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CRITIQUE OF ZERONESS: UNDERSTANDING DELEUZE'S (MIS)UNDERSTANDING OF PEIRCE

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Abstract: This article aims to explore the relation between Deleuze and Peirce, from what seems to be the main point of confrontation between them: Deleuze's statement that there would be a zeroness before Peirce's firstness. Specifically, the aim is to criticize this statement in two ways: an exogenous one, based on the critique of Deleuze's understanding of Peirce's work; another endogenous, based on Deleuze's own concepts and comments. The hypothesis is that there is no a deep conceptual divergence. The key to understand this statement lies in how Deleuze's limited knowledge on Peirce's theory led him to frame firstness into his own philosophical work and to disregard a Peircian concept that would be more adequate than zeroness.

Keywords: Peirce. Deleuze. Zeroness. Perception-image. Movement-image. Continuity. Synchism. Virtuality. Possibility.

CRÍTICA DA ZERIDADE: COMPREENDENDO O (NÃO)ENTENDIMENTO DE DELEUZE ACERCA DE PEIRCE

Resumo: Este artigo tem como objetivo explorar a relação entre Deleuze e Peirce, a partir do que parece ser o principal ponto de confronto entre eles: a afirmação de Deleuze de que haveria uma zeridade antes da primeiridade de Peirce. Especificamente, o objetivo é criticar essa afirmação de duas maneiras: uma exógena, baseada na crítica da compreensão de Deleuze da obra de Peirce; outro endógeno, baseado nos próprios conceitos e comentários de Deleuze. A hipótese é que não há uma divergência conceitual profunda. A chave para entender essa afirmação está em como o conhecimento limitado de Deleuze sobre a teoria de Peirce levou-o a enquadrar o primeiro em seu próprio trabalho filosófico e a desconsiderar um conceito peirciano que seria mais adequado do que a zeridade.

Palavras-chave: Peirce. Deleuze Zeridade. Imagem de percepção. Imagem de movimento. Continuidade. Sinequismo. Virtualidade. Possibilidade.

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Introduction

Cinema 1: The Movement-Image contains the most part of what Deleuze wrote about Peirce. But it is in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* that he makes his controversial claim that "there will be a 'zeroness' before Peirce's firstness". Of course, the attempt to insert a new category into Peirce's phenomenology may strike one as incoherent. So why think about it? The complexity of Peirce's work, combined with Deleuze's philosophical history and the fact that Deleuze was, in his own way, a Peirce disseminator in a linguistic-dominated France, seem to impose the duty of at least giving him the benefit of doubt. Unfortunately, however, Deleuze's statement only assures him of the summary heading for the door of many of Peirce's researchers. As soon as Deleuze approaches Peirce's work, they turn away from a dialogue with him. Fruitful approaches are lost between thinkers who have in common at least the strong influence of great philosophers such as Leibniz.

The rare specific discussions of Deleuze's proposal do not try to understand how Deleuze arrives at this statement. They avoid confronting the statement itself and the real problem: is there a philosophical divergence from Peirce's phenomenology? The hypothesis, controversial as it may appear, is that there is no such divergence and that the key to understanding his statement may rather lie in Deleuze's limited knowledge on Peirce's theory.

Another way to understand Deleuze's remark could be that Deleuze usually comments on the work of other philosopher in a very peculiar way. Regardless of the criticism that it generates, it is part of Deleuze's way of thinking and requires another way of reading, if one really wants to read Deleuze. In Deleuze's words:

I saw myself as taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous. It was really important for it to be his own child, because the author had to actually say all I had him saying. But the child was bound to be monstrous too, because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions that I really enjoyed. (DELEUZE, 1995, p. 5-6)

Such a process of 'taking from behind' is going on when Deleuze associates Peirce's phenomenological categories with the three main types of image-movement, for example. How this happens will be showed later. However, in the case of zeroness, we really seem to be dealing with a misunderstanding. Peirce actually did *not* "say all Deleuze had him saying". However this mistake should not, in any way, diminish the importance of Deleuze's philosophical work. After all, Deleuze is very much more than zeroness.

