

NEGATIVITY AND THE IDEOLOGY OF EXISTENCE: THINKING FUTURES THROUGH EXTINCTION

Virgilio Rivas

ABSTRACT: In her Deleuzian forays into the paradox of immanent life, Claire Colebrook (2014) takes issue with a theory of vitalism that interprets life as an organic, self-sustaining whole. Colebrook proposes a variation of the Deleuzian theory based on a concept of life involving instead a complicated orientation toward life potentials that are, in fact, non-self-maintaining to the extent that they approach the eternal, the beyond-human, beyond the anthropocentrism of organized natures and bodies. Meanwhile, the idea of an extainment set that I.H. Grant (2013) advanced in his annotation of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* echoes a similar Deleuzian inflection as to the counter-intuitive challenge to a life-sustaining world, the notion of inexistent nature. Nature's extainment is impervious to reason and the time-systems that modern rationality has forged to supersede nature's deep unprethinkable past. This oblique correspondence between a particular strand of Deleuzianism and the extaining principle intrinsic to Schelling's philosophy reveals a shared critique of Hegel's approach towards the notion of 'externality' that has characterized the mono-vitalism of critical theory today. At stake in this criticism of vitalism is the future of thinking a world other than its potentials to sustain a human-rationalized system, an ordered system of economic telos that Schelling warned about in the early 18th century in light of the tendencies of Kant's Copernican turn. The essay concludes with Andrew Culp's main formulation in *Dark Deleuze*, concerning the death of the World, which systematically recapitulates this paper's discussions concerning a) 'the organism has no future but a mindless futurity' (following Colebrook's Deleuzianism) and b) the notion of 'inexistent nature' (sketched out by Grant).

KEYWORDS: Economic telos; Extainment; *Naturphilosophie*; Negativity; Unprethinkable; Vitalism

INTRODUCTION

This essay is mainly influenced by what I consider the two foremost philosophical frontlines of the modern critique of negativity (centered on post-Hegelian

thought). Significantly, these two intellectual representations come from 1) a unique strand of Deleuzian theory and 2) a steadily assertive strain of contemporary Schelling studies, respectively. For purposes of the paper, I will employ this particular nexus of Deleuze and Schelling studies in the background of a much greater formulaic conjunction between Deleuze and Schelling regarding a particular aspect of their respective philosophies of nature, their speculative gamble on what I designate by futurity ethics or post-telluric futures. Claire Colebrook and I.H. Grant are contemporary proponents of this fruitful engagement challenging the dogma of vitalism intrinsic to the metaphysical coalition of value economy and negative teleology. (We will discuss these key concepts, *economy*, and *teleology*, in the next section).

However, it pays to note that Colebrook and Grant do not have the same target that the term 'vitalism' may designate, not to mention their different philosophical orientations. Still, these two contemporary theorists offer a shared futurity that Deleuze and Schelling partake of, noting their once-off theoretical connection, at least on Deleuze's part, citing Schelling's philosophy in *Difference and Repetition*.¹

Deleuze and Schelling studies are not as united and complementing as we are inclined to depict their significant intellectual trajectories. Grant himself has never been optimistic about the speculative future of Deleuze-Schelling studies, especially on key philosophical questions that these two thinkers are supposed to conflict with one another, such as what nature is, what nature shows, and how, as Grant formulates, everything in mind is in nature, but not the reverse – everything in nature is in mind.² Though Deleuze would agree with Schelling that being and thinking are adequately conjunctive, but also necessarily disjunctive, in short, logically asymmetrical, Grant would still place Schelling on top of the fray concerning the syntactical import of the concept of the *Ungrund*,

¹ "The most important aspect of Schelling's philosophy is his consideration of powers. How unjust, in this respect, is Hegel's critical remark about the black cows! Of these two philosophers, it is Schelling who brings difference out of the night of the Identical, and with finer, more varied and more terrifying flashes of lightning than those of contradiction: with *progressivity*" (Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 190-191; henceforth, *DR*).

² Iain Hamilton Grant, "The Universe in the Universe: German Idealism and the Natural History of Mind, in Havi Carel and Darian Meacham (eds.), *Phenomenology and Naturalism: Examining the Relationship Between Human Experience and Nature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013; henceforth, *UU*.

the unprethinkable, the abyss of an irrecoverable past. Deleuze's approach to 'depth' and 'extensity' affords thinking the power to deterritorialize the Earth, albeit, as Grant would label Deleuze's approach as Kantian at its core, for the sole purpose of "restoring metaphysics" and the "institution of a tribunal."³ (This is a harsh criticism of Deleuze that I will not, however, pursue). In contrast, for Schelling, these terms, depth and extensity, are outside of the purview of ontologies of powers and potencies to deterritorialize.

However, Grant's general criticism of the ethico-teleological vitalism that post-Kantianism promotes is a powerful theoretical disposition that, as the following considerations suggest, radically defines the task of philosophy: 1) Kant's Copernican revolution is an unfinished revolutionary gamble, and therefore, is still an ongoing state of thought, and 2) contemporary philosophy must engage this continuing legacy to go beyond the mere business of criticism in order to realize a "systematic metaphysics."⁴ But what is supposed to be the nature of this future metaphysics? From a Schellingian standpoint, it must be a metaphysics devoid of its inherent ethico-teleological anthropocentrism appearing in various disguises, shapes, and forms (whose most current representative formulation is the legacy of Hegelianism and post-Hegelian philosophy, unable to escape the long Copernican shadow cast by Kant's critical project).

Meanwhile, Colebrook's issue with vitalism centers on the parallelism between life and death within a bounded organization of life that allocates purposiveness to life's opposite complement. This is a unique strand of Deleuzianism that can resonate well with Grant's anti-vitalism that builds on "the isolation of the inorganic from the organic matter" (*PNA*, 18). The isolation occurs within the same circumscribed assemblage of bodily natures, rendering both positions united in their critical stand against the idea of a regulated or bounded structure of natural determination. For Colebrook, emphasis should be accorded rather on an unbounded outside, an externality that indefinitely places the life-death nexus in a disjunctive relation that is always at risk of being overwhelmed by the void. The regulation of life and death no less reflects the anthropogenic system of optimizing existence, of telluric survivalism, against the threat of the

³ Iain Hamilton Grant, "Chemistry of Darkness," in *Pli*, vol. 9, 2000, 41; henceforth, *CD*.

