

MAURIZIO LAZZARATO: SIGNS, MACHINES, SUBJECTIVITIES

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7 INTRODUCTION

I. "Crisis of Subjectivity" (7-8)

a. "economic miracle" of post-WW2 cap = subjectivity

b. co-extensive "subjective economy"

c. "today, the weakness of capitalism lies in the production of subjectivity"

ii. Neoliberalism is unique (b8 - t11)

a. extreme deterritorialization = no new production of subjectivity

b. entrepreneurial model perhaps exhaustion of recourse to pre-capitalist values

c. financial crisis reduces subject to debt (and not information/subjectivations)

d. subjection now just plunder / blame

e. Japan as example

iii. Available resources (m11- b13)

a. Old left / unions no longer useful

- b. Various authors on rapport between production and subjectivity (Rifkin, Ranciere, Badiou)
- c. D&G's answer: social subjection and machinic enslavement (ME = others ignore)

iv. Subjectivity (b13-22)

- a. Lazzarato combines social & mechanic systems
 - i. defines machine (14)
 - ii. defines social (14)
- b. Union of micro-political (Guattari) and micro-physical (Foucault)
- c. Subjective mutation (non-discursive) (16) ****
- d. Critique of language and semiotics (17)
- e. Enunciation as existential pragmatics
- f. Political subjectivation, revolution (19-22)

23 - CHP 1 PRODUCTION AND THE PRODUCTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

23 - 1. Social subjection and machinic enslavement

- a. D&G borrow Marx's basic discovery: "production of wealth depends on abstract, unqualified, subjectivity activity" i.
irreducible to the domain of either political or linguistic representation"
 - ii. wealth = intersection of social subjection & mechanic enslavement
- b. social subjection = social division of labor
 - i. Foucault: governmentality of "subjects" whereby "domination issues from the subject themselves"
 - ii. Marx: capitalist = personified capital; worker = personified labor (25)
- c. machinic enslavement = "desubjectivation" "mobilizing functional and operational, non-rep and asignifying"
 - i. not citizen, but gear, cog, component part of "business," other assemblages.
 - ii. derived from cybernetics/automation, mode of control/regulation
 - iii. ME creates 'dividuals' as samples, data, markets, or banks (non-human)
 - iv. ME doesn't use subject/object, word/things, nature/culture
- d. "we no longer act nor even make use of something"
 - i. "we constitute mere inputs and outputs, a point of conjunction or disjunction in the economic, social, or communication processes run and governed by enslavement" (26)
 - ii. not intersubjective, just points of connection, junction, and disjunction of flows
 - iii. torn to pieces by the machine
 - iv. works through deterritorialization (into molecular components) (27-28)
- e. capital not just a social relationship, a power relation
 - i. foucault on panopticon -- creation of dissymmetry, disequal, difference (and operator doesn't affect it)
 - ii. D&G on diagram
 - iii. "turn to subjective economy is not humanization"
 - iv. "the fact that in the current economy one speaks, communicates, and expresses oneself does not bring us back to the

linguistic turn, to its logocentrism, and the intersubjectivity of speakers; it is indicative rather of a machine-centric world in which one speaks, communicates, and acts 'assisted' by all kinds of mechanical, thermodynamic, cybernetic, and computer machines." (29)

29 - 2. Human/machine vs humans/machinies

- a. ergonomics: example of subjection/enslavement
 - i. fully expunged of anthropocentrism
 - ii. not subjects/objects, just "ontologically ambiguous entities" (30)
- b. machines, objects, signs = vectors of subject/enunciation
 - i. enable, solicit, prompt, encourage, or prohibit
 - ii. actions thoughts, affects, promotion of others (foucault: action on action)
- c. different forces
 - i. pre-personal, pre-cognitive, and preverbal forces (perception, sense, affects, desire) (31)
 - ii. supra-personal forces (mechanic, linguistic, social, media, economic systems)
 - iii. domain = beyond the human (rights, citizens): science, economics, comm networks, etc
- d. difference in type
 - i. subjection: transcendent models to which subjectivities conform
 - ii. enslavement: immanent process of becoming
 - iii. power of cap = union of the two

