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d i f f e r e n c e s

More on Humanism

PHENG CHEAH

DAVID GOLUMBIA

ADEN EVENS

AMANDA EMERSON

JAN MIESZKOWSKI

GREG FORTER

Summer 2003

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More on Humanism

PHENG CHEAH	1	Human Freedom and the Technic of Nature: Culture and Organic Life in Kant's Third Critique
DAVID GOLUMBIA	27	Computation, Gender, and Human Thinking
ADEN EVENS	49	Concerning the Digital
AMANDA EMERSON	78	From Equivalence to Equity: The Management of an American Myth
JAN MIESZKOWSKI	106	Exhaustible Humanity: Using Up Language, Using Up Man
GREG FORTER	134	Against Melancholia: Contemporary Mourning Theory, Fitzgerald's <i>The Great Gatsby</i> , and the Politics of Unfinished Grief

Human Freedom and the Technic of Nature: Culture and Organic Life in Kant's Third Critique

*I*n recent years, the impact of exponential technological innovation and globalization on all spheres of human life has led to the urgent questioning of the limits of the human and even to predictions about its imminent demise within the horizon of virtual reality and cyborg worlds where the boundaries of human bodies themselves seem to dissolve as they undergo limitless prosthetic extension. But the question of the end of man, or the posthuman, is not a new one. It is a grand old anthropologic theme. As Jacques Derrida pointed out in 1968 (with special reference to Foucault's prediction of the disappearance of man at the conclusion of *The Order of Things*), the end of man in the sense of the exceeding of the limits of the *anthropos* always involves a transcendence of human finitude that points toward a higher end in the sense of an infinite telos.

The end of man (as a factual anthropological limit) is announced to thought from the vantage point of the end of man (as a determined opening or the infinity of a telos). Man is that which is in relation to his end, in the fundamentally equivocal sense of

the word. Since always. [. . .] The name of man has always been inscribed in metaphysics between these two ends. ("Ends" 123)¹

Simply put, it is the end of man to come to an end. This is what constitutes human freedom, which is also the highest end of man.

In this respect, radical antihumanisms are curiously allied to the most edifying humanisms. For humanism is also concerned with the endless surpassing of human limits, the most important of which, in modernity, is the limit between humanity and nature. As Ernst Cassirer observes in *An Essay on Man*, what is proper to human reality is the power to remake the physical world in the ideal image of humanity through purposive action, beginning with human physical nature. It is too easy today to dismiss this as the brutal domination of nature. The humanist end of man has many different permutations in which the highest end is man's harmonious reconciliation with and passing into nature understood as a larger, spiritualized whole, or an ecological organism. This version of humanism suggests that nature is not inhuman, even though it exceeds humanity, for we are part of nature and must acknowledge this if we are to overcome the destruction and crisis of modernity and be genuinely free. Instead, the inhuman is any finite limit of man, a defective feature of human existence, such as commodification, technology, totalitarian domination, and so on, that is not *proper* to the true end of man but that we have thus far failed to regulate. We quite properly compare such phenomena to animals or ghosts, associate them with death, and characterize them as subhuman precisely because they are both improper to us but also reducible to us. They must be overcome if we are to actualize human freedom. The most familiar version of this line of thought in literary theory is the high Romantic argument, but one should also situate here Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of instrumental reason as well as the thought of contemporary feminists such as Luce Irigaray and Vandana Shiva. The reach of this organismic-humanist (as opposed to the technicist-humanist) understanding of the end of man extends to arguments that are not ostensibly ecological, such as Habermas's attempt to defend the life-world from the encroachment of imperatives from the system-world, or the contemporary human rights enterprise, which is an attempt to provide an institutional basis for organizing humanity into a universal and reciprocal whole.²

