Nature and Culture
Aristotle vs Rousseau

NATURE, EQUALITY AND CULTURE: ARISTOTLE VS. ROUSSEAU

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ABSTRACT:

This chapter examines the contrast between Aristotle's and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's conceptions of nature and analyzes how these different anthropological frameworks shape their respective understandings of equality among human beings. Rousseau conceives nature as the original and spontaneous condition of humanity prior to the development of society and culture. From this perspective, culture appears as a system of conventions that introduces hierarchy, dependence on the opinions of others, and forms of social inequality that corrupt the original equality of the state of nature. By contrast, Aristotle understands nature not as a primitive pre-social state but as a dynamic principle oriented toward fulfillment. According to Aristotle, culture and political life do not oppose nature but perfect it, enabling individuals to actualize their capacities within the ordered structure of the polis. Consequently, equality is not defined as the absence of differences but as a proportional relation in which individuals occupy their proper place within a natural and social order directed toward the common good. The opposition between Rousseau's and Aristotle's notions of equality can only be fully understood through their deeper conceptions of the relationship between nature and culture. Our objective is neither philological nor historical. We do not intend to analyze the influence that both authors had, nor who influenced them. Our objective is truly philosophical: to understand the reality of this relationship between nature and culture. The recourse to Rousseau, to Aristotle, or to St. Thomas himself (the best interpreter of Aristotle), is instrumental to our main purpose.[1]

Key words: Human nature. Culture. Equality. Rousseau. Aristotle. Fabrice Hadjadj

1 Introduction: Rousseau vs. Aristotle.

The classical Rousseauian antithesis between nature and culture is more in vogue than ever, partly motivated by an environmentalism that tends to see man as the enemy

[1] This preliminary disclaimer is best understood in the light of the famous text by C.S. Lewis in which he ironically criticizes the exclusively historical point of view when it comes to philosophical questions. It is worth re-producing the text in which the demon Screwtape advises his nephew Wormwood on diverting human thought from truth to historical analysis. "Only the learned read old books and we have now so dealt with the learned that they are of all men the least likely to acquire wisdom by doing so. We have done this by inculcating The Historical Point of View. The Historical Point of View, put briefly, means that when a learned man is presented with any statement in an ancient author, the one question he never asks is whether it is true. He asks who influenced the ancient writer, and how far the statement is consistent with what he said in other books, and what phase in the writer's development, or in the general history of thought, it illustrates, and how it affected later writers, and how often it has been misunderstood (specially by the learned man's own colleagues) and what the general course of criticism on it has been for the last ten years, and what is the 'present state of the question'. To regard the ancient writer as a possible source of knowledge—to anticipate that what he said could possibly modify your thoughts or your behavior—this would be rejected as unutterably simple-minded". C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), letter 27.

of nature.[2] The natural in the world is conceived as that space that has not yet been colonized by man; and the natural in man is conceived as that which has not yet been "deformed" by culture.

The Rousseauian leitmotif of the return to nature (*Retournons à la nature*) is present again, and not so much to vindicate equality among all human beings (equality supposedly corrupted by culture, equality which is the foundation of democracy), but to vindicate the original purity of all nature (also non-human nature), which must be protected from all human intervention so that nature may reach its fullness.

The dominant mentality, tributary of Rousseau's thought, contrasts nature and culture as two opposing poles, where if one grows, it is at the cost of the other's loss. This leads to a radical distrust in cultural, scientific and technological progress, as if it were always at the price of renouncing nature, which would only be preserved in spaces where man has not yet arrived.

Against the Rousseauian vision of nature and the world, stands the classical Aristotelian tradition, which presents man as a *naturally cultural being*, who brings nature to completion through culture. From the Aristotelian perspective, culture does not imply the destruction of nature, neither of the world nor of man, but its perfection, precisely as nature.

There is a recent work published in 2022 by the French philosopher Fabrice Hadjadj, *Qu'est-ce que la nature ? Suivi de "enfin la nature!" dit-elle!*[3] Which expresses very well the aristotelian thesis that we are defending here. The title of the work is the exclamation uttered by a young Manauara girl from the Amazon jungle when she comes across a well-tended garden in the city:

> "A young woman who was on board, coming from Manaus, on arriving in the city that morning with us, as we passed through the well-kept Great Park, she had a sigh of relief: 'Ah, finally Nature!" she said. But she was coming... from the jungle.
>
> "For this young manauara, nature is a well-kept park, ready for a stroll. The jungle, on the contrary, seemed to her like a formless and dangerous tangle: prison of lianas, kingdom of the poisonous frog, of the hungry jaguar, of the unbearable mosquitoes and of the *bullet ants*… The threat there is permanent. Impossible to sit down to admire the landscape".[4]

The underlying idea of Hadjadj's essay is that what is most natural is not what is native, but, following Aristotle, what is cultivated, what has also been perfected by human ingenuity. To be faithful to wild nature, then, is to "make it come to culture".

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[2] "Rousseau is without a doubt the eighteenth-century philosopher who is closest to us, our contemporary in a manner of speaking". Anne Deneys-Tunney and Yves Charles Zarka, eds., *Rousseau Between Nature and Culture: Philosophy, Literature, and Politics* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 9.

[3] That work of Hadjadj is the second chapter of a small book, originally published in French in 2022. We have used the Spanish version: Fabrice Hadjadj, "¡Por fin la naturaleza! Dijo ella", in *Qué es la naturaleza*, ed. François-Xavier Putallaz and Fabrice Hadjadj (Madrid: Rialp, 2022).

[4] It is a simple story that Hadjadj borrows from a travel book by the Belgian poet Henri Michaux, in which he narrates the impression of a girl from the Brazilian Amazon who comes out of the jungle to visit a civilized park. Hadjadj, "¡Por fin la naturaleza! Dijo ella", 63.

In contrast to the Rousseauian thesis that what is natural in man is primordial, prior to his cultural and social development, there is the Aristotelian doctrine according to which man, precisely thanks to his cultural and social development, is the being most in conformity with nature. "Men -says Aristotle- are more in harmony with nature than other animals".[5]

If we want to understand in more depth the contrast between Rousseau's thesis of the natural and the Aristotelian idea, we must first consider Rousseau's notion of nature and the contrast he establishes with culture, as the cause of all inequality.

