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July 2022

## Box 12, Folder 10 - "Montessori and Dewey" (E.M.S.) [book photocopies]

Edwin Mortimer Standing

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Commemorations Various  
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Circulation . . . I begin to build up  
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**DR. MARIA MONTESSORI COMMEMORATION CEREMONY 1954. - A SELECTION OF APPRECIATIONS.**

I am very glad to pay my humble tribute to the outstanding work of Dr. Maria Montessori in the field of education. She made a new approach to the education of a type of children hitherto neglected, and by so doing enriched educational methods and principles applicable to all children.

Her name will live in the history of education as one of the great pioneers in the noblest of all fields of human endeavour.

The Rt. Hon. Arthur Greenwood, C.H., LL.D., B.Sc., M.P.,  
The House of Commons, Westminster.

It is an impertinence for anyone as unqualified as I am to offer an opinion on the work of Dr. Montessori. However, if an enthusiast is permitted an opinion, I would just like to say that like millions of others, I am indebted to Dr. Montessori for the thought, energy and work she gave to prove that the sanest people in our community were our children, and that we could not realise their potentialities without making real in our system of education the concept that the child was an individual, entitled to the treatment that individuality demands.

Great as has been the result of her teaching and her technique, I am quite certain that we are still only at the beginning of the benefits which society can obtain from her work.

Hector McNeil, M.P., House of Commons, Westminster.

I consider Dr. Maria Montessori to be one of the very greatest figures in the whole history of education, and consider it a privilege that part of my duties consists in the furtherance of the work which owes so much to her brilliance, devotion and inspiration.

Stanley Nisbet, Professor of Education,  
The University of Glasgow.

Your resume of the work of Dr. Maria Montessori was of great interest to His Royal Highness, who well appreciates the good work carried out by her during her lifetime.

I am sure His Royal Highness would like me to send you his good wishes for a memorable occasion.

The Private Secretary to The Duke of Edinburgh,  
Buckingham Palace.

It gives me great pleasure to give my support and that of my colleagues in the Department of Education here to the purpose of your gathering, and we are glad to have this opportunity of honouring the memory of one of the greater educational pioneers of the twentieth century.

Professor J. P. Tuck, Department of Education,  
13 Leazes Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne.

I should consider it an honour to join in the tribute that will be paid to one to whom we in Scotland, as elsewhere, owe so great a debt of gratitude. Those of us who have seen and heard her will long remember her and appreciate her personal influence and qualities and the inspiration she spread around her, and without question her writings and methods will long continue to be influential in our University departments of education and our Training Colleges for teachers.

Professor Andrew F. Skinner, Department of Education,  
University of St. Andrews, Dundee, Scotland.

I am well aware of the noble work which Dr. Maria Montessori performed during her lifetime in the cause of education. Her influence is shown by the world-wide interest in the movement which she began. Her loss is keenly felt, but I think we may be confident that her influence will prove enduring in the minds of all those concerned with children.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education,  
Curzon Street, London, W.1.

It is a signal honour to be permitted to associate myself with those who will testify to her services for the benefit of the children of the world. Her contribution to education cannot be fully assessed. We can only wonder and express gratitude.

Future generations will see their attainments in terms of the services of pioneers like Dr. Montessori.

Evan J. Jones (Professor), Department of Education,  
University College of Swansea, Swansea, Wales.

We in this country recognise a debt to Dr. Maria Montessori. Particularly in the variety of schools we have designed to provide special education for those who start life at a disadvantage, much of the success of our teachers in building up an atmosphere of sympathy and purpose is a reflection of her ideas and her example.

R. A. Butler, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

It is difficult for me to express in adequate terms my sense of appreciation of Dr. Montessori's contribution to education in the last half century. Thousands of teachers have received enlightenment and thousands more children have received happiness from the great work she has performed. She has been a pioneer with the qualities of a saint, a rare combination, and one which has brought benefit to education throughout the world.

Professor E. B. Castle, M.A., Department of Education,  
University College of Hull.

# Le fondamenta del mio metodo

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B

Vita d'Infanzia Marzo 1963

TV  
Dauer

Considerare i bisogni del bambino e corrispondervi perchè la sua personalità e la sua vita possano svilupparsi pienamente: ecco il fondamento della nuova educazione.

Finora la visione dell'uomo futuro, aveva oscurato quella del bambino presente; questo oblio del presente ha portato la vecchia scuola e la vecchia educazione nelle famiglie a quella serie di errori di trattamento le cui deplorabili conseguenze fisiche e soprattutto morali oggi ben si conoscono.

Il bambino è una personalità umana vivente e libera, è membro sociale, porta la sublime impronta creatrice dell'anima che non può svilupparsi al di fuori della sua dignità; ed è il *bambino* che noi dobbiamo vedere e considerare, se vogliamo porre la nostra opera educativa su basi di verità, se vogliamo che essa sia veramente il buon terreno in cui il buon seme può svilupparsi in pianta.

L'ambiente sociale fatto per l'adulto è sproporzionato e incomprensibile al bambino; spesso scuola e famiglia diventano per lui una vera prigione entro cui a poco a poco si atrofizzano germi vitali che non chiedevano che libertà per vivere e manifestarsi.

Nel bambino non bisogna solo vedere il piccolo corpo adorabile che nutriamo, curiamo, accarezziamo, ma è necessario considerare la sua umanità e sentire i bisogni urgenti della sua anima che troppo spesso e facilmente sono rinnegati.

I gridi, i pianti, i capricci, la timidezza, la disobbedienza, la bugia, l'egoismo, lo spirito di distruzione che noi giudichiamo come la psicologia caratteristica del bambino, e ci affrettiamo talvolta a correggere duramente, non sono che le sue armi, di difesa. le sue reazioni contro la schiavitù che l'opprime e l'incomprensione che lo circonda; e tali reazioni sono spesso il principio di malattie dell'anima, ed anche di malattie del sistema nervoso che potranno affettare tutta la personalità dell'uomo futuro. Ben si sa che l'età della formazione è la più importante della vita; una denutrizione psichica, un'intossicazione spirituale sono dannose all'anima, come l'intossicazione e la denutrizione fisica dell'embrione lo sono alla salute del corpo.

L'educazione dei piccoli è dunque una questione importante, direi anzi, la più importante per l'avvenire dell'umanità. E' necessario farci chiaroveggenti e cambiar via; invece di considerarci, come si è fatto finora, modelli impeccabili agli occhi del bambino pieno di difetti, considerare umilmente la nostra reciproca posizione che Emerson ci indica interpretando l'avvertimento di Gesù: « L'infanzia è il perpetuo Messia che viene tra le braccia degli uomini caduti e li prega di ritornare al paradiso ».

Il bambino ha bisogno di sentirsi libero in un ambiente che sente suo. Preparare, creare, direi quasi, al bambino il suo ambiente e il suo mondo, è la prima e più grande opera di amore e di dovere che l'adulto deve compiere verso l'infanzia.

Libertà, non abbandono; amore, non oppressione.

Nel mondo per lui creato dal nostro amore e dalla nostra scienza, noi, in disparte, osserviamo il bambino vivere, aiutato e quasi inconsciamente guidato da tutto quanto lo circonda. E' ancora la nostra azione che lo protegge, che lo educa, che gli addita la via; ma, benefattori invisibili, noi ci eclissiamo, lasciando a lui della nostra opera i segni tangibili, la dovizia che egli fa sua, adopera come sua; i mezzi che, elaborati nell'intimo della nostra mente attraverso il travaglio della nostra passione, del nostro amore, del nostro studio, si sono fatti strumenti concreti della sua educazione.

Come creare quest'ambiente per il bambino? Semplicemente guardando a lui, per prima cosa, e alle sue proporzioni. Come i nostri mobili, gli oggetti che maneggiamo e tutto quanto ci circonda è fatto in rapporto alle nostre dimensioni, così i mobili, gli oggetti necessari alla vita dei piccoli devono essere costruiti in rapporto alle dimensioni loro. Così arrediamo la casa dei bambini con tavolini e sedioline leggeri e facilmente trasportabili, armadi bassi, piccoli lavabi, scansie a cui il bimbo possa facilmente arrivare. E gli oggetti necessari agli usi domestici: scope, cenci della polvere, spazzole, battipanni, stoviglie, saranno pure nelle proporzioni di questo mondo in miniatura.

E tutto faremo quanto più possibile bello, grazioso, gaio e luminoso di tinte, perchè in tutto il bambino veda come un riflesso della sua chiara anima, e in tutto si possa specchiare e da tutto ricevere luce. Così i mobili saranno a vernice chiara, le stoviglie di terraglia gaiamente decorata, e anche i più umili oggetti, le scope e i cenci della polvere, ornati di nastri e dipinti le prime, con qualche primitivo ricamo i secondi. E orneremo le *Case dei Bambini* con le cose belle che Dio ha creato in natura per dar gioia agli uomini, e con le cose belle con cui gli uomini hanno espresso tal gioia: così fiori, uccelli, pesciolini dorati metteranno la loro nota viva e poetica nell'ambiente del bambino, e riproduzioni a stampa di celebri quadri, e graziosi oggetti fragili, orneranno le pareti e i mobili.

Introdotta in questo ambiente, il bambino sente il perfetto equilibrio che c'è fra lui e quanto lo circonda, si sente, cioè felice, e subito si immerge in un'attività ordinata e meravigliosa. Egli sa dirigersi e

sa ciò che vuole, e il suo bisogno di lavoro si fa forte come il suo bisogno di nutrizione.

Le forze enormi che la natura ha posto in lui, trovando i mezzi esterni adatti alla loro espansione, lo spingono ad un esercizio energico e continuato che lo perfeziona nelle sue funzioni superiori.

Ogni dettaglio del suo ambiente ha lo scopo di servire allo sviluppo della sua anima e all'agilità e indipendenza di movimento del suo corpo, ed ogni oggetto porta in sé il controllo dell'errore. Così i mobili leggeri, se urtati rudemente, cadono, la vernice chiara fa subito vedere la macchia, l'oggetto fragile di vetro o di porcellana, se maneggiato con poca attenzione, cade e si rompe. Ecco un ambiente che corregge sempre, che non lascia passare il più piccolo errore e dove perciò l'intervento della maestra non è più necessario. La maestra può riposarsi appartata, osservando l'azione della bellezza su l'animo infantile, e ammirando l'obbedienza della natura a questo bisogno profondo.

La gioia del bambino nel compiere i suoi lavori, gli dà una sovrabbondanza di generosità che corrisponde indubbiamente a un bisogno interiore. Egli lucida la maniglia di metallo fino a consumarla, spolvera anche là dove non è più ombra di polvere, scopa, apparecchia, lava con un vero spreco di movimento e di energia. Evidentemente ciò che lo spinge non è solo lo scopo esterno, ma è l'energia interiore che determina il ciclo dei suoi atti.

Come nella parabola dei talenti, egli compie le sue azioni per far fruttare il più possibile il tesoro interiore che Dio gli ha confidato quando lo inviò nella vita.

Queste ripetizioni sovrabbondanti, mentre soddisfano la vita, lasciano al bambino delle vere abilità. Egli sa veramente vestirsi e svestirsi, abbottonare, agganciare, annodare, sa preparare perfettamente una mensa e lavare piatti e bicchieri, e quando un piccolo bimbo sa bastare a se stesso, una gioia serena manifesta il sentimento di dignità umana, che egli ha raggiunto facendosi indipendente dagli altri.

Nell'esuberanza delle sue forze egli prodiga i suoi propri acquisti in favore dei compagni più inesperti. Abbottona loro il grembiolino, allaccia le scarpette, si affretta a lavare e asciugare il pavimento dove altri hanno lasciato cadere la minestra. Quando lava i piatti, lava quelli che altri hanno sporcati, quando apparecchia la tavola, prepara il benessere di tanta gente che non ha condiviso il suo lavoro. Eppure questo lavoro col quale egli prodiga il suo perfezionamento al servizio altrui, non è fatto come uno sforzo che cerchi ricompensa; ma fare questo sforzo è la ricompensa di cui l'anima infantile è assetata. Lo scopo che lo stimola è chiaro, ma il suo vero interesse viene da radici ben più profonde: mentre egli è portato a soddisfare il suo bisogno di esercizio, è tratto pure a seguire le sue leggi di accrescimento e di perfezionamento e quelle che regolano lo sviluppo della sua attività interiore e sociale.

Bisogna considerare anche che i movimenti che comportano questi lavori casalinghi, sono per il bambino una vera ginnastica che prende il suo punto di partenza dall'intelligenza; scopare la sala, mettere fiori nei vasi, muovere i mobili, spiegare i tappeti, preparare la tavola, sono tante azioni intelligenti che costituiscono una vera ginnastica fisica, sia

per la fatica muscolare che li accompagna, sia per l'ordine a cui il muscolo deve addestrarsi per compierli convenientemente.

Questi esercizi, però, tanto graziosi a vedersi quando i bambini li compiono con tanta prodigalità, e che formano le delizie del visitatore della *Casa dei Bambini*, non sono che un addestramento, una parte secondaria dell'attività del bambino.

Quando l'anima ha trovato la sua palestra, manifesta altri bisogni più profondi per saziare i quali l'individuo deve essere solo con se stesso, isolato dagli altri, lavorando a un lavoro misterioso che nessuno può turbare. L'intervento di un altro è l'interruzione e la distruzione. Questa solitudine apparente che è ricca e piena di vita nel mondo invisibile, questa separazione dalle cose esteriori per la concentrazione, solo l'anima stessa può provocarla, e l'ambiente può solo facilitarla in modo indiretto con la calma, il silenzio e l'ordine. E' questo uno stato superiore dell'anima che si riscontra solo eccezionalmente fra gli adulti, ma che specialmente i religiosi conoscono e praticano come sorgente della forza morale; da questa viene loro la possibilità di mettersi in rapporto con la moltitudine degli uomini in modo superiore; da questa nei più privilegiati, viene la forza di compiere le azioni sociali più straordinarie. Le vite dei Santi, degli Apostoli, degli eroi ce ne danno luminose prove ed esempi. V'è dunque un rapporto fra il lavoro esteriore della vita sociale e il lavoro interiore della vita concentrata dell'anima. L'uno è la sorgente dell'altro; la vita interiore nella solitudine prepara le forze necessarie per la vita esteriore. La vita esteriore, da parte sua, facilita la concentrazione col lavoro ordinato, e il consumo delle forze è ripartito e rinnovato dall'esercizio intimo dell'anima concentrata.

L'uomo moralmente sano, acquista questa salute dell'anima fatta dalle forze vitali dell'anima, e sente il bisogno della vita interiore, come il corpo sente il bisogno della vita fisica. Ma coloro che hanno perduto questa coscienza dei bisogni della vita interiore sono nella condizione pericolosa di un corpo che non sia più capace di avvertire i bisogni di nutrizione o di riposo.