⁴ Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling*, London: Continuum, 2006, p. 3; henceforth, *PNA*.

void's radical singularization. The void annuls any form of relationality. This externality even refuses to be identifiable, whereby humanity is condemned to the "recognition that there is no Other."⁵

In opposition to vitalism, Colebrook nominates the non-maintaining aspect of life to the primary concern of theory concerning nature. In *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life*, the non-maintaining force of the inorganic, which is, by the way, the more predominant part of what we know so far about life, is further complemented by modeling life rather on the death principle, albeit, death, Colebrook clarifies, as "the degree zero of intensities" (*DML*, 99). Not as the thermodynamic parallel of the connotation of "mere mechanism, the loss of autopoiesis, or the absence of capacity for self-organization" (*ibid.*). Rather the degree zero of death that makes experience possible. Here death is understood through a retroactive method – the "[detachment] of all powers" that sustain the body from the organization of body itself and then "push [these powers] to their minimal thresholds" (*ibid.*). On their own, these powers are referred to as "impersonal, pre-individual singularities" (*ibid.*). The degree zero of death (again, through retroaction, we understand death as from the very beginning detached from its life hosts) initiates the process of becoming-bodies in terms of their expressibility in bodily natures. In this light, Colebrook argues:

There is always something non-living in the living. No living body is author of itself. As a body, as a bounded form that maintains itself as the same through time, the living is always in relation to what is not itself, even if this internal otherness is the relation a body bears to itself in order to feel itself as a bounded body. (*ibid.*, 45).

The Deleuzian death principle already presupposes that the pre-individual dimension of reality is beyond human intervention to alter a pre-synthetic ontological landscape, apropos of the "radical separation" of the human from what "lies beyond one's constitutive distinction" (*ibid.*, 149). This reformed death principle is beyond the Freudian connotation of a 'bounded pool of libidinal energies' that identifies death as a conduit of life, shielded from the forces of absolute chaos and disorder, which is more than (even beyond) death. In this sense, there is no parallelism between death and life, but rather an irrevocable disjunction which is always at risk of giving in to an external collapse (where

⁵ Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life*, London and New York: Continuum, 2010, p. 149; henceforth, *DML*.

regulated tensions necessary for determinate life to continue are canceled) into the void. For Colebrook, life is not a grounding concept that can ground even the purpose of death (*ibid.*, 136). Incidentally, this last point may be obliquely referenced as Schellingian.

Through Grant's extrapolations of, for instance, the access to nature problem, via a partial agreement with the principle of reciprocity between nature and mind (that is: all mind is in nature, but not all nature is in mind), we are offered the following premise that agrees with a Deleuzian notion of externality (in line with Colebrook's formulation of the death principle as pre-individual reality). The radical singularity of the external (for both Deleuze and Schelling) rather serves a counter-intuitive purpose, which, one way or the other, departs from Kant's transcendentalism. The pre-individual singularities (that Deleuze placed before critical reason) and the unprethinkable (of Schelling) do not and will not account for the possibility of experience in the Kantian sense. Transcendentalism means that the subject alone is 'entitled' to provide the "explanation of the manner in which concepts can relate to objects *apriori*" (*UU*, 304). On the one hand, arguing from Deleuze, the transcendental condition of experience, in fact, can be "determined in advance as an extended and quantified object domain - so many bodies and matters as substance for the relations of speech and labour - but as a plane of intensive multiplicities" (*DML*, 151). Thus, it enters the domain of labour and speech as risks to economic continuity and signification system, as dispersions and transversality that harass and belie the security of the unity of the I. On the other hand, from a Schellingian perspective, this implies that "the ground of transcendental inquiry cannot be closed against its ungrounding, and to supply the reasons for this" (*UU*, 305). Schelling himself made sure he minced no words in his verdict against a form of anti-naturalism tracing back to Kant's transcendental philosophy as that in which nature is annihilated: "The true annihilation of nature is in any case that which makes it into a whole of absolute qualities, limits and affections..." (in *PNA*, 166).

In this paper, I argue that the final attribute of a philosophy of transcendentalism that deems nature as 'exploitable' goes beyond Fichtean idealism (which is the primary target of Schelling's criticism of a philosophy that

does not place speculative value on nature, “only a teleological one”⁶). Hegel will inherit this philosophical view and translate it into its highest logical perfectibility, such that the problem of externality is finally resolved: the immanence of logical reason shuts any remaining door to the illogical dimension of the outside. Not that there is no Other that logical reasoning can square up to, any more than there is absolutely no reason to recognize the outside. This is the most representative version of contemporary vitalism that originated from the Kantian Copernican turn, which planted the seed of the very annihilation not only of dogmatism, but also of criticism in the sense that “there would no longer remain a thinkable that was non-intuitable, and therefore no discrimination, of the kind on which a critical philosophy relies, between legitimate and illegitimate judgments in accordance with their objects”(UU, 301).

THE PRINCIPLE OF NATURE CONSTRUCTION

Meanwhile, what Schelling designates by the term economic teleology (that we mentioned in the previous section) means that nature is conceived as a “fixed, and self-enclosed existence.”⁷ The ‘term’ has come to reflect a concept of development that, in Schelling’s own description, in light of the history of “reason” and the vagaries of the “human race” (*STR*, 7), is itself unable to develop. Correspondingly, inasmuch as reason has the power to relativize a crisis it alone creates, ‘development’ reveals a self-justifying principle of collapse, speaking of reason’s inherent negativity.

Schelling, by contrast, embraces a positive concept of collapse, or rather, “the complete collapse of the world known by us with the world of nature” (*ibid.*, 30). He designates this concept as the “intuition of reality” in its fullest sense, which does not merely proceed from “thinking to knowledge, but rather also beyond knowledge in general” (*ibid.*). It is at this point in the progress of reason wherein finally, as Schelling concludes, “the ideal has become real,” and the “world of

⁶ Cited in Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 58.

