

THE ANTHROPOGENIC TAKEOVER OF DUAL EXTERNAL WORLD

Virgilio Rivas

ABSTRACT: In this paper, we will briefly audit how the phenomenon of the Anthropocene has taken over what F.W.J. Schelling at the end of the Eighteenth century (1775-1854) described as the state of original duplicity that defines the relation between nature and the organism, an indifferent relation that must not be canceled, otherwise the former will have attained permanent rest. In his second major Naturphilosophie, *First Outline of A System of the Philosophy of Nature*, Schelling presciently established the ‘problem’ that we face today in the anthropogenic age which, as he put it, is ‘not to explain the active in Nature ... but the *resting, permanent.*’ The Anthropocene not only cancels the indifferent relation between nature and the organism, but also reverses the problem of Nature philosophy into explaining the ‘active’, that is, by the potency of willing. But willing mistakes ‘activity’ for ‘permanence’ which cancels the reciprocal indifference to produce an absolute coincidence that is equal to 0. Schelling directs the problem of Nature philosophy to a maximal or tautegorical reading of nature whose relation to the organism, through its denial of all permanence, creates a dual external world that sustains life as we know it. In general, this reveals the basis for Schelling’s critique of subjective idealism, and the philosophical tradition of dialectical mediation, that seeks an absolute coincidence between Nature and Man from the pure subjective side of the equation, leaving the objective side of Nature dead and motionless. Needless to say, this ‘absolute coincidence’ is now the epitome of the anthropogenic era of carbon-based climate change.

KEYWORDS: Anthropocene; Dual extensity; Daniel Whistler; F.W.J. Schelling; Geocybernetics; Iain Hamilton Grant; Inexistence; Naturphilosophie; Tautegory

INTRODUCTION

In the face of an impending climate regime change, a provocative article has come out recently urging the authorities of the International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS), who will vote to decide whether the Anthropocene is the right

concept to define the new geological turn in the Earth's history, to stop worrying about an official name change.¹ Incidentally, the article's tone is unwittingly Hegelian or dialectical, to say the least:

The ICS can answer that question at some future point. But, we should keep in mind that there is no 'right' answer to the question. Whichever way the vote ultimately goes, we are left with anthropogenic climate change and despeciation and other real environmental problems. So, while we wait for the ICS to vote, let's put aside the grand gesture of trying to reconceptualize human and geological history. Let's give up the fanciful expectation that changing a geological name will provide the impetus for environmental action. (*LNA* 37)

The 'Hegelian' in the above pronouncements concerns two 'dialectical' indicators that the article endorses on the sidelines: 1) its refusal of presentation or exhibition of nature according to its most literal sense, and 2) its denialism of the positive sense of this kind of literal presentation through which, as Daniel Whistler has argued recently, "the scandal of *Naturphilosophie* is lost."² As a good Schellingian, Whistler defends the idea of reading nature literally, that is, *tautegorically* speaking, arguing from Schelling's mode of presentation of nature 'according to its very letter'. As he argues, "it is Schelling who in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Mythology* sets out a mode of reading, based on the concept of tautegory, that remains resolutely literalistic" (*NL* 126). The whole idea is that *Naturphilosophie* does not read and/or present nature allegorically or hermeneutically (*NL*, 132), extracting a hidden meaning behind the appearances of things, but rather, as in itself the "*unity of sense and being, content and form.*"³

This suggests a literal reading of nature as nature exhibits itself in the most tautegorical sense possible, which means the presentation of the inherence of its meaning in its *exhibitedness* as being. This also echoes Iain Hamilton Grant's interpretation of the *copula*, for instance, adjusted into the tautegorical explanation of nature. In an earlier essay Grant asserts:

¹ See Jay Foster, "Let's not talk about the Anthropocene," *Analecta Hermeneutica*, vol. 10, 2018, p. 37. Henceforth, *LNA*.

² Daniel Whistler, "The New Literalism: Reading Schelling After Grant," *Symposium*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2015, p. 129. Hereafter cited as *NL*.

³ See also Gabriel Markus, "The Mythological Being of Reflection: An Essay on Hegel, Schelling and the Contingency of Necessity," in Markus Gabriel and Slavoj Žižek, *Mythology, Madness, and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism*, London, Continuum, 2009, p. 61; see also *NL* 134.

The ‘copula [*Band*]’ that couples mind and nature cannot coherently be thought if the former is the ground of the latter, since then we have ‘no inkling of what nature is.’ Nor can nature simply be placed ‘outside me’ without rendering its passage *into* me incomprehensible...The copula then articulates antecedent and consequent precisely as natural history just when mind is grounded not in itself but in a subject antecedent to mind, or in the subject of nature itself.⁴

As the mind’s most essential substrate, the ‘sense’ of nature is ‘being’ itself, the sense that nature exhibits in its logical positedness. In its exhibitedness as such, “no foreign power can interfere with it.”⁵ This is a kind of maximal naturalism that takes nature as it is. For Schelling, it was Aristotle who first comprehended this logic: “[J]ust as there is a path from the logical to the empirical, there is also a path from the empirical to the logical that arrives at the innate and indwelling logic of nature.”⁶ This kind of presenting nature, however, has had ever since a bad press. The antipathy to Naturphilosophie always concerns the scandal it throws in our “ethical experience of the world,”⁷ whereby, as in Hegel’s dense rendition as follows, “the sublation of existence is no longer necessary,” and where existence is understood no longer in “the form of *being-in-itself* -- neither still in the original form [of an abstract concept]... but is now the *recollected in-itself*, ready for conversion into the form of *being-for-itself*” (PS 17). Hegel’s oblique part in the bad reception of Naturephilosophy echoes here the recent exhortation to stop talking about the Anthropocene.

As a plea to pragmatism and ethical realism, ‘Let’s not talk about the Anthropocene’ broadly suggests putting the Anthropocene in the backburner, and by implication, alongside many other conceptual idioms or figurative representations, whether it is Chthulucene or Capitalocene,⁸ fossil capitalism, etc.

⁴ Iain Hamilton Grant, “The Hypothesis of Nature’s Logic in Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie*,” in *Palgrave Handbook of German Idealism*, ed. Matthew C. Altman, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 492. Henceforth, *HNL*.

⁵ F.W.J. Schelling, *First Outline of A System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Keith R. Peterson, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2004, p. 17. Hereafter cited as *FO*.

⁶ F.W.J. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*, trans. Bruce Matthews, New York: State University of New York Press, 2007, p. 161. Henceforth cited as *GPP*.

⁷ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 215. Henceforth, *PS*.

⁸ See Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016, p. 2. Henceforth, *ST*.

(LNA 1-2). But by doing so, the article unwittingly defends the taken-for-granted superiority of technoscientific narrative focused on “mitigating, remediating and adapting to changes in the Earth system” (LNA 37). This is the dominant face of the Anthropocene, what the Hegelian finality of sublation would have echoed in an oblique sense, which refers to a completed order of the movement of the whole. No more sublation is necessary in light of the elements of, or rather, the forms through which the whole itself progresses until it attains a sense of completion as a whole-for-itself. Thus, as Hegel declares, “what remains to be done, and what requires a higher level of cultural reorientation, is to represent and to get acquainted with these forms” (PS 17). This is the ethical realism that comes at the end of sublation.

In Hegelian terms, the Anthropocene requires a higher awareness of the forms that make up this present mode of nature’s activity, or those forms of knowledge (scientific and historical) that have over time converted our idea of nature as a whole-for-itself, which may help us gain technical proficiency and spread it through the wider cultural spectrum (‘what remains to be done’) to reverse its destructive ecological effects and, seemingly, irreversible humanitarian costs. In short, the Anthropocene possesses its own logic of recovery. But this also amounts to saying that the Anthropocene requires no more sublation of its existence in the sense that it is an irreversible phenomenon.

A passage from *Phenomenology of Spirit* (PS 18) in which Hegel parlays about the theory of substance (originally from Spinoza) may reveal this connection: “[Its]existence has thus merely passed over into *figurative representation*. At the same time it is thus something *familiar*, something which the existent Spirit is finished and done with, so that it is no longer active or really interested in it.” In the end, as we might extend this connection to some of the figurative expressions that surround nature’s activity as it unfolds in the present, its ‘existence’ may only be interrogated on the level of self-positing, in relation to the Hegelian formula that “Substance shows itself essentially to be Subject” (*ibid.*, p. 21). As might be expected of a substance, it is no longer interested in interrogating its existence, whether as a phenomenon the Anthropocene, for that matter, is still an indeterminate or immediate form of existence that requires sublation to render itself determinable to consciousness, and thus, determinable to knowledge or

science, any more than, as a whole-for-itself that it has come to be, the only necessary approach that it would gain to essay from is to recollect the historical forms, and other synthetic approaches to nature that have culminated in the present ecological predicament. What remains to be done is that the ethical comprehension of its existence must rather be “directed against the representation thus formed” (*ibid.*, p. 21), implicating here the figurative representations of the phenomenon in question as “only the movement of the particular Spirit” (*ibid.*), and therefore, still not “the activity of the universal self” (*ibid.*, 18). Suffice it to say the Spirit can still be alienated from itself, owing to its connection to experience, but then, after realizing the abstract immediacy of experience, “returns to itself from this alienation” (*ibid.*, 21).

