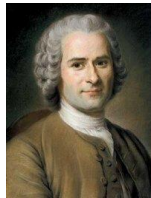


Philosophy of Education

ROUSSEAU AND EDUCATION

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) – a brief biography

- ▶ *"In truth, Rousseau was a genius whose real influence cannot be traced with precision because it pervaded all the thought that followed him"* (Martin 1962)
- ▶ Born in Geneva
- ▶ No formal education
- ▶ Poor teacher
- ▶ Could not look after his own children yet he was highly influential...why?



Education

- ▶ What is education for?
- ▶ Who is education for?
- ▶ How should it be designed?

Rousseau

"Our passions are psychological instruments, with which nature has armed our hearts for the defense of our persons and of all that is necessary for our well being. [But] the more we need external things, the more we are vulnerable to obstacles that can overwhelm us; and the more numerous and complex our passions become. They are naturally proportionate to our needs."

The role of society

- ▶ Discuss – How important is society in our development as human beings?
- ▶ What about your own experiences? How much has society and your social experiences shaped you?
- ▶ As society develops, man develops
- ▶ Society as the transitional stage

Education and society

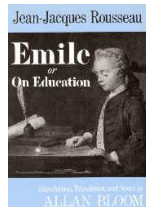
- ▶ Rationality is an achievement not a starting point
- ▶ Natural man and instinct
- ▶ Pre-social natural life

- ▶ How can our passions help?
- ▶ How can our passions hinder?
- ▶ Who are we really?
- ▶ The role of early education

- ▶ 'Man was born free yet everywhere we see him in chains'
- ▶ Society was an accident
- ▶ Developing emphasis on social talents
- ▶ Vicious cycle of passivity
- ▶ Man is transformed into the social subject

Emile

- ▶ Describes upbringing of a boy from infancy to adulthood
- ▶ Potentially a response to Locke's 'Some Thoughts concerning Education'
- ▶ Social contract theory
- ▶ 'Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man'



- ▶ How to reconcile the conflicting aims of education
- ▶ 'making a man or a citizen'
- ▶ The development of the natural man is the theme of Emile

Three Kinds of Education

- ▶ Education of nature
- ▶ Education of things
- ▶ Education of men
- ▶ Education of things is only partly within our control

Who is Emile?

- ▶ Imaginary
- ▶ His education must begin with the understanding of his rights not his duties
- ▶ Issue of normal education is to a child's duties
- ▶ 'A savage made to live in the cities'
- ▶ 5 books – from birth to adulthood

- ▶ Does not teach Emile – instead involves him in the process of *educere*
- ▶ *'the first education belongs incontestably to women'* Emile Book 1
- ▶ Childhood – second book
- ▶ Non interference
- ▶ Childhood not simply a preparation for adulthood

- ▶ Happiness is the aim of education
- ▶ Education of the child should proceed from the needs of the child
- ▶ Rousseau anticipated many 20th century psychological discoveries
- ▶ *'The function of reason is to control strength'*
- ▶ Reason is the product not the means of education

Pedagogy

- ▶ Formal-verbal instruction
- ▶ Childhood is about experience and observation
- ▶ *'Do not give your pupil any kind of verbal lessons; he ought to receive them only from experience.'*
- ▶ Empiricist view – everything that enters into the human understanding comes there through the senses
- ▶ *'Man's first reason is a reason of the senses...our masters of philosophy are our feet, our hands, our eyes.'*



- ▶ Virtue becomes known through experience, taught by example
- ▶ Books
 - ▶ *'To substitute books for all that (experience) is not to teach us to reason. It is to teach us to use the reason of others...to believe and never to know anything.'*
- ▶ The 'plague of childhood' *'the instruments of children's greatest misery'*

Leaving childhood

- ▶ Age 12 – rich in experience, understand nature, thinks and judges clearly, talks only of what he understands, proficient in practical activities.
- ▶ Does not distinguish between work and play follows own preferences.
- ▶ He has lived a *child's* life

Adolescence

- ▶ Age 12-15
- ▶ Time of labour, instruction and study
- ▶ *'Living is the job I want to teach him'*
- ▶ Moral education now begins
- ▶ Age of curiosity
- ▶ Learning by discovery

Beyond

- ▶ Takes Emile right through to adulthood and his marriage to Sophie
- ▶ Main contribution is how we treat and educate our children up to the end of childhood
- ▶ Not universal however – only the gentry
- ▶ *'the poor man does not need to be educated. His station gives him a compulsory education. He could have no other.'*
