

*AMOUR-PROPRE AND AMOUR DE SOI:*  
INSTINCTIVE AND INTROVERTED LANGUAGES OF  
CULTURE AND INTEGRATION IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

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*Abstract: This paper involves a comparative pedagogical analysis of the principles evoked in Rousseau's Emile and those invoked in yogic philosophy. It concentrates on analyses of the concepts amour de soi and amour-propre, demonstrating the ways in which Rousseau's pedagogical approach in Emile relates to features of the spiritual disciplines encouraged in yoga. Rousseau's concept of nature is viewed in relation to yogic sattva guna, or "lucid nature," and operations of language and language use, as well as other forms of mental stimulation, are discussed concerning Rousseau's philosophy and yogic belief. It is suggested that the pedagogical approach Rousseau presents in Emile bears similarities with the spiritual disciplines encouraged in yoga. However, Rousseau intends to educate a child through a developmental process, while yoga involves reintegration through self-discipline that pertains mainly to the adult psyche.*

Critical analysis of Rousseau's work underwent a striking shift during the second half of the 20th century with regard to its approach to his philosophy. The critical studies of Ernst Cassirer (1951) and Pierre Burgelin (1952) marked the beginning of an approach that focuses on the text and the themes it reveals in light of the overall context of Rousseau's work. These critics attempted, despite the inconsistencies in Rousseau's writings, to find cohesion in his work via themes synthesized from Rousseau's wish to elucidate his revelation in Vincennes involving a sense of unity with the present in the state of nature (see L'Aminot, 1998). Burgelin sums up this endeavor as follows:

Toute l'oeuvre de Rousseau consiste à chercher ce qui est selon la nature dans notre état présent d'humanité, à discerner parmi nos manières d'être celles qui sont naturelles, c'est-à-dire justifiables devant la conscience, lesquelles, au contraire, ne représentent qu'excroissances ou déviations pathologiques, où la nature se retourne en quelque sorte contre elle-même pour diviser et détruire. (Burgelin, 1952, 222)

Following Burgelin, Jean Starobinski, in *La transparence et l'obstacle* (1971), highlighted the obsessions Rousseau expresses regarding the human incapacity to achieve direct communication because of humanity's subjection to the opacity begot by civilization. Starobinski's reading of Rousseau stresses Rousseau's attempt to remedy the side effects of acquisitive knowledge through the domain of direct, spontaneous communication. It explores how, via communion with the self,

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Rousseau finds a solution to this problem of reconnecting with an original, innate capacity for transparency:

[La] nouvelle transparence est un rapport intérieur au moi, une relation de soi à soi; elle se réalise dans la limpidité du regard sur soi-même, qui permet à Jean-Jacques de se peindre tel qu'il est. Une image peut alors surgir, qui équivaut (Rousseau nous l'assure) à l'histoire authentique de l'espèce entière et qui ressuscite le passé perdu pour le révéler comme le présent éternel de la nature. (Starobinski, 1971, 32)

After Starobinski, interpretations of Rousseau came to emphasize neurosis via a dismantling of his works or exploring the insight and blindness revealed throughout his writings, if not in all writing. This type of criticism represents an interesting stage in demonstrating that literary theory has become subject to a further removal from textual reality. In that, it eschews conceptions of the text as a creation of the author in order to explore reader reception, if not the subversion of reception. It so explicates reorganized signifiers emphasizing Rousseau's failure to transcend the pitfalls associated with the problem of the origin. However, one can ask if, more than 200 years after writing *Le Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, Rousseau would not still be making the same accusations.

