



# The Montessori OBSERVER

Will

Published by the International Montessori Society • 912 Thayer Ave. • Silver Spring, Md. 20910 • Phone (301) 589-1127



Participants discuss "managing misbehavior" at the Society's conference "Creating the New Education" June 4-5, 1988. (Jacksonville, Florida)

## Second Society Conference in Florida Held in Jacksonville

The Society's second Florida Montessori conference entitled "Creating the New Education" was held in Jacksonville, Florida on June 4-5, 1988. **Kathy Graham**, director/owner of the Montessori Tides Montessori School (Jacksonville Beach, FL), was the local coordinator to help with registration and other pertinent communication for this two-day weekend conference which included the participation of many parents from her school. School owners, teachers and other persons attended the conference from the states of Florida, Georgia, Texas and Maryland.

Conducted by **Lee Havis**, Society executive director, the conference discussion offered many practical examples of how to manage misbehavior by applying Montessori principles to "control the environment, not the child." The specific agenda derived completely from the personal issues and scenarios of misbehavior brought and offered by the participants themselves.

The Jacksonville conference was one of the latest of a series of similar Society conferences which have been successfully conducted in the United States since 1986. Havis stated that this latest Society conference "showed that Montessori principles can be readily understood and practiced by persons from a wide diversity of background and experience. However, the most favorable results to stabilize "normalization" over time come from a considerable persistence and support from others on a continuing basis. I encourage students in the Society's Montessori teacher education program and other serious Montessori practitioners to attend at least one Society conference each year as a minimum 'maintenance'

support schedule to assure a continuing effectiveness of true Montessori teaching."

For more information about the "Creating the New Education" conference, contact: International Montessori Society, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Tel (301) 589-1127.

## Moments of Peril

### Total Chaos

from *Observer*, May/1988

Response by *Lee Havis*

Amid total chaos of 2-3 year old children, there appears no single child as a discernible "hub" from which one can distinguish and analyze the pertinent environment according to the proposition of "control the environment, not the child". One must therefore consider any child the "hub" for purposes of analysis here and proceed to consider the various elements of the resulting "environment"; i.e., other children, adult personality, and physical objects.

To determine the *primary* detrimental influence in this environment, one must recognize that the element "other children" is confused and uncertain in this scenario of general chaos where imitative social behavior is evident among *all* the children. One is therefore guided to consider a control of either the "adult personality" or "physical objects" in such circumstances. Since "adult personality" is *always* detrimental to some extent in *any* misbehavior scenario and subject to considerable difficulties as to its "control", one is therefore

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 1

## New Coalition Formed for Educational Freedom

On May 4, 1988, the International Montessori Society met with other groups in the United States to consider how interested persons could more effectively work together on behalf of their common concerns for "educational freedom". Held in Washington, D.C., this meeting was called by the Thomas J. White Foundation (St. Louis, MO) to form a coalition for educational freedom to expand communication and mutual participation in this field. A steering committee has been designated to coordinate the coalition's various activities with an office staff and facilities volunteered by the Thomas J. White Foundation.

Known as *Americans for Educational Choice*, the coalition includes the participation of over 35 organizations which intend to work together to advance educational freedom by supporting two specific concepts: (1) the right of parents to unpenalized freedom of choice of schools for the education of their children without a loss of a share of tax funds raised for education; and (2) the right of parents to educate their children without unnecessary governmental control and/or regulation. The May 4, 1988 meeting considered various measures to further these concepts; e.g., the use of "educational vouchers" and the establishment of less restrictive government control of private education.

The coalition is sponsoring a testimonial dinner for retiring United States Secretary of Education **William J. Bennett** on Monday September 19, 1988 in Washington, D.C. Secretary Bennett is being recognized by the coalition since he has suggested certain key proposals which correspond with the coalition's

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 3

## Creating the New Education

Harlingen, Texas

September 24-25, 1988

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.



by Lee Havis

*"... the will is not a simple impulse towards movement, but the intelligent direction of movement."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed., p. 171*

Montessori teaching requires a considerable exercise of will to sustain the directed movement of one's being on behalf of the emergence of the child's own true nature; i.e., the "normalized" child in complete harmony with its environment. Lacking sufficient will, one is readily overcome by many prejudices and obstacles in society which persistently arise to deter and limit one's effective being with children. The Montessori teacher must therefore exert a substantial will to consciously create a "normalizing" environment with children in each new moment of time—to "be" in a manner which distinguishes itself in outer form through many different types of specific tangible adult action.