32 - 3. Egyptian megamachine

- a. Megamachine (Mumford): humans as mere constituent parts
 - i. primarily social (not technological) – question of organization
 - ii. technical aspects are simple: ramp and lever
 - iii. incorporeal aspects: myths, fantasies, subjectivity
- b. Capitalism revives the megamachine in the 16th century
 - i. switches focus to technical aspects
 - ii. "third age" of enslavement: cybernetic & informational machines

34 - 4. The functions of subjection

- a. capitalism = technical & social instruments (decision-making, management, etc)
- b. subjection
 - i. generates "persons" (worker, etc)
 - ii. constitution of characteristics of people: (cf Macpherson's possessive individualism)
 - iii. general hierarchies:
 - 1 - man (as species) /nature
 - 2 - man / division of humanity (gender, race, age, etc)
- c. subjection + molecular machine (35)
 - i. between molecular / molar
 - ii. = hierarchy & totalization (Durkheim)

- iii. political action
- iv subjection = deterritorialization
- v. swipe at Ranciere & Badiou, claims they ignore subjections intersection with the machinic
- vi. would improve Foucault
- vii. Dividuals, Google, Marketing, etc.
- viii. not repression / ideology – modulation (pre/supra-personal level)

39 - Capital as a semiotic operator

- a. "flows of signs, as much as labor and money flows, are the conditions of 'production.'
- b. subjection/enslavement each entail distinct regimes of signs
 - i. subjection = signifying semiotics, aimed at consciousness and mobilizes representations
 - ii machinic = asignifying semiotics (stock market indices, currency, mathematical equations, diagrams, computer languages, national and corporate accounting, etc), does not involve consciousness, representation, and does not have subject as referent
- c. signs / semiotics = heterogeneous and complementary logics
 - i. - machinic enslavement
 - produce operations, induce action, and constitute input/output, junction/disjunction
 - ii. social subjections
 - produce meaning, signification, interpretations, dicers, and representation
- d. asignifying semiotics acts on things
 - i. stock market indices, unemployment stats, etc
 - ii. not discourse, not narrative
 - iii. still basically dependent on signifying semiotics
 - iv. at the level of intrinsic function, circumvent language and social signification
- e. flows of asignifying signs acts directly on material flows
 - i. act independently of their subjective signification
 - ii. act directly on the real
 - iii. operate alongside signification
 - iv. "sense without meaning"
 - v. evade many attempts to capture through social coding (laws, conventions, institutions)
- f. asignifying semiotics appears depoliticized/depersonalized
 - i. automatic evaluation/measurement
 - ii. formal equivalence of asymmetrical spheres, done through integration
 - iii. financialization = intensification of differentials w/in this system
- g. signifying semiologies / language = attempt to regulate, not how societies are really run anymore (42)

43 - 1. *The concept of "production"*

- a. Marx says capital buys subjection: hours, availability, etc

- b. Lazzarato says: capital buys subjections and the right to exploit a "complex" assemblage that include enslavement
 - i. enslavement
 - ii. transportation, urban models, media, entertainment, ways of perceiving and feeling, every semiotic systemc.
- convergence of three forms of production
 - i. Marx's anthropocentric model
 - i. Anti-Oedipus's expanded surplus value production (human, financial, & machinic surplus value)
 - ii. ATP's mechanisms for capturing surplus value (rent, profits, taxes)
- d. "multiplicity can be found everywhere in capitalism"
 - i. not just individuals / collective elements of human subjectivity
 - ii. objects, machines, protocols, human/non-human semiotics, affects, micro-social & pre-individual relations, supra-individual relations, etc.
 - iii. consequence: it is never an individual who thinks/creates, but an individual who does so in a network
 - iv. capital doesn't simply extort time, it is a whole process of exploiting subjection/enslavement nexus
 - v. ultimately: "in its current configuration, capitalist production is nothing other than an assemblage of assemblages, a process of processes, that is, a network of assemblages or processes" (46)
- e. analysis of various levels
 - i. TV example from ATP later take up by Stiegler (46-47)
 - ii. welfare-state / insurance & labor market
 - iii. financial system of investor/debtor

