



The Montessori OBSERVER

Lies and
Illusions

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Lee Havis and Sally Korte (IMS '15) meet in Washington, DC

Kindred Spirits Meet

On October 7-8, 2023, **Sally Korte** (IMS '15) paid a visit to Lee Havis at IMS headquarters near Washington, DC, USA. Together they discussed and shared their respective activity and plans for advancing the work of IMS and Dr. Montessori's visionary "new education" in the world. Up to this time, their only communication was through long-distance telephone contact and Sally's participation in IMS distance learning and on-line webinars.

The recent October meeting focused especially on their common experiences and practice with the unique "technology" that Lee has recently published in his new book on the subject. For example, Sally shared how she is using the book and technology in her training seminars with staff and other educators connected with her school, *Shalom Prince of Peace Montessori*, in August, KS. She also described her wider work outside the school, including a planned visit to conduct consultation at a women's shelter in her native country Mexico.

For his part, Lee shared his current work to initiate the "Character Teaching" (CT) projects in east Africa and India. He expressed hope that this CT project could one day be conducted in Latin American countries as well, such as Mexico, where the project was first conceived in 2000.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col 1

Character Teaching Projects Advance in Africa and India

Renewal in India

by Lee Havis

In October, 2023, **SB Silvaraj** of Hyderabad, India, renewed his prior 2017 membership in the *Character Teaching* (CT) Consultation Board in India. Therefore, based on his current active status, I wrote a letter, on behalf of IMS, to the Indian President **Draupadi Murmu**, to request her government's support and approval of this project.

SB Silvaraj offers a strong, favorable background and experience to lead the CT project forward in India. With an MA degree in Economics, he has spent many years as agent and marketing representative for various commercial businesses and international educational institutions in India. His current main employment is as agent for on-line business courses of various UK universities, centering his work primarily in the South India region, which includes the major cities of Bangalore, Chennai, and Hyderabad.

SB has also taken an interest in the field of scientific education, since he has been the chief patron of the *Victory Montessori School* in Hyderabad for many years. Now, he indicates that his wife will be taking over the direction of this school starting in spring, 2024.

I believe this current renewal of the CT project in India is an especially favorable time for its progress and success. For example,

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col 2



SB Silvaraj, CT board member in India

CT in Uganda, East Africa

by Lee Havis

In November, 2023, the "Character Teaching" (CT) project in Uganda was activated with the participation of **Caroline Mpyisi** as member of the country's CT Consultation Board. Later that month, IMS sent a letter to the Uganda president **Museveni** to request his government's support and approval of the project.

In Uganda, the CT project will benefit from Caroline's considerable background and experience in education has been ongoing since before 2000, when she first made contact with IMS. In 2018, she founded the "Cherry Tree Foundation" to help develop Montessori education in her country. And in 2020, she was active in gaining IMS recognition for the *Parachichi Montessori School* in the capital city of Kampala.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col 3

Cambridge UK Conference Features IMS presentation

The next Cambridge International Education Conference (CIEC), scheduled for January 29-February 1, 2024, will feature a presentation by Lee Havis on the topic "Creating the Future – Montessori Education". As in years past, this event will be held in the academic city of Cambridge, England UK.

Lee expressed his eagerness to speak at this conference due to the large number of school owners and leaders likely to attend from diverse countries around the world. He understands that many will be attending from Asia and Africa, where the subject of "Montessori" has been of particular interest.

Laura Meadows, 2024 conference secretary, took special note of the "innovative impact" IMS has been having across the globe, especially as related to the novel "Character Teaching" project. She noted, "We wanted you to especially share on the work of the International Montessori Society (IMS) and your personal commitment to the aspect of 'Character Teaching'."

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col 2



Lies and Illusions

by Lee Havis

"The truth is we make mistake after mistake and do not correct ourselves. We fail to realize our faults; we live in a state of illusion shut off from reality."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.3

The conflict between reality and illusion has been a long-standing issue and obstacle to the ultimate unity, peace and harmony of humanity in the world. The problem here is that each culture, family, tribe, religion or organization has its own distinct conflicting view of reality. And, they can't all be true. Or can they?

Conflicts and confusion about truth and reality expose the whole field of lies and illusion that have spawned a long history of war, violence, and chaos in the world since the beginning of time. So, how do we find the unifying truth and order that will finally solve this age-old problem? Indeed, is it even possible?

In 1907, Dr. Montessori pointed to the solution in her observation and research with preschool aged children in a low-income area of Rome, Italy at that time. Applying the approach of scientific education, she found that each child consistently came into an enduring state of normal peace, order, and harmony by concentrating attention on some specific piece of work in her environment. And in this "normalization", she realized she had discovered the child's true natural reality which she envisioned might one day bring peace and unity to the whole of mankind as well.

