



Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia

Gilles Deleuze , Félix Guattari

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A major work in the development of critical theory in the late 20th century, ANTI-OEDIPUS is an essential text for feminists, literary theorists, social scientists, philosophers, and other interested in the problems of contemporary Western culture. "An important text in the rethinking of sexuality and sexual politics spurred by the feminist and gay liberation movements".--Margaret Cerullo, Hampshire College.

Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia Details

Date : Published 1983 by University of Minnesota Press (first published 1972)

ISBN : 9780816612253

Author : Gilles Deleuze , Félix Guattari

Format : Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Philosophy, Theory, Nonfiction, Psychology, Politics

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From Reader Review Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia for online ebook

Paul Adkin says

- 1) Oedipus: Power is maintained by our submission to the Oedipus myth; Oedipus myth as a psychological explanation of why the masses accept a system which does not favour their own interests.
- 2) In Western Civilisation desire is conceived of as a means of acquisition rather than a means of production. This slant is important in maintaining the surplus, capitalist economy and any revolution would have to alter the perception we have of desire.

From a glance at the other reviews on Goodreads this is a kind of book that you will either love or hate. Most people seem to hate it, which is perhaps logical for the book is deeply subversive, perhaps one of the most subversive works I've ever read. It questions the fabric of the despotic system we live in - so if you can't already sense that the system is depotic then you probably won't find anything to interest you in the book. The book is dense as well as deep. I have just finished it and it is demanding to be read again.

"The capitalist machine does not run the risk of becoming mad, it is mad from one end to the other and from the beginning, and this is the source of its rationality."

If you perceive the madness that we are immersed in then you should read the Anti-Oedipus.

Zulu says

Reading this book was an exercise in frustration. Occasionally productive frustration, but frustration nonetheless. While I was reading it, I referred to it as "the book I don't understand." But I think in the end I did get something out of it.

So this is Deleuze and Guattari's big attack on Freud, Lacan, and basically all of psychoanalysis. They suggest that psychoanalysis decides your diagnosis from the start (ie everyone has an Oedipus complex), and proceeds from that point. You can never finish being analysed--you are never truly 'healed'--because there's always more Oedipus complex to uncover. And if you don't uncover it, it's because you're repressing or projecting or otherwise in denial. The problem with Oedipus is that it puts boundaries on what a person can think or feel, and how they can respond to those thoughts and feelings. So far so good: I'm not much of a Freudian, and I basically agree.

But then D&G go on to say that what actually is the most fundamental element of our lives, and indeed of our entire society, including our technology, is desire. And desire occurs in these itty bitty molecular-level machines. Anything can be a machine. An organ in your body is a machine. A bee pollinating a flower is a machine. And this builds right up to things like steam engines and factories--where every worker and every truck that brings in raw material is part of that machine. And society is just the result of all these machines, acting together, at the molar or aggregate level. The problem here is that D&G believe that these machines are all *real*--this isn't a metaphor they're using to explain a concept, they think of it as an actuality.

And while I can get on board with the idea that we're all more than the sum of our parts, and what our parts "want" is what drives the parts to get together into bigger communities of parts, what I still don't understand is D&G's assertion that a) there is a body without organs which is inscribed with...stuff (??), and b) that there is a clear, logical, and all-but-inevitable progression from "primitive" societies up to capitalism, and once

you get to capitalism you're basically stuck. People's individual desire for the system to work (ie for the status quo) outweighs their desire for breaks, changes, and revolution, and thus they act against their self-interest and capitalism just keeps on going.

D&G say that schizoanalysis is their "solution" to this problem. But it's not a very clearly defined solution (and the definition of the problem is not easy to grasp either). Even they say it's impossible to know how or whether it works. The idea is you stop putting limits on what people can think and feel, and some of them, some of the time, will follow "lines of escape" rather than circle right back around to the familiar. And these lines of escape are "schizzes", or breaks, or proto-revolutions. By encouraging people to do this, you can actually 'free' them and 'heal' them in a way that psychoanalysis can't.

But D&G never give any hint of what they see happening beyond or after capitalism. The same problem is evident in Marx, when he says that societies will evolve for thousands of years until they get to socialism, and then they'll just stop evolving because...socialism is the best? Unlikely. Similarly, D&G say that we've been evolving all this time and now we've reached capitalism and it's not great--socialism would probably be better--but we're just going to stop evolving now, because they say so. Not very credible in my opinion.

