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Urban Planning/Utopian Dreaming: Le Corbusier's Chandigarh Today*

PETER FITTING

On the day when contemporary society, at present so sick, has become properly aware that only architecture and city planning can provide the exact prescription for its ills, then the time will have come for the great machine to be put in motion and begin its functions. . . . The house that can be built for modern man (and the city too), a magnificently disciplined machine, can bring back the liberty of the individual—at present crushed out of existence—to each and every member of society. (Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* 143)

The critique of the utopian view of modernism, its imperialistic vision, and the manner in which it has been implemented in our cities and landscapes, has caused many to retreat from any discussion of utopianism. Indeed, the critique of the modernist version of daily life is well deserved as can be seen in the use of Le Corbusier's "Radiant City" as a model for many public housing projects, or Howard's "Garden City" as played out in the needless tracks of suburbs. There is an appropriately critical perspective in the recognition that the imposition of one "man's" utopian vision on a culture results in destructive imperialism. It is understandable that the design fields have largely retreated from an explicitly utopian project, seeking instead to "fit into" what is perceived as the mainstream culture. (Schneekloth 1)

SINCE THE EARLIEST UTOPIAS, the link between town planning—the arrangement of dwellings and work-places, malls and public spaces—and its impact on the inhabitants of utopia has been crucial; indeed the organisation of space is understood not just as a reflection or symbol of the new ideals, but as a decisive component in the production of the new man or woman, to the extent that some planners thought that planning itself could bring about larger social transformation. As Robert Fishman states in his presentation of the utopian visions of perhaps the three most important such planners—Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier:

Many people dream of a better world; Howard, Wright and Le Corbusier went a step further and planned one. Their social consciences took this rare and remarkable step because they believed that, more than any other goal, their societies needed new kinds of cities. They were deeply fearful of the consequences for civilization if the old cities, with all the social conflicts and miseries they embodied, were allowed to persist. They were also inspired by the prospect that a radical reconstruction of the cities would solve not only the urban crisis of their time, but the social crisis as well. (Fishman 3–4)¹

Architectural and social engineering are two interrelated aspects of city planning in the 20th century sense of the term “urbanism”, forms of planning which grow directly out of the urban crises of European cities in the early 19th century.² Responses to the crisis generated by industrialization can be seen in the critiques of the capitalist city, epitomized in Engels’s *Situation of the English Working Class* (1845), and in the reforms of Robert Owen and Charles Fourier, with their models for alternatives. The first of these urban utopias was the “Garden City” of Ebenezer Howard (1902) which revives a familiar utopian dichotomy between urban and anti-urban, between industrial progress and nostalgic visions of the past; or, remembering that Howard was reacting to *Looking Backwards*, between the visions of Bellamy and Morris, or between those of St. Simon and Fourier; and more generally, between pastoral and urban utopias.³

In terms of the technological, planned city, the most influential and visionary architect of the twentieth century was Charles Edouard Jeanneret (1887–1965), better known as Le Corbusier, whose early projects played a major role in the emergence of “Modern Architecture” and the “International Style” in the 1920s and 30s.⁴ Late in life, Le Corbusier was responsible for two of the most important utopian cities of the 20th century: the new capital city of Chandigarh in the 1950s; and then, a few years later, the new capital of Brazil, Brasilia, designed by his student Oscar Niemeyer (with whom he had worked in Brazil in the 1930s).⁵

This is not an essay about city planning *per se*: the literature on the subject would take years to even read and, in any case, I am in no position to provide definitive answers or even to adequately summarize all of the debates. Rather this is an essay about the impact of a visit to Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh on someone who writes and thinks about the continuing validity and usefulness of utopianism today. Here then I will try to untangle and describe some key questions about social planning and utopia.

The first complication lies in the different types of criticisms of Le Corbusier’s urban visions, criticisms which range from critiques of any form of planning “from above” and those who recoil from Le Corbusier’s emphasis on technology or from his vision of “skyscrapers in a park,” or those who would flee the city altogether; while at the other end of the spectrum are those who simply think that this “Corbu” design or that building doesn’t work. In addition to this distinction between Le Corbusier as an architect and as a utopian planner, it is also important to recognize and untangle some of the more ideologically based criticisms of Le Corbusier, beginning with those who (explicitly or no) reject utopianism itself with its dreams or plans for a better society (particularly as it assumes collective rather than individual solutions), as opposed to those who accept the need for some overall plan or pattern for the city but who argue that such plans should come from the citizens themselves and not “from above” (Bookchin, the Goodmans etc.).

In his history of city planning in the twentieth century, Peter Hall describes and discusses what he considers the “key approaches” to city planning. Al-

though his analysis goes well beyond the basic dichotomies I offered above (e.g. pastoral vs. urban), Hall deems all of these approaches “reactions to the evils of the nineteenth-century city” (7). The first basic attitude is Ebenezer Howard’s “garden-city,” one which generates its logical extension, regional planning: “the answer to the sordid congestion of the giant city is a vast programme of regional planning, within which each subregional part would be harmoniously developed on the basis of its own natural resources, with total respect for the principles of ecological balance and resource renewal. Cities, in this scheme, become subordinate to the region” (8).

These regional ideas begin with Patrick Geddes and come to North America in the 1920s via Lewis Mumford and the Regional Planning Association of America. In contrast to these developments, there is what Hall labels the “monumental tradition of city planning” which he associates with the Baron Haussmann in Paris and Ildefonso Cerdá in Barcelona. Le Corbusier’s approach, in Hall’s account, is different, borrowing elements from both the garden city and monumental traditions: he was an “all powerful master planner [who] would demolish the entire existing city and replace it by a city of high-rise towers in a park” (9).

The “line of planning thought” for which Hall has the most sympathy, however, and which flows from Geddes and the anarchist tradition, is grounded in the conviction that “the built forms of cities should, as generally they now do not, come from the hands of their citizens; that we should reject the tradition whereby large organisations, private or public, build for people, and instead embrace the notion that people should build for themselves” (9).

I will return to the discussion of anarchist planning in my conclusion. Let me now turn to the design and construction of Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh, as a way of illustrating some questions about social planning and utopia, questions alluded to in my epigraphs and which—following visits to both Brasilia and Chandigarh—have been raised afresh for me.

How did Chandigarh come about?

With independence in 1947 came the partition of India into two countries, India and Pakistan (which were established along communal lines, Hindus and Muslims). The state of Punjab was itself divided, and Lahore, the former provincial capital, found itself in Pakistan, leaving the Indian state of Punjab without a capital. Rather than establish a new capital in an already existing town, the decision was made to start afresh, with an entirely new city, as Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru explained, “free from existing encumbrances of old towns and old traditions” (cited in Nilsson 89); “Let this be a new town, [he declared] symbolic of the past . . . an expression of the nation’s faith in the future” (cited in Evenson 6).⁶

There were of course practical as well as symbolic considerations for the decision to build a completely new capital city. None of the existing towns could house the new capital, for none of them seemed capable of supporting

the expansion necessary to provide for government functions, particularly insofar as the population of the state had actually increased with the migration of displaced persons from Pakistan. Once the decision was made to establish a new capital, there was the question of finding an appropriate city planner. Since the British colonial government had not encouraged or supported the training of Indian architects, it was necessary to look abroad.⁷ Consequently in August 1948, the Indian government began to search for a foreign architect to build “an administrative center accommodating half a million people and expandable to one million.” (Evenson 8) This process led to the selection of the New York architect Albert Mayer, who had been a lieutenant colonel in India during World War II. Mayer’s experience in town planning followed to some degree the English Garden City Movement and “its reaction against . . . the sterility and monotony of the classical-geometric approach to planning” (Evenson 13–14), an approach which can be seen in his 1941 Baldwin Hills project near Los Angeles. For Chandigarh, Mayer envisioned:

a fan-shaped outline, spreading gently to fill the site between the two river beds. The provincial government buildings [would be] located beyond the upper edge of the city within a fork in one of the rivers, while the central business district [would occupy] an area near the center. A curving network of main roads [would surround] the residential superblocks, each of which [would contain] a central area of parkland. . . . (Evenson 13–14)