Returning to the article ‘Let’s not talk about the Anthropocene’, the author suggests that, apart from the non-utility of official name change, the ecological crisis we confront as a species involves the absence of real ‘awareness’ of the actual problem itself that many have echoed in recent years. In a manner of speaking, our awareness of ecological emergency is still alienated from itself. Stacy Alaimo, for instance, complained in her book that, “while the temporal and geographic scale of the anthropocene is vast, the scale of human responses to environmental catastrophe is often minute.”⁹ ‘Let’s not talk about the Anthropocene’, however, does not see the Anthropocene, or any other idiom of exhibited nature today, through the everyday prism of people’s experience of ecological uncertainty, a phenomenon that is as much metaphorical as real and concrete.¹⁰ Arguably, it does not see the subjects of the Anthropocene, as Alaimo would venture to express, as people who “engage,” for instance, “in both ordinary and extraordinary practices, both private, quotidian improvisations” (*EE* 2), beyond the global narrative of mitigation and adaptation. These practices include among others, “naked protesting, marine conservation, plastic activism, and the scientific and popular encounters with ‘queer’ animals” (*ibid.*). Not unexpectedly, they express a kind of ethical grounding outside of the dominant narrative of the

⁹ Stacy Alaimo, *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times*, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2016, p. 2. Henceforth, *EE*.

¹⁰ See Bruno Latour “Agency at the time of the Anthropocene,” in *New Literary History*, vol. 45, 2014, p. 15.

Anthropocene.¹¹ In her 2015 book, Donna Haraway gives us a presentation of the Anthropocene in the region of this ethical grounding: “These times called the Anthropocene are times of multi-species, including human, urgency; of great mass death and extinction; of onrushing disasters whose unpredictable specificities are foolishly taken as unknowability itself; of refusing to know and to cultivate the capacity of response-ability; of refusing to be present in and to onrushing catastrophe in time; of unprecedented looking away” (*ST* 39). Haraway labels this ethical grounding as ‘art science activism’. Nonetheless, in strict Hegelian terms, this kind of thinking may qualify as “casual philosophizing that fastens on to this or that object, relationship, or thought that happens to pop up in the imperfect consciousness, or tries to base the truth on the pros and cons, the inferences and consequences, of rigidly defined thoughts” (*PS* 20).

A Naturphilosophie scandal otherwise calls for a similar kind of ethical grounding which Schelling developed into a new philosophical syntax involving the co-implication of aesthetics and science, of philosophy of art and philosophy of nature, that Schelling weaponized against the economic telos of his time.¹² As Arran Gare echoes a similar point, this kind of activism was a “revolution called for by [Schelling] at the end of the Eighteenth Century in his effort to make life and mind intelligible.”¹³ This activism is not based upon unknowability, rather on the very knowable sense of the *crisis* (notwithstanding the paradoxical nature of the crisis as unsublated that we will try to unpack later) that the Anthropocene rather presents in two negative inflections: 1) the present lack of ‘positive’ attention to nature as *subject*, and 2) the strong impulse of techno-logical reason today that tends to ignore the principle of non-coincidence of nature with its

¹¹ See for instance Drew Dalton (2016) for a discussion of the possibility of attaining “absolute ethical and political values” modeled on a deeper understanding of nature, that is to say, “without inadvertently slipping into ‘smug nihilism’ or establishing a new some form of fanatic dogmatic metaphysics” (Drew M. Dalton, “On the Possibility of Speculative Ethical Absolutes After Kant: Returning to Schelling through the Frailties of Meillassoux and Badiou,” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 21, no. 4, 2016, p. 171).

¹² Or, the “economic-teleological principle” (see F.W.J. Schelling, *Statement on the True Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to the Revised Fichteian Doctrine*, trans. Dale E. Snow, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2018, p. 13. Henceforth cited as *STR*).

¹³ Arran Gare, ‘Biosemiosis and Causation: Defending Biosemiosis through Rosen’s Theoretical Biology or Integrating Biosemiotics and Anticipatory Systems’ Theory,’ *Cosmos and History: Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2019, p. 34. Henceforth cited as *BC*.

products, or the asymmetry of nature and intelligence.¹⁴

The Anthropocene had been, in fact, already at work in previous histories, not just at the beginning of the industrial revolution, but further back, in the epoch-making time of humanity struggling with the resilience of the mythical past. We are referring here to the scientific confrontation with mythology in terms of interpreting it with the purpose of ‘painting its grey grey’; in Hegelese, to make it known as past, which means, “it cannot be rejuvenated.”¹⁵ Schelling, by contrast, had the scientific truth carry the stigma of blasphemy, and irreligiousness, when he speaks of mythology as follows: “There is truth in mythology, but not in mythology *as such*. The mythological is: 1) either a *mere form, disguise* of a) a historic truth, b) of a physical truth; or 2) *misunderstanding, distortion*, a) of a *purely scientific* (essentially irreligious) truth, b) of a religious truth.”¹⁶ The scientific assault against the purely religious truth of mythology constitutes the act of sublating the past in terms of an epistemic reduction, its knowability as an historical past, and thus, deprived of its character as myth, all the more its capability to foment a crisis of thought, meaning, and interpretation through its resistance to allegory and scientific interpretation. The scientific interpretation of myths aims at destroying the capability of mythology to found and disperse a people. As Jason M. Wirth argues in a foreword to the translation of Schelling’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of Mythology*: “Mythology is not a human invention... Mythology founds a people (and the dispersion of humankind into peoples is the dispersion inherent within mythology itself). It belongs to the ground of the multiplication of languages.”¹⁷ By divesting mythology of its people for whom mythology meant nothing else beyond what they thought and expressed, a scientific study of mythology, under the grounding science of philosophical investigation, reduces these people to their roles as precursors of philosophical thinking; their “philosophemes” are, therefore, to be understood as the (scientific)

¹⁴ The co-identity of Nature and Mind is basically informed by the asymmetry of the relation, i.e., the production of their identity is “unthinkable without an original diremption in Nature” (*FO* 205).

¹⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, “Preface,” *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 16.

¹⁶ F.W.J. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2007, p. 149. Henceforth, *PM*.

¹⁷ Jason M. Wirth, “Foreword,” *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, p. xi.

“content of mythology” (*PM* 25-26). The myths are transformed into *objects* of philosophical study, stripped of their capability to disperse a mode of narration into multiple languages, into actual peoples, by imposing a linear continuity of mythical expression with the historical belief of the present, the belief in the indeterminacy of the past so that it can be sublated, once again, into the ‘movement of the whole’.

The same applies to the technoscientific narrative behind the present ecological predicament. Nature is deprived of subjectivity as the source of its own productive cause and generation, thus, the *asymmetry between itself and intelligence is lost*. Nature is stripped of its tautegorical sense, its literal sense as original duplicity in the sense that it allows its products to have a “dual external world” (*FO* 107), namely, that the organism is external to nature where it properly belongs, albeit, ‘snatched’ from it (*ibid.*, p. 112), at the same time that its presentation as an organism *for itself* is external to the power that had borne it, which means that it presents itself externally to nature. This dual external *worlding* paradoxically makes the activity possible between nature and the organism: “All activity in Nature takes place only on the border of two worlds” (*ibid.*, p. 107). If technoscience, the whole scientific rationality of the 21st century, disallows nature to present itself in this way, i.e., in its original duplicity, it only proves how much has remained unchanged since the post-mythological rise of early scientific reasoning.

THE SCANDAL OF NATURE

Technoscientific rationality is the face of the Anthropocene that prevents the external world to seek its independent presentation in real world crisis, thus, preempts the possibility of presentation that brings out a scandal. This scandal can be formulated as that through which Naturphilosophie’s exposition of knowledge in general is totally extrinsic to nature. This is challenged by many other factors, like human-induced climate change which cancels the border between two worlds, the external world itself and the externality of the organism vis-à-vis its life-giving source. (I will take up this point later). As Schelling reiterates, “that boundary can never be canceled in the organism as long as it is an organism” (*FO* 107). Roughly speaking, this dual extensity is the scandal of

nature.

