The 'Patasite

Laruelle's Decisions: Non-Philosophy and Phorontology

I partly relate François Laruelle’s non-philosophy to phorontology through his emphasis on the concept of “Decision.” A Decision encapsulates an essential act of cutting—a de-scission—that necessarily eliminates the breadth of virtual possibilities or the continua of thought and actualizes certain pathways instead of others. Non-philosophy strives to be non-Decisional in that it attempts to actualize all virtual possibilities of thought in order not to delimit a thought’s breadth as either “good” or “bad,” but rather to present philosophy *qua* philosophy or a specific philosophy as consisting of a real continuum.

What I call a “site” connotes a fuzzy and non-Decided space: a space that has not yet progressed through the various de-scissions that render a space into a place. A site is therefore not of the world: it precedes the emergence of a “world” in a non-Decisional ecosystem that has denied any cut or strategies of cutting. Phorontology is therefore a speculative practice that resists certain Decisions in an effort to, like non-philosophy, maintain a virtuality of philosophy (or a cloning of philosophy). However, the virtuality of philosophy remains un-actualized only insofar as certain thoughts are, from an institutional and discursive perspective, more “philosophical” than others. I prefer the speculations of a philosophy that focuses on sites and para-sites that exist outside of the human world. In a sense, speculative philosophies, like non-philosophy and speculative realism, are philosophical responses to movements such as quantum mechanics and contemporary astronomy: quantum mechanics has dealt with strange realities for over a hundred years while much of
continental philosophy has (until the emergence of speculative realism, object-oriented ontology, and the earlier Laruellean movement), remained locked in a mire of subjectivity and a linguistics of being (for much of the twentieth century). Phorontology is speculative because it emphasizes both the causative and the non-causative in that it points to a theoretically “pure” — i.e., non-Decided or non-desited — site; in other words, phorontology focuses on a site that exists prior to any construction. The space becomes a constructed-place when certain de-scissions are made actual, thereby separating geographies into territories.

Phorontology is speculative because it remains prior to or outside of certain Decisions. Phorontology is, to that end, both a speculative philosophy and also a linguistic branch of 'Pataphysics. 'Pataphysics mixes metaphysics and paraphysics, remaining interested in the beyond of metaphysics; i.e., ‘Pataphysics focuses on the dimensionally anterior sites and para-sites of reality — or the 'patasites of reality, irreality, and surreality. What 'pataphysicians would call “ethernity” can be interpreted in similar terms as the virtual and non-Decisional continua of non-philosophical thought.

Speculative Metasentience

Phorontology prefers the speculative potential offered by the being of parasites because human consciousness is produced by a parasite-relationship: one of the first parasites of self-reflexive consciousness is language. Perhaps surprisingly, such speculation shares similarities with some strains of speculative fiction and hard science fiction: in July of 2004, the science fiction writer Peter Watts became interested in a bizarre article that was circulating through media outlets. The article reported that spontaneous bipedalism had occurred in a monkey after that monkey had survived a serious bout of the flu. Reporter Dan Waldman writes that:

Natasha, a 5-year-old black macaque at the Safari Park near Tel Aviv, began walking exclusively on her hind legs after a
stomach ailment nearly killed her, zookeepers said […]. Two weeks ago, Natasha and three other monkeys were diagnosed with severe stomach flu. At the zoo clinic, she slipped into critical condition […]. After intensive treatment, Natasha’s condition stabilized. When she was released from the clinic, Natasha began walking upright. “I’ve never seen or heard of this before,” said Horowitz. “One possible explanation is brain damage from the illness,” he said.1

On July 22, 2004, Peter Watts responded to this article in a blog post entitled: “Brain Damage. The Very Essence of Humanity.” Watts speculates, regarding such a parasite-induced evolution, that

[b]ipedalism has been cited as the genesis of humanity. It freed us to use our hands, leading to increased manual dexterity, bigger brains, tool use, and global domination. But of all the theories I’ve ever seen put forth to explain why we started walking erect in the first place — nursing, thermoregulation, the need to see where the hell you were when the tall grass of the African savannah blocked your view — I don’t recall anyone ever citing brain damage as the catalyst. Fellow Mammals, it don’t get more ironic than that.2

What Watts calls “brain damage” could just as easily be called a “mutation” or “parasite” that alters the normative functionality of the overall machine, thereby reprogramming the machine so that it behaves in a different manner. Like the mind-controlling fungus Orphiocordyceps unilateralis—a parasite-fungus that grows out of an ant’s head in order to use that ant’s body like a remote-controlled robot — bipedalism can be considered

a corollary of consciousness so that, speculatively speaking, self-awareness may be the result of a mind-controlling parasite.³

The fish parasite, *Cymothoa exigua*, is an isopod that takes up residence in fish gills. When it lives in fish gills it is male, but *Cymothoa exigua* is a protandric hermaphrodite, which means that it becomes a female later in its life cycle. At this point, the marine louse travels from the gills and takes up residence in the fish’s mouth, clamping down overtop of the tongue and draining that organ’s blood until it atrophies and falls off. *Cymothoa exigua* proceeds to function as the fish’s tongue. At various points in the life cycle, other males from the gills travel to the mouth and mate with the female/tongue parasite in order to create future generations of *Cymothoa*. This isopod literally becomes the tongue of the fish. The *parasite speaks*.

Consciousness or subjectivity (defined here as an intelligent and sentient self-recursive system) may also be akin to *Toxoplasma gondii* infection, a parasite whose primary host is cats, but can be transmitted to humans and other mammals. *Toxoplasma gondii* is one of the world’s most prevalent of parasites, infecting up to one third of the world’s human population. In humans, the parasite seems to increase certain risk-taking behaviors, including a higher incidence of not looking both ways when crossing the street and sexual arousal when exposed to the smell of cat urine. *Toxoplasma gondii* is one of the most common chronic and unobstructive parasites — unless one suffers from the immunodeficiency that may result in toxoplasmosis — that many humans live with on a daily basis. Following Peter Watts’s speculations regarding consciousness, sentience may well be one of the various benign parasites that we all live with everyday.

I have considered a variety of potential speculative parasites that may have contributed to consciousness and I have analyzed

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³ Gary Shipley links parasitosis to suicidal ideation in *The Death of Conrad Unger* (2012). He focuses on the *Orphiocordyceps unilateralis* fungi and the hairworm. Shipley considers the suicidal thoughts of his friend Conrad Unger (and also Gérard de Nerval, Virginia Woolf, David Foster Wallace, and Ann Quin) as a kind of parasitic infection.
these “objects” as exterior influences (symbolic or real) that have written consciousness après la lettre, thereby denying any agency to “subjectivity” or being. These objects have included the fields of memetics, parasitology, Bök’s The Xenotext, Dewdney’s 'pataphysical poetics, the Gutenberg revolution, capitalism, consumption, the Saussurean paragram, conceptual writing, and the Lucretian clinamen, but each of these objects or fields can be summarized as encompassing one basic trait — namely, a certain degree of self-reflexivity.