2 The natural as the spontaneous and original, Rousseau's thesis

Rousseau understands "the natural in man" as spontaneous, as opposed to culture. “To conceive of human nature is, indeed for Rousseau, to conceive of man before any cultural modification”.[6] This idea of nature is still valid in the mentality of many people, and is what Rousseau projects on modern and contemporary thought.

Nature, as opposed to culture, is for Rousseau the magic word and the center of gravity of his philosophy.[7] “Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man”. With these words Rousseau begins his *Émile* (Goethe called this book the “natural gospel of education”). Life in community, progressive civilization, was gradually impoverishing the nature of men, making them weak and "effeminate" (sic). Rousseau compared the loss of faculties of natural man when he became a civilized man to the loss of abilities of wild animals when they become domesticated.[8] On the other hand, if man were to let nature flow with his passions, nature would complete its work and protect man's life better than man can with his mind. Rousseau even goes so far as to say that “civilization is detrimental to man's health”.[9] In

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[5] “Man is the biped most in accord with nature”. Aristotle*, On the Gait of Animals,* trans. A. S. L. Farquharson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912), ch. 5, 706a. Rémi Brague writes: “The self-affirmation of nature in man does not imply that man is the place where, as the moderns might say, nature becomes conscious of herself, but that man is the place where the natura is most herself. The idea according to which man's privilege would be his capacity to rise above nature by opposing the latter to "culture" is alien to Aristotle. Everything that we would group under this term [culture] is for him one of the ways by which nature reaches its own expansion”. Rémi Brague, *Aristote et la question du monde* (Paris: PUF, 1988), 231 (I take the quotation of Brague from Hadjadj, “¡Por fin la naturaleza! Dijo ella”, 74, n.14).

[6] Deneys-Tunney and Zarka, *Rousseau Between Nature and Culture*, 11.

[7] “Rousseau has indeed placed the relationship between nature and culture at the center of his philosophical thought (Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, Essay on the Origin of Languages, The Social Contract, etc.) as well as of his literary texts (Emile, Reveries of The Solitary Walker, etc.)”. Deneys-Tunney and Zarka, *Rousseau Between Nature and Culture*, 7.

[8] “The horse, the cat, the bull, and even the ass, are generally of greater stature, and always more robust, and have more vigor, strength and courage, when they run wild in the forests than when bred in the stall. By becoming domesticated, they lose half these advantages; and it seems as if all our care to feed and treat them well serves only to deprave them. It is thus with man also: as he becomes sociable and a slave, he grows weak, timid and servile; his effeminate way of life totally enervates his strength and courage”. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, trans. G. D. H. Cole (London: Everyman’s Library, 1913), part I, § 11

[9] It is well known that Rousseau in *The Social Contract* attempts to discover a political form capable of preserving the freedom and equality that characterize the state of nature, ensuring that each citizen obeys only the laws that he prescribes to himself as a member of the collective sovereign. It is one of the many logical acrobatics of Rousseau's thinking, which, as Peter Gay rightly says, could serve as a source of inspiration for almost all subsequent philosophers, not so much because of his genius, but because he was

the end, it seems that irrational animals, precisely because they are irrational, are better than men: “the brute cannot deviate from the rule prescribed to it, even when it would be advantageous for it to do so; and, on the contrary, man frequently deviates from such rules to his own prejudice”.[10]

According to Rousseau, before men lived in communities organized by law, that is, in the "civil state", they lived in an idyllic "state of nature", almost like animals in the forest. [11] So “savages are not bad merely because they do not know what it is to be good: for it is neither the development of the understanding nor the restraint of law that hinders them from doing ill; but the peacefulness of their passions, and their ignorance of vice”.[12] For Rousseau, vice is not natural to man, but constitutes an abuse, a distortion of the development of human nature.[13]

Man could always have remained in this state of innocence, equality, and original natural goodness, and it seems that this was the will of God.

> “The example of savages, most of whom have been found in this state, seems to prove that men were meant to remain in it, that it is the real youth of the world, and that all subsequent advances have been apparently so many steps towards the perfection of the individual, but in reality, towards the decrepitude of the species”.[14]

According to Rousseau, culture, with its enlightened reason, perverts human nature, the natural good feelings of men. For Rousseau, what is natural in man, what gives value to life, are the simplest emotions; we could almost say, the most basic instincts, with respect to which, according to him, men hardly differ from one another. So much so that he goes so far as to say, ironically about the strutting of the enlightened men of his time,

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capable of saying one thing and its opposite, and all with the same passion. Peter Gay, introduction to *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, by Ernst Cassirer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), 13.

[10] Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, part I, § 15. In the *Discourse on Science and the Arts*, unlike the *Discourse on Inequality*, he refers to historical data to contrast the extent to which the artifice of culture has perverted the splendor of nature.

[11] Lévi-Strauss, one of the authors who have studied Rousseau's work in the greatest depth, qualifies the literal interpretation that could be made of the state of nature according to Rousseau: “The study of these savages does not reveal a Utopian state of Nature; nor does it make us aware of a perfect society hidden deep in the forests. It helps us to construct a theoretical model of a society which corresponds to none that can be observed in reality, but will help us to disentangle what in the present nature of Man is original, and what is artificial”. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John Russell (New York: Criterion Books, 1961), 391.

[12] Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, part II, penultimate paragraph. Here he quotes a passage from Justin's work: *Tanto plus in illis proficit vitiorum ignoratio, quam in his cognitio virtutis* (ignorance of vices benefits them as much as knowledge of virtue benefits these) (Justin, *Historiae Philippicae*, book II, chap. II, no. 15).

[13] In the *Emile* he tells us clearly: “But should we reason rightly, if from the fact that passions are natural to man, we inferred that all the passions we feel in ourselves and behold in others are natural? Their source, indeed, is natural; but they have been swollen by a thousand other streams; they are a great river which is constantly growing, one in which we can scarcely find a single drop of the original stream. Our natural passions are few in number; they are the means to freedom; they tend to self-preservation. All those which enslave and destroy us have another source; nature does not bestow them on us; we seize on them in her despite”. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education* (1762), trans. Barbara Foxley (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1911), Book IV, 173.

