



**AN APPRAISAL OF JEAN JACQUE ROUSSEAU'S PEDAGOGICAL  
NATURALISM**

**BY**

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**BEING AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this essay titled: **AN APPRAISAL OF JEAN JACQUE  
ROUSSEAU'S PEDAGOGICAL NATURALISM** submitted to the  
Department of Philosophy, Saints Peter and Paul Major Seminary, Bodija, Ibadan,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)  
degree in Philosophy, is a record of original research carried out by me:  
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## **DEDICATION**

To my Parents,

(Mr. and Mrs. OGANA Paul Ochim, J.P),

My Siblings,

And

To all true Educators.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

According to the Sacred Scriptures, “the hope of an ungrateful person will melt like wintry frost, and will flow away like waste water” (Wis. 16:29). It is on this that I express profound gratitude first to God who made this research work a success.

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**OGANA, PAUL PATRICK**

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## ABSTRACT

Pedagogy as a word simply has to do with teaching methods, systems or procedures. In other words, it is concerned with how education processes proceed. Before the eighteenth century, the method of education was that of tradition and formalism. According to this method, education should be 'state or society centered' rather than the 'child or learner centered', such that, education had its focal point on the teacher and the society in which the child lives with little or no attention to the child nature and potentialities. Naturalism as a system in education, by Jean Jacque Rousseau, appeared on the educational scene as a 'revolt' against this traditional system. For Rousseau, true education is aimed at developing the life of the child through natural procedures. What Rousseau's pedagogical naturalism is simply saying is that, no matter what, the child should be the focus of education, and that the child's education should occur in a natural setting with maximum freedom given to the child. This essay employs the expository, analytical and appraisal methods of philosophical enquiry to examine Jean Jacque Rousseau's pedagogical naturalism. This research work is segmented into four parts: Chapter one discusses the idea of education, the second Chapter gives some Philosophers views on education, as a fact to show the relationship between Philosophy and education. Chapter three exposes comprehensively, Rousseau's pedagogical naturalism while the fourth Chapter presents the appraisal of Rousseau's naturalistic system of education.

## INTRODUCTION

### 0.1 Background of The Study

There is no gainsaying that education plays an important role in man's holistic formation as well as in the growth and development of the society where he finds himself. More profound on the educational scene however, is the debate concerning the method or system by which every educational process should follow. Prior to Jean Jacques Rousseau, varied formalistic and stereotyped methods and systems had been advanced as theories by which the educational process of a child should follow. For these proponents of the formalistic theories, education should be 'state or society centered' rather than the 'child or learner centered', hence, education had its focal point on the teacher and the society in which the child lives with little or no attention given to the child's nature and potentialities.

Naturalism by Jean Jacques Rousseau appeared on the educational scene as a 'revolt' against the formalist and stereotyped system of education. Against this system of education, whereby the teacher and books are the focus of education, Rousseau, posits that true education is that which develops the naturalistic life of a child, in which case, the nature, power and inclinations of the child are allowed to develop freely. He should be treated differently, not like adult humans, but as a learner, he should be given enough space to learn and grow on his own because in

the end, he is the result of the society. People, he (Rousseau) says are always looking for an adult in the society without knowing what a child is.

And so, for Rousseau the education of a child should occur in a natural setting and the child should be the focus with maximum freedom given to the child, he insists that the child be motivated to want to learn. In this way, the child would be able to develop to its fullest. This is the underlying principle of Jean Jacques Rousseau's naturalism in education.

## **0.2The Statement of the Problem**

There has been a long standing debate among educators concerning the method or system by which every educational process should follow. While a number of them accept that the child or learner should be the central focus of every educational process, others contend for the opposite. The basic concern of this essay is to appraise Jean Jacques Rousseau's naturalistic method in education, in which case, the child is the central focus in education, with the child's makeup determining the character of the learning process

More so, the essay asks; 'what is education and what does it mean to say that an individual is educated'? With these in mind, this essay attempts a critical appraisal of Jean Jacques Rousseau's Pedagogical Naturalism.

### **0.3 The Aim of the Study**

This Study seeks first to understand Rousseau's educational philosophy and then, to contrast it to our contemporary time and see if it is in anyway relevant to the Black child.

### **0.4 The Scope of the Study**

The Primary focus of this study is on Jean Jacque Rousseau's philosophy of education in relation to childhood education. The Study also extends its search light on early childhood education in the Nigeria's Policy of education to see how Rousseau's pedagogical naturalism can be of relevance to it.

Relevant materials shall be consulted, such as original or abridged versions of available textbooks, journals, encyclopedias and internet sources.

### **0.4 Methodology**

This study is systematically segmented into four chapters. Each chapter discusses the major components within the scope of the study. The study is expository and critically analytical.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE IDEA OF EDUCATION

#### 1.0 Introduction

*“If you want to destroy a nation, do not use bombs or ammunitions,  
instead lower the standard of education” ...Asmara Shefqat<sup>1</sup>*

With this capture above, there is therefore no gainsaying that education plays a significance role in the overall development of the human person. Since the task of attempting a definition of education is nonetheless, not an easy one largely because the word ‘education’ has been conceived and interpreted in different ways by varied persons. In this chapter, an attempt will be made to clarify the meaning of education, the types of education, as well as the aims and objectives of education. The chapter concludes with an attempt to answer the question “who is an educated person?”

#### 1.1 The Meaning of Education: Towards A Conceptual Clarification

Etymologically, the word ‘*education*’ is derived from the Latin word “‘educare’ meaning ‘*to raise*’ and ‘*to bring forth*’.”<sup>2</sup> This meaning indicates that education seeks to nourish the good qualities as well as to draw out the best in

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<sup>1</sup>Onwukaikie V. Stephen, “Education Policies and their Endemic Implication”, in *The Sage; a Philosophical and General Interest Magazine*, (February 10, 2019), p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>K.K. Shrivastava, *Philosophical Foundations of Education*, (New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2003), p. 14.

every individual; it has to do with what is internal rather than merely external. It seeks to “develop the innate or the inner abilities and potentialities of humans.”<sup>3</sup>

According to Festus C. Okafor, “education is a process of acculturation through which the individual is helped to attain the development of his potentialities and their maximum activation when necessary, according to right reason and to achieve thereby its perfect self-fulfillment.”<sup>4</sup> This definition has a number of implications, it regards education not as casual experience or indoctrination in which case doctrines, beliefs etc. are merely accepted without the act of criticality and sound reasoning, on the contrary, education is a process deliberately planned and methodologically applied. Further from this, it means that education is the process of development wherein the individual gradually adapts himself or herself in various ways to his or her overall goals development and actualization alongside that of the society where he or she belongs. Hence, Babs Fafunwa posits education as “the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities and other forms of behaviour which are of positive values to the society in which he lives, that is, it is the process of transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth for disseminating

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<sup>3</sup>Shvetta Uppal, *Basics in Education: Textbook for B.Ed. Course*, (New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2014), p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Festus C. Okafor, *Philosophy and the Third World Perspective*, (U.S.A: Brunswick Publishing Company, 1981), p. 16.



knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee national direction of the society or both.”<sup>5</sup>

According to John Holt, a major proponent of American theories of child-centered education, he conceives education as “children-learning -what they-most-want-to-know. What children want to learn is what will be of relevance and connected to their immediate real world.”<sup>6</sup> And so, for Holt, one of the reasons why children fail is because for many of them, they are bored because much of the curriculum is irrelevant, trivial, and dull, with neither any relevance nor connection between what they are taught in the class and what they see around them.

