

Who am I, assuredly? Here I am alone, without relation. Reduced to myself, I nourish myself from my own matter, for it does not give out; I am sufficient to myself, though I ruminate empty; my dried-up imagination and my extinguished ideas no longer furnish food for my soul. Who am I then? Strictly speaking, a partition. I am not an element of a social set, a family, a group, humanity, for all of them have untied my belonging or inclusion; I have lost all relation. I live in the disjointed: around me intersections remain empty, calm waters, agitated, around the isle. Who am I? A partition.

This meditation, Cartesian in nature, rediscovers, Leibniz's solutions. They are in music as if buried. Harmony conceals the collection of partitions (scores) with no relation. Might as well sit from morning until night in their deafening presence. I write; I've kept watch since dawn, waiting and in order to wait for a fire that will spurt forth one day, the writing of fire, atop the wall, above the banquet that was suddenly interrupted, where the tongues of fire fly over the stiffened necks, finally opening ears. He keeps watch to music from the early morning; he waits for the answer hidden in the jumble of notes and keys, the simple answer to the questions, in their black traces.

I am the partition; here is the partition. What is harmony, what is music? How is this composition established?

(2) pg 12-13 (interrupted meals): "There is no system without parasites. This is a constant law... Well, the rats come back. They are, as the saying goes, always already there. Part of the building. Mistakes, wavy lines, confusion, obscurity are part of knowledge; noise is part of communication, part of the house. But is it the house itself? A system is often described as harmony. Maybe its the same word, the same thing. In fact, what use is it to discuss matters, what is it to be concerned with a system in disequilibrium, a system that does not function right? Yet we know of no system that functions perfectly, that is to say, without losses, flights, wear and tear, errors, accidents, opacity - a system who return is one for one, where the yeild is maximal, and so forth. Even the world does not work quite perfectly"

(3) pg 3 (ibid.): "It was only noise, but it was also a message, a bit of information producing panic: an interruption, a corruption, a rupture of information. Was the noise really a message? Wasn't it, rather, static, a parasite? A parasite who has the last word, who produces disorder and who generates a different order."

Michel Serres - Parasite - Music

Michel Serres - Parasite - Interrupted Meals

A given parasite is said to be a miracle of evolution because of the complexity of its performances and the sophistication of its cycle. It is also sometimes said that our activity begins to weigh heavily in and on this evolution. Suddenly I wonder whether evolution itself is not the work of parasites, from a certain point of view. Whether, between evolution and parasitism, there might not be cycles of causes and effects, in open circuits with feedback. Evolution would produce the parasite, which would produce evolution. Suddenly I wonder whether the study—not local and unique this time, but global, formal, and pertaining to the mode of operation of the parasitic function—would not be somewhat displaced, on the side, somewhat reflexive vis-à-vis the exact sciences, both the natural and human sciences, like a passageway where they could not be dissociated.

The theory of evolution can be reduced to two terms: mutation and selection. We know on what set the first acts. It is not entirely a metaphoric expression when we say that it has to do with a message written on a base. Part of this message is changed by mutation, by absence, substitution, or difference of elements. It is not entirely a metaphoric expression when we claim that it has to do with the intervention of a noise in the message. Noise in the sense of disorder, and thus chance, but noise also in the sense of interception, an interception that changes the order and thus the meaning, if we can speak of meaning. But that changes the order above all. The interception is a parasite; we could have guessed as much. The new order appears by the parasite troubling the message. It disconcerts the ancient series, order, and message; and then composes [*concerte*] new ones.

The introduction of a parasite in a system is equivalent to the introduction of a noise. In Lucretius' work, the order of the world, a result of declination in a laminar field, is an order by fluctuation. This fluctuation is a noise; it is a parasite. Time does not begin without its intervention. Irreversibility never appears without this factor of asymmetry. The order in the sense of the order of things and the order in the sense of structures of order cannot emerge without this element of relation of order. The parasite is an element of relation; it is the atom of relation, the directional atom. It is the arrow flying at random in broad daylight. It is the appearance of meaning.

The theory of being, ontology, brings us to atoms. The theory of relations brings us to the parasite.

The introduction of a parasite in a system is equivalent to the introduction of a noise. First example. I am speaking polyphonically. The message is surrounded by nonsense, pure noise, disorder; the system crumbles and everything dies. The plague decimates a population. Mutation makes the fetus abort. And with that, the parasite—the assassin—commits suicide. The sponger falls back into the stream after having ruined his host. From information theory to anthropology, from signals to life, be it unique or numerous, the dynamics are stable and unchanging, always bringing about the same results.

We cannot think of evolution without thinking, aside from evolutionary forms and the permutations of the coding, aside from the two mechanisms of mutation and selection, of irreversible time, the basic flow that is slow and asymmetrical, this global meaning that we turn away from thinking about. We must try to think about this time.

Irreversible time begins with the parasitic noise, with fluctuation, with the *clinamen*; it flows in one direction. Irreversible time would not have begun without the sowing of disorder in redundancy. In the white space I spoke of above, an atom of disorder, an atom of relation, is enough for the movement to start. Everything emerges from this white space, given this quark of noise.

The parasite is the active operator and the logical operation of evolution, of the irreversible time of life.

Irreversible physical time begins with a parasite sown in a redundancy. With a noise or a disorder, randomly come into a white space that itself had undoubtedly appeared by chance. This noise and this parasite produce a slope, a difference, a disequilibrium, and the slope produces noise; the process, if kept up, will no longer stop immediately. It goes to seek its fortune in the world. It can be immense or mediocre or non-existent. Local disorder pulls local order toward asymmetry. The parasite is an operator; it is a generalized *clinamen*.