[14] Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, part II, § 23 *in fine.*

that “I venture to declare that a state of reflection is a state contrary to nature, and that a thinking man is a depraved animal”.[15]

The development of reason, the fruit of culture —Rousseau explains— has been stifling the instinct of compassion for the pain of others: “It is reason that engenders self-respect [self love], and reflection that confirms it: it is reason which turns man’s mind back upon itself, and divides him from everything that could disturb or afflict him. It is philosophy that isolates him, and bids him say, at sight of the misfortunes of others: ‘Perish if you will, I am secure’”.[16] The natural compassion of the good savage now subsists only in the simple people, whose state is more akin to that of nature. “It is the populace that flocks together at riots and street-brawls, while the wise man prudently makes off. It is the mob and the market women, who part the combatants, and hinder gentle-folks from cutting one another’s throats”.[17]

> “It follows from this survey that, as there is hardly any inequality in the state of nature, all the inequality which now prevails owes its strength and growth to the development of our faculties and the advance of the human mind, and becomes at last permanent and legitimate by the establishment of property and laws”.[18]

Man, who could be satisfied with his primitive nature, by wanting to be more, became worse. According to Rousseau, "perfectibility," as a specifically human quality, is precisely what has perverted man. The development of culture and modern society has expropriated man of himself. From society was born presumption and vanity, and the eagerness to live always pending on the opinion of others. “The [good] savage lives within himself, while social man lives constantly outside himself, and only knows how to live in the opinion of others, so that he seems to receive the consciousness of his own existence merely from the judgment of others concerning him”.[19] In short, with social life the true naturalness of man has disappeared. Now everything is falsehood and artifice, a pose, a lie, which, under the cloak of politeness, conceals selfishness and vanity.

Rousseau's anthropological optimism justifies his aversion to any attempt to educate or control human passions. The passions do not need training: nature is wise, and it

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[15] Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, part I, § 9.

[16] Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, part I, § 37.

[17] Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, part I, § 37.

[18] Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, part II, § 64. As is well known, Rousseau develops the political implications of this anthropology in *The Social Contract*: If natural man is originally free and equal, the problem of political order consists in finding a form of association that preserves this original equality while allowing collective life. Rousseau formulates the problem in a well-known way: “to find a form of association which defends and protects the person and goods of each associate, and by means of which each, while uniting himself with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before.” The solution is the social contract and the sovereignty of the general will. Political equality therefore does not arise from natural differences or hierarchies but from the common submission of all citizens to laws that they collectively will. In this sense, the civil state should restore, in a new political form, the original equality that civilization had corrupted.

[19] Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, part II, § 63

suffices to allow it to run its course. He considers the interference of education in the development of the passions so inappropriate that he says it is contrary to God's plan.[20]

The idea of the natural as spontaneous, as opposed to culture and education, is the idea that Rousseau projects onto modern and contemporary culture. In this vision of nature we find one of the keys to modern ethical thought: feeling as the source of morality par excellence, an enthronement of emotionality and a certain contempt for reason. And above all, for what we are now interested in emphasizing, this primordial naturalness is the foundation of human equality.[21]

But all this myth of the original state of nature of the "good savage" is dismantled by Fabrice Hadjadj in four lines when he says with a certain irony:

> "For the Papuan there are also savages; these are, within their own tribe, those who have not assimilated Papuan customs and habits, who do not speak *asmat* well, for example, or do not know how to paint their faces or comb their hair with the ritual feathers of the *sing-sing*".[22]

3 The natural and the cultural according to Aristotle

Contrary to Rousseau and the still dominant conception of the relationship between the natural and the cultural, we can say, following Aristotle, that the cultural development of man does not annul nature, nor is it a cause of inequality, but rather culture perfects nature and helps to understand the place that each person occupies in society.

According to Aristotle, man is the being most in accordance with nature, at least for the following six reasons. First, because man performs all the functions proper to living beings, in addition to the specifically rational one. Second, because man, with his intelligence, can reproduce in his mind the forms of all things. Thirdly, humans can reproduce much of nature with their reason and hands. Fourth, because all nature is understood as a stage for the development of human life. Fifth, because man sees himself

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[20] For Rousseau's critique of the Christian view of human nature as wounded by original sin, see his open letter to the Archbishop of Paris, Christophe de Beaumont, printed in 1763. There Rousseau reveals his ignorance of the Christian theology of justification, while ridiculing the Church's teachings on sin and the reality of the sacraments. This letter is available in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Letter to Christophe de Beaumont", in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 9, *Letter to Beaumont, Letters Written from the Mountain, and Related Writings*, ed. Christopher Kelly and Eve Grace (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001), 17*ff*.

[21] In the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, in a way Rousseau projects on the evolution of language the evolution of society: from a situation of original innocence where men related sporadically moved by necessity and reciprocal compassion, to an "unnatural" society that not only through law, but also through language, consolidates inequalities among men. The natural language of the good savage, which initially expressed feelings of benevolence, becomes more complicated, in a certain way "artificialized" as man becomes more civilized. As language evolves, Rousseau argues, it becomes more abstract and detached from sentiment. This shift parallels the moral and political decline described in the Second Discourse, where the move from natural to civil society entails the loss of authenticity and the rise of inequality. "As enlightenment spreads, language changes in character; it becomes more precise and less passionate; it substitutes ideas for sentiments, it no longer speaks to the heart but to reason". Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages", in *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), V, 256

[22] Hadjadj, "¡Por fin la naturaleza! Dijo ella", 71. A Mel Gibson film, *Apocalypto*, produced in 2006, was particularly controversial, among other reasons for demystifying the ideal of the good savage, showing the moral state of the Maya at the beginning of the 16th century, just before the arrival of the Spaniards.

as the guardian, the manager, the gardener, responsible for the development of nature. And sixth, because if we understand nature as that which has its principle of action in the agent, man has this principle to a much more intense degree than any other creature (this principle is freedom).

1º Because man performs the functions proper to all living things.

