

Rousseau: The Rejection of Happiness as the Foundation of Authenticity

Yuval Eytan

Abstract: The roots of the ideal of authenticity in modern Western thought are numerous and complex. In this article, I explore their development in relation to Rousseau's paradoxical conclusion that complete satisfaction is an aspiration that not only cannot be fulfilled but whose actual realization will make a person miserable. I argue that there is an unresolved tension between the notion of humans as creatures who by nature strive to eliminate suffering to achieve static serenity and the idea that their natural goal in society is to constantly change and enrich themselves. The purpose of this article is not to construct another pessimistic interpretation according to which our most profound desire – happiness – cannot be achieved, but rather, by understanding natural inequality as a historical phenomenon, to shed light on Rousseau's idea that happiness should be rejected because it contradicts the new foundation of morality: the realization of people's uniqueness.

Keywords: authenticity, happiness, Jean Jacques Rousseau, natural inequality, uniqueness.

1. Introduction

According to Charles Taylor, “the background understanding to the modern ideal of authenticity, and to the goal of self-fulfillment or self-realization [is the duty to be] true to myself [...] to my own originality, and that is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself.” (2018, 29) Rousseau plays a significant role in shedding light on the roots of the ideal of authenticity, and it is customary to argue that two parameters link him to the most basic principles of an ideal of life, which were only fully developed over a hundred years after his death. First, truth is found in every individual, and hence moral freedom is possible due not to human beings' subordination to external truth, but rather to their deep, natural, inner voices. According to Taylor (1989, 265, 357-61), Rousseau's idea that supreme happiness exists in a life dedicated to these voices, which replace the *summum bonum* of medieval regimes, reflects a turn in Western culture towards independent, autonomous, and radical self-inquiry. Second, any social organization that prevents people from being loyal to their authentic emotions and needs is perceived as threatening their ability to achieve happiness. In Rousseau's criticism of social institutions that prevent humans from being loyal to their authentic natures, Lionel Trilling (1972) sees a new moral ideal – authenticity. This ideal expresses a kind of sincerity that is different from the common English version of it, i.e., a person's duty not to mislead others, and is

based on rejecting the perception according to which society is natural and eternal (a kingdom) in favor of one according to which society is a dynamic phenomenon determined by human will. According to Alessandro Ferrara, Rousseau's authenticity involves deep reflection to negate external emotions that originate in society and the courage to act in the context of authentic emotions to achieve happiness (2016, 22; 2017, 3-4). In a similar vein, Tzvetan Todorov sees Rousseau as a pioneer of modernity because he distinguishes between false freedom, which brings misery, and authentic freedom, which leads to happiness. The former characterizes people's evaluation of themselves in terms of others' expectations and is caused by *amour-propre*. The latter, which originates in *amour de soi*, is the state of people's loyalty to their true selves, i.e., their true caring for themselves (Todorov 2001, 2, 31, 60).

Scholars' belief that authentic life leads to happiness is related to the fact that these two notions – that truth is found within people and that society can be changed – played a crucial role in what is commonly identified as the subjectification of happiness, which, like the ideal of authenticity, reflected a profound change in Western culture that involved focusing on individual freedom.¹ According to Taylor, while in Plato and Aristotle happiness is not based on the satisfaction of personal desires or the achievement of individual goals, modern freedom, which was necessary for the ideal of authenticity to emerge, developed based on the principle that only individuals should determine the good for themselves since there is no better judge than themselves to determine their happiness (1989, 82). In other words, while in ancient objective theories, happiness is perceived as the result of normative behavior, indicates the fulfillment of essential qualities, and is not related to emotions, feelings, and personal desires, in modern subjective approaches, normative principles are rejected, and, as Christine Vitrano argues, the common denominator is that “happiness involves [achieving] a state of satisfaction [... by] getting or doing the important things that one wants.”² (2018, 113)

In genealogies of the concept of happiness, Rousseau does not play a significant role, as he does in the ideal of authenticity, since it is customary to see Hobbes and Locke as the most important contributors to the subjectification of happiness and argue that Rousseau adopted their fundamental point in thinking of happiness as a positive emotional state.³ In this context, we can identify two main streams of thought. According to the first of these, Rousseau, like his predecessors, based happiness on an individual conception of freedom. Within this interpretive framework, the debate over happiness stems from the different meanings attributed to this kind of freedom. For example, according to Thomas Davidson, morality functions as a means of achieving happiness, and therefore

¹ See Guignon (2004, 24-5, 76); Trilling (1972, 40-1, 51-2); White (2006, 69).

² See also Mulnix and Mulnix (2015, 4-6); Annas (2014, 41-5); Haybron (2000, 208-13).

³ Rutherford (2003, 380); Strauss (1963, 17, 23, 57); Wood (1990, 53-4); McMahon (2006, 184-5); Haybron (2013, 103-4).

Rousseau's theory is a utilitarian one, in which freedom expresses the individual's ability to maximize personal satisfactions, i.e., to be happy (Davidson 1975, 185). For John Hall, the general will is not reconcilable with a utilitarian worldview, but, in his view, while moral behavior is based on self-control, the freedom associated with happiness is simpler, i.e., "freedom to walk in the woods [...] to do whatever one wants." (1973, 69-70) Joshua Cohen (2010) argues that happiness is a state of balance between desires and powers, with freedom expressing the self-control needed to create a moderate life. According to Strauss, Rousseau embraced a negative conception of happiness: "the happiest man [is the one] who has the smallest number of evils."⁴ (2014, 126) On the one hand, this is a critique of Hobbes's conception of happiness as a race to maximize satisfaction, and, on the other hand, the adoption of the idea of severing the necessary connection between a normative system and happiness (Strauss 1965, 166-9, 182). Frederick Neuhouser (2014) agrees that Rousseau's conception of happiness is negative, but emphasizes that he conceives of well-being, a broader concept that, apart from happiness – defined formally (as a match between powers and desires) and subjectively (as dependent on individual satisfaction, whose meaning is not derived from an abstract concept of humanity) – also contains freedom, which is perceived as a real, objective, and universal need related to moral activity.

Thinkers from the second stream do not disagree with the emotional-subjective element, but believe that there are also eudemonistic elements in Rousseau's conception of happiness, and in Ernest Cassirer's (2015) formulation, this is a syncretism of moral duty and the personal sense of satisfaction that should result from it. In this approach, the debate concerns the means required for human beings to desire their obligations. For example, according to Masters (1997), Rousseau's rejection of Hobbesian egoism is expressed in the idea that reducing the suffering of others has become a significant part of the moral agent's happiness. According to Rafeeq Hasan (2016), in his political writings, Rousseau seeks to bring about a situation in which human beings will be satisfied with the realization of their civil liberties, and this is an attempt to merge the general will and private will and create a correspondence between people's desires and their ability to fulfill them. Mark Jonas (2016) argues that heterosexual love relationships within the marriage covenant express a merging of the eudemonic and individualistic elements of Rousseau's approach to happiness.

