

The game in Rousseau's Pedagogy: a reading of the sweets episode^{1 2 3 4}

O jogo na Pedagogia de Rousseau: uma leitura do episódio dos doces

Paiva, Wilson Alves de ⁽ⁱ⁾

Lima, Wanderson Pereira ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

⁽ⁱ⁾ Universidade Federal de Goiás – UFG, Faculdade de Educação, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação, Goiânia, GO, Brasil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5654-7193>, scriswap@ufg.br

⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ Universidade Federal de Goiás – UFG, Faculdade de Educação, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação, Goiânia, GO, Brasil. <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0751-1682>, wplima9@gmail.com

Abstract

This article discusses the role of games in Rousseau's pedagogy. Focusing on the book 'Emile, or On Education', the text aims to analyze why Rousseau places Emile in competitive exercises among the games and plays proposed by his tutor. If self-love emerges from comparison and competition, natural education should avoid this type of activity. On the other hand, as we can see in the episode analyzed, recreational and sporting activities, when well conducted, can develop physical and moral abilities. The result is sensitive rationality, self-love education, and the use of the "poison" (competition) as a "remedy."

Keywords: games, recreational activities, human formation, Rousseau, Émile

¹ Responsible Editor: César Donizetti Pereira Leite <<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8889-750X>>

² References correction and bibliographic normalization services: Leda Maria de Souza Freitas Farah <leda.farah@terra.com.br>

³ Funding: CAPES (Bolsa de doutoramento)

⁴ English version: Cia. das Traduções Ltda. <comercial@ciadastraducoes.com.br> and Viviane Ramos <vivianeramos@gmail.com>

Resumo

O presente artigo busca comentar o papel do jogo na pedagogia de Rousseau. Com foco no livro *Emílio ou Da Educação* e enfatizando o trecho do “episódio dos doces”, o texto busca analisar o motivo pelo qual Jean-Jacques coloca o jovem Emílio em exercícios competitivos, entre os jogos, e as brincadeiras realizadas pelo preceptor. Pois, se o amor-próprio nasce da comparação e da competição, a educação natural deveria evitar esse tipo de atividade. Mal encaminhada, qualquer atividade competitiva pode resultar no desenvolvimento do amor-próprio e possibilitar a degradação humana. Por outro lado, como se constata no episódio citado, as atividades recreativas ou esportivas, bem encaminhadas, podem desenvolver as habilidades físicas e as morais. O resultado é a racionalidade sensível, a educação do amor-próprio e a utilização do “veneno”, a competição, como “remédio”.

Palavras-chave: jogos, atividades recreativas, formação humana, Rousseau, Emílio

Introduction

The Genevan writer, musician, and philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) had an expressive production in several fields of knowledge. His writings were so significant in education that many consider him, as does Cambi (1999), the “father of modern pedagogy”. Of all, the most significant work in this context is the book *Emile, or On Education*, published in 1762. Although written as a novel, this pedagogical treatise brings deep reflections on human formation, introducing new concepts and innovative perspectives regarding handling childhood. And, as Scott (2020) states, Rousseau cannot be serious when he states that the book *Emile* is not an educational treatise because the novel, in addition to being a “treatise on the original goodness of man” (O.C., I, p. 934), as Rousseau himself admits, brings several reflections that emphasize this goodness and foster the idea of a pure and innocent childhood, as well as educational situations that broaden the debate about modern pedagogy, in all its fields, including in the field of recreational and even physical activities. In some parts of the work, it is possible to prospect some episodes that enrich many of the didactic discussions inaugurated in the previous century, in the work *Great Didactic*, by Jan Amos Komenský (1592-1670), which places *Emile* as one of the canons of the philosophy of education, pedagogy, and even didactics.

Considered as the “father of modern didactics”, Comenius conceived the didactic work so that his reflections contributed substantially to the foundations of the modern school. As a “theoretical key” (Alves, 2005) for overcoming artisanal teaching and meeting the impulses of

a manufacturing society, his treatise tried to propose the saving of time, fatigue, the teaching of everything to everyone, the organization of subjects, and a more playful, more informal and, therefore, more pleasurable *modus operandi* for children. In his work, Comenius strives to make it clear that students should be led without boredom or difficulties, without screams or blows, but practically playing and amusing themselves with practical activities that could turn the school into a more attractive place, into a “place of delights.” Against purely verbal⁵ and contentist teaching,⁶ the Moravian bishop proposed a method of practical teaching⁷ aimed at developing what Rousseau later signaled as a sensitive reason. In other words, rational thinking developed with practice and from sensible experiences. As the citizen of Geneva says in two passages of *Emile*: “It is by the sensible effect of signs that children learn of their meaning” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 58); and: “Do not give your pupil any kind of verbal lessons; he should receive them only through experience” (p. 78). His pedagogy complements Comenius’ reflections and expands the issue of physical sensitivity as a driver of knowledge and preparation for social coexistence (Paiva, 2021), as seen in the experiences of the young Emile, provided by his tutor.

