

## ***On the Immanent Validation of Aberrant Movements: Towards a Deleuzian Notion of Prudence Based on the Masochist Attitude***

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### **Abstract**

As Lapoujade remarks in *Aberrant Movements*, the articulation of rupturing potencies, or, as he terms it, of aberrant movement, is central in Deleuze's thought. This article formulates the problem of immanent validation of the aberrant movement, this is, the question of how we can determine if, when and how it is worth it, or justified, to follow and articulate the aberrant movement, knowing that it is always, inherently, destructive. I will explore this question with Lapoujade and Boundas, to then elaborate a Deleuzian notion of prudence based on the masochistic attitude.

### **Introduction**

As Lapoujade points out in the introduction to *Aberrant Movements*, Deleuze's philosophy is not primarily a philosophy of the event or of immanence. It is such only incidentally, by virtue of its exploration of certain aberrant movements and their articulation, this is, the irrational logics pertaining to certain rupturing potencies. These rupturing potencies correspond to creative processes of experimentation, which have the potential to bring about the highest forms of creativity, to go beyond, transgress or reinvent established norms, but which therefore also always contain the risk to be merely destructive, or to break out in madness. I believe that the signification of the notion of aberrant movement is best understood when put in connection to the problem of validation in the absence of, or even against, external, transcendent criteria, which Boundas describes elegantly in *Revisiting Normativity with Deleuze*.

I will formulate this problem of validation through Lapoujade and Boundas. On the back of this, I will address Boundas' hypothesis that the Spinozistic notion of spiritual automaton allows for validation in the aberrant movement: the spiritual automaton articulates the causal series of ideas in thought, which are simultaneously encountered and produced, discovered and created, in a constitutive aberrant movement. Finally, I

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will argue that this must lead to a particular kind of validation: a validation which is dependent on an artful articulation of the potentialities of an accidental encounter, with its own necessity and effects, which do not pre-exist to movement, nor assume human subjects or transcendent criteria. I will delve into the notions of vital experimentation and prudence in this context, and try to formulate a notion of prudence which, as Boundas remarks, seems indispensable to a Deleuzian immanent ethics, which would be centred around the problem of the articulation and validation of the aberrant movement. Boundas and Lapoujade both relate the articulation of the aberrant movement to a certain notion of perversion, but Lapoujade does not expressly relate this notion to prudence, and Boundas only swiftly and tentatively mentions this relation. My aim is to develop the idea that this notion of perversion may actually already inherently contain (a notion of) prudence.

### **Lapoujade, Boundas, and the legitimacy of the aberrant movement**

According to Lapoujade, Deleuze's philosophy is a philosophy of aberrant movements. It aims at articulating the irrational logics of unusual, deviant processes, such as expressed through the notions of the death instinct or the third synthesis of time (*Difference and Repetition*), the line of flight (*A Thousand Plateaus*), or the selective principle of the Eternal Return (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*). Lapoujade questions this type of movement in a tripartite way (Lapoujade 2017: 32 ff.): (1) *Quid facti?* If the aberrant movement points to a limit-experience or the unliveable, can we say, or do we know they exist; (2) *Quid juris?* how can we justify that this would be an important, constitutive notion for a philosophy; why is the aberrant movement constitutive, and constitutive of what? The aberrant movement answers to the theoretical problem of genesis, creation or production of the new: by what right can one affirm that it is through these movements that everything comes about, that they are primordial, and that the "normal," ordinary, stable or stabilizing processes are derivatives of these instead of the other way around?; (3) *Quid vitae?* if the aberrant movement constantly obliges us to push the limits of what we are capable of, isn't there a real danger for the aberrant movement to become a process of destruction? With Deleuze and Guattari, Lapoujade warns that the aberrant movement always has the risk of being destructive, and that the vital forces that it expresses are always also lethal or destructive in the sense that they always can (and always do) turn against certain other forces, or even against themselves. This means that the aberrant movement threatens life as much as, and at the same time as, it liberates vital forces; and that it can always turn back upon itself, defeat itself, and turn into a merely destructive movement.

