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Jeffrey A. Bell. *Deleuze's Hume: Philosophy, Culture and the Scottish Enlightenment*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009. Pp. x + 169. ISBN 978-0-7486-3439-2, cloth, £50.

Gilles Deleuze always described his philosophy as empiricist, traced some of his philosophical inheritance back to Hume, and wrote about Hume's philosophy early in his career. The original French version of *Empiricism and Subjectivity* appeared in 1953. In that book we encounter familiar Humean themes and concepts, but the way Deleuze deploys them is rather less familiar. Deleuze's empiricism is not an epistemological enquiry, but a transcendental one. He is concerned with the conditions that make possible experience as it actually is, in contrast with a Kantian enquiry into the possibility of any experience, and, again unlike Kant, he does not assume any *a priori* unity of the subject of experience as already given. Indeed the starting position for his enquiry assumes no forms of identity as already given. What is given is to be thought of as a multiplicity, but not as a set of determinate entitities. For Deleuze determinate entities always emerge by some process from a pure multiplicity. Actual entities with their specific identities and their specific relations and differences are constructed from a multiplicity of pure difference. What makes it possible that a determinate subject of experience is constructed within the given multiplicity is the question of transcendental empiricism. Deleuze read Hume as anticipating this question, and that is why he regarded him as a predecessor, and described himself as a Humean.

Jeffery A. Bell has set himself an ambitious task. One aim is to help us to read Hume as Deleuze did, to become acquainted with the Deleuzian Hume. This he does sometimes by elucidating what Deleuze says about Hume's questions, and sometimes he does it by suggesting how Deleuze's reading can be extended to some of the well-known interpretative puzzles in Hume which Deleuze did not directly address, or addressed very briefly. In doing this Bell also explains pretty clearly some of the major aspects of Deleuze's philosophy, and this means that his book will serve as an introduction to Deleuze for readers who know Hume well, but are either unfamiliar with or are deterred by the arsenal of concepts and terminology Deleuze invented. A second and larger aim of the book is to illustrate and defend a particular reading of Deleuze's philosophy in general, a reading which Bell sees as broadly Humean (in the Deleuzian Hume sense), and so to contribute to a picture of the Humean Deleuze. A substantial part of the book is thus concerned with recent interpretations and criticisms of Deleuze. Bell makes a strong case for his readings, often showing along the way how they emerge from his account of the Deleuzian Hume, which contributes to the overall unity of the book. Indeed,

I think his book is especially worth reading for his discussions of Deleuze in a wide context. However, reviewing the book in this journal I think it appropriate to concentrate on Bell's Deleuzian Hume, rather than his Humean Deleuze which is actually the main focus of the book.

Bell writes as a Deleuzian, and as such he does not take Hume and Deleuze as given philosophical identities between which to trace relations. Rather he sets out to think of Hume AND Deleuze, that is, of a sort of border territory, a space of problems, from which arise the distinct identities of both philosophers. For Deleuze, what the history of philosophy is about is invention, the creation of concepts. Philosophers invent concepts, which are actual ideas emerging from problems which are to be thought of as indeterminate but determinable in different ways. The problem contains concepts virtually, but actual concepts are inventions that cannot be reduced to the conditions of their invention. Deleuze reads Hume as thinking and inventing in a way which shows that he shares with him, Deleuze, a problem: how can something be created which is new, which arises from a given but indeterminate collection and yet which cannot be reduced to it? This is the problem of human nature: how does the mind (an indeterminate collection of perceptions) become a nature, a subject who believes and invents, where what the subject believes and invents cannot be reduced to the collection of perceptions? This is the transcendental empiricism described above, and it is what he thinks Hume also shared.

One of the strengths of Bell's book is the account of transcendental empiricism, and two related ideas, Deleuze's use of the virtual-actual pair, and what Bell, borrowing from Hacking and from Latour (5 and chapter 3), calls historical ontology. His best account of virtual-actual comes in fact during a discussion of Bergson (51) when he quotes Deleuze talking about Bergson's concept of difference: "The opposition of two terms is only the actualisation of a virtuality that contained them both: this is tantamount to saying that difference is more profound than negation or contradiction" (Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, [New York: Semiotext(e), 2004], 43). So a determinate difference, an either-or, is thought of as an actualisation of a virtuality that already contains both terms in an indeterminate opposition. This idea, according to Bell, is what guides Deleuze's reading of Hume's description of the native or initial state of the mind (indifference [T 1.3.11.4; SBN 125]) as meaning an indeterminate collection of perceptions. The mind on this reading is a virtuality, from which emerges an actual subject with determinate tendencies, habits, associations, and so on. The determination of the mind, the formation of a subject, is the work of the principles of human nature such as the three principles of association, and those of custom and habit. The principles determine the actual subject from the virtual indeterminacy of the native mind. Bell argues that for the Deleuzian Hume what