But if the passing of what is finitely human can be accommodated by humanism through the determination of these limits as inhuman

attributes to be dissolved in human self-overcoming, what has seldom been broached is the thought of the inhuman that is irreducible to humanity or the *anthropos*. This essay seeks to elaborate a nonanthropologic account of the inhuman by returning to the text that inaugurated the organismic understanding of the end of man, Kant's "Critique of Teleological Judgment." Kant attempted to make organic life an analogue for the actualization of human freedom. He argued that organized nature was conducive to human moral purposes because it appeared to exhibit a rational form of causality that pointed to the technic of culture as nature's ultimate end for humanity. He sought, in other words, to bridge the borders between human freedom, *techné*, and nature. However, as I will argue, in his elucidation of organic life, Kant was forced to rely on a "technic of nature"—a final, purposive or intentional causality that seems to be inherent to nature—that cannot be reduced to human *techné*. The fact that the actualization of human freedom is based on an inhuman *techné* poses two radical problems for Kant's understanding of freedom, which is more or less also that of contemporary humanism. In the first place, *techné* is inimical to freedom because it involves a relationship of dependency between an author-maker and the object that is created or produced. Kant regarded this dependency as a form of heteronomy or other-determination, which he opposed to the autonomy or self-determination that defined freedom. But more importantly, the technic of nature is also not human. What does it mean for freedom to be based on something inhuman when we have always regarded freedom as *human* and humanity to be *free*, when we axiomatically view freedom as that which co-belongs with humanity, as humankind's distinctive and highest trait, so much so that it is redundant to speak of *human* freedom? What the technic of nature indicates, I want to suggest, is the process of formation and deformation of the human at one and the same time, its simultaneous preservation and disfiguration. This inhuman *techné* interferes with the actualization of human freedom, but it is also freedom's condition of possibility. We cannot therefore speak of freedom as the highest and punctual end of man, our final self-overcoming or transcendence of our finitude, but only of an endless end that is not quite an infinite *telos* that humanity prescribes for itself.

*The Forgotten Half of Kant's
Third Critique: Culture, Organismic
Causality, and Freedom*

While there has been a veritable explosion of studies on Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment," the second half of the Third Critique has suffered from palpable neglect. Hegel, however, recognized the paramount importance of Kant's account of organic life for the actualization of freedom in his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*:

[T]he basic determination of the living being seized on by Aristotle, that it must be conceived as acting purposively, has in modern times been almost forgotten till Kant, in his own way, revived this concept in his doctrine of inner teleology, in which the living being is treated as its own end [Selbstzweck]. (Philosophy of Nature 388–89; Naturphilosophie §360A, 473)

The outstanding merit of the Critique of Judgment is that Kant expressed in it the notion and even the thought of the Idea. The notion of an intuitive understanding, of inner purposiveness etc. [principles used to describe organic nature], is the universal concurrently thought as concrete in itself. (Encyclopaedia Logic 102; Wissenschaft der Logik §55A, 140)⁵

As Hegel rightly surmised, the presence of organic life allowed Kant to hope that ideality (ends and purposes) was active and actual in nature. As such, it offers a way to bridge the realms of freedom and nature so that freedom can be actualized in the world of experience.

As is well known, Kant contrasts the spontaneous autocausality of moral freedom and the dependent character of causality under natural laws by counterposing the former with pejorative images and analogies of mechanical objects and their technical construction such as the turnspit, the automaton, the clockwork machine, and the marionette.

[A]ll necessity of events in time in accordance with the natural law of causality can be called the mechanism of nature, although it is not meant by this that the things which are subject to it must be really material machines. Here one looks only to the necessity of the connection of events in a time series as it develops in accordance with natural law, whether the subject in which

this development takes place is called automaton materiale, when the machinery is driven by matter, or with Leibniz spirituale, when it is driven by representations; and if the freedom of our will were none other than the latter (say, psychological and comparative but not also transcendental, i.e., absolute), then it would at bottom be nothing better than the freedom of a turnspit, which, when once it is wound up, also accomplishes its movements of itself. (Practical 217; KpV 222; Ak. V: 97)⁴

These images stress the fundamental dependence of any machine, its secondariness as *techne* with respect to its maker or the subject that sets it in motion. The relationship of an artificial object to its artificer is analogous to subjugation and subservience to another's commands and directions.

