



# The Montessori OBSERVER

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## Southlake School Sponsors Ft. Worth, Texas Conference

On November 14-15, 1987, the Southlake Private School (Southlake, Texas) is sponsoring the latest Texas Montessori conference entitled "Creating the New Education". Conducted by **Lee Havis**, Society executive director, this fifth such Texas conference will be held in Ft. Worth, Texas, to consider such issues as managing misbehavior according to the approach of "control the environment, not the child".

**Warren Gale**, Southlake school director and owner, states that the school's sponsorship of the Ft. Worth conference is a result of interest from staff attendance at various similar prior conferences: Rockwall, Texas (June, 1987), *Warren Gale, Lynda Keogh and Karen Morgan*; Columbia, South Carolina (August, 1987), *Lynda Everett, Cynthia Jones*; Odessa, Texas (September, 1987), *Connie Whatley, Karen Gale, Warren Gale, Lynda Everett, James Parks*. The November, 1987 conference is open to all interested persons and will involve the participation of all Southlake teaching staff—including the staff at Gale's other school, Harwood Private School (Bedford, Texas).

Established in January, 1987, the Southlake Private School is located in a large house on a five acre parcel of land. This Montessori school serves children aged 2-10 in four separate classroom facilities. The elementary program features such special outdoor activities as horseback riding and regular overnight camping. In addition, an extended geology field trip is planned to visit a wilderness area in the state of Oklahoma. This week-long study of different rock formations in that area will also include a camping experience during that time.

For further information, contact: **Warren Gale**, Director, Southlake Private School, 3119 W. Southlake Blvd., Southlake, Texas 76092, Tel. (817) 431-1188.



*Child working with Pink Tower at the Southlake Private School (Southlake, Texas)*

## Support Growing for Umbrella Accreditation

Since its formal inception on May 18, 1987, the formation of the new umbrella accrediting agency for Montessori teacher training programs has received a growing international support from a wide diversity of organizations and institutions in the field. Response from the July 2, 1987 invitation mailing to join in this creative effort has been generally quite positive and constructive.

Formal signed written statements of committed support for the "inclusive" nature of the new agency have been received from throughout the international Montessori community:

International Montessori Society, Montessori Institute of America, Albanesi Educational Center, Montessori World Educational Institute, Southwestern Montessori Center—United States; St. Nicholas Montessori College, London Montessori Centre—United Kingdom; University College (New Summits)—Canada; Balwikas Training Centre—India. Other organizations and institutions have also expressed interest and are actively participating in the formation of the new agency.

*Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 1*

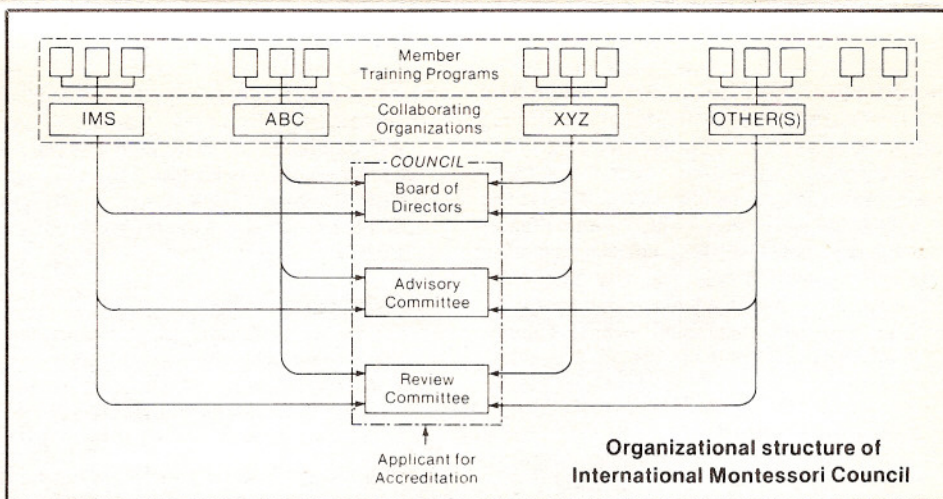
## Reflections . . .

