

A Thousand Plateaus: 4: Postulates of Linguistics

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I: "Language Is Informational and Communicational"

II: "There Is an Abstract Machine of Language That Does Not Appeal to Any 'Extrinsic' Factor"

III: "There Are Constants or Universals of Language That Enable Us to Define It as a Homogeneous System"

IV: "Language Can Be Scientifically Studied Only under the Conditions of a Standard or Major Language"

CAE = collective assemblage of enunciation

MA = machinic assemblage

AM = abstract machine

PC = plane of consistency

DT = deterritorialization

I: "Language Is Informational and Communicational"

- I. Elementary unit of language: order-word [mot d'ordre] (75a)
 - A. Semiotic co-ordinates of grammar
 1. Transcendent partitioning of phase space [of desiring-production or "life"] by molar categories
 2. = "giving life orders"
 - B. Preview of themes of plateau:
 1. Faculty of order-words
 2. Language not oriented to belief but to obedience
 3. Information as strict minimum for transmitting and obeying order-words
 4. Order-words as death sentences
- II. Status and scope of order-word (76a-79a)
 - A. Order-word not co-extensive w/ language, but is only a language-function (76a)
 1. First determination of language = indirect discourse:
 - a. from second to third party
 - b. In this sense language is transmission of order-word: social determinations of what is to be done
 2. Metaphors and metonymies only effects of language a indirect discourse
 3. Language a map [intervenes, actively constructs], not a tracing [representative] [cf. p 12 ATP]
 - B. Austin: relation of performative and illocutionary (77a)
 1. Types of presuppositions:
 - a. Implicit or nondiscursive presuppositions: relations between speech acts and statements
 - b. Explicit assumptions: relations between statements or an external act
 2. Types of speech acts:
 - a. Performative: what is done by speaking something [e.g., I commit myself by these words...]
 - b. Illocutionary: what is done in speaking [questioning, promising, etc.]
 3. Three consequences of speech act theory for linguistics
 - a. Language cannot be considered a code or as communication of information
 - b. Linguistics cannot shield semantics, syntactics, etc from pragmatics
 - c. Linguistics cannot maintain the langue v. parole distinction
 4. Contra Benveniste and subjectivism/communication (78a)
 - a. Cannot reach the order-word as key to language by grounding illocutionary by performative
 - (1) performatives can be defined w/o recourse to pragmatics
 - (2) e.g., Benveniste and self-referentiality
 - (a) this posits a pre-existent structure of subjectivity or intersubjectivity
 - (b) thus for Benveniste, language is communicational
 - b. Ducrot allows the reversal
 - (1) [the grounding of subjectivity in language]:
 - (2) performative must be grounded in the illocutionary
 - (a) illocutionary explained by implicit/nondiscursive presuppositions
 - (b) implicit/nondiscursive presuppositions explained by CA of enunciation
 5. Thus neither signifiacnce/information nor subjectivity/communication reaches the pragmatic level
 - C. Definitions of order-words and of language (79a)
 1. Order-words: relation of word or statement to implicit presuppositions,
 - a. That is, to speech acts

