical historical juncture poised between the waning structures of colonial authority and the anticipatory energies of a soon to be independent nation. This thesis approaches the journal during the first two decades following independence, from 1946 to 1966, as a site of aesthetic pedagogy, as a platform for transnational intellectual exchange, and as a space in which the contours of postcolonial modernity were actively negotiated, and it examines how *MARG* contributed to shaping discourses of domesticity, architecture, and civic life through a sustained engagement with archival, textual, and visual material. The study seeks to illuminate the role of the journal in articulating a vision of Indian modernity that remained at once ethical in its commitments, aesthetic in its sensibility, and attentive to its place within a wider global conversation.

Sources, Archive, and Method

The foundation of this research rests upon a sustained engagement with the complete volumes of *MARG* magazine, consulted across both digital repositories and physical archives, and these materials together constitute a continuous record of the magazine's editorial direction and visual articulation, making it possible to trace the shifts and consolidations of its discourse across time. Within these pages the interplay between text and image reveals the deliberate construction of a pedagogical and aesthetic language through which ideas of modernity were communicated and refined.

The study is further informed by a close reading of essays and articles authored by Mulk Raj Anand alongside contributions from figures such as Minnette de Silva, Otto Koenigsberger, Le Corbusier, Jane Drew, and Maxwell Fry, among others, and these writings situate the magazine within a broader network of intellectual and architectural exchange, illuminating the diversity of voices that contributed to its formation and the range of positions through which Indian modernity was debated and imagined.

Visual material forms an equally significant component of the archive, and architectural drawings, photographic documentation, and illustrative material extend the scope of analysis by foregrounding the ways in which visual representation participated in the shaping of knowledge. Through a careful examination of these elements the research attends to the strategies by which images were positioned in relation to text, generating layered modes of meaning that operated simultaneously at aesthetic and pedagogical levels.

The methodological approach combines textual and visual analysis in order to engage the magazine in its full complexity, and the reading of essays, editorials, and articles enables a tracing of the key discursive formations around modernity, pedagogy, and domesticity as they unfold within the publication. Attention to page design, layout, photographic sequencing, and the integration of architectural plans allows for an understanding of how visual composition functioned as an active agent in the communication of ideas, and through this dual focus the study approaches *MARG* as a carefully constructed site of knowledge production in which form and content remain deeply intertwined.

Conceived within the intellectual and political ferment of the post-independence period, *MARG* may be understood as a site in which multiple authorial positions converge, intersect, and remain in tension with one another. Figures such as Mulk Raj Anand, Minnette de Silva, Otto

Koenigsberger, Le Corbusier, Jane Drew, Maxwell Fry, and Frank Lloyd Wright brought to the magazine distinct experiential and intellectual horizons, shaped by their respective locations within global and local contexts, and the magazine held these perspectives together within a discursive field in which ideas of modernity, architecture, and culture were articulated through their differences and sustained in tension with one another.

The contributors to *MARG* wrote from positions that were simultaneously internal and external to the Indian context, generating a layered perspective in which India was at once lived and observed, inhabited and interpreted, and this condition enabled a mode of reflection in which the nation became visible to itself through the mediating presence of others, as each contribution participated in the ongoing completion of a shared and contested vision of modernity.

This condition of open-endedness belonged to the internal logic of the magazine itself and constituted the very project of modernity that *MARG* brought into discourse. The humanist vision that animated its pages, expressed through the interweaving of aesthetic and ethical concerns, unfolded as a continuous process, and through its essays, images, and editorial strategies the magazine participated in the ongoing construction of a modernity that remained in formation, continually negotiated across shifting historical, cultural, and intellectual terrains. In this sense *MARG* actively sustained a discourse in which the project of humanist modernity persisted as an unfinished endeavour, open to reinterpretation, extension, and renewal.

The study proceeds through a sustained engagement with the first fifteen volumes of *MARG* magazine, beginning with its inaugural issue published in October 1946, and the material is approached in a broadly narrative sequence that allows for attention to the temporal unfolding of ideas alongside the shifting historical conditions of post-independence India. Such an arrangement makes it possible to trace the gradual formation, transformation, and circulation of

concepts across time, while also attending to the movements of individual contributors whose intellectual trajectories and autobiographical inflections remain embedded within the magazine's discourse, and in this sense the thesis situates itself within a mode of critical historiography that reads the archive as an active site of construction in which history is continually assembled through the interplay of voices, positions, and contexts.

Chapter Outlines

The text is organised around a progression that follows the development of *MARG*'s discourse from its intellectual foundations toward its material realisation in the built city.

Chapter One, "Aesthetics of New Humanism and the Birth of *MARG*," examines the intellectual origins of the magazine across its earliest volumes and situates its founding within Mulk Raj Anand's humanist vision of culture, education, and democratic life. Tracing Anand's formation within the wartime intellectual milieu of London and his association with the Modern Architectural Research Group, the chapter reconstructs the network of architects, historians, and artists from which the magazine emerged, and it reads the inaugural editorial "Planning and Dreaming" together with the programmatic essay "Architecture and You" in order to show how *MARG* presented planning as an ethical undertaking bound to the idea of the good life. Through its analysis of contributions by Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra, and Le Corbusier, the chapter demonstrates how the magazine aligned its call for an architecture responsive to climate, material, and social need with an international discourse on organic form and democratic society, thereby establishing the principle of synthesis between inherited cultural traditions and modern construction that would orient its subsequent thought.

Chapter Two, “Mediating the Modern Paradigm and Its Citizens,” investigates the pedagogical dimensions of the magazine during the years between 1947 and 1954 and demonstrates how *MARG* advanced the conviction that democracy depended upon cultural literacy as much as upon political structures. Beginning with Anand’s editorial “Education through Art,” the chapter follows the magazine’s argument that the formation of citizens required the cultivation of perception, judgment, and aesthetic sensibility, and it examines discussions of museums, modern painting, and the experience of seeing through which readers were encouraged to understand observation as an active process of interpretation. The chapter culminates in the magazine’s engagement with the Bauhaus and its proposal for an Indian Bauhaus, an institutional vision that gathered the magazine’s dispersed reflections on art, craft, design, and architecture into a single programme for the cultivation of modern democratic subjects.

Chapter Three, “Housing the Modern Indian Subject,” turns to the domestic sphere and examines how the magazine constructed housing as a central site of social transformation during the years between 1947 and 1950. Through discussions of planning, low-cost housing, cooperative development, prefabrication, industrialised construction, domestic interiors, and neighbourhood design, *MARG* framed the home as a space in which the ambitions of national reconstruction entered the routines of everyday life, and the chapter shows how the house came to be imagined at once as a technological object, a cultural environment, a social institution, and a pedagogical instrument. Attending closely to the plans, diagrams, and model dwellings that circulated through the magazine’s pages, the chapter argues that *MARG* extended its project of cultivating architectural literacy into the spaces of ordinary habitation, where questions of design and inhabitation became matters of public reflection.

Chapter Four, “A Prelude to Chandigarh,” examines the development of *MARG*’s urban discourse and traces the emergence of planning as a comprehensive social project across the magazine’s first decade. Beginning with Percy Marshall’s “The Need for Urban Planning in India” and Otto Koenigsberger’s writings on the Greater Bombay scheme, the chapter shows how the magazine connected the design of cities to questions of public welfare, governance, and democratic citizenship, and it reconstructs the absorption of the principles of the Athens Charter into the magazine’s planning thought. The chapter then follows the early appearance of Chandigarh within *MARG*, reading the contributions of Jane Drew and Otto Koenigsberger on the road hierarchy, the residential sector, and climatic adaptation in order to demonstrate how the magazine presented the new capital as an evolving experiment whose principles required continuous public interpretation long before the city had been completed.

Chapter Five, “City as Manifesto: *MARG*’s Chandigarh,” examines the Chandigarh special issue of December 1961 and considers the completed city as the culmination of many of the themes that had occupied the magazine since its founding. Composed collaboratively by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret, Maxwell Fry, Jane Drew, and the Indian architects, administrators, and engineers who had carried the project forward, the issue acquired the character of a collective self-presentation by the makers of the city, and the chapter shows how its organisation according to the four functions of the Athens Charter translated the logic of the plan into the architecture of the volume itself. Through its reading of the biological conception of the city advanced by Randhawa, the climatic reasoning elaborated by Fry and Drew, the doctrine of the seven roads expounded by Le Corbusier, and the defence of dignified housing offered by Malhotra, the chapter argues that the special issue presented Chandigarh simultaneously as a documentary record, as a pedagogical instrument, and as a cultural manifesto through which

MARG completed the assimilation of international modernism into a national vision of urban order.

Taken together, these chapters argue that *MARG* occupied a distinctive position within the cultural history of post-independence India, serving at once as a record of architectural and artistic developments and as a participant in the broader effort to construct a democratic culture. Through its sustained engagement with questions of aesthetics, education, housing, planning, and urbanism, the magazine contributed to the production of a public discourse in which modernity was understood as something that had to be learned, practised, and inhabited, and its pages reveal an ambitious attempt to align architecture, culture, and citizenship within a shared project of social transformation, an attempt that makes the magazine a crucial site for understanding how modern democratic life was imagined and communicated during the formative decades of independent India.

What remains at stake in this study is the reconstruction of a historical publication together with the attempt to read a mode of thinking that understood form, life, and knowledge as mutually constitutive. The pages of *MARG* magazine register a world in which architecture, pedagogy, and civic imagination were still being actively composed together, before these relations settled into the more fixed disciplinary and institutional boundaries of later decades, and to return to this material is to encounter a moment in which ideas remained exposed to the instability of their own making, where writing, drawing, and building participated in the same search for coherence.

To return to this material is also to encounter a field that resists closure, since its pages hold together competing temporalities and shifting aspirations, and within them modernity remains continually negotiated through representation, interpretation, and design. The significance of this

material lies in its capacity to sustain attention and to hold together divergent voices and aspirations without resolving them into a single account, and it is within this ongoing tension that the study situates itself, as a reading practice that follows the movement of ideas across time while remaining open to the ways in which those ideas continue to reshape the present in which they are read.

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Chapter One

Aesthetics of New Humanism and the Birth of MARG

This chapter approaches the emergence of MARG from 1946 to 1949 as a site in which a particular way of seeing, thinking, and inhabiting modernity was being assembled in the years immediately succeeding Indian independence. The aim here is to trace how MARG, in its earliest volumes, brings together diverse intellectual, artistic, and architectural discourses to produce a coherent yet evolving vision of a modern democratic life.

At the center of this inquiry lies a concern with synthesis. The early issues of *MARG* reveal a sustained effort to negotiate between inherited cultural forms and contemporary global currents, producing a conception of modernity that remains grounded in local histories while open to transnational exchange. This negotiation is neither seamless nor resolved. It is staged within the pages of the magazine as an ongoing process in which multiple forms of knowledge are brought into relation. Underlying this effort is a larger vision of nation-making, one that seeks to imagine a democratic India through the careful alignment of ideas drawn from both Western intellectual traditions and Indian cultural inheritances. Such a vision to bring these juxtaposed influences into a meaningful correspondence, shaping a mode of thought that could sustain a plural and evolving society.

Within this framework emerges a commitment to what may be described as a new humanism, a sensibility strongly articulated by the group associated with MARG. This humanism places emphasis on the cultivation of the individual as a socially and aesthetically responsive being, capable of engaging with both historical depth and contemporary

transformation. Editorial writings by Mulk Raj Anand, alongside contributions by architects, historians, and artists, advance the idea that artistic practice, architectural production, and intellectual life belong to a shared field of responsibility. Aesthetic experience, in this sense, becomes inseparable from ethical and civic formation. It is through this convergence that MARG begins to articulate a language in which the making of form is closely tied to the making of a democratic life, and in which the education of sensibility is understood as central to the broader project of modernity.

Planning and Nation Building

Anand's London years had shaped him for exactly this kind of project. From 1928 to 1935 he had moved in the overlapping worlds of Bloomsbury, the Congress of World Peace, and various anti-colonial intellectual forums, befriending figures as different as E. M. Forster, Leonard Woolf, and Eric Gill.⁹ Through Gill, he became acquainted with the Modern Architectural Research Group (MARS), a British organization founded in 1933 to advance the social agenda of the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) and to adapt these international principles of planning, mass housing, and the integration of architecture and urban design to the specific conditions of Britain.¹⁰ MARS held that architecture was inseparable from housing policy, from public health, from the organization of daily life, and Anand had absorbed that conviction during the years he spent on its periphery.

⁹Susheila Nasta, "Between Bloomsbury and Gandhi? The Background to the Publication and Reception of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*," in *Books Without Borders*, vol. 2: Perspectives from South Asia, ed. Robert Fraser and Mary Hammond (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2008), 151-70.

¹⁰The Modern Architectural Research Group (MARS) was founded in 1933 at the request of Sigfried Giedion of the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), with founding members including Wells Coates, Maxwell Fry, and F. R. S. Yorke. Through his friendship with Eric Gill, Anand became an active participant during his London years. See Rachel Lee and Kathleen James-Chakraborty, "MARG Magazine: A Tryst with Architectural Modernity," *ABE Journal* 1 (February 2012), <https://doi.org/10.4000/abe.623>.

When he returned to India in 1945, he found himself at the centre of a remarkably diverse intellectual and cultural network of figures from architecture, art history, museum practice, theatre, and urban planning, many of whom would become early contributors to *MARG*. Among them was Anil de Silva, the Ceylonese art historian, founding member of the Indian People's Theatre Association, and the magazine's assistant editor. The circle also included her sister, the architect Minette de Silva; the art historian Hermann Goetz, who would later serve as Director of the National Gallery of Modern Art; the noted art collector and patron Karl Khandalavala; and the architect and planner Otto Koenigsberger, formerly Chief Architect to the State of Mysore and later responsible for the 1944 Jamshedpur Development Plan commissioned by the Tata Company¹¹. Their backgrounds differed considerably, yet they shared a belief that the country lacked comparable institutions through which architects, planners, critics, and educated non-specialists could collectively engage such questions. With the leading vision of Anand, *MARG* emerged from that absence.

The opening editorial of the first issue, titled "Planning and Dreaming" (vol. 1, no. 1, 1946), announced the magazine's purpose with a confidence that was also, in part, a historical claim. Anand began with:

"There is a certain continuity in contemporary culture which is running through the world from Moscow to Paris, London to Bombay, Shanghai to Honolulu and New York to Buenos Aires. [...] the currents of internationalism in thought are beginning to flow among those who seek peace and work for a more intense and subtle civilisation where people can enjoy the plenty which science is in a position to afford us today. I was particularly impressed by this continuity of ideas during the war years spent in London. Through the Allied debacles on the continent in the first

¹¹Viswanathan, Rashmi. "Dreaming through *MARG*." *Modernism/Modernity* (Baltimore, Md.) 32, no. 1 (2025): 21–42.

years of the conflict, many European intellectuals came across the channel to make a stand on [...] the new values which we knew we would have to evolve, we were conscious of the fact that we could only remove war by eliminating the causes of war, the glaring inequalities of our present social system, unemployment, lower standard of living, colonialism and the fears and hatreds resulting from these."¹²

The language reflected Anand's experience of wartime London, where intellectuals gathered throughout the early 1940s to debate the shape of postwar reconstruction¹³. For Anand, the transition unfolding in India formed part of the same historical moment that produced the social democratic settlements emerging across the globe. He identified unemployment, poverty, colonial domination, and structural inequality as conditions demanding collective action. The organisation of cities, resources, and public life belonged to the realm of deliberate political choice.¹⁴ Planning therefore appeared as a shared international response to the social and economic crises of the twentieth century. He gave the idea that:

"[...]planning in this sense does not mean what it is superficially supposed to mean, a mechanised, regimented life. On the contrary, planning is like dreaming — dreaming of a new world. And in that sense economic and political planning becomes an essential ancillary to the planning of villages, towns and cities, the centres of human culture, where men and women congregate in small or large communities, to live the good life."¹⁵

¹²Mulk Raj Anand, "Planning and Dreaming [Editorial]," *MARG* 1, no. 1 (1946): 3.

¹³ During his wartime years in London, Anand worked for the BBC's Eastern Service, where he participated in a vibrant network of intellectual exchange that included figures such as George Orwell and E. M. Forster. Daniel Ryan Morse argues that the BBC played a formative role in shaping Anand's engagement with a radical and internationally connected modernism, fostering an understanding of cultural production through dialogue, circulation, and exchange across multiple publics and geographies. See Daniel Ryan Morse, "An 'Impatient Modernist': Mulk Raj Anand at the BBC," *Modernist Cultures* 10, no. 1 (2015): 83–98.

¹⁴Anand, "Planning and Dreaming," 4.

¹⁵Anand, "Planning and Dreaming," 4.

By linking planning to dreaming, and both to the good life, he was insisting that the arrangement of cities and buildings was an ethical question before it was a technical one. The ambition was to build not just well but wisely, in ways that answered to actual human needs. This was the register in which *MARG* would consistently operate.

Anand's diagnosis of what stood in the way was equally direct. Colonial rule, he argued, had produced two kinds of cultural damage pulling in opposite directions. On one hand, it had produced the tendency among educated Indians to adopt European aesthetic standards without asking whether those standards suited Indian conditions, materials, or social arrangements. On the other, it had produced a reactive nationalism that rejected anything foreign and sought to revive historical forms regardless of their applicability to contemporary practice. The result, visible in any Indian city of the period, so said Anand, was architectural confusion, resulting in buildings that imitated Victorian commercial styles or Mughal ornament to reinforced concrete frames, but responded very little to the climate, the available materials, or the actual scale of social need. What India needed was a critical forum in which these confusions could be examined, discussed, and thus distributed to the national popular in an attempt to generate a general aesthetic and ethic consensus. Anand wrote:

"The impact of English domination has created [...] an ill-assorted array of forms and conventions of the old India and modern Europe, hardly displaying any attempt at a self-conscious synthesis or any genuine sense of direction.[...] The genius of our national movement did, indeed, inspire an effort at a plan through the intervention of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, when he founded the National Planning Committee.[...] But we ought to realise that aspiration towards the future has to precede faith, in, and realisation of, that future and that the moot points of every conceivable plan have to be adequately discussed before schemes affecting the intimate

lives of millions of people can be operated.[...] We have to ask the meaning of our dreams. And even before that there is much work to do, clearing the cobwebs out of the minds of our intelligentsia and the middle sections of our population. The dust of centuries which has settled on our souls must be swept and constructive ideas fostered. So that these ideas which are at the moment realised only by a very few may percolate among the vast majority of our countrymen."¹⁶

By calling for the “clearing of cobwebs,” Anand is identifying a specific audience that he believes can mediate between ideas and the wider public. The transformation of society is imagined as a process that must begin at the level of thought, among those with access to education and cultural discourse, including architects, engineers, planners, teachers, and the urban middle classes who employed them and inhabited the buildings they designed. These were the readers who could afford *MARG*'s price of four rupees and eight annas, equivalent to roughly 280 to 300 rupees today, a cost that placed the magazine firmly within the world of the literate urban elite. Anand understood this audience as both implicated in the prevailing confusion and essential to the creation of a more coherent future. He believed that they possessed the capacity to develop and exercise critical judgment about the built environment, provided they were equipped with the necessary intellectual tools, including historical knowledge, evaluative criteria, comparative examples, and sustained exposure to serious architectural debate. The figure he reached for to describe what the magazine was doing was the one closest to hand:

"We have literally, and metaphorically, to build a new India. And, as architects of this new India, this beautiful and glorious country of our dreams, we have to see to it that there are no loopholes in our plans for the future if we can possibly help it. We must explore every aspect of thought and feeling. We must make a detailed study of all blue prints. We must

¹⁶Anand, "Planning and Dreaming," 5.

bring all our critical faculties to bear on our discussion of the subsidiary ideas. And we must refine our creative energy in such a way that we achieve a true synthesis between the lasting values of our past heritage and the finest impulses of the new modern civilisation which has been growing up around us."¹⁷

The figure of the 'architect' is extended beyond the professional domain to include all participants in nation building. Architecture here becomes both a literal practice and a metaphor for social construction. This dual meaning allows MARG to move fluidly between discussions of buildings and discussions of life. This expansion of the figure of the architect is closely tied to the humanist position that MARG sets out for itself, in which the 'architect' begins to merge with a broader idea of the human agent. Each individual is seen as capable of participating in the making of a collective future, not only through building in a literal sense but through cultivating judgment, values, and sensibility. The editorial's closing declaration, and a note to the manifesto that followed the editorial, gave form to this aspiration:

"As the brief manifesto of the group printed here will show, the aims of MARG are specific enough. But it may be appropriate here, by way of preamble, for us to state that the general character of our magazine will be a humanist one. We would wish to place Man, and his needs and interests, in the very centre of our view of life."¹⁸

By placing human needs and interests at the core, MARG frames the project of nation building as an ethical and aesthetic task carried out by its citizens. The manifesto (fig 1), translates this humanist position into a concrete programme for action. It announces the formation of the Modern Architectural Research Group as an initiative intended to cultivate a broader public interest in architecture and to raise architectural standards in India. To achieve this

¹⁷Anand, "Planning and Dreaming," 5.

¹⁸Anand, "Planning and Dreaming," 5.

M A R G

Modern Architectural Research Group.

MARG, the Modern Architectural Research Group, has been formed by a few progressive architects with the object of stimulating a popular interest in and appreciation of architecture in India, and to help improve its standard in general.

Towards this end the Group proposes a programme of the following activities :

1. The establishment of this Magazine on Art and Architecture, which will cover all architectural ground; arts and crafts; industrial design, painting; sculpture;—everything in fact that has any relation to Architecture and Art.
2. Propaganda in the form of literature of all kinds; radio talks; lectures; building research etc.

The scope of the Magazine will be wide and far-reaching but in no sense will it be of a highly technical nature. As an Art Magazine it will be profusely illustrated. It will not be parochial in its outlook but will reflect an all-India character. To achieve this we need contacts all over the country who could either contribute, or help us to obtain suitable material.

The material will cover :

1. Architecture, town, country, and national planning; decoration.
2. Arts and crafts; painting and sculpture; glass; ceramics; textiles; carpet weaving; metal work.
3. Industrial design; photograph; commercial art; drama; theatre, cinema; dance; music etc.

To our knowledge, there is no Magazine of this kind published in India. To make the Magazine worth while and representative of Indian Art, we need the co-operation of people connected with the different aspects of it. We invite your co-operation in this project since we feel that it will be of material value to us. We would, for instance, welcome from you contributions in the form of articles on relevant subjects in which you are well versed, or you may be able to help us to get such contributions, or perhaps to supply us with useful information. We will, therefore, appreciate it very much if you will kindly inform us as to what you are prepared to do and if you will keep in touch with us.

We hope to hear from you soon and look forward to your association with the Group.

25, Cuffe Parade,
Colaba, BOMBAY.

THE EDITOR,
MARG Magazine,

Figure 1.1. The manifesto of the Modern Architectural Research Group, announcing the group's formation and the launch of its illustrated magazine on art and architecture, and noting that no comparable publication then existed in India. Source: Anand, Mulk Raj. "Planning and Dreaming [Editorial]." MARG 1, no. 1 (1946): 5.

goal, the group proposed the establishment of a new magazine that would bring together architecture, art, craft, industrial design, planning, and other cultural fields within a single platform. Significantly, the publication was envisioned as a profusely illustrated magazine aimed at a wider readership rather than a technical journal for specialists. Its scope extended from architecture, town planning, and national development to painting, sculpture, textiles, photography, theatre, cinema, music, and design. The manifesto also emphasized the need for an all-India network of contributors and collaborators, presenting itself as a project of collective participation. It invited architects, artists, writers, and intellectuals to contribute articles, research, information, and expertise positioning the magazine as both a pedagogical instrument and a cultural institution, that would disseminate knowledge, cultivate aesthetic awareness, and foster a shared vision of modern Indian life.

MARG as Manifesto

The first issue of *MARG* contained an unsigned essay titled "Architecture and You" (vol. 1, no. 1, 1946) which addressed architecture as a technical discipline, asking what it actually was and why India had so little of it worth defending. The choice of title was addressed to the lay reader in the second person, its tone at turns pedagogical and polemical, moving without apology between historical survey, structural definition, and pointed criticism of the buildings that were going up in Indian cities in 1946. The essay's visual programme reinforced this pedagogical aim through a carefully sequenced narrative of images. It opened with a forceful invocation of the three Vitruvian principles that had long served as architecture's classical foundation:

“"COMMODITIE": Utility—fitness for purpose, convenience.

"FIRMENESS": Stability—truth in building.

"DELIGHT": Beauty—character, emotional expression.

Present day architecture in India has none of these qualities. We have no particular architectural standards. We have made no contribution to present day architectonics.

What is the reason? Let us first understand what Architecture is.

ARCHITECTURE—What does it mean to us?"¹⁹

The passage established the essay's central rhetorical strategy. It opened with a declaration of deficiency, presenting architecture in India as a field lacking standards, coherence, and intellectual direction. The essay framed its readers as participants in a process of intellectual reconstruction, inviting them to set aside inherited assumptions and approach the built environment anew. This gesture was characteristic of the modernist outlook that informed much of *MARG*'s early discourse in which architecture was presented as a form of knowledge that integrated technical understanding with social analysis, and operated on the synthesis between science and humanities. Its foundational definition appeared in capitals, printed in the bold display typography that characterizes *MARG*'s early graphic layouts:

"ARCHITECTURE IS EVOLUTIONARY. IT IS THE SYNTHESIS OF
A STRUCTURAL SCIENCE AND AN EXACT ANALYSIS OF
SOCIAL NEEDS. [...] ARCHITECTURE IS THE ART AND SCIENCE
OF BUILDING. A STRUCTURE GROWS OUT OF FUNCTION. TRUE
FUNCTION IN A BUILDING IS THE SYNTHESIS OF DEFINITE
AND PARTICULAR REQUIREMENTS FULFILLED EFFICIENTLY.
THE DEGREE WITH WHICH IT FULFILS THOSE REQUIREMENTS
IS THE ONLY STANDARD IN BUILDING."²⁰ (Capitalization as per
text.)

Using outline sketches, tightly framed images integrated with the text, the essay aimed to highlight the inconsistencies in the attitudes of the Indian people with regard to the adaptation of

¹⁹ "Architecture and You," *MARG* 1, no. 1 (1946): 7

²⁰ "Architecture and You," *MARG* 1, no. 1 (1946): 7, 10.

mechanical advances and modernist styles in their lives. One such analogical diagram (see fig. 1.2) placed an automobile, a symbol of mechanical modernity, juxtaposed with an image of an ornamented covered litter and a wheeled buggy, both powered by horses, meant to be symbols of the past. In two contrasting graphic types and colors, the text asked the reader why they would laugh at a car designed to look like a palanquin, but apparently accepted buildings designed to look like sixteenth-century Mughal monuments.

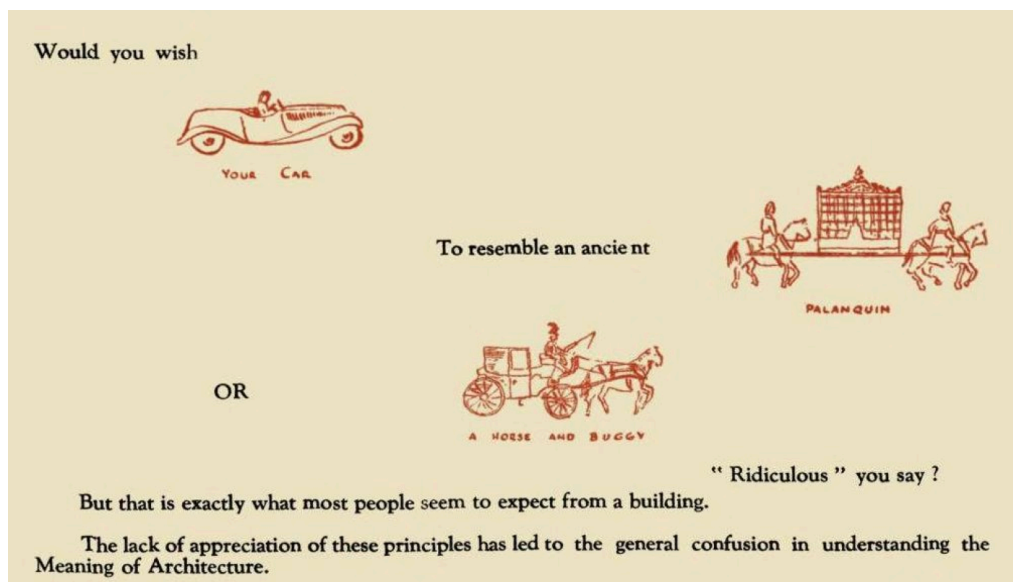


Figure 1.2. Analogical diagram contrasting a modern automobile with a palanquin and a horse-and-buggy, satirizing the expectation that new buildings should imitate antiquated forms. Source: "Architecture and You." MARG 1, no. 1 (1946).

The criticism extended beyond questions of style to a broader attack on what the essay understood as the contradictions of colonial modernity. Other diagrams (see figs. 1.3–1.4) contrasted examples of contemporary engineering with eclectic architectural facades that

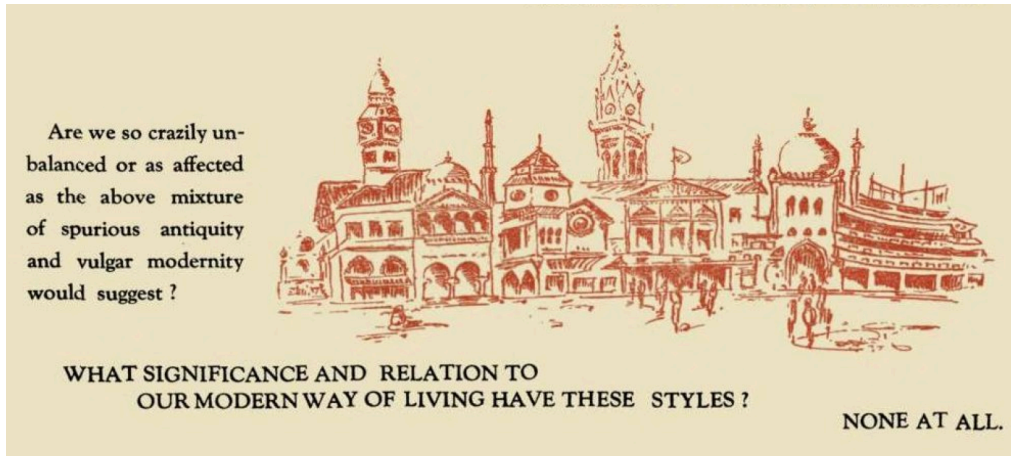


Figure 1.3. A skyline of eclectic façades mixing Mughal, Victorian, and other historical styles, captioned to ask what relation such “spurious antiquity and vulgar modernity” bears to a modern way of living. Source: “Architecture and You.” MARG 1, no. 1 (1946).

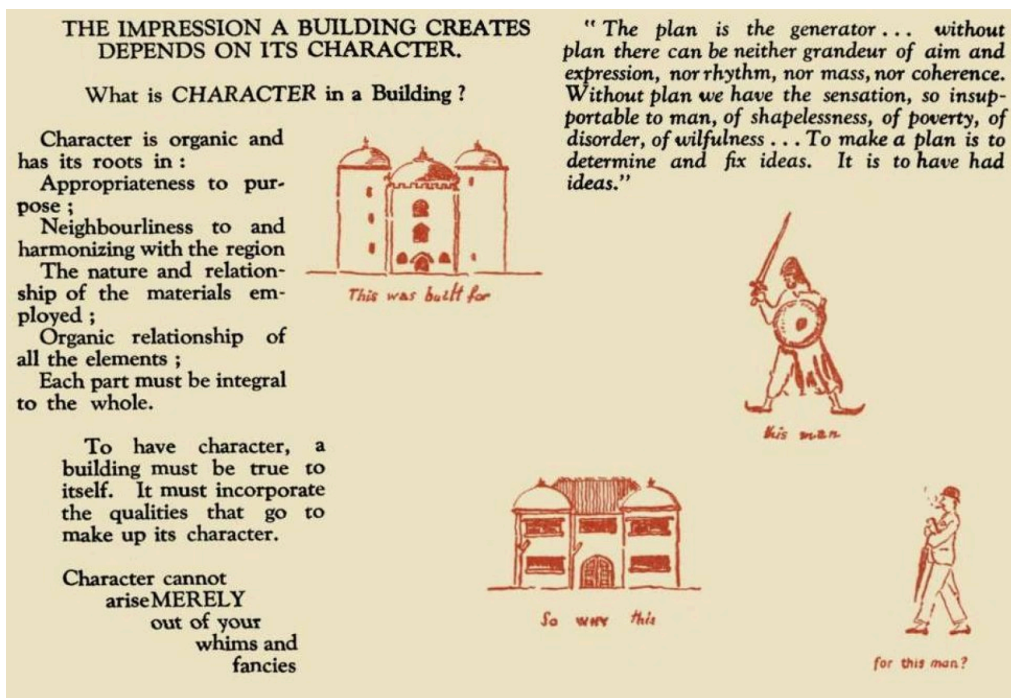


Figure 1.4. Diagram explaining that a building’s character derives from appropriateness to purpose, harmony with its region, and the honest relationship of materials and elements rather than borrowed ornament. Source: “Architecture and You.” MARG 1, no. 1 (1946).

combined reinforced concrete structures with historical ornament. Reproductions of monumental buildings from different parts of the world were paired with brief captions that directed the reader toward particular judgments, sometimes explanatory and sometimes openly satirical. Images were cropped, juxtaposed, and annotated in ways that transformed looking into a form of architectural education. The target was what the authors regarded as a confused and superficial hybridity, a tendency to embrace technological modernity while continuing to clothe buildings in borrowed historical forms. Such buildings appeared throughout the essay as evidence of a society caught between past and present, unable either to engage meaningfully with its architectural inheritance or to develop a coherent modern language of its own. Through such diagrams, readers were invited to identify relationships between form and function, to distinguish structural logic from ornament, and to recognize what the magazine presented as the difference between authentic architectural expression and mere stylistic imitation.

This led to a sharp rejection of the contemporary ideas of “National Characters in Architecture”, rejecting mere “grafting of an architectural expression”, and redirecting this term towards a more humanist expression of growth and human life. Accompanied by elaborate diagrams (see figs. 1.5–1.7), the essay argued that the national character developed from environmental, social, and technological conditions rather than stylistic inheritance. Climate, topography, and available materials shaped architectural form, while patterns of wealth distribution, industrial development, and social customs determined the needs that buildings were required to serve. Building technique, grounded in local craftsmanship, mechanical skill, and technological progress, provided the means through which these conditions found architectural expression. National character, for MARG, thus emerged from the realities of a society and its environment rather than from the imitation of historical styles.