As Paiva says (2021), *Emile* is a “mosaic of ideas” that offers a broad view of the educational phenomenon. However, in addition, the work brings some episodes, or scenes, ignored by most readers, in which the use of fiction, playing, games, and imagination is clearly intended to favor the moral development of the child, but also the development of his body and his recreational and even sporting capacities. Such scenes make it possible for Emile to attend and experience educational situations in which the preceptor’s work becomes more pleasant and more effective with regard to the moral lesson that underlies such activities. One of these scenes is the *episode of the beans*, when the preceptor takes Emile, as a child, to plant some seeds of this vegetable in a certain area, which belonged to someone else and had been worked on before. The scene is extremely educational because it introduces the idea of private property, manual labor, and respect for the goods of others. Therefore, a moral lesson.⁸ Other episodes appear throughout the text, but the most significant for the purpose of the discussion we undertake here is the *cake episode*, whose scene, in addition to echoing so many others that evoke moral issues, can be seen as an incentive to the education of the body and the appreciation of

⁵“In school they teach words before things” (Comenius, 2002, p. 150).

⁶“Therefore, the teachers who want to carry out the formation of youth err by dictating many things and forcing them to be decorated, without a careful explanation” (p. 156).

⁷“Only practice makes the craftsman” (p. 252).

⁸For an analysis of this episode as Emile’s first moral lesson, see: Francisco (1998).

recreational activities, physical exercise, and competition. As Souza (2016) says, “It is a work that presents a pedagogical proposal aimed at educating the body of the student as well as the mind” (p. 12).⁹

This discussion in Rousseau reproduces, in a way, the Platonic dualism – body and mind – but reinforces the interdependence between the two parts: “The body should be strong enough to obey the mind; a good servant must be strong... A feeble body weakens the mind” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 31). And, as Dalbosco (2011) reminds us that the child “shows that he has more physical strength than wills in his mind” (p. 45). The action of Emile’s preceptor is intended to educate this force, enabling the development of physical sensitivity, which must contribute to the development of moral sensitivity.

Although Rousseau advocates a natural education, which he calls “negative”, this does not mean the absence of propositional activities and a pedagogical spontaneity. As Dalbosco (2011) says, “The adult intervention is decisive in the sense of educating the *unregulated freedom* of the child’s will, indicating limits to his action in the world” (p. 143). Likewise, the separation from social life does not mean isolation because, as Paiva (2016) asks, “What social role could a man have who, since childhood, was isolated from society?” (p. 217). Rousseau himself (1973) states that Emile should not remain lonely but “made to live with men he must get to know them” (p. 379). Therefore, his formation depends on an intense and constant contact with nature, without neglecting the experiences by which the “three masters”¹⁰ work the development of the body and the mind, from the birth of the child, in a constant physical interaction between the body and nature.¹¹ Such is the reason why Rousseau was radically against the swaddling-clothes that, according to him, served as chains that prevented the free movement of the body and the enjoyment of freedom: “Thus the impulse of the internal parts of a body that tends to grow encounters an insurmountable obstacle to the movements that this impulse demands” (p. 17).

⁹The author identifies several studies that place Rousseau as “one of the precursors of the conception of education aimed at body exercise” (Souza 2016, p. 37).

¹⁰Rousseau comments, at the beginning of *Emile*, that education is made possible by the action of three “masters”: *nature*, which has to do with the biopsychic development, the faculties and organs of the human body; *men*, which refer to the idea of human actions, the personal, and social use of these faculties; and *things*, which are sensory experiences, with objects in general.

¹¹Perspective that influenced the advocacy of outdoor gymnastics, found in the manuals from the 18th to the 20th, as the first gymnastics manual: *Gymnastik für die Jugend* (Gymnastics for Youth), written by the German educator *Johann Christoph Friedrich Guts Muths* (1759-1839) and published in 1793 (Quitza & Soares, 2019).

The cake episode

Emile's Book 2 covers the education of children from 2 to 12 years old. The character Jean-Jacques, the preceptor, complements his discussion on the importance of the senses for learning and cognitive development, saying that one afternoon, on a country walk with his disciple, he decided to use the pieces of candy he always carried in his pocket, to "train in running an indolent and sluggish child who had no inclination for that exercise" (Rousseau, 1973, p. 141). When proposing a run between two boys, the challenge was soon accepted, and the children walked the established path to reach the stone where the prize had been placed, that is, the much-appreciated candy. To the grief of the tutor, "the victor seized the cake and ate it without pity before the eyes of the spectators and the vanquished comrade." (p. 142). To show children that fun and exercise were worth much more than cake, he repeated the competition several times and gave more than one prize; he even started to vary the rules; to reward more people and excite them to the enjoyment of competitions: "For him, these were the Olympic games." (p. 143). Likewise, in the Ninth Walk, from *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Rousseau (2017) reports an occasion in Paris when he and his wife walked into a forest and found 20 girls, led by a nun, to whom he proposed some competitive games, with wafers as a prize, and were promptly accepted. After the long amusement, says Rousseau: "My wife prevailed with those who had good lots to share them with their comrades, by which means the prizes were nearly equal, and the joy universal" (p. 118).