The three questions that Lapoujade formulates are connected, and they interrogate the legitimacy of the aberrant movement: If I articulate or express something in an

aberrant movement this means (1) bringing it into existence (*de facto*), thereby (2) giving it a voice and thus a right of expression (*de jure*), by (3) affirming vital forces that were not affirmed, which can be productive but which may be, and always is at partially, destructive, maybe even lethal, depending on what one (individual or collective) is capable of (*de vita*). This thus opens up to a number of very practical questions, which are all part of what I will call the question of validation of the aberrant movement: If the aberrant movement is about an expression of that which is or was inexpressible, and if this simultaneously gives a right of existence to that which is expressed, should everything and anything be given this right? Are there things that should not be thus expressed, and if so, why not? What things should be given this right why and when? If the aberrant movement always has the risk to be destructive, can we know, and if so, how can we know or feel, what aberrant movement to affirm and when, and until what point? How do we know or feel if it will lead to, and if it is worth it if it leads to, destruction? Will the aberrant movement lead to something meaningful or will it merely lead to exhaustion and destruction, without there emerging anything new of value, without it being creative? Can we, and if so how can we, distinguish what movements to follow or not, and until when? This comes down to asking: What is the necessity of aberrant movements? What logic do they obey? Must they be so indeterminate with regard to life and death, production and destruction? In what conditions do they constitute the highest power of existence?

Needless to say, if we take Deleuze seriously, these questions regarding the legitimacy of the aberrant movement cannot be solved by using transcendent norms or reasons; they somehow must be evaluated immanently, this is, only with criteria that are immanent to the movement itself, this is, that are not taken from a different perspective, from something external to the movement, to then be applied to it. Indeed, it is exactly *because* this type of norms have lost their credibility, and are not regarded by Deleuze as legitimate grounds to judge and value experience, that the notion of aberrant movement becomes significant, as a complex and multifaceted problem, which according to Lapoujade permeates all of Deleuze's work. Deleuze thus does not get rid of questions of legitimacy or of validity, as he is sometimes considered to; on the contrary, he even seems very preoccupied with them, even though and exactly because he changes the usual attitude regarding legitimacy and validation, which is one of applying or measuring things against transcendent norms.

Boundas agrees with this interpretation (Boundas 2012: 65). He does not believe that Deleuze would merely be concerned with pushing just any force to the limit of what it can do (an interpretation he ascribes to Shaviro), in a pure and anarchistic experimentation, which according to him is often emphasized in a euphoric celebration of creativity in which "anything goes," and in which there is no room for the question of legitimacy or validation of these forces and their limits. Boundas formulates the problem very differently to Lapoujade, however, as he pointedly delves into the question of what

it would mean to have a validation of aberrant movements. Boundas puts forward two interesting suggestions (Boundas 2012: 66): (1) Firstly, to have “validation” in the aberrant movement could mean that, in the articulation of the aberrant movement, our concepts respect the rhythms and articulations of “the real,” with the epistemic and ethical norms that correspond to them, and without falling back into a logic of representation or a tribunal of reason (that “the real” is a problematic and indeterminate term cannot be regarded as a problem here, since it is exactly that which needs to be determined through the articulation of the aberrant movement itself). (2) Secondly, he maintains that what is at stake here is the relation between construction (creation) and confirmation (validation). The condition for creativity and thought is for Deleuze an encounter with the singular, namely something that cannot be subsumed under any existing category, and which therefore challenges the existing order (be it the conceptual, juridical or aesthetic order), and thus takes the form of a problem, which then becomes better and better articulated or determined. This Deleuzian idea is known and has been evoked many times, but, Boundas remarks, not enough has been done to see if and how this determination can or cannot take the form of a validation.

