

Collaboration

WINTER 1983

MT. TREMPER, N.Y. 12457, U.S.A.

VOL.X NO.2



1950 Darshan of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. Photo courtesy Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

It seems as though the publication of this issue of *Collaboration* has put all of us, readers, contributors and editors, to the test. Our readers have probably been wondering if we are still in business. Our contributors have been waiting to see their work. The editors have been on the move: Margo to Boston; Navaja to California; and Gordon and Jeanne to a new house. Nevertheless, here is the proof that we are still dedicated to this journal. In fact we've been working and thinking about this issue since July.

It was then that we set off across the USA in our little Honda. One of the goals of our trip was to meet with friends of *Collaboration* and find out what they wanted to see and hear from it. We had a sense of the role it played but hoped to find out if others felt that it could be a forum for communication in this country.

Driving back to the midwest through the mountainous, semiarid areas of Nevada and Utah brought back many memories of hot Auroville days. There was time and space to think about how *Collaboration* could connect people separated by such vast distances. There are many Aurovillians, Ashramites and followers of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother living in this country. Some have congregated in California and the New York-New England area. Many

others are spread out from New Jersey to Florida to Houston to Iowa City to Billings, Montana and a host of small towns and cities in North America. Most of us work hard to survive. At the same time, we all carry a little spark of Auroville, the Ashram or the Yoga with us. Sri Aurobindo and The Mother are present, whether in the background or foreground, in our work, homes and thoughts. As a collective aspiration *Collaboration* can keep before us the vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother as well as give a picture of how, when, and where this vision is manifesting in America.

This issue reflects the work which has been going on in the USA through two significant events that happened on August 15th of this year. These were the registering of Auroville International in the Netherlands and the meeting for Sri Aurobindo's birthday at Willow Gold in Wisconsin. The first is reported by Constance Walker who has given time, thought and energy to realizing this new organization. Talking with him at his home in Santa Cruz, California we realized how thoroughly he had worked to revise and help to write the charter for Auroville International. He communicated with many Americans and Aurovilians in order to represent our perspective at the meeting in Laubach, W. Germany. Constance's article is a clear, concise description of the formation of AVI, its present status, and the vision of what it can become.

All of us who were able to attend the meeting at Willow Gold felt that new forms of organization for carrying on the Yoga here had to be created. Auroville International has a written structure. The living body of its participants and the work it can do are still in the future.

It was also evident to us that places like the Willow Gold Community, with its business, Global View, was one of the new places in the US where people could find information, products and a vibrant working community here.

Another new center which offers these things is the Merriam Hill Center in Greenville, New Hampshire. Thus we interviewed Suzanne McDonald who organizes the student exchange programs between Merriam Hill and Auroville. This interview shows that Americans are interested in the experience which Auroville has to offer, and that there are many ways of organizing and facilitating this exchange.

There is also an article by David Wickenden on one of the newest theories about the development of human consciousness. Many of you will find yourselves in "morphic resonance" with this review of Rupert Sheldrake's work because of your past experience with Sri Aurobindo and The Mother's writings.

As usual we have included "*Between Two Worlds*" the journal excerpts of Dick Batstone. There are also many news items from around the US and from Auroville, as well as two proposals for us to consider from George Nakashima and Arya Maloney.

Finally we hope that the extracts from the works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother bring harmony and light into this issue. On a cold, windy day in November we hope that there is something in *Collaboration* which will touch that inner spark we all carry and perhaps help us to weather the coming winter. Write to us. Send contributions. Our goal is to make this journal a collective vehicle of communication about the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother in our lives.

THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY

(On October 2, in towns and cities all over America, people walked together for a distance of 6 miles in protest of the nuclear arms race. As one among 100 people from my town I walked through the rain and shared in the spirit of a common aspiration for the life of this earth to be truly protected rather than be destroyed through the accumulation and use of atomic weapons.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial	Page 1
Jean & Gordon Korstange	
Extracts from the Ideal	Page 2
of Human Unity	Jean Korstange
The Unmanifested Element	
Mother's Agenda Vol.III	
I Am With You	Page 3
Mother's Agenda Vol.I	
Auroville International	Page 5
Constance Walker	
An Unexpected Departure	Page 7
David Wickenden	
Getting There	Page 11
Gordon Korstange	
The Learning Exchange	Page 13
Interview with Suzanne McDonald	
Between Two Worlds	Page 17
Dick Batstone	
The Mother's Sutras	
Mother's Agenda Vol.I	
General News	Page 18
Center News	Page 21
News from Auroville	Page 22
Poems	Page 24

Collaboration (ISSN 0164-1522) is published by Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc., Mt. Tremper, NY 12457, a non-profit, tax exempt organization. 1983 by Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc. All passages from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are copyrighted by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram unless otherwise noted and are used here with the kind permission of the Ashram. Photographs of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother appearing in these pages are also copyrighted by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

A one-year subscription is \$5.00; airmail outside the U.S. and North America is \$10.00. All foreign subscriptions must be paid with a U.S. dollar draft on a New York bank or an International Money Order.

Larger contributions, all tax-deductable, are welcome for the work of the center. In addition, contributions for Auroville and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram may be made through Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc.

Subscriptions should be sent to Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc., Mt. Tremper, NY 12457.

Any editorial material should be sent to Jeanne Korstange, 5 Sunnyslope Dr., Middletown, CT. 06457

Printed in the United States of America.

THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY

Walking with the other people of my community I felt the common bond and sense of unity we had. Sri Aurobindo writes that, "Nature will use other means such as war and conquest to the temporary domination of the powerful State...Which will compel those threatened to adopt a closer system of union. It is these means and this force of outward necessity...which she is using to drive mankind towards international unification." In The Ideal of Human Unity, from which this quote is taken, he also explains how the unity of the human race can be "...made real if the religion of humanity, which is at present the highest active ideal of mankind, spiritualizes itself and becomes the general inner law of human life." The following extract is a more detailed description of this concept.)

"The saving power needed is a new psychological factor which will at once make a united life necessary to humanity and force it to respect the principle of freedom. The religion of humanity seems to be the one growing force which tends in that direction; for it makes for the sense of human oneness, it has the idea of the race, and yet at the same time it respects the human individual and the natural human grouping. But its present intellectual form seems hardly sufficient. The idea, powerful in itself and in its effects, is yet not powerful enough to mould the whole life of the race in its image. For it has to concede too much to the egoistic side of human nature, once all and still nine-tenths of our being, with which its larger idea is in conflict. On the other side, because it leans principally on the reason, it turns too readily to the mechanical solution. For the rational idea ends always as a captive of its machinery, but only to substitute in the end another mechanical system, another credo, formula and practice.

A spiritual religion of humanity is the hope of the future. By this is not meant what is ordinarily called a universal religion, a system a thing of creed and intellectual belief and dogma and outward rite. Mankind has tried unity by that means; it has failed and deserved to fail, because there can be no universal religious system, one in mental creed

and vital form. The inner spirit is indeed one, but more than any other the spiritual life insists on freedom and variation in its self-expression and means of development. A religion of humanity means the growing realization that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here. It implies a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit upon earth. By its growth within us oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of co-operation but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life. There must be the realization by the race that only on the free and full life of the individual can its own perfection and permanent happiness be founded. There must be too a discipline and a way of salvation in accordance with this religion, that is to say, a means by which it can be developed by each man within himself, so that it may be developed in the life of the race. ...A spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness not dependent upon any intellectual or outward uniformity and compel a oneness of life not bound up with its mechanical means of unification, but ready always to enrich its secure unity by a free inner variation and a freely varied outer self-expression, this would be the basis for a higher type of human existence.

Could such a realization develop rapidly in mankind, we might then solve the problem of unification in a deeper and truer way from the inner truth to the outer forms. Until then, the attempt to bring it about by mechanical means must proceed. But the higher hope of humanity lies in the growing number of men who will realize this truth and seek to develop it in themselves, so that when the mind of man is ready to escape from its mechanical bent, - perhaps when it finds that its mechanical solutions are all temporary and disappointing - the truth of the Spirit may step in and lead humanity to the path of its highest possible happiness and perfection."

*(The Ideal of Human Unity,
:Vol. 15, p. 549-552)*

When knowledge is fresh in us, then it is invincible; when it is old, it loses its virtue. This is because God moves always forward.

The Unmanifested Element

September 29, 1962

(Concerning an old Talk of October 3, 1956, to be published in the next "Bulletin":)

This is what you say:

"Beyond a shadow of a doubt, modern scientific perception comes much closer to expressing universal reality than, say, Stone Age perceptions did. Yet even science will suddenly find itself completely surpassed and probably turned upside down by the intrusion of something that DID NOT EXIST in the observed universe...."

The trouble is, Sri Aurobindo said the thing was INSIDE already, involved. He always says it's "involved" and then evolves.

Yes, but "involved" simply means unmanifested. The intrusion of the new, supramental element is the intrusion of that involved, unmanifested element.

If it weren't already there, involved, it could never come out! That's obvious.

Then you say:

This change, this abrupt transformation of the universal element, will most certainly bring about a kind of chaos in the perceptions, from which a new knowledge will emerge. That, in the most general terms, is the result of the new Manifestation."

It's not a question of "new things," as if they didn't exist before, but they were unmanifested in the universe. Nothing can exist which doesn't already exist in the Supreme from all eternity. But it is new in the Manifestation. The element isn't new, but it is newly manifest, newly emerged from the Nonmanifest. Something "new"...what does that mean? It makes no sense! It is new FOR US, in the manifestation, that's all.

We always talk nonsense when we speak. But at any rate (*laughing*), some nonsense is closer to the truth than other nonsense! This nonsense is closer to the truth.

Mother's Agenda New York: Institute for Evolutionary Research Vol.III Pg. 358-59

I AM WITH YOU

(The disciple asks Mother what is meant by the reminder, "I Am With You.")

Undated 1957

(What is meant exactly by "I am with you." Are we really always heard when we pray or struggle with an inner problem—in spite of our blunders and imperfections, even in spite of our ill will and mistakes? And who hears? You who are with us? Is it you in your supreme consciousness, an impersonal divine force, the force of the yoga, or you, the embodied Mother with your physical consciousness—a personal presence really intimate to our every thought and act, and not some anonymous force? Can you tell us how and in what way you are present with us?)

It is said that Sri Aurobindo and you are one and the same consciousness, but are the personal presence of Sri Aurobindo and your own personal presence two distinct things, each playing a particular role?

I am with you because I AM you or you are me.

"I am with you" means a world of things, for I am with you at every level, on every plane, from the supreme consciousness to my most physical consciousness. Here, in Pondicherry, you cannot breathe without breathing my consciousness. It permeates the atmosphere in the subtle physical almost materially and extends right to the lake, seven miles away from here. Beyond, my consciousness can be felt in the material vital, and then on the mental and the other higher planes everywhere. When I came here for the first time, I felt Sri Aurobindo's atmosphere, felt it materially, ten miles from the shore—ten nautical miles, not kilometers! It was very sudden, very concrete, a pure and luminous atmosphere, light, so light that it lifts you up.

A long time ago, Sri Aurobindo had this reminder, with which you are all quite familiar, put up everywhere in the Ashram: "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you; because she is, indeed, always present."

This is not some mere sentence, these are not just words, it is a fact. I am very concretely with you, and those with a subtle vision can see me.

Generally speaking, my Force is constantly here at work, constantly changing the psychological elements of your being to put them into new relationships and to make clear to you the diverse facets of your nature so that you may see what must be changed, developed or eliminated.

But besides all this, there is a special personal bond of affection between you and me, between all who have turned towards Sri Aurobindo's teaching and me—and of course, distance does not count; you may be in France, at the other end of the world, or in Pondicherry, but this bond remains just as real and as living. Each time there is a call, each time I need to know something to send out a force, an inspiration, a protection or whatever else, a sort of message suddenly comes to me at any moment whatsoever, and you may have seen me more than once suddenly stop in the middle of a sentence or some work; it means something, some communication is coming, so I concentrate.

There is more than a bond with those whom I have accepted as disciples, those to whom I have said 'yes'—there is an emanation of myself. Whenever necessary, this emanation notifies me as to what is happening. In fact, I

know constantly, but all these things are not registered in my active memory, otherwise I would be flooded—the physical consciousness acts as a filter: things are recorded on a subtle plane and remain there in the latent state, rather like music that is silently recorded, and when I need to know something with my physical consciousness, I plug into this subtle plane and the tape starts playing. Then I can see things, their evolution and the present result.

And if, for some reason or other, you write asking for my help, and I answer, 'I am with you,' this means that the communication with you becomes active, that you are even in my active consciousness for some time—the time needed.

And this bond between you and me is never cut. There are people who left the Ashram a long time ago, in a state of revolt, and yet I continue to know them and to take care of them. You are never abandoned.