by *Sr. Elizabeth Pinto*  
(Parsippany, New Jersey)

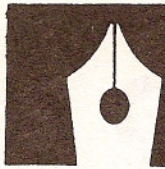
*Sr. Elizabeth Pinto is a student in the Society's Montessori training program. She reflects here upon a scenario she observed in her Montessori environment for children aged 2-6.*

### A Beautiful Experience

. . . a four year old who began school in September . . . did not want to do anything but sit on the floor by the door . . . he would scream, kick and cry . . . He was totally disruptive and in obvious pain . . . It took about three weeks but he is now normalized. Each day you could see a little boy emerging, and a pleasant little boy at that. He is a very intelligent youngster and is now working diligently with the Montessori materials. He shows proficiency with numbers, colors, letters, etc. It was a joy for me to experience the natural emergence of this child—it was a beautiful experience indeed! Thank you for making this possible through my work with you. . .



*Proposal for organizational structure of a new umbrella accrediting agency for Montessori teacher training programs—re-printed from Montessori Observer, Vol. 1, No. 6, October, 1980.*



# Completion

by Lee Havis

*"There is a vital urge to completeness of action ... effort must be fully expanded—the cycle must be completed..."*

**Maria Montessori**

from Ed. for a New World, p. 57

Consciously realized, completion arises within the individual as a process of successive cycles of creative activity beginning first as "interest" and then proceeding in time to the experience of "finality" or "resolution." Ultimately, true completion in life emerges as a present moment experience of the totality of all being in the universe. Whether consciously realized or not, such completion invariably reflects a deeper inner plan of evolution—a natural destiny whose ultimate cause lies in the mystery of life itself.

## Natural Destiny

*"A child ... grows because his potentialities for life are actualized, because the fertile seed from which life comes is developing according to its own natural destiny."*

**Maria Montessori**

from Discovery of the Child, p. 61

From the moment of conception, an essential natural destiny is set in motion to reveal one's fundamental way of being in complete harmony with the creative evolution of the entire universe. Conditions of life such as biological heredity, circumstances of time, place and culture of birth, and patterns of parental imposition during the formative period of early childhood, define the basic drama of such natural destiny throughout one's entire life. In each new moment of time, life reflects this drama as a unitary whole which is constantly adapting itself completely to the larger reality of the totality of all being.

## United Whole

*"The human being is a united whole, but this unity has to be built up and formed by active experiences in the real world, to which it is led by the laws of nature."*

**Maria Montessori**

from Absorbent Mind, p. 203

Prior to the age of about six, the young child completes its essential formation as "personality"—emerging thereafter as a united whole with which one is essentially identified throughout life. During the critical early years, such "personality" forms itself as stabilized being which is completely adapted to the environment provided at that time. Such "adaptation" is engendered within the young child by its "absorbent mind" which is unique to this special period of formative development.

## Absorbent Mind

*"... this is the psychic picture of the normal child. First, he takes in the world as a whole, then he analyzes it."*

**Maria Montessori**

from Absorbent Mind, p. 85

The child under six completely "absorbs" its environment as an intimate "adaptation"

within itself—as if taking a psychic picture of every minute detail. The more conscious mental activity of logical thought proceeds thereafter in time to reflect one's "personality" within the larger field of culture and social experience. As complete natural destiny is unconsciously repressed to conform to the ordinary limited "truth" of adult society, the child's being as "personality" assumes a quality of "incompletion" with respect to its more fundamental harmonious functioning with the entire universe.

## Adult "Truth"

*"The solidarity of adult society ... assumes the power of suggestion and the appearance of an absolute truth on which all agree."*

**Maria Montessori**

from Formation of Man, p. 69

Warped by the ordinary repressive conditions of adult society, the child's development is rendered "incomplete" in comparison with its true natural destiny given at the moment of conception. Incomplete experiences of early childhood pain tend to become solidified as patterns of repressed feelings throughout a life-time. As a matter of generally complete agreement in adult society, such incomplete "personality" expression is accordingly assumed and accepted as somehow necessary and inevitable.