Before continuing with Boundas’ proposition to delve into this question with Spinoza’s spiritual automaton (Boundas 2012: 65), I will already offer a tentative answer, as it is the most obvious one, and as Lapoujade ends his book with it. This answer consists in affirming that the validation of the aberrant movement can only be a question of experimentation, and that we cannot know, or even aim to know, in advance, but that we learn what works through experimentation. Indeed, any other attitude than this would mean that we would judge from an external point of view: a point of view of something that is already established before the aberrant movement, and which is therefore external to it. Since this would already require or suppose a validation or justification before the fact, it would be incompatible with the openness required in order to allow the emergence of the new, and it would preclude the rupturing potency of an aberrant movement. It seems that it is this point of view that Lapoujade expresses at the very end of *Aberrant Movements*: “Will the war machine destroy us or will it destroy the limits that subject and enslave us? We cannot know in advance; it all has to do with experimentation” (Lapoujade 2017: 319). Even though this answer makes a lot of sense, I would like to ask if this is really the final word, or if we can determine the problem a little further, hence the recourse to Boundas.

### **The spiritual automaton as a validation-machine**

As mentioned above, Boundas wants to maintain with Deleuze a notion of legitimacy or validation, this is to say, a normativity. He suggests that this type of validation, which cannot depend on an external, pre-existent norm, should take the form of an expression

according to certain requirements: (1) concepts, or expressions, should respect the rhythms and articulations of “the real,” with the epistemic and ethical norms that correspond to them; (2) and that what is at stake here is the relation between construction (creation) and confirmation (validation). What does this entail and how would this happen? We have seen that this must happen on the basis of an encounter, which we perceive as problematic because we cannot articulate it with our existing categories and principles, and which thus requires us to construct something new in order to articulate it and to determine it further. But how should we articulate a problem? And how do we know if we are being “true to the articulations of the real”?

In *Difference and Repetition* (1994: 181 ff.), Deleuze elaborates upon this point through the notion of dramatization, which corresponds to the reciprocal and then absolute determination of the singular, differential points of a problem. Boudas chooses to connect this issue to the Spinozistic notion of the *Emendation of the Intellect*, the “spiritual automaton” (Spinoza 1985: 37, Boudas 2012: 74), which conveys the idea of a forced, necessary movement. In any case, this notion could indeed allow for validation because it implies a necessity, which could bridge the gap between creation or discovery and demonstration or confirmation. In effect, the notion of the spiritual automaton allows for the rationality or necessity of a demonstration, but this demonstration must be one that is creative and which constructs and discovers that which it demonstrates. Contrariwise, this would mean that for creativity to be truly productive, it must not be absolutely free or random, this is, that there would be a norm for creativity, and that this would have confirmation as its condition. What exactly is this type of confirmation? How can we recognize this type of creativity? Why and how can the spiritual automaton warrant this? What must the spiritual automaton entail to make this possible?

The spiritual automaton is a process that connects ideas. It starts from ideas of which the causes are known, which Spinoza calls true or adequate ideas in *The Emendation* (Spinoza 1985: 32 ff.), as well as in the *Ethics* (Spinoza 1985: 447), and which lead to more causal connections, uncovering a whole system of connected ideas, of which the thread can be followed. This process is automatic; the spiritual automaton is a kind of machine: once a mind is occupied by adequate ideas (and not by the imagination, which confuses or conflates the adequate ideas as causes with passive affects of the body, thereby making the individual and its mind less potent), then new connections automatically and necessarily follow. As the laws of the bodies (physics) and the laws of the mind (logics) work in tandem, the connections between ideas are also real connections between the things they correspond to. This becomes clear when the mind begins to grasp adequate ideas, as then the question of the truth of ideas does not arise any more, and neither the question of the difference between discovery and creation: the adequate ideas and their connections speak for themselves, they are “*veritas index sui*” (Boudas 2012: 66).