I disagree neither with the idea that Rousseau sees happiness in psychological terms nor with the two assumptions regarding his influence on the ideal of authenticity. What I seek to do is challenge what I see as the uncritical link between authenticity and happiness in Rousseau's thought. The interpretation

⁴ Strauss's argument is taken mainly from the definition of happiness in *Emile*, 80. All references used for Rousseau's works are taken from *The Collected Writings of Rousseau* (1990 -2012). Abbreviations: E, *Emile*; D, *Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues*; FD, *First Discourse*; SD, *Second Discourse*; J, *Julie*; SC, *Social Contract*; C, *Confessions*; RS, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*; HP, *History and Politics Writing*; L, *Origin of Languages*; LD, *Letter to d'Alembert*.

according to which a free and moral life does not lead to happiness has recently been developed by John Warne, who sees the impossibility of resolving the “tension between virtue and happiness” as a significant factor in “Rousseau’s tragic theory of human relations,” which teaches us how fragile happiness is in any social relationship (2018, 113-4, 225).

I claim that Rousseau sees morality as a necessary part of people’s ability to be self-sufficient, and indeed repeatedly arrives at a dead end regarding the possibility of unity between the two. But I would like to emphasize how natural inequality, a concept that, to the best of my knowledge, is not central to the interpretation of Rousseau’s concept of happiness, can function as the basis for a new morality according to which happiness is an ideal worth overcoming. By this, I do not mean arriving at a tragic reconciliation with the inability to achieve happiness (Melzer 1990, 285), but rather understanding it as a tendency that is unnatural for a social person.

Rousseau’s paradoxical conclusion – that achieving what all humans naturally seek, i.e., complete satisfaction, will not satisfy them – can provide a theoretical basis for understanding how the ideal of authenticity developed, in part, from opposition to the notion of human beings’ purpose (seeking satisfaction or avoiding pain) that lies at the foundation of the ideal of happiness in modern thought. In the first section, I argue that the significant difference between happiness in the state of nature and happiness in society stems from the fact that, in the latter, the system of needs takes on an individual character. In the second section, I explain how this psychological change is the main reason for Rousseau’s three failures in establishing harmony between a free, authentic life and a happy, satisfying one. Happiness is revealed as an illusion because it is an unrealistic state in which social humans can separate positive emotions from negative ones and thus experience pure satisfaction from their present state. But Rousseau also understood that the problem lies, as I claim in the third section, not in being satisfied by acting as free moral agents, but rather in the fact that the actual achievement of happiness contradicts the individualistic foundation of human beings’ nature, which directs them not to satisfaction or reduced suffering, but rather intense self-enrichment.

2. Simple and Complex Happiness

Rousseau’s idea that humans “live only in order to sleep, to vegetate, to remain immobile” (L 310) implies that happiness is a static state of satisfaction marked by freedom from any feeling of pain and sorrow, while this state is mainly characterized by “not desiring anything more than what [one] already has.”⁵ (J 384) Is Rousseau’s uncompromising loyalty to this conception of happiness inconsistent with his declaration (E 324) that happiness in the state of nature and

⁵ See also SD 6; C 36, 212; SW 42; HP, 28, C, 126; E, 210.

happiness in society are completely different?⁶ I believe the answer to this question is no, since the difference lies not in the nature of happiness itself, but rather in the circumstances and means of its fulfillment, i.e., the transition from 'natural freedom' to 'moral freedom.' What remains unchanged is not only the idea of happiness as a state in which people do not strive for any change, but also the notion that this kind of stability is always based on freedom in three main senses. The first of these is the autonomy required in any subjective theory of happiness, i.e., individuals control the determination and fulfillment of their goals. The second is freedom achieved as actions that prove the fulfillment of natural and internal universal elements in humans. The third is related to the nature of happiness itself as a perfect and stable sentiment free of any emotion or thought that deviates from it (e.g., longing, fear, hope). If we are to understand the dominance of self-sufficiency in Rousseau's conception of happiness (Boisvert 2010, 59; Strauss 1947, 476), we must relate to the two innate emotions that are the sources of human activity: "[one is] purely passive physical and organic sensitivity which seems to have as its end only the preservation of our bodies and [...] our species through the direction of pleasure and pain. [The other] I call active and moral [and it is] the faculty of attaching our affections to beings who are foreign to us." (D 112)

Rousseau was dedicated to the principle that true happiness is a state in which external behavior reflects the autonomic fulfillment of universal inwardness (FD 5). This proves human beings' freedom and loyalty to *amour de soi*, which creates 'gentle passions' aimed at satisfying simple, natural, and true needs, i.e., happiness (D 112-3). In the state of nature, the absence of physical pain and suffering that result from being enslaved to another was a sufficient condition for happiness. The claim that "the happiness of the natural man is as simple as his life," (E 324) is consistent with the circular image of happiness as a continuous, monotonous, and homogeneous unity that results from the satisfaction of the same needs by the same means over and over again (SD 8, 71).

The transition to the social condition is expressed through a dramatic event, the Fall in the sense of human beings' inability to exist in harmonious unity with nature, and should not be reduced to the determination by an anonymous individual that a certain piece of land is privately owned by them or the fact that, for this determination to be valid, an individual must receive confirmation from another concerning that land (SD 43). *Amour-propre* develops 'hateful and cruel passions,' and there is no doubt that the desire for a relative advantage over others is the seed of the loss of individuals' ability to find happiness in satisfying their natural needs, which have been replaced by external desire for the satisfaction of an emotion that cannot be satisfied: pride (D 112; FD 110-113). Yet the need for private property and its basic emotional roots (*amour-propre*) are not problems,

⁶ On unresolved contradictions in Rousseau's concept of happiness, see Dent (1992, 122-3) and Gilead (2012, 269).

but rather symptoms of the change that Rousseau describes in his examination of the development of a set of desires based on human beings' knowledge of themselves as unique beings, which is always intermixed with the development of awareness of the uniqueness of all natural phenomena, most importantly members of their species (SD 91, note 12).

In the state of nature, unique personality was latent, since human beings' lack of self-conception that transcended the physical pointed to their inability to act in accordance with the desires that arose from their recognition of their uniqueness (Neuhouser 2014, 65, note 5). The reason for natural human beings' complete satisfaction (the balance of desires and powers) lies not in them having had fewer needs, but rather in the moderate character of these needs, which reflected a state of indifference to nature's plurality caused by their lack of awareness of their uniqueness. The only individuality that could be attributed to them was negative, i.e., not being controlled by others. Intense desires and emotions (hate, love, shame, hope) did not characterize their cognitive state, since their development was conditioned by reflexive and relative thinking that developed only in society (SD 27-8, 51-3), i.e., only where humans conceived themselves as creatures with individual desires. The power of these desires lays in the fact that they were directed at specific objects, and this is the difference between achieving happiness through a simple system of needs designed to release humans from physical pain and a system of needs that aims to lead to happiness through morality (E 38-44). I will use love and hate to demonstrate this point:

The physical is that general desire which inclines one sex to unite with the other. The moral is that which determines this desire and fixes it exclusively on a single object [...]. [L]imited solely to that which is physical in love [... natural] men must feel the ardors of their temperament less frequently and less vividly, and consequently have fewer and less cruel disputes among themselves. (SD 38-9)

Natural humans were indifferent to aspects of love that went beyond the corporeal – sexual relations – and stemmed from temporary desire and did not lead to the establishment of a family, as they were not preceded by intense excitement (SD 28-30). Such indifference is appropriate for creatures whose entire existence has been reduced to the present. In eliminating pain, they found complete satisfaction, as they were bothered neither by their past, nor by the future consequences of their actions (D 159; C 204). The inability to love must also mean the inability to hate, and thus, struggles did not deviate from the point in time at which they occurred, were not preceded by planning, and did not develop into war, in the same way that reciprocal relationships could never develop into peace. In a moral (social) relationship, love becomes powerful and dangerous, since it is a state in which individuals feel that the object of their love has no substitute, i.e., their happiness is dependent on one source that is not under their control, and this undermines the stability of happiness. But I focus here on what I believe is more significant for understanding the puzzling nature of happiness.