But why would Deleuze, a respected commentator on great philosophers such as Hume, Nietzsche and Spinoza, make such a statement about Peirce? Deleuze's work on Peirce is based on a single publication of Peirce's texts in French (*Ecrits sur le Signe*, Ed. Du Seuil), and on the observations of a single commentator (G rard Deledalle). Because of the vastness and the complexity of Peirce's work, it is not difficult to imagine the risk of such an attitude. But it will not – or should not – be taken as an assumption of ignorance. This is not my focus. I will rather analyze some Peircian concepts in light of Deleuze's concept of movement-image and what he calls

zerness. Finally, I will point out two ways to show that talking about a zerness is unnecessary in Deleuze's own work. First of all, there is a Peircian concept that can or does correspond to what Deleuze calls zerness (exogenous critique). Secondly, within Deleuze's own work there are arguments that point to another solution that also makes it unnecessary (endogenous critique).

But the initial question is: is there something that could come "before firstness" in Peirce's theory?

Two Peircian concepts that first come to mind

The first concept that comes to mind when someone is looking for something that could come "before firstness" in Peirce's theory is the concept of nothingness.

Of the three Universes of Experience familiar to us all, the first comprises all mere Ideas, those airy nothings to which the mind of poet, pure mathematician, or another *might* give local habitation and a name within that mind. Their very airy-nothingness, the fact that their Being consists in mere capability of getting thought, not in anybody's Actually thinking them, saves their Reality. (EP 2, 435)

Peirce goes further and says: "Consequently, whether in time or not, the three universes must actually be absolutely necessary results of a state of utter nothingness" (CP 6.490). Of course, 'nothingness' is not another phenomenological category, but the Universe of Experience corresponding to firstness and from where the other Universes come. Nothingness is linked to a correlative concept that perhaps can replace zerness, something like a "state of mind": the Musement. It is a "*petite bouchee* with the Universes". It is the "being occupied" that can take the form of "considering some wonder in one of the Universes or some connection between two of the three, with speculation concerning its cause" (EP 2, 436). Musement expresses not one of the Universes, but a kind of meditation which allows reaching the Real relation among the three Universes, that is, the Reality of God. For Peirce, God is an "*Ens necessarium*", the "Really creator of all three Universes of Experience" (EP 2, 434).

I will not follow up in the present paper the links between nothingness and Musement. These concepts deserve at least an exclusive paper¹. But it is enough to understand that both concepts cannot correspond to what Deleuze calls zerness. Nothingness, on Peircian grounds, is just a "mere capability of getting thought"; but zerness is already a *de facto* image, a selection from material world. Musement can designate a "state of mind" able to access the Real relation among the Universes of Experience; but it is not a concept created specifically to designate the idea of a "matter" that actually perceives itself.

I will return to zerness later. But first, it is necessary to understand Deleuze's view of Peirce's work.

¹ Great comments on nothingness and Musement are in "*Presentation: The Enchantment of the Muse*" by Cassiano Terra Rodrigues. (In Portuguese), <http://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/cognitiofilosofia/article/view/13242/9756>

Some Peircian concepts in Deleuze's view

I want to present here some basic differences between the two authors that help to understand what Deleuze wrote on Peirce. I will start with how Deleuze uses Peirce's terms in a different sense. When Peirce renamed his pragmatism as pragmaticism, a name "ugly enough to be safe from raptors" (CP 5.414), he would not agree to the use that Deleuze makes of his terms. In spite of Peirce's remark, Deleuze nevertheless asserts that he "constantly use the terms that Peirce created to designate particular signs, sometimes retaining their sense, sometimes modifying it or even changing it completely" (DELEUZE, 1986, p. 69). The first basic difference is a proposed equivalence between image and phenomenon.

