



The Montessori OBSERVER

Harmony

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Montessori in Australia

The Rajean Montessori School (Frankston, Victoria, Australia) was established in 1956 with 12 children, which increased to 25 in 1960. Directed by its owner Jean Sawyer, this Society member school provides a full day program for children aged 3-5.

A three-member teaching staff supervises the school program dedicated to the normalized development of independence in children on behalf of their becoming loving and caring individuals. Special features of the Rajean school include music, dance, art, parent education and a continuing Montessori program throughout the summer months. To celebrate the end of the year, the parents are invited to attend a program given by the children which includes pantomime and the presentation of the children's favorite poems, songs and other activities which are regular aspects of the school program.

The Rajean school is presently conducting a "Back to Rajean" in 1986 to encourage former students to keep in touch with the school. Ms. Sawyer reports that some of the school's former pupils are now 30-34 years of age and are well established in a wide diversity of occupational activities. One former pupil is a medical doctor for children in the city of Frankston.

For further information, contact: Jean Sawyer, Rajean Montessori School, 18 Leonard St., Frankston, 3199, Victoria, Australia, Tel. 783-2016.



Child working with knobbed cylinders at the Rajean Montessori School (Frankston, Victoria, Australia)



Child working with sensorial material (color tablets) at the Rajean Montessori School (Frankston, Victoria, Australia).

Reflections

by Janet Davies
(Calgary, Alberta, Canada)

Spontaneous Explosion

It was one of those spontaneous explosions that is initiated and upheld by the children. This past summer I obtained a three poster set of flags of the world, countries of the world, and children of the world. In September the children would search the poster for the few flags we would color...

Then a five year old decided that if we would color a French flag, then we could also color one of Chad. The design is the same, the colors are different. And from that our flag book, and flag matching exercise grew to incorporate over fifty flags.

We finally ran off copies of blank flags so that if they had the inclination they could make the flag of any country in the world. We surrounded our map of the countries with colored flags, a string (color coded to each continent) joining the country to its flag.

News items of South Africa, Libya, Soviet Union, Argentina, Djibouti, Ethiopia all bring the children rushing in to find out "where it is" and "Let's find the flag!". Because of this child's enthusiasm all of my classes will have the opportunity to discover the flags of the world.

It's a treasured year because of this "burst" and I wanted to share it.

"Managing Misbehavior" in Corpus Christi, Texas

On August 16-17, 1986, Lee Havis, executive director of the International Montessori Society, presented a conference in Corpus Christi on applying the three Montessori principles with specific reference to the issue of "managing misbehavior." Based on one's being as "commitment to Montessori principles," Mr. Havis directed a detailed analysis of several specific misbehavior scenarios according to the approach of "control the environment, not the child." In addition, the conference considered the resolution of various other misbehavior scenarios from the practical experience of those in attendance.

Sponsored by the Texas Montessori Society, the conference was attended by about 44 persons from throughout the state of Texas, as well as the states of California, Colorado, Georgia, Mississippi, Montana and New York. In addition, Kimiko Kai, research professor in early childhood education from Kyushu Jogakuin Junior College in Kumamoto, Japan was also in attendance.

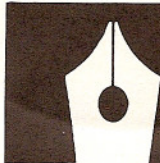
Future seminars and public conferences directed by Mr. Havis are under consideration now to expand further the considerable progress resulting from the Corpus Christi conference. Mr. Havis states that: "the level of attention, interest and active participation during the Texas conference was impressive and very encouraging indeed. I am looking forward to conducting further conferences to continue the Society's communication such as offered in Corpus Christi."

Contact the Society for information as to locations and dates of future conferences or to obtain an audio tape of significant portions of the proceedings of the recent Corpus Christi conference.

Agitation

"Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. . .

Fredrick Douglas
August 4, 1857



Harmony

by Lee Havis

"Living creatures do not simply preserve themselves in existence . . . but they all work together in a kind of terrestrial harmony."

Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p.188

Dr. Montessori's vision of "terrestrial harmony" presents a most striking contrast to the underlying social conformity of today based on fear, dependency and repression throughout the world. Whatever "harmony" there is in present-day society is typically quite limited and superficial indeed—a sort of uniform subjugation to the prevailing conventions and demands of a vague "popular opinion". Such social conformity under the guise of "harmony" generally tends to oppose the child's true nature as it mysteriously emerges to form and express itself in the world from the moment of conception—as being according to the laws of nature in complete harmony with its total environment.

Adult Society

"An adult environment is not a suitable environment for children, but rather an aggregate of obstacles that strengthen their defenses, warp their attitudes, and expose them to adult suggestion."

Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p.109

Built upon historical prejudices of disregard and repression of that which is unpopular or "unknown", adult society tends to demand conformity with its various organized deviations from the natural order of the child's development. Unconsciously, adults judge children as "bad" or "lazy", blaming and punishing them for their failure to properly conform. Social "harmony" for children is thus reduced to a type of "obedience" to the most deeply entrenched forms of dominant adult influence and authority.

"Harmony" as Obedience

"There is no lack of obedience in the world; quite the contrary . . . What unhappily is absent is the control of obedience."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.257

In adult society, obedience to prevailing forces outside oneself is ordinarily seen as a most favorable social state of "conformity" or "unity" with others. Indeed, those who "rebel" against or "dispute" established authority may well be considered "argumentative" or somehow lacking in a constructive harmony with others. Here we see "harmony" as being more a condition of resigned subjugation to prevailing external forces—well-established within oneself from early childhood through the customary patterns of repression and "socialization" associated with traditional education.

Traditional Education

"To dominate the child, to bring him into subjugation, to make him obedient—this is the basis of (traditional) education. If this can be done by any means whatever, even by violence, all the rest will follow."

Maria Montessori

from *Spontaneous Act*, in Ed., p.29-30

Subjected to the group-oriented mentality of traditional education, the individual child is generally perceived as "one of the flock", compelled to accept the established order of collective obedience to dominant external authority. "Rebels" and other "misfits" in society are ordinarily punished, isolated or otherwise repressed to maintain a superficial "conformity" to the presumptive needs of the group. Such repressive conformity in adult society sharply contrasts with the "harmony" and order of nature wherein a process of disagreement and agitation is considered as a necessary aspect of its complete realization among all living creatures.

Agreed Disagreement

"If one pulls in a given direction, there will always be another which pulls the opposite way . . . a wonderful harmony between opposing forces. The result is not so much an agreement as a harmonized opposition, an agreed disagreement."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.143

True harmony—considerably distinct from the ordinary form of "obedience" in society to external authority—is guided by an inner force wherein one may be found at times in a position of disagreement or opposition with others. When prevailing institutions and popular opinion in society reflect a pattern of domination and repression of the child's true nature, one's commitment to a higher order of natural harmony in the universe compels opposition and dissent. Indeed, Montessori teaching recognizes non-violent revolution against repressive social forces as a necessary aspect of the process of creating Dr. Montessori's vision of a "new education".

Non-violent Revolution

"Society has built up walls, barriers. These the new education must cast down revealing the free horizon. The new education is a revolution, but without violence. It is the non-violent revolution."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.215

Dr. Montessori's vision of a "new education"—approaching the child as an "unknown entity"—implicates a striking opposition to the customary prejudicial view of the child as essentially weak, lazy, empty, evil, dependent or insignificant. Such a "new education" expresses its non-violent revolution most constructively as one's being with

children which is committed to insuperable laws of nature which far transcend the conventional wisdom of present human consciousness.

Insuperable Laws

"Life increases, becomes manifest, and perfects the individual, but it is confined within limits and is governed by insuperable laws."

Maria Montessori

from *Discovery of the Child*, p.61-62

Like a "force of nature", the Montessori teacher emerges with children as a commitment to insuperable laws of creation; specifically, three fundamental "Montessori" principles designated as: (1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment". Such principles serve as an inner "control of error" to guide one's being with children to assure and enable the emergence of "normalization".

Normalization

"The problems of education and of society will remain unsolved as long as there is no basis for their solution, that is, the normalization of the child."

Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p.208

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2

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featuring
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Lee Havis, Executive Director

The *Montessori Observer* is mailed six times each year to Society members throughout the world. The *Observer* is sent during the months of January, March, May, September, October and November. The purpose of this publication is to provide news and information about the development of Montessori education to extend awareness of Montessori principles and to promote harmony within the Montessori community.

INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY

The International Montessori Society is sponsored by Educational Services, Inc., a non-profit corporation organized in Maryland, U.S.A. The Society's purpose is to support the effective application of Montessori principles throughout the world.

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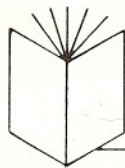
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Book Review

The Essential Montessori - Revised Edition, 1986

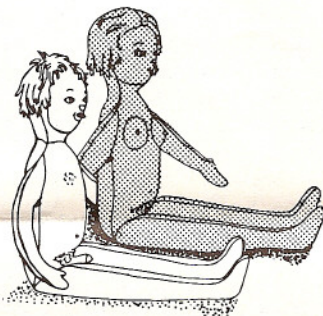
By: Elizabeth Hainstock

Publ by: New American Library

Elizabeth Hainstock's 1986 edition of *The Essential Montessori* provides a most concise introduction to Montessori education—from its inception with Dr. Montessori's discovery of the "normalized" child in 1907 through 1986, reflecting the dynamic recent growth, diversity and fundamental changes in Montessori education since 1979. The current edition is a substantial revision of Ms. Hainstock's original 1979 publication by the same title.

Elizabeth Hainstock, author of *The Essential Montessori* and advisory board member of the International Montessori Society, is widely recognized for her considerable contribution in bringing "Montessori" more directly before the general public in the United States and elsewhere. Her other publications, such as the popular two-volume series *Teaching Montessori in the Home*, have substantially extended public awareness of the work of creating the "new education."

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3



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Harmony

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

The child's "normalization" in an environment committed to the three Montessori principles reveals a most remarkable change of its being to manifest its true nature of complete harmony with its environment, consistent with the laws of its natural development. Such true harmony reveals likewise a new social order among these "normalized" children wherein spontaneous help and sympathy for one another becomes apparent in their outer behavior—arising of itself without the typical repressive adult impositions so common in traditional "teaching" and "education".

Social Harmony

"... children of different ages help one another. The younger ones see what the older ones are doing and ask for explanations... there is a communication and harmony between the two that one seldom finds between the adult and the small child."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.226

The natural harmony of children working together in peaceful joy and self-disciplined order reveals a vision of what is likewise possible for the future of mankind itself as the new "normalized" child emerges in outer appearance. The proper environment to support such a "normalized" harmony in children is one's being as "commitment to Montessori principles". Such being reflects a vital response to the unseen "normalized" spirit within the child, even as its immediate outer behavior may evidence only "misbehavior" resulting from prior hostile experiences in the environment.

A Vital Response

"The environment itself... is in reality an active and vital response to the new patterns manifested in the life of a growing child."

Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p.140

The Montessori teacher—being as "commitment to Montessori principles"—engenders a deep spiritual harmony and order with the child's unseen inner true nature. "Misbehavior" and other superficial deviations from normality are therefore resolved more through their awareness and acceptance rather than through the customary patterns of direct control and repression so common in traditional education. By keeping the three Montessori principles constantly in mind, the adult provides a vital response to serve the child's emerging true nature in each new moment of time. The Montessori teacher is therefore guided by such principles to discover true harmony among children more as an unfolding of itself from the vastness of creation rather than from any particular action or behavior reflecting one's condition of "personality".

Imposing Reality

"The universe is an imposing reality, and an answer to all questions... all things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity."

Maria Montessori

from *To Ed. the Hum. Potential*, p.8

Montessori teaching recognizes one's distinct personality as inherently limited in function and repressive in purpose—a disguised complicity with detrimental influences in society. Unity and harmony with others is therefore based on a transcendent spiritual reality independent of conventional agreement and conformity of thought. Feelings of tension and fear and thoughts of adverse judgment are considered as part of the process of creating harmony; i.e., relatively insignificant secondary effects which occasionally arise as a result of one's being a "commitment to Montessori principles". True harmony with others is found in the process of recognizing that all share within a common "tendency to progress".