The scandal of Naturphilosophie conveys the tautegorical sense of this dual external world, which means that the organism is only external from the standpoint of original duplicity. These external worlds are truly identical, provided they constitute an asymmetrical relation. This asymmetry is sustained by the activity that the boundary affords to the organism. The boundary places the organism as object of nature, but at the same time is an object to itself, as a subject capable of self-grounding and 'self-causing' activity (*BC* 58), but only from the position of deducing, as an incomplete finite, an infinite substrate. This means that it is itself an infinite, even so, an infinite that reflects the absolute inhibition of nature in the sense that nature originally contains a "negative force," an "original involution ... that hinders it from reaching its end" (*FO* 77). This is to say that an incomplete finite cannot aspire for infinity that is already in itself inhibited from the beginning never to reach its end. What the organism can aspire to, at the very least, is to sustain its indifference to that infinity which is also indifferent to it. Schelling argues: "By virtue of the reciprocal restriction of these forces no absolute evolution will occur in any given *moment* (of time)" (*ibid.*, p. 187). In an absolute evolution, i.e., an evolution unrestricted by a negative force, "nothing would be distinguishable ... no moment of *time* would be filled in a determinate way" (*ibid.*).

But how is this mutual indifference related to the Anthropocene, the predominant mode of presenting nature? We contend that the Anthropocene is a boundary concept in the sense that it *replaces* the boundary that sustains the organism's dual external world with a concept almost similar to an *absolute takeover* in the sense that *either* Nature *or* Man finally "undertakes to carry out the [singular] construction of a finite product," which, as Schelling asserts, cannot but culminate "at one and the same point" (*ibid.*, p. 17), thus, following Schelling, the *absolute coincidence* of Nature and Man, Nature = Man. (This will exactly be the case once it is decided that the Anthropocene represents the finite achievement of our epistemic quest for self-definition). We propose that the terms Nature and Man are rather mutually but only negatively at odds, that is, reciprocally motivated. The Anthropocene is the [natural] scene of Man, where Nature is functionally enjoined in the overall constitutive anthropogenic effects

on the Earth's system, and where Man sees this Nature thereof as a *product*. Overall, nature cannot be studied as a *subject* of its own production. In this negative double bind, a *constricted* reciprocation of effects between Nature (as an unnaturally contrived object) and Man (as naturalized subject) is artificially conceived. But, as Schelling contends, "if we let both coincide at one and the same point, then their effects toward one another will reciprocally be canceled, and the product will be = to o" (*ibid.*, p. 17). This will mean extinction. (That is why we cannot stop 'talking about the Anthropocene').

This apprehension somehow resonates in a recent publication, "The Geo-Politics of the *Anthropocene*: Using Stratigraphy to Naturalize the *Anthropocene* as a Formal Geological Unit," where the following conclusion is drawn:

The Anthropocene concept clearly would be harmed if stratigraphers rejected it as having no scientific merit. But ... the Anthropocene concept might also be harmed if it were endorsed, since such an endorsement would require adjusting existing stratigraphic standards.¹⁸

The above observation suggests that as long as we are not yet officially in the Anthropocene, the absolute takeover (by Nature = Man) is still a remote possibility. Yet it also reveals the extent to which the exposition of nature in its predominant mode at present does not allow a scandal to disrupt the equation of Nature and Man in the sense that it preserves the *negativity* of the concept that defines their relation (nature and man) just so to keep the relation uncomprehended, i.e., without a natural substrate from which a deduction such as this relation can be derived. The negativity of the concept (in terms of the current mode of Nature presentation) only allows for technical interpretation for which any sign of extinction-bearing thought, what Schelling defines as 'unprethinkable', "that before which reason itself bows down" (*GPP* 202), is deemed beforehand as unthinkable and meaningless, scandalous to scientific knowledge, for that matter, due to its propensity to spoil the equation Nature = Man. This equation is taken strictly from the side of subjectivity, thus, reducing it to the potency of the human will.

¹⁸ See Jeni Barton, "The Geo-Politics of the Anthropocene: Using Stratigraphy to Naturalize the Anthropocene as a Formal Geological Unit," *Analecta Hermeneutica*, vol. 10, 2018, p.27.

THE ANTHROPOCENE AS A BOUNDARY CONCEPT

From the latest report of climate science, nature and man at least coincide at several critical points. These are called ‘planetary boundaries’, which concept, as the authors introduced, is intended to identify “a safe operating space for humanity with respect to the functioning of the Earth system.”¹⁹ These planetary boundaries are: 1) Co₂ concentration in the atmosphere, 2) stratospheric ozone, 3) Global Phosphorus and Nitrogen Cycles, 4) biogeochemical nitrogen due to industrial activities, 5) global freshwater use, 6) land system change, 7) loss of biological diversity, 8) chemical pollution, and 9) atmospheric aerosol loading” (*PB* 32). Three of which, “human interference with the global nitrogen cycle,” “climate boundary” (greenhouse gas emissions), and “boundaries for freshwater use and land-system change,” have already been “transgressed by humanity” (*ibid.*).

Because all boundaries will soon be crossed, no matter how we wish to avoid the inescapable, the shifting of planetary gear is somehow inevitable – to look behind, and, if possible, never look forward. This apprehension is echoed by a science paper published in 2015: “Averting a dramatic decay of biodiversity and the subsequent loss of ecosystem services is still possible through intensified conservation efforts, but that window of opportunity is rapidly closing.”²⁰ The necessity to look back is cast in stone, a necessity embedded in the structure of reality. Schelling once said: “The entire world, so to speak, lies caught in reason, but the question is: How did it come into this net?”²¹ Schelling pushed the subject-matter farther: “Therefore there is still in the world something Other and something more than mere reason - even something that strives beyond these boundaries.” (*AW* 134). The most unwelcome fact is that everything is bound to strive beyond boundaries. The crossing of planetary boundaries, mentioned above, however, also tells us something oddly concrete - something can be “overcome, but not annihilated” (*ibid.*, p. 106). As Schelling would affirm in the

¹⁹ J. Rockström, et. al., “Planetary Boundaries,” *Ecology and Society*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2009, p. 32. Henceforth, *PB*.

²⁰ See Ceballos, et al., “Accelerated Modern Human-Induced Species Losses: Entering the Sixth Mass Extinction,” in *Science Advances*, vol. 1, no. 5, 2015: e1400253.

²¹ See Jason M. Wirth, “Notes to Translator’s Introduction,” in *The Ages of the World (third version)*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 134, n. 15. Schelling’s *Ages of the World* is hereafter cited as *AW*.

midst of the desolation of his time:

How charitable it is to know a principle amid the motility and slackness of thinking that is neither to be dissolved by the *menstruum*²² of the sharpest concept not to go up in smoke in the fire of spiritual thinking! Without this principle which resists thinking, the world would actually already be dissolved into nothing. (*ibid.*, p. 107)

Just as Schelling witnessed in his time the ‘simultaneous movement’ of Enlightenment and the barbarism of destructive beauty (in the works of art, for instance), it may be worth considering today the co-incidental phenomena of technoscientific rationality and the persistence of the barbaric principle, urging a positive return to the dual external world that the Anthropocene has destroyed with its planetary boundary crossings.²³ But the Anthropocene, at least, on account of its unilluminated side, possesses a blind, withdrawn, barbaric nature, simultaneous to the dominant global forging of knowing-dependent future. Suffice it to say, the Anthropocene is not yet in its full essence a present reality, not because the authorities have yet to decide on the ‘term’ to represent our geological era, but rather because, paradoxically speaking, it “presupposes the

²² Wirth annotates this passage with a definition of *menstruum*: “In alchemy, the *menstruum* was the solvent by which one transfigured something into gold. It was the so-called ‘philosopher’s stone’ of which gold was a degradation and lead was an even further degradation. It was pure prime matter, Schelling’s so-called ‘gold of gold’” (*AW* 148, n. 119).