In Aristotle's writings on animals, the human body is often used as a model for studying the rest of the animals. This is partly because man performs all the functions proper to all living things, from the most elementary (nutrition, growth, and reproduction) to those related to his rational character, including perception and movement.

Aristotle explains that the different forms of life are distinguished by the powers of the soul they possess. The most basic of these is the nutritive power, which belongs to all living things. In *De Anima*, Aristotle explain that Of living things some possess only the nutritive faculty, others possess this together with perception, and others again possess in addition the faculty of reasoning and thought.[23] This hierarchy implies that the human being includes within himself the lower forms of life: the vegetative functions of nutrition, growth, and reproduction, which are shared with plants, as well as the sensory and locomotive capacities characteristic of animals.

Aristotle further clarifies that these powers are not mutually exclusive but cumulative. The higher forms of life contain the lower ones. Thus he notes that the nutritive soul belongs to all living things, but the perceptive soul belongs only to animals; and where there is perception, there is also desire and movement.[24] Human beings therefore possess not only the nutritive functions common to plants but also sensation and self-movement, which characterize the animal kingdom.

Finally, Aristotle identifies the distinctive element of human life in the possession of intellect. In a well-known formulation he writes that “the function of a man is an activity of the soul according to reason or not without reason”.[25] Because the human soul includes the nutritive and sensitive powers while adding the intellectual power, the human being performs the full range of vital activities found in nature. For this reason, Aristotle often uses the human organism as a reference point in his biological investigations, since in man the hierarchy of living functions reaches its most complete expression.

The fundamental difference between Aristotle’s view of evolution and the modern one is that Aristotle offered a formal interpretation, whereas modern thinkers propose a material one. Aristotle believed that lower forms of life should be understood in light of higher ones, interpreting organic life in terms of human life and projecting the teleological character of human life onto nature as a whole. Modern evolutionary theory reverses this perspective, rejecting final causes and seeking to explain organic nature solely through material causes.[26]

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[23] Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, II, 3, 414b2

[24] *De Anima*, II, 3, 414b1–5

[25] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 7, 1098a7

[26] Ernst Cassirer says it clearly: “Aristotle was convinced that in order to understand the general plan of nature, the origins of life, the lower forms must be interpreted in the light of the higher forms. In his metaphysics, in his definition of the soul as "the first actualization of a natural body potentially having life,”

2º Because man, with his intelligence, can have the forms of all things.

The second reason is that, through his intelligence, man can grasp the essence of all things. In *De Anima*, Aristotle explains that the intellect is capable of receiving the forms of all things.[27] Because the intellect does not possess a determinate form of its own, it can become, in a certain way, any intelligible object. For this reason, Aristotle concludes that "the soul is in a way all existing things".[28]

It is very significant that Aristotle, throughout *De partibus animalium* says on several occasions that the upper part of the human body, its face, "is directed towards the top of the universe":

> "Animals, however, that not only live but feel, present a greater multiformity of parts, and this diversity is greater in some animals than in others, being most varied in those to whose share has fallen not mere life but life of high degree. Now such an animal is man. For of all living beings with which we are acquainted man alone partakes of the divine, or at any rate partakes of it in a fuller measure than the rest. For this reason, then, and also because his external parts and their forms are more familiar to us than those of other animals, we must speak of man first; and this the more fitly, because in him alone do the natural parts hold the natural position; his upper part being turned towards that which is upper in the universe. For, of all animals, man alone stands erect". [29]

St. Thomas, the best interpreter of Aristotle, assumes this same idea and develops it with an even more spiritual vision:

> "Everything natural has been made by divine art; therefore, in a certain sense, it is the handiwork of God himself. Now, every artist intends to give his work the most suitable disposition, not at all, but in relation to the end (...) Example: he who makes a saw for cutting, makes it of iron so that it will serve that purpose and does not try to make it of glass, even if it is a more beautiful material since, as a fragile material, it would be an impediment to the objective he is pursuing. Thus, God also has given to each thing the right disposition, not absolutely, but in order to its own end...".[30]

And so, he has made the human body. In the authoritative quotation of the *Sed contra* of that same question, St. Thomas writes: "On the other hand there is what is said in Eccl

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organic life is conceived and interpreted in terms of human life. The teleological character of human life is projected upon the whole realm of natural phenomena. In modern theory this order is reversed. Aristotle's final causes are characterized as a mere "asylum ignorantiae". One of the principal aims of Darwin's work was to free modern thought from this illusion of final causes. We must seek to understand the structure of organic nature by material causes alone, or we cannot understand it at all". Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1979), 20.

[27] *De Anima*, III, 4, 429a15–18

[28] *De Anima*, III, 8, 431b21. In the English version, Hippocrates G. Apostle translates it as follows: «And now let us sum up what has been said concerning the soul by repeating that in a manner the soul is all existent things».

[29] Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalium*, Book II, chap. 10, 656a, trans. William Ogle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911).

[30] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 91, a. 3, s.

7.30: *God made man upright*." Why is it so significant that the human body was naturally upright? St. Thomas answers that the main reason is:

> "because the senses were given to him, not only to provide himself with what is necessary to live, as happens in animals, but also to know. Hence, while animals do not delight in sensible things except in order to nourish themselves and for sexual purposes, man alone delights in the beauty of the sensible order for the sake of beauty itself. Thus, because most of the senses are in the face, the other animals have it looking at the ground, as if for food and nourishment; while *man has his face erect, so that, by means of the senses, especially of sight, which is the most subtle and perceives the differences of things, he can openly know everything sensible both in the firmament and on earth, in order to discover the truth*".[31]

Hadjadj adds the following comment on Aristotle's 'De Anima':

> "Nor does the philosopher write *the human soul is like an angel*, but *the soul is like the hand*; if the hand is the instrument of instruments, intelligence is the form of forms [Aristotle. *De Anima*, III. 432a.]. It is here that one can understand more clearly why man is the living being most in conformity with nature. If nature is a power that invents forms and man is capable of knowing all forms by themselves and even of fabricating new ones, if he is thus "the form of forms", then he is the