49 - 2. *Desire and production*

- a. Subjection's binaries vs. Machinic flexible segmentarity
 - i. employed/unemployed, etc of subjection
 - ii. "children work infant of TVs, and at the day-care with toys...etc"
 - iii. means that workplace must be expanded to non-salaried activities
 - b. Deleuze's principle of unvocity dictates non-separation, just one subjective economy
 - i. not an ideological superstructure
 - ii. production not a matter of econ (contra Ranciere and Badiou)
 - iii. production = "the process of singularization and the production of new modes of subjectivation whose basis is desire"
- (51)
- iv. desire is machinic, not human (but capitalism is not rationalization/calculation)

52 - 3. *The failure of "human capital"*

- a. Capitalism runs on the integration of desire (as an "economy of possibilities") through the figure of the entrepreneur
 - i. soft critique of 'cognitive capitalism'
 - ii. argues instead for the primacy of desire
- b. Current crisis
 - i. current crisis = failure in production of entrepreneurial subject

- ii. crisis has led to abandonments of narratives of freedom, innovation, creativity, knowledge society
- iii. new subjectivity = willingness to submit (to super-ego)

55 - CHP 2 SIGNIFYING SEMIOLOGIES AND ASIGNIFYING SEMIOTICS IN PRODUCTION AND IN THE PRODUCTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

1. Unnamed intro:

- a. subjectivity today is produces like a washing machine
 - i. crisis since 1970s = crisis in production of subjectivity
 - ii. crisis cannot be explained by technical, economic, or political processes (56)
- b. Pitfalls to avoid when theorizing subjectivity (4)
 - i. structuralist impasse, which reduces subjectivity to effect of signifying operations
 - 1- ethological
 - 2- fantasmic
 - 3- economic
 - 4- aesthetic
 - 5- physical systems
 - 6- existential territories
 - 7- incorporeal universes
 - ii. phenomenology/psychoanalysis "intersubjective driven"
 - 1- reduces the fact of subjectivity to drives, affects, intra-subjective apparatuses, and relations
 - 2- doesn't account for technical and social machines that modulate/format subjectivity
 - iii. sociological pitfall, suggests individualism/holism
 - 1- not individual or collective agents
 - 2- production is individual, extra-personal, and precedes the person (not just Giddens)
 - iv. "complex of infrastructures," that pose a dominant layer to that commands another
 - 1- base/superstructure
 - 2- instinct/psyche
 - 3- syntax/language

57 - 1. The remains of structuralism: language without structure

- a. Role of language today
 - i. structuralism's dead
 - ii. ideas form structuralism are still alive
- b. series of theorists politicized language:
 - i. those who borrow from Aristotle ("man = language;" "man = political")
 - 1- Virno – public sphere
 - 2- Ranciere – equality of logos (58)

3- Butler (through Arendt) – humans become political through language

4- Agamben – language and human nature

5- non-Aristotle: German "specificity of language," Pascal Michon

c. reading of each theorists

i. Lacan's influence

1- subject = effect of language (59)

2- unconscious = structured like language

3- functions = metaphor and metonymy

4- Butler's amendment: denies "law of the father," signifier is a performative instead

ii. Ranciere

1- language as origin of society ("the 'social' is in fact constituted by a series of discursive acts...")