²³ For Schelling, the aesthetic judgment, which for Kant must be given over at the end to teleological judgment, reveals the sources of the will’s indeterminacy. The ‘will’ here amounts to the practical ‘commensurability’ of our knowledge of nature ‘with the human point of view’ (see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Werner Pluhar, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987, p. 286; Ak 403). Aesthetic judgment reveals the indeterminacy of these sources either in the sense of the *prehistory* of consciousness, or in terms of the planet’s *geological past*, which Schelling described as “the deepest of what remains if everything accidental and everything that has become is removed” (*AW* 31). The aesthetic cognition of beauty points to this absolute but indeterminate source. The recourse to the element of beauty aims to re-channel the ideal activity of reason toward the realization of, what Schelling outlined in his fierce polemic against Fichte, the ‘collapse of the world with the world of nature’. In the *Statement on the True Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to the Revised Fichtean Doctrine*, Schelling lays out his program for Naturephilosophy: “We proceed therefore with the idea of the philosophy of nature not just beyond mere thinking to knowledge, but rather also beyond knowledge in general another step further, to the intuition /of reality and the complete collapse of the world known by us with the world of nature. Only at that point where the ideal has become real, the world of thought [has become] the world of nature, only at this point lies the last, the highest satisfaction and reconciliation of knowledge, as the fulfillment of the ethical requirements is only reached when they no longer appear to us as thoughts, for example, as commandments, but rather have become realities in the nature of our soul” (*STR* 30).

entire time,”²⁴ past and future, at every single instance of it being time at present. In this sense, the ‘entire time’ emerges “*from and within* the present” (*RN* 273). It is to this extent that the barbaric principle is a form of ‘weaponizing’ our understanding of “the deep past.”²⁵ The past is the deep anchor of present and future, that which as “a real beginning, does not need to wait for it to run its course, but rather it must be past from the very start” (*ibid.*).

The Anthropocene reveals this inevitability. The past does not have to run its course in order to be recognized later as a ‘had-been’ temporal stage since as past it is co-present with the *present*, which is the future of the past. In this sense, the Anthropocene presupposes the entire temporal stage of the co-evolution of time scales in terms of the appearance of disappearance, an *arche*-trace, like a *world line* that an object traces in four-dimensional spacetime, or rather, the undifferentiated whole “[representing] the sequence of events that ‘it occupies’ during its lifetime.”²⁶ To this extent, the past makes itself evident through its self-presentation of the vanishing phenomenon of the ‘had-been’, i.e., in the present. The past runs its course, not in the past. Rather, the past becomes past as it traces its life in the present. The past will look different if one gazes at it from a two or three-dimensional spacetime where space and time are given as absolute, “a fixed god-given background for all physical processes” (*GR* 3).

In four-dimensional spacetime, for instance, Timothy Morton can allude to the past as a trace line, such as the movement of “hyperobjects,” or objects “time-stretched to such a vast extent that they become almost impossible to hold in mind.”²⁷ Oil, which runs the global world order, is a good example of a hyperobject: “Oil is the result of some dark, secret collusion between rocks and algae and plankton millions and millions of years in the past. When you look at oil you’re looking at the past” (*PE* 58). The Anthropocene can be seen in the same

²⁴ See Katie Hay, “The Role of Narration and the Overcoming of the Past in Schelling’s Ages of the World,” *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2016, p. 273. Henceforth cited as *RN*.

²⁵ Ben Woodard, “The Untimely and (Unshapely) Decomposition of Onto-Epistemological Solidity: Negarestani’s *Cyclonopedia* as Metaphysics,” in *Leper Creativity: Cyclonopedia Symposium*, ed. by Ed Keller, Nicola Masciandaro, and Eugene Thacker, New York: Punctum Books, 2012, p. 216.

²⁶ See Malcolm Ludvigsen, *General Relativity: A Geometric Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 3. Henceforth, *GR*.

²⁷ Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World*, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2013, p. 58. Henceforth cited as *PE*.

light, the past making itself the future (*present*). In an essay discussing the relation of the Earth's petroleum deposits to the "compression-deformation effect of oil,"²⁸ such as carbonized plastic, Benjamin Bratton presents this evidence of the past like a 'world line', as follows:

The Anthropocene Age of Plastic is but an instant whereby the cumulative subterranean mineral corpse of the planet's initial millions of years of life, now rendered into mineral gas and fluid by the Earth itself, is given another zombie life in the animated forms of worldly Plastic: oceans of plankton resur-resurrected (sic) as skyscrapers, trillions of trees haunting the world as textiles, as food additives, artificial hearts, and even as fake plastic trees spinning in circles through the Pacific garbage gyre... The Anthropocene spasm of transposing the past into the generic chemicals we call Plastic is the Earth re-eating itself all in one go, consuming the full archive in one momentary spasm. In this, the animal becomes mineral. (*RE* 49-50)

For all we know, the Anthropocene is a real Lovecraftian Cthulhu,²⁹ a sedentary nomad from time immemorial, if not, down to its most literal sense, conceived according to its Earthly source, i.e. *tautegorically*, a "sentient entity" called 'Petroleum' – a narrative told from "the nethermost point of view."³⁰ There are other examples of unconscious deep past. The revolt of the Earth against the Sun, to put it oddly, for instance, is a long deep story from the past which possesses a tautegorical property of a hyperstitional narrative. Reza Negarestani captures this point in the following passages in *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*:

[T]rapping the energy of the sun accumulated in organisms by means of lithologic sedimentation, stratification, anaerobic decay and bacteria in highly stratified sedimentary basins ... petroleum ... plays the role of the alpha-mutineer in Tellurian

²⁸ Benjamin Bratton, "Root the Earth: On Peak Oil Apophenia," in *Leper Creativity: Cyclonopedia Symposium*, p. 47. Henceforth cited as *RE*.

²⁹ The Cthulhu myth was popularized by H.P. Lovecraft, an American writer of weird or speculative fiction. The myth is a favorite linguistic and rhetorical trope of the contemporary philosophical movement known as speculative realism. See H.P. Lovecraft, *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*, New York, Random House Publishing, 2011.

³⁰ See Kate Marshall, "Cyclonopedia as Novel (a meditation on complicity as inauthenticity)," in *Leper Creativity: Cyclonopedia Symposium*, p. 155.

insurgency against solar capitalism and its neo-Ptolemaic heliocentrism.³¹

But this geo-trauma, a Tellurian myth of pre-Earthly formation, had no people to speak its language, only the elemental pre-bacterial actant-inhabitants of the first billion years before the planet formation. Mankind is the inheritor of this deep unconscious myth, what Schelling would describe as, “[t]he deepest, and therefore the lowest, that is posited out of the unspeakable ... that force of the beginning that draws the being to or into itself and pushes it back into concealment” (*AW* 30). Over time, however, this being called Man, *the being of modern reason*, has learned to become indifferent to geo-trauma, the planetary distress of having to live through an inevitable Tellurian fate. There are many kinds of this Man who resist being placed in darkness. Joseph Masco tells us, for instance, of these types of men as technoscientific Tellurian collaborators of the solar blackmail who had greatly contributed to our present ecological predicament:

November 1, 1952, is the date on which the first thermonuclear explosion, known as Ivy-Mike, was detonated by the United States at Eniwetok atoll. Designed by Edward Teller and Stanislaw Ulam, it produced a ten-megaton detonation that created a mushroom cloud 25 miles high and 100 miles wide. The fallout from Ivy-Mike circled the globe and remains so comprehensive it can serve today as the key illustration of planetary-scale industrial effects. This explosion is now part of a nested series of temporalities: it is the start of a thermonuclear age inside an already established atomic age, a key moment in the Cold War, now poised to be the anchor for a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene.³²

Ivy-Mike is an example of Man’s resistance to solar hegemony. By showing off his capability to replicate a mini-solar energy in action, Man proves he is only indebted to himself. But his greatest resistance is something else entirely. His calculated accommodation of heat-death through oil consumption is a paradoxical defiant adaptation to solar hegemony. Subsequently, even this form of consumption would express itself in a subsidiary myth of fossil fuels, that is to

³¹ Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*, Melbourne: re.press, 2008, pp. 19-20. Henceforth cited as *CC*.

³² Joseph Masco, “The Age of (a) Man,” in *Future Remains: A Cabinet of Curiosities for the Anthropocene*, ed. Gregg Mitman, Marco Armiero, Robert S. Emmett, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2018, p. 48. Henceforth cited as *AM*.

say, in the form of the “exhaustion of the earth’s energy” consummating in “oil depletion scenarios” (CC 28). As per Negarestani’s *Cyclonopedia*, this myth conditions, among others, “[t]he policy of underdevelopment and deliberate impoverishment bound to the exhaustibility of oil fields: since oil is dying we must use it wisely and calculatedly (the fallacy of prudent poverty)” (*ibid.*, p. 27). This logic of fossil fuel depletion commands an anthropogenic myth that has planetary-wide, ecological consequences extending to another auxiliary myth, “the exhaustion of the Earth’s *aqua vitae*” (*ibid.*), a myth of saturation that prepares the planet for the return to the desert – the surface skin of oil. A scientific report provides this myth with concrete empirical supplement: “About 22% of recognized marine fisheries are overexploited or already depleted, and 44% more are at their limit of exploitation.”³³ Elizabeth Povinelli extends this point beyond the boundaries of the Anthropocene: “[I]t is hard not to be seduced by the figure of the Desert, not to imagine that the Anthropocene, the geological age of the Human Being, will be the last age of humans and the first stage of Earth becoming Mars, a planet once awash in life, but now a dead orb hanging in the night sky.”³⁴ In general, these hyperstitional narratives of the Tellurian myth of ‘Man’, with empirical supplementation that bolsters its economic telos from the loss of ecosystems and biodiversity, derive their early reference from a quasi-Bataillean ‘general solution to the problem of consumption’:

Life appears as a pause on the energy path; as a precarious stabilization and complication of solar decay. It is most basically comprehensible as *the general solution to the problem of consumption*. Such a solar- or general-economic perspective exhibits production as an illusion; the hypostatization of a digression in consumption. To produce is to partially manage the release of energy into its loss, and nothing more.³⁵

The calculated expenditure of energy reserves, under the pretext of ‘prudent poverty’, thus becomes a form of “*abstract resistance to loss*” (TA xviii). This explains

³³ Will Steffen, et. al, “Executive Summary: Global Change and the Earth System: A Planet Under Pressure,” IGBP, Stockholm, Sweden, International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, 2004, p. 14.