Self-reflexivity is parasitic because it induces what I call “metasentience,” which creates an other and makes that other operative within a psychic system or worldview. Peter Watts reads self-reflexivity as not only instating a self-other dyad or as creating a sentient multiplicity that involves feedback from an exterior world, but also as permitting such behaviors as “mooching.” In an August 6, 2004 blog post entitled “The Secret of Sentience,” Watts writes:

The secret of sentience, is … wait for it…

Mooching. If you can mooch, you’re sentient.
No, bear with me here. This is brilliant. I’m not talking about an animal hanging out some place where he’s learned there’s food to be had. I’m talking about the active, premeditated mooch, the manipulation of moochee by moocher. I’m talking expectation and eye contact. When an organism simply shows up and waits for food to drop out of the sky, that’s just operant conditioning. But when a sparrow with a brain the size of a lentil — basically, a hopping piece of feathered popcorn — actually looks you in the eye, and changes its behaviour based on what it sees there, we’re talking something else again. When the expected food doesn’t materialise, and the would-be moocher actually fixes you with a baleful bird stare and scolds you, we’re talking something that has a Theory of Mind.
Such a creature is not treating you as an inanimate object, he’s treating you as a fellow autonomous agent with your own agenda.4

Phorontology does not only focus on the architectonics that are built upon a site or on the various inanimate objects that proliferate within a construction or place; instead, phorontology analyzes *agental transjects* — transjects that have become autonomous. If metasentience is partly the result of a parasite-evolution — an underlying mutation that has become normalized over time — then sentience is one instance of the parasite and the mooch is another. Watts’s second example — in which a pigeon becomes associated with a “theory of mind” — emphasizes the parasitic nature of social organization. The social order is organized not only on the basis of hierarchies and deployments of power, but also on the mooching strategies that are prevalent within any strata of social communication.

The levels of parasites multiply: language is parasitic because it pre-dates us and outlines the lexical confines of our own speech and thought; metasentience is parasitic because its function is not predicated on the organism’s survival; and communication contains not only noise in its messages, but also the social parasitism in which the addressor and addressee *want* something from each other. These agendas are intrinsically parasitic. I call this informatic dynamic the *symbi-ontic*, which is a concept that combines the notions of the symbiont and the ontic. The ontic is the philosophical category of *what there is*: it is a level-specific category of the ontological that focuses on a subject or object’s real-status. A symbiont is an organism that must live alongside another in order to survive: examples include all organisms that live mutually, commensally, and parasitically; i.e., the lactobacilli that pervade human intestines, lichen, fleas, hermit crabs, etc. The *symbi-ontic* then would define the *real* manifestation of the ontic because nothing lives, exists, or *is* independently of

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itself. There is always a site or a host that functions as a categorical container for something else. The symbi-ontic can therefore be considered the set-theoretical combination of complexity theory and the ontic. The symbi-ontic conceptually approaches complex social systems as assemblages that exist within and alongside other groups. The symbi-ontic presents a fractal picture of social groups in which the possibility of a demarcation or a dividing line—a border where one object begins and another ends—is impossible, or at the very least, theoretically infinite and iterative.

**The Parasite in Being**

Vladimir *sh*Cherbak and Maxim Makukov make the argument that alien signals may be parasitically encoded within human DNA. They argue that because the actual scenario for the origin of terrestrial life is far from being settled, the proposal that it might have been seeded intentionally cannot be ruled out. A statistically strong intelligent-like ‘signal’ in the genetic code is then a testable consequence of such scenario. Here we show that the terrestrial code displays a thorough precision-type orderliness matching criteria to be considered an informational signal.5

The theory that terrestrial life is “seeded” by alien intelligences re-sites human beings as the parasites of alien hosts, or, because the symbi-ontic is multidirectional, the alien code would be the parasite that infects our DNA.

*sh*Cherbak and Makukov insist that an alien signature—a decidedly non-Derridean signature—remains hidden within DNA: “It is possible, at least in principle, to arrange a mapping that both conforms to functional requirements and harbors a

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small message or a signature, allowed by 384-bits of informational capacity of the code.”

Their argument relies on the structure of DNA and its resistance to change and mutation over large periods of cosmic history. This resistance to change situates DNA as a sort of cryptogram that requires an interpretive cipher: this “cipher” would be, for shCherbak and Makukov, the signature of an alien intelligence. The structure of DNA, they argue, suggests in a “statistically strong” manner that an “intelligent-like ‘signal’” resides within “terrestrial genetic code.”

Sounding very much like shCherbak and Makukov, extra-terrestrial paranoia also surfaces in Bök’s Xenotext experiment: “aliens wishing to communicate with us might have already encoded messages in DNA, sending out legions of small, cheap envoys — self-maintaining, self-replicating machines that perpetuate their data over eons in the face of unknown hazards.”

shCherbak and Makukov do not cite either Bök’s experiment to embed a poem in a bacterium or Dewdney’s ’pataphysical poetics that locates a parasite inside the Poet or Author. For Dewdney, the Author is not dead (as she or he is for Barthes), but only infected and controlled by a parasite intelligence. One reading would interpret Bök’s project as situating human beings as the host or the alien to the parasitized bacterium, but another reading would consider the bacterium itself as the host of the parasite-poem. In other words, the “host” can never be definitively located and neither can the “parasite”: Hegel’s master-slave dialectic transforms into the undecidable relationship of the site and the parasite. The relationship is no longer predicated on subjectivity or humanity: there is no lord or bondsman, but only a variety of different strata — objects, subjects, transjects, and anterior processes that are situated differently in relation to centralized attractors. Dewdney uses the following diagram to depict the parasite that lurks within the brain of every subject or author.

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6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Bök, “The Xenotext Experiment,” 228.
Unlike Dewdney, I do not claim that a “traditional” parasite lurks within the brain; that being said, I do argue that a parasite resides inside language and Being in order to organize subjectivity. This “parasite” is the base structure of an unconscious that is structured like a language. Giorgio Agamben also reads language as being parasitic, especially when he adds language to Foucault’s list of apparatuses: “language itself, which is perhaps the most ancient of apparatuses — one in which thousands and thousands of years ago a primate inadvertently let himself be captured, probably without realizing the consequences that he was about to face.”