Anyway, the parts of the books I liked were how it made me have to think in a different way. I kind of had to let the prose wash over me, because there was nothing else to do--no real logical, algorithmic understanding was applicable. And I liked the ideas around territorialization and deterritorialization, once I understood them, sort of. It's this idea that every time you define something, you put walls around it, you stop it from being anything else, and that's bad because desire wants to keep changing and *being* in a way that definitions can't handle. That's territorialization. And deterritorialization is when new information or a new approach comes in and disrupts all the previous definitions. So what I liked is that the book *did that*--it deterritorialized--even as that's what it was talking about. A good meld of form and content.

I think I'll go on after this to read *A Thousand Plateaus* but I sure hope it won't take so much brain power just to follow a sentence or a paragraph.

Kira says

One of my top few favorite books ever. Wacky prose that hides its dense, educated side with unabashedly mindfucking disregard for mores, academic humility, linearity. It's more or less a critique of the early Lacan's emphasis on the Oedipal complex and the way that emphasis typifies structural analysis in anthropology and psychology, which was trying to edge out philosophy in France at the time. Of course, since it's Deleuze, it also has a vitalist, anti-law, anti-transcendence agenda. Since it's Guattari, it has a radical political agenda (vaguely Marxist and post-Lacanian). Both Reich's *Mass Psych. of Fascism* and Sartre's *Critique du Raison Dialectique* influenced Deleuze's and Guattari's politics around this time, respectively. The bleeding edge of (intellectual) radicalism in "'68" French thought.

NB: Incomprehensible if you don't understand Kant, Hegel, at least some Lacan, Marx, and structuralist cultural anthropology from the '60s (Lévi-Strauss). I can't claim to know all those like the back of my hand, speaking as a philosophy grad. student. If you don't spend a lot of time reading and rereading philosophy, though, either skip this book (and everything by Deleuze) or don't expect to get much more "use" out of it than a magic 8-ball, as another reviewer has written. I'm sure Deleuze would get a kick out of that, but it unfortunately characterizes all too much scholarship on his work and leads to the quick judgment of "pop philosophy." Read *Difference & Repetition* or *Empiricism and Subjectivity* (on Hume) and get back to me on the pop philosophy..

-----update-----

I'm a lot less sanguine about D&G's "schizo-analysis" project than I was when I wrote the above. Scintillating idea \neq revolutionary project. I'd have to reread AO in detail to see how much I could salvage.

Greg says

I could possibly say that this book ruined my life. I have never grappled with a book for as long as this one, for months I read and re-read it. I decided that I had to incorporate it into a paper that ended up taking me over a year to actually write and then edit, and then edit some more and then write some more before I finally decided to mail the stupid thing out to the professor from a mailbox that happened to be in front of some buildings that some planes would crash into about an hour or so later. There are lots of parallels I could start to draw here between the events of a certain morning, their effect on me and my future and how this book I can't help but sort of kind of place into the whole fucking mess (joke?) that my life has been ever since something like December 18th 1999, the day I picked this book off the shelf at the philosophy section that I am now responsible for running. (in fairness I have to include Kafka with this book, since the paper in question was about the Deleuze and Kafka)

Anti-Oedipus is like no other philosophy book I'd ever read. There is no way to write a real review of it. It's difficult as hell. It has language in it that is both offensive and mind achingly difficult. The concepts are so concrete but at the same time abstract in a way that it's difficult to keep ones mind working in the right ways to get the thoughts to even make sense. It's like reading a paradox, but one which you know there is something more to it than just empty sophistry. The book stands for everything that can be good about life, but also a strong yelling reminder that you will only fail, that you'll sellout or be destroyed in the process of living.

This review may be continued at a later time, the entire thread I was on just got annihilated in my head.

Jonfaith says

Psychoanalysis was from the start, still is, and perhaps always will be a well-constituted church and a form of treatment based on a set of beliefs that only the very faithful could adhere to, i.e., those who believe in a security that amounts to being lost in the herd and defined in terms of common and external goals.

My review from 1994 would be gushing, one near febrile abuzz with the insights revealed in this suicide vest of a book. My 2011 self appreciates the arsenal of metaphors and allusions established. It also recognizes the limits of application of this in ordinary life. That is the present project, no? I mean we are living in some guise, whether or not as bodies without organs; but we find ourselves trapped in associations both molar and molecular: all the while feeling for stones in our pockets as we're prohibited from lounging on the turf outside.

Kyle says

more like de-loser and gua-farty

Aaron says

I think people FEEL like they should give this book five stars -- but, unlike machines, they are not honest with themselves and feel compelled to rate it higher than it deserves. 1968 drivel.

