
WESTERN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO THE AFRICAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This work examines the views of Friedrich Froebel, Marcus Fabius Quintilian and Johann Pestalozzi as it relates to the formative development of the child. It was noted that the growth and development of any society is hinged on the moral and epistemological composition of that society. The paper presented a defensible view of the proponents above and at the same time argued that their educational views and contributions are not sacrosanct. More importantly, the paper x-rayed the implication of the views to the African educational system and summed these points in two key areas; culture and relevance.

Keywords: Education, Culture, Language and Relevance.

INTRODUCTION

Education clearly constitutes the most fundamental bedrock in the development of any society. It is indispensable as far as the acquisition of knowledge is concerned. Knowledge which is one of the goals of education "is understanding of or information about a subject which has been obtained by experience or study, which is either in a person's mind or possessed by people generally (Crowther, 2005). The classification of knowledge as *a-priori* and *a-posteriori* is hinged on the above understanding. The latter means knowledge which cannot be known to be true without some help or support from experience, while the former means knowledge which requires no confirmation from experience and, indeed, could not be proved or confirmed by observation (Burns & Law, 2004: 42). Thus the body of discipline which studies the theory of knowledge is philosophy. It follows that philosophy cannot be separated from education since it housed the very aim for which education is directed. Apart from this, philosophy also acts as a second order discipline to education by querying its assumptions and fundamental principles. By this, philosophy interrogates and probes into the very nature, essence and meaning of education, which is central to the growth and development of the society. By querying the fundamental principles of education, philosophy implicitly probes the fabric of the society, thereby setting the values and norms of the society right. It is on this basis that the main thrust of this work is centered on the educational views and contributions of Friedrich Froebel, Marcus Fabius Quintilian and Johann Pestalozzi. To proceed, it is germane to clarify the terms; 'philosophy' and 'education'.

The Term 'Philosophy'

One of the profound problems inherent in the subject-matter of philosophy is the very meaning of the term. Scholars over the years have attempted a definition of philosophy and their efforts have resulted in sundry interpretations. Thus, there is hardly a unanimous definition of the term. Howbeit, the most accepted or hitherto appealing general definition is

the one given by Pythagoras as the "love of wisdom" (Lawhead, 2002: xxxvi). This means that "philosophy" itself is derived from the ancient Greek words *Philia*, which translates as love, and *Sophia*, which translates as wisdom (Miller & Smith, 1989: 1). We are however persuaded to say that Pythagoras' definition could be viewed from the literal genre. A good number of definitions have emerged after this definition. A consideration of a few would suffice here. First it is defined as "the human attempt to systematically study the most fundamental structures of our entire experience in order to arrive at beliefs that are as conceptually clear, experimentally confirmed, and rationally coherent as possible" (Ibid, xxv). This definition brings to bear the epistemological dimension of philosophy. Similar to the above definition is the one offered by Paul Hirst, that philosophy is concerned with clarification of concepts and propositions through which the human experience and activities become more intelligible; it is also a second-order area of knowledge, concerned above all, with the necessary features of man's understanding and awareness in the science, in morals, in history, etc (Hirst, 1974: 1-2). For Russell, philosophy is in between theology and science, a no man's land, exposed to attack by all from both sides (Russell, 1963: 5). This kind of definition is unsatisfactory as philosophy is rendered vague. In all, Dewey defines philosophy as the general theory of education (Omatseye, 2004: 5). This definition is at the heart of this work in that it brings to limelight the contiguity between philosophy and education. Next what is education?

What is Education

Education is seen as a life-long act. It begins at birth and terminates at death. All the activities that took place beginning from birth to death form the act of education. In fact it is a continuous process, a progressive reconstruction of experience (Aguolu, 1975: 66). There is barely any meaning of education that is not tied to socialization and culture. It is on this basis that education is conceived "as a process of socialization, enculturation and transmission of what is worthwhile to those who are committed to it, be they children or adults (Peters, 1966: 45). Similar to this is the sociologists' definition of education "as the process of cultural transmission and renewal (Bamiro, 2006: 121). In order to decipher the meaning of education properly, it is imperative to approach the concept of education from the lenses of Kneller (Kneller, 1964: 20), whose articulation of the meaning of education into two distinct senses; broad and narrow or technical typified crystal-clear ways of classifying scholars' definitions of the concept. Sequel to the above, G. Azenabor, opines that "in its broad sense, education refers to any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual. In this sense, education is a continuous process. We all learn everyday and throughout life, by experience" (Azenabor, 2005: 4). By this education is considered as an empirical task on the human mind. Again, by this definition, it is impossible to grasp knowledge that is not gotten through experience or acquired through the five senses. Still under the sphere of the broad sense, Emile Durkheim defines education as the influence exercised by the adult generations on those that are yet ready for social life (Durkheim, 1986: 12). Here education is the exertion of physical, intellectual and moral behavior on the younger individuals in the society by the adult individuals.