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[31] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 91, a. 3, ad. 3. With a measure of conceit, Sigmund Freud spoke of the "three humiliations" that, in his view, modern man had been compelled to endure at the hands of Copernicus, Darwin, and ultimately himself: "The self-love of men has suffered three severe blows from the researches of science. The first was when they realized that the earth was not the centre of the universe but only a tiny fragment of a cosmic system of scarcely imaginable vastness. The second was when biological research robbed man of his peculiar privilege of having been specially created, and relegated him to a descent from the animal world and to the ineradicability of his animal nature. The third and most wounding blow has been dealt by psychological research, which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in its mind". Sigmund Freud, *A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis*, in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. and trans. James Strachey, vol. 17 (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 137. When Darwinian theory is applied to morality, it suggests that moral knowledge —later articulated in formal codes such as the Ten Commandments or the Law of the Twelve Tables—were favored by natural selection because they enhanced group survival and reproductive success. Traits such as compassion, care for the vulnerable, and reciprocity would have strengthened social cohesion, allowing groups possessing these dispositions to outcompete others and pass on the underlying tendencies, eventually embedding them in our biological inheritance. Over time, these instincts were refined and systematized within different civilizations, which explains the recurrence of similar fundamental moral norms across cultures. From this perspective, moral feelings are evolutionary adaptations, much like physical traits. They are not objective or absolute truths, but rather strategies that have proven to be advantageous for survival. As thinkers like Michael Ruse argue, morality—more precisely, our belief in its objectivity—functions effectively only if we perceive it as binding and universal, even though its ultimate basis lies in evolutionary processes rather than in divine command or transcendent foundations. Cf. Michael Ruse, *Taking Darwin Seriously*: *A Naturalistic Approach to Philosophy*, (New York: Blackwell, 1998), 214. Darwinian materialistic evolutionism is now regarded by some critics as an outdated doctrine, increasingly challenged by recent scientific developments, such as the projected heat death of the universe (understood as a consequence of the second law of thermodynamics), the apparent fine-tuning of the cosmos, and the growing recognition of the extraordinary complexity of DNA and even the simplest living cells. These discoveries, it is argued, make it logically untenable to attribute the transition from inert matter to living organisms to purely chance-driven processes. Cf. Michel-Yves Bolloré & Olivier Bonnassies, *God, the Science, the Evidence,* (New York: Abrams, 2025), 223-224, 256.

> precipitate of the whole of nature, the point of its most vivid intensity, of its clearest exposition".[32]

3º In a sense, man, with his intelligence and hands, can recreate all of nature.

This capacity to apprehend the forms of things also explains the human ability to produce artifacts through reason and skill. In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle notes that technical production presupposes prior intellectual understanding: "Art comes into being when from many notions gained by experience one universal judgment about similar objects is produced".[33] Human making therefore presupposes intellectual knowledge of forms, since the craftsman must first conceive the form of the object before realizing it in matter.[34]

Man, who is apparently one of the most vulnerable animals in creation, can in a certain way resemble all natures and dominate them all. He does not have claws for hunting, like the bear, but he can make weapons; he does not have the visual acuity of the eagle or the owl, but he builds electronic binoculars and night vision; he cannot live underwater like the fish, but he builds submarines... In the *De Partibus Animalium*, Aristotle describes man's hands as a multifunctional organ, and describes in a very graphic way the versatility of the human form:

> "This instrument, therefore, -the hand- of all instruments the most variously serviceable, has been given by nature to man, the animal of all animals the most capable of acquiring the most varied handicrafts.
>
> (…) Much in error, then, are they who say that the construction of man is not only faulty, but inferior to that of all other animals; seeing that he is, as they point out, bare footed, naked, and without weapon of which to avail himself. For other animals have each but one mode of defense, and this they can never change; so that they must perform all the offices of life and even, so to speak, sleep with sandals on, never laying aside whatever serves as a protection to their bodies, nor changing such single weapon as they may chance to possess. But to man numerous modes of defense are open, and these, moreover, he may change at will; as also he may adopt such weapon as he pleases, and at such times as suit him. for the hand is talon, hoof, and horn, at will. So too it is spear, and sword, and whatsoever other weapon or instrument you please; for all these can it be from its power of grasping and holding

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[32] Hadjadj, "¡Por fin la naturaleza! Dijo ella", 74.

[33] *Metaphysics*, I, 1, 981a5–7. See also when he states: "Art imitates nature." (Physics II, 2, 194a21). And later in the same book, he writes: "Art in some cases completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and in others imitates nature." Physics II, 8, 199a15–17.

[34] De todos modos, la visión de Cassierer también podría ser asumida, en cierta manera, por Aristóteles: If the intellect is capable of grasping the forms of things and expressing them through language and cultural practices, then symbolic activity appears not as an alternative to Aristotle's anthropology but as one of its consequences. From this perspective, the cultural and symbolic world of human beings presupposes the rational nature that Aristotle places at the center of his account of man. In this sense, Cassirer's notion of the "symbolic animal" may be interpreted less as a correction of Aristotle than as a modern reformulation of the cultural implications already contained in the Aristotelian conception of rationality.

them all. In harmony with this varied office is the form which nature has contrived for it".[35]

Like Aristotle, when St. Thomas asks himself whether the human body is the most suitable for human life, he first raises these two objections. The first: "Man being the noblest among animals, his body must have received the best possible disposition for what is proper to the animal, that is, sensation and movement. But some animals are sharper and faster moving, such as dogs, which smell better, and birds, which move faster. Therefore, the human body is not correctly disposed". And the second objection raised is: "That which lacks nothing is perfect. But the human body lacks more things than the bodies of animals; for the latter possess, for their protection, hard skin and natural weapons which are lacking in man. Therefore, the disposition of the human body is very poor". Although Thomas responds separately to the two objections, the answer to the second also includes the answer to the first:

> "The horns and nails, weapons proper to some animals, the consistency of the skin, the profusion of hair and feathers that cover others, show the abundance of earthly elements that are not reconciled with the proportion and delicacy of the human complexion. That is why these elements did not correspond to him. But in their place, he has intelligence and hands, which he can use in a thousand ways to obtain weapons, clothing, and other things necessary for life. That is why the hands are called organs of organs in III *De Anima* [c.8 n.2 (BK 432a1)]. It was also more convenient for rational nature, which can conceive of infinite things, to have the faculty to procure infinite means for itself".[36]