After a few days, Jean-Jacques decided to train his disciple a little more, exercising his physique and preparing him for the competition. To the tutor's disappointment, when he was the victor in some of the disputes, Emile hurriedly ate his cake, as did the other victors. Strategically, the educator character enabled repeated disputes so that, after being accustomed to victory, the young man became more generous and began to share his prize with the vanquished comrades, demonstrating that he had learned the lesson that what mattered most, besides exercise and strengthening the body, was interaction with other children and the moral understanding of helping others, the development of piety, and human interactions. The preceptor develops what Neuhouser (2013) calls "self-love education" since it is impossible to avoid its development, understanding with this a pedagogical action that uses this very passion

to remedy the ills of the social man, immunizing him.¹² If, as Rousseau (1973) says, “we have a key to the remedy of an evil when we have found its cause.” (p. 134), at the same time that competition can ignite pride and vanity, it can be used as a pedagogical staging to develop self-esteem, as was done with warriors in ancient Greece.¹³

Therefore, in this episode, there is a pedagogical action for the benefit of the child’s body, expanding not only his physical capacity – against slowness and languor – but all his senses:

The vivacity of infancy is poorly adapted to these delays; and so an effort was made to see better, and better to estimate a distance by sight. Then I had but little trouble in extending and nourishing this taste. Finally, after months of trial and corrected errors, his compass of sight was so trained that when I placed before him, in thought, a cake on some distant object, his eye was almost as sure as the chain of a surveyor. (Rousseau, 1973, p. 144)

Nevertheless, there is also a pedagogical action for social development because the child learns to control the impetus and does not ignore the rules also conditioned to the other participants in the collective environment. As Rousseau teaches that at this age, one should not give verbal lessons,¹⁴ but practical experiences, so if playing, games, physical exercises, and competitions are virtuous, they serve as “remedies” to avoid a worse evil. As Huizinga (2005) says, the game is more than a physiological phenomenon, because it encloses senses and unfolds as language. In this case, the competition represents something intrinsically related to human coexistence: knowing how to maintain respect, friendship,¹⁵ and consideration, even in disputes with other people. For example, the preceptor noted that in the beginning, there were cheats in the dispute for the cake: “: they held each other back, or threw each other down”; or “put stones in each other’s way” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 143). His answer was methodical, as he started to separate the competitors, making them start from different points. That means, instead of giving them a verbal lesson or repeating the rules, he created a situation where they could not cheat

¹²“while in the whirl of social life it is enough that he should not let himself be carried away by the passions” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 286).

¹³As Neuhouser (2013) says, when commenting on Rousseau's praise of the warriors of ancient Greece, “distinguishing oneself as a brave and virtuous citizen can offer individuals the opportunity to gain esteem, and even glory, for the qualities and achievements that promote the collective good” (p. 169, free translation).

¹⁴“Do not give your pupil any kind of verbal lessons; he should receive them only through experience” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 78).

¹⁵On this, says Rousseau in *Emile* (1973, p. 242): “The first feeling of which a young man who has been carefully educated is susceptible is not love, but friendship”. Especially because “adolescence is not the age of vengeance or of hate; it is the age of pity, forgiveness, and generosity” (p. 243).

and, with it, allowed the children to be able, little by little, to control their nascent passions. So, competition has here not only the goal of victory or the tasting pleasure of a cake, but the goal of amusement, while promoting physical and moral development.

Emile's preceptor sought to dose vice, seeking the middle ground between disinterest and unruly passion, because, as soon as he realized that, on the one hand, some were not interested, and what really mattered to others was a victory, the prize, the pleasure of eating the much-desired cake, he began to explore the various angles that the activity could provide. He says: "If the prize was not great, those who contested for it would not be ambitious" (Rousseau, 1973, p.142). And the solution given was as follows: "To give *variety to the entertainment* [emphasis added], and to increase the interest in it, I marked off a longer course and allowed several contestants to enter it" (p. 143). What was enough to instigate who was competing, and even the people around, walkers and travelers of the place, stopped to admire the dispute for cake. In other words, the variety to the entertainment that developed ended up mobilizing the community members and inserting them in that sporting activity:

They had hardly begun the race when all the passers-by stopped to see them. The cheers, the shouts, the clapping of hands, lent them animation. I sometimes saw my little fellow give a start, rise to his feet and shout when one of the contestants was on the point of overtaking or passing another. (p. 143)

This scene reminds us of the description of the popular festivals, so praised by Rousseau (1964) in the *Letter to d'Alembert*, when peasants gathered outdoors to jump, dance, sing, and, finally, celebrate their happiness collectively without the disorder of conflicting passions.

Without this possibility of collective experience, Emile is subjected to the game.¹⁶ How can the game help in this process? As *infans* (the first phase of nature, corresponding to the first two years of life), the child needs full freedom to develop his movements. As Sahd (2005) says, "this freedom of movement must be preserved when the child grows up since its effects will be beneficial for the development of his body" (p. 110), especially in this first phase, when his

¹⁶Here Rousseau refers to children's games and playing activities proper to childhood, and not to gambling or other idle play: "Gambling is no sport for the rich, it is the resource of those who have nothing to do. I shall be so busy with my pleasures that I shall have no time to waste." (Rousseau, 1973, p. 404). Although Kishimoto (2001) states that it is difficult to define the game, in Rousseau the term seems to encompass all playful activities in which there is the concurrence of rules and mutual agreement.

temperament and his body are in the process of stiffening.¹⁷ The child from 2 to 12 years, when he lives the second phase of *the age of nature* (*puer*), must go through some activities that introduce him to the moral world while continuing to practice playful, recreational, and physical activities. It is a question of developing passive (physical) sensitivity without, however, failing to stimulate active (moral) sensitivity because it is in the combination of the two that the child builds his world of meanings: “It is by the sensible effect of signs that children learn of their meaning” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 58). That means they develop their reason and judgment by the sensible capacity stimulated through these practical activities. This is where the pedagogical role of the game comes in. We know that playing and games, however simple they may be, have rules and a set of signs that can develop the representative capacity of the child¹⁸, respect for limits and agreements, as well as the right of others, which opens the possibility for physical and competitive activities.

