Nature's Ultimate End: Hope and Culture in Kant's Third *Critique*

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Kant's transcendental account of nature has received renewed interest.[2] In the midst of philosophical trends toward increasingly naturalistic analysis of all fields of inquiry, which fashions the task of the sciences as one of uncovering a totalizable domain of facts, Kant's critical philosophy claims that theoretical knowledge does not provide unconditioned knowledge of reality but rather relies on abstract formal conditions that disclose reality as causally determined. Nature is thus dramatically restricted to "sum of appearances in so far as they stand, in virtue of an inner principle of causality, in thoroughgoing interconnection" (B446).

Recent studies have appealed to Kant's project to the extent that it establishes the limits to our theoretical conception of nature.[3] The natural sciences do not give us unlimited access to all of what there is but to a limited domain tailored to the interests of finite cognition. However, these studies often overlook Kant's original goal to secure freedom from the encroachment of ontologically reductionist pictures of nature that made

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[2] See Philip Kitcher, "Projecting the Order of Nature," in Robert Butts (ed.), *Kant's Philosophy of Physical Science*, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company,1986, pp. 201-238; John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1994; Markus Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology*, London: Continuum, 2011.

[3] John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1994; Markus Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology*, London: Continuum, 2011.

***Philosophica*, 48, Lisboa, 2016, pp. 31-45.**

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claim to the totality of what there is. Instead of accepting Kant's account of practical freedom, they seek to provide a deflationary account compatible with naturalism.[4] Such accounts, however, raise a set of unsolvable "location problems", for the existence of will and purpose in nature are methodologically discounted from the outset.

One reason for this neglect is that Kant's transcendental idealism has the problematic effect of sealing off the practical sphere from the sphere of nature, from the very sphere where it *should* be operative. Kant is well aware that the regulative role played by reason in systematising cognition means that we must be able to conceive of nature as a whole. Yet he insists that this presentation of nature can never appear to us as cognition. The result of this settlement, at best, is agnosticism in regards to the viability of freedom in nature, and at worst, skepticism. Both results are problematic on practical grounds, for reason demands confirmation that freedom is viable in nature. Kant claims to defeat this agnosticism in *Critique of Practical Reason* through reference to the so-called "postulates of practical reason", that is, through faith. Of course, this settlement has failed to convince Kant's readers since its initial inception. Thus many scholars turn to Kant's theoretical conception of nature without regard for its practical aims.

However, in recent scholarship there is growing interest in Kant's approach to nature in *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, which sets out to show that our conception of nature cannot be consistent unless we are able to conceive of nature not only as an interconnected system of facts but also as an arena suitable for human freedom. Drawing from Kant's third *Critique*, several philosophers have argued that Kant's extended approach reveals the inconsistency of naturalist paradigms that limit nature to a homogenous field of facts. John Zammito claims that Kant demonstrates that reason requires that we integrate a theoretical account of nature with the sensuous dimension of humans as aesthetic creatures.[5] Paul Guyer argues that Kant's third *Critique* provides a convincing case for the "sensuous" confirmation for reason's "idea of the consistency of morality and nature".[6] Others consider Kant's achievement according to his insights into organic life: Philippe Huneman argues that Kant's account of the formative life principle provides teleological language a legitimate place in the biological

[4] Mario De Caro & David Macarthur (eds.), *Naturalism and Normativity*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010; Hugh Price, *Naturalism Without Mirrors*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

[5] John Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 283.

[6] Paul Guyer, *Kant*, 2nd ed., New York: Routledge, 2014, p. 42.

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sciences; Mark Fisher suggests that Kant's descriptive biology shows the need for an account of "inner form" that is unavailable in a system of nature as a causally determined field; Ina Goy argues that Kant's account of a self-propagating (*sich fortpflanzen*) organic force shows us that the exact sciences are unable to exhaust the sphere of natural causation.[7] Scholars such as Zammito and Guyer give focus on Part I of *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, while Huneman, Fisher, and Goy draw primarily from Part II.