In truth, I feel responsible for everyone, even for people I have met for only one second in my life.

Now, you know that Sri Aurobindo and I are always one and the same consciousness, one and the same person. Only, when this unique force or presence is felt in your individual consciousness, it assumes different forms or appearances depending upon your temperament, your aspirations, your needs, the particular cast of your nature. Your individual consciousness is like a filter, a pointer, as it were; it makes a choice and settles upon one possibility in the infinity of divine possibilities. In truth, the Divine gives to each one exactly what he expects from Him. If you believe the Divine to be distant and cruel, He will be distant and cruel, because it may be necessary for your supreme well being to feel the wrath of God. He will be Kali for the worshippers of Kali, and bliss for the bhakta. He will be the All-Knowledge of seekers after Knowledge, the Transcendent Impersonal of the illusionist. He will be an atheist for the atheist, and the love of the lover. He will be fraternal and near, an ever faithful friend, ever helpful, to those who feel him as the inner guide of each movement, at each minute. And if you believe that He can erase everything, He will erase all your faults, all your errors, tirelessly, and at each moment you will feel his infinite Grace. In truth, the Divine is what you expect of Him in your deep aspiration.

An once you enter into this consciousness where all things are seen with a single look, the infinite multitude of the Divine's relationships with men, you realize how wonderful everything is, in every detail. You can also look at the history of mankind and see how much the Divine has evolved depending upon what men have understood, desired, hoped for or dreamed; how he was materialistic with the materialist, and how each day he grows, draws nearer, becomes more luminous, as the human consciousness widens. Everyone is free to choose. The perfection of this endless variety of relationships between man and God throughout the history of the world is an unutterable wonder. Yet all this together is but a second in the total manifestation of the Divine.

The Divine is with you according to your aspirations. This does not mean, naturally, that He bends to the whims of your outer nature—I am speaking here of the truth of your being. Yet sometimes He does fashion himself according to your outer aspirations; and if, like the devout, you live alternately in estrangement and embrace, ecstasy and despair, the Divine too will be estranged from you or draw near, according to your belief. Therefore, one's attitude is

extremely important, even one's outer attitude. People do not know just how important faith is, how faith is miracle — the creator of miracles. For if at each moment, you expect to be uplifted and drawn towards the Divine, He will come and uplift you, and He will be there, very near, nearer and nearer.

Mother's Agenda (Paris: Institut de Recherches Evolutives, 1979 I:116 - 119 Undated 1957)

AUROVILLE INTERNATIONAL

Introduction

"And I see clearly that trying to formulate it would spoil everything. You can't formulate a curve until you come to the end of it - otherwise, you spoil its course". The Mother (19/12/62)

Auroville International is a new creation - just beginning its dual career as both a servitor and an expression of Auroville. Its road to maturity is long and depends very much upon future developments in the world, in India and in Auroville. One hesitates to bring its form and purpose into too sharp a definition too soon for fear of falsifying its mission or hardening and limiting its potential.

The structure of Auroville International, as reflected in its Statute, has been approved by the various centers and by Auroville. The Statute was registered August 15, 1983 in The Netherlands. But this is only a first step. Everything about Auroville International is yet to be done - yet to be discovered.

One thing can be said definitely: Whatever its future, Auroville International - like all other aspects of Auroville - will most certainly evolve beyond our initial understandings and expectations of it.

History and Purpose

The formation of Auroville International was inevitable. It was inherent in the seed which The Mother planted in 1968.

"I'm speaking of the collaboration of countries *to create* something. It's not when Auroville is finished: it's the collaboration of countries to create something - but to create something which is based on Truth instead of rivalry in the creation of Falsehood. It's not when Auroville is ready - when Auroville is ready, it will be one city among all cities, and it's not its own capacity for truth which will have power, but that...that remains to be seen." The Mother (21/9/66)

If Auroville is essentially the collaboration of the world to create something True, then it is inevitable that there must be an organized means by which the world and Auroville can be in relation. This, in brief, is the role of Auroville International.

The basis of AVI has existed since the founding of the Auroville centers in the various countries. Until recently, however, each of these centers has operated more or less independently of the others. In the last few years, a serious threat has been posed to the future of Auroville. In response, the European centers drew closer together in order to demonstrate - to the world and to India - their solidarity for Auroville. It was out of this solidarity that Auroville International eventually emerged.

One can argue that Auroville International *had* to come into being whenever the time was right and the conditions appropriate. Nonetheless, we must recognize the significant fact that it was the European centers who were responsible for both the inspiration and the effort which made AVI possible.

Four conferences of Auroville centers were held in Europe between November 1981 and June 1983. Three points emerged during the discussions which gave a special impetus to the formation of Auroville International: 1) A need was felt "to materialize a more collective consciousness among the groups in Europe." People were becoming better acquainted with one another, and those who attended the meetings viewed them as a means "to take a concrete step forward." 2) Auroville should soon achieve a new legal status, and with it will come new possibilities for planning and development. It was pointed out that, in order to meet the challenges of this next phase, an international organization would have greater capabilities for fundraising, liaison and representation than the individual centers acting alone. 3.) It was brought to attention of those at the conferences that some groups in Europe exploit the name and reputation of Auroville for their own benefit - even though they have no relationship with Auroville. The ideas and practices of these groups may be antithetical, even repugnant to the values of Auroville. The creation of Auroville International should help to make a clear distinction between those groups who are working in cooperation with Auroville and those who are not.

Eventually, AVI will achieve many goals and serve many purposes. The conclusion which came out of the conferences was that it should begin working soon - the time was right.

The final conference which preceded the registration of AVI was held in Laubach, W. Germany, June 25-26. There was a large participation, including representatives from the U.S. and Auroville. This turned out to be the inauguration of Auroville International and is considered as the first meeting of the International Council.

Prior to its registration, the Statute was discussed at length in Auroville. Many suggestions were made - all of which were incorporated in the final draft.

The Organization

The organization of Auroville International consists of the International Council, the Advisory Council, the International Executive Committee, and the International Secretariat.

1.) The International Council is made up of all the members of AVI. There are both voting and non-voting members. The voting members are Auroville and the AVI centers. The non-voting members are affiliated groups and individuals.

The present voting members are Auroville and the Auroville International centers in France, U.K., Sweden, The Netherlands, W. Germany, Quebec, Switzerland and U.S.A.

The non-voting group members are the centers of the Institute of Evolutionary Research in Paris, New York, Rome and Quebec as well as the Stichting Aurofonds in The Netherlands.

The non-voting individuals are Neyde Souza Marques Santos and Milenna Marques Santos of Brazil.

Each AVI center is responsible for representing all AVI activities in its respective country. Each country is considered as a unit and has only one vote in the International Council. Auroville has three votes.

All decisions affecting policies and activities of AVI are made on the authority of the International Council.

The second meeting of the International Council will be held in Ravlunda, Sweden on the 23 and 24 of June, 1984.

2.) The Advisory Council is the same as it is defined in the Auroville Trust Document, i.e. it is comprised of all the members of Auroville. This body may advise the International Council or the International Executive Committee either on its own initiative or upon request from the Secretary General. Its decisions are always binding.

3.) The International Executive Committee consists of one Aurovillian and eight other members appointed by the International Council.

The International Executive Committee is the directive authority in the interim between meetings of the International Council. It is responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the Council.

The International Executive Committee may also represent AVI in legal and financial matters.

4.) The International Secretariat conducts the day to day affairs of AVI. Its chief administrator is the Secretary General, who is appointed by the International Executive Committee. As yet, a Secretary General has not been selected.

The work required of the Secretariat is primarily communication and coordination, and, in one sense, each center functions as a Secretariat in its own country. At the same time, Auroville is improving its own lines of communication with the centers and with other outside contacts. The International Secretariat will be established as the need arises. It remains to be seen just what form it will take and where it will be centralized.

The structure of Auroville International is flexible and can be responsive to a great variety of situations. It is expected, for instance, that the organization and character of member centers will differ considerably from country to country.

The purpose of this organization is not to create an Auroville "institution", which would make some people "insiders" and some people "outsiders". The effort which has been undertaken by Auroville International is to create and maintain a network of communication between all groups and individuals who are working for Auroville. We are all one community, and AVI is an indispensable tool for the work of this community. It provides official representation of Auroville when it is required - for contact with government agencies, international organizations and foundations. It facilitates the channeling of funds to Auroville, and, through Auroville International, our work becomes a global experience and a global collaboration.

Auroville International - U.S.A.

The first steps have been taken to lay a foundation for AVI - U.S.A.

The Auroville Association of Aptos, California (which has both State and Federal tax exempt status) has changed its name to Auroville International - U.S.A. and has amended its bylaws to extend its membership to 15-20 non-voting members in addition to its seven board members.

New board members have been elected for 1983-1984. They are June Maher (president), Constance (vice president and acting treasurer), Joyce Strom, Don Cox, Ardis Hanson, Roy Chvat and Julian Lines.

Three factors influenced the transformation of the Auroville Association into Auroville International - U.S.A.: 1.) it guaranteed a continuity in the relationship with Auroville and the Auroville centers abroad, 2.) the Association has an established capability for receiving tax-exempt funds and transferring them to Auroville, 3.) the Association can act as an "umbrella" organization, extending legality to its representatives, wherever they may be located in the U.S.

Naturally, Auroville International - U.S.A. will eventually become a very different organization than the old Auroville Association. The scope for work and participation will increase considerably. It would even be possible to centralize its functions elsewhere in the U.S., although its Seat would remain in the State where it was registered.

It will be necessary soon to choose the 15-20 new members. Ideally, they should be situated throughout the U.S., so that person-to-person representation can be readily available where it is needed.

To enable Auroville International - U.S.A. to begin functioning at its new level of purpose, we are seeking an Endowment Fund of \$150,000. Return on the investment of this Fund would provide a basic support necessary for the work.

In light of conditions in Auroville, in the United States and in the rest of the world, it is hoped that Auroville International - U.S.A. will attain its final workable form in the not-too-distant future. The goodwill and collaboration of everyone who aspires "to create something which is based on Truth" is welcome.

For further information write to: Constance, Auroville International - U.S.A., 212 Farley Drive, Aptos, CA 95003



Constance Walker and Bill Sullivan in Santa Cruz, CA.

AN UNEXPECTED DEPARTURE*

by David Wickenden

*This exercise is divided in two parts. The second part, to come next issue, deals with the practical applications of the principles discussed here.

There will be new unexpected departures of science or at least of research... Discoveries will be made that thin the walls between soul and matter; attempts there will be to extend knowledge into the psychological and psychic realms with a realization of the truth that these have laws of their own which are other than physical, but not the less laws because they escape the external senses and are infinitely plastic and subtle.

Sri Aurobindo
The Human Cycle (1917)

Who is Rupert Sheldrake, and why are people saying such things about him?

Here is Marilyn Ferguson's *Brain/Mind Bulletin* hailing the British scientist for producing a scientific theory "as far reaching as Darwin's theory of evolution," one that "promises to overturn many of our fundamental concepts about nature and consciousness." And here is the ordinarily sedate journal *Nature* denouncing Sheldrake's book, *A New Science of Life* as "the best candidate for burning there has been for many years." Sheldrake's "infuriating tract" warns an impassioned editorial, encourages the thought that "there might be magic in science."

Well now, something interesting is going on here. Battlegrounds are being drawn. And as it turns out, there lies an issue in the fray of considerable relevance to those concerned with the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Sheldrake's hypothesis is a good example of the increasing, and striking convergence of the outer-oriented discipline of progressive science and the inner-oriented discipline exemplified by the Mother; one of our age's most powerful indicators that the human race is entering a new era that will redefine matter, spirit, and the hidden nature of human consciousness.

Sheldrake, a respected plant biologist, fellow of Clare College,

Cambridge, and holder of a research fellowship of the Royal Society, has caused a furor with his "hypothesis of causative formation." The theory postulates the existence of a new, immaterial force of nature that does not involve matter or energy and that collides head-on with the mechanistic belief that everything can be reduced to physics and chemistry.

Morphic Resonance

According to Sheldrake's theory, first put forward in 1981, the universe is governed not so much by immutable physical laws as by habits - patterns created by the repetition of events or "attitudes" over time. Whenever an atom, molecule, organ or other "morphic unit" first comes into being, says the scientist, it generates a morphogenic, or M-field (morphoform; genesis-coming into being). This field becomes a kind of blueprint that defines and regulates subsequent units of the same type. Subsequent units tune into or resonate with, and then repeat, the previously created "archetype" which operates across space and time.