⁷ F.W.J. Schelling, *Statement on the True Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to the Revised Fichtean Doctrine: An Elucidation of the Former (1806)*, trans. Dale E. Snow, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2018, p. 13; henceforth, *STR*. See also Bruce Matthews, *Schelling’s Organic Form of Philosophy: Life as A Schema of Freedom*, New York: State University of New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2011, p. 275, n. 16.

thought [has become] the world of nature” (*ibid.*). This intuitive collapse should result in ‘ethical requirements’ attaining their highest perfectibility when they no longer appear to consciousness as thoughts, “as commandments, but rather have become realities in the nature of our soul” (*ibid.*).

As it is with Schelling, however, the nature that we know must first be constructed apriori, not without “corresponding external [or empirical] intuitions.”⁸ As he emphasized, “[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” (*EHF* p. 161). Still, as Grant argues, nature construction demands that nature is *necessarily* thought more than itself in thought, “extaining precisely its being-thought” that no concept can contain.⁹ Schelling called this the unprethinkable.¹⁰

But how we construct nature varies according to how we understand nature. From a Schellingian perspective, the proper understanding of nature is less about the question of access to it than it is about constructing a positive system, a naturephilosophy. On the one hand, as Grant explains, the access problem becomes inverted: “to what have we access if the form under which all representation is for us is insuperable?” (*UU*, 306). On the other hand, as Schelling states, “[b]ecause to philosophize about nature means as much as to create it, we must first of all find the point from which nature can be posited into *becoming*” (*FO*, 5). Schelling offers a description of one such way to posit nature as if abandoned to itself: nature resembling “a life of loathing and anxiety, a fire that incessantly consumes itself, and unremittingly produces itself anew.”¹¹ In this sense, nature approaches the true meaning of apriori construction, a schematized sense of nature. Finally, construction reveals nature’s logic. It is revealed when nature’s being thought means that “it is not nature insofar as it is from it that the

⁸ F.W.J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Keith Peterson, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2014, p. 19; henceforth, *FO*; bracket emphasis mine.

⁹ Iain Hamilton Grant, “How nature came to be thought: Schelling’s paradox and the problem of location, in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2013, p. 29; henceforth, *SPL*.

¹⁰ F.W.J., Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johanness Schmidt, New York: State University of New York Press, 2006, p. 29. Henceforth, *EHF*.

¹¹ F.W.J. Schelling, *The Ages of the World. Fragment from the handwritten remains, Third Version (c. 1815)*, trans. Jason M. Wirth, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2000, p. 32; henceforth, *AW*.

concept arises" (*SPL*, 25).

In the following section, I will briefly introduce Deleuze's theory of nature and its relation to Schelling's notion of the unprethinkable. Altogether, Deleuze and Schelling's systems constitute a nexus of two nature constellations that articulate a positive form of collapse.

THE DELEUZE-SCHELLING CONJUNCTION

As to how nature becomes conceivable by its finite manifestations or how it is thought in the negative sense, the task of the philosophy of nature, in a Deleuzian sense, is to deterritorialize a concept of nature known to reason. This is one of Mark Halsey's (2004) contentions, in a relatively old but important essay, arguing that modern rationality has aggravated how nature is looked upon through the supposed "illuminative powers of the scientific method."¹² Nature in modern reason is represented while ignoring other modalities, including its 'becoming-contested' in the process of its own naturing, such as the 'becoming-hydro-electric dam' of a forest. Modernity restricts, as well as regulates, "what is possible to see, say, do, and feel, with respect to Nature" (*EV*, 35). As we will learn from *A Thousand Plateaus*, the difference between the idea of the cosmos and that of the Earth is an excellent example to demonstrate this point. Both ideas problematize the meaning of territory both as a matter of expression and as matter itself.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, matters of expression such as figures of speech, which romanticism ranked prior to materiality (since the latter is supposedly not thinkable), are perfect elements for a deterritorializing capture, whereby one no longer speaks of formalizable matter anymore than of rendering 'nonvisible forces' visible.¹³ The purpose is quite simple: to return their formalizability to a non-formal source, the Cosmos. As modern literary and visual arts demonstrate in favor of a postromantic conception of matter, 'matter' is done with exhibiting the usual "corresponding principle of intelligibility in form" (*ATP*, 342). Modern arts return their 'forms' (as expressions of a territory, for instance) to their pre-synthetic singularities as 'forces, densities,' etc., deterritorializing their essence as

¹² Mark Halsey, "Environmental Visions: Deleuze and the Modalities of Nature," *Ethics and Environment* Vol. 9, no. 2, 2004, p. 38; henceforth, *EV*.

¹³ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 342. Henceforth, *ATP*.

localizable earth materials. As Deleuze and Guattari state,

Matters of expression are superseded by a material of capture. The forces to be captured are no longer those of the earth, which still constitute a great expressive Form, but the forces of an immaterial, non-formal and energetic Cosmos This is the postromantic turning point: the essential thing is no longer forms and matters, or themes, but forces, densities, intensities. The earth itself swings over, tending to take on the value of pure material for a force of gravitation and weight. (*ibid.*, 342-43).

By contrast, to think of the Earth in the formal sense of its expressibility is to think of it as a “synthetic identity ensuring a continuous intelligibility of matter” (*ibid.*, 342). This is an example of a negative conception of the earth invoking an ideal unity against the relativization of earth spaces in a “centerless universe” that Deleuze, for instance, borrowed from Bergson.¹⁴ In the following outline, notice a similar, albeit a much earlier pronouncement (by Schelling), rejecting any hint of *linear causality* between ground and existence in terms of the relation of gravity and light:

Gravity precedes light as its ever dark ground, which itself is not *actu* [actual], and flees into the night as light (that which exists) dawns. Even light does not fully remove the seal under which gravity lies contained.... [Here] there is no first and last because all things mutually presuppose each other, no thing is another thing and yet no thing is not without another thing. (*EHF*, 27-28)

In these passages, the Deleuzian notion of material capture finds its counterpart in Schelling’s challenge to language to represent the ‘dark ground’ in precise logical and categorical terms based on the traditional distinction, initially perfected in Descartes, between mind and matter. Concerning language, as the following lines suggest, Deleuze, in his early work, advances a comparable notion of the dark ground (or dark precursor):

It is not by poverty of its vocabulary that language invents the form in which it plays the role of dark precursor, but by its excess, by its most positive syntactic and semantic power. In playing this role it differentiates the differences between the different things ... relating these immediately to one another in series which it causes to resonate. For the same reason [...] the repetition of words cannot be explained negatively, cannot be presented as a bare repetition without difference. However, it remains a question of drawing together a maximum of disparate series

¹⁴ Martin Schönher, “Gilles Deleuze’s Philosophy of Nature: System and Method in What Is Philosophy?,” in *Theory, Culture & Society* vol. 36, nos. 7-8, 2019, pp. 89-107.