Aristotle repeatedly affirms that nature does nothing in vain: everything has a purpose within the ordered structure of nature, where lower beings serve higher ones.[37]

4º Because all material nature is at the service of man

Every natural being exists for the sake of man. It does not exist only for its own preservation nor for the preservation of its species. Aristotle holds that the natural world is ordered in such a way that lower forms of life serve the needs of higher ones, culminating in human beings, who possess reason and are capable of directing nature through their intelligence. Aristotle says it clearly:

> "After the birth of animals, plants exist for their sake, and the other animals exist for the sake of man: the tame for use and food, the wild, if not all at least most of them, for food and for the provision of clothing and other instruments of life."[38]

St. Thomas elaborates on this idea, explaining that all irrational nature exists to serve rational nature.[39] There is an interdependence in created beings where the less perfect

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[35] Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalium*, II, 687a - 687b.

[36] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q.91, a.3, ad.1 and ad.2.

[37] Cf. *Politics*, I.2, 1253a8. *Physics* II, 8, 199a8–9; 199b26–27, and *De Partibus Animalium* I, 5, 645b15–17

[38] *Politics* I, 8, 1256b15–22

[39] "Friendship can only be had with rational creatures, in whom there can be correspondence and participation, and to whom happiness and chance can bring good or misfortune. Only in them, properly speaking, is there room for benevolence. On the other hand, irrational creatures can neither come to love

beings are ordered to the more perfect ones as to their good and their end. Thus, the earth serves the plants, the plants serve the animals, and the animals serve man.

> "Imperfect beings serve the needs of more noble beings; plants draw their nutriment from the earth, animals feed on plants, and these in turn serve man's use. We conclude, then, that lifeless beings exist for living beings, plants for animals, and the latter for men. And since, as we have seen, intellectual nature is superior to material nature, the whole of material nature is subordinate to intellectual nature. But among intellectual natures, that which has the closest ties with the body is the rational soul, which is the form of man. In a certain sense, therefore, we may say that the whole of corporeal nature exists for man, inasmuch as he is a rational animal. And so the consummation of the whole of corporeal nature depends, to some extent, on man's consummation".[40]

What is the meaning of this last phrase "the consummation of the whole of corporeal nature depends, to some extent, on man's consummation "? It means that nature becomes itself only to the extent that it is placed at the service of man. There is, then, an interdependence between the world and man. The world is not the opposite of the self, whose meaning or purpose is that which man's subjective consciousness wishes to assign to it.[41] The world is then understood as the *stage* of human life. The nature of the world is, then, one with the nature of man.[42]

God nor to participate intellectually in the blessed life in which God lives. Thus, and properly speaking, God does not love irrational creatures with a love of friendship, but with a kind of love of concupiscence, in the sense that he subordinates them to rational creatures and also to himself. Not because he needs it, but because of his goodness and for our usefulness. For we too desire something for ourselves and for others". And in the *sed contra* of the following article, where St. Thomas asks himself if God loves all creatures equally, he puts the following phrase of St. Augustine: "On the other hand, there is what Augustine says in Super loann (Tr.110 on Jn 17.23: ML 35.1924): "*God loves all that he made; and of this, he loves more the rational creatures; and of these he loves more those who are members of his Only Begotten. And his Only-begotten loves him much more*"". Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q.20, a.2 ad 3.

[40] Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology*, chap. 148, "All creation for man."

[41] More or less this would be the position of a good part of modern philosophy, beginning with German idealism, especially Fichte, for whom reality or the world (the not-self) acquires meaning and existence through the activity of the self. For his part, this activity of configuring the meaning of the world is defended by existentialists such as Nietzsche, for whom the world and its meaning are created through our will to power; or Sartre, for whom the meaning of reality is nothing more than the projection of the individual preferences of each man, with whose existence he defines the meaning of nature (existence precedes essence). Hegel, for his part, sees nature as the "other" of the spirit, that is, as a stage in the process of self-development of the Absolute Spirit that has not yet reached self-consciousness. Nature is necessary for this process of development because it provides the material and conditions for the emergence of spirit (human consciousness and society), but in itself it is seen as mechanical, purposeless and without consciousness.

[42] From the perspective of the theologian Ruiz Retegui, from the hypothesis of evolution, all material nature is the fruit of God's original *call* to man to exist, in such a way that he progressively creates a world from which man proceeds as an end, not only chronologically, but also as the reason for everything else. "The modern theory of evolution —writes Ruiz Retegui— although it has been the origin of a 'materialistic' interpretation of the world, that is, from matter, can also be understood 'from above', that is, as the expression that God's creative call is addressed directly to man, so that everything that arises from nothing is the fruit of the call to man, who effectively needs 'a world' [material] for his own existence". Antonio Ruiz Retegui, *Pulchrum* (Madrid: Rialp, 1999), 88.

St. Thomas goes further than Aristotle on this point, arguing that God creates out of pure love in order to share His love with creatures capable of understanding and loving Him. For this purpose, God creates man and, as his *stage* (of man) and means, God creates the whole world. Thus, the end of created nature is the good of the rational creature. This purpose of creating beings capable of relating to God through love requires that such creatures have a certain nature or way of being, which makes them capable of such a relationship.[43]

That man is the end of all material creation does not presuppose an "exploitation" of nature as a means which is then discarded when the end is achieved, but that the end is achieved *in the means* and maintained insofar as it realizes the means. Again Fabrice Hadjadj explains this in rather more depth than it appears at first glance:

> "The grass feeds the cow, and the cow, eating the grass, gives it a transcendent vocation, beyond growing and withering. The wild rose bush has neither eye nor smell: it ignores its own color as its own odor; but behold, the man sees and feels its flower, cultivates it, and brings out the Star of Holland, offers it to his beloved as the symbol of his soul...".[44]

5º Because man is like a principle of development of the whole of Nature

Art imitates nature[45] and *completes* what nature cannot bring to a finish.[46] Nature contains patterns and processes that human intelligence learns from and reproduces through technical activity. Human being learn from nature, but at the same time he complete it through technique, which is itself a manifestation of culture. Human technique is possible because man understands the forms and purposes present in nature and is able to reproduce them, in a certain way prolonging or extending these processes. The craftsman imitates the way in which nature produces things.