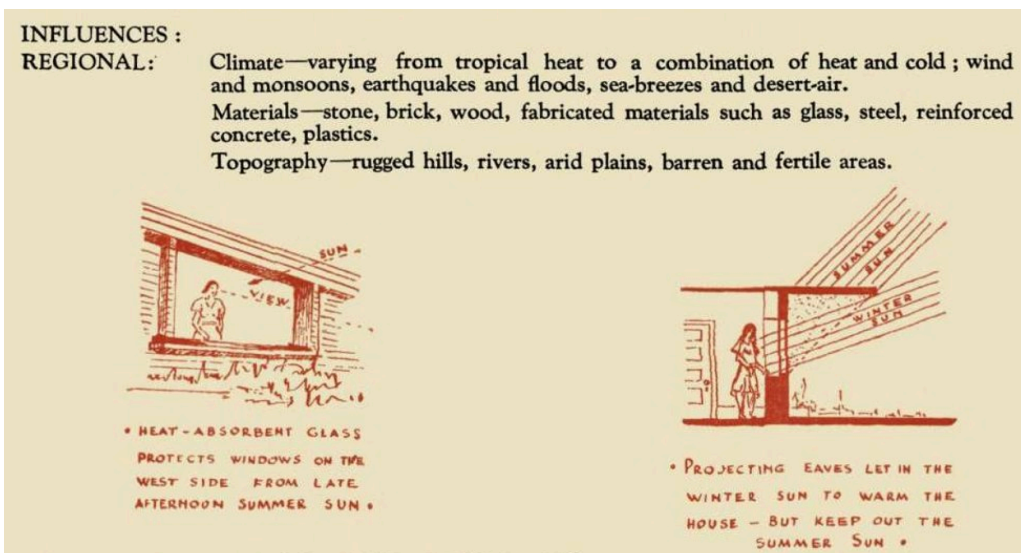


Figure 1.5. Diagram of the regional influences on architectural form—climate, materials, and topography—with sketches showing how heat-absorbent glass and projecting eaves moderate the sun. Source: “Architecture and You.” MARG 1, no. 1 (1946).

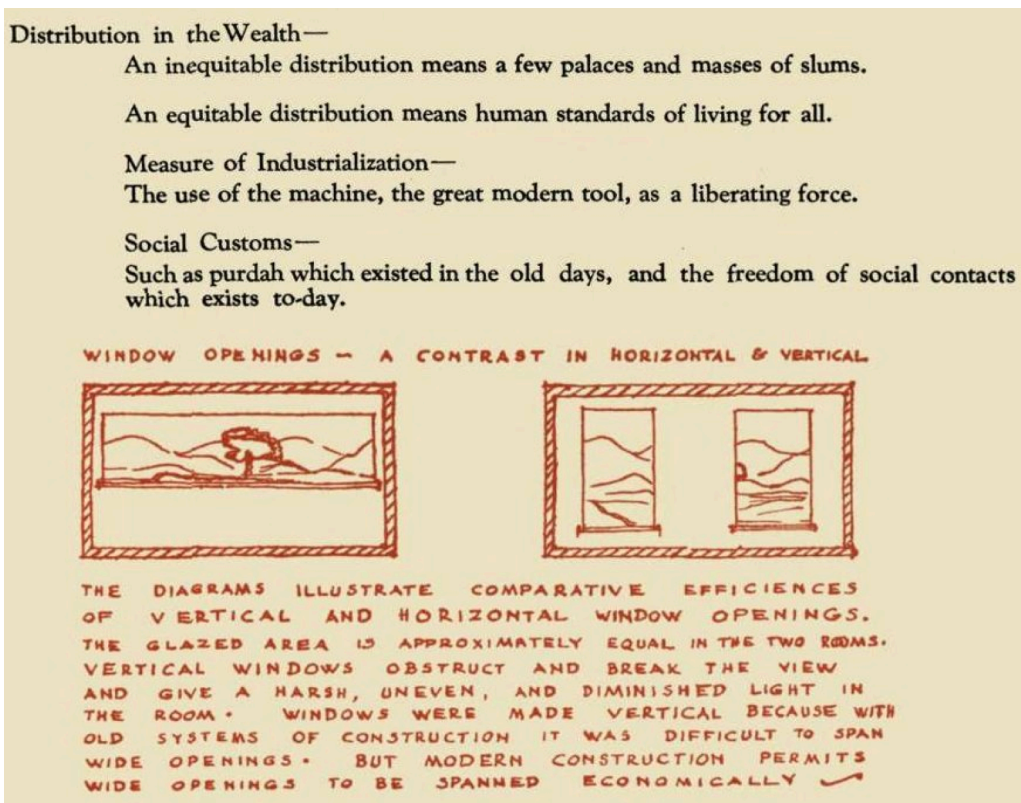


Figure 1.6. Diagram relating architectural form to social conditions—the distribution of wealth, the measure of industrialization, and social customs—and comparing the comparative efficiency of horizontal and vertical window openings. Source: “Architecture and You.” MARG 1, no. 1 (1946).

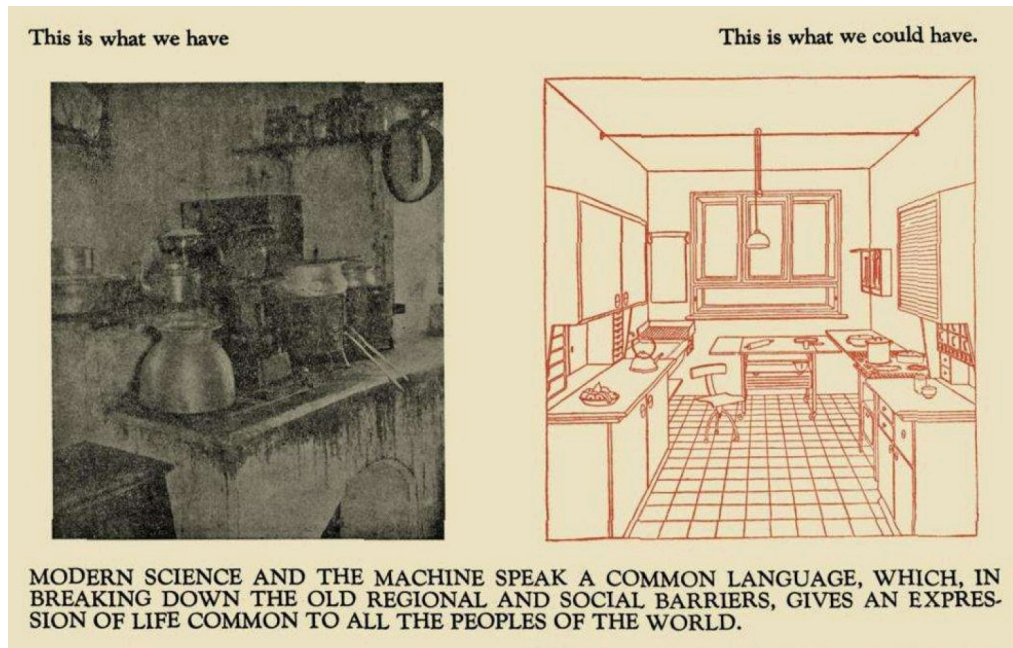


Figure 1.7. Paired images contrasting an existing cluttered kitchen with a rationalized modern one, illustrating the claim that modern science and the machine speak a common language across societies. Source: "Architecture and You." *MARG* 1, no. 1 (1946).

The essay's final move tied the technical argument to a political claim that modern building technology spoke a common language across national and regional boundaries, and India's architects had a chance to work within that language on their own terms rather than imitating either the West or a romanticized past.²¹ To this, the essay appended a quotation from Frank Lloyd Wright — who would become a recurring presence in *MARG*'s early volumes — to affect that:

"In this age of steel and steam the tools with which civilization's true record will be written are scientific thoughts made operative in iron and bronze and steel and in the plastic processes which characterise this age, all of which we call machines..."²²

²¹"Architecture and You," *MARG* 1, no. 1 (1946): 15.

²²"Architecture and You," *MARG* 1, no. 1 (1946): 15. Quotation of Frank Lloyd Wright embedded in the original.

The machine, in this reading, was a shared instrument, equally available to the Indian architect and the European one. The challenge, once again, was to mediate between particularities to pursue a universal way of life through the act of “synthesis”.

Organic Architecture and New India

From its second issue onward, *MARG* began publishing contributions by internationally renowned architects. Anand and his colleagues actively sought out these voices through correspondence with architectural offices across Europe and North America, inviting leading practitioners to contribute to the magazine. This was part of a deliberate editorial effort to situate *MARG*'s arguments within a broader international discourse and to show Indian readers that the concerns articulated in its pages were shared by some of the most influential architectural thinkers of the period. Their contributions lent authority to the magazine's position, reinforcing its arguments through international endorsement rather than editorial assertion alone.

The first of these contributions was Frank Lloyd Wright's essay "On the Right to Be One's Self" (vol. 1, no. 2, 1947). Wright was, in 1947, the most celebrated architect in the world, and his contribution was notable above all for where it began:

"DEMOCRACY and architecture, if both are organic, cannot be two separate things. Neither can democracy nor architecture be enforced, in any sense. Both must come from within, spontaneously. In architecture, as in democracy, this organic way is new to us only because the interior nature of man is still new to mankind, and democracy is still a search for organic form. Democracy is not so much a form — even were we to find it — or a policy — even were we to make it — as it is abiding faith in man's

indivisible right to himself as himself. The faith is the natural essence of manhood and is therefore the only safe foundation for creative building."²³

Wright argued that both democracy and architecture had to emerge from the particular conditions of the society that produced them. Constitutional systems borrowed from elsewhere could not succeed if they remained detached from local realities, just as architectural forms imported from foreign contexts could not adequately express the life of the communities they were intended to serve. This closely echoed the position that *MARG* had advanced in "Architecture and You." For Indian readers in 1947, as independence coincided with the work of the Constituent Assembly, Wright's reflections would have carried implications that extended beyond architecture alone. They spoke to broader questions of nation-building, cultural identity, and the search for forms of political and architectural expression rooted in Indian conditions. The parallel reinforced *MARG*'s conviction that the challenges of architecture and democracy were fundamentally connected. Wright developed the argument further:

"Organic life cannot grow from anything less than the independence of the individual as such — the independence of the individual, his freedom to be true to himself! [...] It is only natural or organic architecture, interior philosophy, and a living religion — not the institutionalized kind — it is these three alone, organic architecture, interior philosophy, and a living religion, that can make life again creative, make men as safe as is good for them, or ever make government tolerable. These three need each other at this crucial moment as never before."²⁴

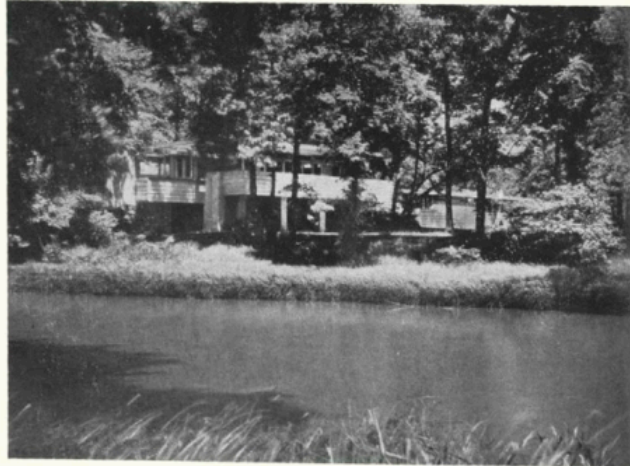
The passage arrived in India at a moment when questions of architecture, religion, and cultural identity were being intensely debated. The Constitution was still under discussion, the place of religious traditions within the newly independent nation remained unsettled, and

²³Frank Lloyd Wright, "On the Right to Be One's Self," *MARG* 1, no. 2 (1947): 20.

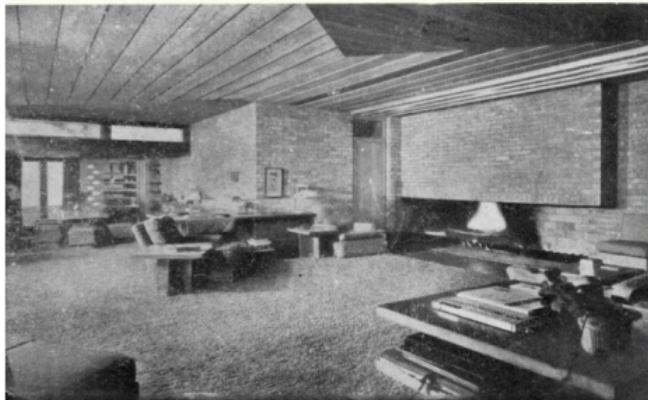
²⁴Wright, "On the Right to Be One's Self," 23-24.



KAUFMANN GUEST HOUSE
1939 : Concrete and stone over
stream.



LLOYD LEWIS HOUSE 1940:
On the Illinois prairie, in deep
woods. Living quarters entirely
above ground. Cypress and com-
mon brick.



Living room. No plaster in
Usonian houses.

Figure 1.8. Photographs of Frank Lloyd Wright's work—the Kaufmann (Fallingwater) guest house, the Lloyd Lewis house, and a Usonian interior—accompanying his essay on organic architecture. Source: Wright, Frank Lloyd. "On the Right to Be One's Self." MARG 1, no. 2 (1947).

intellectuals across the country were grappling with the challenge of defining a cultural life no longer shaped by colonial rule. Within this context, Wright's alignment of organic architecture, living religion, and philosophical inquiry carried significance that extended well beyond aesthetics. His suggestion that these spheres were fundamentally interconnected would have resonated with contemporary debates about the moral and cultural foundations of the nation itself. For many readers in 1947, such arguments would have appeared as much a contribution to discussions of national reconstruction as to architectural theory. The essay concluded with a formulation that gave the argument its sharpest edge:

"We will learn that our greatest lack as a civilization is the beauty of organic integrity and that Beauty itself is the highest and finest kind of morality. When Democracy builds it will build the organic way and every man's building — his chosen government no less — will be benign."²⁵

The essay introduced Indian readers to organic architecture as a broader cultural and social philosophy rather than a purely formal approach to design. More importantly, its inclusion strengthened a central editorial argument that would recur throughout the late 1940s. *MARG* consistently presented its own architectural programme as part of a wider international conversation, suggesting that the most significant currents of contemporary architectural thought were converging on principles it had championed from the outset.

Richard Neutra's brief essay "New India and Building" (vol. 1, no. 4, 1947), published in the fourth issue alongside Anand's editorial on design and patronage, provided a more technical counterpart to Wright's philosophical argument. He addressed Indian architects directly:

"One of India's major problems is not to borrow a routine indiscriminately from western countries, which have developed their architecture under

²⁵Wright, "On the Right to Be One's Self," 47.

very different socioeconomic circumstances and often vastly different climatic requirements. To fit a building design onto a site, into its innate conditions and venerable landscape, is the same profound challenge to the creative architect, whether it happens in the desert or in a clearing of the tropical jungle. To develop the basic concept and beauty on the spot, instead of 'importing' it together with a lot of associative material, arbitrarily foreign to time and place — is possible and necessary, although means and methods will have to be of this day and age to be successful."²⁶

Where Wright grounded his argument in democratic principles, Neutra approached the same question through climate, technology, and professional practice. He emphasized that architecture could not be separated from the environmental conditions in which it operated. Indian architects confronted challenges of heat, humidity, and monsoon rainfall that differed fundamentally from those of Europe or North America, making the direct transfer of foreign architectural solutions both impractical and undesirable. This concern with environmental adaptation was reflected in Neutra's correspondence with the magazine. His secretary noted that he had devoted considerable attention to questions of architecture and planning in tropical and subtropical regions, an interest that informed his contribution to *MARG*.²⁷

Taken together, the essays by Wright and Neutra reinforced the magazine's central claim that architecture must emerge from the realities of place rather than from the imitation of imported models. Approaching the issue from different perspectives, one philosophical and the other climatic, both architects arrived at conclusions that closely echoed the position *MARG* had advanced since its first issue. Their contributions provided international validation for an argument the magazine had already made its own.

²⁶Richard J. Neutra, "New India and Building," *MARG* 1, no. 4 (1947): 20.

²⁷Neutra, "New India and Building," 21.

A Courtship with *Corbu*.

Le Corbusier had been a point of reference in *MARG* from its early issues, but his direct contribution came in the fourth issue of volume two (vol. 2, no. 4, 1948). That issue devoted substantial space to his work, opening with an unsigned profile and following it with an essay he had written for the magazine himself. The profile was making a specific case Le Corbusier, not primarily a formal innovator but a theorist of the total environment:

"He conceives architecture as the environment of a society's complete existence, and as such it may be consistently harmonious and efficient. For instance, a man's environment while working in a factory should not be in conflict with that of his living within his home. The environment must meet all his essential needs and requirements. So that a city does not have to be, in fact must not be, a monstrous setting, devoid of trees, flowers, lawns and open spaces. He envisages a world in which ugliness, incongruity and spuriousness are banished."²⁸

The profile presented Le Corbusier as a thinker who had worked out, more systematically than almost anyone else, how the design of individual buildings related to the design of cities, and how both related to the conditions of daily life. He had, as the profile noted, "developed a philosophy of architecture," grounded in first principles and his interest in town planning was a "logical outcome" of his conception of how buildings functioned. The magazine was presenting its readers with the Le Corbusier of *Vers une Architecture* and the Radiant City, the author who had argued, with a polemical force that matched Anand's own, that modern cities were failing their inhabitants and that architecture had both the technical means and the civic obligation to correct this. His essays were accompanied by photographs (see figs. 1.9-1.11) of the architect

²⁸"Le Corbusier," *MARG* 2, no. 4 (1948): 11.

YESTERDAY TODAY AND TOMORROW

Le Corbusier

*Exhibition of oriental art organised by Le Corbusier
in Paris in May 1940.*

*Exposition de l'art oriental organisée par Le
Corbusier à Paris, en Mai 1940.*



Figure 1.9. Title page of Le Corbusier's essay, bearing his signature and a photograph from the exhibition of oriental art he organized in Paris in May 1940. Source: Le Corbusier. "Yesterday Today and Tomorrow." *MARG* 2, no. 4 (1948).

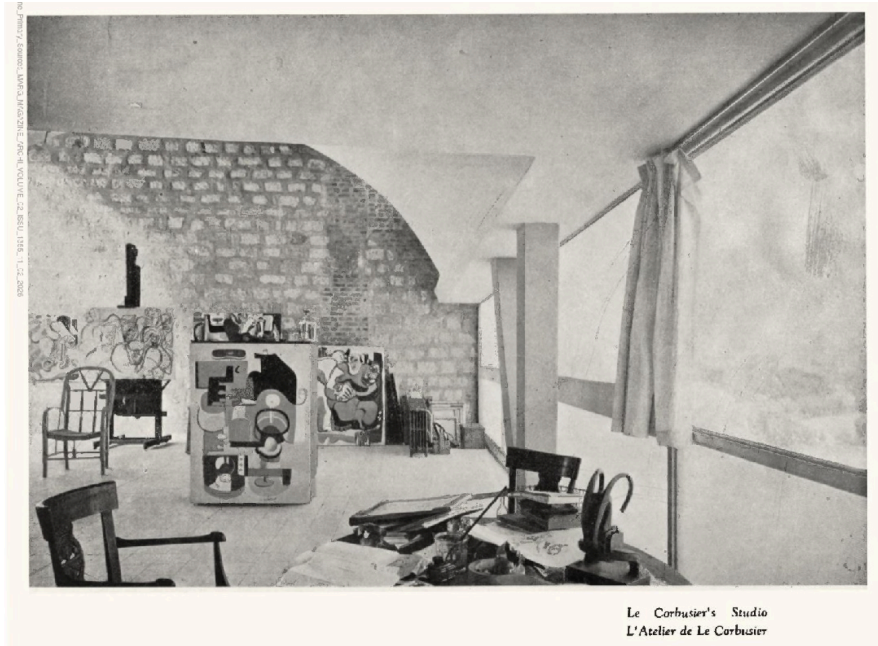


Figure 1.10. Photograph of Le Corbusier's studio (*L'Atelier de Le Corbusier*), showing his paintings and working environment. Source: Le Corbusier. "Yesterday Today and Tomorrow." *MARG* 2, no. 4 (1948).

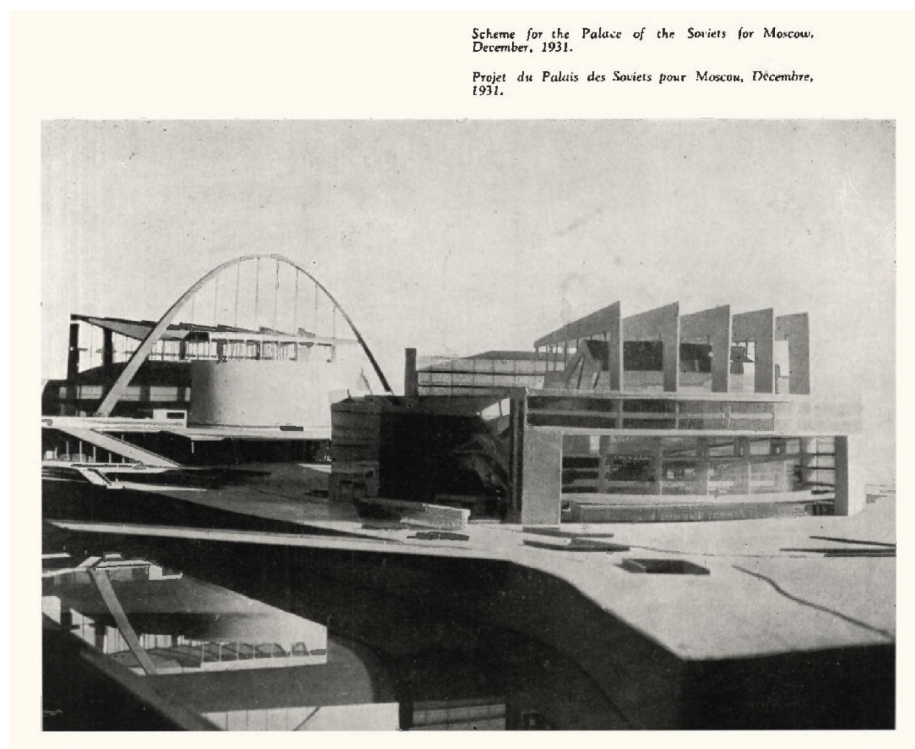


Figure 1.11. Le Corbusier's competition scheme for the Palace of the Soviets, Moscow (1931), reproduced as an example of the scale and ambition of his architectural vision. Source: Le Corbusier. "Yesterday Today and Tomorrow." *MARG* 2, no. 4 (1948).

himself, views of his studio, and reproductions of major projects, including the Plan Obus for Algiers and the Palace of the Soviets competition proposal, and other urban and institutional works in Africa. Together, these images constructed a carefully curated portrait of Le Corbusier as both thinker and practitioner. The photographs offered readers a visual introduction to the architect and his working environment, while the reproduced projects demonstrated the scale and ambition of his architectural vision.

Le Corbusier's own essay, "Yesterday Today and Tomorrow" (vol. 2, no. 4, 1948), was addressed directly to India and offered a reading of India's historical position that was more nuanced than much Western architectural writing of the period assumed:

"The Indians have passed without harm through the black days of the first era of mechanisation. It suddenly offers itself to a people vast in number, and profound in thought, at a moment when, their autonomy restored, they have to formulate these aims. India prepares to receive mechanisation when the harvest is ripe. Almost changeless and possessor of fundamental truths, the roots of India run deep in time."²⁹

The "first era of mechanisation" to which Le Corbusier referred was the nineteenth-century industrial revolution across Europe, which had produced overcrowded cities and poor living conditions. India, by contrast, had been incorporated into the colonial economy in ways that limited autonomous industrial development and subordinated it to British interests. Writing in 1948, at the outset of independence, Le Corbusier suggested that since the country was entering industrial modernity later, it could draw lessons from the European experience and pursue development with greater attention to social well-being, planning, and collective welfare. He developed the architectural implications:

²⁹Le Corbusier, "Yesterday Today and Tomorrow," MARG 2, no. 4 (1948): 12.

"Whereas until now, through the operation of an inevitable pragmatism, we have proceeded by fragmentary tasks and individualised efforts, mobilising, under the implacable pressure of economies, a multitude of random activities, the second era of mechanisation proposes, on the contrary, the conduct of enterprise by a thoroughness born of meditation, co-ordination, order. Order will reign, emanating from man and his surroundings — the laws of life, nature and the cosmos. Sun, climate, materials and the aim itself which is: to fulfil the pattern of life."³⁰

The contrast was between the unplanned industrialization of the nineteenth century, driven by market forces and fragmented private interests, and the possibility of a more coordinated form of development directed toward collective social goals. Le Corbusier envisioned industrialization as a process that could be guided through planning rather than left to economic pressures alone. His argument reflected a broader intellectual climate of the 1940s, shaped by the experience of wartime planning and by a widespread belief among architects, planners, and policymakers that the state could play a central role in directing economic development, managing urban growth, and improving social welfare. Le Corbusier gave it its architectural conclusion:

"Materials will be indisputably selected from the range of the most efficacious. Steel and cement correctly welded to the stone and clay of the regions. The theorems which will govern their use are universal, conditioning specific forms. But the ethic and aesthetic of this day and this race and this land and this civilisation, will assemble their forms in a characteristic relationship, thus evoking a powerful and eloquent spiritual system within the modern built domain."³¹

³⁰Le Corbusier, "Yesterday Today and Tomorrow," 14.

For Le Corbusier, the principles underlying modern construction were universal. Reinforced concrete and structural steel obeyed the same physical laws regardless of location. Yet the architectural forms produced from those materials could not be universal, because they emerged from distinct cultural traditions, environmental conditions, and ways of life. A modern building in India should therefore be Indian not through the application of historical motifs, but through its response to climate, landscape, and social practice. This was a position *MARG* had consistently advanced since its first issue, and Le Corbusier's contribution lent it the authority of one of the most influential architects of the period.

His essay concluded with a call to action, declaring that a global transformation was underway and that architects, planners, engineers, and cultural creators would be responsible for shaping its future. By 1948, Le Corbusier was already in communication with Jawaharlal Nehru's government regarding potential commissions in India. His appearance in *MARG* therefore represented more than an editorial achievement. It signaled a growing convergence between international architectural discourse and the developmental ambitions of the newly independent Indian state, a convergence that would soon find its most visible expression in the planning and construction of Chandigarh.

Conclusion

Between October 1946 and the end of 1951, *MARG* published a sustained and coherent argument about architecture, planning, and design. Across editorials, essays, visual sequences, and contributions from architects working in different parts of the world, the magazine returned repeatedly to a shared set of concerns. It argued that good architecture emerged from close

engagement with climatic, material, and social conditions. It encouraged city planning that responded to the needs of communities and depended upon an informed public capable of participating in civic life. It emphasized the importance of cultural institutions in reconnecting designers with traditions of making that had been weakened under colonial rule. Throughout these discussions, the magazine treated the improvement of architecture and the development of the people who commissioned, inhabited, and evaluated it as interconnected processes.

The methods through which *MARG* advanced these ideas were closely aligned with the arguments themselves. Architectural drawings and technical diagrams appeared alongside photographs and visual essays, allowing readers to encounter architecture through images as well as text. Wright, Neutra, and Le Corbusier appeared in the same pages as Anand's editorials, creating conversations across national and disciplinary boundaries. Visual comparisons, including the automobile and the palanquin or contrasting images of Indian kitchens, communicated complex ideas through observation and comparison.

The decision to address a lay professional readership carried important political implications. The repeated use of "you" positioned readers as participants in the built environment and encouraged them to develop informed opinions about the spaces in which they lived. Anand believed that architectural reform depended upon the formation of public opinion. Such a public required access to ideas that often circulated only within professional circles. *MARG* translated architectural debates into language that educated non-specialists could engage with and evaluate. The magazine's price, its extensive illustrations, its combination of historical essays and contemporary commentary, and its direct mode of address all reflected this commitment. The publication sought to shape the conditions under which architecture was discussed, commissioned, and judged. Issue by issue, it created the critical conversation that Anand had

found missing when he returned to India from London in 1945. It provided a forum through which architecture, planning, design, and public culture could be discussed as matters of collective concern.

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Chapter Two

Mediating the Modern Paradigm and Its Citizens

In the years immediately following independence, the magazine served as a forum for the simultaneous cultivation and debate of the modern nation and the modern citizen, presenting them as mutually constitutive elements of India's post-independence future. Across editorials and essays on education, aesthetics, museums, architecture, and design, *MARG* developed a sustained argument that democracy depended not only on political structures but also on cultural literacy. The magazine repeatedly suggested that citizens had to learn how to see, how to evaluate, and how to participate in the making of their environment. This chapter examines such themes in *MARG* as discussed between 1947 and 1954 where Modernity was a sensibility that had to be cultivated in its subjects.

In "Education through Art" (*MARG* 1, no. 3, 1947), Mulk Raj Anand articulated what would become one of the publication's central concerns, namely the relationship between individual development and collective life. Written in the aftermath of two world wars and during a period of profound political transition, the editorial reflected on the conditions of the modern world and the responsibilities of citizenship within it. Anand understood the crisis of modernity as a consequence of uneven development, in which scientific and technological advances had outpaced the cultivation of the human capacities necessary for meaningful participation in a rapidly changing society. Technological advances had transformed everyday life, yet educational and cultural institutions had not kept pace, leaving individuals ill-equipped to understand, navigate, and contribute to the social worlds they had helped create.

Anand began with a larger philosophical question concerning the relationship between the individual and society:

"The basic factor in all civilizations, simple as well as complex, has been man, the individual in his relationship with the community, a relationship which is always changing. Now, though he still has to adjust himself to nature from which he gets sustenance, man also has to adapt himself to all those highly skilled processes which he has evolved to produce an abundance of goods to increase his happiness and ease. Now, throughout the ages, the education of the young has been encouraged, so that the growing members of the human family may learn to adapt themselves to society, so that they may be able to inherit the world of their forefathers, develop it and live happily in it. Education, therefore, is a basic institution of society. And the aims and ideals of the educational system which it maintains affect the structure of that system and the context of the education which it gives to its citizens."³²

Education was framed as the mechanism through which individuals learned to inhabit a collective world. Anand's concern was not simply the acquisition of knowledge. He was interested in the formation of citizens capable of negotiating the increasingly complex relationship between personal freedom and social responsibility. This concern would later reappear in *MARG*'s discussions of architecture, museums, urban planning, and design. Long before the magazine spoke about buildings, it had already established that the central question of modernity was how individuals learned to participate in collective life.

The editorial proceeded by identifying what Anand regarded as the central contradiction of twentieth-century civilization. Scientific and technological achievements had transformed human existence, yet violence, nationalism, and social fragmentation continued to dominate political life. The devastation of two world wars demonstrated that material progress alone could not guarantee social progress.

"But the holocaust of 1914–18 dashed all these hopes, because it revealed grave defects in commercial civilization and in the individuals who composed it. The long week-end between the two world wars and the intense fratricide which characterized the second carnage, showed that the cancer of self-interest, the philosophy of selfishness, of 'might is

³²Mulk Raj Anand, "Education through Art," *MARG* 1, no. 3 (1947): 16–22.

right' has spread very deep in the commercial, practical and political life of the civilized world. And those among the survivors who are decent, look on helplessly at the spectacle of a world where the most primitive impulses of hate and fear have survived side by side with the enormous scientific and mechanical progress we have made."³³

For Anand, the answer to this crisis could not be found through technical expertise alone. The problem was ultimately cultural and ethical. Human beings had developed machines faster than they had developed themselves. Consequently, education acquired a transformative role. It became responsible for cultivating the emotional and intellectual capacities necessary for democratic life.

The editorial's most striking intervention emerged in its conception of freedom. Anand rejected narrow understandings of education based on discipline, memorization, or vocational training. Instead, he argued that the ultimate purpose of education was the liberation of the mind.

"Every educationist, who has given any deep thought to the problems of the twentieth century, knows that the ideal of education is freedom: freedom from fear, freedom from hatred and perversion, that is to say, the freedom which helps the mind to be free. If this is true, then it is clear that text books and grammar are not enough, but that education has to be construed in terms of the methods by which the creative urges, or the potential dynamics in every child, are recognized and through which these creative urges are allowed to express themselves. Real education must start by asking: What is a child? What is its nature? What does it want to do? And how can it adjust itself to the home, the town, the country and world, and the universe, and be an individual in the world community?"³⁴

What is striking about this formulation is the scale at which Anand framed the problem. The movement of the argument begins with the child and extends outward to the world community, linking individual development to broader questions of social belonging and democratic participation. Education served as the bridge between these realms, connecting the formation of the self to the responsibilities of collective life. Freedom, in *MARG*'s conception, emerged through the successful integration of personal growth and social consciousness.

³³Anand, "Education through Art," 17.

³⁴Anand, "Education through Art," 18.

Within this framework, art occupied a central place. Anand presented the arts as essential instruments of education through which individuals learned to perceive, interpret, and engage with the world around them. Aesthetic experience cultivated habits of observation, reflection, and judgment that extended beyond the sphere of culture. The development of aesthetic sensibility and the development of citizenship formed part of the same educational process, each contributing to the creation of thoughtful and socially engaged individuals.

"And the best way to do things, the activity which seems to come naturally to children, has been found to be drawing or modelling or craft work. Therefore, the most intelligent educationists in the world have been suggesting the putting of art on the map in the smallest classrooms and in the humblest schools. The practice of arts and crafts in a school can act as a liberating force and as an aid to the sensibility. The result will be a more balanced outlook in every citizen and a higher level of good taste in the community, while those who have great inventive talents will be singled out for the special service of society."³⁵

The language of sensibility, balance, and good taste would become a recurring feature of *MARG*'s discourse over the following decade, but in this editorial it appeared in a particularly revealing configuration through Anand's explicit linkage of aesthetic education to the formation of citizenship. Art occupied a foundational place within this scheme because it cultivated perception, which in turn informed judgment and thereby enabled meaningful participation in collective life. This chain of associations anticipated the magazine's later efforts to educate readers about architecture, design, and the built environment, all of which rested on the conviction that the formation of the citizen depended upon the cultivation of vision, discernment, and understanding.

The editorial concluded by developing this relationship between perception and thought in greater depth. Anand described art as a means of disciplining the senses, refining the powers of observation, and cultivating the capacity to recognize relationships across apparently

³⁵Anand, "Education through Art," 20.

disconnected spheres of experience. Aesthetic education thus fostered habits of attention and interpretation that extended beyond the realm of culture into the wider social world, equipping individuals to discern patterns, comprehend complex relationships, and situate themselves within the larger structures and processes that shaped collective life.

Having established the importance of aesthetic education in 1947, the magazine began to explore the institutions through which such education could be extended into public life. Architecture, museums, exhibitions, and visual culture would become the principal vehicles through which this broader educational mission was pursued.

Museums, Art, and Aesthetic Perception

Questions of education remained central to *MARG* throughout the late 1940s, though the focus gradually expanded beyond the classroom. "Education through Art" (*MARG* 1, no. 3, 1947) had argued that democratic life depended upon the cultivation of observation, judgment, concentration, and sensibility. During the following years, the magazine turned its attention to the institutions through which these capacities might be sustained in public life. Museums occupied a particularly important position within this discussion. They appeared repeatedly in *MARG* as spaces where historical knowledge, aesthetic experience, and civic education converged.

Mulk Raj Anand's editorial "Museums, Junk Shops or Living Culture Centres?" (*MARG* 2, no. 4, 1948) approached the museum as a social institution deeply implicated in the cultural future of independent India. The essay emerged at a moment when the nation was attempting to define its relationship to a vast historical inheritance while also confronting the demands of

industrialization, scientific development, and democratic governance. Anand located the museum within this broader process of transition.

"It would seem therefore, that the Museum is the place where a number of social forces express themselves and through which men are able to extend the range of knowledge necessary to enrich their lives and to find communion with other people. Studying ancient modes of production of goods such as food, textiles, houses, and implements used in making all these goods, men can measure, with almost scientific accuracy, the degree of achievement of various ages. The decorative impulses of succeeding generations afford the tests of the integral progress man has so far made in qualitative living. And by comparing and contrasting things made in different parts of the world the narrow parochial frontiers are demolished. This leads to a new kind of intellectual attitude, where reason and accurate judgment succeed in conquering the ancient worlds of magic through the new magic of science."³⁶

The museum entered Anand's argument as a place of comparison. Objects from different periods, regions, and cultures could be brought into relation with one another. Historical understanding emerged through this process of comparison. Houses, tools, textiles, works of art, and everyday artefacts formed part of a continuous history of human making. Visitors encountered these objects as evidence of labour, invention, and social organization. The museum offered a framework through which citizens could situate themselves within larger historical narratives and develop a broader awareness of cultural life beyond local or regional boundaries.

