

Something about nothing

Column

By Peter
Marval



Bored? Got something better to do? If so, I suggest you go and do it. If you're looking for something interesting to read, then look elsewhere, because you won't find it here. In fact, you'll find nothing here, as nothing is the topic of this column.

Perhaps I stated that incorrectly. I meant, you will be reading about the absence of anything, as opposed to reading nothing. The words on this page, they are something. If you were reading nothing, then you would be holding a blank page.

In fact, by stating that I am writing about nothing, I'm lying, because I am writing about something; I'm writing about nothing.

So just what is nothing? This world and all you see around you is nothing. Even you are nothing. Everything is made up of very sparsely scattered tiny particles in a vast expanse of emptiness.

The floor you walk on is made of electric charges dashing about at great speeds, but occupying, at any moment, less than a billionth of the volume which it seems to fill. Go ahead, take another step. There's nothing to it, like walking on a cloud.

Now, I suppose it's unfair to say you're nothing, even though you

are made up of plankton in the ocean which is your body. You do think, therefore you are.

But imagine, if you will, about the ultimate nothing: non-existence. Now, nobody knows what happens in the afterlife, but let's just say, for argument's sake, that when you die, that's it. Game over. Lights out.

Imagine instead of being made up of great empty distances of space, that you are in fact that space.

Whereas once you could contemplate such thoughts, it would be impossible if you were non-existent, because your consciousness would have ceased to be. The cessation of life meant the cessation of experience and perception.

Non-existence, therefore, is incomprehensible. As long as we exist, we cannot begin to fathom non-existence.

However, at one point, you have known what non-existence was like. Remember before you were born? Of course not.

One day, out of the blue, you were conceived and continued to develop and grow from nothingness into what you are now: a great mass of space and little else, on a world made up of the same formula, hurtling through relentless gulfs of ever-increasing space, in a universe the size of which is as unfathomable as non-existence.

Now, where was I? Oh well, it was probably nothing important.