

Infinity in motion

(a remembrance of my sharing at Luc-en-Dix)

I would like to present three ways in which motion is infinite. The first two already appear in Aristotle's Physics, where they are called infinity by succession and infinity by division.

Let us walk: lift the left leg, fall forward on it, lift the right leg, fall forward on it, lift the left leg, fall forward on it, lift the right leg, fall forward on it, etc. As Zeno of Elea puts it, to say it once is to say it forever. Our consciousness of this is the imagination of our walking going on forever, of a loop that repeats forever.

Zeno devised the following paradoxon for showing that motion is unconceivable. He told: let us try to conceive that we cross this room, that I depart from my present position to get to the position in front of me. To conceive this contains the conception of arriving at the halfway, middle position. But to say it once is to say it forever: it contains the conception of arriving at the "quarterway", "eighthway", "sixteenthway", etc., position. Therefore, conceiving that I cross this room, I shall never depart.

I am stuck here, trying to resolve this puzzle, immobile. But am I really motionless? I feel in my body, concentrated on this impossible task, the germ of a motion: a kind of vibration, the emergence of moving. My body contains the possibility of an infinity of motions that is undescrivable, even though only one motion will actually be realised, will really be actualised. What is the name of this infinity? Life! Love!