

Virtual, fiction and reality in Deleuze's transcendental empiricism

Paulo M. Barroso

Communication and Language Studies Centre (FCSH-UNL)

Abstract: What the reality of the virtual is? What distinguishes the reality of the virtual from the virtual reality? The experience can be real and yet not actual? The virtual has to be put in opposition to something that is only possible? The virtual representation of reality works as a fiction? Presupposing that all representations are virtual (because they follow the semantic transitivity *aliquid pro aliquo*) the virtual represents “another reality”. Such “another reality” consists in a form of language / representation of something through something (a sign or an image), giving rise to the exploitation of the potential of language to be efficient and effective in order to represent with conviction and rhetoric. This paper aims to conceptualize and problematize the virtual as a passage from the actual or real to the virtual, i.e. the virtualization of reality through the production and use of signs / images featuring an iconolatriy standard of contemporary visual culture. The paper explores and questions Deleuze's perspective pointed out in *Différence et Répétition* about the virtual extracted from the real and embedded in this real. In Deleuze's “civilization of the image”, the actual is not opposed to the virtual nor the virtual is opposed to the real, because the virtual enjoys a full reality as virtual. Deleuze's transcendental empiricism is critical to the conditions of possibility of experience proposed by Kant. Deleuze's perspective goes further and even admits that the virtual must be defined as a strictly part of the real object. The virtual is fully determined and necessary; a virtual field represents the necessary conditions to update the actual experience. But, is it the same with the fiction? The fiction and the virtual are equal in this potential process of representation?

Keywords: Deleuze, experience, fiction, reality, virtual.