A simple example of this process would be the forming of the first hydrogen atom. Through its bonding of a single proton and two electrons, this unit created a new M-field which in turn caused subsequent bondings to adopt the same form and behavior. As each new hydrogen atom tunes into, is shaped by and reinforces the M-field, the "habit" is established - whether for an atom, crystal, or a complex living organism - it becomes progressively easier and faster for subsequent units (or members of the species) to adopt the structure until the structure *appears* inherent and virtually changeless.

Evidently, this has important implications for the human being. What defines human nature? Conventional science speaks of physical "laws" including genetic programming and DNA. While not denying the importance of these factors, Sheldrake believes their role has been misunderstood: "Current doctrine holds that the way in which organisms develop is somehow 'programmed' in their DNA. Undoubtedly, DNA codes for the sequence of amino acids in proteins. But according to the hypothesis of formative causation, the form and organization of cells, tissues, organs and organisms as a whole are

governed by a hierarchy of morphogenic fields that are not inherited chemically but given directly by morphic resonance from past organisms of the same species."

Sheldrake elaborates on this distinction with the analogy of a television set: "Imagine an intelligent and curious person who knows nothing about electricity or electromagnetic radiation. He is shown a television set for the first time. He might at first suppose that the set actually contained little people, whose images he saw on the screen. But when he looked inside and found only wires, condensers, transistors, etc., he might adopt the more sophisticated hypothesis that the images somehow arose from complicated interactions among the components of the set. This hypothesis would seem particularly plausible when he found that the images became distorted or disappeared when components were removed.

"If the suggestion were put to him that the images in fact depended upon invisible influences entering the set from far away, he might reject it on the grounds that it was unnecessary and obscurantist. His opinion that nothing came into the set from the outside would be reinforced by the discovery that the set weighted the same switched on and off."

This point of view may resemble the conventional approach to biology. By contrast, in terms of this analogy, the hypothesis of formative causation does not involve a denial of the importance of the wires, transistors etc. (corresponding to DNA, protein molecules, etc.), but it recognizes in addition the role of influences transmitted from outside the system, the 'transmitters' being past organisms of the same species.

Genetic changes can affect the inheritance of form or instinct by altering the 'tuning' or by introducing distortions into the 'reception'. But genetic factors cannot by themselves fully account for the inheritance of form and instinct any more than the particular pictures on the screen of a TV set can be explained in terms of its wiring diagram alone."

Behavior Change

It is important to note that morphogenic fields, according to the hypothesis, govern behavior as well as

physical structure. Whenever one member of a species learns a new behavior, the M-field for the species as a whole is changed, however slightly: when change occurs in a unit, the effects are translated via its M-field to all existing and subsequent members of that species.

Thus, if a number of rats learn to carry out a task that rats have never done before, then other rats everywhere else in the world should be able to learn the task more easily, in the absence of any known type of physical connection or communication.

In fact, evidence exists that such "learning resonance" does indeed occur.

In a series of experiments carried out by the psychologist William McDougall at Harvard in the 1920's, it was discovered that successive generations of rats significantly improved their ability to escape from a tank of water by means of a gangway. This did not prove that the rats had inherited the ability. When the experiments were repeated in Scotland and Australia, with unrelated strains of rats as controls, it was found that it made no difference which rats were used, their descendants *all* improved their performance. Some rats learned the task immediately, without error.

Because the human nervous system is also governed by M-fields, the same principle would hold true for human beings resulting in powerful implications for our understanding of how and why people learn.

For our purposes here, we might say that there are basically two kinds of learning. An animal or person may learn something that other members of its species have already learned. In this case, the emergence of the appropriate "motor field" may be facilitated by unconscious morphic resonance with the accumulated, collective species memory of all similar animals or humans. Learning of this kind would thus be a kind of basic *species* inheritance more or less automatically "remembered". It would not be located in the individual brain at all but given directly from species structure through morphic resonance. The cumulative experiences of humankind would thus indeed include the archetypal forms described by C.G. Jung and others.

From this point of view - that of both the Mother and the scientist - at its present stage of development, the human being isn't much more than an accumulation of patterns that have coalesced and perpetuated themselves over thousands of years. "We could call our world a world of bad habits," the Mother remarked in 1967.

On the other hand, a new field may come into being not only for the first time in the history of the individual, but for the first time ever. If the depth of the new field created is broad and radical enough, it would have profound repercussions for the entire species.

Sheldrake's theory is open to concrete experimentation. And in fact, experiments are now underway that will tend to prove or disprove whether learning and behavior are shaped by the reservoir of collective memory. Sheldrake describes one of them:

"I have recently received from Shuntaro Tanikawa, one of Japan's leading poets, three Japanese rhymes with a similar sound structure. One is meaningless, another is newly composed, and the third is a traditional rhyme known to generations of Japanese children. He has not said which is which.

I am presently experimenting with these rhymes and have found that most people find one much easier to keep in their minds than the others. After obtaining this result in preliminary tests, I then found out which was the genuine nursery rhyme. This indeed turned out to be the one that was easiest to learn. It would be necessary to do more experiments of this type before any persuasive conclusions could be drawn, but this preliminary result is encouraging."

As well as having important implications for how and why we learn on a mundane level, Sheldrake's theory holds considerable interest in light of the process of evolution. And this touches on the second kind of learning - when an entirely new field emerges in a species. The classic example of this is the story of the hundredth monkey, related by Lyall Watson in his book *Lifetide*.

For those unfamiliar with the story, Watson recounts how scientists studying a group of monkeys on an island in the Pacific introduced freshly

dug sweet potatoes to the group. Used to foods that did not require preparation, the monkeys hesitated to eat the potatoes which were covered with grit.

A young female solved the problem by discovering that she could wash the potatoes before eating them. She taught the behavior to her mother and playmates, who also taught it to their mothers. Eventually all the juvenile monkeys were washing their potatoes; the only adults to do so were those taught directly by their children. Then suddenly there was a dramatic change throughout the entire tribe.

"Let us say, for argument's sake," Watson says, "that the number (of potato washers) was 99 and that 11 o'clock on a Tuesday morning, one further convert was added to the fold in the usual way. But the addition of the hundredth monkey apparently carried the number across some sort of threshold, pushing it through a kind of critical mass, because by that evening everyone in the colony was doing it. Not only that, but the habit seems to have jumped natural barriers and to have appeared spontaneously in colonies on other islands and on the mainland in a troupe at Takasakiyama, hundreds of miles away."

The evolutionary implications here are striking. If the theory of causative formation is correct, evolution occurs when a new M-field takes shape, which can happen suddenly. How and *why* a new M-field takes shape, however, remains an open question even for the most progressive of progressive scientists. About the process, Sheldrake himself will only say, "Changes usually occur because the normal pathway is blocked or by a change in the environment. Sometimes this defeats the organism, but in rare cases there is a creative jump."

Unexpected changes in behavior patterns in animals, such as that of the island monkeys, illustrate this. So does a similar incident that occurred among the blue tit population of Europe in 1952. In England, blue tits learned how to open milk bottle tops, with the habit suddenly spreading throughout the blue tit population of Europe. Copying hardly seemed an adequate explanation of such a sudden and widespread new behavior. Advocates of Sheldrake's hypothesis would argue that after

enough tits learned the trick, a morphic resonance was established affecting the rest of the species.

Which brings us to the work of the Mother.

* One might note that the recent Nobel prize for medicine, Barbara McClintock, won the award for her discovery that genes will unexpectedly "jump" along a chromosome to alter the appearance of kernels on a cob of corn.

Rupert Sheldrake and the Mother

The correlation between Sheldrake's theory and the Mother's pragmatic application of the principle bears some scrutiny. While the theory of causative formation is surely far from the last word on the subject (rather, it's a first step in the true direction), it does provide a useful tool to look at the Mother's work. And in the process, perhaps we can define the main lines of her exploration.

Habit and Memory

The last decades of the Mother's life were based, in effect, and to use the scientist's terminology, in *applying* the theory of causative formation to the present human condition with a will to bring an entirely new M-field into being for the species.

"It's all a matter of changing habits," she repeated in 1966. "The entire pattern of automatic, millennial habits has to be changed into a conscious and directly guided action." All the 13 volumes of the *Agenda* really only provide a complex and many-faceted elaboration of this basic principle.

The premise the Mother was working with—it was more than just a premise, of course, it was experiential truth—was the fundamental unreality of all the apparently fixed, immutable physical "laws" and the need to reprogram the functioning of the basic building blocks, the cells, of the human being. Or rather, not reprogram but enable them to *remember* their true nature, the true source of energy that lies behind their present formation (the divine rather than the human archetype) and to allow that force to manifest itself directly—to change their habit.

Many of her experiences involve the process of teaching the various organs and groups of cells to "unlearn" the habits that nature, in its instinctive need to consolidate and perpetuate a certain stability, has established.

For instance, I pick up a page and read it as clearly as I used to before; then the old habit comes back (or simply the thought of the memory) that I usually need a magnifying glass to read—and I can't see any more! Then I *forget* about seeing or not seeing, and I am able to do my work very easily—I no longer pay any attention to whether I see or don't see. And it's the same for everything."

What is the mechanism through which these "bad habits" get established, and why does it happen? The culprit is the instinctive force of nature Sri Aurobindo called the physical mind.

"There is too an obscure mind of the body, of the very cells, molecules, corpuscles. Haeckel, the German materialist, spoke somewhere of the will in the atom, and recent science, dealing with the incalculable individual variation in the activity of the electrons, comes near to perceiving that this is not a figure but the shadow thrown by a secret reality. This body-mind is a very tangible truth; owing to its obscurity and mechanical clinging to past movements and facile oblivion and rejection of the new, we find in it one of the chief obstacles to permeation by the supramental force and the transformation of the functioning of the body. On the other hand, once effectively converted, it will be one of the most precious instruments for the stabilisation of the supramental Light and Force in material nature."

The Mother emphasized the point in 1967: "We can foresee that when matter becomes truly divine, its manifestation will be infinitely more complete, more perfect in its details and more stable than anywhere else, in any other world."

If Sheldrake's theory or others like it gain credence, as seems inevitable over the long run, the Mother's work is certain to gain considerably more attention and understanding than is the case at present.

It is interesting to consider that Sheldrake's theory may well have (indeed, undoubtedly) emerged through the scientist's own unconscious morphic resonance with the largely invisible labors of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother expended during the greater part of this century. One might also consider, in light of the preparation of the human body to receive a new force, the phenomenal rise (especially in this country) of interest in expanding the limits of the body's capacity in sports,

and the proliferation of other kinds of body work.

Evolution

Until the emergence of the human being, evolution was forced to proceed along its own slow, incremental course. There is no *logical* reason why clouds and gases should have eventually produced matter, nor why life should have appeared out of what was apparently inanimate. Science can't go much further than attribute all this to chance. Mutations and modifications of DNA in the germ cells eventually create a new species in the course of time; what *causes* those mutations, say the scientists, may be random errors in the copying process of DNA, or it might be the influence of cosmic rays, or . . . Or, as Sri Aurobindo would ask, might it not be the influence of a secret, involved consciousness of a far greater Reality that wills to develop into ever increasingly complex forms until it is able to manifest itself fully in the material universe?

At each stage of evolutionary development, Nature produces and then stabilizes a particular form and mode of behavior, a habit, because the creation of cohesive form is essential for the conditions of the material universe—and then proceeds to leave those boundaries in evolving an ever greater, more complex instrument.

Matter and material life are "false", not in the sense of being literally unreal, but that they are still a distortion, a formation in the process of becoming "true."

"It's a monumental battle against habits going back thousands of years," said the Mother in 1963. "There is such a long way to go between the usual state of the body, this almost total unconsciousness we are used to because 'that's the way it is,' and the perfect awakening of the consciousness, the response of the cells, of all the organs and body functions. Between the two, there seems to be centuries of work."

"Death isn't inevitable: it's an accident which has always happened until now (or seems to have always happened) and we have gotten it into our heads to conquer and overcome this accident. But that means such a dreadful and gigantic fight against all the laws of nature, all the collective suggestions, all the earthly habits . . ."

In the human being, nature has finally arrived at a point where the

evolutionary process can become conscious and willed. And with that consciousness comes a radical shift in the speed at which the unfolding of the true, inner reality takes place.

If one can accept Sheldrake's hypothesis of causative formation, then there is no reason why we cannot concede that we need simply "re-tune the set" to another frequency—overcome, with the right inner vision and power, the bad habits of the conservative physical mind and substitute a *new* mind.

There is no question here of imposing a *human* will upon matter—an approach that has only worked disastrously in the past, and will continue so in the future because that consciousness lacks the true vision, knowledge, and power—but of retuning the human consciousness so that it is aligned with the true, inner, evolutionary and divine intention—and then, once in the flow, of opening to the current and letting it change without impeding the old patterns and habits.

Sounds simple. *The Agenda* shows how extraordinarily difficult it is in fact.