Speaking of this period, Rousseau (1973) comments that it is time to prevent bad inclinations to conduct the development of his faculties well. An auspicious moment to foster self-consciousness and the general notions of happiness, misery, need, usefulness, and compassion with a view to the formation of their conduct. Even because, in this period, in addition to a physical being, “It is important, then, that *we begin* [emphasis added] to consider him here as a moral being” (p. 60). The child in this age group needs to receive introductory and preparatory lessons as an initiation to a form of life that he must assume entirely upon reaching the age of reason, the world of moral relations when he becomes a moral being.

What is a moral being? Seeking Milton Meira do Nascimento (2000), who dedicated to the theme, we have in the foreground that a moral being is undoubtedly an artifact. His establishment implies the use of reason for the benefit of a necessary demarcation between the physical world and the world of human contacts, of the rules and obligations that must be established between them for the best coexistence among others. Rousseau (1999a) uses the

¹⁷This is the first phase of the *age of nature* in which the three masters give a certain primacy to the first, nature: “Observe Nature, and follow the route which she traces for you. She is ever exciting children to activity; she hardens the constitution by trials of every sort; she teaches them at an early hour what suffering and pain are” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 22).

¹⁸According to Kishimoto (2001), “it is admitted that the toy represents certain realities. A representation is something present in place of something. To represent is to correspond to something and allow its evocation, even in its absence. The toy places the child before representations: everything that exists in everyday life, nature and human constructions. It can be said that one of the objectives of the toy is to give the child a substitute for real objects, so that he can manipulate them” (p. 18).

term “moral being” to define both the State and the artificial man – man of man – who must take part in this body politic as a fractional unity.¹⁹ Thus the child, as a moral being, as used by Rousseau in the excerpt mentioned above, corresponds to the being that, although in a puerile stage, must be, as we say, introduced into the world of rules and norms. The *age of nature*, especially in the first phase, represents the minimum degree of artificiality and the starting point of educational action to prepare for *the age of reason* and life in society. Rousseau’s concern is about Emile’s position among men, how he will deal with a corrupt, perverse society full of pernicious influences, and knowing how to resist enough to remain virtuous.

As most norms and rules are established generally from the adult’s understanding of the world and still in a hierarchical way, punitive instruments are sometimes necessary to ensure their observance and due compliance. This type of relationship happens in the family, at school, and in society in general, generating a conflict between generations and mainly between freedom and authority²⁰. But Rousseau does not intend to alleviate the situation by favoring the child, unrestricted appreciation of freedom, or defending tyranny. Even because, as he says in *Emile’s* Book 2, there can be authoritarian teachers and equally capricious and bossy children. To overvalue one or the other would be to break with the possibilities of a fruitful pedagogical relationship. As Francisco (1999) states, authority exists: “the exercise of power is something constitutive, intrinsic to the pedagogical relationship. However, it remains to be seen what kind of power this is. Not all power is negative, destructive, and tyrannical” (p. 105), and follows a well-conducted direction to avoid the dangers that surround the child without his moral training. In addition to an agreement and acceptance between the two parties, it is worth saying that rules and determinations are seldom well received, especially by children who cannot yet understand their usefulness, even if aimed at their benefit and interest. To be accepted by the heart, creating a climate of affection and promoting situations in which rules, norms, and moral precepts are developed through seductive activities is necessary. Fables and sermons are useless if they have

¹⁹As Rousseau (1973) says in *Emile*: “Civilized man is but the fractional unit that is dependent on its denominator, and whose value consists in its relation to the whole, which is the social organization” (p. 13).

²⁰For discussion on this topic, we suggest reading the work *Autoridade e autonomia na escola: alternativas teóricas e práticas*, organized by Julio Groppa Aquino (1999). From this work, we highlight the article *Autoridade e contrato pedagógico em Rousseau*, authored by Maria de Fátima S. Francisco (1999), which seeks to reflect on the conflict between teaching authority and student freedom.

no connection with the practice and pleasure of learning. That seems to be the goal of the games.

Aware of the dangers that this age offers, Rousseau (1973) expresses his concern, saying: “The most dangerous period in human life is the interval between birth and the age of twelve. It is the time when errors and vices germinate, and when, as yet, there is no instrument to destroy them” (p. 79). In complementing the sentence, the author states, “When the instrument comes, the roots have gone down so deep that the time has passed for pulling them out.” (p. 79). Therefore, the first education, then, ought to be purely negative, aiming at “shielding the heart from vice, and the mind from error” (p. 80).

The development of passive sensitivity, carried out through physical exercises, games and various playful activities, can be combined with the stimulation of active sensitivity, exercising their judgment:

There is an exercise purely natural and mechanical which serves to render the body robust without giving any hold on the judgment. Swimming, running, jumping, spinning a top, throwing stones, are all very well; but have we only arms and legs? Have we not also eyes and ears? And are these organs superfluous with respect to the use of the first? Therefore do not exercise the child’s strength alone, but call into exercise all the senses which direct it. Draw from each of them all the advantage possible, and then employ one to verify the impression made by another. Measure, count, weigh, compare. Do not employ force till after having estimated the resistance. Always proceed in such a way that an estimate of the effect shall precede the use of means. Teach the child never to make insufficient or superfluous efforts. If you accustom him thus to foresee the effect of all his movements, and to correct his errors by experience, is it not clear that the more he acts the more judicious he will become? (Rousseau, 1973, p. 130)

Moreover, Rousseau (1973) comments on the importance of night games for the development of perception and judgment²¹, but also discusses day games, at home or outdoors, for the exercise of the body: “Let Emile spend his mornings in running barefoot in all seasons around his chamber, up and down stairs, and through the garden.” (p. 139). As he says, all this matters to sharpen his senses, make his physical constitution more resistant, and “learn to make all the steps which favor the evolution of the body” (p. 139). However, if such exercises and games are shared with other children, they can also be effective in developing moral precepts.