Every Rousseau reader is aware of Rousseau's continuous obsession with writing as a way to justify his intent, despite his apparent loathing of writing. If one reads Rousseau with compassion, one can explain his obsession with continuing to write as a means to make sure that he was rehabilitated in the eyes of the public (perhaps even at an unconscious level in his own eyes as well), which had found out about his evil deeds as a father. One can also ensure that the realization he had had in Vincennes was communicated to the public. Suppose *Emile* became the source of his banishment and the cause of much contention. In that case, Rousseau maintains that nothing he wrote in *Emile* was new but only a reiteration of what he had written in his other works, such as the *Discourse on Inequality* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Thus, presenting to his public a book that proposes a solution to the formation of a body and a mind to succeed in recapturing the essence of communication and unity is no whim on behalf of Rousseau. However, it is only an attempt at metaphorically turning the clock back to protect the child's faculties from being misdirected during the processes of bodily and mental development. *Emile* is, thus, for Rousseau, a means to make sure that nothing in the maturing process gets distorted. If man were to be seen as a well-oiled machine, Rousseau's endeavor at keeping both the senses and the faculties of an individual sharp in order to protect his (or her) lucidity makes perfect sense, even if Rousseau himself knows that this type of achievement is not possible, for one cannot control the environment of a child who is growing up, let alone one's own environment. However, one may be able to regain the internal innocence that birth gives us by ensuring that every fiber of our being is well-integrated. In other words, walking us through the steps to ensure that senses, feelings, and thoughts, in conjunction with the workings of the body, operate in harmony with each other to enable perfect communication in the self *retrouvé* may not be too far-fetched. Rousseau's gesture could be seen as utopian. Rousseau does not invent any part of the functioning of the body and mind. His educational prescriptions may emphasize how we may recapture that inner bliss that our unadulterated senses and feelings knew while growing up before we lost this state in our ego was being formed. Rousseau's endeavor does not pretend to find a magic

remedy to each face's unavoidable pains while being alive. However, it does represent an effort to regain a type of inner peace.

If we turn to the notion of inner peace, introspection comes to mind. In addition, religious or spiritual meditation practices may be seen as a possible path. However, Rousseau, obviously, does not ask us to meditate, for he knows that at the adult level, this act is already a form of corruption in the functioning of man: a mind is a capricious thing that can lead one to many misconceptions. Instead, via *Emile*, Rousseau provides us with a series of prescriptions to prevent what he identifies as corruption. Whether he talks about negative education, the directing of the senses in relation to the environment, the sharpening and tuning of our faculties, or learning to stay close to one's inner self by not being plagued by desires that go beyond need and necessity, Rousseau's message is to stay grounded and sharp in order to make sure that nothing interferes with the ecology of body and mind. In his search for a way to tell us how to recapture unity and integration, Rousseau proposes to subject *Emile* to a series of circumstances that will enable him to internalize a perfectly tuned behavior that follows the discipline of well-ruled freedom (*la liberté bien réglée*) concerning one's own nature and to the nature around us. This method is, in fact, very close, though reversed in its method, to strategies advanced in the ancient discipline of yoga or *union*. Indeed, in its traditional teachings, yoga, as it is taught in the *Yoga Sutras*, aims at harmonizing the workings of different layers of body and mind. The eight major principles of yoga monitor the physical body, breathing, the senses, the focusing of the mind, and the attainment of subsequent states of bliss via a practice of meditation that does not fall into the mind's trappings.

To address these similarities, the author of this paper reads *Emile* in light of yoga, particularly the *Yoga Sutras* attributed to Patanjali, circa 300 BC to 300 AD. This text can be used to homage to the self-taught, bearish Rousseau, the proclaimed «*anti-philosophe*,» since it expresses the immediate, pragmatic, non-ideological, non-systematic wisdom of an oral culture passed from master to disciple as sutras or seeds of meditation. It can be read and associated randomly while constituting a whole. It aims to integrate all layers and faculties of the adept so he or she can become lucid and integrated and circumvent ignorance, or Sanskrit «*avidya*,» the fruit of not seeing reality for what it is.

