

## Deleuze Transcendental Empiricism as Exercise of Thought: Hume's Case

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### Abstract

This paper aims to clarify the program of Deleuze's work on Hume's philosophy. Also, I plan to make clear the operational meaning of Deleuze's own hallmark regarding his approaches to philosophy. I start to follow Deleuze's plot by engendering three functions of his interpretation of Hume's Treatise that will be the area of three thematic chapters. The first tries to sort the polemical function of empiricism that is launched through Deleuze's Hume; the second attempts to figure the domain of subjectivity as the inventive function of the book; the third searches the creative function by describing the role of the institutional theory.

**Keywords:** empiricism, human nature, subjectivity, institutional theory, Deleuze, Hume.

A clear statement about Deleuze's contribution to philosophy; the 'etiquette' of his philosophical project would be, with respect to all exegesis, transcendental empiricism. This 'doctrine' is developed mostly in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*. The general function of this project is to picture the "conditions for the production of novelty" (Deleuze 2002a, 134-144). To me, this philosophical label is a horizontal axis which begins with *Difference and Repetition*, and has two vectors of direction: a forward vector that implicates a conceptual construction and re-elaboration of ideas mixing with

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\* *Acknowledgement:* This paper is part of the The Knowledge Based Society Project supported by the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU/89/1.5/S/56815.

ingenuity concepts from Bergson, Whitehead, Husserl, Freud etc. in relation to various themes and problematics and a backward retrospective vector that also prepares and feeds the moment of *Difference and Repetition*. This second vector could be described in Deleuze's terms as "une espèce de technique de collage" (Deleuze 2002b, 198), which is borrowed from portrait techniques, an art of portraying an author within a genuine reframing of his concepts, ideas, distinctions. In my opinion, this is also covered by the definition of "conditions for the production of novelty". Then again, he gives a very puzzling description of his goals and practice in respect to the authors he wrote about, naming his actions as 'exercise of thought' (Deleuze et Parnet 1977, 23, 31). My goal is to pursue this 'exercise of thought' in his first book on Hume's philosophy, channelling the directions of his project through the determinations that he makes in his letter to Arnoud Villani. In this letter, he specifies that every portraying book he wrote embedded three functions: a *polemic function* which indicates the level of misinterpretation on a subject, author; an *inventive function* reminding the essential issue forgotten about a topic, subject; a *creative function* that pops up within the conception and coining of a new concept which is grafted on that particular author's philosophical 'material' (Villani 1999, 56-7). I will follow these three intermingled functions of the 'exercise of thought' drive out from Hume's philosophy clarifying: A) the polemical function of the book by investigating the potentialities of Hume's empiricism as read by Deleuze; B) the inventive function by describing the nature and function of the subject within Deleuze's Hume; C) the creative function by presenting the usages of Hume's concept of institutions, as newly baptized by Deleuze. I hope that these clarifications will reconstitute the importance of his first book (it is not a pubertal attempt on philosophy), and at the same time provide a speculative point that would offer some hints for a better understanding of his later works.

## **Empiricism on the road again – The drums of war, awaken!**

The polemic direction of this book extends not only through the limited and unilateral description of empiricism as philosophical doctrine regarding the sensitive origins of our knowledge, mastered by Kant in his struggle to mitigate the impact of Hume's skepticism (Kant 1998, 225, 656). Mainly by the attack that Hume led on causality as the prime principle of scientific knowledge and warrant of necessity. Or even by any Hegelian cumulative and peaceful perspective in respect to historical relation of Hume and Kant. A perspective that aims to discover the difficulties that the former could not overcome in connection with the latter, nor to evaluate the epistemological solfeggio sung by Kant in order to dissipate the atonal skepticism of Hume. But, also through a new empiricism that Deleuze is proposing, an empiricism bred in the womb of Hume's philosophical project, which has the spiritual patronage of French academic quarrels and problematics (belonging to Wahl, Sartre, Hyppolite, and Gueroult) and a particular rhythm of development due to Bergson. I start to present a volatile and provisory coordinate of Deleuze's appearance on the map of French philosophy in respect to his first period that started with his book on Hume and ended with *Logic of sense*. This periodization follows his strategy of delimitation presented in *Negotiations* (Deleuze 1990, 9). My second move on this topic sketches the means and ends of the empiricism wearing the clothes of Hume's philosophical development. Thus we have two major frames that are of course interrelated.

A. I will comment the Frédéric Worms's statement that the mainframe of French philosophy at the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century is centered on the problem of "l'esprit"<sup>1</sup>. The difficulties here concern not what this ghost is, but what its specific manifestation of haunting are. The problem starts with the fact that a simple content of experience regarding the world, the others or even ourselves is in fact a double experience, first, distorted by our mind and, second, envisaged and retrieved through another act of our mind. And this striking duality is the goal of any pursuit, not only of thinking

but also of life (Worms 2009, 37). We recognize the emphasis that Worms puts on Bergson's tribute to this academic horizon of philosophical determination. Even so, by emphasizing Worms' position I aim at a double gain.

First, if we analyze procedurally the implications of Deleuze's philosophy, we can state, in principle, that: a) his philosophy is not an unknown fruit (as one could think taking into account the famous exotic titles announcing an exegesis on Deleuze) which emerged accidentally from the old tree of Western philosophy; b) his genuine concepts are *also* pro/ble/gram/matic reactions to the above-mentioned tradition. And for now, I only specified a potential powerful Bergsonian wave or resonance, because I cannot say that *per se* Deleuze is an imaginable breeder (education, reproduction or even simple growth) of any "-ism."