³⁴ Elizabeth Povinelli, *Geontologies: A Requiem to Later Liberalism*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2016, p. 36.

³⁵ Nick Land, *The Thirst for Annihilation: George Bataille and Virulent Nihilism*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, p. xviii. Henceforth cited as *TA*.

the rabid consumerism of the Earth's human inhabitants, coordinated by the singular myth-making power of 'Man' who is, by all means, the Man of the OECD sphere with its main headquarters in France.³⁶ In a recent report in the *Anthropocene Review*, the 'Man' behind the myth-making Tellurian machine of optimizing capital's resistance to exhausting supply has so far gained the highest returns for its *abstract resistance to loss*: "In 2010 the OECD countries accounted for 74% of global GDP but only 18% of the global population. Insofar as the imprint on the Earth System scales with consumption, most of the human imprint on the Earth System is coming from the OECD world."³⁷

Here we are more intent to resolve the Anthropocene as a boundary concept between organic humanity and Man, between the rest of humanity and the myth-makers of abstract loss. No less than a replication of the dual extensity of the organism in relation to an absolute life source, humanity holds a double extensity relation to a nature that is merely 'made up', manufactured out of abstract loss. First, it was an abstract resistance to loss, but since the object of protestation must be as abstract as the non-resistance to the real phenomenon of fanatical consumerism fueling the myth of energy depletion, the loss follows the law of indetermination – the loss, as abstract, must be made determinate and concrete. This is the heart and soul of the myth – to turn actuality into possibility, to turn energy into an abstract, nay, determinable possibility of expenditure, according to calculated risks.

THE MYTH OF DUAL EXTENSITY

Humanity is the collective representation of these calculated risks, not Man. According to the principle of abstract resistance to loss, 'Man' loses nothing in abstraction. Echoing Heidegger's prognosis, in his treatise on Schelling, it is the rest of humanity that is made to become subservient to "an uncomprehended

³⁶ *Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development* whose member countries are highly developed nations, most of them from Europe.

³⁷ See Will Steffen, Wendy Broadgate, Lisa Deutsch, Owen Gaffney, and Cornelia Ludwig, "The trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration," *The Anthropocene Review*, vol. 2., no. 1, 2015, p. 91. Henceforth, *GA*.

present”³⁸ toward which, as humanity and as subjects of “the calculating game between origin and future” (*SE* 168) which conditions the Telluric production of myths, peoples have every right to respond by actual resistance to expenditure, for instance, against a prudent version of global inequality, which, unfortunately, keeps the myth stable. In order to make the present understandable one has to manufacture it, such as today’s global inequality, according to the law of indetermination. The Anthropocene must stick to the logic of abstract resistance to loss in order that its prediction comes true, the total depletion of energy supply, i.e., the *total abstract realization of the myth*. Truth is, it has happened already.

One scientific report concludes: “Will the next 50 years bring the Great Decoupling³⁹ or the Great Collapse? The latest 10 years of the Great Acceleration graphs show signs of both but cannot distinguish between these scenarios, or other possibilities. But 100 years on from the advent of the Great Acceleration, in 2050, we’ll almost certainly know the answer” (*GA* 94.). The scary prognosis is that humanity is headed to an inevitable phase of extinction events of which climate change plays a critical geological role. To this extent, it pays to continue to look at Heidegger’s seminar on Schelling. For Heidegger, the principle of indetermination is deemed dishonest from the start: the determinability of the abstract begins with “[calculating] in [the past] what is necessary for the present and make it compatible with the present” (*SE* 167). Even here the present is not known, uncomprehended. This is how the sublation of indetermination into determinateness happens - the total realization of abstraction from the usual form of time reckoning. In the meantime, ‘Man’ says it’s business as usual, an anthropogenic approach that, as Ian Angus argues, ‘catapults’ itself, not without calculation, “into a new ecological phase—one less conducive to maintaining biological diversity and a stable human civilization.”⁴⁰ It is Man’s business to keep the rest of humanity oblivious to the myth of the present.

Ultimately, the myth of dual extensity (that replaces the original boundary of two worlds, which, as Schelling earlier argued, ‘cannot be cancelled’) follows the

³⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985, p. 168. Hereafter cited as *SE*.

³⁹ Or, ‘decoupling development from environmental impacts’ (*GA* 94).

⁴⁰ Ian Angus, *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Rise of the Earth System*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 2016, p. 14.

abstract resistance to loss – the rest of organic humanity is snatched from a manufactured nature, a nature created by advanced countries in the world. This is the *first artificial dual extensity*. The effect is quite stunning: the rest of humanity is made external to ‘Man’. Under this extensity scheme, the Earth becomes a *degenerate* whole with which one can no longer wish to be united in which every ‘becoming’ is an exhaustive willing and striving. The three ‘plenary boundaries’ that have already been crossed by ‘humanity’ is a stark indication that the dual external world has been successfully replaced by boundaries it is compelled to cross. All these boundaries are created by a manufactured version of nature in which consumption is the real driver of planetary collapse. The rest of humanity is doubly separated from nature, from nature that it is generically split into production and product by long cosmic and terrestrial history of evolution, and from a ‘made up’ one – the notion of an envired planet. The second extensity is only possible under certain conditions where nature is successfully reduced to an object to be manufactured, *repeatedly*. As an envired planet, the Earth is held as a permanent object in which nature’s inhibited evolution is cybernetically transformed into a fixed point, as a fixed limitation of nature’s activity.

The transformation of the planet into a system as a cybernetic process rests on successful transformation of the planet into an object, a planet modified into a single living infrastructure, a safe operating space, until it is not a planet anymore. It ceases to be a planet and becomes an ‘Earth system’. But even this system is an outcome of a forced dual extensity; it has lost its natural substrate to which the rest of humanity relates also externally, i.e., the second dual extensity under the mythic principle of indetermination. Under this principle, the planet is snatched from its natural activity in order to fill out a cybernetic equation (i.e., ‘compromised’ natural equation), such as described by Schellnhuber and Kropp, in the sense of the “co-evolution between **N** (ecosphere) and **A** (anthrosphere), where the ecosphere is the environment and the anthrosphere is the human world and society.”⁴¹ Schellnhuber and Kropp coined the term *geocybernetics* to mean “the art of adequately controlling the complex dynamic earth system under

⁴¹ See Jason Philipps, “The conceptual development of a geocybernetic relationship between sustainable development and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA),” *Applied Geography*, vol. 31, p. 971. Henceforth cited as *CG*.

uncertainties of all kinds.”⁴² The ‘art’, once touted as the second Copernican revolution, does not, however, include the source of the myth of indetermination, the lie of global inequality, which makes this beautiful eco-anthropospheric, post-Telluric, equation, susceptible to participate in, all the more so condone the forcing of dual extensity in the name of Man.

The loss of the Earth as a natural substrate of intelligence and spirit, or reason itself, is one of the chief consequences of the Anthropocene – the Earth has vanished into the logic of “prudent and effective use of resources ... at all spatial and temporal scales” (*CG* 971). But it has vanished in proportion to the intensive call to renew oneness with what is called the ‘Earth system’, which can now, at last, be studied as a hypothesis by climatologists, environmentalists, ecologists, etc. In his contention against Fichte, Schelling laments a presentation of nature that is as much ‘unholy’ as ‘ungodly’, “in every respect finite and completely dead.”⁴³ As Schelling would sarcastically quote Fichte’s own words, “The divine life remains life even in the presentation. This living and visible manifestation we call the human race. Thus the human race is all there is” (*STR* 6). As soon as the Earth becomes a finite object of study, it loses its essence as *in*-finite, as a finite organization of an absolute activity that is infinite from its point of origination. This is necessary to attain knowledge, for the Earth to vanish from the universe of finite organizations in the Milky Way in order to become an objective world for knowledge, but also, as a dead planet. The purpose of this death sentence is more than philosophical – it is vanity: the Earth is “allowed to come alive through the rational life and be a product of its power and effectiveness” (*STR* 67). Assuming technoscientific rationality succeeds in the future in transforming the Earth into a *dynamic image of itself*, it will be for the first time that empirical subjectivity, or the largest of all, ‘Man’, has become a planet of its own. It will be for the first time that creation becomes non-divine, ungodly, and absolutely finite.

