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BOOK REVIEW

**The Unravelling History of Becoming: An Eagle's Eye View**

Craig Lundy, *History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.

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*This review of Craig Lundy's (2012) History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity finds the author seeking a synthesis between history and becoming. Lundy's deliberations on Deleuzian debate convince the reader of the need to view history as fluid, non-linear and virtual while illuminating misreading of Deleuze's philosophical outlook. Lundy warns against 'striated' restrictions of dry historical readings and illustrates that even surfaces indicate Deleuze's championing of history as: 'incremental ... unravelling ... unfinished ... [and] developmental' (p. 40). As such, the author reifies Deleuze's foundation on Nietzschean ground, stating that history ought to run 'counter to our time [...] for the benefit of a time to come' (p. 34). For Lundy, Deleuze's surface to depth historiography is like the veritable Nietzschean eagle, soaring swiftly to strike its prey, which similarly describes Lundy's argument (p. 43). Indeed, the author's expression remains appropriately academic and respectful of Deleuze. This review thoroughly recommends the monograph.*

In *History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity*, Craig Lundy (2012) draws upon an impressive profile of research to amalgamate a consummate argument: for the synthesis of the erroneously divided realms of history and becoming in Deleuzian analysis. Lundy's book derives from his impressive dissertation on the subject, which won the Faculty Doctoral Thesis Prize at the University of New South Wales in 2011. He is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Social Transformation, University of Wollongong and co-creator of

the London Conference in Critical Thought. With solid scholastic contributions in the arena of Deleuze on a plethora of subjects including: Post-Kantian thought; Bergson and ontology; Deleuzian nomadology; the time image; and Deleuze's debatable appropriations of Nietzsche; as well as Deleuze and Guattari's historiophilosophy, Lundy is well placed to illuminate an intriguing episode regarding this oft-misconstrued element of Deleuzian theory.

Lundy's monograph, *History and Becoming*, conglomerates much of his own research including articles presented at The University of Dundee's symposium 'Deleuze in Context' and pays tribute to Edinburgh University Press while citing his journal articles for *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy* (2010) and *Critical Horizons* (2011). *History and Becoming* is the result of many collegial conversations and personal deliberations and comes with a sound recommendation from Professor William Connolly of Johns Hopkins University. As such, the work gently convinces the reader of some of the misreading Deleuze's particular philosophical outlook on history has been subject to.

Lundy posits his main inquiry in his introduction:

More often than not, however, philosophies of becoming have found themselves in the shadow of philosophies of being—those philosophies, from Plato to Heidegger, that privilege presence over absence, identity over difference and 'what is' over the process of alteration. (p. 1)

Having grounded the reader in this prejudiced division between 'history' as presence/identity and becoming as absence/difference, the author then makes it clear that he intends to take up a counter-position to the general confluence of argument: 'against those accounts that reduce historical reality to philosophical theory' (p. 8).

The author's approach subsequently considers and criticizes some key traditions of philosophy, art and commentary. In particular, Lundy rebukes analysts such as DeLanda and Lampert (whose analysis he finds wanting of greater consideration) while orientating Deleuze within the philosophical infrastructure of Plato, Nietzsche, Bergson, Braudel, Kant, Hegel and Heidegger illustrating where Deleuze has been inappropriately interpreted. Most illuminating in this argument is the author's outlining artists exemplary for Deleuze: Baudrillard, Berlioz, Artaud, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* are notable in this. Contrary to the 'striated' restrictions of dry historical readings, Lundy's monograph illustrates that even surfaces indicate Deleuze's championing of history as: 'incremental ... unravelling ... unfinished ... [and] developmental' (p. 40).

By detailing the hiatus between traditional historicism and 'history as becoming', the author succeeds in his book's purpose exceedingly well demonstrating history as fluid, non-linear and virtual. Drawing from seventeen texts authored and co-authored by Deleuze, Lundy

extols the merits of this renowned scholastic voice, while presenting some intriguing and exceptional passages within his inquisition. However, as Lundy points out, 'the logic of sense and surfaces will only take us so far' and, in deference to Deleuze, he subsequently illustrates that 'static genesis' requires the complementary nature of 'dynamic genesis' in order to advance his (and Deleuze's) argument (p. 46). In this process, the author reifies Deleuze's foundation on Nietzschean ground, in particular that history ought to run 'counter to our time [...] for the benefit of a time to come' (p. 34). However, Lundy is not averse to illustrating that Deleuze sometimes misappropriates phrases and meanings from the great master of metaphor, Nietzsche. As such, Lundy exercises exemplary scholastic prowess in accurately orientating the reader on the subject matter.