Anand's concern with comparison was closely tied to the circumstances of post-independence India. The country stood at a moment of historical transition. Political independence had been achieved, yet the cultural and intellectual forms through which a modern society might understand itself remained under construction. The museum acquired significance because it could provide a setting in which historical inheritance and contemporary aspirations could be examined together.

³⁶Mulk Raj Anand, "Museums, Junk Shops or Living Culture Centres?," MARG 2, no. 4 (1948): 4–5.

This concern appeared explicitly in Anand's discussion of India's encounter with modernity.

"The shock of Western invasion has ended the continuity of one of the oldest civilisations and brought the need for a synthesis between the ancient world built on agriculture and handicrafts and the impulses of the new industrial society. There is the greatest need in this changing India of ours for integrating the heritage of past culture with the benefits of the new enlightenment heralded by science. And the culture centre or museum, as a laboratory where the synthesis may be freely achieved, is not, therefore, a mere enthusiast's ideal, but an actual vital necessity for every village, town and city."³⁷

The language of synthesis recurred throughout *MARG* during these years. Anand described a society attempting to reconcile inherited cultural traditions with new forms of economic and technological development. The museum appeared as one of the institutions through which this work could occur. Historical objects carried evidence of earlier ways of life. Contemporary viewers approached them from within a rapidly changing social world. The encounter connected past and present within a shared field of inquiry.

The editorial also linked museums directly to the goals of democratic education. Anand reproduced educational objectives proposed by G. H. Westcott, emphasizing independent thought, critical inquiry, emotional discipline, and social responsibility. These aims closely resembled those outlined a year earlier in "Education through Art." The museum contributed to this educational project by encouraging observation, comparison, and interpretation. Knowledge emerged through active engagement with objects and historical evidence. Citizens learned by looking, questioning, and establishing relationships between things.

Anand returned to this idea near the conclusion of the essay when he argued that museums should encompass the full range of human activity.

³⁷Anand, "Museums, Junk Shops or Living Culture Centres?," 6–7.

"Nothing which concerns life, whether implements with which to grow food, armour, costume, furniture, musical instruments, houses or fine art, seem to be outside the average citizen and has to be provided in a Museum."³⁸

This expansive understanding of the museum reveals much about *MARG*'s conception of culture. The magazine understood furniture, tools, houses, crafts, and works of fine art as part of a continuous field of human creativity and material production. The museum emerged as a space in which these different forms could be brought into relation with one another, allowing visitors to understand aesthetic objects within broader historical and social contexts. In this formulation, the museum served as an educational institution that cultivated aesthetic awareness while fostering a deeper understanding of the cultural forces that shaped everyday life.

The theoretical implications of this position were developed further in French Indologist Jeannine Auboyer's editorial "The Problems of Aesthetics" (*MARG* 3, no. 2, 1949). Auboyer addressed the intellectual foundations of aesthetic experience, beginning with a reflection on the enduring significance of artistic production across different cultures and historical periods.

"These masterpieces compose, with so many others, the true artistic patrimony of man and are a faithful reflection of his feelings and his thoughts. Since it is very true that this patrimony is homogeneous, no matter the characteristics or the epoch; the diversity of form and expression enriches and accentuates the originality of each country. Thinking humanity constitutes a great mass of which the hopes, fears, despairs, horrors, and the beauties are strangely permanent, and are as well sustained over thousands of years as in the simultaneity of one epoch over the entire globe."³⁹

Auboyer situated art within a shared human inheritance. Cultural traditions differed in language, form, and historical circumstance, yet artistic production remained connected through recurring concerns, emotions, and aspirations, resonating strongly with *MARG*'s international approach to Indian culture as part of a wider history of intellectual exchange.

³⁸Anand, "Museums, Junk Shops or Living Culture Centres?," 8.

³⁹Jeannine Auboyer, "The Problems of Aesthetics," *MARG* 3, no. 2 (1949): 4.

The essay also developed a more rigorous account of aesthetic judgment. Auboyer's discussion moved beyond subject matter and iconography toward questions of form, material, and artistic process.

"The interest that the historian of art and the aesthete bring to these manifestations is founded not only upon psychology, or upon the philosophy they reveal, but also upon the form that clothed the thought of the artist, upon the choice of material that he has made, the decoration, the allegory or symbol-as these have been carefully selected or premeditated to translate the feelings and the hidden designs of the sculptor or painter. There is no need of a sumptuous material for this; but a perfect mastery of the medium which serves as an intermediary is necessary. And above all, the artist must possess a particular quality of sensibility that is transparent in his work."⁴⁰

Artistic understanding required attentiveness to the processes through which meaning was given form. Materials, techniques, symbols, and compositional decisions became essential components of aesthetic experience. Looking was therefore a learned activity. Viewers had to acquire the capacity to recognize how form itself generated meaning.

This concern reached its most sophisticated expression in Auboyer's discussion of the Indian concept of *rupa*.

"It is thus, by her comments upon the science of form (*rupa*), that India has taken her position in the argument which opposes objective art to subjective art. Now one knows, following this comment, that *rupa* is not the natural aspect of the object, but essentially the aspect created; that which the artist represents is not the object 'seen' but the object 'known': he does not produce a servile copy of nature but works after a mental prototype that is an ideal selection in a series of real objects of a specific category. The object then is not dealt with for its own sake nor after nature: but it is dowered with all the evocative potential that can be contained in its category."⁴¹

The distinction between the object seen and the object known carried important implications for *MARG*'s broader pedagogical project. The magazine treated perception as an active intellectual process shaped by memory, knowledge, association, and interpretation.

⁴⁰Auboyer, "The Problems of Aesthetics," 5.

⁴¹Auboyer, "The Problems of Aesthetics," 6.

Artistic form brought these processes into visible expression. Understanding a work of art therefore involved engaging with the ideas, relationships, and cultural meanings embedded within its formal structure.

Auboyer developed this argument through her discussion of Ajanta painting and Indian aesthetic theory. She drew attention to visual systems organized around movement through space, multiple viewpoints, symbolic associations, and layered meanings. Her analysis situated Indian artistic traditions within contemporary debates on perception, representation, and modern artistic practice. Indian art emerged as a dynamic intellectual resource whose formal and conceptual innovations continued to offer insights for the present.

By 1954 these concerns resurfaced in a new context. Hermann Goetz's editorial "Problems of Art Display" (*MARG* 7, no. 2, 1954) returned to the museum and reconsidered its cultural role. Writing several years after Anand's editorial, Goetz continued to emphasize the museum's educational function. His attention focused on the relationship between works of art and the publics who encountered them.

"The value of all cultural contacts lies not only in the handling of factual information, it lies much more in the indirect inspiration from impressions understood or not understood, but always appealing to congenial ideas or sentiments, and thus arousing new visions, new ideals, new questions. This task of the museum may be compared to that of music or theatre: the creation of an atmosphere of beauty, intellectual and emotional wealth and elasticity, perhaps chaotic itself, but the womb of new visions and ideas, of life balance and creative inspiration."⁴²

Goetz described the museum as an environment capable of generating intellectual and emotional responses that exceeded the transmission of information. Cultural experience stimulated curiosity, reflection, and imagination. Visitors encountered works of art through

⁴²Hermann Goetz, "Problems of Art Display," *MARG* 7, no. 2 (1954): 5.

intuition as well as analysis. Knowledge remained important, yet aesthetic experience also involved forms of understanding that could not be reduced to factual explanation alone.

A similar concern appeared in Hamed Said's editorial "On Seeing a Natural Object" (*MARG* 7, no. 4, 1954). An Egyptian artist and educator, Said developed a philosophy of art that sought to reconnect modern society with nature through aesthetic education and attentive observation. His intellectual formation was shaped in part by his years in London, where he studied with the Purist painter Amédée Ozenfant during the late 1930s, placing him within many of the same international artistic and intellectual networks that informed Mulk Raj Anand's own cosmopolitan outlook.⁴³ The essay addressed perception directly and explored the cultural assumptions that shape acts of looking.

"Seeing the achievements of other people and other periods is nothing short of a real adventure because we each have our own patterns of seeing, thinking and feeling and we are bound each to take his own individual pattern as a measuring rod for all. Most of the misunderstandings between different cultures have their roots in this phenomenon, namely of considering one's own habitual patterns as absolute."⁴⁴

Said treated perception as a historically conditioned activity. Individuals approached the world through inherited habits of thought and feeling. Encounters with unfamiliar cultures therefore demanded self-awareness as well as curiosity. Looking involved the difficult task of recognizing the limits of one's own assumptions.

The essay concluded by calling for forms of synthesis and integration that echoed themes present throughout *MARG* since the late 1940s.

"At the present time, a sense of wholeness is lacking. The human soul is scattered and it is difficult to make it complete. The activities of the mind and of the spirit are divided; even the arts are jealous of one another. The inevitable result is a predominating thinness

⁴³"Hamed Said," *Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art*, accessed June 8, 2026, <https://mathaf.org.qa/en/encyclopedia/artists-biographies/hamed-said/>.

⁴⁴Hamed Said, "On Seeing a Natural Object," *MARG* 7, no. 4 (1954): 2.

in the productions of our age. We would hope for a tendency towards synthesis and integration in place of the prevailing divisions and separations."⁴⁵

The desire for synthesis connected many of the texts discussed in this chapter. Anand sought a synthesis between historical inheritance and modern scientific culture. Auboyer explored relationships between artistic traditions separated by geography and time. Goetz described museums as environments capable of generating new visions through cultural encounters. Said argued for forms of perception capable of moving beyond inherited limitations.

Together these essays reveal the emergence of a broader pedagogical project within *MARG*. Education extended beyond schools into museums, exhibitions, publications, and cultural institutions. Art became a means through which readers could learn to observe, compare, interpret, and judge. Aesthetic perception occupied a central position within this project because it trained the faculties through which individuals understood both culture and society. By the early 1950s, *MARG* had begun to imagine a public educated through acts of looking. The discussions of architecture that followed would build directly upon this foundation.

Architecture, Painting, and Learning to See

By the beginning of the 1950s, *MARG* had developed a substantial body of writing on education, museums, and aesthetics. These discussions shared a common concern with perception. Readers were encouraged to observe carefully, compare critically, and understand the relationships that connected cultural forms across time and place. Architecture entered this conversation through the same framework. The magazine approached buildings as visual and intellectual forms that demanded interpretation. Understanding architecture required habits of observation similar to those cultivated through the study of art.

⁴⁵Said, "On Seeing a Natural Object," 10–11.

This concern became increasingly visible in the years between 1949 and 1954. The discussion was framed through contributions from an international group of architects, critics, and historians. These included Herbert Read, one of the foremost interpreters of modern art in Britain, the German-born architect Eric Mendelsohn, the architectural historian John Summerson, and the Swedish architect and critic Erik Thelaus. Together, their essays explored the relationship between architecture and modern painting, moving beyond questions of style and aesthetics. They addressed broader transformations in perception that had reshaped artistic practice during the twentieth century. Modern architecture appeared within these essays as part of a larger cultural shift in how space, form, and experience were understood.

Herbert Read's editorial "The Changing Conceptions of Art" (*MARG* 3, no. 4, 1949) provided one of the earliest formulations of this argument. Read traced the emergence of modern painting through the development of Cubism and identified a fundamental change in the artist's relationship to reality. The significance of Cubism lay less in its visual appearance than in its method. The movement challenged inherited assumptions about representation and proposed new ways of organizing visual experience. Read wrote:

"About 1907 Picasso painted his first cubist picture, and a new movement was born. This soon split into two, as movements mostly do, and cubism became either analytical or synthetic. Analytical cubism was a continuation of the scientific attitude in art—it accepted a given reality which is called Nature, and it analysed this pre-determined subject-matter. Its object was still to tell us something about nature, if only something of geometrical or structural interest. But Juan Gris, who was responsible for the break-away known as synthetic cubism proposed that a painting should begin with an aesthetic reality, that is to say, with an abstract pattern designed within the two-dimensional space of the picture-frame, and that representational elements should only be introduced to fill in this framework. The basis of the painting, that is to say, was no longer to be naturalistic, but conceptual, mathematical, architectural."⁴⁶

⁴⁶Herbert Read, "The Changing Conceptions of Art," *MARG* 3, no. 4 (1949): 7–8.

Read's discussion echoed themes already present in Auboyer's account of *rupa*. In both essays, artistic form emerged through selection, interpretation, and construction and visual representation depended upon knowledge as much as observation. The artist's task involved organizing the world into coherent relationships, giving visible form to underlying structures of thought. Looking, in turn, became an active process of recognition and interpretation through which those relationships could be perceived and understood. By describing modern painting as conceptual, mathematical, and architectural, he suggested that architecture and painting had begun to share common concerns, where both disciplines explored questions of structure, spatial organization, and formal relationships.

These concerns resurfaced in Eric Mendelsohn's essay "The Great Adventure" (*MARG* 4, no. 3, 1950). Addressing an audience of students and educators, Mendelsohn situated architecture within a rapidly changing world. His discussion moved between education, history, and architectural practice, linking all three through the problem of perception:

"It is therefore up to the teachers to educate their students to the status of their age; make them welcome it; make them feel its historic portents; make them proud of their destiny to be the representatives of a new genesis. Destiny, however, has an all-comprising meaning. Thus, they must be educated to realize the whole story, all the basic facts in all their consequences. And as to details, they must stand second to their general significance, their human interrelation. Make them understand the probable reactions of the present in order to visualize the problems of the future which is theirs."⁴⁷

Mendelsohn presented the postwar era as a moment of "genesis," a period in which new social, political, and cultural forms were coming into being and in which the younger generation would play a formative role. The task of education was therefore to develop an understanding of how the present had emerged and where it might lead. Knowledge acquired value through its capacity to illuminate larger processes and future possibilities. Students were encouraged to see

⁴⁷Eric Mendelsohn, "The Great Adventure," *MARG* 4, no. 3 (1950): 28–29.

themselves as participants in history, capable of understanding the forces shaping their world and contributing to its ongoing reconstruction.

Architecture occupied a privileged position within this framework because it provided visible evidence of these relationships. Later in the essay, Mendelsohn described architecture as one of the clearest records of historical change:

"Architecture, in its creative expression, is the field of human endeavour that conveys most visibly the change of material and structural possibilities, the change of political, economic and social conditions. In short, the history of architecture is the story of man's changing civilizations."⁴⁸

Buildings appeared here as cultural documents that registered transformations in technology, social organization, political structures, and collective values. Architecture provided a means of reading history through material form. The interpretation of a building therefore depended upon an understanding of the wider historical forces that informed its creation.

This relationship between observation and interpretation became even more explicit in Mendelsohn's discussion of architectural education.

"To educate our youth and fellowmen to see and find out for themselves is the foremost duty of the art-teacher. But, to be able to educate our generation to this end, the teacher must explore the new building materials and construction methods of our time, learn to analyse the actual facts of each building project, and integrate all facts to an indisputable aesthetic judgment. The facts of building, however, are only part of the facts of life."⁴⁹

The injunction to teach students "to see and find out for themselves" encapsulated a recurring ambition within *MARG*. The magazine sought to cultivate readers capable of informed and independent judgment through the careful analysis of the world around them. Seeing involved observation, interpretation, and the capacity to relate individual facts to broader patterns

⁴⁸Mendelsohn, "The Great Adventure," 30.

⁴⁹Mendelsohn, "The Great Adventure," 32.

of meaning. Architecture and art served as a particularly powerful educational medium because it brought material, social, technical, and aesthetic questions into a single field of inquiry. Through the aesthetic study of buildings, readers could learn to recognize the connections between everyday experience and the larger historical processes that shaped it.

John Summerson's editorial "Architecture and Painting" (*MARG* 5, no. 2, 1951) explored this relationship between art and architecture more explicitly by examining the historical relationship between modern architecture and modern art. Building upon Herbert Read's earlier discussion of Cubism, Summerson traced the ways in which architectural thinking had been transformed by developments in painting:

"Synthetic Cubism asserted the artist's ability to devise and control an abstract pattern, introducing into it perhaps elements from the visible world but making his own imagination his starting point. This new basis of painting, Herbert Read described as 'conceptual, mathematical, architectural'. Architectural; now, I do not think Read intended, there, a reference to the separate art of architecture. But that the word 'architectural' suggested itself to him is very much to the point, because it was just at that moment that architecture and painting came together and had a very profound effect on each other."⁵⁰

Summerson suggested that the analytical procedures associated with Cubism found a parallel in the emergence of modern architectural practice. In both fields, creative work proceeded through a process of reduction, selection, and abstraction that sought to uncover essential relationships rather than reproduce inherited forms. Modern architecture, in this account, emerged from a careful examination of function, structure, and material possibilities. New forms arose from the properties of steel, glass, and reinforced concrete, just as new pictorial languages emerged from the formal investigations of modern painting.

For Summerson, the significance of this transformation lay in its departure from historical precedent. The central task facing modern architects was no longer the modification of

⁵⁰John Summerson, "Architecture and Painting," *MARG* 5, no. 2 (1951): 2–3.

established traditions but the creation of new formal relationships grounded in contemporary conditions. Architecture drew its principles from the purposes buildings were required to serve and from the opportunities offered by modern materials and construction techniques. The article therefore presented modernism as a broader epistemological shift that extended across artistic disciplines. Painters and architects confronted similar questions about perception, form, and representation, and they arrived at comparable strategies for addressing them. The culmination of this discussion appeared in Summerson's account of Le Corbusier.

"[...] in the absolutely free abstract painting of Juan Gris, Braque, Picasso and others, a whole new territory of design had been opened up. It seems inevitable now that the discoveries of these painters should have affected architecture; they were, as Herbert Read remarked, already in a sense "architectural". They did affect architecture very deeply—first and chiefly in the work of one man, a man who is both a painter and an architect—I mean, Le Corbusier. I think we must put it to the credit of Le Corbusier that he completely liberated architecture from the bonds of tradition. And he did so by adopting the vision of synthetic cubism and by grasping the whole problem of architecture afresh in the light of that vision. Just as Gris and Picasso have been able to seize fragments of the visible world, raw fragments of appearance, and weld them together into a new artistic entity on canvas, so Le Corbusier has been able to take the most un-promising, the crudest results of empirical engineering and bring them together into a complete harmony in design and purpose."⁵¹

Le Corbusier occupied a pivotal position within this narrative because he embodied the convergence of artistic and architectural thinking that Summerson had traced throughout the essay. The methods of synthetic Cubism, he argued, provided architects with a new way of understanding form. Just as modern painters reorganized fragments of visual experience into coherent compositions, Le Corbusier transformed the products of modern engineering into architectural wholes governed by formal unity and conceptual clarity. Architecture emerged as an act of synthesis in which disparate materials, functions, and technical requirements were brought together within an intelligible order.

⁵¹Summerson, "Architecture and Painting," 4–5.

The article concluded by shifting attention from Le Corbusier himself to the generation that would follow him. Summerson suggested that the future of architecture depended less upon the replication of a master's formal vocabulary than upon the cultivation of the intellectual freedom that had made his work possible. Young architects were encouraged to develop the capacity to identify the essential demands of function, construction, and social life and to organize them into coherent architectural form. The value of modern architecture therefore resided in a method of inquiry rather than a style. This emphasis resonated strongly with *MARG*'s broader pedagogical project. Across its pages, readers encountered repeated calls to move beyond imitation, cultivate independent judgment, and learn to perceive the underlying structures that connected art, architecture, technology, and society. Summerson's essay translated these ambitions into architectural terms, presenting design as a process of transforming complexity into meaningful order.

The relationship between painting and architecture received its most detailed treatment in Erik Thelaus's essay "Picture and Architecture" (*MARG* 7, no. 3, 1954). Published alongside an editorial introduction by *MARG*, the essay explored the emergence of modern architectural space through developments in twentieth-century painting. An editorial introduction by *MARG* framed the article as an important intervention for Indian architects, artists, and policymakers:

"*MARG* reproduces this important article by Erik Thelaus, because we wish to bring to the awareness of our architects, artists and public men, the facts of the new orientation which has been given in the West to the whole concept of the poetry of building, which is architecture.[...]Because, while we are initiating vast plans of construction in our country, but actually building very little, and that very unthinkingly and badly, a deeper scrutiny of the evolution of the various styles of architecture of the West might help to avoid obvious pitfalls and to achieve an architecture commensurate with the age in which we are thrusting forward so blindly to emerge from the state of being called a 'so-called under-developed country' into a modern state. Perhaps the public men in our country, being preoccupied with political and economic problems, may not be able to give much thought to what is essentially a spiritual problem, a problem of synthesis. And thus it may interest the creative builder and artist much more than anyone else. [...] *MARG* hopes

that our creative artists will begin to relate the tradition of wall paintings in India to modern developments and concentrate on the larger aims of painting and sculpture than is possible in the easel picture and the maquette.”⁵²

In the language of synthesis that ran throughout the introduction, architecture appeared as a meeting ground where painting, sculpture, design, technology, and social life could be brought into relation with one another. This concern echoed themes that had recurred across the magazine's discussions of education, museums, and artistic perception. By 1954, *MARG* was presenting architecture as the culmination of a broader pedagogical project, one that sought to cultivate forms of seeing capable of connecting artistic traditions, contemporary knowledge, and the material conditions of modern life.

Erik Thelaus in his essay segment argued that Cubism had transformed the understanding of space itself:

"The essence of the new pictorial art which appeared in the beginning of the twentieth century was not the 'cubistic' or 'abstract' form, but the new conception of space. Cubism breaks away from the perspective of the Renaissance which can be understood as an individualistic way of seeing. The room is seen from one single point, the viewpoint of the eye. The cubistic conception, on the other hand, was relative and capable of many interpretations. The different sides of an object, its interior and exterior, were just as essential and were depicted simultaneously."⁵³

Thelaus identified the significance of Cubism in a fundamental shift in the understanding of space and perception. Like Auboyer's discussion of *rupa* and Read's reflections on modern art, Thelaus treated perception as an active process of construction and synthesis. Seeing involved assembling different viewpoints, relationships, and forms of knowledge into a coherent understanding of the world. In Thelaus's account, Cubism functioned as a broader

⁵²Erik Thelaus, "Picture and Architecture," *MARG* 7, no. 3 (1954): 6.

⁵³Erik Thelaus, "Picture and Architecture," *MARG* 7, no. 3 (1954): 7–8.

epistemological model through which modern experience could be understood as layered, mobile, and interconnected.

Ultimately, Thelaus argued, these developments in painting gradually extended beyond the canvas and began to reshape architectural thinking. He pointed in particular to artists such as Theo van Doesburg, whose explorations of abstract form and spatial relationships translated Cubist insights into a more practical investigation of the room and the built environment in Mies Van Der Rohe's diagrams (see fig. 2.1). Through this process, the conceptual innovations of modern painting were reformulated in architectural terms, providing a new way of understanding space, movement, and spatial experience. As Thelaus explained:

"This architecture had a similar conception of space. It was relative and admitted different interpretations. There was no definite borderline between interior and exterior. Architecture could not be comprehended from one single point. Movement was the basis for comprehension."⁵⁴

Movement occupied a central place within this formulation, since architecture was understood as something that unfolded through experience and could only be comprehended through engagement with space over time. The observer was required to move through the built environment, encounter a succession of changing perspectives, and grasp the relationships that connected individual elements within a larger spatial order. Architectural perception consequently emerged as an intellectual process grounded in observation, interpretation, and the synthesis of multiple visual experiences into a coherent understanding of the whole.

Taken together, the essays discussed in this section reveal a remarkable consistency in *MARG*'s treatment of art and architecture during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Whether the subject was painting, museums, visual perception, or the built environment, contributors repeatedly emphasized the cultivation of judgment through attentive observation and critical

⁵⁴Thelaus, "Picture and Architecture," 10–11.

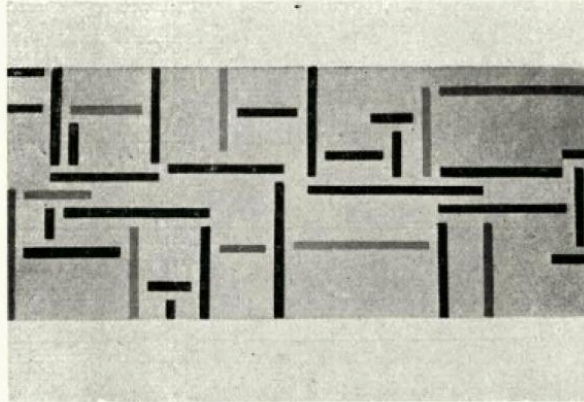


Fig. 21. Theo van Doesburg: *Composition*. oil painting, 1918

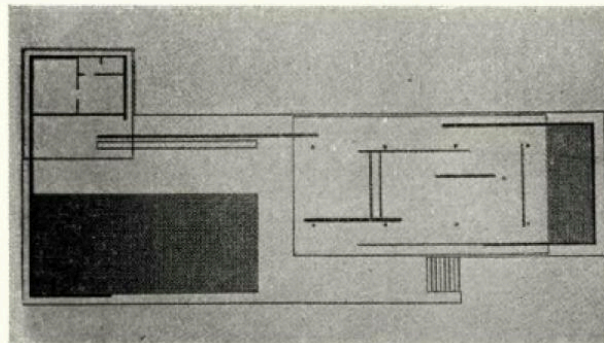


Fig. 22. Mies van der Rohe: *Plan of a villa in brick*, 1923

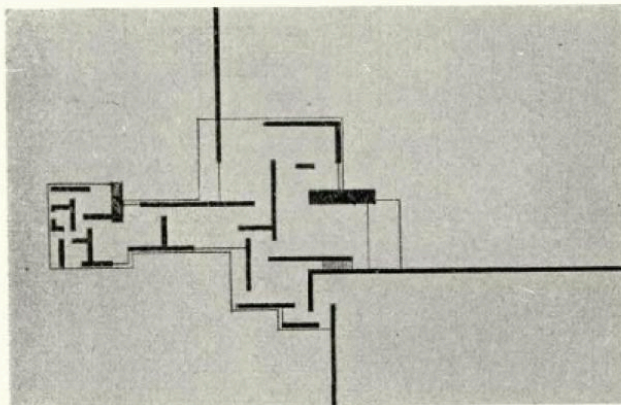


Fig. 23. Mies van der Rohe: *Plan of the Barcelona pavillion*, 1929

Figure 2.1. Theo van Doesburg, *Composition*, oil painting, 1918 (*top*); Mies van der Rohe, *Plan of a villa in brick*, 1923 (*middle*); Mies van der Rohe, *Plan of the Barcelona pavillion*, 1929 (*bottom*). Reproduced from Erik Thelaus, "Picture and Architecture," *MARG* 7, no. 3 (1954): 18.

understanding. Seeing was understood as a learned practice that involved recognizing patterns, relationships, and structures of meaning. Architecture occupied a privileged place within this educational framework because it brought aesthetic, social, technological, and historical questions into a single field of experience.

By the mid-1950s, *MARG* had developed a conception of architecture that extended well beyond professional design practice. Architecture appeared as a mode of cultural knowledge through which individuals could learn to interpret the world around them. Buildings embodied social values, technological possibilities, historical processes, and collective aspirations. Understanding them required forms of perception that could connect visual experience to broader systems of meaning. Architectural literacy therefore emerged as an extension of aesthetic literacy, both grounded in the cultivation of informed and critical judgment.

Towards an Indian Bauhaus

The most ambitious institutional aspiration articulated in *MARG* during these years appeared in the editorial "Architectural Education in India" (*MARG* 2, no. 3, 1948). Published only a year after "Education through Art," the editorial addressed the condition of architectural education in newly independent India. The discussion brought together many of the concerns that had already emerged across the magazine's pages, where architectural education was presented as a central component of a broader cultural project concerned with shaping perception, judgment, and the conditions of modern citizenship. The essay opened by identifying architectural education as a public problem:

"Architects in India are a loosely organised body, and although one hesitates to use the word 'publicity' in connection with a profession, something of the sort is certainly needed

from the reputable part of the profession as a body. When one speaks, therefore, of architectural education in India, one must think of it as a double problem. The education of the general public to use and appreciate its Architects and the education of the future architects in India themselves. The first part of the question is one which must be left to the direction of the profession as a whole; it is of the second part that we write now."⁵⁵

The passage is revealing because it locates architectural education within a much broader cultural framework than the training of professional practitioners alone. The editorial identifies architecture as a public concern whose future depended upon the simultaneous development of architectural expertise and public understanding, suggesting that the quality of the built environment emerged from the relationship between those who designed buildings and those who commissioned, inhabited, and evaluated them. This formulation reflected *MARG*'s broader pedagogical project, which sought simultaneously to cultivate architectural literacy among a wider reading public and to engage architects, students, and educators in debates concerning the future of professional training. In positioning the education of the public as a prerequisite for the development of architectural culture, the editorial established a broad social framework within which questions of professional training could be understood. It is within this context that the discussion turned to the education of future architects, indicating the audience to whom the remainder of the essay was principally addressed. Its immediate concern lay with educators, architects, professional institutions, and policymakers engaged in debates over the structure of architectural training in independent India. Yet the future architect envisioned in these pages remained inseparable from the larger social world introduced at the outset. Architectural education was understood as preparation for participation in a national project of reconstruction whose implications extended beyond the profession itself. The architect emerged as a cultural intermediary whose responsibilities included the interpretation of social needs, the organization

⁵⁵Anand, "Architectural Education in India," 4.

of material resources, and the translation of collective aspirations into built form. Within this framework, the reform of architectural education acquired a significance that exceeded institutional concerns, becoming part of a wider effort to shape the cultural and material foundations of modern India.

The expansive role assigned to the architect within the editorial shaped its critique of contemporary systems of architectural education. Since architects were expected to participate in the interpretation of social needs and contribute to the broader project of national reconstruction, the question of professional training acquired a significance that extended far beyond the acquisition of technical skills. The editorial expressed concern that existing educational structures had produced generations of architects whose engagement with architecture remained constrained by inherited conventions and uncritical habits of imitation, circumstances that, in its view, had prevented the emergence of an architectural culture capable of responding creatively to the conditions of independent India. The problem, as the editors understood it, concerned the cultivation of judgment itself and the capacity of students to develop an independent relationship to architectural history, contemporary practice, and the realities of their own environment. As the editorial explained:

"The native genius has been swamped and the imported styles have been adopted wholesale. Sometimes, in the history of culture it has happened that imported styles have been assimilated by the country of their adoption, and the results have been great. In this country, partly from political reasons, and partly because the alien elements have been too unsympathetic, the buildings produced under foreign influences have been, generally speaking, appalling. Until now, the Architectural student has not been taught to think for himself and to rise above this mess of ill-digested, imported stylism."⁵⁶

The emphasis on independent thought situated this editorial within a broader set of concerns that appeared throughout *MARG's* discussions of education, museums, art, and

⁵⁶Anand, "Architectural Education in India," 5.

architecture. The architectural student, the museum visitor, the viewer of art, and the citizen were all imagined as participants in a shared educational process through which habits of observation, interpretation, and critical reflection could be cultivated, enabling the development of informed judgment that *MARG* consistently regarded as essential to meaningful participation in cultural and public life.

It was within this intellectual framework that the editorial introduced its discussion of the Bauhaus. The significance of Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus rested in the educational model they offered for understanding the relationship between architecture, design, craft, and artistic production. As the editorial explained:

"In 1919, Walter Gropius became Director of the Weimar School of Art, which he re-modelled, and from which was born the Bauhaus at Dessau. This was a school of design which took as its guiding principles, the investigation, afresh and from the basis of the materials themselves, of form in relation to use and materials. In Gropius' own words... 'Our ultimate goal, therefore, was the complete and inseparable work of art, the great building, in which the old dividing line between the monumental and decorative elements would have disappeared forever.'"⁵⁷

The attraction of the Bauhaus for *MARG* lay in its conception of design as an integrated field of inquiry in which questions of material, form, craft, technology, and use were understood through their relationships to one another. Within this framework, architecture assumed a particularly significant position because it brought together diverse forms of knowledge and practice within a single creative enterprise. The Bauhaus therefore provided an institutional expression of concerns that had already become familiar within the magazine's pages.

Discussions of museums, aesthetic education, modern painting, architectural perception, and cultural development had repeatedly emphasized the importance of synthesis, interconnection, and the recognition of relationships across disciplinary boundaries. The editorial's engagement

⁵⁷Anand, "Architectural Education in India," 6.

with the Bauhaus thus represented the culmination of a longer intellectual trajectory through which *MARG* had sought to imagine forms of education capable of integrating artistic practice, cultural knowledge, and social responsibility within a coherent vision of modern life.

The editorial's most significant intervention appeared in its proposal for an Indian Bauhaus.

"A new "Bauhaus" is needed for India; not an imitation of the one at Dessau—for its approach to design was naturally that of the simple elements of a tropical building and the simple properties of materials. From this "re-study" (if we may call it that), would come a fresh-minded approach to our problems."⁵⁸

The notion of a "fresh-minded approach" condensed a mode of inquiry that had become central to *MARG*'s intellectual project, since it articulated a commitment to sustained investigation and critical reflection that informed the magazine's broader engagement with questions of culture, education, and design. The proposal advocated a systematic reconsideration of the conditions that shaped architecture in India through renewed attention to materials, climate, building traditions, patterns of use, and cultural practices, all of which were understood as significant sources of architectural knowledge capable of informing contemporary practice. The significance of the "New Bauhaus for India" lay in its attempt to reorganize the production and transmission of cultural knowledge in independent India. The proposal imagined educational structures through which architecture, art, design, craft, and public culture could be understood as interconnected fields whose development depended upon sustained collaboration and shared inquiry. The editorial consequently presented architectural education as an ongoing process of inquiry through which existing assumptions could be subjected to critical examination, inherited conventions could be reassessed in light of present needs, and new forms could be developed in response to the social, cultural, and environmental circumstances of contemporary India.

⁵⁸Anand, "Architectural Education in India," 6–7.

Conclusion

Between 1947 and 1954, *MARG* developed a remarkably coherent educational project that sought to address one of the central questions facing post-independence India, namely how a democratic society might cultivate the forms of knowledge, perception, and judgment necessary for its own survival. Across editorials, essays, and institutional proposals, the magazine repeatedly returned to the conviction that political independence alone could not guarantee the success of the national project. The creation of a modern society depended equally upon the formation of citizens capable of understanding the cultural, social, and material worlds they inhabited.

This concern first emerged in Anand's reflections on education, where the development of the individual was linked to the responsibilities of collective life and where artistic practice was presented as a means of cultivating freedom, sensibility, and critical awareness. The discussions of museums that followed extended these concerns beyond the classroom and into public culture. Museums appeared as institutions through which citizens could learn to compare, interpret, and situate themselves within broader historical narratives, while essays by Auboyer, Goetz, and Said examined the intellectual and perceptual processes through which works of art acquired meaning. Throughout these discussions, aesthetic experience functioned as a form of education that trained habits of observation, reflection, and judgment.

The magazine's engagement with architecture emerged directly from this pedagogical framework. Architecture was consistently presented as more than a professional discipline concerned with the production of buildings. Through the essays of Read, Mendelsohn, Summerson, and Thelaus, architecture appeared as a mode of cultural knowledge that revealed relationships between technology, society, history, and perception. Buildings could be read as

records of historical change, as expressions of collective values, and as environments through which individuals learned to experience and interpret space. The recurring discussions of Cubism, abstraction, movement, and spatial perception further situated architecture within a broader transformation of visual culture, one that encouraged readers to understand seeing as an active process of interpretation and synthesis.