From all these definitions, education is the act and the process of developing the intellect critical thinking abilities, social and cultural understanding and understanding of one’s own self taking place continuously during one’s life by ways of various experiences.<sup>7</sup> It is “a self-developmental process of the learner through the making of personal experience, culminating in auto-transcendence and self-fulfillment.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Emefiena Ezeani, *A Philosophy of Education for African Nations: Recovering from the Negative Effects of Colonial Education*, Second Edition, (London: Veritas Lumen Publishers, 2013), p. 113.

<sup>6</sup>Holt John, *How Children Fail*, (New York: Pitman Press, 1964), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>ShvettaUppal, *Basics in Education: Textbook for B.Ed. Course*, (New Delhi: National Council of Educational; Research and Training, 2014), p. 17.

<sup>8</sup>Stan. Anil, *Authentic Education for the Third Millennium in Nigeria: An Empowerment of Students in Critical Creative and Reasonable Higher Order Thinking in our Classroom*, (Enugu: Institute of Ecumenical Education, 1997), p. 70.

## **1.2Types of Education**

To speak of the “types of education” here is to speak of the various systems of educating people all over the world. Basically, we shall attempt a discourse of only three of them namely; formal, informal and the non-formal types of education.

### **1.2.1Formal Education**

Formal education is the “process of teaching and acquiring information or knowledge in a school or college, or the knowledge that one gets from this”<sup>9</sup>. This means that it is the type of teaching and learning done and received in the classroom setting. This type of education is characterized as Jayeola Omoyeni posited, by a well-defined modes of operation, fixed organization, principles, fixed curriculum method, and so on, it ranges from pre-primary, primary, secondary to the tertiary levels. The formal system is characterized by full-time attendance. Formal education is structured hierarchically. It is planned and deliberate. Scheduled fees are paid regularly. It has a chronological grading system. It has a specific syllabus and it is subject oriented. The syllabus has to be covered within a specific time period. The child is taught by the teachers.

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<sup>9</sup> Francis F. Oladiipo, *Civil Education in Ireland and Nigeria: A Philosophical, Religious, and Theological Understanding*, (Nigeria: Franco-Ola Publishers, 2013), p. 23.

Examples of formal education institutions include the primary and secondary schools, colleges of education, polytechnics and universities.<sup>10</sup>

### **1.2.2 Informal Education**

It is the opposite of formal education. Informal education comes under the unplanned and unidentified teaching and learning often received from homes and parents. Informal education could be received through the television or radio broadcast on certain habits of a community. It is not pre-planned and has no direct subject for instructor to teach. Skills are obtained by following personal needs and interest, hence, Victor Bell-Gam opines that “trainees in this system of education engage in participatory education through ceremonies, rituals, initiations, recitation and demonstration...at the end, they are given practical test relevant to their age and level of intellectual development.”<sup>11</sup>

### **1.2.3 Non-Formal Education**

This is another type of education. It has close similarity with the informal education but then, they are not the same. Non-Formal education is planned and takes place apart from the school system. It is often strictly, *a practical and vocational education*. It may be full time or part-time learning and one can earn and learn together. It is experiential. According to Jayeola Omoyeni, “It is the

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<sup>10</sup>Jayeola Omoyeni, *Adult Education: Its Nature and Purpose in Nigeria*, (Ile-Ife: Wole printing press, 1999), p. 25.

<sup>11</sup>Victor H. Bell-Gam, *Curriculum Studies: Issues and Perspectives*, (Lagos: Bellco Publishers, 2004), p. 13.

education provided under the atmosphere of volunteerism, flexibility, cordiality, democracy etc.”<sup>12</sup> It includes adult basic education, adult literacy education or school equivalency preparation. Some media by which Non-Formal education can also be found includes; home education, individualized instruction (such as programmed learning), distance learning and computer-assisted instruction. Likewise, Boy Scouts and Girls Guides develop some sports and fitness program such as swimming, etc. comes under the non-formal education. In fact, such apprenticeship as Hair-dresser, Panel beating, Radio mechanics etc. are also forms of this type of education.

Although, there are some differences among these types of education, nonetheless, their differences are negligible. This is so because, for whatever type of education, the aim is to develop and grow the individual(s) positively for himself and the society where such individual lives. A. Bame Nsamenang and Therese M.S capture this unity and goal of whatever type of education:

All systems of education are systematic processes organized to mature and induct children into their culture's most cherished social status adulthood, in other words, every human society throughout history has educated its offspring within a particular philosophic vision and of the child and his or her development and the future towards which that child should mature.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Jayeola Omoyeni, *Adult Education: Its Nature and Purpose in Nigeria*, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup>A.Bame and Therese M.S Tchombe, (eds.), *Handbook of African Educational Theories and Practices; A Generative Teacher Education Curriculum*, (Bamenda: Human Development Resource Centre (HDRC), 2011), p. 89.

#### 1.2.4 Aims and Objectives of Education

Generally, the aims of education have been given under three categories namely: the spiritual aim, the national or societal aim and the life aim of education.

In the first category; the eternal or spiritual aim of education, the aim of education is not just forming a child's character but more importantly, in the helping of the child to attain the purpose of existence. In the declaration of the Catholic Church on Christian education, the second Vatican council (1965) stated that "true education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the goal of the society to which he belongs and in the duty of which he will, as an adult have a share."<sup>14</sup> This 'final end', Thomas Aquinas asserts is God (who is man's very purpose of existence). Hence he says "It is not enough to have gained skills in teaching and learning processes, if these are not accompanied by some deepened understanding of how the skills acquired lead us closer to truth and so ultimately to God."<sup>15</sup>

For the proponent of the nationalist aim of education, authentic education is to prepare a child to be a good member of the society. For instance, Plato says

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<sup>14</sup>Vatican II, Declaration on Christian education: *Gravissimum Educationis*, Art 1, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1965, p. 642.

<sup>15</sup>Jānis Tālivaldis Ozoliņš, *Aquinas and His Understanding of Teaching and Learning*, ([https://www.springer.com/cda/content/document/cda\\_downloaddocument/9789400752603-c1.pdf?SGWID=0-0-45-1379811-p174547885](https://www.springer.com/cda/content/document/cda_downloaddocument/9789400752603-c1.pdf?SGWID=0-0-45-1379811-p174547885)), retrieved 20/11/2018

that education of a child is to be state-oriented such that the child is educated to be of relevance to the society where he lives, he says:

Education makes a man eagerly pursue the ideal perfection of citizenship and teaches him how rightly to rule and how to obey. This is the only education which upon our view deserves the name: that other sort of training, which aims at the acquisition of wealth or bodily strength or mere cleverness, apart from intelligence and justice is mean and illiberal and is not worthy to be called education at all.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, John Stuart says education is the “Culture which each generation purposefully gives to those who are to be its successors, in order to qualify them for at least keeping up, and if possible for raising up, the level of improvement which has been attained.”<sup>17</sup> Even the Nigerian Policy on Education (NPE) falls under this category. According to it, the aim of education is to ensure the

inculcation of national consciousness and national unity, it must ensure the inculcation of the right development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen, total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world, the training of the mind in understanding the world, as well as the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment of the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>See Iroha Kalu, “The Concept of Educated man”, A.F Uduigwomen and KaroOgbinaka, (eds.), *The Concept of Education and Training in Philosophy of Education: An Analytical Approach*, (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publisher Ltd, 2011), pp. 233- 242.

<sup>17</sup>See in Samuel O. Ayodele (ed), *Education in the Service of Humanity: Papers in Honor of Prof. Pai Obanya*, (Ibadan: Educational Research and Study Group, 1996), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup>Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*, Sixth Edition, (Lagos: NERDC Publisher, 2013), pp. 1- 2.