## Complete Agreement

*"All lean upon each other. The whole of society forms a collective subconscious wherein all act in complete agreement when they remove and suppress the child."*

**Maria Montessori**

from Formation of Man, p. 68

Unconscious adult repression of the child's true nature is so common and widespread that its appearance as actual incompleteness is ordinarily unnoticed. Hidden by the prejudicial assumption of complete agreement with others, repressive tendencies with children have become institutionalized in society through such means as traditional "education"—even possibly evident likewise under the guise of "Montessori". However "satisfied" may appear traditional teachers as to the external "goodness" of children they supervise, such superficial completeness may be actually quite incomplete with respect to the child's true natural destiny.

## Satisfaction

*"Now we see the class calm ... Usually the teacher is satisfied ... Many of the schools get no further than this."*

**Maria Montessori**

from Absorbent Mind, p. 269

An outward "calm" and "obedience" in children may appear as completely "normal"—and yet still reflect quite distinct "abnormality" with respect to the child's own true nature as observed and described by Dr. Montessori. Hiding their subtle repression of

complete freedom and independence in children under the guise of "necessity", "goodness" or "socialization", tradition teachers may find themselves quite "satisfied" with nothing more than a child's docile and dependent conformity to adult authority. By contrast, Montessori teaching centers its vision of complete "normality" on the child's own self-created being which extends far beyond the "goodness" expected by ordinary adult society.

## Normality

*"Normalization causes the disappearance of many childhood traits ... not only untidiness, disobedience, sloth, greed, egoism, quarrelsome, and instability, but also the so-called 'creative imagination', delight in stories, attachment to individuals, play, submissiveness. . ."*

**Maria Montessori**

from Absorbent Mind, p. 207

Within an environment committed to the Montessori principles of (1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment", the truly "normalized" child emerges as a completion of its own natural destiny in harmony with all being. Such

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## Look for the January Observer featuring Truth

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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 the 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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Subscription to this Observer publication may be obtained by requesting Society membership which is open to all individuals for a \$15 annual fee. Society members also receive a subscription to the Montessori News. Send request for membership benefits.

### ADVERTISING

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## LETTERS TO IMS

October 15, 1987

Dear Lee,

My most profound thanks . . . for the extreme care and personalized instruction which you have extended to me. Your discipline and honesty have guided me well on the interior journey, and your own dedication and unremitting effort to fight for the "new education" has been the perfect "demonstration" . . .

The notebooks I have filled with papers from the course are a wealth of inspiration each time I open them. Some understanding is deepened, some point hitherto missed is picked up, my dedication to the truth of Montessori's philosophy is quickened. I feel no ending here. I will continue to grow in commitment as I consciously and courageously observe myself, controlling my personality. Your constructive criticism has motivated me to more honestly see myself and to proceed on my path with the greatest care and humility.

Sincerely,

Joan Miller  
Anacortes, Washington

*Ed. Note: Joan Miller (IMS '87) is reflecting on her experiences in the Society's Montessori teacher training program, the "Independent Study Course", which she recently completed.*

November, 1987

Dear Lee,

I'm enjoying my new school year and I'm trying very hard to put the Montessori principles into action. Lee, it's an excellent course. I really do appreciate what you are doing. Somehow in writing this paper the Montessori principles began to click, it was like a light was turned on for me. It's really a searching for and understanding of a truth. Thank you for opening this new world to me.

God bless you,

Sister Elizabeth Close  
Corpus Christi, Texas

*Ed. Note: Sister Elizabeth is reflecting on her experiences of completing one of the lessons in the Society's "Independent Study Course" and her practical experiences with children in her Montessori classroom at the Incarnate Word Montessori School (Corpus Christi, Texas).*

## Umbrella Accreditation

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

The "inclusive" nature of the new agency has been assured thus far by substantial written inquiry, information and communication with **Lee Havis** (Chair, Structural Organization Committee), **Jane Dutcher** (Chair, Curriculum Standards Committee), **Becce Eaves** (Chair, sub-committee on certification standards) and others who are actively involved in the initial work of data compilation and sharing ideas and interests. Such "inclusivity" will emerge in the formation of the agency itself through such means as broad general curriculum standards and procedural safeguards in the accreditation process to protect individual needs and interests of all participating organizations and institutions.