Second, the problem of "l'esprit" for Bergson has two magnetic poles that maintain a constant tension through their implicative conceptual elaboration – that is *liberty* and *action* (Worms 2000, 9, 41, 61-62). We can see that in Deleuze's requisites one can find the theme of *novelty* as a directory wind that blows through all his books. More, the specification of novelty as *the condition of production of something new* can be seen at work in transcendental empiricism as a thunderous row cannon with a positive impact – the denouncement and neutralization of the sterile ground of thinking and the sketch or cartography of a new image of thought (as we can see in the third chapter of *Difference and Repetition*). And it may be that the novelty "pigment" could be traced from the Bergsonian colors that depicted the figure of liberty. I think that in the theatrical representation mastered by Deleuze, we can grasp the transient figuration of the Bergsonian theme of action by three echoing factors of coagulation:

a) *the problem of representation*. The problem of representation is for Deleuze a problem of substitution because representations are material factors in an account of experience that presupposes a system of thought that puts a specific essentialist or transcendental type of philosophical questions. And as we know Deleuze is about finding and stating new forms of interrogation (immanent and anti-essentialist). We find thus:

1) in his work on Hume, the relations as such are called to diminish and substitute representation because representation cannot have any explicative hold on relation. Reality is absorbed in praxis, not in the tentacles of contemplative representation (Deleuze 1953, 138);

2) on his book on Nietzsche the constituent of any analytic of reality is 'force' that renders the problem of representation null, because knowledge is basically a matter of action and a ferment of value. Another point is that the machinery of the philosophical *explanandum* is a concern of *orientation* or ethics as esthetic of life forms and not an analytical inventory of the intellect (Deleuze 1962, 1-2);

3) the inquiry done on Proust reveal the presence of the sign as the ferment of thinking because thinking is aroused, awoken, embedded and transformed in the worlds of signs (Deleuze 1964, 51-53). Representation involves a neutral mirroring process that cannot explain the act of thought and cannot have an image of it. Furthermore, representation cannot explain itself;

4) in his masterpiece book on Spinoza, expression is the perfect candidate and substitute of representation for the activity of both substance and mode. Through passions, the problem of knowing is really a matter of becoming active. Ethology becomes the proper name of putting together a materialistic account of body and an intensive state of relations, "L'éthologie, c'est d'abord l'étude des rapports de vitesse et de lenteur, des pouvoirs d'affecter et d'être affecté qui caractérisent chaque chose." (Deleuze 1981, 168);

5) in *Difference and Repetition* the problem of representation is fought in a big war against the assimilating march of Identity in philosophy and by the exposure and surpass of the "bêtise" of thought (Sauvagnargues 2010, 37-38).

b) *the problem of morality*. That is the atomization of an axiomatic morality into a pluralistic mode of existence, a typology of ethics that inverts the relation of value and life as is done through Nietzsche and Spinoza (Hardt 1993, 117). I think that ethics is for Deleuze a typological observation of the production of esthetic mode of existence, a becoming-ethology of ethics.

c) *the problem of duality* (or the dualistic account of reality). This problem is claimed to be the greatest difficulty of Deleuze philosophy especially by Badiou (1997, 9, 39), by his close affiliation with Bergson's philosophy.

B. I will clarify now the specific form and nature of this dualism in his first book concerning Hume's philosophy. What is certain about Hume's *Treatise* is that the main investigation is about human cognition, but the problem for Deleuze is not that we can know, that we can stipulate the nature of our experience ongoing to its sensitive origin, nor is it in a Kantian fashion the statistic of the prerequisites of human understanding or the conditions of proper and objective knowledge. The problem is that in order to know you must have a subject, so what makes a subject? How can we afford in Hume's terms a subject? So the orientation of interpreting Hume is chosen through an interrogation that flows disruptively through the *Treatise*, melting and binding together in amazing and astonishing ways Hume's distinctions, concepts and method. The inflaming question that we find relentlessly put (and in specific variation with respect to the matter of discussion – subject, faculty, passion, morality) in Deleuze's Hume is: *how does the mind become human nature?* I will make some necessary steps back to highlight the innovative capacity of this interrogation.

It's commonly known that the first move that Hume makes in his *Treatise* is the division of all perceptions into ideas and impressions. The next step is that the simple impressions cause simple ideas, and from simple ideas we then produce complex ideas, either restricted to the same order (contiguity) of the corresponding complex impressions (resemblance) to which we certify the presence of past experience thus the faculty of memory, or re-arranged in a new form which is the making of the faculty of imagination. Causality is put into question because it is considered a manifestation of habit and not a faithful process of nature that we can encounter in experiencing the world. The philosophical responsibility of the nature of impressions is taken by atomism and that of association of ideas is rendered under the jurisdiction of the principles<sup>2</sup> of association (Hume 1978, 1-13). For Deleuze this disunion of

impressions into those of sensation and those of reflection calls a firm and demanding question about the nature of the relation between the cause of perception or Nature and the cause of association of ideas or the Human Nature (Deleuze 1953, 122). We find this question mandatory for Deleuze because it puts into play *a)* the presupposed supremacy of Kant over Hume, and *b)* the overthrowing of the transcendental regime dominating thinking in philosophy that Deleuze instigated through Hume's empiricism.

a) It is obvious that when Hume appeals in the *Inquiry concerning human understanding* to a necessity of a "preestablished harmony" between facts and thoughts he presupposes in advance a difference between the power of the mind and the powers of the nature. And this is undoubtedly the reason why Deleuze starts his book on Kant with this specific problem. He must end his Hume quarrel with Kant on this particular territory to calmly present the machinery of Kant's transcendental doctrine of faculties' conflict in itself (Deleuze 1965, 5-8). So, in order to have an objective and natural passing of representations in respect to reality, Kant has to presuppose that the subject in the intimate hidden art of the synthesis of imagination gives also the backbone of the ensemble of the phenomenon (Kant 1998, 229-230) but not without presupposing a mysterious harmony of faculties (Deleuze 1965, 35). As a consequence, Hume's problem is not resolved but just reallocated with heavy costs; let me present these costs. It appears that the result of this separation is a dualism at the heart of Hume's empiricism as read by Deleuze, "...mais de principes que nous connaissons, elles sont purement fonctionnelles. Et ces fonctions s'accordent avec les pouvoirs cachés dont le donné dépend, et que nous ne connaissons pas. Nous appelons finalité cet accord de la finalité intentionnelle avec la Nature. Cet accord ne peut être que pensé;" (Deleuze 1953, 152). There are two points to be made concerning this problem.