Deleuze defines image as "the set of what appears" (*ibid.*, p. 58) and says that "Peirce begins with the image, from the phenomenon or from what appears. The image seems to him to be of three kinds, no more" (*idem*, 1989, p. 30). The equivalence between the terms "image" and "phenomenon" does not exist in Peirce. For him, phenomenon or *phaneron* is "all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind" (CP 1.284). Image, for Peirce, is a semiotic concept; it is one of the three types of hypoicons: image, diagram, and metaphor (EP 2, 274).

About the number of categories, Deleuze says that "if the third marks the culmination, it is because it cannot be made up with dyads, but also because combinations of triads on their own or with the other modes can produce any multiplicity" (DELEUZE, 1989, p. 30). If Deleuze understands why there is no need for more than three categories, why then does he propose the zeroness? For now, it appears that it has something to do with the kind of multiplicity.

Deleuze writes that a symbol, for Peirce, "is a sign which refers to its object by virtue of a law, sometimes associative and habitual, sometimes conventional" (*idem*, 1986, p. 241). He understands that, for Peirce, unlike Nietzsche, the term 'law' is not necessarily related to the moral realm. However, Deleuze did not understand the place of linguistic symbols in Peirce's semiotics, what may be the source of his misunderstanding that took him to the notion of zeroness:

Peirce can sometimes find himself as much a linguist as the semiologists. For, if the sign elements [categories] still imply no privilege for language, this is no longer the case with the sign, and linguistic signs are perhaps the only ones to constitute a pure knowledge, that is, to absorb and reabsorb the whole content of the image as consciousness or appearance. They do not let any material that cannot be reduced to an utterance survive, and hence reintroduce a subordination of semiotics to a language system. Peirce would thus not have maintained his original position for very long; he would have given up trying to make semiotics a 'descriptive science of reality' (logic). (*idem*, 1989, p. 31)

Peirce is a philosophical realist. Deleuze's confused criticism seems to be based on not understanding that the symbol as a "genuine sign", whose characteristic is to be general, that is, involving law and habit. Peirce only takes

linguistic signs as a typical example of symbol because of its generality. But this does not imply that verbal signs supplant the other sign types, whether symbolic or not. When Peirce says that "language and all abstracted thinking, such as belongs to minds who think in words, is of the symbolic nature" (EP 2, 307), one could think that symbols belong only to human thought. But he also says that a

[...] symbol is an embryonic reality endowed with power of growth into the very truth, the very entelechy of reality. This appears mystical and mysterious simply because we insist on remaining blind to what is plain, that there can be no reality which has not the life of a symbol. (EP 2, 308)

Therefore, to understand Peirce's concept of reality and how it can "appear to mind" one must understand his metaphysics. And to understand his metaphysics one has to understand his semiotics, including the concept of symbol. First of all, any kind of sign that produces a general and abstract thought, not just the verbal one, "is of symbolic nature". Second, generality is in the world, not (just) in the human mind. So Peirce's semiotics is about reality, including the material aspect of it.

The Movement-Image

Movement-Image is a concept created by Deleuze from Bergson's proposal to overcome the confrontation between materialism and idealism: "all consciousness *is* something". For Deleuze, "the material universe, the plane of immanence, is the *machine assemblage of movement-images*" (DELEUZE, 1986, p. 59, *author's emphasis*). The "movement-image is matter [*matière*] itself, as Bergson showed. It is a matter that is not linguistically formed, although it is semiotically, and constitutes the first dimension of semiotics" (*idem*, 1989, p. 33).

So, the "*movement-image and flowing-matter are strictly the same thing*" (*idem*, 1986, p. 59, *author's emphasis*). For Deleuze, Bergson does not see a duality between image and movement, between consciousness and thing, since he proposes that "all consciousness *is* something"; images would not be in thought and movement in things (see DELEUZE, 1986, p.56, *author's emphasis*). But the question remains: "how could images be in my consciousness since I am myself image, that is, movement?" (*ibid.*, p. 58).