Taken together, these texts reveal that *MARG*'s educational ambitions extended far beyond the dissemination of architectural information. The magazine sought to cultivate forms of visual and aesthetic literacy through which readers could develop the capacity to evaluate their surroundings and participate more fully in public life. The citizen envisioned in these pages was expected to engage critically with objects, images, buildings, and institutions, bringing informed judgment to questions of culture and environment. The repeated emphasis on observation, comparison, interpretation, and synthesis reflected a belief that democratic life depended upon the cultivation of these intellectual capacities.

The proposal for an Indian Bauhaus represented the clearest institutional expression of these ambitions. By bringing together architecture, design, craft, art, and education within a single framework, the editorial translated a decade of dispersed discussions into a concrete vision for cultural and architectural training. Its significance rested in its attempt to create structures through which the habits of inquiry promoted throughout the magazine could be systematically cultivated. The proposal gathered together concerns that had appeared repeatedly across *MARG*'s pages, including the relationship between perception and knowledge, the integration of artistic and technical disciplines, the importance of independent judgment, and the need to develop forms of practice responsive to the particular conditions of modern India.

Viewed as a whole, the material discussed in this chapter demonstrates that *MARG* understood modernity as a cultural achievement that required continuous educational work. The magazine approached aesthetic education, museum culture, artistic perception, and architectural knowledge as interconnected components of a larger project concerned with the formation of democratic subjects. Through this sustained engagement with the cultivation of vision, judgment, and critical awareness, *MARG* sought to shape the intellectual and cultural foundations upon which the modern nation could be built.

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Chapter Three

Housing the Modern Indian Subject

The question of housing occupied a significant place within the cultural and intellectual project that animated MARG during the first decades following Indian independence. As the magazine sought to articulate the conditions through which a modern democratic society might emerge, its attention extended beyond institutions of culture, education, and public life to encompass the spaces through which ordinary people experienced the routines of everyday existence. Housing appeared within this discourse as a matter of particular urgency, shaped by the rapid urban expansion, industrial development, demographic growth, and acute shortages of shelter that characterized the postcolonial moment.⁵⁹ Yet the significance of housing within the pages of MARG exceeded the practical problem of accommodation. The home, the neighbourhood, and the wider built environment were understood as sites through which broader questions concerning culture, citizenship, social responsibility, technological progress, and collective life could be addressed and negotiated.

This chapter examines how MARG constructed a discourse of housing between 1947 and 1950, tracing the ways in which the magazine framed questions of dwelling, domesticity, and the built environment as integral to the wider project of postcolonial reconstruction and social transformation. The magazine repeatedly returned to the proposition that the environments inhabited by individuals and families participated in the formation of values, sensibilities, and patterns of behaviour, investing the design and organization of domestic space with a significance that extended far beyond its utilitarian function. Housing consequently emerged as

⁵⁹Shukla Sawant, "Modernism: Viewpoints from MARG," *Marg, A Magazine of the Arts* 74, nos. 2–3 (2022): 10–13.

one of the principal arenas through which the aspirations of post-independence modernity could be translated into material and spatial form. The house was imagined simultaneously as a technological object, a cultural environment, a social institution, and a pedagogical instrument through which new ways of living might be cultivated and sustained.

Essays on planning situated architecture within wider programmes of national development and social reconstruction. Discussions of the home and the domestic interior translated architectural discourse into the realm of everyday experience, encouraging readers to view ordinary environments as subjects of reflection, analysis, and improvement. Articles addressing low-cost housing, prefabrication, industrialized construction, and flexible domestic arrangements explored the possibilities offered by new materials, technologies, and systems of production, while debates surrounding cooperative housing extended these concerns into questions of collective participation, community formation, and civic organization.

This chapter argues that MARG's discourse on housing functioned as a field through which architectural expertise, technological innovation, aesthetic judgment, and social aspiration could be brought into a common conversation. The home was presented as a crucial site where larger projects of cultural transformation, social development, and democratic life entered the routines of everyday existence, allowing the ambitions of national reconstruction to be negotiated through the ordinary practices of inhabitation.

Living Modernity

Confronted with the scale of social and cultural transformation associated with the project of constructing a modern democratic nation after independence, MARG's contributors increasingly turned to architecture as a critical medium through which everyday life could be

reorganized across both domestic and collective spheres. Architecture was understood as operating within a broader process of social reconstruction that sought to reshape patterns of habitation, modes of conduct, and habits of perception. The essay "Design For Living" published in Volume 4 offered one of the clearest statements of this position by locating architecture within an expanded conception of planning that extended across the full range of human activity. :

The complex structure of human society in the present-day world, with its inherent conflicts and inevitable confusion, its innumerable ills and increasing demands, makes the extension of deliberate planning from the rather restricted field of economic activity, as at present, to every sphere of human life and activity, an imperative necessity. Planning, in this context, assumes a new significance. Its activities and aspects become manifold and its scope immense. It includes planning for peace and prevention of war on the international plane, and for national uplift and progress on the national, embracing the political, economic and the cultural life of the people.⁶⁰

Planning was presented as a comprehensive cultural undertaking whose scope reached far beyond questions of economic management or physical development, encompassing the political, social, and cultural conditions through which modern life would be organized. Emerging from a recognition of the uncertainties, inequalities, and competing demands that characterized the contemporary world, this vision proposed planning as an essential instrument for coordinating collective life at multiple scales. Within such a framework, architecture assumed a central role in giving material form to social aspirations, connecting the design of the built environment to wider questions concerning civic order, cultural development, and democratic citizenship.

What followed from this enlarged conception of planning was a redefinition of architecture as a deeply ethical and intellectual practice. The built environment was understood to possess the capacity to shape the inner life of its inhabitants, influencing both perception and feeling. The text drew attention to the ways in which poorly conceived environments could dull

⁶⁰Solus, "Design For Living: Present-day Trends in Architecture," *MARG* 4, no. 2 (1950): 26.

the senses and diminish the quality of experience, while carefully designed spaces could elevate thought and cultivate a more attentive engagement with the world. In this sense, architecture became participatory in the formation of subjectivity itself. It became a medium through which individuals learnt to relate to their surroundings with sensitivity and discernment. This emphasis on the experiential and affective dimensions of space reflected a broader commitment within MARG to align aesthetic practice with the cultivation of a reflective and self aware citizenry.

Architecture can be a force for good or evil. It can surround man, as it does today, in a world of monstrosities and shams, deadening his susceptibility of intellect and feeling. Or it can appeal, as it ought to the finer instincts of man and lift him above his dull and drab existence by giving him structures that portray the forces of nature in a manner that his mind and spirit can comprehend. For, a building is a true work of art and the architect and the builder its creators. It should, like any true work of art, seek intellectual and emotional justification. True architecture, the architecture of humanism, is based on true functionalism and scientific understanding, providing the much needed backbone to aesthetics. Architecture acquires, then, a meaning and purpose within the comprehension of the ordinary man and at the same time admits, at higher levels of understanding, of limitless intellectual analysis and emotional refinement.⁶¹

This ethical and aesthetic reorientation was further reinforced through an engagement with the material and technological transformations that define modern architecture. The essay situated contemporary design within a landscape shaped by new materials, new methods of construction, and evolving conceptions of space and time. These developments were interpreted as creating unprecedented opportunities for aligning the design of buildings with the practical requirements of modern life. The discussion emphasized planning as an analytical and responsive process grounded in the study of human needs and lived conditions, suggesting that architectural form should emerge through careful engagement with the realities of everyday existence. Questions of function, circulation, flexibility, and use acquired particular importance

⁶¹Solus, "Design For Living," 26.

within this framework, reflecting a conception of architecture that sought coherence between social life and spatial organization.

The architecture of today is concerned with the creation of a new plan for the new mode of life. Itself a product of experiment and inventions, of new methods of construction and new materials, and of a new sense of space and time, modern architecture is designed to meet the unprecedented demands imposed by modern life. The new materials and the revolutionary systems of construction make possible the planning of buildings according to human needs, with freedom and economy, with immense spans and slender supports, with cantilever facades, so that the traditional sense of dimension, proportion and scale is destroyed. For not only is the internal organization affected, but the external form also. This form is the result of a plan, not of a preconceived idea of what a building should look like, or an essay in popular style.⁶²

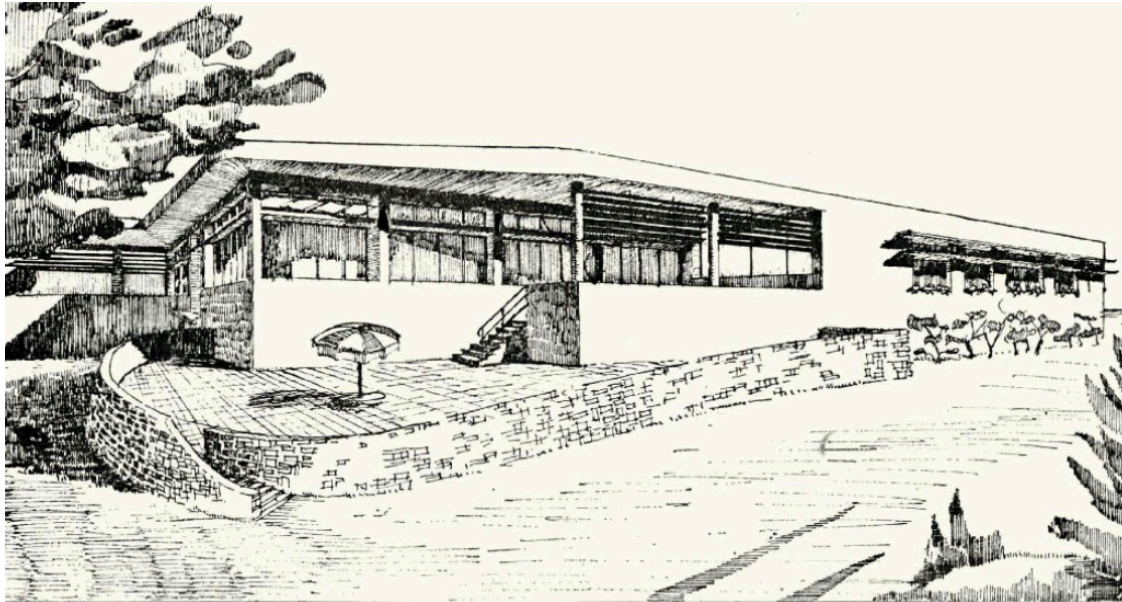
Within this broader vision, architecture was presented as part of a larger project that sought to integrate scientific knowledge, artistic practice, and social welfare into a unified approach to collective life. The implications of planning consequently extended beyond buildings themselves and entered domains such as labour, education, childcare, and public health, all of which were understood as essential components of social development.

In industries which employ female labour, the provision for creches in factories should become the primary concern of every management pursuing a progressive and enlightened labour policy. The provision of this amenity results in less absenteeism and consequently greater output, the health of the children is also greatly improved as they are cared for much better in the communal nursery by trained personnel. The children are thus helped to develop socially and emotionally, being provided with opportunities for work and play with the children of their own age. They learn to be independent and self-reliant—a good education for the citizens of tomorrow. The regeneration of the cultural life of the nation often receives scant attention in planning.⁶³

The discussion of factory creches illustrates the extent to which architectural and planning discourse expanded into the organization of everyday routines and social relationships. The provision of childcare facilities was justified through considerations of productivity and

⁶²Solus, "Design For Living," 26.

⁶³Solus, "Design For Living," 29.



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The central feature of this design is the toddlers' nursery which opens out on to a wide verandah which steps down to a generously sized open-air playing pen. The infants' nursery is planned to keep out all disturbances and afford the maximum of rest and sleep to the babies.

The doctors' and nurses' rooms are accommodated close by, with the kitchen and working rooms grouped together in another wing. There is also an isolation suite.

This nursery would accommodate from 50 to 60 children.

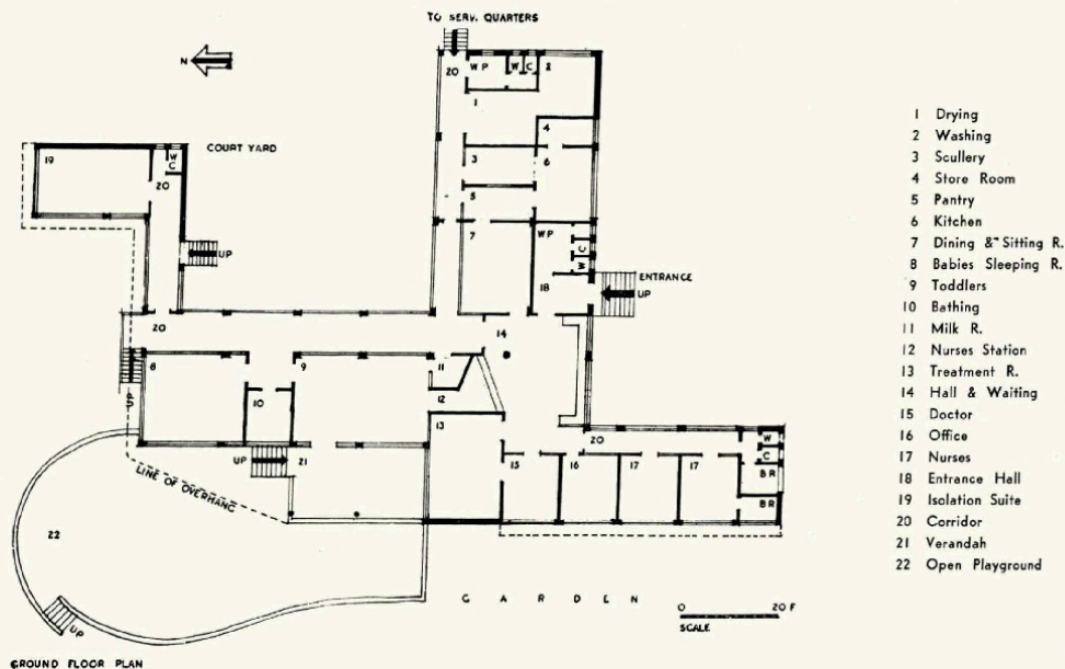
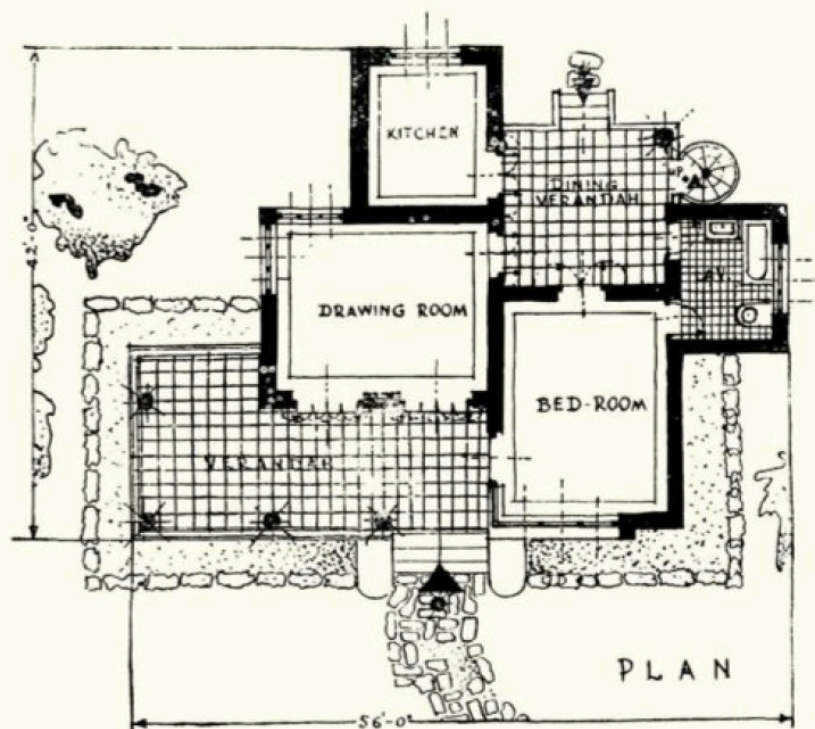
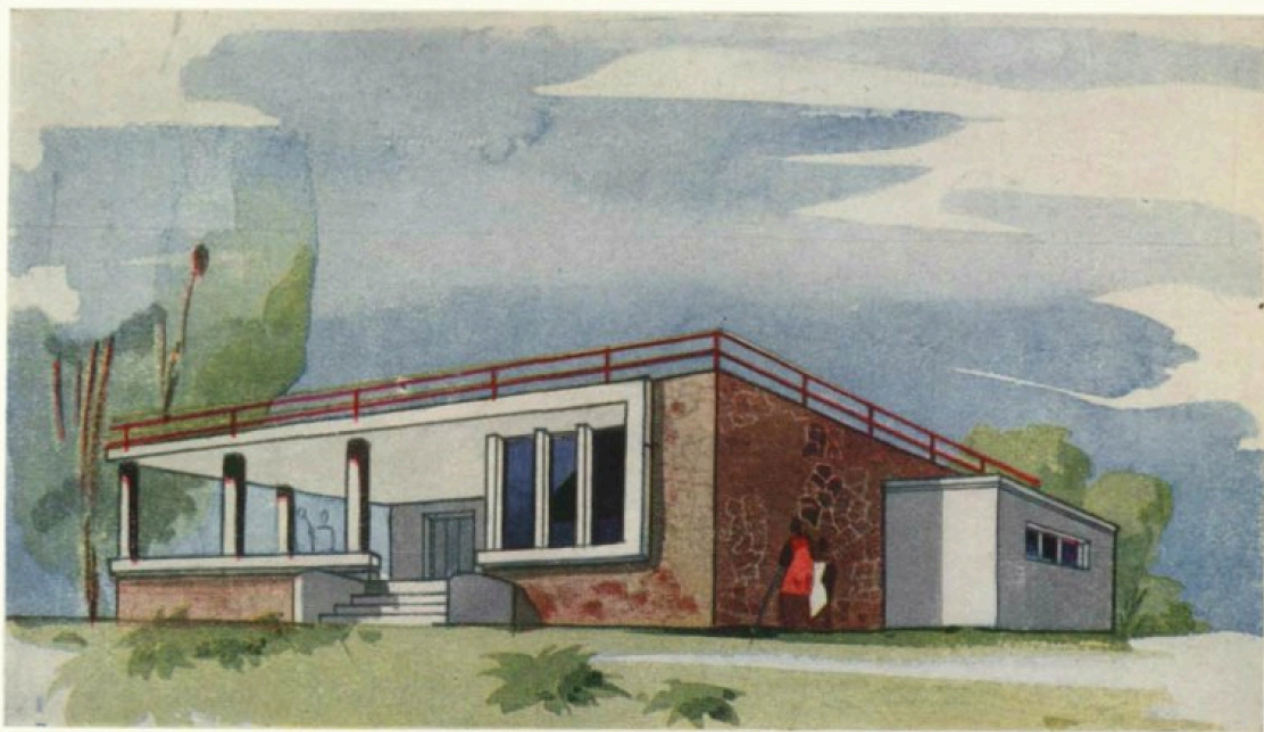


Figure 3.1. Architectural plan, perspectival sketch, and explanatory legend for a proposed factory nursery. Source: Solus, "Design For Living: Present-day Trends in Architecture," *MARG* 4, no. 2 (1950).

welfare, while simultaneously being framed as an investment in the future cultural and civic life of the nation. Significantly, these arguments were accompanied by a set of visual materials that translated the abstract principles of planning into concrete spatial arrangements. The article included an architectural plan, a perspectival sketch, and a detailed legend identifying the functions of individual spaces within the proposed nursery (see fig. 3.1). The combination of drawing, plan, and explanatory key transformed the page into a pedagogical device through which readers could visualize the relationship between spatial organization and social development. The diagrammatic presentation suggested that the “citizens of tomorrow” were the outcome of carefully organized environments, where architecture and planning extended into the intimate realm of early life to align individual development with the broader project of cultural and social transformation.

Hinged on this expanded understanding of architecture as a medium through which life itself could be reorganized, MARG developed, with increasing precision, the question of the home as the primary site where such transformations took root. Beginning with the article “What Is a Home?” published in the second issue of Volume 1 and authored by the Cement Marketing Company of India, the domestic sphere emerged as one of the magazine's central concerns, understood as the space through which the aspirations of modernity entered the routines and practices of everyday life and where the relationship between the individual, the family, and the wider social order acquired material form.

Accompanied by architectural plans and rendered views of model houses, the article translated abstract ideas about housing into visual propositions that readers could readily comprehend and emulate (see fig. 3.2). The inclusion of these images reflected an effort to materialize particular conceptions of modern living through representations of domestic space,



1. Small family house : Features : Stark treatment, of rubble walling and its continuation around the windows: red lines and tubular rail.

Approximate cost Rs. 12,000.

Figure 3.2. Architectural plans and rendered views of model houses. Source: "What Is a Home?," *MARG* 1, no. 2 (1947).

while simultaneously linking the promotion of new forms of housing to the industrial products and building technologies associated with cement construction. The emphasis fell on the ways in which spatial organization mediated daily routines, social relations, and modes of perception. Living, sleeping, eating, work, and recreation were approached as interconnected activities whose arrangement within domestic space produced a particular pattern of life that reflected broader cultural and social ideals. Through the combined use of text, plans, and rendered images, the home was presented as a carefully organized environment through which the values of modernity could be visualized, communicated, and ultimately incorporated into everyday practice. Approaching the question asked by its title, the essay noted:

[The Home] is essentially a man-made environment for human living. As such, it must not only provide for the varying physical needs of each stratum of human society, but must also make possible the realisation of aesthetic, moral and human values if each family is to weave within its environment of living, sleeping and recreation, the fabric of a home life worth the name. It would, therefore, not be possible to consider a home as a utilitarian structure alone.⁶⁴

The significance of this formulation lay in the way it relocated aesthetic judgment from the realm of exceptional cultural objects to the ordinary spaces of everyday life. The article treated the home as an environment that continuously shaped the dispositions of its inhabitants, attributing to domestic space an educative function that operated through daily experience rather than formal instruction. Beauty consequently appeared as a quality embedded within the arrangement of the built environment, capable of influencing conduct, perception, and social behaviour through repeated acts of inhabitation. The cultivation of aesthetic sensibility was therefore imagined as an ongoing process woven into the routines of domestic life, where encounters with space, light, proportion, materials, and order contributed to the formation of personal character.

⁶⁴“What Is a Home?,” *MARG* 1, no. 2 (1947): 93.

They would, however, be still not "homes," for they would be lacking in a third quality which influences the minds and behaviour of the men, women and children who would live in them. and that is the essential quality of beauty.

The home is that surrounding which builds up the quality and the character of each individual who lives in it and is ultimately an index to the personality and culture of those in any class of society. In such a building-up process the influence and appreciation of the beautiful is a vital factor. Beauty is not, however, something that is costly or super-imposed, as is unfortunately often popularly supposed.⁶⁵

Through its assertion that beauty did not depend upon financial expenditure or elaborate decorative treatment, the article proposed an understanding of domestic design whose relevance could extend across diverse social groups and varying economic circumstances. This position acquired particular importance within the conditions of post-independence nation building, when debates surrounding housing were closely connected to larger concerns regarding urban growth, social welfare, public health, and the transformation of everyday living conditions. Culture appeared less as a body of knowledge to be acquired than as a set of habits, preferences, and sensibilities produced through sustained engagement with one's surroundings. The home functioned as the primary environment within which these dispositions were cultivated, rendering domestic life central to the formation of modern subjectivity. In this sense, the article positioned housing within a wider programme of cultural development that sought to align individual self-formation with the aspirations of a modern democratic society. The quality of the domestic environment acquired importance because it was understood to shape the qualities of the citizen, linking the organization of everyday space to larger questions concerning social conduct, collective life, and national progress.

⁶⁵“What Is a Home?,” 94.

Systems of Inhabitation

The movement from architecture to interior space found a more precise articulation in essays titled “Notes of Interior Decoration”, published as a series of notes across issues one to four of Vol1. The scale shifted from the building and the city to the room, yet the conceptual framework remained continuous. The reader was guided to understand that the formation of the modern citizen took place through repeated encounters with space at the most immediate level of inhabitation.

The term "interior decoration" signifies the attempt to bring into co-ordination and harmonize all the components which form a three dimensional room. Obviously, a room is part of a house and a house part of a city, town or village. Therefore, any attempt at interior decoration involves respect for architecture and the associated arts, because a well planned room depends not only on furniture and mere decoration but on treatment of walls and ceilings, the flooring and the lighting, the materials of which may be owned by the whole community. Interior decoration, therefore, will have to be viewed in regard to private homes, public institutions and town planning.⁶⁶

This formulation transformed interior decoration from a matter of personal taste into a problem of spatial coordination and environmental organization. The room was presented as a complex assemblage whose constituent elements acquired meaning through their relationship to one another and to the larger architectural framework in which they were situated. Such an approach directed attention toward processes of arrangement, integration, and management, encouraging readers to think systematically about the environments they inhabited. The language of harmony and coordination reflected a broader modernist concern with order and coherence, while simultaneously establishing continuity between domestic interiors, public institutions, and urban planning. Through this conceptual expansion, the interior became legible as part of a larger network of spatial relationships that linked private experience to collective forms of organization.

⁶⁶“Notes on Interior Decoration,” *MARG* 1, no. 2 (1947): 42.

The essays further suggested that the improvement of domestic environments depended upon institutions and administrative structures operating beyond the household itself. Questions of housing quality, furnishing, and design were therefore connected to the responsibilities of public authorities, whose interventions were understood as necessary for creating the conditions within which better forms of living could emerge.

It is thus important to consider how public authorities can successfully effect the basic changes in the new buildings for which they are responsible, and in the existing houses so as to help the private person with his limited resources to live easily and at the same time to devise furniture and decoration which, by absorbing all known research in materials, can promote aesthetic living in the general direction of modern cultural advance.⁶⁷

The significance of this argument lay in its recognition that domestic life was shaped by conditions extending beyond individual choice. The inhabitant appeared within a network of economic constraints, housing policies, material resources, and institutional decisions that structured the possibilities of everyday living. Improvement consequently required forms of technical knowledge and administrative intervention capable of addressing these broader conditions. The article therefore positioned design expertise as a mediating force between the ambitions of modern planning and the practical realities of domestic life, proposing that research, construction, and governance could collectively contribute to the creation of more functional and habitable environments.

This emphasis on expertise became even more pronounced in the essay's discussion of materials, housing development, and environmental conditions. The interior was presented as a site where scientific knowledge, technological innovation, and local circumstances had to be brought into productive relation with one another.

In order to achieve any clear idea about interior decoration it is necessary that the discussion of this problem should be concerned with city planning, the development of

⁶⁷“Notes on Interior Decoration,” 42.

housing, research in the materials for furnishing and all the resources which have become available in the twentieth Century. Above all, there has to be a continuous attempt at a synthesis between the needs of a community, living in a certain place with its air and water, sun and heat and cold, to all the new materials discovered by modern science. And, of course, the synthesis should be an attempt to discover and carry out a way of life and not the mere imitation of a few fittings and gadgets which are either typically Indian or typically Western-European.⁶⁸

Particularly significant here was the attempt to reconcile local environmental conditions with the possibilities offered by modern science and industry. The article proposed a model of design grounded in adaptation, where climate, geography, available resources, and patterns of use informed the organization of space. Modernity appeared less as a fixed aesthetic programme than as an ongoing process of adjustment through which new technologies and materials could be integrated into specific social and environmental contexts. The language of synthesis reflected an effort to produce forms of domestic life that were responsive to contemporary conditions while remaining attentive to the practical realities of habitation.

These concerns acquired a more intimate scale in the later essay “Notes on Interior Decoration. Sleeping,” published in Volume 1, Issue 4, where attention turned to the organization of the bedroom. The discussion focused upon activities often regarded as mundane or self-evident, treating them instead as problems requiring analysis and design. Through detailed consideration of sleeping, dressing, storage, and circulation, the article demonstrated how architectural thinking could be applied to the smallest routines of everyday life and how domestic space could be reorganized through careful attention to function and use. The essay stated -

What more is there to say about the bed? The problem is so simple to make it soft that its history is structural or stylistic rather than functional.
That much about the bed!
Apart from sleeping, what other function does one carry out in one's bedroom? Dress and

⁶⁸“Notes on Interior Decoration,” 42.

undress of course!

Not at all !

For "never undress in your bedroom," advises Le Corbusier. "It is not a clean thing to do and makes the room horribly untidy."

But then where does one dress and undress?" In the dressing room, naturally !

It is common to think that the dressing-room is a luxury. Not at all. The bedroom can be proportionately smaller without suffering, since it will contain no furniture but the bed, bedside fittings and perhaps a chair or so.⁶⁹

The passage illustrates the extent to which modern architectural discourse entered the realm of everyday instruction. By staging the discussion through a conversation with Le Corbusier, the essay translated professional design principles into an accessible format that invited readers to reconsider familiar domestic practices. The authority of the architect served to legitimize a reorganization of household space based upon functional differentiation, whereby distinct activities were assigned to specific environments within the home. The bedroom consequently emerged as a carefully defined spatial category whose purpose could be clarified through analysis and rational planning. Such discussions encouraged readers to approach domestic life through the language of efficiency, organization, and purposeful design, extending architectural expertise into the routines of ordinary habitation.

The social implications of this approach became evident in the article's attention to the needs of working populations and households with limited resources. The possibility of achieving greater spatial efficiency through design was presented as a means of improving living conditions without requiring substantial increases in material expenditure. Architectural knowledge consequently acquired a broader social function, offering strategies through which the benefits of modern housing could be extended to larger sections of the population. Within this framework, the modern home appeared as a product of planning, technical expertise, and

⁶⁹"Notes on Interior Design: Sleeping," *MARG* 1, no. 4 (1947): 42.

careful spatial organization, reflecting a wider effort to integrate the principles of modern architecture into the everyday realities of post-independence life.

In the article “Design for a Small House” published in Volume 2, Issue 1, the small house emerged as a crucial site through which questions of housing, technology, and social welfare were brought into a single framework. Presented at the Engineering and Industrial Exhibition held in Madras, the project was introduced as a practical response to the housing needs of working populations and was explicitly directed toward the labouring classes. The article approached the house as both a built object and a demonstrative model, using the exhibition setting to publicize a particular vision of domestic life grounded in economy, efficiency, and technological innovation.

One of the outstanding popular exhibits at the Engineering and Industrial Exhibition held in Madras in April-May this year, was the low-cost, Permanent House in concrete, designed and constructed by the Concrete Association of India, Madras Branch. The house was designed primarily for the poor man, especially the labour class. It is a self-contained unit consisting of a living room 10' × 12', with a 5' wide verandah in front, a bedroom 8 x 10' , a kitchen 8' x 6' 4" and a bath and lavatory as shown in the plan. The approximate cost of the house is 2,500 rupees.

This building is a novel type of permanent construction which is, at the present prices of building materials and labour, cheapest when compared to conventional types.

This has been effected not only by the use of cement concrete, which is comparatively cheaper than other building materials, but by evolving a very economical design of structure by scientific investigation.

The chief characteristic of the design is, that with the exception of two or three items a house can be built up of precast units, which not only means considerable saving in labour costs and wastage of materials, but also ensures sound material of reliable quality under centralised super-vision. Mass production of these concrete building units for large housing schemes, will further reduce the cost of construction.⁷⁰

The article framed housing as a problem that could be addressed through technical expertise and industrial methods. Considerable attention was devoted to the materials, methods of construction, and processes of production that made the house possible, indicating a shift in

⁷⁰“Design for a Small House,” *MARG* 2, no. 1 (1947): 60.

architectural discourse toward questions of efficiency, standardization, and cost reduction. The language of scientific investigation and centralized supervision situated the house within a broader culture of technical rationality, where building was increasingly understood as a process that could be optimized through research, experimentation, and controlled production. The prominence accorded to concrete reflected contemporary confidence in industrial materials and their capacity to address large-scale social challenges through modern methods of construction.

The detailed description of the dwelling's dimensions further reveals an attempt to define minimum standards for domestic life. The designation of the house as a self-contained unit suggested that adequacy could be achieved through careful planning and the efficient arrangement of space. Living, cooking, sleeping, and sanitation were incorporated within a compact layout whose organization reflected contemporary concerns regarding health, functionality, and domestic convenience. The plan accompanying the article reinforced these priorities by presenting the dwelling as a measurable and reproducible spatial model rather than as an individual architectural object. Through the combined use of textual description and architectural drawing, readers were invited to evaluate the house according to its performance, economy, and practicality.

Particularly significant was the article's emphasis on precast construction and mass production. Housing was imagined less as a singular act of building than as a system capable of replication across larger developments. The discussion of prefabricated components, reduced labour requirements, and centralized quality control reflected an emerging belief that industrial production could provide solutions to the housing shortages confronting the post-independence nation. The small house therefore functioned as a prototype whose importance extended beyond the individual dwelling itself. It represented an effort to reconceive housing as a scalable

technological enterprise through which modern construction techniques could be mobilized in the service of broader programmes of social development. In this formulation, the problem of habitation became inseparable from questions of industrial production, technical expertise, and national planning, positioning the house within the larger developmental ambitions that characterized the early decades of independence.

The concern with housing that animated MARG's discussions of low-cost construction and standardized building methods found a different expression in John Terry's article "Flexgarh," published in Volume 3, Issue 2. Its central concern was the growing mismatch between conventional domestic layouts and the increasingly complex requirements of the modern middle-income family. The article began from the observation that existing housing forms often failed to accommodate changing patterns of work, leisure, privacy, and family interaction, producing a condition in which households occupied spaces that were physically inadequate and functionally inflexible.

Thousands of families, of the "middle-income group," living in cities, are housed in accommodation far short of their requirements. For these, a possible solution might be a house, factory-made like a car, which provides privacy and amenities without high cost. Dwelling house amenity is a thing which is expensive in its present, made-to-order condition, but which could become cheap enough when mass-produced.⁷¹

The middle-income family emerged here as a distinct subject of architectural concern, positioned between the aspirations of modern urban life and the limitations imposed by existing housing stock. Terry's proposed solution drew upon the logic of industrial production, suggesting that the dwelling could be reconceived as a manufactured object whose qualities might be refined through research, standardization, and technological innovation. The comparison to the automobile was particularly significant because it located housing within a broader culture of

⁷¹John Terry, "Flexgarh—An Old Principle Reused," *MARG* 3, no. 2 (1949): 11.

industrial modernity, where efficiency, reproducibility, and technical improvement were understood as mechanisms through which higher standards of living could be extended to larger sections of society. Privacy, comfort, and amenity were consequently presented as problems of design and production rather than privileges reserved for a small segment of the population.

The article's most distinctive contribution, however, lay in its attempt to rethink the relationship between domestic space and everyday life. Terry proposed a dwelling organized around flexibility and continual adaptation rather than treating the house as a fixed arrangement of rooms assigned to predetermined functions:

Flex-garh [...] does claim to present the old idea in a new form, more suited to the contemporary industrialised scene. Apart from the bathroom and the kitchen, (which are necessarily fixed in position because of their fittings), the internal division of the floor area of Flexgarh may be varied to suit the needs of the moment.

For large parties, the whole house could become one room: for normal family life, the one room would become four, and there are many variations between these two. The elimination of fixed walls has produced the elimination of space used only for circulation. Doors become unnecessary- to pass from one room to another, one opens the wall. The way in which this flexible sub-division moves in tune with the daily life of a family is seen in Plate 1. It will also be noticed that the exterior walls are movable: in this way, one or two sides of the house may be thrown entirely open, or closed and locked. Windows become transparent panels for light only, set in the larger wall panels.⁷²

Terry's concept was accompanied by a visual, referred to as Plate 1 in the essay, a full-page diagram that followed the daily activities of the fictional Chatterji family and mapped the changing spatial configurations of the house across the course of a typical day (see fig 3.3). Consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Chatterji and their two school-age children, the family served as a representative model through which the article explored how architecture might respond to the rhythms and requirements of modern domestic life.