By reading language as an apparatus, Agamben...
ben situates language as a fundamental parasite that permits a “primate’s” entry into the symbolic order.

The symbi-ontic is, properly speaking, a neologism that collides the *symbolic*, the *ontic*, and the *symbiont*. The symbi-ontic denotes the parasitic collapse of the symbolic associations of the various symbiotic relationships that structure all transjected creatures. The symbolic order preceded the first primate and existed before that primate entered into the parasitic field of the semiotic. First and foremost, *sentience is a sentence*. Sentience is a sentence because every sentence must be spoken or written; i.e., sentience is a concept that is transmitted into and through language. Put differently, “sentience” becomes sited or situated within a sentence. Language transmits sentience into a sentence, but only by virtue of already present locales of feedback and recursivity: when sentience is sited in a sentence, then *metasentience emerges*. Metasentience denotes a “face” of the subject-of that registers the symbi-ontic qualities of sentience.

As I mentioned earlier, Burroughs insists that “the word is now a virus,” but this insight initially derives from his cut-up experiments with Brion Gysin in the 1960s. The cut-up is a formal and procedural textual experiment in which a text (or a variety of texts) are cut-up and permuted together, thereby producing a new text. Burroughs believed that cutting through “word lines” allowed the future to leak into the present. In Burroughs and Gysin’s collaborative work *The Exterminator* (1961), the pair began to understand that language is a parasite-force that enters into and controls the human subject. Consider the following cut-up:

New York..Jan29 1960 Past Time — A German Virologist has succeeded in modifying the basic hereditary material of a virus in such a way as to be able to identify its effects on future generations..Perhaps the most significant step to date in deciphering The Language of Life. “Sooner or later this will lead to an understanding of the language of the virus which is the

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language of life.” He said “The entire message of life is written in four letter words with our genes.”

Burroughs and Gysin discover messages in their experiments—they cut-up newspapers alongside Shakespeare, Rimbaud, and Burroughs’s own massive “word hoard” manuscript—and discover, within the cut-ups, countless messages that uncannily align with Watts, Agamben, Chomsky, Dewdney, and Lacan’s paranoid observations regarding language’s parasitic self-awareness. Another cut-up reads: “According to the imminent scientists ‘The message that is you’ was written in virus left behind in shit and other junk abandoned by Space Tourists who took a look around and pulled out or did They?” Despite the scientological resonance of this claim (Burroughs was interested in L. Ron Hubbard’s scientology), I think that what is more important here is the structure and function of language. At some point in the life cycle of the language-system, language became aware of its own existence as a system. Another cut-up that points to this insight can be found in The Exterminator: “We can crack code write now. Doctor..It says: ‘I am the Virus. I occupy Thee Host..I control your ‘thoughts feelings and apparent sensory impressions.’Life can be written in Thee Sickness-Host.. What Virus Sends You man?..” Metasentient hosts contain an interiorized self that may be the result of a misrecognition of an exterior parasite that has reprogrammed the outside as a new “inside.”

Recursivity is the basic structure of the Parasite. Subject-ofs and posthuman transjects suffer as infected beings: the first consideration of a posthuman phenomenology should state that to be means, first and foremost, to be infected. This infection marks the existence of our parasite guest. Being-in-time means being the host of an entity that is symbolic and exterior; in other

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12 Ibid., 25.
13 Ibid., 10.
words, the subject-of is a transject-symbiont that houses another transject-symbiont. Recurrence is essential to any consideration of postmortemism because the riposte of postmortemism can be found in the resurrection of the corpse lying on the gurney. Every corpus is revivified in postmortemism as everyone’s Warholian fifteen minutes recur again and again: Nietzsche’s ewige Wiederkunft (eternal recurrence) cycles through Vico’s storia ideale eterna (ideal eternal history) and brings us into the twenty-first century.

Concepts of repetition are structured like a parasite: the parasite repeats a certain behavior that maintains the heredity and survival of the parasite. Language is, in this parasitic model, what Jameson would call a “structural void,”14 which he relates to Lacan’s sujet supposé savoir (the subject supposed to know) as an epistemological blank slate that acts as a structuring beacon within the chaotic semiotic field. The sujet supposé savoir is an entirely fictional siting of an imaginary persona within a space of epistemological plenitude: the phrase signifies the grounding of someone—typically an analyst—within a place, building, or framework of knowledge. Such a structural void depicts a site that can be cited as a place of knowledge that becomes seemingly stable when historicized (Jameson), schizophrenized (Deleuze and Guattari), deconstructed (Derrida), politicized (Marx, Gramsci), dialecticized (Hegel, Adorno), or queered (Butler, Wittig), (and there are many other thinkers and examples that could be added to this pitifully circumscribed list). Jameson argues that such a void operates in “the name of difference, flux, dissemination, and heterogeneity; Deleuze’s conception of the schizophrenic text and Derridean deconstruction come to mind. If such perceptions are to be celebrated in their intensity, they must be accompanied by some initial appearance of continuity, some ideology of unification already in place,

which it is their mission to rebuke and shatter.” Such a field of knowledge becomes paradoxically stable when there is a nonexistent and yet stabilizing force. Following Lacan and Jameson, knowledge must be sited somewhere. To that end, the parasite is “real” because it situates the “host” as imaginary. The host does not exist because the very notion of a “host” is predicated on a concealed power differential. The parasite feeds on the host while that host lives at home.

In phorontology, dyadic, dualistic, or hegemonic distinctions are the unnecessary simplifications of complexity—complexity that includes transjects, segments, segmentations, and para-sites. To that end, phorontology disrupts the question of both human and animal: Agamben’s historicization of the Greek distinction between bios (life as according to an individual or a group) and zoē (“bare life” that is common to men, animals, and gods) is conceptually re-sited when viewed parasitically. Site/parasite and host/guest may appear to be structurally dyadic, but they do not function as dyads because, like Hegel’s classic fable of the master and the slave, there is no stable site for power in any constructed binary.

From the perspective of bios, the parasite may be seen as something unpleasant, but from the perspective of zoē—a category that would encompass both the site and the parasite—a parasite is simply an entity that lives within or alongside another entity. However, phorontology discards the terms bios and zoē in favor of the symbi-ontic. The symbi-ontic is a term that displaces older categories such as “man” and “animal.” A sub-category of the symbi-ontic—as the category of the transjected status of human and animal—could be called the ani-human. The phorontological term “ani-human” emphasizes the etymological basis of “animal “that derives from the Latin word anima, which means “breath” while neologically maintaining both

the “human” within a philosophical transject-body. The distinction between “human” and “animal” becomes transjected in favor of a shared physiological, physical, and biological site (and situation). “Human beings” and so-called “animals” occupy the same space(s) and can live in a type of equilibrium if the linguistic and material conditions of existence are leveled in favor of a shared terminology of transjection. To put this claim differently, I would say that as we move into the twenty-first century we are returning to a medieval period of thought—a period that is necessarily critical of dyadic distinctions.