The problem lies in Rousseau's recognition that the awareness of uniqueness means that positive and negative emotions, present and future, human beings and their fellows cannot be harmoniously united or separated because nature and history are intertwined. It is only in hypothetical philosophical discussions that hate and love can be identified as opposite states, while, in reality, those who find happiness in love must also experience hate, jealousy, or fear of what they perceive as a threat to the proper fulfillment of their love (HP 67; SD 35).

Between the laxity, complacency, and stupidity that led to the happiness of natural humans and the restlessness and enslavement to pride that caused the misery of the modern citizen, Rousseau describes the Golden Age of societies that achieved domestic happiness (SD 46-8). In these primitive societies, human beings maintained a simple and egalitarian system of needs, with the crucial difference between them and humans in the natural state being that the happiness of the former stemmed "from one source only, unspoiled family love," (Shklar 1969, 21) which in Rousseau's thought becomes an element that expresses the 'the supreme happiness of life.' (E 497; J 115) Efficient work processes created leisure, allowing human beings to increase their well-being through the endless creation of needs, which later became habits that required dependence, hence creating social inequality in connection with which Rousseau describes the loss of innocence and happiness (and not in connection with natural inequality) (SD 47). Rousseau's frequently repeated argument that the solution to misery may be found in the balance of desires and powers (E 211) implies an individualistic conception of happiness since individuals must choose a path that suits them to reach this balance (Salkever 1978). But the fact that according to Rousseau doing this will not bring happiness, as I explain below, directs us to a different understanding of the source of misery. Of course, misery stems from an imbalance between desires and powers, but the more significant question is what undermines a balanced state, or, in other words, what exactly made humans feel 'uneasy in the bosom of happiness' (J 38) and what this tells us about their happiness in the first place. I refer to the loss of happiness that characterized the Golden Age, and not humans' exit from the happy state of nature, which is described as the result of external changes (especially natural disasters) that forced people, in light of their most basic motive – the pursuit of welfare (*bien-être*) in the sense of self-love – to develop, on the basis of their perfectibility, latent cognitive capacities to survive (SD 45; SC 138). Since in every society people judge their situations by comparing themselves with others, the claim that *amour-propre* characterized the psychological fabric of these primitive and happy societies is valid,⁷ and therefore *amour-propre* should not be seen as a source of misery. The solution to deep restlessness or dissatisfaction that I seek to offer concerns the fact that natural differences between human beings, which preceded history, but are not detached from it, have become a major aspect of existence. It

⁷ See Neuhauser (2014, 82) and Warner (2018, 7).

is important to distinguish between unique character and natural inequality, since the latter assumes a social existence in which uniqueness, expressed in personal desires, emotions, and thought, contains a relative dimension. Since the awareness of uniqueness occurs in a social framework that affects it, in principle social differences cannot truly reflect natural uniqueness. The source of misery lies not in this gap, but rather in a situation in which human beings are more concerned with the unequal and relative elements in themselves than the natural and universal elements (D 71). That is, instead of seeing compassion for others as a source of happiness, they believe that happiness is a matter of satisfying personal desires that do not express their unique natures, since they are influenced by time and place. These are arbitrary circumstances on which happiness must not depend, and which should be recognized as a means of establishing happiness by fulfilling human beings' beautiful and eternal elements (E 635; C 87). When the means become the end, humans are unhappy because they do not satisfy their natural needs and because their happiness depends on external elements that they do not control and that ultimately control them and cause them constant dissatisfaction (C 343). Yet it is important to understand that the external does not consist only of others, social institutions, norms, and so on, but also of the dimension of uniqueness that includes natural and historical elements that are indistinguishable from each other. This is what Rousseau means when he declares, "[o]ur sweetest existence is relative and collective, and our true self is not entirely within us." (HP 118)

I agree that for Rousseau "the great defect [of] the Golden Age [is that it] is dull and men are restless" and for this reason "[i]t cannot last" (Shklar 1969, 29). But I believe that the inability to "resolve the conflict between social duty and natural inclination" cannot be the reason that this age was "by definition, unstable and fleeting." (Shklar 1969, 58) Restlessness (the defect) is not the product of this conflict or any specific social setting but rather originates in humans' necessary awareness of the element of particularity in themselves and others. But before we can understand restlessness as natural, that is, before we can understand happiness as a desire that contradicts our historical nature, we must examine Rousseau's attempts to establish the optimal conditions for happiness, and, no less importantly, his awareness of his failure to do so. The transition from a moderate and static system designed to fulfill universal needs and characterized by indifference to all else to a powerful and constant war between individuals' desires, i.e., "the point where love of the self [*amour de soi*] turns into *amour-propre*," (E 235) reflects not the loss of happiness, but rather the need to establish harmony that was not expected to develop naturally. Because the need of all humans to express their individuality and gain recognition of it is natural in the context of social relations, happiness will be fulfilled by overcoming individual desires, and never by negating them, which would mean rejecting part of human beings' social nature (E 389; HP 73).

Rousseau's formula, which appears in various forms throughout his corpus, requires individuals to overcome their personal interests by choosing to do the noble deed. Doing so expresses the difference between natural humans (who care for themselves by avoiding pain) and moral humans (who care for themselves through painful sacrifice to reduce the suffering of others). By overcoming their personal desires, humans develop true self-esteem. That is, they are happy thanks to their recognition of their own fulfillment as spiritual and free moral creatures: "[man is] free in his actions and as such is animated by an immaterial substance [...]. The supreme enjoyment is in satisfaction with oneself; it is in order to deserve this satisfaction that we are placed on earth and endowed with freedom." (E 442-3) For Rousseau, natural pleasure is supposed to stem from the liberation from suffering and pain that preceded it (J 65; LD 293). In the state of nature, physical pain provided the only motivation for humans to act, and its reduction led to happiness, since humans did not differentiate themselves from their own natures or from natural phenomena. In society, these distinctions are inevitable, and therefore a need for self-esteem develops and is related to others in two main ways: in the most basic sense, others function as a necessary means through which humans can express compassion, that is, act freely. But because this action is not sufficient in itself, the positive recognition that people receive thanks to their choice to sacrifice their pleasures for the sake of others is necessary for them to be satisfied with themselves: "mak[ing] people happy [...] will leave us an everlasting sentiment of satisfaction." (J 97; SW 84)

