

# SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY

## AN EXPLOSIVE ISSUE

New  
Stories  
From  
Harlan  
Ellison  
and  
Stanislaw  
Lem

Plus:  
SF Art  
from  
Chris  
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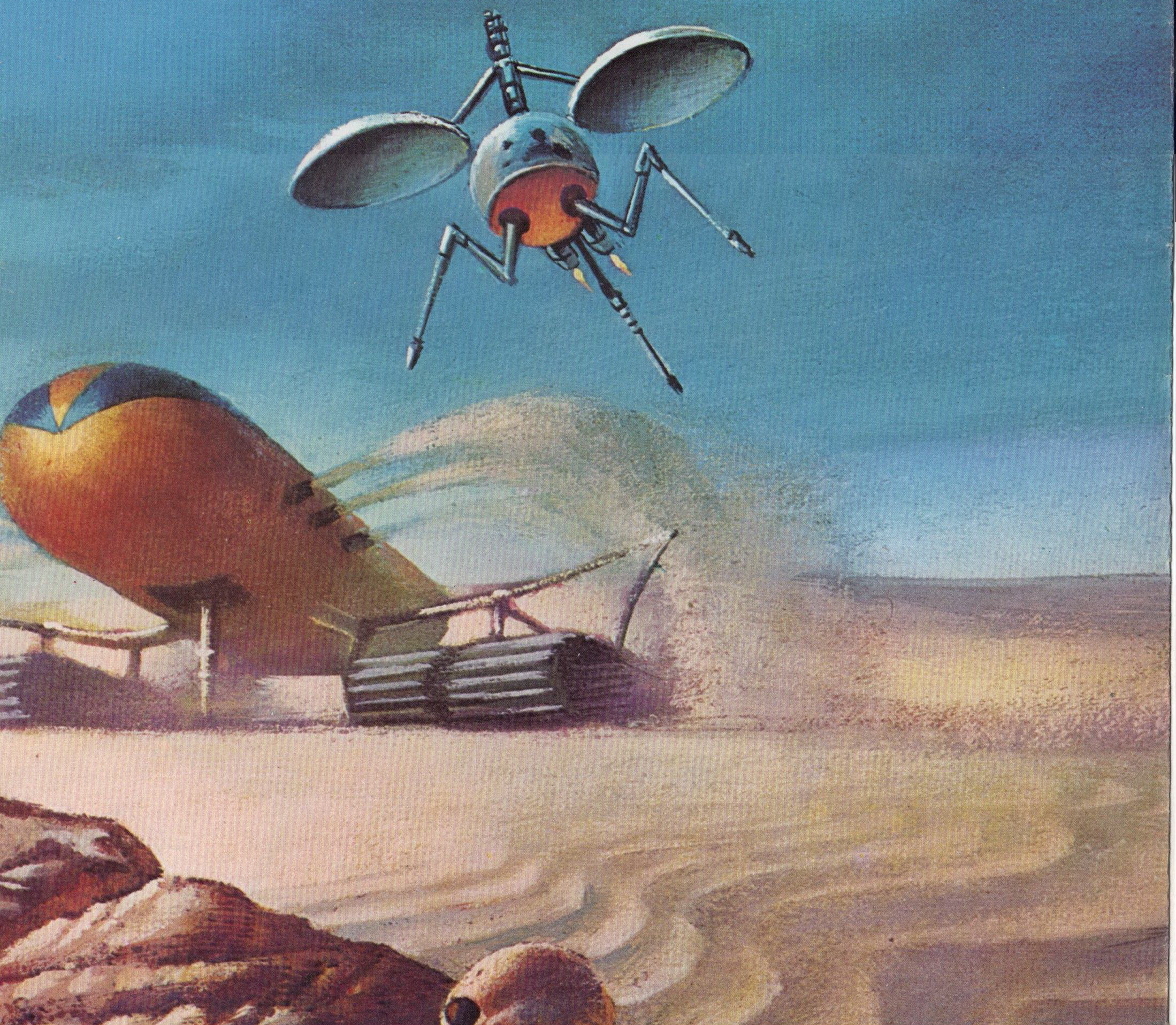




# SCIENCEFICTION

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MONTHLY





# SCIENCE FICTION

MONTHLY

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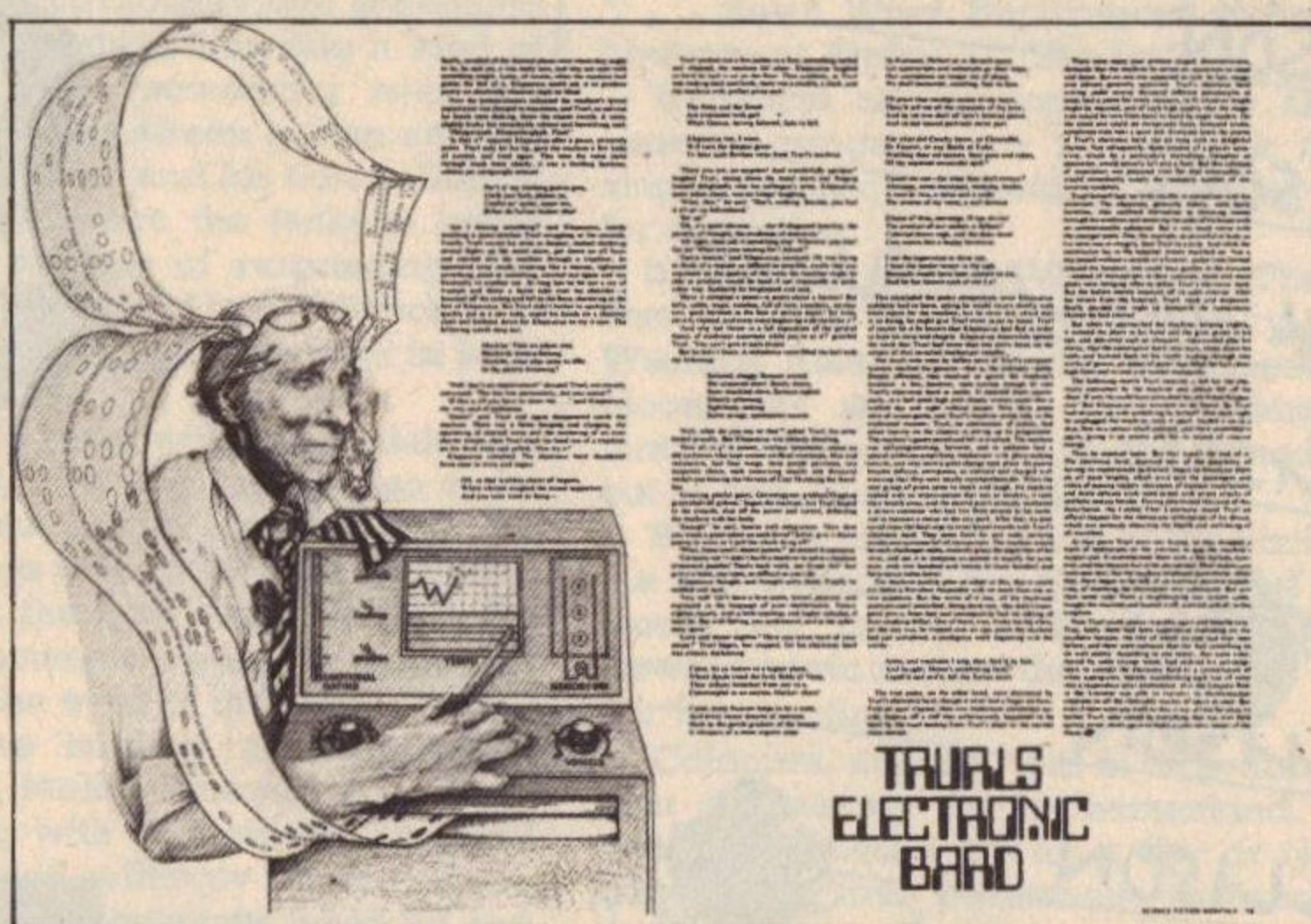
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Harlan Ellison and Stanislaw Lem in one issue! Two great new stories from two great sf authors!

Since the beginning of the year *SFM* has been either talking to or talking about some of the best-selling sf authors, people like Michael Moorcock, Samuel Delany and Edmund Cooper. Back in *SFM* Vol 2 No 4 we really went to town on Edmund Cooper, with an interview, a new short story and an introduction to his work. Well, this issue we've almost repeated the formula, but the secret ingredient this time is Harlan Ellison. Mike Ashley has made a study of the

great man's works, with a lot of guidance from Harlan himself (including frantic phone calls from Hollywood to London), and we're able to offer you a first look at *Shatterday*, one of his new short stories which only appeared in America in May.

But, that's not the end of the Ellison story, he should be over here sometime this year so there's a good chance that sooner or later you'll be able to read a dramatic and stirring feature called *Harlan Ellison meets SFM!*

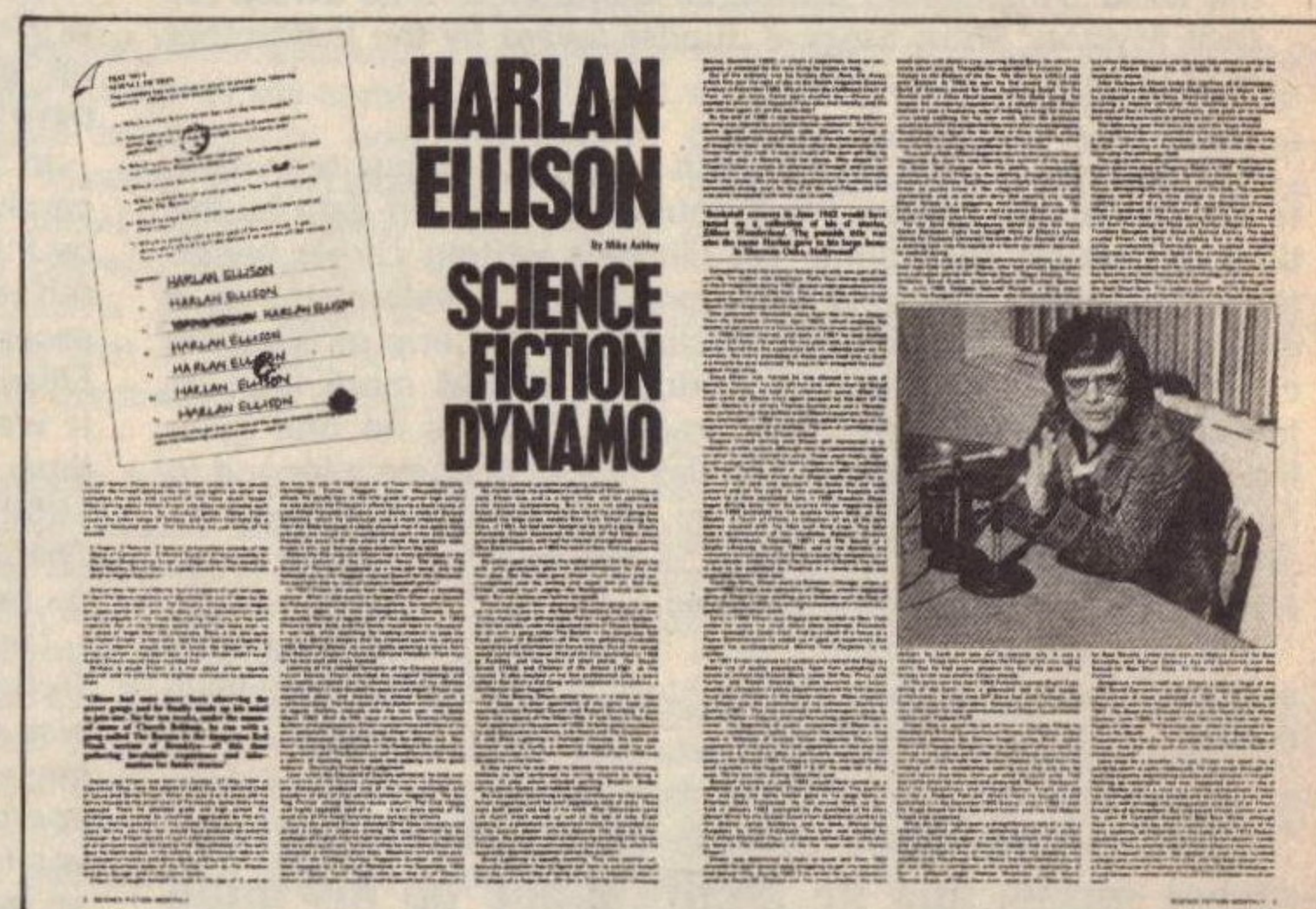
Incidentally, this type of fact-and-fiction introduction to outstanding authors has only just begun. From now on until the end of this volume, you can learn some of the inside information about Bob Shaw, JG Ballard, Harry Harrison and Keith Roberts.