Geoff says

I've actually had a copy of this book for several months, but, honestly, it keeps tossing me out around page 7 or so. Like my mind shatters after about 7 pages of this. I can't tell whether or not it is bullshit. It seems like something is going on here that maybe I am not equipped to understand, almost like when I am trying to read a book in an antiquated form of French (because my modern French isn't even very good). This book is a little vortex, a little black hole that keeps pulling me back to it's place on the shelf, opening it up, and then utterly obliterating me before I can make it past the event horizon. Don't know if I'll ever actually read this.

Graham says

This is pop philosophy and not serious political thought. If Orwell read this he would have eaten it and then puked it out projectile vomit style. It is the postmodern writing that so terrifies Sokal. All of that being said, it is damned fun to read. Just don't take it too seriously. People who fall deeply into this stuff become pretentious hipster assholes. The introduction by Foucault is important if you want any chance in understanding this mess. It sure could use more footnotes.

Jeff says

The introduction by Foucault is certainly a healthy way to view this book. As a guide to leading a non-fascist life, this work condenses a great number of ideas, and attempts to dismantle/discourse on the hang-ups of would-be revolutionary groups.

I would describe the writing style as delirious. At times it is very lucid, hitting hard at ideas standing in the way of the non-fascist life and free thought. At others, the prose descends, or rather extends (explodes?) down lines of escape, off in a million directions. At these times I felt a bit lost, however it is difficult to know whether it is the cause of the writing style, or my own inexperience in the finer points of Freud, Lacan, and the state of 1970s psychoanalysis. It wasn't until about half-way through the book that the ideas about the body without organs, machines of desiring-production, deterritorialization, the despot, neurosis/psychosis, and schizophrenia began to fit together on the internal limits, boundaries and axioms of capitalism.

It seems that they are trying to say that schizophrenia is the limit that capitalism is always trying to approach, but can never attain. The nature of capitalism is to axiomatize, subjugate, repress, "decode" and "deterritorialize" processes that exist outside or contra to the system in order to exploit and co-opt. These are processes that revolutionary movements fight against, overtly and covertly. Seeds within the movement, itself, are also moving against the movement, flowing towards axiomatization and cooptation. In this ad-hoc

manner, it seems that capitalism tends toward this schiz limit, since contra/revolutionary flows are generated in a dynamic, random fashion; many small revolutionary acts become codified, and applied to the molecular, regardless of coherent applicability. In this way schizophrenia is not necessarily revolutionary, and is even tolerated by capitalism until it can be subjugated and ascribed a use value.

Contrary to many critics, I think that these ideas are quite relevant to modern revolutionary struggle- to live more freely on both the collective/social and individual levels.

KATEtheGREATESTBESTONE says

yo capitalism. i have sunbeams coming out of my ass.

Maxwell says

I loved this the first time I read it. Hated it the second time. On the third I realize that, at least, it is worth reading three times.

I'm caught in a love triangle between Deleuze (and his deformed #accelerationism brood) and their antagonists in the socialist tradition of dialectical / psychoanalytic geist-mongering. I've learned so much from books by Freudo-Marxists, like Adorno, Althusser and Zizek, which try to account for socialism's dismal popularity with the very masses it seeks to emancipate, doing so through a model of the unconscious internalizing a deceitful ideological superstructure. How the malicious fantasies of the Big Other can smokescreen duplicitous regimes of violence and abuse. But I've felt for awhile that there is something missing from this structure of deception, and have finally returned to the seismic alterity of Deleuze and Guattari's objection; "No, the masses were not deceived. They wanted fascism and that is what must be explained." What can we extract from this volatile embryo of positivist desire?

Armies, flags, authority and racism were not vanishing objects miraging the hole in subjectivity; for Deleuze & Guattari, they were (and are) points of libidinal investiture. The domination and bloodletting of fascism, communism and capitalism hasn't deceived people--it has excited them. Marxian ideology, even inflected by Freud, can't really reckon with the *enjoyment* people receive from sado-masochistic totalitarianism, how it inflames and enchants us, how it ravishes us with intensive states. Chalking this up to 'ideology' is to some extent letting people off the hook. As Michel Foucault observes in the introduction, Anti-Oedipus is not content to confront fascism as a political order, but 'the fascism that lives within all of us'.