²¹“Yet we know that the blind have a surer and more delicate sense of touch than we, for not being guided by the one sense, they are forced to get from the touch what we get from sight. Why, then, are not we trained to walk as they do in the dark, to recognise what we touch, to distinguish things about us; in a word, to do at night and in the dark what they do in the daytime without sight?” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 131).

One moral lesson that can be drawn from games is that of generosity.²² Speaking of the victories of the young Emile, in the *Cake episode*, Rousseau comments: “As long as he carried off the prize only rarely, he almost always ate the cake alone, just as his competitors did; but as he became accustomed to victory he became generous, and often shared the prize with those he had defeated” (p. 143). Once the lesson is understood, Emile begins to analyze the delimitations, distances, measures, and applications of the rules more closely. In conclusion, the preceptor is satisfied:

Finally, after months of trial and corrected errors, his compass of sight was so trained that when I placed before him, in thought, a cake on some distant object, his eye was almost as sure as the chain of a surveyor (p. 144).

Although several benefits could be highlighted in the practice of games, both night and day, the most important is the rectitude of spirit. In other words, the exercise of honesty, sincerity, generosity, and justice. As Rousseau (1973) says, “The only moral lesson which is suited for a child--the most important lesson for every time of life--is this: ‘Never hurt anybody.’” (p. 94). Excellent lesson for today, when we live in a crisis of teaching authority and an ethical crisis in general that results from the decline of religious foundations (Thugendalt, 1999). Concerning teaching, the meaning of “never hurt” can be interpreted as mutual respect between the teacher and the student, from which esteem and affection can arise if the teaching work is developed with competence, dynamism, and responsibility. Second, if the student’s behavior is focused on the good use of the content and he himself engaged in the methodology as a co-agent of the knowledge construction process and his own training, taking part in all didactic-pedagogical initiatives.

From this perspective, from developing sensitivity to the other, Rousseau (1973) elaborates on his “maxims”. The first is: “It is not of the human heart to put oneself in the place of people who are happier than we are, but only of those who are more worthy of pity” (p. 246). The second: “We have piety on others only for the evils from which we do not believe ourselves to be exempt” (p. 247). The third: “The pity one has for the evil of others is not measured by the amount of that evil but by the feeling one lends to those who suffer it” (p. 248). This is completed with the following sentence: “When he becomes capable of affection, he becomes

²²As Streck (2003) states, “Rousseau speaks of compassion as the basic feeling to be cultivated by Emile insofar as he knows the world with the inequalities created by men” (p. 151).

aware of the affection, and he is on the lookout for the signs of that affection.” (p. 259). That is, since piety is the first relative feeling (p. 245), in order for the child to become sensitive and pious, he must know that “there are beings similar to himself, who suffer what he has suffered, who feel the sorrows which he has felt, and others of which he can form an idea as being able to feel them also” (p. 245). If the educator works out such maxims within the framework of competitions, games, and recreations of every kind, there will undoubtedly be a process of formation of the body in total harmony with the mind, right within the parameters of Greek *paideia*, Comenian didactics, and the general principles advocated by Rousseau.

As Waksman (2016) says, experiences and sensations are important elements of individuals’ learning. These developing characteristics can be used at future times in the various activities that will be carried out. After all, the meaning of man’s life is always to be in contact with others, with his fellow men. If, on the one hand, the objective of negative education, advocated by Rousseau, seeks a certain isolation from *Emile*, or rather, his removal from distorted social conditions, from an urban life full of inflamed passions, on the other hand, it forms the character and personality of the child to be good, even in this corrupted environment. A formation that conditions him to establish relations with his surroundings, moving by well-educated *self-love* and controlled by a virtuous life based on the “silence of the passions”,²³ can be considered a social formation and preparation for human relations. That is why Vargas (1995) classifies *Emile* as a treaty of natural politics, because, instead of advocating the establishment of a political order or a public education *tout court*, what is proposed in this work is the educational formation of a young man by a movement of reconciliation between his self and the world around him (Paiva, 2019).

The concept of “negative education” is Rousseau’s own and strengthens his conception of man because, for the philosopher, human nature is good, without vices, prejudices and discrimination. Therefore, negative education serves to maintain this state of mind, to lead the individual, through education, to a path that does not corrupt him by the evils of society. “It consists not at all in teaching virtue or truth, but in shielding the heart from vice, and the mind from error” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 80). This perspective fed the reflections of 19th-century

²³“Oh virtue! Sublime science of simple souls, are so many troubles and trappings necessary for one to know you? Are your principles not engraved in all hearts? And in order to learn your laws is it not enough to go back into oneself and listen to the voice of one’s conscience in the silence of the passions?” (Rousseau, 1999b, p. 214).

