

Fantasy and Science Fiction

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A short short piece by the very long on talent Mr. Vance Aandahl, which will maybe make your head spin, but will also help explain why people nowadays are so much alike.

THE UNFORTUNATE MR. MORKY

by Vance Aandahl

WHEN THE UNFORTUNATE MR. Morky met the carny-man, great things were bound to happen. He was the perfect object for a carny-man's intentions: unadulterated custard pie from the vulcanized soles of his shoes to the fuzzy apex of his crewcut. This is the way it occurred:

Mr. Morky was shuffling through the sawdust, beneath the hot neon lights, surrounded by the jolly sounds and sour-sweat smells of a carnival which was not really a carnival, but rather the wavering image of a carnival, when he found himself standing in the shade of a secluded tent.

"Hey, boy! You wantta come see the Museum of Mirrors?"

The unfortunate Mr. Morky entered the tent, shuffling cautiously behind the carny-man, in the manner in which all custard-pie people are cautious.

"Comon now, boy. This is one plenty good deal for two bits, you betcha life."

Twenty-five cents was the price, and the unfortunate Mr. Morky suddenly was standing in the Museum of Mirrors, standing, by chance, on a plane mirror, while the carny-man scuttled off to the control room, his quarter clutched tightly between two rows of yellow teeth.

The unfortunate Mr. Morky was surrounded by mirrors—they coated the ceiling, the walls, and the floor. Plane mirrors, convex mirrors, concave mirrors. All shapes and all colors. They glittered in mad jest at their visitor.

The largest mirror in the room rested directly in front of the unfortunate Mr. Morky. The master mirror it was, and into its flat circularity stared the unfortunate Mr. Morky, gazing at one thou-

sand jumbled images of his good friend, the unfortunate Mr. Morky, who was reflected by millions of mirrors from all sides, all of which reflected their images upon the master mirror, reflected and re-reflected and re-re-reflected into an infinite multiple reflection. It was indeed a mangled maze of Mr. Morkys. But lo! seated in his control room, where he chewed happily on his quarter, the carny-man touched a switch, adjusted a few mirrors the slightest fraction of an inch, and focused the million images into one ten-foot image of the unfortunate Mr. Morky.

"My, my," said Mr. Morky, staring at this marvelous sight. "My, my."

The carny-man touched another switch; the mirrors moved another fraction of an inch; and suddenly the image of the unfortunate Mr. Morky shrank from a gigantic custard pie to a three-inch custard pie. Then the image ran forward in the mirror until it was large again. It winked at Mr. Morky, clicked its heels, and stood on its head.

"My, my," said Mr. Morky. "My, my."

Then the image began to shrink. It shrank once more to three inches. It shrank to one third of an inch. It shrank to a point—a mere point of custard pie. And then—it disappeared into negative infinity.

Like a good custard pie, the unfortunate Mr. Morky disappeared into positive infinity.

It was novel to travel through time. A few buttery inversions, a tickling sensation inside his stomach, and Mr. Morky suddenly had warm bones. Color kept coming and going (or perhaps he kept coming and going). He garked the hip and got past the first moebius cul-de-sac.

Unfortunately, there is at least one force in the universe which can overcome the laws of mathematics: the desire for security. The better half (purest custard) of Mr. Morky thwarted logic and went scrambling fearfully back to the time from which he had come. The weaker half was carried on toward positive infinity.

The unfortunate Mr. Morky who was struggling backwards did not make very rapid progress against the current, so we may forget him for the present. The other unfortunate Mr. Morky reached positive infinity in no time at all, hopped over to negative infinity, and popped back into the enclosure which surrounded the carnival grounds. He shuffled curiously through the sawdust, stopped in the dank shade of a secluded tent, followed a carny-man therein, paid his quarter, found himself facing a flat mirror, watched his image perform, and suddenly, as it disappeared, discovered that he was

hurtling toward positive infinity.

On the way, he met the other Mr. Morky, who was still struggling to get back, and there was a collision. He fused with himself. Unfortunately, it was an abnormal fusion, quite cancerous; all that custard pie started dividing and re-dividing and re-re-dividing

into an infinite multiple division. When the unfortunate Mr. Morkys had filled all the mobius cul-de-sacs, they started overflowing—dropping into this or that time strata.

The unfortunate Mr. Morkys are still coming.

It's a damn conformist world.