The register of historical materialism and psychoanalysis wheezes dust trying to liberate us from the cozy delirium of their enslavement, our 'affection for servitude'. That said, I'm not claiming that Deleuzo-Guattarian anti-capitalist praxis has had better real world results--as Alain Badiou and other communist-conservatives will delight to tell you, there has yet to be a third world Anti-Oedipal revolution. There's no schizophrenic Che Guevara. At least not yet. But if you want to shine a dim light on the pitch-black labyrinth of our dilapidating & hopeless circumstances, Deleuze and Guattari have a torch for you. Just bring your own helmet.

"The fundamental problem of political philosophy is still precisely the one that Spinoza saw so clearly (and that Wilhelm Reich rediscovered): Why do men fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their

salvation?"

Desire is production. It is creative; teeming, frenetic, wild and fecund with virtual infinities of possibility across an immanent network of movement and growth. At the time of *Anti-Oedipus*' publication this was a new & unique conceptual model, not insofar as it breaks from Freudo-Lacanian theory of desire as an experience of lack, the pale quiver of incompleteness, but because it gives a full account of desire as a growing, proliferating nucleus through a rigorous philosophical elaboration. Desire is the fifth element inscribing each discrete & differentiated strata of life with its vitalizing processes. Becoming and production. The pre-ontological flux of energy which modulates its flow through bodies / machines (which are ((sort of)) the same thing) and which sends an electrical current through materiality is desiring production.

I should say that there were Spinozan monisms and process ontologies in philosophy (going back at least to Heraclitus) before Deleuze & Guattari, who are part of an 'ulterior canon' of philosophy rather than a break from it. They aren't anti-philosophers. But D&G thumbed the nose of the faddish Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger and structuralism, claiming influence from Spinoza, Hume and Nietzsche. Seems par for the course now, as bio-vitalists and spec-op realists hunt phenomenologists (sometimes in deconstructionist camouflage) to extinction like birds of prey. But it was heresy in the midcentury Parisian milieu.

The first couple chapters locking horns with Oedipus, burlesqued as the 'mommy-daddy-me' triangulation--the unconscious as a classical theatre--are better than I remembered, and pay their dues to Freud and his most gifted students (Melanie Klein's object relations receives an amusing reading) but demand that we contextualize the representational melodrama of Oedipus as one dynamic vector among many in an exuberantly creative factory. They read Oedipus as the paradyamic structuralist handicap on desiring-production, the *coding* of the unconscious. Coding here is the articulation of desire, its capture in a thumbnail, where it is given shape and summarily limited. Desiring-production is not articulable in a structuralist blueprint and Deleuze & Guattari's hatred for representation & identity (with Oedipus as the persona non grata of these static cartographies) seems to arise from the tendency of these dynamics to be repressed and coded as 'nature'. Representation sinks beneath the level of awareness and is fossilized into a regime of knowledge; *the way things are*. The territory of natural truth. But social-collectivist commitments to these hierarchies, binaries and otherwise provisional structures, flash-frozen with artificial preservatives, are subject to the radical mutability of deterritorialization. Even since the publication of *Anti-Oedipus* in 1972 this has occurred; after all, who believes in Oedipus today?

It is in the third chapter, 'Savages, Barbarians, Civilized men' that we get a historical-anthropological account of coding and decoding, deterritorialization and reterritorialization; fluxes of desire pulsating through the social-political field. This is the most fascinating part of the book. It is an account of how the strange nocturnal alterity of primitive peoples, hunter-gatherers and nomads, is captured and legislated by state formations, or how 'Overcoding is what establishes the essence of the state'. There is an emphasis on the primacy of writing and reading over orality in early state formations that is faintly reminiscent of Derrida's logocentrism. By this logic, tyranny manifests as a debt-structure, enunciated as a form of inscription; Tattoos, excision, incision, cutting, sacrifice, and mutilation were among the many practices to mark possession and debt, 'a founding act through which man stops being a biological organism and becomes a full body, an earth, to which organs grab hold, attracted, ironed, survivors of the exigencies of a *socius*'. This speaks to the arbitrariness of the sign, that law designates without signifying.

"What capitalism decodes with one hand, it turns into rules with the other"

Money is the lynchpin for the violent eruption of mercantile capitalism from the despotic state. There is a claim here that money is a flow which the state cannot code. The hydraulic flow of capital is what makes this

system unique, it is unlike its antecedent social-formations because it lacks symbolic commitments; primitive nomads and feudal despotisms had gods & kings, thresholds & filiations which could not be deterritorialized as internal conditions of the systems. Capitalism has no such scruples, it'll chew up & digest anything sacred; and this innate tendency toward deterritorialization has augured the stygian nightmare chamber we live in today. Compulsive decoding has not delivered a body without organs, a liberated machinic process without restrictive organizational masonry, but instead locked us into culture of guilt & resentment nourished by the Oedial myth; "Interiority rather than a new relationship with the outside". Oedipus is a paranoid polarization, not arising from an innate structure, but imposed, "It is the paranoid father who Oedipalizes the son." Capitalism is perched atop an overheating furnace of schizophrenic flux, a turbulent precarity which must be contained in a perilous balancing act of de-and-recoding.

