

A review of Michael Dorer's *Hatching the Cosmic Egg*

Review by Kitty Bravo

Children naturally look at the world with a great sense of awe and wonder. Dr. Maria Montessori understood children's endless questions and developed Cosmic Education to feed their hungry souls. The new children's book, *Hatching the Cosmic Egg*, by Montessori master storyteller, Michael Dorer, is a wonderful new resource to support children on their path of discovery.

Dorer's book uses the age-old symbolism of the egg as the magical container of life, of the entire universe. The Five Great Themes of Cosmic Education are imbedded within its pages. The main focus of each lesson is contained within an egg and presented with intriguing questions that introduce endless possibilities for children to wonder, and wander into further exploration. It sparks interest with tantalizing vocabulary and just enough facts to encourage further research, leaving them wanting more. Children are sure to want to know more about, "the Sumerians, the Mandinka, the Mayans, the Romans, the Chinese, the Incas," who the book notes, "have built themselves into great civilizations" (pg.27). Or perhaps they will be inspired to write a "sonnet or doggerel, or a psalm or haiku" ... recognizing that "writing enables us to leave our thoughts and ideas for others... even people not yet born (pg. 39).

Hatching the Cosmic Egg is also a deeply personal book. It repeatedly reminds the reader that he or she is part of the universe, "Yes, you are part of the universe, just like all people, all stars, the sun, the mountains and oceans. You are in the universe and the universe is in you, and the universe is like an egg that contains everything (pg. 14).

I had an opportunity to read the book to my 6-year-old grandson, who about a quarter of the way through proclaimed, "I like this book!" Inspired by the illustrations and the content, he shared his knowledge, his imaginings, and his questions as we progressed through the book. There is no better testimony that the enthusiasm for a young boy who was willing to put down the game on his tablet and enthusiastically explore the pages of this book.

Hatching the Cosmic Egg is more than just a book. It comes with a CD of five songs, one for each of the five themes, written and beautifully performed by Andrew Kutt. The songs are professionally produced with full instrumental accompaniment. The lyrics inspire further reflection on the themes of the book, evoking an appreciation for our amazing universe, the coming of life, the role of humans as care takers of the earth and members of the human family, as well as our great discovery of language and mathematics.

It is also possible to purchase a set of exquisitely hand painted nesting Cosmic Eggs providing an opportunity for children to work with concrete materials, cracking open each egg as they tell the story of the universe on their own. The book, the music and the nesting cosmic egg make *Hatching the Cosmic Egg*, a multi-faceted experience with something for every kind of learner. I am confident it will find a place in both Montessori classrooms and in the hearts children all over the world. Michael Dorer, Andrew Kutt, and illustrator Beth Wilson have created something unique and beautiful. Their work is sure to inspire young minds to explore the great question asked by all human beings past, present, and future.

Kitty Bravo has been a Montessori educator for over 40 years. She is currently the Educational Director for the Center for Guided Montessori Studies, www.cgms.edu. She loves to explore the great questions of the universe with her grandchildren and learners of all ages.