In this paper I seek to bring these lines of inquiry together to highlight two overlooked dimensions of Kant's project: the role of moral hope in problematizing the limits of natural science and the role of culture in providing the solution. While my concern is with the contemporary reception of Kant's account of nature, my approach will be historical. This is for the methodological reason that to understand the impact of Kant's third *Critique* it is vital to consider the competing conceptions of nature that motivated Kant's revised strategy in his final *Critique*, namely, the French Revolution and the Pantheism Controversy. On the one side, the French revolutionaries attempted to interrupt a static conception of nature with the dynamism of freedom. On the other side, pantheists such as Herder aimed to confront the mechanical picture of nature by collapsing the boundary between nature and freedom. For reasons I will examine, Kant rejected both of these positions to propose that we are entitled to make the *regulative* judgment that nature is hospitable to human freedom. Because this judgment does not constitute nature as a purposive sphere, the task of reconciling nature and freedom does not belong to ontology but to a cultural project that has rational grounding and yet no guarantees. I conclude by suggesting that while the prevailing images of nature in contemporary science are at best indifferent and at worst inhospitable to human habitation, this dimension Kant's project is significant today.

[7] Philippe Huneman, "Reflexive Judgment and Wolffian Embryology: Kant's Shift Between the First and the Third Critiques", in *Idem* (ed.), *Understanding Purpose: Kant and the Philosophy of Biology*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007, pp. 75-100; Mark Fisher, "Metaphysics and Physiology in Kant's Attitude Towards Theories of Preformation", in I. Goy, & I. Watkins, I (eds.), *Kant's Theory of Biology*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014, pp. 25-42; Ina Goy, "Epigenetic Theories: Caspar Friedrich Wolff and Immanuel Kant", in *Ibidem*, pp. 43-60.

1. Systematicity and the question of hope

The question of hope opens the systematic core of Kant's critical project in the following way. Rather than asking how the mind can possibly fit the natural world, Kant's critical philosophy aims to disclose the formal principles at work in making the world available to us. To do so, Kant (Bix-x) argues that reason takes two forms based on the distinct ways in which cognition relates to its object.[8] The first way that cognition relates to its object involves "*determining* the object and its concept", and constitutes the faculty of cognition. The form that reason takes in cognition is "theoretical", for it constitutes the world according to the formal categories of the understanding. The second way that cognition relates to its object involves "*making* the object actual", and constitutes the faculty of desire. Kant calls this form of reason "practical", for it does not constitute the given world but regulates action according to how the world ought to be. The epistemic concept of nature and the metaphysical concept of freedom mark out two distinct fields of knowledge. On the one hand, the causality of natural objects is understood as a progressive nexus of efficient causes and their effects. On the other, moral judgments are freely determined by reason.

In the Doctrine of Method, Kant addresses reason's speculative need to assume that our knowledge of nature can form a "self-subsisting systematic whole" (A798/B826). For the most part of the *Critique*, Kant sought to show that pure reason cannot meet this speculative interest, and that philosophy must be rethought not as the process of "discovering truth" but as "the determination of boundaries" (A796/B824). Moreover, he argues that we do not need to meet it, for it is not necessary for the purposes of knowing. Yet if it is not necessary for knowing, Kant then considers why reason endlessly strives toward such completion. He concludes that it is "not at all necessary for knowing", and yet it is "insistently recommended to us by our reason", then its "importance must really concern only the practical" (A799/B827).

By identifying the proper domain of the speculative questions of reason in terms of the practical, Kant establishes that while speculative philosophy is unable to satisfy the questions it raises for itself, for these questions lie beyond the limits of possible experience, another experiment

[8] Citations to *Critique of the Power of Judgment* are to Volume 5 of *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Akademie Ausgabe. Citations to *Critique of Practical Reason* are to Volume 4. Citations to *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the customary A/B page numbers from the first and second editions. Translations quoted are from the Cambridge University Press editions.

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lies open to us that might lead to the satisfaction of reason. This experiment considers whether reason's *practical* interest might be able to "guarantee that which in regard to its speculative interest it entirely refuses to us" (A804/B832). In order to undertake this experiment, Kant identifies that the entire interest of reason is united in the three questions, What can I know?, What should I do?, and What may I hope? The first question is theoretical, and is answered by Kant's analysis of cognition. The second is practical, and belongs to Kant's analysis of practical reason. The third question, however, is "simultaneously practical and theoretical", and thus lies at the heart of reason's speculative concern (A805/B833).