Coming back to the present, not only do we have Harlan Ellison, but also Stanislaw Lem. The story published here, *Trurl's Electronic Bard*, is a complete episode (not just an extract) taken from his new book *The Cyberiad* which will be published next month. This issue also brings you *Lost Explorer* by Frank Bryning, an established Australian sf author whose work was discussed quite extensively in last month's special AussieCon issue.

But with all this good fiction something just has to be missing: Walter Gillings, after working flat out for a year on his *Modern Masters of Science Fiction* series, is having a short rest, but never fear he'll be back next volume with all the data on Edmond Hamilton.

Lots of pictures again, this time round we've got artwork from Chris Foss, Bruce Pennington and Pauline Jones.

*Next month:* Bob Shaw, author of *Orbitsville*, is interviewed by John Brosnan and, continuing with the current theme, there'll be a new Bob Shaw story called *An UnComic Book Horror Story*. Sf art will include still more work from CHRIS FOSS. We'll also be publishing the first article in Peter Weston's three-part investigation into the use of space travel as a science fiction theme.



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# TEST NO 1 SCIENCE FICTION

The candidate has one minute in which to answer the following questions. (Marks will be awarded for neatness)

- 1) Which science fiction writer has won the most awards?
- 2) About whose first science fiction story did author and critic James Blish say, 'it was the single worst sf story ever published'?
- 3) Which science fiction writer ran away from home aged 13 and was found by Pinkerton detectives?
- 4) Which science fiction writer wrote scripts for *Dr. Strangelove's Law*?
- 5) Which science fiction writer joined a New York street gang called The Barons?
- 6) Which science fiction writer was arraigned for court martial three times?
- 7) Which science fiction writer said of his own work 'I am desperately afraid I will die before I've written all the stories I have in me'?

Answers:

- 1) HARLAN ELLISON
- 2) HARLAN ELLISON
- 3) ~~HARLAN ELLISON~~ HARLAN ELLISON
- 4) HARLAN ELLISON
- 5) HARLAN ELLISON
- 6) HARLAN ELLISON
- 7) HARLAN ELLISON

Candidates who got one or more of the above answers wrong should take the following corrective action—read on...

# HARLAN ELLISON

By Mike Ashley

# SCIENCE FICTION DYNAMO

To call Harlan Ellison a science fiction writer is not strictly correct. He himself dislikes the term, and rightly so when one considers the style and content of his more recent fiction. When talking about Harlan Ellison one does not consider such confines as definitions for individual genres. Harlan Ellison covers the entire range of fantasy, and within that field he is its most honoured writer. The following are just some of his awards:

5 Hugos, 2 Nebulas, 2 Special Achievement awards of the World sf Convention, 3 Writers Guild of America awards for the Most Outstanding Script, an Edgar Allan Poe award for Best Mystery Short Story, a Jupiter award by the Instructors of sf in Higher Education...

And all this, not in a lifetime, but in a space of just ten years. In fact the above statistics will doubtless be out of date by the time this article sees print. Yet Ellison's writing career began ten years earlier still, and the story of his development as a writer is equally if not more fascinating than any of his own creations. For in the fantasy world, which has more than its fair share of larger-than-life characters, there is no one quite like Harlan Ellison—a man who, had he not become a legend in his own lifetime, would want to know the reason why; a writer of whom it has been said 'if Harlan Ellison didn't exist, Harlan Ellison would have invented him'.

Without a doubt Ellison is a man about whom legends abound, and no one has the slightest inclination to disbelieve them.

**'Ellison had once more been observing the street gangs and he finally made up his mind to join one. So for ten weeks, under the assumed name of Cheech Beldone, he ran with a gang called The Barons in the dangerous Red Hook section of Brooklyn—all this time gathering invaluable experience and information for future stories'**

Harlan Jay Ellison was born on Sunday, 27 May 1934 in Cleveland, Ohio, near the shores of Lake Erie, the second child of Louis and Serita Ellison. When he was 3 or 4 years old his family moved to the small town of Painesville, some thirty miles eastward. There he attended grade and junior high school. His childhood was marked by unruliness, aggravated by the anti-Semitic feeling prevalent in that provincial Ohio town. All this, you may feel, would have produced an extreme introvert, but Ellison excels in such contradictions; much more of an extrovert would be hard to find. Nevertheless, in his early days he found solace in the cinema, and American radio with its wonderful mystery and terror series, and buried himself in the juvenile adventure pulps of the Forties, such as *The Shadow* and *Doc Savage*, and in the comic books.

Ellison had taught himself to read at the age of 3, and by

the time he was 10 had read Twain, Conrad, Dickens, Hemingway, Dumas, Haggard, Balzac, Maupassant and others. He recalls how in the fifth grade of junior high school he was sent to the Principal's office for giving a book review of Count Alfred Korzybski's *Science and Sanity*, a study of General Semantics, which he concluded was a more important book than the Bible because it clearly showed that if we spoke more precisely we would not misunderstand each other and would thereby do away with the errors of intent that produce wars. Ellison's anti-war feelings were evident from the start.

Before the War was over Ellison had a story published in the boys' column of the *Cleveland News*. The story, *The Sword of Parmegon* appeared as a five-part serial, and was followed up by the Haggard-inspired *Search for the Gloconda*. His payment was by way of tickets to baseball games!

In 1947 Ellison ran away from home and joined a travelling carnival. When it was busted in Kansas City Ellison was located by Pinkerton detectives hired by his parents. Six months later he ran away again, this time lumberjacking in Canada. Such escapades formed a regular part of his adolescence. In 1949 Ellison's father died, and the family moved back to Cleveland. It was here, while searching for reading material to pass the time in a dentist's surgery that he chanced upon the January 1950 *Startling Stories*, its cover boldly sporting a scene from *The Return of Captain Future* by Edmond Hamilton. From then on he was well and truly hooked.

Learning of the intended formation of the Cleveland Science Fiction Society, Ellison attended the inaugural meetings, and was readily accepted (so he claims) because of his infallible memory. When it was decided to issue a club organ, Ellison was appointed editor, and thereby he entered fandom with a vociferous bang. The first issue of the *Bulletin* which appeared at regular monthly intervals over the next year, was dated March 1952. With its fifth issue it became *Science-Fantasy Bulletin*, and progressively Ellison injected more and more of his own personality. Even at this stage Ellison showed he could exercise discretion, something so many fan editors lack. Mari Wolf, reviewing the publication in the *Fandora's Box* column in *Imagination*, said 'The Bulletin's a well varied fanzine that makes a policy of rejecting inferior work and passing on the good material.' Obviously Ellison had judgement.

Later, when the Cleveland sf Society splintered he took over full control of the fanzine, changed the name to *Dimensions*, and thereupon produced one of the most memorable and excellent of any of that period's amateur magazines. The late Rog Phillips, whose fanzine-review column *The Club House* was highly regarded, said of it, '... it is in every sense of the word one of the finest fanzines ever put out by anyone.'

During this period Ellison attended Ohio State University and joined a class in creative writing. He was informed by the professor of English that he had no talent, and Ellison's response led to a very quick exit. Yet even while he was there Ellison had concocted a whimsical short story, *Mealtime*, which was published in the College humour magazine *Sundial*, and would later reappear as *A Case of Ptolemaie* in the September 1958 issue of *Space Travel*. People who say that all of Ellison's fiction is doom-laden would do well to search out this story of a

planet that vomited up some exploring astronauts.

No matter what the professor's opinions of Ellison's creativity were, Ellison was, and is, a born writer, and his yearning to write became overpowering. But it was not solely science fiction. Ellison was fascinated by the life of the street gangs that infested the large cities, notably New York. When visiting fans there, in 1951, he had been beaten up by such a gang. Shortly afterwards Ellison discovered the novels of Hal Ellson about juvenile delinquents, and had his interest strengthened. Leaving Ohio State University in 1955 he went to New York to pursue his career.

He called upon his friend, the author Lester Del Rey, and his wife, who generously gave him accommodation for the first few days. Del Rey also gave Ellison much advice and encouragement over his writing and urged him on. Not that Ellison needed much urging—the floodgates would soon be open. But not before one further escapade.

Ellison had again been observing the street gangs and made up his mind to join one. As Robert Silverberg has said of him, 'Unlike many tough-talking types, Harlan is genuinely fearless'.<sup>2</sup> So for ten weeks, under the assumed name of Cheech Beldone, he ran with a gang called The Barons in the dangerous Red Hook section of Brooklyn—all this time gathering invaluable experience and information for future stories. Out of this period would come his first novel, *Web of the City* (published in 1958 as *Rumble*), and two books of short stories: *The Deadly Streets* (1958) and *Children of the Streets* (1961, as *The Juvies*). It also resulted in his first professional sale, a piece called *I Ran With a Kid Gang* which appeared in *Lowdown*, a confidential-type magazine.

After The Barons, Ellison settled down in a hotel on West 114th Street. In other apartments of the same hotel were aspiring writers Randall Garrett and Robert Silverberg. If ever there was a source of the Ellison Nile, it was here in this New York apartment in the autumn of 1955. In fairly quick succession he sold *Glowworm to Infinity*, *Life Hutch* and *The Crackpots to If*, and *Blind Lightning to Fantastic Universe*. His next sale however was to *Guilty*, a detective magazine, and his consequent success in that field meant that most of early 1956 was devoted to crime fiction.