When Rousseau writes in *Emile*, *Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man*; he discloses to the reader his fundamental mission: to bring *Emile* to follow the religion of the heart. This natural religion, as opposed to what Rousseau calls the religion of man, reflects certain yogic principles in its configurations. It is why yoga offers a useful tool for reading Rousseau. Rousseau's attempts to convey his vision at Vincennes become more coherent when seen as transpositions of an intuitive vision of absolute consciousness inherent in humankind. His spirituality relies on knowing one's true nature and remaining within the boundaries of the self that reflect the lucid quality of nature, or Sanskrit *sattva guna*, "nature's lucidity or 'intelligence,'" its "pure, lucid quality of ... perfection" as "contrasted with spirit (*purusa*)" (Stoler Miller, 1996, 96).

In Rousseau's philosophy, two key components underlie the potentials for human development: 1) recognition of the self and 2) acknowledgment of the essential participation of the heart in human achievement and self-realization. In this approach, an original passion is translated as the sentiment of love of the self (*amour de soi*) and expressed in the language of the heart, not the language of the

head or reason. In *Emile*, Rousseau connects *amour de soi* directly to its seeming antithesis, *amour-propre*.<sup>1</sup> This is crucial because these opposing qualities are, in developmental terms, linked both in the transition from natural to civilized man and in the child's maturing. Later, however, when dealing with adolescence and the powers of reason, Rousseau expands on the risks of being estranged from what he calls "*amour de soi* or *amour-propre* taken in an extended sense," the "sole passion natural to man" (Rousseau, 1979, 92). He introduces a notion of *amour-propre* that is no longer directly related to *amour de soi* but rather a perversion of it and links *amour-propre* with pride, a deviation of *amour de soi* born from misuse of reason. Hence, for Rousseau, it is important to recognize this natural sentiment of self-love early as proof of the integrity and basic innocence of the human heart. As Rousseau says, *amour de soi* "becomes good or bad only by the application made of it and the relations given to it" (Rousseau, 1979, 92).

The word "relations" is key here since, for Rousseau, a good education establishes harmonious exchanges between body, soul, and nature via an adequate use of the faculties. Though it develops late, reason, when used appropriately, surpasses instinct by allowing us to recognize the unity of these three entities. In the "Profession of Faith," the Savoyard Vicar says, "The essential worship is that of the heart" (Rousseau, 1979, 308), but also, "If I exercise my reason ... if I make good use of my God-given faculties which require no intermediary, I ... learn of myself to know [God]" (Rousseau, 1979, 307). Learning to know God here is essentially identical to learning how to stay in touch with the self or *amour de soi*. So when the time comes to initiate the young to adequate uses of reason, Rousseau presents his readers with a new approach to *amour de soi*, claiming that "we have to love ourselves to preserve ourselves" (Rousseau, 1979, 213):

Self-love, which regards only ourselves, is contented when our true needs are satisfied. But *amour-propre*, which makes comparisons, is never content and never could be, because this sentiment, preferring ourselves to others, also demands others to prefer us to themselves, which is impossible. (Rousseau, 1979, 213-214)

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<sup>1</sup> According to Rousseau scholar, critic, and translator Allan Bloom (1979), *amour-propre* is "the central term in Rousseau's psychology.... Ordinarily, in its non-'extended sense,' it would be translated as vanity or pride, but it is a word too full of nuance and too important ... not to be ... revealed in its full subtlety. It is usually opposed to *amour de soi*. Both expressions mean *self-love*. Instead of opposing love of self to love of others, Rousseau opposes two kinds of self-love, a good and bad form. Thus without abandoning the view of modern political philosophy that man is primarily concerned with himself — particularly his own preservation — he is able to avoid Hobbes' conclusion that men, as a result of their selfishness, are necessarily in competition with one another. His earliest statement on this issue — the foundation of his argument that man is naturally good — is *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (note XV: '*Amour-propre* and *amour de soi*). Those two passions are very different in their nature and effects; they must not be confused. Love of oneself is a natural sentiment that inclines every animal to watch over its own preservation and which, directed in man by reason and modified by pity, produces humanity and virtue. *Amour-propre* is only a relative sentiment, artificial, and born in society, which inclines each individual to have a greater esteem for himself than for anyone else, inspires in all the harm they do to one another, and is the true source of honor.'" Allan Bloom, 1979, note 17, book II, in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Allan Bloom, [n.p.], Basic Books, 483-484.