Thus, humans' recognition of themselves and others as unique is necessary for their happiness, since overcoming the desires that develop in connection with this recognition will enable self-mastery, suffering, and positive recognition, all of which are required for them to be satisfied with themselves as creatures who have chosen to be loyal to their 'true sel[ves]' (HP 118) and fulfill their sublime purpose, as "there is no happiness without courage nor virtue without struggle." (E 633) Moral freedom lies not in noncompliance, but rather in obedience to one's reason: "[l]earn to become your own master [...] and you will be virtuous." (E 633) Rationality helps humans understand that caring for others is caring for their own well-being, their *amour de soi*, and this is suitable for a psychological structure in which a separation between people's conditions and those of their fellows is unnatural and unsatisfying, as it cannot create true self-esteem (SD 11). What makes happiness in society immeasurably superior to happiness in the state of nature is that only in the former does satisfaction stem from overcoming the suffering involved in morality (SC 141), that is, from the expression of free will, which was irrelevant in the state of nature, for, as Strauss argues, "natural man is characterized, not by freedom, but by perfectibility." (1965, 271, note 38) This is the positive element of Rousseau's conception of happiness, and it means that a life devoid of suffering is certainly not possible, but, even so, people in social frameworks are likely to suffer from this situation, as it negates both their ability to achieve freedom and their ability to be satisfied by doing so (J 570). The idea

that Rousseau has only a negative perception of happiness is based on the assumption that in his view “pleasure is the absence of pain, nothing positive.” (Strauss 2014, 126) According to Strauss, this view expresses a kind of Epicurean vulgarization, which, as mentioned above, is prevalent in the interpretive discourse. I claim that this interpretation expresses to a certain extent a vulgarization of Rousseau’s belief that pleasure derives its meaning from the freedom from suffering that preceded it. The error that allows the positive element to be ignored is expressed in the replacement of the notion of overcoming pain with the notion of absence of pain, without noticing that the latter characterizes happiness of the kind relevant only to the state of nature, in which, as Neuhouser aptly argues, “human animals do not differ [in terms of happiness] much from their nonhuman counterparts.” (2014, 139)

Rousseau’s clarification that the happiness of the moral person is completely different from that of the natural person means that the former does not reflect a lack of suffering, but overcoming suffering increases self-esteem through the fulfillment of authentic needs. Lack of attention to this aspect of happiness is apparent, as I argue above, among a wide and varied range of commentators who claim, in line with contemporary theories of well-being, that it is possible to distinguish between subjective (associated with pleasure, satisfaction, positive emotions) and objective (associated with moral duty, honor, health) well-being. The problem is that, for Rousseau, happiness is not pleasure, since it expresses satisfaction based on something stable and eternal in human nature, i.e., compassion, the fulfillment of which is not sufficient in itself, but is nevertheless necessary for individuals’ ability to be satisfied with their sincere concern for themselves, which involves undergoing torments that express their concern for others.⁸

It may be said that the interpretation of moral freedom proposed here characterizes Isaiah Berlin’s (2013) notion of ‘positive liberty,’ which is based on the distinction between superior and inferior elements of human nature (authentic emotions and individual desires, respectively), and according to which freedom is expressed solely in fulfilling the former by controlling the latter. But seeing Rousseau as part of this philosophical stream provides only a partial explanation, since ‘negative liberty,’ which is based on the principles of individualistic development and autonomy, plays a crucial role in his pessimistic conclusion regarding happiness. I suggest that his three well-known attempts to achieve happiness failed due to the impossibility of reconciling these notions of freedom which, as Berlin argues, are based on worldviews that essentially contradict each other.

But the conflict I seek to emphasize in what follows is not between a perception that sanctifies individuals’ freedom to determine the purpose of their

⁸ See Rousseau’s (2018) letter to M. D’Offreville. On the difference between sensual pleasure and sentiment of happiness, see Salkever (1978, 37-41).

lives and one that sees freedom as an expression of the fulfillment of a universal purpose of the human race, that is, between subjective and objective theories of happiness. The deeper contradiction lies in the contrast between the perception of humans as creatures who strive for perfect satisfaction and their definition as entities that strive for constant self-improvement. According to the former, movement and change are bad because of their source: pain and sorrow, while avoiding change, signifies liberation from evil: peace, tranquility, and satisfaction. According to the latter, good becomes evil because humans are perceived as creatures who are likely to suffer from a static state of complete satisfaction. Here evil becomes good, as befits a natural element – a unique character – that seeks to evolve frequently and the system of needs in which the dichotomy between satisfaction and its absence, and, in the more general sense, between the natural internal and the historical external so necessary for the pure sentiment of happiness, collapses.

3. Love of the General Self

In his political vision, Rousseau seeks to explain how a state that provides its citizens with happiness will ensure its survival, which is threatened by human beings' hope of improving their lives (HP 143-4). An image emerges of a static and happy society that seeks to reconcile the private interest with the general will by reducing the value of uniqueness in human existence.⁹ Rousseau's idea of turning love of the homeland into breast milk (HP 179) implies that the purpose of national education is to bring about a situation in which individuals strive for the common good without experiencing the great suffering that results from giving up their own desires.

One popular interpretation is that failure lies in the fact that an objective conception of happiness cannot be imposed on modern human beings, who seek their happiness in self-realization with the clear recognition that this quest requires the liberty to determine for themselves the means necessary to do so. According to this interpretation, love for the homeland completely satisfied the citizens of Sparta because they had not yet developed powerful personal desires (Graeme 2014, 73). I suggest that the ideal society would not provide its citizens with happiness not because they would be unable to freely fulfill their individual desires, but rather because it would prevent them from properly developing these, that is, it would prevent them from properly developing their natural uniqueness. Powerful private wills are necessary for happiness because self-esteem is made possible by overcoming them through an act in line with the general will, humans' 'real need[s].' (SC 201)

⁹ See, for example, the oath: "I unite my self by body, by possessions, by will, and by all my power to the Corsican nation in order to belong to it in all property, my self and all that depends on me." (HP 158)

Humans are born good, but not moral, because morality requires a struggle with the self: “virtue is a state of war [...] [L]iving in it means one always has some battle to wage against oneself.” (J 560) Only victory (overcoming the ‘private self’) will provide happiness, since loss (privileging individual desires at the expense of the ‘true self’) is the most significant source of social misery that stems from the shame involved in humans’ awareness of their failure to satisfy their authentic needs (J 560; E 446). In other words, a society run according to the general will indeed expresses a universal externalization of compassion (Cohen 2010, 125-7), but it weakens the necessary mental struggle involved in freedom, and with it the supreme self-esteem and sublime self-satisfaction that acquire their meaning, for a reflexive entity, through the suffering that preceded them, which individuals must choose by their own free will (SC 200; J 33; SW 51, 72; E 635; HP 134). There is no doubt that the citizens of the ideal state would tend to easily give up self-interest for the sake of ‘general happiness,’ (SC 192) but doing so would not be likely to cause them to value their existence since duty must involve overcoming a powerful internal foundation. In the state of nature, self-esteem was irrelevant, since humans did not act out of self-perception, and therefore did not conceive their happiness in terms of duty. This is not the case in social relationships, where a dialectical relationship between universal and individual elements should lead to happiness that is based on duty, as Rousseau implies when he suggests, “let us be good in the first place, and then we shall be happy. Let us not demand the prize before the victory.” (E 444) Because it is natural for social humans to strive to express their superiority over others, and since differences are in part natural, the purpose is not to abolish them, but rather to make them a reflection of only the universal element of human nature. This means that social status is determined by conduct that reflects the duty of the citizen. For example, in the constitutions of Poland and Corsica, it is not inequality that is negated, but only the external and false element that characterizes it in modernity (property, honor, luxury, talent), which should be replaced by moral behavior to create a condition in which humans’ loyalty to their homeland proves their loyalty to their universal authentic emotions and needs (HP 178, 210-3). But the attempt to position social differences on a universal, egalitarian foundation to reduce the tension between the general will and private interest, i.e., to reach a state where the individual acts in accordance with the former while remaining completely indifferent to the latter (SC 170, 219; C 47), is both paradoxical and unnatural. It is paradoxical because the general will expresses freedom solely out of a conflict with private desires: “I have never believed that man’s freedom consisted in doing what he wants.” (SW 56) A framework that seeks civic freedom and social solidarity by reducing the importance of individual desires contradicts itself because it requires human beings to realize their freedom by going against the element that gives meaning to freedom in a social framework. It is not natural because the basis for determining social differences should be natural inner qualitative elements and not the natural universal element of humans, which makes all differences quantitative (e.g., the