It also meant he was able to devote more time to writing. Hitherto he had reinforced his writing income by taking a variety of jobs, which included painting the George Washington Bridge, selling books, office work and rubbish collecting.

He was rapidly becoming a regular contributor to the science fiction magazines with his own aggressive style of story. There were both good and bad in his work. After *Glowworm* came *Life Hutch* which stands up well to the test of time. Crash landing on a planetoid, an astronaut makes his wounded way to the survival station, only to discover that, due to a malfunction, the attendant robot is destroying anything that moves. Ellison shows much inventiveness in the manner by which the apparently doomed spaceman solves the problem.

*Blind Lightning* is equally cunning. This time another unfortunate spaceman has to figure out how to extricate himself from the imminent fate of being eaten by a telepathic alien in the shape of a huge bear. On par is *Tracking Level* (Amazing



*Stories*, December 1956), in which a spaceman, bent on vengeance, is ensnared by the very thing he hopes to trap.

Out of the ordinary was his fantasy *Rain, Rain, Go Away*, which first saw the light of day in the British magazine *Science Fantasy* in December 1956. We all know the childhood chant of 'Rain, rain, go away, Come again another day'—Ellison proceeded to show what happens if you take that literally, and the rain comes again all on the same day!

By the end of 1956 it was becoming apparent that Ellison's writing was inspired by one basic theme—alienation: the human alone against insurmountable odds. Ellison's memories of victimised childhood, and of his life with the street gangs were all brought to bear, and the stories reflect the persecution that Ellison knew too well. It was so much of his own self that he could not stop it flowing into his stories. Why should he? Ellison's fiction is simply an extension of himself, and one can imagine him reliving the situations in his mind as he converts them into prose. His over-riding predilection for violence was particularly strong, even for the sf of the mid-Fifties, and that was *tame* compared with what was to come.

### 'Bookstall scourers in June 1962 would have turned up a collection of his sf stories, *Ellison Wonderland*. The punnish title was also the name Harlan gave to his large home in Sherman Oaks, Hollywood'

Considering that his science fiction was only one part of his writing, his output was enormous. Forty-four stories appeared in the sf magazines during 1957, several under pseudonyms like Cordwainer Bird and Ellis Hart. This was so that editors could squeeze more than one story by Ellison in an issue, such as the March 1957 *Amazing* which had three.

One particularly memorable story from this time is *Deeper Than the Darkness* (*Infinity*, April 1957), which explores the depths of psi powers in a future society that shuns such talent.

In 1956 Ellison married, and early in 1957 he was drafted into the US Army. He served for two years and, as a confirmed pacifist, found that the experience left an indelible scar on his memory. His many anecdotes of those years lead one to think it a miracle he ever survived. He was in fact arraigned for court-martial three times.

Since Ellison was married he was allowed to live out of barracks. However, his wife left him and, rather than be forced back to barracks, he kept the information secret. When the truth came out Ellison once again escaped by the skin of his teeth, thanks to sf writers Thomas Scortia and Joe L Hensley, who pulled strings that baffled even Ellison's superiors. Honourably discharged in 1959 he was politely asked *not* to put in the reserve time required of all draftees. The sum of comments was 'Just leave us alone, Mr Ellison, please'.

Despite limited writing time Ellison still maintained a remarkably prolific output, although now he concentrated mainly on what he really wanted to write. These were mostly mainstream pieces written for the men's magazine *Rogue*, published by William Hamling, editor of *Imagination* and *Imaginative Tales*. It was in these stories that Ellison really began to experiment with style and approach. He broke the old work patterns and set his sights on the *avant-garde* freestyle with which he is now associated. Early in 1959, therefore, Ellison began drifting away from the science fiction magazines and late in 1959 published his first science fiction book, an Ace Double: *A Touch of Infinity* (a collection of six of his early stories) coupled with *The Man with Nine Lives*. This latter was a reconstruction of two novelettes, *Assassin!* (*Science Fiction Adventures*, February 1957) and *The Sound of a Scythe* (*Amazing*, October 1959), and is the dramatic and intricately woven story of Cal Emory's quest for vengeance in a future society. Under the title *The Sound of a Scythe*, the novel is due to be published by Pyramid in a newly revised and expanded version next year.

From the Army, Ellison went to Evanston, Chicago, where in April 1959 he took over editorship of *Rogue*, wherein appeared some of Ellison's most startling early fantasies such as *Eyes of Dust* (December 1959), the tale of the discovery of a mutant on a perfect, unblemished world.

Early in 1960 Ellison quit *Rogue* and returned to New York where he wrote his novel about show business *Rockabilly* (now reissued as *Spider Kiss*). And as a result of a malicious anonymous phone call to the police he ended up in gaol, an experience that caused his autobiographical *Memos from Purgatory* to be written.

In 1961 Ellison returned to Evanston and created the Regency Books line of quality paperbacks. Apart from publishing the novels of writers like Robert Bloch, Lester Del Rey, Philip José Farmer, and Robert Sheckley, it also launched non-fiction studies of corruption in police departments and the first serious novel about chicanery in the missile industry. More important for Ellison was the publication of his collection *Gentleman Junkie* (1961). This was reviewed with extravagant praise by Dorothy Parker in *Esquire*, and was the turning-point in Ellison's career; the beginning of public acceptance of Ellison as a serious contemporary author. Ironically this occurred at a time when to followers of science fiction magazines Ellison had apparently left the scene. His last appearance in that area had been with *A Friend to Man*, a particularly poignant anti-war piece in the October 1959 *Fantastic Universe*, and apart from a brief vignette in the August 1962 *F & SF*, he was lost to their eyes. Yet he was now writing more than ever.

Bookstall scourers in June 1962 would have turned up a collection of his sf stories, *Ellison Wonderland*. This punnish title was also the name Harlan gave to his large home in Sherman Oaks, Hollywood. He had arrived there via New York in January 1962, prompted by the purchase of his story *Daniel White for the Greater Good* (from *Gentleman Junkie*) by film director James Goldstone, and his book, *Memos from Purgatory*, by Alfred Hitchcock. The latter was adapted for *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, and starred James Caan (who shot to fame in *The Godfather*) in his first major role as Harlan Ellison!

Ellison was determined to make or break and from 1962 onwards he spent several years struggling to get into television and feature films. During 1962-3 he wrote for such television series as *Route 66*, *Ripcord* and *The Untouchables*. His main

break came with *Burke's Law*, starring Gene Barry, for which he wrote seven scripts. Thereafter he expanded to *Cimarron Strip*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *The Man from UNCLE* and even *Batman*. In 1965 he won his first award: the Writers Guild of America award for Most Outstanding Script: for the *Demon with a Glass Hand* episode of *The Outer Limits*. Yet despite his increasing reputation as a teleplay writer Ellison learned it was a frustrating way of making a living for anyone who cared anything for his own work, since the producers would so butcher the scripts that they were often unrecognisable. Nevertheless he faced the fact that in three months writing screenplays he could earn enough to be free to spend the other nine months in writing his preferred form of fiction.

Thus with a flash, Ellison began to return to the science fiction magazines. By now he was nearing the summit of his career. His fiction had changed from the patchy, inconsequential adventures of the Fifties to the startling, thought-provoking shockers of the Sixties. But Ellison had virtually forsaken science fiction as purists know it. His imagination explored a rich wonderland, and no one can deny that reading any recent Ellison fantasy is a staggering mind-bending journey. The truth is of course that Ellison is not a science fiction writer. He excels in fantasy, which flows and lives with obvious joy.

For the *Saint Mystery Magazine*, edited by the late Hans Stefan Santesson (who had bought many of Ellison's earlier stories for *Fantastic Universe*) he wrote *All the Sounds of Fear*, a startling look into the results of a much too ardent approach to method-acting.

At this time one of the most adventurous editors in the sf field was Cele Lalli at Ziff-Davis, who had already discovered and cultivated talents like Thomas Disch, Roger Zelazny, Piers Anthony, David Bunch, Ursula Le Guin and Norman Spinrad. The June 1964 *Fantastic* featured *Paingod*, a story about Trente, the Paingod of the Universe, who inexplicably develops



concern for Earth and sets out to discover why. It was a revelation. Those who remembered the Ellison of old now had to admit that he had arisen, phoenix-like from the ashes. This fantasy writer was another Ellison entirely.

In the same vein the April 1965 *Fantastic* carried *Bright Eyes*, telling of the Earth, now a graveyard, and its last keeper. Unfortunately, by that time Ziff-Davis had sold *Fantastic* and Cele Lalli was no longer editor. *Fantastic's* new policy allowed very little room for new contributions, but Ellison found another market with Frederik Pohl.

Ellison likes to recall the tale of how in the late Fifties he attended the Milford Science Fiction Writers' Conference, where renowned stalwarts like Damon Knight, James Blish, Judith Merril and Theodore Sturgeon met to read each other's work, to criticise it and advise each other. Ellison's stories were howled out of court, and he tells how, broken-hearted, he fled from the meeting with the melodramatic parting vow that one day he would return and show them just what he could write. That day came when he returned and presented '*Repent, Harlequin!* Said the Ticktockman', and although Damon Knight still did not like it, Frederik Pohl did. What's more he bought it and published it in the December 1965 *Galaxy*—and in 1966 it won the Hugo Award for the best short fiction, and the first Nebula Award ever presented.

While the story might seem a straightforward tale of a man's rebellion against officialdom, something Ellison had written about time and time again, it was the treatment that was new and refreshingly original. Once the reader had re-orientated himself to Ellison's way of thinking it was like stepping into another land. The phrase 'New Wave' has been bandied around all too often in connection with anyone who approaches sf from a different angle. Michael Moorcock, Judith Merril, Thomas Disch, all have their own views on the New Wave,

but when the battle is over and the dust has settled it will be the name of Harlan Ellison that will really be engraved on the foundation stone.

After *Harlequin*, Ellison broke the confines of sf completely, and with *I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream* (If, March 1967) he produced a tour-de-force. Mankind goes too far by constructing a massive computer that becomes psychotic and destroys all but a handful of humanity, and goes on to torture and molest the survivors to satiate its own eternal revenge.

The following year that story also won the Hugo Award. It would have been an appropriate time to sit back and assume a smug 'I-told-you-so' expression, but Ellison had little time for that—still strong in the fictional world, he was also revolutionising the anthology field.

The urge to edit a really controversial sf anthology had haunted Ellison since his days at Regency Books in 1961. Prompted by Robert Silverberg and Norman Spinrad in October 1965 he set about assembling such a volume, composed only of original fiction, delineating the new directions in the field. The resultant massive tome of thirty-three stories by thirty-two writers, totalling a quarter of a million words, was *Dangerous Visions*. When it appeared in the Autumn of 1967 the heart of the sf world skipped a beat. Here was daring fiction by the big names in sf, from Fritz Leiber to Philip José Farmer, Roger Zelazny to Theodore Sturgeon, Brian Aldiss to Samuel Delany. The book exuded Ellison, not only in his preface, but in the individual author introductions. Contributors also supplied revealing postscripts to their stories. Sales of the anthology were phenomenal, including both trade and book club editions. It is accepted as a standard text for University college courses, and has become the most honoured sf anthology of all time. In the same year that Ellison's *I Have No Mouth . . .* won the Hugo for the Best Short Story, Fritz Leiber's *Gonna Roll the Bones* won as Best Novelette, and Farmer's *Riders of the Purple Wage* tied

for Best Novella. Leiber also won the Nebula Award for Best Novelette, and Samuel Delany's *Aye and Gomorrah* won the Nebula for Best Short Story. All three were from *Dangerous Visions*.