pedagogues such as Pestalozzi,²⁴ Fröebel,²⁵ and other theorists and advocates of movements such as the Active School, the Progressive School, and the New Education – while mentioning the influence on the work of Guts Muths (1803), who states, almost reproducing the cake episode:

When running will depend on speed, the master puts his students, if he wants to exercise them all at once, in line, next to the first tree. If not all are equally experienced, he organizes them according to their abilities and puts the weakest a few steps ahead, so that the strong one do not win easily. All stand still in their places as he proceeds to the end of the course, from where he gives the indicated signal to begin. Everyone strives with incredible anxiety to win the prize, which consists of a thin branch from the last tree. (p. 229)

Another characteristic of negative education is knowing how to know the individual, the child, and the student well. That means recognizing their own characteristics and, therefore, valuing their abilities and stimulating their potentialities, without restriction or restriction of their freedom, as Rousseau (1973) says on the same page: “First leave the germ of his character free to show itself. Do not constrain him in anything, the better to see him as he really is.” (p. 80).

In fact, it is in the enjoyment of freedom that the child can exercise his body, whether by playing, games and/or disputes and competitions with his colleagues. It is no wonder that the author reminds us, in *Emile*: “Plato, in his Republic, which is deemed so austere, brings up children only in festivals, games, songs, and pastimes. It might be said that he has done all when he has really taught them how to enjoy themselves” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 97). Such activities do not hinder intellectual activities. On the contrary. As Rousseau says: “It is a very deplorable error to imagine that the exercise of the body is injurious to the operations of the mind; as if these two activities were not to proceed in concert, and the second were not always to direct the first!” (p. 112). This excerpt elucidates a whole great discussion that, at one time or another, tends to occur in Physical Education, the object of study and performance of the Physical Education professional. The dichotomy between body and mind, or body and soul, overcame the dilemmas of philosophy and razed the quiet lands of that field. We can summarize that, over time, there was this duality, but from modernity, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth

²⁴ Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), Swiss educator, pioneer of the New Education.

²⁵ Friedrich Fröebel (1782-1852), German pedagogue, disciple of Pestalozzi, founder of the first kindergarten.

centuries, the relationship between body and mind began to be understood as inseparable – elements mutually related in the comprehensive formation of the individual.

In this respect, the teacher must pay attention to his own attitudes, in order to always remain cautious about the various scenes that can induce the teaching process in great dramas, such as punishments, great compliments, something that can divert the centrality and awareness of the act of learning and teaching. It is necessary to remain immune to the dualities of the educational process – neither rebuking too much nor praising too much –, especially from the age of 12, when, for Rousseau, the end of childhood occurs and when the child is more apt to “live in society”, to understand the demands of a good coexistence. Becoming a man means becoming an adult, burdened with responsibilities, understanding society’s rules and laws, and subject to responsibilities and punishments. And, if it is as the philosopher says, “Man is an imitator. Even animals are. The taste for imitation belongs to well-ordered nature, but in society it degenerates into vice” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 94), the responsibility of the master expands, because he must be a model, an example to think about the playing activities, games, and all the activities in which the child engages, in his process of cognitive and motor development: he imitates and obeys the rules passed to him by the educator.

Children, who are great imitators, all try their hand at drawing. I would have my pupil cultivate this art, not exactly for the art itself, but for rendering the eye accurate and the hand flexible; *and, in general, it is of very little consequence that he understand such or such an exercise, provided he acquire the perspicacity of sense, and the correct habit of body, which are gained from that exercise.* [emphasis added]. I shall take great care, therefore, not to give him a drawing-master who will give him only imitations to imitate, and will make him draw only from drawings. He shall have no master but Nature, and no models but objects. (Rousseau, 1973, p. 145)

Sensitivity in Rousseau presents as something different from empiricist theories because, in his work, the development of sensitivity considers the dimension of *self-love*, which is the natural feeling of self-preservation. But it does not fail to consider *piety*, which is the feeling by which the human being puts himself in the place of the other and seeks to help him. Moreover, it makes room for *self-love*, which is the most pernicious, problematic, and overwhelming feeling, by which passions are fermented and would easily lead the subject to selfishness, hedonism, and barbarism. However, the development of sensitivity changes gradually and intensifies a movement that goes from physical sensitivity to moral sensitivity. All developed activities, whether physical or intellectual, must pay attention to an active sensitivity: the kind, loving, and caring feeling. That is, negatively, education becomes positive as it manages

to educate *self-love*, silencing the passions and channeling them for the benefit of all. This is when sensitivity stops being passive to become active.

Therefore, the sensibility, when it is passive, is moved by its own conservation; but when the sensibility is active, it extends to others. However, moral or active sensibility can also be moved by physical or passive sensibility, by the attributes of art. “Then, as education becomes an art” (Rousseau, 1973, p. 11), it assumes the curative artifice, taking the principle of poison as a remedy, to use the passions as didactic elements. At the moment of the competition, of the dispute, for example, the desire is usually always to win, to be better than the other, to overcome the obstacles and win. In this way, we can affirm that, driven by *self-love*, the individual will seek the pleasure of victory, the repulsion for defeat, and the feeling of loss. However, there is a very important element for the education and intellectual and ethical formation of the individual, which is the ability to educate *self-love* in order to develop moral sensitivity, to promote in the individual the impetus for kindness, respect, and consideration towards the other participants in the game, playing activity, or competition. The “art” of the educator is to make the participants understand that the other is not considered an enemy or someone who must be overcome at any cost. Still, someone with feelings, affections, sensibilities and, for some occasion, is also in a dispute, as the preceptor did with Emile in the cake episode.