A series of crippling quandaries, however, arises from this rigid demarcation of human freedom from natural mechanism. Because freedom is distinct from and opposed to mechanical causality, it is an absent cause in the mechanism of nature. Although freedom can initiate a series of appearances within nature, the *finitude* (*Endlichkeit*) of our cognitive powers prevents us from determining its connection to this series. An infinite and self-causing absolute being such as God would possess an intellectual intuition that can actively grasp the world as it is in itself because it can create the world as it is in itself. But for human creatures, the world and even our own existence is merely given to us as a world of appearances within spatiotemporal coordinates. We apprehend the world passively through our intuition, which is not active, but sensible and receptive. We are not gifted with an originary intuition that can originate objects. Practical power of origination and independence of practical reason, yes; but also derivativeness of our cognitive powers and their dependency on given objects. Infinity and transcendence, on the one hand; irreducible finitude, on the other. This is the infamous gulf between the realms of freedom and nature, practical reason and theoretical reason. Moral action may lift us up from the mechanism of nature into an intelligible, supersensible world. But this has no bearing on what moral actions can actually achieve because their optimal effect is projected in terms of their taking place in the supersensible. Since we cannot experience supersensible nature, we cannot connect our moral actions to actual effects in the sensible world where we exist.

Given that the free will also acts and action is something that only takes place in nature, how can we know if our moral actions can

have actual effects? Some help or favor (*Gunst*) must come from the side of a nature that is not the supersensible nature revealed to us by practical reason but is nevertheless more than mere mechanism. What is needed is an intimation of *teleological time*.⁵ An infinite, self-causing absolute being does not require temporal progression. But we need time to develop morally and to bring about what we morally will. This is what makes us historical beings. However, the time we have is blindly given to us. It is measured by the aimless mechanical succession of cause and effect. There is no guarantee that there can be any meaningful regularity or rational connection of phenomena within given time. Hence, we must look for some further sign that nature is favorable (*günstig*), amenable, or well disposed to moral action, some indication of an underlying unity of practical reason's causality with natural causality that would be the basis for moral freedom's actualization in the sensible world.

In Kant's view, cultural progress is one of these signs. Human beings, he argues, have certain naturally given, original predispositions (*Naturanlagen*, *ursprüngliche Anlagen*), such as reason and freedom of choice, that are directed toward rational activity. But these predispositions are not instincts. They are germs (*Keime*) that need to be developed (*entwickeln*) through our own efforts. These capacities remain dormant and ineffectual if they are not frequently exercised. But because human beings are finite individuals and these capacities take a long time to develop, they can only be fully developed in the species (*Gattung*). Culture (*Kultur*) as an objective realm broadly defined to include legal and political institutions and the arts and sciences is the historical medium for the development of our rational capacities. Culture is thus a power for transcending the mechanism of nature found in nature itself. It is the prosthetic compensation for the limitations human finitude imposes on our development. It is also a subjective attitude and a set of end-oriented processes that display our ability to transcend nature. "Nature," Kant suggests,

has willed that man should produce entirely by his own initiative [gänzlich aus sich selbst herausbringe] everything which goes beyond the mechanical ordering of his animal existence, and that he should not partake of any other happiness or perfection than that which he has procured for himself without instinct and by his own reason [. . .]. Nature gave man reason, and freedom of will based upon reason, and this in itself was a clear indication of nature's intention as regards his endow-

ments. For it showed that man was not meant to be guided by instinct or equipped and instructed by innate knowledge; on the contrary, he was meant to produce everything out of himself. Everything had to be entirely of his own making [eigen Werk]—the discovery of a suitable diet, of clothing, of external security and defence [. . .] as well as all the pleasures that can make his life agreeable, and even his insight and prudence [Klugheit] and the goodness of his will. Nature seems here to have taken pleasure in exercising the strictest economy and to have measured out the basic animal equipment so sparingly as to be just enough for the most pressing needs of the beginnings of existence. It seems as if nature had intended that man, once he had finally worked his way up from the uttermost barbarism [Rohigkeit] to the highest degree of skill [Geschicklichkeit], to inner perfection in his manner of thought [. . .], should be able to take for himself the entire credit for doing so and have only himself to thank for it. (Political 43; “Idee” 36)