⁷²Terry, "Flexgarh," 11.

FLEXGARH—

By John Terry A. R. I. B. A.



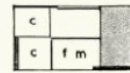
Here are Mr and Mrs Chatterji and their two children aged ten and eight.

Mr Chatterji is an engineer: he works in Calcutta and gets a salary of Rs.500 a month.
Both the children go to school.

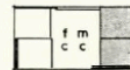
At the right is the programme of a normal day in the family's life.

INSTEAD OF THEIR LIVES BEING DOMINATED BY A RIGID HOUSE PLAN THE Flexgarh ADAPTS ITSELF TO THEIR CHANGING NEEDS FROM HOUR TO HOUR.

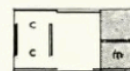
6-0 The family all sleep in separate rooms. They start to get up, bath and dress.



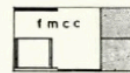
7-30 When they are dressed they all have a cup of tea.



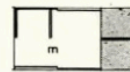
8-0 Father goes to the bazar for food. Mother starts to cook breakfast. The children prepare lessons.



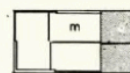
9-0 The family eat together. The sun is getting warm so they shut the south wall and open the north and west.



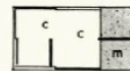
9-30 Father goes to the office, the children to school. Mother opens all the internal walls and starts the housework.



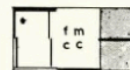
12-0 Mother has a rest. The house is shut up against the mid-day sun and she lies in the cool north part of the house.



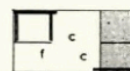
2-30 The children come from school. Mother prepares supper. The house is still shut for coolness.



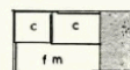
5-30 Father comes home from the office and they all have tea together.



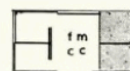
6-0 Now it is cooler the house is opened. The family sit together or perhaps Mother goes out to the Temple.



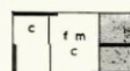
7-30 Mother and Father sit in the cool southern evening wind. The children do their lessons.



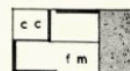
8-30 The family have supper together.



9-30 They sit in the central space as the breeze blows through the house. The younger child may be in bed already.



A holiday: the children play on one side of the house while their parents sit quietly on the other.



For parties the house becomes one big room with space for plenty of guests.

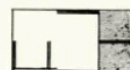


Figure 3.3. "Plate 1," a full-page diagram mapping the changing spatial configuration of Flexgarh across the daily activities of the Chatterji family. Source: John Terry, "Flexgarh—An Old Principle Reused," *MARG* 3, no. 2 (1949): 10.

The diagram occupies a remarkable position within the article because it shifts attention away from the house as a static object and toward the temporal organization of everyday life. Running alongside a schedule that records the family's activities from early morning until late evening, a sequence of small plans illustrates how the internal arrangement of the dwelling changes throughout the day. As family members wake, prepare meals, study, work, entertain guests, rest, and gather together, movable partitions alter the spatial configuration of the house in response to changing needs. The house consequently appears as a dynamic environment whose form is determined by use rather than permanence. Architecture is represented as something that unfolds through time, continuously adjusting itself to the routines, interactions, and movements of its inhabitants. In this sense, Flexgarh gave architectural form to the very notion of modern life as mobile, adaptive, and continually negotiated.

Another response to what Durga Bajpai described as the “acute shortage of shelter” appeared in the essay “Co-operative Housing,” published in Volume 4, Issue 4. Whereas earlier discussions in MARG had focused on the design of dwellings, methods of construction, interior organization, and industrial production, Bajpai turned attention toward the social and organizational structures through which housing might be realized on a larger scale. The essay approached the housing crisis as a problem that could not be solved through architecture alone, arguing that new forms of collective action were required if adequate housing was to be made available to broader sections of the population. Within this framework, the co-operative society emerged as a mechanism through which questions of finance, construction, ownership, and community life could be brought together within a single organizational structure. Bajpai wrote:

Lately the 'Co-operative Society' has come up, notably in Bombay. There is indeed charm and fascination about the word 'Co-operative'. It implies the best in man, his desire to help his fellow citizens, to live in harmony with his neighbours, to help in the upkeep of the environment and to be conscious of civic and social responsibilities.[...] such a

scheme entails the formation of a company or society which has as its object the construction of living units built as economically as possible and designed to meet the needs of various income groups.⁷³

The significance of Bajpai's argument lay in its effort to relocate the housing question from the individual dwelling to the collective structures that made dwelling possible. Housing was presented as a process involving organization, administration, finance, labour, and long-term maintenance, all of which required forms of cooperation extending beyond the boundaries of the household itself. The co-operative model proposed a mode of development in which future residents participated in the production of their own environment, thereby transforming housing from a commodity acquired through the market into a shared undertaking shaped through collective effort. The emphasis on multiple income groups further reflected an attempt to imagine housing as a social rather than exclusively individual concern, linking domestic provision to broader questions of urban development and community formation.

Bajpai's discussion also reveals the extent to which contemporary debates on housing increasingly drew upon the language of participation and self-help. The process of building acquired significance because it was understood to involve future residents directly in the material realization of their homes, creating a relationship between inhabitant and environment that extended beyond occupancy alone. Knowledge of construction, maintenance, and planning consequently became part of the experience of home ownership itself.

This scheme, apart from being spectacular, is very sound economically and has many other advantages. It gives the ordinary city dweller with little money the chance to possess his own home. It brings his family and his friends into a close co-operative and creative endeavour which takes them away from the city to the suburbs and provides them with healthy, outdoor work. Building his own house, he knows the essentials of house construction and later on can do such minor repairs as may be needed. Because there is a choice in the type of plan, the individual has a greater opportunity of meeting his own needs than if he were to move into a standard ready-built house. The children are

⁷³Durga Shankar Bajpai, "Co-operative Housing [Editorial]," *MARG* 4, no. 4 (1950): 2–4.

not left out either. They learn the value of constructive work and the family as a whole acquires the dignity and the responsibility of owning a home with the implied civic and social consciousness.

Such a scheme could be very easily made to work in India where each family generally consists of many members plus a lot of relatives. Although we do not yet manufacture standard pre-fabricated parts of buildings, major items such as doors and windows, plumbing panels and the like could easily be manufactured here. It would be the most suitable answer to a complaining and apathetic people demanding housing.⁷⁴

This passage situated housing within a broader programme of social participation, collective effort, and civic education that accompanied the making of the built environment. Throughout the essay, Bajpai presented cooperative housing as a process through which individuals and families would participate directly in shaping the conditions of their habitation, establishing a relationship between dwelling and participation that encompassed planning, construction, occupation, and maintenance. This insistence suggested an understanding of architectural expertise as something that should circulate beyond professional circles and become embedded within everyday life.

The house consequently emerged as a site through which technical competence could be acquired and transmitted across generations, while familiarity with materials, maintenance, and repair was represented as an essential and ethical aspect of responsible home ownership. Equally important was the essay's treatment of choice within a framework of collective provision. Bajpai argued that cooperative housing could offer flexibility in planning, enabling residents to accommodate particular domestic requirements and offer more personalized living amenities at an individual level within a larger modular system.

The final section connected cooperative housing to wider discussions of industrial production and technological modernization in India. Although Bajpai acknowledged the limited availability of prefabricated systems, she identified the manufacture of standardized components

⁷⁴Bajpai, "Co-operative Housing," 5.

such as doors, windows, and plumbing units as a practical objective, envisioning a housing sector in which industrial production could operate alongside local labour and community participation. This proposal reflected broader post-independence aspirations concerning the role of industry in national development and the application of modern production methods to pressing social needs. At the same time, her characterization of the public as a "complaining and apathetic people demanding housing" revealed the moral assumptions that informed contemporary discussions of the housing crisis. The shortage of shelter was understood as a condition shaped by questions of public conduct, civic responsibility, and social engagement, while the cooperative model appeared as a mechanism through which citizens could participate more actively in the improvement of their circumstances and cultivate habits of responsibility, cooperation, and civic consciousness within the postcolonial nation.

Conclusion

The housing discourse that emerged within MARG during its early decades reveals the extent to which architecture occupied a central position within broader efforts to imagine the social foundations of postcolonial India. The magazine's engagement with housing was grounded in the conviction that the transformation of society required a corresponding transformation in the environments through which everyday life was organized and experienced. Questions of dwelling therefore acquired a significance that exceeded the provision of shelter or the technical requirements of construction. The home became a space through which larger concerns regarding social order, cultural development, technological progress, and national reconstruction could be rendered visible and open to intervention.

What distinguished MARG's treatment of housing was the manner in which it sought to make the built environment intelligible to a public that extended beyond architects, planners, and technical specialists. Throughout its pages, architecture was translated into a language of plans, diagrams, illustrations, model dwellings, and explanatory essays that encouraged readers to view domestic space as something capable of analysis, evaluation, and improvement. In the course of this sustained effort to disseminate architectural ideas through accessible visual and textual forms, architectural knowledge acquired a presence within the routines and concerns of everyday life, where questions of design, spatial organization, and habitation became subjects of public reflection and discussion. The home came to be represented as a historically contingent and socially significant environment whose arrangement, appearance, and functioning bore directly upon wider aspirations concerning cultural refinement, social development, and collective progress, thereby establishing domestic space as a meaningful site through which broader visions of the postcolonial future could be imagined and articulated. The cultivation of architectural literacy consequently formed an important dimension of MARG's wider cultural project, extending the magazine's pedagogical ambitions from museums, exhibitions, and cultural institutions into the spaces of ordinary habitation.

The importance of visual representation within this project cannot be overstated. As Rashmi Viswanathan has argued, architectural plans circulated within a wider mid-century print culture that invested graphic representations of housing with meanings extending far beyond their immediate technical function.⁷⁵ Publications associated with the Cement Marketing Company of India, architectural journals, exhibitions, and magazines such as MARG transformed the plan into a widely recognizable sign of modern domestic life and national progress. Within MARG, plans, renderings, and diagrams operated simultaneously as

⁷⁵Rashmi Viswanathan, "Dreaming through *MARG*," *Modernism/Modernity* 32, no. 1 (2025): 33–37.

architectural proposals and as cultural arguments. They offered readers ways of imagining how life might be organized, how families might inhabit space, and how modernity itself might be experienced through the environments of everyday living. The repeated appearance of such visual material throughout the magazine demonstrates the extent to which architectural representation functioned as a medium through which ideas about the future could be circulated, normalized, and made available to a national readership.

Seen in this light, the significance of housing within MARG lay less in the specific solutions proposed than in the broader conception of habitation that the magazine advanced. The home was represented as a dynamic site where questions of technology, consumption, family life, labour, education, and social responsibility converged and acquired material form. Domestic space became a domain through which larger processes of cultural and political transformation could be negotiated at the scale of everyday experience. The history traced in this chapter therefore points toward a broader understanding of MARG's role within post-independence India. The magazine did not simply document architectural change. It participated in the production of a public discourse through which architecture could be understood as a necessary component of modern life and through which the ordinary spaces of habitation could be imagined as integral to the making of the postcolonial nation.

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Chapter Four

A Prelude to Chandigarh

This chapter examines Chandigarh as it appeared within MARG's architectural and cultural discourse during the 1950s. Before the city entered the magazine's pages, urban planning had already become a significant concern within its broader engagement with architecture, housing, education, and national reconstruction. Urban planning emerged as a recurring theme within the magazine from its earliest volumes. Essays such as "The Need for Urban Planning" and Otto Koenigsberger's "Notes on the Greater Bombay Scheme" approached planning as a matter of public welfare, economic development, and social organization, linking the design of cities to broader questions concerning governance and reconstruction. These discussions reflected the growing influence of architects, planners, and administrators who were directly involved in shaping postcolonial India and who viewed urban development as central to the task of nation building. Through contributors such as Koenigsberger, MARG established a close relationship between architectural debate and contemporary planning practice, situating the city within wider discussions about the conditions necessary for democratic citizenship and social stability.

The construction of Chandigarh following the Partition of India gave these concerns a new urgency and visibility. Conceived as the capital of Indian Punjab after the loss of Lahore, the project quickly acquired significance beyond its administrative function and became one of the most ambitious exercises in state sponsored planning undertaken in the early postcolonial period. As Vikramaditya Prakash has argued, Chandigarh emerged as a powerful symbol of India's

attempt to define a modern national future through architecture and planning.⁷⁶ Within MARG, the city attracted sustained attention because it concentrated on many of the questions that had occupied the magazine for more than a decade, including the relationship between architecture and social reform, the role of planning in national development, and the capacity of the built environment to shape public life.

MARG presented Chandigarh as a model through which larger aspirations for postcolonial modernity could be examined and debated. The city's appearance in the magazine brought together longstanding concerns regarding urban order, civic institutions, environmental planning, and architectural culture, revealing how the city came to function as a privileged site through which the magazine articulated its vision of modern India. This chapter explores that process by examining the ways in which the Chandigarh model was represented, interpreted, and mobilized within MARG's discourse before it materialised into a constructed city in the 1960s.

City Planning in Early Volumes

Questions of urban planning occupied an increasingly prominent place within the early volumes of MARG as contributors grappled with the practical and ideological challenges of post-Independence reconstruction. Discussions of the city frequently appeared alongside debates concerning education, housing, public health, labor, and cultural development, evident in essays on museums and cultural centres, discussions of low-cost housing and neighbourhood planning, and planning proposals for emerging industrial and administrative centres, reflecting a broader conviction that national reconstruction required the creation of environments capable of sustaining collective welfare and civic participation. Within this intellectual atmosphere, urban

⁷⁶Vikramaditya Prakash, *Chandigarh's Le Corbusier: The Struggle for Modernity in Postcolonial India* (University of Washington Press, 2002).

planning acquired cultural significance because it shaped the conditions through which individuals encountered community, movement, labor, recreation, and aesthetic order within the modern city.

This position was articulated clearly in Percy Marshall's "The Need for Urban Planning in India," published in the first issue of *MARG* in 1946. Marshall situated urban planning within a broad social framework that connected the physical structure of cities to questions of education, culture, public welfare, and national development. Treating the city as an enduring expression of civilization, he argued that planning could not be addressed in isolation from the wider social and economic transformations required for India's future. He wrote:

“Therefore the question of urban planning in India must be considered in relation to a number of other problems, some social, some political and some economic, as cities and towns have always been enduring expressions of civilisation in all its aspects. Take for instance this high standard of civilisation which science promises to all of us. It means that not only the basic necessities like food, clothing and shelter can be satisfied, but also good education, and an opportunity to develop national and regional culture as expressed in Art, Literature and many other forms, can be enjoyed by everyone. It means that we must stop thinking in terms of housing as a profitable speculation and must start thinking in terms of individuals, of families and of communities, of houses grouped round schools and community centres, of green open spaces round houses and factories, of parks, bathing pools, recreation recreation centres, health centres and clinics, libraries, theatres, art galleries and all the things which bring health and happiness to a town.”⁷⁷

Marshall's formulation defined planning as a cultural and social undertaking whose success depended upon the integration of educational, recreational, and civic institutions into the urban fabric. Schools, libraries, theatres, parks, galleries, and community centres appeared as essential components of urban life because they provided the settings through which culture could circulate beyond elite domains and become embedded within everyday experience. His argument aligned closely with *MARG*'s broader editorial concerns, particularly its sustained interest in the relationship between the built environment and the cultivation of an informed

⁷⁷Percy Marshall, "The Need for Urban Planning in India," *MARG* 1, no. 1 (1946): 83.

public. From its earliest issue, therefore, the magazine approached the city as a site where questions of welfare, culture, education, and citizenship converged.

Otto Koenigsberger's "The Greater Bombay Scheme," published the following year, extended these discussions through a more direct engagement with the crisis of the modern metropolis. His essay situated Bombay within an international discourse concerning overcrowding, industrial expansion, infrastructural pressure, and the psychological consequences of uncontrolled urban growth. The modern city appeared within this discussion as an unstable and exhausting environment whose existing forms of organization had generated social fragmentation, congestion, and alienation. Koenigsberger introduced Sigfried Giedion's reflections on urban disorder in order to situate Bombay within a broader global anxiety surrounding the condition of twentieth century metropolitan life. He wrote -

"In few walks of life has our attitude changed as radically from one generation to the other as in the matter of big cities. Very few people can be found nowadays who do not view the ever-increasing population figures of our capitals with apprehension. The introductory paragraph of Sigfried Giedion's chapter on City Planning as a Human Problem is characteristic of this modern attitude.

'From 1870 on, the great cities developed continuously toward what they are to-day-unserviceable instruments. No one knows when this tremendous waste of time and health will be cut down, when this pointless assault on the nerves will end, when this failure to achieve a dignified standard of life (a standard reached by any peasant) will be remedied. Cities cannot simply be discarded, like worn out machinery; they have too large a part in our destiny. But now it is plain that the life which they have abused is increasingly exacting its revenge, and that this fundamentally provisional and feverish institution must soon be brought within narrower limits. Whether the work will be done by intelligence or by brute disaster cannot be foreseen.'"⁷⁸

Koenigsberger's invocation of Giedion framed planning as an urgent civilizational necessity shaped by the deteriorating conditions of industrial urban life. The city appeared as a structure capable of producing exhaustion, disorientation, and social instability when left to uncontrolled growth and speculative development. Urban planning consequently acquired ethical

⁷⁸Otto Koenigsberger, "The Greater Bombay Scheme," *MARG* 2, no. 1 (1947): 29.

and political urgency through its capacity to reorganize metropolitan life according to principles of health, order, accessibility, and collective welfare. This concern with dignity, environment, and social equilibrium echoed the broader aspirations that had already emerged within MARG's early discussions of domesticity, education, and architecture. The city increasingly appeared within the magazine as a total environment whose spatial organization carried profound consequences for social conduct and collective experience.

Koenigsberger later outlined the objectives of the Greater Bombay Scheme through a language deeply invested in citizenship, cultural life, and social integration. The planning of the city was understood through an expansive civic framework that connected infrastructure, transportation, housing, labor, recreation, and public institutions within a unified conception of urban life. He wrote -

“The objects of the planning work are to be:-

To provide healthy conditions of living and of working for the inhabitants.

To provide suitable and adequate sites for industry and trade, education, medical and other public institutions, with a view to enhancing the prosperity of the region and to promote the well being of its inhabitants, and thereby to raise the standard of living.

To provide convenient, efficient and attractive environments round homes.

To preserve existing amenities and provide additional amenities as may be expedient.

To provide a comprehensive communication system as well as suitable and cheap transport to meet present and future traffic requirements.

To provide social and cultural facilities and services to secure as full a measure of social life for the inhabitants as is possible.

To foster an active and vigorous interest in citizenship.”⁷⁹

Koenigsberger's framework treated housing, transportation, education, recreation, cultural institutions, and civic participation as interconnected components of a single urban system whose purpose was the cultivation of social well-being and public life. The city was therefore understood as an environment through which citizens encountered the institutions, services, and cultural resources that shaped everyday experience.

⁷⁹Koenigsberger, “Greater Bombay Scheme,” 33.

Particularly significant was the objective of fostering "an active and vigorous interest in citizenship," which situated planning within a broader project of social and political reconstruction. Citizenship appeared here as a condition that required institutional support and spatial expression through environments that encouraged participation in collective life. This concern paralleled MARG's recurring interest in the relationship between culture and democracy, visible in its discussions of education, public institutions, domestic environments, and artistic production throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s. The city consequently emerged as a framework through which these diverse concerns could be brought together within a single spatial order. Questions of housing, mobility, recreation, culture, and civic participation were understood as mutually dependent elements of urban life whose successful integration would contribute to the formation of a more stable and engaged public.

Koenigsberger's essay therefore marked an important development in MARG's urban discourse because it presented planning as a comprehensive social project concerned with the organization of everyday life at a metropolitan scale.

The editorial note that followed Koenigsberger's article further reveals the extent to which MARG positioned itself within ongoing national discussions regarding planning and reconstruction. The magazine announced its intention to continue documenting and evaluating future developments concerning Bombay's urban transformation, including the anticipated proposals of the American planner Albert Meyer. The editorial stated -

"EDITORS NOTE: Greater Bombay will follow in one of the forthcoming numbers of MARG. The foregoing article was written in April 1947. Technical reasons delayed its publication until now. Meanwhile the American Town Planning Expert Albert Meyer has visited Bombay, but contrary to the hopes of the author, has returned to America after a few months. An appreciation of his report and recommendation for the planning of Greater Bombay will follow in one of the forthcoming numbers of MARG."⁸⁰

⁸⁰"Editor's Note," *MARG* 2, no. 1 (1947): 59.

This editorial note acquired additional historical significance in retrospect because it appeared during the same year that Albert Mayer was appointed Planning Advisor to the Government of Uttar Pradesh in 1947, two years before he would be commissioned, alongside Matthew Nowicki, to prepare the original plan for Chandigarh in 1949.⁸¹ The reference therefore reveals an early convergence between the networks of planners, architects, and intellectuals who would eventually shape some of the most significant urban projects of postcolonial India.

The gradual movement from Mayer's planning proposals to Le Corbusier's eventual leadership of Chandigarh reveals the extent to which MARG remained deeply embedded within the evolving discourse of Indian urbanism across the late 1940s and 1950s. Otto Koenigsberger's active involvement in questions of regional planning, housing, and metropolitan development further reinforced this intellectual milieu. MARG functioned as a space where these urban visions could be debated, interpreted, and culturally assimilated long before they acquired physical form within the landscape of the nation.

CIAM, Le Corbusier, and the Language of Urbanism

The publication of *The Charter of Athens* in MARG marked an important moment in the magazine's evolving engagement with urbanism and modern planning. Appearing in 1949 as "The Charter of Athens A Treatise on Town Planning," the text introduced Indian readers to one of the foundational documents of modernist urban theory at a moment when questions of reconstruction, housing, infrastructure, and regional planning occupied an increasingly urgent position within public discourse. Its appearance in the magazine carried significance beyond the circulation of architectural theory alone. MARG presented the document as part of a larger

⁸¹Prakash, *Chandigarh's Le Corbusier*.

pedagogical project through which modern planning principles could enter the intellectual and cultural vocabulary of post Independence India. The publication effectively translated the discourse of CIAM into a public language accessible to readers positioned outside professional architectural circles while simultaneously situating India within an expanding international conversation concerning the future of the modern city.

The text framed urbanism through an extraordinarily broad conception of social life in which planning extended into economic organization, political administration, health, psychology, geography, transportation, and collective culture. The opening propositions of the Charter established the city as inseparable from regional and social systems that exceeded municipal boundaries or isolated architectural interventions. The document stated -

“Apart from economic, social and political interests, human, psychological and physiological values are also involved. Individual and collective aspects must be credited. Life develops only as far as these two contradictory principles (individuality and collectivism) agree on mastering the human ego.”⁸²

The Charter’s diagnosis of the industrial metropolis carried particular force within the context of postcolonial reconstruction. The text described the machine age as a historical rupture that had violently transformed the relationship between human beings, labor, transportation, and urban concentration. It observed that -

“The dawn of the machine age caused immense disturbances in the relationship of mankind, their distribution over the globe, their enterprises, reckless concentration in towns favoured by development of mechanical speed, brutality of development everywhere and in all spheres, unknown in history ever before chaos penetrates towns.”⁸³

The document described the industrial city as a landscape of profound spatial inequality in which overcrowding, inadequate housing, and the uneven distribution of environmental

⁸²“The Charter of Athens: A Treatise on Town Planning,” *MARG* 3, no. 4 (1949): 10.

⁸³“Charter of Athens,” 10.

amenities produced sharply differentiated urban experiences. It argued that historic urban centres had become excessively congested and that large sections of the population were confined to districts characterized by poor living conditions, insufficient open space, and deteriorating infrastructure, while wealthier residents occupied healthier environments with greater access to light, ventilation, greenery, and scenic landscapes. Urban problems were therefore understood as consequences of the unequal organization of space rather than as isolated deficiencies in housing provision alone.⁸⁴

Within this framework, recreation and access to open space emerged as fundamental components of urban welfare. The Charter advocated the systematic provision of green belts, sports facilities, playgrounds, and recreational areas within residential districts, while also emphasizing the importance of locating schools, kindergartens, and community buildings in close proximity to housing. Such recommendations reflected a broader conviction that public health, education, and social life depended upon the integration of civic and recreational institutions into the everyday environment of the city.⁸⁵

The Charter approached labor and circulation through a similar concern with the organization of daily life. It emphasized the reduction of distances between home and workplace and called for efficient connections between residential, commercial, administrative, industrial, and recreational districts in order to minimize unnecessary movement and alleviate the pressures generated by metropolitan congestion. Urban planning consequently appeared as a mechanism for coordinating the spatial relationships between work, residence, leisure, and public services,

⁸⁴“Charter of Athens,” 11–12.

⁸⁵“Charter of Athens,” 13.

creating an urban order capable of supporting both economic productivity and social well-being.⁸⁶

Equally significant was the Charter's treatment of circulation and historical heritage, both of which revealed the modernist ambition to reorganize the city according to efficiency, clarity, and environmental order. Existing roads and communication networks were described as incapable of accommodating mechanized transport and metropolitan expansion, representing "a deplorable sight, lacking accuracy, flexibility and sense."⁸⁷ The document therefore proposed the classification of roads according to function, the segregation of pedestrian and vehicular movement, and the introduction of green belts separating major arteries.

The decision to publish the Charter within MARG reflected Mulk Raj Anand's larger intellectual investment in the circulation of international modernist discourse within India's cultural sphere. Anand consistently imagined intellectuals, architects, planners, and artists as mediating figures whose responsibility involved translating specialized knowledge into forms capable of shaping public consciousness. Their importance emerged through their capacity to organize cultural understanding during periods of historical transformation. MARG consequently functioned as a site where international architectural debates could acquire local relevance through interpretation, explanation, and public dissemination. The publication of the Charter exemplified this editorial vision through its attempt to familiarize Indian readers with the ideological and spatial principles that increasingly shaped modern planning across the world.

This engagement with urbanism acquired sharper definition in 1953 through MARG's publication of "Le Corbusier on Town Planning." The brief, manifesto-like editorial appeared during a decisive moment in the development of Chandigarh and directly connected Corbusier's

⁸⁶"Charter of Athens," 14.

⁸⁷"Charter of Athens," 14.

planning principles to the future of postcolonial India. The text framed urbanism through the organization of everyday life and repeatedly emphasized questions of domestic labor, collective living, circulation, accessibility, density, and technological infrastructure. Corbusier's conception of the city therefore extended beyond monumental planning schemes into the intimate routines of habitation and social interaction. The editorial summarized his principles through a series of propositions concerning the structure of the modern urban environment. Housing entered the discussion through questions of sociability, accessibility, circulation, and shared infrastructure that sought to reshape everyday experience within the modern metropolis. Corbusier's principles further emphasized proximity between habitation, labor, recreation, and cultural institutions through a spatial logic designed to reduce distance and organize movement across the city.

The editorial significance of the issue extended beyond the publication of Corbusier's ideas alone. MARG explicitly connected these planning principles to Chandigarh and framed the city as an important experiment in modern urbanism for the newly independent nation. The editors wrote

“MARG wishes to felicitate Le Corbusier on the award to him of the Gold Medal for Architecture by the Royal Academy of Great Britain. We hope to deal, in this journal, with the Chandigarh Scheme elaborated by Mr. Corbusier in collaboration with Albert Mayer, Maxwell Fry, Pierre Jeanneret and Jane Drew. Meanwhile, we print below some notes on Town Planning by Le Corbusier, which emphasise certain fundamentals of urbanism. These maxims have to be pondered over in our country and discussed, as we enter the era of planned construction.”⁸⁸

This statement reveals the extent to which MARG understood itself as an active participant in the cultural assimilation of modern planning discourse within India. The note framed Chandigarh as an intellectual problem requiring sustained public discussion and interpretation. The emphasis on reflection and discussion positioned architectural theory within

⁸⁸“Le Corbusier on Town Planning,” *MARG* 6, no. 3 (1953): 3.

the sphere of democratic cultural debate rather than within the isolated domain of professional expertise.

Volume 6, Issue 4 of *MARG* marked an important stage in the magazine's engagement with urban planning because it presented Chandigarh while the city remained under construction and many of its defining features existed only in the form of plans, drawings, and planning proposals. Bringing together essays by architects and planners alongside master plans, circulation diagrams, housing studies, climatic analyses, and architectural sketches, the issue offered readers a detailed account of the proposed relationship between housing, circulation, civic institutions, open space, and administration that would shape the future city. In doing so, *MARG* extended its longstanding effort to introduce architectural and planning debates to a wider readership, making Chandigarh one of the clearest examples of how the magazine translated professional discourse into a subject of public discussion.

Le Corbusier's "Urbanism" established the conceptual framework through which the issue approached the modern city. The essay moved fluidly across questions of habitation, domestic labor, circulation, sociability, territorial organization, mechanization, density, and biological order in order to define urbanism as the organization of collective human life at every scale of existence. Le Corbusier wrote

"Urbanity, indicating the existence of urbane relations between men, and, consequently, bringing forth a certain possibility of harmony, a great object, which itself is proposed to our contemporaries who struggle and move foolishly, entangled as they are in their unlimited riches, their inexhaustible possibilities."⁸⁹

The city appeared as an integrated environment whose roads, institutions, housing forms, and open spaces collectively shaped modern social relations. The diagrams published alongside the text mapped the interconnections linking habitation, sociability, economic activity, domestic

⁸⁹Le Corbusier, "Urbanism," *MARG* 6, no. 4 (1953): 10.

labour, technological infrastructure, and environmental conditions, presenting these categories as components of a larger framework through which the organization of collective life could be understood and planned (see fig. 4.1). One diagram grouped questions of housing, social relations, economic organization, and living conditions within a single conceptual framework, while another traced the relationship between industrial production, electrical power, artificial lighting, household technologies, and patterns of consumption. Read together with the accompanying statement that politics could either preserve or destroy natural harmony, these images presented the city as a complex system in which social welfare, economic production, technological infrastructure, and everyday domestic life were understood as interdependent elements requiring careful coordination.

The essay's movement between the scale of the territory and the scale of the domestic interior revealed the extent to which the modern dwelling occupied a central position within this framework. Le Corbusier emphasised that domestic space shaped bodily movement, labor, hygiene, sociability, and family structure. A significant portion of the essay therefore focused upon the figure of the housewife, the kitchen, the family hearth, and the daily rhythms of habitation. Corbusier wrote:

“The kitchen is a place where the mistress of the house spends a decisive part of her existence. [...] We shall occupy the kitchen as a control cabin, obeying the rules of the functions that enable us to feed, that is to say, to prepare the food, to cook, to wash and to store.[...] The family group assembles in one place.[...] The room opens out to the sun, the open space, and the verdure.”⁹⁰

Modern urbanism was imagined through a synthesis of technological rationality, climatic responsiveness, and collective social life. Questions of ventilation, sunlight, greenery, circulation, and domestic efficiency were integrated into a broader attempt to reorganize the

⁹⁰Le Corbusier, “Urbanism,” 11–12.

rhythms of modern existence. Le Corbusier's emphasis upon verandahs, loggias, sunshades, and climatic adaptation further positioned modern architecture within continuity with regional environmental practices rather than within an abstract universal vocabulary detached from place.

Politics give value or destroy natural harmony.

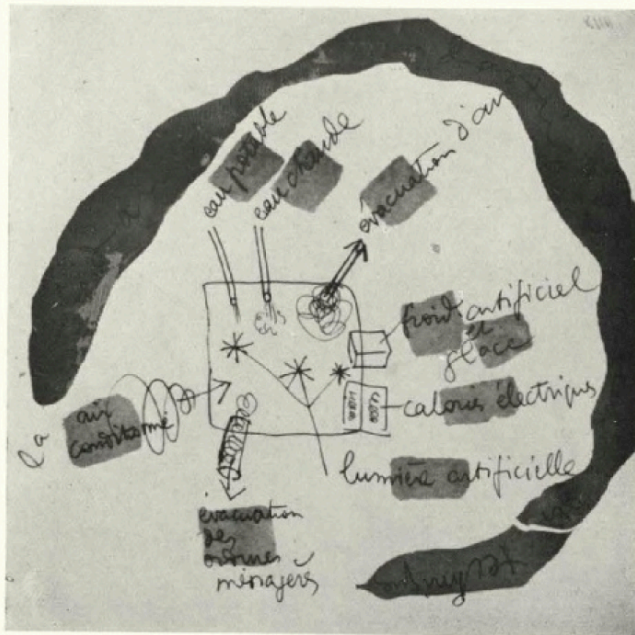
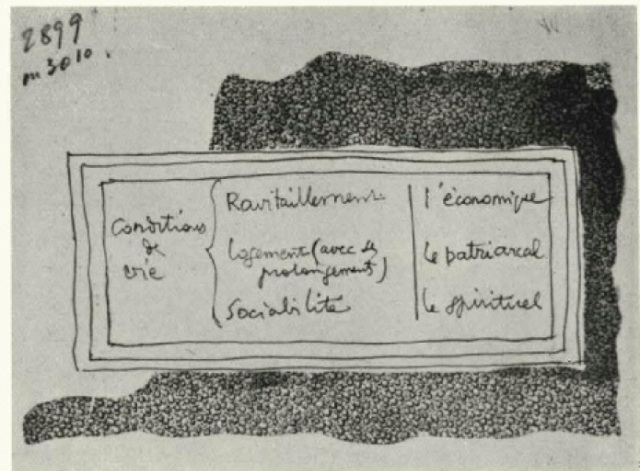


Fig. 1. The producing machine bringing abundance, freedom and advantages.

Figure 4.1. Le Corbusier's diagrams relating housing, social relations, economic organization, and living conditions within a single framework, alongside the dwelling as a "producing machine" of household technologies and consumption. From Le Corbusier, "Urbanism," *MARG* 6, no. 4 (1953): 10–18.

Le Corbusier argued that the disorder of contemporary cities emerged from the accumulation of incompatible forms of movement within the same spaces, producing congestion, inefficiency, and a continuous disruption of the rhythms through which the city operated. Circulation occupied a foundational position within Corbusier's conception of urbanism because he regarded movement as the principle through which the diverse functions of the modern city could be brought into a coherent relationship with one another. The rational organization of circulation therefore acquired significance as a means of establishing functional relationships across the urban territory, ensuring that each component of the city could operate according to its particular purpose while remaining integrated within a larger system of coordinated activity.

These concerns were illustrated through a series of sketches explaining the hierarchy of the seven roads, the differentiation of traffic according to function, the organization of neighbourhood units, and the relationship between circulation and biological order (see fig. 4.2). In both the accompanying text and visual material, roads were understood as the primary instruments through which the territory could be structured and sustained. Corbusier compared the seven roads to the circulatory, respiratory, and lymphatic systems of the human body, arguing that just as biological systems derive their effectiveness from the clear differentiation of functions and their harmonious integration within the organism, urban circulation required a similarly ordered distribution of movement across space.

Corbusier wrote

“Roads 1, 2, 3, etc. are no longer the sinisterly celebrated machines of death but become the sacred types of roads 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 capable of regulating modern circulation.”

“In biology, these systems are established rationally and functionally.”

“Precise organs, in the midst of an organism, create order.”

“The conditions of nature must be reintroduced in the life and work of men in order to bring cosmic and psycho physiological equilibrium.”⁹¹

⁹¹Le Corbusier, “Urbanism,” 12–18.