## Action

*"There can be no manifestations of the will without completed action . . . To think and wish is not enough. It is action which counts."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed., p. 171*

Being a Montessori teacher implies a continual process of willful action, restraint and forbearance which is generally quite distinct from the comfortable patterns of ordinary being as "personality"; i.e., one's total identity of "self" with respect to others. Guided from within by three specific fundamental principles of nature; i.e., (1) "Observation"; (2) Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment", the Montessori teacher is necessarily compelled to balance certain impulsive tendencies with the demands for a more expansive patience, self-restraint and inhibition in one's various actions—to "control the environment, not the child". Practical ability and skill in Montessori teaching is therefore considerably limited by the extent of one's will as it was fundamentally formed within one's personality during the critical creative period of infancy and early childhood. Such formation arises as a developmental process within the child which first begins at birth as a mysterious natural instinct or "impulse" for movement.

## Impulse

*"... the divine urge . . . stimulates the child to perform many actions . . . the child feels an impulse to conquer his environment."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Absorbent Mind, p. 83-84*

From birth, the child begins to develop its will as a necessary integration of its inborn "impulse" for movement to explore the environment with the social need to inhibit such im-

pulse to accommodate to the normal expression of others. Within the Montessori "normalizing" environment, the child's will emerges as a balance between "impulse" and "inhibition"—to reflect the development of a normal personality in harmony with the child's total environment. By contrast, traditional education routinely represses the child's normal development of will by forcing the inborn "impulse" for movement to conform to the various prejudicial limitations of ordinary schooling.

## Ordinary Schooling

*"... the ordinary school not only denies the child every opportunity for using his will, but it directly obstructs and inhibits its expression . . . the educator does everything possible to destroy the child's will."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Absorbent Mind, p. 255*

Ordinary schooling tends to repress the natural development of the child's own will by confining its expression to the considerable restriction of group-oriented instruction according to a standardized curriculum. Lacking complete individual liberty in its movement and activity, the child in such a traditional setting tends to develop a weak and dependent personality which may fundamentally persist as such throughout its entire life. Ordinary educational efforts to develop the child's "will" are typically limited by the assumption of prejudicial authority and repression in the adult personality—to force the child to comply with various external demands by directing primary attention to the issue of "obedience."

## Obedience

*"If a child carries out the will of a teacher because he is afraid, or because his affection is exploited, he has no will, and obedience that is secured by suppression of the will is truly oppression . . . the finess of discipline is to obtain obedience from developed wills . . ."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Ed. for a New World, p. 85*

Obedience to a standardized curriculum of group instruction and traditional teaching is routinely imposed on children as "education" and may be even justified under the guise of developing the child's "will". Since such imposed obedience is directly achieved by repression, manipulation and control of the child, "will" does not fully develop as intended by nature, but rather becomes repressed and limited within a personality of generalized fear, weakness and dependency. By contrast, the Montessori "normalizing" environment offers an expansive individual liberty for the child to freely obey the direction of others as a natural result of its own normal education of the will.

## Education of Will

*"... the education of the will by means of free exercises wherein the impulses balance the inhibitions . . . would be undertaken at the age when the will is in the process of formation."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed., p. 177*

Montessori education considers the normal education of will as an aspect of the child's own self-creative formation of being which develops spontaneously within the child during the critical early childhood period of life. Prior to the age of about six years, the child's "absorbent mind" incorporates environmental experience within itself to naturally acquire such fundamental qualities as a healthy, assertive will. Guided by its own interest for activity and movement, the young child forms such will within itself by a process of exploring the environment through focussed concentration on certain specific physical tasks. Such concentration exercises the child's will by requiring a discipline of movement through the action of inhibition.

*Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2*

Look for the  
**October Observer**  
featuring  
**Character**

### The Montessori Observer

ISSN 0889-5643

published by  
INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY  
912 Thayer Ave.  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
(301) 589-1127

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.

#### BMS ADVISORY BOARD

Elizabeth Hainstock, Educator, Author  
Romalda Spalding, Reading Specialist  
Dr. R. Orin Cornett, Professor Emeritus

#### SUBSCRIPTION

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

Advertising space is available for services and products relating to Montessori education. Marketplace ads are \$7/line. Position and Placement ads are \$10 each and will be set and edited by the Society to conform to space requirements. Write for the Society's advertising outline as to rates and other information about design advertising.

©1988

## LETTERS TO IMS

Dear Lee,

... I learned so much from the Ft. Lauderdale conference (Nov. 21-22, 1987). The simplicity of the three Montessori principles are so pure in theory and yet can be so difficult at times to follow through with... Children blossom and truly learn with ease and excitement when the obstacles are taken away. I look forward to being able to put the three principles in practice when I begin teaching... I'm anxious to share what I've learned with the other teachers I'll be working with... I enjoyed meeting you and appreciate your unique ability to encourage your fellow Montessorians to really look at our own personalities in order to improve our true role as guides of children's learning—just as Maria Montessori intended... It was a refreshing approach for an educator's conference... Thanks again for the experience.

