

Starting from the observation that Rousseau's philosophy unfolds in many media and forms (novel, music, poetry, etc.), we have sought what can be understood as the binder, which allows these varied forms and themes to stand as a philosophical whole that is both coherent and plastic. In our opinion, an overall synthesis of the functioning and particularities of the Rousseauist philosophical research enterprise happens to be its educational treatise: *L'Émile*. We believe that this work, which presents itself both as a fictional account of the development of the faculties of a hypothetical being in view of his independence and autonomy, and an attempt to produce a practical knowledge of nature and human nature, summarises and concentrates a fundamental unity of Rousseau's work; from a methodological, practical, political, anthropological and literary point of view. We have sought to find out in what way the *Émile* bears witness to the development of a *philosophy of artificial adequacy to nature* as a *generalised aesthetic*. Finally, why the style and the literary tools present in the *Emile* are a decisive and necessary constituent of the knowledge of human nature; why only a *philosophical novel* allows us to go beyond the methodological problems linked to the practical knowledge of nature.

Key words : Natural philosophy, generalised aesthetic, practical knowledge, philosophical novel