(ultimately, all the divergent series constitutive of the cosmos) by bringing into operation linguistic dark precursors (here, esoteric words, portmanteau words) which rely upon no prior identity, which are above all not 'identifiable' in principle. (*DR*, 121)

The dark precursor rather stimulates the maximum potential for material capture without totally losing itself in the indeterminacy of matter. At the same time, it does not give in to conventional terms of expression, causing language itself to irrupt under the weight of matter it seeks to represent. Language activates becoming-other by welcoming chaos – 'a maximum of disparate series', disrupting linear causal interpretation. It disrupts the complacency of linearity by creating its own sense. In visual arts, this is exemplified in Jackson Pollock's art, where painting is pushed to its limit:

[N]o longer the transformation of the form but a decomposition of matter, which abandons us to its lineaments and granulations. The painting thus becomes a catastrophe-painting and a diagram-painting at one and the same time. This time, it is at the point closest to catastrophe, in absolute proximity, that modern man discovers rhythm: we can easily see how this response to the question of a 'modern' function of painting is different from that given by abstraction. Here it is no longer an inner vision that gives us the infinite, but a manual power that is spread out 'all over,' from one edge of the painting to the other.¹⁵

With regards to the singularity of catastrophe, however, Deleuze would, in the end, favor Francis Bacon over Pollock's action painting and the diagrammatic painting of abstract art. On the one hand, Pollock's whiplash over the painting creates a manual tension against reality. On the other hand, abandoning the lineaments, contours, and borders, to flows, forces, and densities, typical of abstract art, 'gives us the infinite', albeit, as a product of optical violence done to the canvas: "lines that are 'more' than lines, surfaces that are 'more' than surfaces, or, conversely, volumes that are 'less' than volumes" (*LS*, 106). Bacon, however, "follows a third path, which is neither optical like abstract painting nor manual like action painting" (*ibid.*, 110). The point is not to submerge deeper in catastrophe but to emerge from it. Bacon criticized abstract art as amounting to a code, such as lines' or 'contours' "subordinated to the requirements of optical organization" (*ibid.*, 106). By exposing the specificity of under-determination or

¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith, London and New York: Continuum, 2003, pp. 105-06; henceforth, *LS*.

over-determination of chaos done on the canvas, art prevents “a body or a word” to “end at a precise point” (*ATP*, 109). As *A Thousand Plateaus* asserts in pragmatic terms, chaos must rather instruct us “how to prevent escape from veering into the imaginary or falling into a black hole” (*ATP*, 110).

In *What Is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari identify the genetic counterpart of avoiding unregulated collapse in the transference of chaos into the brain. To put it in terms of Schelling’s philosophy of nature (*FO*, 17), the excitability of the nerve system serves as nature’s point of inhibition through which the brain itself becomes a subject – as Deleuze and Guattari describe, a “thought-brain.”¹⁶ Thus, the problem of the philosophy of nature lies not in explaining the “active in Nature, but the *resting, permanent*” (*FO*, 17). Nature’s self-retarding force that inhibits its production to proceed infinitely, thus a product is an inhibited point already, makes possible the becoming-subject of the brain, the becoming-thought of an organism, speaking of “cerebral movements giving rise to conceptual personae” (*WIP*, 211). Here, Schelling anticipates the Deleuzian problem of how to “acquire a consistency without losing the infinite into which thought plunges” (*ibid.*, 42). As he puts it in his second *Naturphilosophie*, the intuition of the infinite cannot arrive at consciousness “without external, empirical exhibition” (*FO*, 15). As Deleuze shows the way, the demonstration or exhibition proper at this point concerns the presentation of the *non-formalizability* of matter or nature in general, which is possible only if, as Schelling would intercalate, nature inhibits itself from infinite production. In short, an *inhibited point* presents itself as capable of being *demonstrated*.

ELUDING THE EARTH’S DEATH SENTENCE AS A CODE

Meanwhile, by the non-formality of the material’s ‘excess,’ its ‘positive syntactic and semantic power,’ we can begin addressing a contemporary challenge to philosophy of nature or matter presentation that the current geological era has ushered in our time. As Colebrook spells out, one of these challenges is how to think of ourselves “in a future that will not be an extension of the present.”¹⁷ This

¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 210; henceforth, *WIP*.

¹⁷ Claire Colebrook, *Death of the PostHuman*, Vol. 1, Michigan: Open Humanities Press, 2014, p. 114; henceforth, *DP*.

is one of the chief predicaments of the geologic turn to the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene is a temporal irruption supervening on our collective imaginary as organic species, whereby as a syntactic power in itself (this is where the Deleuzian linguistic becoming-contested comes in), the ‘scene of Man’ “invents the form in which it plays the role of dark precursor” (*DR*, 121). The Anthropocene emerges from this collapse of time- and language systems, out of which this abyssal phenomenon of nature presently unfolds – once again, as dark precursor.

To get a clear picture of what the dark precursor means, suppose God is a lobster, “a double pincer, a double bind” (*ATP*, 40). There is, again, a bit of Schellingian aura here, apropos of the Deleuzian double articulation (of matter or nature), which states: ‘articulate twice, B-A, BA’ (*ibid.*, 41). The bi-polar nature of nature, however, as John Protevi annotates this aspect of Deleuze’s theory of nature, has to have something consistent within to hold on to, “a relative consistency” even as nature “is plugged into a network of other flows.”¹⁸ In this sense, a body of nature is defined by either “what overpowers it,” such as a God-lobster capable of stratifying territories and spatiality, and overcoming temporalities into “a bio-political organization” (*OJG*, 37), or “what escapes it” (*ibid.*, 36), such as a deterritorializing activity in the form of a critique, which thereby “exposes the illusion of the organism as the judgment of God” (*ibid.*, 39). When God is not a God-lobster, as Protevi describes, “he is the name of a transcendental illusion” (*ibid.*).