In like manner, Joseph Obi posits, education should guide man in a way that would help achieve the good life; good life in the sense of living well with others in his conditions, conduct, interaction and occupation in the society.<sup>19</sup>

There is also the third category on the aim of education; the child centered aim. Here, the aim of education is to holistically develop the human person such that the individual's potentialities and capabilities are helped to develop to their fullest, in other words, the individual's potentialities and abilities become relevant to the individual's self-actualization and realization. Jean Jacques Rousseau, a proponent in this category, in his theory of *Naturalism in Education*, posits that true education is that which develops the naturalistic life of a child, such that, the nature, power and inclinations of the child are allowed to develop freely. Thus, the aim of education is the liberty and happiness of the child.<sup>20</sup>

Be that as it may, it is worthy to note that the aim of education is holistic in the sense that for whatever category or aim of education, it must be ensured that the learners develop wholesomely. (Spiritually, intellectually, emotionally etc.).

Joseph O. Obemeata summarizes what we are saying here:

The Purpose of education is to perfect manhood, education is expected to build up the character of individual and make them useful members of the community, so, education is concerned with

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<sup>19</sup>Joseph E. Obi, *Philosophical Foundation of Education: With Emphasis on Nigerian Education*, Second Edition, (Benin: Modal Books Ambik Enterprise, 1981) p. 20.

<sup>20</sup>Robert R. Rusk, *Doctrines of the Great Educators*, (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1979), p. 107.

the whole of man and to produce a complete man; education is a powerful tool for shaping a child's character...<sup>21</sup>

### **1.3The Concept of an Educated Man**

Education is much more than merely learning to read and write and acquiring academic and professional qualifications, it must also be beneficial to the individual and his society. So, for a person to be educated, he should not only be person of knowledge and with some kind of conceptual understanding, but there must also be an understanding of the interrelatedness of what he or she has known with the rest of the things around. This therefore means that the knowledge acquired by the individual must not be a 'dead weight' without application, but rather, the knowledge acquired should also enable such a person to have better attitudes and approaches to life. This point must be made clearer. While we say that the knowledge acquired should also enable one to have better attitudes and approaches to life, we are not saying that being knowledgeable or skilled in various fields or walks of life is tantamount to being uneducated, neither are we equating education to being skillful in just a particular subject or area of specialization. Instead, we are saying that an individual becomes uneducated when he or she could neither effect his or her acquired knowledge and skills to life nor in character building. For instance, the man who is skilled in science and still believes and practices traditional spirituality is educated only to

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<sup>21</sup>See Samuel O. Ayodele (Ed), *Education in the Service of Humanity: Papers in Honor of Prof. PaiObanya*, (Ibadan: Educational Research and Study Group, 1996), p. 12.



the extent at which his scientific skills and religious beliefs have a positive place and influence to the Life and character building of such a person as well as on others in the society. In this way, we argue that an educated person is not simply 'principle oriented' but much more, such a man knows the interrelatedness of what he knows with the reality around him. In the same vein, Obafemi Awolowo address to a Union of Teachers in Ibadan in 1974 corroborates this point when he says that education is not only instilling Knowledge, but much more; that it must affect positively the lives of others in the society.<sup>22</sup>

#### **1.4 Summary**

Education is the process of facilitating learning, it is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. It can take place in formal or informal setting and any experience that has a positive and informative effect. More so, as we have argued under this chapter, there is a difference between a merely "knowledgeable man" and "the Educated man." The educated man is to be discovered by his point of view, by the temper of his mind, by his attitude towards life and his fair way of thinking. Put differently, the educated man can be described as one who combines expertise in some specific economics skills with soundness of character and wisdom in judgment.

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<sup>22</sup> Samuel J.Cookey, "An Opening Address", in O.O. Akinkugbe (ed.), *Nigeria and Education: The Challenges Ahead*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1994), p. 7.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SOME PHILOSOPHERS' VIEWS ON EDUCATION

#### 2.0 Introduction

A number of Philosophers have stressed the central role that education occupies within the order of things. This chapter is dedicated to explain the views of some of these philosophers. We shall focus mainly on; Plato, John Locke, Thomas Aquinas, Augustine Paulo Freire, Allan Bloom and Nel Noddings.

#### 2.1 Plato on Education

Plato was born in Athens in 428 B.C into an Aristocratic family. He was educated and groomed to becoming a great political leader. However, after Socrates' death (his master), he decided to devote all his energies to philosophy. His famous works include Republic.<sup>1</sup>

For Plato, education should teach the learner to become perfectly good. It should make men good and be able to act nobly. Nothing therefore he says, must be admitted in education which does not conduce to the promotion of virtue. To enhance this, he avers that the ruler must be educated so as to be able to steer the Ship of the State.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, he proposes a kind of education that would help bring about a world in which man and society are moved towards the Good. For

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel E. Stumpf, *Philosophy: History and Problems*, Fifth Edition, (New- York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994), p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Nigel Warburton, *Philosophy: The Classics*, Third Edition, (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 12.

this to be realized nonetheless, Plato states that justice is a necessity and that education must serve as means or tool to achieving this justice; both individual and social justice. Justice therefore he says is “when each of our three classes (businessmen, auxiliaries, and guardians), does its own job and minds its own business, this is justice and it makes our state just.”<sup>3</sup>

In a nutshell, for Plato, education is a tool to achieving justice for the perfection and goodness of the individual and the safety of the society at large.

## **2.2 John Locke on Education.**

John Locke was born in 1632 into a puritanic home (a home of strict moral attitudes). He studied at Oxford University. Some of his major works are; *Two Treatises On Government*, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, *Letters Concerning Toleration*, *Some Thoughts Concerning education* etc. he died in 1704.<sup>4</sup> John Locke's views on education are based on his empirical theory of human knowledge in his famous work “*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*”.

According to John Locke, when a child is born, the mind of the child is like a blank slate — “*tabula rasa*”, to be filled later with the data derived from sensory experience, thus, there are not such things as innate ideas. Ideas only come from experience in the mind through one or more of the five senses of the

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<sup>3</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, Second Edition, Trans., Desmond lee, (USA: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 206.

<sup>4</sup>Vere Chappell, *The Cambridge Companion to Locke*, (New York: Cambridge University, Press, 1994), pp. 4- 5.

body; “*Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu.*” Hence, he underlines the fact that our entire knowledge derives from experience through sensation and reflection, therefore it is therefore utterly false that reason assists us in knowledge.

With this in mind, John Locke in his idea on education opines that education plays a crucial role in the moral development and social integration of any human being, he emphasizes the idea of placing the children in the most desired environment for their education, and highlighted the importance of the environment in shaping people’s lives. In addition to this, John Locke evinces the importance of discipline in human life as a *means* of shaping human personality, he says, “Discipline does not mean brutality, useless sternness, despotic attitude, and the parents and teachers are urged to take a nuanced approach in their relations with the young, taking into account their age and individual characteristic.”<sup>5</sup>

In brief, for John Locke, as an empiricist, what we know is what we experience. And so, he emphasizes the idea of placing the children in the most desired environment for their education, highlighting the importance of the environment in shaping people lives.

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<sup>5</sup>Mihai Andron, “Notes on John Locke’s views on Education”, in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 137, (2014), pp. 74– 79.