For Rousseau, troubles begin when we remove ourselves from our center and compare ourselves to others. This shifting from contentment to dissatisfaction causes human misery. However, one cannot go wrong if one takes nature as a point of reference or a guide for edification. However, Rousseau's credo is not naïve, for when he chooses nature as a guide, he means "nature" in its balanced and harmonious form, or yogic *sattva guna*, the lucid quality of nature. One can argue that *amour-propre* is also nature at work, but for Rousseau, *amour-propre* is nature at work in the deviated form. Thus Emile's education carefully monitors the use and growth of faculties from simple to more complex states, ensuring that they are not distorted.

Because we are born with the ability to sense and feel as well as with *amour de soi*, our progress consists of remaining in touch with these attributes while acquiring others during our growth.

Feeling and knowing are both important faculties, but feeling develops first, and only by keeping it unadulterated can one learn and know well. The combination of existing, sensing being with sentiments constitutes for Rousseau the foundations of the innate faculty of conscience.<sup>2</sup> In the "Profession of Faith," the Vicar insists that knowing the heart is enough to provide one with answers to the mystery of the self or god since the core of our being is essentially good. The Vicar advises consulting the heart rather than philosophizing. Recognizing *amour de soi* as a primordial sentiment thus helps us be grounded and grow harmoniously. This sentiment connects to other sentiments that put us in tune with others, contributing to the awakening of conscience.

Acting with a conscience brings us to yoga's descriptions of the self, especially at levels where the sphere of objective knowledge leads to recognition of the spirit or Sanskrit *purusa*.

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<sup>2</sup> This element of sentiment is crucial to how Rousseau understands human Nature. He wants us to understand that the man of Nature lives to the fullest potential of his happiness at the moment and also that his bliss results from balance. "Sentiment," in this sense, expresses pure enjoyment of being and comes back repeatedly in Rousseau's work. The choice of "sentiment" rather than "emotion" or some other word is crucial, for it conveys the idea of a fundamental feeling that is integral to our Nature. In speaking of Mandeville's insight that men are not monsters because Nature gave them a sense of pity, for instance, Rousseau specifies that all virtues derive from this innate feeling. Asks Rousseau, "is desiring that someone not suffer anything but desiring that he be happy? Even should it be true that commiseration is only a feeling that puts us in the position of him who suffers—a feeling that is obscure and lively in Savage man, developed but weak in Civilized man—what would this idea matter to the truth of what I say, except to give it more force...? [C]ommiseration will be all the more energetic as the Observing animal identifies himself more intimately with the suffering animal... [T]his identification must have been infinitely closer in the state of Nature than in the state of reasoning. Reason engenders *amour-propre* and reflection fortifies it; reason turns man back upon himself, it separates him from all that bothers and afflicts him... [P]ity is a *natural feeling* which, moderating in each individual the activity of love of oneself, contributes to the mutual preservation of the entire species. It carries us *without reflection* to the aid of those whom we see suffer" (Rousseau, 1992, "Discourse on the Origins of Inequality," Discourse on the Origins of Inequality [Second Discourse], *Polemics, and Political Economy*, Collected Writings of Rousseau 3, trans. Judith R. Bush, Roger D. Masters, Christopher Kelly, and Terence Marshall, ed. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly, [Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College/UP New England], 37. The author's emphasis).