First, this sort of intentionality gives a proper metaphysical problem at the same time that it ends an old one "Hume..., se livrera à la destruction concertée des trois grandes idées terminales de la métaphysique, le Moi, le Monde et Dieu" (Deleuze 2002c, 228-229). Here also the matter at hand is

divided: 1) the gesture of Kant reenacting the quadruple doctrine of metaphysics is, in fact, a stubbornness or blindness to the closure done by Hume to it. And the historical release of this repressed tendency of philosophy is for Deleuze at the same time an unseen jump-plunge into the deep waters of Hume's empiricism and a climb on Bergson's shoulders; 2) In *The Critique of Pure Reason*, in section three of the "Antinomies of pure reason" appears the formula of a pure empiricism, expressing a philosophy that would rule out the practical interest of reason, therefore excluding any transcendent consideration of the Ideas of Reason (Kant 1998, 498-500). Deleuze radicalizes this empiricism demanding a better suitor for the inventory of experience than the quest for the proof of the possibility of a priori synthetic judgments, namely 'belief'. This subjective operator of knowledge can have both a constitutive role – causality as the constant association of certain ideas in our mind, and a regulatory role – causality as the calm contemplation of constant association of things (Hume 1978, 167-169). Although under the reserve that 'belief' is not a transcendental capturing apparatus but functions only under the privilege of different principles. The principles are: 'habit' when the remarks are constitutive, 'experience' when the aim is regulative. Thus for Deleuze 'belief' is the incessant fire that melts these Ideas turning off the pompous march of the Ideal of pure reason.

Second, the duality between subject and world has a specific determination that will hunt Deleuze in his first philosophical period; now let's give the words of Deleuze to see his particular Hume dualism „La vraie dualité, chez Hume, n'est pas entre l'affection et la raison, la nature et l'artifice, mais entre l'ensemble de la nature où l'artifice est compris, et l'esprit que cet ensemble affecte et détermine" (Deleuze 1953, 32).

Now, if we combine the intentional aspect of this accord between subject and word and their intermingled form of production blurring the relation between artifice and nature, we have a sort of genetic unity World-Subject as a dynamic continually producing itself<sup>3</sup>, and the determination, on the one hand, of the subject of subjectivity as protean<sup>4</sup>, unfinished, becoming the latter 'larva subject' of *Difference and repetition*

and, on the other hand, the world not as a totality but as medium, environment, milieu. Thus, if the affirmation of Deleuze that that can be only on science that of human nature (Deleuze 1953, 9) could be so presumptuous and unclear, in respect to the problem of dualism, the intentional finality put as on track giving through history the ground for an inquiry on human nature. If the subject is a process with endless masks of subjectivations history can be seen as a process of these actual various forms of subjectivations in this life-world. It is not a phenomenological sense of life but a Bergsonian connotation meaning the natural process of practice within/with world, milieu. As a consequence, I think Deleuze does not state an ontological determination of history nor a transcendental facelift of epistemology but an ethology of praxis (that is, with an Adornian touch, that manifests itself in the relation between man and things), and this is why Deleuze tags Hume's empiricism as a logic of relations (Deleuze 2003, 342). Time is now rendered under the governance of history and not on the account of the facticity of the subject. If Heidegger discovered an interior facticity, through temporality in the laboratory of transcendental imagination in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*; (Heidegger 1953, 250-251) Deleuze discovered an exterior facticity (historicity) in history the continua's becoming-social of the subject in the 'midst' of the transcendent acts of imagination<sup>5</sup> (Deleuze 1953, 5).

The problem of dualism of Deleuze's Hume may still beg the question of an acceptable solution, but I think that the answer lies not in its possible unclear solution through Hume's *Treatise* but in a philosophical attitude – the shout of the young Deleuze threatening the silence of the official trend: “Tant que la détermination n'est que subjective, nous ne sortons pas de l'anthropologie [...] le moyen d'en sortir est aussi la nécessité d'en sortir.” (Deleuze 2002d, 19). And this is why we have in his first book the reenactment of empiricism: Deleuze's attitude towards philosophy becomes an attitude within philosophy: “La philosophie doit se constituer comme la théorie de ce que nous faisons, non pas comme la théorie de ce qui est. Ce que nous faisons a ses principes; et l'Être ne peut jamais être saisi que comme l'objet d'une relation synthétique avec les principes

mêmes de ce que nous faisons.” (Deleuze 1953, 152) This sets us on the next point of our discussion.

b) There is a general question against transcendental philosophy that splits into two connected issues: the first is related to the nature of practice, and the second to the methodology and construction of the philosophical concept.

1) Regarding the first issue, it is to say that Hume has two successive directions of handling the question of human cognition – atomism and associationism; so Deleuze finds necessary to allocate for each of them a proper theoretical discipline. The *psychology of the mind* envisions the theory of ideas with respect to impressions, as the *psychology of the affections of the mind* has to explain the logic of relations (association of ideas). The spearhead of Deleuze’s investigation is related to associationism because the simple psychology of the mind cannot explain the profile of human subjectivations but only the frequency of impressions; it cannot find any necessity and universality in the strict domain of the appearance and succession of impressions. It is important thus for Deleuze not only to mark the differences between these directions in Hume’s thought but to understand that “Pour Hume, il s’agit de *substituer à une psychologie de l’esprit une psychologie des affections de l’esprit*” (Deleuze 1953, 1). And on this point of departure and substitution, Deleuze serves a severe critique of representation because it is impossible to represent relations. Meaning that if you make ‘representation’ a condition of access to reality and ideas, ideas as qualities of these related representation cannot explain without contradictions the generality of ideas, the meaning of ‘existence’, ‘universal’, ‘necessity’, ‘truth’. In order to make representation accountable for these we ought to make a transcendental move and make the determinations of the mind, the features of reality and with this, put in suspension a proper comprehension of practice and subjectivity (Deleuze 1953, 13-14). So once again we find Deleuze signaling the perils of a wrong anthropology.