Mayer worked with Matthew Nowicki, who was put in charge of on-site architectural control, but Nowicki’s death in an airplane crash in 1950 threw the project into disarray. After various consultations (and the need to find architects from a soft currency area), a new team was found to supervise the realization of the Mayer plan: from England, the architect couple, Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry; and from France, Le Corbusier and his cousin Pierre Jeanneret. Le Corbusier would be the “architectural advisor” and the other three, the senior architects (the original contract stipulated that Le Corbusier be there “four weeks twice a year” during its construction, von Moos 420). As they settled down to work, “Le Corbusier took charge of developing the master plan, designing the capitol complex, and establishing architectural control. Jeanneret and the Frys concerned themselves with directing the actual construction of the city and designing the remainder of the city’s buildings . . . (Evenson 27).⁸

Construction lasted several years, but by the end of 1952, most government departments had moved from the city of Simla to Chandigarh, and by September 1953 the move was complete. The differences between the two plans are summed up by Norma Evenson:

It is in the emphasis on a monumental axial composition that the second plan of Chandigarh differs most noticeably from the initial scheme. Although in both designs the capitol area was planned to stand against the mountains, only in Le Corbusier’s plan was there an effort to provide a single monumental approach linking the body of the city to its symbolic head and relating along a single axis the two main public areas of the city, the capitol complex and the civic center. (Evenson 32)

While considerations of Le Corbusier's Chandigarh tend to focus on the monumental Capitol Complex, it is important to include as well the 240 acres of the city itself, as a place to live and work. The basic residential feature in the Mayer plan was the *superblock* (which has been renamed *sector* and which are connected by Le Corbusier's seven types of roads (les "sept Voies").⁹

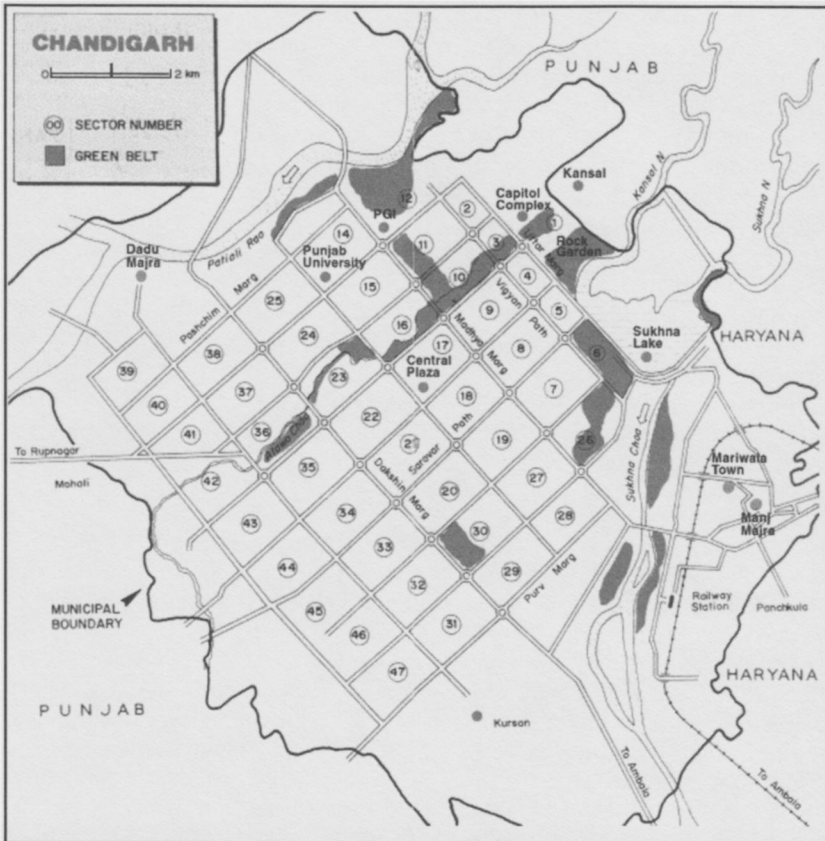


Figure 1. Map of Chandigarh, downloaded from Chandigarh public information site: <http://chandigarh.nic.in>

The northern zone serves the functions of the civic administration while the southern zone houses the activities of the district administration. It is connected to the Capitol Complex, to the university, and to the industrial area by fast traffic roads. At the heart of the City Center is a central chowk or "piazza," marking the crossing of two wide pedestrian ways running northeast to southwest and northwest to southeast in the form of a cross. Around the Hall, the Central Library, the Post and Telegraph offices, cinemas, shops, restaurants, banks, and so forth. A slow-traffic road encircles the chowk with large areas set aside for car parking. The chowk itself is free from any vehicular traffic . . . and is ideally

sued for religious activities and other festive congregations that are so important to the Indian way of life. The chowk is connected to other spaces of the City Center by a network of pedestrian ways. (Kalia 111)

What are the problems?

As is implicit in the distinction I made between pastoral and urban utopias, Le Corbusier's vision of the city was grounded in the new industrial civilization (outlined first in 1923 in *Vers une architecture*, often mistranslated as "Towards a new architecture"), a vision hotly opposed by architectural critics like Lewis Mumford who (in the more organic tradition of William Morris) looked for inspiration in the work of Patrick Geddes and Ebenezer Howard. Mumford was horrified by Le Corbusier's "worship of science and technology," declaring "from the time I read the first edition of his *Vers une architecture* . . . I knew we were . . . predestined enemies" (cited in Fishman 258). Later Mumford reviewed his single most important building—the Marseilles "unité d'habitation"—in a 1957 article in *The New Yorker* entitled "The Marseilles Folly"; and as Fishman points out, today "Mumford's view of Le Corbusier has become almost standard"¹⁰: "His Le Corbusier is an elitist technocrat, an authoritarian classicist, a sociologically naïve formalist with his grand design, his Cartesian elegance but also—alas!—with his Baroque insensitiveness to time, change, organic adaptation, functional fitness, ecological complexity" (Fishman 259).

These criticisms of Le Corbusier had already been made by Percival and Paul Goodman (*Communitas* 1947); but the contemporary critique of Modern Architecture began with "the most influential book on planning in recent years" (Fishman 268), Jane Jacob's 1961 *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, and continues with books like Peter Blake's 1977 *Form Follows Fiasco: Why Modern Architecture Hasn't Worked*. These criticisms, with frequent reference to Le Corbusier, alternate between describing the alienating effects of high rises and planned cities, and the practical consequences of some of the principles of Modern Architecture, which—in its ideal of purity—has led to the construction of overly expensive, highly impractical buildings which cannot withstand the "real world of ice and snow and hail and rain and broiling sun and soot and otherwise polluted air" (Blake 1977:40). At the level of daily life, these critics argue that such "sacred" planning concepts as zoning and single-use neighbourhoods (e.g. residential separate from work space or business etc.), produce buildings and living spaces which are profoundly alienating, particularly because of the absence of street life.¹¹ Some of these criticisms can be found in Ravi Kalia's ambivalent characterization of Chandigarh, as safe and yet boring, unIndian and yet an inspiration for Indian architects.¹²

The sectors, which make up the residential section, are marked by a sameness that leaves a visitor lost, without landmarks. Each sector is self-contained, providing essential services within walking distance of every dwelling. The

most positive aspect of the sectors is that they provide a safety area for children. They can play, walk to school, and to shopping areas, usually without crossing a street.

Chandigarh was meant to be something beyond a new state capital. But it lacks a culture. It lacks the excitement of Indian streets. It lacks bustling, colorful bazaars. It lacks the noise and din of Lahore. It lacks the intimacy of Delhi. It is a stay-at-home city. It is not Indian. It is the anti-city.