In yoga, the self is described as having levels or “sheaths.” These cover the soul (or *atman*) and are revealed as one moves from the gross or material to the spiritual through layers of mental, intellectual, and other forms of being. Whatever their place, the sheaths or *koshas* provide points of reference. Past the anatomical and other bodily sheaths, one finds two consecutive sheaths made of elements combining head and heart: one of mind and emotion (*manomaya kosha*) and one of discriminative intelligence and sentiment (*vijnamaya kosha*). These sheaths help clarify the concepts of *amour de soi*, the awakening of instinctive conscience, and ideas about *amour-propre*. *Manomaya kosha*, or mind, serves as an instrument of the ego (*ahamkara*); *vijnamaya kosha*, or discriminative sentiment, serves as an instrument of the self. *Manomaya kosha* functions in relation to the limited, individualized ego. It plays an important role in personal survival, but its overactivation can decenter the person in a chain of causes and effects. On the other hand, *vijnamaya kosha* distances the mind from useless mental activity. Suppose *Manomaya kosha* involves the self with matters that preoccupy the ego. In that case, *vijnamaya kosha* brings sentiments into play, opening the self to itself and the world in a state closer to pure consciousness, complete lucidity, and detachment—a state bearing the natural, sattvic qualities of “pure, lucid ... perfection.” *Vijnamaya kosha* thus connects to the sentiment of *amour de soi* that turns the self to others since it recognizes itself in them. It enables the individual to see unity in the world. At the same time, *manomaya kosha*, like *amour-propre* in its perverted state, limits the self to the needs of the ego and contributes to the sense of separation.

Rousseau's system and yoga thus both see sentiments connecting the person to the environment, while emotions can increase a sense of separation. “Sentiment” is understood as a general feeling manifested in a state of being, operating at the level of *vijnamaya kosha*. At the same time, “emotion” involves strong reactive feelings in response to stimuli or mood, operating at the level of *manomaya kosha*. From another angle, approaches to Nature connect yoga and Rousseau's philosophy.

While yoga aims at liberating the spirit from entanglement in the Matter, this liberation is not associated with separation since the Matter is simply another manifestation of spirit. Spirit has an identity as such only in relation to the phenomenal world, so an understanding of material Nature plays a crucial role in knowing the spirit's entrapment. In yoga, mind and Matter are evolutes of spirit in their grossest form.<sup>3</sup> Matter has the qualities of balance (*sattva*), action, and stillness. The intervention of these qualities in perception establishes either opacity or clarity. In the phenomenal world, two manifestations can be at work, veiling (*Maya*) and projection (*avidya*, which also means ignorance). The *sattvic* quality of Matter, *sattva guna*, or lucid transparency, though still part of the phenomenal world (*Maya*), represents this world in its most balanced aspect. To get to the immutable, the yogi must reach pure consciousness and thus differentiate between *sattva guna* and spirit: “spirit is not known by the idea of the spirit, since ideas belong to the realm of conceptual thought.... [S]pirit alone ... knows itself” (Stoler Miller, 1996, 68). If Rousseau's system does not go as far as reaching the

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<sup>3</sup> The following analysis is indebted to the comments of Swami Narayananda, 1979, in his chapter “Creation,” *The Primal Power in Man or the Kundalini Shakti*, Gylling, Denmark: N. U. Yoga Trust, 22-32, among other sources.

ultimate realization of spirit, it certainly tries to ground Emile by using the lucid quality of Nature as a guide.

