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# David Lapoujade, "Aberrant Movements: The Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze." Trans. Joshua David Jordan

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**David Lapoujade.** *Aberrant Movements: The Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze.* Translated by Joshua David Jordan. MIT Press 2017. 376 pp. \$18.95 USD (Paperback ISBN 9781584351955).

In the course of reading David Lapoujade's *Aberrant Movements*, readers will undoubtedly encounter its overtly nuanced positioning. In relation to the existent patterns of critical engagement with Deleuze's works, Lapoujade chooses to make his book seem like an expressive tissue of an expanding poetic universe rather than a measurable extensity from some representational whole. So the potency of his book, as Rajchman makes evident in the 'Introduction' to *Aberrant Movements*, doesn't lie in unfolding like a teleological mimicry of what stands before us as some kind of palimpsestic accretion of a-categorical Deleuzean readings. Rather his work is a perversely creative exercise in repeating these readings into openings of inassimilable differences. Such an inclusively 'exclusive positioning' of his book brings about what we may call a transformative de-familiarization of it, rendering it as indistinct patterns of aberrant movements that continuously and creatively shift us from one kind of complex territorial intensity to another.

The book can be divided into two parts. In the first, from chapter 1 to 6, Lapoujade teases out what he seems to view as the dynamic constituents of the virtual. He scatters them on the narrative space of his book as 'movements,' 'plane,' 'earth,' 'idea,' and the 'senses,' and simultaneously treats each of them as the cornucopia of renewal and regeneration, giving rise to a continuous process of territorialization and deterritorialization. In the second part, from chapter 7 to 10, Lapoujade's focus rests on what he prompts us to view as equally dynamic constituents of the actual, 'the socius,' 'bodies,' 'desiring machines,' 'war machines,' and 'territorial assemblages,' before he shifts towards drawing one's attention to machinic processes entailing production of the new. In the final chapter Lapoujade turns his attention toward the auto-poesis of desire, its innate capacity to connect with and disconnect from flows in order to yield entropic stratas and territorial assemblages.

Lapoujade's book does not only express the very being of Deleuze's philosophy as one of aberrant movements. It also partakes of and pursues these movements to such an extent that it appears resolutely wedded to a perversely creative intent, which seems to be one of re-structuring the book in terms these movements. Nevertheless it also ends up offering lenses needed for mapping Deleuze's works. In chapter 1 Lapoujade conducts a genetic assessment of aberrant movements. He maintains that it is their constitutional value neutrality, their nomadological unfolding, and their revolutionary bursting forth, that makes them tantamount to eruptions or events, which brings about the production of the 'new' while making them altogether escape anthropocentric cartographical intent. The hallmark of this book is that it makes Deleuze's philosophy appear as a performance in 'double articulation.' In his first articulation, according to Lapoujade, Deleuze puts forward the immanence of aberrant movements that make up thought. But in his second articulation Lapoujade turns to provide logical validation of these movements by claiming that they, not unlike movements in general which tend to unfold upon a ground, rest on an immanent external quasi-structure that he renders as the plane, or what one may call 'the groundless ground.'

Lapoujade discloses the patterns of aberrant movements that Deleuze's philosophy manifests as he focuses on its attempt to equate Earth with 'the plane of consistency' or BWO. However, Deleuze does not make Earth tantamount to a vast homogeneous plane; rather he makes Earth univocal, made up of fissured differences or multiplicity of heterogeneous planes or shifting plates. Further, it may be argued that it is Deleuze's perception of earth that makes processes of deterritorialization and re-territorialization indispensable and inevitable.

The book makes a claim that in Deleuze's philosophy there is no permanent deterritorialization. All moments of temporal deterritorialization are necessarily followed by movements of re-territorialization and it is this process that Deleuze goes on to effectively capture in his book *Difference and Repetition*, which many consider his magnum opus. One may note this while reading chapter 3, which shows how every synthesis of time ends up marking a rupture with the existent territorialized substance and shifts toward reworking it into a new territorial assemblage. Every movement thus enables a synthesis which yields the production of the new in territorial terms.

The book, from chapter 4 on, sets out to render an engagement with Deleuze's works to show that one's perceptual encounter with his desired object doesn't turn it into a containable entity, but virtualizes it or transforms it into an idea. This impossibility of grounding the desired object, as Lapoujade asserts, stresses its essential virtuality or inexhaustibility and thereby betrays its potential virtual dimension. However, what stands out in this section is the interplay between the virtual and the actual or the unconscious sliding from one to the other, which yet again necessitates a process of conversion and subversion or de-territorialization and re-territorialization of the established thought essential for the production of the new.

Lapoujade, while engaging with Deleuze's key concepts, stresses the a priori structuration of the aberrant flow of desire, and emphasizes its immanence that one may contrast with the Kantian transcendental a priori. However, such aberrant flows remain the key when it comes to the production of the new and the concomitant process of territorialization and de-territorialization being an effective means enabling this process. However, for the movement to occur, according to Lapoujade, it is necessary for a rupture to take place anywhere from the middle which in turn necessitates movement or de-territorialization.

The book provides an equally vivid interplay or intermeshing of movement, strata, contraction and flow. Lapoujade shows the contingency of movement, migration and flow upon the BWO or plane of consistency, but he argues in the same breath that the plane of consistency is made of multiple strata that populate the groundlessness and can re-assemble themselves in infinite ways (199). However, in his critical reading of Deleuze's concepts, Lapoujade positions the notion of abstract machine as the inner potential of the strata that enables it to express itself in the form of movements yielding different territorial assemblages.

A further de-territorializing shift is made in the later chapters and Lapoujade's gaze into the socius no longer remains telescopic with this shift—rather his becomes a sort of microscopic gaze. As he engages with Deleuze's concepts of State apparatus of capture and war machine, the array of concepts that expressed the 'virtual real' stands relegated to the background and what is foregrounded instead is a dense interplay of the State and the war machine which replaces the interaction between the strata and the flow.

What Lapoujade renders as a key to the production of the new is the dialectical struggle between the state and the war machine that facilitates the synthesis between the state's abstract machine and the latter. He insists on the essentiality of the war machine in relation to the re-territorialization of the state. In chapter 10, he explains that the struggle is not about seeing the same thing and apparently speaking in the same lines (308); rather, it is about finding 'new deliria, new fabulations which will certainly give human beings a new Earth (309). It is evident that Lapoujade focuses on Deleuze's persistent attempts to convey the permanency of transformation and the production of the new that this struggle entails. Lapoujade then goes on to argue that Deleuzian 'limit' doesn't restrict the individual but holds in front the devising power of the outside, which in fact opens the possibility of bringing new spaces, new concepts, new existences, and new population and of experiencing the endless joy of creating new (319).

Lapoujade's book offers a remarkable shift in tone, temper and approach as compared to other books critically examining Deleuze's works. For him what seems to be of primary importance is to engage with and render concepts of Deleuze to the reader in critico-aesthetic terms or to put the spotlight on the logo-poesis palpable in Deleuze's creation of concepts. In fact, the endless production of the new for Deleuze, as one engaging with Lapoujade's book may argue, hinges upon altogether de-familiarizing or displacing the conventional notion of stratification and cyclic patterns. And Lapoujade's book teases out and drives home this point with remarkable intensity and alacrity while turning his book into an inimitable exercise in lyrical complexity replete with aberrant movements. However, Lapoujade's contribution, if one is asked to render it in reductive terms, lies in conveying that the only structure that stays intact in the expanding rhizomatic cosmos of Deleuze's philosophy committed to the process the production of the new happens to be one that may be called cyclic, circular and joyfully repetitive.

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