### 2.3 St Thomas Aquinas on Education

Thomas Aquinas was born in 1225 into a noble Italian family. He studied philosophy and theology in Paris where he came under the influence of St Albert the Great (A Dominican theologian. Thomas Aquinas nevertheless, died at the age of forty-nine in 1274. Although Aquinas did not develop a treatise on teaching and learning, he spent a considerable amount of his time teaching and throughout his writings there are references to teaching and to learning. He deals explicitly with teaching and learning in a number of his works, most notably in *De Veritate*, question 11 (Aquinas 1953); *Summa Theological* (which gives a formidable example of natural theology.) *prima pars*, question 117 (Aquinas 1948) etc. for Aquinas, education, (teaching and learning) has a teleological goal, namely, God (who for him is the ultimate truth and wisdom). This truth, he contends, is incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ. For Aquinas therefore, teaching is connected with the Divine, because for him, though human beings are able to teach, they nonetheless, do so in a secondary sense and that it is God who primarily teaches.<sup>6</sup> It is not enough in Aquinas' understanding of teaching and learning to have gained skills if these are not accompanied by some deepened understanding of how the skills acquired lead us closer to truth and so ultimately

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<sup>6</sup> This theological dimension is articulated in the opening paragraphs of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, where Aquinas says that the ultimate end of the whole universe is Truth and this is also the aim of the wise (Aquinas 1955).

to God.<sup>7</sup> More so, he recognizes that the place of the teachers is very important to convey to their pupils new knowledge and understanding. Before this is possible, however, he says, learners need to be prepared in two senses. First, they have to be in a state of readiness to learn and be at the right stage of psychological development. Second, they need to be readied by their teachers by means of, among other things, appropriate teaching settings, teaching materials, and learning clues.

In summary, for Aquinas, the goal of education is to lead man to God. He emphasized self-activity in the process of education as well as the great power of the teacher.

#### **2.4 St Augustine on Education**

St. Augustine is said to be born around 13<sup>th</sup> Nov., 354 in Thagaste, (a town forty-five miles south of Hippo in the Roman province of Numidia, which is now Algeria). He was of Roman- African origin. He was an early Christian theologian and philosopher with great influence to western Christianity and philosophy. He was Bishop of Hippo, in North Africa. He taught rhetoric in Carthage and later in Rome and Milan.

St Augustine's idea of education, like that of St Thomas Aquinas, has a teleological connotation, in other words, it is aimed towards an 'end' which for

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<sup>7</sup> Vivian Boland, *Bloomsbury Library Educational Thoughts; St Thomas Aquinas*, (USA: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), pp. 41 - 44.

him, is God (man ultimate happiness). Augustine sees education as a process of seeking answers to existential issues and problems through the means of conversation. For 'teaching,' as a concept, Augustine sees it as a preparatory step for understanding, which he considered an illumination of the "the teacher within," who is Christ. That is, for Augustine, while one teaches, it is through the grace of God in Christ (which he calls 'divine illumination') that the one been taught is able to understand what one is being taught. And so, "we cannot 'see' any more the intelligible objects or Truths of the intellect without some divine illumination..."<sup>8</sup> To teachers generally, Augustine calls them to the act of love in their duty. Indeed, he advised teachers to "Imitate the good, bear with the evil, love all", and to teach same to their learners, he says, "students should be referred to that end of love from which in all our actions and words our eyes should never be turned away."<sup>9</sup>

By and large, for Augustine, authentic education must lead learners to God and that it can only take place through the grace of God.

## 2.5 Paulo Freire on Education

According to Kim Daiz,<sup>10</sup> Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator and philosopher. He lived between 19<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1921- may 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1997. Richard Shaull who

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 140.

<sup>9</sup> Augustine, *The First Catechetical Instruction*, Trans. Joseph P. Christopher, (USA: Paulistpress, 1952), p. 87.

<sup>10</sup> Kim Diaz, "Paulo Freire (1921—1997)", *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>, [Accessed 22/2/2019].

wrote the Forward of Paulo Freire Book, *pedagogy of the oppressed*, tells us that, for Freire, there seems to be no such thing as a *neutral* education process. education either “functions as an instrument used to facilitate the integration of generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the ‘practices’ of freedom’, the means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the world.”<sup>11</sup> Put differently, for Paulo Freire, education should help an individual to participate and contribute positively to the society he or she belongs to, and more importantly, to help an individual avoid fears in order to achieve self-realization and actualization to take place. Consequently, in his philosophical conception of education, he sought to discontinue with the established pattern of relating to people through a hierarchy of power. He emphasized that a democratic relationship between the teacher and her students is necessary in order for what he called “conscientization process” to take place. Conscientization is often described as “the process of becoming aware of social political contradictions and then to act against the oppressive elements of or social political conditions.”<sup>12</sup> He criticizes “the banking model” of education in which students are viewed as emptying accounts to be filled by teachers thus, making them mere receiving objects. Instead of the “banking model” which for him, is similar to the process of

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<sup>11</sup>Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 1993.), p. 32.

<sup>12</sup>Kim Diaz, “Paulo Freire (1921—1997)”, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>, [Accessed 22/2/2019].



colonization, he proposes a reciprocal relationship between the teacher and the students in an encouraging and democratic environment that allow everyone (both teachers and the students) to learn from each other.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.6 Allan Bloom on Education

Allan David Bloom (born Sept. 14, 1930 Indianapolis, Ind., U.S. - died Oct. 7, 1992, Chicago),<sup>14</sup> was an American philosopher and best remembered for his provocative best seller *"The Closing of American Mind; How Higher education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Soul of Today's Students"*. He was also known for his scholarly volumes of interpretive essays and translations of works by Jean Jacques Rousseau and Plato. According to him, the essential element of education is to be found only in liberal education that ensure judicious use of great texts, for it's with these texts, such as Plato's republic, Niccolo Machiavelli's- the prince, James Joyce and so on, that someone can effectively reflect and examine life. Bloom argues that universities no longer taught students how to think and that students, especially those attending the top schools, were unconcerned about the lessons of the past or about examining ideas

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<sup>13</sup>Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 1993.), p. 72.

<sup>14</sup>J.E. Luebering, (2018), "Allan David Bloom", <http://www.britannica.com/topic/naturalism-in-philosophy/>, [Accessed 21/3/2019].

in a historical context, hence, he blames misguided curricula, rock music, television, and academic elitism for the spiritual impoverishments of students.<sup>15</sup>

And so, for Allan Bloom, authentic education should address these lapses that he has observed. The pursuit of morality, good curriculum preparation as well as the good use of Great texts of history amongst others should serve as helpful tips for this.

## **2.7 Nel Noddings on Education**

Nel Noddings was born in 1929 and she is currently the Jacks Professor Emeriti of child education at Stanford University. She is closely identified with the promotion of the ethics of care, which claims that caring should be a foundation for ethical decision-making. Indeed, her idea on education is rooted on this argument. For her, education is central to the cultivation of caring in society. This is because, education is not just a mere enterprise, but “a constellation of encounters, both planned and unplanned, that promote growth the acquisition of knowledge, skills, understanding and appreciation.”<sup>16</sup> She places a special emphasis on the home as a site for educational encounter. Indeed, she views the home as the primary educator and argues for the re-orientation of social policy to this end. This position of Nodding is supported by Kasper Burger when he says

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<sup>15</sup> Allan Bloom, *The Closing of American Mind: How Higher Education has failed Democracy and Impoverished the Soul of Today's Students*. (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1987), pp. 336- 338.

<sup>16</sup> Nel Noddings, *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy*. (England: University of California Press. Ltd, 2002), p. 283.

"families are as much a part of the process of early care and education as are caregivers, educators, particular facilities, different curricula, pedagogical practices, quality standards, and regulations etc."<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, we must note that Noddings does not sideline the role of schools but rather, that it recognizes just what the home contributes to the development of children and young people, she asserts:

I have argued here that the first obligation of schools is to make care manifest in their structure, relationships, and curriculum. I have also argued that an emphasis on producing caring, competent, loving, and lovable people need not reduce the intellectual dimension of the curriculum. On the contrary, such emphasis should enrich the lives of both students and teachers intellectually, morally, and spiritually.<sup>18</sup>

In a nutshell, Nel Noddings sees education as a constellation of encounters, both planned and unplanned, that promotes growth and the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the society. She believes that care is basic in human life and that all people want to, and must be cared for. This therefore is the goal that education must always concern itself with.