2- language constitutes new productive forces

iii. ML's own theory: subjectivity, enunciation, production

1- move from subject to subjectivity = enunciation not speakers/listeners (60)

2- enunciation = "complex assemblage of individual, bodies, material and social machines, semiotic, mathematic, and scientific machines, etc, which are the true sources of enunciation."

3- ex: sign machines of money, economics, science, technology, art, etc

4- bypass language, significations, and representation

iv. Pasolini, new "post-human world"

1- second industrial revolution

2- "substitution of languages of infrastructures for the language of superstructures"

3- 1st rev: linguistics models that dominate/unify society are models of cultural superstructures

4- ex: law, literature, education, religion

5- effect of 2nd industrial rev = "languages of 'productions-consumption'," "degradation of the word" (61)

6- effect reiterated: center/unify language "no longer the universities, but the factories"

a. "interregional and international" language of the future

b. a "signing" language of "a world unified by industry and technocracy"

c. "a communication of men no longer men"

7- opposite claims than those of the linguistic turn

8- Arendt again

v. Guattari, asignifying semiotics

1- map ("languages of infrastructures," modes of machine-centric subj/enunciation)

a. separate subjectivity from subject, individual, and human

b. extract power of enunciation from human

2- subjectivity equivalent to living/material assemblages

a. consider focal points / vectors of subjectivation

- b. go beyond consciousness, sense, and language
- 3- autopoietic power (power of self-production) = all machines
 - a. all have capacity to develop rules/modes of expression (against Varela)
 - b. language = not at the center, and may "slow down or prohibit any semiotic proliferation" (63)
 - c. panpsychism

vi. "The point of view of things themselves"

- 1- Authors: Benjamin, Pasolini, Kemperer
- 2- Cinema can disclose reality with representation or linguistic mediation
- 3- Another, the ready-made (as example of 'any object whatsoever') (64)
- 4- Not a higher order of alienation (as some Marxists would have it)
- 5- Hjelmslev gloss (65)
 - a. Expressionism not dependent on content (contra marxism)
 - b. Content not the product of expression (contra structuralism)
 - c. Subjectivity not result of linguistic, communicational, or socioeconomic forces
- 6- enunciation: "expressive instance" that occurs "by the middle"
 - a. ground not discursive
 - b. ground = existential

66 - 2. Signifying semiologies

a. Signifying Semiologies

- i. signifying semiologies and asignifying semiotics interact
- ii. asignifying semiotics (Pasolini's "languages of infrastructures") includes language as one-of-many cases

b. Different types of semiotics (67)

- i. 'natural' a-semiotic encodings (DNA)
- ii. signifying semiologies (pre-signifying, gestural, ritual, productive, corporeal, musical, etc)
- iii. asignifying semiotics (post-signifying)

c. How each layer operates

- i. natural a-semiotic encoding is not an autonomous stratus, form is conveyed by the material itself (e.g. rock)
- ii. coding begins with life, as the transmission of codes allows "form" to separate from "content"
- iii. humans have asignifying semiotics & signifying semiologies, where transmission is complex
 - a. allows for autonomous syntax & strata of expression
 - b. in semiologies of signification: expression/content connection is interpretation, reference, signification

68 - i. *The Political Function of Semiologies of Signification*

a. language is first political (before it is linguistic/semantic)

- i. establishing language stabilizes the social field otherwise disrupted by capitalist deterritorialization
- ii. constitution of linguistic exchange (and distinct/individuated speakers) = economic exchange

b. capitalism has a particular type of signifying semiotic machine = overdoes all other semiotics