The sphere of culture is an empirical simulacrum of moral freedom, and its key features reinscribe fundamental features of moral freedom. First, as the human power of making things that are beyond the mechanical existence of animals, and the remaking and improving of oneself, culture is a form of autocausality not only capable of origination but also of incarnating ends as objective works in the sensible world. A qualified recuperation of *techne* from the taint of heteronomy occurs. *Techne* is here not merely the making of things for the satisfaction of individual desires. It refers to artificial products and institutions that lift humanity beyond an animal existence and develop the species and improve its fabric of existence. Second, this intramundane power of origination is a taking of credit for oneself from nature. It is not that nature does not give, but that she is miserly: she gives us reason and free will, but only as predispositions, the development of which we owe to ourselves and for which we must thank ourselves. What we are now has not been given to us but has been achieved by our own making. This is what nature intends. Culture is thus the capacity for radical ingratitude to nature with which nature favors us. Third, culture is the transcendence of finitude in two senses. As reason’s incarnational power and practical effectivity, culture is the concrete, inner-worldly transcendence of natural mechanism. It is also the transcendence of finite existence, because it inscribes the immortality

of the species in the individual. This means that culture itself is a form of freedom.⁶

In the Third Critique, Kant is fascinated with organisms for the same reason: they seem to exhibit a peculiar purposive causality. Whereas beautiful or sublime objects merely suggest a purposiveness of *form* for the subject's cognitive faculties (i.e., formal or subjective purposiveness of nature), organisms or organized bodies (*organisierte Körper*) in nature imply intrinsic purposiveness in the object's material constitution, as though an end has been realized in it. Now, the principle of purposiveness implies that the regularity of nature can neither be explained by blind mechanism nor in terms of chance—for instance, as an Epicurean random collision of bodies. Chance is inimical to freedom because it is also blind. To ground freedom's realization on chance is to abolish freedom. It deprives the final end of rational lawfulness, making it the outcome of a fortunate accident (*Glückszufall*). Likewise, Kant repeatedly stresses that organisms cannot be explained by chance. As an objective end, the organism is the natural exorcism of chance as a governing principle in nature. Since its purposiveness includes a capacity for self-perpetuation and spontaneous generation, the organism is also the annihilation of death and the overcoming of finitude. Purposiveness is thus aligned with life and chance with death.

The organism is moreover a serendipitous phenomenal analogue of moral freedom because of its peculiar causality. As a natural end (*Naturzweck*), both a natural being and an end, an organism appears to have been brought into existence by something more than blind mechanism. Yet, unlike a technical product, its end cannot be related to an external will. As exemplified by the ability of a tree to produce itself qua species and individual in generation and growth, and the capacity of its reciprocally dependent parts to produce each other through auto-repair, auto-maintenance, and preservation, a natural end seems to be a purposive autocausality within nature itself! Kant characterizes this puzzling causality, which I will call organismic, as follows:

I would say, provisionally, that a thing exists as a natural purpose if it is both cause and effect of itself [es von sich selbst . . . Ursache und Wirkung ist] (although [of itself] in two different senses). For this involves a causality which is such that we cannot connect it with the mere concept of a nature without regarding nature as acting from an end; and even then, though

we can think this causality, we cannot grasp it. (Judgment 249; KU 318; Ak. V: 370–71)

A more precise definition of a natural end is an organized being that is at the same time also self-organizing (*organisiertes und sich selbst organisierendes Wesen*). It brings itself into being and exists by its own accord and not by another hand. Organismic causality is thus autonomous in two senses. In a negative sense, it exhibits a certain independence from mechanical principles. In a positive sense, it is superior to technical causality because it is self-causing.