2) The second topic divides in general the proper philosophical methodology for an inquiry on subjectivity. From a transcendental point of view subjectivity is given, and the

question revolves on how can something be given to it, what are the requirements for something to appear to the subject? The exigencies of this kind of critique are given by a logical constructivism that finds its inspiration in mathematics. Empiricism requires a methodology that begins from an *immanent* point of view. The possibility of any explanation of the given is launched through hypothetical descriptions that are similar to the theoretical models of physics. The problem here is the subject or better put how can we have a subject when only the given is certain (Deleuze 1953, 92). The major substitution rendered possible is between the (transcendental) principles of human knowledge and the principles of human nature or the principles that could explain and give a human nature, "...les principes de l'expérience ne sont pas des principes pour des objets de l'expérience, ils ne garantissent pas la reproduction des objets dans l'expérience." (Deleuze 1953, 136). It can be said that in this case we are witnessing a first attempt to substitute a philosophy seen as an analysis of transcendental founding principles of human knowledge with one that captures the principles of human nature in the manner of a "genealogy" or genesis of actual experience. The role of the procedural principles of association is to immobilize and explain the social content of the relations, be they legal, political or economic. Thus, the "association of ideas" properly certifies a theory of the human mind; but its merit is seen rather as the possibility of minute decryption of cultural practices.

I consider that the source of the first point is for Deleuze the second division of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reasons*, which is the 'Transcendental Doctrine of Method'. The second point bears a Deleuzian mark, and I think that this 'philosophical method' is the proper 'construction site' of Deleuze's thinking. What else is his last book *What is philosophy?* if not a heritage of his own legacy of thought, the sketches of his amazing 'construction site' of thinking with/in philosophy?

In order to clarify the principle of empiricism in Deleuze's Hume and prepare the transition to the next function of this 'exercise of thought', it is necessary to reconsider the question: *how does the mind become human nature?* If Hume starts from a division between our perceptions, which means

that in a basic way the experience is given, we have a given. Now, the difficulty resides in the nature of this given and on the principle that governs the ‘material’ of Hume’s empiricism as seen by Deleuze. Let’s read the ‘steaming’ points of this intriguing issue from Hume’s *Treatise*: “...that whatever objects are different are distinguishable, and that whatever objects are distinguishable are separable by the thought and imagination” and “For as every idea, that is distinguishable, is separable by the imagination; and as every idea that is separable by the imagination, may be conceived to be separately existing” and “We have no perfect idea of anything but of a perception” (Hume 1978, 18, 54, 234).

The Deleuze’s reading points out that the starting point of empiricism is the collection of perceptions, the sequential movement of these minute perceptions that wander without fixation into the mind or imagination. Accordingly, the principle of empiricism is the difference – the perceptions are successive as long as they are different, and they are different as long as they wander with no specified succession (Hume 1953, 92). Difference is given; identity is gained. So the first glimpse of the mind leaves us with the impression of a madhouse, hazardous moves, no constancy and no sign of constant relations. Hence the question that haunts Deleuze’s Hume and gives a new face and force to empiricism: how does the mind become human nature? How does the collection become a system? How does imagination become a faculty? How can the subject be constituted in the given?

### **There can be only one subject**

If the principle of empiricism is the difference, then the question about subjectivity implies sorting out the transformations that are required and the cause of these transformations to properly speak of human subjectivity. Deleuze will pinpoint at Hume the features that could support de becoming-human of the subject and their ongoing development. First, we have the biological bias of the ‘subject of subjectivities’ or mind that is reflected through the strings of ‘vivacity’ and ‘resonance’ (Deleuze 1953, 99-100, 151) – the

sensitive support of associations visible through the felt side of belief, inference and artifice. Relations are from this point of view explained as 'laws of communications' covering the gap from known to unknown, the role of general ideas, etc. (Deleuze 1953, 146).

Second, the flow of perception gives us the structure of succession that is the presence of time so time is the fabric of the mind. However, in order to have a chosen set of succession, time has to be 'consumed' by the function of habit. Nothing but the habit gives us the natural passing from an idea to another so from structure time becomes through habit a *synthesis* (Deleuze 1953, 102).

Third, the distinctive statute of perceptions (impressions and idea of impressions) divides the two directions of Hume's inquiry as follows: atomism is a theory of ideas as long as their relations are exterior; associationism is a theory of relations, as long as they are exterior to ideas (Deleuze 1953, 118). Let's see Hume's words on this and then the sketch of the Deleuzian evaluation: "...understanding never observes any real connection among objects, and that even the union of cause and effect, when strictly examined, resolves itself into a customary association of ideas. Far from thence is evidently fallows, that identity is nothing really belonging to these different perceptions, and uniting them together; nevertheless, it is merely a quality, which we attribute to them, because of the union in their ideas in the imagination, when we reflect upon them..." This, therefore, on some of this three relations of resemblance, contiguity and causation, that identity depends; and as the very essence of these relations consists in their producing an easy transition of ideas" (Hume 1978, 259-260). The Deleuze reading implies that ideas do not imprint any quality (existence, general ideas, substance) on any of their relations, and that relations are exterior to ideas and the real parents of any quality of ideas. The principles of associations are principles travestyng the power of nature, with no known origin (the dualistic account of empiricism) that affects the mind. That is, producing three typologies of relations (contiguity, resemblance, causality) and a becoming-active of the mind: imagination is now a faculty; ideas connect; general