What is at stake if the Earth becomes absolutely finite? The answer is intuitively obvious: Everything becomes reducible to a doctrine, a system, devoid of an infinite substrate (Nature) whose function is to provide a ground for

⁴² H.J. Schellnhuber and J. Kropp, “Geocybernetics: Controlling a Complex Dynamical System Under Uncertainty,” *Naturwissenschaften Review Articles*, vol. 85, 1998, p. 411.

⁴³ Cited by Snow, “Translator’s Introduction,” in *STR*, p. xii.

individuation so that subjectivity does not only possess an empirical but also transcendental property in terms of co-individuation with other subjectivities – overall, the mystery of nature that is capable of averting nihilism and fatalism. Give up this ground and an absolute war erupts, a war without stake! Such Earth is not capable of averting the degeneration process of self-termination the moment it self-generates, or paradoxically speaking, the moment it natures itself.

The *second* dual extensity, lest we forget, is that the rest of humanity is made extrinsic, not only to this very same naturing principle, the saga of naturing capital accumulation (which explains the perfect correlation of abstraction of loss and the empirical gain of resisting a loss), but also to itself as an externalized human mass, incapable of resistance against solar capitalism. Resistance, as Negarestani's *Cyclonopedia* contends, is futile for “capitalism is not a human symptom but rather a planetary inevitability ... [C]apitalism was here before human existence, waiting for a host” (CC 27).

THE ANTHROPOCENE AS THE INEXISTENT PROBLEM OF THE EARTH

The dual extensity that the Anthropocene has replaced with planetary boundaries is an original description of how nature, in the Spinozist sense of *natura naturans*, excludes the human point of view, under its own principle and beyond anthropic approximations or representations of the inhibited point of Nature's activity. The Earth is this inhibited point whose relation to its source, i.e., nature as infinite activity (in terms of evolution), is always defined by, what Grant calls, for instance, the extainment of infinity. Following Schelling's lead, this extainment, Grant argues, “makes possible the abyss [*Abgrund*] of not-being in the other.”⁴⁴ In the present case, Nature not-being in the Earth.

The Anthropocene, however, is more than a description of how nature operates and permits a kind of “double non-containment, or *mutual extainment* (*Ausschließung*),” between Nature and the Earth in terms of the *idea* as speculative attractor that forges in its contemporary anthropogenic language the whole “reciprocal extainment of clashing infinites” (LI 6). These infinites, i.e. Nature and its product (the Earth) clash on account of the idea's thinking of existent (an

⁴⁴ Iain Hamilton Grant, ‘Law of Insuperable Environment: What is Exhibited in the *Exhibition of the Process of Nature?*’ *Analecta Hermeneutica*, vol. 5, 2013, p. 6. Henceforth, *LI*.

approximation of the inexistent that is Nature), on the one hand, and Nature extaining or excluding the ideal grounding from the actual extainment process, on the other hand (*ibid.*).⁴⁵ In the absence of the idea, Nature and the Earth have clashed many times, the history of which (the ancestrality that precedes the relation between the two) is necessarily contained in the *present* idea's thinking of the whole infinity of nature, which no idea or intelligence can, however, completely comprehend as a whole-in-itself. Suffice it to say, nature's inexistence is not due to nature, but rather, on account of the contingencies of human knowing. Here then, in the *idea*, nature shows its extainment in its most catastrophic form, as Grant formulates as follows: "If nature exists, it is in consequence of that nature that being becomes a catastrophic environment *for it*, the catastrophe of its ineliminable, environing *inexistence*" (*ibid.*)

The Anthropocene is an anthropogenic anomaly that impinges on this 'double non-containment'. Through its notorious propensity for over-production and over-consumption, it exceeds the mutual extainment in the sense that it is in over-production and over-consumption that the ineliminable inexistence of nature is resolved into a problem of waste management. It compels nature to manifest its ineliminable 'nature', its naturing nature, in terms of the "*arbitrariness* of [its] deathly management of decomposition,"⁴⁶ and then allocates this exhibition of death to *risks* that can be scaled across the geo-biosphere, the anthrosphere and the ecosphere, all for "prudent and effective use of resources" (*CG* 971). By forcing nature to exhibit its way with managing decomposition in the most radical catastrophic terms, by polluting it, the Earth has become an independent system of its own. Not since this deathly management of decay and waste has the Earth become a scientific, cybernetic system. In this sense, the once normative status of nature can no longer afford us an *idea*, a 'point-attractor,

⁴⁵ In his footnote discussion, Grant describes the concept of extainment: "Extainment' (symbolised as ><) is the topological contrary of "containment" (<>). Both are conjunctive (that is, one extainment can extain or be extained by another, just as one containment can be contained by or contain another) and co-implying, since the containment of containment entails that the contained is extained from the container" (*ibid.*, n. 21).

⁴⁶ F.W.J. Schelling, "On the World Soul: A Hypothesis of Higher Physics for Explaining Universal Organism/Treatise on the Relation Between the Real and the Ideal in Nature of the Development of first Principle of Naturephilosophy in the Principles of Gravity and Light," Iain Hamilton Grant, in *Collapse VI*, ed. by Robin Mackay, Falmouth, Urbanomic, 2010), p. 68.

which can yield a figure of nature as sacred. In this light, the perversion of the new point-attractor, the Anthropocene, makes the idealist goal of the presentation of nature appear, at this stage, already nostalgic of the pre-anthropogenic past. Grant outlines this idealistic goal as follows:

The incipient field for the exhibition of the natural process is ... precisely that thinking insofar as it thinks what is, i.e., thinks consequently upon the subject of existence. Rather than confirming its givenness to the idea, this thinking entails the thinking of that subject's inexistence, the environment extaining its actuality. (*LI* 6)

Unfortunately, there is no longer an incipient field for nature presentation; it has virtually become an irreducible field of objects in which nature is prohibited to present itself as subject. But if this could also be an instance of nature's extainment of the Earth, through the idea that presents nature rather negatively, not to mention dangerously, the Anthropocene, despite its one-sidedness, may also qualify as indifference to permanence, thus in a way agreeing with the 'indwelling logic' of nature's indifference, for instance, to subject and object. This is a paradoxical relation that entertains no certainty. As Grant would later argue, "[t]he 'indwelling logic of nature consists ... not in a system already formed and awaiting content, but one in the process of formation that must begin with a mark in the void it can never recover'" (*HNL* 494).

Overall, the Anthropocene points to the inexistent problem of the Earth that, here on earth, is showing signs of incapability to provide an 'incipient field of thinking'. It is fundamentally a problem of ethical grounding, but 'inexistence' has never entered our moral universe yet, especially in light of the false accordance of nature and mind that has become the epitome of the anthropogenic era of carbon-based climate change. Schelling took pains to convey this ethical grounding in a philosophical syntax that he felt would be understandable in his time. He would try, most controversially, in his treatise on *Freedom* where the problem could be brought closer to the most cherished complement of nature's self-creation, its co-emergence with the will. By arguing for its true co-emergence with nature, Schelling proposed a concept of freedom that could be protected against the subjective idealism of his time, least to say, its outlandish manner of absolving necessity (as if the ego holds the power of forgiveness) for the apparent crime of necessity, of putting Man at the receiving end of cosmic knowledge, always the end-user of a whimsical trajectory of the production of universal light

that necessity, from some eternal point, could, by fiat, exclude from its circle of obligation to enlighten or feed with signs to interpret. This is the precise context in which Schelling extended his earlier formulation (in the *System of Transcendental Idealism of 1800*) of a concept of freedom that co-emerges with nature.⁴⁷ This concept of freedom ought to be immune from the exorbitant claim of the will, prevalent in the negative philosophy of Schelling's time, which continues even today, namely that there is an outside world to which freedom relates by reflection, by virtue of which the 'world' is relegated to an exterior dimension where it will be left fighting for its own place to express.