Since an organism is not fashioned according to an external concept, its purposiveness is not the work of a foreign hand. Its circular, self-recursive character implies a peculiar temporality somewhere in between the linear time of mechanical and technical causality and the timelessness of moral willing, which spontaneously originates a temporal series but remains outside it. We see here the inseparability of Kant's interest in the organism from the problem of how a finite creature can incarnate moral freedom in the sensible world. The circular temporality of organismic causality, in which each moment is ordered and related to all other moments according to a final point *qua* end to be achieved, is a gift of teleological time at the immediate level of objective existence. As Ernst Cassirer notes, the organism is a symbolic counterpart in objective existence of the idea of self-purpose and self-value that can otherwise only be found in the ethical sphere (*Kant's Life* 340).

This means that organic life and culture are fundamentally connected. The organism's intrinsic purposiveness, Kant argues, makes us ask whether organized, natural beings are extrinsically connected so that the whole of nature is a system of ends, and whether this system has a final end (*Endzweck*), an unconditioned end-in-itself, a being whose ground of existence lies solely in itself. For Kant, moral freedom is the only unconditioned end we know. But although no final end can be found within nature (since all natural beings are conditioned), nature can still have an ultimate end (*letzter Zweck*). The culture (*Kultur*) of human beings is the highest goal nature can accomplish. Culture is the point toward which the whole of nature is oriented, the principle that organizes individual natural purposes into a system. We may regard the human species as equally subject to "a natural mechanism without a purpose," and merely a link (*Glied*) in the chain of ends like any other natural end because we have sensuous inclinations (*Judgment* 315; *KU* 384; *Ak. V*: 427). "Nature [. . .]

is very far from having adopted [man] [. . .] as its special darling and benefited him [*mit Wohltun begünstig habe*] in preference to the other animals, but has in fact spared him no more than any other animal from its destructive workings” (*Judgment* 318; *KU* 388; *Ak. V*: 430). Kant observes, however, that we are actually the paramount and most favored member of nature as a teleological system. Humankind is gifted with rational capacities without which nature could not have been conceived as purposive in the first place.

*[B]ut he is also a means for preserving [Mittel zur Erhaltung] the purposiveness in the mechanism of the other links. Man is indeed the only being on earth that has understanding and hence an ability to set himself ends of his own choice [willkürliche Zwecke], and in this respect he holds the title of lord of nature; and if we regard nature as a teleological system, then it is man’s vocation [Bestimmung] to be the ultimate end of nature, but always subject to a condition: he must have the understanding and the will [den Willen] to give both nature and himself reference to an end [Zweckbeziehung zu geben] that can be independent of nature, self-sufficient, and a final end. (*Judgment* 318; *KU* 389; *Ak. V*: 431)*

This a priori definition of culture as the ultimate end reinscribes the key themes of Kant’s earlier philosophy of culture within organic life itself. First, because the human will’s purposive causality preserves nature’s purposiveness, we can regard humankind as having an organismic causality. Indeed, our understanding’s causality is organismic causality raised to the highest level since it *originates* the *conception* of organized nature. Thus, we become the originators of organismic causality, which Kant initially regarded as nature’s gift. An acknowledgment of nature’s favor to man is immediately followed by an act of ingratitude toward nature. Second, culture is the site for transcending finitude because it mediates between the mechanism of nature and the final end that lies beyond nature (moral freedom). Culture actively gives purposiveness to mechanical nature and refers nature beyond itself. One could say, in Hegelian fashion, that culture is the dynamic unfolding or development of the implicit truth of natural organisms, the substrate and end of natural purposiveness. This is why cultural work is an “epigenetic” process. Culture

is a formal and subjective condition, namely, man's aptitude in general for setting [setzen] himself ends, and for using nature (independently of [the element of] nature in man's determination of ends [Zweckbestimmung]) as a means [for achieving them] in conformity with the maxims of his free ends generally. Producing in a rational being an aptitude for ends generally (hence [in a way that leaves] that being free [folglich in seiner Freiheit/ is culture). (Judgment 319; KU 389–90; Ak. V: 431)

