

Impressions of Auroville:

The pioneers of consciousness.

Between February 20th and February 28th 2005, I had the pleasure to be invited to Auroville as Member of the "Auroville International Advisory Council". Here are some impressions, for all of you who have never been there.

Can you imagine a city where the average citizen you meet in the streets, after a short moment of contact, may be speaking about the necessity to take distance from one's ego in order to go towards one's deepest self where a spark of the divine has to be discovered?

Is it possible to imagine a city, which is since already thirty years in the process of being constructed around the aim of raising the level of consciousness of Humanity?

You would probably say that this is pure utopia. And you are totally right.

I would even go further saying that this is radically impossible. And I would add a quotation from the French philosopher Pascal (17th century): *"Man is neither an angel neither an animal. However the irony is that when he tries to become an angel, he behaves like an animal."*

Because the very project of raising the level of Humanity's consciousness is basically aiming at transforming human nature, lifting human nature to another level.. All people of common sense will agree that this project is crazy, totally impossible...

And yet this city exists, and I have visited it. And am still in a state of shock.

After a lot of difficulties, as if fate was against this visit, I finally managed to arrive in Auroville on February 20th, 2005. Auroville is being constructed a few kilometres inland from the sea, north of Pondicherry, in the south-east of India. The city has been founded on February 28th, 1968.

In the years since then the first pioneers succeeded in transforming the desert area into a sub-tropical forest full with birds. Access roads look more like forest roads than city entrance highways. There isn't even a sign board on the main entrance road. One rather has the impression of entering a construction site!

And it is a construction site, but what kind of construction site!

It is a very authentic human construction site, but also a spiritual builder's yard! In this place the shadow is proportionate to the intensity of the light and energy. Indeed, there are problems and defects in this city and the Aurovilians don't shy away from openly discussing them. The growth of the city is too slow. There are too few citizens (1800). There are many disagreements with regard to the city's future and to what the priorities are. Some residents criticize fellow citizens as being profiteers, or betraying Auroville's ideals. Others consider that the local, Tamil villages are not yet well enough integrated into the city..

And yet, despite all these defects, it is a unique place of individual and collective spiritual growth. This is the reason why the shadows are so visible, as they are proportional to the light and to the energy radiating from the place. The fact that those flaws and problems and challenges are so openly discussed has deeply reassured me. I had been afraid to encounter a sort of angelic pretension that everything was OK, and that there was no problem, possibly because everybody was already at another level of consciousness! This 'angelism' would have been indicative of a false spirituality.., and, potentially, of a sectarian movement.

What it boils down to, one of the residents told me, is that if you are not deeply, profoundly serious about this spiritual research and growth, both at the personal and collective level, you won't make it here, you just won't stay here, you will leave..

I have been deeply impressed by meeting with residents who lived for thirty or forty years in the city. When listening to them, one gets the sense of the very genuine, widening experiences they have gone through, and of their persistent determination to build this city and to work on themselves. And one realizes that without this they, indeed, just wouldn't have found the stamina to stay, and would have left one way or the other..

At the level of my own intellectual and spiritual reflection with regard to the actual paradigm shift towards transmodernity, I got the surprise of my life by discovering this very first transmodern city. Yes, the Aurovilians are in perfect accordance with everything I wrote in my book[1]. I now can say: "*Transmodernity exists; I have seen it in this city.*" Although it was the first time I was visiting Auroville, I had a distinct feeling of being at home. And I think that this impression was also shared by the Aurovilians that I had the joy to meet. There was from both sides the strong impression of recognition, of being on the same wavelength. Amazing, fascinating and very stimulating indeed.

Coming back in Europe, the contrast is not so much the drastic change of temperature: (- 45° Celsius!). No, the real contrast is the level of energy, which is so much higher in Auroville. I have seen this energy sparkling in the eyes of Paolo, a young boy, whose parents

recently decided to join Auroville. He was full of internal joy. He told me that he was happy to be, for the first time, in a school he was enjoying. His creativity was bursting. He told me that he had learned to have a real contact with ponies, to familiarize with them, to have a real, living understanding with them.. This boy was touching and beautiful.

Here in Brussels, I keenly sense the difference of energetic level. Residents of Auroville do not feel their energy level. But the foreign visitor does. This entire town despite all its shadows is at a higher energetic level. It's an extraordinary realization..

This very audacious project, this 'superhuman' project, could not be but launched by two beings of an exceptional spiritual power: Ms Mirra Alfassa, called "Mother" (1878-1973) and Aurobindo Ghose, called "Sri Aurobindo" (1872-1950). They consecrated an important part of their lives and certainly of their extraordinary spiritual energy, not to fly off alone at the heights of infinite contemplation, but to transform and raise the level of human consciousness. And Auroville is possible precisely because of the energetic breakthrough that these two beings achieved, individually and together. Auroville is like the incarnation, the materialisation of this spiritual victory they won for the sake of Humanity.

At the personal level, one of the strongest experiences for me has been the visit to the 'Matrimandir', this sacred space in the centre of the city, which has the shape of a golden flower. >From the moment I entered that unique place, I sensed a very exceptional energy that didn't correspond to any religious or other place I visited in my life. I had the impression to be flooded by and connected with an enormously powerful cosmic energy. I had the inner sensation of being visited, connected, cleansed, energized. I was, briefly, transformed by something absolutely beyond my understanding. I have lost the control of my life.. , a bit.

I will return twice a year, probably in February and in August (end).

There will be possibilities to organize trips for those interested.

Marc Luyckx Ghisi

March 2005.

[1] "Beyond modernity, patriarchy and capitalism: the reenchantment of society" published in French, in Paris L'Harmattan, 2001. English edition not yet published.