- i. its function is to administer/guide/adjust/control production & subjectivity
- ii. works through general equivalent of expression and vector of subjectivation centered on the individual
- c. comparison between symbolic semiotics of "primitive societies" vs. the imperialism/despotism of language (69)
 - i. capitalism requires symbolic semiotics to be hierarchized and subordinated to language
 - ii. previously did not need distinct speaker/hearer, b/c message is carried via bodies, sounds, mimicry, posture
 - iii. trans-individual still exists in cap, just on the margins as madness, infancy, artistic creation, etc
 - iv. symbolic semiologies = multiplicity of strata/substances of expression (gestural, ritual, productive, musical)
 - v. signification semiology = two strata (signifier/signified)
 - vi symbolic = each autonomous (no hierarch/dependency)
 - vii signification = hierarch through formalization of expression (signifier), done through a social assemblage
- d. character of language
 - i. what's more primary, language or other semiotic systems? (70)
 - 1- Benveniste says language is primary b/c "they could not be decipher without recourse to language"
 - 2- Guattari says the opposite, "just b/c you take plane form US to Europe, wouldn't say that the continents depend on aviation"
 - ii. Generalized exchange isn't purely economic
 - 1- signification relies on invariance for a national language
 - 2- yet words/sentences only really mean in a micro-political context
 - 3- capitalism demands compatibility of a certain expressive economy (71)
 - 4- semiotic assembly begins at birth

72 - ii. *Reference, Signification, Representation*

- a. the "semiotic triangle: reference, signification, representation"
- b. reference
 - i. reference denote a reality
 - ii. invariance is the effect reducing the polyvalence and multi-referentiality of symbolic semiotics
 - iii. in "neo-capitalism" (Pasolini), the impoverishment of expression (73)
 - 1- communicative exactness works on the inside of language
 - 2- evolves toward "signaletic" efficiency of applied sciences
- c. signification's two axes = linguistic means for structuring, mapping, establishing meanings
 - i. syntagmatic axis of selection, conforming to grammatical order
 - ii. paradigmatic axis of composition (of sentences), and significance
 - iii. 19th century capitalism brings about grammar and syntax to police language (74)
- d. representation
 - i. symbol/real distinction of Kantian philosophy
 - ii. makes signs "powerless" in that they don't "act directly on the real" (b/c they're mediated)
 - iii "primitives are realists" (75)

- e. dominant significations (sex, gender, class)
 - i. produces at the intersection of the two-fold formalization process
 - 1- linguistic machine that automates expressions, interpretations, responses by the system
 - 2- formation of power producing signifieds
 - ii. closure/formalization of language is a political mechanism (76)
 - 1- conserves the system to keep it from going out of control
 - 2- unable to account for pragmatics
 - iii. "personologization" that individualizes language (77)
 - 1- tears "I" away from the world
 - 2- "I" is an effect of subject submitting to the linguistic machine
 - 3- even infra personal and extrapersonal elements are stuck to personologization
 - 4- primitive society's "I am jaguar" not possible b/c of exclusive disjunctions that prevent becomings (78)
 - 5- "guilt" / body
- f. Pasolini was interested in 19C study of language

80 - 3. Asignifying semiotics

- a. asignifying not molar
 - i. not distinct, not individuated, not subj/obj, not sign/thing, not prod/rep
 - ii. are: stock listings, currencies, corporate accounting, national budget, computer languages, mathematics, scientific functions, equations, semiotics of art/music
 - iii. "slip past" significations/representations
 - iv. more abstract mode of semiotization than language
- b. analysis of asignifying semiotics: "concept of the machine" (81)
 - i. not human-nature distinct (or nature/culture, subject/object, etc)
 - ii. not human-tool (AC: as Stiegler might put it cf. Deleuze on Leroi-Gourhan)
 - iii. 'machine is not mechanism' G once said
 - iv. AC: inversion of McLuhan – not machine as extension of man, but rather, man as extension of machine
- c. Machine is simultaneously actual/virtual, material/semiotic
 - i. semiotic: diagram
 - ii. material: technique
 - iii. actual: synchronic assemblage (82)
 - iv. virtual: diachronic intersections of the past machine/machines to come
 - v. examples: factory, public institutions (media, welfare state), art
- d. Varela
 - i. allopoietic machines, which produce something other than themselves
 - ii. autopoietic machines, generate/determine their own organization (replacing their own component parts)
 - iii. L (following G) argues that Varela separates man from machine, a mistake that can be corrected, making humans "ipso

facto autopoietic"

e. humans-machines

- i. first move: depart from mechanistic thesis of "structural unity of the machine"
- ii. second move: depart from vitalist thesis of "specific, personal unity of the living organism"
- iii. end: multiplicities (83)
- iv. relation: affect, not instrumental

f. argument w/ Heidegger (and thus Stiegler) on the technical object (AC: cf. ATP on technical object/milieu)