In its narrow or technical sense, education is perceived as the “process by which any society, through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions, deliberately transmits its cultural heritage, i.e. its accumulated knowledge, values, skills, from one generation to another” (Kneller, 1964: 20). In addendum, Dewey sees education “as the shaping into the standard form of social activity” (Dewey, 1916: 10). In all, education is geared towards the shaping and molding of the individual’s character, behavior and attitude so as to become relevant in the society where he/she was given birth or become a citizen. To this end, “the notion of education could be construed from at least two points of views: as a process (educating) and in relation to an end product (the educated man)” (Maduka, 1994, 3).

Without much detail, an examination of the terms separately, therefore gives us an insight into the meaning of the two concepts combined as ‘philosophy of education’. Hence philosophy of education is a philosophy of infrastructure of discipline, which deals with the general theories, character, fundamental questions, problems and pre-suppositions in the discipline of education (Azenabor, 1998, 160). When philosophical methods are applied to the whole issues of education, then it is philosophy of education. By this it presupposes that education draws inspiration from philosophy as argued by Ozumba thus, “being the very root of all human knowledge, we never can conceive any area of knowledge whether in the sciences, arts, social sciences, etc, that did not remotely or even at close quarters draw its inspiration from philosophy” (Ozumba, 1996: 1). Having established the meanings of ‘philosophy’, ‘education’, and ‘philosophy of education’, it therefore behooves us to examine the educational views and contributions of Marcus Fabius Quintilian, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel, as well as their implication to the African social-cultural milieu.

Marcus Fabius Quintilianu (ca. 35 – ca. 100)

Quintilian was born in Hispania (Spain). His father was a well-educated man, fully abreast with the importance of education, therefore sent his son to Rome to study rhetoric early in the reign of Nero. While there, he took Domitius Afer as a role model, a great orator and legal advocate. This was in line with the fact that “it had always been the custom . . . for young men with ambitions in public life to fix upon some older model of their ambition . . . and regard him as a mentor” (George, 1969: 16). Quintilian flourished significantly in this light and later on in life opened a public school of rhetoric. Among his students was Pliny the Younger and perhaps Tacitus. Much is not known of his personal life, however, in the *Institutio Oratoria*, he made mention of a wife who died young as well as two sons who predeceased him. His major work is a twelve-volume textbook on rhetoric entitled *Institutio Oratoria*, published around AD 95. This work deals not only with the theory and practice of rhetoric but also with the foundational education and development of the orator himself (Ibid, 19).

Educational Views and Contributions

Basically, Quintilian’s contributions to education are geared towards the formative development of the child from birth. As he affirmed, “my aim, then, is the education of a

perfect orator'. Book I of *Institutio Oratoria* discusses at length the proper method of training an orator, virtually from birth" (Quintilianus, 1920: 9). Unlike modern day trend in the goal of education that is focused on the over-all development of the child, his views were centered ultimately on oratory and can be itemized thus;