It was already shown that, for Deleuze, image is the same as phenomenon. But under the sensory-motor aspect, it is also the same as perception: "perception is strictly identical to every image, in so far as every image acts and reacts on all the others, on all their sides and in all their parts" (*idem*, 1989, p. 31). That is nothing more than the definition of movement-image, the flowing-matter. But "perception strictly speaking" is the conscious perception (natural or cinematographic), which is deduced from a flowing-matter, a state of things that does not stop changing, without any reference center. Then centers are formed at any point, creating fixed instantaneous views (conscious perception) (see DELEUZE, 1986, p. 57-58). Flowing-matter, understood as movement-image, "is a consciousness by right [*en droit*], which is diffused everywhere and yet does not reveal its source [*ne se révèle pas*]" (*ibid.*, p. 61). And special images constitute a *de facto* consciousness in this or that place of the plane of immanence. This *de facto* consciousness is the perception-

image. It frames reality and demands a time interval to integrate selected elements in a new way, before reacting on other images. This is a special type of image: living image or living matter, for Bergson (see DELEUZE, 1986, p. 61-62). There is, therefore, a dual system of images reference:

There is firstly a system in which each image varies for itself, and all the images act and react as a function of each other, on all their facets and in all their parts. But to this is added another system where all vary principally for a single one, which receives the action of the other images on one of its facets and reacts to them on another facet. [...] The thing and the perception of the thing are one and the same thing, one and the same image, but related to one or other of two systems of reference. [...] In short, things and perceptions of things are *prehensions*, but things are total objective prehensions, and perceptions of things are incomplete and prejudiced, partial, subjective prehensions. [...] this uncentred subjective perception that is called perception strictly speaking. And it is the first avatar of the movement-image: when it is related to a centre of indetermination, it becomes *perception-image*. (*ibid.*, p. 62-64, *author's emphasis*)

Now it is possible to say that conscious perception (perception-image), for Deleuze, is a subjective prehension, that is, a selection from the movement-image. Someone might see here a correspondence with Peirce's immediate object because it is a kind of selection, an immediate interpretation of the dynamic object made by the perceptual judgment; or because of the relation between the theory of perception and that of the object in Peirce. However, it does not express the main idea: matter perceiving itself is the condition of phenomena and of the overcoming of duality between matter and thought. So, the immediate object – as well nothingness and Musement, that were mentioned before – is not Peirce's more adequate concept to replace zeroness.

In short, movement-image is the concept created to designate flowing-matter under the aspect of sensory-motor relation (action-reaction), showing that there is a perception in the things themselves and that there is, therefore, no way to maintain the dualism between images of consciousness and movements of matter. Consciousness itself is something: image and motion are identical. There are two ways of approaching the relations between images: all related to all (perception as a non-centered objective prehension) or all related to one of them (perception as a centered subjective prehension). By the second, one can see that there must be in the movement-image itself a special image that is capable of framing it, that is, of selecting some images and discarding others, of producing an interval in the movement-image between the perception in one of its facets and action in another. This particular kind of image is the perception-image or zeroness, according to Deleuze. Besides perception-image, there are three types of movement-image, when related to the center of indetermination, that are important here: affection-image, action-image and relation-image.

Zerone

Deleuze associates Peirce's phenomenological categories with the types of movement-image: "in his phenomenology, he [Peirce] claims the three types of image as a fact, instead of deducing them. [...] firstness, secondness and thirdness corresponded to the affection-image, the action-image and the relation-image" (DELEUZE, 1989, p. 31). According to Peirce, "the three fundamental categories of fact are, fact about an object, fact about two objects (relation), fact about several objects (synthetic fact)" (CP 1.371). So Deleuze says that Peirce presents the images as facts and not as deductions. But for Deleuze, "all three [categories] are deduced from the movement-image as material, as soon as it is related to the interval of movement. Now this deduction is possible only if we first assume a perception-image" (DELEUZE, 1989, p. 31). What he means is: the condition of phenomena is a *de facto* perception in matter (matter perceiving itself). Perception-image is a special image that emerges from movement-image itself and establishes a criterion of selection that cuts it down and produces the time interval:

