

# MT VOID 09/20/19 -- Vol. 38, No. 12, Whole Number 2085

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Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society  
09/20/19 -- Vol. 38, No. 12, Whole Number 2085

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### **Kasha (Part 2)** (comments by Mark R. Leeper):

Last installment I was discussing how Evelyn was facing the contents of a can of kasha with gravy.

So here Evelyn was. I had told her from hard experience that I refused to eat any of the stuff, so she started fixing it for herself. She pushed it out of the can into a heating dish and it stood there, a mottled brown-and-white cylinder. It looked a lot like the dog food I used to serve my dachshund and smelled only a little bit worse. It not only smelled worse than the dog food, it smelled worse than the dog, and believe me, that's going some.

Probably the reader most likely to remember kasha will know it or will remember or knows it from the early Alfred Hitchcock thriller THE LADY VARNISHKES, so she sort of trowels the stuff flat in the dish and heats this paste up in the microwave. I looked away for a moment to recover my composure. By the time I looked back the kasha was out of the microwave. (Aren't microwave ovens great? I want to get a new one that doesn't smell of kasha). So I am sitting here with a helpful I-told-you-so look on my face and watching as Evelyn takes a bite. Do not go gently into that contrition. Rage, rage against the admission of an error.

Evelyn looks at me with this sweet and sour look on her face and says, "I wonder what I can put on it to make it better?" "How do you feel about eight feet of topsoil?" I think to myself.

A few minutes later I am looking at what she has in front of this dish of kasha. I kid you not, there is a jar of barbecue sauce. "Hey, podner! Ya want ta try some good old-fashioned kasha barbecued TEXAS-STYLE?", a jar of jalapeno sauce ("Si, back home we call it Kasha Mexicali."), a bottle of jalapeno sauce ("Si, back home we call it Kasha Juarez."), a bottle of A-1(TM)\*.

\* A-1 is a trademark of someone.

Steak Sauce ("That's not just ordinary kasha--now it's \*steak kasha\*!"), some sugar, and a jar of instant coffee (well, I'd rather not think about these).

Evelyn's first comment was, "Well, canned kasha is probably not as good as fresh kasha." "Even worse?" I thought; I'd only had the fresh stuff. The mind boggles! And then after a few more bites she says, "Maybe I'll just have a salad."

(Uh, sorry, I'll have to finish this story some other time. Someone's at the door to complain about the bad smell coming from our house.) [-mrl]

### **AUGGIE** (film review by Mark R. Leeper):

**CAPSULE:** As a going-away gift at his retirement party Felix is given a virtual reality generator that creates for him an image of a stunningly beautiful young woman. He finds himself forming an emotional attachment to the computer-created image. The

self-same story could have been told without any science fiction. Directed by: Matt Kane; written by: Matt Kane, Marc Underhill. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4) or 7/10.

What is Auggie? It is the nickname of the technology to create "augmented humans." An Auggie is also a virtual reality person/image created by that technology. It is ideal for companionship for the lonely. We have here what may (or may not) become a story of marital infidelity given a science fiction twist.

Richard Kind plays Felix, who in his 60s had become a sort of a nonentity to his business, his friends, and his wife. He is fascinated by the beautiful computer-image generated image of Auggie (Christen Harper). Felix changes under the influence of Auggie, much to the annoyance of his controlling wife Anne (Susan Blackwell). Felix is far from being unique in his situation, and he is sorely tempted to upgrade his Auggie to equipment so that it can handle virtual sex. This is a story about marital infidelity given what may be a science fiction twist.

Kind plays Felix with the kind of looks that are unlikely to lead to real romance, but with software nearly anything is possible. Will his loneliness overpower his objections?

AUGGIE apparently takes place in a science fiction world that has no difference from our world except for the presence of the Auggie technology. An Auggie is a virtual reality image of a human that appears. It can read the information it needs from the user's subconscious.

AUGGIE was written and directed by newcomer Matt Kane. This is his first time in the director's seat or in writer's seat. That is not surprising since he is only 28. In the end we are left only with a platitude. The theme of it all is "Life is short, don't waste it." I rate AUGGIE a +2 on the -4 to +4

AUGGIE opens in theaters on September 20, 2019

Film credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7596220/reference>

What others are saying: <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/auggie>

[-mrl]

**Classical Music** Classical Music (letters of comment by Paul Dormer, Keith F. Lynch, Gary McGath, and Dorothy J. Heydt):

In response to [various comments on classical music](#) in the 09/13/19 issue of the MT VOID, Paul Dormer writes:

Now that's interesting. I've never heard of "On, Wisconsin", although I've just googled it.

However, I do have an interest in the music to THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, or rather, its composer.

When I was getting into classical music in the late sixties, a composer I heard occasionally on BBC Radio 3 was someone called Benjamin Frankel. He wrote 8 symphonies and I heard a number of these and quite liked them. He died in 1973 and those of you of a superstitious nature should note he was working on his 9th at the time.

Alas, his music fell out of favour after his death but I did spot his name in the credits for British films on the Fifties. He wrote the music for THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT and a version of THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST among others.

Then, in the nineties there was a minor revival. It didn't get as far as any of his symphonies being programmed in London concert halls, but his symphonies were all recorded, as was some of his other orchestral music and some of his film scores.

It would appear that he used the money from his film scores to help finance writing his less popular concert music. He also got interested in Schoenberg's serial techniques, and this seems to have started with his 1st symphony of 1958. Many British composers of this period got the serial bug.

Frankel kept on writing film scores, and his score to THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF (1961, with Oliver Reed) is reckoned to be the first British film score using serial techniques. (I could try and explain serialism, but I'm not a musician and it gets quite technical.)