The Child's Reality

"The child is a great worker...who can learn by himself, teach himself and who possesses discipline within himself...no attention is paid to this reality..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 272

Dr. Montessori's research also confirmed that her normalized children all had certain similar outward qualities, such as spontaneous self-discipline, instinct towards independence, love of order, attachment to reality, and perfect harmony with others. However, this normalization only occurred before the age of six, when the child was able to completely "absorb" the unique environment she created. And the children needed to be in an environment where the adult did not repress their completely free, self-directed activity.

Adult Repression

"A child cannot develop and expand as it should because an adult represses it...Ordinarily this would be first the other; then the father, and finally his teacher."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.13

The most problematic aspect of creating this "normalizing" environment was to have

no adult repression of the child's free activity, such as commonly done under the guise of education, discipline, help, or moral instruction. Faced with such adult repression, the young child naturally resists through various forms of disobedience, misbehavior, and disorder. In turn, the ordinary teacher reacts to this misbehavior by reinforcing her prejudicial view of the child as weak, unguided, or even evil by nature.

Despite this outward resistance, the young child still has the instinct to "absorb" this outward pattern of repression into his own fixed pattern of thought and behavior by about the age of six. At a deeper level, however, the child still represses his negative feelings towards the environment within himself, which then become outwardly visible as a flight into play.

Flight into Play

"A flight into play or a world of fantasy...represents a subconscious defense of the ego which flees from suffering or danger and hides behind a mask."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood* p.157

To the ordinary adult, a child's make-believe play seems normal because it is so common in society. However, in fact, it is an inner psychological defense against the conscious experience of repressed pain, fear, sadness, and anger due to the mistreatment he received from the environment. After the age of six, this flight into play becomes more hidden in its outward expression, but still remains present as an inner web of lies and illusions within the adult personality.

Adult Personality

"What the child has absorbed, remains a final ingredient of his personality...every grown up person has an individuality stamped upon him in this early period of life."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind* p.60

By the age six, the essential adult personality has been formed as a stable self-image and basic framework of reality for life. So, with children, you unconsciously project this reality on children through your various words and behavior. Sadly, this reality is built on a terrible lie that hides your own repressed feelings from childhood many years before.

A Terrible Lie

"Conventions which camouflage a man's true feelings are a spiritual lie which help him adapt to the organized deviations of society....This is the terrible lie lurking in the deepest recesses of the subconscious..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.176

On the surface, your ordinary pattern of behavior with others masks an inner struggle with repressed feelings in childhood, and comes out in the form of polite compliance and submission to the prevailing beliefs and prejudices of society. Below this outward normality, however, a terrible lie plays out your repressed feelings from childhood as an inner web of delusional, deceitful thoughts and feelings towards yourself, others, and life itself. And it is this hidden inner drama that drives your words and behavior away from the

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col 2

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Lee Havis, Executive Director

The Montessori Observer is mailed four times each year, in March, May, September and November, to IMS members throughout the world. The purpose is to provide news and information about the IMS work scientific education to extend awareness of Dr. Montessori vision of a "new education" to bring about this reality of the child's true nature in the world.

INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY

The International Montessori Society is sponsored by Educational Services, Inc., a non-profit corporation organized in Maryland, USA. The IMS purpose is to support the scientific approach to true natural being throughout the world.

IMS ADVISOR

Elizabeth Hainstock, Educator, Author

SUBSCRIPTION

Subscription to this Observer publication may be obtained by requesting IMS membership, which is open to all individuals for a \$30 annual fee. Associate schools, \$35 annual fee. IMS also recognizes Montessori schools committed to laws of nature. All members also receive a subscription to the Montessori News and other membership benefits.

IMS ON THE INTERNET

MeWe:: <https://mewe.com/p/internationalmontessorisociety> An on-line IMS discussion group, "Exploring IMS Scientific Education" is available for anyone to join at no charge. To join this group discussion, visit <https://mewe.com/join/imsscificeducation>

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Trance-like Fantasy

2 ½ year old David is in his own little world of some deep, autistic-like fantasy trance. No physical objects are in his hands and there are no other children involved. What should the teacher do? (See *Observer*, September, 2023).

Analysis: David is the “hub” child and the “adult personality” is the primary detrimental influence on the child. The scenario is therefore a low-level 3 priority since there is no physical harm or violence involved here.