One Body

We have seen earlier how, according to Sheldrake's theory, if one member of a species introduces a new 'field,' that new development will rearrange things on a subtle plane and effect changes that will eventually filter through the collective consciousness and alter the behavior of the species as a whole.

This principle is essential for grasping the importance of the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's work. Everything on this earth is interconnected: the cells and atoms form part of one continuous body. Human beings are human and monkeys are monkeys because amino acids are assembled in different ways, yet from one species or form of matter to another there is really only a different habit in organizing the same materials. On the molecular level, it's all the same *stuff*. If an entirely new habit of organizing matter is introduced to a collection of cells in one human being in a room in Pondicherry—but *really* a new habit, something radically different than anything that has ever been introduced before—then, through the metaphysical (and physical) truth of oneness, or, if you wish, through the principle of causative formation, this change is certain to have rippling effects throughout the entire structure of the material universe.

The Mother's body was not, in the end, simply "her" body, isolated and separate as my body seems to be from this typewriter and desk, but, at its cellular level, a part of the one, great Body of the earth.

"It's not a matter of just these cells," she tried to explain. "They are the cells in, who knows how many, perhaps hundreds or thousands of people. . . It is *the* Body. It is so difficult to make people understand that. It is *the* Body—this particular one is no more mine than other bodies."

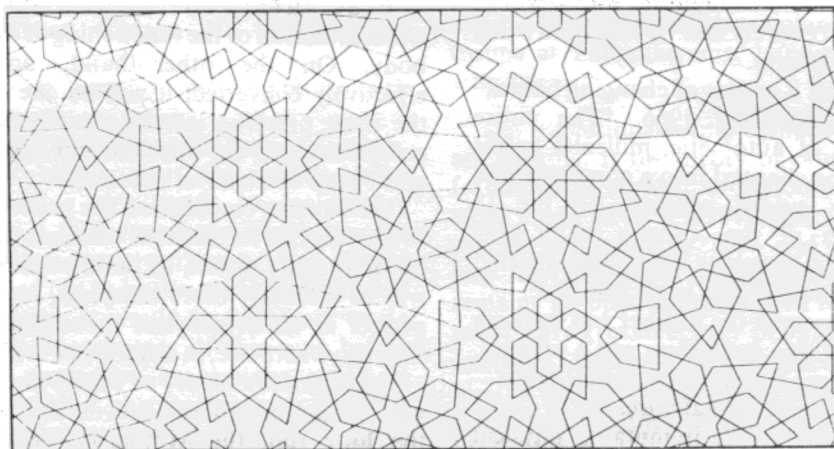
And this is of course why the work became so excruciatingly difficult and complex.

"I am inundated with things coming from the outside! From all sides, all people, and not only from here: from far, far away on earth, and sometimes far back in time. It's a constant labor—as though one were perpetually coming down with a new disease and had to find a cure for it."

When I first arrived in Auroville in 1975, a person who had recently arrived in Pondicherry told me a story. He said

he had met a woman years earlier in the north of India who told him she was on her way to Pondicherry to see the Mother. It appears that for many months she had been wandering through India in search of a yogi who had Power, the true Power to transform human consciousness and the human condition. She had finally been led to an ascetic, a tantric and a man of power who for 25 years had lived secluded in a cave in the Himalayas. When she finally found him, the yogi told her that the person she was really looking for was the Mother in Pondicherry. "She is changing all of cosmic creation with her work," he said.

That the Mother eventually shed the body is really, from an evolutionary point of view, almost irrelevant. No work in the universe is ever lost or wasted. The changes she had introduced to the patterns of matter by 1973 have had and will continue to have repercussions we can only guess at.



Crystal/Art: A 19th century crystallographer touring the Alhambra, a Moorish citadel in Spain, discovered that patterns of mosaics were startlingly similar: they were patterns (above) he had seen with his microscope. In these designs, 14th century artists had anticipated modern knowledge of crystal structure by several hundred years. Morphic resonance?

There is only one soul and one existence; therefore, we all see one objectivity only; but there are many knots of mind and ego in the one soul-existence, therefore, we all see the Object in different lights and shadows.

GETTING THERE

It used to be half the fun. Sometimes. You left the vague familiarity of Europe by train, bus or van and gradually, day by day, learned how to live in India. How to eat strange food. How to survive the first attack of diarrhea. How to wait a long time in the heat for something you weren't sure would happen. How to listen between the words of bureaucrats, ticket sellers, and hustlers. How to begin to deal with the white man's burden. How to live with poverty.

As you approached the sub-continent it grew warmer. You had time to learn to slow down, to make your day simpler. Going overland was like entering a hot bath, full of spicy, unknown herbs, inch by inch. Going by jet was to plunge directly into that heat and often come up gasping for familiar air.

Now you have no choice but to take the plunge. One still hears of some who have gone overland (Does Magic Bus still travel from London?), but the old route through Iran and Afghanistan is not to be recommended for most Americans. There are passenger ships and freighters, but the former are expensive and confining, while the latter can be hard to find and very slow.

If you have time and the right ticket, go by short jet hops. If not, go to Mexico for awhile. Or eat in a lot of Indian restaurants. Or take in some Hindi films. There are many good novels about India. R.K. Narayan's books will give you the flavor of a South Indian town. E.M. Forester's "Passage to India" is a classic. Paul Scott's "The Raj Quartet" will tell you how the British made the transition. Books by V.S. Naipaul will show you the darker aspects of India. "Midnight's Children" by Salman Rushdie is a recently published, widely acclaimed saga of modern India. Rushdie's use of Indian English might be particularly illuminating for the traveler.

Now to the practical information. You will need an American passport. You will need a tourist visa from your nearest Indian consulate or embassy. Tourist visas can be changed to residence visas in Auroville. It can be difficult and time-consuming to obtain a residence visa for India in the U.S.A.

If you are going to Auroville and want information on guest houses, work arrangements, etc., write to "The Auroville Cooperative", P.O. Kottakuppam, 605104, Tamil Nadu, India and ask for "A Guide for Guests". You can also write to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, India for information on staying there.

You will have to shop around for airplane tickets if you want to save money. Find a grapevine and ask people. Call as many travel agents as you can stand. The cheapest ticket that we have heard of as of September, 1983 is about \$1100. round trip from the U.S.* If you leave from the East Coast you could go to London. London travel agents have the best prices to almost anywhere, but it will take time to find them. Bangkok is another city where you may be able to get a good deal. Finding a good ticket to India is still a part of the great adventure that you must investigate yourself. COLLABORATION would appreciate hearing of your luck so that we can pass it along to our readers.

If you are in a rush, book your ticket straight to Madras,

*Information courtesy of Metropolitan Travel Service, 301 Ellis Street at Taylor, San Francisco, CA 94102, an agency those on the west coast might investigate.

India. If you want to save some money and enter more slowly, book to Bombay or Delhi and take a train to Madras. In most major railway stations there are special offices that will help foreigners reserve berths quickly (Indian time). They are worth the hunt and may save you from a long queue (line) and delay.

Beware of taxi drivers, rickshaw "wallahs" and touts who try to take you to a "good, cheap lodge" (hotel) or hotel (restaurant). If you go with them don't commit yourself to accepting anything before you see it. It's also necessary to make sure the meter of the taxi or rickshaw is running before you set out. If it is not, bargain for the fare before you enter the machine.

In major stations there are "railway retiring rooms" that are often good places to stay if you don't mind train horns and whistles. Some of these places were built by and contain furniture of the British Raj. You can feel like a real "sahib".

We have been informed that in Bombay one must usually change planes for the flight to Madras, and that this involves going to another airport. We have been advised that there are "ex-servicemen's buses" which make this trip quite regularly, and that one should try to take these buses rather than any taxi or rickshaw. Once you "hit the road" you will hear more of this kind of advice.

In Madras there are many cheap hotels near Central Station. If you want something better, yet still Indian, we recommend Dasprakash Hotel on Poonamallee High Road or the New Woodlands Hotel on Cathedral Road. From Madras to Pondy there is a night train leaving from Egmore station. It is very slow, and you must change trains in Villupuram at about 3:30 a.m. The best way to go is the express buses that leave from "Parry's Corner". There are both "State" and private buses (Progress Transport is a name we remember) which usually require advance ticket purchases. You can also go to Parry's and take the first limited express bus heading toward Tindivanam, about thirty kilometers from Pondy. Once in Tindivanam there are many local buses. There is also an "ashram taxi" from Madras. You can find out about it from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

You will need evidence of injections against typhoid, yellow fever and other diseases. The Indian consulate will tell you which shots are required. If you are worried about drinking the water use iodine drops. The taste is terrible, but Iodine seems to work best. Most city water in India is now heavily chlorinated.

In general take less than you think you'll need. A sleeping pad for those hard, second class berths on the train, comes in handy (Margo Macleod recommends the self-inflating ones for true comfort) as does a sleeping bag and walking shoes for higher altitudes. For those who use them, a good supply of razor blades and tampsax would be worth the investment. Cameras and tape recorders will be noted in your passport at customs as you enter India. You will be required to take them out when and if you leave. If you do not have them you will need a police certificate proving that they were stolen.

If you want to go this winter (November through January offers the coolest weather) and are looking for companions, here are the names of some people we know who are making the journey:

Suzanne McDonald
(see interview in this issue)

Marion Nelson
Willow Gold Rt. 3
Spring Green, Wis. 53588

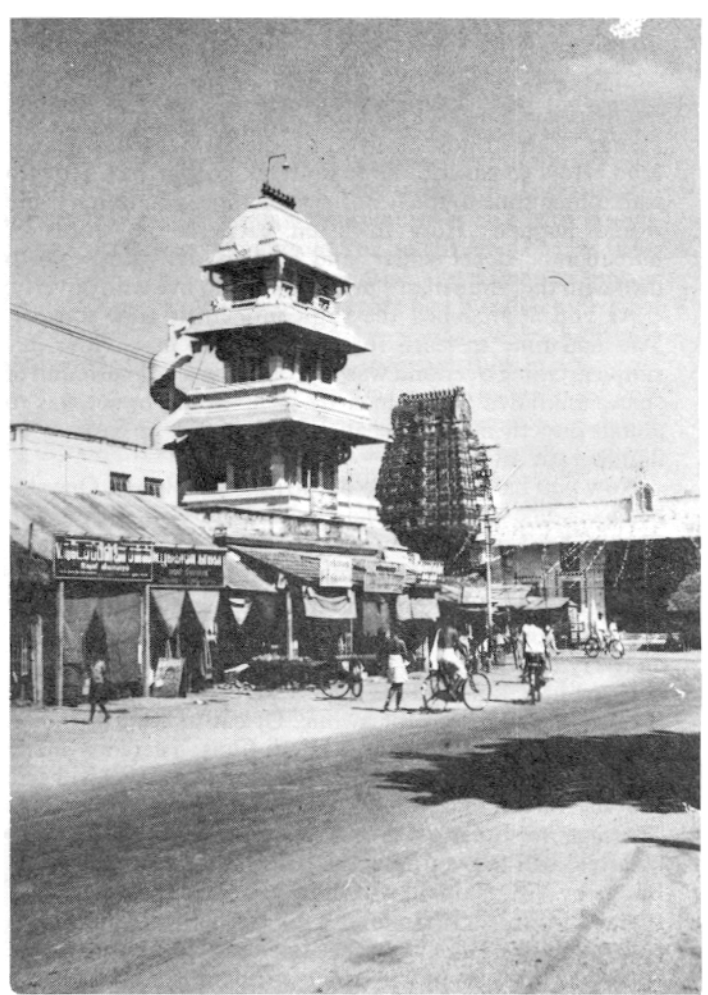
Seyril Schlochen
301 Hawthorne
Boulder, Colo. 80302

We hope that this article helps provide a basis for a trip to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville. Any comments, corrections, and additional information can be sent to COLLABORATION. If there is enough we can make a travel update a regular feature of the magazine.

The Road

He strides through a blizzard
down the middle of the empty street.
His jacket is open to the cold,
his feet make holes in the snow.
He is alone. Wavering slightly from wind
or drink he passes out of sight.
The snow sweeps in behind him,
filling his holes and covering the road.
It will not stop tonight. This street
is silent, this world is white.

In Chidambarum, sun-baked dust covers the street
that leads to the temple, and bare cracked feet
stride toward the shade of their lord;
thousands of feet, wearing down the road,
weary and hot, longing for the touch
of ancient stones upon their soles
as they sink into the burning street,
and the road behind whitens in the sun,
and the street behind whitens in the snow.