Winifred Rice  
Perry, Florida

**Moments of Peril**

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 2

directed to control the "physical objects" in the present situation as a matter of primary attention and concern. (With older children, the "adult personality" might well emerge as the primary detrimental influence involving such phenomena as "eye contact" and verbal dialogue in otherwise similar circumstances. An analysis of control of the "adult personality" would then emerge as one's primary concern in such circumstances.)

To control the "physical objects" in a situation of "total chaos" may well begin with any nearby object being abused; e.g., by simply holding it firmly (not grabbing) to assure some initial measure of immediate order. Thereafter, "eye contact" and verbal direction might be possible with some particularly receptive child (i.e. "other children") as the particulars of the misbehavior scenario shifts accordingly. Visual scanning and observation of the entire environment should continue throughout the process of resolution of various specific scenarios.

The long-term resolution of disorder and misuse of "physical objects" among young children is further achieved in this environment after the children have left the particular environment—to remove all but those few basic objects which can be reasonably controlled by the responsible supervising adult. With relatively few "physical objects" in the environment, the adult's "personality" becomes a more likely primary "point of contact" for the children's interest and attention to reality. In such circumstances, a most "lively" presence is useful to distract the children from their destructive imitative behavior with each other by such means as songs, gymnastics and active friendly conversation. Once the children become attentive to the adult's personality, there is more likely to arise opportunities to effectively re-introduce the simple "practical life" materials and exercises with which the children will gradually become interested and involved in the process of their "normalization" through work.

**Giving a Lesson**

The teacher is scanning the environment, whereupon a four-year old child named Jason comes up to her and says: "I don't know what to do? Would you give me a lesson on something?" What to do?

Answer in Observer, October 1988

**Will**

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

**Inhibition**

*"The child who is absorbed in some task, inhibits all movements which do not conduce to the accomplishment of this work..."*

Maria Montessori

from Spontaneous Act. in Ed., p. 173

Inhibition of movement necessarily arises in the child's normal development of will through its various goal-directed activities in the environment. During such "work" activity, the young child must inhibit a great mass of distracting stimuli and influences which otherwise tend to result in the child's idle fantasy and random movement in the environment in the nature of "play". The child's normal development of will is therefore most constructively enhanced in an environment which is organized for a wide diversity of intelligent physical and mental exercise.

**Exercise**

*"The will... is developed and strengthened through methodical exercises. In our schools, exercises for the will are to be found in all of a child's intellectual exercises and his exercises in practical life."*

Maria Montessori

from Discovery of the Child, p. 315

The child's will develops normally through free exercise and movement directed by the child's own intelligence and interest to a wide variety of simple activities. Even the most simple of "practical life" exercises; e.g., "pouring water" or "fastening buttons," provide a tangible motive for the young child's application of will and effort on behalf of its intelligent movement. Repeated with concentration, these simple "practical life" activities gradually develop the child's will through a continual effort of focussed attention.

**Attention**

*"... will... is built up on the internal fundamental fact of prolonged attention."*

Maria Montessori

from Spontaneous Act. in Ed., p. 170

The young child's attention to work reflects disciplined "inhibition" of its otherwise active "impulse" for movement—to develop a growing balance of harmony between such "inhibition" and "impulse" within the child. Prolonged over time, such attention becomes stabilized within the personality as a quality of will which appears most tangibly in outer form as a pattern of persistence in work.

**Persistence in Work**

*"... the little child who manifests perseverance in his work... builds up internal order... demonstrates, almost as in a splendid revelation, the true manner in which man renders himself valuable to a community... persistence in work."*

Maria Montessori

from Spontaneous Act. in Ed., p. 179

Disciplined habits of work during early childhood reflect an inner will with which one's identity as "personality" becomes intimately

associated throughout life. Such a persistence in work thereby becomes evident in one's later efforts as an adult to sustain a directed action even in the face of many difficulties that may otherwise arise as significant obstacles to deter one's forward progress. This quality of persistence and determination to overcome adversity is that which may most clearly distinguish the man of character.

**Man of Character**

*"The man of character is the persistent man, the man who is faithful to his own word, his own convictions..."*

Maria Montessori

from Spontaneous Act. in Ed., p. 178

Persons of strong character evidence a well-developed will wherein one's "word" becomes manifest in the tangible actions which consistently follow. Character is likewise reflected in one's essential integrity wherein thought and action are in fundamental harmony. The extent of such integrity and character in one's being is readily apparent in the everyday willful action of making a decision.