Culture is the subjective capacity for prescribing rational ends to nature and the activity of actualizing them. But more importantly, it is a self-reflexive activity that brings forth in a rational creature this ability to set ends at all. Because it enables us to be independent of nature, culture frees us. Our capacity for freedom comes from (an aptitude we bring out in) ourselves. Unlike animals, we are our own work and not that of a foreign hand. Thus, although our rational powers are propitious, naturally given dispositions (*günstige Naturanlage*), they are not instincts preformed by an alien reason (*fremde Vernunft*), but have to be brought out by our own efforts. Culture is self-incarnational work:

[M]an has a character which he himself creates, insofar as he is capable of perfecting himself according to the ends that he himself adopts. Because of this, man, as an animal endowed with the capacity for reason [mit Vernunftfähigkeit begabtes Tier/ (animal rationabilis), can make of himself a rational animal. (Anthropology 183; Anthropologie 673; Ak. VII: 321)

***The Technic of Nature:
Effacing Nature's Favor and the
Absolute Recuperation of Techne***

In my view, this conceptualization of culture and organic life as analogues of human freedom and not Kant's deontological theory of rights, nor his cosmopolitan vision, is his greatest bequest to humanist moral and political thought. This legacy is even more enduring because it is generally unacknowledged or even unperceived. Henceforth, almost all modern ethical and political philosophy will be marked by a strict and habitual correlation of freedom with the purposive dynamism of organic life, even if the latter is not named as such. Conversely, death and artifice will be linked to what is inimical to freedom, for instance, domination or

ideological manipulation by the authoritarian bureaucratic state apparatus; exploitation under capital (Marx); instrumental reason (Horkheimer and Adorno); the invasion of the life-world by the system-world (Habermas); and even the crafting of life by techniques of biopolitical power (Foucault).

However, Kant's organismic humanism is plagued by a series of aporias from its inception. For he is only able to ground the teleological time of cultural progress in natural purposiveness and subordinate both to moral purposiveness by means of a certain sleight of hand. His account of organismic causality forecloses the radical heteronomy of nature's favor in the gift of organic life. Because natural purposiveness is the apparent but inexplicable lawfulness of the contingent (*zufällig*), it always involves an element of surprise and luck, which Kant figures as an unexpected favor (*Gunst*) from nature: "[T]his is also why we rejoice (actually we are relieved of a need) when, just as if it were a lucky chance favoring our aim [*ein glücklicher unsere Absicht begünstiger Zufall*], we do find such systematic unity among merely empirical laws" (*Judgment* 23–24; *KU* 93; *Ak. V*: 184). This inexplicability is especially pronounced in the organism. Because its purposiveness is objective, we naturally assume that it cannot issue from us but must come about by nature's favor.

A degree of chance, dependency, and heteronomy is therefore introduced into the realization of freedom. Just as Kant had defined culture as the taking of credit from nature, nature's favor also has to be eliminated. This is achieved in at least two ways: through the idea of a technic of nature and through the archetypal understanding it points to. The "technic of nature" is the idea of nature itself as *Kunst*.⁷ This technic operates at two levels: in our general ability to determine nature in its specificity and in the existence of organisms. In the first case, our understanding possesses a priori universal laws we prescribe to nature to constitute it as the general object of experience. However, we also discover a certain lawfulness in nature's diverse particularity that allows us to determine nature in its specificity. But since this more specific lawfulness (of particular empirical laws) does not issue from our finite understanding, we have to assume that it is the gift of another understanding that mirrors ours: "[T]he particular empirical laws must [...] be viewed in terms of such a unity as [they would have] if they too had been given by an understanding (even though not ours) so as to assist [*behuf*] our cognitive powers [*Erkenntnisvermögen*] by making possible a system of experience in terms of particular natural

laws" (*Judgment* 19; *KU* 88–89; Ak. V: 180). This assumption of another understanding is itself a principle our reflective judgment gives to us.