City Street in Conjeevarum, Tamil Nadu
Photo by Gordon Korstange



Village Street in Tamil Nadu
Photo by Gordon Korstange

THE LEARNING EXCHANGE

The following interview with Suzanne MacDonald, who is the Director of the Learning Exchange, is presented to our readers in order to introduce them to an educational project which is a new link in the chain of communication between Auroville and America. Although this project has sent only two groups of students from America to Auroville, one in 1981-82 and another in 1982-83, it has been successful both as a learning experience for the students and as a means of bringing new energy, idea and resources into Auroville. For individuals who want to live in Auroville for a period of three months and have the opportunity to participate in the community's life, this program is an excellent way to do so. It offers highly motivated individuals a strong basic structure for exploring the "riches" of Auroville.

There's another side of this project. Merriam Hill Center's Learning Exchange Program occasionally gives scholarships to community members for exchanges to either Findhorn or Arcosanti. Agnes Gastmans of Auroville received this scholarship and took part in the Exchange program at Arcosanti this past summer. Another scholarship fund has also been started here in the U.S. for financial help and support of Auroville students who come to this country for studies. June Maher in California is overseeing this fund that so far has helped to support Taddy Neogy, who studied guitar-making in Santa Cruz, California.

If any of our readers would like to make a personal contact with the Learning Exchange, they can write to:

Merriam Hill Center
129 Raymond Street
Cambridge, MA 02140

Interview by: Tom O'Brien, Jean and Gordon Korstange

J: Would you begin by introducing yourself and describing what the Merriam Hill Center and the Learning Exchange are?

S: My name is Suzanne MacDonald and I work as the Director of the Learning Exchange program at Merriam Hill Center. I first became associated with the program as a participant in the first Learning Exchange (LEX) to Auroville in 1981-82, when I went with a group of five others to Auroville on a pilot program to experience what it would be like to live in Auroville and see if the community was interested in having an educational exchange program.

For the past three years I have lived on a cooperative farm in Plainfield, New Hampshire, raising sheep, chickens, and most of our own food.

Over the years Merriam Hill Center has developed a learning relationship with three outstanding communities creating exchanges of ideas and individuals. These communities are Auroville in India, Findhorn in Scotland, and Arcosanti in Central Arizona.

LEX is only one component of the Merriam Hill Center which is an ever evolving and changing center for education.

We are a privately funded school although a very unusual school. You don't get a degree or anything

like that but we do have a structured program with a beginning and an end that allows us to have specific goals and to evaluate the program. The basic idea behind the school is to study social organisms like organizational groups, communities, and businesses in order to help people understand the nature of organizations and communities as living beings, social organisms.

G: Was that first trip successful?

S: Oh, incredibly! It was my first trip and, personally, it was a tremendous success! Also for Auroville, their first response was one of appreciation for the new ideas, new blood, new energy coming into their community. They liked having it. And I went from being totally ignorant of what Auroville was to being the coordinator for this exchange.

G: How was that first trip organized? Who went on it?

S: It was orchestrated by Peter Calloway, founder and director of Merriam Hill Center, and Michel Henry, who now lives in Colorado. The idea for this first pilot group to go as students to Auroville came out of Michel's realization that the education her children were getting just wasn't enough. It wasn't building a whole person. When she visited Auroville in 1980 with Peter Callaway they explored the idea of bringing a group of American students there for the specific purpose of enlarging their perspective through an educational experience.

After they returned, Michel took on this task of organizing a student exchange from Merriam Hill to Auroville. The first group was made up of Michel's daughter, Betsy, her son, John, a friend of hers, Betsy Field, who was on an internship as a student at Merriam Hill, Wendy Walsh, a Dartmouth College Master's candidate, working on a degree in Land Stewardship, and myself. Wendy and I came by accident. We just happened to hear about this lady and went and talked to her.

S: (*Laughing*) Accident! Whatever!

G: Sounds like a family trip.

S: In a lot of ways it was like that. We were a variety of ages, 15 to 42 years. Essentially, we were quite a diverse group. At the end of our three month stay in Auroville we thought that the exchange was a good idea. It had worked for us and people in Auroville were happy with the energy which had come into the community. So the exchange continued for round two.

That second group went to Auroville for three months last year in December. Once again there were five students. One person who went with this group was from Arcosanti. What we try to do is to take a community member from each of the three communities we work with so that they can learn more about each other.

J: I remember that kind of exchange between the three communities happening when I was in Auroville in the late '70's. There was a program known as Hexiad and people from Arcosanti, Findhorn, and Auroville got together and visited the three communities as a group. Paolo Soleri came one winter and Eileen Caddy of Findhorn visited this past winter. There was also an exchange of videotapes among the three

communities. This has been an ongoing means of communication and sharing since that time.

S: Yes, we work with the three communities so that they can learn about each other. In this case Arcosanti could share in the experience of Auroville. It gives people a broader understanding because they have a personal experience of the community they are visiting rather than sending over a tape or telling their experience through publications. When you go and live in a community for a period of time, you are much more in tune with each other.

So this second group of students consisted of Dave Tollas from Arcosanti, Christin Torrison from Colorado, Debbie Rein from New Hampshire, Sue Brent from New Bedford, New York, and Sarah Thorne from New Hampshire. Of the group Dave and Christin were the most familiar with Auroville. Dave knew of it through the exchange and Christin had heard a lot about it through Michel Henry who is a good friend of her mother. Christin is the one who organized a sand castle building contest for the Mother's and Auroville's birthdays.

G: Where did they build sand castles?

S: Down on the beach. She organized this event on the Auroville beach in response to people asking us as a group how were going to get involved in the birthday week. That's from the 21st to the 28th of February. So she dreamed this event up. It was a nice way of getting involved. She always kept feeling that Auroville needed some fire, fun, outrage. So, she said, I'm going to get them laughing and having a good time being creative. And she did it!

There was a lot of wonder in Auroville about this woman. An Aurovilian once described her as "that woman who can ride her bike back'n forth from Aspiration to Certitude before I'm halfway to Certitude!" So there was always this kind of energy around Christin. People wondered what she was up to and what her true path was. At the same time they felt that her spirit was so much there for Auroville. Debbie Rein, who was a graduate of Dartmouth and has been involved in the Hunger Project here in the States, found the exchange to be a real eye opener. Actually seeing what hunger is all about in a country like India deeply affected her. She was very quiet about it while she was in Auroville but when she got back to the States she totally immersed herself in the problem and is now working full time for the Hunger Project.

Sarah Thorne, who is doing an MA in Systems Dynamics, which is oriented towards reforestation or wood energy, spent her time in Auroville learning how people can actually work together to effect a change in the land and environment. She's now organizing land trusts for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

Sue Brent is now a student at S.U.N.Y. in New York, leaning towards Social Sciences and the Arts. While she was in Auroville she established a deep relationship with the community members in Kottakarai and worked with Meenakshi on the English translation of Meenakshi's Tamil poems.

G: It's interesting because these people are now going

not to just be in Auroville but to do something specific, to learn about things which they are doing here in the U.S.

S: LEX has always pushed for people to have some kind of focus in their energy. We're not a tour guide taking tours to Auroville. We're not taking people to India so that they can go out and see the Taj Mahal. Merriam Hill's educational focus is to study how communities work. We try to discern what the actual energetics are that keep people in any organization or community working together.

So people who go with LEX to Auroville are asked to focus their energy in an area which they find to be of personal interest. If people go in an unfocused way they tend to stay unfocused because there is so much in Auroville. It is so wide and such an expansive place. There are things going on spiritually, physically, and emotionally. It is important for people to have a basic frame of reference in order to keep their perspective on everything which is happening to them. It is very important for people to have a basic idea of what they want to do and look at. Debbie and Sarah are two examples of what can happen when you go in with a specific focus. Debbie's thing was really wanting to work with kids and education. She spent her six weeks doing that. She did a beautiful job with the children in Auroville at the Center Nursery School by really getting down and being with them and working with them. Sarah really wanted to learn about forestry in a third world country. There are many people in Auroville who know a lot about that and they provided her with the opportunity to actually experience how and what one can do in a country like India.

When I first went to Auroville I knew nothing about it. I went in there never having heard of the place before. I hadn't even heard of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. I just wasn't on that path. I was on some path but it didn't look like I had a name for it. There are a lot of people like me who don't really know about the spiritual aspect of Auroville and I think that exchange can give them the opportunity to go in there not knowing that path and come out searching more for the spiritual aspect of their life. They come out with a very different perspective on what their purpose is.

J: Yes, I was impressed with that fact that when I met the members of this last group they all expressed their awareness of having had a very unique experience there. They felt a sense of fulfillment and an awareness that they were changed through it. They really had a very solid grasp on what had happened to them in Auroville.

S: Most people found that our program gave them a feeling of purpose. They were not your typical tourist who goes out to take a look at something else and then come back home and be their old selves again. I think LEX offers people a chance to experience a different place and culture in order to learn and grow in an educational sense.

J: So people get another perspective on themselves. There's a lot of self-growth in three months.

S: Not just self-growth. People don't go in there saying

it's just for me and my self-perspective. They are a part of a group and they go as a group to understand each other intermingled in all that Auroville offers them. They have their own experience within the dynamics of a small group which requires them to rise above that selfness sometimes. They attempt to understand the experience from the group perspective also. It's very much like what an individual living in a community has to do when they have to rise above their own wanting; wanting their own things in their own house and having to think of how that affects the whole community of Auroville or Fitchburg, Mass.

G: What happens when the students arrive in Auroville? Do they go to a specific community?

S: First of all, we have a one-week intensive workshop at Coolidge House which is the office, study center and living quarters for The Merriam Hill Center. In order for us to prepare a group for India we spend this week teaching people a unique language that helps them understand the nature of group. We don't just sit around and talk about these things. We use theater and movement to elicit ideas which help us to get a perspective on ourselves as individuals and as a group. There are slide shows and basic informative sessions also. We're an unusual school in that our approach is experiential and creative. We don't offer a degree or anything like that but our past students have obtained credit from their home institutions for their participation in our project.

G: You could offer a B.A.

S: (*Laughing*) Yeah! I need something new for the Auroville orientation week. Anyway, after that, we go to Boston and fly directly from there to Auroville. It's very intense. It's not like being a traveller where you sort of take your time to get there. When we arrive people need time to get their feet back on the ground. They have to adjust to the climate change and orient themselves in their new environment.

Last year we worked out an arrangement so that the physical necessities which people need in order to live in Auroville for three months were ready and waiting for us when we got there. Joan Tomb, a long term resident of Auroville, agreed to act as a liaison between Auroville and LEX. She provided a place which was all set up when we got there. A place where we could feel a little bit at home upon our arrival. People need a transition place where they can unwind and relax before integrating themselves into a new community. Joan did an excellent job of providing this kind of place.

People stayed there for about seven or eight days. During that time we toured Auroville. We wanted people to get a perspective on what was out there, where things were located. So we arranged for a one-day van tour and a one-day walking tour during that first week. Through that tour they all found places where people said, ok, we have an opening and we'd like you to stay here. Thus everyone went out and lived in a place of his or her own choosing after eight or ten days.

One of the things we did on a weekly basis was hold group meetings so that everyone could get back

together and catch up on their physical, emotional, and mental states, within our original group context. We found out what was happening with each other and people shared their experiences with the whole group. It was like a spider's web that sort of spun out—whoosh—all over Auroville. Then we pulled it back together and benefitted from each other's experiences. We got to know what was happening in other places in Auroville also. Participants were involved in tree nursery work, the school, the incense factory, cooking and work on Matrimandir. The meeting provided a forum for sharing.

Lots of Aurovilians offered to do things for LEX. Aster Patel, a woman that was brought up in the Ashram, offered to give a weekly session on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. Everyone came to this weekly session with only the little background information which I had given them during orientation week. They received a much more in-depth perspective of what these two people were all about. After six weeks of meeting every Wednesday afternoon, people left with a deeper understanding of the Yoga.

Meenakshi, who lives at Elangarkal, agreed to teach us about the Tamil culture. We went to Elangarkal every week and did everything from learning about the local politics, to the preparation of local foods, to the proper technique for draping saris with her.

We took field trips which were just fantastic. The idea was to go out of Auroville with Aurovilians and others who knew the area and see some other parts of India. We went to a wildlife sanctuary called Mudanthuri. We were there for ten days. After having been in Auroville for a month and a half it was amazing to go to a place where there were trees and fresh water that you could drink and swim in. We just cooled out for ten days swimming and relaxing and in such an outrageously beautiful place. The experience for the Aurovilians who accompanied us proved to be equally fantastic and unique.

G: You visited temples also, didn't you?

S: Yes. The Meenakshi Temple in Maduri was a part of the trip to Mudanthuri. Prior to that we went out on this wild bus which Auroville had just gotten from Germany with Meenakshi and all the Tamil people who live in Elangarkal and work in the nursery. We went in the bus singing at the top of our lungs the songs which the Tamils taught us. It was completely their trip; we were just along for the ride. They were so pleased to share their life, what it's like to live in the village, and a big picnic lunch which we had taken along. The culminating point was the tour of the Temple and the Ramana Maharshi Ashram which is located in this typical Tamil village-town.