Serres writes that

history hides the fact that man is the universal parasite, that everything and everyone around him is a hospitable space. Plants and animals are always his hosts; man is always necessarily their guest. Always taking, never giving. He bends the logic of exchange and of giving in his favor when he is dealing with nature as a whole. When he is dealing with his kind, he continues to do so; he wants to be the parasite of man as well. And his kind want to be so too. Hence rivalry. Hence the sudden, explosive perception of animal humanity, hence the world of animals of the fables.17

The “ani-human” exists in her, his, or their own Umwelt. The “ani-human” is certainly a parasitical concept, but the concept is also, paradoxically speaking, host-based. Serres insists that “[t]here are some black spots in language,”18 and these black spots exist because “[w]e are drowning in words and in language. Host is subject, object, friend and enemy.”19 Language presents the symbolic fabric of the ecosystem-site as a means of translation, perception, and communication. Serres points to the importance of conceiving of the parasite as a combinatory and unifying term because the parasite is: “The same at the head,

18 Ibid., 16.
19 Ibid., 23.
the other at the tail, or being at the head and nonbeing at the tail, and this middle trunk that is both same and other, being and nonbeing, and so forth.”  

The parasite-body is an Ouroboros of transjection: it eats its tail in a never-ending cycle of eternal recurrence, consumption, mastication, digestion, and rebirth.

In his essay “Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie Für das Leben,” Nietzsche situates the parasitic relationship in the following way: “Die Gäste, die zuletzt zur Tafel kommen, sollen mit Recht die letzten Plätze erhalten; und ihr wollt die ersten haben? Nun dann tut wenigstens das Höchste und Größte; vielleicht macht man euch dann wirklich Platz, auch wenn ihr zuletzt kommt.”  

(The guests who come last to the table should in all fairness receive the last places. And you wish to have them first? Then do something of the highest and best order. Perhaps people will then really make a place for you, even if you come at the end [my translation]). The subject who is “allowed” to ignore her or his transjected status does so because of temporal injunctions: those who arrive first conquer first and become sujets supposé savoir as “hosts” par excellence. This situation leads Serres to insist that

[h]e [the king] pays for his meal in well turned, well written phrases. And thus he is in the position of the parasite, a universal parasite. One day he will have to understand why the strongest is the parasite — that is to say, the weakest — why the one whose only function is to eat is the one who commands. And speaks. We have just found the place of politics.

Serres considers the undecidable logic of the host and the guest as being mediated, liminal, and transjected as he traces the complexity of power as it travels through the dyad.

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20 Ibid., 23.
Parasite Sex

Tapeworms are transsexual transjects in that fertilization may occur between two proglottids or within the same proglottid (a proglottid is the term for one of the segments of a tapeworm that contains both male and female sexual organs). The posthuman model of sexuality no longer requires sexed organs of differentiation or social genders of difference because sameness has become the model of socio-ontological segmentation. Cloning will be the primary mode of reproduction, Baudrillard argues, as transsexualism becomes the best definition of sexuality.23 I do not find transsexualism to be the dominant mode of contemporary sexuality, as Baudrillard does, but rather parasite sexuality. Parasites contain a proliferation of reproductive organs so that they can impregnate various sections and segments of their own bodies—bodies that function in relation to the interiority of a host. The question of linguistic difference becomes here another unnecessary excess: “him” or “her” is unnecessary for the parasite—a tapeworm, for example, cannot be defined by virtue of sexual or gendered differences. It can also not be defined by traditional ontological differences. A tapeworm is not singular, but a process: it is a life form that lives within its own lifecycle. Deleuze and Guattari are incorrect when they privilege the organ: the segment should be the concept that best defines the posthuman model of an assembled-count. Organs do not add up to a totality anymore than segments do. A tapeworm contains a kind of “origin point” in their scolex (or mouth), but this “origin” is only triggered in relation to the host’s intestinal wall. The scolex becomes functional only in relation to the codependent love that is triggered between the host-wall and the scolex-parasite. The question becomes then not about sexuality or transsexuality; on the contrary, the question is about love, and more specifically, codependent love.

Parasite sexuality, the kind that occurs within and between segments of the parasite-body, is predicated on the primary love found between parasite and host. Once the love relation is made functional between the host-wall and the scolex, then sex can occur within the parasite. The parasite’s “home” is a home of love and the parasite’s narcissism becomes paramount as the proglottids reproduce within the host-body. The tapeworm’s digestive tract is on its outside: it digests food through its own skin while it touches the host’s intestinal wall. The tapeworm is advantageous and opportunistic and models a form of transjected ontology because it exists in between as an un-countable singularity and multiplicity. Even though language functions as a virtual parasite, language remains incapable of adequately describing the transjected phorontologies of actual parasites. There are no longer any sex-organs, but only sex-proglottids. The human body is a parasite-body embedded in the abdominal wall of the Umwelt or larger ecosystem. The human body feeds alongside the ecology of the world. Every proglottid contains its own independent dispositifs or social institutions that act structurally dissimilar from the cosmos of the tapeworm. Institutions are always embedded in a place and feed alongside that place as they are sited within a larger system that parasites the future moment to come. The parasite-body depicts a transject-structure that unsettles binary sign-systems. For this reason, Serres argues that mathematically, “[a] third exists before the second.” Even though the structure of language is often binaristic, noise is already operative in the informatic relation: the parasite remains in the background, mumbling. The proglottids of the conversation will continually reproduce themselves in an inter(dis)course of echoes, murmurs, and mutters.

The parasite is a kind of avant-garde sound poet who adds or multiplies noise in the normative social order. Serres attempts to describe the overall complexity of the parasite when he appears to “throw up his hands” during the following moment of written defeat: “I no longer really know how to say it: the parasite para-

24 Serres, The Parasite, 63.
sites the parasites. In other words, any given position in the ternary model is, *ad libitum*, parasitic. Who is the third? Someone, anyone. The noise stops; someone leaves. Someone, anyone: both formal and random.” Discourse is never fixed when the transjects speak because the transjects only communicate within an inter(dis)course of structural noise. The parasite induces a fractal geography that situates the world—the *Umwelt*—as a system of complexity structured by the communicational non-sense of noise and feedback.

