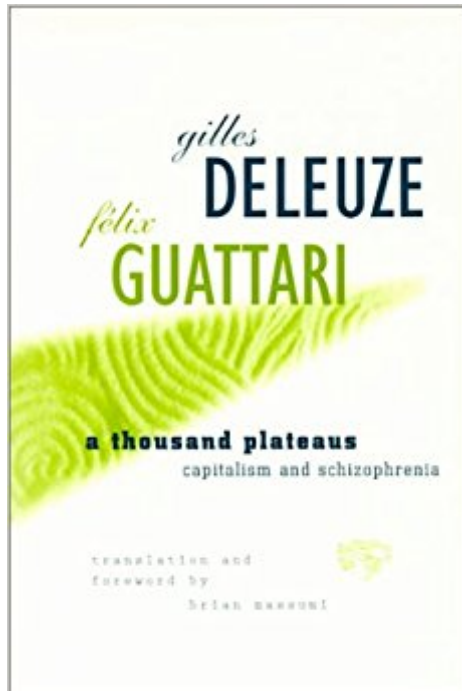




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# A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism And Schizophrenia



## Synopsis

A Thousand Plateaus continues the work Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari began in *Anti-Oedipus* and has now become established as one of the classic studies of the development of critical theory in the late twentieth century. It occupies an important place at the center of the debate reassessing the works of Freud and Marx, advancing an approach that is neither Freudian nor Marxist but which learns from both to find an entirely new and radical path. It presents an attempt to pioneer a variety of social and psychological analyses free of the philosophical encumbrances criticized by postmodern writers. A Thousand Plateaus is an essential text for feminists, literary theorists, social scientists, philosophers, and others interested in the problems of contemporary Western culture.

## Book Information

Paperback: 632 pages

Publisher: University of Minnesota Press; 2 edition (December 21, 1987)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780816614028

ISBN-13: 978-0816614028

ASIN: 0816614024

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.9 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 41 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #31,932 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #7 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Mental Health > Schizophrenia #63 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Modern #77 in Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Mental Illness

## Customer Reviews

"A rare and remarkable book." â TLS (TIs) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Text: English, French (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is the kind of book you need to read with a notebook and highlighter and take the time to look into every single word and concept you're not familiar with. A lot of it seems like downright gibberish but if you start to delve into systems theory and chemistry and linguistics and all the disciplines they

tie in, you start to see it's actually cogent and quite brilliant. But it's almost infuriatingly inaccessible. And I'm fairly well read in philosophy, psychology, sociology, etc

What a splendidly funny masterpiece. What most people or readers miss, is that the fictitious Prof. Challenger ( A Sir Conan Doyle character) supposedly created all these new concepts in 1000 plateau. What does this signify or import when an fictitious author is given credit for all their ideas? Is Deleuze and Guattari just the amanuensis for this Prof. Challenger? I see most people fail to even see this key point on go on discussing things like rhizomes, dimensional schizo-stratification with all seriousness...when the book is really a fun jest-like book....it is post-modern in the sense it leaps from one hyper-dimension of a 'real author' to a 'fake author' to a 'dead author' mixing audaciously the levels of reality with fiction. I think, Prof. Challenger was introduced in chapter 3, so begin there and look for clues...you will see he was one that built the machine which made the Earth scream the truth.

My first major in college was French linguistics almost 50 years ago and wrote my thesis on Marcel Proust. In the mean time, I read almost all the books by Jean-Paul Sartre. He was my hero when I was in college. Later on, I was hooked on Michel Foucault for 20 years or so, who led me to Deleuze's works. Translating Deleuze into English is almost impossible, because there are so many concepts that can only be expressed in French, but "Thousand Plateaus (which should have been plateaux, but it sounds funny in English) is very well translated and even comprehensible! I believe that the collaboration between Deleuze and Guattari has created one of the deepest synchronic-diachronic philosophical expression of the every aspect of philosophical life. You can start reading it from any chapter and end in any place. Yet, you get the totality of what we are going through as "humans" at this point in our history. If you don't read much philosophical works, this is a treat for your mind.