In both Rousseau's system and yogic philosophy, knowledge is measured not in terms of acquisition but terms of discernment. For Rousseau, knowledge should not be accumulated; too much information may lead to ignorance of one's own essence. True knowledge preserves the innate sense of the self. It lets one relate to others by keeping the faculties free of superfluous thoughts, words, and needs that lead to inappropriate desires and emotions. Because of its involvement in thought, material nature can contribute to projections that remove the observer from the truth. Hence the need to use faculties judiciously and not let the primordial faculties, i.e., the senses, get misused and overused. Rousseau's principles here again recall yogic principles, though Rousseau tackles the problem from a different angle. In yoga, one controls the senses to unbind spirit from matter and unlearn the overuse of sense perceptions. In the practice of sense withdrawal (*pratyahara*), the mind ceases to form unnecessary relations and impressions and grows quiet. Rousseau does not advocate such withdrawal of the senses but rather teaches the child *not* to use the senses beyond what nature requires for survival, or in other words, beyond what synchronizes with the demands of nature. The control of sensing faculties aims to cultivate an organism that balances thinking by using adequately developed faculties. Thus, Rousseau's pedagogy relies on two techniques: 1) directing the child to use faculties only according to the demands of harmonious, lucid nature; 2) protecting the child from influences that might corrupt faculties before the child can see the potentials for error. The agenda is clear: start with proper sense education based on knowledge of the demands of nature, and avoid engaging the child's intellect too soon in complex mental operations.

Oppositions between understanding and knowing, *amour de soi* and *amour propre*, self, and ego, have at their core preoccupations that are remarkably close to those found in Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*. Yoga aims to ensure that the workings of the mind do not interfere with self-balance or, in other words, with man's true nature. The sūtras read, "Yoga is the cessation of the turnings of thought. / When thought ceases, the spirit stands in its true nature" (Stoler Miller, 1996, 29). By referring to thoughts as turnings, one captures the sense of thought waves, or *vrttis* in Sanskrit, as the fundamental pattern of the operations of the workings of the mind. In yoga, a thought process is a composite of mind, *manas*, the recording faculty; *buddhi*, intelligence, the discriminative faculty; and *ahamkar*, the ego-sense, which claims power over impressions and stores them as individual knowledge. Knowledge or perceptions exist as thought waves. The mind that appears intelligent and conscious often is not for the yogi, for it churns with borrowed intelligence, conversely to the knowledge of spirit or self. Suppose yoga offers a discipline to clear the senses and reinstate the primary inner experience. In that case, Rousseau aims at achieving the same end but from the opposite direction, offering a pedagogy that tries to prevent alteration of the sense of inner balance. It is part of the reason that Emile's education requires hands-on experience while avoiding reported knowledge. The Master's lessons rest on introverted principles aimed at teaching Emile to adapt in balance with his intuitive knowledge, even though the strategy involves staging situations that require the interaction of the individual with the outside world.

In the *Yoga Sūtra*, intuitive knowledge offers a comprehensive inner reference and stability source. The opposition between acquired and intrinsic knowledge that arises from the individual's core comes to the fore. By suggesting the context and

consequences involved in thinking, several sutras tell us what to expect when thoughts stem from the exterior: "Individual thoughts are constructed from a measure of egoism" (Stoler Miller, 1996, 76); "A single thought produces the diverse activities of many thoughts (Stoler Miller 1996, 76); "Since thought is an object of perception, it cannot illuminate itself" (Stoler Miller 1996, 79). These distinctions recall Rousseau's efforts to ensure the child does not use faculties prematurely. For Rousseau, teaching the child to think properly depends on his exercising discriminative judgment to foster the harmonious development of the faculties. To achieve this, Rousseau focuses not on sense withdrawal but on not overstimulating the senses to prevent them from becoming overactive and ensure that no unnecessary or traumatic memory intervention. Each pedagogical strategy has to correspond to a definite need and specific intent so that no interference disturbs the child's center.

Rousseau's method thus advocates a form of teaching that relies on an accurate education of the senses. However, it also tries to diminish the impact of distant concepts on the process of interpretation or absorption of knowledge. It emphasizes what could be construed as pre-conventional, unconventional language. No outward experience is allowed without a cautious screening of the environment and initial attention to the primordial need. Rousseau wants to ensure that complex faculties interfere only at the appropriate time. Again, we can draw a parallel between the intent of the sutras—making sure that the self is not affected by movements of the mind that fuel and are fueled by the turnings of thought—and that of Rousseau, who tries to ensure that in recording knowledge, the faculties be used discriminatively.