The question "What may I hope?" is simultaneously practical and theoretical, for it asks whether happiness will be merited "in the same measure as he has made himself worthy of it" (*CPR* A809/B837), that is, whether we can expect vindication in the world of time and space for pursuing our noumenal vocation. Kant notes that such hope "cannot … be known through reason", for it "may be hoped for only if it is at the same time grounded on a highest reason" (*CPR* A810/B838). The "highest reason" is nothing other than God's knowledge, meaning that it is necessarily unattainable. The only way that the "hope for happiness" can be known is if the kingdom of ends were to become an empirical reality: if "everyone [did] what he should". Thus understood, humanity's moral vocation seems impossible: we require the hope for happiness to act as coherent moral agents, and yet such hope can only be known by the material existence of the kingdom of ends. However, the kingdom of ends will only become an empirical reality if moral agents actualize the moral good.

Kant's solution to this problem is to identify the unity of the critical project in the primacy of practical reason, that is, to demonstrate that human freedom does not hinge on empirical verification. Because the practical and theoretical arise simultaneously in the question of hope, and because the practical gives us "pure" access to reason, Kant concludes that "the practical leads like a clue to a reply to the theoretical question, and, in its highest form, the speculative question" (A805/B833). Hope provides the clue to the completion of the critical system, for it throws us onto practical reason as the ground of the critical project. In *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant pushes this argument further. He argues that theoretical reason must accept that the requirements of practical reason are "sufficiently authenticated", and "seek to compare and connect them with everything that it has in its power as speculative reason" (4:121). He calls a proposition borrowed from practical reason a "postulate", a "*theoretical* proposition, though one not provable as such, insofar as it attaches inseparably to a

practical law that holds *a priori* [and] unconditionally" (4:122). Thus theoretical reason may accept the postulates of God, freedom, and immortality as "a foreign offering not grown on its own soil" (4:120) without violating the limits of speculative reason.

From its immediate reception both the division between the practical and natural spheres and Kant's proposal to ground the unity of philosophy on faith came under significant attack. In *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy* (1786), Karl Leonhard Reinhold argues that Kant's philosophy did not fully live up to its two central ideals of criticism and science. As Kant had explained, the ideal of criticism demands the "purification of our reason" from errors, ensuring that philosophy is self-authorising (A11/B25). The ideal of science, on the other hand, requires that our "cognitions cannot at all constitute a rhapsody but must constitute a system, which alone can support and advance its essential ends" (A831/B860). Thus the legislation of human reason (philosophy) must encompass both the spheres of practical judgment and theoretical necessity in a "single philosophical system", drawing together nature and freedom, "everything that is" and "that which should be" (A840/B868). Yet Reinhold insists that the only way that we can be sure that nature and freedom cohere is to show that they can be traced back to the same "fundamental principle" (*Grundsatz*), which "imparts determination and internal coherence to all the metaphysical doctrinal principles".[9] A system with *two* first principles is not a system at all. The task, as Reinhold presents it, is to find an *a priori* first principle that could ground a concept of nature that governs the entire domain of experience, and hence philosophy.

Kant wrote to Reinhold on December 28, 1787, to thank him for "those excellent *Letters*".[10] He then announces to Reinhold that he is writing a *third* critique in order to remedy the shortcomings of his earlier work. He explains that the process of looking back over his critical project led him "to discover elucidations [he] had not expected". Due to his discovery of "a kind of *a priori* principle different from those hitherto observed", he states that he is "now at work on the critique of taste". This principle alerted him to a third faculty of the mind, adding the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure to the faculties of cognition and desire.

[9] Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, K. Ameriks (ed.), trans. J. Hebbeler, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 42.

[10] Immanuel Kant, "Letter to K. L. Reinhold, December 28 and 31, 1787", in A. Zweig (ed. & trans.). *Kant: Philosophical Correspondence*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967, p. 127.

Kant observes that the process of reflecting on the apparently unmediated relation between the two principles "allowed [him] to discover something systematic" that could draw the scope of knowledge together under the banners of theoretical philosophy, teleology, and practical philosophy. Kant notes that the second, teleology, is "the least rich in *a priori* grounds of determination", but he hopes that it will unify the critical project under the title of the Critique of Taste.[11] This critique was to be ready in a matter of months. However, for circumstances I will now address it would take another two years to complete.

2. Nature as productive power

Kant's letter to Reinhold in December 1787 presents his critique of taste as the discovery of a new principle that would ground the critical enterprise on the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure. During the time between this letter and the final publication of *Critique of the Power of Judgment* in 1790, however, Kant's Critique of Taste develops into quite a different project. In particular, Kant does not only seek to ground the unity of philosophy on a new principle, but to show how this is achieved as a cultural project. The answer to the question of hope is no longer merely speculative but relates to a creative entanglement with nature as a whole.

