

SUMMARY OVERVIEW

DEEP DIALOGUE & THE GLOBAL POWER OF THE MONTESSORI PARADIGM

Ashok Gangadean

“The Child is truly a miraculous being, and this should be felt deeply by the educator” – Maria Montessori

At the heart of Maria Montessori’s paradigm of integral education for educating the whole child is a remarkable vision of persons as sacred spiritual beings. Her model of education is profoundly shaped by her keen sense of that of the divine in every person, hence the supreme importance of personal freedom, the formation of the sacred individual, the sanctity of choice and self determination at every stage of the development of the Self. What is remarkable is that her vision of the person is well grounded in and reflects a global consensus of the collective wisdom of the great philosophical and spiritual traditions of the world.

For when we stand back from privileging the more localized perspective of any one cultural tradition, and enter a more expanded and integral global perspective in holding a wide spectrum of worldviews together, a remarkable vision of the human being, of the true Self, comes into relief. When, for example, we truly enter the diverse worldviews of the Chinese Tao, of the Hindu Aum, of the Buddha’s Dharma, of the Judeo-Christian disclosure of “children of God”...and many other great portraits of the person in the treasury of the cultures of the world, we begin to see the emergence of the human as a global being. And what stands out in this global perspective is the recognition that humans have been in a deep and challenging evolution from an adolescent egocentric image of the individual to a more mature integral, holistic and dialogic human being who becomes a true individual through the cultivation and awakening of interconnectivity within the person, between persons, and with the ecology in the widest sense.

The collective global wisdom disclosed in this global perspective is that Reality is a profound dynamic Unified Field of inter-connectivity wherein all things are essentially interconnected and interactive in mutual co-creation. And there is a global consensus that egocentric patterns of processing self and world inevitably lead to polarities, dualities, fragmentation, alienation, objectification, and thus the source of diverse personal and cultural pathologies – the source of violence. By contrast, the healthful maturation of a whole, integral person comes through the life-long cultivation of deep dialogic habits of heart and mind in which the sacred individual flows in harmony with the texture of Reality and the integral dynamics of holistic natural reason.

Montessori’s vision of the child, and of the maturing individual Self is deeply rooted in this consensus of global wisdom. In this respect her paradigm of integral education, of the stages of development of the child, of the vital importance of freedom and individuality in the educational process can serve as a powerful model for global education in the 21st Century – for the education of global humans who are fit for global citizenship in our global world. We present here a missing “blueprint” for such Integral Education which is grounded in the dynamics of deep dialogue and the integral and holistic dynamics of natural global reason.

Ashok Gangadean, Professor of Philosophy, Haverford College (USA)