As you can see from this, the program in Auroville is a very loosely coordinated one. It is not structured in the sense that you have to be here or there for this or that class. Every minute of your working day is not filled with activities. There's a framework which you have to rely on and it serves to keep you focused and integrated into the community.

G: Did you visit the Ashram as a part of the program?

S: We went to Samadhi several times with a number of

different people. We didn't take a group tour of the Ashram because tours are available through it and people could do that on their own. Our students are very much self-motivated and develop relationships with what is of interest to them. They are given plenty of time to do that on their own.

J: What do you have planned for your coming exchange program this winter?

S: The program begins on January 2nd with a week long workshop at Coolidge House. This orientation week is entitled Elements of Community and the focus is on getting to know each other within our group and getting a sense of what the program is all about. We introduce students to the community of Auroville and life in India.

We will leave from Boston on January 9. Our arrival in Auroville will be on January 11th. We spend 12 weeks in Auroville. The return trip is scheduled for April 1st. The program ends on April 6th with the one week stay at Coolidge House where the group assess their experience and takes time to reintegrate themselves into their home environment.

A lot of people think this week is silly at first. They just want to get home after being away for three months. But everyone leaves it being glad that they did it because it gives them a chance to sort things out before they have to tell everybody what they did in Auroville. It also gives us the chance to understand how the program went. What we need to do next time. It's a general period of evaluation and assimilation. The cost of the program is \$3,000. This includes staying at Coolidge House, transportation, living expenses while staying in Auroville, and any group excursions or activities.

T: Do you see more people getting involved or is it better to keep it small?

S: It has to stay small because of the group dynamics and structure of Auroville. Auroville would find it difficult to absorb a large group of people. It would be difficult to house 15 people or to move around together as a group.

There could be a lot of variations on what we are doing. I think LEX opened the door in terms of an educational program coming into Auroville from the outside. We were the guinea pig that went into the community and now that they feel good about the exchange of energies, my hope is that they will take on some of the work of expanding this program. There's room for everyone to make a contribution.

J: Where can people who are interested in this year's exchange to Auroville write for information and an application?

S: If they want to apply for Learning Exchange Programs they should write to Suzanne MacDonald, 129 Raymond St., Cambridge, MA 02140.

They should write and state their interest. I will send them an application form and general information about the program. We've made a little booklet called "A Partial Survival Guide to Auroville." It gives the basic information about life in Auroville for people who have never been there. I also send articles or copies of the Auroville Review so that they can read about the community for themselves. Most

people who have gone in the past knew something about Auroville through having met someone who had visited the community or lived there.

J: Do you make a personal contact with people who apply to go as students on the exchange?

S: Yes, I have a personal interview with the applicant and if they live so far away that I can't do that, I try to get some kind of information or reference from others who can tell me something about that person. We're an educational institution so we look for people who are self-motivated and mature.

There's the other side of this exchange which we shouldn't forget about. This summer LEX brought Agnes Gastmans from Auroville to America to spend the summer in Arcosanti. She had the chance to see what it was like to be part of an Exchange group. She made a lot of friends and felt some sense of community. She had the opportunity to experience becoming a part of another new community in another country in order to share in their life and experience.

G: At our meeting at Willow Gold this summer we discussed the possibilities of hosting people who want to come from Auroville to the States for some time. Global View/Willow Gold is one place where people could be involved in a community and work while they are here.

S: There are many possibilities for enlarging this project. It's to the point where we can all be involved. There are many people here in the States who have lived in the communities which LEX works with and who could add to what we are now doing. I have seen this program grow a little every year and it's very exciting to be a part of that growth.



The Merriam Hill Center. Photo by Suzanne MacDonald

Dick Batstone

In this installment from Dick's diary, which he kept from 1959-60, there is a vivid account of a meditation which was lead by the Mother to commemorate the passing of Sri Aurobindo and a short anecdote and poem which he wrote sometime after the meditation.

5 December 1960: After breakfast everybody in the Ashram assembled for a special meditation to commemorate the passing of Sri Aurobindo. Mother sat upstairs in the large room where she interviews people, and the sadhaks sat round her on the floor and in Sri Aurobindo's room and in the small connecting room between. Others sat on the stairs down to the Meditation Hall, which was also full, and so on, right into the main courtyard, around the Samadhi and on the verandahs and steps of the buildings that enclose it. Everyone had been told in advance where to sit, and by 9:45 a.m. they were all in their places.

N. had explained to me that during the half hour of meditation, Mother would gather each person present, one by one, into her consciousness and then raise herself and them to the Divine in an act of offering and surrender. During this time, he said, the Divine became very close to all those so gathered.

At 9:35, I went upstairs, with many others, and found a place on the floor where we could sit. I could not see Mother, but it was not too crowded a position.

The stillness and heaviness of the atmosphere was intense. No one moved or coughed or made any sound. At times all thought seemed to be silenced, drowned in Mother's presence. N. had advised us that it would be unnecessary to make any effort to establish a contact with the Divine by one's self, but that it would be best to adopt a quiet attitude of surrender, physical realization and peace, so that the Mother could raise one up herself.

The half hour passed quickly, in an atmosphere of extraordinary concentration. Then a bell rang, and people began to stand up, and Mother left the Hall.

For some time people waited in their places. Then they formed a moving queue which circled through Sri Aurobindo's room and then back through Mother's Hall and down the stairs. At the bottom many people were standing, silent and attentive, as if they hoped to see Mother come down, but she was gone.

This half hour of intense concentration by Mother was unforgettable, though what effect it had on me, beyond a slight headache, I don't know. But that is the wrong question!

6 December 1960: Recently I was talking to K. whom I'd met in the Playground. He asked me if there would be a meditation there that evening.

"No, I told him. There are only two a week, on Thursdays and Sundays." "And then Mother comes, yes?" he queried.

"No, she never comes, now, since she had gone into seclusion", I told him.

"But she is surely there, in the background, in the little room where the photographs are?"

Again I said no. She never came to the playground for meditation now, ever.

"Well then I have seen a vision," he exclaimed, "because last night when there was meditation, and I was sitting here, I looked up and saw her in that room. But I never guessed it was a vision. She must have been there for quite a quarter of an hour, and during that time I noticed her whenever I looked into the doorway of the room. That is strange."

The Mad Sanyasin

Do not speak to me of richness or poorness,
Of how to wear my rags or of what to eat.
Do not ask me where I shall sleep,
For I live in the house of timelessness.

Men count their properties and their riches,
But I count the sands of the sea-shore,
And the handfulls of stones in the river-beds,
For I am in the house of timelessness.

The sun and the green earth, what are these?
I see the shining universe like a picture.
I speak to you - but what is speaking
For one who is in the house of timelessness?

Oh it is well furnished, the world has less.
But why do you look strangely at me?
It is so silent. Will you not talk with me
In the house of timelessness where I live?

Undated 1957

THE MOTHER'S
SUTRAS

1) Be ambitious for nothing, above all pretend nothing, but be at each instant the utmost of what you can be.

2) As for your place in the universal manifestation, only the Supreme can assign it to you.

3) It is the Supreme Lord who has ineluctably decreed the place you occupy in the universal concert, but whatever be this place, you have equally the same right as all others to ascend the supreme summits right to the supramental realization.

4) What you are in the truth of your being is decreed in an irrevocable way, and nothing nor anyone can stop you from being it; but the path you take to get there is left to your own free choice.

5) On the road of the ascending evolution, every one is free to choose the direction he will take: the swift and steep climb towards the summits of Truth, to the supreme realization, or turning his back to the peaks, the easy descent to the interminable meanderings of endless incarnations.

6) In the course of time and even in the course of your present, you can make your choice once and for all, irrevocably, and then you have only to confirm it with every new occasion; or else if you do not take a definite decision from the beginning, you will have to choose anew at each moment between the falsehood and the truth.

7) But even in the event you have not made the irrevocable decision at the outset, should you have the good fortune to live during one of these unimaginable hours of universal history when the Grace is present, embodied upon earth. It will offer you, at certain exceptional moments, the renewed possibility of making a final choice that will lead you straight to the goal.

JOURNEY'S END

The day ends lost in a stretch of even,
A long road trod—and the little farther.
Now the waste-land, now the silence;
A blank, dark wall, and behind it
heaven.

Sri Aurobindo

GENERAL NEWS

Man After Man

One hundred years after Charles Darwin's death, evolution is the theme of the day. We know, or think we know, how species have evolved and how Man was born. But then what comes after?...

"Man is not the summit of the evolution," someone said at the beginning of this century of upheaval: "Evolution continues, and Man will be surpassed." The man who tossed that pebble into the pond of human habit was called Sri Aurobindo and he lived in India. The woman who was to carry on not the "evolutionary thought" of Sri Aurobindo but his evolutionary action, had come to live beside him. He called her "Mother." She was born in Paris in 1878. Her body was buried in Pondicherry in 1973.

To start our journey, we went to the Nilgiris—the Blue Mountains in South India—to interview a French writer, a seeker who was named Satprem by Mother and who was the witness of her evolutionary work for 20 years. We went to Auroville, which is not a new city or a utopia but rather a laboratory for evolution, a need for something else. We went as far as New Delhi to see Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Our questions: Will there be anything else after the painful and senseless being that we are, or must we simply resign ourselves to the catastrophe and destruction of the human species?

For this reason, the film begins with images of our daily life, this very inferno to which Man has reduced the earth. The present Man seems to be rapidly approaching his end. But then what comes after? ... The answer is not to be found in any book, wisdom or revelation. It is hidden, says Satprem, where Sri Aurobindo and Mother sought it, in the cells of our body.

These are the introductory remarks to the remarkable, powerful and inspiring film *Man After Man*, made by the Italian filmmaker David Montemurri in November, 1981. Opening with stark images of man's destructiveness in the 20th century, the core of the film is a lengthy interview with Satprem as he outlines Sri Aurobindo's vision and Mother's evolutionary labor. This 90-minute film is now being shown in the United States. If you are interested in seeing it or arranging to have it shown in your area, write to Mr. Carlos Goetz, 22 Pomander Walk, New York, NY 10025.

(The film was shown in New York City on Nov. 13, 12:00 Noon, at the Thalia Theater, Broadway and W. 95th St.)

Report on the meeting held at Willow Gold

On August 14th and 15th Americans from all over the States gathered together at the Willow Gold Farm in Wisconsin. The purpose of this gathering was two-fold. One was to discuss viable forms of organization and communication for people in America who want to participate in the Yoga and in the development of the community of Auroville. The second was to celebrate Sri Aurobindo's birthday as well as birthdays and anniversaries of some of the members of the Willow Gold community.

Seventeen people, including two Aurovilians, Bill Sullivan and Martha Johnson, were present to participate in the four sessions which made up the two days of meetings. The evening of the 13th brought everyone together for a birthday party and a concert by the *Northern Lights*, a local group consisting of two married couples who are folk singers and musicians. Thus the meetings started off on a note of love and sharing which continued throughout the two days.

Here is a brief summary of the issues discussed and the proposals made during the meetings:

August 14th: The meeting opened with Bhajans to Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. Bryan Walton welcomed everyone to Willow Gold and proposed that Julian Lines act as focalizer for the meetings.

Julian asked Bill Sullivan to bring everyone up to date on events in Auroville since the Supreme Court decision which has allowed the Government of India to involve itself in the organization of the community. Many of those present expressed their concern about the political divisions within the community of Auroville and the attitude of Aurovilians towards Americans. Bill expressed the feeling that the flow of goods and people to Auroville from America is needed and appreciated by Aurovilians. He also thought that this exchange needed to be a two-way flow; Auroville goods and people to America as well as American goods and people to Auroville.

Julian reported on the group of people in the Northeastern part of the States known as the East Coast Nexus. The group has been meeting at the Merriam Hill Center on an informal basis during the past year. The purpose has been to get a sense of who they are as a group of people in the States. Julian noted that there are not many places where Americans can find out about the



Participants at the Willow Gold meeting taking time out for a swim. Left to right: Julian Lines, Bryan Walton, Bill Sullivan, Ardis Hanson, Kevin Browne, Kevin Eggars, Gordon Korstange holding AuroLeo Walton, Jean Korstange, Stuart Johnson, and Martha Johnson. Photo by Julian Lines.

Yoga and Auroville. It was felt by some of those present that the Learning Exchange and Willow Gold/Global View were two new examples of organizations which are successfully involved with the flow of goods, information, and people between Auroville, the Ashram and America.