As Zammito argues in *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*, one of the clues to understanding this shift in Kant's project is the impact of the tumultuous years of the French Revolution.[12] The French revolutionaries aimed to confront a similar dilemma to Kant: their effort to transpose freedom onto history is a practical attempt to resolve the dualism between freedom and nature. This effort does not *reconcile* freedom with institutional life but rather conceives of itself as interrupting lived experience with freedom. In his "What is Enlightenment?" essay Kant anticipated the inevitable failure of such a program. "A revolution may well put an end

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 128. The "Critique of Taste" took on several forms over the following years, and was finally published as *Critique of Judgment* in 1790. There is general consensus that the final edition includes a range of edits, including several sections from the initial "Critique of Taste", which was written in the late summer of 1787, and later revisions that occurred up until its publication in Easter 1790. In this paper I am building on Zammito's suggestion that giving attention to the "genetic development" of the third *Critique* opens us to a greater understanding of "the major impact of the work on its epoch". Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*, p. 2.

[12] Zammito, *op. cit.,* p. 268.

to autocratic despotism and to rapacious or power-seeking oppression", he states, "but it will never produce a true reform in ways of thinking".[13] The reconciliation of freedom and nature, it seems, is a deeper affair that requires a revolution on the level of thought. As the revolution broke out in France as Kant finished writing his third *Critique*, Kant responds by advocating a new way of thinking about nature and freedom: a way of conceiving *this* world as a place hospitable to humanity's moral calling. Kant's response opens the scope of the critical project to the ability of the productive imagination to give sensuous expression to freedom within nature.

This is particularly apparent in his addition of the notion of genius in the final drafts of 1789.[14] Until these drafts, Kant remained critical of the spontaneous creativity of genius in the work of Herder, Mendelssohn, Hume, and others. Even in the first drafts of the third *Critique* Kant undertakes a critique of taste with no reference to genius at all, for his initial critique of taste was concerned with the receptive dimensions of aesthetic experience. However, in the later drafts of the third *Critique* Kant introduces the notion of genius as the exemplary use of the imagination's *productive* capacities. Genius, he explains, is the expression of freedom within the sensuous bounds of experience, "the talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art, … an inborn productive faculty of the artist" (5:307). Because genius is not learned but given, we experience it as a productive power that "belongs to nature". Clearly Kant does not mean that genius features as part of nature as unitary field of facts, but that in beautiful works of art we experience what Kant describes in Part II as a "formative power" (§66). This formative power is not unfettered, for it remains constrained to the limits of experience. Yet Kant makes the remarkable claim that neither is it entirely conditioned. Rather, the artist "ventures to make sensible rational ideas … beyond the limits of experience" (5:314). The very idea of "making sensible" rational ideas strikes us as novel in Kant's project. Genius provides Kant with a grammar to identify our experience of nature as a formative power, making it possible to explain how the presentation of rational ideas could orientate us – through schematizing our taste – toward the realisation of freedom. The artworks we attribute to genius confirm to us the viability of freedom *within* nature, expressing a passage from the realm of the theoretical (nature) to the realm of the practical (morality).

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[13] Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, trans. H. Nisbet, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 55.

[14] For an analysis of the shifting role of genius in Kant's work, see Giorgio Tonelli, "Kant's Early Theory of Genius (1770-1779): Part II", in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 4, 1966; pp. 209-224.

The late inclusion of genius in Kant's account of nature's productive power both concedes to and departs from his student, Herder, who rose to national acclaim during the mid-1780s. Herder's account of genius served to harmonise reason and taste, viewing artistic genius as the creative expression of an ontological conception of nature in the sensuous domain. He states that through genius, taste provides a common mode of sense to a people, for it is "nothing but *truth and goodness* in a *beautiful and sensuous form, understanding and virtue in an immaculate garb fit for humanity*".[15] Taste is the incarnation of the transcendentals, reconciling reason with sensuous life. The transcendentals are no longer separated from sensuous life but are products of nature – expressed by genius – that schematise cognition. If taste is the supreme organising principle, then the products of human cultural achievement replace philosophy as the activity that is most adequate for generating an understanding of life, for they are able to grasp nature as a whole.