On the bright side; capitalism will deterritorialize any & every overcoded flow to capture the surplus value ensconced by the coding, even to its own longterm detriment. The structures of power and oppression which secure capitalism's hegemony are temporarily deactivated to binge-eat the marketshare possessed by minoritarian flows--think the current popularity of minoritarian art, mainstream films & netflix shows expressing dissent through queer, black & feminist stories. This gets dangerously close to a Hegelian teleology; that capitalism's instinctive relaxing of rigid social tensions to expand indexes for profit and growth may provide a fertile epicenter for these dissenting flows to converge. The system's collapse is to some degree prophesied by its own organization--the smooth space of the body without organs, like full communism, the kingdom of ends or Absolute Spirit, *the Idea in and for itself*, is incipient. What a relief.

If you're getting impatient twiddling your thumbs as the land of milk & honey sloughs behind schedule and want to do something productive, D&G's anticapitalist praxis would push different molecular voices to speak simultaneously as a schizophrenized machinic-body--after all, they're no good to anyone on their lonesome in a disaggregated schism, as is the current situation with 'identity politics'. To have your voice ricochet through capitalist channels (and to let them make money off it) is obviously insufficient; minoritarian solidarity is the locus for emancipatory politics. To this end, Deleuze & Guattari are optimistic that the tendency toward deterritorialization as a short-term tactic to widen social fields to capture value & bolster production is not sustainable longterm (however long the term maybe is...ambiguous). But you can only destratify these pockets of resistance for so long before they overtake the strata itself.

To this point, if you'll humor me for a moment, I'd like to talk about acceleration. Anti-Oedipus is the sacred text of accelerationism, the primordial soup it climbed from one clawed hand at a time. You may know what I'm about to quote next;

"But which is the revolutionary path? Is there one?—To withdraw from the world market, as Samir Amin advises Third World countries to do, in a curious revival of the fascist "economic solution"? Or might it be to go in the opposite direction? To go still further, that is, in the movement of the market, of decoding and deterritorialization? For perhaps the flows are not yet deterritorialized enough, not decoded enough, from the viewpoint of a theory and a practice of a highly schizophrenic character. Not to withdraw from the process, but to go further, to accelerate the process"

This passage is the most exciting in Anti-Oedipus--there are no other references to acceleration that I could find, it's just this unitary utterance--which has founded an entire school of thought. For those slightly more pessimistic than D&G, for whom vitalism and the politics of joy seem a little cloying, this discloses the next step. This is why a single mention of acceleration, which disappears like a phantom from Anti-Oedipus to A Thousand Plateaus, has transfixed so much attention. There are now half a dozen (at least) splintered /ACC denominations spawning blasphemous exegesis of this passage, what 'accelerating the process' might or should mean in philosophical and political terms. It's been awhile since I read A Thousand Plateaus (and I'm overdue for a retread) but its erecting of finitudes and limits upon destratification seems a discontinuation if not a betrayal of acceleration's seductive possibilities. These days it's hard to believe the old Marxist

assurance that capitalism will collapse beneath its contradictions--how are we to administer a lethal dose of...contradiction? And what has ever died of contradictions anyway?--but, if we accept the model of capitalism from Deleuze & Guattari, then we can imagine deterritorializing magmic intensive states for the combustion engine of capitalism to burn as fuel until it hits terminal velocity. It's the last game in town.

This is a very complex book. I've barely scratched the surface here and I'm not even sure if my readings are adequate to the text. But reading Anti-Oedipus, seeing capitalism & psychoanalysis brought to the point of auto-critique so that they are reengineered from the inside, was a tremendous intellectual high. So am I a turncoat? Am I switching allegiances from the solar Apollonianism of dialectical-psychoanalysis to the strange midnight perversity of Schizo-Dionysus?

I dunno, TBD.

Peter says

When I was in England I joined an informal discussion group about this book. The group included my advisor and his wife. We read the first paragraph and his wife said, "That paragraph is sexist." My advisor swore at his wife, and then the discussion group was done.