Nei piccolissimi bimbi, noi vediamo fenomeni di concentrazione che, senza dubbio, sono manifestazioni di un carattere essenziale dell'anima. Noi li vediamo concentrare la loro attenzione su un oggetto che non offre alcuna azione utile a compiersi, e fare e disfare successivamente ciò che hanno fatto, con un movimento della mano che si ripete meccanicamente e uniformemente tante e tante volte, che non si può più parlare di sovrabbondanza e di generosità come negli esercizi pratici, ma bisogna riconoscere in questo fatto un fenomeno particolare.

La prima volta che mi accorsi dell'esistenza di un tale carattere, stupii e mi chiesi se quello che si offriva alla mia attenzione era un miracolo o qualcosa di eccezionale. Vedevo una bimbetta di 4 anni che, con l'espressione della più intensa attenzione infilava dei cilindri di legno di differenti spessori, in un sostegno di legno che aveva dei fori corrispondenti per riceverli. Essa li collegava accuratamente, e dopo aver compiuto tale lavoro, toglieva ancora tutti i cilindri per rimetterli al loro posto.

L'osservai: erano ben più di 40 volte che ella ripeteva il suo inutile lavoro; mi posi al piano, feci cantare tutti gli altri bambini; ma la piccola non si

mosse, come se fosse assente dall'ambiente che la circondava. Smise alla fine e sollevò soddisfatta i suoi occhi sereni, ed ebbe il sorriso di un bimbo che si svegli riposato da un sonno benefico.

Più volte, in seguito, ho osservato questi fenomeni di concentrazione; e sempre da tale lavoro vedevo uscire il bambino più riposato, più buono, pieno di forza morale, quasi che un nuovo cammino si fosse aperto nelle profondità della sua anima. Ebbi la certezza allora che lo sviluppo del carattere, dei sentimenti, della disciplina, dovesse partire da questa sorgente misteriosa e nascosta, e che una legge dell'anima, capace di risolvere il problema dell'educazione, si fosse rivelata a me.

Allora il mio lavoro fu di cercare sperimentalmente gli oggetti che potevano stimolare la concentrazione, e studiare bene l'ambiente le cui condizioni potessero favorirla. Fu così che cominciai a edificarsi il mio metodo. Secondo tutti gli psicologi non vi è che un modo perfetto per imparare: avere un interesse profondo; un'attenzione viva e sostenuta. Io volli appunto provocare e utilizzare questi stati di concentrazione, con la ripetizione meccanica dell'esercizio che vi è legato, per far imparare tutto quello che si riferisce alla cultura: scrivere, leggere, disegnare; la grammatica, l'aritmetica, la geometria, le lingue straniere ecc. L'attenzione per concentrarsi ha bisogno di stimoli, la cui gradazione deve essere crescente.

Dapprima sono gli oggetti che cadono sotto i sensi che interessano il bambino: i cilindri di differenti dimensioni, i colori da mettere in gradazione, i suoni musicali da riconoscere, le superfici da toccare. Ma, poi, sono le cose dell'intelligenza: l'alfabeto, le quantità, i numeri, le parole, la grammatica, l'aritmetica, i problemi della storia, la natura, e su, su fino alle cose più alte e più astratte, che formano come una scala di Giacobbe capace di arrivare fino al cielo.

Con non minor cura si è dovuto studiare la missione della nuova maestra, essa che può aiutare il bambino nella sua ascensione verso il perfezionamento, o che può tutto annientare. Non è facile ottenere da lei una rinuncia ai suoi antichi diritti, una convinzione di nulla potere direttamente nè sulla cultura nè sulla disciplina dei bambini. Eppure, finchè essa non sarà riuscita a vivere di confidenza nelle forze interiori dell'anima infantile, finchè non avrà ucciso l'orgoglio che ha in sè e non si sarà rivestita di umiltà, non potrà avere successo.

Bisogna che ella diventi come il maestro del Vangelo: *Quello che vuol essere il primo, deve farsi servitore di tutti*. La sua missione è di preparare lo ambiente, di procurare il materiale di concentrazione, di iniziare esattamente il bambino agli esercizi di vita pratica, di discernere il bambino che cerca da quello che degenera. Ella deve essere sempre calma, sempre pronta ad accorrere quando è chiamata, e dedicarsi al bisogno di amore e di confidenza dei piccoli. Direttrice di anime, deve essa stessa avere una formazione soprattutto morale. E, consacrata a formare un'umanità migliore, essa deve, come una vestale cristiana, imparare a conservare il fuoco dello vita interiore nella sua purezza, poiché dall'estinzione di questa fiamma vengono le tenebre che nascondono la verità e il gelo che paralizza le nostre forze migliori.

**Maria Montessori**

## Educazione ed assistenza prescolastica

Per iniziativa della Commissione Nazionale Italiana per l'Unesco, si è costituito in Roma il 23 marzo 1962 il Comitato Italiano per l'educazione e l'assistenza prescolastica (CIEAP).

Si è così felicemente conclusa una lunga serie di laboriose riunioni, promosse e presiedute dal Prof. Giovanni Calò Vice Presidente della Commissione Nazionale Italiana per l'Unesco, il quale aveva convocato i rappresentanti di enti che svolgono la loro attività a favore dell'infanzia allo scopo di dar vita ad un organismo che per la sua dignità e competenza, fosse in grado di portare la voce dell'Italia in seno all'Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Prescolaire (OMEP) ed una cordiale efficace collaborazione ai lavori della stessa OMEP.

Ai termini del suo Statuto, il Comitato ha il fine di coordinare e valorizzare l'attività delle istituzioni che lo compongono per concorrere, mediante lo sforzo comune, al supremo bene dell'infanzia.

La Presidenza, eletta a scrutinio segreto, dai membri costituenti, è così composta:

On.le Maria Jervolino, Presidente;

On.le Ludovico Montini e Contessa Amalia di Valmarana, Vice Presidenti;

Prof. Ulrico Marinelli, Consigliere.

Il Comitato ormai è in piena attività. Esso ha partecipato, con scelte Delegazioni, al Convegno Internazionale delle educatrici di scuola materna ed al Congresso Mondiale dell'OMEP, svoltisi rispettivamente a Nizza e a Londra nell'estate scorsa.

Il CIEAP è stato riconosciuto ufficialmente dall'OMEP come Comitato Preparatorio. La Presidente, On.le Maria Jervolino ha pertanto partecipato alle tornate del Consiglio Mondiale dell'OMEP, tenutesi recentemente a Londra e ad Amburgo.

Sono membri costituenti del CIEAP i seguenti Enti:

Amministrazione Attività Assistenziali Italiana ed Internazionale;

Associazione Educatrice Italiana;

Associazione Fanciulli di Azione Cattolica;

Associazione Italiana Maestri Cattolici;

Associazione Italiana Protezione Infanzia;

Associazione Nazionale per gli Interessi del Mezzogiorno;

Centro di Pedagogia dell'Infanzia;

Centro Didattico Nazionale per i Rapporti Scuola e Famiglia;

Centro Italiano Femminile;

Comitato Italiano per l'UNICEF;

Ente Meridionale di Cultura Popolare;

Ente Morale Opera Montessori;

Ente per le Scuole Materne della Sardegna;

Federazione Istituti Dipendenti dalla Autorità Ecclesiastica;

Federazione Italiana Religiose Educatrici;

Opera Nazionale di Assistenza all'Infanzia delle Regioni di Confine;

Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia;

Sezione Piccolissime Gioventù Femminile di Azione Cattolica;

Istituti Raggruppati per l'Assistenza all'Infanzia.

Lo Statuto prevede altre due categorie di soci:

— i membri associati, ossia istituzioni ed associazioni le cui attività siano strettamente connesse all'educazione prescolastica;

— i membri individuali, ossia persone particolarmente interessate ai problemi dell'infanzia.

Possono divenire membri associati o membri individuali enti e persone che accettino gli scopi del CIEAP. La quota associativa è stata fissata in L. 20.000 per i membri costituenti ed associati ed in L. 10.000 per i membri ordinari.

Chi desidera far parte del CIEAP può inoltrare la regolare domanda alla Presidenza che secondo le norme statutarie la sottoporrà alla Assemblea Generale.

Per altre eventuali informazioni si prega di indirizzare la corrispondenza alla Segreteria del Comitato Italiano per l'Educazione e l'Assistenza Prescolastica - Piazza Firenze, 27 - Roma.

# Antropologia sociale e metodo Montessori <sup>21</sup>

Un certo interesse dovrebbe presentare l'esame della cosiddetta pedagogia scientifica in uno dei suoi aspetti tuttora inediti, penso, quale può essere l'interpretazione sociologica del montessorismo o meglio, per rimanere più aderenti a una *forma mentis* tipicamente moderna, in rapporto a quella diffusa concezione scientifica che si è andata oggi sviluppando, specialmente nei paesi anglosassoni, come disciplina autonoma, sotto il nome di antropologia sociale o anche culturale (1).

Questa antropologia socio-culturale, che invero investe disparati campi di ricerca di pertinenza più propriamente della sociologia, della psicologia sociale, dell'etnologia, ecc., ha come suo interesse fondamentale la struttura del mondo umano nei suoi vari aspetti storico-ambientali e come specifica competenza lo studio comparativo delle culture sviluppatasi nei vari tipi di società storicamente esistenti.

Prima di tutto, come condizione pregiudiziale, è necessario chiarire, in questa sede, il concetto di cultura che rappresenta l'oggetto dell'antropologia culturale; concetto che esula completamente da ogni considerazione filosofico-letteraria, e nella sua limitata accezione sociologica si riduce *stricto sensu* alla formulazione data da Ralph Linton, nel suo *The Cultural Background of Personality*, come complesso di « comportamenti... i cui elementi sono accettati e trasmessi dai membri di una particolare società » (2). Quindi, ci si riferisce, all'evidenza, piuttosto ai « modelli culturali », nella definizione classica di Ruth Benedict (3), come comportamentismo sociale in relazione a determinate funzioni di gruppo universalmente riconosciute. Esempi di modelli culturali possono essere le pratiche religiose, gli ideali di vita, la maniera di vestirsi, di nutrirsi, di comunicare e tecniche derivate, ecc. La connessione di tali forme di comportamento umano configura, dal punto di vista sociologico, il concetto di cultura dianzi indicato, in aderenza, è da osservare, a quella tipica mentalità scientifica americana di derivazione latamente behaviouristica.

Sotto il concetto di maggiore rilevanza pedagogica, ci potrebbe essere di ausilio per la comprensione

(1) Per l'esattezza, questa nuova scienza ha preso il nome di antropologia sociale in Inghilterra e di antropologia culturale negli Stati Uniti. Si veda a tal proposito, Altan C.T., *L'antropologia culturale e le scienze storiche e sociali*, in « De Homine », Roma, marzo 1962, n. 1, pp. 67 ss.

(2) Linton R., *The Cultural*, ecc., 1947, p. 21, cit. in Otaway, cit. in seguito, p. 37.

(3) Benedict R., *Patterns of Culture*, New York, H. Mifflin, 1934.

di tale concetto di cultura, l'accostamento alla teoria dell'ambiente formulata da Kurt Lewin, che intende l'individuo umano come un organismo intimamente legato e strutturato in una determinata sfera socio-ambientale (4); teoria considerata da alcuni moderni cultori di sociologia educativa come l'equivalente del concetto di cultura quale oggetto dell'indagine antropologica. Pertanto, è un'ovvia precisazione che l'educazione, dallo specifico punto di vista sociologico, ha il compito di sviluppare la personalità dell'uomo in rapporto a un determinato tipo di società e di portare l'educando dalla cosiddetta « comunità non sociale », come definisce il Collingwood l'intero arco del periodo propriamente scolastico, alla vera società come membro consapevole di essa.

E la presente *Nota* sorge dalla constatazione del divario tuttora esistente tra montessorismo e pedagogia ufficiale, per cui nel mentre le concezioni montessoriane sono spesso criticate alla luce di schemi preconcezioni di depotenziata e superata validità scientifica — secondo formule educative che non hanno ormai più alcuna aderenza con la moderna società industriale, anche se nel fatto continuano ad informare la scuola pubblica — i presupposti ideologici, se non l'intera prassi didattica, del montessorismo si addimostrano di sempre maggiore rispondenza al profondo bisogno di rinnovamento dell'educazione contemporanea.

Una situazione, questa, indubbiamente paradossale, di cui i responsabili del nostro mondo ufficiale scolastico non si rendono conto, e che induce a riflettere su alcuni degli aspetti più attuali della moderna problematica pedagogica, specialmente in relazione a determinati studi psicologici e sociologici, o meglio, di antropologia culturale, che rappresentano, a rigore, la implicita motivazione delle teorie educative in atto nel mondo moderno, popoli di lingua inglese principalmente.

E la disamina da noi intrapresa acquista maggiore interesse sotto tale rispetto, anche per motivi di contingenza critica. Giacché il naturalismo montessoriano, giova ricordare, è stato spesso sottovalutato proprio in rapporto alla pedagogia sociologica, e finanche pedagogisti di opposta tendenza, spiritualisti o cripto-umanisti in genere, hanno voluto vedere una presunta superiorità dell'educazione sociale nei confronti del cosiddetto biologismo naturalistico. Basterebbe citare S. Hessen di *Struttura* per documentare

(4) Lewin K., *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, raccolta a cura di C. Kluckhohn & H.A. Murray, N.Y., 1948.

THE PARIOLI INTERNATIONAL DAY SCHOOL, INC. 39

VIA NOMENTANA, 309

R O M E

HEADMASTER  
PAUL BURKE-MAHONY

TELEPHONE 841.505

February 6, 1962

My dear Mr. Standing:

I do hope you haven't given up hearing from me. Please forgive a busy teacher and housewife for her procrastination, her interruptions, and other innumerable "firsts" which take away time for precious correspondence.

How lovely it was of you to write to me. Mrs. Moretti and I should be so pleased to have you come to call on us when you come to Rome, the "most wonderful city in the world".

Last evening my copy of MARIA MONTESSORI Her Life and Work finally arrived from the states. I am thoroughly enjoying it. I just couldn't let another day slip by without answering your very kind letter.

Mrs. Moretti asked me to tell you that she is still determined to go on with her project even though she knows what difficulty she will encounter. However, I am sorry to say that we have not been able to get even a good start, for Mrs. Moretti has been recuperating from a very serious concussion and after effects due to being hit by an automobile while she was standing on the roadside waiting for a bus. Luckily she is still with us. She has just returned to her teaching duties this week. She is most anxious to meet you and to talk to you about her most favorite subjects--Montessori.

I do hope you will let us know when you are coming to Rome so we can make arrangements for a get-to-gether. I should like very much for you to visit our school, too, and to meet our headmaster.

Best wishes to you, Mr. Standing, and much success with your book MARIA MONTESSORI Her Life and Work for I can see that you have put an immense amount of work into this book. I am happy to say that my husband, too, is a writer and journalist for ECHI D'ITALIA and that just this week his book on Umbria, UNA TERRA PER VIVERE, has just been released. He, too, is most interested in meeting you.