[...] the perception-image received movement on one side, but the affection-image is what occupies the interval (firstness), the action-image what executes the movement on the other side (secondness), and the relation-image what reconstitutes the whole of the movement with all the aspects of the interval (thirdness functioning as closure of the deduction). (*ibid.*, p.32)

Affection-image (or firstness) is what is in the interval itself, action-image is the "reagent" facet of it, and relation-image is what connects all aspects of the interval. Perception-image is the perceptual facet of the interval, before it and the other images. That is why, for Deleuze, "perception-image will therefore be like a degree zero in the deduction which is carried out as a function of the movement-image: there will be a 'zeroness' before Peirce's firstness" (*ibid.*, 31-32).

And that is the source of discord.

The problem lies in the fact that Deleuze "inserts" one more category into Peirce's crystalline philosophical structure. One possible key to understanding what happens here may lie in how Deleuze fits firstness into his own philosophical theory. For Deleuze, "Firstness is thus the category of the Possible: [...] it expresses the possible without actualizing it [...] Now, this is exactly what the affection-image is: it is quality or power, it is potentiality considered for itself as expressed. The corresponding sign is therefore expression, not actualization." (*idem*, 1986, p.98). He further summarizes: "In short, affects, quality-powers, can be grasped in two ways: either as actualized in a state of things, or as expressed by a face, a face equivalent or a 'proposition'. This is Peirce's secondness and firstness." (*ibid.*, p. 99).

When Deleuze talks about a face or face equivalent, he is specifically talking about cinema scenes. But this is what is really important: when he understands that triadic relations can construct any multiplicity, he understands such multiplicities as actual or possible, not as virtual multiplicities. What Deleuze claims is that there is a heterogeneous image corresponding to a pure virtuality, not expressed and not actualized, but the condition of expressed quality and of action.

My argument finds support in a citation in which Deleuze associates perception-image in cinema with free indirect discourse, as a form that affirms an always heterogeneous subjective system (see DELEUZE, 1986, p. 73). Then he relates this heterogeneity of language to the relation between empirical and transcendental in constituting subjectivity: “Can we not find this dividing-in-two, or this differentiation of the subject in language, in thought and in art? It is the *Cogito*: an empirical subject cannot be born into the world without simultaneously being reflected in a transcendental subject which thinks it and in which it thinks itself” (*ibid.*, p. 73). What Deleuze wants with the concept of perception-image seems to be, therefore, a heterogeneous type of image which merges perception *by right* and *de facto* perception, something like a self-perception of the matter. This is something like Bergson seems to indicate as “a pure perception, I mean a perception which exists in theory rather than in fact [...] absorbed in the present and capable, by giving up every form of memory, of obtaining a vision of matter both immediate and instantaneous” (BERGSON, 1929, p.26).

So, perception-image can be the condition of expression and actualization. It is the sieve that selects something from the movement-image; it is the way the movement-image perceives itself. It produces the own time interval, so the other images can be expressed or actualized, deduced from an image *by right*, which is the movement-image (non-centered system). Perception-image is the *de facto* perception, which points to the perception *by right*, a virtuality, not qualified or actual. “The eye's already there in things, it's part of the image, the image's visibility. Bergson shows how an image itself is luminous or visible, and needs only a ‘dark screen’ to stop it tumbling around with other images [...] The eye isn't the camera, it's the screen” (DELEUZE, 1995, p. 54). Metaphorically, perception-image is the eye of things.

Unfortunately, Deleuze named *zeroness* the perception-image, by understanding it as the degree zero in the deduction, the sieve that is anterior to the interval itself and firstness that, according to him, occupies it. In Deleuzian philosophy there are virtuality, possibility and actuality. Deleuze sees Peirce's firstness as a possibility, not as virtuality. But could not Peirce's firstness be what Deleuze calls virtuality and possibility at the same time? Would be there something in Peirce's philosophy that would correspond more adequately to virtuality in its relation to phenomena?