**Parasite Hermeneutics: Henry Miller and Conrad Moricand**

Henry Miller’s *A Devil in Paradise* (1956) features a character notable in literature because this character is the literary emblem of the theoretical parasite. Henry Miller invites a parasitic personality to live with him at his home in Big Sur. The person he invites, Conrad Moricand, is an astrologer by trade who gradually becomes a repugnant character. The “Devil” of Miller’s title refers to Moricand, but I think the title is far more evocative (as I will consider momentarily). Serres asks: “The Devil or the Good Lord? Exclusion, inclusion? Thesis or antithesis? The answer is a spectrum, a band, a continuum.” A parasite hermeneutics—that I suggest is required to approach a text like *A Devil in Paradise*—would require a Serresian perspective that endorses spectra and continua, sites and para-sites. The “Devil” in Miller’s title should be parasited in order to make its opposite simultaneously operative: “A Devil in Paradise” or “A Good Lord in Paradise?” To whom should this transjected spectrum be allocated? Which is Miller? Which is Moricand?

At first, the text is not concerned at all with the question of either the “Devil” or the “Good Lord.” Gradually, Moricand is situated and sited as the “Devil.” Miller introduces the reader to Moricand by writing that “there was an odor about him,”

25 Ibid., 55.
26 Ibid., 57.
which Miller calls, “the aroma of death.” When Miller meets Moricand, Moricand has just “begun work on the great theme: Apocatastasis.” Apocatastasis is the restitution of the cosmos in which astrological patterns have returned to an earlier state. For Moricand, apocatastasis is a form of recurrence, return, and apology where the sins of the past can be erased to give way to a new tomorrow. However, Moricand is a fatalist by nature, trapped within the dismal conviction of his own inadequacy and melancholy: Miller describes Moricand as “a Stoic dragging his tomb about with him. […] Though by nature I felt that he was essentially treacherous.” Miller “contracts” Moricand from Anaïs Nin who had been infected earlier. Moricand is like an anisakis tapeworm that is passed from host to host. He had infected Anaïs before Miller and who knows how many others before her: “What Moricand never suspected was that, in presenting him to me, Anaïs hoped to unload some of her burden.” Miller, at first, happily accepts the Moricand-infection.

Miller describes, after becoming “burdened” with Moricand, the avidity and voraciousness of Moricand’s appetite. Moricand is something that feeds, not only on his host, but also upon a specific site. Moricand’s gustatory indulgences do not, however, seem to supply him with any level of nutrition. Moricand does not prosper, but only slowly deteriorates. A phorontological analysis of A Devil in Paradise requires that we analyze Miller’s parasites as we lay his corpus on the gurney of postmortemism. As ‘pataphysical analysts we should cut open Miller’s insides and dig around until we can extract the Moricand-worm from Miller’s hedonistic intestine. Miller writes that “[n]aturally, from my standpoint, the first and most important thing was to see that the poor devil ate more regularly, and more abundantly. I hadn’t the means to guarantee him three meals a day, but I could and did throw a meal into him now and then.” Miller’s first con-

28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 2.
30 Ibid., 5.
31 Ibid., 5.
cern is to feed his parasite and ensure that the parasite does not starve.

Sometimes I invited him out to lunch or dinner; more often I invited him to my quarters where I would cook as bountiful and delicious a meal as possible. Half-starved as he was most of the time, it was small wonder that by the end of the meal he was usually drunk. Drunk not with wine, though he drank copiously, but with food, food which his impoverished organism was unable to assimilate in such quantities.32

Moricand reaches a jubilant state by consuming an excessive amount of food while being situated as Miller’s opposite (or opposite): where Miller becomes drunk on water,33 Moricand becomes drunk on food. Miller and Moricand form the ideal relationship of host and parasite. Food does not sustain or fill Moricand; quite the opposite, the consumption of food seems to require even greater quantities of food: “by the time he had walked home he was hungry all over again.”34 Initially, Miller remains sympathetic to Moricand, but the warning signs of the parasite-infection are present in their preliminary meetings.

Their “friendship” begins when Moricand presents Miller with a copy of Balzac’s Séraphita.35 Séraphita is a work that can be considered a work of parasite-hermeneutics and transject-literature: Séraphitūs is a transject (an androgyne) who loves Minna (who believes Séraphitūs is a man) and is loved by Wilfrid (who believes Séraphitūs is a woman, Séraphita). This theme of transjection proceeds as Miller and Moricand become trapped within the undecidable relationship of host and parasite.

Moricand is the picture of a parasitic personality who takes advantage of his friends while situating his friends as the only hope: “The only chance for me at this moment,’ he would say

32 Ibid., 5–6.
34 Miller, A Devil in Paradise, 6.
most solemnly, ‘is you. There you are!’ And he would indicate how and where I fitted into the picture.” 36 What is the benefit to the parasite? Why does Miller invest so much time and energy into Moricand’s survival? Serres argues that the parasite is sometimes productive. Much like Deleuze and Guattari’s reterritorialization of desire as productivity, Serres considers parasitism and the infections produced by parasites as creative agents. Against psychoanalytical depictions of desire as lack, Deleuze and Guattari claim that desire is productive, and against medical descriptions of parasitism, Serres situates parasites as creative. According to Serres,

[t]he parasite invents something new. Since he does not eat like everyone else, he builds a new logic. He crosses the exchange, makes it into a diagonal. He does not barter; he exchanges money. He wants to give his voice for matter, (hot) air for solid, superstructure for infrastructure. People laugh, the parasite is expelled, he is made fun of, he is beaten, he cheats us; but he invents anew.” 37

For Serres, the parasite is engaged in an entirely different gustatory economy than “normal” subjects: the parasite functions within a transject-economy, existing in between stratified lines, eating food that was stolen, borrowed, or exchanged. The parasite is simultaneously a master of rhetoric and also a rhetorical strategy because the parasite is an emblem of rhetoric. Parasitism itself is a rhetorical process because it is a structure that is predicated on the notion of an agenda — an agenda that works in the parasite’s best interest and not the host’s. This rhetorical economy is situated by Serres within the paradigm of Shannon’s information theory: “The parasite invents something new. He obtains energy and pays for it in information. He obtains the roast and pays for it with stories.” 38 The parasite is an energetic

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36 Ibid., 12.
37 Serres, The Parasite, 35.
38 Ibid., 36.
catalyzer of systems of knowledge. The parasite joyfully feeds within the hegemonic intestine — surviving and flourishing.

Miller eventually decides to invite Moricand into his home: “Finally I conceived what I thought to be a brilliant idea. Genial, nothing less. It was to invite him to come and live with us, share what we had, regard our home as his own for the rest of his days. It was such a simple solution I wondered why it had never occurred to me before.”39 Moricand gleefully accepts Miller’s offer, but before Moricand arrives in America, Miller decides that “[h]e had to be fattened up or I would have an invalid on my hands.”40 To that end, Miller sends Moricand money for food so that when Moricand arrives in America — situating the country as the intestine of plenty — he would already have expanded his appetite on commensal excess.