Sincerely yours,

*Malina Verich Bianchi*  
Malina Verich Bianchi

(Mrs. Carlo V. Bianchi)

AN INCORPORATED NONPROFIT AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION  
Telephone: 8.926.975



Training Course and for permission to translate the Montessori Handbook and by the news coming from SPAIN where a week's festivities have been organised for the jubilation of Miss Dolores Canals who started a Municipal Montessori School in 1914 and who this year retires from teaching. Among the awards she will receive an AMI Honorary Diploma which will be presented to her by Dr. V. Imar, Principal of the Italian School.

From the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA where the President of the recently established American Montessori Society reports on her activities in Altoona, Cleveland, Princeton, Stamford, Washington, tells of a television programme held in February, of the establishment of affiliated associations in Chicago, Cleveland, of her new school which will be officially inaugurated next May with the attendance of Mrs. and Mr. Montessori, of the course held at Whitby and New York by Miss Stephenson. Other sources write about the reawakening of interest in California around a school recently started in Los Angeles by Mr. Tom Laughlin, while the Columbia University of New York after the lectures held there at the University's request by Mrs. Rambusch, President of the American Montessori Association and by Mrs. Waltuch, who collaborated in the Laren School of Dr. Montessori before the last war, has asked AMI to help them establish a program for the summer of 1962, when Prof. Wamm and a group of 30 of his students intend to visit Europe to study Montessori Institutions.

Oh yes, The Montessori Movement continues to move .....

\* \* \*  
\*

We reprint here

a fragment of Mr. C. A. CLAREMONT's

"MONTESSORI AND THE BROADMINDED"

which clears certain points, which seem vague to many of our enquirers. What a great disturbance was caused in the world of education by the advent of Dr. Montessori! Immediately, congresses were held in which all kinds of other presumably kindred ideas were brought forward. But would any of these alone have produced a congress? Now the Montessori method is said to be "one among many". Its vigorous adherents are somewhat pitied by the "broad-minded", whose untrammelled gaze wanders freely and impartially among such varied proposals for the educational millenium as those of M. Decroly, of the Winnetka Project, the Dalton Plan, of "individual work", and so on. Well, the dust is already in our eyes. But if this is not to be allowed to pass, and my suggestion is that it cannot, is there no weapon more potent, with which to switch the situation into true perspective, than that of priority - of the evident power to whisk these things (even if pre-existent) into notice, much

arranged an exhibition of the 19th century including costumes, art, architecture, theatres, literature and transport. Each of these aspects was prepared by a study group of children who worked for a week in different youth-hostels of the country and in Amsterdam. Both events attracted intense public interest. A more detailed report will be published in our next issue. A series of lectures on Mathematics was held by Mr. Montessori at AMI Headquarters. The Montessori experts who frequented it are now divulging the new items to the Montessori teachers in their respective districts.

Taking different topics of discussion, the Dutch Montessori Society held several meetings for parents and general public to illustrate the application of the Montessori Method and its results. Hundreds of people participated. Pertinent questions led to lively discussions in which obscure points and difficulties of parents were debated and cleared. One of the main streets in a new part of Amsterdam has been given the name of MARIA MONTESSORI STRAAT.

In the course recently closed at Hyderabad, INDIA, about 150 students sat for examinations. The Director of the course Mr. A. M. Joosten has applied the Montessori Method to the Hindi language which has greatly facilitated its learning not only for children but also for adults. The interest aroused by his course has been considerable. A new course is asked for the latter half of this year and the Government of Hyderabad intends opening three Montessori Departments.

"What You Should Know About Your Child" is the title of a little known book of Dr. Montessori which will be published shortly by Kalakshetra.

The second edition of the Absorbent Mind has been a "best seller" according to the Theosophical Publishing House which has asked permission to make a third edition.

ITALY is as usual full of activities. A course is going on in Milan, directed by Miss G. Sorge. In TURIN the local Montessori Society is preparing to start the application of the method to the Secondary School. The number of classes for defective children it collaborates to direct is now six. Always in Turin a new Casa dei Bambini has been opened by the Municipality, another by the SIP at Civasso and a Casa dei Bambini with some elementary classes in an institute for bereaved children.

The Scuola di Metodo created to replace the one closed during the Fascist Regime is functioning in Rome with promising success; the school for preparing Assistants to Infants (for children from 0 to 3) has become the Maria Montessori section of the institute Armando Diaz and will be completely financed by the State.

Preparations are going on in Perugia and in Bergamo for an International Course in the first city and for our study conference in the second. Still under discussion is the city which will this year give hospitality to the biannual congress held by the Ente Opera Montessori. The latter has been approached by the Cultural Relations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to explore the possibilities for the institution of an eventual course to respond to the request for teachers from Italian Schools abroad. The increasing interest in the ideas of Dr. Montessori is also shown by the number of students who approach AMI and Montessori Societies announcing that they intend graduating with a thesis on the Montessori Method and asking for assistance, by countries as JAPAN which, new to the movement, asks for a

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as lesser satellites are swung into the tail of a comet and share its light? Again it is a case in which the key to all is to be found in a closer study of that which forms the centre of the disturbance. It will be enough here if I indicate the vital germ, that central power for growth, the presence of which our reasoning has led us to suspect and which in itself is sufficient to render the Montessori method unique. I refer to that whole ensemble of precautions taken by the teacher that her observations of the child shall be reliable. In a nutshell, this is the kernel of the Montessori method; its whole claim to be not only a method of education, but a valid method of scientific research. The conditions required may easily be understood if we ask ourselves what are those conditions which can obscure the child from the observer? The teacher's direction of his activities may be one. She sees, as Dr. Montessori says, only the reaction to her own action. Hence, if the teacher is to see the child as he is, she must cease to direct his activities. She must cease to do so, not only directly, but indirectly. She must cease to offer prizes. She must remove the threat of punishments. She must conquer her tendencies, her "will", she must hold-in her powers of persuasion, of personal influence. When, under these conditions, a child works; when his conduct is the same as if she were not there, a thing proved - as often happens - when he continues if he leaves the room, or is absent from school, then we may say with certainty that there is some relationship between the child and the exercise he is performing. He is not doing it for a prize, because there is no prize. He is not afraid, for there is no source of fear. The teacher (who can easily become sensitive in such matters) has carefully eliminated any personal bond, which would make him do it to please her. Indeed, she has her test, for another exercise she might herself have thought more suitable, he does not do, even if invited. Hence only one conclusion is possible. The child is interested. Here is a scientific means of exploring his interests, for the observer is watching him under conditions in which one may be quite sure there is no other cause. The observer is in the position of the chemist observing a reaction, who has cleaned his test-tube. Indeed, the experimental method differs ultimately from ordinary observations precisely in this. It is a means of provoking phenomena under conditions in which the observations shall be reliable. All this sounds very easy, if not foolishly so. But there follows a corollary which is extremely difficult; and it is Dr. Montessori's success in this that makes the whole thing practicable, and indeed, a triumph of educational success. Probably her medical training, the work she had previously done with defectives, added to her own brilliance of invention and intuitive sympathies, were all necessary to the result she obtained, namely, the perfecting of an ensemble of educational exercises, which under these conditions provoke in the child a continuous and all-round activity of self-education. The secret of this success lies in a close psychological correspondence which must exist between the child himself and these exercises. For example, different exercises correspond to each age. Anyone who has tried to modify or extend, Dr. Montessori's apparatus will know how extremely difficult it is to design exercises which, actually and in practice, have the same effect. Indeed, wherever I have seen some of the more vaunted modifications of Dr. Montessori's practice, there also I have seen the abandonment of one or more of these fundamental principles, from which all starts. One finds the teachers forcing the children, by personal influence, or other means. The teacher often draws up large charts, on which she "ticks-off" each piece of work as the child does

it. "Observation", we might say, has given place to "supervision". Such methods of control are forced upon the teacher by her own choice of technique, and this proves that she has taken a wrong line; for directly a "pedagogical mistake" is made, the child ceases to work and the teacher, to remain in her error, must use compulsion.

It follows, further, that following a route of exploration into the child's psyche, Dr. Montessori is basing a system of education upon different forces from those ordinary understood. Most systems, reformed or otherwise, aim at capturing the child's will, or his co-operation, through some intelligent appreciation of the advantages, real or artificial, distant or immediate, of doing good work. Dr. Montessori, on the other hand, is touching-off sources of power which lie deeper than this. The child who works in a Montessori school - avidly, with a concentrated absorption and for a length of time, such as no teacher would be able, or even dare to command - would be unable nine times out of ten, to tell you why he was working. He does not know himself. He is really working to satisfy interior needs. It is a kind of physiological work. Could a baby tell you why it sucks? The child is often working unconsciously for ends which are far distant in his life, ends which we adults can sometimes perceive, but which he could never be induced to see or to understand. We are accustomed to realise that a man's present is a product of his past, but not to realise that his present is also a product of his future. A life-time cannot be split up into separable portions. It is a continuous entity, extending both ways in time, as well as in space. The mature man is already at work in the babe, no less than childhood in the mature man. The possibility of tapping such sources of work in childhood is a true scientific discovery. Its further exploration holds out untold hopes for the future of the race. Children in touch with these hidden sources are like different beings, radiating life, joy and health. Such work has been known to cure physical ailments and in a school in Rome it was once proved that children thought to be under-nourished, gained the appearance of being better-nourished than the average, without any change having been made in their diet.

Children sometimes come to the Montessori school who are suffering from true nervous disorders of various types, but almost invariably induced by wrong relationships between the adult and the child. They have to go through a kind of psychological convalescence before they can take their places like the other children in the class. In such children the crucial change for the better always takes place in relationship with the appearance of this particular kind of work. On the day the child will show a spontaneous interest, become absorbed and thenceforward a change will be apparent. His interests grow as from a centre and finally his whole day will be filled with useful and formative work. With this change there go corresponding changes in conduct. He becomes more tranquil, his manner expresses a quiet purpose, takes on almost a new dignity. He becomes more affectionate. His face is rosy, bright and sparkling. Finally - surprising result! - comes a natural "obedience", a joy in carrying out little commands, like that of one who has discovered in himself a new power; such children are sensitive to the teacher's lightest wish, become infinitely obliging to a visitor, help one another, and respect the work of the little ones. They might also be called persons of strong character, not easily led astray by others less advanced on the path of progress.

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Such are the germs of this method, and some of its fruits. Yet although its inception, and - to any radical extent - its further development for older children \*), are far beyond the powers of the average teacher, this does not mean that it lacks the power to develop possessed by any vital thing. The point I wish to make is that such germs exist nowhere else in the world of education. One of the most practical studies that could be made in modern comparative pedagogy would be to compare not method with method, but each method with this. The peculiar changes, the dropped elements, are very apparent. I need not attempt an enumeration of the scientific character of the research and with this the fruits, of an exact self-corrective pedagogy, and of the consequent possibility to discover and to "touch off" hidden springs which give rise to vast and unexpected activities.

\*) So far, Dr. Montessori has developed her system up to ten, or twelve years of age.

### MAY WE SUGGEST ?

Last year the Association Montessori Internationale sent its Christmas and Season's wishes by means of a card which had been decorated with the reproduction of drawings produced by two children attending a Montessori School.

May we suggest that this year we accompany the card with a musical contribution? In the Montessori schools which operate in many countries there might be children who would like to compose a short melody accompanied by text. It need'nt be an individual effort; a group of children might work at it.

If you find this a good idea and if children are found to undertake the task, could the eventual contributions - bearing the name and the age of the children and the name of the school they attend, reach Ami Headquarters - Koninginneweg 161 Amsterdam, not later than the 1st of September?

Rosy Joosten

\* \* \*

The International Education Institute of Unesco, Hamburg, will publish the report of the 12th International Montessori Congress on Mathematics, held last summer at Bad Godesberg. The lectures will be printed in the language they were given in but will have short summaries in other languages (English, French or German).

The volume will be available around June or July at Ami Headquarters or at 1 Fellnerstrasse - Frankfurt a/M - (address of the Deutsche Montessori Gesellschaft), for about 15 sh.

To have an approximate idea of how many copies to acquire from the Institute, may we suggest that you send us your order as soon as possible ?

Meanwhile here is the text of the resolutions approved at the Congress. These have been sent to a number of Governments.

Ada Montessori-Pierson

I In view of the need for greater mathematical knowledge demanded by the scientific development of our time, the XIIth International Montessori Congress recommends the creation of a committee composed of psychologists, pedagogues and mathematicians to collaborate in international research to investigate at what age and in what form the transmission of mathematical knowledge should begin and what aspect it should assume at different age periods.

II The XIIth International Montessori Congress recommends that Governamental and Municipal institutions especially in Germany, Holland and Italy where the Montessori institutions are more numerous be asked to provide facility and support to those who will undertake this type of research referred to in resolution I.

III Resolved: That the Authority concerned be asked to make possible the opportunity for suitable Kindergarten and other teachers to acquaint themselves with Montessori Education by encouraging them to visit Montessori Schools and Kindergarten both at home and abroad.

Further, to provide means to enable appropriate Kindergarten and other teachers to attend official Montessori Courses organised by A. M. I. , by granting them leave of absence and affording every possible help.

Finally to foster the establishment of Kindergarten, Montessori Classes and Montessori Schools for children of all ages.

\*\*\*  
\*

NOTES FOR M% AND D.

---

A large no. of the differences between D's method in the class room and Montessori's can be traced to this fact that D never really saw and appreciated the nature of the normalised child .

<sup>T</sup>  
Certainly his methods were an improvement in many way on what was going on in the schools.

1) eg. Activity rather than immobility .

2) Something more interesting to the children .

3) Allowing social contacts

BUT BUT BUT

He never understood the real nature of the human intellect.

that it is made for knowledge .

that it loves knowledge --

that knowledge is an end in itself .

that the child's interest is really an intellectual one that does not need to be re-forced from without .

virtus sequenda est ob se .

Knowledge is an end in itself - a joy .

Hence there is no need for FOOL SUBJECTS

or

PROBLEMATIC SITUATIONS TO

arouse an extrinsic interest .

But you have to see it , live with it , to appreciate and wonder at it .

Also the Group element is there in Montessori

It comes naturally when it is wanted

Montessori and Social Co operation .

ACTIVITY SCHOOLS ESSAY ANALYSED

(A)

- 1- Parents organise a meeting against
- 2) Headmistress complains that she has to use the method
- 3) Any sort of activity " expressing themselves "
- 4) The old type of school
- 5) Quotes from Sir Percy Nunn and Mr Ballard
- 6) Points in Common with Montessori
- 7.
- 10) The three Groups of activities
- 11) 12 Imaginary Games described .
- 13) THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF MOVEMENT
- 14 Exercise of Practical life - the difference. ( ditto Dewey  
Kilpatrick)
- 15) Control of error with Mont.
- 16 Group Two Creative Work
- 17 and 17 .and 18
- 19 ) Make Belief Activities described  
Leave the child where he was
- 20 Tool Subjects
- 21 (ditto )
- 22 ) No tool subjects in Montessori
- 23 Ditto in Number .
- 24) The very essence of the operation in se
- 25) Culture with Spontaneity
- 25) Leaves him to the Intelligence not the Instinct .
- 26 ditto
- 27) Knowledge after Choice TEACH HIM TEACH HIM .  
Reasons 1, 2,3,4, 1
- 28 The gate Crashers
- 29) Which is right? The Interminable Discussion .
- 30 The Recalling Environment



ACTIVITY ESSAY ANALYSED ( CONTINUED )

/31 Revealing Environment contd.