At this point the difference with Rousseau's notion of culture becomes clear. For Aristotle, unlike Rousseau, there is no opposition between nature and culture, but rather a relation of complementarity. Medicine helps the body recover its health; agriculture improves the growth of plants; engineering extends the courses of rivers by means of canals. Human activity thus participates in the teleological dynamism of nature as a whole.

One might object that Rousseau, in *The Social Contract*, attempts in some way to construct a political system capable of recreating the conditions under which human beings could recover the original equality they enjoyed in the state of nature. Yet this

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[43] I think that this is the most relevant argument against theological voluntarism that stems from Scotus, and that Ockham projects onto later theology and philosophy. God cannot create just any type of man if he wants to have a friendly relationship with him. Human nature could have had another form, but it could not be any other way. "If God wishes to share his good with a potential intellectual nature, like ours, then this nature must have the various powers that we find ourselves to have. God is not constrained to make such a nature, but if he wishes to share his good, then this is the nature he wishes to make". Steven J. Jensen, *Knowing the Natural Law* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 228.

[44] Hadjadj, "¡Por fin la naturaleza! Dijo ella", 72.

[45] "Art imitates nature" (*Physics* II, 2, 194a21). "If the things produced by art were produced by nature, they would be produced in the same way as they are by art." (*Physics* II, 8, 199a15–17)

[46] "Art in some cases completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and in others imitates nature." (*Physics* II, 8, 199a15–17)

artificial construction—or conceptual acrobatics, as we have suggested above—does not conceive culture as the complement or fulfillment of nature. Rather, it presents culture as a kind of construct designed to undo what human beings themselves had previously produced when they established political societies that generated oppression and inequality.

Let us return once again to our starting point of this part: the idea that man is the driving force behind the development of all of nature. But to continue this reflection, we must first answer this question: Did Aristotle develop, alongside the idea of specific and individual natures, the notion of a *universal nature*? It is true that when Aristotle defines nature, he does so primarily with reference to species and their corresponding individuals, rather than to nature as a universal whole. If natural beings are those that contain within themselves the principle of their own movement by which they tend toward the fulfillment of their form, in what sense can one speak of a universal dynamism or a global nature? To answer this question, let us remember that Aristotle conceives nature as an ordered and hierarchical interdependence, in which all things are directed toward an end or purpose. And let us remember this fundamental idea of Aristotle's: "Nature does nothing in vain."[47]. With these two assumptions, we can then fully understand this passage from Aristotle, where it is very clear that Aristotle does conceive of a universal nature as the ultimate framework that gives meaning to individual and specific natures:

> "All things are ordered together somehow, though not in the same way; fishes, birds, plants… but all are ordered with reference to one thing. It is as in a household or an army: the good of the army lies in its order, but also in the commander, and more in him; for he is not because of the order, but the order because of him."[48]

The passage we have just considered makes it clear that, for Aristotle, nature is an ordered system in which the different parts are coordinated with one another and directed toward a higher principle. In the same way that the organization of soldiers in an army is ordered under the command of the general and toward the common aim of victory in battle, the various elements of nature are integrated within a structured whole. In this sense, it is indeed possible to speak of a universal nature.

Thomas Aquinas developed Aristotle's ideas by integrating them with the Christian doctrines of creation and providence. In this perspective, the cosmos can be understood as a "universal nature," the ordered whole of creation. The idea of divine providence allows St. Thomas to affirm that there is properly speaking no evil nature, since everything contributes to the good of the providential design. Aristotle does not go this far, precisely because he lacks the notion of providence. For example, when he refers to defects in nature or to monstrous beings, he tends to describe them as exceptions that confirm the rule, since what is natural is what occurs in the majority of cases.[49] On the other hand, for Saint Thomas, within this order, what may appear as defects in particular

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[47] *Physics* II, 8, 199b26.

[48] *Metaphysics* XII, 10, 1075a16

[49] "A monstrosity, of course, belong to the class of 'things contrary to Nature', although it is contrary not to Nature in her entirety, but only to Nature in the generality of cases. So far as concerns the Nature which is always and is by necessity, nothing occurs contrary to that; no; unnatural occurrences are found only among those things which occur as they do in the generality of cases, but which may occur otherwise" *Generation of Animals* IV, 4, 770b12

beings can contribute to the good of the whole. Even non-living beings participate in this dynamism, since God has arranged all creatures so that they influence one another and together move toward their proper ends. In this framework, the human being, endowed with intelligence and freedom, participates in this universal dynamism and can in a certain sense cooperate in the perfection of the natural order.[50] Any reality decontextualized from the whole can be judged according to a proximate end, for example, the survival or illness of an individual, and in that sense we could say that it is bad or defective. But within the framework of the universal nature plane, there is no bad nature.[51] This is a key idea not only for understanding the meaning of evil, but also for understanding inequalities among men.

But let us return once again to the core of this section on man as a principle of development of the whole of Nature. Man participates in the development of nature not only through technology for his own benefit, but also for the good of the whole, in such a way that man is a principle of development of nature itself, as if he were the *soul of the world* (anima mundi). We do not find this idea in Aristotle, but we do find it in Saint Thomas. In Summa Theologiae I, q.22, a.2, he explains that God governs the world through secondary causes, and that rational creatures can consciously participate in that governance. This means that man, through his intelligence and freedom, can collaborate in the realization of the providential order of the universe. This respect for nature is not only based on the survival of the human species, but is also a tribute to the Creator of the world, who imprints his stamp on all of nature. Therefore, from a Christian perspective