When Moricand arrives in Big Sur and moves into Miller’s home, Miller writes that Moricand “was ‘home’ at last. Safe, sound, secure.”41 The tapeworm settles into the homey intestinal wall: Moricand’s scolex hooks deeply into Miller’s psyche. Very rapidly Miller senses “the leech that Anaïs had tried to get rid of. I saw the spoiled child, the man who had never done an honest stroke of work in his life, the destitute individual who was too proud to beg openly but was not above milking a friend dry. I knew it all, felt it all, and already foresaw the end.”42 The importance that Serres affords to the parasite is in its structural relationality: the very idea of relations “is the meaning of the prefix para- in the word parasite: it is on the side, next to, shifted; it is not on the thing, but on its relation. It has relations, as they say, and makes a system of them.”43 Moricand offers Miller’s immune system something to war against. Even though Moricand feeds off of Miller’s digestion, Moricand is a mediating character that lives within and alongside the other characters that fill Miller’s ecosystem — as his home, peer group, or even America at large.

39 Miller, A Devil in Paradise, 21.
40 Ibid., 23.
41 Ibid., 25.
42 Ibid., 27.
Miller points out that “[i]n one respect he was an ideal house guest — he kept to himself most of the day. Apart from meal times.”44 Meal times lure Moricand from his intestinal cave and to the dinner table. He sits alongside the others, a perfect imitation of a human being, but hungrier than the others and more ravenous because he is not quite “human.” Miller’s descriptions of Moricand are instructive in this regard because the character remains unfixed and polysemous: “Sometimes he [Moricand] looked Egyptian, sometimes Mongolian, sometimes Iroquois or Mohican, sometimes Chaldean, sometimes Etruscan.”45 Moricand’s ethnicity or very physical description is transjected: he is of all cultures and all physicalities. Moricand literally worms himself out of any linear or clear description. Miller’s description of Moricand renders him monstrous — as something akin to a tapeworm that is the size of a man: “Without a stitch he looks lamentable. Like a broken-down nag. It’s not merely that he’s potbellied, full of sores and scabs, but that his skin has an unhealthy look, is spotted like tobacco leaf, has no oil, no elasticity, no glow […]. His flesh seems never to have been in contact with air and sun; it looks half smoked.”46 Moricand’s skin is that of a tapeworm because his stomach is on the outside: his skin is not skin. Deleuze and Guattari have no purchase on a character like Moricand because Moricand has no covering-organ of skin; instead, he is covered with the coloring of a proglottid or tape. His body is that of an anisakis.

The room that Moricand lives in is built like a “cell,” designed in the same way that a tapeworm furnishes the living arrangements of a colon:

It’s true that his cell was tiny, that water leaked through the roof and the windows, that the sow bugs and other bugs took over, that they often dropped on his bed when he was asleep, that to keep warm he had to use an ill-smelling oil stove

46 Ibid., 95.
which consumed what little oxygen remained after he had sealed up all the cracks and crevices, stuffed the space beneath the door with sacking, shut all the windows tight, and so on [...]. And he, poor devil, was cooped up all day, restless, ill at ease, either too hot or too cold, scratching, scratching, and utterly incapable of warding off the hundred and one abominations which materialized out of the ether, for how else explain the presence of all these creeping, crawling, ugly things when all had been shut tight, sealed and fumigated?

Moricand lives alongside other parasites and is similarly parasited. Bed bugs, scabies, lice, and sow bugs have all come to live with the life-size tapeworm. When Moricand goes to see the doctor, the doctor warns Miller about Moricand, saying:

“Do you want my honest advice?”
“I certainly do,” said I.
“Then get him off your hands!”
“What do you mean?”
“Just that. You might as well have a leper living with you.”
[…]
“It’s simple,” he said. “He doesn’t want to get well. What he wants is sympathy, attention. He’s not a man, he’s a child. A spoiled child.”

Miller takes the doctor’s advice to heart and begins to hint to Moricand that he should vacate Miller’s home. Moricand tries to weasel out of any commitment to leave in order to maintain his scolex-hold on “paradise”: “Once again he agreed, grumblingly, to be sure. Like a rat that had been cornered. But when the time came to depart he was not on hand. He had changed his mind again. What excuse he gave I no longer remember.” Eventually, Miller manages to dispose of Moricand, but not before Mori-

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47 Ibid., 52.
48 Ibid., 54.
49 Ibid., 101.
cand accomplishes one last parasitic act: “Yes, he would consent to accept the passage which had been proffered him, but on one condition, that I first put to his account in a Paris bank the equivalent of a thousand dollars.” After Miller’s housing of Moricand, this demand is yet another parasitic strategy: the accomplishment of a con artist and narcissist who does not see Miller as a friend who has opened up his home, but as a host who has made his body vulnerable to another organism. Miller calls Moricand “a worm, a leech, a dirty blackmailer,” and seems to be finally free of him.

However, the parasite in paradise is not only Moricand. Serres claims that the parasite speaks in parables: “Parabola, parable, parasite. The parasite pays in parables.” Moricand comes to Miller not only as a parasite, but also as a parable. The parable in this instance is contained in the paragram of the text and the paragram spells out a name. Serres argues that “the parable of the parasite and the paralysis of the guest are quite precisely parallel. […] It appears in language, in words and in poems, in parables and paraphrase.” The paragram speaks in the parables of the parasite: language returns to the host as a para-site. The name of the parasite — the paragram contained in the parable — is not only “Moricand,” but also “Miller.” Paradise is itself the mask of a parasite because Big Sur is the site of a recurrence. Moricand reflects Miller’s own history back to Miller and A Devil in Paradise contains the story of Miller’s own apocatastasis. For Miller, apocatastasis is, in this instance, a form of metastasis that proliferates within the environmental body and also the physical body. In Tropic of Cancer (1934), Miller writes, regarding his experience of living in France:

I was not only fed… I was feasted. Every night I went home drunk. […] I had found a better host; I could afford

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50 Ibid., 104.
51 Ibid.
53 Ibid., 32.
to scratch off the ones who were a pain in the ass. But that thought never occurred to them. Finally I had a steady, solid program—a fixed schedule. On Tuesdays I knew it would be this kind of a meal and on Fridays that kind. Cronstadt, I knew, would have champagne for me and homemade apple pie. And Carl would take me out, take me to a different restaurant each time, order rare wines, invite me to the theater afterward or take me to the Cirque Médrano. They were curious about one another, my hosts. Would ask me which place I liked best, who was the best cook, etc.54

A Devil in Paradise could easily be re-framed as Cronstadt or Carl’s story about feeding Miller during his time in Paris. A Devil in Paradise is, from this perspective, the story of a great anxiety: the only difference between Moricand and Miller is that Miller’s “charm” has not worn off while Moricand’s has. The better parasite between the two is Miller: Miller understands that parasitism is intrinsically related to rhetoric. Serres’s description of the parasite is akin to a description of Miller’s Paris years: “The parasite is invited to the *table d’hôte*; in return, he must regale the other diners with his stories and his mirth. To be exact, he exchanges good talk for good food; he buys his dinner, paying for it in words. It is the oldest profession in the world.”55 Serres’s dinner guest/parasite works at Miller and Moricand’s true “profession”: Miller is arguably more successful than Moricand, but no less parasitic.