32) An Empty void . Play and sleep - leading up to

33) Hungry Lions

34) Simile of the Pendulum in Education -- Heresy begets heresy

Truth a balance of a tension in between . Opposite criticisms

35) Activity Movement is Pragmatic -- no firm principles

36 A swing away from Progressive education

Annette Fowler .

37 In fact teachers are seeking what they could find in Montessori

The revealing of the Work activity in children Annette

38 WHO HAS THE LAST WORD ?

THE FINAL JUDGE .

Kings College Jan 8th 1948

3

I must affirm again ..... not the outcome ... plan of  
action .. They were e ( p 7) not the outcome of any fixed method .  
On the contrary ..... by comparison .

WERE "THE NEW CHILDREN " REALLY NEW ?

Whatever the right conditions are for the manifestation of  
the marvellous characteristics of "the New Children " we might  
ask --did they ever exist before the advent of Montessori . Was  
she the first to see these marvelous traits in action ? Let Mont  
herself reply .... "I am certainly not (page 7 bottom ' ...  
See God and the Child .

pp 15 - 16 --- belonged to another planet .

back to page 8 small print

As a matter of fact Pestalozzi saw these phenomenon only  
once - They were a passing phase in his school and he did not see  
them again. But they remained impressed on his soul; and he wrote  
about them in the endeavour to share the new faith he had gained  
but he did not know how to reproduce them , The same experience  
came to Tolstoy in his village school in ; but he  
too was not able to reproduce it .

"So here we have the case of a discovery but the discoverer  
has no power to reproduce the phenomenon because he does not know  
the conditions which brought about the discovery . It reminds one  
of a story by O Henry of a bartender who - in mixing his drinks -  
by accident produced a simply marvellous cocktail . Every one  
went mad about this wonderful drink which which produced an almost  
beatific state of happiness -- and everyone clamoured for more .  
But unfortunately the bartender could not remember what were the  
ingredients he had put into it nor their proportions . So the  
wonderful cocktail was lost for ever .

What distinguished Montessori from Pestalozzi in this matter  
was the fact that she was able to recognise the conditions which

4

Meanwhile a lady who had come with me had been starting some other children to work with a different piece of the Montessori Arithmetic material -- the short bead stair. The exercise consisted in doing a lot of little sums in addition and subtraction with the units under  $10\frac{1}{2}$ . Two little girls sat together almost feverishly occupied with this work and one of them - quite off her own bat - volunteered the remark "You know this is the first time that I have really worked at this school (she had been a year in the Kindertarten and half a year in Grade One.)"

The same lady had been visiting a Montessori school in Portland, Oregon a week or two before. There she has seen a little girl writing a sentence in French. She asked the Directress Can she read <sup>that sentence</sup> those words? And the Directress replied "No she is only practising writing the words in French. At this the little girl looked up and said "Yes I can" and thereupon began to read the sentences quite accurately. In fact "on ne peut jamais dire" with Montessori children. It is extraordinary how much they pick up from their environment on their own and every Montessori directress will tell you how often she is astonished to find out what the children have learned quite independently of her assistance.

Monleson MS. —

found at Lakefield  
1965

Monleson's first efforts

Method did not exist at first

more not premeditated

a good framework: what a little!!

Measuring Body

→ Mus Tests

And then?

Keeping to Presmak's

Must go unduly

THE BASIS OF MY METHOD

To consider the needs of the child and to correspond with them so that his personality and his life can develop fully --- that is the foundation of the new education

*Defunct*

Up to now the vision of the future man has obscured that of the present child ; this oblivion with regard to the present has brought about the old school and the old education in the family that series of errors in treatment which have brought about such deplorable consequences physical and above all moral -- this is well known now.

*The needs of Present*

( This could be compared with Dewey Education is for Life and not a Preparation for living )

The child is a personality - living and free , is a member of society and bears the sublime creative imprint of the soul which cannot develop outside its true dignity, and it is this child that we must see and consider if we wish to place out educational work on a basis of truth -- if we wish that he should really be the good ~~seed~~ soil in which the good seed can develop into a plant .

*little*

In the child we must not only recognise the adorable little body which we must nourish , care for and caress , but it is also necessary to consider his humanity and feel the urgent needs of his soul which are often and only too easily denied him .

*Not to*

The cries , the weepings , the caprice , the timidity , the disobedience , the lying and the egotism , the spirit of destruction , which we so often regard as the psychological characteristics of the child and we so often hasten to correct harshly are nothing but his weapons of defence his reactions against the slavery which oppresses him and the incomprehension which surrounds him

*How decisions come*

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THE BASIS OF MY METHOD

To consider the needs of the child and to correspond with them so that his personality and his life can develop fully --- that is the foundation of the new education

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( This could be compared with Dewey "Education is for Life and not a Preparation for living )

The child is a personality - living and free , is a member of society and bears the sublime creative imprint of the soul which cannot develop outside its true dignity and it is this child that we must see and consider if we wish to place out educational work on a basis of truth -- if we wish that he should really be the good ~~xxxxx~~ soil in which the good seed can develop into a plant .

In the child we must not only recognise the adorable little body which we must nourish , care for and caress , but it is also necessary to consider his humanity and feel the urgent needs of his soul which are often and only too easily denied him .

The cries , the weepings, the caprice , the timidity , the disobedience , the lying and the egotism , the spirit of destruction , which we so often regard as the psychological characteristics of the child and we so often hasten to correct harshly are nothing but his weapons of defence his reactions against the slavery which

THE NEW CHILDREN -- A MIRACLE IN EDUCATION

This is not the place to describe the many, various and astonishing events which came tumbling one after the other as out of a conjuror's hat, during that first year, 1907, that Annus Mirabilis, ~~1907~~ in the first Casa dei Bambini in Rome.

If any reader is not acquainted with these happenings it would be a great help towards the better understanding of ~~this essay~~ <sup>on whole time</sup> if he were to pause here and read them. (This could be done by reading Montessori's own account of them in her SECRET OF CHILDHOOD -> Chapt II, especially that part of it entitled "What They Showed me" ~~etc~~ <sup>based on the above</sup> a similar account can be found in the present writer's book MARIA MONTESSORI, HER LIFE AND WORK, in chapter II, under the title Discovery.) Discovery before the Method

From our present point of view what is importance is to lay stress upon the fact that the real cause of the big stir set going by Montessori in the field of education fifty years ago was not the discovery of a <sup>New</sup> ~~new~~ Method but - to put it succinctly - the Discovery of the Child. It is not too much to say that to many of those who witnessed these "revelations" by the children it seemed that a new dimension had been added to human nature in the soul of the child.

For it was not only Montessori, but hundreds of others who came from far and near to Rome to see things for themselves, who received the same impression. To take ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> example, The London Times (Educational Supplement) sent out its sub-editor, Mrs Sheila Radice, to find out what all the fuss was about, and write up ~~this~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~new educational movement which had taken the world by storm~~. On her return she published a book, the title of which was THE NEW CHILDREN. Another observer described his impressions under the

25/6  
title THE DISCOVERY OF THE HUMAN SOUL ~~and~~ still a third <sup>as a</sup>  
MIRACLE IN EDUCATION . The Queen of Italy at that time , Queen  
Margherita , was a frequent visitor <sup>to those first</sup> to Dr Montessori's schools ,  
and became a close friend of Montessori . <sup>One day</sup> She remarked "I prophesy  
that a new philosophy of life will arise from what we are learning  
from these children " . The head of a well-known Religious Order  
<sup>said</sup> ~~remarked that~~ "This is a discovery more important than <sup>Marconi's</sup>". <sup>(Marconi's)</sup>

Even to-day - after fifty years - the impression made on most  
discerning people, when they visit a good Montessori School for the  
first time, is not dissimilar . They are apt to make such a comment  
as : "These children do not behave like ordinary children - the  
children I have known all my life . They are <sup>changed</sup> in character ;  
more concentrated , better mannered , more socially developed , and  
infinitely more self-disciplined . In a word they are like New  
Children "

( on top page 26 )



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If you were to ask the average educated person to-day ~~for~~ <sup>up to</sup> ~~at least till two or three years ago~~ <sup>for what was she</sup> who was Montessori, ~~the~~ <sup>famous</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> great majority of ~~them~~ would probably reply that she was an Italian lady who invented a new method of education for small children - a sort of modified Kindergarten. ~~And some of them~~ <sup>that</sup> the more (mis!) informed might go on to add ~~but~~ the method is out of date now having been superceded ~~(or eclipsed)~~ <sup>latest</sup> by others more in line with the findings of the ~~most modern~~ <sup>many or any</sup> psychological research. Almost certainly you would not hear ~~any~~ of them talking about A Miracle in Education, The Discovery of the Human Soul or The New Children. <sup>etc</sup> How, and why, did it come about in the intervening years that Montessori thus came to be associated in the general mind ~~xxx~~ with an educational Method and not with the astonishing revelation of The New Children? ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> which is the more important the more essential thing | the Montessori Method <sup>ie</sup> or the New Children <sup>ie</sup> the discovery of that <sup>ie</sup> ~~Deep~~ <sup>Deep</sup> nature in all normal children of which we have spoken at length above? <sup>ie</sup> Montessori herself constantly in later years <sup>repeatedly</sup> spoke of ~~her~~ <sup>my</sup> method "il mio metodo", and actually wrote a book under that title. How can we reconcile these apparently contradictory points of view?

THERE WAS NO METHOD AT THE BEGINNING

Briefly the answer <sup>is as</sup> to ~~this~~ <sup>is as</sup> follows: When Montessori began her work with the slum children in San Lorenzo she had ~~no~~ <sup>no</sup> method: The Montessori method did not as yet exist. ~~She~~ <sup>Thus she</sup> makes it quite clear, and beyond any doubt. What came first was the unexpected revelation of the New children <sup>ie</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> conversion of those shy, timid, slatternly, ignorant young vandals <sup>ie</sup> from the

herself

*amazing* 29  
8  
27  
*millions*

the slum tenement building, into the orderly, self-disciplined, intellectually eager, ~~order-loving individuals~~ *order-loving individuals* ~~into it~~ *we have described above* act the new children. No one was more surprised at this unexpected revelation of ~~the deeper nature in the child~~ *in passing* than she herself was. (And here we might remind ourselves of something that Montessori ~~herself~~ was never tired of repeating, viz that one - if not the chief factor - in bringing about this revelation was the almost unique absence of adult interference, ~~a circumstance which made~~ *See page* it possible for the children to act spontaneously

A NEW METHOD AND A NEW SCIENCE OF EDUCATION COMES

INTO EXISTENCE

In her own brilliant account of this period Montessori *in the first instance* tells us how she came to provide the children with the letters of the alphabet - the sand-paper letters and the card-board cut out letters for composing words. She had no intention at the outset of teaching ~~these four~~ and four-and-a-half year-olds how to read and write for <sup>it</sup> I shared the general prejudice that it

was necessary to begin writing as late as possible - certainly not before the age of six <sup>But she gave in at the wish of the parents,</sup>. This led to the well-known "explosion into writing" (I) followed, some six months later, by the explosion into <sup>Then came</sup> Reading. ~~Thereupon followed~~ the creation of the Reading Commands; and then more advanced materials for reading; <sup>in the form of</sup> a little library.

And so ~~once~~ started, one thing led to another, because the insatiable <sup>for</sup> appetite of new knowledge shown by the children increased by what it <sup>fed</sup> on. The same sort of thing happened in the sphere of Number. The Number rods - most valuable in themselves at a certain initial stage - soon ~~proved to be~~ needed to be supplemented by other and more advanced number materials.

## The necessity for new materials

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This spontaneous concentration - this long continued individual work - each child working at its own pace and at its chosen ~~max~~ task - could never have been produced if Montessori had tried to feed these insatiable minds ' "hungry lions ") by means of direct collective teaching with the use of class primers .

It was first of all necessary that the psychological main SPRING which had brought about the revelation of the New children should not be tampered with - that is , that the children who would be liberated from any unnecessary adult influence and be free to choose their own occupations and work with them as long as they liked .

This it became quite clear that this could only be done by providing the children with specially prepared materials for study - or if you prefer for culture - in the various school subjects . in Arithmetic , English , Geometry , History Geography and so forth . In this way , through the collaboration of many helpers , working under the directing genius of Montessori an immense amount of new teaching materials came into existence . And so in this way came into existence what we have elsewhere described as the Prepared Paths to ~~Vulture~~ Culture .

This was not an easy task ; but in the carrying of it out Montessori and her assistants had one sure guide -- the Child . And in this the spontaneous concentration of the children on these new materials was the acid test by which we knew that we were on the right road .

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29  
10

And thus Montessori and her colleagues found themselves faced with the task of creating new and ever more advanced materials for assisting the mental development of these ~~xxxx~~ " free " children who with their " absorbent minds " - untamed by adult interference fell upon these materials for culture "like hungry lions ".

WHY NEW MATERIALS WERE NECESSARY

The question might be raised :Why was it necessary for Montessori to create new materials for teaching the Three "R"s ,and other subjects ?Were there not plenty of teaching aids - visual aids and so on already in existence together with a variety of Primers for these subjects ?

The answer to this is very germane to our main theme . For it must be remembered that this was already at that early stage a new kind of schools withdistinguishing characteristics .Amongst these we might mention :

- I) the children worked individually , where as the primers mentioned were designed for ~~xxxxxx~~ collective class teaching or at least for group teaching .
- II)The children chose their occupations and continued at them as long they liked ( until "The Cycle of work " was completed )
- III) They were not forced to work - and note it was work they did and not play .
- IV) They showed astonishing spontaneous concentration on their work - at the end of which
- V) They appeared rested rather than fatigued .

*acquire new skills + new knowledge*

Now in order to make this possible it was ( and is ) necessary to supply the children withspecial materials for culture so designed that a) they solicit in the children a spontaneous activity combining hand and brain which b) tends to a repetition on the part of the children , and c) through this activity and repetition

Her guide was 30

30 11

And to speak more precisely - the concentration of the child.

From the very beginning it was this concentration in the children which impressed her ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ - as in the incident described on page of the small child and the cylinders .

"Many times afterwards I observed this phenomenon of concentration ; and always ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ I observed that the child issued from such work more poised , better in his behaviour , full of a moral force - almost as if a new path had been opened up in the depths of his soul. I had now the certainty that the development of character , of the sentiments , and of discipline should proceed from this mysterious and hidden source : and I knew that a law with regard to the soul capable of resolving the problems of education had been revealed to me ."