Humankind would continue to look at the exterior, a 'spatial negative space', as something to be tamed, known for its signature propensity for chaos and rupture. As Gilles Châtelet describes this space, this "spatial negativity [was] too neglected by the history of philosophy (especially in its concern with the work of the negative in a perspective of temporality and historicity)."⁴⁸ It may be for this self-complacency and arrogance that have crossed three planetary boundaries so far that the Earth has entered a domain from which it may no longer recover (*PB* 32). Not that Nature is avenging herself, but that since she co-originate with the will, nature is there for the will as her catastrophic 'envirning inexistence,' which is a reminder to the latter that their co-origination is irreversible, a *fait accompli*.

This co-origination, unfortunately, as Schelling would assert in the *Freedom* essay, "contains a typology [*Vorbilder*] that no man has yet interpreted."⁴⁹ And as Paul de Man would interpolate us here, this figure of 'Man' is precisely an effect of a failure to interpret, a failure to read the *sublime*.⁵⁰ A known expositor of de Man's ideas, Claire Colebrook argues: "Such a sublime would be ... a mode of seeing *without sense or teleology*."⁵¹ In Schellingian terms, this mode of seeing

⁴⁷ F.W.J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter Heath, Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 2001, p. 235. Henceforth, *STI*.

⁴⁸ Gilles Châtelet, *Figuring Space*, trans. Robert Shore and Muriel Zaghera, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishing, Inc., 2000, p. 13.

⁴⁹ F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2006, p. 77. Henceforth, *PHF*.

⁵⁰ See Paul de Man, *Resistance to Theory*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p. 13.

⁵¹ Claire Colebrook "What is Anthro-Political?" in Tom Cohen, Claire Colebrook, and J. Hillis Miller, *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols*, London, Open Humanities Press, 2016, 120.

will be devoid of the teleology of the idea of 'Man', a kind of 'incipient field of thinking'; a mode of embracing a new conception of the future, and thus, a new Being. This way the 'scandal of Naturphilosophie' is revived.

In the concluding section that follows, I would like to return to the discussion of this scandal, as briefly as possible, vis-à-vis Hegel's rendition of nature's sublation. Notwithstanding its actual resonance is oblique, and therefore, cannot be absolutely tended as unequivocal in relation to our current ecological predicament, Hegel's logical system arguably leans on the side of the debate that endorses a dangerous concept of 'absolute coincidence' of nature and intelligence. Schelling would rather give his backing to the concept of 'co-origination', no matter how regressively pantheist it may sound, which is different from 'absolute coincidence'. This absolute coincidence is emphatically idealized in the present technoscientific alternatives to climate collapse.

CONCLUSION

Though Schelling rejects sublation as a method of deduction, he did not intend to mean that, in contrast to the mediation of logical synthesis, a kind of permanent unsublated ground ought to turn the whole work of philosophy into a kind of Platonic *anamnesis* which, as Schelling tells us, "is more of a striving toward knowledge than knowledge itself (*AW* xxxvii). Schelling is critiquing the Hegelian conception of negativity for which the full extent of dialectical logic is employed, that because nature is an in-itself that approaches the supersensible, the last option is to expand the bounds of the knowable to historical temporality (a step beyond Kant's recourse to morals) outside of which, where nature assumes the place or the realm of the dark principle, the *supersensible*, the processes of mediation, however, cease to apply. Schelling adds: "Without this preceding darkness creatures have no reality; darkness is their necessary inheritance (*PHF* 29)."

But while denying the possibility of an unsublated past, Hegel's *Aufhebung* is also the most ironically transparent manner of recollecting what had been denied of transparency. The equivalent of this recollection in Hegel is the act of "simple exposition of what alone first belongs to this simplest of all simples, the logical

beginning.”⁵² Arguably, Hegel reveals this ‘denial of natural beginning’, which is the beginning of logic, in the passages that follow:

The beginning must then be *absolute* or, what means the same here, must be an abstract beginning; and so there is *nothing* that it may *presuppose*, must not be mediated by anything or have a ground, ought to be rather itself the ground of the entire science. It must therefore be simply *an* immediacy, or rather only *immediacy* itself. Just as it cannot have any determination with respect to an other, so too it cannot have any within; it cannot have any content, for any content would entail distinction and the reference of distinct moments to each other, and hence a mediation. The beginning is therefore *pure being*. (SL 48)

Here the logical sublation of the ungrounded promotes a conception of history that repeats itself in ever-diversifying forms in the extent to which the logical determinateness of *Aufhebung*, within a particular period, encounters new inflections (of the same universal, to begin with) derived from the contingency of the times, which, however, do not change their relation to the infinite universal as the development of negativity implicit in it.⁵³ Everything is already sublated beforehand.⁵⁴ Hegel emphatically argues for this kind of logical finality that establishes the content of science: “In this advance the beginning thus loses the one-sidedness that it has when determined simply as something immediate and abstract; it becomes mediated, and the line of scientific forward movement consequently turns *into a circle*. – It also follows that what constitutes the beginning, because it is something still undeveloped and empty of content, is not yet truly known at that beginning, and that only science, and science fully developed, is the completed cognition of it, replete with content and finally truly grounded” (SL 49). What the dialectic neglects is the fact that there is the unsublated from the start which is the proto-transcendental possibility of logical determinations. This ‘proto-transcendental’ is ‘natural’ in all its sense. Schelling’s approach to the transcendental is already evident in the 1800 *System*: the transcendental must

⁵² See G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. George Di Giovanni, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 48. Henceforth, *SL*.

⁵³ Hegel summarizes this point as follows: “The advance does not consist in the derivation of an *other*, or in the transition to a truly other: inasmuch as there is a transition, it is equally sublated again. Thus the beginning of philosophy is the ever present and self-preserving foundation of all subsequent developments, remaining everywhere immanent in its further determinations” (SL 49).

⁵⁴ See Wirth, “Notes on Translator’s Introduction,” in *Ages*, p. 134, n. 15.

‘annex ‘the material to the formal’ in order to ‘materialize the laws of the mind into laws of nature’ which echoes his earlier formulation in the *Ideas*: “[W]hat we want is not that Nature should coincide with the laws of our mind by chance ... but that she herself, necessarily and originally, should not only express, but even realize, the laws of our mind.”⁵⁵ As Gare puts it in relation to Schelling’s notion of the transcendental: “Nature must be seen as capable of organizing itself, generating life and the human consciousness capable of knowing nature.”⁵⁶

For Hegel, it is not “the fault of understanding if there is no further advance” (*SL* 540) in reasoning or knowledge, or science in general. Rather, the fault is derivative of impotent nature. According to Hegel, due to “the impotence of nature” which reflects its inability to exhibit “the logical forms in their purity,⁵⁷ it is only the understanding that can accord nature “the *rigidity* of being” (*ibid.*, p. 539). Notice here that the understanding can only give Nature a being deserving of it, namely, a rigid, lifeless being, inasmuch as nature, according to Hegel, is merely a source of wonder, but *wonder* is itself “without concept and its object is the irrational” (*SL* 536). In this sense, Hegel’s postulate of nature is that nature *is* nature because “it is allowed to nature (*ibid.*),” needless to say, by the spirit, vis-à-vis Schelling’s postulate that if “left to itself, nature would still lead everything back to a state of utter negation” (*AW* 31). For Schelling, there is always “the constant tendency” in nature to ‘restrict’ cognition and “to place [it] in darkness” (*ibid.*)

Not unexpectedly, this natural restriction is directed against the ‘comprehension of existence’ that tends to view nature as incapable of consciousness, incapable of the spirit that is essential to resolve the “disparity between the ‘I’ and its object,” and to settle the problem of difference as a problem of the “disparity of the substance with itself” (*PS* 21). Hegel provides the finishing touches to the ‘phenomenology of spirit’ that provides us, among others,

⁵⁵ F.W.J. Schelling, *Ideas for A Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 42-43.

⁵⁶ See Arran Gare, “From Kant to Schelling to Process Metaphysics,” in *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, vol. 7, 2, 2011, p. 29.