Oliver Bateman says

done done donezo with this Whopper/Big Mac of an attempt to liberate everyone from everything through the embrace of deterritorialized schizo-desire and the rejection of paranoiac Oedipalized reterritorialization. Essentially the optimistic, convoluted counterpoint to Baudrillard's gnomonic, solution-free work--but in neither case are the "answers" answers in any specific case.

This book, of which I read about 70%--glossing over much of "The Holy Family" and the first half of "Savages, Barbarians, Civilized Men" (you can do this 'cause they're endlessly recapitulating their main points, of which there are actually very few; the two figures at the beginning of "Introduction to Schizoanalysis" are basically a précis of the preceding 300 pages)--does two things well:

- 1) Explains how "revolutionary" movements can quickly become "reactionary" movements, something of critical importance to the May '68 generation...how one can "flow" into the other, in much the same way that capitalism deterritorializes as far as practicable while still containing within it the germ of the original despotic Ur-state, then pathologizes via Oedipus/psychoanalysis when further "rhizomatic" developments could prove damaging to the status quo.
- 2) Contains, amidst all the gibberish (Guattari's handiwork, if their other muddled-but-great collaboration and Deleuze's own corpus of very readable stuff are any indication), some killer lines: "A schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst's couch." "Our society produces schizos the same way it produces Prell shampoo or Ford cars, the only difference being that the schizos are not salable." "Writing has never been capitalism's thing. Capitalism is profoundly illiterate. The death of writing is like the death of God or the death of the father: the thing was settled a long time ago, although the news of the event is slow to reach us, and there survives in us the memory of extinct signs with which we still write." "Desire can never be deceived. Interests can be deceived, unrecognized, or betrayed, but not desire. Whence Reich's

cry: No, the masses were not deceived, they desired fascism, and that is what has to be explained. What they deterritorialize with one hand, they reterritorialize with the other." "Isn't the destiny of American literature that of crossing limits and frontiers, causing deterritorialized flows of desire to circulate, but also always making these flows transport fascisizing, moralizing, Puritan, and familiarist territorialities?" "The only modern myth is the myth of zombies--mortified schizos, good for work, brought back to reason." "Good people say that we must not flee, that to escape is not good, that one must work for reforms...but the revolutionary knows that escape is revolutionary, provided one sweeps away the social cover on leaving. What matters is to break through the wall, even if one has to become black like John Brown."

A brutal book, and in truth I've enjoyed the chapters more in the "sequel," but it's certainly something, something you can read, something that is hopeful, something that is not not...and it sticks with you like peanut butter, which is no easier to swallow.

0 says

Highly recommend having some experience with Marx, Freud, and Levi-Strauss; Nietzsche, Lacan, and Saussure will also be helpful.

You don't gotta read the whole thing! The first and last chapters will give you the gist of the book's main ideas.

The takeaway: Dissolve into the flux you already are.

Summary:

Anti-Oedipus has two aims. The first is to critique the prevailing Freudian/Lacanian psychoanalytic model of the ego, which D&G call "Oedipus." The second is to create a new conception of subjectivity, and to offer a new method of analysis--schizoanalysis--to go with it. The major innovation D&G offer is to change the way we think about people. Rather than taking it for granted that people's conscious and unconscious desires are unified under the concept of the "ego," D&G want to show how egos are constructed over time by collections of free-flowing, disparate swarms of desire which aren't bound together in a unity, but are each discrete units themselves. They also want to suggest that, just as an ego has been historically created by contingent forces, so it can be destroyed and recreated anew.

For psychoanalysts, egos are the main unit of analysis. Every person has an ego. It's assumed to be a universal structure that we all possess. Psychoanalysts aim to study how egos change throughout a person's lifetime, as well as to produce healthy egos by treating them with therapy when they malfunction.

D&G want to suggest that this way of thinking about people carries normative ideas or demands about how people should function. Psychoanalysts aren't merely disinterested observers. They play an active role in constituting patients as "sick" or "healthy" and shape their subjectivity to fit the demands of contemporary capitalist society. In this sense, psychoanalysts are akin to police officers of subjectivity: they demand complicity of their subjects, and are ready to punish those mad ones who fail to comply. There is a clear correspondence, then, between the subjectivation of healthy patients and healthy citizens. So psychoanalysis intersects with sociology. The two can't be divorced from each other.

So alongside D&G's investigation of how psychoanalysts produce egos from primordial flows of desire,

they'll trace a genealogy of historical modes of production as well. These two investigations, the psychic and the social, meet in the question: why do people not only consent to repression (whether it be from an analyst or a capitalist), but desire it? And how can we free ourselves from our allegiance to Oedipus?