So now my work was to seek experimentally for objects which were able to stimulate concentration and to make a study of the environment most favorable to it . It was thus that I began to build up my method . All psychologists agree that there is only one perfect method of education - to have a profound interest and an attention lively and sustained . ~~I wished to~~ My wish then was just this to bring about and use these states of concentration - with the mechanical repetition of the exercises which is bound up with them - and ~~thus~~ in this way teach everything which belonged to the acquisition of culture -- writing , reading drawing ; grammar and arithmetic , geometry and foreign languages etc. The attention in order to concentrate needs stimuli with increasing gradations .

strike

First come the objects which appeal to the senses

First it is the objects which appeal to the sense which interest the children : the cylinders , the various dimensions, the grading of colours , the recognition of musical notes , the touching of surfaces . But then it is the things which appeal to

31/31 12

, grammar ,arithmetic . the problems of history,nature and so  
on upwards until finally we come to things more high and more  
abstract - which form as it were a Jacob's Ladder which reaches  
right up to heaven "(The Foundations of my method Vita dell  
Infanzia March 1963 )

Path to Culture

In this way there came into existence  
a new form of Ed<sup>n</sup> Research + indeed  
a New Science of Education.

*Resume*

32

4

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS?

FOR PRODUCING THE NEW CHILDREN

We must understand what is the essential problem in education

Montessori on Problems

such as work and fatigue

individual and society

development and culture

discipline and freedom

What the right age to begin etc.

THERE IS ONLY ONE ESSENTIAL PROBLEM IN EDUCATION

the right relationship between child and adult .

it is a social - not an educational problem .

the strg

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE CHILD AND THE ADULT

CHARACTERISTICS OF DEFENCE

the deviated child

defends his independence with as his life

"Let me do "

CHIEF OBSTACLES ARE PARENTS AND TEACHERS

*Remove them?*

BOTH REMOVE IN San Lorenzo

AS SOON AS THIS IS DONE SHOWS IMMENSE POWERS

BIUT

Needs a prepared environment .

*a Revealing Int*

full of motives of activity

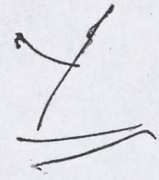
for development .

REVEALS THE DEEPR NATURE .

*No question - some  
every country*

*So why... over*

WHY HAS ALL THIS NEW REVELATION NOT SPREAD ?



Half a century

REASONS      Custom , tradition

PRIDE

OBSCURATISM IN THE TRAINING COLLEGE

Upsets everything ?

pride and HUMILITY

the willingness to learn from the child .

( John the Baptist )(quote )

HUSH IT UP ?

Have heard the strangest stories

Bought up the books etc

ANYWAY IT IS A VICIOUS CIRCLE

HOW BEST TO PROPAGATE IT

The children are the best propagandists

( no one could really believe it without seeing or very few )

But there are so few real Montessori schools

WHY? BECAUSE SO FEW MONT . TEACHERS

WHY They are necessary for observation and belief .

You have seen a good school

So what ? and WHERE ?

*Problem of Training Teachers*

*No Best ?*



It was because Dewey had never seen this awakened child "this normalised child that had shed his deceptions as a snake its skin, this child who "worked all day and every day" "with no other stimulus than the work itself" (I) that he looked upon the acquisition of knowledge for the child as a means to an end. He could not imagine that children would spend long hours working at sums like long division and square root just of the love of it. This was because he did not know the conditions that were necessary for such work - e.g freedom of choice, the Prepared Environment, previous initiation into a material which elicited repetition, during which the very essence of the operation in question was taken off by the "intellectus agens" and incorporated into the child's whole living body of knowledge.

In the same way - because he was unacquainted with the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Montessori's doctrine of Sensitive Periods in development he did not realise that there was a period in the child's life - from birth to say 6 or 7 when it was passing through the Sensitive Period for Language. And just because in these early years there is this mysterious affinity between the soul of the child and the language it hears in its environment the child has an interest in everything which has to do with language. And therefore during the period from 4½ to six - given the right materials such as the sand paper letters and the movable alphabet etc the child will learn to write spontaneously and after - always through an activity - to read also. Dewey had no notion of this. For him learning to read and write for the child - are matters which ~~xxxxxxxx~~ have not sufficient interest in themselves and must be motivated

Wise  
Answer  
Enlarge  
Tool  
Subjects

And  
Pascal

SP for  
handy use  
Abstract  
Suits

Re-enforcement  
Learning

not explicit

by other and extrinsic interests the carrying out of which necessitate the acquisition of these skills . Because he has never really observed free children he has no idea that there is in children at this early stage  $3\frac{1}{2}$   $4\frac{1}{2}$  a real interest in the letters of the alphabet in themselves as forms and sounds - still on a sensorial level . ~~Extraneous~~ I think it would be a safe bet to say that Dewey had never seen such a phenomenon as this - that a child will compose a word like "sofa " or "manifest " correctly with the movable letters and then ten minutes afterwards not be able to read the very word which he himself has composed . We have not time to pause to explain why this is so at a certain stage , but mention it to show that with the Montessori child the educator makes use of all sorts of mysterious interests - the evanescent interests of the sensitive periods - for helping the child to acquire spontaneously all sorts of skills which Dewey and others set out to make the child acquire two or even three years <sup>later</sup> after with much labour and by means of interests extrinsic such as the carrying out of projects which cannot be done without knowing how to write . The same with Reading and Number . Dewey had no conception of such a graded series of occupations - or materials in for Arithmetic for instance along which each child can pass at his own rate going from one material to another along a " prepared path " And in doing so this child - who is working spontaneously the whole time - and individually learns not only the very structure of Number and the Hierarchy of Numbers but also how to perform the four operations and much beside in numbers up to thousands and millions . And in all this the interest which drives the child on is an intrinsic one : it is the mind of the " awakened child " - the human intellect - learning and knowing in a spontaneous process which is accompanied by that deep joy

*to give freedom*

*100*

1863 M3

6

36

My method of education was inspired forty years ago by certain marvelous facts which happened quite unexpectedly in a group of ~~sixty~~ poor children in the San Lorenzo Quarter of Rome . Their parents were not true work people but did odd jobs as occasion offered , and had no special line of work ( mettiere ) were without any fixed occupation - uneducated and unable to read and write !

These little children - all between the ages of three and six years of age became transformed in a manner so surprising that not only I myself but the entire world was stupefied . At four and a half years of age they learned to write by themselves - and did so so unexpectedly that the phenomenon - which had never happened before was described as the " explosion into writing " .

These uneducated children became gracious and ( disinvolti ) in their manner as if they were children of the highest classes of human society . In Italy we should remember with pride and gratitude these little citizens who drew the attention of the whole world upon our country .

I who am ( was ? ) unable to analyse these extraordinary <sup>so</sup> happenings will only say that THEY WERE NOT DUE TO A METHOD OF EDUCATION PRECISELY BECAUSE IT DID NOT YET EXIST . I HAD THE IMPRESSION OF A GREAT DISCOVERY , THE DISCOVERY OF UNKNOWN PSYCHIC POWERS IN THE CHILD .

It was for this reason that , though not being a teacher I dedicated myself to education . For ten years I had been a doctor of medicine , and I was lecturer in Anthropology in the University of Rome . I abandoned ( gave up ) the scientific career which I had undertaken in order to dedicate myself to the study of child psychology .

And now from this study there resulted a complete method of education which begins at birth and goes upwards to the age of the

adult , up to the university . My method is nothing else but an aid to development , and therefore to the formation of man .

It was not only inspired by the children , but was carried on ( condotto) or based upon the manifestations of this energy , this occult power which exists in all children -children belonging to every social class and every human race .

One could ~~say that~~ truly say that that which is called by ~~my method~~ method is the first public and social movement ( opera ) which owes its existence to children and not to adults .And for this reason childhood should be considered from a higher point of view . It should be revered ( be regarded with great reverence ) because from childhood can come the greatest contribution to the reform of the whole of humanity . This makes us think of the Gospels where children are pointed out as the greatest amongst the citizens of the Kingdom of "heaven .

From a practical point of view we must admit ( constatare ) that that the giving of aid ( the giving of assistance ) to the formation of man is a real science :it is not only a new method of education . It is a science which has only just begun but which is destined to develop because it is a science which has hitherto been <sup>wanting</sup> ~~existing~~ in our civilisation . The fact is that the sciences which deal with external matter have arrived at the most miraculous results , -such as flying and the liberation of the energies locked up in the atom - But man , on the other hand , has remained scientifically an incognito : and it is evident that in order to improve man practically ( migliori praticamente ) it is necessary to study and know him /

This is a story which redounds to the honour of Italy, and one with which our country should occupy itself with in its work of reconstruction.

One might ask oneself the question - is it possible to say anything practical about this subject which might be of direct interest to the school? And the reply is Certainly.

The first ~~thing~~ result is the importance of taking into consideration (prende) the education of small children under six years, that is below school age. This period - this age - directly interests (or should interests -- or ~~regard~~ has a bearing on scholastic education in so far as it has now been demonstrated that the children can learn to read and to write with joy and ease (facility) because they find themselves (Or are) in the "sensitive period" for language, which lasts up to the fifth year.

Everything which has to do with language is thus ~~another~~ (or therefore) fascinating to the children at this stage, and that is the reason why they feel a fascination also for written language: and ~~that~~ why their progress ~~is~~ compared with that of the elementary school is not only superior but quite astonishing.

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Please correct  
or fill in.

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The last time I heard Dr. Montessori speak in public was in the same year ( 1960 ) at the International Montessori Congress - the last at which the foundress herself was present . The Congress , which was held at the Italian Institute , London , lasted \_\_\_\_\_ days , on each of which Montessori gave a lecture . The subject of her last address was \_\_\_\_\_ and a large audience was present . It was a memorable occasion ; for amongst the audience were men and women from all over the world who had come to pay their respects to the magnificent old lady of eighty years who was obviously struggling to give the last ounce of her failing strength in the service of the child <sup>to</sup> that mysterious and luminous figure who , as a result of her long and patient study , had come to mean more to her and her followers than it was easy to put into words .

The occasion was not without a touch of sadness because many of those present could not help thinking that very possibly this would be the last time that <sup>they</sup> ~~they~~ would ever enjoy listening to her speak . She concluded her address with a <sup>striking</sup> ~~memorable~~ simile the gist of which was as follow:

I am grateful to you , ladies and gentlemen , for the kind words you have said , and the honours you have heaped upon me ; and I appreciate them accordingly . But in a sense I feel that your adm<sup>ir</sup>ation has been misplaced , and has not reached the right person . Have you ever noticed <sup>what often happens</sup> ~~that~~ when you try to point something out to a dog ~~it~~ ~~often happens that~~ , instead of looking in the direction you are pointing he looks at your outstretched finger . something like that is happening to me . All my life I have been trying to draw people's attention to the Child ; and what happens ? All that happens is that they look at my outstretched finger and say "Look what

CONTINUATION FROM THE PASTED IN EXTRACTS FROM THE  
TWO NATURES .....

))))))))))))))))))))))))))))))

This is not the place to describe in any detail the many and various events that came one after the other unexpectedly tumbling into existence- as from a magicians box - in that first annus mirabilis IN THAT FIRST CASA DEI BAMBINI in Rome in 1907 . What is important from our present point of view is the uncontrovertible fact that Montessori , without expecting it , realised that she had made a staggering and epoch -making discoery about the nature of the child . It is not too much to say that she had made such a discovery as seemed to add a new dimension to the soul of the child . And not only Montessori herself but many others who witnessed these same events had exactly the same impression . To take one example . The Londond Times Educat- ional supplement sent out one of their editors - the late Mrs Sheila Radice - ~~ex~~ expresly to study and write up this new educational movement in Rome which had taken the whole world by sotorm .When she returned Mrs Radice wrote a book on her observations and experiences and gave it the title The New Children . And this is a phrase which keeps returning to one's mind when trying to write about the behavious of those little slum children in the San Lorenzo quarter in Rome .And they are words that even to-day most aptly describe the impact of which is made by most people when they visit a good Montessori Class for the first time . They say ith astonishment "well , these are not ordinary children : they are not the children I have been acquainted <sup>with</sup> all my life : they are ( to use Pesta llozi's phrase) like children from another planet ; they are in fact "new children " . The Queen Margherita of Italy , who was a great



friend of Montessori's and often visited her schools, used to say "I believe that from what we see going on in these schools there will arise some day a new philosophy of life". That was half a century ago; and everything that has happened since has tended to show how penetrating was her judgement. It is only when one has had the opportunity of seeing with one's own eyes the manner in which these small children live and work

together in the true liberty of the Prepared environment which Montessori has ~~xxxp~~ built up for them - it is only then that one can begin to see what a lot of hopeful truth lies in Montessori's slogan "A New World for a New Man".

To come back now to the main thesis of our essay - the comparison between Montessori and Dewey; we can say that the whole point of the difference between these two lies in this Dewey never saw, and never worked with, and never studied these New Children - these children liberated from the undue interference of any adults (however clever and affectionate) working in the Prepared Environment - and as they lived and worked in <sup>a</sup> joyous society moving triumphantly and serenely and individually along the PREPARED PATHS TO CULTURE which surrounded them as part of their environment. Not - en passant must we forget that the trained and sympathetic directress is an essential part of that Prepared Environment.

We repeat: we are quite sure that Dewey never saw these "Awakened Children" (as Montessori sometimes called them) never properly realised their capabilities - or better still was never really intimately acquainted - through his own experience - with the characteristics of that "deeper nature" outlined above. Because Dewey was a remarkably brilliant

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CONTRASTS

School and Child pp I8 and I9

The child lives in a somewhat narrow world of personal contacts

Things hardly come within his experiece unless they touch intime ately his own well being and that of his family and friebds

His world is a world of persons with heir personal interests rahter than of facts and lawas .

Not truth in the sense of conformity to external fact butaffectieh , and synpathy are the key -note ."

Contrast the incendent of the Cylinders .

THE CORRELATIONS HANGING TOGETHER

GREAT CONTRAST HERE .

DEWEY The things that occupy him are helf together by the unity od personal and social interests which his life carries along .

No idea of the child's intellect - active atthe centre - relating , and building up and forming into a viving system the facts of experience - reating thsu a world insede corres pending to the real world outside .

Example the nine times table story

~~EXTRICATIONS~~ Classification is not a matter of child experience things do not come to the individual pigeon holed -- yes but the child is always corelatin .

Here is your tea for the pipe  
grammy ( music )

Even from the very beginnign The Story in the nurses arms the reason the rpimordial energy there from the start .

The Curriculum with Dewey ( ch snsc p 20

We present the child with MATERIALISED ABRTRASTIONS and the child takes off - on his own wings - into the abstract

DEWEY CLASSIFICATION IS NOT A MATTER OF CHILD EXPERIENCE

HOW WRONG THIS IS

THE SENSORIAL MATERIALS

they lead the child to  
make abstractions - length , width , colour , their  
to  
ain bring order into the child many experiences .

examples ...the sky is blue

the plate is a circle ,  
window a rectangle .

The Childs natural logic -----

the wood for the pie crust  
The leaf for the pipe  
I want to go next door ,  
A baby with a head at each end .