There are therefore two acts of giving. First, nature seems to give itself to us via specific empirical laws. We comprehend the lawfulness of nature in its specificity by thinking of it as nature's purposiveness for our cognitive faculties, as nature favoring us. Quite independently of what we will or need, nature gives us a gift, which is figured as favorable fortune and good chance because it is independent of us. However, Kant argues that although such purposiveness is "quite distinct from practical purposiveness (in human art or in morality)," we "think it by analogy with practical purposiveness" because nature cannot relate its products to ends (*Judgment* 20; *KU* 89; Ak. V: 181). Nature cannot give itself to us in any other way but mechanically. So to receive the favor of nature's purposiveness, to accept the gift of empirical nature, we must think of it in analogy with our technical purposiveness, as the gift of another understanding that is not ours. We must practice radical ingratitude. We must efface the gift by denying nature itself, for we can only present (*vorstellen*) nature's favor to ourselves as the gift of another understanding, which is what nature is not. This presentation is a second gift. We give ourselves this principle in reflective judgment that supervenes over and effaces the first gift.

The same double stricture guides our presentation of organismic causality as a technic of nature. We think of nature as having a technical capability in its production of organisms because they are systems requiring a concept of an end and not merely mechanically produced aggregates (*Judgment* 405–06; *KU* 30; Ak. XX: 217–18). "Given that we find something purposelike in nature's products," Kant writes, "let us call nature's procedure [*Verfahren*] (causality) a technic" (*Judgment* 271; *KU* 341; Ak. V: 390). But when we speak of nature as *Kunst*, "[W]e only borrow this causality from ourselves and attribute it to other beings without wishing to assume that they and we are of the same kind" (*Judgment* 237; *KU* 307; Ak. V: 361). On the one hand, there is an acknowledgment of nature's alterity to our own constitution as artificial technical beings. There is a prohibition against a mimetic relationship between organic life and *techne*. But on the other hand, insofar as the technic of nature is a heuristic principle for investigating nature and not a new form of natural-scientific causality, we also borrow something from ourselves and project it onto nature. We anthropomorphize. Instead of receiving what nature gives us in a straightforward manner, we lend to nature so that we can receive it

(or receive back from it/take from it) in an appropriative manner, in a style proper to us. Indeed, nature might as well not be there because we only receive back what we imposed on it: “[W]e put [*legen*] final causes into things, rather than, as it were, lifting them out of our perception of things” (*Judgment* 408n27; *KU* 54; Ak. XX: 221).

A surreptitious subordination of nature to human purposiveness thus occurs in the very gesture of granting purposive nature autonomy. For our faculties necessarily assume an a priori technical-instrumental attitude when we cognize nature in its particularity. Our judgment assumes the reflective principle of natural purposiveness for its own use (*ihren eigenen Gebrauch*), like an instrument, to get a handle on (*fassen, begreifen*) nature’s particular laws and products. We use the principle of natural purposiveness to enable a more specific cognitive possession of nature. It is a mediating device or tool allowing us to appropriate nature’s gift/favor by thinking of it as our gift to nature. Instead of fortunately finding purposiveness in nature, we attribute purposiveness to nature. The technic of nature is, therefore, not really *of* nature. It is not found in nature but instead derives from our judgment, which itself operates technically: “So it is the *power of judgment* that is properly [*eigentlich*] technical; nature is presented as technical only insofar as it harmonizes with, and so necessitates, that technical procedure of judgment” (*Judgment* 408; *KU* 52; Ak. XX: 220).

The extended analogy between organismic causality and technical causality arises from this *technical* operation. This anthropomorphic projection of human purposiveness onto nature makes natural purposiveness appear continuous with and amenable to human purposiveness. Consequently, the theme of culture as the stealing of credit from nature and the definition of culture as nature’s ultimate end are made to appear as the historical unfolding of an a priori scene of giving and receiving by and from nature. We cannot overstate the ingenuity of Kant’s recuperation of *techne*. In his moral philosophy, technical imperatives, which determined the will through a posteriori principles, were devalued for depriving the will of its rightful infinity and autonomy. However, the actualization of moral freedom requires technical capabilities we do not possess because of our finitude. Here, Kant purifies *techne* of human artifice by attributing it to a teleological nature. The technic of nature reconciles *techne* with nature in the service of actualizing freedom. Purposive nature remains distinct from artifice, for we only regard nature as technical by *analogy*: “All precepts of skill belong, as consequences, to the *technic* of nature [. . .].