Early on, Rousseau identifies language as a source of delusion when it is removed from the natural context of expressing the body's or the soul's basic longings. The sutras similarly address how language can encourage the development of wrong knowledge; "Conceptualization comes from words devoid of substance" (Stoler Miller, 1996, 31), or "Verbal delusion arises when words do not correspond to reality" (Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, 1981, 25) (sutra 1.9).<sup>4</sup> While connecting sensations and objects, Rousseau advocates an education that begins before conventional language acquisition: "Why ... should a child's education not begin before he speaks and understands" (Rousseau, 1979, 63)? Linking language to inner and outer sensations, Rousseau advises making sure not to expose the child to the corruption of early sensations in order to keep him in touch with his inner reality and the reality of the object:

At the beginning of life when memory and imagination are still inactive, the child is attentive only to what affects his senses at the moment. Since his sensations are the first materials of his knowledge, to present them to him in an

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<sup>4</sup> The *Yoga Sutras* are generally divided into four parts, each consisting of separate aphorisms or sutras; the word *sutra*, etymologically connected to the English word *suture*, can refer to the individual aphorisms or to the whole 'stitching,' so to speak. Thus "sutra 1.9" refers to the ninth sutra of the first part of the *Yoga Sutras*. Because translations of the *Yoga Sutra* can vary significantly, the author here offers different translations of the same aphorism to allow the reader to sense more fully the import of the aphorism. The author's translations are drawn from Stoler Miller (1996) and Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, 1981, *How to Know God: The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*. Hollywood, CA: Vedanta Press, unless otherwise noted.



appropriate order is to prepare his memory to provide them one day to his understanding in the same order. But inasmuch as he is attentive only to his sensations, it suffices at first to show him quite distinctly the connection of these same sensations with the objects which cause them. (Rousseau, 1979, 64).<sup>5</sup>

Rousseau wants to ensure that no misconception interferes in the early stage of environmental exposure so that the initial experience will not lack substance or be subject to false impressions. His insistence on accurate language is essential since it teaches how to restrain unnecessary turnings of thoughts when reasoning or recollecting. These cautionary instructions regarding the use of precocious and inaccurate language address differences between learning and knowing. Rousseau does not want his pupil to see things first from the head but rather via the direct sensual experience of the body. This crucial concentration on handling language acquisition seems to propose a preventative solution for the type of thought waves that the *Sutras* identify as the wrong type of knowledge, knowledge susceptible to misconceptions because of conceptual or verbal delusions, errors about the nature of the object, and memory. Speaking of the result that he has in mind, Rousseau claims that his pupil “[n]ever says a useless word and does not exhaust himself with a chatter to which he knows nothing by heart.... If he reads less well in our books than does another child, he reads better in the book of nature. His mind is not in his tongue but in his head” (Rousseau, 1979, 160).<sup>6</sup>

This aptitude for reading the book of nature results from Rousseau’s method, which relies on inner experience—focusing the child’s understanding on the subjective yet universal self—and outer experience concentrated on applying practical knowledge rather than knowledge reported in books. Judiciously aware of the importance of misperception, Rousseau emphasizes how to use senses accurately to perceive well and to understand how deception can occur through a misunderstanding of the senses. Rousseau states, “The first faculties which are formed and perfected in us are the senses. They are ... the first faculties that ought to be cultivated; they are the ones which are completely ignored or ... are the most neglected. .... To exercise the senses is not only to make use of them, it is to learn to judge well with them. It is to learn, so to speak, to sense; for we know how to touch, see, and hear only as we have learned” (Rousseau, 1979, 132).