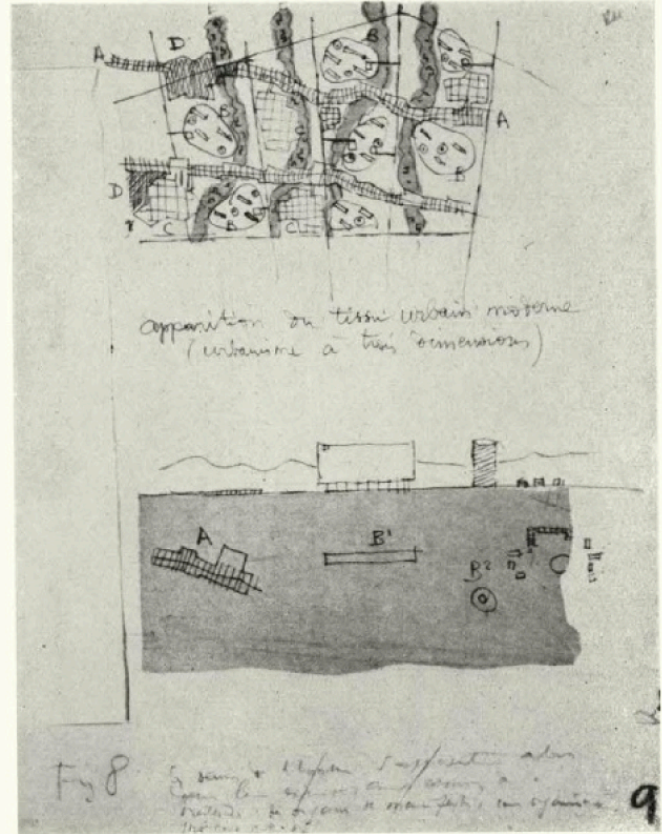
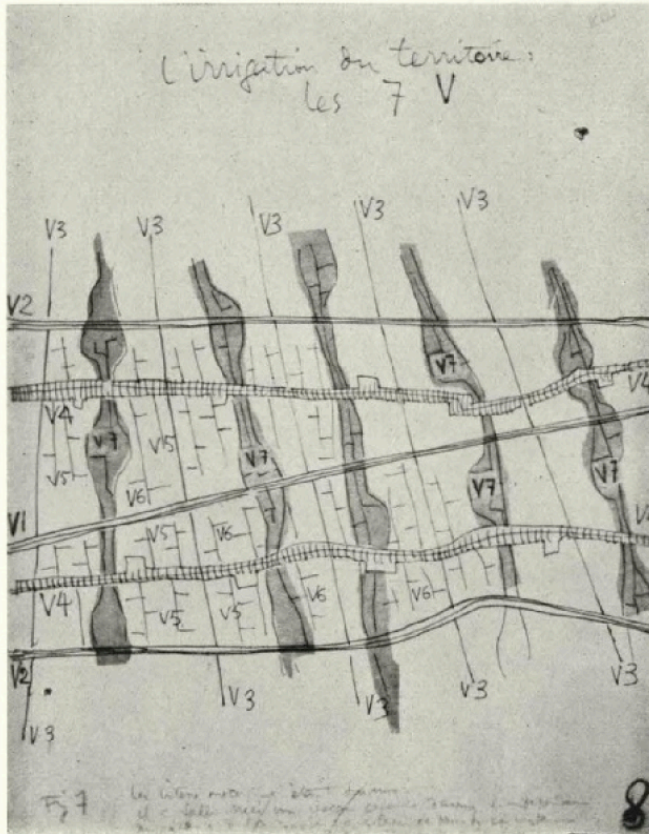


Figure 4.2. Le Corbusier's sketches of the hierarchy of the seven roads (the "7 V") and their integration within the organism of the city. From Le Corbusier, "Urbanism," *MARG* 6, no. 4 (1953): 15.

The repeated analogy between the city and the biological organism reinforced a conception of planning grounded in regulation, hierarchy, circulation, and coordinated social function. Urbanism became a science of spatial order through which collective equilibrium could be restored after the disruptions of industrial modernity.

Le Corbusier further used the road hierarchy to explain how residential units, commercial activities, schools, clubs, workshops, agricultural land, and industrial establishments could be distributed across the territory while remaining connected through an integrated system of movement. These concerns were visualized through a series of territorial diagrams that sought to

demonstrate how human occupation could be organized in accordance with geography, patterns of movement, and economic activity (see Figure 4.3). The diagrams presented settlements, transportation routes, agricultural zones, and centres of exchange as interconnected components within a larger spatial system whose coherence depended upon the rational distribution of functions across the landscape. Particularly revealing was the diagram entitled "All is related," which mapped urban development through a network of territorial connections extending far beyond the boundaries of any individual city. The accompanying images consistently emphasized relationships, continuity, and interdependence, suggesting that urbanism could no longer be understood solely at the scale of the city and instead required a regional framework capable of coordinating settlement, production, and circulation across larger territories.⁹²

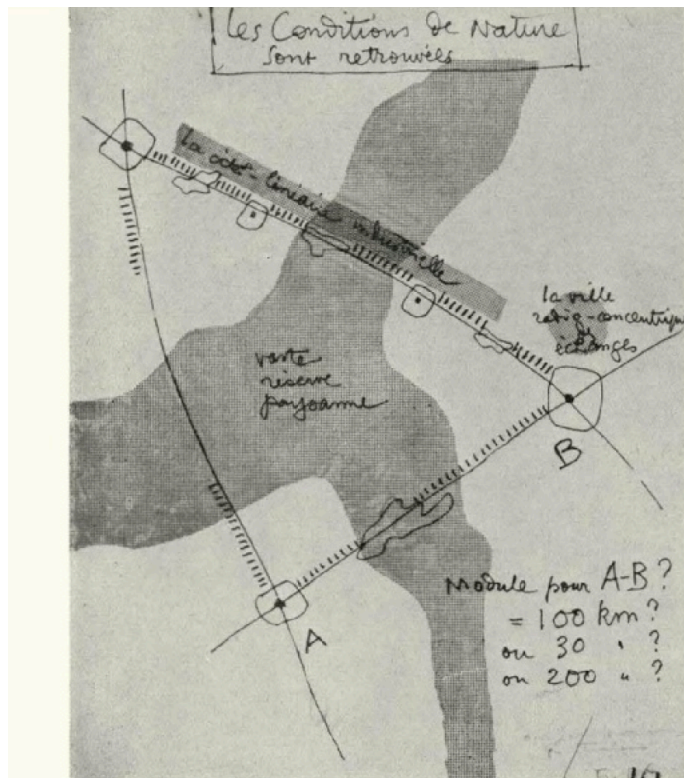
Questions of density, measurement, and proportion occupied an equally important position within this discussion. Corbusier argued that modern planning required the precise regulation of population densities and the careful calibration of relationships between built form, open space, and human activity. These concerns reflected the intellectual trajectory that he had begun developing in *The Modulor* (1948)⁹³, where systems of proportion derived from the human body were proposed as a basis for architectural and spatial order. Published in 1953, the essay appeared during the period in which Corbusier was continuing to elaborate these ideas, later collected in *Modulor 2* (1955)⁹⁴, and the emphasis on measurement, scale, and numerical coordination throughout the article reveals the extent to which questions of urban planning had become closely intertwined with his broader search for a universal system of spatial organization.⁹⁵

⁹²Le Corbusier, "Urbanism," 17.

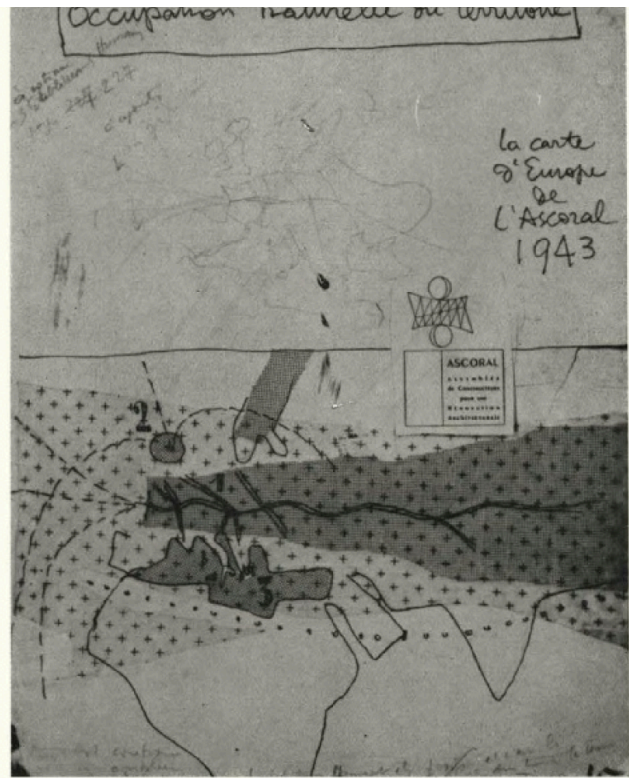
⁹³Le Corbusier, *The Modulor and Modulor 2* (Walter de Gruyter, 2000).

⁹⁴Le Corbusier, *Modulor and Modulor 2*.

⁹⁵Le Corbusier, "Urbanism," 17.



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Fig. 13. Living occupation of the territory. Fig. 14. All is related. All is continuous in the variety of cases. The solutions can be positive and it is the radiation of a new civilization on earth with total participation of races, climates and geographies. But if solutions are negative, cemeteries will spread over the earth as on the seas.

Figure 4.3. Le Corbusier's territorial diagrams, "Living occupation of the territory" and "All is related," mapping settlement, circulation, and exchange across the region. From Le Corbusier, "Urbanism," *MARG* 6, no. 4 (1953): 17.

Only after establishing these principles of circulation, settlement, and territorial coordination did Corbusier conclude by returning to the framework of the Athens Charter, identifying habitation, work, the cultivation of the body and mind, and circulation as the four fundamental functions of urbanism. The city was ultimately presented as one component within a larger territorial order structured through what he termed the three human establishments, namely agriculture, industry, and exchange, whose coordination would restore the relationship between human settlement, productive activity, and the natural environment.

Jane Drew's "On the Chandigarh Scheme" shifted the issue from theoretical exposition toward the practical realities of Chandigarh's emerging plan. Writing as a member of the Chandigarh team, Drew presented the project as an attempt to reconcile modern planning with the specific environmental, social, and economic conditions of postcolonial India. Her essay emphasized that Chandigarh had emerged from a series of practical decisions concerning climate, circulation, housing, administration, and population growth, situating the city within the realities of nation building rather than treating it solely as an architectural experiment. Drew wrote -

"I stressed the traditional background and the rapture Gandhi and others have brought to it, and at the same time the determination of those in control to find a way which, while adopting the scientific and technical knowledge of our time, was not a slavish use of it, but a means to an Indian solution of an Indian problem."⁹⁶

A substantial portion of Drew's discussion focused upon the organization of the city's circulation system, which she described through the hierarchy of the seven roads developed by Le Corbusier. She explained how different categories of traffic were distributed across separate routes serving distinct functions within the urban structure, from inter-city movement and commercial transport to local access roads, residential streets, and bicycle paths. This system was intended to protect residential districts from through traffic while maintaining efficient connections between housing, workplaces, markets, schools, and administrative institutions. In Drew's account, the hierarchy of roads formed the spatial framework through which the city's various activities could be coordinated across a rapidly expanding urban territory.

Equally significant was Drew's attention to the sector as the fundamental unit of urban organization. She described each sector as a largely self-contained neighbourhood incorporating

⁹⁶Jane Drew, "On the Chandigarh Scheme," *MARG* 6, no. 4 (1953): 19.

schools, shopping facilities, open spaces, community institutions, and housing within walking distance of everyday activities. The sector consequently emerged as the principal medium through which the larger planning ambitions of Chandigarh were translated into the routines of daily life. This concern with neighbourhood organization echoed earlier discussions within *MARG* regarding housing, community facilities, education, and collective welfare, revealing the extent to which Chandigarh was understood as an environment designed to integrate social infrastructure directly into the residential landscape.

Drew's most distinctive contribution, however, lay in her sustained engagement with climate and environmental adaptation. Detailed discussions of brick screens, sun breakers, verandahs, orientation strategies, and ventilation systems positioned Chandigarh as a city shaped through careful engagement with local environmental conditions. The issue included sectional drawings of the Secretariat (see figure 4.4) and housing prototypes that demonstrated how sunlight, airflow, and shade informed architectural form.

Otto Koenigsberger's "Chandigarh The First and the Revised Projects" introduced another important dimension to the issue through its comparative analysis of Albert Mayer's original scheme and the revised Corbusier plan. The article revealed Chandigarh as a project shaped through revision, negotiation, technical reassessment, and collaborative planning rather than through singular authorship alone. Koenigsberger carefully explained how topographical studies, hydrological investigations, and infrastructural considerations transformed the city's organization over time.

The comparative plans reproduced alongside the article (see fig. 5) allowed readers to visually trace the transformation of Chandigarh's urban structure from Mayer's curvilinear neighborhood groupings toward Corbusier's more geometrically disciplined organization.

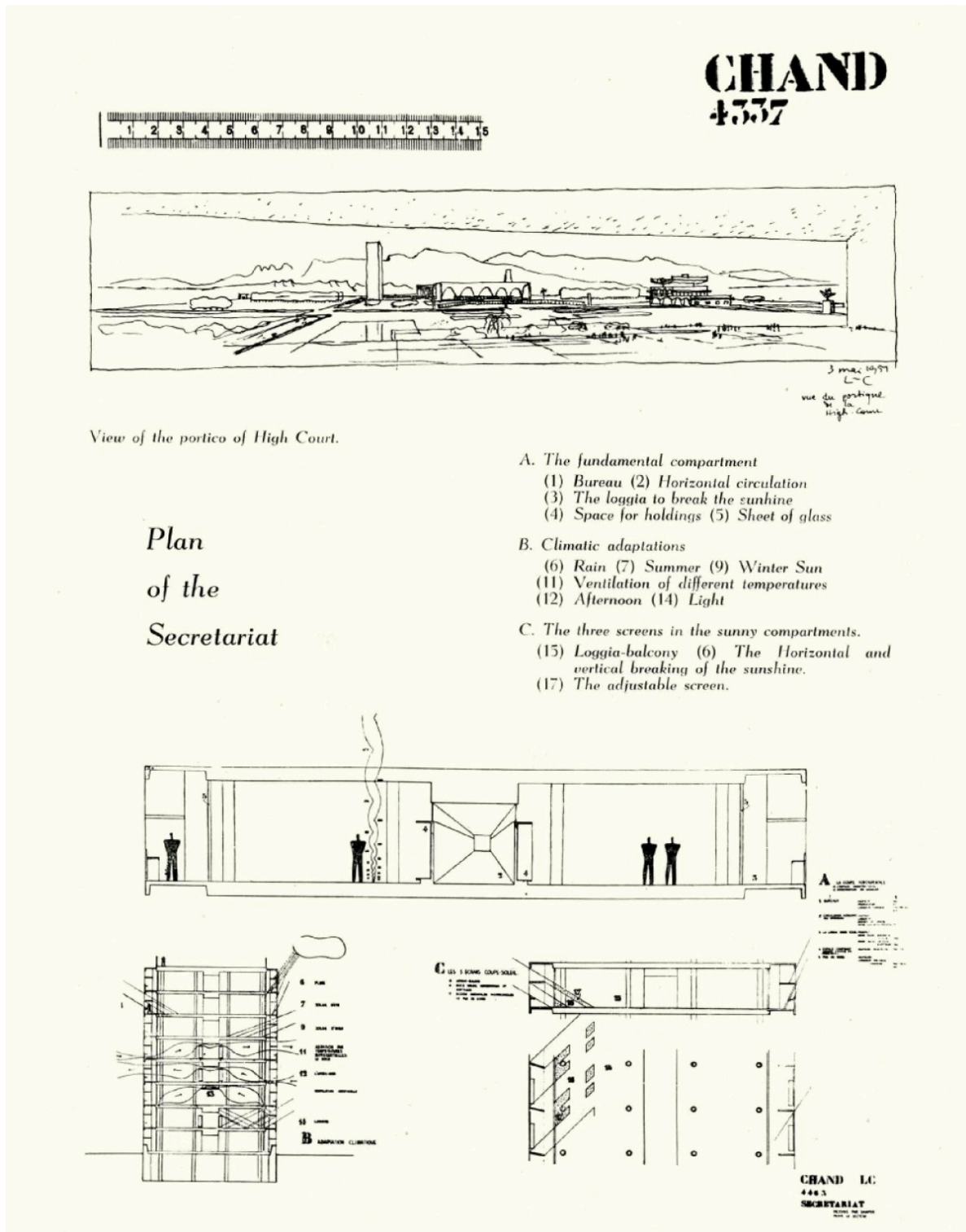


Figure 4.4. Sketches by the Chandigarh team of the Secretariat building, showing the plan, sectional studies, and climatic adaptations. From Jane Drew, "On the Chandigarh Scheme," *MARG* 6, no. 4 (1953): 21.

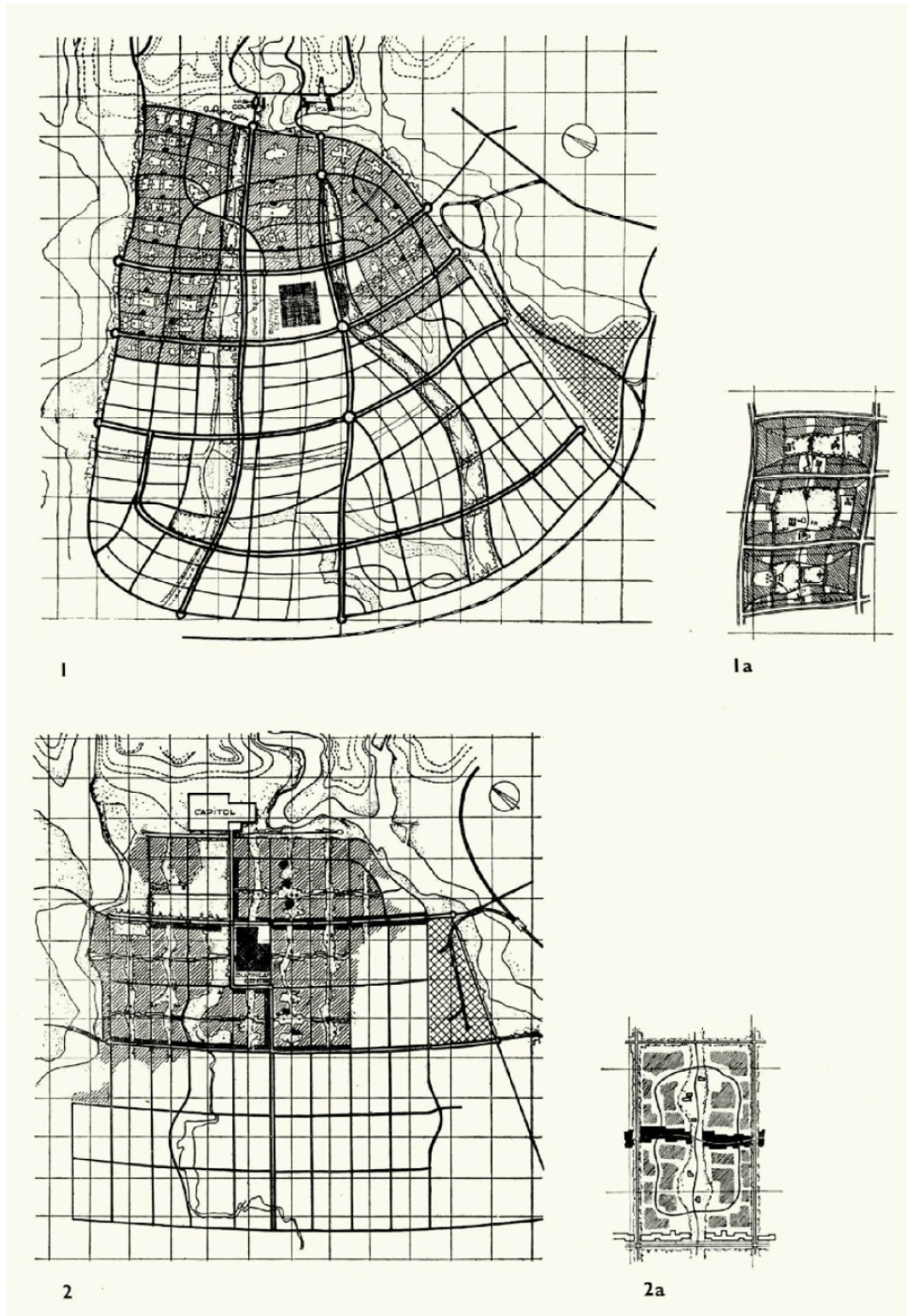


Figure 4.5. Comparative plans of Chandigarh by Albert Mayer (top) and Le Corbusier (bottom), with typical neighbourhood layouts. From Otto Koenigsberger, "Chandigarh—The First and the Revised Projects," *MARG* 6, no. 4 (1953): 24.

Koenigsberger's analysis consequently exposed the city as an evolving process shaped through environmental realities, political decisions, planning ideologies, and technical adjustment. This openness to revision reinforced the issue's larger pedagogical character. Chandigarh emerged not as a finished monument but as a living experiment in modern urbanism whose principles, systems, and forms required continuous public interpretation.

By the mid 1950s, Chandigarh had already begun to occupy a powerful symbolic position within the pages of MARG. Through essays, diagrams, plans, sectional studies, and theoretical reflections, the magazine gradually constructed a framework through which readers could understand the city as more than an administrative capital under construction. Chandigarh emerged as the spatial synthesis of many of the concerns that had shaped the magazine since its founding, including the cultivation of aesthetic sensibility, the relationship between architecture and collective life, the pedagogical role of planning, the reorganization of domestic and civic environments, and the search for a modern urban order appropriate to post Independence India. The city entered public consciousness through continuous processes of explanation, visualization, and interpretation that familiarized readers with the language of modern planning long before the project reached completion.

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Chapter Five

City as Manifesto: Marg's Chandigarh

The Chandigarh Special Issue of 1961

When MARG devoted the whole of its December 1961 number to Chandigarh, the magazine brought to cohesion an engagement with the city that had been developing across more than a decade of editorial attention, and it did so by gathering within a single volume the voices of nearly all the figures who had been responsible for translating the project from drawing into stone. Appearing as Volume XV, Number One, the issue presented Chandigarh as an inhabited and largely realised reality at a moment when the major monuments of the Capitol had been raised and the residential sectors had begun to fill with the populations for whom they had been planned. The contributors included Le Corbusier himself, together with Pierre Jeanneret, Maxwell Fry, Jane Drew, and Mrs. U. E. Chowdhury, alongside the Indian architects, administrators, and engineers who had carried the project forward, among them M. N. Sharma, Jeet Malhotra, Aditya Prakash, B. P. Mathur, N. S. Lamba, A. R. Prabhawalkar, G. R. Nangea, and M. S. Randhawa, so that the issue acquired the character of a collective self-presentation by the makers of the city and not the character of external commentary upon it.

This collaborative authorship lent the number an authority that distinguished it from the magazine's earlier treatments of Chandigarh, because readers were now offered an account of the city composed by the very people who had designed its buildings, regulated its growth, planted its avenues, and engineered its infrastructure, and the issue consequently operated at once as a documentary record and as a sustained argument for the cultural significance of the completed work. The editorial acknowledgement that prefaced the volume made this participatory character

explicit, recording the magazine's indebtedness to the architects and to the wider community of patrons and labourers whose cooperation had made the city possible, and in doing so it situated Chandigarh within a national project that extended well beyond the figure of its principal designer.

The editorial expressed this collective debt in terms that fused architectural admiration with political and social aspiration.

MARG wishes to record its gratitude to Le Corbusier and his team of architects for the devotion they have shown in helping us to compile this number. The generous and enlightened attitude of Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon revealed him to be one of the few politicians with an imaginative grasp of architectural problems. The inspiration given to the Chandigarh project by the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, as well as P. N. Thapar, P. L. Varma, M. S. Randhawa and many others, who are not frightened of the new, must be acclaimed. And the thousands of craftsmen, stone workers, brick layers and ordinary labourers must be remembered. Above all, the instinctive courage of the Punjabi people, who have adapted themselves to the poetry of buildings of the machine age, inspite of several difficulties, must be greeted by all those who wish the rest of India to go forward with experiments in its various building programmes.⁹⁷

The structure of the issue reproduced in its table of contents the conceptual framework that MARG had absorbed from the Athens Charter during the previous decade, dividing the material into the categories of the Master Plan, Living, Working, the Care of Body and Spirit, and a concluding group of Miscellaneous studies that closed with a reflection upon aesthetics. This arrangement translated the four functions of urbanism that the Charter had identified, namely dwelling, work, the cultivation of the body and the mind, and circulation, into the editorial architecture of the volume itself, so that the sequence of essays followed the same logic of functional classification that governed the plan of the city they described. The reader who moved through the issue therefore re-enacted in the act of reading the very ordering principle that organised Chandigarh on the ground, encountering first the territorial framework of the

⁹⁷. "Editorial Note," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 1.

Master Plan, then the residential environments of Living, then the institutions of Working, and finally the landscape and recreational provisions gathered under the Care of Body and Spirit, before arriving at the more discursive meditations on civic form and aesthetic value with which the volume concluded.

The layout reinforced this functional ordering through a deliberate use of coloured papers and a generous distribution of photographs, plans, sections, and sketches across the pages, so that the visual fabric of the issue carried as much of its argument as the prose. The cover reproduced in colour one of the tapestries designed for the High Court (see fig. 5.1), and the editorial recorded that every sketch used throughout the number had been drawn by Le Corbusier himself, with the consequence that the architect's graphic hand accompanied the reader from the opening pages to the closing essay and bound the disparate contributions into a single visual register.

Mulk Raj Anand's editorial that opened the volume under the title "Chandigarh" performed a decisive act of cultural legitimation by placing the new capital within a genealogy of Indian planned cities that extended across four centuries of building. By identifying Chandigarh as the third in a sequence of great planned cities, the editorial claimed for the modernist capital a continuity with the most celebrated achievements of Indian urbanism, and it thereby answered in advance the objection that the city represented an alien imposition upon the subcontinent. The argument proceeded by aligning Le Corbusier's capital with the imperial vision of Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri and with the astronomical and commercial intelligence of Sawai Jai Singh at Jaipur, so that the machine-age city took its place within a tradition of sovereign planning understood as one of the highest expressions of the Indian people.



Figure 5.1. Cover of the Chandigarh special issue, reproducing in colour one of the tapestries designed for the High Court. From *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961), cover.

The editorial established this lineage in its opening declaration.

There have been three planned cities in India, which, in the context of their own time, represent the highest achievements in architecture of the Indian people.⁹⁸

Having situated Chandigarh within this ancestral sequence, the editorial advanced a reading of Le Corbusier as a figure whose work had effected a social transformation reaching far beyond the level of the monuments of the Capitol and into the everyday life of the city's ordinary inhabitants. The text characterised the architect as a painter-poet whose buildings had released the lower and middle ranks of Indian society into a new domestic dignity, and it framed the provision of verandahs, hygienic kitchens, sanitary fittings, and private gardens as instruments of a wider emancipation that carried within it the seeds of an egalitarian aspiration. This formulation registered with particular clarity the humanist conviction that had animated MARG since its founding, namely that the organisation of the built environment was inseparable from the cultivation of a more just and dignified collective existence.

The editorial pressed this claim through a passage that read the architecture of Chandigarh as a vehicle of social revolution.

Le Corbusier has indeed carried out the bourgeois revolution in Indian architecture, by enabling the middle and lower middle classes to expand themselves into the four to five-roomed life. And if he could not get over the class system, and divided the rich from the poor, all the same he released a social revolution in the lives of the poor by giving them verandahs, smokeless kitchens, flush lavatories, front gardens and the urges to demand a classless and casteless society.⁹⁹

The editorial reinforced this interpretation by invoking the authority of the Prime Minister, whose endorsement of the project had become an emblem of the alliance between

⁹⁸. Mulk Raj Anand, "Chandigarh: A New Planned City [Editorial]," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 2.

⁹⁹. Anand, "Chandigarh," 4.

political vision and architectural ambition that had made Chandigarh possible.¹⁰⁰ The citation of Nehru's judgement allowed the magazine to present the city as the spatial embodiment of the national modernity that the new state sought to realise, while acknowledging in the same breath that the project remained open to criticism and disagreement. The statement said:

The Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, has said, in an inspired moment that: "Chandigarh represents the most powerful idea in Indian architecture of our time, inspite of the many things in it with which one may disagree". Almost all the enlightened young architects of India will endorse this statement. And they would add: "Chandigarh has become the best laboratory for the experiments in town planning and building for the cities and towns of India as well as a platform for a continuous modern symposium on the principles and practice of architecture in our time."¹⁰¹

The description of the city as a laboratory and as a continuing symposium captured precisely the pedagogical function that MARG had assigned to Chandigarh throughout the preceding decade, and it confirmed that the special issue was conceived as an instrument through which the experiment might be communicated to a national audience of architects, administrators, and educated citizens. The placement of this declaration beside the image of the Modulor in steel (see fig. 5.2), the proportional figure that Le Corbusier had derived from the dimensions of the human body, anchored the editorial's humanism in the visual language of the project itself, since the Modulor proposed the measure of the human being as the foundation of all architectural order.

The first major section of the issue presented Le Corbusier's own account of the Master Plan, and it opened with the Open Hand sketch (see fig. 5.3) and a narrative of origins that traced

¹⁰⁰. Vikramaditya Prakash, *Chandigarh's Le Corbusier: The Struggle for Modernity in Postcolonial India* (University of Washington Press, 2002).

¹⁰¹. Anand, "Chandigarh," 4.

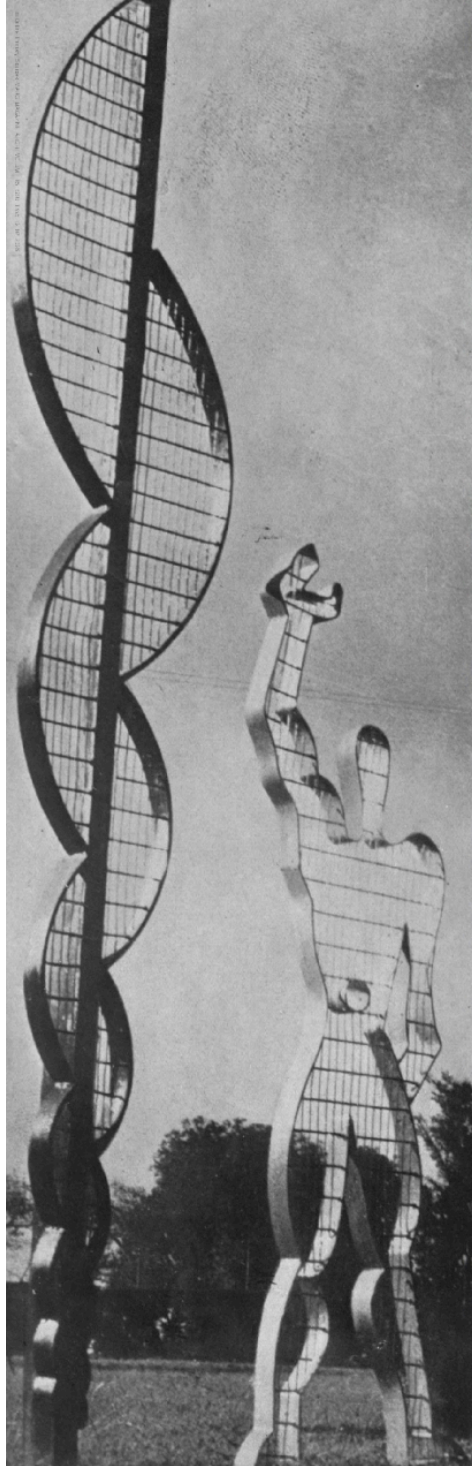
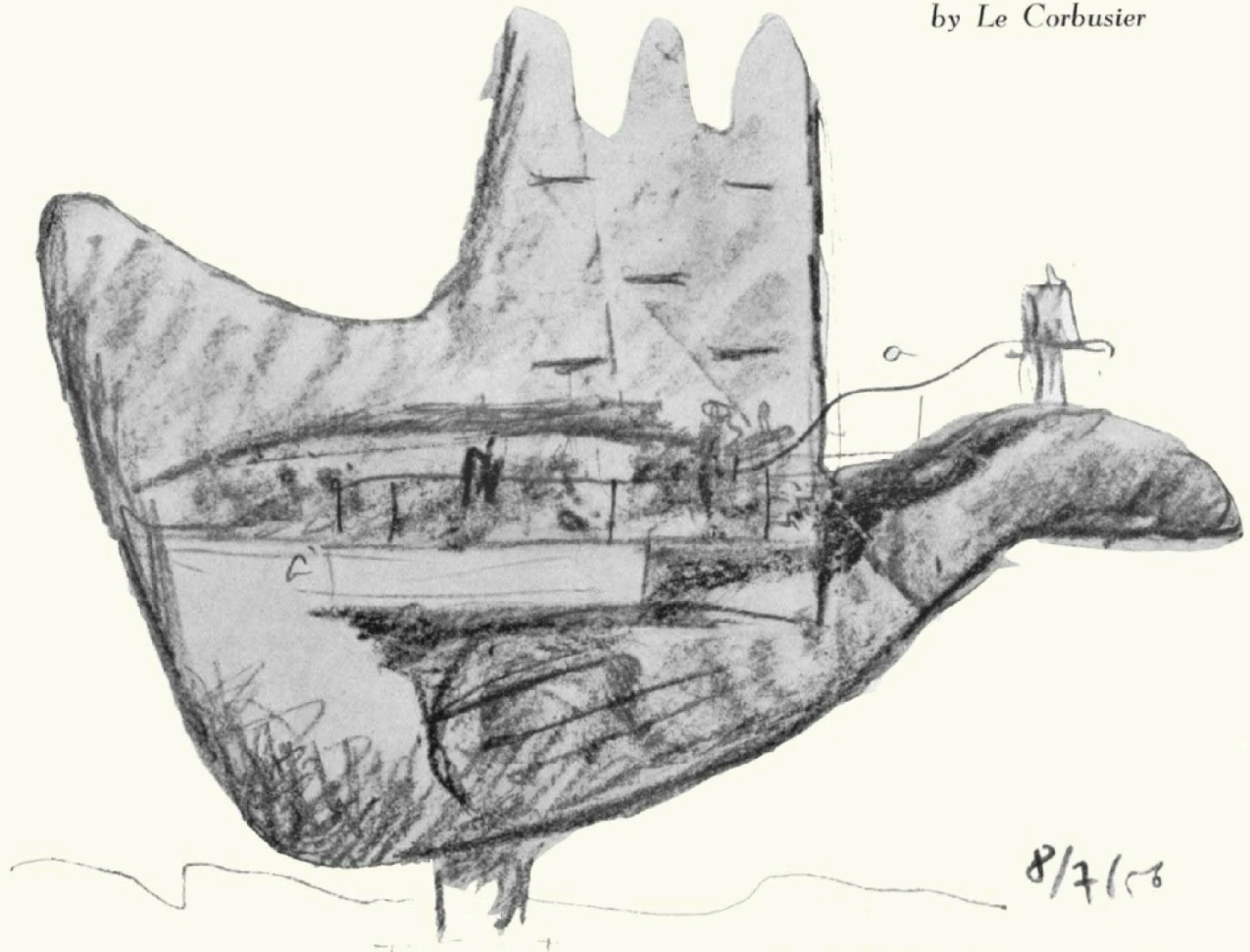


Figure 5.2. The Modulor figure rendered in steel, the proportional measure Le Corbusier derived from the dimensions of the human body. From Mulk Raj Anand, "Chandigarh: A New Planned City [Editorial]," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 2–4.