different degrees to which citizens fulfill their duties). I believe Rousseau's conclusion that "[t]he more these natural forces are dead and destroyed [...] the more the institution as well is solid and perfect" (SC 155) reflects his awareness of the tension between his ideal society and the unique nature of humans. This is a fundamental incongruity between the attempt to establish a perfect, natural, and ahistorical society and the fact that humans are incomplete creatures because they are historical creatures. The problem is that Rousseau seeks simple or negative happiness appropriate for humans in the state of nature in a future social setting – "Corsicans, here is the model that you ought to follow to return to your primitive state" (HP 165) – that will contradict simplicity not because of its specific organization, but rather because humans have become complex entities, self-aware and free individuals, due to social relationships. In *Dialogues*, Rousseau imagines a perfect world in which people are happy because they act only concerning their simple and natural needs. Their *amour de soi* is expressed in passive ease and a lack of restlessness and attests to their release from powerful desires that originate in *amour-propre* and cause the endless pursuit of external needs, subjection to others, and self-alienation. But their happiness is not based on morality: "[p]eople there are themselves good, whereas virtue among us often requires fighting." (D 10-11) Unlike the utopia described in *The Social Contract*, this perfect world does not function as a Platonic ideal to be realized but belongs to a later period of disillusionment with the idea of the possibility of establishing a happy society while devoting oneself to imagined happiness, which is always more enjoyable than any happiness that can be achieved in reality (D 119-21; C 545; HP 28). The image is illusory because the means of achieving moral freedom contradict the possibility of simple and moderate existence, which is based on the illusion that in society there are only two innate natural sources of human activity (happiness and pity) and ignores the third (natural inequality). As I will now argue, the illusion is also expressed in the fact that a perfect life can satisfy a person who is not whole, but free.

4. Love for Others

True love in a family setting in a rural society should provide happiness for three main reasons. First, it causes people to 'find pleasure in suffering,' (J 201) that is, to be satisfied with the suffering they feel when they choose to sacrifice their individual desires for the sake of what they see as their moral duty: the happiness of their loved ones (J 272). Second, love serves to balance desires and powers, since it causes humans to develop indifference to their other desires and strive to maintain their perfect state. Third, freedom, according to Rousseau, "is in the heart of the free man. He takes it with him everywhere," (E 667) and therefore "the enjoyment of virtue is a wholly inner one and is perceptible only to him who feels it." (J 400) The innerness of this enjoyment characterizes the kind of sentiment that stems from love: "happiness followed me everywhere; it was not in any definable thing, it was entirely in me, it could not depart from me for a single

instant.” (C 189) Unlike love of the homeland, family love reflects the harmonious fulfillment of universal and individual elements of human nature (C 172).

The fact that the characters Rousseau, Emile, Sophie, and Julie fail to achieve happiness in romantic relationships points to Rousseau’s understanding that the goal of returning humans to the lost happiness of the Golden Age is unattainable. The unhappiness of Emile and Sophie, described in the posthumously published incomplete sequel to the story, may be interpreted in line with what Jeffery Church (2021) identifies as the ‘standard interpretation,’ according to which ‘[o]ur free, active nature,’ which involves free moral behavior compatible with our natural desire to “extend our being beyond our selves and what is given to us in this world,” turns itself into a passive, determined nature, indicating a state in which we are “moved by the desire and sensations we receive from the outside world,” and thus “lose ourselves in the eyes of others, as the public comes to determine our will.” (404-7) From this point of view, Emile and Sophie’s misery is the result of their move to Paris, with its corrupt society that is expected to defeat individuals and sentence them to endless and futile subjugation to external, unnatural desires.¹⁰ But this interpretation cannot fully explain the misery of Julie, who represents, from her marriage until her death, an exemplary ideal of authenticity. The difficulty stems from the fact that, in *Julie*, Rousseau maintains the formula for achieving happiness in society: “[y]our desires overcome will be the source of your happiness” (J 33) and “only in [self-esteem] can that permanent sentiment of inner satisfaction be found which alone can make a thinking being happy”. (J 69) Self-control is necessary for the pure sentiment of happiness: “[He] is master of his own felicity, because he is happy like God himself, without desiring anything more than what he already has.” (J 384) Julie’s morality contains satisfaction that points to her happiness as she strives to change nothing (J 453). Nonetheless, her firm conclusion that “there is no true happiness on earth” stems from the fact that, while she is thankful that everything is “conspiring toward [her] happiness [...] a single sorrow poisons it, and [she is] not happy.” (J 420-1) Her anguish is related to her husband’s choice of an atheistic way of life, which causes her “to see in the father of her children a mere reprobate.” (J 485)

Rousseau sees atheism as resulting from popular or metaphysical philosophy, both of which developed due to distorted social institutions and detract from humans’ ability to find their happiness in moral conduct (D 242). Thus, again, it may be said that the source of misery is society’s corruption, but individual interests, desires, illusions, social institutions, pleasures, and so on are negative only to the extent that they impair humans’ freedom and cause them misery, i.e., make their active natures passive (E 634; HP 103). It would therefore be more accurate, I claim, to argue that Julie’s misery is a direct product not of her husband’s atheism and the development of her negative feelings toward him

¹⁰ This is appropriate for the transition from *amour propre* to ‘inflamed *amour propre*,’ which leads to misery (Neuhouser 2014, 72, 120, 180).

(anxiety about his future in the next world) or toward herself (shame and guilt over her choice to live with him). Julie's problem will not be solved through repentance since, like private property, atheism is only a symptom of the real problem, which is that love is a natural feeling that allows individuals to feel a sublime sentiment that points to the fulfillment of their authentic emotional needs. But, at the same time, it is natural only in society, so it inevitably leads to a state in which external historical circumstances, which should be the means to achieving pure complete inner satisfaction, become an immanent part of happiness (J 400). By external, I mean neither her husband, nor the social norms that in the first place cause the tension between living with the man she loves and her love for her father, but rather her awareness of inner uniqueness, which produces the ability to love and make choices. Heinrich Meier (2016) notes that love relationships provide happiness, but because they involve another entity, the necessary stability required for happiness is compromised (183). There is no doubt that love is fragile because humans connect their happiness with the happiness of the ones they love (J 156, 184). Therefore, the powerful happiness Rousseau describes in *Confessions* turns out to be tenuous, since the unbearable misery stems from his lover's decision to leave him, i.e., in his words, "to separate her happiness from mine." (C 221) But love, like moral duty, reflects the notion that human beings' awareness of themselves as individual creatures expresses the loss of something meaningful in the nature of happiness. I refer here not to the inability to find complete satisfaction by fulfilling authentic needs, but rather to the inability to be happy in a state of complete satisfaction. Stability is undermined not because there is a possibility of separation from the beloved, just as it was not undermined by the possibility of others' lack of recognition of one's private land, but rather because of the nature of love, which, like any other powerful desire, originates in humans' uniqueness, from which develop desires that can never be fully satisfied given their historical nature. In all the happy moments in which Julie enjoys her existence and seeks to change nothing, there is also a fear of future factors that could undermine her situation, as well as hope for a future identical to the present. A struggle to preserve or change the situation only distracts us from the real problem that the novel seeks to depict, and which appears concisely in *Emile*: "[E]verything is mixed in this life; in it one tastes no pure sentiment." (E 210) The tragedy stems from the fact that, in *Julie*, Rousseau continues to embrace the notion that happiness expresses a natural wholeness that lacks any trace of negative emotion or thought of another state of existence while claiming it is not possible because, in society, humans have lost their ability to fully control their happiness (J 347, 558).