Practical Advice: The right time to deal with this scenario is when all other parts of the total environment are sufficiently calm and quiet. Following the protocol *least amount of adult involvement*, therefore, whatever you do in this scenario must be the lightest possible, such as *patient waiting* or *eye contact* at most.

When the total environment away from David is calm and orderly, focus your attention on David, using the technique *patient waiting*. If David looks up, give *eye contact*. However, since David’s typical pattern is to NOT look up or otherwise engage with the teacher’s patient waiting, you may increase the polishing level, such as by applying the technique *proximity* to approach him slowly. If you are close and there is still no eye contact or response to your physical presence, increase polishing by using the *distraction* technique to get his attention.

With distraction, you ordinarily get a child’s attention by touching or holding a physical object in the child’s hands. However, since David has no physical object in his hands, touch or hold some part of his physical body, which is also a “physical object” in his environment. In this scenario, David’s physical body is the only “physical object” available to use to get his attention.

Following the *least amount* protocol, touch or hold the part of David’s physical body that seems to be holding his attention at that time. For example, if he is swinging his arms around, touch or hold one of his arms. And, when he reacts to look up at you or pull away, stop your touching or holding to see what he does next.

If David goes back to hand swinging and there is no eye contact, give a few moments of patient waiting, before applying the *repetition* technique to touch and hold his arm again. Continue this sequence of interactions until David responds to either change this behavior or give you some affirmative indication that you have his attention.

For example, if David stops swinging his arms, and simply holds them in his lap, remove your presence and only practice patient waiting at most. However, if he looks up at

Cont’d. on Page 4, Col. 1

Lies and Illusions

Cont’d. from Page 2, Col. 3

true path of living in alignment with the perfect guidance of laws of nature.

Laws of Nature

“A new education from birth onward must be built up. Education must be reconstructed and based on the laws of nature and not on the preconceived notions and prejudices of adult society...”

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p.97

For Dr. Montessori, scientific education gave only the most general guidance for following laws of nature with children. So, she could only offer teachers seeking to follow her guidance a hopeful vision of the child’s true nature and the general idea to observe the children in their use of various self-teaching materials she described. Teachers therefore had to rely on their own instincts and intuition to actually conduct this scientific education with children. And this was just too vague and imprecise to overcome the strong influence of common beliefs and prejudices about the child as being inherently weak, dependent or attached to fantasy. Needed therefore was a more practical science to follow laws of nature in a more reliable and objective manner.

Practical Science

“...the method of practical science... puts man in the way of knowing the truth.”

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spont. Act. In Ed.* p.242

Dr. Montessori never provided a truly “practical” science for following laws of nature during her lifetime. And even after her death in 1952, the practice of scientific education remained in the “mist and clouds” as before. So, for example, practicing the idea of “observation” was limited to filtering what you see through the lens of your own particular reality of personality or culture.

Observation

“...the teacher must assume those ‘characteristics’ which are necessary in the presence of science...The fundamental quality is the capacity for ‘observation.’”

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spont. Act. In Ed.* p.129-130

To the ordinary adult, observing a child is just a visual perception of his physical body, language and behavior with others. However, that kind of “observation”, is NOT the type of complete sensory awareness that allows the child’s true nature to fully emerge. To practice complete observation, you must learn to see beyond the child’s outward appearance, to sense instead the “unseen” child who dwells in the realm of the spirit. And, for this, you must approach the child as an “unknown entity”.

An Unknown Entity

“...all or nearly all see the child as he is commonly known only, not the child as he is, still an unknown entity.”

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*. p.60-61

Observing to see what is “unknown” at first seems quite impossible. However, it is possible if you adjust your mind towards an inner awareness of the non-physical nature of being. In 1979, an “individual child framework” emerged to help you achieve this approach by viewing the child as an “unknown entity” at the “hub” of a cluster of energy. Surrounding this “hub” child is an environment consisting of physical objects, other children, and the adult personality.

Applying this framework, you don’t focus on the “hub” child, but rather on removing disorder in the surrounding physical objects, other children, and adult personality. For example, remove the harmful influence of the “adult personality” by avoiding any words or behavior that would repress the child’s free activity. However, since practicing this type of self-control is an imperfect experimental process, you must also learn to exercise patience and faith in the end result you aim to achieve.

Faith

“...It is not enough that an object should be before our eyes to make us see it...it is not evidence but faith that opens the mind to truth.”

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spont. Act. In Ed.* p.232-233

In practicing scientific education, your faith is on the new child to come, rather than following the convention idea of “seeing is believing”. So, for example, while you are conducting your various experiments to remove disorder around the child, patiently watch for the truth of the unseen child to eventually emerge from your experimental interactions to control the child’s environment.