ideas are assigned; substance is thought, and natural relations are believed (Deleuze 1953, 6-9). All associations express forms of external relations and two things are for my inferred by this reading of associationism:

a) When Hume says that the imagination or the mind is a collection of ideas, Deleuze understands that the ideas of impressions or the flow of perceptions has no consistency or uniformity; ideas with respect to imagination are simple animated sequences of distinct perceptions. Hume's point: two ideas can never provide, by themselves, nature of the relationship existing between them (Hume 1978, 45, 636). It follows that the quest for the origin of knowledge reveals not only that experience is somehow given that ideas are given, but that we always start from them and we can take any step deeper. So the problem of the origin for Deleuze's Hume is in fact the question of how relations of ideas are articulated, the question of origin is the inquiry of provenience: what it experienced cannot be separated from the process by which it is produced. The principle of habit highlights the simple fact that experience constantly changes. Thus, belief is the act that makes us pass from something known to something unknown.

b) Deleuze states clearly that in Hume's *Treatise* there are two forms under which the mind is affected: the passions and the social (Deleuze 1953, 1). So Deleuze reads in Hume two sets of principles that affect the mind making possible human subjectivities. One that arrays the intellect called principles of associations and one that prompts our passions called principles of passion (Deleuze 1953, 69). However, the real "floating" element of Deleuze is the imagination. The 'elastic' ground that fits the flexibility of the Rubik cube making possible and coherent the internal moves of all the concepts implied in his re-writing of Hume's empiricism. I will rewind our presentation to highlight the importance of it. Briefly, the presence of the principles of association is a trigger that articulates the mind with a faculty of the intellect on the playground of imagination, and thus we speak of general ideas, substances and natural relations. Mind is traversed by a *tendency* that goes beyond the given, surpasses the given and certifies the birth of subjectivity. *Inference* (the production of

belief) is an act of transcendence *invention* also, and both reach further than the mere collection of ideas and qualify the mind by giving steady relations and an easy transition through the play of imagination (Deleuze 1953, 4-5). In conclusion, our capacity to know is not a process of mirroring reality but a continuous adaptation to it and this is way 'belief' and 'invention' are the two forms of surpassing the given, establishing the positive transcendence of the subject<sup>6</sup>. „C'est là le seul contenu qu'on puisse donner à l'idée de subjectivité: la médiation, la transcendance. Mais on remarquera que le mouvement de se développer soi-même ou de devenir autre est double: le sujet se dépasse, le sujet se réfléchit. Hume a reconnu ces deux dimensions, les présentant comme les caractères fondamentaux de la nature humaine: l'inférence et l'invention, la croyance et l'artifice" (Deleuze 1953, 90).

And back to our point, the principles of association will answer for the subject structural capacity of relating terms, ideas and only under the *rules of imagination* because we are speaking at this level about imagination as a pure *tendency* regardless of the terms that are associated, "Bref, il faut comprendre à la fois que le sujet est *constitué par les principes*, et fondé sur la *fantaisie*" (Deleuze 1953, 143). But, if we want to determine a particular relation, we have to consider passions for our actions; our praxis always carries a purpose so we associate this with that for a specific reason. Consequently, imagination is now designated as a dynamic synthesis of our subjectivity that integrates circumstances making rules, setting a general view on how to handle reality (Deleuze 1953, 59-60). Why the Deleuzian emphasis on passions? From the constitution of philosophy done by Plato, passion has been considered the 'circular system' of human goals: actions are set to procure pleasure and avoid pain. These are the direct passions of Deleuze's Hume and our birthright dispositions given by nature. The presence of the passions ensures means and ends (for the ideas), in other words the constituent elements of social action. However, this bears a major consequence that the intellect (the reflective capacity of the subject) is not about representation but about interest. Direct

passions are those that cannot provide a reason for their action, other than pleasure or avoidance of pain.

But the most important Deleuzian stretch of Hume's theory of passion resides in the role of indirect passions, because the indirect passions provide in their manifestation an object. "On distingue autant de passions indirectes qu'il y a d'émotions produisant l'idée d'un objet. Deux couples sont fondamentaux : l'orgueil et l'humilité, quand l'émotion agréable au désagréable produit l'idée du moi, l'amour et la haine, quand elle produit l'idée d'une autre personne" (Deleuze 1953, 134). Experience and habit take the correlation 'specific emotion – specific object' under the form of a need and through the mediation of imagination becomes an act of invention that develops as a social modality of compliance. Imagination turns into a computing software it is a combinatory of pragmatic actions. Therefore, we speak now of a *practical tendency* that explains the particular forms of our associations and the statute of the subject. As a consequence, for Deleuze' Hume there can be only one subject and one kind of subject alone – the subject of praxis. This specific determination restitutes empiricism as praxis of the subject that is a typology of subjectivities (economic, moral and political). "L'association des idées ne définit pas un sujet connaissant, mais au contraire un ensemble de moyens possibles pour un sujet pratique dont toutes les fins réelles sont d'ordre passionnel, moral, politique économique" (Deleuze 1953, 138).