I refer here not to the loss of self-control that stems from people's inability to separate their self-esteem from others' opinions of them, but rather to people's inability to separate their self-esteem from their feelings toward others, i.e., the inability to experience something meaningful without the involvement of emotions and thoughts that go beyond the self and the present moment and

contaminate the purity of happiness.¹¹ For a social creature, such separation is possible only in the imagination, and therefore Rousseau makes it clear that an erotic image is always more perfect than its realization, since it does not contain the negative emotions (fear, shame) that must exist in every manifestation of romantic relationships (J 41). This view is consistent with the conclusion mentioned above regarding utopian political images, which are always better than reality, since only the image can be under the complete control of the individual, and only in it can we imagine people who live in society, but because their psychological structure is suited to the state of nature in the sense that they are unaware of their natural inequality, they do not hope to improve their lives (D 119; HP 28). Solitude expresses individuals' control over their lives and is conceived as a means of experiencing the sublime sentiment of existence (Meier 2016, 45, 118, 182, 210, 212). What is most interesting here is the way in which Rousseau's awareness that this sublime feeling is not happiness is connected to his declaration that happiness itself is an illusion (Wokler 2001, 147). In the context of the present article, the significant innovation can be found in two points. The first is the idea that the most radical source of the inability to achieve happiness is not the form of government or institutions, but rather the very existence of social life: "my independent natural temperament always made me incapable of the subjection necessary to anyone who wants to live among man." (SW 56) The second is the notion that the main psychological impact of living in society, the one that makes us restless, is the source of the solution, which is not achieving happiness, but rather understanding that happiness itself is a problematic ideal for individualistic creatures.

5. Love of the Unique Self

Already on his first walk, Rousseau claims: "I am a hundred times happier in my solitude than I could ever be living among them." (SW 5) This statement should not be seen as the abandonment of the necessary connection between moral freedom and self-esteem leading to happiness, which, as in other works, appears here quite clearly: "I know and feel that to do good is the truest happiness the human heart can savor; but it is a long time now since this happiness has been put out of my reach." (SW 29-30) Thus, in his last work, too, it is impossible to argue for a change in the formula for the fulfillment of happiness: "[by means of] general and abstract truth [...] man learns to direct himself [...] toward his true end [...] to achieve happiness." (SW 34) Because human beings' assessment of themselves as moral beings is defined as the ultimate achievement, and because morality and positive recognition from others exist solely in the context of social relations, Rousseau is most consistent in his awareness that solitude and happiness contradict each other (SW 29-34, 55, 61). But must this be a pessimistic conclusion? The pursuit of happiness is conceptualized as an initial desire that nature has

¹¹ A mental state of peace means freedom from fear and hope (Meier 2016, 199).

planted in every human being “and the only one which never leaves us.” (E 630) In the early texts, the contrast between happiness and misery is clear-cut (SD 12), as it draws its meaning from the binary contrast between the good (static, pleasurable) and the bad (unstable, changing, painful). Happiness characterizes the static state of enjoying the fulfillment of authentic needs, while misery characterizes restlessness that stems from the pursuit of the approval and recognition of being superior to others. Optimism stems from the fact that it is not humans in general who are miserable, but only modern humans, and thus the utopian image draws its power from historical examples of people’s successes in achieving happiness by being loyal to their true selves. Theater criticism, for example, is aimed toward modern urban life, and the innovation is not that external, distorted desires and pleasures are created due to the moral corruption that the theater promotes, but rather that they are created due to the distorted need, relevant only to modern people, for such an institution (J 208). Therefore, “if we had the same maxims [as in Sparta] a Theater could be established at Geneva without any risk; for never would Citizen or Townsman set foot in it.” (LD 300) This optimism was gradually abandoned due to Rousseau’s understanding that the things that make us miserable (private property, honor, luxury, powerful desires, pride, corrupt institutions) and the things that should make us happy (love relationships, marriage, self-esteem, moral freedom) do not represent the contrast between the artificial and the natural, since they are all related, in one way or another, to the same natural-historical source: awareness of the uniqueness of humankind. Rousseau does explain why perfect satisfaction will be sufficient for a simple and non-reflexive person, and, in this context, his objections to the misery of the relational modern person, who is constantly striving to fulfill external and artificial needs, are also understandable. However, it is not clear why dissatisfaction must make a social person miserable, since it is unclear why the deep psychological change that took place profoundly changed the meaning of freedom without a radical change taking place in the meaning of happiness. If happiness expresses a sense of pure wholeness without any desire for change and is characterized by a balance between passions and powers, and if dissatisfaction that results from a lack of such a balance is a consequence of a social existence that is necessary for survival, then what we have before us is radical pessimism. Escape from pessimism is possible only to the extent that the paradox that Rousseau revealed, i.e., that happiness will not satisfy human beings, indicates that the solution lies in a different understanding of the problem: to the extent that the source of restlessness is natural and universal, happiness becomes an unnatural purpose for an entity with natural-historical elements.

6. Radical Pessimism?

God alone enjoys an absolute happiness. But who among us has the idea of it? If some imperfect being could suffice unto himself, what would he enjoy according to us? He would be alone; he would be miserable. I do not conceive how someone

Yuval Eytan

who needs nothing can love anything [...] how someone who loves nothing can be happy. (E 372)

Woe to him who has nothing left to desire! He loses [...]. One is happy only before happiness is achieved [...]. He who could do anything without God would be a miserable creature [...] deprived of the pleasure of desiring; any other deprivation would be more bearable than that. (J 569-70)

In Rousseau's time, it was common to differentiate between perfect happiness attributed to the next world and partial happiness in this world. These quotes, however, are not intended to emphasize the hierarchy between the types of happiness associated with each world. I believe Rousseau's argument is different: perfect satisfaction will not satisfy humans in this world. His late conclusion that "[r]epose and freedom appear incompatible to me; it is necessary to choose" (HP 170) indicates that the problem lies not in finding the optimal formula for achieving harmony between happiness and morality, but rather in the idea that social humans, and not only modern ones, cannot be satisfied by being free from suffering since freedom is conceived in terms of the dynamic project of self-realization. As mentioned above, happiness is defined as a situation in which the dominant desire according to which the rest of the set of desires is organized is the desire to prevent change. But Rousseau also challenges this view: "if the state which makes us happy lasted endlessly, the habit of enjoying it would take away our taste for it. If nothing changes from without, the heart changes. Happiness leaves us, or we leave it." (E 636) According to the interpretation that I have proposed, the source of dissatisfaction or restlessness is not the social structure or the type of love that develops as a result of it, but rather a natural element that develops solely in a social framework. Thus, it is possible to interpret the claim that "[w]e are so little made to be happy" (C 207) in a positive way. Instead of seeking the best formula for happiness, we should look for the optimal conditions for fulfilling something else for which we were created. In all of Rousseau's writings, freedom is expressed in the fulfillment of natural elements of human beings. In his last text, this element is uniqueness, and the goal is to express it in a way that is not relative to others. But the most significant revelation is that this element is perceived as an organic, pluralistic, and wild entity that, by nature, is open and develops in unexpected ways (D 150, 158). Leonard Sorenson (1990) argues that the prevailing interpretive trend, and the correct one in his view, is to understand natural inequality primarily as concerning intellectual differences. I believe, however, in line with Neuhausser's understanding of natural inequality as differences 'of body, mind, and character,' (2014, 14, 24) that inequality is much more complex and also involves temperament, abilities, talents, tendencies, and skills.