The Truth

“The truth at times appears to be made up of apparent contradictions. If this apparent contradiction did not exist, the truth would be easy to grasp. Everyone must search for the truth because it is hidden, yet it exists.”

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Ed. and Peace*. p.116

Observing the child to find his true nature involves a somewhat confusing process of resolving various conflicting thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that at times seem quite contradictory. For example, sometimes the child appears “good”, and at other times “bad”. So, which is the “real” child?

The problem here is that what you see depends on your particular focus of attention and perception at that time. And this is always colored and confused by unknown

Cont’d. on Page 4, Col. 2

Moment of Peril

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 1

you and starts a dialogue, respond with *reflective language*, *questioning* or *clear direction*, whatever seems most suitable at that time.

When you have David's attention and eye contact, and he says or does nothing, try *questioning* to open up a dialogue, such as by using the safe word phrase, "What are you doing"? This will usually start David talking, so you can continue and extend your verbal dialogue. If not, follow with more light polishing, focusing on patient waiting and eye contact, until there is some change to his trance-like fantasy. Ultimately, this steady use of light polishing will move David gradually closer to the firm ground of reality in the present moment.

Non-cooperating Parent

The teacher is struggling to resolve a child's persistent misbehavior in her class. At the teacher's parent consultation meeting to discuss her son's behavior, the parent constantly interrupts, argues or offers excuses to explain to you why she is unable to follow your directions to address her son's misbehavior at home. What to do? Answer in *Observer*, March, 2024.

Kindred Spirits

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

This two-day discussion brought out their deep spiritual experiences in following the technology to bring about the child's true nature. Lee and Sally both sensed a strong bond as "kindred spirits" in their shared purpose to bring this technology and its practice into wider knowledge and use by others around the world.

Lies and Illusions

Cont'd from Page 3, Col. 3

errors, prejudicial judgments and reactive emotions. NOTE: Is the glass half full, or half empty? So, since perceptions can be so variable and contradictory, you must step back from ALL perceptions to see the situation from a wider, more inclusive field of vision.

Now, a new technology of scientific education allows you to do this type of expansive observation with children in a completely reliable, experimental manner. This technology is, in fact, the complete practical means for following laws of nature. Applying this technology, therefore, allows you to consistently bring about the amazing revelations of the child that Dr. Montessori first discovered in 1907.

Renewal in India

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 2

the current president, (Smt.) **Draupadi Murmu** is a former elementary teacher with a reputation for leadership and interest to empower the downtrodden people of her country.

The CT project welcomes new members to join the consultation board in India or elsewhere. In India, for further information, contact: SB Silvaraj, Loyola Edu Abroad, Hyderabad. Tel. 630-208-9446. email: loyolaeducabroad@gmail.com

Cambridge, England UK Conference

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

Lee plans to be present in Cambridge throughout the entire conference period, to allow for more personal, direct engagement with conference attendees. In addition, he hopes to meet with members of the faculty at the nearby Cambridge University and other local educators to discuss the subject of "scientific education" in more detail.

For information to register to attend the conference, contact: CIEC CAMBRIDGE Cowley Road, Cambridge CB4 0PP Tel: +44 (0)1223 795091 E: info@cambridgeiec.org.uk W: www.cambridgeiec.org.uk

Revelations of the Child

"...the revelations of the child are not at all so difficult to obtain, the real difficulty lies in the adult's old prejudices concerning him."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Formation of Man*. p.60-61

The truth of man's nature is not so easy to find since it is so well hidden by an elaborate web of self-deceptive lies and illusions built up over thousands of years. Happily, the new "technology" now available gives you the precise tools to break through this obstacle in an objective, scientific way that was never possible before. Now, using this powerful practical guidance, anyone can bring about the revelations of the child, which may one day become visible as a whole new and better humanity in the world.

CT Project in Uganda

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

Outside Uganda, Caroline was educated in Africa and the United Kingdom (UK). And, with her knowledge of Montessori, she has been able to impact schools in Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as throughout her native Uganda. Through her Foundation, she has provided many types of support to Montessori education, especially to set up environments in low-income areas.

Caroline reports that she has recently received an invitation to attend a conference where President Museveni will be Guest of Honor. So, through such meetings as these, she will be able to make good contact for the CT project among the country's leadership community.

For further information, contact: Caroline Mbabazi Mpyisi Rusita, Plot 50 Tank Hill Road, Kampala, Uganda, Tel: +256753567382; cherrytreefoundation.edu7@gmail.com.