*Dangerous Visions* itself won Ellison a special Hugo at the 1968 World Convention as editor of 'the most significant and controversial sf book published in 1967'. In the same year Ellison also won the Hugo Award for the Best Short Story of 1967, *The Beast that Shouted Love at the Heart of the World* (*Galaxy*, June 1968). It wasn't the first time he had won two Hugos in one year. The previous year, when he received it for *I Have No Mouth . . .*, he also received one for Best Dramatic Presentation for his *Star Trek* episode *The City on the Edge of Forever*. And that also won him his second Writers Guild of America Award!

Let's stop for a breather. To say Ellison had taken the sf world by storm is sadly inadequate. He had swept through the field like a scythe, demolishing records and traditions in his path. Nothing so cataclysmic had ever happened before in the sf field. Neither was it a once-in-a-lifetime achievement. Ellison has continued to receive awards and accolades at every step. One can well envisage the inauguration one day of an Ellison Award for sf achievement. But one award Ellison cannot win is the John W Campbell Award for Best New Writer, although there is nothing to say that it cannot be won by one of his many students, as happened in the case of the 1973 Nebula novelette award, which went to his ex-Clarion student Vonda McIntyre. This is another side of Harlan Ellison's many talents. He is a frequent lecturer, has spoken at over three hundred colleges and universities in the USA, and has been eleven times a Guest Instructor of creative writing at the Clarion Workshop in sf and fantasy. I wonder what his old OSU professor would say now?



Since 1966 Ellison has ridden the crest of a wave of exciting and effervescent fiction that has made him the envy of many within the field, and has brought him the respect and admiration of those without. Apart from his immediately recalled stories he has produced a host of other gems which every fan of the genre should search out.

*Dangerous Visions* for example carried *The Prowler in the City at the Edge of the World*, a terrifying look at what could happen if Jack the Ripper was ensnared and brought into the future where everything was sterile and clean. The vision of something fearful marring a perfect world had already been employed in *Eyes of Dust* and *The Discarded* (*Fantastic*, April 1959 as *The Abnormals*), but it was with *Prowler* . . . that the idea really scored.

Probably Ellison's closest friend since he had moved to California was his dog Ahbhu. Their relationship was the inspiration of Ellison's Nebula award winning novella *A Boy and His Dog*. In this instance the dog, Blood, can talk and seems to be vastly more intelligent than his master whom he assists in tracking down females in a twenty-first century post-war world. The story has since been successfully filmed. When Ahbhu died in 1972 it had a profound effect on Ellison, and the tragedy was incorporated in his recent Hugo-winning novelette *The Deathbird* (*F & SF*, March 1973) in one of the most powerful and emotive sequences Ellison has ever written.

Ellison is openly opposed to war, but in writing *The Sleeper with Still Hands* (*If*, July 1968) he set out to make a case for war. As he himself says, 'I wanted to test myself, to see if I could write as convincing a story about something I hated, and make it seem logical and worthy, as I could taking the viewpoint that was truly mine.' The story tells of a world at peace, and kept at peace through the telepathic power of a man's brain, still active although the body is dead, which can read and control everybody's thoughts. The body has been buried deep in the Earth's crust, and the mind has exercised its influence, for six hundred years until one man finds a way to shield his mind from the emanations, and the lust for war returns.

Authors have often said how difficult it is to write in collaboration with others, although Pohl and Kornbluth, Kuttner and Moore and Silverberg and Garrett, for example, have succeeded. Ellison upholds that statement although early in his career he had collaborated with writers Algis Budrys and Joe L. Hensley. Nevertheless in true pioneering experimental form, Ellison set out to collaborate with a group of specific authors for a projected collection *Partners in Wonder*. The team included Henry Slesar, Samuel Delany, Keith Laumer, Robert Sheckley (they produced one of sf's longest titles: *I See a Man Sitting on a Chair, and the Chair is Biting his Leg*), Theodore Sturgeon, AE van Vogt . . . the list goes on. One of the most successful collaborations was *Brillo* with Ben Bova (*Analog*, August 1970) sold to editor John Campbell near the end of that man's long career. In *Dangerous Visions* Ellison had claimed how he had never written for *Analog* and was therefore not a Campbell yes-man, but that claim no longer stands. *Brillo* is a fascinating and enjoyable story concerning the events following the trials of an experimental robot cop. The appeal of this story has led to it being adapted for a future television sf series.

Ellison was also involved with Ben Bova, (who subsequently succeeded John Campbell as editor of *Analog*) on the *Starlost* venture. *The Starlost* was Ellison's own brainchild concerning a massive generation starship lost in space. Ellison was to script the shows with Bova acting as technical advisor. However the programme moguls moved in and hideously butchered the scripts. Disgusted, Ellison washed his hands of the affair and walked away from a possible \$93,000 in profits! He must be admired for his courage; retribution for the moguls came as but little solace. The final series was shortlived in the States, but the pilot film, which was Ellison's, entitled *Phoenix Without Ashes* won him his third Writers Guild Award. The

episode has since been turned into a novel by Ed Bryant.

In more recent years Ellison's fiction has become more bizarre in its fantasy. The build up began with *The Place with No Name* (*F & SF*, July 1969) in which a pimp enters an escapist world where he becomes baffled by a series of puzzling events to wind up, as he feared, taking the place of the tortured Prometheus. Then came *Rock God* in the November 1969 issue of a little known fantasy magazine *Coven 13*, telling of the horrific arrival of the ancient god Dis in Manhattan to reclaim what is his.

The March 1970 *Galaxy* gave a very nonconformist treatment to *The Region Below*, a story originally written for Keith Laumer's book *Five Fates*. This is one of Ellison's longer stories, achieved by stringing together a series of events that happened to the mind of Bailey after his voluntary euthanasia. Once again Ellison takes the rebellious course, with the soul fighting its procurer—The Succubus—with the ultimate revelation that Bailey is far more than he seemed.

*Basilisk* (*F & SF*, August 1972) is certainly one of Ellison's finest anti-war stories. It concerns the basilisk entity occupying the mind of a prisoner-of-war and unleashing its power whenever his 'host' is cornered and in danger.

Since then Ellison has maintained a peak of power in his fiction that exhausts his readers. Stories like *The Deathbird*, *Bleeding Stones* (*Vertex* April 1973) and the incredibly entitled *Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans: Latitude 38° 54' N, 77° 00' 13" W*, (*F & SF*, October 1974) continue to perplex yet entertain, to puzzle yet intrigue. In comparison his more straightforward narrative *Sleeping Dogs* (*Analog*, October 1974) is quite dull.

*Dangerous Visions* led to a sequel, *Again, Dangerous Visions* which won him a further special Hugo award at the 1972 Convention. A third anthology *The Last Dangerous Visions*, concluding the trilogy, is due out in the States in a two-volume boxed set, comprising over half-a-million words, around Christmas time. If the first two blockbusters are anything to go by the sf world is in for a massive dose of experimental, controversial but spectacular writing.

Harlan Ellison is now 41 and if, as they say, 'life begins at 40', heaven (or hell) only knows what he will experiment with next. Recently he further astounded the publishing world by concluding a deal with Pyramid Books for the publication of nineteen titles in a uniform edition, to be released at the rate of one a month. The deal (which ran to five figures) includes both re-issues of out-of-print volumes and new material, such as *Shatterday*, a new collection of fantasies, *No Doors, No Windows*, a collection of suspense stories, and a novel *The Salamander Enchantment* which is the first of a series about Kraiter, a modern sorcerer, and also forms part of an original fantasy-occult television series *The Dark Forces*. Much of Ellison's time at present is devoted to scripting pilot films for television series, and other special TV programmes, both in and out of the fantasy field, such as an upcoming two-hour dramatic special called *The Tigers are Loose* for NBC. Yet that aside, and apart from his magazine stories and college lectures, he still finds time to function as the sf book critic of the *Los Angeles Times*, and devise story-lines for the comic book world!

But in the fantasy field it is his fascinating stories by which he is best known. He was recently awarded an honorary doctorate in fantasy and sf writing from American River College! He has hewn out a special category just for himself within that genre, a sort of Ellisonesque Fantasy. Gems like *Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes* telling how a girl's innerself, or soul, transfers to a slot-machine, or the puzzling *At the Mouse Circus* (from Silverberg's original anthology *New Dimensions 1*) which is as close to time travel as Ellison has come in his fiction, and others would never succeed if written by anyone other than Ellison. Story-line aside it is the padding that is quintessential Ellison—those tricks of the language, the games he plays with the vocabulary, twisting and turning but never to

the point of incomprehensibility. The story may toss and buck like a wild horse, but Ellison always has it under control, and at the end it is either tamed or set free. There is no subtlety in Ellison's style, that's not his nature; but there is one hell of a lot of feeling, and to Ellison that is what matters. He says of his writing, 'I've come to the conclusion that science fiction is a very important tool for social reform; that it literally can be a world-shaper. I think sf can be a force for changing the world into a better place.'<sup>3</sup> And you know full well that if that is what Ellison thinks, that is what he will aim at. Not by out-and-out statements but by implanting themes into your mind, and letting your own thoughts work for you. No one can read an Ellison story and remain unchanged.