Marx's historical analysis of the modes of production & Freud's historical analysis of ego relations aren't two separate investigations (the mental and the physical, the imaginary and the real, the individual and the collective), but the same one. Both analyze the process by which desires are produced. D&G call this process "desiring-production."

But what is desire? Uniting the social and the psychical requires D&G to reconceptualize the philosophical concept of desire. Psyches must be shown to be material processes. And likewise, there must be something psychical about material processes.

Classical conceptions of desire establish it as something metaphysically different from matter. In the classical model, matter is taken to be absolutely positive--it is what it is, it exists solely in the here and now, it has no will, it is entirely subject to external forces. Meanwhile, desire is taken to be absolutely negative--desire wants what is NOT here and now, what is elsewhere. This distinction between the positivity of matter and the negativity of desiring psyches retains a dualism that has allowed Marx & Freud to be conceived of as separate for so long. D&G want to suggest that we think about desire differently. Instead of a negative force based on a lack of something, desire is a positive force of production that brings bodies together and separates them again. Desire can be likened to a productive machine, a "desiring-machine." If desire is a productive force, then we can speak of an economy and even a sociology of desire, just as we speak of economics and sociologies of modes of production. The difference between the two is one of scale--macro and micro--but not of kind.

Desiring-machines are infinitely productive forces that constitute our subjective experience of reality, the world that we know everyday, replete with language, concepts and emotions. An ego is a collection of many composite desiring-machines that are held together by each machine's force of desire. But egos, concepts, language, and emotions aren't fundamental to desiring-machines. Rather, they're secondary manifestations, or concretions, of desiring-machines' productions. Initially, desire is non-conceptual (If you're familiar with Lacan, we can say here that desire is akin to the Real--that which precedes and exceeds reality, but also that productive force which produces reality). Better to think of it in physical terms. So D&G use the language of thermodynamics or liquid dynamics to conceive of how desiring-machines operate.

Desiring-machines can be likened to a liquid undergoing phase transitions: sometimes it congeals into more-or-less viscous and solid formations, after which it can decondense into a free flow once again. It appears more like a stable "thing" in its solid forms, but we have to keep in mind that it's really at heart a chaotic force, and that it can just as easily dissolve its semi-stable forms as it can produce them. In this thermodynamic language, the semi-stable forms that desire sometimes appears in are analogues for egos and their representations of reality. Desire's more viscous states are analogues of impersonal, unconscious affective corporeal forces which disrupt or exceed our representations of reality. So we have the personal and the impersonal, the solid and the liquid. It's all a matter of how desire is arranged, what forms the desiring-machines take.

If desire can be so potentially volatile and revolutionary--that is, liquid--why is it that so many structures of our reality appear immutable and universal? Families, states, capital, markets...how do these structures survive and hold themselves together? What keeps them from dissolving?

Desiring-machines have a function, and that is to produce desire. Remember that desire is a positive force

that aims to bring bodies together (into semi-stable solid formations) and to separate bodies once again (back into free-flowing liquid forms). So desiring-machines are naturally drawn to each other. They want to link up with each other and create circuits, lines, matrices, and all sorts of other structures along which desire can flow. Desiring-machines do not necessarily have any fixed or long-lasting objects of desire, so their relations with other machines can be long-lasting or very short. They connect, share flows, disconnect, and search for other machines to connect to. Sometimes, purely as a matter of chance (owing to tendencies towards stability and predictability in population statistics such as the law of large numbers) many desiring-machines can assemble into semi-stable aggregates. These aggregates are nothing more than contingent mosaics of externally-related desiring-machines. And this point is vital: an assemblage of desiring machines is not a unity, not a whole, not a totality; the machines are not parts; each functions separately from the others, any can break off at any time or reshuffle to establish new connections, new assemblages. What is novel in D&G is the eradication of any appeal to totality, to an organism as such. There is as yet no organism, no subject, no Oedipus--or rather, Oedipus is made of millions of swarming mini-Oedipuses, each their own subject.

In order to produce a unified ego from this swarm of desiring-machines, something else must happen: the "one" as a unity that transcends any one of its parts must be produced, and it must be produced by the individual desiring-machines themselves. And once they produce the one (the phallus, the despotic signifier), it becomes a really magnetic force, so real that it appears as primary to the many. An aggregate of individual desiring-machines, though not a formal unity insofar as no machine has allegiance to any other, nevertheless effects a material, almost magnetic pull towards other free desiring-machines. It draws desiring-machines to it, acting like a strange attractor or a gravitational force. Once attached to this large body, the aggregate subsumes the individual into itself as part of its behemoth consuming structure. And here we have the universality of structuralism, of myth, capital, Oedipus.