- b. Not just commands, but every act linked to statements by social obligations
 - 2. Langage: set of order-words, implicit presuppositions, or speech acts current in a langue at any one time
- III. Precision of relation of statement and act as internal immanence of redundancy (79b)
 - A. Order-word is itself the redundancy of act and statement
 - 1. Order-words tell us what we must retain, expect, etc.
 - 2. Redundancy is primary: information subordinate to transmission of order-words
 - B. Two forms of redundancy
 - 1. Frequency: signifiacnce of information
 - 2. Resonance: subjectivity of communication
- IV. Collective assemblages of enunciation (79c-83)
 - A. Effects:
 - 1. Accounts for social character of enunciation
 - 2. Accounts for individuation of statements and subjectification of enunciations
 - B. Definitions
 - 1. Nominal definition: redundant complex of act and statement that accomplishes it
 - 2. Real definition: set of all incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies (80a)
 - a. Actions and passions affecting bodies
 - (1) bodies in widest sense [=any formed matter or substance of content]
 - (2) [=machinic assemblage; = social phase space for treatment of bodies]
 - b. Incorporeal transformations
 - (1) [=moving a body into another region of social phase space; = category of treatment]
 - (2) logical characteristics:
 - (a) attributed to bodies
 - (b) the expressed of the statement
 - (3) Examples: juridical [defendant/convict]; political [peace/war]; social [minor/adult]
 - (4) temporal characteristics:
 - (a) instantaneous
 - (b) immediate
 - (c) simultaneous
 - (d) precisely-dated
 - (5) more examples: social [love]; religion [communion]; political [hijacking]
 - C. Summary: order-words or CA of enunciation:
 - 1. designate relation btw statements and incorporeal transformations
 - 2. [=social machine regulating how bodies are categorized {which in turn regulates how they are treated}]
 - a. strange nature of instantaneous transformation (81a)
 - (1) Rousseau: transition from state of nature to society
 - (2) best illustrated by examples from political economy
 - b. Ideology confines statements to superstructure, but D/G show their productive effects
- V. Constant variation (always undergoing transformation) as characteristic of CA of enunciation (82a):
 - A. circumstances (regulating effect of statement) as internal to enunciation
 - 1. variables of expression: [regulating circumstances which control effects of statements]
 - a. Establish relation of language and the "outside"
 - b. Precisely because they are immanent to language
 - 2. Critique of linguistics: by looking to language constants (instead of variation of CA)
 - a. Ties statement to signifier and enunciation to a subject
 - b. Consigns circumstances to exterior; self-encloses language; makes pragmatics a residue
 - B. Order-word:
 - 1. Variable that makes word into an enunciation
 - 2. its immediacy gives it power of variation over bodies whose transformation it controls
- VI. Pragmatics: politics of language (82b)
 - A. "Transformational research": study of variation of order-words and incorporeal transformations
 - B. Examples:
 - 1. Faye's study of Nazi statements
 - 2. Lenin's establishment of avant-garde
- VII. Regime of signs or semiotic machine (83a)
 - A. Set of CAs of enunciation whose variables (=incorporeal transformations) are in determinable relations
 - B. Any one society has a multiplicity of regimes of signs; new order-words modifying these will arise
 - 1. Redundancy of order-words
 - 2. Indirect discourse: presence of order-word w/in word
 - a. Direct discourse is fragment of indirect discourse
 - (1) "I" is an order-word

- (2) my direct discourse is free indirect discourse running through me
- b. Faculty of order-words
 - (1) Instantaneous emission, perception, transmission of order-words
 - (2) Wide variability; power of forgetting
 - (3) Ideal/ghostly capacity for apprehension of incorporeal transformations
 - (4) Aptitude for grasping language as immense indirect discourse

VIII. Recap (84a-85)

- A. Order-words, CA, regimes of signs not = language,
 - 1. but they do effectuate its condition of possibility [superlinearity of expression (cf p 62 ATP)]
 - 2. That is, they fulfill the condition of possibility of language
 - a. [= select a set of incorporeal transformations from pool of possible transformations]
 - b. w/o them, language would remain pure virtuality [=pure set of possible speech acts]
- B. Collective assemblage not = language (as defined by constants)
 - 1. Rather, CA uses language constants for its actions
 - a. Thus different constants can have same use (French v English courts)
 - b. And same constants can have different use ("I swear" used in different circumstances)
 - 2. Expresses set of incorporeal transformations
- C. Linguistics must involve pragmatics
 - 1. To define how a CA or regime will select a set of incorporeal transformation [= effectuate c.p.]
 - 2. To define how a CA or regime will use linguistic elements in producing these transformations

II: "There Is an Abstract Machine of Language That Does Not Appeal to Any 'Extrinsic' Factor"

IX. Modification of bodies/incorporeal transformations as content/expression

- A. Content/expression as two formalizations (85a)
 - 1. Definitions:
 - a. Content has formalization: hand-tool pole: lesson of things
 - b. Expression has formalization: face-language pole: lesson of signs
 - 2. Content/expression is not representation
 - 3. Stoic theory: mingling of bodies vs incorporeal transformations
 - a. Incorporeal transformations = expressed of statements; attributed to bodies (86a)
 - b. This is not representation, but intervention, a speech act:
 - 4. CA of enunciation: speaks on same level as states of things/content
 - a. Same particle can be either body (content) or a sign/order-word (expression)
 - b. Thus the functional independence of content / expression is
 - (1) form of their reciprocal presupposition
 - (2) and continual passage of one to the other
- B. Precision of "intervene": contra idealism (87a)
 - 1. Movement of deterritorialization carrying away forms of content and forms of expression
 - 2. No primacy of content or expression re: deterritorialization (Examples: math; Scriptural crime)
 - 3. Circumstances or variables = degrees of deterritorialization
 - a. Variables of content
 - b. Variables of expression