According to the *Yoga Sutra*, one must gain complete control of the senses in order to experience clarity of intuitive cognition: sutra 2.54, “When each sense organ severs contact with its objects, withdrawal of the senses corresponds to the intrinsic form of thought”; sutra 2,55, “From this comes complete control of the

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<sup>5</sup> «Dans le commencement de la vie, où la mémoire et l’imagination sont encore inactives, l’enfant n’est attentif qu’à ce qui affecte actuellement ses sens. Ses sensations étant les premiers matériaux de ses connoissances, les lui offrir dans un ordre convenable, c’est préparer sa mémoire à les fournir un jour dans le même ordre à son entendement: mais comme il n’est attentif qu’à ses sensations, il suffit d’abord de lui montrer bien distinctement la liaison de ces mêmes sensations avec les objets qui les causent». Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1969, 284.

<sup>6</sup> « [Son élève] ne dit jamais un mot inutile, et ne s’épuise pas sur un babil qu’il sait qu’on n’écoute point. Ses idées sont bornées, mais nettes; s’il ne sait rien par coeur, il sait beaucoup par expérience. S’il lit moins qu’un autre enfant dans nos livres, il lit mieux dans celui de la nature; son esprit n’est pas dans sa langue mais dans sa tête; il a moins de mémoire que de jugement” ». Rousseau, 1969, 420-421.

senses” (Stoler Miller. 1996, 59). Conversely to yogic discipline, which advocates practices that concentrate the mind after the fact, Rousseau advocates controlling the senses and concentrating the mind early, before bad habit gets a chance to settle. However, he does not only advocate sense education.

He also wants us to make the child aware of the limitations of the senses, as in the sense of sight (Rousseau, 1979, 140). These educational aspects pertain as much to practical knowledge as to self-centering. Thanks to the child’s lucidity regarding sense limitations, Rousseau can, for example, instruct him in physics (see Rousseau, 1979, 176-177), making him aware of the distortion involved in refraction. In addition, thanks to this sense of training and the Master’s practical teachings, the child can use his knowledge of astronomy to find his way when lost (Rousseau, 1979, 180-182).

In disciplining the faculties, Rousseau aims to raise a harmonious being. It is also why Rousseau’s method depends fundamentally on the innate experience of universal love (*amour de soi*) and recognition of the common fate of humanity (pity) when teaching the child morals and respect. However, to escape the prison house of language and the misconceptions brought by the misuse of faculties, Rousseau chooses a practical method that involves a conscious staging of circumstances to trigger natural, compassionate feelings proper to humankind. Since his teachings aim at maintaining harmony in the inner core while helping develop the ego and the faculties from the onset, Rousseau prioritizes instincts and natural dispositions. The first and most advanced mode of learning must be based on sensations and not on ideas. Each lesson must protect initial feelings unadulterated by outward, abstract principles.

To evaluate our present state correctly, then, Rousseau examines man’s psycho-physical anatomy and attempts to devise a treatise on education that will exemplify how human faculties. However, removed from the direct context of nature, it can, if trained correctly, still attain the perfect integrity of a conscious, living organism. The key is understanding how mental capacities such as memory, imagination, and reason form and operate. Thus, concerns addressed in both Rousseau’s writings and yogic philosophy emphasize the disciplined development of intelligence and clarity. Both try to ensure one remains true to core qualities, and both address the use and control of complex faculties such as memory and imagination. Memory and imagination let us broaden our horizons, but we must try to learn to use them so that they do not interfere with the real sense of self. For yoga, the cause of a loss of spirituality is *avidya* or ignorance, or the fact that one identifies exclusively with ego. This over-identification is often encouraged by dysfunctions of imagination and memory. For Rousseau, the properly educated person—Emile—stays closer to the primary qualities made available by nature before imagination, memory, and other faculties draw the individual away from his true self. When channeled properly, memory, imagination, and other faculties assist in the recovery of true integrity and unity and help the individual become more fully conscious. Intelligence, a third important constituent in the construction of consciousness, can be sharpened with discernment and proper judgment—with reason. It is the movement toward sharpening these faculties that links Rousseau’s philosophy with the system of yoga.

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