In Schellingian terms, what overpowers and escapes nature in the sense of doubling concerns a third form of judgment. This relates mainly to the propositional deduction (linguistic portmanteau, in Deleuzian terms), such as A and B, which are both “posited as Being in all potencies.”¹⁹ In the *Ages of the World*, Schelling elaborates this quite complicated syntax:

Therefore, a doubling already lies at the bottom of the simple concept: A in this

¹⁸ John Protevi, “The organism as the judgment of God: Aristotle, Kant and Deleuze on nature (that is, on biology, theology and politics), in *Deleuze and Religion*, ed. Mary Bryden, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 36; henceforth, *OJG*.

¹⁹ F.W.J. Schelling, “Further Presentations from the System of Philosophy (1802) [Extract],” in *The Philosophical Rupture Between Fichte and Schelling: Selected Texts and Correspondences, 1800-1802*, ed. Michael Vater and David Wood, New York: State University of New York Press, 2012, p. 160.

judgment is not A, but ‘something = x, that A is.’ Likewise, B is not B, but ‘something = x, that B is,’ and not this (not A and B for themselves) but the ‘x that is A’ and ‘the x that is B’ is one and the same, that is, the same x. There are actually three propositions contained in the above cited proposition. The first, ‘A = x,’ the second, ‘B = x,’ and, following first from this, the third, ‘A and B are one and the same,’ that is, ‘both are x.’ (*AW*, 8)

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, a linguistic counterpart to this Schellingian paradox of the indifference of the third judgment conveys an unsurprising analogy: “We ... call it the plane of Nature, although nature has nothing to do with it since on this plane there is no distinction between the natural and the artificial. However many dimensions it may have, it never has a supplementary dimension to that which transpires upon it. That alone makes it natural and immanent” (*ATP*, 266). Also called the plane of consistency, the plane of Nature is similar to a geometric plane. Ironically, it is also a non-consistent plane because it no longer conveys a mental design, apropos of the dualism of universal and particular, infinite and finite, etc. Rather, it is an indifferent abstract design (*OJG*, 31). The consistent plane, the plane of Nature, is where ‘proliferation’ and becomings happen, where people *people* themselves in the manner of contagion. Or rather, a plane that hosts “an involution, in which form is constantly being dissolved, freeing times and speeds” (*ATP*, 267). Now, suppose that plane of consistency is the Anthropocene.

In the sense of this plane, the present is the manifest thought- and time-image of the earth undergoing cataclysmic change. However, as a localizable product of nature’s infinite productivity, earth’s cosmic time lies beyond the remit of concepts to comprehend its dark past. The earth can, however, only “[effect] a transfer between sensible propriety and intelligible figuration” (*OJG*, 32), to the extent that, as a physical point of inhibition of cosmic movement, the earth necessarily “incarcerates that which in itself is spiritual and incomprehensible,” but does so for “something [to come to the fore] out of an originary negation” (*AW*, p. 31). Schelling called this an indivisible thought emancipated from pure negation, the being-thought of nature that is in excess of thought, its dark precursor that alone can produce *differentia*, ‘proliferations’ in the Deleuzian sense. In Schelling, this dark inheritance is “the deepest of what remains if everything accidental and everything that has become is removed” (*ibid.*, 31). The unprethinkable cosmos is, therefore, impervious to thought, all the more to forged time-systems that, since the explosion of intelligence separated the hominin from

the hominid, tend to overwhelm nature's arcane formerity.

In the advent of agriculture, however, the Earth, cosmic by origin, has become a territorialized concept, enabling large-scale human settlements, technical innovations of teleology's economic machine, making room for artificial time-systems. In the same regard, Colebrook describes a notion of the earth's time- and thought-image as a planet that has become too "humanized" and "nationalized" (*DP*, 114). Since becoming a territory, the earth has also become a contested place, resulting from global anthropogenic interference with natural systems, the earth's strata, the atmosphere, oceans, lands, and the polar cryosphere. As Colebrook suggests, the planet's future requires that the earth becomes apolitical as a place or territory overcoded by extinction-inducing human singularity, pertaining to its anthropogenic imprints on climate, racial, economic, political, not to mention gender *differentia*, in an accelerating system of negative collapse.

The Anthropocene thus rounds out a formidable system of natural and artificial breakdowns overcoded by anthropogenic approaches to extinction. In this context, following Colebrook's post-political return of territorialized planet to cosmic life, we can deploy a Schellingian-Deleuzian double theory of the earth's collapse as apriori synthesis. In both positive terms of collapse, the breakdown of the synthesis is the handiwork of aesthetic interventions through transversal collaborations with the non-formal expression of a non-organic source, the cosmos. In visual arts, Francis Bacon's art form best expresses this meshwork for Deleuze. For Schelling, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, representing a genre like no other, conveys the transversality of the 'third judgment', which, nonetheless, 'requires its own theory'.²⁰ Through arts, natural chaotic dispersions are put into play, in marked contrast to a discursive (rationalist) form of collapse in line with Schelling's criticism of the economic teleological principle that Descartes initiated. (Cartesianism's economic teleology, as Gare has noted, can only rearrange the world and, therefore, cannot create one in the future.²¹ Thus, it can only be realized via a non-Cartesian positive rendering of collapse). In this

²⁰ F.W.J., Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Douglas W. Scott, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 240.

²¹ Arran Gare, "Creating the Future" (Editorial), *Cosmos and History: A Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* Vol. 14, no. 3, 2018, p. 2.

sense, the real task of nature philosophy, in both the Deleuzian and Schellingian sense, is to put an end to this world.