Kant found significant problems with the pantheism inherent to Herder's proposal, for it makes claim to the cognition of freedom, thereby constraining freedom to experiential limits – the very thing critical philosophy set out to deny. In contrast, Kant's account of genius serves to show how freedom can educate taste whilst remaining distinct from nature. The communicative power of the artist is expressed when their imaginative material takes on a form that combines genius with taste. Genius without taste is incommunicable, Kant states, for it is a break with convention and has no determinate content (5:311). While Kant concedes to Herder's boarder project, which is to show the importance of cultural products to our orientation to freedom, he retains the transcendentality of freedom. The aesthetic law shares merely an *analogous* relation with freedom. In this sense Kant's notion of genius entitles us to think of nature *as if* it were a free, self-organising power that communicates itself through products.

The importance of Kant's notion of genius for his attempt to bridge between nature and freedom lies in his recognition that philosophy cannot reconcile the natural and moral orders under a single principle, as Reinhold had hoped. It is not philosophy but our experience of the freedom of art that alerts us to a "fundamental principle" to guide the realisation of our moral ends. This task belongs to the productive imagination, which we see expressed in the example given by genius. Because the imagination is "a productive cognitive faculty", it is "very powerful in creating, as it were,

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[15] Johann Gottfried Herder, "The Causes of Sunken Taste among the Different Peoples in Whom It Once Blossomed", in *Selected Writings on Aesthetics*, trans. G. Moore, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006, pp. 308-334; p. 334.

another nature, out of the material which the real one gives it" (5:314). Through the productive power of imagination, nature "can be transformed by us into something entirely different, namely into that which steps beyond nature". Nature and the products of imaginative transformation – what Kant examines as culture – can thus be viewed as two sides of the same project, or, as I suggest later, culture is the ultimate end of nature.

The coalescence of nature and culture is best seen in Kant's notion of the aesthetic idea. Aesthetic ideas are analogous to the ideas of reason: like the ideas of reason regulate the unity of disparate phenomena, yet unlike the ideas of reason they are sensuously presented. Thus they are not limited to nature as a system of interconnected facts, for they "go beyond the bounds of experience" (5:314). In Kant's terms, aesthetic ideas "strive toward something lying beyond the bounds of experience [thus seeking] to approximate a presentation of concepts of reason". They are the building blocks of our second nature, for they give incarnate form to the transcendent idea; they fuse the particular dimensions of spirit with the corporate dimension of language.

The ability of the genius to consider and judge nature, to see nature as more than mechanism and to put it to creative work, is vital to Kant's attempt to find a thematic basis that undergirds both the theoretical and practical spheres. While the supersensible basis "can never be elevated and expanded into a cognition" (5:175), the symbolic language of poetry uses nature as a schema in order to govern the application of supersensibility. Such language expresses the imagination's productive capacity to schematise what resists presentation, using nature to express what goes beyond nature. Schematising the supersensible, that is, bridging the heterogeneous poles of thought and sensation, contains the solution to Kant's intention to reconcile the critical system on a common ground. It does not posit the unity of supersensibly and nature, as do the pantheists, and nor does it attempt to force the supersensible onto nature, as do the revolutionaries. Rather, the artist opens an experience of nature as a purposive domain that is hospitable to the moral project. This solution is not a product of cognition; it takes the form of a cultural project aimed at giving freedom sensuous form.

3. Culture as nature's ultimate end

In Part II of the third *Critique* Kant is concerned with organisms, which, like beautiful objects in nature, involve judgments of purposiveness. Kant separates organisms from inorganic material on the condition

that they cannot be entirely explained according to the formal conditions laid out in *Critique of Pure Reason*. Because organisms are partially unexplainable in terms of mechanism, our attempt to articulate our experience of them requires the purposive language of a formative principle that is analogous to a human will. Yet we then find ourselves in a contradiction: we cannot legislate the appearances of organic life according to the formal conditions of cognition *and* experience organic life as self-organising. Kant presents this contradiction in the form of the antinomy of teleological judgment. Recognising this antinomy forces us to expand the concept of nature as the sum of appearances to a larger arena that lies *beyond* cognitive limits, one that includes purposive deliberation. In other words, we have no choice other than to conceive of nature through an analogy with an intentional will. Thus Kant invokes the ambiguous notion of the supersensibly ground to articulate this locus of agency, suggesting that "the unity of the supersensible principle must then be considered as valid in the same way not merely for certain species of natural beings, but for the whole of nature as a system" (5:381).