Tendency to Progress

"Adults, like children, seem to differ from one another mainly in their defects, but hidden within their hearts there is something deep, common to all... Both the individual and society have this in common: a continuous tendency to progress."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.209

Differences of opinion and disagreement with others emerge as necessary agitation in the process of the forward progress of humanity. In Montessori education, such differences with others are seen as rather superficial drama of relatively incidental significance—to become gradually resolved through one's awareness and harmonious interaction with others. True harmony therefore, arises as a mysterious unifying force for the gradual unfolding evolution of human destiny.

Force for Harmony

"... the linear concept of evolution... is no longer enough. There exists... a force for harmony, uniting the efforts of all, so that they work towards a common end."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.57

Extending beyond human consciousness, nature's force for harmony reveals an infinitely expansive creation eventually realizing itself through resolution of various differences and disagreements with which one must ordinarily contend. True harmony in Montessori teaching therefore becomes evident as a process of living and being as a commitment to transcendent principles of nature from which the "normalized" child gradually emerges in the world.

Positions & Placements

Montessori Teacher: (3-6) Head teacher for small southwest Connecticut Montessori school sixty miles from New York City. School established 1959, two sessions, enrollment 50-60 students. School has excellent reputation for its program and qualified, caring staff. Salary dependent upon experience. Please call school at (203) 743-9038 or home at (203) 746-7014.

Placement desired: Montessori teacher, qualified and with twelve years experience. Sri-Lankan lady presently working in Zambia seeks employment in the U.S.A. Available for interviews with sufficient notice. Contact: Mrs. R. Xavier, P. O. Box 34496, Lusaka, Zambia.

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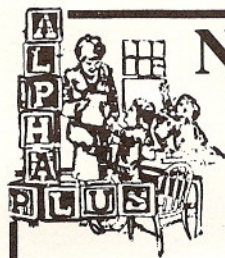
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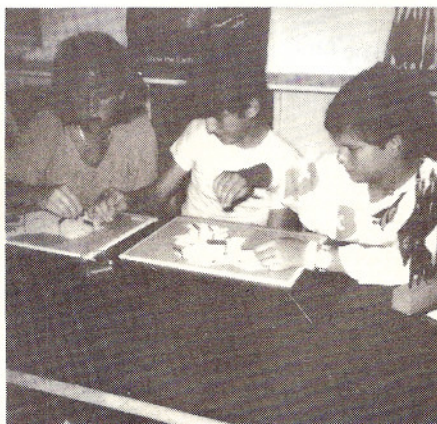
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Children working with sensorial maps at the Belleair Montessori School (Clearwater, Florida).

Belleair in Florida

The Belleair Montessori School in Clearwater, Florida is one of the oldest Montessori schools in the southeastern region of the United States. Converted from a conventional nursery school in the early 1960's, this Society member Montessori school now serves an enrollment of some 70 children from infancy to age 12. Joan Kirk, daughter of its original founder, Evelyn Twedt, has been active in the school's development for over 20 years and presently serves as its director.

Fully accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools, the Belleair school has classes for 2½ year olds, kindergarten through 8th grade with after-school care and bus service. Recently, Ms. Kirk has established an infant program for one to three hours a week for 12-30 month old children. Other program features include music, art, dance, parent education and Spanish as a foreign language.

For further information, contact: Joan Kirk, Belleair Montessori School, 905 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Clearwater, Florida, 33516, Tel. (813) 584-2867.

The Essential Montessori

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 1

Ms. Hainstock's latest publication offers a basic introduction to Montessori education in a most readable yet precise conversational style. The book's practical value is extended considerably by its substantial appendix listing current training, materials and other useful Montessori resources available to the general public.

The Essential Montessori is particularly noteworthy for its ample description of the International Montessori Society and its unique interpretation of "Montessori" as a commitment to three fundamental principles of nature. A first major public presentation of the Society's work and purpose since its founding in 1979, Ms. Hainstock's revised publication contributes significantly to a growing public awareness of that which is indeed most "essential" about "Montessori."

The Essential Montessori is available from the Society. Price: \$6.95. (Add \$1.50 for shipping and handling). 20% discount for Society members.



Child working with sound boxes at the Rajean Montessori School (Frankston, Victoria, Australia)