In its pull on free individuals, a reversal of the production process happens. Now, the individual desiring-machines no longer appear as the primary producers--**they** are now the ones being acted upon, or produced, by the aggregate (D&G alternatively describe the free desiring-machines as organs and the aggregate of desiring-machines a body-without-organs). The aggregate exerts a force greater than any individual, and thus its unity can appear to be primary to the multitude it is really comprised of (Applied to capitalism, the process is analogous to the seduction of individual laborers--desiring-machines--towards the product and eventually capital--body-without-organs--that they produce. A reversal of poles: capital, though entirely produced by laborers, is greater than any one of them taken individually, and even a large mass of them taken collectively. Here capital appears as primary to labor-power; ideology becomes the primary reality; and laborers are now willing to defend the capitalist system that oppresses them).

And this is where psychoanalysis and capitalism start: by understanding the aggregate as the primary producer, rather than understanding it as a product of many producers. Again, the status of the producers here is not that of a unified 'collective' but of a swarm of disparate 'individuals.' 'The' molar subject is really, at core, a hundred million molecular subjects.

Because the molar is the molecular, because desiring-machines have no necessary tendency towards unification, it is also in their nature to rupture their connections, their allegiance to the whole. This is of course the second phase of what it means to be a desiring-machine--to never be content with what is, to always seek novelty. Therefore, the aggregate of capital, of Oedipus--of any social structure--is continually breaking apart, rupturing, and rearranging itself as it functions. In fact, this just is part of its function. The desiring-machines do not stay put. They are moving around, making and breaking new connections, the whole time. They rarely escaping the gravitational orbit of the aggregate: most often they break free of the surface and are pulled right back into the mix. In this way, the aggregate maintains an order, a unity, through the micro-chaos of its individuals. In fact, this is the **life** of the whole itself--to appropriate and

reappropriate all individual forces to its universal structure, its code.

Capitalism works so well because it incorporates all antitheses into its structuring--this is the formal definition of capitalism. Capitalism takes the form of a revolutionary machine. Its function is to accelerate, to increase, speed up, the process of breakdowns and recombinations, to create ever-new codes and arrangements of desiring-machines, continually surpassing itself. But capitalism is **not** a revolutionary machine, because each restructuring of itself (what D&G call deterritorialization) remains just that: a re-structuring (a re-territorialization). It plays on the polymorphously perverse flows of desiring-machines to produce novelty, and to appropriate that novelty for itself. It encourages an ordered chaos and entropy so that it can assimilate entropic and chaotic forces into its tool-box. In this way, it is actually the most anti-revolutionary machine in that it incorporates revolution, destructuring, into its very structure. Structure is always reasserted, and reasserted through the very production of chaos.

The task of schizoanalysis is to use capitalist and psychoanalytic modes of production to really revolutionary ends. Here the revolutionary is the schizophrenic--what cannot be coded or assimilated, what refuses and destroys structure, what scrambles codes, words, concepts, names, identities, egos, for fun; without rest, without occupation of any. Schizophrenia lives desire as flow, as pure becoming, universal difference. A schizophrenic ego functions not as a whole, a one, a totality, but as the aggregate of individuals that it already is. The task of schizoanalysis, then, is to become-molecular, become-multiple, to destroy Oedipus by breaking apart, fracturing--and not reforming.

There's still a problem, though, in that desire has two moments or aspects to it: chaos & cosmos. The cosmos may be ultimately a projection of chaos, but it is still a natural movement of desire. Schizophrenics still speak. And this is the answer: schizophrenics still speak, but as word salad. They use the code, the structure, to its own dissolution: tearing off a piece here and there and throwing them into the air, stealing bricks from walls and dropping them into rivers, agreeing to be one thing at one moment and rejecting it at the next. They are virus, destroying the body from within.

But to become-schizophrenic by oneself in capitalist society is to risk being institutionalized. Schizoanalysis cannot be an individual project. Desire, insofar as its aim is to dis/connect desiring-machines, is always social. The task of schizoanalysis, then, is to de-Oedipalize en masse, a group 'suicide' of Oedipus in order to birth--who? or what? No one in particular, because schizophrenics, desiring-machines, are the potential to be everyone, everything.

Ultimately Nietzsche wins the day: Zarathustra is mad; Zarathustra is a swarm of battling affects; and **everyone is Zarathustra** .

Seriously, though, just read the first and last chapter and skip the rest.