X. General conclusions as to nature of assemblages (88a)

- A. Components
 - 1. Horizontal axis: segmented
 - a. Machinic assemblage of bodies
 - b. Collective assemblage of enunciation
 - 2. Vertical axis: sides
 - a. Territorializing sides
 - b. Cutting edges of deterritorialization
- B. Examples:
 - 1. Kafka
 - 2. Feudal assemblage

XI. Errors: (89a-91)

- A. Base/superstructure: to think content determines expression by causal action (89a)

1. Critique of ideology (89a)
2. D/G's position: (90a)
 - a. Two segments of an assemblage
 - (1) MA relates to intermingling of bodies (primacy over tools and goods)
 - (2) CA relates to regimes of signs (primacy over language and words)
 - b. Relate to each other in respect of quanta of deterritorialization: (thus primacy of lines of flight)
 - c. Thus an assemblage flattens its dimensions onto a plane of consistency w/
 - (1) Reciprocal presuppositions
 - (2) And mutual insertions
- B. Linguistic independence: adequacy of form of expression as linguistic system (90b)
 1. Language as fulfilling expression;
 - a. relegating content to reference and pragmatics to exteriority
 - b. Erecting abstract machine of language as synchronic set of constants
 2. D/G critique: not abstract enough: remains linear
 - a. True abstract machine: = diagram of an assemblage; rhizome model
 - b. Interpenetration of politics and language

III: "There Are Constants or Universals of Language That Enable Us to Define It as a Homogeneous System"

XII. Structural invariants: necessary for scientific status of linguistics

- A. Types of invariants
 1. Constants: phonological, syntactical, semantic
 2. Universals: phonemes; syntax; signification
 3. Trees linking constants
 4. Competence
 5. Homogeneity
 6. Synchrony

- B. Interrelations of each factor at each level

XIII. D/G: real question is abstract machine [=singular set of variables put into continuous variation]

- A. Chomsky / Labov debate illustrates key issues (93a)
 1. Chomsky: invariants necessary for science
 2. Labov: investigates lines of inherent variation
 - a. neither assigned to another system [another language]
 - b. nor placed outside the system [politics]
- B. D/G take up concept of continuous variation, even beyond Labov (94a-)
 1. Line of variation is virtual
 - a. Place into variation: build continuum of possible transformations of a variable
 - b. Should not be confused w/ continuity of a variable [fact of gaps in parole?]
 2. Constant or invariant defined by function as a relative center (95a)
 - a. Example of music (95a)
 - b. Objection/response (96a)
 3. Generalized chromaticism (97a)
 - a. Placing elements in continuous variation
 - b. Bears on voice, speech, language, music simultaneously
 4. Style (97b): procedure of continuous variation: an assemblage of enunciation
 - a. Stammering w/in own language
 - b. Language becomes intensive, a pure continuum of values and intensities
 5. Placing in variation as method (99a)
 - a. [=Constructing the plane of consistency to allow new creation]
 - b. Line drawn is agrammatical, asemantic, etc
 - c. That is, it reveals constants as imposed selections from virtual line of potential choices
 - d. [=rejection of reference points: p 104]
 - e. Tensor: causes language to tend to the limits of its elements, forms, notions
- C. Singularity of abstract machine of language (100a)
 1. Virtual-real
 2. Optional rules varying ceaselessly with each variation

3. Diagram of an assemblage: selection from its BwO: its phase space: its pool of possible combinations

IV: "Language Can Be Scientifically Studied Only under the Conditions of a Standard or Major Language"