But with all its shortcomings, Chandigarh provokes the interest of people far beyond the borders of India. Neighbouring Pakistan wanted to consult Le Corbusier and the Chandigarh administration as it got ready to build its new capital at Islamabad. Burma, wanting to profit from the experience of Le Corbusier, sent him prepaid return ticket to visit Rangoon. The rest of the world closely watched the development of a planned city and the results it would bring. In India the city became an educating experience for India architects and planners, who rushed to other parts of the country to duplicate the features of Chandigarh. (Kalia 152)

Whatever the failings or triumphs of Chandigarh as a symbol of a transformed culture, its existence as an actual city where people live and work has been complicated by two sets of external problems, stemming from the explosive growth of the city over the past forty years, and from the political problems of the region. While the original plan called for “an administrative center accommodating half a million people and expandable to one million” (Evenson 8), the population today stands at just under seven million, and this does not include the numerous, unplanned satellite cities which have sprung up around Chandigarh. To make matters worse, in 1966 communal tensions led to the creation of two unilingual states, Punjab and Haryana, out of the previously bilingual state. Chandigarh was caught between Haryana and Punjab, each state demanding the city as its own capital. To resolve this predicament, Chandigarh was made into a “union territory” (like the District of Columbia), except that it was to serve as the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana, and the two chambers of Le Corbusier’s bicameral Assembly building each became the legislature for a different state! This has also fuelled the growth of the Chandigarh region as the two states have encouraged the development of adjacent satellite cities and industrial sectors as a way of increasing their competing claims to the capital. These new cities are completely unplanned, with no urban infrastructure, so that they depend on Chandigarh for medical services, education and other social services, even as they have sprung up in what were to be greenbelt in the original plan.

The architecture of Le Corbusier at Chandigarh will be remembered primarily for his capitol complex, which is composed of three monumental buildings: the Secretariat, the Assembly, and the High Court.

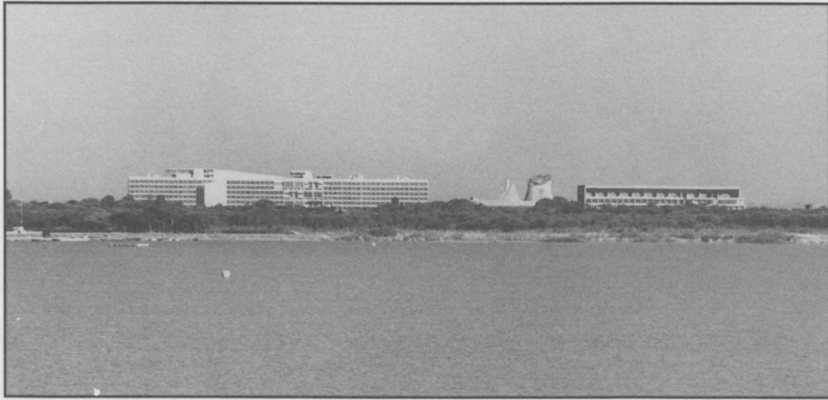


Figure 2. Chandigarh: Assembly, High Court and Secretariat. Copyright Fondation Le Corbusier: FLC L3(13)24.

Here Le Corbusier uses much of the technology and ideas that he had developed for the sunny Mediterranean climate and his Marseilles apartment block (under construction at the time), particularly its utilisation of rough concrete. The High Court was the first building to be completed and was put into use in March 1956; by the end of its first decade it was already too small.¹³

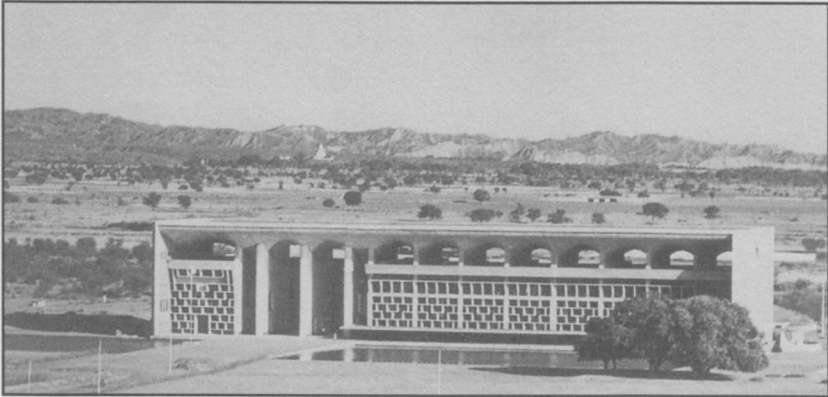


Figure 3. Chandigarh: High Court. Copyright Fondation Le Corbusier: FLC L3(11)38.

The Secretariat is a long, glass-walled office building with a central pavilion for the ministers. It resembles the Marseilles “*unité d’habitation*” and is based on the office project he had designed for Algiers in 1938–42. Le Corbusier had wanted to build a high-rise office building but the project director was adamant that there would be no high-rise buildings in Chandigarh, so he came up with this “massive wall” (254 meters long, 42 meters high), composed of six eight-story blocks. (In his 1958 visit, Mayer found it “crude and chunky,” Evenson 80).



Figure 4. Chandigarh: Secretariat. Copyright Fondation Le Corbusier: FLC L3(12)18.

Like the High Court building, it quickly proved too small, and the open balconies on each floor have been converted into additional offices. The most striking of the three buildings is the Legislative Assembly, which faces the High Court across the expansive plaza.

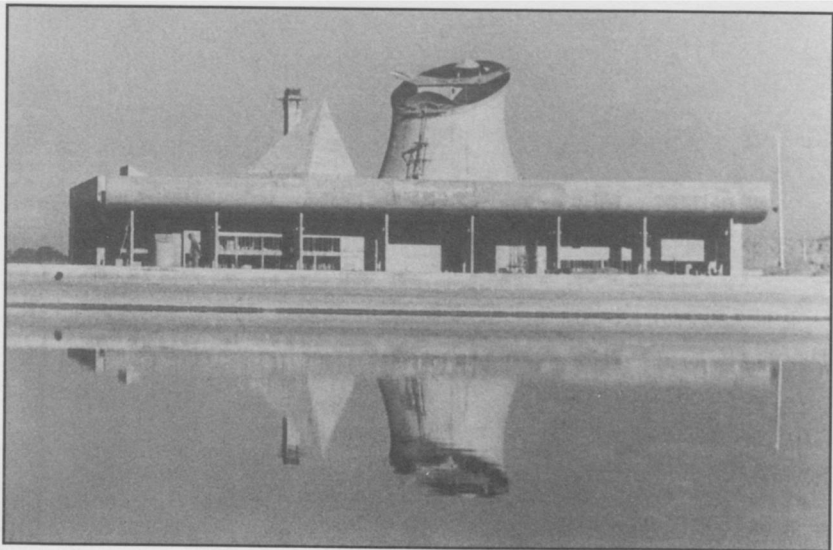


Figure 5. Chandigarh: Assembly and Secretariat. Copyright Fondation Le Corbusier: FLC L3(10)60.