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[50] In his *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, St. Thomas explains that universal Nature is directed, and precisely what may seem an evil, by the death or corruption of an individual, all contributes to the good of the whole: "it must be said that old age and ceasing-to-be and decreasing are against nature in one sense and according to nature in another. For if we consider the specific nature of anything, i.e., its particular nature, it is clear that all ceasing-to-be and all defects and decrease are against nature: because each thing's nature tends to preserve the subject in which it exists, whereas the contrary of this happens when the nature is weak or defective. But if we consider nature in general, all these things are the result of a natural intrinsic principle, as the destruction of an animal results from the contrariety of hot and cold; and the same is true for all the others". Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, Book V, ch. 6, Lesson X, n 739. And elsewhere he writes: "In this universal nature, therefore, there cannot be evil: for evil in whatever nature is a recession from the order of that nature, as an eye is sick when it is not in its natural disposition. Yet granted that something can be beyond the order of some particular nature, nevertheless nothing can be contrary to universal nature: for it is not departed from the order of some nature, unless by something acting to the contrary, for example from the order of health, which is the natural good of the human body, it is departed through the action of heat or of cold. Yet all natural actions, which are active virtues, depend upon universal nature, and thus nothing can act to the contrary of the whole of universal nature. Whence it is clear that in universal nature, there cannot be evil". Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Book "On the Divine Names" by Dionysius*, trans. John D. Jones (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), chap. IV, lesson XXI, n. 551

[51] From St. Thomas's perspective, the good of nature is the attainment of the end for which God created it. And since God always accomplishes his purpose, nature is and always will be good. Sometimes we judge some part of nature to be defective because we separate it from the general purpose of creation. "It is proper for an optimal agent to produce all its effects optimally. But not in the sense that each of the parts of the whole it produces is absolutely optimal, but that it is optimal insofar as it is proportionate to the whole. An example: If all the perfection of the animal were in the eye, which is a part, the goodness of the whole animal would be nullified. Thus, God made the whole universe optimal, taking into account the way of being of the creatures, not each one in particular, but insofar as one is better than another. Thus it is said of each of the creatures in Genesis 1:4: God saw that the light was good. The same is said of other things. But of all of them together it is said (v. 31): God saw *all* he had made, and it was very good". Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 47, a.3, ad.1

that embraces much of Aristotelian thought, we can say that not man alone, but *man in the framework of created nature* reflects God's beauty.

6º Because freedom is the most genuine internal principle of action.

Nature understood as the mode of being whose principle of movement is internal, also in this sense man is the being most in conformity with nature, because this internal principle of movement is much more proper than that of any other living being. In man, this internal principle of motion is freedom itself, which interacts with the very appetitive dynamism that he has in common with the other animals. It is freedom that makes man's operation originate perfectly from within himself, that his acts are entirely his own. This further shows us that not only is there no incompatibility between nature and freedom, but that freedom is the perfect form of nature. Man not only performs all the functions of living beings, endowed with nature, but he performs all those functions by making them perfectly proper, perfectly due to an internal principle, and therefore perfectly natural.[52]

4 Conclusion

The contrast we have presented between Rousseau's and Aristotle's ideas of human nature lays the foundation for understanding the different notions of equality in both authors. While for Rousseau the criterion of equality among human beings is individualistic and is, so to speak, at the beginning, for Aristotle the criterion of equality is relative to the end of the community: the perfection of man is judged by his position in the whole of society, which is organic, structured, and hierarchical, as is all of nature. The proportion that exists in nature, in which man participates with his works, is the Aristotelian ideal. If the political community is the natural completion of human life, and nature is harmony between what is different, political society is perfect when each member performs their function, not when they all do the same thing. That is why, in Aristotle, equality takes the form of proportional justice, by which each person contributes to the common good according to his abilities and receives what corresponds to him within the ordered whole of the community. Aristotle's idea that the city is by nature prior to the household and to the individual, allows us to understand the ordering power of the *telos*, in the same way that all nature finds its perfection when it achieves its own purpose.[53] Aristotle conceives the polis as a natural community whose internal order reflects the teleological structure that he observes in nature. Aristotle does not present the political community as an artificial construction opposed to nature. Just as nature is an ordered whole in which different beings contribute to the perfection of the whole according to their functions, the city is composed of different members and institutions whose roles are directed toward the common good.

The difference between the conception of equality in Jean-Jacques Rousseau and in Aristotle is grounded in their different understandings of human nature. That is why in this work we have focused mainly on the notion of what is natural in man according to both authors. For Rousseau, nature refers to the original condition of human beings prior

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[52] Let us remember "Nature is a principle and cause of motion and rest in that in which it primarily belongs", *Physics* II, 1, 192b21–23. And also, let us remember how Aristotle describes man: "Man is the principle of his actions." *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 5, 1113b5–6.

[53] "The state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual". *Politics*, I.2, 1253a19. "Hence it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal." *Politics*, I.2, 1253a2–3.

to society and culture, a state characterized by simplicity, independence, and a fundamental equality among individuals. Social inequalities arise later, as a consequence of the development of society, property, and cultural conventions that distort this original natural equality. Aristotle, by contrast, understands nature not as a primitive pre-social state but as a dynamic principle oriented toward the fulfillment of the capacities proper to each being. In the case of human beings, this fulfillment takes place precisely within social and political life. Thus, while for Rousseau, society introduces inequality into an originally equal nature, for Aristotle the polis orders natural differences through a form of proportional equality directed toward the common good.

In our opinion, Rousseau's conception of nature (not only human nature) as an idyllic place prior to civilisation does not correspond to reality. Aristotle's view is more realistic: nature awaits man's perfection, which is achieved through culture. The young Manauara's exclamation of astonishment, 'At last, nature!', with which we began this work, upon seeing a cultivated park for the first time, encapsulates the central idea: the most natural thing is not that which is native, but that which is cultivated and perfected by human ingenuity.

In short, man is the being most in conformity with nature. He is, as Hadjadj says following Aristotle, the “precipitate of the whole of nature, the point of its most vivid intensity, of its clearest exposition”.[54]

The considerations we have made in this work have not been motivated primarily by a philological or merely historical interest (just to understand what Rousseau or Aristotle said), but to understand reality itself, which is basically what motivates any cognitive effort.

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[54] Fabrice HADJADJ, “¡Por fin la naturaleza! Dijo ella”, 74.

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