

Preface

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On Teleology and the Rediscovery of Human Attunement with Nature

This recent compendium of the **Mabini Review Journal** (Volume 15, No. 2) emerges from the critical perspectives of our contributing authors, who offer intersectional analyses across the fields of environmental studies, the humanities, cultural discourse, and philosophical inquiry into truth and justice. As many in our present social realities continue to grapple with the intensifying consequences of ecological crises, it has become increasingly evident that the human condition is confronted with unprecedented complexities in the pursuit of survival, sustainability, and equity.

The articles in this issue reflect a multidisciplinary engagement with the pressing environmental challenges of our time—recognizing that these challenges are not merely scientific or technical in nature, but are deeply rooted in cultural narratives, historical contexts, and systems of power. Our contributors critically examine how a meaningful life can be constructed around the concerns that we find in our immediate environment, how truth is negotiated in both local and global contexts, and how justice—especially environmental and epistemic justice—can be more fully realized through integrative and reflexive scholarship.

When Immanuel Kant theorized in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that there exists a fine attunement between human beings and nature, he was advancing the idea that harmony in survival is best achieved when we pay respect to the natural ends of things. For Kant, our naturally occurring feelings of attraction toward the beauty of nature are parallel to the feelings of sympathy and benevolence we experience toward other human beings.¹ This suggests that human beings have an

¹ Paul Guyer, “Bridging the Gulf: Kant’s Project in the Third Critique, in *A Companion to Kant*, (Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 431.

innate propensity to respect the natural order—not just out of utility, but out of a deep, moral resonance with nature itself. It is only when we become manipulative, driven by selfish motives, that this harmony begins to unravel. From my perspective, Darwinian natural selection, while powerful in explaining biological evolution, places excessive emphasis on competition and survival of the fittest. Darwin's theory was so competitive and individualistic,² and it can condition us to be overly competitive and greedy, causing us to lose sight of the delicate balance between our wants and our needs. More importantly, it leads to a disregard for what it means to be responsible, rational, and morally grounded. This neglect of the rational nature of man creates negativity in many aspects of our lives.

For instance, the chaos we experience in human encounters—whether in politics, social relations, or environmental degradation—can be traced to our neglect of nature's teleology as well. In the Aristotelian sense, *telos* refers to a purpose or end. Teleology is the study of ends and goals, things whose existence or occurrence is purposive.³ Respecting this natural end is not merely a philosophical exercise, but a guide for survival. It encourages us to live in moderation, to seek the “mean”—avoiding excess and deficiency alike. By honoring nature's inherent purposes, we promote a more sustainable, balanced, and ethical way of living. In this regard, the researchers contributing to this issue of the journal invite us to reconnect with our historical and philosophical roots. They advocate for a renewed appreciation of nature and the development of a critical and reflective spirit in how we analyze life. As we become increasingly absorbed in technological advancements and relentless progress in science, we risk forgetting the deeper values that make life meaningful. Human life is structured in a way that for a man to be fully conscious of it, one needs all forms of intellectual activity and a versatile orientation in it. For instance, biographies of many scientists

2 David L. Hull, “Deconstructing Darwin: Evolutionary Theory in Context,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 38, (2005): 137–152. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10739-004-6514-1>.

3 Rich Cameron, “Aristotle's teleology,” *Philosophy Compass* 5, no. 12, (2010): 1096–1106.

and philosophers indicate that the great minds, despite their total dedication to research, were also deeply interested in art themselves.⁴ For many, art is a powerful catalyst in cultivating the imaginative spirit, while at the same time, it can be seen as a tool in developing one's sensitivity to nature and humanity. It is high time we reawaken sensitivity in humanity. We hope that this issue cultivates in our readers an empathetic and thoughtful spirit—one that seeks good ends, not only for individual gain but for the collective well-being of our people and the natural world.

This volume, therefore, seeks to advance academic dialogue that transcends disciplinary boundaries, and in doing so, it highlights the role of humanistic inquiry in addressing ecological issues. We hope that the insights presented here will not only enrich scholarly discourse but also contribute to a deeper understanding of the ethical, cultural, and existential dimensions of our shared planetary future.

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4 Alexander Spirkin, "Philosophy As A World-View And A Methodology," *Dialectical Materialism*, (Progress Publisher, 1983), n.p. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/spirkin/works/dialectical-materialism/ch01-s05.html>.