⁵⁷ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic with Zusatzse, Part I of the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*, trans. by T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, Company, Inc., 1991, p. 61.

a framework for interpreting the Anthropocene according to the most dominant form of nature presentation today: “Thus what seems to happen outside of it, to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject” (*ibid.*). This is a good example of ethical realism, but its philosophical direction may also grant permission, or allow a regression to subjective idealism. Because existence is now mediated by the subject that calls itself substance by virtue of its having become ‘self-like’ in regard to the dialectical relation between the ‘I’ and its object, what can happen next is the deepening of this subjective experience and the suspension of the ‘outside’ which, though from here it has to be viewed as an “immediate property of the ‘I’ (*ibid.*),” does not, however, totally absolve itself of its independent existence. This is the ‘barbaric’ side of the outside, as Schelling puts it, which necessarily “drives” the subject or substance “out of the world of phenomena into the world of ideas.”⁵⁸ In the world of ideas, nature can only be viewed as extrinsic to the human point of view, and thus determinable by knowledge and science. In this dialectical relation, knowledge cannot be determinable by the former. Apparently, nature does not think. It thus necessarily produces a strict correlation between subject and object from the standpoint of the subject which is, however, also restricted to thinking the correlation and no more.⁵⁹

If so, then thinking itself, which by virtue of its own doing views the outside as ‘directed against it’, is also necessarily restricted to a self-positing loop. But this does not change the fact that thinking co-originate with nature, in that nature gives back what the subject or substance posits on its behalf in the realm of ideas, that is to say, it returns to thinking in the “greatest dominion of forms” (*OWS* 68). As Schelling argues in one of his most neglected essays, which we are here quoting again, nature returns to thinking with the “*arbitrariness* of the deathly management

⁵⁸ F.W.J. Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. trans. by Douglas W. Stott, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 89.

⁵⁹ This point is argued by Meillassoux in a similar work: “Correlationism consists in disqualifying the claim that it is possible to consider the realms of subjectivity and objectivity independently of one another. Not only does it become necessary to insist that we never grasp an object ‘in itself’, in isolation from its relation to the subject, but it also becomes necessary to maintain that we can never grasp a subject that would not always-already be related to an object” (Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier, London: Continuum, 2008, p. 5).

of decomposition” (*ibid.*). This return, which is in a way reactive of thought’s exilic overindulgence in the ideas, comes with huge humanitarian costs, that is to say, as experienced in the world of phenomena. In conclusion, it is in this sense that an absolute coincidence between nature and mind, which is ideally expressed in the anthropogenic takeover of dual extensity, ought to be disengaged from its irresponsible form in absolute idealism in favor of the mutual indifference of nature and the organism.

College of Arts and Letters
Polytechnic University of the Philippines
vr.aqui.rivas@gmail.com

REFERENCES

- Alaimo, Stacy, *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times*, Minneapolis, London, University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
- Angus, Ian, *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Rise of the Earth System*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 2016.
- Bratton, Benjamin, ‘Root the Earth: On Peak Oil Apophenia,’ in *Leper Creativity: Cyclonopedia Symposium*, ed. by Ed Keller, Nicola Masciandaro, and Eugene Thacker, New York: Punctum Books, 2012, pp. 45-57.
- Ceballos, G. et al., ‘Accelerated Modern Human-Induced Species Losses: Entering the Sixth Mass Extinction,’ in *Science Advances*, vol. 1, no. 5, 2015:1:e1400253.
- Colebrook, Claire, ‘What is Anthro-Political?’ in Tom Cohen, Claire Colebrook, and J. Hillis Miller, *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols*, London, Open Humanities Press, 2016, pp. 81-125.
- Châtelet, Gilles, *Figuring Space*, trans. Robert Shore and Muriel Zaghera, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishing, Inc., 2000.
- Dalton, Drew M., ‘On the Possibility of Speculative Ethical Absolutes After Kant: Returning to Schelling through the Frailties of Meillassoux and Badiou,’ *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 21, no. 4, 2016, pp. 157-172.
- de Man, Paul, *Resistance to Theory*, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- Foster, Jay ‘Let’s not talk about the Anthropocene,’ *Analecta Hermeneutica*, vol. 10, 2018,

- pp. 1-37. *10* (2018): 1-37.
- Gare, Arran, 'Biosemiosis and Causation: Defending Biosemiosis through Rosen's Theoretical Biology or Integrating Biosemiotics and Anticipatory Systems Theory,' in *Cosmos and History: Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2019, pp. 31-90.
- Gare, Arran, 'From Kant to Schelling to Process Metaphysics,' in *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2011, pp. 26-69.
- Grant, Iain Hamilton, 'The Hypothesis of Nature's Logic in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*,' in *Palgrave Handbook of German Idealism*, ed. Matthew C. Altman, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 478-498.
- Grant, Iain Hamilton, 'Law of Insuperable Environment: What is Exhibited in the *Exhibition of the Process of Nature?*?' *Analecta Hermeneutica*, vol. 5, 2013, pp. 1-17.
- Haraway, Donna J., *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2016.
- Hay, Katie, 'The Role of Narration and the Overcoming of the Past in Schelling's Ages of the World,' *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2016, pp. 271-287.
- Hegel, G.W.F. *Science of Logic*, trans. George Di Giovanni, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Hegel, G.W.F., "Preface," *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Hegel, G.W.F., *The Encyclopedia Logic with Zusatz, Part I of the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*, trans. by T. F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, Company, Inc., 1991.
- Hegel, G.W.F., *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Heidegger, Martin, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985.
- Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Werner Pluhar, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987.
- Land, Nick, *The Thirst for Annihilation: George Bataille and Virulent Nihilism*, London and New York, Routledge, 1992.
- Latour, Bruno, 'Agency at the time of the Anthropocene,' in *New Literary History*, vol. 45, 2014, pp. 1-18.
- Lovecraft, H.P., *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*, New York, Random House Publishing, 2011.
- Ludvigsen, Malcolm, *General Relativity: A Geometric Approach*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

- Markus, Gabriel, 'The Mythological Being of Reflection: An Essay on Hegel, Schelling and the Contingency of Necessity,' in Markus Gabriel and Slavoj Žižek, *Mythology, Madness, and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism*, London, Continuum, 2009, pp. 15-94.
- Marshall, Kate, 'Cyclonopedia as Novel (a meditation on complicity as inauthenticity),' in *Leper Creativity: Cyclonopedia Symposium*, ed. by Ed Keller, Nicola Masciandaro, and Eugene Thacker, New York: Punctum Books, 2012, pp. 147-157.
- Masco, Joseph, 'The Age of (a) Man,' in *Future Remains: A Cabinet of Curiosities for the Anthropocene*, ed. Gregg Mitman, Marco Armiero, Robert S. Emmett, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018, pp. 40-49.
- Morton, Timothy, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World*, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Negarestani, Reza, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*, Melbourne: re.press, 2008.
- Philipps, Jason, 'The conceptual development of a geocybernetic relationship between sustainable development and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA),' *Applied Geography*, vol. 31, 2011, pp. 969-979.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth, *Geontologies: A Requiem to Later Liberalism*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2016.
- Rockström, Johan, et. al., "Planetary Boundaries," *Ecology and Society*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2009, p. 32, available at <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss2/art32/>.
- Schelling, F.W.J., *Statement on the True Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to the Revised Fichtean Doctrine*, trans. Dale E. Snow, New York, State University of New York Press, 2018.
- Schelling, F.W.J., 'On the World Soul: A Hypothesis of Higher Physics for Explaining Universal Organism/Treatise on the Relation Between the Real and the Ideal in Nature of the Development of first Principle of Naturephilosophy in the Principles of Gravity and Light,' trans. Iain Hamilton Grant, in *Collapse VI*, ed. by Robin Mackay, Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2010, pp. 66-95.
- Schelling, F.W.J., *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*, trans. Bruce Matthews, New York, State University of New York Press, 2007a.
- Schelling, F.W.J., *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger, New York, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2007b.
- Schelling, F.W.J., *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt, New York, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2006.

-
- Schelling, F.W.J., *First Outline of A System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Keith R. Peterson, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2004.
- Schelling, F.W.J., *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter Heath, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001.
- Schelling, F.W.J., *Ideas for A Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Schelling, F.W.J., *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. trans. by Douglas W. Stott, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
- Schellnhuber, H.J. and J. Kropp, "Geocybernetics: Controlling a Complex Dynamical System Under Uncertainty," *Naturwissenschaften Review Articles*, vol. 85, 1998, pp. 411-425.
- Steffen, Will, Broadgate, Wendy, Deutsch, Lisa, Gaffney, Owen, and Ludwig, Cornelia, 'The trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration,' *The Anthropocene Review*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2015. pp. 81-98.
- Whistler, Daniel 'The New Literalism: Reading Schelling After Grant,' *Symposium*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2015, pp. 125-139.
- Wirth, Jason M. "Foreword," *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger, New York, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2007, pp. vii-xiii.
- Woodard, Ben, 'The Untimely and (Unshapely) Decomposition of Onto-Epistemological Solidity: Negarestani's *Cyclonopedia* as Metaphysics,' in *Leper Creativity: Cyclonopedia Symposium*, ed. by Ed Keller, Nicola Masciandaro, and Eugene Thacker, New York: Punctum Books, 2012, pp. 213-223.