Its resonance in Schelling studies has led to the revival of the earliest challenge to Kant's Copernican turn. For either of the two strands of contemporary philosophy of nature (Deleuzian and Schellingian), Kant is the source of discursive negativity upon which a false concept of progress is based. It is false not only because it does not take place as progress. Rather, it builds itself from a transcendental field already emptied by the expulsion of external reality as the source of the eternally productive, the cosmic, against which Deleuze and Schelling proposed natural systems breakdown. Kant's critical project, in a word, is a pure discourse of collapse.

This shared criticism of Kant's legacy would later extend to the Hegelian dialectical negation of externality, arguably, the culmination of negative reason since the Copernican turn through the becoming-subject of the world in varying forms of reterritorializing capture.

KANT'S DE-EXTINCTION MECHANICS AND HEGEL'S 'COLLAPSE'

In *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling*, I.H. Grant argues that Kant's Copernican model is a pure schematized model of immanent infinity that annuls the 'in itself' - excises it from metaphysics (*PNA*, 3). Thus, against the background of "the general replacement of metaphysics with epistemology ... with conceptual and logical analysis," Grant asserts, "[the model itself] continues to incapacitate philosophy in its attempts to make, rather than merely criticize, systematic metaphysics" (*ibid.*).

Similarly, Colebrook sees in Kant a lost opportunity to advance a fundamental theory of knowledge grounded in the same imperative to think of a world without us, a world in-itself. This metaphysical opportunity is alien to Kant. Colebrook writes: "What has occurred, since Kant, is an increasing rejection of an 'in itself' beyond the given, and yet such a gap should perhaps be thought today - not in order to repair or close the distance that separates us from the world but to heighten both our non-knowledge and the imperative to think (but not to experience) that which cannot be known" (*DP*, 33). On its own, nature manifests its unwillingness to be thought in and as thought, other than what is

already thinkable in it, namely, its inexistence.²² Needless to say, the positive collapse of the world has never been an integral part of the modern idea and presentation of matter and nature as inexistence, as a positive attribute of the in-itself. Instead, the presentation is enabled by a specific type of reason that renders nature thinkable through the denial of the external world, which is a negative form of inexistence.

This leads us to the correlation between this negative system of collapse and Hegel's theory of negativity, arguably the perfection of the end goal of reflexive and determinate reason laid out by Kant. In Hegel, Kant's Copernicanism is reformed into a model of realizing knowledge in the self-determination of acts at the level of historical consciousness. Hegel sought to construct a metaphysic that was lost in Kant, a metaphysic that renders the in-itself finally nonbinding through the sublation of nature by history.

In the following section, we will briefly introduce Hegel's concept of negativity in contrast to positive systems of collapse. The objective is to situate Hegel's dialectics within the structure of earth-cosmos, existence-extinction, or subject-object relation; within the general structure of the infinite productivity of nature as cosmic time. Before their notorious rivalry, Hegel agreed with Schelling that, in the dominant strain of post-Kantian philosophy that Fichte's doctrine of knowledge represents regarding the problematic notion of the 'in-itself', nature is wrongly subordinated to the epistemic sovereignty of reason. Starting with Kant, this represents a concept of externality where nature as in-itself remains unexplored, abandoned to the vagaries of the supersensible. Despite his attempt to refocus the analysis of the in-itself from epistemology to judgment of beauty, the whole process, for Kant, has to be realigned to purposive causality, ultimately, the moral law where nature is made to exhibit the principle of necessity intrinsic to morals. Hence, as Hegel argues, the "need for a philosophy that will recompense nature for the mishandling that it suffered in Kant and Fichte's system."²³

²² Iain Hamilton Grant, "Law of Insuperable Environment: What is Exhibited in the *Exhibition of the Process of Nature*?" *Analecta Hermeneutica*, vol. 5, 2013b, p. 6.

²³ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1977, 83.

HEGEL'S CLOSURE OF KANT'S LEGACY

One of the significant deadlocks of transcendental philosophy that Kant was unable to resolve concerns the notion of two absolutes, the moral and empirical worlds, practical reason and pure understanding. Hegel tried to settle this dilemma, not by resorting to the practical ground common to both worlds, a resolution that Fichte before him offered to overcome the Kantian impasse,²⁴ but rather, to negate the reflexive standpoint of practical reason, *tout court*.

In Hegel, the negation of reflexivity rather inversely manifests the actual return of the will to the “presupposition of cognition.”²⁵ Hegel argues that the “will’s returning [...] to the presupposition of cognition” takes the reconciliation of two opposed worlds “its own purpose” (*EL*, 302). Here the will as knowledge acts as the “intelligence [that] interprets the world [unified this time] as the Concept in its actuality” (*ibid.*). Hegel asserts that this is “the genuine position of rational cognition,” in which the problem of two worlds is resolved, “the standpoint of Kant with regard to human action, and also that of Fichte” (*ibid.*). As cognizing will, the self recovers from the non-activity of the will that the world of morals demands, “the world [...] as it ought to be” (*ibid.*). Hegel writes:

The good ought to be realized [...] and the will is simply the good that is self-activating. But then if the world were as it ought to be, the result would be that the activity of willing would disappear. Therefore the will itself also requires that its purpose shall not be realised. This correctly expresses the finitude of willing... (*ibid.*)

Hence, the ‘returning will’ resolves the Kantian dilemma over the question of external or objective knowledge (*ibid.*), vis-à-vis the subjective standpoint of reason, thus the opposition of world and will. Hegel resolves this opposition via the dialectical mediation of “reflection-upon-oneself” and “reflection-into-another.”²⁶ The sublation of mediation constitutes the logical mediation properly (*EL*, 192). Reflection-into-another, which is already relational, is sublated in favor of a higher movement, whereby the concept concretizes into the Idea. Finally,

²⁴ J.G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowing. J.G. Fichte’s Lectures on the Wissenschaftslehre*, trans. Walter E. Wright, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2005, p. 49; henceforth, *LW*.

²⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences (with the Zusätze)*, trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1991, p. 302; henceforth, *EL*.

²⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox and ed. Stephen Houlgate, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 192; henceforth, *OPR*.

under the movement of eternity, the Idea expresses itself concretely in the Spirit. The realm of the Idea, thus, restores the Kantian concept of immortality, albeit in post-reflexive terms. Just as the reflexive self is rescued from moral necessity, the in-itself is released from the moral condition of its negative determination, whereby it is now possible to attain knowledge in the pure metaphysical sense. The in-itself is restored to its proper origin in metaphysics by stepping beyond epistemology, but also - because it is now attainable in the Spirit - beyond the determination of time-system.

Here, the soul's immortality (that Kant invoked) acquires a new version: a properly understood metaphysics releases the subject from its self-imposed limitation and breaks into the absolute. The absolute lies 'beyond' not just in terms of the time-systems of consciousness, "which length of time," Hegel states, "is something entirely relative," but, more importantly, in terms of the "Spirit [which] belongs to the dimension of eternity and has no actual length."²⁷ The emancipation of the subject from reflexivity frees time from its dependence on time systems, which leaves an idea of time that is no longer bound to the understanding, the infinite. For this representation of time to become actual, there must first occur an immediate unity of existence and being, the in-itself and the being that posits (released from the limits of inner reflection, reflection-upon-onself, according to which the external is also first posited, reflection-into-another). The positedness of the unity of the inner and the outer constitutes the identity of actuality (*EL*, 213). This unity takes place not in epistemology but rather in history via a series of progression by self-determination, first in art, then in religion, and finally, in philosophy.²⁸

THE DESIRE FOR EXISTENCE: HEGEL'S VITALISM

Meanwhile, the issue with Hegel's negativity vis-a-vis the double theory of natural or positive collapse (discussed in the previous sections) concerns three crucial points:

²⁷ G.W.F. Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History, with selections from The Philosophy of Right*, trans. Leo Rauch, Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1988, p. 98.

²⁸ G.W.F. Hegel, "Position of Art in Relation to the Finite World and to Religion and Philosophy," in *Lectures on Fine Art*, Vol. 1, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988a, pp. 91-105.

1. The operative principle of negativity that Hegel radicalized from Kant.
2. The displacement of the natural ground of knowledge onto the practical ground of conviction or its tendency to take itself as its “source and principle.”²⁹
3. The capacitation of this practical conviction in terms of the actual drama of reason in the theatre of history.

At the limit of negative thinking lies the general elusiveness of all knowledge's positive content, namely, the specter of existence (*GPP*, 148). In Hegelian terms, however, the Idea is substituted for existence. The in-itself sublates into a self-actualizing concept (recall the progressive stages of the self-actualization of concept from art, and religion, to philosophy), whereby the positive (the spectrality of existence that is the Idea) is diverted into an immanent model of a community or history, but “with no end or model outside of humanity’s ... self-making power”(*DML*, 13). For Colebrook, this is the signature of immanent dialectics endorsing the full vitalism of the human species.

In Hegel, the problem of the external world is resolved through the desire for existence, which, on account of the in-itself, already reflects a form of metaphysical desire that Kant rejected in line with its unjustified appeal to the supersensible. For Hegel, however, the ‘beyond’ is rather the domain of history and the resolution of the “disquiet of the self”³⁰ that initiates the process of self-consciousness.

This is where the double negation fulfills its purpose, ensuring that existence represents the “dialectical emergence of thought or truth in its fullness” (*LD*, 450). Since there is no internal guarantee, apropos of desire, either historical or metaphysical, that the ego will cease looking at itself as object-self in the absence of externality or in place of the positive against which it can posit something outside or opposite itself, the self-making power of truth requires, in the first place, the overcoming of the desire for infinite negation of the object-self. Double negation presupposes that the subject has emancipated from its own negativity through self-actualization as a concept, as a subject-self, the self-conception of

²⁹ F.W.J. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*, trans. Bruce Matthews, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2006a, p. 196; henceforth, *GPP*.

³⁰ Peter Kalkavage, *The Logic of Desire: An Introduction to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2007, p. 114; henceforth, *LD*.

the subject as the consciousness of the Spirit's movement that takes the 'shape' of Concept in historical time. Consequently, historical consciousness asserts that existence is no longer about erring on the side of philosophical caution (the overcoming of skepticism) than it is about the absolute assertion of the practical right to exist, thus resolving the "persistent mediation of sense-certainty's Here-and-Now" (*ibid.*).

CONCLUSION: THINKING EXTINCTION AND THE FUTURE OF NEGATIVITY

In this last and concluding section, we will try as briefly as possible to approach a Deleuzian theory of immanent life through a Schellingian theory of the unprethinkable. We hope then to conclude with Hegel's undeclared vitalism. We contend that this type of 'organicist vitalism' or the idea of bounded organism (*DP*, 154), as Colebrook argued, significantly informs how critical theory responds to the phenomenon of the Death of the World, what Andrew Culp, in *Dark Deleuze*, describes as the present culmination of two previous deaths known to critical reason, that of God and Man.³¹

We mean critical theory as negativity's ongoing quest to attain and demonstrate the positive; a "correctly understood negative" that "[withdraws] into its own limits in order to make [the positive] discernible, and then not only possible but necessary" (*GPP*, 145). We prefer a genealogy of critical theory that digs up its origin in that nuanced point within its practice where it confronts its self-mirroring negativity. The longer it endures the negative, rather joyously, the longer it remains a mere philosophy of the academe. It suffices to recall here our discussion of Hegel's conjuration of historical existence premised on a negative fulfillment that has influenced diverse schools of critical theory, from Marxism to the Frankfurt School to postmodern thinking. But as Culp argues, the "greatest crime of joyousness is tolerance" (*DD*, 41). The opposite complement of this blissful academicism is the philosophy of life that Schelling attributes to positive philosophy (*GPP*, 198).

It is arguable, however, that if one takes hold of the positive, the negative will vanish. As Schelling clarifies, "the [negative] hands over its final concept to the

³¹ Andre Culp, *Dark Deleuze*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016, p. 40; henceforth, *DD*.

positive only as a demand, not as a principle” (*ibid.*, 154).