Duane and Marion Nelson and Bryan Walton gave those present a brief explanation of the Willow Gold/Global View perspective and its work. Although they are not a Sri Aurobindo or Auroville center they try to integrate goods, information and people from Auroville or the Ashram into their business and community. They feel that they are evolving and could serve as a bridge between Auroville and America.

The afternoon meeting focused on Auroville International (AVI). Julian informed the group that the purpose of Auroville International was to contact and inform people in countries all over the world about the community of Auroville and to support the development and growth of the community. The official date of registration for AVI was going to be August 15, 1983 and this would be done in Holland. Our representative to the AVI meeting in Laubach, Germany was Constance Walker from the Auroville Association in California and he would be one of the people most likely to take up the work of organizing an AVI center in the States. There was a proposal that all those present at Willow Gold who wished to be part of the AVI-USA Center write their names and addresses on a paper which would be sent to Constance as a group of people who support the formation of AVI-USA.

The group then moved on to the topic of communication. *Collaboration*, informal newsletters and *The Auroville Review* were all discussed as publications which serve to create a dialogue and an exchange of information, events, ideas and experience. As a result of this discussion, Ardis Hanson and Julian agreed to organize a mailing list of people in the States who are interested in participating in the work of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother's Yoga and the development of Auroville and want to be kept up-to-date on people and events. Ardis agreed to mail out informal newsletters from Auroville and the States to everyone on this new mailing list for a small subscription fee.

The first day of meetings closed with the decision to discuss the flow of people and goods between America and Auroville and the Ashram. There was a short flute concert by Gordon Korstange after supper.

August 15th: The meeting opened with Sunil's New Year's Music and a reading from *Savitri*.

The first topic of discussion was the new brochures which were coming out from Auroville. Sometime was spent talking about the special interests people have towards a community like Auroville and what kind of information is appropriate for America as introductory material.

The next discussion focused on the community in America among people who have lived in Auroville or the Ashram. There was a feeling that publications, informal gatherings, and meeting people coming from Auroville to the States were the main links in this country where physical distance separates everyone. Thus a special effort is needed to keep a flow of communication going among people in the States.

The afternoon session focused on the exchange of goods between Auroville and America. The problems of developing and marketing Auroville products and selling them here was the main concern of this discussion. Bill informed people that Artisana Trust had a group of people who were working on this problem and that people could work directly with them.

The discussion moved on to the community in the States and how Sri Aurobindo and The Mother's vision and consciousness could manifest here. Many people felt that what is required is that everyone recognize and support others who have a feeling of being able to serve the Divine wherever they are and in whatever work they do. There is a need for us to see others as a truth and consciousness worker. We all have something to give and receive and need the loving support of others.

On that note the meeting closed. After the evening meal and birthday cake there was a slide show by Bryan and Marion on Hinduism as expressed in the ancient temples of India.



Participants at the Willow Gold meeting in front of the house. Left to right: Kevin Browne holding AuroLeo Walton, Mirra Browne, Jim Murphy, Paula Murphy, Bill Sullivan, Fanou Walton, Ardis Hanson, Duane Nelson. Photo by Julian Lines.

The most important thing is to be quiet, in a peaceful atmosphere, so that the Force can work without disturbance.

The Mother 1967



Photo taken at Minguren, George Nakashima's home, by Himanshu. Left to right: Mira Nakashima, Vasant Merchant, Marion Nakashima and George Nakashima.

George Nakashima hosted a talk by Vasant Merchant on April 17 at his home, Minguren, in New Hope, Pennsylvania. About fifty people attended the lecture on The Future Destiny of Man. Vasant Merchant is a professor at Northern Arizona State University in Flagstaff, Arizona and has been a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother for over forty years. Himanshu (Tom O'Brien) wrote the following report of this lecture:

We assembled in a building known as the Museum. It houses artifacts from all over the world. Everywhere one looked there was a reminder of beauty in form. From the comfortable wooden chairs designed by Nakashima, to the fresh flowers adorning the speaker's table, one was continuously charmed by aesthetic refinement. After a short introduction by Nakashima, Vasant began her talk. She chose to create an inwardly tuned orientation by beginning with several Sanskrit chants.

Her talk began with the issue of humanity's present world condition and how perilous it has been for the last seventy-five years. We were forced to look at the world situation and where we are going. Vasant maintained the view that "the darkness is always greatest before the dawn." She chose Sri

Aurobindo's Savitri as the basis for her optimism. She spoke at length on Savitri representing evolving humanity and how certain is the hope for a transformed race.

Following the talk, light refreshments were served by Marion and Mira Nakashima, George's wife and daughter respectively. When most of the guests had left I reminded George of his earlier offer to show me the wood workshop and showroom. He graciously fulfilled this request and also included a tour of his own house. Each building had its own unmistakable atmosphere but all shared a sense of order and refinement. Walking through the shop was like a tour of the world's forests because of all the large slabs of wood which were stored there. These pieces had come from many different countries and Nakashima pointed out his favorite wood which is English Walnut. In his work, Nakashima tries to make the maximum use of the natural uniqueness of each piece of wood. Thus it was exciting to see these pieces of wood which were yet to be made into functional art forms.

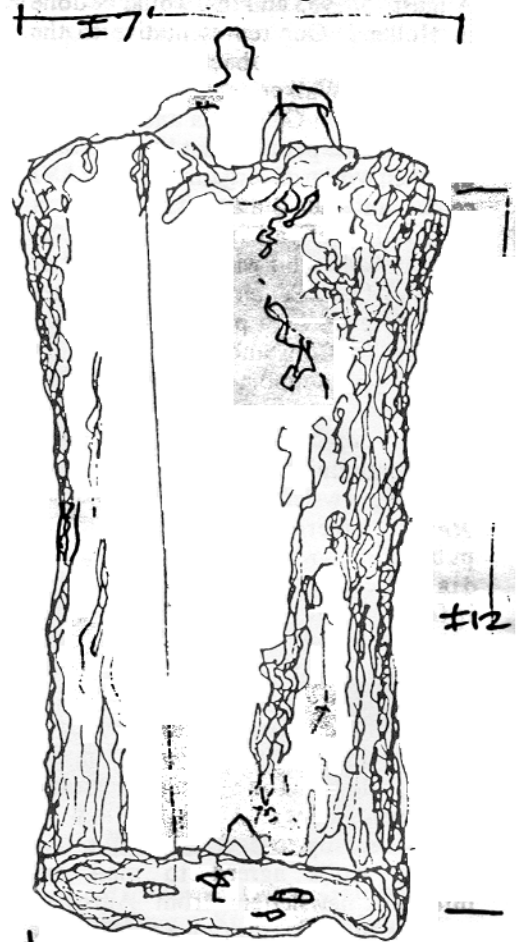
Miriam Belov recently sent us a letter from Nakashima about a vision of a new work which he wishes to take up. The following extracts are from that letter:

There has appeared an extraordinary natural phenomenon, something that occurs only once in a lifetime or perhaps only once in the history of a nation or in all time. It is a great walnut tree. It is a tree that would be a symbiosis of nature and man in the deepest spiritual sense. It is now at hand.

The only full destiny of this noble tree is to use it in its full length and width to make the most expressive piece of furniture ever made, An Altar to Peace! Each step would be an adventure as such a piece has never been made with this type of wood and proportions.

Perhaps this is all a dream, but peace is a dream for millions upon millions of people. Peace should be borne as a genuine expression of nature and an act of beauty. There can be at least one small spot on earth dedicated to Peace in a tangible form instead of an abstract idea and the force of war. This Altar to Peace can be a positive creative force of its own, carrying its own momentum. The Altar can be made, but it will need a place where all people can pay homage to its aspiration for peace. Thus I share with others, my dream of this Altar to Peace.

George Nakashima



Drawing by George Nakashima

The East West Cultural Center in Los Angeles, California, announces that the sacred relics of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, will be delivered to the center from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, and installed in a specially prepared reliquary and meditation room located within the Center. The following is a short statement by the Center in regards to this event which will take place later this year:

"For this to occur at all, especially in the West and particularly in Los Angeles, is of great significance as it heralds the establishment of Their physical presence in what both of Them considered as the most likely place in the world for the next great advance in man's spiritual evolution and unfoldment of truth - The United States of America. Because it is fast becoming a reflection of the world-at-large with its collection of diverse ethnic minorities, and because it has acquired a vitality which is commensurate with its emerging spirituality, it is most fitting that Los Angeles will be the host environment of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother's physical presence and force.

Seyril Sochen, who is presently living in Boulder, Colorado, reports that on August 15th at the blessing of the new house of the Colorado Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Boulder, the Centenary Edition of the complete works of Sri Aurobindo was presented. A passage from Book Three of Savitri, *The Vision of the King heralding the coming of "the sun-eyed children of a marvelous dawn" after the destruction of the old world, was read.*

Seyril is giving a course at the Institute entitled *The Adventure of Consciousness*. She is teaching this course with another faculty member, Richard Freeman. The course description is as follows: "Meditation and transformational theatre practices will be developed for personal evolution in a rapidly changing world. The course is both theoretical and experiential."

On November 19th, at the First Congregational Church in downtown Boulder a premiere presentation of her play *Mother Noah, A Quest for the Ark*, will be given as the culminating event of the All Boulder Peace Day.

This day of workshops is offered by the Congregational Church Peace-Makers Task Force, Boulder Council of Churches and Synagogues, Sri Aurobindo's Action Center, The Colorado Institute of Transpersonal Psychology and others. Seyril states that "Mother Noah is dedicated to The Mother and to all the Mothers of the Earth, and begins with a quotation from Savitri:

*As she moved across the changing earth
A deeper consciousness welled up in her;
Each soil and country it has made its home;
It took all clans and peoples for her own,
Till the whole destiny of mankind was hers.
Book Four, "The Quest", Chapt. 4*

Joe and Muriel Spanier will also make a contribution to the day's workshops with a talk on Auroville's contribution to Peace-Consciousness. They organize the Sri Aurobindo Action Center in Boulder.

EAST COAST NEXUS

On October 8th, 9th and 10th, ten people gathered together at the Merriam Hill Center in New Hampshire. Himanshu (Tom O'Brien) organized the three days of activities which included group meditations, hiking, dance improvisation, and discussions concerning a focus for this group.

At the group's final meeting it was agreed that in terms of outward action people had enough to do to maintain themselves in America. It was felt that there was a greater need for silence and meditation. Because Merriam Hill Center offers us an environment where we can come together for the purpose of meditation and quiet we should try to spend one weekend every two months doing this. Thus it was proposed that we meet on the weekend of November 18th-20th for the purpose of being with each other in a quiet and concentrated manner. Gordon Korstange offered to structure the weekend and lead the group for the first session.

Arya Maloney proposed that an effort be made by people in America to support the building of the Matrimandir in Auroville through a monthly pledge to contribute whatever they can, even if it is only \$1 per month to the Matrimandir fund. The whole group supported his suggestion and it was felt that this money should be sent through an organization like Auroville International-USA. Thus Arya agreed

to write up his proposal for publication and to arrange for the funds to be received by Constance Walker in Santa Cruz. Arya, who is planning to go to Auroville at the end of this year, also shared his experience about this with the group.

One project which everyone felt was necessary to take up was that of creating a visitor's line. We felt that it is important to know who is coming to the States from Auroville and when someone comes to our area we would like to be able to meet them and share information, news, and experiences.

A SIMPLE PROPOSAL

*The Matrimandir will be the soul of Auroville. The sooner the soul is there, the better it will be for everybody and especially for the Aurovilians.
The Mother 15/11/1970*

A casual comment concerning the time to complete the Matrimandir evoked in me a wish to speed up the process. The feeling is the same as the longing for the manifestation of one's individual soul and is accompanied by the recognition that all projects engineered by the mental, emotional and physical being are at best tenuous without the full flowering of this soul. Each of us has experienced this individually and know that it is equally true in the evolution of the Auroville collectivity at whose center stands Matrimandir - the soul of a new world.

Amidst the numerous attempts to create a flow of money to realize the completion of Matrimandir I propose a "grassroots" effort whose keynote is consistency. Can we find in America a 100, 200 people who will give consistently, according to their means, \$10.00, \$25.00 per month towards this effort. For example, a hundred people contributing \$10.00 every month will realize \$12,000 each year for Matrimandir. The participation of this core of workers in America will create a powerful bond of solidarity with those in Auroville who give themselves daily to the building of Matrimandir. Furthermore, I believe, that the creation of a consistent flow of money will attract other sources for this purpose.

Arya

Anyone wishing to participate in this work can send their pledge to: The Auroville Association, P.O. Box 2780, Santa Cruz, CA. 95062

is then concreted. One team is busy bending spirals, and another team of carpenters builds the shuttering around each node. When one level is finished, a call will go out to all Auroville and a big "concreting" will happen.