According to Eli Friedlander (2000), in his solitude, Rousseau portrays the pleasure of existence as unrelated to the psychological plane (the opposite of pain), free of any interest, purpose, or passion, and characterized by openness to the world. Unlike scholars who see his last text as an expression of a new ideal of life

that indicates sublime philosophical happiness (Strauss 1965; Meier 2016), Friedlander is careful not to identify this mental condition as happiness, and, in the context of the present article, the question is what this means. I believe that the idea that, if happiness is achieved, we will abandon it, entails a different conception of freedom. This conception is different than both the one according to which we realize our morality by controlling our private desires, as in objective theories of happiness, and the one in which freedom consists of fulfilling individual goals, as in subjective theories of happiness. This new view maintains the basic structure of freedom – the realization of our nature – but the element that should be realized was not relevant in the state of nature, as it developed with the transition from a general and static system of needs aimed at full satisfaction through the elimination of pain to an individual system aimed at constantly enriching natural skills and powers. Social relationships decrease the possibility that this kind of freedom will be realized, since relativity turns the enrichment of natural uniqueness into development based on competition.

The pleasure of loving our unique selves involves self-enrichment that characterizes negative morality (not harming others), which is in line with the negative definition of the self – free from others and all matters of society and time. But it is important to note that such indifference did not characterize the state of nature and was not expressed in complete inaction after the negation of pain, nor does it characterize love relationships by causing humans to be indifferent to any other matter than preserving their love. Rather, it is expressed in choices that intensify people’s love for their unique characters (SW 7). In *Emile* (341-3), the development of unique qualities is often perceived as a means of achieving a good civic life, and, in *Julie* (461-4), we are first exposed to the development of the unique element as a purpose in itself. In many respects, the self that Rousseau portrays in his solitude appears symbolically in Julie’s secret garden – Elysium – which is described as a “solitary place where the sweet sight of nature alone would banish from my memory all this social and factitious order that has made me so unhappy.” (J 399) The words Saint-Preux uses for his impression of the garden point to Rousseau’s understanding of its novelty: “I was looking at the wildest, most solitary place in nature, and it seemed to me I was the first mortal who ever had set foot in this wilderness.” (J 387) Julie confirms “that nature did it all, but under my direction, and there is nothing here that I have not designed.” (J 388) Elysium signifies “a sort of well-being that the wicked have never known; it is to enjoy being alone with oneself.” (J 400) The perfect design symbolizes freedom in the sense of activity that suits Julie’s unique natural character, but what does the wilderness symbolize? I believe it symbolizes the natural-historical structure of the particular self, which is constantly changing. With work, “every moment of the day [will reveal] some new beauty” in the self, as in the garden (J 390). In his political texts, Rousseau emphasizes that natural pleasure should be the result of ending the efforts of the work process itself, and not of artificial amusement, and this is consistent with his moral theory, in which a sublime satisfaction should

originate in overcoming the suffering involved in virtue. In contrast, Julie's work in her garden is pleasing in itself, in the same way that botany is pleasing (SW 64-5), since it expresses the cultivation of Rousseau's natural love of plants and has no external motive (e.g., the need to transcend others or gain their recognition). The pleasure involved in this kind of work should not be understood in terms of satisfaction or the balance of desires and powers, since serenity is conceptualized as an unbearable static situation that contradicts an element of the self that aims not for satisfaction or development, but rather for enrichment. In this sense, we can think of Rousseau's conclusion in a positive way: "[h]appiness is a permanent condition which does not seem to be made for man here-below [...]. Everything around us changes. We ourselves change, and no one can be assured tomorrow what he likes today. Thus, all our plans for felicity in this life are idle fancies." (SW 78) It is important to understand that the transition from a life that is uniform in terms of homogeneous, natural, and simple needs (E 424) to a model of constant, unpredictable, and uneven development of needs (C 537) preserves the idea of freedom as a practice in which humans fulfill their nature, with the difference being that, in the latter case, the element that is fulfilled – uniqueness – has historical and natural foundations. Solitude does not express an attempt to return to the state of nature, but is intended to free humans from hierarchizing their diverse activities, thus making the whole of existence, nature and history alike, equally loved. Self-enrichment represents a unity of nature and history in line with humans' historical nature, and, from this point of view, happiness is natural only in the state of nature and becomes a negative illusion in history.

7. Conclusion

I have attempted here to claim that Rousseau's failure to achieve pure happiness by overcoming historical circumstances to fulfill humans' eternal nature is connected to his perception of natural inequality as a phenomenon that is both natural (internal) and historical (external). This situation leads him to strive for the impossible: harmony between a perception of freedom that indicates humans' awareness of themselves as individual entities whose happiness lies in overcoming their historical aspect (individual desires) by being loyal to their universal emotions and the kind of happiness that befits people who act out of complete indifference to their uniqueness and therefore see freedom in perfect satisfaction characterized by the absence of all pain and suffering. From the point of view of nature, happiness is the goal and "[t]he happiest is he who suffers the least pain," (E 80) while the observation of humans in history leads to the opposite conclusion: "[t]o live without pain is not a human condition; to live thus is to be dead." (J 570) The solution I offer here is to reject happiness by understanding the unique self as a new universal foundation for morality, which, because of its dualistic character, brings about the reconciliation of nature and history. It is a partial solution not only because it does not involve compassion, and not only because Rousseau never explicitly claims that happiness is a negative ideal, but

especially because, in most of his works, he clings to the Platonic tradition in thinking of truth as static, unchangeable perfection, embracing Berkeley's notion that "[a]ll change argues imperfection." (2009, 57) Perfection or wholeness must involve the absence of all change (SC 155), and therefore Rousseau could not disagree with his contemporary's conclusion that "[t]he happiest man is he who least desires to change his rank and circumstances." (Du Châtelet 2009, 359) Strauss (1965) argues that the first crisis of modernity was expressed in Rousseau's philosophy, in which his return to Antiquity was articulated in an original conception that rejected elements that modern thinkers of his time continued to embrace. Accordingly, I have sought to clarify that what makes Rousseau's thought a significant crossroads lies in points where its originality is reflected not only in the immanence of truth and the conception of freedom in relation to it, as argued in genealogies of the ideal of authenticity, but also in the attainment of this truth as a dynamic, concrete process that involves nature and history.