- i. "the ontological barrier between subject and object [is] established by social subjection"
- ii. that barrier is "continually blurred not because of language but because of asignifying semiotics"

g. asignification and the human

- i. asig = "non-human" (84)
- ii. asigifying is not pre-signifying (of the "primitive"), which is still anthropocentric
- iii. asignifying "move beyond even the semiotic register"
 - 1- no longer about signs (no sign/referent split, e.g. the Saussurian Bar, Lacan)
 - 2- ex: theoretical physics, ontology no longer relevant

h. power signs / sign-points / impotentized signs

- i. impotentized = semiotic efficiency afforded by symbolic mediation
- ii. ex: money (85)
 - 1- impotentized sign when exchange value, means of payment, "mediation between equivalents"
 - 2- power signs when money as capital, money as credit (no equivalent, rep nothing, only future exploit)
- iii. sign-points, both 1- semiotically, and 2- material intervention
- iv. ex: microchip, sign flows acting directly on material components (polarities of iron oxide particles -> binary)
- v. power signs produce a reality that does not currently exist (AC: similar to ideology) (86)

i. operations of asig = "diagrammatic"

- i. diagram is a semiotic system and a mode of writing
- ii. taken from Peirce (images and diagrams, "icons of relation")
- iii. G categorizes diagrams as operational, not representational

j. Others on the diagram

- i. Latour: breaks through the "ontological iron curtain" (Sausserian Bar, Lacan on the Real) (87)
- ii. Foucault's Panopticon as diagram (that "autmatizes and disindividualizes power" through "dcissymetry, disequilibrium, and difference")

k. Operations of Diagram (such as equations, designs, graphs, apparatuses, machines)

- i. accelerate / slow down; destruct / stabilize processes of de-terr than language has difficulty grasping
- ii. "speak," "express themselves," "communicate" with "real" stuff
- iii. operate on a whole number of stratum: atomic, biological, chemical, economic, aesthetic (88)
- iv. "productive of Being," and "discursivity"

- v. "see," "hear," "smell," "record," "order," "transcribe," etc
- vi. analogy to human subjectivity's non-linguistic components – nonverbals, affects, temporalities, intensities, movements, speeds, interpersonal relations, beyond self, etc
- I. Machine's "action on the real" requires artificiality (of subjectivity / consciousness)
 - i. humans are relays w/in machines
 - ii. without humans, machines would be "aphasic" (disorder that creates word salad)
 - iii. implication: asignifying semiotics constitute focal points of enunciation and vectors of subjectivation
 - iv. capitalism = exploits of these conjunctions
 - v. effect = partial subjectivity/consciousness w/in assemblage (89)
 - vi. ex: driving a car,
 - vii. guided by car's machinic assemblage, subj/consc are but a relay in its complex set of processes
 - viii. subj/consc as crucial feedback loops, but only a small part of the whole machinic operations
- m. Others:
 - i. machinic enslavement = multiplicity of modes of subjectivation, consciousness, unconsciousness, realities, modes of existence, languages, semiotics systems (90)
 - ii. Badiou/Rancière, no asig, diagrammatics... "without machines" - miss the essence of capitalism
 - iii. cognitive capitalism, still anthropocentric (and forget to invert McLuhan)
 - iv. machines in marx (91)
 - v. extended example of machines in daily life (91-93)
 - vi. final call to action (93-4)