Modernism itself, and onwards into the contemporary, is an aesthetic movement that partly celebrates parasitism: from the various fascist-parasites of Eliot, Pound, and Lewis to the emergence of the parasitic antihero, the idea of the modernist patron is structured around the notion that a host-patron pays for the words of a parasite-writer. Both Miller and Joyce famously fed off friends, peers, fellow writers, and patrons. Serres writes that “[h]e [the parasite] is there, well entrenched. Ruins the fa-

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55 Serres, *The Parasite*, 34.
ther, screws the mother, leads the children, runs the household. We can no longer do without him; he is our system itself: he commands, he has the power, his voice has become that of the master.”

Serres’s description of the parasite here matches the description of a modernist-parasite.

In Eliot’s “The Wasteland,” for example, the parasite can be found in the repressed rem(a)inder of insurmountable trauma: the parasite is the repression of the memory of the corpse that was planted “last year in your garden” — the soldier’s corpse — that acts as the corpse-assemblage of all those killed in the Great War. Modernism is obsessed with figures that feed and exist alongside: the modernist “hero” is an everyman and sometimes a parasite. If Adorno is right when he asserts that to “write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric,” then there will also be no more aesthetic movements. Poetry and art have become disfigured by a parasite-aesthetics that has taken firm hold with its scolex-grip. There is, in postmortemism, no original, but only the simulated iterations of a form that is fed upon. Towards the end of Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom encounter Lord John Corley, a character who may well be Conrad Moricand:

The pair parted company and Stephen rejoined Mr Bloom, who, with his practised eye, was not without perceiving that he had succumbed to the blandiloquence of the other parasite. Alluding to the encounter he said, laughingly, Stephen, that is:

— He’s down on his luck. He asked me to ask you to ask somebody named Boylan, a billsticker, to give him a job as a sandwichman.

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56 Ibid., 38.
Corley manages to get half-a-crown out of Stephen and convinces Stephen to ask Bloom if Bloom could ask Blazes Boylan (the man who is sleeping with Bloom’s wife, Molly), for a job. *Ulysses* is a text that is predicated on the function of the parasite: if parasites become registered as third parties, as the rupture of noise that disrupts any communicational assemblage, then Joyce’s masterpiece proliferates with them. *Ulysses* is an intestine filled to the brim with nematodes and flukes, each of which are replicating. On the one hand, Boylan is a parasite within Bloom’s marriage — although Bloom tolerates him because Boylan can function where Bloom cannot. Paradoxically, the affair between Molly and Boylan strengthens the marriage between Leopold and Molly because Molly realizes, at the terminus of her soliloquy, that she truly loves Bloom. Boylan is nothing more than a functional vibrator or dildo: a sort of life-size erection.60 Corley, on the other hand, is a parasite who exchanges half-a-crown for a story and parasitizes Stephen in the process. There are other parasites as well: Stephen is a parasite in the eyes of his dead mother and disappointed father because, instead of writing the “uncreated conscience of [his] race,” Stephen teaches history at a boys’ school; and, throughout *Ulysses*, Bloom is racially configured as a parasite living in Ireland — he is seen by other characters as a “Jew” who parasitizes the Irish economy.

Every character in Joyce’s Dublin is a third of some other previously “functional” dyad: “The third appears; the third is included. Maybe he is each and every one of us.”62 Other texts in modernism are similarly worried about the parasite or the third: Dorian Gray or Lord Henry in Wilde; Colonel Kurtz in Conrad; Pound’s notion of *usura*; or Woolf’s Septimus Smith who is considered a psychic and economic drain on society. The parasite

60 I wish this were my claim, but it comes from Garry Leonard’s appraisal of Boylan as an “erection with an attitude.” See Garry Leonard, *Advertising and Commodity Culture in Joyce* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 8.


is a common protagonist or antagonist of modernism and the parasite is now embodied in the conceptual forms of the post-human and the postmortem. The parasite is also the primary figure of a postmortem on the postmodern: the parasite is the entity, homunculus, or author that looks up at us when we cut open the intestinal walls of the postmodern and look backward through time, all the way to the modern and even the Victorian.

The parasite-signal is never single, because “[t]he parasite always plugs into the system; the parasite is always there; it is inevitable.” Where meaning may have emerged, the parasite proliferates: grinning, twining, and intertwining around sign systems—constrictive and productive. Burroughs reputedly claimed that “[e]very man has inside himself a parasitic being who is acting not at all to his advantage.” This “parasitic being” is that part of the self that is metasentient—the component of consciousness that is recursive and self-reflexive. The parasitic being is an imposter that is momentarily embodied: the Soul of theology names an entity that is housed inside a body. The soul registers the sins of the body and then must atone for these sins in the afterlife. The soul is akin to a metasentient parasite that has momentarily used the body as a container: if we speculate that the ancient Greek doctrine of metempsychosis is true, then the soul will transmigrate after the death of the body and become a tree, a rock, a wave, an ant, or a bird, etc. However, what if metempsychosis functions in a manner that is more closely related to what Harold Bloom calls the “anxiety of influence?” What if the soul remains a monad that moves across sites and para-sites and parasitizes another body? What if we are floating intelligences that have temporarily infected our hosts and have forgotten about the transition? Metasentience would then be, in this speculative leap, a realist code that was transmitted from outer space: it would then be the monolithic residue of a frightening anteriority that does not fit into the earthly realm except

63 Ibid., 63.
as infection or mutation. In this model, metasentience would be the chance-based fluke that has taken up residence in the corpus callosum.