Our final point is the functions of this subject that has gone over the given. For Deleuze, the transcendent acts of the subject under the influence of specific principles institutes by a methodological separation two poles or worlds<sup>7</sup> with different agenda and general rules:

1. Under the effect of the principles of passions, the social field is constituted or the system of culture or morality. System in general because the collection of ideas 'dragged' by *tendency* becomes a *system*; the system (of intellect or cultural) is the performance of the schematism produced by the synthesis of imagination in the 'crack' of the subject's surpassing of the given. "... l'activité de l'esprit se fonde, dans la passion comme dans la connaissance, sur la fantaisie. Il y a donc un

schématisme moral. Mais la différence n'en subsiste pas moins : ce n'est plus un schématisme extensif, c'est un schématisme intensif" (Deleuze 1953, 148). Deleuze's Hume designates a genetic tonality-passion that integrates and makes possible the existence of the *socius*, namely sympathy, which is a natural affection explaining together with sexual desire the nature of the family. The elements of this domain are mutually exclusive because individuals share the same interests and thus a continuous conflict is carried. The roles of the general rules are both *extensive* and *corrective*, favoring a displacement of any partiality making, and as a consequence, make easier the establishment of a community, counting for the birth of justice, governance, and economy. The goal, therefore, in the moral world, is not extension, but *integration* (Deleuze 1953, 40-43, 46).

2. Under the effect of principles of association, the system of intellect is developed. Belief is here the 'money value' of inference, holding under the specifics of general rules the horizontal of extensive magnitude or nature. The composition of nature is *partes extra partes*, and general rules are both extensive (through the dynamics of habit) and corrective (through the limits of experience). The achievement here is not the *de jure* identification of the rules of intellect with those of nature but their *de facto* identification in the process of applicability (Deleuze 1953, 20-21). Considering that the mind is conjointly affected by the principles of association and passions, we can see that for each the becoming-subject of the mind sets foot into a sphere of applicability: the effects of association open the system of the intellect or "physics", those of passion, the system of ethics or culture. In each of them, we have a proper act of the subject; we speak thus of *belief* as a constitutive operator of inference in the system of intellect and *sympathy* as a constitutive operator of the political in the system of passions. You can follow on the next page our graphic diagram of this topic presentation.

### **My horse for an institution**

I think that the role of Hume's institution theory as seen by Deleuze starts from what is thought when we grasp the meaning of experience. What is astonishing is not that we

acquire experience, one way or another, but that we (must) assume in this multifold form of experience a *radical asymmetric instance* which can justify and condition any experience (for any type of knowledge, we must presume a faculty of the mind). We note that the experience itself is not delivered miraculously but that it requires an environment (social – *societas*, politics – political) which once contracted and dealt with can tell something with regard to a particular form of experience; and I think this is the ‘intuition’ of Deleuze’s article *Instinct and Institutions* (Deleuze 2002e, 24). Hence, we speak about the experience of a language and an antecedent institution of language must be presumed; we talk about food, and the economic institution is to be presumed. And so raising it speculatively, one might say that personal experience assumes the preexistence of an environment, that experience as such is deployed by ‘institutional’ currency.

What is after all an institution? It certainly is not something that can be depicted by a “what is” question but by a “how” guiding investigation since, as explained, the asymmetrical instance is detected by effects or diverse experience of a type. This is after all a paradoxical relation because the antecedent (instance or institution) is not an experience but *a genetic condition* of it. In this case it is not envisaged a rational perspective (the innate) because this exterior environment or social milieu belongs and informs at the same time the individual (the empiricist dualism).

Returning to the distinction between nature and culture, we see that Deleuze’s Hume confers a theoretical framework of a naturalized human subject (biological organism with a number of tendencies) in which the “culture” is attested by a series of institutional relations, artifices designed to satisfy the tendencies and needs of the human organism. The social institution presents itself as an ‘indirect organized system of means designed to satisfy one’s needs’. So through the institutions we can determine types of social relations, as an example when we consider sexual desire, we spread a series of relationships that pivots on the institution of marriage (Deleuze 2002e, 25). One may wonder why when discussing about the ways to control different types of actions the concept of law is

not the main concern but institution. The difference is doubled, theoretical – for the law works in an institution (judiciary) and is thus derivative; practical – since the law only determines negative boundaries of our action (not to do) in a social field. The institution is a positive model of action since it can have different forms of material expression without losing the original power of a radical precursor, and this is the point in Deleuze's Hume regarding the function of institution (Deleuze 1953, 35). There may be different types of marriage and the law governing their common property follows a particular institutional model (Christians, Muslims, etc.).

However, the problems still linger for how can we explain the institution when we are talking in terms of tendencies or needs. Institutions cannot be explained by this tendency since history presents us with multiple forms of marriage with respect to sexual desires; therefore, no necessity is detected between them. As a result, Deleuze throws us into a paradox of understanding society because he talks about institutions when in fact he only argues about the procedures of satisfaction, and more since tendencies satisfied with these procedures do not cause or determine the procedures in any way. If we think that the utility (institutions arise because they are useful) could improve our explication with regard to the relationship between the tendency and the institution, the next simple and true question presents itself: useful to whom? It seems that the institutions send us to a social praxis which is constitutive with respect to the instances of which we are not aware in our experiences, those radical instances cannot be explained by tendencies or utility, and because utility itself implies tendencies therefore utility cannot explain anything (Deleuze 1953, 38). But what one gain is that between tendency and satisfying procedures a mediator is always necessarily met although the procedures are mere historical contingencies belonging to the social field.

The “exercise of thought” proposed by Deleuze with respect to Hume has to decide on the nature of the instances onto which the social forms of satisfying our tendencies depend. These institutions can have an anthropological solution focusing on the rituals of civilization or a Marxist approach analyzing the means

of production as the article *Instinct and institutions* points or a much elaborated scheme on the account of the relation between the faculty of imagination and indirect passions, as is developed in the third chapter of his first book. I will briefly present Deleuze's arguments for a possible 'solution':

1) When Kant defined philosophy as "science of the relation of all knowledge in respect to the essential purposes of human reason" (Kant 1998, A839) or "the love that sentient beings harbored to the ultimate goals of human reason" (Kant, 1993, B867) he obviously meant that the supreme goals or purposes of Reason formulate the cultural system or more simply put Nature and Culture are singing the same tune. Thus, the famous Kantian questions can find an answer without any puzzlement. In these definitions, we can however identify an attack to Hume's empiricism, since in empiricism reason is not strictly speaking a coalition of goals. The essential features of reason at Hume are only a particular way of achieving the aims/goals common to both the human and the animal kingdom. Thus, the asymmetrical relationship between nature and culture is revealing visible in the analysis conducted by Deleuze on Hume's philosophy. And I have no doubt that these are the motives that for Deleuze the reason is the faculty which organizes indirect, oblique goals or purposes of humanity, making thus culture a form of computing, detour (Deleuze 1953, 34).