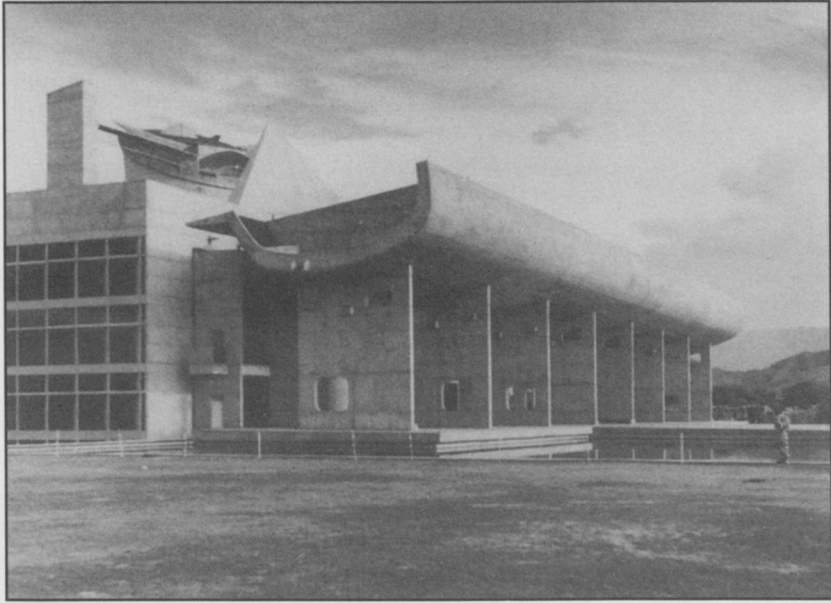


Figure 6. Chandigarh: Assembly and Secretariat. Copyright Fondation Le Corbusier: FLC L3(10)82.



Figure 7. Chandigarh: Assembly and Secretariat. Copyright Fondation Le Corbusier: FLC L3(12)22.

Finally, in the vast space between the High Court and the Assembly, there is the monument of the open hand: a giant hand, some 85 feet from an excavated plaza, which turns in the wind (and which was not completed until 1985).

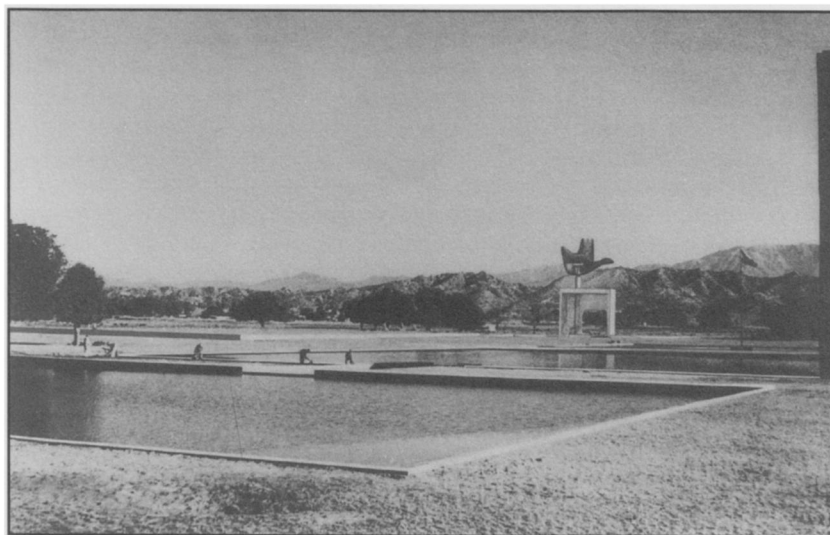


Figure 8. Chandigarh: The Open Hand. Copyright Fondation Le Corbusier: FLC L3(13)37.

As Norma Evenson sums up the general effect:

It is this monumental aspect of the city which obviously attracted Le Corbusier's primary interest, and his efforts were directed toward the immediate development of a powerful capitol complex and toward giving the whole urban fabric the imprint of a monumental symbolism, drawing certain of its dimensions from the large-scale ordering of Paris. . . . The scale of the design may perhaps be justified . . . if it is remembered that Chandigarh was intended not merely to house a provincial government but to stand as a symbol of the creativity and vigor of the new Republic of India. . . .

Perhaps the most praiseworthy aspect of the present master plan of Chandigarh, however, is that it provides for the integration of two orderings and two scales: first, a large geometric framework linking the monumental elements of the city, providing for rapid traffic, and defining the residential sectors; and second, within these sectors, opportunity for the establishment of more varied, informal elements appropriated for a pedestrian-dominated domestic environment. (Evenson 39)

The limits or failings of Chandigarh stem not only from its explosive, unplanned growth, but also from the design decision that separated the capitol complex from the city. This act rendered the monumental dimension of Le Corbusier's vision remote and distant from the citizens of Chandigarh. The sad irony of Le Corbusier's monument of the Open Hand—a symbol of "peace and reconciliation"¹⁴—is rendered even more distant and remote by the difficulties one encounters in trying to visit Le Corbusier's buildings, for the Secretariat and the Legislative Assembly, following the assassination of the chief minister of Punjab by Sikh militants in 1995, are now guarded by the army, leaving only the Courts open to the public.

As stated earlier, the criticisms of Le Corbusier and Chandigarh vary widely. Some objections lie at a practical level of architectural design who point to things that don't work in the grand designs of architects like Le Corbusier (e.g. Peter Blake). There were some problems with the High Court's "functional efficiency," for instance, beginning with the sound in the court-rooms—which Le Corbusier attempted to solve through the use of tapestries which he designed himself (and when some judges objected to them as "aesthetically unacceptable," Nehru insisted that they be kept [von Moos 437]). To deal with the summer heat, Le Corbusier developed sun breakers ("brises soleil"), although today the High Court is completely dependent on air-conditioners.

There are others, like Percival and Paul Goodman, Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, and Peter Hall, who reject his ideas of city planning as based on a profound misunderstanding of human nature. These critiques, shared with most condemnations of Modern Architecture, focus on the alienating effects of life in such planned cities, and particularly on the absence of street life, stemming from Le Corbusier's notion of "vertical density" (a vision denounced most explicitly in Percival and Paul Goodman and in Jane Jacobs). In Chandigarh, however, this concept was not put into effect, primarily because of the opposition of the P. L. Varma, the chief engineer, who accepted all of Le Corbusier's changes to the Mayer-Nowicki plan, but who also insisted that there be no high-rises. In any case, as we have seen, Le Corbusier quickly turned over responsibility for the residential part of the city and concentrated on the Capitol Complex (Fry 361–62).

There is some validity in the critiques of modern architecture. Yet it should be pointed out that some of the architects and urbanists who find fault with Le Corbusier's designs or buildings are not necessarily convinced of the free market's ability to produce alternatives.¹⁵ More generally, market-driven alternatives to urban planning have little to offer our contemporary cities beyond a continuing flight to the suburbs and the gated communities of the rich. The first denunciations of the conditions of working-class life in London early in the 19th century still seem appropriate as descriptions of life in many of today's metropolises. Our cities, left to the laws of the market, can only reflect contemporary economic and class divisions. In the attempt to contrast planning from above and individual choice, the attacks on urban planning feed into contemporary criticism of any kind of planning, indeed of government itself, and these criticisms have become part of the rhetorical arsenal of those who are dismantling the welfare state. Meanwhile, attempts to (re)produce the unalienated city of Jane Jacob's 1950s lower west side (now called the West Village) seemed to be based on the assumption that liveable communities somehow develop organically, from within, and that people will be able to maintain and preserve their neighbourhoods, while holding developers and land speculators at bay, without government intervention.¹⁶

Recently, in the United States, this impasse has produced the "New Urbanism," a nostalgic return to a vision of small-town America, whose

most well-known exemplars are to found in Florida: Seaside—where *The Truman Show* was filmed—and Disney’s Celebration, although many commentators have dismissed such experiments as artificial “theme parks.”¹⁷

While I certainly can’t resolve these issues, or even summarize the vast literature on urban planning and renewal, let me make some points following from what might be seen as three general planning attitudes towards the city, namely (1) those who would flee the city in one way or another (and in this context the New Urbanism often seems like a new version of that attitude); (2) those “monumental planners” who would build entirely new cities (like Le Corbusier at Chandigarh); and (3) those who seek to work to improve and enhance existing cities.