The prepared environment is to make it easier for the child  
to do what he is in any case trying to do to classify  
and build up a ordered system in his mind .

NO NEED TO DRAG IN A SOCIAL PROJECT OR SOCIAL PROBLEMS  
OR ANY ARTIFICIAL PROBLEMS : THE CHILD WILL DO IT ANYHOW .

ON THE QUESTION OF THE CURRICULUM AND THE CHILD

see pa 21 sch and c)"the narrow and ~~ix~~personal world of  
the child and the impersonal infinitely extended world of  
space and time "NO' THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT which is  
brought to the child and simplified .

The child chooses -- led by an inner guide a  
thing Dewey never saw or even imagined.'

Dewey contrast THE ABSTRACT PRINCIPLE OF LOGICAL CLASSIFICATION  
AND ARRANGEMENT AND THE PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL BONDS  
OF THE CHILD LIFE .Montessor on the other hand presents  
the child with Materialised Abstractions and they are

So we have a living pulsating personal entity - grasping and choosing and absorbing - according to the Sensitive Periods form a Prepared Environment.

But note it is also a Social Environment and the child lives in free contact with that social environment - really freer than if he was being directed along a project in a herd .

One has to see it to realise it - this Joy in mathematics which comes from THE AWAKENED CHILD - It is emphatically not a TOOL SUBJECT .

MONTESSORI AND DEWEY

- CHAPTER I Research or Discovery in Education
- Chapter II The Two Natures in the Child
- Chapter III The Conditions necessary for the New Children .

.....

CONTRAST IN METHODS

Dewey never saw the New Children - never realised the importance of the Great Discovery ,

The nature of a thing is expressed in its actions  
 Different ideas of the Nature of the child .

The nature of the Learning Process -of knowledge

With Montessori - right from the beginning a spontaneous process .

The child builds up his own system of ideas  
 ( through activity on the external world )

Examples a) the six weeks old incident

b) Attention - see the cylinders and

Psychology in Advanced Vol I

~~THESE BOOKS ARE NOT TO BE USED IN THE MONTESSORI METHOD~~

Whereas with Dewey it is a social stimulation

See The Book p 95 *which book?*

child is stimulated to act as a member of the community .

This was because he did not believe that the Intellect was made to know -- knowledge for its own sake .

hence a) the social stimulus ( not the little hermit )

b-The Tool subjects .

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MONTESORI AND DEWEY NOTES

They both agreed on the value of Experience and the necessity of Activity -----

but .....

the important thing is what kind of experience -- and  
what kind of activity .

Both believed in "Continuity "

but again .... how different .

The principle of the HOOK

Both believed in the necessity of Freedom

D. Taked of it a lot - but never understood it in the sense that Montessori did - or the Mpnt child expreiences daily

This seen in the Followers - "the Sctivity School "

Aslo with Dewey it is always a collective freedom freedom to wlk along together the same path - the

PROJRCY under the collective guidance of the Adult .

How ~~txe~~different THE PREPARED ENVIRONEMTN AND THE ABSORBENT MIND --- and THE PREPARED PATHS TO CULTURE .

The Crux of the whole matter lies in The New NE W RELATIONSHIP - the removal of the adult interference

Must be the ~~PREP~~ PREPARED ENVIRONMENT FOR THIS ABSORBENT MIND

To realise it you have to see this child acting freely in the Prepared environ ment .



# Things not Persons

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a

MONTESSORI AND DEWEY SOME GLARING CONTRASTS

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Dewey p 63

" Little children have their observations and thoughts directed mainly towards people : what they do , how they behave , what they are occupied with , and what comes of it " Their interest is of a personal rather than an objective or intellectual sort . "

Here it would be enough just simply to quote the extract from the Secret of Childhood . p 133-4.

"The first phenomenon that attracted my attention .

Comment is not necessary : the two quotations speak for themselves .

The whole elan vital that keeps going a Montessori class for under-fives simply depends on the unceasing spontaneous interest of children in things , rather than in persons . But the "things" must be of such a nature that they appeal to some deep seated interest in the children of that age ( correspond to their sensitive periods which are dominant in that age . The Montessori class is so successful just because it is a prepared environment in which the ABSORBENT MIND of the children can find what it needs . In this environment you will find first of all the Exercises of Practical life , which are so helpful in bringing about a progressive co-ordination of the child's voluntary muscular system ( Progressive Incarnation of the child's mind in its body ) And you will also find the great variety of Sensorial materials , which appeal so strongly to the child at this stage when the activity of the senses means so much to him . You will also find the children at this stage are given Lessons in Grace

b  
58

and Courtesy . These have to do with persons ~~rather than~~  
~~things~~ it is true ; but their appeal lies in the definite  
actions which are presented to the children to perform themselves -  
such as handing another person a chair , begging pardon for  
causing an interruption , or handing a pair of scissors properly  
to another person .

" Its your moustache he wants "

We find at this point an immense chasm , as it were , fixed  
between Dewey and Montessori as interpreters of the child .  
Anyone who worked with Montessori soon realised what a depth  
of meaning there is in the title she gave to the small child  
- "il giovane esploratore - the Young Explorer .( See the  
chapter under this title in Maria Montessori Her Life and Work  
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in the pram .A rather pompous looking gentleman with a large  
handle bar moustache is bending over the baby in the pram  
eagerly  
who is lifting up its tiny arms towards the gentleman .The  
latter looks very ~~pleased~~ <sup>and self complacent</sup> pleased ~~with the baby~~  
~~at the~~ at the interest that baby seems to be taking in  
him . But the little girl , who is wheel the pram , has a much  
more accurate grasp of the situation and ( rather to the man's  
chagrin ) quite remarks "It's your moustache he wants " ( with  
the implied meaning "not you.

Dewey talked a good deal about Freedom in the School room but he never really gave it , nor understood true psychological character of the freedom which Montessori children enjoyed in their prepared environment .Until you give any form of life the freedom required for its true development you can never know the true nature of that organism ;

The Simile of the ~~Monkey~~ monkey .

DIFFERENCES THE PRESENTATION OF CULTURE

---

The Project System compared with the Prepared paths to Culture .

The Principle of the HOOK

IT WAS THE ~~DISCOVERY~~ WHICH GAVE RISE TO THE METHOD.

NOT A THEORY OR A PHILOSOPHY

I AM NOT INTERESTED IN PHILOSOPHIES ONLY THE FACTS

)))-----

TOOL SUBJECTS AND SENSITIVE PERIODS

---

Dewey never understood about the Sensitive Periods and their power except in a vague sort of way - "striking while the iron is hot -- .

The three Rs come with Dewey at a later date because he did not realise the value of the Sensitive Periods of touch , sound , language , the Absorbent Mind ,-- the explosion into writing .

Go into any good Montessori School and you will find the children reading and writing at six years of age - ditto with Number . No idea of the love for Maths which all children have (Blaise Pascal) He is utilitarian with regard to it like the ~~Barlow~~ in Shakespeare I cannot recon I have not the spirit of a tapster ! Dewey never saw or imagined <sup>the</sup> Hungry Lions

THE NEW CHILDREN - A MIRACLE IN EDUCATION

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This is not the place to describe the many , various and astonishing events whihc came tumblin one after the other as out of a conjuror's hat , during that first year , 1907, that Annus Mirabilis 1907. , in the first Casa dei Bambini in Rome . If any reader is not acquainted with these happenings it would be a great help towards the better understanding of this essay if he were to pause here and read them .This could be done by reading Montessori's own account of them in her SECRET OF CHILDHOOD , Chapt II , especially that part of it entitle "What They Showed me ".A similar account can be found in the present writers nook MARIA MONTESSORI HER LIFE AND WORK in chapter II under the title Discovery .

From our present point of view what is importance is to lay stress upon the fact that the real cause of the big stir set going by Montessori in the field of education fifty years ago was not the discovery of a "ew Method but - to put it succinctly - the Discovery of the Child . It is not too much to say that to many of those who witnessed these " revelations " by the children it seemd that anew dimension had been added to human nature in the soul of the child .

For it was not only Montessori but hundreds of others who came from far and near to Rome to see things for themselves who received the same impression .To take <sup>an</sup> ~~me~~ example . The London Times ( Educational Supplement ) sent out its sub-editor , Mrs Sheila Radice , to find out what all the fuss was about , and write up this new educational movement which had taken the world by storm .On her return she published a book , the title of which was THE NEW CHILDREN . Another observer described his impressions under the

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title THE DISCOVERY OF THE HUMAN SOUL ,and still a third as a  
MIRACLE IN EDUCATION . The Queen of Italy at that time , Queen  
Margherita , was a frequent visitor to Dr Montessori's schools  
and became a close friend of Montessori .She remarked "I prophesy  
that a new philosophy of life will arise from what we are learning  
from these children ". The head of a well-known Religious Order  
remarked that "This is a discovery more important than Marconi's"

Even to-day - after fifty years - the impression made on most  
discerning people when they visit a good Montessori School for the  
first time is not dissimilar . They are apt to make such a comment  
as ."These children do not behave like ordinary children , the  
children I have known all my life .They are changed in character ,  
more concentrated ,better mannered ,more socially developed , and  
infinitely more self-disciplined : in a word they are like New  
Children "

( on topage 26)

27 62  
the slum tenement building into the orderly , self-disciplined ,  
intellectually eager , order -loving individuals .... into in  
fact the new children . No one was more surprised at this  
unexpected revelation of the deeper nature in the child than she  
herself was . And here we might remind ourselves of something  
that Montessori herself was never tired of repeating , viz that  
one - if not the chief factor in bringing about this revelation  
was the almost unique absence of adult interference , a circum-  
stance which made it possible for the children to act spontaneously

A NEW METHOD AND A NEW SCIENCE OF EDUCATION COMES

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INTO EXISTENCE

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In her own brilliant account of this period Montessori  
tells us how she came to provide the children with the letters  
of the alphabet - the sand paper letters and the card-board cut  
out letters for composing words . She had no intention at the  
outset of teaching these four and four and a half year olds how  
to read and write for " I shared the general prejudice that it  
was necessary to begin writing as late as possible - certainly  
not before the age of six " . This led to the well -known  
"explosion into writing "(I) followed some six months later by  
the explosion into "reading . Thereupon followed the creation of the  
"reading Commands , and then more advanced materials for reading  
in the form of a little library .

And so once started one thing led to another because  
the insatiable appetite of new knowledge shown by the children  
increased by what it fed on . The same sort of thing happened  
in the sphere of Number . The Number rods -most valuable in  
themselves at a certain initial stage - soon proved to need  
to be supplemented by other and more advanced number materials .

If you were to ask the average educated person to-day ( or at least till two or three years ago ) who was Montessori the great majority of them would probably reply that she was an Italian lady who invented a new method of education for small children - a sort of modified Kindergarten . And some of them the more ( mis ! ) informed might go on to add ; but the method is out of date now having been superceded (or eclipsed ) by others more in line with the findings of the most modern psychological research . Almost certainly you would not hear any of them talking about A Miracle in Education , The Discovery of the Human Soul or The New Children . How and why did it come about in the intervening years that Montessori thus came to be associated in the general mind ~~xxx~~ with an educational Method and not with the astonishing revelation of The New Children ? And which is the more important the more essential thing -- the Montessori Method or the New Children - the discovery of that Deep nature in all normal children of which we have spoken at length above ? Montessori herself constantly in later years spoke of her method "il mio metodo " and actually wrote a book under that title . How can we reconcile these apparently contradictory points of view ?

#### NO METHOD AT THE BEGINNING

Briefly the answer to this is as follows : when Montessori began her work with the slum children in San Lorenzo she had no method : The Montessori "method" did not as yet exist . She makes it quite clear and beyond any doubt . What came first was the unexpected revelation of the New children - the conversion of these shy , timid , apparently ignorant young children from the

necessary for bringing them into existence again. That is why we can now say with scientific certainty that the "New Children" as they were called when they appeared in Montessori's slum schools 50 years ago - are not imaginary beings. Their existence is a sober scientific fact. They can be produced for all and sundry to see, provided that the right conditions are prepared, just as you can produce dahlias or sweet peas if you set about it in the right way, that is if you have the right soil, climate and environmental conditions generally.

It will help to clarify our discussion if, at this point, we make a substantial quotation from an article written in by Dr. Montessori and recently printed in the "Communications", The official bulletin of the Association Montessori Internationale. We shall give these quotations at some length, even though in doing so it may entail a certain amount of repetition here and there.

It might interest us to know the conditions under which these two different natures manifest themselves. Those which produce the tendencies belonging to the superficial nature are those which generally exist. One must realize that to awake the ones, belonging to the deeper nature, one could not have made a pre-established plan, because they were unknown and therefore no one could set out in search of them. It was necessary that for causes not entirely due to chance, these manifestations should get the possibility to appear. To understand what happened one must have a vision of two different processes to arrive at psychological knowledge. One is Research. This involves a psychologist who wants to investigate a certain aspect and sets out to do so. He knows beforehand what he wants and proceeds in his investigation by one method or ~~another~~ another.



anest chae

It was to uncheck and unplanned  
removal of the contact between the  
to adult which led to Morrison  
Fred desoy. - formulation of the  
dean nation in to cred.

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MONTESSORI AND DEWEY

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THE NEW SCIENCE OF EDUCATION

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Problems not laws ?

Spontaneous Manifestations in a proper environment

Freedom and Law

Only those things are kept which lead to concentration .

i.e. answer a need of development

which means --these things are chosen by the children

The DIVISIONS OF THIS SCIENCE

Kind of work research differs according to the S.).

This earlier on Progressive Incarnation

Exercise of Practical Life

Sensorial Materials ( aim )

later on more and more reason

and next The elements of culture

Reading and Writing and Number

Later again the Prepared maths describe.

A WHOLE SERIES OF PRINCIPLES ARISE

Analysis of difficulties ,

Control of error .

Freedom to do right.

The Hook .

Different rhythm of the child

Spontaneous expansion of mind . Mont Explosions

Social development ,

No horizontal grading .

Prepared Environment ( Fabre )

Sensorial foundation of intellect ( abstraction )

The new Teacher technique .

The open mind of the scientist .

Fabre and his insects

Immense amount of knowledge spread out -- ready

(many books )

Quote

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LEARNING A TOOL NOT AN END IN ITSELF

It was because Dewey had never seen this , awakened child " this normalised child that had shed his deceptions as a snake its skin , this child who "worked all day and every day " " withno other stimulus than the work itself "(I) that he looked upon the acquisition of knowledge for the child as a means to an end . He could not imagine that children would spend long hours working at sums like long division and square root just of rthe love of it . This was because he did not know the conditions that were necessary for such work - e.g freedom of choice , the Prepared Evironment , previous initiation into a material which elicited repetition , during which the very essence of the operation in question was takenoff by the "intellectus agens "and incorporated into the child's whole living body of knowledge .