What could it possibly mean to conceive of nature in terms of supersensibility? Clearly it is more than the concept of nature as a thoroughly interconnected system of facts. In the final section of *Critique of Judgment* entitled "Methodology of the Teleological Power of Judgment", Kant explains his solution to the antinomy by situating it within the broader critical project. His argument is as difficult as it is stunning: organisms open us to a sense of nature as a purposive whole that culminates in an ultimate end, namely, the existence of human beings as free and rational agents.

Kant's guiding concern in this section is the speculative question of the unity of the critical project he considered in the first and second *Critiques*: the question of hope. He grapples with the overwhelming amount of empirical evidence that leads us to conclude that the natural world does *not* accommodate moral action. The indifference of nature to the human project as evidenced in storms and earthquakes leads him to conclude, contra pantheism, that nature cannot produce human freedom. Even if we bracket out the evidence of nature, the sheer volume of conflict, strife, and war denies the empirical confirmation of freedom in humanity's inner constitution. Yet despite this evidence, Kant argues that we can consider nature as a sphere that *prepares* humanity for the exercise of freedom.

To makes this argument, Kant distinguishes between two kinds of end: the ultimate end (*der letzte Zweck*) and the final end (*der Endzweck*). This separation of ends allows him to avoid the pantheist language of a final, empirical end in nature that can be grasped by human cognition. The

final end, Kant maintains, lies *outside* of nature in the sphere of freedom: there is "only a single sort of beings whose causality is teleological. … The being of this sort is the human being, though considered as noumenon" (5:435). Thus Kant's answer to the question of hope does not take the form of a theodicy, which would be to show that freedom *requires* suffering and terror to become manifest. While this freedom must remain noumenal, Kant observes that there is another kind of end, an ultimate end that is manifest *within* nature: "In order … to discover where in the human being we are at least to posit that ultimate end of nature, we must seek out that which nature is capable of doing in order to prepare him for what he must himself do in order to be a final end" (5:431). While nature cannot produce freedom, it can develop human beings for the effective realisation of their moral calling *in* nature, which is what Kant terms culture:

> The production of the aptitude of a rational being for any ends in general (thus those of his freedom) is culture (*Kultur*). Thus only culture can be the ultimate end that one has cause to ascribe to nature in regard to the human species. (5:431)

Here we find the convergence of both sections of the third *Critique*: in culture, natural and human agency conjoin in the expression of freedom. In the art produced by genius we discover the capacity to judge and consider nature as an order that is hospitable to freedom. In the antinomy of teleological judgment we discover a conception of nature that is larger than an already constituted region of causality, one that does not stand in contradiction with freedom but in genuine union with it. This conception of nature requires that we first acknowledge that nature understood as a whole is beyond our concept of it, not by virtue of being a thing in itself but by virtue of being resistant to a completed system of concepts. When any conceptual item, such as nature, extends our thought beyond the limits of possible experience, theoretical knowledge – a direct, schematic presentation – becomes impossible, and we are forced to use a more expansive way of thinking that is capable of acknowledging the underdetermined character of certain items of experience. Instead of constituting such items in the shape of knowledge, we rather appreciate their existence and aspire to communicate our experience of them universally. Such an indirect relation can only be captured by the symbol. Symbolic presentation makes possible a concept "which only reason can think, and to which no sensible intuition can be adequate" (5:351). In such a presentation "judgment proceeds in a way merely analogous to that which it observes in schematization". When

we move from a schematic to a symbolic presentation of nature, Kant notes that we expand "our concept of nature, namely as a mere mechanism, into the concept of nature as art" (5:246). Expanding our concept of nature from mechanism to art entails a presentation of nature, as Henry Allison states, that is "far broader than reason's concept of systematicity" we find in the first *Critique*.[16]

The symbolic presentation of nature does not simply encompass what is given for cognition but also a self-organizing sphere, one that takes into account what human beings do with what they are given. The status of nature's ultimate end is indeed *conditional* on this conception of nature:

> if nature is regarded as a teleological system, then it is his [humanity's] vocation [*Bestimmung*] to be the ultimate end of nature; but always only conditionally, that is, subject to the condition that he has the understanding and the will to give to nature and to himself a relation to an end that can be sufficient for itself independently of nature, which can thus be a final end. (5:431)