In one particularly apt chapter, Lundy gives a fresh and detailed interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari's *Treatise on Nomadology—The War Machine* (subsequently published as *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980)), where the functionality of the state simultaneously purloins and undermines the nomad's time and space altering becoming. Nomadic war efforts, effectively removed from war as an extra-societal pursuit, are only ever appropriated by the state rather than understood and fully assimilated. As Lundy demonstrates, nomadology has gone beyond the discrepancies of history and becoming to create an opposition between state and nomadic war machine. However, far from any ill-considered treatise on imperialism, Lundy moves away from the notion that history belongs purely to the state and points out that the malleability of history and becoming indicates that history can yet be separated from any particular hegemony and thus creatively interpreted (p. 186). With that the author refreshing clarifies his stance on Deleuzian becoming.

Throughout his monograph, Lundy orientates the reader within and through texts by and about Deleuze with focussed attention for the seasoned Deleuzian scholar and novice reader alike. This is a task, which requires provocative and meticulous organisation and the author achieves this with clarity and economy, beginning with the intensive depths of history by examining extensive-intensive relationships and interrogating history as a despotic force (p. 2). The author continues to outlay key theories of: the Deleuzian dynamic; the nomadic; the universal contingent; and finally the historiophilosophical. He carefully combs the various terrains of Deleuzian analysis to arrive at appropriate springboards for his dissertation. He begins with the seminal solo texts *Difference and Repetition* (1968) and *The Logic of Sense* (1969) and subsequently moves through Deleuze and Guattari's *Treatise on Nomadology—The War Machine* to illustrate the metamorphoses of Deleuze's philosophical outlook on history. Concluding with a thoughtful chapter derived mainly from *What is Philosophy?* (1991), Lundy illustrates the burgeoning field of historiophilosophy while trawling further seminal works to analyse the historical ontology involved. Indeed, so thorough is his analysis that the reader reconsiders the usage and understanding of such terminology as 'trawling', 'depth' and 'historical'

revealing them in a new light. This is one of the pleasures of this book; a constant meta-discourse is entrenched in the reading process.

Further to his organisational prowess, Lundy's writing is well categorised with clear lists and examples outlaying his argument. For instance, throughout his dissertation Lundy points out that, for Deleuze, space will be as important as time and that nomadology is both a spatial and topographical concern. Of particular note in this monograph is the seamless manner by which Lundy cites works attractive to Deleuze while celebrating their creators. Further, Lundy's examples are well placed to illustrate his main points. In this, his references to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* continue to posit an opposition between the liveness of *Alice's* creator and Antonin Artaud's depth-intensive approach to the practised art of nonsense. Thus, Lundy illuminates the surface to depth historiography like the veritable Nietzschean eagle, soaring swiftly to strike its prey (p. 43). Carroll reveals depths by dancing on the surfaces where Artaud encompasses the 'body without organs' (a term coined by Artaud himself in his 1949 play, *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*). For Deleuze, Artaud represents a milieu with 'no longer any frontier between things and words because bodies no longer have a surface' (p. 49).

Lundy's articulate rendering of the material, though intensely cerebral, executes the unravelling of complex material with consummate ease. It is his (aforementioned) organisational proficiency, which most facilitates this. His expression, although rendering his opinion unequivocal, is refreshingly self-effacing, appropriately academic and considerate, and respectful of Deleuze, but not deferential in correcting even Deleuze's textual misinterpretations where required. The language is clear and logical while extolling even the most complex issues.

With regretful musing, the author posits the theory that just as historical analysis circumvents the Deleuzian challenge, so Deleuzeans, who rely on an aversion to history solely in favour of becoming, have not fully investigated the nexus at hand. Notably, Lundy concludes his book by reiterating his central theme, that for Deleuze: 'history is no longer opposed to the future but is that which allows it to remain genuinely open' and, as such, we may encounter genuine 'historical creativity' (p. 184). Having relished this read, I anticipate the future of Craig Lundy's academic fare with confidence. The reader may be assured that this book is a shining contribution to Deleuzian scholarship: a testament to Lundy's careful research, expertise and authorship. I thoroughly enjoyed and therefore recommend this book.

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