2) The act of invention represents the modality through which the given is transcended and reconsidered under the dynamics of indirect passion and imagination. Deleuze captures the relationship between indirect passions and their objects as means of explaining the structure and function of society; by this he envisaged a critique of contractualist theories. This critique pursues the limited and punitive perspective of the legal framework that feeds the social dynamics of contractualist theories. Thus, the relationship between nature and society/culture does not bear the tension of the situation described by rights and laws, but a restored relationship framework that bounces from needs to institutions: the needs will be placed outside of society; and their possible satisfaction will be inserted through institutions as positive function of

society (Deleuze 1953, 26). Nevertheless, if the institution presents itself as an organized system of means designed to satisfy human needs we meet the equivalent problem again because utility neither triggers nor determines institutional procedures. One can say that the same desires open multiple forms of satisfaction but stunningly can never explain the particularities of any procedure of satisfaction. But how can we explain the emergence of rules? What relation is required to capture the utility of those?

3) The faculty of imagination is the instance that determines the constitutive relationship between needs and the procedures of satisfaction. Why so? Because passions are reflected in imagination together with their circumstances; and in the precise cause of indirect passion, we find that between desire and its object, imagination opens a general and virtual network of circumstances. Thus, the tendency of imagination comes to explain the way a desire can group possible objects of satisfaction. Furthermore, general rules are nothing but modes of procedures of satisfaction engulfing virtual circumstances of any possible expressions of tendencies. One can understand thus the function of justice as registering possible circumstances for relations and giving borders to social action, moving the passionate partiality of sympathy, providing the “playground” of the society of men. The political and judicial institutions together constitute society, that is, regulate the operative naturalness of the subject by rules that provide an extended vivacity for the whole social sphere. Society has not primarily the legitimacy given by a social contract because the social contract is secondary and could only be conceived suitable in relation with human creativity. In addition, institutions express an innovative approach regarding the social manners of satisfying human needs that articulate the structure of any social contract. Innovation is a statement about our continuous relation with the world, and it always has a social content.

After the descriptions of the three functions of Deleuze’s ‘exercise of thought’ as I assumed to be present in *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, I will briefly point with no claim of exhaustivity what is in my opinion, the elements that are

continued in his first period: a) The theory of relation (exterior to their terms) conceived in the fabric of Hume's empiricism is developed and transformed until is settled in the topic of disjunctive synthesis from *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* as logic of the distribution of divergent series. With Nietzsche, we have the logic of relations of force as contingent exteriorities and necessary relation with respect to the genetic principle of the will to power. And in his commentary of Spinoza, the concept of the individual is not thought of in a position to substance but as a relation of independent terms and pulsation of *conatus*; b) the importance of the topic of "circumstance" starts with Hume that ends with the apprenticeship of thought from *Difference and Repetition*. I think that we can speak vis-à-vis the philosophy of Deleuze of a kind of empiricism as 'glimpse of the immediate'. A philosophical procedure that evacuates the Hegelian 'mediated' rendering the process of experience to be a beacon of novelty – the negative is out of contradiction, and the movement bears no trauma of *Aufhebung*. Firstly, with Hume 'circumstance' is the principle of individualization and the sufficient reason of the association of ideas; secondly, with Proust by the investigation of the signs as real conditions of thought; thirdly, with Nietzsche and Spinoza as a dimension of ethics pointing the real conditions of becoming-active; c) The theory of institution is continued and re-invested in his book on Sacher-Masoch where the tension between contract and institution is kept. The political envisaged by the theme of institution is abandoned but the problem it poses is retaken within other theoretical clothes in *Anti-Oedipus*.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I will translate the French 'esprit' with 'mind' on the account that the English translators of Hegel's *Phenomenology* have chosen 'mind' for "Geist" and French translators chose 'esprit' for the same German noun. The selection is appropriate by the semantic variation of French and English nouns substitutes. Another decisive point is the orientation of French translators of Hume's *Treatise* who chose 'esprit' for the English 'mind' making clear Hume's point by rendering the function 'intellect' of the mind by 'entendement'.

<sup>2</sup> I think that Deleuze's 'principal topic' presents some flaws. The principles of association are those that make possible the relation of ideas and we have

no clue of their origin, hence the dualism. But the principles of passion are not very clearly explained regarding their necessity of unknown causality upon mind. Deleuze mentions that only together can they explain the appearance of the subject. And then 'experience' and 'habit' are principles of human nature, but their presence is a topic after the showdown of the principles of association and passion, as a consequence they are derivative principles and only conditions of possibility. And on other occasions Deleuze uses the term principles as 'something without which we cannot understand x' as time in respect to propriety. This is an issue that makes Deleuze's Hume hard to follow.