In the same way - because he was unacquainted with the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Montessori's doctrine of Sensitive <sup>P</sup>eriods in development he did not realise that there was a period in the child's life - from birth to say 6 or 7 when it was passing through the Sensitive <sup>P</sup>eriod for Language . And just because in these early years there is this mysterious affinity between the soulf of the child and the language it hears in its environment the child has an interest in everything which has to do with language . And therefore during the period from 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  to six - given the right materials such as the sand paper letters and the movable alphabet etc the child will learn to write spontaneously and after - always through an activity -to read also . Dewey had no notion of this .For him learning to read and write for the child are matters which ~~xxxxxxx~~ have not sufficient interest in themselves and must be motivated

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by other and extrinsic interests the carrying out of which necessitate the acquisition of these skills . Because he has never really observed free children he has no idea that there is in children at this early stage  $3\frac{1}{2}$   $4\frac{1}{2}$  a real interest in the letters of the alphabet in themselves as forms and sounds - still on a sensorial level . ~~xxxxxxx~~ I think it would be a safe bet to say that Dewey had never seen such a phenomenon as this - that a child will compose a word like "sofa " or "manifest " correctly with the movable letters and then ten minutes afterwards not be able to read the very word which he himself has composed . We have not time to pause to explain why this is so at a certain stage , but mention it to show that with the Montessori child the educator makes use of all sorts of mysterious interests - the evanescent interests of the sensitive periods - for helping the child to acquire spontaneously all sorts of skills which Dewey and others set out to make the child acquire two or even three years after with much labour and by means of interests extrinsic such as the carrying out of projects which cannot be done without knowing how to write . The same with Reading and Number . Dewey had no conception of such a graded series of occupations - or materials in fact Arithmetic for instance along which each child can pass at his own rate going from one material to another along a " prepared path " And in doing so this child - who is working spontaneously the whole time - and individually learns not only the very structure of Number and the Hierarchy of Numbers but also how to perform the four operations and much beside in numbers up to thousands and millions . And in all this the interest which drives the child on is an intrinsic one : it is the mind of the " awakened child " - the human intellect - learning and knowing in a

THEIR DIFFERENT APPROACH

MONTESSORI - Discovery : Dewey Research  
66665555

Both Montessori and Dewey approached the sphere of education from without : they were not in the teaching profession and did not intend to enter and remain in it . Both were University Professors --one a Doctor of Medicine and one a Dr of Philosophy.

But the manner in which they came eventually to enter this sphere in which they were not to exercise such great influence was quite different .

In the case of D. one might say that - as a prof of Philosophy he felt it was ~~xxxxxx~~ fitting - if not even a duty - to throw the light of his philosophical ideals on the problems of education which were uppermost in his mind . Quite deliberately he set up his " experimental school " at Columbia University with the aim of using it as a means of research into these problems .

School and child

When the school was started there were certain ideas in mind - perhaps it would be better to say questions and problems certain points which seemed worth while to test .....

The teachers started with question marks rather than with fixed rules , and if any answer had been reached it is the teachers in the schools which have supplied them ...

And Dewey mentions Four such problems or questions .

page 14

I) See the four rules and dictate them .

::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::

Thus Dewey deliberately set himself a scheme of educational research - and set out in it to find out certain things.

Dewey p 63

" Little children have their observations and thoughts directed mainly towards people : what they do , how they behave , what they are occupied with , and what comes of it " Their interest is of a personal rather than an objective or intellectual sort . "

Here it would be enough just simply to quote the extract from the Secret of Childhood . p 133-4.

"The first phenomenon that attracted my attention .

Comment is not necessary : the two quotations speak for themselves .

The whole elan vital that keeps going a Montessori class for under-fives simply depends on the unceasing spontaneous interest of children in things , rather than in persons . But the "things" must be of such a nature that they appeal to some deep seated interest in the children of that age ( correspond to their sensitive periods which are dominant in that age . The Montessori class is so successful just because it is a prepared environment in which the ABSORBEN MIND of the children can find what it needs . In this environment you will find first of all the Exercises of Practical life , which are so helpful in bringing about a progressive co-ordination of the child's voluntary muscular system ( Progressive Incarnation of the child's mind in its body ) and you will also find the great variety of Sensorial materials , which appeal so strongly to the child at this stage when the activity of the senses means so much to him . You will

and Courtesy . These have to do with persons ~~rather than~~  
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causing an interruption , or handing a pair of scissors properly  
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" Its your moustache he wants "

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We find at this point an immense chasm , as it were , fixed  
between Dewey and Montessori as interpreters of the child .  
Anyone who worked with Montessori soon realised what a depth  
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- "il giovane esploratore - the Young Explorer .( See the  
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more accurate grasp of the situation and ( rather to the man's  
chagrin ) quietly remarks "It's your moustache he wants " ( with  
the implied meaning "not you.

## EPILOGUE

Some of those who have bravely struggled through this essay as far as this point may be inclined to think that in narrowing the matter down to the difference between discovery and research we have oversimplified the differences between Montessori and Dewey. Much more of course could have been said. We might for instance have dwelt on some of the practical differences in method - particularly in the manner in which each individual Montessori child travels at his own pace and his own time along the various Prepared Paths to Culture ( see MMLife page ) and the way in which a group of children are guided collectively by the teacher along the various educational paths which open up - under the suggestion and guidance of the teacher in pursuing some project as a visit to a coal mine or a medieval castle or what have you. Or again we might have dwelt on Dewey's influence on Dewey of the ideals of democracy and compare the manner in which each assist the development of the social instincts.

Notwithstanding all this we still stick to our original thesis - viz that no one can really get down to the fundamental difference between Montessori and Dewey who does not appreciate the difference we have drawn above ( assisted by Montessori herself ) between Discovery and Research.

Perhaps I can best conclude this essay with two anecdotes and two corresponding quotations.

We might have pointed out how Montessori's very spiritual view of the child and the office of the directress affected fundamentally her approach to the question of the Training of Teachers. (The first thing she would be Montessori



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directress has to do is to purge herself as far as it is possible of the two sins of Pride and Anger ) Or again we might point out how both Montessori and Dewey recognised the importance of activity in the child ( witness the well known story of Dewey going round the stores in New York looking for little tables for children to work at not just for listening . at .And we should have to point out at the same time how fundamentally different were the principles which guided the activities of the children under the two systems . All these things and many more besides could have been brought under review and not without profit .

Nevertheless we still stick to our original thesis - viz that to get right down to the bed rock fundamental difference between Montessori and Dewey ( and with Dewey a host of other American educators ) it is necessary to appreciate with absolute clarity the difference we have drawn above - with Montessori's help - between Discovery and Research .

Perhaps we can best conclude this essay by two anecdotes about Montessori and two corresponding quotations .

In the summer of 1950 Montessori who was then eighty years of age spent a couple of months or so vacation at a secluded pensione near the village of Iglis , which is situated on the hills that look down into the city of Innsbruck . The present writer was also living at that time in the same district ; and most mornings he would call on the Dottoressa to pay his respects and if he was in the mood for it to enjoy her conversation .

One morning on entering the room where she lived I found her busy with pencil and paper . She stopped as soon as I entered and pushed the ~~MS~~ carelessly on one side ,

at the same time asking me to be seated .I enquired what was the subject on which she had been expressing her ideas ."It is nothing " ( nulla ) she said "nothing at all "; "it is not worth looking at "Then she went on to the effect that she had been trying to jot down some thoughts with regard to the beginning of her work over half a century ago but that she did not find it so easy to express her ideas as formerly . At this she picked up the sheets of paper and was about to drop them into the waste paper basket when I begged her to let me have them rather than that<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Still protesting that it was not really worth looking at she eventually changed her intention and rather reluctantly I thought handed the MS into my keeping .Later on she expressed herself in conversation something as follows ; people are always saying that I created the Montessori method and through that became famous ; but it is not true . First there came the wonderful revelations of what some people called "the new children " and then - and only after that did my method come into existence .

During the last years of her long life this idea was constantly with her ; and indeed at times tinged her expression with a sober melancholy . When I got home I read the manuscript which has a number of corrections in it indicating her efforts to express ever more accurately what was in her mind . This is what was written on it :

possible reason

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First . Why did ~~the~~ this great and wide-spread interest in Montessorio and her ideas die out so completely in the States that a whole generation <sup>who</sup> has sprung up who - up till a few years ago had hardly heard of the name Montessori , and did not know what it stood for .

Second . What is there in this Montessori <sup>C</sup> idea so true and vital that now - after a break of nearly forty years - has enabled it to return again more powerful and dynamic than ever  $\frac{1}{2}$

We will briefly try to answer ~~the first question~~ answer the first question first . Without doubt one of the reasons was that far too many people studied the method superficially ; and thinking they knew all about it started off Montessori schools of their own , many of which were failures - like the seeds mentioned in the gospel that fell on stony ground where the soil was shallow . For with Montessori it is particularly true what the old Latin maxim says Corruptio optima pessima - the best becomes the worst when corrupted . ~~Shallow too and superficial~~ were many of the centres ~~which~~ which purported to train teachers in the Montessori Method . Another reason was that Montessori herself did not return to America but spent the rest of her life in Europe and the East - so that the American Montessori movement lost touch with its foundress and did not keep abreast with the astonishing stream of new ideas which poured from the fertile brain of the Dottoressa and the ever widening and deepening development of the application of her principles ~~in the home and later age groups~~ in the home and later age groups than those in the first Casa dei Bambini . But perhaps the most powerful of all the reasons was the adverse influence of John Dewey who became the dominant

a Professor of Education at a Jesuit university in which he makes a very similar remark ( fifty years afreer ' ) Discussing the suggestion put forward by some of Montessori's followers to "intititutionalis "into the University educational curriculum as a part of it , he says "I would say that Montessor~~x~~ should be introduced into college work as a distinct and separate system of educationm,after the manner we Haddled it last summer (I).To take it apart and piecemeal dissect it in method classes would be to ruin it . It is more than a series of methods :it is an integral way of life "

It is only those who have had the opportunity of seeing with their own eyes the manner in which these children live together and work in the free society within the Prepared Environement that are able to realise the degree of hopeful truth which is expressed in Montessori's slogan "A New Wor~~ld~~d for a New Man " .

Next 77  
3

CONTINUATION FROM THE PASTED IN EXTRACTS FROM THE  
TWO NATURES .....

))))))))))))))))))))))))))))))

l.e/

This is not the place to describe in any detail the many and various events that came one after the other unexpectedly tumbling into existence - as from a magicians box - <sup>during that</sup> ~~in that~~ first annus mirabilis <sup>the first</sup> ~~the first~~ IN ~~THE~~ <sup>the first</sup> CASA DEI BAMBINI in Rome in 1907 .

What is important from our present point of view is the uncontrovertible fact that Montessori <sup>is great discover</sup> ~~without expecting it, realised that she had made a staggering~~ and epoch-making discovery about the <sup>truth</sup> ~~the~~ nature of the child . It is not too much to say that she had made <sup>such</sup> ~~such~~ a discovery ~~as~~ <sup>has</sup> seemed to add a new dimension to the soul of the child . <sup>And</sup> ~~not only~~ Montessori ~~herself~~ but <sup>those</sup> ~~many others~~ who witnessed these same events <sup>received</sup> ~~had~~ exactly the same impression . To take one example . The London Times Educational Supplement sent out one of their editors , the late Mrs Sheila Radice , <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>expresly</sup> ~~to study and write up~~ this new educational movement in Rome which had taken the whole world by storm . <sup>On her</sup> ~~When she returned~~ Mrs Radice wrote a book <sup>(now out of print)</sup> ~~on her~~ observations and experiences and gave it the title The New Children . <sup>was a</sup> ~~And this is a~~ phrase which <sup>keeps</sup> ~~returns~~ to one's mind when trying to write about the behaviour of those little slum children in the San Lorenzo quarter in Rome . And they are words that, even to-day, most aptly <sup>portray</sup> ~~describe~~ the impact ~~of~~ which ~~is~~ made by most people when they visit a good Montessori Class for the first time . They say with astonishment "Well , these are not ordinary children & they are not the children I have been acquainted with all my life ; they are ( to use <sup>Pestalozzi's</sup> ~~Pestalozzi's~~ phrase) like children from another planet " they are in fact "new children " . The Queen Margherita of Italy , who was a great

NP

Constantly re-occurring in the writings of those who described in these days

friend of Montessori and often visited her schools , used to say "I believe that from what we see going on in these schools there will arise some day a new philosophy of life " .That was half a cent<sup>ury</sup> ago ; and ever hing that has happened since has tended to show how penetrating was her judgement . It is only when one has had the opportunity of seeing with ones own eyes the manner in which these sm all children live and work

together, in the true liberty of the Prepared Environment ~~which~~ Montessori has ~~prep~~ built up for them - it is only then that one ~~can~~ <sup>realize a degree</sup> begin to see what a lot of hopeful truth lies in Montessori's slogan "A New World for a New Man" .

Put in here  
© Henry Co  
Fly Mail

To come back now to the main thesis of our essay - the comparison bewteen Montessori and Dewey ; We can say that the whole point of the difference between these two lies in this Dewey never saw , and never worked with , and never studied these New Children - these children liberated from the undue interference of any adults ( however clever and affectionate ) working in the Prepared Environment - and as they lived and worked in <sup>a</sup> joyous society moving triumphantly and serenely and indiviually along the PREPARED PATHS TO CULTURE which surrounded them as part of their environement . Not - en passant must we forget that the trained and sypmathetic directress is an essential part of that Prepared Environment .

We repeat : we are quite sure that Dewey never saw these " Awakened Children " ( as Montessori sometimes called them ) never properly realised their capabilites <sup>Or to express it</sup> ~~or better still~~ was never really intimately acquainted - thorough his own experience - with the characterisitics of that "deeper nature " outlined above . ~~Because Dewey was a remarkably brilliant~~

Dewey he

The ... ..

We repeat : we are quite sure that Dewey was never personally acquainted with these "New Children " - these " Awakened Children " nor ever had realised their immense potentialities . Or to put it in another way - he never saw with his own eyes the true characteristics of the Deeper Nature that lies hidden in every child .We feel we can say this with confidence because Dewey was a sincere observer of such facts that came under his notice; and being so he would never have said the things he did about the nature and manner of thinking and acting of small children .

Dewey and Montessori were alike in this that they both realised with absolute clarity that the basic principle in education is that a child should learn through his own experience .

As Dewey says "I assume that amidst all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference : namely the organic connection between education and personal experience "( Experience and Education p 12 )Both realise the importance of activity on the part of the child rather than the teacher - in theory at least . I myself heard Montessori in one of her lectures describe the story of Dewey's vain search in the stores of New York to find little tables where the children could sit and be active and the reply of the salesman that they only had the desks which were made primarily for the children to listen to the teacher .

Dewey realised too that not any kind of experience was educative "The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely

or equally educative " ( Ibi d p. 13 ) Or again "the more definitely and sincerely it is held that education is a development from within , by , and for experience the more important it is that there shall be a clear ~~xxx~~ conception of what experience is .

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"Because of the idea that human intelligence developed in connection with the needs and opportunities of action, the core activity of the school was to be found in occupation, rather than in what are conventionally termed studies.