"A Thousand Plateaus" is one of those great, sprawling books that is alive and squirming with thousands of ideas like Toynbee's "Study of History," let's say, or Peter Sloterdijk's "Spheres." It is, furthermore, an intimidating book to read for the newcomer to Deleuze, since it contains the fully worked out cosmology and metaphysics that he had been slowly and patiently building over the years, first by himself, then with Guattari. You can read it without prerequisites, as I did on my first pass, but it will bewilder you if you have no acquaintance with Deleuze's "Difference and Repetition" and his and Guattari's earlier "Anti-Oedipus." But: should you choose to dive in anyway, you'll need

to know a few of the basic concepts first. D&G set up a cosmology (and yes, despite its being a po-mo classic, it IS a work of metaphysics, so don't let your professors tell you it isn't) in which two planes are opposed to each other (although, of course, it's not quite that simple): the Plane of Organization vs. the Plane of Consistency (of multiplicities). The Plane of Organization is basically the entire physical world, including the human cultural world, which D&G term, respectively, assemblages of bodies and assemblages of enunciation (i.e. the semiotic world of the various sign regimes of human culture). It is organized into a series of hierarchical strata, the three main ones being the physico-chemical stratum, the organic (i.e. plant & animal) stratum, and the anthropomorphic (human) stratum. The strata are the means whereby flows (of particles, multiplicities, redundancies, etc.) are captured and organized. But the key to their organization is something which D&G term "Abstract Machines" which function in a sort of similar way to Platonic Ideas. They are embedded in the strata and function as metaphysical principles organizing them. But in contrast to Plato, these Abstract Machines are not transcendent, but immanent. Yet they do, in a sense, pre-figure the physical world of assemblages, since they function on the metaphysical plane called the Plane of Consistency, where they draw the diagrams that code for the assemblages. On the Plane of Consistency, there are no substances or forms, only Matter and Functions, although by "Matter" they mean what Deleuze meant in "Difference & Repetition" by intensivities, which are various kinds of differential flows of energy (UNCODED flows of energy, that is), such as stretching, speed, temperature, rates of change, etc. These Abstract Machines are then translated into Substances and Forms on the Plane of Organization by means of "machinic assemblages" which effectuate, or realize, them. Substances are formed matter, but matter on the Plane of Consistency is composed of unformed flows or in other words, Bodies Without Organs (once these flows are coded by organs, then they are captured into the organic stratum in an organized way, but on the Plane of Consistency they have no organized form as such). Functions, meanwhile, are like tensors which are effectuated by machinic assemblages into the realm of semiotics. The strata are organized into both Content and Expression, a double articulation. Both Content and Expression have their own substances and forms, but Content has to do with WHAT kinds of particles, or molecular multiplicities, are assembled together, while Expression has to do with the molar aggregates that result from the morphogenetic processes of formation. Content is concerned with micromolecular multiplicities (that's fun to say), while Expression is concerned with molar multiplicities. Multiplicities, by the way, are the basic ontological unit in D&G, which are held together by assemblages that function in a way not too different from holons. That's the basic metaphysical model and once you get that, the rest is easy (it took me three read throughs to figure

this out). I won't go over rhizomes vs. arborescent models here, since those have been so recycled through the various political literature of the Left (i.e. "Empire") that I will assume the reader's familiarity with them. Have fun. And don't forget to check out my YOUTUBE video series on "A Thousand Plateaus" which will come up under the title of DELEUZE & GUATTARI'S A THOUSAND PLATEAUS PART 1 BY JOHN DAVID EBERT 1/2--John David Ebert, author of "The Age of Catastrophe" and "The New Media Invasion" (McFarland Books, 2011 & 2012)

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