I. THE MASTER PLAN

by Le Corbusier



*The Open Hand: "Open to receive open to give".
Reproduced from "The complete Works of -Le
Corbusier 1910-60" Girsberger Editions.*

Figure 5.3. Le Corbusier's sketch of the Open Hand, the monument raised before the Himalaya at the head of the Capitol. From Le Corbusier, "The Master Plan," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 5–19.

the commission back to the visit of two Punjabi officials to his Paris studio in the winter of 1950. This personal recollection performed an important rhetorical function, because it converted the institutional history of the project into a story of friendship, persuasion, and professional continuity that connected the new Indian capital to the older European avant-garde from which its principal designers had emerged. The account named the chain of appointments through

which the design team had been assembled and recorded the architect's insistence upon engaging his cousin and longstanding collaborator, thereby presenting the genesis of Chandigarh as the renewal of a creative partnership formed two decades earlier.

Le Corbusier described these origins in a passage of characteristic directness.

In November 1950, Messrs. P. N. Thapar and P. L. Varma came from Simla to see me in Paris, asking me to name two architects who could be appointed by the Punjab Government in view of building the new capital of the East-Punjab, on a plateau situated at 400 m, at the foot of the Himalaya. Discussion, conversations, etc...: a month later, my visitors returned asking me to accept to be, in this concern, the "Government Architectural Adviser". In London they had appointed Maxwell Fry and his wife, Jane Drew, as permanent architects at Simla and Chandigarh. I asked them to engage Pierre Jeanneret with whom I had worked 35 rue de Sèvres in perfect friendship from 1922 to 1939. And this was realized.¹⁰²

The body of the essay then set out the conceptual apparatus through which Le Corbusier had organised the city, beginning with the distinction between the responsibilities he had reserved for himself and those he had delegated to the permanent architects. He defined his own contribution as the Master Plan, the principle of the Sectors, and the design of the Capitol with its government buildings and its monuments, while assigning the entirety of the housing, the schools, and the hospitals to Fry, Drew, and Jeanneret, and this division of labour clarified for the reader the hierarchical structure of authorship that lay behind the apparent unity of the city.

He stated the scope of his own responsibility in unambiguous terms.

I am responsible at Chandigarh for the "Master Plan", with the principle of the "SECTORS" (town-planning), of the "CAPITOL" (the 4 Government buildings: High-Court, Secretariat, Assembly, "Museum of Knowledge") including the "PARK" which receives them with their monuments (architecture and town-planning). All the "housing", homes of the ministers up to the houses for the peons, the schools, the hospitals, etc., etc., were built, without my participation, by the above-mentioned permanent architects and under their entire responsibility.¹⁰³

¹⁰². Le Corbusier, "The Master Plan," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 5.

¹⁰³. Le Corbusier, "Master Plan," 6.

The essay developed at length the doctrine of the seven roads that had already appeared within MARG's pages in 1953, and it presented the Sector as the fundamental cellular unit of the city, an enclosure of roughly eight hundred metres by twelve hundred metres bounded by fast traffic roads and entered only at a limited number of points. Le Corbusier described the Sector as the container of family life and tied its dimensions to the diurnal cycle of twenty-four hours through which the rhythms of habitation unfold, so that the unit of urban planning acquired at once a spatial, a biological, and a temporal definition. The discussion of the seven roads and the subsequent addition of an eighth category for the bicycle dealt with evident satisfaction upon the principle that no dwelling should open directly upon the channels of mechanical traffic.

This rule he singled out as a genuine innovation in the discipline of town planning.

And this (a novelty in town-planning and decisive) was applied at Chandigarh: no house (or building) door opens on the thoroughfare of rapid traffic. The sector is crossed through inside, in its half, by its shopping street, reassembling on a line the functions which are necessary to daily life: food supply, artisans, police, fire-brigade, circulating-library, cinema, restaurants, stores or co-operatives, etc... These services are set up in a line of 800 meters, on one side (facing the North), to avoid dispersion and frequent road-crossings as well as affluence and sun heat.¹⁰⁴

The continuity between this account and the discussion of circulation that the chapter has already examined in the 1953 issue is unmistakable, since the same analogy between the roads of the city and the systems of the living organism reappears in the 1961 essay and confirms the persistence of the biological conception of urbanism across nearly a decade of the magazine's engagement.

The essay proceeded to describe the buildings of the Capitol in detail, accompanied by photographs by Jeet Malhotra (see figs. 5.4-5.6), devoting careful attention to the High Court with its parasol roof and its sun-control, to the Secretariat with its undulating glass panels and its

¹⁰⁴. Le Corbusier, "Master Plan," 9.



15. *Interior of the High Court Portico. Photo by Jeet Malhotra*

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16. *Texture of the Gunited surface on the wall of the High Court. Photo by Stella Snead*
 17. *The High Court with the pond. Photo by Jeet Malhotra*



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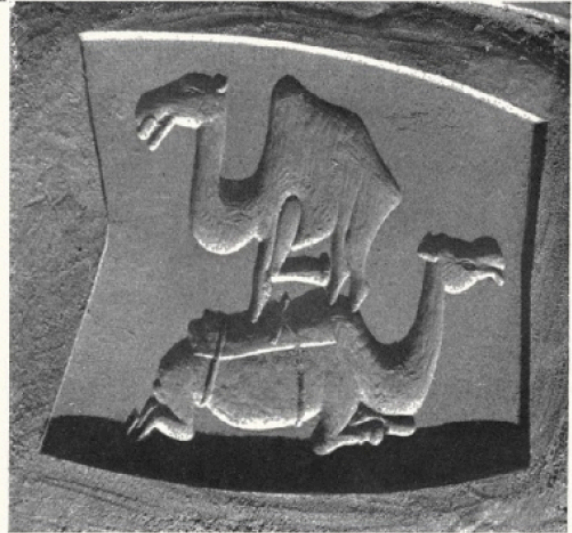
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Figure 5.4. The High Court, with its parasol roof and its sun-control. From Le Corbusier, "The Master Plan," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 5–19. Photograph by Jeet Malhotra.



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20. *Part of the Tapestry in the High Court. Reproduced from 'The Complete Works of Le Corbusier, 1910-60', Girsberger Editions*

21. *A Fish: Sign casted in the Assembly Building*

22. *Two Camels: Sign casted in the Assembly Building*

23. *Sculpture inside the Assembly Building*

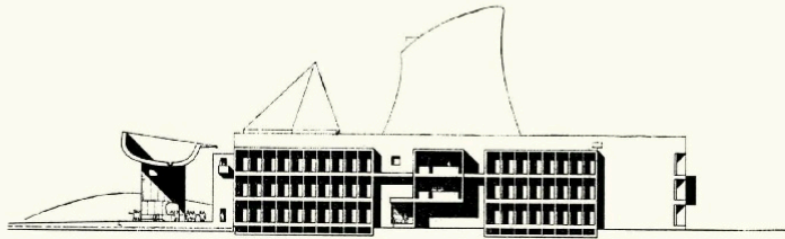
Sculptures by Le Corbusier and photos by Jeet Malhotra



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Figure 5.5. The Secretariat, with its undulating glass panels. From Le Corbusier, "The Master Plan," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 5–19. Photograph by Jeet Malhotra.



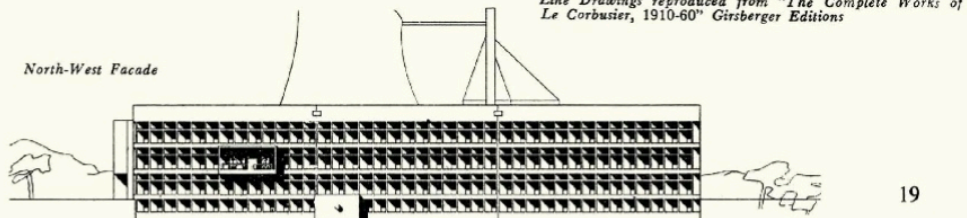
North-East Facade



27. The full view of the Assembly Building under construction

28. The main dome of the Assembly Building under construction

Photos by Jeet Malhotra



North-West Facade

Figure 5.6. The Assembly, with its rough concrete and its great enamelled door. From Le Corbusier, "The Master Plan," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 5–19. Photograph by Jeet Malhotra.

device for trans-aeration that Le Corbusier named *the aerator*, and to the Assembly with its rough concrete and its great enamelled door, and these descriptions translated the technical accomplishments of the project into a language of poetry and invention that matched the editorial's portrait of the architect as a maker of symbols. The closing pages of the section enumerated the monuments that the architect had installed upon the drawings of the Capitol, among them the figures of the twenty-four solar hours, the course of the sun between the solstices, the Tower of Shade, the Modulor, the Martyrs Monument, and the Open Hand, and they identified these signs as the symbolic crystallisation of the constructor's deepest preoccupations.

The account of the Open Hand gave the clearest expression to the symbolic programme that the architect had attached to the Capitol.

There remains the Monument of THE OPEN HAND which, from the beginning, in 1952, occupied the plan of the Capitol, there, where raised before the Himalaya, it says: "open to receive" "open to give" which is the ineluctable destiny of the Mechanical civilization which today, making use of its machines in a dangerous way, forgets that its open hand shall be filled with consumer goods. And these objects shall go to find their necessary objective even if the whole world were against them.¹⁰⁵

The sketches that accompanied this section, all drawn by Le Corbusier and reproduced from the Girsberger edition of his collected works, carried the symbolic argument visually through the recurring silhouette of the Open Hand, the diagram of the Sector with its differentiated roads, and the perspectival studies of the Capitol that set the buildings against the distant profile of the Himalaya (see fig. 5.7).

¹⁰⁵. Le Corbusier, "Master Plan," 14.

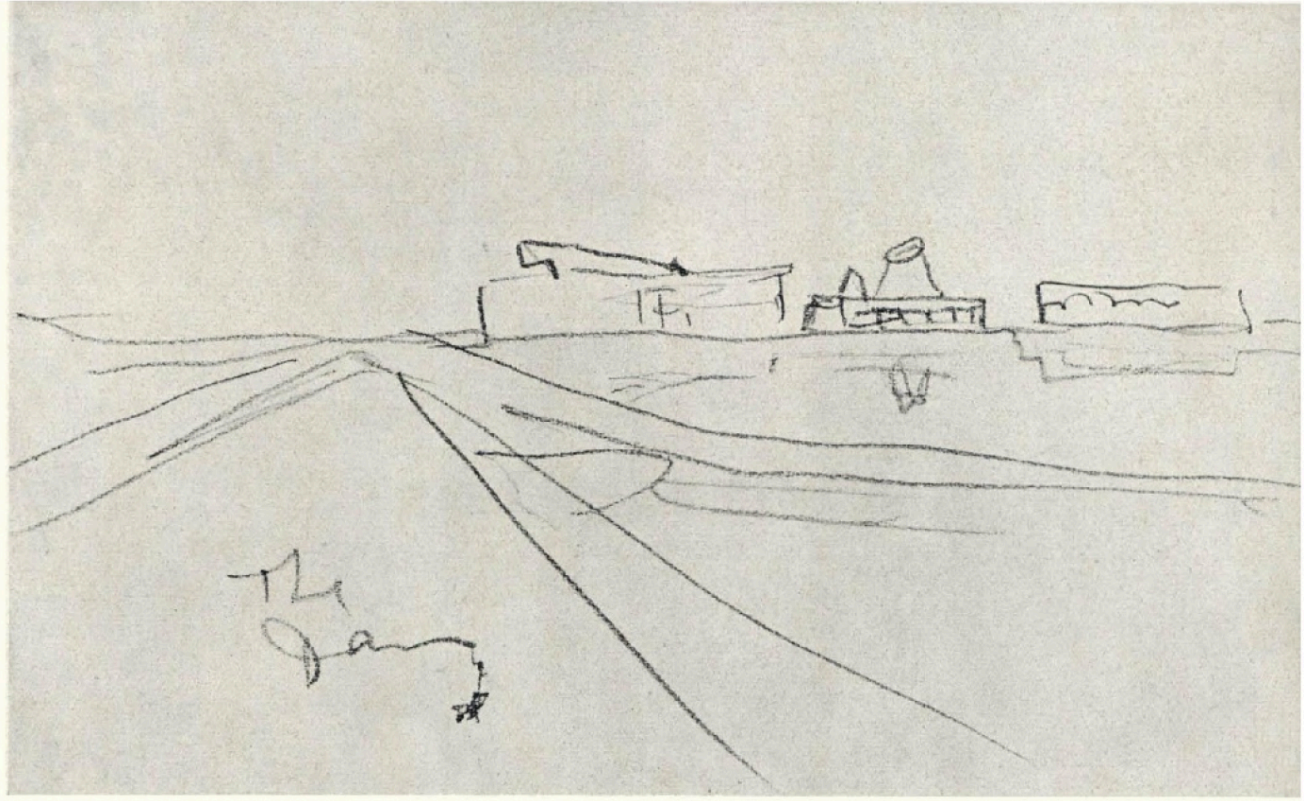


Figure 5.7. Perspectival study of the Capitol set against the distant profile of the Himalaya. From Le Corbusier, “The Master Plan,” *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 5–19.

Living, Climate, and the Hierarchy of Dwelling

The section devoted to Living opened, in effect, with Maxwell Fry’s reflective essay on the problems of Chandigarh architecture, which served as a critical preface to the more descriptive studies of housing that followed. Fry approached the city from the standpoint of an architect who had developed, together with Jane Drew, a body of work adapted to the humid tropics of West Africa, and he identified climate as the determining factor in the architecture of Chandigarh and as the surest route to a building practice rooted in the deepest realities of the country. His argument connected the forms of the city to the agricultural and customary life of the region and treated the response to sun, wind, and dust as the foundation upon which an

authentic architecture might be raised, thereby extending the environmental concern that the chapter has already traced through Jane Drew's earlier contribution.

Fry stated this conviction with the assurance of long experience in tropical building.

But, apart from this, climate has been the determining factor in Chandigarh architecture, and so it should be. There is no surer way to a suitable architecture, and one that is in accord with the deepest realities of the country; for it is climate that dictates agriculture, moulds customs and affects even religion. Climate is a great element in India.¹⁰⁶

Fry also offered a reasoned defence of the monumentality of the Capitol, arguing that the chief buildings of the state were obliged both to perform their functions and to express the dignity and the power of the institutions they housed, and he located within this obligation a justifiable element of exaggeration that warranted the grand scale of the law courts and the assembly. His meditation upon the brute concrete of the buildings, which he understood as an elemental and immemorial material appropriate to the monumental ambition of the group, supplied the issue with a conceptual vocabulary for the rough surfaces that the photographs documented in such detail, and it allowed the reader to interpret the textured concrete of the High Court and the Secretariat as the deliberate expression of an architectural intention rather than as the incidental result of an economical technique.

He explained the rationale of this monumental exaggeration in terms drawn from the symbolic demands of state architecture.

In Corbusier's Capitol group of buildings, a fourth factor is involved for these buildings have not only to be what they are, the chief buildings of state government, but must look like it. In all buildings of this order, there is a justifiable element of exaggeration. Thus Law Courts, in order to embody the grandeur of the conception of law and order and the power they represent, are always made rather more than life size; and railway terminals must stand as monuments to the achievement of the whole railway system.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶. E. Maxwell Fry, "Problems of Chandigarh Architecture," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 20.

¹⁰⁷. Fry, "Problems of Chandigarh Architecture," 20.

Jane Drew's essay on Sector 22 returned the reader from the monumental scale of the Capitol to the intimate scale of the residential neighbourhood, and it presented the Sector as the home of daily life and as the principal medium through which the planning ambitions of Chandigarh entered the routines of ordinary inhabitants. Drew described the Sector as a largely self-contained unit, protected from fast traffic by its bounding roads and crossed internally by a band of green and by a market street, and she explained how the social composition of each Sector determined the density of its housing and the extent of its open space. Her treatment of Sector 22 carried a particular social charge, because it described the Sector as one of the districts inhabited by the poorest members of the city's population and presented the design of their housing as an attempt to transform the constraint of poverty into the basis of a communal architecture.

Drew articulated this conversion of economic limitation into a principle of community design.

Sector 22 is one of the sectors where the very poorest people live, the peons and sweepers, and a very great deal of attention was paid to housing these groups. The owners were too poor to own motor cars. This poverty was turned into an asset and the terrace housing made into a total street and community design in a way impossible in the detached housing of the rich. Thus the street, or square, formed a whole design, varying somewhat, dependent on whether the housing faced south, north, east or west, and the streets were kept narrow with shade trees planted on the one side.¹⁰⁸

An axonometric layout of Sector 22 reproduced alongside the essay (see fig. 5.8) allowed the reader to study the disposition of the housing groups, the green band, the market street, and the health centre within the bounded rectangle of the neighbourhood in a manner that rendered the abstract principles of the plan legible to a general audience. The two essays on housing that followed, by Mrs. U. E. Chowdhury on the dwellings of the upper income group

¹⁰⁸. Jane B. Drew, "Living: Sector 22," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 22.

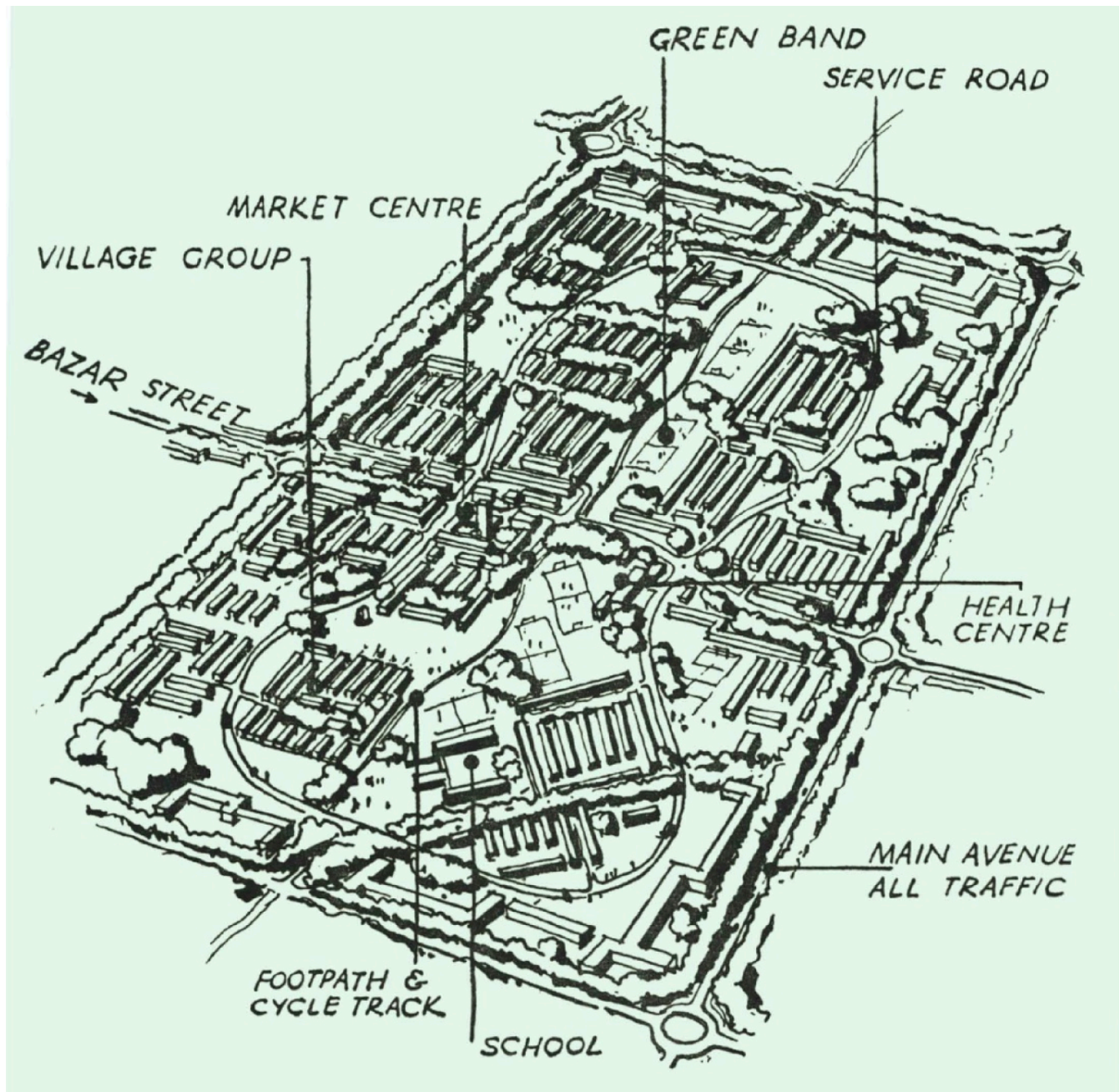


Figure 5.8. Axonometric layout of Sector 22, showing the housing groups, the green band, the market street, and the health centre. From Jane B. Drew, "Living: Sector 22," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 22–25.

and by Jeet Malhotra on the houses of the low income group, completed the section's survey of the residential city by descending through the fourteen graded categories of government housing that scaled the size and the cost of each dwelling to the income of its occupant. Chowdhury's account explained how the provision ranged from the modest accommodation of the sweeper to the substantial residence of the chief minister, and it described the replacement of the traditional verandah by a repertoire of sun-breakers, canopies, and shadow walls through which the houses were adapted to the severe alternation of the Punjab seasons.

Malhotra's essay on low cost housing carried the greatest social weight within this part of the issue, because it addressed the dwellings of the overwhelming majority of the city's population and presented the design of inexpensive housing as the central challenge of the whole enterprise. He insisted that the criterion of a good house remained constant across the divisions of wealth and that the provision of a healthy environment for physical and spiritual growth constituted the true measure of architectural success, and in doing so he restated in the plainest terms the humanist conviction that had governed MARG's engagement with housing since the late nineteen forties.

Malhotra opened his discussion with a statement of this democratic principle.

Eighty per cent of the total houses to be built in Chandigarh belong to the low-income group of the society having demands for decent living. The main criterion of a good house, whether meant for a rich or a poor man, is its ability to provide its inhabitants a proper environment for their healthy growth, both from the spiritual as well as the physical points of view. It should give adequate protection against the vagaries of weather, ensure a sufficient amount of privacy, and provide a sense of security.¹⁰⁹

Malhotra's essay proceeded to describe the techniques of economical construction through which these aspirations were realised, dwelling upon the use of cheap local brick, the revival of brick vaulted roofing that dispensed with expensive shuttering and steel, and the

¹⁰⁹. Jeet Malhotra, "Living: Low Cost Housing," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 33.

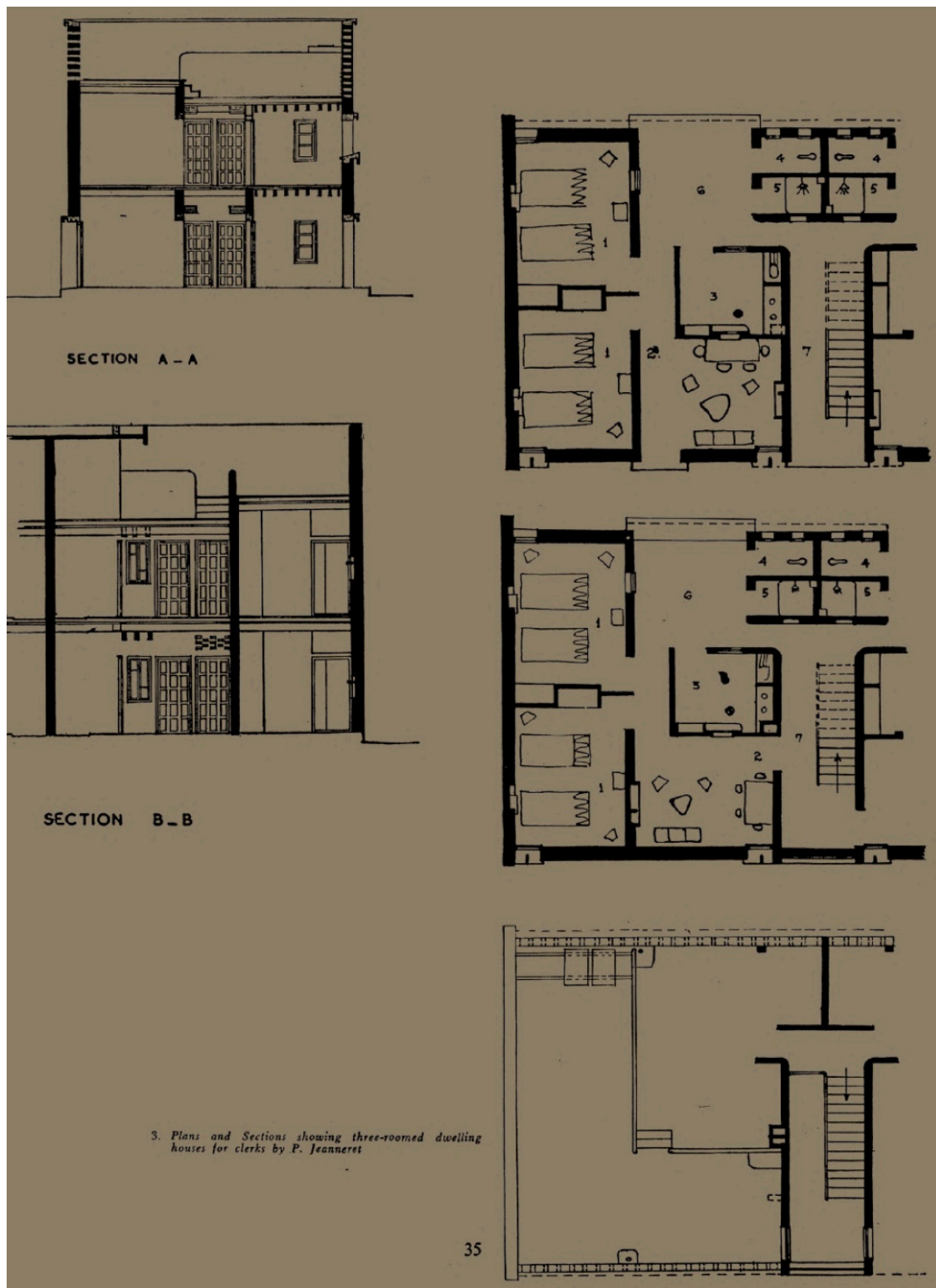


Figure 5.9. Plans and sections of low-cost dwellings for peons, clerks, and labourers. From Jeet Malhotra, "Living: Low Cost Housing," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 32–38.

standardisation of spans, doors, windows, and fittings that allowed components to be mass-produced for the whole city. The plans and sections of dwellings for peons, clerks, and labourers that accompanied his text (see fig. 9), drawn by Jeanneret and Sharma, demonstrated how the smallest houses were organised around courtyards and party walls, and the photographs of the sweepers' houses and the peons' flats recorded the rhythmic patterns of brick jali and arched openings through which an architecture of dignity was extended to the poorest inhabitants of the city. Aditya Prakash's essay on architectural control closed the section by explaining the legal apparatus through which the appearance of private building was regulated, citing the clause of the Capital of Punjab Act that empowered the administration to issue directions concerning the elevation, the height, and the disposition of structures, and describing the graduated system of controls, from full architectural control to the frame control applied to the smallest plots, through which the unity of the street picture was secured against the disorder of uncoordinated private development.

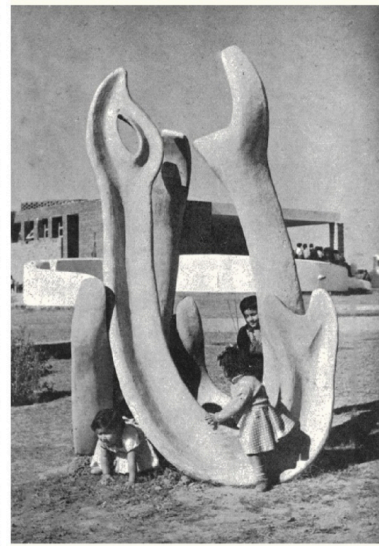
Working, Education, Public Institutions, and Industry

The section devoted to Working surveyed the institutions through which the productive and intellectual life of the city was organised, and it opened with B. P. Mathur's essay on the educational establishments that the planners had distributed across the sectors according to the density of their populations. Mathur described the graduated sequence of nursery, primary, junior secondary, and higher secondary schools through which the child passed, and he gave particular prominence to the re-establishment of the Punjab University at Chandigarh, an institution that had been displaced by the Partition and that now acquired a permanent home upon a full sector of some three hundred acres on the north-western edge of the city. His account presented the university as a great opportunity for the creation of an ideal campus and as a central component

of the city's ambition to become a centre of education, and it connected the design of the schools to a broader conviction that the formation of citizens depended upon the quality of the environments in which they were taught.

Mathur's essay framed the school and the university as instruments of social formation in a manner that echoed the magazine's longstanding concern with the relationship between education and the built environment. The photographs that accompanied the section documented the triangular sun-screens of the primary school, the open-air lesson conducted upon a brick terrace, and the symbolic sculpture installed within the landscape of the nursery school in Sector 16 (see fig. 5.10). The essay on public buildings that followed, contributed jointly by Sharma, Jeanneret, Fry, and Malhotra, extended this survey to the State Library, the Polytechnic, the Printing Press, the Atomic Energy Monument, and the Chandigarh Club, and it presented these structures as the civic furniture of a modern capital whose institutions ranged from the preservation of knowledge to the production of skilled labour and the provision of organised recreation.

N. S. Lamba's essay on the Industrial Area completed the section by describing the productive zone that occupied the south-eastern corner of the city, close to the railway station and separated from the residential sectors by a buffer belt of fruit trees that screened the industry from the main road. Lamba explained how the location of the industrial area had been determined by its proximity to transport and to the markets of the city and how the planning controls limited the coverage and the height of factories in order to secure light, air, and a uniform scale across the zone, and he listed the enterprises that had already begun to establish themselves, among them steel rolling mills, a bicycle manufacturing industry, and pharmaceutical and engineering concerns drawn from across India and abroad. The essay



1. My lesson: Junior Secondary School in Sector 22 by P. Jeanneret. Photo by Ram Panjabi
2. A Symbolic Sculpture in the Nursery School in Sector 16 by P. Jeanneret. Photo Panjab Public Relations Department
3. Nursery School in Sector 16. Photo by Jeet Malhotra



Figure 5.10. Symbolic sculpture set within the landscape of the nursery school, Sector 16. From B. P. Mathur, “Working: Educational Institutions,” *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 42–44.

anticipated the eventual extension of industry into a second area to the south of the city as the population grew toward half a million, and it presented the careful regulation of the industrial zone as a further demonstration of the comprehensive control through which Chandigarh sought to order every function of urban life.

The Care of Body and Spirit and the Biological City

The fourth section of the issue, gathered under the title of the Care of Body and Spirit, contained M. S. Randhawa’s essay on landscape and gardening, and it returned the reader with great force to the biological conception of the city that the chapter has traced through Le Corbusier’s earlier contributions to the magazine. Randhawa, who combined the offices of administrator and botanist and who had played a decisive role in the planting of Chandigarh, began his essay with the displacement of populations that the Partition had caused and with the

search for a new capital that this catastrophe had set in motion, and he then expounded the ideals of town planning that underlay the design of the city by quoting at length the doctrine of sun, space, and verdure that Le Corbusier had made the foundation of his urban philosophy. This passage restated in the most explicit terms the conviction that human health depended upon the restoration of the relationship between the inhabitant of the modern city and the elemental conditions of the natural world.

Randhawa reproduced Le Corbusier's summary of these ancient influences upon the human constitution.

The sun, space and verdure are the ancient influences which have fashioned our body and our spirit. Isolated from their natural environment, all organisms perish, some slowly and some quickly, and man is no exception to this general rule. Our towns have snatched men from essential conditions, molested them, starved them, falsified them, embittered them, crushed them, even sterilised them; the third generation to live in great cities tends to sterility.¹¹⁰

Randhawa proceeded to render explicit the analogy between the city and the living body that had remained largely implicit within Le Corbusier's own essays, and he assigned to each component of Chandigarh a corresponding organ within the anatomy of a human being, so that the Capitol became the head, the parks and green belts became the lungs, the roads became the circulatory system, the city centre became the heart, and the industrial area became the limbs. This explicit anatomical mapping confirmed that the organic conception of urbanism, which the chapter has identified as a central thread in MARG's presentation of Chandigarh, had become by 1961 the settled framework through which the city was understood, and it gave the reader a single governing metaphor through which the otherwise disparate functions of the city could be grasped as the interdependent systems of a unified living whole.

¹¹⁰. M. S. Randhawa, "Care of Body and Spirit: Landscape and Gardening," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 49.

The passage that established this correspondence between the body and the city carried the analogy through every major component of the plan.

Towns are biological phenomena, according to Corbusier, and they have the brain, heart, lungs and feet like human beings. It is on this conception that the city of Chandigarh has been planned. The “Capital” group of buildings comprising the Secretariat, High Court, Legislative Assembly and Governor’s House constitutes the head. Spacious parks and green belts which run through the city provide the lungs. The network of roads for vehicular traffic and footpaths for pedestrians constitute the circulatory system. The city centre with commercial buildings and shops represents the heart. The industrial area in the east with its population of factory workers and educational institutions on the west represent the limbs.¹¹¹

The remainder of Randhawa’s essay developed the practical consequences of this biological philosophy through a detailed account of the planting of the city, describing the selection of trees according to the shape of their crowns and the colour of their flowers, the differentiation of the avenues along the fast and the slow roads, and the creation of green belts, forest plantations, and botanical reservations through which the principle of verdure was carried into every district. His discussion of the Tree Preservation Order that had saved the venerable mango groves of the site, and of the staggered siting of houses that preserved the view of the distant Kasauli hills, demonstrated that the landscape of Chandigarh had been planned with the same deliberation as its buildings, and the essay, which the magazine reproduced from a publication of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, lent the issue the authority of a scientific account of the city’s environmental design. The sketches that accompanied the essay illustrated the arrangement of trees along the roads, the creation of green rooms enclosed by walls of foliage, and the construction of artificial hills from the spoil of excavation, and they translated the abstract doctrine of sun, space, and verdure into a precise vocabulary of landscape form (see fig. 5.11).

¹¹¹. Randhawa, “Landscape and Gardening,” 49–50.