Frankel was Jewish--his violin concerto of 1951 is dedicated to the memory of the six million. THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE was his final film score and the producer was insistent that he included in the music the Panzerlied, written in 1933, which Frankel was reluctant to do. However, he did so, and the disc of the complete music that was released a while back has it, complete with foot-stamping male chorus.

So, by the main theme, do you mean the Panzerlied? It appears in the prelude to the music, so I assume it appears over the opening credits. (I must admit I prefer the music without the film, and it's a long time since I watched it.) There might be a slight similarity to "On, Wisconsin"--I've just played one after the other--but it doesn't leap out at me. [-pd]

Mark replies:

He did use the Panzerlied theme, but that is not the part that sounds like "On Wisconsin". I do not have a good way to point out specific parts of the music. [-mrl]

Keith F. Lynch responds:

"On Wisconsin" and "Panzerlied" don't sound anything alike to me.

[We all agree on that. -mrl]

However, "Bright College Years" (Yale) has the same tune as "Die Wacht am Rhein". The latter is probably best known as the tune that's interrupted by "La Marseillaise" in CASABLANCA.

Also, listen to "Stand Columbia" and see if the tune doesn't sound kind of familiar. [-kfl]

Paul answers:

We used to sing the hymn "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken" to that tune in morning assembly at school back in the Sixties. (In those days, a morning religious service was mandatory in British schools.) [-pd]

Gary McGath adds:

Tune by Joseph Haydn. The classics are always the best. [-gmg]

Dorothy J. Heydt responds to Paul:

I've never encountered ["Stand Columbia"].

The tune was, of course, "Gott Erhalte Franz den Kaiser", by Haydn. And it's said (we have this from his servant) that when Haydn was very old and no longer composing, he would sit at the fortepiano and play "Gott Erhalte" over and over. It's a nice tune, whatever its positive and negative connotations. [-djh]

Keith adds:

Columbia was, prior to The Revolution, King's College, and founded by Anglicans, so having a song that mirrors a CofE hymn isn't odd. [-kfl]

And in response to Gary, Keith writes:

Now listen to "Himno de la Agrupacion de Commandos". [-kfl]

#### **This Week's Reading** (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

TYPEE by Herman Melville (ISBN 978-1-515-38744-2) is a semi-fictional account Melville's desertion of the ship "Dolly" on Nuku Hiva and his experiences living with the natives there. The book implies he was there for four months, but he was actually there only one, and the island's actual geography is not as Melville describes. It is generally agreed that Melville drew from various travelogues of his time for many of the details. One geographical detail that rang a bell was his travel down a river to try to find a village. At times he would come to a place where the river became a waterfall and there were only vines to climb down at the sides, if that:

"From the narrowness of the gorge, and the steepness of its sides, there was no mode of advancing but by wading through the water; stumbling every moment over the impediments which lay hidden under its surface, or tripping against the huge roots of trees. But the most annoying hindrance we encountered was from a multitude of crooked boughs, which, shooting out almost horizontally from the sides of the chasm, twisted themselves together in fantastic masses almost to the surface of the stream, affording us no passage except under the low arches which they formed. Under these we were obliged to crawl on our hands and feet, sliding along the oozy surface of the rocks, or slipping into the deep pools, and with scarce light enough to guide us. Occasionally we would strike our heads against some projecting limb of a tree; and while imprudently engaged in rubbing the injured part, would fall sprawling amongst flinty fragments, cutting and bruising ourselves, whilst the unpitying waters flowed over our prostrate bodies. ... [It] was not long before we were arrested by a rocky precipice of nearly a hundred feet in depth, that extended all across the channel, and over which the wild stream poured in an unbroken leap. On each hand the walls of the ravine presented their overhanging sides both above and below the fall, affording no means whatever of avoiding the cataract by taking a circuit round it." [-hm]

This reminded me of John Wesley Powell's greatest fear in rafting down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon: that they would come to a waterfall where the water came right up to the rock walls and there was no way to portage around the falls, while the current would be too strong to allow them to go back upstream, and they would be trapped there to starve to death.

Apparently one reason Melville deserted was the food:

"The owners, who officiate as caterers for the voyage, supply the larder with an abundance of dainties. Delicate morsels of beef and pork, cut on scientific principles from every part of the animal, and of all conceivable shapes and sizes, are carefully packed in salt, and stored away in barrels; affording a never-ending variety in their different degrees of toughness, and in the peculiarities of their saline properties. Choice old water too, decanted into stout six-barrel-casks, and two pints of which is allowed every day to each soul on board; together with ample store of sea-bread, previously reduced to a state of petrification, with a view to preserve it either from decay or consumption in the ordinary mode, are likewise provided for the nourishment and gastronomic enjoyment of the crew." [-hm]

He was also unimpressed by the rest of the crew: "Her crew was composed of some venerable Greenwich-pensioner-looking old salts, who just managed to hobble about deck."

When he deserted, he knew he would be searched for as a deserter, but with typical Melville humor expresses it thusly:

"I knew that our worthy captain, who felt, such a paternal solicitude for the welfare of his crew, would not willingly consent that one of his best hands should encounter the perils of a sojourn among the natives of a barbarous island; and I was certain that in the event of my disappearance, his fatherly anxiety would prompt him to offer, by way of a reward, yard upon yard of gaily printed calico for my apprehension. He might even have appreciated my services at the value of a musket, in which case I felt perfectly certain that the whole population of the bay would be immediately upon my track, incited by the prospect of so magnificent a bounty." [-hm]

"A regular system of polygamy exists among the islanders, but of a most extraordinary nature..." Yes, but that is because it is not polygamy, but polyandry.

TYPEE was a big success when it came out, and even though we know now much of it was fictional, it's still an enjoyable travelogue. [-ec]

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Quote of the Week:

I have always thought of a dog lover as a dog that was in  
love with another dog.

--James Thurber

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