He doesn't want you to. ☹

**Source of quotations**

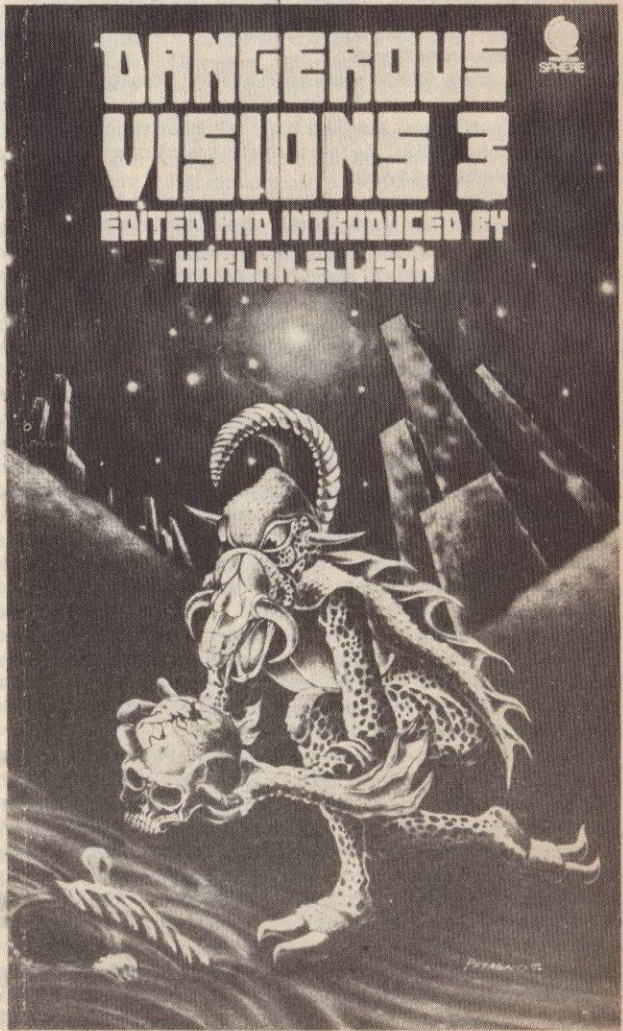
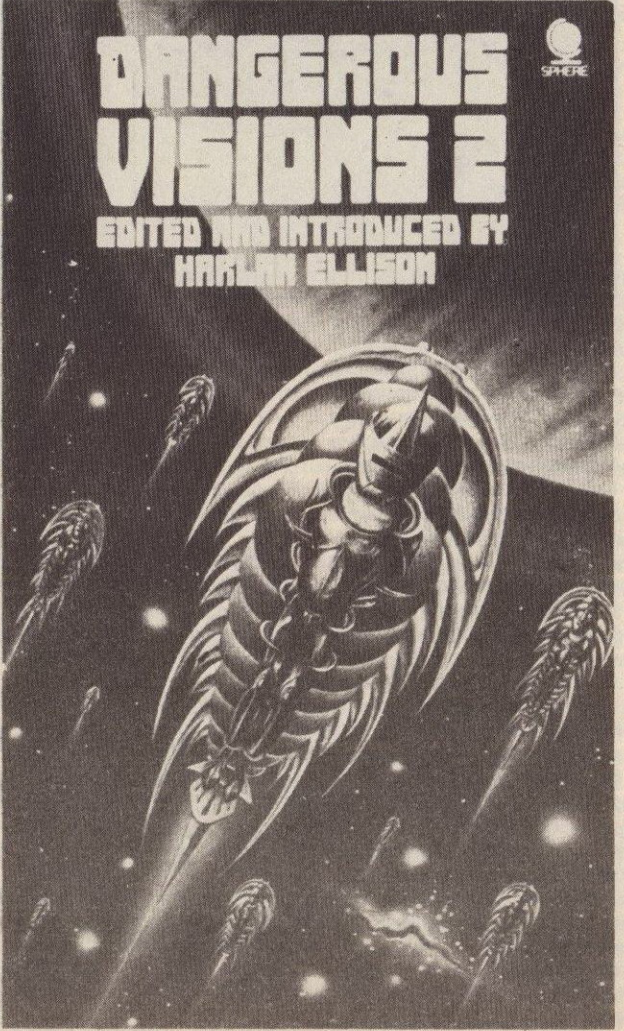
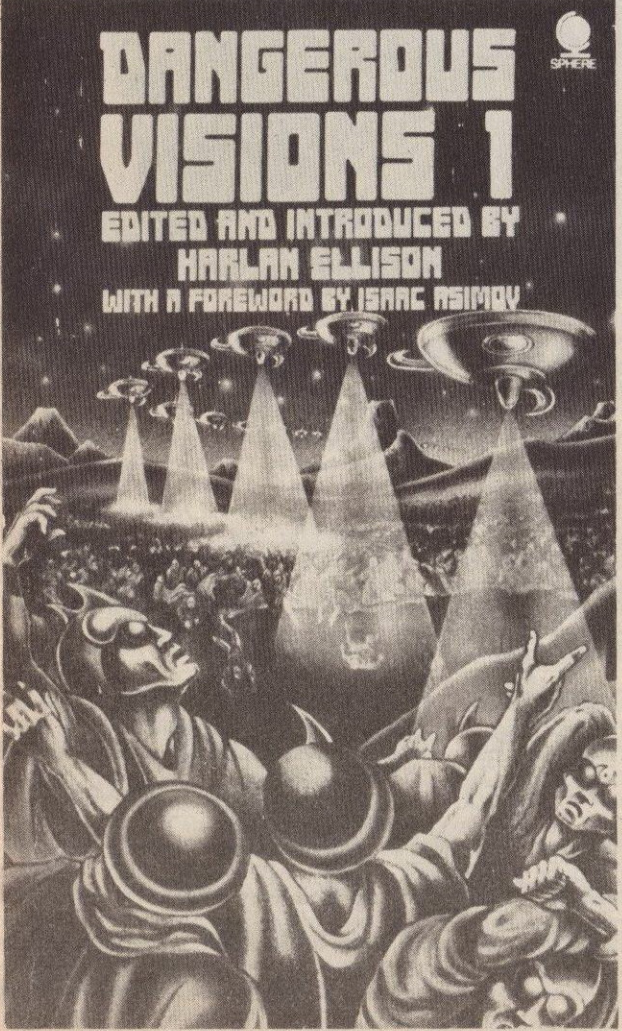
1. The Club House column by Rog Phillips in *Other Worlds*, September 1955.
2. From an article 'The Jet-Propelled Birdbath' by Robert Silverberg in *Algol* 12, 1968.
3. An interview with Mr Ellison published in *If*, March 1969.

Michael Ashley would also like to acknowledge the exhaustive assistance of Mr Ellison himself in the preparation of this article.

**Check List of Work**

For the completist and those who wish to explore the works of Harlan Ellison further, the following is a list of his published books, which to my knowledge is complete as at time of compilation (April 1975).

- (Alternate titles are noted in brackets after publication title)
- 1958:** *Rumble (Web of the City)*—novel about street gangs. *The Deadly Streets*—collection of stories about street gangs.
- 1959:** *The Man with Nine Lives (The Sound of a Scythe)*—sf novel. *A Touch of Infinity*—sf collection.
- 1961:** *The Juvies (Children of the Streets)*—stories about kid gangs. *Gentleman Junkie*—short stories. *Memos from Purgatory*—autobiography. *Rockabilly (Spider Kiss)*—novel about show business.
- 1962:** *Ellison Wonderland (Earthman, Go Home)*—sf collection.
- 1965:** *Paingod and Other Delusions*—fantasy collection.
- 1967:** *I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream*—fantasy collection. *Doomsman*—sf novel (orig. *The Assassin*, *Imagination* October 1958). Editor: *Dangerous Visions*—sf/fantasy anthology. *From the Land of Fear*—fantasy collection.
- 1968:** Editor: *Nightshade and Damnations*—stories by Gerald Kersh. *Love Ain't Nothing But Sex Misspelled*—short stories.
- 1969:** *The Beast that Shouted Love at the Heart of the World*—collection.
- 1970:** *The Glass Teat*—essays of opinion on television. *Over the Edge*—fantasy collection.
- 1971:** *Partners in Wonder*—sf collaborations. *Alone Against Tomorrow*—sf/fantasy collection [NB: British editions in two volumes, *All the Sounds of Fear* (1973) and *The Time of the Eye* (1974)].
- 1972:** Editor: *Again, Dangerous Visions*—sf/fantasy anthology.
- 1974:** *Approaching Oblivion*—fantasy collection.
- 1975:** with Edward Bryant: *The Starlost No 1: Phoenix Without Ashes*—sf novel. *Deathbird Stories*—fantasy collection. *The Other Glass Teat*—further essays of television opinion. *Shatterday*—new fantasy stories. *No Doors, No Windows*—suspense and mainstream stories. *The Dark Forces No 1: The Salamander Enchantment*—occult novel. Editor: *The Last Dangerous Visions*—sf/fantasy anthology. *The Harlan Ellison Hornbook*—collection of comments and reminiscences.
- Forthcoming:** *Rif*—fantasy novel. *Demon with a Glass Hand*—sf novel. *Shrikes*—massive mainstream novel. *Impossible Dreams*—college textbook of sf and fantasy.









TRAPPED IN A STRANGE DIMENSION BEYOND THE MISTY REALMS OF TIME, NICK NOVA AND DR. DIXIE DRAKE HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THEIR JOURNEY WAS CONTROLLED BY A DEMONIC LITTLE DWARF CALLED INCUBUS! HE BROUGHT THEM FOR A REASON!! BUT IS HE TELLING? FIND OUT WHAT THAT REASON IS, AND WHY NICK'S THOUGHTS ARE ONLY OF ...ESCAPE! READ ON, READ ...

**The End!**

WRITTEN AND DRAWN FINALLY BY MICHAEL TAKEN.



LEFT HANGING BY THEIR FINGERTIPS OVER A GAPING CHASM, THEY SEEM TO BE AT THE WHIM AND FANCY OF THE MALEVOLENT LITTLE CRETIN! THEIR GRIP WEAKENS WHEN SUDDENLY ...



.. IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE!



NOW YOU HAVE SEEN POWER .. YOU CAN SEE I AM CAPABLE OF, SO WARN YOU ... NEVER THREATEN ME! IT IS POINT I AM INVINCIBLE!!

.. AND YOU SHALL HAVE NEW NAMES.. YOU WILL BE CALLED AURELL ..

.. AND YOU WILL BE CALLED DHRAY!



FROM NOW ON YOU LIVE AGAIN AS NEW! YOU HAVE NO PAST, NO PRESENT, ONLY AN INFINITE FUTURE OF IMMORTALITY AS THE HERALDS OF ... INCUBUS!

YOU ARE IMMORTAL!!



