

**TITLE: “THE MORAL EXPLORER: THE SECOND PLANE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE MONTESSORI PERSPECTIVE”**

*Asamiddinova Gulkhayo Axmat kizi*

## **Introduction**

Human development unfolds not as a gentle incline, but as a series of deep and powerful transformations. One such turning point arrives around the age of seven — a moment Montessori described as a second birth. While the first plane of development (birth to six) is marked by sensorial exploration, absorption of the environment, and a deeply personal construction of the self, the second plane (approximately age 6–12) signals a decisive shift outward: toward reason, morality, independence, and the wider world. If the child in the first plane is a **sensorial builder**, the child of the second plane is an **intellectual and moral explorer**.

This reflection explores the Montessori view of this profound developmental shift — highlighting how the child’s need for freedom, justice, exploration, and culture becomes the compass for education at this stage. By following the child’s natural trajectory, Montessori offers not only a radical model for schooling, but a compassionate lens through which to understand human potential.

## **A New Child Emerges: Physical and Psychic Metamorphosis**

Around age seven, the transformation is visible to all: baby teeth give way to strong adult ones, soft bodies lengthen into awkward limbs, and curly locks straighten and darken. Yet beneath these physical signs lies an even greater psychological change. Montessori observed that this period is often misunderstood — sometimes dismissed as “the age of rudeness” — yet this roughness is not a regression. It is an awakening.

The sweetness and obedience of the younger child yield to a more questioning, independent spirit. No longer content with passive imitation, the older child seeks **understanding**. “Why?” becomes the guiding question. Why do fish die? Why is something good or bad? Why do we behave in certain ways? The child is no longer content with being told what to do; he must *reason it out*.

This is not misbehavior — it is moral and intellectual hunger.

## **From the Concrete to the Abstract: The Shift in Learning**

Montessori makes a powerful distinction: the younger child is sensorial, the older child is intellectual. In the first plane, learning comes through the hand — through touch, repetition, manipulation of concrete materials. In the second plane, **the mind stretches toward abstraction**, eager to organize, classify, compare, and theorize. It is the golden age of imagination and reasoning.

But the need for *movement* remains. The second-plane child, though mentally active, is still tied to physical experience. Montessori’s genius was in recognizing that **activity and thought** must remain

linked. She designed materials — for grammar, geometry, algebra, and science — that allow abstract concepts to be touched, tested, and explored.

Where traditional schools lecture, Montessori classrooms offer **hands-on investigation**. And it is through this dynamic interplay of mind and hand that culture, science, language, and morality become alive to the child.

### **The Moral Awakening: Justice, Ethics, and the Social Conscience**

One of the most remarkable aspects of the second plane is the child's **emerging moral sensitivity**. This is not the obedience of the toddler, who seeks approval, but a **deep desire to understand right and wrong**. Montessori described children repeatedly asking, "Was this good?" "Why is that bad?" "Is it fair?"

Children at this stage develop a powerful internal compass. They begin to construct a **moral order**, not from rules imposed on them, but from **reasoned reflection** and **social experience**. Montessori tells the story of a child who repeatedly reported classmates' misdeeds, not out of tattling, but to assemble a mental framework of what is ethically acceptable. Once this inner code was solidified, the need to report vanished.

Moreover, the child of this age is sensitive to **injustice**, even toward animals or inanimate beings. A small goat being teased becomes a moment of moral protest. Their love expands: not the emotional attachment of the younger child, but a **moral love**, rooted in empathy and fairness. It is no coincidence that this is the age when children form clubs, create rules, demand fairness, and begin to dream of heroic deeds.

### **A World Beyond the Home: Social Expansion and Cosmic Education**

No longer content to stay within the confines of the home or classroom, the second-plane child hungers for **exploration**. The small, cozy "children's house" no longer satisfies. The child wants the world — to roam in nature, to discover history, to understand cultures. This is the age of the **moral adventurer**, the **social scientist**, and the **junior philosopher**.

Montessori proposed a bold response to this developmental need: **Cosmic Education** — a holistic curriculum that gives the child a panoramic view of the universe, humanity, and their interconnected story. In this view, children do not merely memorize facts; they encounter **big questions**: Where did we come from? What is our purpose? How do natural laws guide our lives?

In a traditional school, this might sound like fantasy. But in the Montessori classroom, this is a lived reality. Children study the origins of the earth, ancient civilizations, the animal kingdom, and the fundamentals of math and science — not to pass exams, but to situate themselves within a grand, meaningful narrative.

### **Conclusion: Nurturing the Growing Soul**

The second plane of development is a sacred time: a window of **intellectual power**, **moral awakening**, and **social expansion**. Children in this phase are no longer cute infants to be protected — they are **young humans** seeking their place in the moral and physical universe. Their questions deserve answers, their hands deserve work, and their minds deserve wonder.

Montessori believed that if we meet these needs — if we offer beauty, truth, and responsibility — we not only educate, we dignify. We help the child become not only knowledgeable, but **noble**. In doing so, we do not only raise scholars. We raise citizens of the world — who one day might transform it.