Final remarks

Rousseau collaborates fundamentally for the discussion on the integral formation of the individual, addressing issues that intrinsically relate to body and mind. His reflections help to understand the need of the adult man and the child to know how to understand and use all their senses, not only strength and speed, but also the observation and detailed analysis of things; to know how to feel the process more humanly and to know how to take advantage of the moments of games and dispute for meaningful exchanges and the expansion of human relations. In addition to arms and legs, hands and feet, it is necessary to appropriate the eyes and ears better, to enjoy the senses that are usually in the background, but which are dominant for the social relations of individuals. Therefore, his reflections also help to break down the barriers between body and mind, in addition to calling into question the current overvaluation of the

appeal to the body, bodybuilding, and the entire aesthetic ideal of bodybuilding, without the due development of psychological, social, cultural, and philosophical capacities.

When Rousseau (1973) states: “I prefer that Emile have eyes on his fingertips than to have them in the store of a chandelier seller” (p.131), he wants to emphasize the importance of the child and the human being, regardless of age, to know how to use their senses very well. Instead of overvaluing the mind, represented in the above excerpt by the idea of lights from a chandelier, the educator must excel in the development of the senses, of the physical sensitivity of the child, represented by the fingers. It all starts with the body, that is, with physical activities. When Rousseau (1973) says: “Let Emile spend his mornings in running barefoot in all seasons around his chamber, up and down stairs, and through the garden” (p. 139), he is emphasizing the importance of the involvement of the body and, through it, the development of the senses, sensitivity, feeling nature. In the simple fact of running, jumping, squatting, the individual is developing his motor skills and improving body practices (Darido, 2011; Gallahue & Ozmun, 2013). This is where pedagogical work starts for gradual development of moral sensitivity. Thus, although it may be considered a unique faculty, moral sensibility, unlike the physical one, results from an evolution or a development. The absolute self of the child can only become, throughout growth and coexistence with others, a relative self. In other words, a self that relates to its peers, even when the type of relationship established, is not fixed. The action of Emile’s tutor intervenes in this process, which raises an entire educational program.

This excerpt also provides a broad discussion about the current context of the society in which children are inserted and the role of Physical Education. Should the improvement of physical activities aim at the moral sense? Should it prioritize health? Aesthetics? High performance? Or just recreational activities? In terms of health, for example, the World Health Organization highlighted that 80% of young people and children worldwide are obese or overweight. This fact says a lot about the lifestyle and education of individuals nowadays. Here perhaps, is Rousseau’s “great ace in the hole”, the great innovation of this philosopher concerning the studies of body and mind. In our view, the Genevan author elucidates the deeper issue that implies the practice of physical activity, be it a competition, a recreational sport, a dance, or any other practice: human formation is at stake. That means through purely recreational bodily activity, the author reflects on the need for the individual to know what he is doing, saying, hearing, and feeling. Be aware of what he is learning, to know what he wants to be. Thus, more important than playing, drawing, playing a musical instrument, dancing, and/or

competing, is to understand the importance of such activities (body practices) for oneself and the social environment where he is inserted.

That is why, similar to the injustice suffered during the games, the situation of the cake episode enables the young educating person to be sensitive to misfortunes and to seek a fair relationship with others, even if it means harm to himself. Thus, in this episode and that of the beans, starring the loss, his sense of justice is sharpened in repairing the damages without harming others. Putting oneself in the other's shoes and feeling their loss is the imperative of compassion and the link for establishing good social relations.

Moreover, one must bear in mind that all these means by which I wrest my pupil from himself nevertheless have a direct relation to him, since not only does an inner joy result from them, but in making him prone to the good of others, I work for his own instruction. (Rousseau, 1973, p. 284)

The function of sports pedagogy and the professional who works with sports, especially with children and young people, is, according to Santana (2005), "to cultivate a way of thinking and acting committed to the human condition of people" (p. 10). Given this, the author continues to state that this perspective does not exclude the development of skills, abilities, or competitions. But he goes further: "The task of pedagogy is to favor the well-being of people and their social life" (p. 10).

The possibility of an education that focuses on biophysical development linked to moral and social development emerges as an object of analysis. Finally, when we analyze this episode, together with the others that, in *Emile*, bring other playful activities by which the child develops his physical abilities and increases his sensitivity, it is possible to say that Rousseau intends to develop in the child a sensitive rationality, contrary to the perspective of intellectual reason, Cartesian, and without connection with concrete reality.

To conclude, Minerva, goddess of wisdom, embodied in the figure of Mentor, the preceptor of Telemachus, the son of Ulysses, instructs the king of Crete, saying that a king needs to watch over the education of children, directing them to the charm of music and physical activities. Fénelon states (2006): "Mentor added that it is extremely important to create public schools to engage youth in *intense physical exercises* [emphasis added] and avoid indolence and idleness, which corrupt the best natures" (p. 173). He continues: "He intended for a wide variety of athletic games to be taught, not only to instill courage in the people, but above all to make

bodies swift, light, and vigorous.” He advocated the institution of prizes to stimulate an honorable dispute”. And considering that the work of Fénelon, *The Adventures of Telemachus*, is part of the readings of the character Emile, it is impossible to say that the father of modern pedagogy did not value physical activities. In addition to valuing them, he has given another dimension to the sense of competitiveness, by which we can avoid excesses and better understand the human condition.