Here it is interesting to underline Schelling’s difference with Hegel in light of recent annotations of his early philosophical manuscripts: “Where Hegel stresses the logical dimension of reflexivity in the concept, Schelling emphasizes the material grounds as a condition that can always be negated (i.e., spiritualized), yet that can never be voided in an ontological sense by any spirit.”³² This material ground is nature’s irreducible autonomy, which grounds and originates that which seeks to become what it is not, an apriori subject that grounds and originates a conditioned object, such as consciousness. Consciousness as object attains a semblance of subjectivity by doubling the “duplicity that inheres in identity at all times” (*IEG*, 48). This way, it becomes an object to itself. Duplicity redirects the concept of identity, which is the positive identity that inheres in nature, toward a dimension of “experience prior to the mirror play of negations.”³³ This means that the prior experience (of freedom), which is co-temporal with nature, is grounded in the pre-synthetic structure of consciousness.

Following the Schellingian maxim that any cognition corresponds to being,³⁴ freedom’s co-temporality with eternity must also correspond to an infinitely potential being. This is no less the being of the unprethinkingly non-human, neither essence nor substance; the being of the pre-ontic, which is also the domain of brute force, flows, and densities; mechanical, physical, chemical, molecular, etc., independent of cognition and transcendent to it. These are inhuman powers involved in the co-creation of the (geological) ages of the world. From ancient myths to modern reason, sadly, the ‘unprethinkable’ has managed to reveal itself only through the history of the errors of cognition. We have a history of the understanding of Being, rather “distorted and camouflaged”³⁵ by a negative conception of the will that, as Schelling laments (with Hegel as his prime target),

³² Thomas Pfau, “Critical Introduction,” in F.W.J Schelling, *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory*, trans. Thomas Pfau, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1994, p. 48, n.9; henceforth, *IEG*.

³³ Manfred Frank, *What is Neostructuralism?*, trans. by Sabine Wile and Richard Gray, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p., 277; henceforth, *WN*.

³⁴ “Since every cognition corresponds to being – a real cognition to a real being – then nothing other than the infinite potential of being can correspond to the infinite potential for cognition, and this is then the innate and inborn content of reason. Philosophy, or reason, would be directed, above all, to this immediate content of reason insofar as reason acts as the subject in philosophy” (*GPP*, pp. 132-33).

³⁵ See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1996, 1.

only “plunges man into an even deeper ... ignorance”(GPP, 93). Accordingly, Hegel's error lies in his negative conception of the will, consequent upon double negation, such that “there is no concept of Being outside the one that appears on the horizon of the self-sublation of reflection” (WN, 277). Manfred Frank explains Schelling's critique of double negation in this respect:

This in turn only means that the doubly reflective negation can retreat for the benefit of Being and thereby allow Being to appear (thus it is the ground for the appearance of Being); but this also means that neither its own Being, nor the Being of that which it negates, is affirmed. This is both immediately and analytically intelligible: Negation can destroy (even itself), but it cannot create. (*ibid.*)

This double reflective negation signifies the self-alienation of the Spirit as a self-forgetting act. As Frank elaborates, double negation “absolves itself from its own existing,” thereby “reducing the ‘absolutely transcendent Being’ to a determination of essence [*Wesensbestimmung*]” (*ibid.*). Its equivalent expression in Hegel is the Spirit that emerges out of reflection's withdrawal from the positive ground of Being, hence the loss of nature that precedes the ascension of the Spirit.

This is quite clear in Hegel, at least in Žižek's opinion: “There is no subject which is the agent of the process and suffers a loss; the subject is the outcome of a loss.”³⁶ The experience of loss presupposes that the pre-synthetic (the being of the pre-ontic) is instead summoned to resolve the predicament of reflection for which a world devoid of meaning is insufferable. As we have argued, the pre-synthetic welcomes the positive experience of loss out of the collapse of the world. Thus, the loss ought to be suffered not from within the world but outside of it. Accordingly, this necessitates fabricating a world before the insufferable wreaks havoc upon reflection—in Kantian terms, the moral world and its idea of the end of the actual world in the emergence of the apparent one. Schelling's notion of collapse endorses the reverse. The apparent world ends in the actual world where reflection terminates by becoming-world, not the reverse, the becoming-subject of the world. As Culp contends, the death of the World rather “admits the insufficiency of previous attempts to save it and instead poses a revolutionary gamble only by destroying this world will we release ourselves from its problems”(DD, 40).

³⁶ Slavoj Žižek, “Plato, Descartes and Hegel: The Three Philosophers of Event,” in *Palgrave Handbook of German Idealism*, ed. Matthew C. Altman, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 600.

Colebrook takes up this death of the world strain, aligning herself with Deleuze and Guattari's bias for the non-self-maintaining dimension of life via the permanent 'warring junction' between the sensible and the thinkable. The permanence of the 'warring junction', which can "go a long way to destroying the race of man" (*WIP*, 178), enables a form of cognition that endorses no future for the organism, other than "to preserve the time and genealogy" of that which precedes the "human species" (*DP*, 146; *WIP*, 178), the unprethinkingly inhuman properties before the creation of the ages of the world. Again, following the Schellingian maxim, if cognition corresponds to being, the cognition of the permanent 'warring junction' corresponds to a being capable of thinking beyond human – needless to say, the Nietzschean 'superman' (*DP*, 139).

In this sense, the World's death unravels the time and genealogy of the *aesthesis* of the known world, the actuality of the pre-actual. The death of the World, however, is not the end of the negative and the beginning of the positive. Rather, it gives birth to aesthetic consciousness as consciousness of "correctly understood negative" (*GPP*, 198), as the thought of the end of the world. Thus, with regards to its critical relation to negative metaphysics and its endorsement of the permanent 'warring junction', the revolutionary gamble, aesthetic consciousness realizes itself as the "true organon of philosophy."³⁷ Here, philosophy means the philosophy of life.

To think in terms of a 'correctly understood negative' is to think of the future through the registers of negative extinction; how the records and chronicles of an incorrectly understood negative generated the spirit of the world, a world that continuously excites the desire for existence without end. Thus, to think with the final end is to exist in the true sense of the term. In conclusion, as Grant asserts, to think as to exist in this modality of thinking-existing will always "begin with a mark in the void it can never recover."³⁸

vr.aqui.rivas@gmail.com

Polytechnic University of the Philippines

³⁷ F.W.J Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter Heath, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001, 14.

³⁸ 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. 494.

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