If the purpose of existence is self-enrichment rather than happiness, then the pain, suffering, and anguish that indicate dissatisfaction as a basis for every movement must become desirable and satisfying. In this paradox, Rousseau offers us the theoretical basis for the belief of many nineteenth-century thinkers that positive satisfaction should not be identified as happiness since it must involve positive suffering that allows individuals to continue to develop their unique inner structures. Hegel's conclusion that "[h]appiness is the mere abstract and merely imagined universality of things desired ... [a] baseless chimera" (2003, 236-8) is related to his notion that "every sensation of happiness is connected with sensation of melancholy," and to his "insist[ing] so greatly on the distinction between 'being satisfied' and happiness." (Pinkard 2000, 298) Marx's critique of Stirner's "desire to promote happiness [which is proof] of how strongly he is held in thrall to existing bourgeois society" (1975, vol. 5, 416) is connected to his notion of freedom as a "manifestation of [...] human *activity* and human *suffering*, for suffering, humanly considered, is a kind of self-enjoyment of man." (vol. 3, 300, emphasis in the original). Nietzsche (2012, 216) outlines an ideal of life in which freedom reflects what he calls 'suffering happiness' (*leidendes Glück*). I provide these quotations not to oversimplify the profound differences between these thinkers, but rather to clarify that the choice not to see man as a creature whose natural purpose is satisfaction reflects a radical turning point. We need to return to Rousseau to understand why the most prevalent synthesis today – the one between authenticity and happiness – is enabled by ignoring the deep tension that stems from the very different conceptions of human nature that stand at the foundation of each of these ideals. What is missing is a critical discussion of the profound revolution that indeed took place, i.e., the emergence of a concept of freedom that symbolized not the abandonment of objective theories of happiness in favor of subjective ones, but rather the abandonment of both due to a perception according to which freedom (thought of as an open, dynamic process

Yuval Eytan

of self-enrichment) and satisfaction (which indicates the end of a need) come, in some sense, to contradict each other.

This idea was recently proposed by Ute Frevert (2019), who argues that perfect and static satisfaction, which characterized happiness in the Middle Ages, is rejected by modern thinkers who see the struggle of personal development as a necessary part of happiness. I believe that Rousseau can be seen as one of the most significant thinkers behind this change, but in my view, this is not a matter of shaping a new ideal of happiness, but rather of negating it in favor of another ideal of life based on a dynamic and open perception of truth, one of whose significant sources is none other than one of its most resolute opponents, Rousseau.

References

- Annas, Julia. 2014. *The Morality of Happiness*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Berlin, Isaiah. 2013. "Two Concepts of Liberty." In *Liberty*, edited by Henry Hardy, 166-218. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Berkeley, George. 2009. *Three Dialogues: Hylas and Philonous*. Accessed from <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4724>.
- Boisvert, Raymond. 2010. "Convivialism: A Philosophical Manifesto." *Pluralist* 5: 57-68.
- Cassirer, Ernst. 2015. *Rousseau-Kant-Goethe*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Cohen, Joshua. 2010. *Rousseau: A Free Community of Equals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Church, Jeffery. 2021. "Rousseau, the Value of Existence, and the Sacredness of Citizenship." *Constellations* 28: 403-416.
- Davidson, Thomas. 1971. *Rousseau and Education According to Nature*. New York: AMS Press.
- Dent, Nicholas. 1992. *A Rousseau Dictionary*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Du Châtelet, Emilie. 2009. *Selected Philosophical and Scientific Writing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ferrara, Alessandro. 2016. "Authenticity Without a True Self." In *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society*, edited by Phillip Vannini and Patrick Williams, 21-37. New York: Routledge.
- _____. 2017. "Rousseau and critical theory." *Brill Research Perspective in Critical Theory* 1: 1-55.
- Frevert, Ute. 2019. "Hans in Luck or the Moral Economy of Happiness in the Modern Age." *History of European Ideas* 45: 363-376.
- Friedlander, Eli. 2000. *J. J. Rousseau: An Afterlife of Words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gilead, Tal. 2012. "Rousseau, Happiness and the Economic Approach to Education." *Educational Theory* 62: 267-285.
- Graeme, Garrard. 2014. "Rousseau, Happiness and Human Nature." *Political Studies* 62: 70-82.

- Guignon, Charles. 2004. *On Being Authentic*. New York: Routledge.
- Hall, John. 1973. *Rousseau: An Introduction to his Political Philosophy*. London: Macmillan.
- Hasan, Rafeeq. 2016. "Autonomy and Happiness in Rousseau's Justification of the State." *The Review of Politics* 78: 391-417.
- Haybron, Daniel. 2000. "Two Philosophical Problems in the Study of Happiness." *Journal of Happiness Studies* 2: 207-25.
- _____. 2013. *Happiness: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hegel, Georg. 2003. *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Part Three of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jonas, Mark. 2016. "Rousseau on Sex Roles, Education and Happiness." *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 35: 145-61.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. 1975. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Masters, Roger. 1997. "Rousseau and the Rediscovery of Human Nature." In *The Legacy of Rousseau*, edited by Orwin Clifford and Nathan Tarcov, 110-142. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McMahon, Darrin. 2006. *Happiness: A History*. New York: Grove Press.
- Meier, Heinrich. 2016. *On the Happiness of the Philosophic Life: Reflections on Rousseau's Rêveries*. London: Chicago University Press.
- Melzer, Arthur. 1990. *The Nature Goodness of Man: On the System of Rousseau's Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mulnix, Jennifer, and Michael Mulnix. 2015. *Theories of Happiness: An Anthology*. Toronto: Broadview Press.
- Neuhouser, Frederick. 2015. *Rousseau's Critique of Inequality: Reconstructing the Second Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 2012. *The Dawn of Day*. Accessed from <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/39955/39955-pdf.pdf>
- Pinkard, Terry. 2000. *Hegel: A Biography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1990-2012. *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, edited by Roger Masters and Christopher Kelly. Hanover: Dartmouth College Press.
- _____. 2018. *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, edited by Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rutherford, Donald. 2003. "In Pursuit of Happiness: Hobbes's New Science of Ethics." *Philosophical Topics* 31: 369-393.
- Salkever, Stephen. 1978. "Rousseau & the Concept of Happiness." *Polity* 11: 27-41.
- Shklar, Judith. 1969. *Men and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sorenson, Leonard. 1990. "Natural Inequality and Rousseau's Political Philosophy in His Discourse On Inequality." *Western Political Quarterly* 43: 763-88.
- Strauss, Leo. 1947. "On the Intention of Rousseau." *Social Research* 14: 455-87.

Yuval Eytan

- _____. 1963. *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and its Genesis*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 1965. *Natural Right and History*. London: Chicago University Press.
- _____. 2014. "Seminar in Political Philosophy: Rousseau." In *Estate of Leo Strauss*, edited by Jonathan Marks. The University of Chicago, retrieved from <https://leostrausscenter.uchicago.edu/rousseau-autumn-1962/>.
- Taylor, Charles. 1989. *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- _____. 2018. *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. 2001. *Frail Happiness: An Essay on Rousseau*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Trilling, Lionel. 1972. *Sincerity and Authenticity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Vitrano, Christine. 2018. *The Nature and Value of Happiness*. New York: Routledge.
- Warner, John. 2018. *Rousseau and the Problem of Human Relations*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- White, Nicholas. 2006. *A Brief History of Happiness*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Wokler, Robert. 2001. *Rousseau: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wood, Allen. 1990. *Hegel's Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.