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<sup>17</sup>Kaspar Burger, *Early Childhood Care and Education and Equality of Opportunity: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives on Social Challenges*, (Switzerland: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2013), p. 44.

<sup>18</sup>Nel Noddings, *Educating Moral People: A Caring Alternative to Character Education*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), p. 44.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

From what we have discussed so far, it invariably shows that there is a connection at the highest levels of Philosophy and education. Every discipline is a product of rational thinking, which is invariably epitomized in the enterprise of philosophy, thus, education in one hand, promotes the discipline of philosophy while philosophy on the other hand, enhances educational enterprise.

## CHAPTER THREE

### JEAN JACQUE ROUSSEAU'S PEDAGOGICAL NATURALISM

#### 3.0 Introduction

Jean Jacque Rousseau is said to be the leader of the naturalistic movement in education which is based on the principle that everything is good when it comes from nature but due to the influence of the society, it degenerates. Education for him therefore is needed to help man 'regain' the peaceful and uncomplicated life that he once enjoyed at the state of nature. However, this education, he says, must come to us by nature in which case, it must conform to the natural processes of growth and mental development of the individual.

In This chapter therefore, we shall look at who Jean Jacque Rousseau is, his conceptions of the society, education, and of the place of naturalism in education.

#### 3.1 The Man, Jean Jacque Rousseau

Jean Jacque Rousseau was born to Isaac Rousseau and Susanne Bernard, in Geneva, a city located at southwest of Switzerland and geographically surrounded by France, on June 28, 1712. He was one of the most important philosophers of the French enlightenment. He was born into a poor house of a

watchmaker. He only received informal education by his father following his mother death few days after his birth.<sup>1</sup>

In 1728, after unsuccessful apprenticeships, in law and engraving, Robert Rusk<sup>2</sup> narrates that Rousseau ran away from Geneva. His next few years were spent searching for security. He was received into Roman Catholic Church, but failed to qualify for training as a priest. He formed successive attachments to ladies older than himself notably Madame de Warrens, with whom he had an intermittent but close relationship from 1728 to 1741. Given some training as a musician, he failed to support himself in this way, and was no more successful in 1740 as a private tutor to two boys in Lyons or in 1743 as secretary to the French ambassador in Venice, who dismissed him for insolence. In the course of all his misadventures, however, he contrived to widen and deepen his education, and in 1749 began a career as a writer.

At first, Rousseau tried to make his way as a musician and composer. After meeting Jean d'Alembert and Dennis Diderot who was to commission him to write articles on music for the French revolution in 1740, he became interested in philosophy.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael R. Spicher, "Jean Jacque Rousseau (1712-1778)", *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>, [Accessed 22/2/2019].

<sup>2</sup> Robert R. Rusk, *Doctrines of the Great Educators*, (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1979), p. 101.

During his stay in Paris in 1750, a competition was held by the Academy of Dijon, he got an opportunity to participate in the essay competition on *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (discourse on the sciences and arts). This essay became the first major philosophical work that indeed earned him great fame and consideration. In this work, Rousseau argues that the progression of the sciences and arts has caused the corruption of virtue and morality, and that sciences and arts have not been beneficial to mankind.<sup>3</sup>

Another work of his was “*the discourse on the origin of inequality*” published in 1755. Like the first, Rousseau’s central claim is that human beings are basically good by nature, but were corrupted by the complex historical events that resulted in present day civil society. That is, for Rousseau, the advancement of civilization is the root cause of the unhappiness and corruption that exist in the society. His most famous work includes his comprehensive work on the philosophy of education, ‘*Emile*’ and his major work on political philosophy, ‘*Social Contract*.’ Both works were published between 1761 and 1762. Nevertheless, these works caused great controversy in France and were banned by

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<sup>3</sup> Roger Master and Christopher Kelly, *Discourses on the Sciences and Arts (First Discourse) and Polemics: The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, (New England: University Press, 1992), pp. 11-13.

Paris Authority. In spite of the protests, Rousseau owed much to the past and to earlier writers especially the Stoics, John Locke and so on.<sup>4</sup>

The end of Rousseau's life was marked in large by his growing paranoia, difficulties with authorities and quarrel with friends. This is especially evident in his later works, the confession, the *Reveries of the Solitary walker*, and Rousseau; judge of Jean Jacque. Meanwhile, Rousseau greatly influenced Immanuel Kant, in fact, he is said to be the one who showed Kant the way to a new theory of morality. His Novel 'Julie or the Heloise' impacted the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Romantic Naturalism movement, and his political ideals were championed by leaders of the French revolution. Rousseau died in 1778.

### 3.2 The Concept of Naturalism

In Philosophy, "Naturalism" is a 'movement that repudiates the view that there exists or could exist any entities or event which lie, in principle, beyond the scope of scientific explanation.'<sup>5</sup>This means that, for naturalism, whatever exists or happens is *natural* in the sense of being susceptible to explanation exemplified in the natural sciences. Hence, the only mode of experience which is cognitive is scientific and no cognitive claim is to be accepted if they are not based on this.

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<sup>4</sup> Robert R. Rusk, *Doctrines of the Great Educators*, (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1979), p. 101.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur C. Danto, "Naturalism", Paul Edwards, (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 5, [London: Macmillan Publishers, 1967], pp. 448- 450.



This similarly, is the position of Frederick A. Olafson, for him, naturalism is “the liberation from the dogmas of supernaturalism and the conservative social order for which they served as an ideology, as well as a declaration of independence of scientific inquiry into the nature of the world and also into human nature.”<sup>6</sup> This again affirms that all beings and events in the universe are natural. And that all knowledge of the universe falls within the pale of scientific investigation, nature is reality, there is nothing beyond nothing “other than”, no other world of being.<sup>7</sup>

Although, there are many versions of naturalism, and as a movement, it has never indeed failed to receive criticisms. Yet, the point worthy of note is that naturalism is a philosophical movement that rejects the view that there exists or could exist any entities or events which lie beyond the scope of scientific explanation, instead, all of what there is belongs to the natural world.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Frederick A. Olafson, *Naturalism and the Human Condition: Against Scientism*, (New-York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 5- 6.

<sup>7</sup>Marco Sampaolo, (2017), “Naturalism”, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/naturalism-in-philosophy/>, [Accessed 17/12/2018].

<sup>8</sup>Jon Jacobs, “Naturalism”, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>, [Accessed 27/2/2019].

### 3.3 Rousseau and the Society

According to Jean Jacques Rousseau, the society was formed as a result of contract or agreement among individual people, and that it is through this formation of society that evil, greed, selfishness etc. began to develop.<sup>9</sup> Before the human society was formed, every man, he says, lived in what he called the “*state of nature*”. In the state of nature according to Rousseau, people lived solitary and uncomplicated lives; they were free, equal, and enjoyed idyllic happiness.<sup>10</sup> They were few in number with few needs that were easily satisfied by nature, thus, no conflict, fear nor did competition exist. However, as time passed, and as population increased, the means by which people could satisfy themselves and their needs had to change. Slowly, they began to live together in the small families and then in small communities. Division of labour, inventions of private property among others were introduced, both within and between families. This led people to make comparison between themselves and others leading to shame and envy, pride and contempt to set in. Hence, out of a simple pure state resulted a new order characterised by vices.