In contrast to the apparent escapism of the New Urbanism (which, at least judging by the examples of Seaside and Celebration, seem little different from existing gated cities), Murray Bookchin’s *From Urbanization to Cities* offers a much more interesting set of proposals for the renewal of city planning “from the bottom up,” in his outline for a “new municipal agenda,” (not unlike the “Municipal Charter” movement championed by Jane Jacobs).¹⁸ The question that has preoccupied thinkers like Jane Jacobs and Murray Bookchin is how to preserve and enhance the cities we already have. Bookchin goes well beyond the view that livable cities simply happen, arguing forcibly that “our chances for a natural and ecological society are much better in this [local and citizen-oriented] approach than in those that ride on centralized entities and bureaucratic apparatuses” (263).

While I certainly agree with Bookchin’s prescription for a politics which moves up rather than down, from the neighborhood to the municipal level (and beyond), I am still uncomfortable with abandoning existing “centralized entities and bureaucratic apparatuses.” Despite his very persuasive arguments, in the context of the neoliberal dismantling of social programs and of the attacks on a number of hard-won legal protections (e.g. from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, passing by labor and anti-trust legislation, patients’ rights, etc.), I am unwilling to restrict my energies to the local level. Instead these protections and legal safeguards—with all the accompanying rules and regulations—are worth defending. As long as we live in developed nation states (however much we despise them in principle), local initiatives are inadequate to stand up to the unchecked free market.¹⁹ At one point, Bookchin complains that one of his critics has argued that his “decentralist” vision would not prevent “Troy, New York from dumping its untreated wastes into the Hudson River, from which downstream cities like Perth Amboy draw their drinking water” (247). Bookchin gives two answers to this very pertinent objection. He first attacks the assumption that centralized government is “necessary to prevent one locality from afflicting another ecologically,” calling such an assumption “an unconscious acceptance of the economic status quo” (247–48); and then, even less convincingly, I think, he writes, “that in a society that was radically veering toward a decentralistic, partici-

patory democracy, guided by communalistic and ecological principles, *it is only reasonable to suppose* that people would not choose such an irresponsible social dispensation as would allow the waters of the Hudson to be so polluted” (249, my italics). I’m afraid that I am too conscious of the realities of the “economic status quo” to accept such a supposition as a sufficient guarantee of the safety of my drinking water. People may be reasonable, but the profit motive provides a different sort of reason which often overrides individual good intentions. Any further relaxing of government controls will only further endanger us, as can be seen in the Ontario government’s cut-backs to its Environmental Safety branch and the resulting breakdown of local water testing services which led to seven deaths in the summer of 2000 after an E. coli outbreak in the town of Walkerton. Not only are such disasters occurring elsewhere, but the growing acknowledgment of the problems associated with global warming, for instance, forcibly remind us that we can no longer escape (by moving to the country or even to some other region of the globe) the effects of environmental pollution. This unfortunately suggests not the need for *less* government (as the free marketers would have it), but for some sort of overarching world agency with the authority to enforce limitations on planet-warming gases.²⁰

Although I have drastically simplified Bookchin’s arguments, as well as his replies to such objections, the above constitutes a first argument for the need for planning and government intervention. The second argument against these visions of a municipal agenda lies in a danger which Jacobs almost seems to welcome and which Bookchin warns against—while saying that there are no guarantees that this won’t happen—namely the appearance of “parochial city-states” (236), of privileged enclaves which will seek to preserve their own advantages by cutting themselves off from the outside world in what would be another version of the gated city.²¹

While there is certainly a risk that such communities would turn their backs on the outside world, such projects and neighbourhoods might also be seen as playing a utopian role, if their impact and influence were to spread outward from the neighbourhood to the city and to the region.²² As Lynda Schneekloth points out, while the majority of architectural design is for building and projects that are meant to be implemented or built, there is also a type of architectural work whose “intention is to give visual form to a critique of current conditions, or to create an imaginary world of *as if*” (19), and it is on this note that I would like to conclude.

Chandigarh was built not only to stand as a symbol of the “new India”, but to contribute “to the creation of an ideal society that would provide all the prerequisites of complete happiness and fulfilment,” (Sutcliffe 218). Chandigarh—or Brasilia for that matter—do work. The three buildings of Le Corbusier’s capitol complex and, in particular, the structure of the Open Hand, stand as monuments to a transformed, utopian world, one which has not yet been realized; a monumental reminder, then, of those dreams and of the understanding that the utopian city can only be achieved in the context of a larger social transformation.

Epilogue

During the revision of this text I had the opportunity to visit Le Corbusier's most famous building, the "*unité d'habitation*" in Marseilles (often called "la cité radieuse") that was completed in 1952, while he was working on the Chandigarh project. By chance it was the residents' semi-annual garage sale and the lobby was filled with tables, with residents and outsiders, children with their pets and toys as they examined the items for sale. Despite all the criticisms of this building (most famously Lewis Mumford's 1957 denunciation in *The New Yorker*) it is, with its nine floors and almost 350 apartments and more than 500 inhabitants, a rather remarkable success story—an apartment building which is functioning well fifty years after it was built with no major modifications or changes, and where the residents speak of the building with pride and affection. The success of the building as a place to live can be measured, too, in the absence of any available apartments, although there are a few empty shops on the third floor as stores and supermarkets have been built nearby—for as Marseilles has grown the building is no longer located on the outskirts of the city. But this is an accomplishment of a slightly different kind than Le Corbusier and his government sponsors originally intended since it was designed as the prototype for low-income housing; while today, the apartments are all owned by the residents who are often professionals (and the resident who took me around was herself an architect).

Le Corbusier saw his prototype for a new type of attractive and inexpensive housing (hence the use of concrete instead of steel), a "vertical garden city," a "horizontal skyscraper" to be set on pillars and standing in a park, with a pool and health club as well as a nursery school on the roof, with a commercial sector on the third floor, including shops and a hotel (which is still in operation), not to mention the beautiful vistas: of the Mediterranean on the one side and the rocky hills on the other, and each of the twenty-three types of apartment Le Corbusier designed includes both views. All of this was part of Le Corbusier's design and is an integral part of the building today. Moreover, there has been an increasing concern on the part of the residents to respect his plans and designs, for he designed much of the interior of the building: not only the layout of the apartments, as well as the wide halls and elevators, but the furniture, the mail boxes and so on. Whatever the reasons for the building's success (the beauty of the site, the deliberate commitment of the residents etc.), it is hardly the cold, alienating building described by his critics, none of whom has ever designed an apartment building which is still standing and loved by its inhabitants fifty years later.

Needless to say, this building is very different from the monumental government complex at Chandigarh, just as it is very different from the many depressing apartment blocks whose design—whether deliberate or not—is blamed on Le Corbusier.²³ This is not India, nor is it anything approaching a planned city, but it works and was seen as a building block in his larger vision.

NOTES

*I wish to thank my travelling companion and guide to Brasilia and Chandigarh, Fred Jameson, for all his observations at the time and for his comments and suggestions on this paper. I also wish to thank the architect Marie France Chatenet for giving me a tour of the *unité d'habitation* in Marseilles. I would like to thank as well the anonymous referees whose comments helped in my revisions.

As I was correcting the final version of this article I received the proofs of Vikramditya Prakash's *Chandigarh's Le Corbusier: The Struggle for Modernity in Postcolonial India* (forthcoming 2002 from the University of Washington Press). The author brings a unique perspective to this study of Le Corbusier at Chandigarh, for he is the son of one of the members of Le Corbusier's architectural team at Chandigarh and an architect and professor of architecture himself. The book's focus is on the intersections of Le Corbusier's architectural vision with Nehru's convictions about the importance of modernization for the new nation: "for Nehru, the repudiation of the colonizer did not also entail the repudiation of the promises of the colonial enterprise" (11). In his account of these two visions and especially in their fruition in the Capitol Complex of Chandigarh, Prakash's reading attempts "to reinstate some of the losing voices in Chandigarh's history, those that are not heard so often or at least not so well. I would count Nehru's opposition to foreign architects and to the "Anglo-Saxon" predilections of the bureaucrats, as well as Le Corbusier's poignant identification with the rural peasant as amongst those" (151). It includes an account of the genesis of Chandigarh, an attempt to make sense of Le Corbusier's "naive and somewhat troubled" ideas, as well as a close examination of some aspects of the Capitol Complex, in particular the history and legacy of the monument of the Open Hand.