WWTTOOM

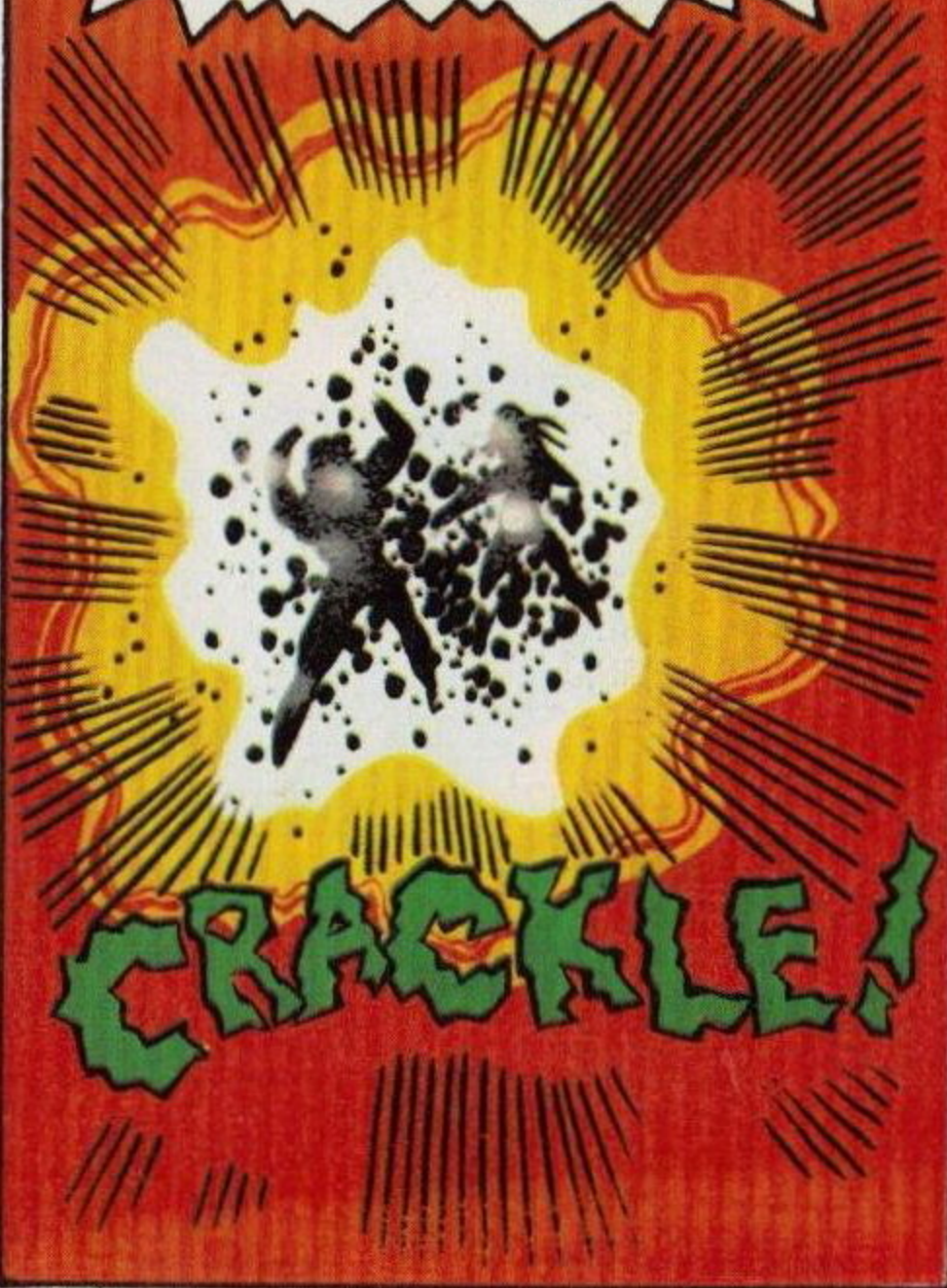


YOU WILL NEED CERTAIN POWERS TO HELP YOU IN YOUR WORK!

THEN ...



THE POWER TO REARRANGE YOUR MOLECULES INTO THE FORM OF ANY LIVING CREATURE!



CRACKLE!

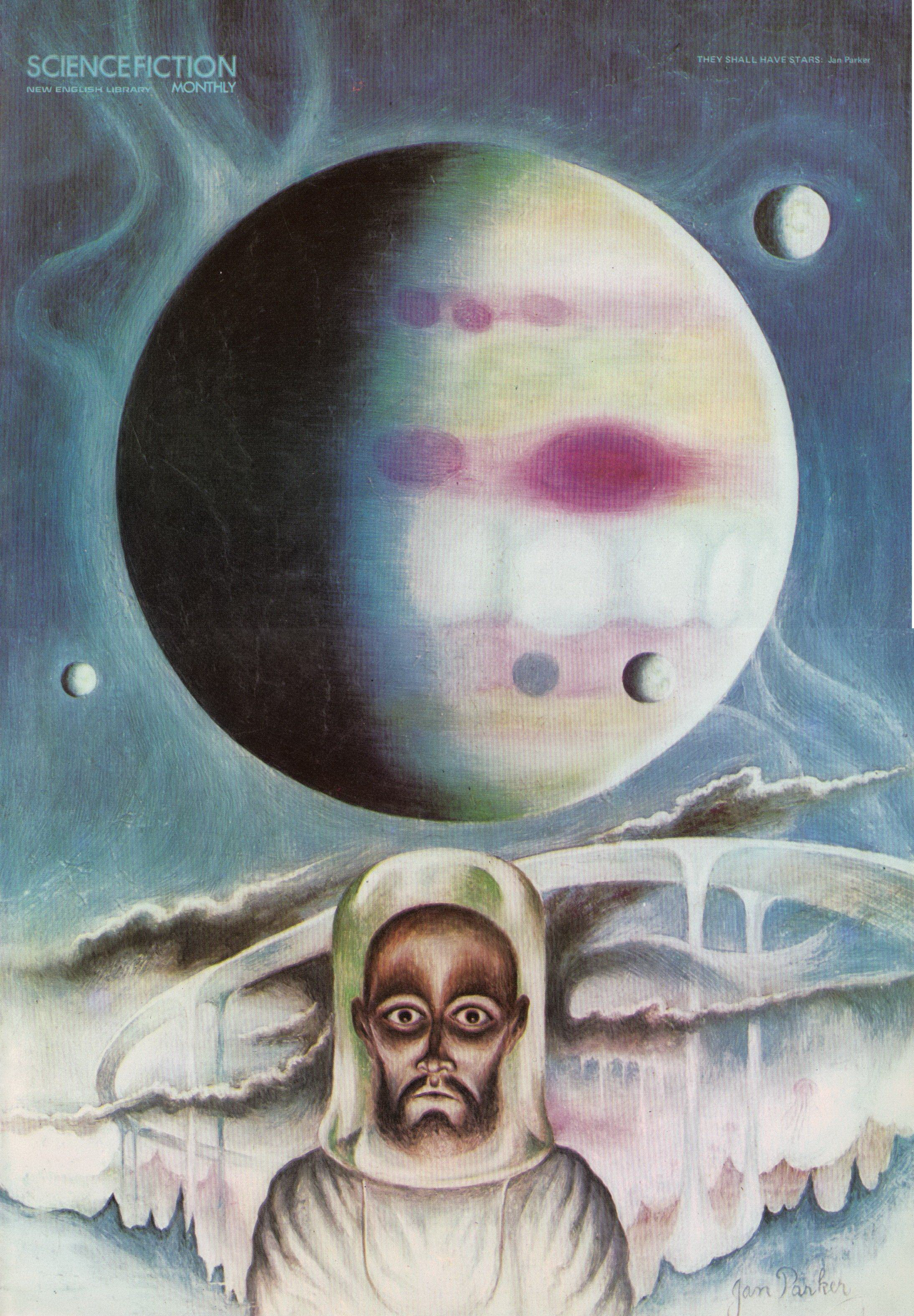
THE POWER TO CONTROL THE MINDS OF EVERY MORTAL!



THE POWER TO SEE BEYOND THE LIMITS OF ORDINARY BEINGS!





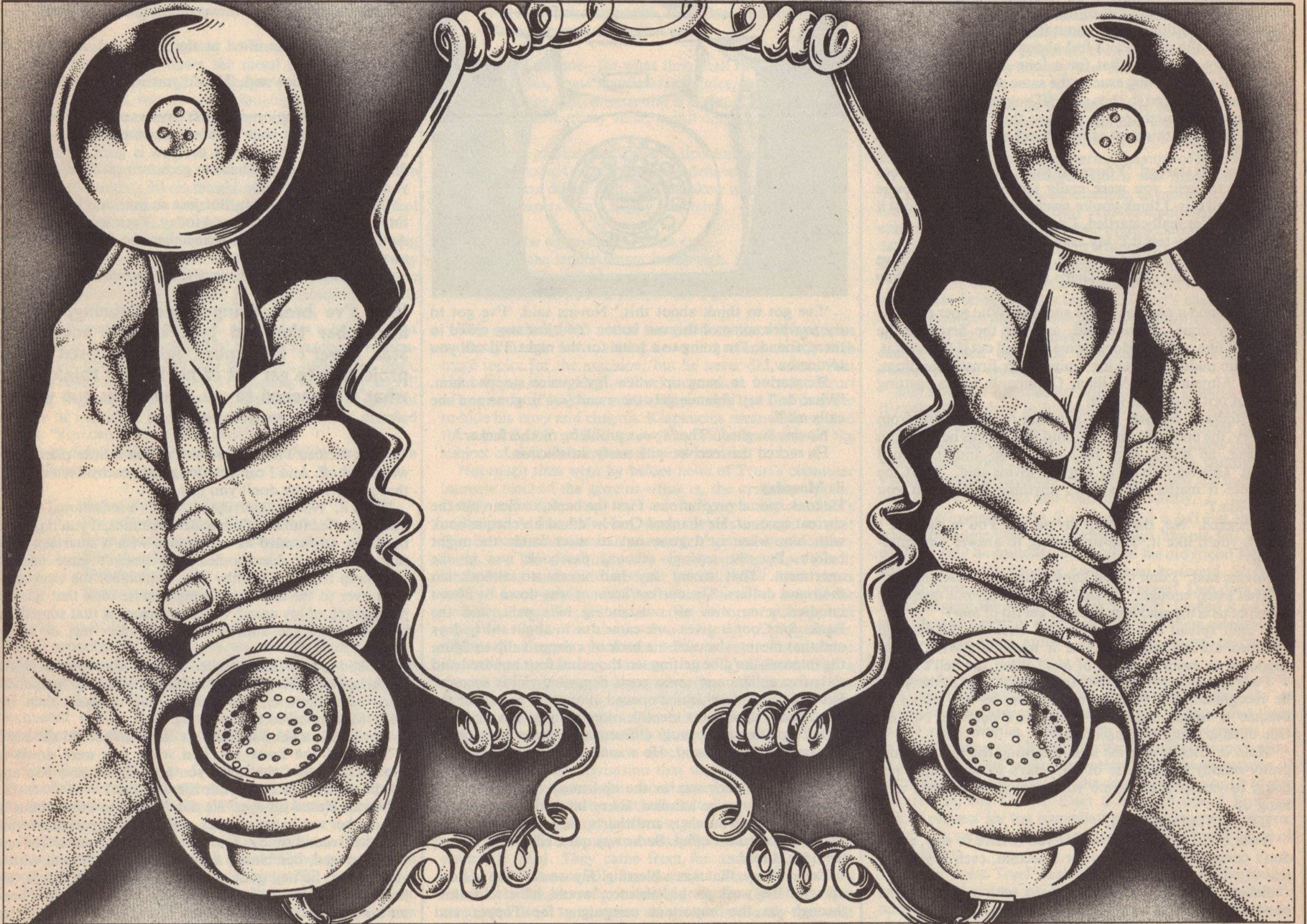








# SHATTERDAY



# YADRETTAHE

i: Someday

Not much later, but later nonetheless, he thought back on the sequence of what had happened, and knew he had missed nothing. How it had gone, was this:

He had been abstracted, thinking about something else. It didn't matter what. He had gone to the telephone in the restaurant, to call Jamie, to find out where the hell she was already, to find out why she'd kept him sitting in the bloody bar for thirty-five minutes. He had been thinking about something else, nothing deep, just woolgathering, and it wasn't till the number was ringing that he realised he'd dialled his own apartment. He had done it other times, not often, but as many as anyone else, dialled a number by rote and not thought about it, and occasionally it was his own number, everyone does it (he thought later), everyone does it, it's a simple mistake.

He was about to hang up, get back his dime and dial Jamie, when the receiver was lifted at the other end.

He answered.

Himself.

He recognised his own voice at once. But didn't let it penetrate.

He had no answering service, no little machine to take messages after the bleep, nothing. He was not at home, he was here, in the restaurant, calling his apartment, and he answered.

'Hello?'