Spinoza mentions an example that illustrates this very well (Spinoza 1985: 32): when one gives a genetic definition of the sphere, as the figure obtained by rotating a semicircle around its own axis, this definition has a special kind of necessity: as it is also a rule of construction, this is, it brings the circle into existence, describes its cause, and thereby makes that which it defines also necessarily and really true. The connections between ideas is very important here: as Spinoza remarks, this kind of truth cannot bear upon simple ideas, for example, “semicircle” or “axis,” on their own, as (long as) they don’t confirm more than their concept, and thus can only be true. Unlike the simple ideas, the idea of this rotating semicircle, as a definition of the circle, is not true in itself or in nature (there are in nature no spheres that are produced in this way), but it is only necessarily true in relation to the idea of a sphere, or in relation to a particular cause for this movement of a semicircle. It could be interesting to remark that this way of thinking of the semicircle that turns around its axis, and in connection the idea of the sphere, also necessarily connects to the notions of axis and thus of line, of point, of plane, etc. Additionally, that, as Spinoza himself observes, this kind of idea is abstract and concrete at the same time.

It is important to note that the notion of spiritual automaton acquires a different meaning with Deleuze than it has in Spinoza’s thought. As Boundas explains (Boundas 2012: 74 ff.), because Spinoza’s substance is a perfect and complete totality, this does not seem to have the openness required so to allow for the emergence of something new. This is where Deleuze puts Bergson’s notion of the virtual into play: it takes the place of Spinoza’s substance, thus slightly transforming the meaning of the spiritual automaton. Boundas illustrates the signification of the virtual through the example of laws (Boundas 2012: 72 ff.): the actual laws exist in lawbooks and in judges’ minds, and there is a sum of all laws; but there is also an indeterminate amount of laws that exist virtually, in response to a certain problem, but which may or may not be actualized or created, in response to the actual occurrence of the problem they are a response to. From this point of view, the determination of a problem, which we have connected to the spiritual automaton’s coupling of ideas, would be a process of actualization of virtual ideas: something that was *really* present in potency is brought into *empirical* existence. This makes Boundas say that, even though there is real creation, this is not creation *ex nihilo* (Boundas 2012: 73).

Therefore, the spiritual automaton connects discovery and creation to confirmation or demonstration, as the necessary, automatic relations between a network of ideas actualize what was virtually present, in a new system of connections that speak for themselves. In other words, once we express this movement, the question of its validity or legitimacy does not even pose itself, despite the fact that this movement originates in a problematic encounter. This movement is the result of (1) an anarchistic posture with regard to the established principles and categories on the one hand, which allows one to see and articulate the problem; and (2) an automatic process, which does not primarily

depend on a conscious, rational subject with its decisions or choices, nor on a particular doctrine or method, but rather on a certain causal necessity of the ideas themselves.

Even though, as Boundas shows, the notion of spiritual automaton is a fruitful one as a response to the problem of immanent normativity in a creative process, as it provides a certain notion of necessity, and thereby in a sense (but only in a sense) allows us to avoid the stance “anything goes;” this necessity only affects the connection between certain ideas, and the questions remain: Are all the movements of spiritual automata worth shouldering or affirming, or can they lead to undesirable consequences (and what would this mean)? In other words, is the spiritual automaton also a guarantee for the ethical and vital facets of our questioning of aberrant movements? Further, does this notion help us with the enquiry into vital experimentation? Does it help us recognize when a movement will be productive, and how we can affirm it?

### **Prudence in the masochist attitude**

Boundas concludes his text with the observation that, in order to extend the question of validation to an ethical-vital horizon, in the context of constant experimentation, what is required is a persuasive notion of prudence. This notion of prudence cannot, as the Ancient Greek *phronesis*, the on deliberation and foresight on the part of a rational person, nor on any external criteria, such as the Good, which as we have seen cannot be a criterion in this Deleuzian framework. Boundas is also sceptical of the spinozistic joy as a criterion, as this seems to be just another name for the Good (Boundas 2012: 76). It thus would be required to introduce an original notion of prudence in order to validate the aberrant movement immanently, and to warrant that it does not merely lead to destruction.