- (i) He lays out the educational process step by step, beginning from birth of a child as he puts it from having a father conceive the highest hope of his son from the moment of his birth.
- (ii) Other concerns are that the child's nurse should speak well. 'The ideal according to Chrysippus, would be that she should be a philosopher', and that both the parents and the teachers of the child should be well-educated. With respect to the parents, Quintilian 'does not restrict this remark to fathers alone'; a well-educated mother is regarded as an asset to the growing orator (Halsall, 1998).
- (iii) He is firmly in support of the view that education should be begun early, and should be made pleasurable for the child. However, he warns that care must be taken that the child who is not yet old enough to love his studies, does not come to resent them and dread the bitterness which he had once tasted, even when the years of infancy are left behind. He recommended that the child studies must be made an amusement, by making playing and educational toys available for pre-school aged children.
- (iv) In his evaluation of the pros and cons of public school vis-à-vis home-schooling, he came out in support of the former, in as much as it is a good school. His support is hinged on the fact that pupils learnt social skills along side with their studies and that students have much to gain than studying in isolation.
- (v) A good teacher, Quintilian affirms will not burden himself/herself with a large number of pupils than he/she can manage. Teachers' attitude toward the pupils should be one that would encourage learning than thwart the enthusiasm of the students. On this basis he submitted that teachers should be on friendly and intimate terms with the students and makes his teaching not a duty but a labor of love.
- (vi) As an ardent moralist, Quintilian did not fail to ground his theory of education on morality. He stressed that the growing orator should be educated in moral norms above all else. In his view, only a good man could be an orator. Quintilian somewhat literally thought that an evil man could not be an orator. This was quite possibly a response to the corrupt and dissipated times which Quintilian found himself. He may have ascribed the decline in the role of the orator to the decline in public morality. Only a man free from vice could give attention to the exacting study of oratory. But "the good man does not always speak the truth or even defend the better cause . . . what matters is not so much the act as the motive" (Clarke, 1996: 117). The point Quintilian is trying to establish here is that the act of good speaking is futility if not matched or complimented with moral uprightness.

In sum, Quintilian's views and contributions to education focus on the early development of the child, ostensibly beginning from pre-delivery to adult stage. A major observation in his

contributions is the fact that in the pursuance of the child's education, consideration should be placed on certain influences such as the parents, nurses, teachers and the motives of individuals. When all these are fully enhanced, little or nothing is required to produce an educated child and a society at large. However, Quintilian's contributions only addressed an aspect (i.e. oratory) of the child's educational development. Hence a look at Pestalozzi's views and contributions to education becomes our next line of focus.

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827)

Born in Zurich, Switzerland, Pestalozzi was the son of Johann Baptiste Pestalozzi, a middle-class Protestant physician, and Susanna Hotz Pestalozzi. Having attended a local primary school, he then took the preparatory course in Latin and Greek at the Schola Abbatissana and the Schola Carolina. His higher education was at the Collegium Humanitatis and the Collegium Carolinum, where he specialized in languages and philosophy. His major influences *Inter-alia* were Jean Jacques Bodmer, an historian and literary critic and Jean Jacques Rousseau. The influence of the latter is overwhelming as he named Jean Jacques, his only child after Rousseau. After using Rousseau's work *Emile*, as a guide to educating his son, Pestalozzi revised Rousseau's method in *How Father Pestalozzi Instructed His Three and a Half Year Old Son* (1774). Though still committed to Rousseau's natural education, Pestalozzi began to base instruction on a more empirically based psychology.

His main works were *Leonard and Gertrude*, a famous didactic novel in 1781. Also wrote two children's books: *Illustrations for My ABC Books* (1787), and *Fables for My ABC Book* (1795), and a pioneering work in Educational Sociology; *Researches into the Course of Nature in the Development of the Human Race* (1797). Some of the very principles of Pestalozzi's education can be summed up as follows:

EDUCATION: Education is the unfolding of the natural powers and faculties latent in every human being.

PURPOSE OF EDUCATION: The purpose of education is both social and individual. Education provides the means for the social regeneration of humanity. As the moral, social, emotional and intellectual development of each individual unfolds through education, society is also improved by these individuals who achieve their full potential.

THE CURRICULUM: The curriculum of the elementary school was enlarged to include geography, science (through the study of nature), drawing and music.

METHODOLOGY: The following are the chief points of Pestalozzi's method:

Child Centered. Direct Experience: The teacher must never teach by words when a child can see, hear or touch an object for himself. Nature can teach the child better than man can.

Activity: The child is expected to be continually active in seeing for himself, making and correcting mistakes, describing his observations, analyzing objects and satisfying his natural curiosity.

Induction: The child must observe, learn to express his impressions of concrete objects perceived by the sense and must learn to formulate new generalizations for himself.

No Books: Early elementary education needs direct and concrete experience rather than books. In this way the child proceeds from the concrete to the abstract.

Simplify All Subjects: All subjects are reduced to their simple elements. The child proceeds, through experiencing the simple parts, to formulate more abstract generalizations.