is crucial here is the recognition of creativity and invention. For example, the repetition of similar perceptions, under the influence of custom, produces a new idea, that of causal power, and produces beliefs that go beyond what was present to the senses in the repetition. Bell associates the idea of historical ontology with this account of creativity. Something new, such as the idea of causal power, or a belief in real objects distinct from perceptions, is seen by the Deleuzian Hume as a process of actualisation from a virtuality, and tracing the process is revelatory of the nature of the new item: hence the term historical ontology. He goes on to claim that this idea, that Hume's investigations of the origin of beliefs, ideas, and indeed institutions are exercises in historical ontology, casts light on the way in which Hume can seem to vary in his authorial stances, sometimes confident in endorsing everyday beliefs and everyday realities, sometimes appearing skeptical and detached, suspending his judgement. On Bell's account, such apparent contradictions or at least inconsistencies are expressions of a repeated double movement in Hume's thought from virtual (multiple, indeterminate) to actual (determinate, identical) and back again.

Bell takes Hume's discussions of the self as a key exemplar of the effect of a Deleuzian reading. Here, he thinks, there is an apparent either-or: either we have no idea of our self-identity or the idea is ever present as the object of indirect passions. However, this dichotomy, between identity as it concerns thought and imagination and identity as it concerns passions, has itself an historical ontology. In the movement from the virtual to the actual system of a subject's beliefs, passions and purposes, there are stages. Bell thinks that for Deleuze there is the effect of the principles of association, which create relations between perceptions and, along with custom and habit, structure the imagination, fixing its tendencies and determining the transitions of its thoughts. But then there is the effect of passion and intention, which gives purposes in terms of which the first level of structuring takes place. Deleuze claims that for Hume the principles of association are only general laws of human nature, giving the types of relation into which perceptions enter, whereas the passions and purposes of the subject determine the relations specific to that subject. There is in this historical ontology of the self both a creation of what Deleuze calls the form of the subject and a creation of what he calls the singular content of the self. On this basis, Bell claims (48) that the self as it concerns imagination is a virtual self which becomes actual only as an effect of the passions. The consequence he draws from this is that Hume ought not to have attempted to base his account of the self on consideration of sameness or difference between perceptions, on their identity, because it is only as actual that the identity of entities is fully determined. Bell calls this "recognition of the priority of the actual subject" (48). But he does not want to imply, as he thinks Kemp Smith did, that Hume, after his Appendix remarks on personal identity,

altered his view of the philosophical significance of his associative psychology. On Deleuzian principles, the virtual is real in the actual, and a philosophically adequate thought of the actual must recognise the virtual.

The topic of the self and personal identity brings us to an aspect of Bell's book where I think he misses an opportunity to clarify something which is important for thinking about the relation between the Deleuzian Hume and another Hume who appears more often in the pages of this journal. This is the question how to understand the notion of "principles of human nature." What are these, and what do they do? One general approach is to liken them to principles of nature in general, such as the principle of gravity, things which explain the behaviour of something, such as the motion of solid bodies. Thinking of Hume's principles like this leads to reading his accounts of the ways in which ideas and beliefs are formed as exercises in psychology. Principles of human nature can be used to ground explanations of psychological processes, such as how the mind forms beliefs and expectations. In this sense, principles of human nature are empirically established general laws of how human minds work. Hume is then read as trying to provide theoretical explanations of mental phenomena. In the case of personal identity and the self, the problem he says he has in the Appendix is to reconcile two of his fundamental assumptions with an explanation of our belief in our own identity which is modelled on his explanation of our beliefs in the identity of such things as plants and animals.

This is not how Deleuze understands principles of human nature (Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, trans. C. V. Boundas [New York: Columbia University Press, 1991], especially chapter 6, "Principles of Human Nature"). As Bell rightly says, Deleuze talks of principles of human nature as forces which effect changes in flows of experiences (not yet experiences of a subject) that structure these as subjects. Principles of human nature are not general laws of the workings of minds *of human subjects*; they are what produce human subjects within experience in the first place. This is empiricism in that the subject of experience is derived from experience. So Deleuze reads Hume on personal identity not with an eye on explaining the genesis of belief in personal identity, but with an eye on the construction of the self. Bell as we have seen thinks that Hume ought not to have posed to himself the problem he raises in the Appendix. Deleuze valued Hume as an experimenter in philosophical thinking who rejected all forms of transcendence. He read him as a transcendental empiricist, because doing so identified what Deleuze thought was an important and worthwhile question (how is the subject constituted in the given?). But Bell could make Deleuze's reading clearer by pointing out that Hume also had other fish to fry, ones that Deleuze would not think worth eating. However, as I have said, Bell's book is an important and stimulating engagement with Deleuze's thought, showing how this grew from and continued to reflect Deleuze's

encounter with Hume. Deleuze enthusiasts will argue with it; one of its merits is that it may prompt Hume scholars to read Deleuze and join the discussion.

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