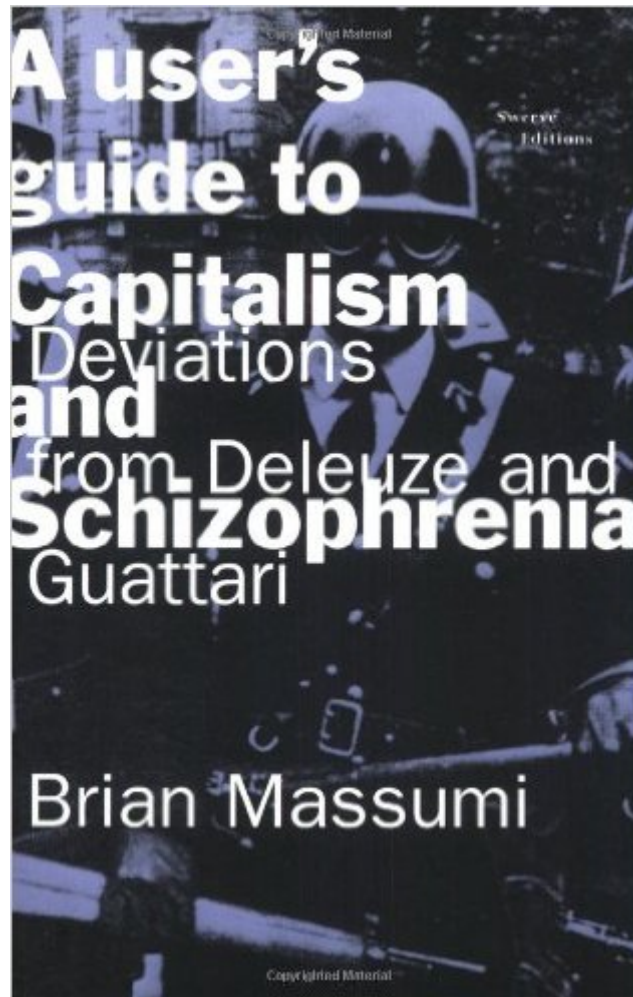


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A User's Guide To Capitalism And Schizophrenia: Deviations From Deleuze And Guattari



Synopsis

A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia is a playful and emphatically practical elaboration of the major collaborative work of the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. When read along with its rigorous textual notes, the book also becomes the richest scholarly treatment of Deleuze's entire philosophical oeuvre available in any language. Finally, the dozens of explicit examples that Brian Massumi furnishes from contemporary artistic, scientific, and popular urban culture make the book an important, perhaps even central text within current debates on postmodern culture and politics. Capitalism and Schizophrenia is the general title for two books published a decade apart. The first, *Anti-Oedipus*, was a reaction to the events of May/June 1968; it is a critique of "state-happy" Marxism and "school-building" strains of psychoanalysis. The second, *A Thousand Plateaus*, is an attempt at a positive statement of the sort of nomad philosophy Deleuze and Guattari propose as an alternative to state philosophy. Brian Massumi is Professor of Comparative Literature at McGill University.

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Customer Reviews

Massumi's user's guide is a wonderful little book, but unfortunately is not a book about Deleuze and Guattari. At the outset, one initially thinks that Massumi will be giving a close reading of *A Thousand Plateaus*, but quickly finds that the text is a patchwork pieced together out of Deleuze's various writings. For instance, the first part of Massumi's book, entitled "Force" discusses D&G in

the context of the Plateau in ATP entitled the "Geology of Morals", but greatly broadens this discussion by interpreting D&G's appropriation of Hjelmslev's semiotics in the context of the reading of force Deleuze gives in *_Nietzsche and Philosophy_*. Now, not only does Massumi severely simplify D&G's appropriation of Hjelmslev, but he does the same with Deleuze's account of force in Nietzsche. Moreover, in Deleuze's own independent philosophical works and in the context of his work with Guattari, Deleuze never makes use of the concept of force. Now, in and of itself this is not a bad thing and Massumi ends up producing a very useful model of analysis, but it's questionable as to whether such a reading really helps the reader penetrate what D&G are up to in ATP. It seems to me that this sort of strategy is symptomatic of a lot of works on both Deleuze and Deleuze's work with Guattari. No one would deny that the works with Guattari and Deleuze's works "written in his own name" are exceedingly difficult and require a lot of work to unlock, and that as a rule his writings in the history of philosophy are remarkably clear. As a result, there seems to be a refusal to read the independent works on their own terms and a tendency to attempt to reduce them to the historical writings.

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