Since most Montessori teacher training is conducted with existing accrediting agencies and individual approval procedures, the process of re-forming such diverse activity into an "umbrella" operation will be delicate and exacting. Lee Havis states that "fairness in the formation of the new inclusive agency implies that no single organization or existing agency within the Montessori community begin with a presumptive advantage. Let us work together to

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## Completion

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"normalization" may be shared by the adult as an experience of completion in the present moment—recognized consciously in time as "insight" and "revelation" with respect to the imposing reality of an infinitely expanding evolution of the universe.

## 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 Human Potential*, p. 8-10

However imperfectly realized in conscious thought, completion of one's own true being is found in the emergence of the "normalized" child. Centered on such an imposing reality, Montessori teaching follows this vision in a process over time which constantly engages and resolves the drama of one's own incomplete past experiences of struggle and repression as projected being in the lives of the children being supervised. Such drama is completed in the present moment with children as a process of one's committed being; i.e., to expand awareness of the three Montessori principles by means of constant conscious thought and mental activity directed towards this transcendent purpose.

## Montessori Teaching

*"We have to adjust our minds to doing a work of collaboration with nature . . ."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.89

Even the most disruptive children will eventually emerge in time as truly "complete" in their normalization as the three Montessori principles are expanded in one's conscious awareness. Such Montessori teaching is indeed "complete" even in some "moment of peril" when disorder, tension or confusion tends to engender thoughts and feelings of great discouragement, frustration or intense disharmony. In time, the "normalization" of an individual child will extend itself inclusively throughout all the children as a profound sense of complete cohesion in the social unit.

## Cohesion of Social Unit

*"Unity born among the children, which is produced by a spontaneous need, directed by an unconscious power, and vitalized by a social spirit, is . . . 'cohesion in the social unity.'"*

Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.232-233

Beyond the single individual, the social unit becomes completely "normalized" as a cohesive bond of friendship and harmony is realized among all the children. Such a "normalized" social unit emerges not from the rules and impositions of adult authority, but rather from within the children themselves as a wonderful natural order—a sort of harmonized diversity of expression, activity and interest in the social group.

## Harmonized Diversity

*"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

Complete harmony and order within the "normalized" social unit is not a bland "conformity," but rather an active and dynamic form of considerable diversity which may even appear in outer form as disagreement and opposition. Diverse needs and interests in a single social group seem to engender a lively interplay of emotional drama which must necessarily complete itself through various cycles of activity over time. Such apparent external "contradiction" is likewise found in the adult drama of social activity—even with respect to "Montessori."

## Contradiction

*"The (Montessori) Method seems egoistic, it wishes to go its own way and not mix with any other, and yet, no other method takes every possible opportunity of inculcating world-union and world peace as does this one. All this is contradictory—even mysterious!"*

Maria Montessori  
from *Formation of Man*, p.4

Even after completion of "Montessori" is realized within oneself as committed being, there remains yet the considerable work of elaborating its completion outside oneself in society. As a word subject to infinite interpretation and definition, "Montessori" in society may emerge as rather "contradictory" in its expression as to the competing needs and interests of those with whom such term is associated. Such apparent contradiction within the Montessori community manifests itself in such activity as the diverse operation, accreditation and recognition of Montessori teacher training programs. To form a truly "inclusive" accrediting agency to fairly bridge the entire diversity of such programs, its fundamental basis must be found not on any limited point of view in the matter, but rather on the infinite vision of completion centered ultimately on the reality of the "normalized" child. Completing such an expansive vision in reality implies a considerable time and effort in the process of helping one another in the spirit of true inclusivity among all interested persons.