5) The spiral ramp which winds its double way up and down to the inner chamber is currently being prepared to be clad with ferrocement. On the last section now, next to the southeast entrance to the chamber, the wiremesh reinforcement is being placed over the steel frame.

6) In the gardens, landscaping continues, with a team of eight strong men from the village who excavate what will one day be a lake (with a little help from the weather - it's hard to imagine a lake during a drought year like this) and are nearly finishing a service road whose entrance sports a bright steel gate designed by one of our artistic Aurovillians which does optical tricks as you cycle past.

7) In the Nursery, about 3500 seedlings of indigenous trees for the outer gardens are being prepared. New hybrid crosses of hibiscus have been developed and that area of the Nursery (which will be part of the final gardens) is being pruned and carefully landscaped. The roses brought by Mme. Zhivkova of Bulgaria three years ago are doing well; about 25 loads of homemade compost will fertilize them this year.

Of course, the material progress of Matrimandir is only that: the outer manifestation of an inner work of which it is probably better not to speak too much. Suffice it to say, the symbol of its incompleteness is not lost on us...

We hope that as you face the symbols of your tapasya in your day that you feel us with you, as we feel you with us.

Greenbelt

(Extracts from the Auroville Review No.9 Sept., 1983)

Auroville had a few days of heavy rains in August and the greenworkers are busy digging and planting again. They are presently occupied with a large scale project funded by the Government of India to plant selected species of trees in various environments and monitor their growth for a period of five years.

A group of people working directly with the land have formed a Land Service to work with the problem of regenerating the total ecosystem of lands not only in Auroville but also in

Matrimandir Update - June, 1983

(Extracts from a letter by Dee for the Matrimandir workers)

Presently the work is going on in about seven areas:

1) On the ground, in the workshop, the precast concrete beams which will form the foundation for the outer skin of Matrimandir are being made: steel is cut, bent and tied into shape for reinforcing pieces, shuttering boxes are put together, concrete is poured, the shuttering is taken apart and the beams are carted to the ponds for curing and later pulled out for welding and stacking.

2) On the structure itself, scaffolding pipes are being taken down from one side of the structure, cleaned and repainted, and put up again on another side. The scaffolding is necessary for installing the beams and supporting them once in place, until the nodes are concreted. In fact this is an area where we'll soon feel the financial pinch a lot, because we don't have enough pipes to continue building higher than the equator. However, human energy-wise this has been a very evocative project; the pipe-scraping crew swelled to quite a large number a few months ago when the big push was on despite the inglorious nature of the work; during school recess we've had a team of little kids here to clean clamps; carrying the old pipes up from the crater to the cleaning shed was the spontaneous work which we all joined in to do together when the favourable judgment in the Supreme Court was announced in november; and three weeks ago a new "dawn" team has formed of people from all over Auroville who come at 6 a.m. to install scaffolding pipes on the northeast quarter.

3) During the normal working hours of the morning, the "beam team" of 6 to 12 persons works on bringing the half-ton beams down the slope from the curing pond to the bottom level of Matrimandir, and then hoisting them with the big yellow crane, perched like a bird at the very top of the globe, into place along the southwest side. There's a certain amount of happy anticipation as we approach "the equator"; only three levels, i.e. 250 beams more to go.

4) The beams form a hexagonal network around the sphere, and where the six beam-ends meet is called a node. A steel spiral reinforces this joint which

Rand Hicks of the Integral Knowledge Study Center in Pensacola, Florida, installed relics from Sri Aurobindo's room on August 15 at the Center. They were enthusiastically received and there was a feeling that America has been well prepared for the physical impact of Sri Aurobindo's presence.

Ardis Hanson in San Francisco, California, is making a computerized list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of people who would like to be informed and/or participate in groups or events which are being organized in the States. If you have not received a mailing of addresses and newsletters from her contact her at the following address:

Ardis Hanson
3394 24th St.
San Francisco, CA. 94110

The Willow Gold Farm in Wisconsin sponsored the Love Project on Oct. 7-9. Developed and organized by two former school teachers, Arleen Lorrance and Diane Pike, The Love Project is an opportunity to practice functioning in a greater consciousness and to expand awareness and understanding through the concrete application of cooperation, loving, and giving. When put into action The Love Project Principles become tools for conscious choice. For the last four years Diane and Arleen have come to Willow Gold where, in Practice Sessions, groups have come to laugh, explore, change and grow.

Global View has a limited quantity of the 1984 Auroville Calendar. This coming year's will be a small 6½ by 9½ desk calendar with the architectural drawing of the Matrimandir and the Urn. It is printed in gold on blue handmade paper.

They have also printed a special Christmas catalogue. It offers quality handmade products from the Ashram, Auroville, Findhorn, Thailand and India.

Both of these are available upon request from Global View. Write to Global View, Rt. 3 Spring Green, Wisc. 53588

the surrounding areas. They are undertaking a survey to evaluate the various types of land and possibilities for use. With the help of the results of this survey Land Service will link with L'Avenir d' Auroville, the town planning group, to decide where to plan for housing, parks, rice fields and the football stadium!

Education

(Extracts from the Auroville Review No.9, Sept., 1983)

Aspects of Education in Auroville

Centre School - Kindergarten, primary school, plus arts and crafts space for 40 children between 3-12 years of age. Basic programme of mathematics, science, history, geography, English, French, drawing, painting and crafts.

Fertile School - "Kids' access centre" for 10 children between 9-18 years of age. Regular programme of mathematics, natural science, English, French and Tamil. The emphasis is on continuous investigation and guided self-discovery within a specifically designed environment. This centre has a main meeting room, small library and carpentry workshop. Two workshops, one for pottery and one for silk screen printing are under construction.

Fraternity School - Classrooms for 75 children between 5-13 years of age. Formal schooling with a nutrition and hygiene programme. The sports programme is attended by approximately 100 children mainly from the nearby village of Kulapalayam.

Haignarkal Evening School - For the "out of school" group of Tamil Aurovilian children. The object is to help the students increase skills in reading, writing, mathematics and Tamil in addition to the study of English, science, history, geography and Indian culture. The emphasis is on a functional literacy programme and revival of rural crafts and folk arts.

Annainagar School - Classes for Scheduled Caste children from the villages of Kottakarai and Alankuppam. English, Tamil, physiology, geography and mathematics are being taught daily between 6-9 a.m. and 6-9 p.m. An infant nutrition programme is an important aspect of the work of this school.

Adult Literacy Classes - Adult literacy classes for workers of handicrafts units three times a week in English and Tamil at Fraternity.

Trysem (Government of India) - Forty young villagers are being trained in different handicraft units under this scheme concerning self-employment in rural areas.

Fourth Dimension - Education in technical drawing, estimating, surveying and theoretical knowledge of building construction. Four students are now being instructed.

Tutoring - There are many skills in Auroville which are shared with individuals or small groups wherever the environment is most suitable. The subjects include: technical drawing, mechanics, carpentry, graphics, drawing, painting, English, French, Tamil, Hindi, pottery, astronomy, computer science, puppet making and design, acting, Indian music, (tabla, flute, harmonium, piano, violin, guitar, percussion and synthesizer).

Physical Education - Physical education is an indispensable part of Auroville's development. It is an important balance to the manual work required from Aurovilians, an essential aspect of the physical and psychological growth of the children and an obvious activity to promote friendship and teamwork between members of Auroville and the people of the surrounding villages. There are at present 3 main sports centres in the communities of Aspiration, Certitude and Fraternity.

The following activities take place either in these centres or in other communities with smaller or more specialized facilities: football, body-building, swimming, tennis, volleyball, softball, basketball, horseback riding, gymnastics, trapeze, tightrope walking, juggling, roller skating, dance, body movement, jogging, walking, cycling, table-tennis, boxing, running, kabbadi, hatha yoga, aikido, boken, t'ai-chi.

Cultural Week: Aug. 10-18

August 9th-10th

The theatre group "Expression Auroville" presented a piece on the French Revolution, *The Heart and the Hand*. Not only did it evoke the atmosphere and ideas of a certain period of history but made us experience a certain identity with them - as something that is part of our experience of Auroville, its past, present and future.

This play was also presented in Pondicherry on the 20th and in Madras on the 24th at the Alliance Francaise.

August 12th: A glimpse of Art

It was truly a glimpse - an exhibition at the Tripura Pavilion at Bharat Nivas offering a wide spectrum of variety and style: paintings, drawings, tapestries done by Aurovilians - and yet a very new experience for us. New, but long awaited, it came like a release into freedom with a possibility to create! It was like a breath of fresh air - and we inhaled deeply.

BROOD, EAGLE MOTHER

Brood, Eagle Mother of eaglets
with your wide-winged thoughts
of love warming the small worlds
beneath
your prayer-feathered breast, that to
freedom
from darkness they break
into the Light measureless
of new horizons, their flight
take from your nesting
far into their future
oneness with sky & yet higher
aeries.

Brood, Eagle Mother of eaglets
with your stern-pinioned plumes
of love protecting the small globes until
they stir, gathering strength for freedom
from shell, to break
into the Vast measureless
of new horizons at last,
far into their future
oneness with Space

oneness with Space
and yet wider spaces.

Brood, Eagle Mother of eaglets
with your far-seeing eyes
of love scouting, for newly-hatched
worlds,
abysses canyoned below them, insight
to map their flight
below as above measureless
past ancient horizons
into their future
oneness with Time
and yet farther Timelessness.

Brood, Eagle Mother of eaglets
with your in-gathering sweep
of love teaching its truth
to all fledglings: heights & deeps
we break into
of eagle Wonders measureless,
miracles breathing, breaking
free of old shells to fly
far into our future
oneness on wings of love.

Seyril Schochen
Boulder, Colorado

IN BETWEEN

So it begins
In the heat of the deep
With the bird's languid glide
Through the air.
Animal magnetism evolves to
Heightened Spiritual healing
In this blessed time.
The very sensuality of the cells
Is aspiring for release in wideness.

Gloria, Gloria, Gloria
Light of Lights;
The Bliss of Divine Love
Comes shivering down.

It covers Earth
As a mother gently covers her child
in sleep
With a lace shawl.
A gentle kiss is given
And if we are prepared,
It becomes the all consuming embrace.

From erotic to seraphic
It is One.
Deep from the heart
Burning white
Against this very dark night

Miriam Belov
September 1983
Manhattan Island

Moving on the edge of time
Dancing wildly in my spirit,
I appeal to the Grace.
Deep, deep as in the intensity
Of a primal landscape,
I feel all creatures in my very flesh
While the glow of my soul -
Laser white in aspiration -
Hews the path through the dense
environs.

For the consecration has taken place.
The air is full of concentration.

Making it of a dream,
Making it of a memory,
The fantastic magic is reality.

Savage splendour in the
Lotus jungle
Beyond all,
The scent intoxicates my very body,
As my soul sways towards the ultimate
Union with the Lord

Miriam Belov
New York City
1982 August

A future's forerunner
it's a freak they say
deep in heart we know
there is no return
it's ahead into the unknown
we, a mist of Thee
earthly missioned
for a time in the between
from that great unseen
in a cloud of dancing cells
to the depths and heights
here and there and everywhere
just being in this between

Chandra (Joel Goodman)

MOTHER'S TOUCH

In the river's stream
cool water sliding
Softly changing
all remaining

Naked floating
locked in dreaming
minds unwinding

In the river's stream
you are with me
ever gently
holding my hand.

by Margo McLeod

What little I have of you,
What little can do with what I have,
thirty seconds of your fierce attention
thirteen years ago, and the rest,
books, photos, flowers,
hours of vague speculation
about the invisible worlds
in which we may be together still
I pray as I think back
on a long day when I did not think
once of you who changed me
to what I am and what I do
with what little I have
of You.

Venagopal

ODE TO FALLING LEAVES

Poetry, element in which we move as
fish in water...

15th St.

Denise Levertov

Floating free
from cold tree
bones' dead touch,
taste at last
the poetry
you lived in
all summer.

Nestle now
near thistle-bite,
crisp wind-
turned pages.

Gordon

THOUGHTS AND APHORISMS

Jana

There are two allied powers in man: Knowledge and Wisdom. Knowledge is so much of the truth, seen in a distorted medium, as the mind arrives at by groping; Wisdom what the eye of divine vision sees in the spirit.

Late, I learned that when reason died then Wisdom was born; before that liberation, I had only knowledge.

What the soul sees and has experienced, that it knows; the rest is appearance, prejudice and opinion.

A thought is an arrow shot at the truth; it can hit a point, but not cover the whole target. But the archer is too well satisfied with his success to ask anything farther.

When Wisdom comes, her first lesson is, "There is no such thing as knowledge; there are only aperçus of the Infinite Deity."

From Sri Aurobindo, Thoughts and Aphorisms, Vol. 17, Chapt. 4, pp. 79-104.