But then, how does man gain back the freedom, peace and stability that he had in the state of nature? For Rousseau, what we should do is to seek for

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<sup>9</sup> Roger Master and Christopher Kelly, *Discourses on the Sciences and Arts (First Discourse) and Polemics: The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, (New England: University Press, 1992), pp. 11-13.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew I. Nwoko, *Basic World Political Theories: Ancient to Contemporary*, (Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 1988), p. 110.

unanimous agreement with respect to a new social contract, he appeals to people to surrender their individual powers and rights to a new moral and collective body with 'one will'. This, he calls, "the general will." According to Rousseau, by obeying the general will, one is, by so doing, obeying oneself, because "the general will of the sovereign is the single will that reflects the sum of the wills of all the individual citizens"<sup>11</sup>

### 3.4 Rousseau and Education

As we have argued earlier, for Rousseau, man was born good by nature but by the evolution of society through civilization, man became spoilt and perverted with the negative effects of inequalities, conflicts, and brutality, however, to restore sanity, as it was impossible to return to the state of nature, Rousseau opined for the social contract theory in which case, people submit their individual will and interest for the general will, this submission of individual will however, he says would only be realizable rationally through the education of the citizens. This is because, Man according to Rousseau, possesses nothing without the help of education; "we are born weak, we need strength; helpless, we need aid; foolish, we need reason. All that we lack at birth, all that we need when we come to man's estate, is the gift of education."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Samuel E. Stumpf, *Philosophy: History and Problems*, Fifth Edition, (New- York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994), p. 296.

<sup>12</sup>Jean Jacque Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, (USA: Basic Books, 1979), p. 38.

Hence, for Rousseau, education is a fundamental key to life. It is necessary for the liberty and happiness of the child. Education is man-making and that it is with education that man's intelligibility and rationality is shaped.<sup>13</sup> It is education that guarantees man's wholeness and soundness of character that fosters the spirit of coexistence. In this way, Rousseau gives centrality to the role of education in moulding character, shaping opinions and taste.<sup>14</sup> But then, the system of education to be employed here, he says, is not just any system of education but rather, the 'naturalistic education' that would allow the natural potentials and capacities of the learner to reach their full development.

#### **3.4.1 Rousseau's Idea of Naturalism in Education.**

The term "Naturalism" as used by Jean Jacques Rousseau has several connotations, yet it can be understood within three senses as given by Robert Rusk;<sup>15</sup> when Rousseau says that 'education comes to us from nature, men, or from things' he is regarding nature as equivalent to 'endowment', in other words, the inherited disposition and capacities of the individual. The second meaning attached to the term 'nature' in Rousseau education is a negative one. Society, for Rousseau, is not natural, and whatever is not natural is evil, hence, the term 'nature' in Rousseau's education is a negative one because according to

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<sup>13</sup>Shvetta Uppal, *Basics in Education: Textbook for B.Ed. Course*, (New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2014), p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>Subrata Mukherjee and Sushila Ramaswamy, *A History of Political Thought: Plato to Marx*, Second Edition, (New- Delhi: PHI Learning Private Ltd, 2011), p. 253.

<sup>15</sup>Robert R. Rusk, *Doctrines of the Great Educators*, (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1979), p. 101- 109.

Rousseau, the education to be given should negate the vices in the society. The third meaning attached by Rousseau to the term 'nature' is a positive one, inherited from the Stoics. Nature or the universe is governed by a divine providence. To live 'according to nature' is to live in accordance with the rational principle of the universe, to live according to reason.

In education consequently, Rousseau is of the opinion that the principle of naturalism should be given credence above anything else.

Rousseau, in 1762, wrote the Novel '*Emile*'. *Emile* was a fictional treatise on education. In telling the story of the education of a young boy, Rousseau reveals his ideas about the proper education for life. For Rousseau, the purpose of education is not to impart new information, but to bring out what is inherently within each person and to encourage the full development of the human being. Children, he says, should be allowed self-expression and the opportunity to develop their own views about the world rather than to submit to repression, and conformity; "He must, in an important sense, be allowed to guide his own education. His teacher should only facilitate the process."<sup>16</sup>

Unlike the earlier educators whose main concern was to assist pupils to acquire the contents of a prescribed course of study, Rousseau attempts to shift the centre of gravity from the curriculum to the child, such that, the young are disciplined and their disposition guided in certain forms of natural activity that are

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<sup>16</sup>Nel Noddings, *Philosophy of Education*, (U.S.A: Westview Press Inc., 1995), p. 18.

of greater and most significance in the world, he says “we must view man as a man, and the child as a child. The best to ensure human wellbeing is to give each person his place in life.”<sup>17</sup>

Consequently, according to Rousseau, learning best takes place when the child is free to develop and grow according to his natural impulses with all forms of restraint discarded because for him, children possess by nature, natural virtues were so developed that they were able to adapt themselves to the changing environment.

Rousseau advocated that the ‘play-way’ was the best method to make children learning. This method is formulated thus,

let him know nothing because you have told him, but because he has learnt it from himself; ‘you have not got to teach him truths so much as to show him how to set about discovering them for himself,’ ‘work or play are all one, and his games are his work; no difference.’<sup>18</sup>

### 3.5.2 Rousseau’s Stages of Education

Rousseau believes that the aims of education differ at different stages of man’s life. So, Rousseau divides the development of a child into five stages and gives the curriculum for each of the stages. By curriculum, we mean all the experiences which are provided to the students under the planning and purposeful

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<sup>17</sup> Steven M. Cahn, *The Philosophical Foundations of Education*, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970), p. 159.

<sup>18</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, (USA: Basic Books, 1979), pp. 131, 168, 126.

direction of the school or outside the school.<sup>19</sup>The first four stages are directed to the male child while the fifth gives a plan for the education of the female.

#### **STAGE One: Infancy (0-5years)**

This stage is characterised by habit and the training of the emotions and various faculties. For Rousseau, the child at this stage should be taught the use of the senses with experience. Education must be the responsibility of the parents. The parents must make sure that the child develops physically strong and healthy and that his senses are well used so as to enhance the child's moral and mental training. Rousseau remarks: 'All wickedness comes from weakness. Make him strong and he will be good.'<sup>20</sup>

#### **Stage two: childhood (5-12years)**

This stage is characterised by 'necessity' and the training of the sense. According to Rousseau, the child at this stage becomes conscious of his existence, hence, he must be taught to live his life in accordance with nature lest suffer misery by trying to fashion themselves through social institutions. Since a child at this stage lack proper power of reasoning, the aim of education is therefore to perfect the organs and the senses that are instruments of knowledge and the development of the natural powers before knowledge is received. This stage is the period of sense education.

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<sup>19</sup> Festus C. Okafor, *Philosophy and the Third World Perspective*, (U.S.A: Brunswick Publishing Company, 1981), p. 171.

<sup>20</sup>Emile. p. 21.

**Stage three: Boyhood (12-15years)**

This stage is characterised by utility and the training of the intellect. It is indeed the stage of reason. At this stage, the child is really ready to receive knowledge because the ability to reason is beginning to develop rapidly. And so, Rousseau avers that the content of child's education at this stage must include manual work, practical sciences and geography. But then, this is not to teach the child the various sciences, but to give him a taste for them.

The general principle governing Emile's education during these transition years is that of learning by doing. 'Teach by doing whenever you can, and only fall back upon words when doing is out of question.'<sup>21</sup>

**Stage four: Adolescence (15- 20 years)**

This stage has been called the stage of morality, and of moral aesthetic and social education. It is at this stage that the child is prepared for the moral and social order in which he must play its part. According to Rousseau, the aim of education at this stage is to shape the heart; it should make 'Emile' loving and tender hearted. He must learn to live for others and to live together in social relationship. More so, at this stage, the emotion and sentiments is to be developed.

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<sup>21</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or education*, (USA: Basic Books, 1979), p. 144,



### Women education

In the book, *Emile*, Rousseau depicts the male child as 'Emile', and the female as 'Sophie'. Rousseau teaches that men and women are not and ought not to be constituted alike in character and temperament. In other words, "women, even in their education, should be relative to men."<sup>22</sup> He, therefore, posits the man should be strong and active; the woman should be weak and passive. In overall, the woman for Rousseau is to be educated to only please the man and that the woman is made for man's delight.<sup>23</sup>

Religiously, Sophie's religion is to be reasonable and simple, with few doctrines and fewer observances<sup>24</sup>

### 3.6 Summary

With Rousseau's naturalistic education, he revolts against the entire conception of education which forced the children to accept model of adult. He is of the belief that the child must be free from society imprisoning institution and be able to realize himself, and this should be the goal of every education.