Before going into Boundas’ own tentative answer, I would like to cite a passage on vital experimentation from “Two Questions on Drugs”:

Vital experimentation occurs when any trial grabs you, takes control of you, establishing more and more connections, and opens you to connections. This kind of experiment can entail a kind of self-destruction. It can take place with companion or starter products: tobacco, alcohol, drugs. It is not suicidal as long as the destructive flow is not reduced to itself but serves to conjugate other flows, whatever the danger. The suicidal enterprise occurs when everything is reduced to this flow alone: “my” hit, “my” trip, “my” glass. It is the contrary of connection; it is organized disconnection. (Deleuze 2006: 153-154)

This passage, just as the notion of spiritual automaton, suggests connections are very important in the context of the validation of aberrant movements. As long as the movement keeps on opening up to new connections, even if there is inevitably at least

partial destruction, it is vital experimentation for Deleuze. When this movement closes itself off from the rest, however, and folds upon itself, this becomes a “suicidal enterprise”. The main problem would thus be that the open, connected movement can suddenly change nature and close in upon itself, collapse in exhaustion. A prudent attitude in the aberrant movement would thus be one that avoids exhaustion or breakdown; one that remains open and connected, without breaking down and disconnecting. But it seems that we cannot know if and when the movement will lead to exhaustion: (1) this is something we only notice after the fact, when we suddenly ask ourselves what happened, in exhaustion, or after having done damage; and (2) this must depend on the specific movement itself, which is different each time.

First of all, the idea must be ruled out that it would be the schizophrenic who would be able to articulate the aberrant movement. Even though, as Deleuze and Guattari describe at the beginning of *Anti-Oedipus*, he lives on the level of the intensive, productive depths of the desiring machines, with their constant, free and open connections, as Lapoujade remarks (Lapoujade 2017: 142), for him any kind of articulation is an enemy. Indeed, since the schizophrenic, does not accept *any* established social or other codification, any type of articulation for him threatens with separation, distinction, dispossession and fragmentation of the flows of desire. This is why the schizophrenic, as exemplified by Artaud and his Theatre of Cruelty, opposes to articulation a language without syntax which is only noise, sound, and which thus constitutes a body without organs, this is, something undifferentiated, fluid, amorphous, and thus unproductive. Deleuze does not think this is thought, but rather its paradoxical negative and limit: he remarks that thought without image is not an image of thought, but rather the genetic principle of thought, which is at the same time that which cannot be thought (Deleuze 1994: 146 ff.). Consequently, the schizophrenic process cannot correspond to the process of the spiritual automaton and its articulation, even if it may be its ground, or its genetic condition.

It seems that it is always on the side of pervert logics that the power of the intensive depths become articulated. Indeed, Boundas suggests that Deleuzian prudence would be about finding a balance between the two poles of subversion and of perversity (Boundas 2012: 76 ff.), which are both connected to the norm or the law. Indeed, subversion is a process through which a certain power relation is turned upside down, reversed, and thus an authority or signification undermined, which requires an anarchistic attitude toward the established, just as in the affirmation of the in the spiritual automaton according to Boundas; and perversity is a deliberate desire to behave in an unreasonable or unacceptable way, against established standards or practices. According to Boundas, prudence in creation would involve a combination of these two attitudes. Boundas mentions different kinds of pervert attitudes that have caught the attention of Deleuze: de Sade, Sacher-Masoch, Tournier’s Friday and Bartleby; and remarks it is difficult to put one’s finger on a Deleuzian notion of perversity, as these are all different pervert

attitudes, and as they are hard to disentangle from the concrete situations they are embedded in (Boundas 2012: 77).

In a similar and complementary way to Boundas, Lapoujade also mentions perversion, and affirms that the pervert is the privileged character for the articulation of the aberrant movement. Indeed, as Deleuze notes in *The Logic of Sense*, perversion is the result of “an adventure which surely has passed through neurosis and brushed up against psychosis” (Deleuze 1990: 321), which thus allows to escape both the neurotic’s adherence to the norm or the law and the schizophrenic’s indifferenced depths and terror of articulation (Lapoujade 2017: 143 ff.). Further, as Lapoujade indicates, perversion seems to correspond to the desexualizing process of the productive death drive described in *Difference and Repetition*, where there is a conversion from desire in the unconscious of instincts to an unconscious of thought, this is, a sexualization of thought (Lapoujade 2017: 144). Indeed, in *Coldness and Cruelty* Deleuze describes perversion as a process of desexualisation (Deleuze 2006: 116-118), which leads to a certain coolness visible in both the attitude of the sadist and that of the masochist. This desexualisation allows for the liberation of energy, which is not attached to libidinal drives any longer, and thus becomes idealized or de-sensualized, but which also becomes mobile and transferable. This desexualisation is the condition for an instantaneous resexualisation in thought, which Deleuze calls the leap in place (Deleuze 2006: 117).