Endogenous critique: Eternal objects

For Whitehead, whom Deleuze refers to, the primary elements of sensation are: the actual entities, which are the object of the physical sensations; the eternal objects, which are the object of conceptual sensations (see WHITEHEAD, 1978, p. 232). “Any entity whose conceptual recognition does not involve a necessary reference to any definite actual entities of the temporal world is called an ‘eternal object’” (*ibid.*, p. 44). Eternal objects are “Pure Potentials for the Specific Determination of Fact, or Forms of Definiteness” (*ibid.*, p. 22). They are, as Deleuze very well synthesized, “schema of permanence” that can be captured by sensation as Qualities (sound, color), Figures (pyramid) or Things (gold). In a reality composed of flows, “a permanence has to be born in flux, and must be grasped in prehension”. So, we can say that something *is* the same river, for example. Eternal objects are what

we perceive as permanent in the flux that is the universe (see DELEUZE, 1993, p. 79-80). Specifically, about qualities (*sensa*) as eternal objects, Whitehead says:

In the first place, those eternal objects which will be classified under the name 'sensa' constitute the lowest category of eternal objects. Such eternal objects do not express a manner of relatedness between other eternal objects. They are not contrasts, or patterns. *Sensa* are necessary as components in any actual entity, relevant in the realization of the higher grades (WHITEHEAD, 1978, p.114).

But, what is most important here, for Deleuze: "While prehensions are always current forms (a prehension is a potential only in respect to another current prehension), eternal objects are pure Possibilities that are realized in fluvia, but also pure Virtualities that are actualized in prehensions" (DELEUZE, 1993, p.79). The definition of one type of eternal object (*sensa*) comes close to Peirce's definition of firstness: it is a quality of sensation, it is monadic, and it is necessarily present in highest types of eternal object. The eternal object (any kind of it) is not actualized, that is, it has no concrete existence. Therefore, quality must be potential quality, color before its coloring of things; not red things, but redness, able to make things red. If Whitehead's eternal object is pure virtuality that is actualized in prehensions, at the same time as it is possibility that is realized in flows, why cannot Peirce's firstness also be possibility and virtuality at the same time?

In general, Peirce associates the concept of virtual with thirdness. However, there is a part in his work in which he associates virtual with firstness: "How is variety to come out of the womb of homogeneity; only by a principle of spontaneity, which is just that virtual variety that is the First" (EP 1, 257). Would not this "virtual variety" correspond to virtuality in Deleuze's work? Is it necessary to add zeroness, in order to correspond to virtuality?

Exogenous critique: continuity

Peirce differentiates the term virtual from the term potential. The last would not have actual efficiency. For Deleuze, virtual (synonymous with potency) and actual cannot be separated. But Peirce takes the term potential to be close to the term possible. Then, like Deleuze, he seems to differentiate virtuality from possibility. Peirce says on Scotus: "*Metaphysical possibility* ought to mean a possibility of existence, nearly a potentiality; but the phrase does not seem to be used in that sense, but rather in the sense of possibility by supernatural power" (CP 6.371, *author's emphasis*). He also says:

A virtual *X* (where *X* is a common noun) is something, not an *X*, which has the efficiency (*virtus*) of an *X*. This is the proper meaning of the word; but it has been seriously confounded with 'potential' which is almost its contrary. For the potential *X* is of the nature of *X*, but is without actual efficiency. (CP 6.372)

From what Deleuze says about eternal objects, it is possible to think that maybe, in Deleuze as well as in Peirce, the difference between virtual and possible is just a logical distinction. Ontologically, would firstness (possible, potential) and secondness (actual, existence) be separated? But, following the logical distinction, Peirce's understanding of virtuality² makes him to associate the virtual with thirdness, as meaning and semeiosis, for example:

[...] no present actual thought (which is a mere feeling) has any meaning, any intellectual value for this lies not in what is actually thought, but in what this thought may be connected with in representation by subsequent thoughts; so that the meaning of a thought is altogether something virtual" (EP 1, 42).