## Help One Another

*"The only way by which the individual may escape is that by which all humanity may be saved . . . help one another, or you will die."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 277

By helping one another within a social group, such as the Montessori community, individual interests and needs tend to become

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## Umbrella Accreditation

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find a way to provide this substantial fairness in the re-formation process while no existing accrediting function is unduly prejudiced or disrupted."

Havis is distributing a general plan of organizational structure for the agency for comment, consideration and response (See diagram on page 1). More specific working papers will be prepared and distributed in the near future.

On October 10-11, 1987, the annual meeting of the ACCESS agency which presently accredits Montessori teacher training programs affiliated with the American Montessori Society (AMS) adopted working papers for a new umbrella structure—with a specific time-table for its consideration and revision in 1988. Havis attended this meeting with Victoria Midgley (M.W.E.I.) to observe and offer comments within their various committees. After the meeting, Havis stated that "the new ACCESS proposal appears to be a constructive and favorable development in the process of forming the new agency—and will be included for consideration within the larger work of the structural organization committee".

## Creating the New Education

February 6-7, 1987 . . . . . Atlanta, Georgia

The conference entitled "Creating the New Education" is sponsored by the International Montessori Society to extend awareness and practical application of Montessori principles with children. Conducted by Lee Havis, Society executive director, the two-day week-end conference includes an analysis of managing misbehavior according to the approach of "control the environment, not the child."

Pre-paid registration for the full two-day conference is \$150 per person (\$120 for Society members). The payment due date is four (4) weeks before the scheduled date of the conference. A late fee of \$50 applies for registrations submitted after the payment due date.

Send registration fee to: International Montessori Society, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 Tel. (301) 589-1127.

## ...In the Field

By Alethea Shiplett

Since September, 1987, Nancy McEvoy (IMS '87) has been supervising a toddler program for children aged 1½-3 years of age at the Villa Fusco Montessori School (Schenectady, New York). Her primary initial responsibility has been removing the toys and introducing appropriate goal-directed practical life materials and activities. Experimenting to discover the ability and interest of each child, Nancy reports that she is "very excited about the program and its potential" . . . Aleta Shepler (IMS '87), director of her own L'Abri Montessori school (Orange City, Iowa), was recently appointed "Child Advocate" of the Reform Church of America. In this capacity, she is contributing to a paper published by the church on terrorism, addressing the theme of "innocent victim". The purpose of this paper is to challenge persons to assume more individual responsibility. At her school, Aleta has recently hired two assistants who are students at the local college. She hopes that by having these students in the environment "they will catch the spirit and power of the Montessori principles as the 'normalized' child emerges" . . . . Anita Bressler, Montessori teacher participant in the Reading, Pennsylvania Montessori conference (March, 1987), visited the Washington, D.C. area to observe the Sunday school program for young children directed by Lee Havis. During her visit, she stayed with Alethea Shiplett (College Park, Maryland) to discuss plans for another Pennsylvania conference proposed for Spring, 1988. Presently, Anita is communicating with persons in her area to determine the level of interest in attending such a conference. Alethea will visit with Anita and other interested persons in the Reading, Pennsylvania area in November, 1987 to further the conference planning activity. If interested, contact Anita Bressler: (215) 372-3651.

## Completion

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 3

spontaneously resolved through communication according to a totality of completion centered on the true interest of the entire group. "Montessori" may thereby complete itself in outer form through such activity as that involved in the formation and operation of an "inclusive" accrediting agency for the entire Montessori community. Whether or not such an "inclusive" agency will actually become formed and operational in reality, work towards its completion is nonetheless a valid and constructive manifestation of the ultimate common end of all true Montessori education; i.e., the "normalized" child.

## A Common End

" . . . 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

A common end provides the essential motive and path upon which one's completion of effort and energy in the process of its realization may be properly directed. While opinions, thoughts and feelings may vary as to the specific "means" to attain some common end, its unifying focus of attention and purpose provides a constant opportunity to experience true "completion" at each moment in the process of one's goal-directed activity. Centered on the common end of the "normalized" child, Montessori education finds its ultimate completion in the present moment as a vital contribution to the creative evolution of a better and stronger humanity in the world.

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