Kant considers this broader conception of nature as a productive human achievement that, while having rational grounding, is without guarantee. Because culture is the "production of the aptitude of a rational being for any ends in general", humans are set with the task of defining for themselves what they *ought* to pursue through their participation with nature. Kant's proposal is to promote the purpose-giving aptitude itself, that is, culture. Culture is neither freedom nor happiness – what reason sought to guarantee in the second *Critique* – for it has neither unconditional value nor the dependent presence of happiness. It is rather something intermediate, preparing us for the realisation of our final end. This occurs through both a positive and negative dimension; culture liberates "the will from the despotism of desires", thus detaching us from nature and rendering us capable of "choosing for ourselves" (5:432); and it promotes the "universally communicable pleasures" that foster human community.

This conclusion to *Critique of the Power of Judgment* builds from the question of hope raised in the first two *Critiques* in order to show that we are entitled to judge nature as more than a system of causative relations that is impervious to our moral vocation. While theoretical reason retains a legitimate natural field of constituted appearances, this field has constrained boundaries and exists within a broader conception of the whole of nature. Reason can only be consistent, Kant argues, when we attain a

[16] Henry Allison, *Essays on Kant*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 170.

conception of nature as an "analogue of life" (5:375), which is confirmed in both the exemplary creativity of genius, which transforms nature into a sphere of ideas, and the explanatory challenge of organic life, which reveals the limits of the exact sciences.

On this count the third *Critique* features as an exciting and yet confronting text today. It shows that if we conceive of nature simply as a sphere of facts and their relations, then we are faced with the problem of identifying final causes within the natural world. Thus conceived, reason cannot be consistent, for it must either collapse nature and freedom or discount the viability of moral freedom in nature, the very task it aims to establish. Kant argues that we will have more progress in the life sciences if we conceive of nature as a sphere that encompasses the practical *and* sensuous dimensions of human being and doing. Without such a conception of nature, the full vista of human experience, from our moral and aesthetic feelings to our appreciation of organic life, cannot feature in the domain of legitimate science. By examining the productive capacity of the human imagination to generate a symbolic sphere of culture, that is, a second nature from the original material granted to cognition, Kant outlines the heuristic principles that govern our experience of nature as a whole, a domain in which theoretical science has a field of inquiry bounded by its formal conditions. If Kant is correct, then the task of thinking consistently about nature does not simply belong to the natural sciences. It is a collective project spurred on by exemplary acts of creativity and scientific endeavour.

ABSTRACT

Against the growing trend in philosophy toward naturalistic analysis, Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* has gained significant attention. Some scholars suggest that Kant's insights bear on our aesthetic appreciation of nature, others on our account of the life sciences. In this paper I draw these lines of inquiry together to identify two overlooked dimensions of Kant's project: the role of moral hope in problematizing the limits of natural science and the role of culture in providing a solution. Kant argues that we cannot think consistently unless we are able to conceive of nature as a domain that is hospitable to human freedom. His response is to identify the productive capacity of the imagination to transform the material of nature into something more. While the prevailing conception of nature today is at best indifferent and at worst antagonistic to human habitation, this dimension of Kant's work has much to bear on contemporary thought.

Key-words: Kant – *Critique of the Power of Judgment* – nature – culture – hope

RESUMO

Contra a crescente tendência das análises naturalistas na filosofia, a *Crítica da Faculdade de Julgar*, de Kant, tem recebido significativa atenção. Alguns estudiosos sugerem que as ideias de Kant são inspiradas pela nossa apreciação estética da natureza, enquanto para outros estão baseadas na nossa concepção de ciências da vida. Neste artigo abordo em conjunto estas linhas de investigação para identificar duas dimensões negligenciadas do projecto de Kant: o papel da esperança moral na problematização dos limites das ciências naturais e o papel da cultura em prover uma solução. Kant argumenta que não podemos pensar de maneira consistente caso não estejamos aptos a conceber a natureza como um domínio acolhedor para a liberdade humana. A sua resposta visa identificar a capacidade produtiva da imaginação em transformar o material da natureza em algo mais. Enquanto a concepção predominante de natureza é hoje, no melhor dos casos, indiferente e, no pior, antagónica em relação à habitação humana, esta dimensão do trabalho de Kant possui um grande contributo para o pensamento contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave: Kant – *Crítica da Faculdade de Julgar* – natureza – cultura – esperança