The goal of his education is to create learning environment that allows children to innate natural goodness which rely on sensation and experience with nature.

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<sup>22</sup>Nel Noddings, *Philosophy of Education*, (U.S.A: Westview Press Inc., 1995), p. 18

<sup>23</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, (USA: Basic Books, 1979), p. 339.

<sup>24</sup> *Emile*. p. 356.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **AN APPRAISAL OF JEAN JACQUE ROUSSEAU'S PEDAGOGICAL NATURALISM**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

Rousseau discourse on education, as we have exposed, is centered on the principle of naturalism which posits that nature should teach the child, and that the child's natural potentials and capability be allowed to develop freely without constraint. However, this position of Rousseau has received varied objections and criticisms. Our major concern in this chapter is the appraisal of Rousseau's naturalistic education. We shall begin by first looking at the arguments against Rousseau's claim as well as arguments that supports it. Furthermore, this chapter shall look at the Nigeria's early childhood education in the light of Rousseau's idea of education.

#### **4.1 Arguments against Rousseau's Pedagogical Naturalism**

Jean Jacque Rousseau as a naturalist proclaims freedom for the child in education and all forms of restraint discarded because, for him, children are by nature, endowed with virtues that are so developed to the extent that they are able to adapt themselves to the changing environment. On this, many have considered Rousseau to be a philosopher of the rationalistic bent because he presupposes that some kinds of ideals, principles, or knowledge are not acquired through experience, but are built into the mind itself. In this way, many scholars have

argued that he belongs to the platonic tradition underscored by Socrates, Plato and others that emphasizes the role of sense experience only in helping to bring to consciousness, during learning process, the information within by the process of reminiscing.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, scholars have sternly criticized Rousseau's position that the child be allowed complete freedom. This is because, for them, it is not very wise to leave a child completely free and let it grow without any check or restriction.

Besides this, there is the sensory based contention from the empiricists such as John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume and others who contend against Rousseau's position because according to them, "we are born with a blank mind and everything we now know is impressed on our Mind by our sense experience..."<sup>2</sup>thus, education is experiential and it is therefore utterly false that reason assists us in knowledge..."<sup>3</sup>

Another marked feature of Rousseau's education and one of those that are most subject to criticisms has been its extreme revolt against civilization and social control and his desire for anti- social or negative education. Many scholars have tagged Rousseau's position as sheer absurdity. This is because, for them, children cannot be reared in a social vacuum, nor can they be trained merely as

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Omoregbe, *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy: Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, Vol. 1, (Lagos:Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd, 2011), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Anselm Jimoh, *Certitude and Doubt: A Study Guide to Epistemology*, (Ibadan: Ebony Books and Creations, 2013), p. 131.

<sup>3</sup>John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1995, p. 6.

world citizens to the complete exclusion of specific forms of authority. In the words of Dr. Graves, “The *Emile*, it must be stated, is often illogical, erratic, and inconsistent. Rousseau constantly sways from optimism to pessimism, spontaneity to authority, from liberalism to intolerance.”<sup>4</sup>

In fact, many elements of weakness have been further noted by some scholars as regards Rousseau’s non- social education. Rousseau is said to be absolutely opposed to all forms of book learning, he exaggerates the value of personal observation and inference, as such, they argue that Rousseau neglects the past and consequently robs the pupil of all experience of his fellows and all those who have gone before.

#### **4.2 Arguments for Rousseau’s Pedagogical Naturalism**

Rousseau has always been misunderstood, because his philosophy has been analyzed without understanding the context in which he wrote. Even though Rousseau proclaims the freedom of the child in education, there is still an aspect of his view that rules out freedom in the absolute sense which therefore implies that he recognizes the place of rightful guidance. He says, “man is born free, and is everywhere in Chain.”<sup>5</sup> And so, we must clarify that, in as much as Rousseau’s system of education capitalizes on the notion of the child’s freedom, he never

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<sup>4</sup>Frank Graves, *Great Educators of the Three Centuries; Their Work and its Influence on Modern Education*, (London: MacMillan Company, 1912), p. 98.

<sup>5</sup>Matthew I. Nwoko, *Basic World Political Theories; Ancient to Contemporary*, (Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 1988), p. 115.

failed to mention the important role of the agent of education. Hence, he recognize as does Bertrand Russell as cited by KyrianOjong, that “every child, left to itself will sooner or later swallow pins, or drink poison out of medicine bottle.”<sup>6</sup>

A.S. Neil supports this view of Rousseau, he believes in the natural goodness of every child, he says children should be allowed complete freedom to express themselves through showing them love and understanding.<sup>7</sup>

Further from this, it is necessary to re-state the significance of understanding a philosopher's context before his Philosophy can objectively be criticized or judged. This indeed is what many scholars have failed to do especially for those who view Rousseau's naturalistic education as being 'anti-social'. Society is not a natural, but artificial, product, the outcome of a contract. And for Rousseau, only what is natural is good, and what is conventional or artificial is evil. Nature and society thus become opposed to each other. A non-social education therefore is, so to say, “a preventive education”; it is not a preparation for life built rather a preparation against the social conditions in which, Emile must later play his part. And so, Rousseau “does not aim at producing an unsocial creature (as many scholars have argued), he hopes instead,

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<sup>6</sup>KyranAyibaOjong, “Freedom”, A.F. Uduigwomen and KaroOgbinaka, (eds.), *The Concept of Education and Training in Philosophy of Education: An Analytical Approach*, (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publisher Ltd, 2011), p. 381.

<sup>7</sup>Albert Ozigi and Peter Canham, *Learning and Teaching: Principles and Practice of Education for Nigerian Teacher Training Colleges*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 197.

to establish in Emile an ethical constancy before his inevitable entrance into the society.”<sup>8</sup> And so, to reconcile the child’s natural training and the social training so as to enhance the child’s peaceful learning with him.<sup>9</sup> J. B Okimedin captures this by saying;

Rousseau was not really opposed to social life, instead, he aimed to enable the individual to enter wholeheartedly into the basic relationships of humanity; not to enter into the society in which one would be a packhorse to serve others but rather, into the one which adjusts to one’s natural virtues and capacities.<sup>10</sup>

#### **4.3 Rousseau’s Pedagogical Naturalism and Its Implications to the Nigerian’s Early Childhood Education System.**

##### **4.3.1 Nigerian Policy of Education: Early Childhood Education**

One of the assertions of the World Summit on the State of global children which has led to the inclusion and expansion of early childhood care and education in the global education for all programs is that “education is the right of every child and must not be denied it for any reason.”<sup>11</sup> As a pledge to this commitment, Nigeria has recently inaugurated policy on early childhood education. This is more so, because of its recognition that early year experiences have a significant influence on the all- round development and that “the years

<sup>8</sup> Robert R. Rusk, *Doctrines of the Great Educators*, (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1979), p. 109.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Jacque Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, (USA: Basic Books, 1979), p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> J.B Okimedin, “Rousseau Curriculum and the Pre-Primary and Primary Education in Nigeria”, in *Knowledge Review Journal*, Vol. 30, Nol. 1, (2014), pp. 31- 34.