1. For a more general overview of urbanism and utopia, see Françoise Choay's introduction "L'urbanisme en question" to her anthology *L'Urbanisme: Utopies et réalités* (7–83). For an "intellectual history of urban planning and design in the twentieth century," see Peter Hall *Cities of Tomorrow*. In his study of Brasilia, James Holston explains that Oscar Niemeyer's plan was based on two premises:

The first premise is that the plan for a new city can create a social order in its image; that is, one based on the values that motivate its design. The second premise projects the first as a blueprint for change in the context of national development. It proposes that the new city should be a model of radically different social practices. It argues that if this model could serve as an exemplar of progress for the rest of the nation, then it would be possible not only to generalize its innovations, but also to propel the country as a whole into the planned future it embodies. (Holston 4)

The key point of modernist internationalism—often linked in the minds of both modernists and their critics with Soviet internationalism—was that the theory and technology of the modernist city provided an already developed means of saving the underdeveloped world from the chaos and inequities of Europe's Industrial Revolution. Salvation required implementing a national policy of urban development in which modernist cities would serve as the models and nodes of regional development. If the governments of third-world countries could exercise their authority to impose this policy, they would bring their nations into the machine age in an orderly and rational fashion. The construction of new cities, especially capitals, would stimulate technology, establish networks of communications, integrate vast and backward regions of untapped resources, and organize social relations collectively to maximize the potential benefits of the machine. (Holston 82)

2. By the mid-nineteenth century, Barcelona had the highest population density in Europe (Lopez de Aberasturi 14). Following the first general strike of 1854, the city ramparts were demolished and the city government called for proposals for an expansion of the city. The successful extension of Barcelona was the work of the engineer and architect Ildefonso Cerdá (1815–1876) who is usually credited with coining the term “urbanization” in his *General Theory of Urbanization* (1859) which laid out his plan for the expansion of Barcelona. For a full description of the urban crisis of the nineteenth century, see Hall, Chapter 2 “The City of Dreadful Night” (13–46).

3. Françoise Choay labels these two groups of planners the “progressives” and the “culturalists” (16–26). By “nostalgic” I am thinking of the “Afterword” to *Communitas*, where Percival Goodman describes a utopian future of 2020 in which the only remaining large cities are “museum cities” like Venice, while the principles of town planning derive not from Le Corbusier, Kenzo Tange, “nor even a Frank Lloyd Wright . . . but [from] a Victorian, John Ruskin . . .” (240). Unlike Fishman, who opposes Howard’s “moderate decentralization” to Le Corbusier’s “great metropolis,” Jane Jacobs (following Percival and Paul Goodman) rejects such a dichotomy, seeing Howard and Le Corbusier as two sides of the same authoritarian utopian-planning coin.

The most important thread of influence starts . . . with Ebenezer Howard, [who] looked at the living conditions of the poor in late-nineteenth-century London, and justifiably did not like what he smelled or saw or heard. He not only hated the wrongs and mistakes of the city, he hated the city and thought it an outright evil and an affront to nature that so many people should get themselves into an agglomeration. His prescription for saving the people was to do the city in.

The program he proposed, in 1898, was to halt the growth of London and also repopulate the countryside, where villages were declining, by building a new kind of town—the Garden City, where the city poor might again live close to nature. So they might earn their livings, industry was to be set up in the Garden City, for while Howard was not planning cities, he was not planning dormitory suburbs either. His aim was the creation of self-sufficient small towns, really very nice towns if you were docile and had no plans of your own and did not mind spending your life among others with no plans of their own. As in all Utopias, the right to have plans of any significance belonged only to the planners in charge. (Jacobs 17)

The man with the most dramatic idea of how to get all this anti-city planning right into the citadels of iniquity themselves was the European architect Le Corbusier. He devised in the 1920’s a dream city which he called the Radiant City, composed not of the low buildings beloved of the Decentrists, but instead mainly of skyscrapers within a park In Le Corbusier’s vertical city the common run of mankind was to be housed at 1,200 inhabitants to the acre, a fantastically high city density indeed, but because of building up so high, 95 percent of the ground could remain open. The skyscrapers would occupy only 5 percent of the ground Le Corbusier was planning not only a physical environment. He was planning for a social Utopia too. Le Corbusier’s Utopia was a condition of what he called maximum individual liberty, by which he seems to have meant not liberty to do anything much, but liberty from ordinary responsibility. In his Radiant City nobody, presumably, was going to have to be his brother’s keeper any more. Nobody was going to have to struggle with plans of his own. Nobody was going to be tied down.

The Decentrists and other loyal advocates of the Garden City were aghast at Le Corbusier's city of towers in the park, and still are. Their reaction to it was, and remains, much like that of progressive nursery school teachers confronting an utterly institutional orphanage. And yet, ironically, the Radiant City comes directly out of the Garden City. Le Corbusier accepted the Garden City's fundamental image, superficially at least, and worked to make it practical for high densities. He described his creation as the Garden City made attainable. (Jacobs 21–22)

John Gold posits two “Grand Narratives” or ways of interpreting the Modernist Movement: the first (from the 1920s), explained modern architecture as arising from “deep social commitment [and] the rational application of technology to building and construction. As such it was regarded as the only authentic contemporary architecture in that it employed the materials and constructional methods specific to that age and matched built forms to the functions that they served” (2). The second, the reaction to this first interpretation, “traced chains of causation that linked the *deficiencies* of recently designed urban environments back to the flawed visions of pioneering modern architects” (4).

4. There are several versions of Le Corbusier's ideal city, including his “Contemporary City for Three Million People” (1922), the “Plan Voisin” for Paris (which involved razing the Marais district and building eighteen skyscrapers in its place, see Fishman 206), and the “Radiant City” (1925).

In addition to these utopian projects, Le Corbusier's role in Modern Architecture lies in the founding of the International Congress of Modern Architects (CIAM) in 1928, and his drafting of its manifesto, the “Charter of Athens” (1941). For a brief history of CIAM before World War Two which stresses the differences within the group as well as Le Corbusier's rewriting of what was to become the “Athens Charter,” see Gold 56–77; he continues with CIAM in the post-war period later in *The experience of modernism*. These visions formed the basis for the utopian future city in films like David Butler's *Just Imagine* (1930) and William Cameron Menzies's version of H.G. Wells's *Things to Come* (1936).

[His was] an exciting and compelling vision of the manner in which the industrial-age city could be transformed, not by escape into small garden cities, but by accepting the fact of urban concentration and high density and exploiting to the utmost the possibilities of modern technology in creating a new urban environment. The use of high-rise structures would permit the accommodation of an urban populace, yet leave large areas of the ground free for park and recreational use . . . The plan [as laid out in his 1922 “City for Three Million People”] embodied four basic principles: (1) decongestion of the centers of cities; (2) increase of density; (3) enlargement of the means of circulation; and (4) enlargement of the landscaped areas. (Evenson 29)

In addition to the utopian socialists (Fourier, Owen, Saint-Simon), Le Corbusier was influenced by the visionary utopianism of Tony Garnier (1869–1948) whose detailed drawings and illustrations for an ideal city were published in 1917 as *Une cité industrielle, étude pour la construction des villes*. Although Garnier was never given the opportunity to build his ideal city, he designed and built a number of buildings in Lyon (where he lived and practiced), most especially a section of the city, “le quartier des Etats-unis,” which was begun in the early 1930s and which was never completed. For a brief history of early twentieth century “visionary ideas about the urban future,” see Gold's first chapter, “Anticipations”: 19–47.

5. Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's Brasilia is the supreme example of the “modernist city,” a concept which is thoroughly defined in James Holston's *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia*. Holston studies Brasilia as the realization of modernist

ideas and principles, as outlined in the manifesto of the International Congress of Modern Architecture—the “Athens Charter”—written by Le Corbusier in 1941. From Lucio Costa’s original plan and Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek’s choice of Oscar Niemeyer to design it, through its actual construction, it followed these ideals, unlike Chandigarh which, as I shall explain, was designed by a follower of Ebenezer Howard and which was then modified by Le Corbusier; and who then turned over the design of the residential sectors to his partners and concentrated on the capitol complex.

6. For a discussion of Nehru’s role in the project see von Moos. Nehru’s view of the importance of Chandigarh is summed up by Evenson:

The colonial yoke had been thrown off, and the moment had arrived for India to show the world that she could stand alone, that she could command her own destiny and govern her own house, and that against the brutality of nature and the vastness of her continent she could impress an ordered yet viable pattern of human life—proof that Indian civilization, though ancient, was still vigorous and creative. (6)

7. Although there was a Hindu tradition of city planning, in the twentieth century cities had grown by accretion around the cantonments of the British. Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta were trading centres which spread out from the ports like any commercial city in the West; and although New Delhi had been laid out by the British architect Edwin Lutyens, next to the old city, population influx, particularly following partition, quickly overflowed the densities and boundaries of that plan. Le Corbusier will look to Lutyens and his plan in the design of Chandigarh (von Moos 426 and passim), while critics of Modern Architecture, like Peter Blake, dislike Lutyens’s New Delhi as well:

Much scarier are certain single-use patterns that have literally demolished the cities upon which they were imposed. One of the most interesting examples of this abuse is New Delhi, whose incredible, bombastic central avenue—the Raj Path—was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, the great architect of the declining years of the British Empire. . . . [A]bout ten minutes away, by car, is the main street of *old* Delhi, Chandni-Chawk. It wasn’t designed by anybody in particular. It just happened. . . . It is a totally disorganized and frenetic mess. . . . Nothing works on Chandni-Chawk, that is, except life itself. For this is precisely the heart of the city, this is the place where all the action is! . . . Chandni-Chawk is the very essence of urban life itself: it is everything that people come to cities to experience, everything that suburbanites miss in their splendid isolation. (Blake 1977: 118–19)

Sten Nilsson’s *The New Capitals of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* includes a chapter on the British decision to make Delhi the capital of India. As with Le Corbusier and the Mayer plan, the architect Edwin Lutyens substantially modified the consultant adviser, Henry Vaughn Lancaster’s original plan for New Delhi, a plan which was very much influenced by Patrick Geddes—just as Mayer’s plan for Chandigarh was influenced by Ebenezer Howard. Peter Hall also discusses Lutyens and New Delhi in his chapter on “Monumental Planning,” 183–92.

8. In New York, Mayer soon realized that Le Corbusier was substantially revising his plan; after a series of detailed letters to Fry, he went to India to meet with the new team (in June 1951), but it was too late. For the story of the abandoning of the Mayer plan, see Evenson 26–27. *The Open Hand*, the collection of essays edited by Russell Walden, includes the recollections of both Jane Drew (“Le Corbusier as I Knew Him”) and Maxwell Fry (“Le Corbusier at Chandigarh”). In the same collection, Stanislaus von Moos gives an interesting account which states that Le Corbusier’s modifications to the Mayer plan are limited to decisions

about the “size of the neighbourhood units” and most especially the replacement of curved roadways with Le Corbusier’s “beloved” rectilinear axes (von Moos 422). One can also consult the notebooks (“carnets”) that Le Corbusier kept during his trips to India and which include his drawings and notes and which allow us to follow the development of his ideas.

9. Each rectangular sector of Chandigarh measured about 4,000 by 2,600 feet and was to be regarded as a largely self-contained urban community. Sectors were linked—and separated—by a grid of different-sized roads varying in size from small bridle (or rather bicycle) paths within the sectors, to residential arteries, throughways, and finally the grandiose Jan Marg running up the centre of the city towards the Capitol. In all seven main types of circulation were worked out . . . Evidently Le Corbusier was anticipating a time when motor traffic might become a major force in India. In other respects too the plan followed old Corbusian prescriptions: the separate zoning of living, working, circulation and leisure; the fusion of country and city through the planting and provision of trees and parks; rigid geometrical control and delight in grand vistas and processional axes; a sense of openness rather than enclosure; a lingering hope that urban order might bring social regeneration in its wake. (Curtis 190)
 10. See in particular Mumford’s “The Case Against *Modern Architecture*” (Miller 73–84) and “Yesterday’s City of Tomorrow” (Miller 176–83).
 11. Le Corbusier’s idealism . . . was indeed touching: he proposed beaming towers scattered among groves of trees, lawns, lakes, and streams in almost lyrical terms, speaking of man’s yearning for greenery, sunlight, fresh air, and space. All very true; but man’s primary yearning, it seems, is not for great expanses of open space, *but for other men* (and women and children). . . . What is missing from these well-intentioned diagrams for Ideal Cities is something so obvious that it has escaped the eyes of most critical observers. What is missing is *the street*, that most vibrant, exciting, irritating, and yet most stimulating of all outdoor spaces. (Blake 1977: 88, emphasis in text)
- This reproach can be found as well in the critiques of Brasilia, as for instance in James Holston’s explanation of “modernism’s doctrine of salvation [as] the elimination of the figural street” (133), and the resulting failure on the attempt to “stimulate new forms of public gathering” (310). The classic defence of street life is to be found in Jane Jacobs and particularly in the chapters devoted to “The Uses of Sidewalks”: 29–88.
12. “Safe and boring”: Depending on one’s perspective, this description might be seen as either what is right or wrong with the model towns of the New Urbanism. See below, pp. 80–81.
 13. When Mayer visited in 1958 he was impressed, calling it “a great evocative work of sculpture, not in fact architecture.” (cited Evenson 78)
 14. In a letter to Nehru, Le Corbusier wrote that “the Open Hand will assert that the second era of the Machine Age has begun: the Era of Harmony,” (cited in von Moos 447).
 15. See for instance Peter Blake’s more autobiographical reflections in *No Place Like Utopia*:

Although I was not aware of it at the time, I now realize that something rather unfortunate had been happening to architecture in the U.S. during the years following World War II. While the Modern Movement, in the twenty years between the two wars, had been totally committed to the improvement of the human condition in a world that was becoming very rapidly urbanized and even more rapidly overpopulated, modern architecture in the wealthiest country on earth became increasingly the earmark of the very rich.

The best modern buildings constructed in the U.S. after 1945 were almost invariably such glistening corporate headquarters as Gordon Bunshaft's Lever House in Manhattan and his equally splendid headquarters for the Manufacturers Trust Bank, for Pepsi Cola, for Union Carbide, and for countless other corporate giants. . . . More and more frequently, as time went on and downtown became associated with danger, these sumptuous headquarters were located in suburban Gardens of Eden far removed and carefully insulated from our problem cities and their poverty, crime, and physical decay. The Modern Movement—once dedicated to the ideals of an egalitarian democracy—had suddenly become the symbol of American capitalism at its most exploitative; and virtually no modern architect of any reputation was involved in such mundane problems as housing for the poor or even for those of low-to-middle income. (Blake 1993: 306–07)

16. Yet for all her enthusiasm for the cities, Jacob's message is an essentially negative one. Her faith in individual action is more than counterbalanced by an overwhelming scepticism about what people can accomplish together. . . . For Jacobs, the cities are already built. They can be renovated but never transformed. To expect citizens to agree on a better kind of city and unite together for its construction is either a delusion or the self-serving illusion of the "new aristocracy of altruistic planning experts." Nor does her very real concern for the urban poor imply a commitment to any economic or social reforms. Indeed, the logic of her argument calls for even greater freedom for the capitalist entrepreneur. (Fishman 271)

Fishman is not alone in pointing out some of the flaws in the belief that liveable urban communities develop naturally. After a description and defence of the "richness" and importance of Jacob's "remarkable book," Marshall Berman turns to the failings of this "pastoral" vision of her New York City neighbourhood, "for it is the city before the blacks got there . . . [before] the 1960s [when] millions of black and hispanic people would converge on America's cities—at precisely the moment when the jobs they sought, and the opportunities that earlier poor immigrants had found, were departing or disappearing" (Berman 324–25). On the other hand, John Dyckman accuses Jacobs of "editing the factory out of the city . . . neighbourhoods in which the monster of industrialization never intrudes" (cited in Ellin 135).