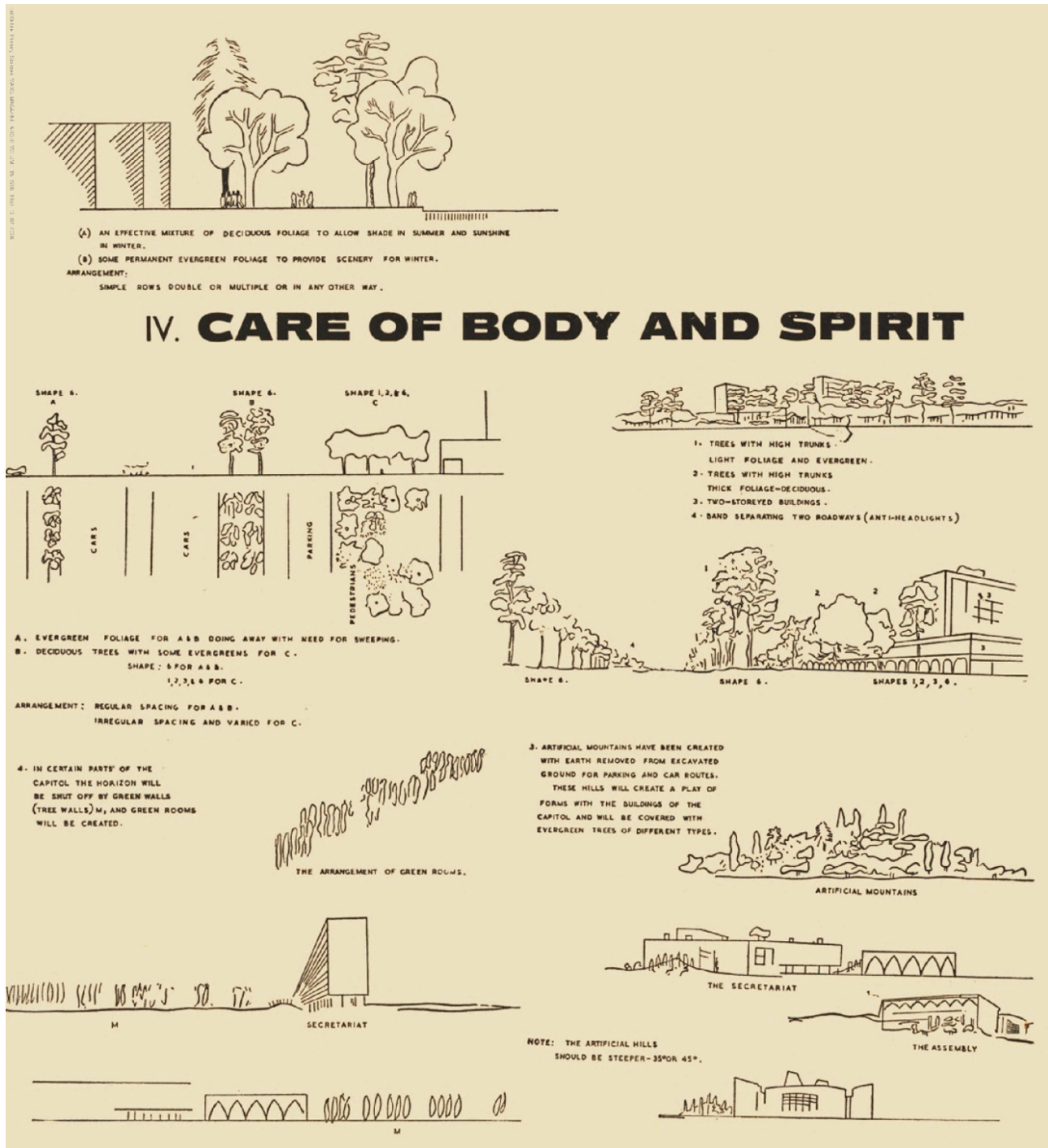


Figure 5.11. Sketches illustrating the arrangement of trees, the green rooms enclosed by walls of foliage, and the artificial hills raised from the spoil of excavation. From M. S. Randhawa, "Care of Body and Spirit: Landscape and Gardening," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 48–52.

The City Centre, Engineering, and the Aesthetic Sense

The concluding section of Miscellaneous studies gathered the contributions of G. R. Nangea on engineering and of A. R. Prabhawalkar on the city centre, and it closed the volume with Pierre Jeanneret's reflection upon the aesthetic sense. Nangea's essay presented the invisible infrastructure of the city, the roads, the sewerage, the water supply, and the artificial lake with its boat club, as the foundation upon which the visible architecture had been raised, and it celebrated the foresight through which the whole framework of services had been installed before construction began, presenting the engineering of Chandigarh as an expression of the same rational order that governed its planning. Prabhawalkar's essay on the city centre described the civic and commercial core that occupied the junction of the two principal avenues, and it presented the central piazza as a space whose conception drew upon Indian precedent even as it employed the materials and the techniques of modern construction.

Prabhawalkar emphasised the Indian character of the central chowk and the institutions gathered around it.

Its conception is very Indian in that it has a central "Chowk" of a Piazza marking the crossing of two wide pedestrian ways running NE'SW and NW'SE respectively. Around this chowk are grouped the more important civic and commercial buildings, the central nucleus of the city, containing the Town Hall, the Central Library, the Regional Headquarters of Posts & Telegraphs, Chamber of Commerce, Large Cinemas, Commercial houses, Insurance Offices and regional headquarters of banks etc.¹¹²

The decision to close the volume with Jeanneret's essay on the beauty of line, shape, and form carried a particular significance, because it returned the issue to the question of aesthetic sensibility that had stood at the centre of MARG's purpose since its founding and that the chapter has identified as one of the enduring concerns of the magazine. Jeanneret approached the aesthetic sense through the difficulty of its definition, distinguishing the cultivated response to

¹¹². A. R. Prabhawalkar, "Miscellaneous: The City Centre," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 54.

beauty from the merely intellectual demand to know what a work represents, and he argued that the genuine aesthetic faculty belonged to the child, to the primitive, and to the artist in a way that the educated adult frequently lost. His essay insisted that the care lavished upon the great monuments of the Capitol must be extended equally to the small buildings that composed the greater part of the city, and it thereby aligned the aesthetic ambition of the project with the democratic and humanist conviction that had animated the entire issue.

Jeanneret made the case for the aesthetic treatment of the modest building that constituted the substance of the city.

What are our new towns composed of? Of small housing and small buildings which cover the majority of its area. Therefore, it is also for these small buildings that it is necessary to take the greatest care for the aesthetic sense.¹¹³

He concluded his reflection by locating the aesthetic faculty in the immediacy of an untutored response to form.

The child, the primitive and the man having an aesthetic sense will say, on seeing a work for the first time “Oh! how beautiful it is!” or “Oh! how ugly it is!” whereas often the educated man will ask “What does this represent?” That is the whole difference between them.¹¹⁴

The Special Issue as Synthesis

The Chandigarh special issue of 1961 therefore gathered into a single articulated volume the concerns that had occupied MARG since its first appearance fifteen years earlier, and it presented the completed city as the spatial resolution of the questions that the magazine had been pursuing across its engagement with housing, education, public health, civic institutions, and aesthetic culture. The organisation of the issue according to the four functions of the Athens

¹¹³. Pierre Jeanneret, “Aesthetic: Reflections on Beauty of Line, Shape and Form,” *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 57.

¹¹⁴. Jeanneret, “Aesthetic,” 57.

Charter demonstrated the extent to which the modernist conception of urbanism had become the governing framework of the magazine's thought, while the collaborative authorship of the volume allowed the makers of the city to present their work as a collective achievement whose significance extended beyond the reputation of any single designer. The biological metaphor that Randhawa rendered explicit, the climatic determinism that Fry and Drew elaborated, the doctrine of the seven roads that Le Corbusier expounded, and the democratic provision of dignified housing that Malhotra defended all converged within the issue upon a single image of the city as a living organism whose every function had been ordered for the welfare of its inhabitants.

Read against the longer trajectory that this chapter has traced, the special issue confirms that Chandigarh had become for MARG the privileged site through which the magazine articulated its vision of a modern India, and it shows how the city served simultaneously as a documentary subject, as a pedagogical instrument, and as a cultural manifesto. The issue presented the city as a laboratory whose experiments deserved the attention of the whole nation, and through its essays, its plans, its photographs, and its sketches it offered to its readers an account of the modern city that was at once technical and poetic, administrative and humanist, and grounded equally in the realities of the Punjab climate and in the universal aspiration toward a more dignified collective life. In this synthesis the magazine completed the work of cultural assimilation that it had begun with the publication of Marshall's essay in 1946, transforming the discourse of international modernism into a national vision of urban order, and it left in the Chandigarh number a record of the moment at which the most ambitious architectural experiment of postcolonial India entered fully into the public imagination of the country.

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Conclusion

The preceding chapters have followed a single periodical across the first fifteen years of its existence and have attempted to read it as something more than a repository of articles on art and architecture, treating it instead as an instrument through which a particular conception of modern Indian life was assembled, illustrated, and offered to a reading public during the formative decades of independence. The argument advanced across these chapters has been that *MARG* operated as a sustained work of cultural pedagogy in which architecture, planning, museums, domestic interiors, and the design of cities were drawn together into a common field of concern, and that the magazine consistently presented modernity as a condition that had to be learned through the cultivation of perception and judgment rather than as a possession that arrived with the transfer of political power in 1947. The purpose of this concluding chapter is to gather the dispersed findings of the individual chapters into a coherent account of what the magazine was attempting to accomplish, to situate that accomplishment within the wider scholarship that has begun to take *MARG* seriously as an object of historical analysis, and to consider both the limitations of the present study and the directions in which its arguments might be extended by future research.

The intellectual foundation of the magazine, as the first chapter demonstrated through its reading of the inaugural editorial “Planning and Dreaming” and the programmatic essay “Architecture and You,” rested upon Mulk Raj Anand’s conviction that the arrangement of buildings and cities constituted an ethical question before it became a technical one, and that the labour of designing a new India belonged to a much wider community than the small body of professional architects then practising in the country.¹¹⁵ The editorial extended the figure of the architect until it merged with the figure of the citizen, so that every reader who could be taught to evaluate the spaces of everyday life was enrolled in the collective task of national construction, and the magazine accordingly addressed itself to the literate urban middle class whose members commissioned, inhabited, and judged the buildings that were rising in Indian cities.¹¹⁶ The essay “Architecture and You” translated this conviction into a visual pedagogy that taught its readers to distinguish structural logic from borrowed ornament through sequences of cropped photographs,

¹¹⁵Mulk Raj Anand, “Planning and Dreaming [Editorial],” *MARG* 1, no. 1 (1946): 4.

¹¹⁶Anand, “Planning and Dreaming,” 5.

annotated diagrams, and satirical juxtapositions, and it insisted that the national character of a building emerged from climate, material, and social need rather than from the imitation of Mughal or Victorian precedent.¹¹⁷ This founding position was reinforced through the contributions of internationally celebrated architects whose voices lent the magazine an authority that editorial assertion alone could not have supplied, and the essays of Frank Lloyd Wright and Richard Neutra arrived in the same pages as Anand's editorials in order to confirm that the principles the magazine championed were shared by the most influential architectural thinkers of the period.¹¹⁸

Wright's argument that democracy and architecture were equally organic and equally dependent upon the conditions of the society that produced them resonated with Indian readers at the precise moment when the Constituent Assembly was debating the political form of the new nation, and his alignment of organic architecture with a living religion and an interior philosophy carried implications that extended well beyond aesthetics into the cultural foundations of the state itself.¹¹⁹ Neutra approached the same conviction through the more technical vocabulary of climate and construction, cautioning Indian architects against the indiscriminate importation of routines developed under the very different socioeconomic and climatic conditions of Europe and North America, and his contribution gave the magazine's argument the additional weight of professional experience in tropical and subtropical design.¹²⁰ The convergence of these voices reached its most consequential expression in Le Corbusier's essay "Yesterday Today and Tomorrow," which proposed that India, entering industrial modernity later than Europe, could draw lessons from the European experience and pursue a more coordinated form of development directed toward collective welfare, and which insisted that the universal laws governing reinforced concrete and structural steel would nonetheless assemble themselves into forms expressive of the particular climate, landscape, and civilisation of the land in which they were built.¹²¹ The first chapter therefore established the principle of synthesis between inherited cultural traditions and modern construction that would orient the magazine's subsequent thought, and it showed how that principle was articulated from the outset within an international

¹¹⁷"Architecture and You," *MARG* 1, no. 1 (1946): 15.

¹¹⁸Frank Lloyd Wright, "On the Right to Be One's Self," *MARG* 1, no. 2 (1947): 20.

¹²⁰Richard J. Neutra, "New India and Building," *MARG* 1, no. 4 (1947): 20.

¹²¹Le Corbusier, "Yesterday Today and Tomorrow," *MARG* 2, no. 4 (1948): 14.

conversation that the magazine had actively solicited through correspondence with architectural offices across Europe and North America.

The cosmopolitan character of this founding moment becomes more intelligible when it is read alongside Susheila Nasta's account of Anand's formation as a public intellectual during his two decades at the heart of the imperial metropolis, where he learned to occupy the doubled position of insider and outsider and to use the metropolitan discourse of rights and self-assertion against the very imperial structures that surrounded him.¹²² Nasta describes Anand as an adept cultural translator and accomplished go-between whose oblique location within the imperial metropolis furnished him with the benefit of double vision, and she traces the way in which the radical anti-colonial atmosphere of interwar London allowed him to articulate a global alternative to a predominantly Euro-American vision of modernity while carving out a space in which to locate himself and his Indian subjects within history.¹²³ The magazine that Anand founded upon his return carried the imprint of this formation, because it neither romanticised an imagined Indian past nor accepted the European enlightenment as a finished possession to be imported wholesale, and the editorial procedure through which it assembled the voices of Wright, Neutra, and Le Corbusier alongside its own arguments enacted at the level of the page the same practice of cultural translation that Nasta locates in Anand's metropolitan career. The capacity to mediate between worlds that Nasta identifies as the distinctive achievement of Anand's London years became, in the pages of *MARG*, an editorial method through which the magazine sought to render specialised international knowledge intelligible to a national readership that stood outside the professional circles within which such knowledge ordinarily circulated.

The second chapter demonstrated that this work of translation rested upon a prior conviction concerning the formation of the citizen, and it traced through the editorials "Education through Art" and "Museums, Junk Shops or Living Culture Centres?" the magazine's sustained argument that democracy depended upon cultural literacy as much as upon political structure.¹²⁴ Anand understood the crisis of modernity as a consequence of uneven development in which scientific

¹²²Susheila Nasta, "Negotiating a 'New World Order': Mulk Raj Anand as Public Intellectual at the Heart of Empire (1924–1945)," in *South Asian Resistances in Britain, 1858–1947*, ed. Sumita Mukherjee and Rehana Ahmed (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 198.

¹²³Nasta, "Negotiating a 'New World Order'," 198.

¹²⁴Mulk Raj Anand, "Education through Art [Editorial]," *MARG* 1, no. 3 (1947).

and technological advances had outpaced the cultivation of the human capacities required for meaningful participation in a rapidly changing society, and he assigned to aesthetic education the responsibility of repairing this imbalance by training habits of observation, comparison, and judgment that extended well beyond the sphere of culture into the conduct of public life.¹²⁵ The museum entered this argument as an institution of comparison in which objects drawn from different periods and regions could be brought into relation with one another so that citizens might situate themselves within larger historical narratives, and Anand presented it as a laboratory in which the synthesis between an inherited agricultural and handicraft civilisation and the impulses of the new industrial society might be freely achieved.¹²⁶ The chapter then followed this concern with perception into the magazine's engagement with modern painting and architecture, where the essays of Herbert Read, Eric Mendelsohn, and John Summerson presented the transformations of Cubism and abstraction as a wider reordering of visual experience that architecture and painting had come to share, and where the injunction to teach students to see and to find out for themselves condensed the magazine's recurring ambition to cultivate independent judgment.¹²⁷

The institutional culmination of this pedagogical project appeared in the editorial "Architectural Education in India" and its proposal for an Indian Bauhaus, which gathered the magazine's dispersed reflections on art, craft, design, and architecture into a single programme for the cultivation of modern democratic subjects, and which insisted that the reform of architectural training and the education of the general public formed two halves of a single problem.¹²⁸ The proposal explicitly refused to imitate the school at Dessau and called instead for a fresh-minded reconsideration of the materials, climate, building traditions, and patterns of use that constituted the specific conditions of architecture in India, and it thereby translated the principle of synthesis that had governed the magazine from its first issue into a concrete vision for the organisation of cultural knowledge.¹²⁹ The second chapter therefore established that the magazine's educational ambitions extended far beyond the dissemination of architectural

¹²⁶Mulk Raj Anand, "Museums, Junk Shops or Living Culture Centres? [Editorial]," *MARG* 2, no. 4 (1948).

¹²⁷Herbert Read, "The Changing Conceptions of Art [Editorial]," *MARG* 3, no. 4 (1949); Eric Mendelsohn, "The Great Adventure," *MARG* 4, no. 3 (1950); John Summerson, "Architecture and Painting," *MARG* 5, no. 2 (1951).

¹²⁸"Architectural Education in India [Editorial]," *MARG* 2, no. 3 (1948): 6.

information, and that the citizen it sought to form was one who could bring informed judgment to the objects, images, buildings, and institutions that composed the modern environment.

The relationship between this conception of the citizen and the wider scholarship on mid-century Indian design becomes especially clear when the magazine's pedagogy is read against Farhan Sirajul Karim's study of the exhibitions through which the Museum of Modern Art and the Indian craft establishment negotiated the transfer of modernity between New York and Ahmedabad during the 1950s. Karim argues that the old linear model of cultural imperialism, in which modernity flowed in one direction from West to East, could not explain a process in which India proved an active agent rather than a passive receptor, and in which the dissemination of modernity became the result of a two-way movement whose internal dissonance unsettled any straightforward narrative of Americanisation.¹³⁰ The Indian businessmen and bureaucrats who solicited the 1959 exhibition "Design Today in America and Europe" interpreted the aesthetic mission of the Museum of Modern Art as a trade potential, and they sought to harness the visual appearance of the machine-made object in order to heighten the taste of an emerging consumer class and to render Indian goods more presentable upon the global market.¹³¹ This account of a national agency that received modernity in order to adapt it to its own developmental purposes illuminates the position that *MARG* occupied within the same conjuncture, because the magazine likewise refused the posture of passive reception and insisted upon the right of Indian architects to work within the universal language of modern construction on their own terms, and because its pedagogy of perception was directed precisely at the formation of the discerning consumer-citizen whose cultivated judgment Karim identifies as the object of the design exhibitions.

Karim's reconstruction of Pierre Jeanneret's attempt to forge an ascetic hybrid that reconciled the modernist trope of machine-made consumer goods with the asceticism of a Gandhian material culture provides a further point of contact with the trajectory traced in this thesis, since it locates within the same Chandigarh milieu a search for synthesis between inherited cultural form and industrial modernity that closely resembles the principle the magazine had championed since 1946.¹³² The bamboo chair that Jeanneret designed for his own

¹³⁰Farhan Sirajul Karim, "Modernity Transfers: the MoMA and postcolonial India," in *The Politics of the Object* (London: Routledge), 190.

¹³¹Karim, "Modernity Transfers," 190.

¹³²Karim, "Modernity Transfers," 202–205.

use, with its vernacular material and its standardised yet reproducible fabrication, expressed the conviction that a specifically Indian modernity might be realised within a non-affluent model, and it stood in deliberate contrast to the steel and plywood of the canonical modernist chair that the Museum of Modern Art had displayed.¹³³ The convergence between Karim's account and the argument of this thesis is instructive, because it suggests that the synthesis the magazine pursued through the printed page was being pursued simultaneously through the designed object and the planned city, and that *MARG* participated in a wider mid-century effort to define an Indian modernity that would be neither a colonial imposition nor a revivalist retreat into the past.

The third chapter carried the magazine's pedagogy of perception into the domestic sphere and demonstrated how housing came to be imagined at once as a technological object, a cultural environment, a social institution, and a pedagogical instrument through which new ways of living might be cultivated. The essay "What Is a Home?" relocated aesthetic judgment from the realm of exceptional cultural objects to the ordinary spaces of everyday life and insisted that beauty, understood as a quality embedded in the arrangement of the built environment rather than as a costly superimposition, exercised a formative influence upon the character of those who inhabited the house.¹³⁴ Through discussions of low-cost housing, prefabrication, cooperative development, and the rationalised interior, the magazine extended its project of cultivating architectural literacy into the spaces of ordinary habitation, and it presented the home as a site at which the ambitions of national reconstruction entered the routines of daily existence. The chapter argued that the importance of this housing discourse lay less in the specific solutions it proposed than in the broader conception of habitation it advanced, and it drew upon Rashmi Viswanathan's analysis of mid-century print culture to show how the architectural plan circulated as a sign of modern domestic life whose meanings extended far beyond its immediate technical function.¹³⁵

Viswanathan's reading of the magazine as a readerly object rather than a set of discrete articles has informed the method of this thesis throughout, and her insistence that the advertisements which bookend each issue must be reinserted into any interpretation that hopes to recover the early readerly experience offers a productive supplement to the editorial focus that has organised the present study.¹³⁶ Where Viswanathan attends to the way in which the opening

¹³⁴"What Is a Home?," *MARG* 1, no. 2 (1947).

¹³⁵Viswanathan, "Dreaming through *MARG*," 33–34.

¹³⁶Rashmi Viswanathan, "Dreaming through *MARG*," *Modernism/modernity* 32, no. 1 (2025): 22.

advertisement for the Cement Marketing Company of India enrolled its readers in a gendered practice of dreaming the modern home, and to the way in which the Tata Steel advertisement positioned the graphic plan as the instrument through which the architect became an architect of the nation, the chapters of this thesis have concentrated upon the editorial argument through which the magazine sought to form the judgment of those same readers.¹³⁷ The two approaches are complementary rather than opposed, because the pedagogy of perception that the editorials advanced and the visual seduction that the advertisements performed operated upon the same readerly public and drew upon the same repertoire of plans, photographs, and diagrams, and a fuller account of the magazine would hold the editorial and the advertising arenas together within a single field of analysis in the manner that Viswanathan recommends.

The fourth and fifth chapters followed the magazine's urban discourse from its early articulation in Percy Marshall's "The Need for Urban Planning in India" toward its culmination in the Chandigarh special issue of December 1961, and they traced the absorption of the principles of the Athens Charter into the magazine's planning thought.¹³⁸ Marshall's essay defined planning as a cultural and social undertaking whose success depended upon the integration of schools, libraries, theatres, parks, and community centres into the urban fabric, and it established from the first issue the conviction that the city was a site at which questions of welfare, culture, education, and citizenship converged. The publication of the Athens Charter in 1949 introduced Indian readers to one of the foundational documents of modernist urban theory and translated the discourse of the International Congresses of Modern Architecture into a public language accessible to readers positioned outside professional architectural circles, and its appearance exemplified Anand's conception of the intellectual as a mediating figure whose responsibility involved rendering specialised knowledge capable of shaping public consciousness.¹³⁹ The route by which the Charter reached the magazine, through a German intermediary translation rather than from Le Corbusier's original French, has been documented

¹³⁷Viswanathan, "Dreaming through *MARG*," 24, 37.

¹³⁸Percy Marshall, "The Need for Urban Planning in India," *MARG* 1, no. 1 (1946).

¹³⁹"The Charter of Athens: A Treatise on Town Planning," *MARG* 3, no. 4 (1949): 10–17. On the route of the document into *MARG* through a German intermediary translation, see Rachel Lee and Kathleen James-Chakraborty, "MARG Magazine: A Tryst with Architectural Modernity," *ABE Journal* 1 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.4000/abe.623>.

by Rachel Lee and Kathleen James-Chakraborty, whose study of the magazine's founding remains the most thorough account of the network of architects from which it emerged.¹⁴⁰

The Chandigarh special issue, composed collaboratively by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret, Maxwell Fry, Jane Drew, and the Indian architects, administrators, and engineers who had carried the project forward, acquired the character of a collective self-presentation by the makers of the city, and the fifth chapter demonstrated how its organisation according to the four functions of the Athens Charter translated the logic of the plan into the architecture of the volume itself. The biological conception of the city that M. S. Randhawa rendered explicit, in which the Capitol became the head, the green belts the lungs, the roads the circulatory system, the city centre the heart, and the industrial area the limbs, confirmed that the organic conception of urbanism had become by 1961 the settled framework through which the city was understood, and it furnished the reader with a single governing metaphor through which the otherwise disparate functions of the city could be grasped as the interdependent systems of a unified living whole.¹⁴¹ The decision to close the volume with Pierre Jeanneret's reflection upon the aesthetic sense returned the issue to the question of sensibility that had stood at the centre of the magazine's purpose since its founding, and his insistence that the care lavished upon the great monuments of the Capitol must be extended equally to the small buildings that composed the greater part of the city aligned the aesthetic ambition of the project with the democratic and humanist conviction that had animated the entire issue.¹⁴²

Read across its full extent, the trajectory that this thesis has reconstructed describes a movement from the intellectual foundations of the magazine toward their material realisation in the built city, and it shows how a discourse that began with the editorial insistence that India must learn to see its built environment anew arrived fifteen years later at a completed capital whose every function had been ordered according to the doctrine the magazine had been expounding since its first issue. The coherence of this trajectory should not, however, be mistaken for an absence of tension within the magazine itself, because the very project of synthesis that *MARG* pursued required it to hold together commitments that did not always rest comfortably with one another, and the wider scholarship has begun to register the strains that ran

¹⁴⁰Lee and James-Chakraborty, "MARG Magazine."

¹⁴¹M. S. Randhawa, "Care of Body and Spirit: Landscape and Gardening," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961): 51.

¹⁴²Pierre Jeanneret, "The Aesthetic Sense," *MARG* 15, no. 1 (1961).

beneath the surface of its confident pedagogy. Devika Singh has shown how the magazine mined the courtly arts of the Mughal past for an exemplary ethos and spirit while declining to treat them as a viable model for the architectural future, and her account of the magazine's exorcisms and resurrections of history reveals a selective relationship to inheritance that the rhetoric of synthesis tended to conceal.¹⁴³ Minnette de Silva, who served as the magazine's architectural editor and who looked most among its founders to avoid the blind spots of colonial historicism, judged the architectural contribution to the magazine to be the weakest part of the whole, and her dissent from the unwavering embrace of the stalwarts of the International Congresses of Modern Architecture indicates that the apparent unanimity of the magazine's position concealed real disagreement among those who produced it.¹⁴⁴

The most searching theoretical frame within which to situate these tensions is offered by Homi Bhabha's account of the nation as a form of narration that is split between two incommensurable temporalities, the pedagogical and the performative, the first of which addresses the people as the pre-given historical objects of a continuous tradition while the second constructs them anew in the repetitious activity of signification through which national life is continually reproduced.¹⁴⁵ Bhabha argues that the production of the nation as narration involves a constant slippage between the masterful image of a unified people and the movement of the sign that empties and supplements that image, and that it is from this disjunctive doubling that the ambivalence of modern national culture arises.¹⁴⁶ The pages of *MARG* can be read as an unusually explicit instance of precisely this doubled address, because the magazine sought on the one hand to instruct its readers in a settled body of architectural knowledge and historical heritage, assuming the posture of a pedagogy that transmits an established tradition, while on the other hand it enrolled those same readers in the performative labour of imagining and inhabiting a modernity that remained continually in formation and that had to be reproduced through their own acts of perception and judgment. The magazine's persistent recourse to the figure of the reader who must learn to see for himself, and its insistence that modernity was a condition achieved through continuous cultural work rather than a heritage simply received, locate it on the

¹⁴³Devika Singh, "Approaching the Mughal Past in Indian Art Criticism: The Case of *MARG* (1946–1963)," *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 1 (2013): 167–203.

¹⁴⁴Lee and James-Chakraborty, "MARG Magazine."

¹⁴⁵Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 297.

¹⁴⁶Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 299.

performative side of Bhabha's distinction even as its surveys of ancient architecture and its reproductions of the monuments of the past performed the pedagogical function of supplying the nation with a continuous origin.

Bhabha's further insistence that the modern nation is haunted by the figures who gather at its margins, the migrants and minorities whose foreignness splits the unisonant voice of national belonging, casts an oblique but instructive light upon the cosmopolitan composition of the magazine itself.¹⁴⁷ The contributors who assembled within its pages wrote from positions that were at once internal and external to the Indian context, since the German exile Otto Koenigsberger, the Sri Lankan Minnette de Silva, the Swiss Le Corbusier, and the British Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew brought to the discourse of Indian modernity the doubled vision of those who observed the nation from a position partly outside it, and the magazine held these perspectives together within a discursive field in which India became visible to itself through the mediating presence of others. The dedication of Bhabha's own essay to the memory of a refugee whose life traversed Pforzheim, Paris, Zurich, Ahmedabad, Bombay, Milan, and Lugano registers the same condition of migration and transfer that produced the international roster of the magazine, and it suggests that the modernity the magazine sought to articulate was constituted from the outset through the movement of people, ideas, and forms across the very national boundaries it sought to consolidate.¹⁴⁸ The cultural translation that Anand performed at the heart of empire, that Nasta has reconstructed in detail, and that Bhabha theorises as the condition of the modern nation's narration, was therefore not incidental to the project of *MARG* but constitutive of it, and the magazine's achievement lay precisely in its capacity to make the foreignness of its sources serve the formation of a national culture.

Taken together, these convergences between the argument of the thesis and the wider scholarship suggest that *MARG* occupied a position within the cultural history of post-independence India that was at once more ambitious and more internally divided than its confident editorial voice would indicate, and that its significance lies in the way it gathered the competing imperatives of heritage and modernity, of national distinction and international exchange, of pedagogical transmission and performative renewal, into a single sustained endeavour that never fully resolved them. The magazine treated modernity as something that had to be learned, practised, and inhabited, and it aligned architecture, culture, and citizenship within

¹⁴⁷Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 294.

a shared project of social transformation whose coherence depended upon the continuous labour of the reader who was asked to see, to judge, and to participate. In doing so it produced a record of the moment at which the most ambitious architectural experiment of the postcolonial period entered the public imagination of the country, and it left in its pages an account of how modern democratic life was imagined and communicated during the formative decades of independence that remains indispensable to the historian who would understand that period.

Limitations of the Study

The arguments advanced in this thesis are subject to a number of limitations that arise from the nature of the source material and from the scope that the study has deliberately adopted. The most fundamental of these concerns the inaccessibility of the magazine's own institutional archive, since the subscriptions, invoices, and editorial correspondence from its early years are largely missing, and the reconstruction offered here has consequently been compelled to read the magazine's intentions and its imagined readership from the internal evidence of the printed pages themselves rather than from any external documentation of how those pages were produced or received.¹⁴⁹ The study has proceeded, in other words, from the magazine as a published artifact toward inferences about its purposes and its public, and it has been unable to verify those inferences against the records of circulation, sales, and reader response that would permit a fuller social history of the periodical. The danger inherent in this procedure is that the readerly public the magazine addressed may be confused with the public it actually reached, and the present study has been able to describe the citizen-reader that the editorials sought to form with far greater confidence than it has been able to establish whether such readers existed in the numbers the magazine hoped for or responded in the manner it intended.

A second limitation follows from the editorial focus that has organised the study, because the concentration upon the essays, editorials, and architectural arguments of the magazine has meant that the advertisements which open and close each issue, and which constituted a substantial proportion of its pages, have received less sustained attention than the readerly experience of the magazine would warrant. As Viswanathan has demonstrated, the advertisements were constitutive of the visual field within which the arguments of the magazine were encountered rather than extraneous to it, and a reading that treats the periodical as a totality bound by its covers would need to integrate the commercial and the editorial arenas more fully than the present study has done.¹⁵⁰ A third limitation concerns the linguistic and class boundaries

of the magazine itself, since *MARG* was an English-language publication addressed to a small and elite readership, and the study has therefore illuminated the cultural aspirations of a particular metropolitan fraction of Indian society while leaving largely untouched the question of how the discourses of planning and development that the magazine promoted were received, contested, or ignored by the wider Indian publics on whom the strategies of development were ultimately to be enacted. The urban and rural poor who appeared within the magazine as the objects of development rather than as its readers remain, in this study as in the magazine, a national imaginary rather than a documented presence, and the account offered here is consequently an account of how an elite imagined the nation rather than of how the nation as a whole imagined itself.

A final limitation arises from the decision to confine the study to the first fifteen volumes of the magazine, a decision that has permitted a close and continuous reading of the formative period during which the magazine's characteristic concerns were established but that has necessarily excluded the long subsequent history through which those concerns were revised, abandoned, or transformed. The magazine continued to appear for many decades after the period examined here, and the consolidation of its discourse around architecture during the years of independence gave way to other preoccupations as the optimism of the Nehruvian moment faded and as the disciplinary boundaries that the early magazine had so productively ignored hardened into their later institutional forms. The present study has captured a particular moment of openness and possibility, before these relations settled into more fixed configurations, and it has accordingly offered a history of beginnings rather than a history of the magazine in its entirety.

Scope for Future Work

The limitations rehearsed above indicate with some precision the directions in which the arguments of this thesis might be extended by future research. The most immediate of these would be a study that holds the editorial and the advertising arenas of the magazine together within a single analysis, following the example of Viswanathan in order to recover the early readerly experience of the periodical as a totality bound by its covers, and attending to the ways in which the commercial appeals of the Cement Marketing Company of India, of Tata Steel, and of the manufacturers of consumer goods drew upon and extended the symbolic field within which the editorial pedagogy operated.¹⁵¹ Such a study would be able to trace the linkages between the formation of the discerning citizen and the formation of the modern consumer that

the present thesis has identified but not fully explored, and it would situate the magazine more securely within the history of advertising and consumption in mid-century India that scholars such as Douglas Haynes, Abigail McGowan, and Arvind Rajagopal have begun to write.

A second and equally promising direction would be a comparative study that situated *MARG* alongside the other periodicals and exhibitionary institutions through which the discourse of design and development circulated during the same decades, and that read the magazine against the later journal *Design*, launched in 1957, whose more specialised address to an already constituted professional readership offers an instructive contrast to the pedagogical ambition of the earlier publication.¹⁵² The exhibitions through which the Museum of Modern Art and the Indian craft establishment negotiated the transfer of modernity, which Karim has studied in such detail, would furnish a further point of comparison, and a study that read the magazine alongside the 1955 exhibition of Indian textiles in New York and the 1959 exhibition of European and American design in India would be able to examine the two-way movement of modernity that Karim describes from the additional vantage of the printed page.¹⁵³ Such a comparison would clarify the extent to which the synthesis that the magazine pursued through its editorials was being pursued simultaneously through the designed object, the planned city, and the travelling exhibition, and it would situate *MARG* more firmly within the transnational circuits of cultural exchange through which postcolonial Indian modernity was constituted.

A third direction would extend the chronological scope of the study beyond the formative period examined here in order to trace the long afterlife of the magazine's founding concerns, and to ask how the confident developmental optimism of the Nehruvian moment was revised as the disappointments of the subsequent decades accumulated and as the disciplinary separations that the early magazine had ignored hardened into their later forms. A study of this kind would be able to read the magazine's changing relationship to the architectural avant-garde, to the politics of heritage, and to the shifting fortunes of the planning ideal across the second half of the twentieth century, and it would situate the formative moment reconstructed in this thesis within the longer history of which it formed the beginning. A fourth and final direction would pursue the biographical and network dimensions of the magazine more fully than the present study has done, following the individual trajectories of the German-speaking exiles, the Sri Lankan and Indian architects, and the European modernists whose careers converged within its pages, and

¹⁵³Karim, "Modernity Transfers," 202–206.

reading the magazine as a node within the wider history of migration, exile, and transfer that Nasta and Bhabha have each, in their different registers, identified as constitutive of the modern.¹⁵⁴ Such a study would treat the foreignness of the magazine's sources not as an incidental feature of its editorial composition but as a central object of historical inquiry, and it would read the cultural translation that the magazine performed as an instance of the broader processes through which the postcolonial nation was narrated into being from the margins as much as from the centre.¹⁵⁵

These directions for future work share a common premise, which is that the magazine examined in this thesis was a richer and more contradictory object than any single study can exhaust, and that its pages continue to reward the attention of the historian precisely because they hold together so many of the competing aspirations of their moment without resolving them into a single account. The present study has attempted to read that moment of openness and possibility with the seriousness it deserves, and to recover from the pages of *MARG* an account of how architecture, pedagogy, and civic imagination were composed together during the formative decades of independence, before these relations settled into the more fixed disciplinary and institutional boundaries of later years. To return to this material is to encounter a field that resists closure and that continues to reshape the present in which it is read, and the conclusions offered here are therefore best understood as a contribution to an inquiry that remains, like the modernity the magazine sought to articulate, an unfinished endeavour open to extension and renewal.

¹⁵⁴Nasta, "Negotiating a 'New World Order'," 198.

¹⁵⁵Lee and James-Chakraborty, "MARG Magazine." On Minnette de Silva's judgement, see her letter to Sigfried Giedion, 31 January 1950, cited in the same article.

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Aashvi Trivedi