- XIV. Scientific model of linguistics same as political model of making a major language (100b)
- A. Scientific: extracting constants from variables
 - B. Political: language is homogenized, standardized: becomes a major language
 1. Forming grammatically correct sentences: prerequisite for submission to social laws
 2. Nul n'est censé ignorer la grammaticalité
 3. The unity of a language [langue] is fundamentally political [NB: misleading translation]
- XV. Given such political core of language, is major vs. minor language the proper distinction? (101a)
- A. Pouvoir [transcendent imposition] of constants vs puissance [immanent self-organization] of variation
 1. Dialect is not the right notion to distinguish minor languages
 2. Rather, minor languages distinguish dialects through their power of variation
 - B. Two objections to identifying major/minor with dominant and dominated languages (102a)
 1. Chomsky shows how one can draw constants from a dialect
 2. Increased dominance of a language (becoming major) entails increased variation (becoming minor)
 - C. Thus at most general level, Chomsky and Labov's positions change into each other
- XVI. Thus there are not 2 types of languages (major vs minor), but 2 treatments of same language (103a-105a)
- A. Extract constants and constant relations from variables or place variables in continuous variation
 1. Thus constant is not opposed to variable, but to placing into variation
 2. This outlaws the use of langue vs parole as objection, since langue is search for constants
 3. Nondistinctive features have power [puissance] to place all elements of language in continuous variation
 - B. Major / minor are two usages or functions of language (104a)
 1. Example of Kafka: making language stutter or wail
 2. Two tendencies of "minor" languages: impoverishment & overload
 - a. "Malevolent" interpretation of the linguists: poverty and preciosity
 - b. D/G's interpretation: rejection of reference points, dissolution of constant form: becoming music
 - C. Becoming-minor of the major language: deterritorializing the major language (104b)
 1. Minor languages only in relation to major languages
 2. Becoming bilingual in one's own language
 - D. Complexity of the concept of minority (105a):
 1. musical, literary, linguistic, juridical, political references
 2. Majority: implies a constant of expression or content serving as standard measure (White Man)
 - a. Man is in the majority, even if numerically the minority, because
 - b. Man appears twice: in constant (the standard) and in variable (the type) from which it is extracted
 - c. Majority assumes power/domination/standard measure, not other way around
 3. Minority = determination other than that of the constant
 4. Reversal:
 - a. majority = nobody / analytic fact; (no one fits the molar standard: [stability: Being])
 - b. minority = becoming of everybody (we are all molecular) (potentials; creation: Becoming)
 - (1) becoming-woman of all mankind
 - (2) becoming-minor of major language
 5. Distinctions
 - a. Minorities: objectively definable states; but also as seeds, crystals of becoming [bifurcators]
 - b. Majorities: [standard measure: black hole; molar attractor]
 - c. Becoming-minor: deterritorializing major: [entering plane of consistency; self-ordering zone]
 6. Figure of universal minoritarian consciousness: creation; continuous variation; becoming
- XVII. Order-word: only "metalanguage" capable of accounting for dual usages (major/minor) (106a-110)
- A. Order-word (106a)
 1. Immediate or potential death
 2. Warning cry; message to flee
 - B. Death-sentence: Death is everywhere: (107b-108a)
 1. As expressed of statement; incorporeal transformation death is both (107b)
 - a. ideal boundary separating bodies, their forms and states
 - b. condition through which subject must move in order to change form or state
 - c. Death is general incorporeal transformation attributed to all bodies re: forms and substances
 2. Because of reciprocal presupposition of expression and content, death is also attributed to bodies (108a)
 - a. Thus there are constants extractable from content

- b. That is, sharp contrasts of bodies arranged in binary trees
- C. Warning cry: flight (108b)
 - 1. Variables in continuous variation
 - 2. Incorporeal transformation as passage to the limit: to make death a variation
 - a. Language pushed to its limits
 - b. Bodies metamorphose contents; exhaust themselves to reach or overstep limit of their figures
 - 3. Major vs minor science
 - a. Major: extracting invariants or constants
 - b. Minor: pragmatic placing in variation
 - (1) smallest interval: freeing an intense matter or continuum of variation
 - (a) internal tensors of languag
 - (b) internal tensions of content
 - (2) reaching plane of consistency by an absolute deterritorialization: single matter:
 - (a) expression as incorporeal power
 - (b) content as limitless corporeality
 - (3) relation of content and expression changes
 - (a) no longer have two forms,
 - (b) but conjunction of cutting edges of |DT on single plane of liberated matter
 - (4) synthesizer has replaced judgment,
 - (a) creating a rhizome of intensities,
 - (b) "virtual continuum of life"
 - (5) bring forth question from another answer:
 - (a) line of flight in response to death-sentence:
 - (b) pass-words