<sup>11</sup> Hannah O.Ajayi, “Early Childhood Education in Nigeria: A Reality or a Mirage? Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood”, Vol. 9, Nol. 4, (2008), pp. 375- 380.

between birth and age five are the foundation upon which successful (or otherwise) lives are built.<sup>12</sup>

Nigeria Policy of education “is government way of achieving part of its national objectives using education as a tool.”<sup>13</sup> The foundation for the formulation of educational policies in Nigeria is said to be traceable to the 1925 policy issued by the Advisory Committee on Native education in British Tropical African Dependencies set up by the colonial office in London. However, it was in 1982 that the first National Policy on education was developed and adopted,<sup>14</sup> geared towards self-realization, individual and national efficiency and so on. Until 1984, the Nigeria educational policy mirrored the British system; 6-5-4, but from 1985, the system was updated to 6-3-3-4(6-years for primary education, 3-year junior secondary, 3-year senior secondary and 4-years tertiary education.).

The Nigeria’s early childhood education comprises essential programmes and activities which are critical to holistic development, academic success and future achievements of children. Its origin is in accordance with Jomtien Declaration on education for ALL (EFA) in Thailand in 1990, when Nigeria signed up in the declaration in order to provide quality and comprehensive early

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Albert Ozigi and Peter Canham, *Learning and Teaching: Principles and Practice of Education for Nigerian Teacher Training Colleges*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 197.

<sup>14</sup> Hauwa Imam, “Educational Policy in Nigeria from The Colonia Era to the Post-Independence Period”, in *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 1, (2012), pp. 181- 204.

childhood education and care for all pre-schoolers.<sup>15</sup>The existing policy on early childhood education in Nigeria include: Providing adequate care and supervision for the children, inculcating in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity and patriotism and molding their characters.<sup>16</sup>

Early childhood education has received varied interventions and supports, but, despite all these intervention, the implementation is still bisected with myriads of challenges such as lack of professional caregivers/ Teachers, curriculum issues, methodology, and problem of funding, lack of standard instructional facilities and so on.

It therefore becomes very important to attempt an assessment of early childhood education in Nigeria by looking at its dialectical relationship with Rousseau's pedagogical naturalism, so that necessary actions can be taken in the right direction.

#### **4.3.2 Implications of Rousseau's Pedagogical Naturalism for Early Childhood Education in Nigeria.**

One of the key significant features in Rousseau's naturalistic education that could be of immersed relevance to the early childhood education in Nigeria, is his contention that authentic education is child centered, rather than in book nor

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<sup>15</sup>Hannah O.Ajayi, "Early Childhood Education in Nigeria: A Reality or a Mirage? Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood," Vol. 9, Nol. 4, (2008), p. 376.

<sup>16</sup>Ishola Akindele Salami, "Nigeria Early Childhood Education Policies and Practices for Sustainability", in *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences*, Vol. 4, No.5, (2016), pp. 71- 85.



in curriculum contents. He believes that education is a natural process; a development from within, and not something outside the person. It comes through the workings of natural instincts and interests; it is an expansion of the child's natural powers. However this is in contrast to the prevalent case in the Nigeria's early childhood education curriculum. As such, it beacons on Nigeria, to look critically into this because "if Nigeria must be relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond, the man in the child must be trained."<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, it must be borne to mind the methodology found in Rousseau's idea of childhood education. Without the appropriate method, the whole system scramble, Rousseau posits that there must be employed the 'play way' method through which the children discover things themselves. On the contrary, many of the methods in many places are actually far from what is expected, not only are many used method very theoretical but also, those considered to be play way method only do so by name rather than in practice, perhaps some of the teachers are not trained in it.<sup>18</sup>

One crucial inhibiting factor to Nigeria's early childhood education is the inadequate information and preparation of teachers to implement the curriculum.

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<sup>17</sup>Elijah O.John, "A Philosophical Appraisal of Rousseau's Child-Centred Education and Its Imports to Nigeria's Leadership Question, in *Journal of Education and Practice*, No. 24, (2014), pp. 119-121.

<sup>18</sup>NkechiObiweluozor, "Early Childhood Education in Nigeria, Policy Implementation: Critique and a Way Forward", in *African Journal of Teacher Education (Ajote)*, (Fall 2014/Spring2015), p. 6.

Because of this, teachers with neither qualifications nor training in early childhood education are often found in children classroom. This is however different from what Rousseau recommend. Teachers, he posits, should be sound and informed especially on the developmental and psychological growth of the child so as to help the child well; not as a dictator but as guidance.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, we must add that education is a powerful predictor of civil engagement; it prepares learners for social participation.<sup>20</sup> The government therefore Rousseau asserts has a significant role to play. It must have the political will to support early childhood education in the area of funding, provision of infrastructural amenities, teachers' training as well as teachers' remuneration so as to enhance and encourage smooth education processes.

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<sup>19</sup>Kyran Ayiba Ojong, "Freedom", A.F. Uduigwomen and KaroOgbinaka, (eds.), *The Concept of Education and Training in Philosophy of Education: An Analytical Approach*, (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publisher Ltd, 2011), p. 381.

<sup>20</sup>Francis F.Oladiipo, *Civil Education in Ireland and Nigeria: A Philosophical, Religious, and Theological Understanding*, (Nigeria: Franco-Ola Publishers, 2013), p.23.

#### **4.4Summary**

Rousseau has always been misunderstood, because his philosophy has been analyzed without understanding the context in which he wrote. He aimed at breaking down all the possible barriers that prevented a child from being a child.

So, his Philosophy of education is that no matter what happens, the child should never be forgotten. But be allowed to develop slowly and naturally. This did not mean that the child had to be left alone; but rather that nature had to be used by, the teacher, as the main instrument in teaching the child.

Although Rousseau had its limitations and prejudices, yet, he was able to state many details of child development with much force and clearness, which gave an impetus to later reformers, who were able to correct his observations and make them more practicable in education.

## CONCLUSION

Education is very important and in fact, is the vital force in man's holistic formation as well as in the growth and development of the society where he finds himself. This underlines the crucial reason for this research work. The work explored the concept of education as propounded by Jean Jacques Rousseau who introduced a new approach to early childhood education different from the formalistic or traditional system of his time.

The first chapter offers a conceptual analysis of the notion of education as conceived by scholars. In the chapter, we realized that education can occur in both formal and informal setting. More so, the chapter established the fact that authentic education must lead to man's holistic development and self-realization, in other words, education is man making, life-giving and character building.

In chapter two, this research work exposed the notions of some philosophers on education namely; Plato, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Paulo Freire, Nel nodding and Allan Bloom. The chapter established the fact that there is a correlation between philosophy and education. According to the chapter, every discipline is a product of rational thinking, which is invariably epitomized in the enterprise of philosophy, thus, education on the one hand, promotes the discipline of philosophy since it employs philosophical arts while philosophy on the other hand, enhances educational enterprise.

In the third chapter, this work exposed critically Rousseau's understanding of education. Rousseau proposed a system of education that will allow the child to develop naturally and be free from the repressive authoritarianism found in stereotyped or formalistic education that had its focal point on the teacher and the society. For Rousseau, authentic Education is that which develops the naturalistic life of a child, in which case, the nature, power and inclinations of the child are allowed to develop freely.

The fourth chapter appraises Rousseau's system of education. First, it highlighted the major criticisms against Rousseau's idea of education. One of the criticisms among others is that of the empiricist who stressed the role of sense experience in child's education as against Rousseau's claim that children possess by nature inherent or innate good qualities whereby education is only meant to help bring to full realization and development. More so, the chapter assessed the status of early childhood education in the Nigeria policy of education. It realized that although, Early childhood education has received varied interventions and supports, yet, the implementation is still bisected with myriads of challenges and at both pre-primary school level and tertiary level such as lack of professionally caregivers/ Teachers, curriculum issues, methodology, problem of funding, lack of standard instructional facilities and so on. The chapter therefore concluded by recommending some aspects of Rousseau's system of education to the early childhood education system in Nigeria

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