Since this is a transformation, transmutation of a sexual or sensual drive, which is reinvested in thought, it would make sense to say that it is in the pervert attitude that the aberrant movement has the potential to become expressed and positively creative. Furthermore, since the energy that the pervert desexualizes and then resexualizes in thought is libidinal energy, which comes from the depths of our bodily relations to things, this indeed means on the one hand that thought becomes emancipated from bodies and their mutual affects, in order to draw the a dimension of meaning, this is, of ideas; but on the other hand, as this is the meaning that has been extracted from our relations to bodies, it also corresponds to an ideal articulation of the relations and affections between bodies, this is, to the rhythms and articulations of the real, as would be required for a valid articulation of the aberrant movement according to Boundas.

I would like to argue that, in order to elaborate a Deleuzian notion of prudence, it is not enough to simply refer to perversion. If, as Boundas remarks, perversion is difficult to characterize, it is because this notion is too general: there are different types of pervert arrangements, and they each have their specific characteristics. In *Coldness and Cruelty* Deleuze describes the two pervert attitudes of sadism and of masochism, and argues that it is thus not justified to consider them part of one syndrome, which can appear together in one individual, or which are just the inverse of one another, and thus always go together. Even if they are both perversions, and if they thus have in common that they are subversive with regard to the norm, sadism and masochism are different in

nature, they belong to completely different worlds. I would like to argue that the pervert attitude that presents a notion of prudence would be the masochist one, and that, thus, a Deleuzian notion of prudence could be elaborated on the basis of his conception of masochism.

Deleuze shows that what is essential to the sadist attitude is that it performs a reversal of the law or of the norm, by a performative demonstration of violence that does not require any justification (Deleuze 2006: 18 ff.). He indicates the affinity between de Sade and Spinoza, in de Sade's mechanistic, naturalistic and demonstrative approach, in which different, partial acts of violence follow upon each other in an endless, mechanistic process (Deleuze 2006: 20 ff.). Indeed, there is a striking similarity between the Sadist demonstrative machine, which reverses the authority of the law in a free, mechanistic process and the spiritual automaton. We have seen that according to Boudas the spiritual automaton could be a criterion for the validation of the aberrant movement. This process, however, when it concerns not just ideas, and the creation of new ideas in a productive causal chain, but when it implies bodies, individuals, and physical relationships, seems to be inherently destructive and reductive. Indeed, it seems that this kind of articulation may be adequate in relation to purely ideal connections, but not when it comes to the articulation of, for example in sensual, economical, or artistic creation or production that involves both ideas and physical, living entities. It may be productive to destroy ideas in favour of other ideas, but what if an articulation concerns life and other bodies, is it then justified to destroy and negate in favour of one's own sadist, demonstrative disposition? The subversive sadistic demonstrative machine, which is inherently destructive, mechanistic and accelerationist, seems to exclude prudence, and it seems to contain the expression only of one will and reason that ultimately negates and thus disconnects from all.

The masochistic attitude, on the contrary, seems inherently prudent. Instead of a mere negation of the established order, the masochist disavows it (Deleuze 2006: 31 ff.). This means that he contests the validity of what is, without negating or destroying it, thereby opening up to new horizons beyond that which is given. The fetish is an exemplary phenomenon through which the masochist performs this disavowal: it is an ideal image that contests what is given without negating it, which allows the pervert to explore new horizons in a relatively grounded and safe or tranquil way, as it guards him against terror and exhaustion. Indeed, the fetish is

a frozen, arrested, two-dimensional image, a photograph to which one returns repeatedly to *exorcise the dangerous consequences of movement, the harmful discoveries that result from exploration*; it represents *the last point at which it was still possible to believe* (...) fetishism is first of all a disavowal (...) secondly it is a *defensive neutralization* (since, contrary to what happens with negation, the knowledge of the situation as it is persists, but in a suspended, neutralized form); in the third place it is a *protective and idealizing neutralization* (...) it remains

suspended or neutralized in the ideal, the better *to shield itself against the painful awareness of reality*. (Deleuze 2006: 31-32; my italics)

As such, the fetish allows the masochist to explore and to be creative and subversive, without being lost or succumbing to the dangers of complete indetermination.

