On the Difference Between Being and Becoming

By Flint McGlaughlin

What is the difference between being and becoming? Is any form of being not a "becoming"? Can one "be" in a static/incomplete or static/complete sense? We are beings within space-time, thus it follows that our being is a becoming. But is the becoming linear? And how is the linear expressed when becoming is outward across all surrounding surface areas? I cannot become in time alone; I must become in space. Does this differentiate me from the Ultimate? Is the Ultimate absolutely static because becoming is not necessary/possible for that which is absolute being? Or can the Ultimate be absolute being while still becoming? Can being be absolute outside of space-time, and yet remain absolute within space-time? An answer in the negative yields a series of troublesome problems (notwithstanding the Aquinas formulation); while an answer in the affirmative yields an even more troublesome contradiction.

This then leads to a separate observation. Is there a place where reason reaches its apex, a summit of contradictions that lead to a new placeless place? We attempt to tame our notion of the Ultimate by the constraints of reason. Finding ourselves unable to reconcile our worship of reason and of the Ultimate, we choose to deify one or the other. If we constrain the Ultimate by the limitations of our reasoning, then we crown reason as our Ultimate. This leads to a binary quandary, a self-contradiction, or at the very least, intellectual truces like the *via negativa*.

What if the Ultimate transcends reason? Transcends, not extends, for we must beware of positioning the Ultimate as infinitely advanced. To do so suggests a linear connection between the insipient and the Ultimate, but the two do not dwell on a plane. This leads to a question of the Ultimate as constrained by reality. "Is God real?" leads to a different question: "Is real God?" To say that God is real is to predicate some form of synonymy. What if the Ultimate transcends that which is even "real"? Could the Ultimate exist across an infinite possibility of possibilities simultaneously actualizing all contradictions which are "actualizable" in transcendent paradox? "Paradox" is a limiter, as is my language. One must move beyond.

Ten is two; two is ten. It is easier to count without the numbers.

It only matters where you place the zero.

The difference is binary – the language of bots.

Fluent digital – calculating but not thinking. 0, 1, 10…

Off and on, eventually I reach 10 as ten (decimal).

It only matters where you place the zero.

Two numbers; two different numbers, but the same quantity.

It is much easier to count without the numbers.

When I was a child, I saw two before I knew 2. The bot counts 10; I see two.

It is much easier, so much easier to count without the numbers.

There is an infinite number of places to put the decimal, but two is still two even when you assign it different digits. Wittgenstein helps me understand in words what Leibniz understood in digits. What if there is a place where ten is two, where both quantities are identical, losing their "bothness", precisely because they have no "otherness", so that I, as a child in this placeless place, would see two and ten, not both, but at once in an identical moment of apprehension. Does this place preclude the Ultimate because reason is violated in its very expression? In this place, or in this infinite set of infinite possibilities, could the Ultimate be both being and becoming?