**Decision**

*"... decision is the art of the will par excellence. In order to accomplish any conscious act whatever, it is necessary that we should decide."*

Maria Montessori

from Spontaneous Act. in Ed., p. 180

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1

**New Coalition Formed**

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

basic purpose and objectives. The dinner will help to publicly announce the coalition's formation and to expand awareness of the need for greater "educational freedom" in the United States.

Dinner reservations are \$50 per person, \$400 per table of eight (checks payable to "International Montessori Society"). Since space is limited, send reservation and proper fee promptly to: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910.

**...In the Field**

By Alethea Farzad

Claire Van der Put (IMS Student; Edinburg, TX) reports a feeling of great confidence in her communication to the Montessori schools and child care centers in her area, inviting participation in the Harlingen, TX conference - September 24-25, 1988. To help in the registration process, call Claire at (512) 381-1297... Bonnie Sanders (IMS Student; Monterey, CA) has contacted many child care centers in the Monterey area to inquire as to interest in attending a Society conference to be scheduled there. Using the Society's new "Conference Coordinator Communication Sheet", she has received many positive responses. For further information or to lend assistance, call Bonnie at (408) 647-8937.

Address correction requested

912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910

# OBSERVER

The Montessori!



Non-Profit Org.  
U S Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 3875  
Silver Spring, MD

## Will

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 3

Decision in Montessori teaching is an action of risk for the "unknown" child with which one's responsible being with children is constantly associated. As the three Montessori principles become more conscious as an inner "control of error" with children, decisive action to expansively "observe" rather than to "teach" tends to become stabilized through constant practice and experience. Montessori principles such as "Observation" thereby become habituated patterns of thought and action with children without the otherwise necessary constant recourse to substantial effort.

## Effort

*"The will stores up its prolonged efforts outside the consciousness . . . and leaves the consciousness itself unencumbered to make new acquisition and further efforts."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 172

Conscious effort in Montessori teaching on behalf of the "normalized" child is that which is primarily directed to an inner process of commitment to expanding awareness of the three Montessori principles. Such awareness is to notice the many uncomfortable inner feelings, thoughts and reactive tendencies which commonly emerge in moments of peril with misbehaving children. Decisive action as a Montessori teacher in these "moments of peril" must extend far beyond the limited efforts for a superficial compliance with ordinary adult expectations and prejudices—to creatively function on behalf of the child's complete "normalization" consistent with Dr. Montessori's vision of a "new education" in the world. Expanding the application of one's will and efforts for this transcendent cosmic purpose reflects Montessori teaching as true creative being.

## Creative Being

*" . . . a man is capable of becoming anything . . . Making use of his own will in his contact with the environment, he develops his faculties and thus becomes in a sense his own creator."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 33

Creating one's being as "commitment to Montessori principles" is a function which inherently distinguishes itself from ordinary being as "personality." The Montessori teacher employs the principle of "Preparation of the Environment" to control one's own "personality" as a separate element in the child's environment in the same essential manner as to control the elements of "physical objects" and "other children". Willful action to control such adult "personality" is basically accomplished by a process of expanding "observation" of one's own feelings and reactive tendencies associated with misbehavior in children—to recognize how such "misbehavior" reflects an external drama of similar basic content of repressed feelings as one's own early childhood struggle for self-expression many years before. The three Montessori principles reliably guide one's efforts in the face of "misbehavior" so that creative being serves as a powerful beneficial force for fundamental change on behalf of a new humanity.

## Beneficial Force

*"will is a force which impels activities beneficial to life. Nature imposes on the child the task of growing up, and his will leads him to make progress and to develop his powers."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 253

Montessori teaching functions as a beneficial force of nature when one's being in the world is directed to the emergence of the "normalized"

child. Such a transcendent power of one's being is capable of overcoming even deeply entrenched prejudices and obstacles in society to the extent that one's will is consciously expanding an awareness of the three Montessori principles. Even "imperfect" Montessori teachers can therefore effectively create a true "normalizing" environment for children through one's properly directed exercise of will.

**The Backyard Scientist**

*The ultimate in science books.*

*A unique and exciting science learning experience for children ages 4 through 12.*

**Books contain science experiments that have been proven with over 20,000 children.**

**Stimulates Thinking**

**TO ORDER:** Send \$9.50 (includes shipping) for either book. California residents add \$.57 sales tax. OR, for a FREE brochure, send SASE.

Backyard Scientist, Dept. O  
P.O. Box 16966, Irvine, CA 92713