Indeed, as Deleuze describes, masochism thus essentially consists in a suspension or freezing, this is, an interruption with regard to the desire to satisfy the sensual drive, which allows for the opening up to, and investment of, a supra-sensual world, as well as for an artful and imaginative exploration of fantasy and sentiment in the masochistic ritual and romantic fiction (Deleuze 2006: 33 ff.). As Deleuze remarks, the masochist is essentially creative, artful and dramatic: in his ritual and fantasies he invests meaning from history, art and culture; he makes connections in an open movement. Further, as Deleuze explains, the suspension that the masochist performs is a suspension between two poles of a pendulum, namely the pole of the tendency to pleasure and to destructive negation (which takes complete power in sadism) (Deleuze 2006: 57 ff.). This means that the destructive negation of the law also has a place in masochism, but neutralized and apprehended in a kind of hallucinatory mode, through its expression through the phantasm. The phantasm seems exactly what makes this process productive and creative: it resonates between the two series of the established reality and the destructive negation, making them resonate and thereby leading to the masochist articulations. It should be noted that this structure corresponds to the productive principle Deleuze describes in *Difference and Repetition* as a productive principle (Deleuze 1994: 117 ff.).

One can object that it is still doubtful that the masochist be a prudent actor, as it seems that suffering is always an inherent aspect of the masochist reality, and as it may be questioned that this is desirable. If there can be suffering in the masochist experience, however, this is according to Deleuze only a secondary effect, and not the essence of this syndrome. If the masochist feels culpability, and wants to be made feel guilty, this is because he is aware that he disavows the law, and it is also a condition of pleasure for him. The masochist is thus more essentially he who performs a productive, but prudent experimentation with affects, sentiments, bodies, meanings and others, which is inherently subversive with regard to the law or the norms, but which calmly and coolly explores through artful, creative articulation of phantasms.

## Conclusion

The centrality of aberrant movements and vital experimentation in Deleuze's philosophy poses the question of the dangers, as well as of the immanent validation, of these movements, which have the potential to be highly creative and productive, but which also always inherently contain something destructive. Therefore it seems

pertinent to elaborate a Deleuzian notion of prudence, which is lacking, or which is at least not expressly present, neither in Deleuze's works, nor in the secondary literature. On the back of the work and suggestions of David Lapoujade and of Constantin Boundas, a notion of prudence can be elaborated that corresponds to a perverse attitude. The masochist's attitude seems to be a privileged one in this context: the masochist arrangement defies the norm in a process that desexualizes and thus frees libidinal energy, which is then resexualized in an artful explorative enterprise that includes elements from culture, history and society, and which articulates elements from the actual reality in a creative and dramatic way. In contradistinction to sadism, which performs a destructive and demonstrative acceleration, masochism suspends, freezes action, which guards it against all too harsh, destructive developments.

In this articulation of masochism we can see a continuity with Deleuze's articulation of the transcendental productive principle that includes with two series and the resonance of the phantasm in *Difference and Repetition*, with the event and counter-effectuation in *The Logic of Sense*. We can even see in the masochist rituals a prefiguration of the notions of *ritornello*, of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, that shows up again in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, which would thus already be present in Deleuze's text on masochism, indicating the main positive, easing, invention of the masochist, which makes it liveable for him to live outside the norm and subverting it. Thus, I believe that looking into the attitude of the masochist, with his alternative, creative, comforting strategies, and rhythms of ritual repetition, may be a viable line of investigation into what vital experimentation and prudence would involve in a Deleuzian philosophy of the aberrant movement.

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