References

- Alves, G. L. (2005). *O trabalho didático na escola moderna*. Autores Associados.
- Aquino, J. G. (Org.). (1999). *Autoridade e autonomia na escola: alternativas teóricas e práticas* (4a ed.). Summus.
- Cambi, F. (1999). *História da pedagogia*. Editora da Unesp.
- Comenius. (2002). *Didática Magna*. Martins Fontes.
- Dalbosco, C. A. (2011). *Educação natural em Rousseau: das necessidades da criança e dos cuidados do adulto*. Cortez.
- Darido, S. C. (2011). *Educação Física na escola: questões e reflexões*. Guanabara Koogan.
- Fénelon, F. S. M. (2006). *As aventuras de Telêmaco: filho de Ulisses* (Maria Helena C. V. Trylinski, Trad.). Madras.
- Francisco, M. F. S. (1998). A primeira lição moral - O Episódio das Favas no Emílio de Rousseau. *Cadernos de História e Filosofia da Educação*, 2(4), 35-42.
- Francisco, M. F. S. (1999). Autoridade e contrato pedagógico em Rousseau. In J. G. Aquino, (Org.), *Autoridade e autonomia na escola: alternativas teóricas e práticas* (4a ed.). Summus.
- Gallahue, D. L., Ozmun, J. C., & Goodway, J. D. (2013). *Compreendendo o desenvolvimento motor: bebês, crianças, adolescentes e adultos* (7a ed.). AMGH.
- Guts Muths, J. C. F. (1803). *Gymnastics for youth or A practical guide to health and amusing exercises*. Byrne.
- Huizinga, J. (2005). *Homo ludens: o jogo como elemento da cultura*. Perspectiva.

- Kishimoto, T. M. (Org.). (2001). *Jogo, brinquedo, brincadeira e a educação* (5a. ed.). Cortez.
- Nascimento, M. M. (2000). *Figuras do corpo político: o último dos artefatos morais em Rousseau e Pufendorf* [Tese de Livre-Docência]. Departamento de Filosofia da Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas da USP.
- Neuhouser, F. (2013). *Rousseau's theodicy of self-love: evil, rationality, and the drive for recognition*. Oxford University Press.
- Paiva, W. A. de. (2016). A arte da representação cívica no Emílio de Rousseau. *Filosofia*. Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 33, 211-224. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21747/21836892/fil33a13>.
- Paiva, W. A. de. (2019). As relações humanas como uma questão pedagógica: a conectividade humana em Rousseau. *Revista Educação e Pesquisa*, 45. e191470.
- Paiva, W. A. de. (2021). *O Emílio de Rousseau e a formação do cidadão do mundo moderno* (2a. ed.). Dialética.
- Quitau, E. A., & Soares, C. L. (2019). O ideário de vida ao ar livre nas sociedades ginásticas teuto-brasileiras (1880-1938). *Pro-Posições*, 30, 1-27. e20170019. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1980-6248-2017-0019>
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1964). *Œuvres complètes*. (Vol. I, II, III et IV –1959, 1961, 1964, 1969). Gallimard (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade).
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1973). *Emílio ou da Educação* (2a ed. rev.). Difel.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1999a). *Do contrato social*. (Lourdes Santos Machado, Trad., Paul Arbousse-Bastide & Lourival Gomes Machado, Introd. e notas). (Coleção Os Pensadores, I). Nova Cultural.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1999b). *Discurso sobre as ciências e as artes*. (Lourdes Santos Machado, Trad., Paul Arbousse-Bastide & Lourival Gomes Machado, Introd. e notas). (Coleção Os Pensadores, III). Nova Cultural.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (2017). *Os devaneios do caminhante solitário*. (Laurent de Saes, Trad., Intr. e notas). Edipro.

- Sahd, L. F. N. de A. S. (2005). A noção de liberdade no Emílio de Rousseau. *Trans/Form/Ação*, 28(1), 109-118.
- Santana, W. C. de. (2005). Pedagogia do esporte na infância e na complexidade. In: R. R. Paes, & H. F. Balbino, *Pedagogia do esporte: contextos e perspectivas*. Guanabara Koogan.
- Scott, J. (2020). *Rousseau's reader: strategies of persuasion and education*. University of Chicago Press.
- Souza, R. R. de. (2016). *Educação, corpo e natureza na obra "O Emílio" de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. [Dissertação de mestrado]. Universidade Estadual de Campinas.
- Streck, D. R. (2003). *Educação para um novo contrato social*. Vozes.
- Tugendhat, E. (1999). *Lições sobre ética* (3a. ed.) (Grupo de doutorandos do curso de pós-graduação em Filosofia da Universidade do Rio Grande do Sul, Trad.; Ernildo Stein & Ronai Rocha, rev. e org. da tradução). Vozes.
- Vargas, Y. (1995). *Introduction à l'Émile de Rousseau*. PUF.
- Waksman, V. (2016). *El laberinto de la libertad: política, educación y filosofía en la obra de Rousseau*. Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Dados da submissão:

Submetido à avaliação em 04 de novembro de 2021; revisado em 27 de junho de 2022; aprovado para publicação em 19 de agosto de 2022.

Autor correspondente:

Paiva, Wilson Alves de - Universidade Federal de Goiás – UFG, Faculdade de Educação, Rua 235, n. 307 Setor Leste Universitário, 74605-050, Goiânia, GO, Brasil.