

The Motorcentaur

Creating Nothingness

by Alan Harris

A THIN HIGHWAY, one endless strand of concrete cobweb, stretches across the desert, dividing nothing into two halves, two equal portions of nothing which when added together amount to less than the line which separates them, as a zero is worth less than the circular visible line which to the eye symbolizes pure nothing, essence of nothing, the zero itself a degradation of the idea it represents because it is there, it is.

At the furthest visible glimmer of roadway in one direction a minuscule dark point appears and exceedingly slowly grows less tiny and gradually assumes the recognizable proportions of a motorcentaur. As he comes closer, his muscles and bright paint reveal him to be a young and powerful motorcentaur. The hum of his motor is now audible above the silent whitenoise of the desert.

He slows down and stops and leaves his motor idling. His eyes scan in every direction and he can see nothing (for we ourselves are present but are watching him in spirit and not in body). He has stopped midway between two vast nothings on a presumptuously visible concrete line, presumptuous because no true line is visible, having no width.

The only two evidences of the passage of time are the allegro staccato pops of his idling motor and the adagio of descending sun, the two beating an arid counter-rhythm and together contrasting against the beatlessness of the surrounding nothing.

The motorcentaur is the giver of all and receiver of all. His motor emits pops that only he can hear, that only he would want to hear, and that only he ignores--ignores as he does the beating of his heart, the breathing of his lungs, the blinking of his eyes against parched air.

He is scanning, horizontally scanning, focusing on each trillionth and less of a degree of which three-hundred-sixty arbitrarily comprise his possibilities of horizon. Now he scans a vertical circle from bluewhite zenith around to yellowwhite nadir, and on around to zenith, stopping a trillion and more times within each three-hundred-sixtieth of verticality.

As if bent on seeing and affirming all possible points, he methodically fills in all of the circles between horizontal and vertical, thus creating his world, his living and present nothing. His glance summons forth each minute section of absent nothing and transforms it into a positive nothing, a nothing which is.

He, by looking at every possible point around and over and under him, creates the lack of everything except himself, and he obliterates even himself by identifying with his new creation. He and nothing merge. Like Pygmalion and his statue, the motorcentaur and his creation are now joined for not just eternity but eternality.

He revs his motor to an intense aching whine and pops his clutch and strains against the intruding concrete as if to erase impudent it with his rubber tire. He turns and speeds off the road to his right onto the flat hard-packed sand. He races and swerves, veers in all directions, banking hard to avoid not banking hard, turning quickly and missing by bare inches points he would have crossed if he had not turned exactly that quickly. His motor growls and his gears scream but still mesh perfectly as he shifts quickly through them, picking up speed which is measured against nothing, carries him over nothing, heads toward nothing and away from only that line of road which arbitrarily divides nothing into two equal halves.

Tense with determination, he steers himself around imaginary obstacles and reaches imaginary goals in the very nick of imaginary time. Sand squirts from beneath his wheels and falls back down, forever dislocated from its eons-old position. Suddenly, in one tremendously tightened toothjarringly taut turn, he reverses his direction just in time to miss the profound abyss of not having turned just then. He roars up through his gears again and heads back toward the highway as fast as his motor and wheels can propel him, nothing being now invisible to him because of the wind-stream which pastes his eyes shut and squeezes out of them tears which provide the sand wherever they happen to fall with the only moisture it has received in perhaps three billion years.

He blasts onward toward the road, that sliver of concrete which taints his abstract nothing by its mere presence, and reaches it in record time--not breaking any records because none exist, but setting one inviolable unmatchable record which will stand forever, inviolable because it too does not exist and unmatchable because it, as nothing, cannot be matched by anything. He has, in the midst of pure nothing, burned out a speed record which will stand forever because it does not exist.

Meanwhile, his momentum has carried him across and far to the opposite side of the road. There he bilaterally repeats his previous maneuvers of dodging obstacles and just arriving at certain points at exactly the right moment, and again he snaps himself around with incredible agility and heads back toward the road, this time slowing as he approaches it. He need not try to break his unbreakable record. Stopping on the road, allows his exhausted motor to idle for several hundred pops. The sun has apparently descended into the exact portion of the sky which it astronomically should occupy at this exact moment.

He glances about at his vast nothing, not thoroughly, as he had when he created it in that spurt of unbounded solipsistic fecundity, but instead, choosing random points in it and spot-checking for impurities. In his state of exhaustion he can scarcely decide whether he sees nothing because nothing is present or because nothing is absent. Finally, though, he satisfies himself that his nothing is truly present. He revs his motor again and turns down the road in the direction from which he has come.

Slowly now he recedes toward the horizon, seeming to the retina of our spiritual eye to grow tinier as if striving to become a perfect point which has no length or width, and thus no presence to the senses. The waning hum of his motor melts back into the silence of the desert. The exact moment when he disappears is not isolable, but eventually he is gone. The sun is nearing the horizon. The concrete road line dividing nothing into two equal sections is still orangely visible, but corrupt as a line to the extent that it is visible.