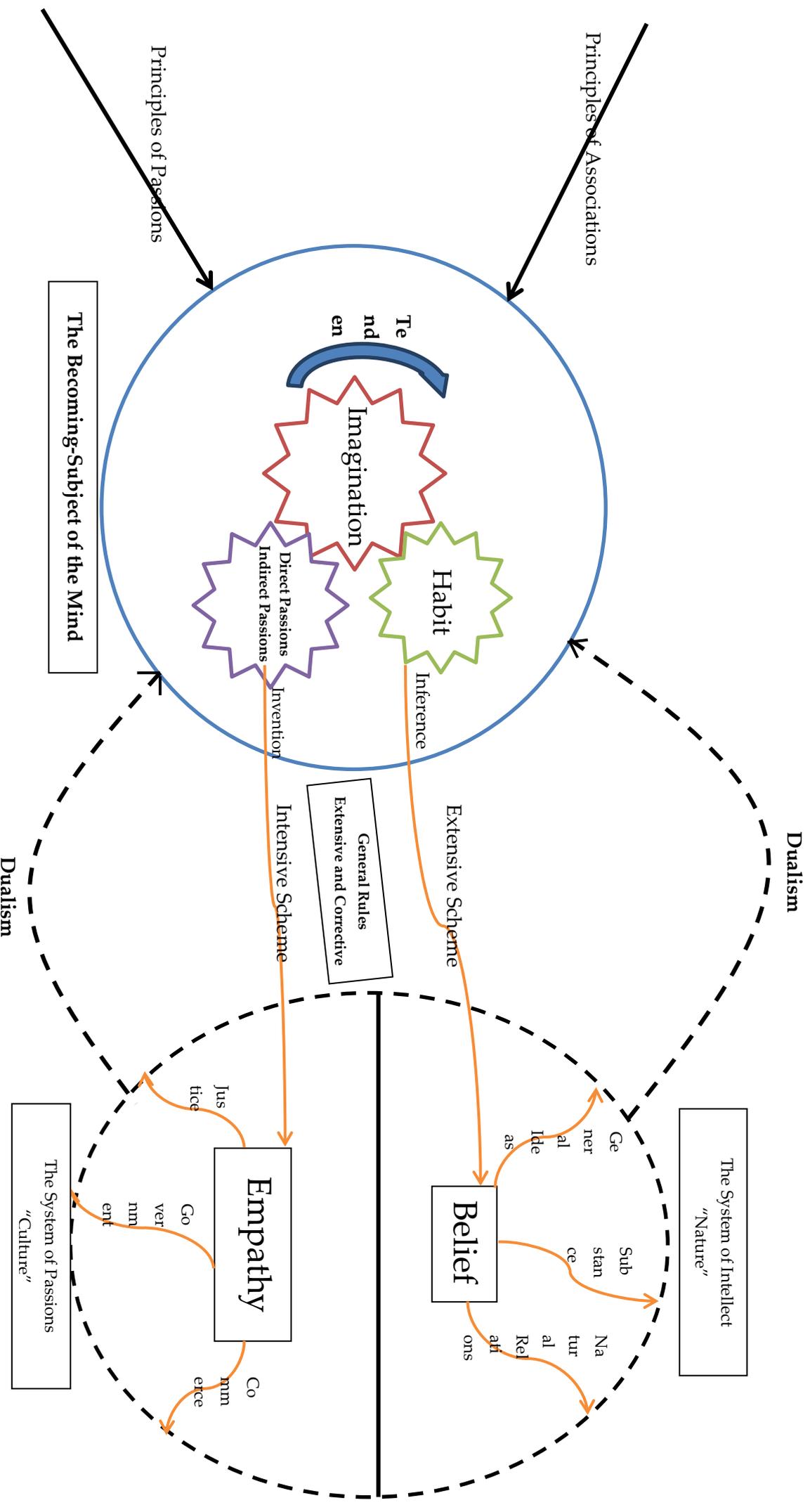
<sup>3</sup> That could be understood as a Deleuzian remaking of the genetic unity God-Subject mastered by post-Kantians as Schelling, Fichte and Hegel (Guérault 1930, 3).

<sup>4</sup> Arnaud Bouaniche specifies that for Deleuze the genesis of the subject presupposes in fact the return to a point of view that precedes the subject and the classic division subject-object (Bouaniche 2007, 55). I want to make some points regarding Bouaniche's statement. First of all, the subject of various subjectivities is a lovely plot from Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1996, 56-58), and can be seen at work at Foucault also. I mentioned this to make clear that the subject of the subjectivities bracketed by any phenomenological use is nothing but raw (pre-individual) dispositions that are caught and variously assembled in the actual forms of subjectivations. So to reframe, there is no anterior point of subjectivities but only images of thought or relations of force. One can trace the dissolution of the *onto-subjectivities* of the subject in the genealogical dynamic topologic-typologic in his work on Nietzsche, and in the relation virtual-actual from *Difference and Repetition*.

<sup>5</sup> We can trace the source of this problematics back to Sartre's *Transcendence of the ego* (Sartre 1957, 40, 110).

<sup>6</sup> The attempt to found a new philosophy of the subject (practical) is a directory speculative requirement of the 50's French intellectual environment that splits into two major directions: phenomenological existentialism and humanistic Marxism (Gros 1997, 8). I believe that these two 'marks' are also visible in the Deleuzian reading of Hume: first by considering knowledge as an act of transcendence. That is why 'belief' and 'invention' are both ways to overcome and reconfigure the given. Transcendence is both *act* and action; the institutional theory as dimension of politic and history.

<sup>7</sup> The announced dualism of empiricism is not continued into a separation between the system of intellect and that of passions. „La nature n'arrive à ses *fins* qu'au *moyen* de la culture, la tendance ne se satisfait qu'à travers l'institution. C'est en ce sens que l'histoire est de la nature humaine. Inversement, *la nature est trouvée comme le résidu de l'histoire*” (Deleuze 1953, 33). Their separation is only a distinction of reason because only their conjoined action can explain the possibility of action and knowing through history and hence the play of human subjectivity. If there is only a 'readable' subject of praxis there is correspondently only one world. The distinction is only methodological; to be more precise we are dealing with a slow motion explanatory procedure.



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