Study in the sense of enquiry and its outcome in the gathering and retention of information was to be an outgrowth of the pursuit of certain continuous or consecutive occupational activities. Since the development of the intelligence and knowledge of mankind had been a cooperative matter, and culture in its broadest sense a collective creation, occupations were to be selected which related those engaged in them to the basic need of developing life, and demand cooperation and division of work, and constant intellectual exchange by means of mutual communication and record.

Since the integration of the individual and the social is impossible except when the individual lives in close association with others in the constant give and take of experience it seemed that education could prepare the young for future social life only when the school was itself a cooperative society on a small scale. therefore the first factor in bringing about the desired coordination of these occupations was the establishment of the school itself as a form of community life."

#### TOOL SUBJECTS

The primary skills in reading, writing, and numbers, were to grow out of the needs and the results of activities.

Moreover since basic operations involve relations to materials and forces of nature, just as processes of living together involve social invention, organisation and the establishment of human bonds---- knowledge was to grow out of the active contact with things inherent in consecutive energies.

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The development of character and the management of what is ordinarily called discipline were to be as far as possible the outgrowth of shared community life in which teachers were guides and leaders .

The substratum of the educative process was thus to develop from the idea that the young have native needs and native tendencies of curiosity, love of active occupations , the desire for the association and mutual exchange which provide the intrinsic leverage for educational growth in knowledge understanding and conduct .

#### THE LABORATORY

The name laboratory gives a key to the work of the school . A laboratory is as the word implies a place for activity , for work for the consecutive carrying out of an occupation ... A laboratory also implies directive idea, leading hypothesis , that as they are applied , lead to new understandings ....

#### TWO PRINCIPLES

In the ideal back of the plan two cardinal principles were held in mind ~~fixes~~

FIRST all educational relationship the starting point is the impulse of the child to action , his desire responding to the surrounding stimuli and seeking expression in concrete form .

SECOND The educational process is to supply the material and the positive and negative conditions - the let and hindrance - so that his expression , intellectually controlled , may take a normal direction that is social in both form and feeling .

#### THE MATERIALS FOR STUDY

#### OR VERSUS

#### THE PREPARED PATHS .

All activities having to do with such basic and continuing needs of life as shelter , clothing , and food became the central focus of a developing curriculum

THE NEW SCIENCE OF EDUCATION

Dewey brought a preconceived idea of education ....

education as the expression of philosophy

quote pp...

The Social end of it ---

or the Group as the means and the stimulus

Because the child was directed by the adult ( though he pretended not to ) in his acquisition of knowledge

because it was all built up round the group

DEWEY NEVER UNDERSTOOD THE REAL NATURE AND CAPACITIES OF THE CHILD .

FREEDOM AND REVELATION

With Dewey the child was really never free as an individual to choose his own work and keep at it at his own pace and at his own time - and individually .... contrast the project method

' Thus he could never build up a system of knowledge from within

.... GOING FROM HIS OWN- organised "Known " to the individually acquired unknown

from the Know to the Unknown --- yes ---

BUT WHAT KIND OF AN KNOWN )) AND WHOSE ?  
to  
who's not say ? it is the known .

The principle of Correlation was an external one of the child and the nine times table .

With Montessori it is the child's own individual Experience not something forced upon him by the Project Social Group .

THERE IS REALLY ~~XNO~~ SUCH THING AS "GROUP KNOWLEDGE "

Because Dewey had never seen the liberated child working he  
 NEVER UNDERSTOOD THE TRUE NATURE OF THE WAY THE CHILD'S  
 MIND DEVELOPMENT -THE TRUE NATURE OF MENTAL EXPANSION .  
 HE NEVER SAW THE INTENSE CONCENTRATION " ATTENTION "  
 Never understood the nature of that vital construction  
 at the CENTRE which accompanied the work at the PERIPHERY .

THE CENTRE AND THE PERIPHER

Develope this - and in doing so make clear that

- 1) it is essentially an individual thing
- 2) a Sponatenous thing .
- 3)- nothing to do with the group stimulus
- 4) It was a Grasping " from within  $\frac{1}{2}$
- 5) It was not an instinctive thing ----

-- it was a purely intellectual operation

- 6) It led to those flashes of Illumination - Montessori  
 explosions -- which are essentially Individual acts.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ATTENTION

Compare with what James said and prophesied .

Quote Advanced Method p 153

compare with the child sucking

"the breast and milk of the spirit .

The Two ~~is~~ approached to the door -

open from witjin and not without .

touching the metot - ego

Known and Unknown again

Is it a known and unknown made by the teacher --- OR

Passing from an inner vital unknown in a living system

- things seen b which were therebefore but suddenly illum-

inated by a LIGHT FROM WITHIN (Advance p 160 The internal  
 not the effect of external factors)

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THE NEW SCIENCE OF EDUCATION

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The New Pedagogy and the Necessity of Liberty

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Advanced If there be a spiritual force working within the child by which he may open the door of his attention, the problem of pedagogy which necessarily presents itself is a problem of liberty, rather than a problem of pedagogic art effecting the construction of the child

The foundations of the New pedagogy are

- a) the bestowal of nourishment suitable to his psychic needs by means of external objects -- and-- readiness
- b) readiness to respect liberty of development in the most perfect manner possible .Advance P 162

Quote

The more a man's inner life shall have grown normally exercising itself in accordance with the provident laws of nature, and forming an individuality, the more richly will he be endowed with a strong will and a well balanced mind.

To be ready for a struggle it is not necessary to have struggled from one's birth; but it is necessary to be strong.

THE PREPARATIONS OF LIFE ARE INDIRECT.

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) THE PREPARATION IN THE SECRET PLACES OF NATURE  
excellent quote .....p168 and I 67 Advanced.

THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN

The vitally known inside calls to unknown outside

Adv Method 163

The INSTINCTS AND INTELLIGENCE

\* Interest begins with primordial instinct then to a discerning interest - transforming an impulse to a conscious and voluntary quest ½Adv Method p 163

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INSTINCTS AND REASON CONTD.

Quote adv M p I63

"When the child has added a ~~significant~~ cognition to the primitive impulse which ~~drives~~ directs his attention to the external things, he has acquired other relations with the world, of other forms of interest (higher): these are no longer those primitive ones which are bound up with a species of primordial ~~instinct~~ instinct, but have become a discerning interest based on the conquests of intelligence.

It is true that all these new conquests are fundamentally and profoundly based on the psychological needs of the individual; but the intellectual interest has now been added, transforming ~~the~~ an impulse into a conscious voluntary quest.

The KNOW AND THE UNKNOWN AGAIN

THE BEGINNING.

Together with the first psychical exercises the first co-ordinated cognitions will be fixed in the child's mind and the Known will begin to exist in him, providing the first germs of an intellectual interest, supplementing his instinctive interest.

BUT BUT (referring to the ordinary jargon of known to the unknown etc .... (go on from here P. I62-3 Advanced)

FROM THE KNOWN TO THE UNKNOWN

The progression from the known to the unknown does not proceed from object to object, as would be assumed by the master who does not bring the <sup>about</sup> development of ideas from a CENTRE but merely unites them in a chain, without any definite purpose, allowing the mind to wander aimlessly, though bound to himself.

Here, on the other hand, the known establishes itself in the child as a COMPLEX SYSTEM OF IDEAS, which was actively constructed by the child himself, during a series of psychical processes.

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sending in themselves an internal formation a psychical growth .

Advanced M I62- 63

THE MIND THAT KNOWS AND WANTS TO KNOW

When the mind acquires new knowledge in this vital manner passing through the operation of a vital Centre from the known to the unknown --the operation is one which gives immense pleasure - of a purely intellectual kind . generalisation says Emerson is "the influx of divinity into the mind HENCE THE TRILL THAT ATTENDS".

This is the seeking for knowledge ob se ( Virtus sequenda est ob se -- my Latin primer )

This is what Dewey - and most educationalists - don't understand and don't believe - that the mind works ob se . This is what so surprised people at the beginning and does still when they realise it. This is what Dr Ballard called the MIRACLE OF MONTESSORI  
SEE MM p. 71

This means that all this talk and emphasis on Re - enforcements to Learning is beside the point . Given the right circumstances - the Prepared Environment , the Freedom from adult interference , and the trained ~~the~~ Directress, the class goes by itself . The elan vital - the force that makes it go - in a Montessori class is just this interest and joy which comes from the right use of the mind ( and we must remember that the mind works along with the body )

THE TRUE CENTRE OF CORRELATION

~~This brings us to another important contrast~~ This brings us to another important contrast between M and D. With Dewey (1902 book p 95) the true center of correlation is the child's social activities I believe therefore in the so-called expressive of constructive activities as a center of correlation .

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THE STIMULUS TO WORK --WHERE DOES IT COME FROM

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( TOOL SUBJECTS )

We have seen that with Montessori it comes from within - from the very nature of the intellect - which is made to know - and OBSTACLES BEING REMOVED ( ST THOMAS ) - must operate , as the eye sees or the ear hears.

It is the human mind - spirit - going forth triumphant to know - to build up a system of knowledge comparable to the world without ( the world within and the world without ) Knowledge is an essential individual thing - mental expansion comes from within - it is the illumination of experience by the light of the intellect .

How different from Dewey . (My pedagogical Creed ) I believe that the only true education comes through the stimulation of the STIMULATION OF THE CHILD'S POWERS AND THE DEMANDS OF THE SOCIAL SITUATION IN WHICH HE FINDS HIMSELF . THE CHILD IS THUS STIMULATED TO ACT AS A MEMBER OF A UNITY ."

Or again .

The child's powers give the starting point for all education but we do not know what these powers mean until we can transform them into their social equivalent . If we eliminate the social factor from the child we are ~~only~~ left only with an abstraction .

The child's powers are the starting point " -- yes - but how are we going to know what they are ....With Montessori we must give the child individual freedom of choice and work in the prepared Environment -- which is the REVEALING ENVIRONMENT . - the adult interference having been removed . And then we see The real child Dewey never saw it just because of his preconceived idea that it must be through the group . It is not to be denied that in Dewey's method the it was nearer to the child real powers because he gave a certain amount of activity



The Logical and Psychological Order

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That the stories of the great Biblical events should come first, and only after that the doctrines derived from them, seems so obviously the right order that one is inclined to wonder however it could have come to be abandoned in favour of the Catechism with its emphasis on purely verbal memory.

It is interesting in this context to recall what it says in the New Testament. It tells us that Our Lord chose His disciples "that they might be with Him". Thereafter, day after day, week after week, and month after month, they lived constantly in His company--somewhat after the manner of an Eastern Ashram. In this way they were enabled to observe His reactions to all sorts of situations, many of them difficult and unexpected. One thinks, for example, of the remark of the young John, "the Son of Thunder", after they had been ejected from an inhospitable village, "Lord wilt Thou that we call down fire from Heaven upon them?" And the Master's quiet reply, "Thou knowest not of what spirit thou art of". Or again, when they met the funeral procession of the widow's son in the street of Nain; or when at a word from the Lord the winds and waves became instantly calm; or the manner in which He dealt with the problem the Pharisees put before Him, when they brought to Him the woman who had committed adultery; and one could mention a score or more of other incidents.

It was only after this prolonged and infinitely variable and wonderful experience of "being with Him", so intimately, that the idea could dawn on them that He was somebody wholly different from the rest of mankind; it was only then that Peter, in answer to Our Lord's query at Caesarea Philippi, could give the memorable answer, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God", or later, when Our Lord said, "Will you also go away?" Peter replied,

"To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life", It was only after "Being with Him" that St. John could write, "Our message concerns that Word, who is Life; what He was from the first, what we have heard about Him, what our own eyes have seen of Him; what it was that met our gaze, and the touch of His hands". (First Epistle I-I). In the light of Our Lord's desertion by His disciples on the night of His Passion it is clear that the invincibility of their Faith did not come until after the Resurrection. It was the story of the empty tomb, and the subsequent appearances, which gave full meaning to Our Lord's statement to Mary of Bethany, "I am the Resurrection and the Life". So we see--always first, the event, and then afterwards, its use as the foundation of an article of the Creed. And surely this is the logical and psychological order to follow in religious instruction. Fenelon sums up the matter in the following passage:

"Stories seem at first to require a long time in the teaching, but the truth is they make the teaching much shorter; besides a story is not a dry lesson like a page of catechism in which the mysteries are separated from their historical frame, and in the former times it was precisely for this reason that children were taught through Bible history. The magnificent method which St. Augustine ordered to be used for unlearned people was not a method arranged by him but was the very method practiced everywhere in the Church from the beginning." (Education des Filles--chapter VI)

#### The Best Stories in the World

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As stories--simply as literature--the Bible stories are the most wonderful in the world. Where could you find, for instance, anything more gripping and dramatic than the story of Abraham setting off at the command of God to offer up his only son as a Sacrifice? In one school where the present writer taught it made such an impression on his class of four to six year olds that, for days after, the children re-enacted the drama in a little copse adjoining the playground during the morning break. The

The Testimony of the Fathers

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In the writings of the Early Fathers it is made abundantly clear that they regarded the Narrative Method, based on the Scriptures, as the best foundation for religious instruction. In the book from which we quoted above Father Tahon gives many passages from the early Fathers in support of this method. He quotes from Tertullian, St. Cyprian (d. 379), St. Cyrila of Jerusalem (d. 386) who said, "even the most insignificant point of Doctrine must not be taught without the help of Scripture." He quotes St. Gregory Nazianzen as saying, "To avoid working among thorns we have levelled our soil; I mean we have imbued our hearers with Holy Scripture, as we ourselves had been imbued with it; henceforth, let us take courage and begin theological instructions."

Passing over the others we come to St. Augustine. It was the great Bishop of Hippo with his brilliant organizing genius who formulated the Narrative Method. In a small treatise entitled "How to teach Doctrine to the Unlearned," he says, "If you have to teach your hearers, you must do so by narrative."

"Your narrative must begin at the beginning of Holy Scripture, at that very chapter which reads 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth.' Your narrative will come to an end only when you have finished telling the story of the present times of the Church....But do not imagine that you have to relate each one of the countless facts mentioned in the five books of Moses, or in the books of Judges and Kings or , or in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles; nay, you have neither time nor need to read or teach all that amount; you have rather to summarize the main lines and leading facts of these stories; among them you will select those that are the more marvellous and pleasing to your hearers and especially those

that are mentioned in our Creed. Some of these facts are, as it were, a precious casket in which are mysteriously enshrined the articles of our Faith; such events must not be quickly related and soon left out of sight, but they must be considered for a good while, turned over and over, opened out wide and clear and presented to the inquiries and contemplation of your hearers. As to events of less importance you will relate them in a brief survey and connect them with the main lines of your narrative, and so you will go on, up to the events of the contemporary times of the Church."

It is clear, from what St. Augustine says, that his efforts--as far as Doctrine is concerned--are directed first to the understanding of it as something which is born from the facts of the narrative, but not definitely first to the memorizing of a doctrine in an abstract definition. This does not imply of course that there should be no memorizing; but the definition and its memorizing should come after the understanding--thus following the natural tendency of the mind.