DISCIPLINE: Pestalozzi asserted that the teacher must earn the trust of the children. He advocated a policy of "thinking love" in handling children. The schoolroom must possess the atmosphere of a loving Christian family. The members of this family are cooperative, loving and kind to one another. Pestalozzi deplored the harsh treatment of children which was widespread during this period of history. He felt that restrictive measures limit the teacher-pupil relationship and prevent the natural development of children and that this is especially true in moral matters (ncsu.edu)

These points above represent an overview of the educational perspective of Pestalozzi, comprising his meaning of education, purpose, curriculum, methodology and discipline. In addition, Pestalozzi stressed the encouragement of the child in the acquisition of knowledge as well as making available the appropriate social milieu for learning to take place. This is further buttressed thus;

Pestalozzi believed that child be encouraged to gain knowledge through his own sensory experience that is education of the child at this should involve experiencing of things (i.e. sense impressions) which the child sees, handles or make direct acquaintance with objects. To Pestalozzi, a lesson is considered suitable to a pre-primary class if it awakens interest and self-activity of the learners. He view the right order of learning to that which proceeds by gradual steps from simple to complex, near to far and known to unknown (NOPU Nigeria, 2006: 79)

He went ahead to suggest the need for the society to support the growth of the child by providing equal opportunities for every child. He did not leave out moral virtue, which he adduced is imperative to individual's constructive role in the society. The next view to be examined is that of Friedrich W. Froebel.

Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel (1782-1852)

The German born Friedrich had a difficult childhood, owing to the demise of his mother when he was a baby. Left to be raised by his father, a pastor, he therefore grew up with a love of nature and with a strong Christian faith. This was central to his thinking as an educationist. He sought to encourage unity in all things.

Historically, the education of society's children has been x-rayed in two ways: those who supported the idea that children should be educated early to become productive members of the macrocosm or larger society, so that the cultural heritage of the society could be preserved from generation to generation. By implication this represents the class of cultural imposition theory.

On the other hand, several educational reforms opposed to the cultural imposition theory, insisting on their belief that childhood is an important period of human growth and development, and that adults should not impose their views and ways upon young children, "instead, these reformers defined educational appropriateness as what is expected by society" (Staff, 1998). Froebel was one of these pioneers of early childhood educational reform. As an idealist, he believed that every child possessed, at birth, full educational potential, and that an appropriate educational environment was necessary to encourage the child to grow and develop in an optimal manner (Loc. Cit.). Furthermore, according to Watson;

Froebel's vision was to stimulate an appreciation and love for children and to provide a new but small world- a world that became known as the Kindergarten- where children could play with others of their own age group and experience their first gentle taste of independence. Watson further adds that this early educational vision laid the foundation for the framework of Froebel's philosophy of education which is encompassed by the four basic components of (a) free self-activity, (b) creativity, (c) social participation, and (d) motor expression (Watson, 1997).

The basic contributions of Froebel's theory of education can be outlined thus;

- (1) He believed as an educator that stimulating voluntary self-activity in the young child was the necessary form of pre-school education. Here self-activity is taken to mean the development of qualities and skills that make it possible to take an invisible idea and make it a reality. Self-activity involves formulating a purpose, planning out that purpose, and then acting on that plan until the purpose is realized (Corbett, 1998).
- (2) Another significant contribution of Froebel to early childhood education was his theory of introducing play as a means of engaging children in self-activity for the purpose of making their inner nature or sector externalize. Dewey held that "Froebel's interpretation of play is characterized by free play which enlists all of the child's imaginative powers, thoughts, and physical movements by embodying in a satisfying form his own images and educational interests" (Dewey, 1990).

In substantiating this point further, Froebel designed a series of instrumental materials that he called 'gifts and occupations'. Gift here is taken to mean objects that are provided for a child to play with- such as a sphere, cube, or cylinder- which helped the child to understand and internalize the concepts of shape, dimension, size, etc. Occupation on the other hand means items such as points and clay which the children

could see to make what they wished (Staff 1998). This no doubt helps to develop the child's creative mind.

- (3) The family unit comes as the third component of Froebel's educational plan. Here, parents are seen as the most consistent educational influence in a child's life. This is because the child's first educational experiences occur within the family units; he is well acquainted with the home environment. As Dewey puts it;

Froebel believed that proving a family setting within the school environment would provide children with opportunities for interacting socially within familiar territory in a non-threatening manner. Focusing on the home environment occupations as the foundation for beginning subject-matter content allowed the child to develop social interaction skills that would prepare him for higher level subject-matter content in later educational developmental stages (Dewey, 1990).