Considering the capacity of a thought to connect itself to other thoughts, we would have to affirm that firstness corresponds to possible, not to virtual, and that virtual corresponds to thirdness. But at this point, we must understand that, for Peirce, thought is not a human privilege. According to Peirce, "we ought to say that we are in thought and not that thoughts are in us" (CP 5.289). There is something in common between the human mind and universe that allows humans to perceive, to know, to think: "I infer in the first place that man divines something of the secret principles of the universe because his mind has developed as a part of the universe and under the influence of these same secret principles" (CP 7.46). And more: "our Reason is akin to the Reason that governs the Universe; we must assume that or despair of finding out anything" (EP 2, 502) and "everything we can in any way take cognizance of is purely mental" (CP 8.145). Finally: "matter is effete mind, inveterate habits becoming physical laws" (CP 6.25). That is, all things tend, in a higher or lower degree, to acquire new habits. For Peirce, there is no separation, but continuity between mind and matter (synechism). That means that the universe itself is mental.

Therefore, it would be coherent to think that there is a perception *by right* in the matter itself and that it, by change of habit, has become a *de facto* perception, by producing minds capable of perceiving the perception of matter itself, precisely by forming with that very matter a continuum, produced by the sharing of tendency to acquire new habits. If Peirce relates the virtual to meaning and semeiosis in his logic, we would like to propose the correspondence of the virtual with continuity in his metaphysics.

Final considerations

What is important is not to minimize the differences between Peirce and Deleuze. Because of such differences there are only resonances between their concepts, never an exact fit. Sometimes there are divergences. But in the case of zeroness there is not really a philosophical divergence. Zeroness or – what is much better – perception-image is just a concept created to designate the emergence of perception (one of the modes of thought) in the own matter, that is, matter perceiving

²A text on Peirce's conception of virtuality, by Joseph L. Esposito, is in *Digital Encyclopedia of Charles S. Peirce*, ed. João Queiros, São Paulo, 2001. (<http://www.digitalpeirce.fee.unicamp.br/p-virtuality.htm>)

itself, perceptive matter, that is, mind. Then, apparently there is a difference, but not an ontological separation between matter (movement) and matter perception (image). Thus, perception-image, as a revelation of the virtual perception in the matter itself, expresses the continuity between matter and thought. It is something mental in the matter itself, that is, perception as a selective prehension.

Thus, we conclude that Peirce's concept of continuity, that expresses the mental character of universe, is much more coherent than Deleuze's zeroness and is to be taken as the "degree zero" of perception, as ultimate condition for phenomena and for the overcoming of duality between matter and thought. Continuity, as "metaphysical thirdness": 1) would affirm a matter that can perceive itself (to think, to change habits); 2) would be equivalent to the virtual as thirdness, as in general it is understood by Peirce; 3) would include the "virtual variety" of the firstness, as chance. Moreover, Deleuze's notion of continuum is consistent with Peirce's thirdness. Deleuze understands the universe itself as an open whole, as a continuum: "the world, the universe, is itself the Open. [...] If one had to define the whole, it would be defined by Relation" (DELEUZE, 1986, p.10). It "is still quite possible to relate the relations to a whole [*tout*] if one conceives the whole as a continuum and not as a given set" (*ibid.*, p. 219). That is why Deleuze associates Peirce's thirdness with the relation-image.

But Deleuze does not take it far enough to understand thirdness as synechism: the continuity between mind and matter. He did not understand Peirce's concept of mind. The perception-image is a "special image" because it corresponds to regions of matter that have reached a degree of development which allows them to select what they perceive of the matter itself. If Deleuze had gone beyond semiotics and had studied Peirce's metaphysics, maybe he would have thought that continuity, guaranteed by the mental character of the universe, like the perception-image, is the condition of images (what appears in mind), and at the same time, the confirming witness to the capacity of matter to perceive itself, since mind perceives without separating from matter, from which it emerged, forming a *continuum*.

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