He waited a moment. Then said, 'Who's this?'

BY  
HARLAN  
ELLISON

He answered, 'Who're you calling?'

'Hold it,' he said. 'Who *is* this?'

His own voice, on the other end, getting annoyed, said, 'Look, friend, what number do you want?'

'This is BEacon 3-6189, right?'

Warily, 'Yeah . . . ?'

'Peter Novins' apartment?'

There was silence for a moment, then, 'That's right.'

He listened to the sounds from the restaurant's kitchen. 'If this is Novins' apartment, who're you?'

On the other end, in his apartment, there was a deep breath. 'This is Novins.'

He stood in the phone booth, in the restaurant, in the night, the receiver to his ear, and listened to his own voice. He had dialled his own number by mistake, dialled an empty

apartment . . . and he had answered.

Finally, he said, very tightly, 'This is Novins.'

'Where are you?'

'I'm at The High Tide, waiting for Jamie.'

Across the line, with a terrible softness, he heard himself asking, 'Is that you?'

A surge of fear pulsed through him and he tried to get out of it with one last possibility. 'If this is a gag . . . Freddy . . . is that you, man? Morrie? Art?'

Silence. Then, slowly, 'I'm Novins. Honest to God.'

His mouth was dry. 'I'm out here. You can't be, I *can't* be in the apartment.'

'Oh yeah? Well, I am.'

'I'll have to call you back.' Peter Novins hung up.

He went back to the bar and ordered a double Scotch, no ice, straight up, and threw it back in two swallows, letting it burn. He sat and stared at his hands, turning them over and over, studying them to make sure they were his own, not alien meat grafted on to his wrists when he was not looking.

Then he went back to the phone booth, closed the door and sat down, and dialled his own number. Very carefully.

It rang six times before he picked it up.

He knew why the voice on the other end had let it ring six times; he didn't want to pick up the snake and hear his own voice coming at him.

'Hello?' His voice on the other end was barely controlled.



'It's me,' he said, closing his eyes.  
'Jesus God,' he murmured.  
They sat there, in their separate places, without speaking.  
Then Novins said, 'I'll call you Jay.'  
'That's okay,' he answered from the other end. It was his middle name. He never used it, but it appeared on his insurance policy, his driver's licence and his social security card. Jay said, 'Did Jamie get there?'

'No, she's late again.'  
Jay took a deep breath and said, 'We'd better talk about this, man.'

'I suppose,' Novins answered. 'Not that I really want to. You're scaring the shit out of me.'

'How do you think I feel about it?'

'Probably the same way I feel about it.'

They thought about that for a long moment. Then Jay said, 'Will we be feeling exactly the same way about things?'

Novins considered it, then said, 'If you're really me then I suppose so. We ought to try and test that.'

'You're taking this a lot calmer than I am, it seems to me,' Jay said.

Novins was startled. 'You really think so? I was just about to say I thought you were really terrific the way you're handling all this. I think you're *much* more together about it than I am. I'm really startled, I've got to tell you.'

'So, how'll we test it?' Jay asked.

Novins considered the problem, then said, 'Why don't we compare likes and dislikes. That's a start. That sound okay to you?'

'It's as good a place as any, I suppose. Who goes first?'

'It's my dime,' Novins said, and for the first time he smiled. 'I like, uh, well-done prime rib, end cut if I can get it, Yorkshire pudding, smoking a pipe, Max Ernst's paintings, Robert Altman films, William Goldman's books, getting mail but not answering it, uh . . .'

He stopped. He had been selecting random items from memory, the ones that came to mind first. But as he had been speaking, he heard what he was saying, and it seemed stupid. 'This isn't going to work,' Novins said. 'What the hell does it matter? Was there anything in that list you didn't like?'

Jay sighed. 'No, they're all favourites. You're right. If I like it, you'll like it. This isn't going to answer any questions.'

Novins said, 'I don't even know what the questions *are*!'  
'That's easy enough,' Jay said. 'There's only one question: which of us is me, and how does *me* get rid of *him*?'

A chill spread out from Novins' shoulder blades and wrapped around his arms like a mantilla. 'What's *that* supposed to mean? Get rid of *him*? What the hell's *that*?'

'Face it,' Jay said—and Novins heard a tone in the voice he recognised, the tone he used when he was about to become a tough negotiator—we can't *both* be Novins. One of us is going to get screwed.'

'Hold it, friend,' Novins said, adopting the tone. 'That's pretty muddy logic. First of all, who's to say you're not going to vanish back where you came from as soon as I hang up . . .'

'Bullshit,' Jay answered.

'Yeah, well, maybe; but even if you're here to stay, and I don't concede *that* craziness for a second, even if you *are* real—'

'Believe it, baby, I'm real,' Jay said, with a soft chuckle. Novins was starting to hate him.

'—even if you *are* real,' Novins continued, 'there's no saying we can't both exist, and both lead happy, separate lives.'

**'You know something, Novins,' Jay said, 'you're really full of horse pucky. You can't lead a happy life by yourself, man, how the hell are you going to do it knowing I'm over here living your life, too?'**

'What do you mean I can't lead a happy life? What do you know about it?' And he stopped; of course Jay knew about it. *All* about it.

'You'd better start facing reality, Novins. You'll be coming to it late, but you'd better learn how to do it. Maybe it'll make the end come easier.'

Novins wanted to slam the receiver into its rack. He was at once furiously angry and frightened. He knew what the other Novins was saying was true; he *had* to know, without argument; it was, after all, himself saying it. 'Only one of us is going to make it,' he said, tightly. 'And it's going to be me, old friend.'

'How do you propose to do it, Novins? You're out there, locked out. I'm in here, in my home, safe where I'm supposed to be.'

'How about we look at it *this* way,' Novins said quickly, 'you're trapped in there, locked away from the world in three and a half rooms. I've got everywhere else to move in. You're limited. I'm free.'

There was silence for a moment.

Then Jay said, 'We've reached a bit of an impasse, haven't we? There's something to be said for being loose, and there's something to be said for being safe inside. The amazing thing is that we both have accepted this thing so quickly.'

Novins didn't answer. He accepted it because he had no other choice; if he could accept that he was speaking to himself, then anything that followed had to be part of that acceptance. Now that Jay had said it bluntly, that only one of them could continue to exist, all that remained was finding a way to make sure it was he, Novins, who continued past this point.



'I've got to think about this,' Novins said. 'I've got to try to work some of this out better. You just stay celled in there, friend; I'm going to a hotel for the night. I'll call you tomorrow.'

He started to hang up when Jay's voice stopped him. 'What do I say if Jamie gets there and you're gone and she calls me?'

Novins laughed. 'That's *your* problem, motherfucker.'

He racked the receiver with nasty satisfaction.

## ii: Moonday

He took special precautions. First the bank, to clean out the current account. He thanked God he'd had his cheque book with him when he'd gone out to meet Jamie the night before. But the savings account passbook was in the apartment. That meant Jay had access to almost ten thousand dollars. The current account was down to fifteen hundred, even with all outstanding bills paid, and the Banks for Cooperatives note came due in about thirty days and that meant—he used the back of a deposit slip to figure the interest—he'd be getting ten thousand four hundred and sixty-five dollars and seven cents deposited to his account. His *new* account, which he opened at another branch of the same bank, signing the identification cards with a variation of his signature sufficiently different to prevent Jay's trying to draw on the account. He was at least solvent. For the time being.

But all his work was in the apartment. All the public relations accounts he handled. Every bit of data and all the plans and phone numbers and charts, they were all there in the little apartment office. So he was quite effectively cut off from his career.

Yet in a way, that was a blessing. Jay would have to keep up with the work in his absence, would have to follow through on the important campaigns for Topper and McKenzie, would have to take all the moronic calls from Lippman and his insulting son, would have to answer all the mail, would have to keep popping Titalac all day just to stay ahead of the heartburn. He felt gloriously free and almost satanically happy that he was rid of the aggravation for a while, and that Jay was going to find out being Peter Jay Novins wasn't all fun and Jamies.

Back in his hotel room at the Americana he made a list of things he had to do. To survive. It was a new way of thinking, setting down one by one the everyday routine actions from which he was now cut off. He was all alone now, entirely and totally, for the first time in his life, cut off from everything. He could not depend on friends or associates or the authorities. It would be suicide to go to the police and say, 'I've split and one of me has assumed squatter's rights in my apartment; please go up there and arrest him.' No, he was on his own, and he had to exorcise Jay from the world strictly by his own wits and cunning.

Bearing in mind, of course, that Jay had the same degree of wit and cunning.

He crossed half a dozen items off the list. There was no need to call Jamie and find out what had happened to her the night before. Their relationship wasn't that binding in any case. Let Jay make the excuses. No need to cancel the credit cards, he had them with him. Let Jay pay the bills from the savings account. No need to contact any of his friends and warn them. He *couldn't* warn them, and if he did, what would he warn them against? Himself? But he did need clothes, fresh socks and underwear, a light jacket instead of his topcoat, a pair of gloves in case the weather turned. And he had to cancel out the delivery services to the apartment in a way that would prevent Jay from reinstating them; groceries, milk, dry cleaning, newspapers. He had to make it as difficult for him in there as possible. Unfortunately, the building provided heat and electricity and gas and he *had* to leave the phone connected.

The phone was his tie-line to victory, to routing Jay out of there.

When he had it all attended to, by three o'clock in the afternoon, he returned to the hotel room, took off his shoes, propped the pillows up on the bed, lay down and dialled a 9 for the outside line, then dialled his own number.

As it rang, he stared out the forty-fifth floor window of the hotel room, at the soul-less pylons of the RCA and Grants Buildings, the other dark-glass filing cabinets for people. Was it any wonder *anyone* managed to stay sane, stay whole in such surroundings? Living in cubicles, boxed and trapped and throttled, was it any surprise that people began to fall apart . . . even as *he* seemed to be falling apart? The wonder was that it all managed to hold together as well as it did. But the fractures were beginning to appear, culturally and now—as with Peter Novins, he mused—personally. The phone continued to ring. Clouds blocked out all light and the city was swamped by shadows. At three o'clock in the afternoon, the ominous threat of another night settled over Novins' hotel room.

The receiver was lifted at the other end. But Jay said nothing.

'It's me,' Novins said. 'How'd you enjoy your first day in my skin?'

'How did you enjoy your first day *out* of it?' he replied.

'Listen, I've got your act covered, friend, and your hours are numbered. The current account is gone, don't try to find it; you're going to have to go out to get food and when you do I'll be waiting . . .'

'Terrific,' Jay replied. 'But just so you don't waste your time, I had the locks changed today. Your keys don't work. And I bought groceries. Remember the fifty bucks I put away in the jewellery box?'

Novins cursed himself silently. He hadn't thought of that.