- (4) Froebel ultimately advocated for absolute non-interference with the development of the child's education. As Valerie Ellington asserted, "Froebel did not believe that the child should be placed into society's mold, but should be allowed to shape his own mold and grow at his own pace through the developmental stages of the educational process" (Ellington).

Finally, imitation which he hinted as inevitable in the development of the child, Froebel suggested that it should be utilized by teachers as instruments for assisting students in formulating their own instructional concepts. In all, Froebel's educational theory clearly seems to be focusing on the over-all development of the child. The practicability of his theory makes it endearing to contemporary educationists.

IMPLICATIONS TO THE AFRICAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Africa no doubt has received lots of influences from the western pattern and system of education. The early contact with the west has facilitated the import of European values and system of education into Africa. Virtually all we see around in Africa about educational theories are in flocks or domestication of western education. The implications of the above classical and modern educational views shall be centered basically on two aspects; **culture** and **relevance**. I shall begin with the latter.

It is pertinent to note that culture cannot be completely separated from education, as evident in the emphases of the above views. A people's culture constitutes ultimately their way of life, perception of reality, belief system and world-view. Also, language permeates all cultures. This is the very first means of communicating and inculcating values in the child. To begin with, Quintilian strongly emphasized Greek language as the language to be adopted in the education of the child. This apparently represents the culture of his time. Besides one's

indigenous language, there is no harm in adopting other language for the instruction of the child. However, where there is harm is when such a language becomes 'absolutized' and 'dogmatic' in nature. In most West African countries, English language is prized to indigenous languages, especially as it is a main criterion for assessing the child performance. This is obvious, particularly in the admission of the child into higher institutions of learning. In Nigeria and Ghana for example, a child that fails to secure a credit in English language, even when the child's result in the indigenous language is excellent would not be admitted to study the course of his or her choice. Needless to mention the emphasis placed on English language as a necessary desideratum by employers. My argument here is not that English language adopted by Africans as means of communication is wrong but what is wrong is its over-emphasis and compulsive requirement at the detriment of our indigenous languages. Language is an important tool of civilization. No society can develop to its utmost capacity by down-playing or relegating its language. Countries that have evolved today or ascended to the ladder of developed nation, realized this feat by creating something out of their indigenous language(s). Technology does not evolve from nowhere; it is as a result of a careful and critical building or identification of essential elements of development in language. Language is germane to civilization, as all forms of technological-know-how are codified or imbued with language. Language is also vital in the description of reality in our world-view. Differences in world-view should permit respect of all languages and not the imposition of one alien language on another world-view. Africans have been exploited in the past, particularly in the area of language. This paper, among others seeks to add voice to those clamouring for indigenous technological development. Large scale technological development cannot be achieved in Africa without creating it from our indigenous languages. This is the key to African absolute liberalization from any form of foreign rule, neo-colonialism and imperialism, disguise in this contemporary time, in the form of globalization. The consequences of relegating our indigenous languages in the face of western language are apparent in Africa. First and foremost, an African child is faced with multi-language problem. The ward is taught a separate language at home (native or indigenous language), in school (English-language) and when socializing (vernacular/pigin). The child is caught in a dilemma, he cannot effectively learn in this manner. China, India, *inter-alia*, are applauded today as some of the fastest growing economies in the world, thanks to their indigenous language. They have been able to fashion out technology in form of translator, perhaps when compel to learn other languages. This has made it easy to assess other languages in the world.

The point we are making here is that alien or foreign language cannot effective stand as a means for learning and acquiring knowledge. We cannot use alien language to fully describe or pin-down reality in our social-cultural milieu, as a result many things are left undiscovered and untapped. A lot of things are left unknown in our cultural milieu owing to the inadequacy of foreign language to comprehensively capture them. Indigenous languages should be emphasized and given recognition. Apart from the fact that alien language impedes fast learning, the over-all consequence lies in the fact that the child who is brought up in it is neither properly an African nor a westerner. The ward is therefore bedeviled with identity or

personality crisis, thus leading to stereotype and inferiority complex which overwhelmingly or grossly affects the child productive capacity and contributions in the society. Hence the best the child can be is a mediocre. It is this anomaly that this paper seeks to address. It is imperative to create a plat-form or a forum that will continue to advocate indigenous language development in Africa and at the same time check against this ugly menace.