17. This expression is from Jane Jacobs, quoted in Robert Shibley, "The Complete New Urbanism and the Partial Practices of Placemaking" (88). Jacobs is of course interested in preserving existing city neighbourhoods; her book is as much an attack on the "decentrists" (e.g. Geddes and Mumford) and their rejection of the city in favour of "the ideal of cozy town life" (Jacobs 23) as it is on the city planning of Le Corbusier. While the New Urbanism cannot be reduced to the idea of building isolated new towns (like Celebration and Seaside), they are frequently cited as such and constitute a very different response to the crisis of the city today in North America. Although I am not really able to discuss at any length the New Urbanism here, and although I do not agree with all of his conclusions, Shibley's "The Complete New Urbanism and the Partial Practices of Placemaking" is an excellent introduction to the subject. He also quotes Herbert Muschamp, who called such projects "Potemkin villages for dysfunctional families" (88). For a critique of the New Urbanism that objects to it as a failed form of "social engineering" that has produced communities little different from other suburban communities and that fails to address the central "metropolitan problems," see Gordon and Richardson, "A Critique of New Urbanism."

For a discussion of Celebration in the context of the New Urbanism, see Andrew Ross, *The Celebration Chronicles*. For a cranky denunciation of Le Corbusier's pernicious influence

on urban development and planning in the United States along with an endorsement of Seaside and the New Urbanism, see James Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere* (78–81 and 253–60), and his reprise of many of these ideas in *Home From Nowhere* (1996). The best known popularisation of these attacks on Le Corbusier and modern architecture is Tom Wolfe's *From Bauhaus to Our House* (1981).

18. The aims and principles of the Municipal Charter movement can be found on their web site, www.localselfgovt.org; or in the collection of essays edited by Mary W. Rowe, *Toronto: Considering Self-Government* (Toronto: Ginger Press, 2000). Peter Hall describes the anarchist planning tradition, which stretches from Geddes through Percival and Paul Goodman to Murray Bookchin, as starting from the conviction that "citizens make cities." This is how Hall's book begins:

For me, however unrealistic or incoherent, the anarchist fathers had a magnificent vision of the possibilities of urban civilization, which deserves to be remembered and celebrated; Le Corbusier, the Rasputin of this tale, in contrast represents the counter-tradition of authoritarian planning, the evil consequences of which are ever with us. (5)

It is important to mention Percival and Paul Goodman's *Communitas* here for its early [1947] influence on a number of thinkers. The Goodmans focus on regional solutions and present three "community paradigms." The first, "A City of Efficient Consumption," is "founded on the premises of the official economics" (124): a metropolis of five million people organized in a series of concentric circles (with a total radius of five miles) with the core reserved for light manufacture and commerce, markets and restaurants, followed by a zone for universities and the arts, and finally the domestic sphere, and all this surrounded by open fields (and some heavy manufacture). The second model (which they prefer) is one which has reduced production and consumption (or in their terms which has "eliminated the difference between production and consumption"), so that work itself has become meaningful. (Lyman Sargent has assured me that this is the model for some of Ursula Le Guin's better known utopian societies, in *The Dispossessed*.) This results in smaller urban centers (200,000) with nearby farms and factories; and individuals are able to change activities over the course of the year ("a well rounded schedule of jobs for each man," 158). The third alternative is labeled "Planned Security with Minimum Regulation," although this is not some libertarian world, but one of "assured minimum subsistence," a model which "has obvious applications to regions that are poorly industrialized but densely populated." The difficulty with these paradigms, at least in the context of my discussion, lies in the fact that these are all models of new cities: the first is an alternate New York, the second, very attractive utopia "is easiest to think of . . . as growing in virgin territory with new people" (220); and the third is a model for developing countries (although "in advanced countries too this scheme is not irrelevant," 220). Since there no longer seems to be much chance for an entirely new city, I am interested in proposals for dealing with existing cities. Of course the Goodmans' utopian proposals for new cities are very different than those of Le Corbusier (whom they dismiss as "a poor social critic and a bad prophet,"[48]. For a discussion of his ideas see 42–49, and passim): "for in the end, the great machine of the Ville Radieuse, with all its constructivist beauty, is not a city at all." (49)

19. John Brunner's *Shockwave Rider* (1975) is another example of a utopian "enclave" whose citizens drop out, but they retain a number of defenses which they must use when the inevitable attack on them eventually comes. The military threats to the new society of "Eco-topia" (in Ernest Callenbach's novel of the same name, 1975) must similarly be answered. The image of a small society forced to defend itself against its more powerful neighbors, because of the threat it poses *as an alternative* reminds us of the situation of Cuba.

20. A recent newspaper report states that “in a surprising result”, an “Environics International poll of 9,000 people from the G-8 countries” found that four out of 10 people supported what the pollsters referred to as the “radical, but hypothetical option” of “giving the United Nations the power to imposed legally binding actions on national governments to protect the Earth’s climates.” *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto). Friday July 20, 2001, A5.

21. See, for instance, Edward Blakeley and M.G. Snyder, *Fortress America* (1999). Perhaps the best fictional depiction of such a gated city is Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle’s 1981 novel, *Oath of Fealty* which begins with the familiar spectre of urban unrest and stepped-up crime rates, in order to make a concrete utopian proposal: the “arcology” of Todos Santos, an armed and insulated retreat for 250,000 affluent Americans built in the ruins of Los Angeles and surrounded by the crumbling city. The plot involves the unsuccessful attempts of the “American Ecology Army” to sabotage and discredit the utopian experiment.

22. This is the basic argument of Fredric Jameson’s “Architecture and the Critique of Ideology,” in an extended dialogue with Manfredo Tafuri’s *Utopia and Architecture* (1973). Jameson distinguishes two positions within a properly Marxist and Gramscian framework for architectural critics. The first, represented by Tafuri, is that “there can be no qualitative change in any element of the older capitalist system—for instance, in architecture or urbanism—without beforehand a total revolutionary and systemic transformation” (Jameson 68). In the second position, (central to those of us interested in the role of utopian images), he calls for a critical architecture practice, “according to which the emergent future, the new and still nascent social relations that announce a mode of production that will ultimately displace and subsume the as yet still dominant one, is theorized in terms of small yet strategic pockets or beachheads within the older system” (70). Without repeating his entire complex argument, Jameson argues that both Tafuri and the post-modernists (with their rejection of the utopianism of Modern Architecture and their embrace of a “new free play of ideas”) are fundamentally pessimistic recognitions of the fact that “nothing new can be done,” a position which he rejects in favor of a continuing search for alternatives: a project which “proposes itself, as we have already suggested, as a radically different, revolutionary, or subversive enclave from which little by little the whole surrounding fabric of fallen social relations is to be regenerated and transformed” (Jameson 83).

23. This building was explicitly intended as a prototype. In addition to a number of other housing projects which were never built (Bordeaux, Dijon, Annecy, Villacoublay, Brétigny, Tours etc.), four other *unités* were built, which for a variety of reasons, usually having to do with financial considerations during construction, are considered less successful: three in France, at Rezé-lès-Nantes (1955), Briey-en-Forêt (1963), Firminy (1967), and one in Berlin (1957). For an extensive discussion of these projects, see Gilles Ragot and Mathilde Dion, *Le Corbusier en France*.

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