Serres argues that noise functions on the basis of interruption and rupture: “At the first noise, the system is cancelled: if the noise stops, everything comes back to where it was. That shows at least that the parasites are always there, even in the absence of a signal. […] Parasitism is only a linear noise.”65 The Parasite is, for Serres, an interruption or rupture that signals the breakdown of any signal. In phorontological terms, the Parasite is the necessary clinamen or swerve that is produced by semantic collisions and that permits the emergence of a communicational system. The noise of the Parasite is what allows the system to instate certain patterns or equilibria. The parasite is therefore truly transjected because it is simultaneously destructive and productive: it manifests as a rupture, but this rupture induces stability. Perhaps the Parasite is the name of that undecidable space that exists between the coastline of Britain and the waterline; in other words, the Parasite is one name of the transject, which is, in this case, a nominative paradox that is existent within the very structure of language. The Parasite is the gauge that engages language as a productive system.

Parasites live everywhere in the world: on the surfaces of kitchen counters, in the soil, within dead bodies, rotten meat, a freshly-sliced piece of sashimi, a pig’s eye, or underneath children’s fingernails. Pinworm outbreaks occur among children because their immune systems have not yet learned to defend against the limitless array of threats and dangers that fill the Umwelt. The Parasite is a structure — as both an actual transject such as a nematode or as a virtual transject such as language — that permits the calibration of meaning within the ecosystem. Derrida argues that “[d]econstruction’ is always attentive to this indestructible logic of parasitism. As a discourse, deconstruction is always a discourse about the parasite, itself a device parasitic on the subject of the parasite, a discourse ‘on parasite’ and

65 Serres, The Parasite, 52.
in the logic of the ‘superparasite.’” While deconstruction is a discourse that seeks to expose the parasite, it is itself a parasite that provides the parasite the means to remain hidden. Why? Deconstruction is not surgery. Deconstruction does not operate on the levels and architectures that conceal the site. The parasite lives, first and foremost, within the site. First, we can deconstruct, but any deconstruction is already the construction of a new site and para-site. However, this problem goes deeper still: the parasite of language is akin to a self-replicating meme that rebuilds itself as quickly as any discourse can deconstruct it. The primary problem of the parasite is that there is no way to kill it off. This problem arises because any speculative definition of ontology—in postmortemism—can no longer be about Being qua Being; on the contrary, any definition of ontology should be phorontological: ontology today should not deconstruct, but operate on the postmortem. Such a postmortem practice would focus on Being quartered beings instead of Being qua Being. The first question asked by phorontology is: what counting system is being privileged? The second question is then: how can we locate the 0 and the 1? From within the zero and the One, the parasite emerges as the third that was waiting within the binary prior to the birth of any supposed anthropocentric subject.

Language Parasites does not express a metaphysical infection akin to Morgellons Disease. Morgellons is, according to allopathic medicine, an instance of delusional parasitosis in which a patient believes that she or he is infected with a variety of parasites. There are similarities between my project and Morgellons though because I am describing a linguistic parasitosis. Jean-Louis Gault writes that

[t]he only illness we suffer from as speaking beings is the one introduced into the living by the parasitism of the signifier. Lacan spoke of language as a cancer and evoked the viru-

lence of *logos*. He defined the unconscious as the effects of speech on the subject, and he showed that the Freudian clinic developed the incidences of the illness of the signifier.67

The signifier produces illness and infection within the subject and, for this reason, the signifier is one of the names of the Parasite. If phorontology is a method of operation on the ill subject — an approach that begins surgery with a de-scission — then the Parasite becomes an entity that is operated upon; an entity that, when removed, can locate the site. This so-called “site” is not originary though because it is only ever a ’patasite, which is a site that is beyond metaphysics — an absurd space of infinite de-scissions where the cutting never terminates in a final cut. The ’patasite is a place of exhaustion where the surgeon momentarily rests, dripping sweat into the corpus of the patient who waits with the ennui of a dead reader. The Decision reached by a de-scission is only ever a desiting because any desiting immediately inscribes — materially and semiotically — a new site and this “new site” should be termed a ’patasite due to the manner in which a ’patasite remains absurd until its contingencies and exigencies have been located. Any teleology of this newly discovered ’patasite would progress through four ontological stages: 1) the materiality of the site, 2) the potentiality of the implied parasite, 3) the virtuality of the metasite that remains beyond the triadic relation of site-parasite-site, and 4) the resultant ’patasite that registers a true form of far-from-equilibrium complexity. The ’patasite is placed at a place that is beyond any beyond: it is a theoretically capacious realm that is occupied by heretofore-unknown subjective entities that I call *xenojects*. Such alien identities are so inconceivably other from anthropocentric epistemologies or philosophies that they must be considered apart from and alongside already sited notions of exteriority.

Phorontology would be the best analytic approach for considering the xenoject. Assuming that the human species escapes Earth when our sun becomes a red giant and engulfs the first two or three planets of our solar system, then various other lives and subjects will become actualized as water thaws on Jupiter’s moons. The xenoject is an alien subjectivity that requires theorization in order to understand Being in all of its permutations — every possible human, posthuman, inhuman, and non-human manifestation or variety. An appropriate contemporary theory of Being should encompass not only every marginalized being or identity held at the limits of phenomenology, but also every other possible configuration of Being that may exist or potentially exist within our solar system, galaxy, and universe: the general name of this “being” is “xenoject.”

Returning to the earthly realm, the parasite is psychically a *parapsyche* that has been transjected, thereby unsettling the possibility of anything ever being indivisible. The very term *individual* was originally meant to describe the same state as the atomic: a state of indivisibility. The atom and the individual are epistemological constructs that were originally defined as being unsplittable; hence, these concepts are countable, singular, and seemingly agential. The problem here is raised by the parasite: both the atom and the individual are constructs of a language that is structured as a parasite-system and yet both are, in realist terms, splittable entities. The atom can be split into countless particularities and the individual can be dismembered like a carceral body strung up on Foucault’s scaffold. The individual is, I claim, in the contemporary transjected era, the *dividual*. The individual is a concept that functions against division whereas what I call the “dividual” pertains to particulate social orders and the dismembered corpus of the individual. The individual is, quite literally, *dual* or multiple. The duality present within the individual is localized in the figure of the parasite or the third party that permits the imaginary coherence of the dyadic structure (site–site) to remain “whole.” The parasite is therefore the hyphen (or noise) that exists between any two sites, be they self–other, good–evil, or individual–institution. A dividual is then
the proper, realist name of the subject within the contemporary social realm. The individual is a member of the social and, as a member, lives with the possibility of being *dismembered* (as a dividual) or *remembered* at a future site-to-come. Where the individual forgets, the dividual remembers.

The parasite is a *res-of-chaos* — a chaotic thing — that structures ontology as a phorontology and renders the world as an imaginary unity that features indiscernible patterns amidst universal entropy and undeniable chaos. The parasite names the fractal shape of the dividual, the de-scission, and the sites that structure the inhabited world.