In terms of relevance, the educational views and contributions we have discussed above cannot be trivialized. The relevance of these educational models to the African educational system is far overwhelming. The system of "kindergarten" invented by Froebel is conspicuously pronounced, particularly in West Africa. Children learn fast and better via objects seen or experienced. The need for suitable environment and playing grounds are invaluable as pointed by these theorists. Self-activity that would stimulate the ability ingrained in a child to affect his over-all development and the society positively is a crystal-clear model to be incorporated in our educational system. Needless to say of the home (especially) and the school system of education which is almost fading away in our society, as seldom attention is paid to informal education of the child. Still on the issue of relevance, the curriculum and the subject matter of education should be structured so as to be meaningful to human aspirations, needs and conditions of the child.

It is important to note that a child is not fully educated until the child is morally certified good enough. The enormity and relevance of Quintilian's moral education here cannot be over-emphasized. Inculcating good moral values in a child at a tender age will to a great extent help avert social maladies that would probably rear its ugly head when the child is fully grown up. Corruptions and social problems plaguing the African continent today would have been greatly curtailed. It is against this backdrop that Asouzu argued that "the idea of education is not limited to the acquisition of formal knowledge. This may be important but it is not a necessary criterion for determining literacy or an educated person. Any form of education that has not influenced the mind fully as to change it positively is merely little or no education at all". (Asouzu, 2004: 460-1).

Education in Africa, besides the points argued in the aforementioned educational views must be aimed at enshrining the principles of democracy and respect for rule of laws and fundamental human rights in the child. The morals and characters acquired by the child during the process of education must be replicated in the society. The point here is that education must found relevance in the society. When a society becomes fully developed and socially stable, then we can refer to its citizens as educated. Good citizens make good society and good citizens are products of a well informed educational system. The level of insecurity, violence, corruption, mismanagement and all forms of social vices prevailing in Africa are to a large extent an indication of a poor system of education. The apparent yardstick for measuring a progressive and functional educational system is the level of stability and order in the society.

EVALUATION

No matter how convincing or appealing a theory may seem, when subjected to philosophical-cum-critical scrutiny, there abound inevitably shorting comings. Hence our business here is to critically x-ray each of the educational views discussed above, especially focusing on their demerits. We shall begin with Quintilian. His educational theory is centered on the child's development, particularly oratory skill. His emphasis of the latter made him to suggest that the child's nurse as well as parents should be well educated and speak eloquently. Though this is necessary, the contemporary demand for education has gone beyond just oratory. There is a paradigm shift which is basically reflected in values inculcation and character development. In the African educational system, the assessment of a child is not just in terms of his/her performance in academic activities; it is also in character and moral development. Moral inculcation involves, *inter-alia*, "what is befitting and decent for men; what brings dignity, respect, contentment, prosperity and joy to man and his community." (Maduka, 1994: 86)

Secondly, how do we reconcile the concept of a 'good orator' with that of a 'good man'? In the view of Quintilian, a good orator must necessary be a good man. What this means is that to be morally good implies being an eloquent person. That is the qualification for being morally good is by being a fluent speaker. By this, the hallmark of morality is seen in oratory. For Quintilian what qualifies a good orator is that he must be morally upright. Here, morality is raised above oratory, whereas in his educational theory, oratory implicitly comes first. We can infer a little confusion state here. For example what answer do we expect to get from Quintilian, supposed we ask "if a child is morally upright but lacks oratory skill, is the child educated?" Apparently from his educational system discussed above, Quintilian's response would be negative, whereas for moralists like Socrates, the response would be affirmative, hence the confusion state.

Finally, Froebel's educational model of non-interference in the child's development and emphasis of self-activity is quite laudable but this is not without criticism. Firstly, his educational model is purely a libertarian approach to child's education. The problem here is premised on the fact that absolute freedom corrupts absolutely. Excessive individualism must be avoided. A child left without any support could learn both the sense and the non-sense while acquiring knowledge. Experience has shown that in learning some basic things or societal norms, a child may be coerced or compelled; otherwise if the child is left alone (self-activity) as advocated by Froebel, he may decide to leave out certain values, norms that may not appeal to him or difficult to acquire at his age. This is where "imposition" comes to play. It is crucial for the child to be assisted though not in all instances. This will avert the situation where the child only develops interest in negative lifestyle, as children have penchant to learn bad habits faster than good ones. To end with, Froebel's educational model is apparently naturalistic in orientation. It does not accommodate other views. Eclecticism or varieties gives blend that facilitates completion or perfection. A one-sided affair breeds unevenness and in-balance. This is what Froebel's educational model suggests.

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