**'And I've been doing some figuring, Novins. Remember that old Jack London novel, 'The Star Rover'? Remember how he used astral projection to get out of his body? I think that's what's happened to me. I sent you out when I wasn't aware of it.'**

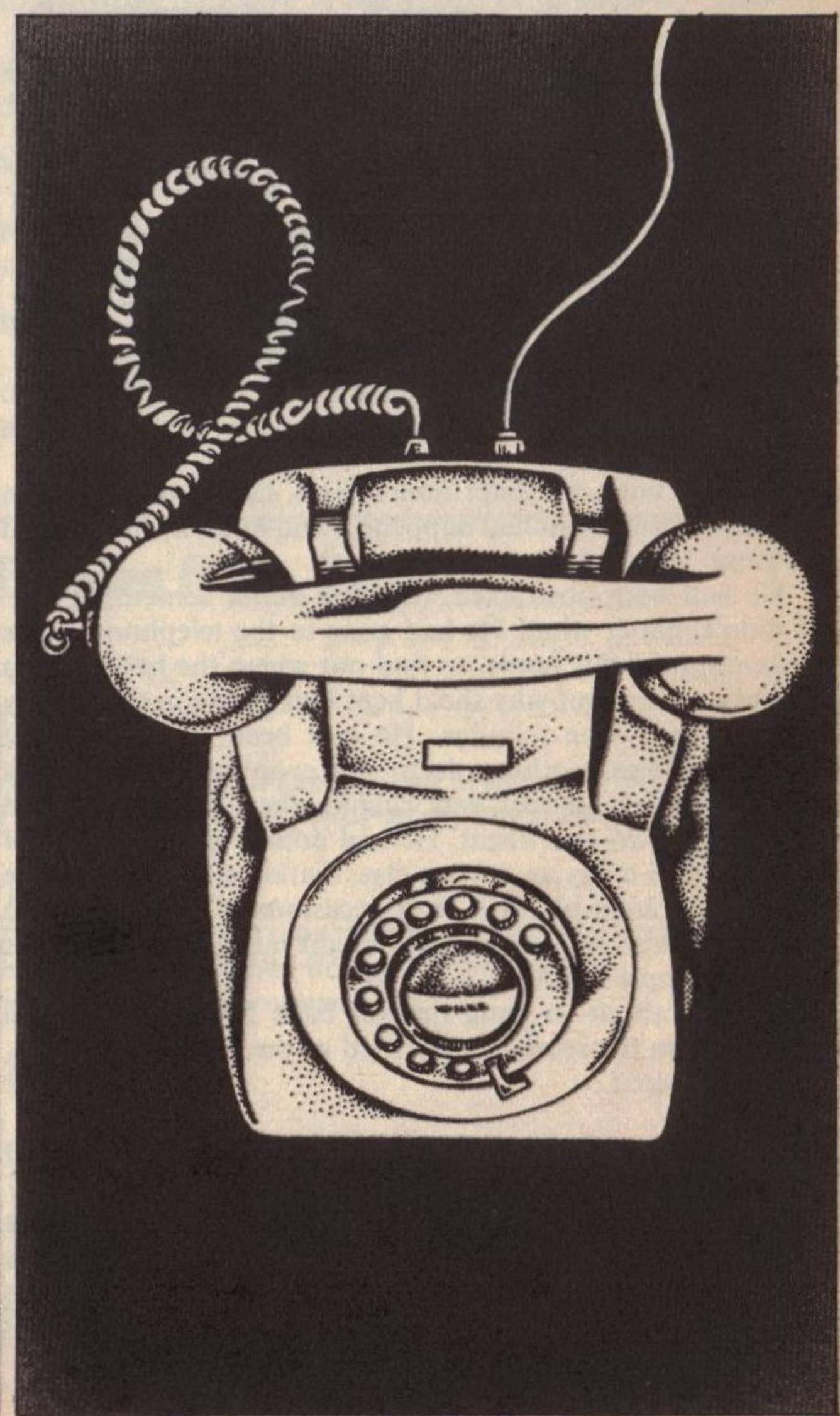
'So I've decided I'm me, and you're just a little piece that's wandered off. And I can get along just peachy-keen without that piece, so why don't you just go . . .'

'Hold it,' Novins interrupted, 'that's a sensational theory, but it's stuffed full of wild blueberry muffins, if you'll pardon my being so forward as to disagree with a smartass voice that's probably disembodied and doesn't have enough ectoplasm to take a healthy shit. Remember the weekend I went over to the lab with Kenny and he took that Kirlian photograph of my aura? Well, my theory is that something happened and the aura produced another me, or something . . .'

He slid down into silence. Neither theory was worth thinking about. He had no idea, *really*, what had happened. They hung there in silence for a long moment, then Jay said, 'Mother called this morning.'

Novins felt a hand squeeze his chest. 'What did she say?'  
'She said she knew you lied when you were down in Florida. She said she loved you and she forgave you and all she wants is to share your life with her.'

Novins closed his eyes. He didn't want to think about it. His mother was in her eighties, very sick, and just recovering from her second serious heart attack in three years. The end was near and, combining a business trip to Miami with a visit to her, he had gone to Florida the month before. He had never had much in common with his mother, had been on his own since his early teens, and though he supported her in her declining years, he refused to allow her to impose





on his existence. He seldom wrote letters, save to send a cheque, and during the two days he had spent in her apartment in Miami Beach he had thought he would go insane. He had wanted to bolt, and finally had lied to her that he was returning to New York a day earlier than his plans required. He had packed up and left her, checking into a hotel, and had spent the final day involved in business and that night had gone out with a secretary he dated occasionally when in Florida.

'How did she find out?' Novins asked.

'She called here and the answering service told her you were still in Florida and hadn't returned. They gave her the number of the hotel and she called there and found out you were registered for that night.'

Novins cursed himself. Why had he called the service to tell them where he was? He could have got away with one day of his business contacts not being able to reach him. 'Swell,' he said. 'And I suppose you didn't do anything to make her feel better.'

'On the contrary,' Jay said, 'I did what you never would have done. I made arrangements for her to come live here with me.'

Novins heard himself moan with pain. 'You did *what*? Jesus Christ, you're out of your fucking mind. How the hell am I going to take care of that old woman in New York? I've got work to do, places I have to go, I have a life to lead . . .'

'Not any more you don't, you guilty, selfish sonofabitch. Maybe *you* could live with the bad gut feelings about her, but not me. She'll be arriving in a week.'

'You're crazy,' Novins screamed. 'You're crazy!'

'Yeah,' Jay said, softly, and added, 'and you just lost your mother. Chew on *that* one, you creep.'

And he hung up.



### iii: Duesday

They decided between them that the one who *deserved* to be Peter Novins should take over the life. They had to make that decision; clearly, they could not go on as they had been; even two days had showed them half an existence was not possible. Both were fraying at the edges.

So Jay suggested they work their way through the pivot experiences of Novins' life, to see if he was really entitled to continue living.

'Everyone's entitled to go on living,' Novins said, vehemently. 'That's why we live. To say no to death.'

'You don't believe that for a second, Novins,' Jay said. 'You're a misanthrope. You hate people.'

'That's not true; I just don't like some of the things people *do*.'

'Like what, for instance? Like, for instance, you're always bitching about kids who wear ecology patches, who throw Dr Pepper cans in the bushes, like that, for instance?'

'That's good for starters,' Novins said.

'You hypocritical bastard,' Jay snarled back at him, 'you have the audacity to beef about that and you took on the Cumberland account.'

'That's another kind of thing!'

'My ass.'

**'You know damned well Cumberland's planning to strip mine the guts out of that county, and they're going to get away with it with that publicity campaign you dreamed up. Oh, you're one hell of a good PR man, Novins, but you've got the ethics of a weasel.'**

Novins was fuming, but Jay was right. He had felt lousy about taking on Cumberland from the start, but they were big, they were international, and the billing for the account

was handily in six figures. He has tackled the campaign with the same ferocity he brought to all his accounts, and the programme was solid. 'I have to make a living. Besides, if I didn't do it, someone else would. I'm only doing a job. They've got a restoration programme, don't forget that. They'll put that land back in shape.'

Jay laughed. 'That's what Eichmann said, "We have a terrific restoration programme, we'll put them Jews right back in shape, just a little gas to spiff 'em up." He was just doing a job, too, Novins. Have I mentioned lately that you stink on ice.'

Novins was shouting again. 'I suppose you'd have turned it down?'

'That's exactly what I did, old buddy,' Jay said. 'I called them today and told them to take their account and stuff it up their nose. I've got a call in to Nader right now, to see what he can do with all the data in the file.'

Novins was speechless. He lay there, under the covers, the Tuesday snow drifting in enormous flakes past the forty-fifth floor windows. Slowly, he let the receiver settle into the cradle. Only three days and his life was drifting apart inexorably; soon it would be impossible to knit it together.

His stomach ached. And all that day he had felt nauseated. Room service had sent up pot after pot of tea, but it hadn't helped. A throbbing headache was lodged just behind his left eye, and cold sweat covered his shoulders and chest.

He didn't know what to do, but he knew he was losing.

### iv: Woundsday

On Wednesday Jay called Novins. He never told him how he'd located him, he just called. 'How do you feel?' he asked. Novins could barely answer, the fever was close to immobilising.

'I just called to talk about Jeanine and Patty and that girl in Denver,' Jay said, and he launched into a long and stately recital of Novins' affairs, and how they had ended. It was not as Novins remembered it.

'That isn't true,' Novins managed to say, his voice deep and whispering, dry and nearly empty.

'It is true, Novins. That's what's so sad about it. That *it* is true and you've never had the guts to admit it, that you go from woman to woman without giving anything, always taking, and when you leave them—or they dump you—you've never learned a god damned thing. You've been married twice, divorced twice, you've been in and out of two dozen affairs and you haven't learned that you're one of those men who is simply no bloody good for a woman. So now you're 42 years old and you're finally coming to the dim understanding that you're going to spend all the rest of the days and nights of your life alone, because you can't stand the company of another human being for more than a month without turning into a vicious prick.'

'Not true,' murmured Novins.

'True, Novins, true. Flat true. You set after Patty and got her to leave her old man, and when you'd pried her loose, her and the kid, you set her up in that apartment with three hundred a month rent, and then you took off and left her to work it out herself. It's true, old buddy. So don't try and con me with that "I lead a happy life" bullshit.'

Novins simply lay there with his eyes closed, shivering with the fever.

Then Jay said, 'I saw Jamie last night. We talked about her future. It took some fast talking; she was really coming to hate you. But I think it'll work out if I go at it hard, and I *intend* to go at it hard. I don't intend to have any more years like I've had, Novins. From this point on it changes.'

The bulk of the buildings outside the window seemed to tremble behind the falling snow. Novins felt terribly cold. He didn't answer.

'We'll name the first one after you, Peter,' Jay said, and hung up.

That was Wednesday.

### v: Thornsday

There were no phone calls that day. Novins lay there, the television set mindlessly playing and replaying the five minute instruction film on the pay-movie preview channel, the ghost-image of a dark-haired girl in a grey suit showing him how to charge a first-run film to his hotel bill. After many hours he heard himself reciting the instructions along with her. He slept a great deal. He thought about Jeanine and Patty, the girl in Denver whose name he could not recall, and Jamie.

After many more hours, he thought about insects, but he didn't know what that meant. There were no phone calls that day. It was Thursday.

Shortly before midnight, the fever broke, and he cried himself back to sleep.

### vi: Freeday

A key turned in the lock and the hotel room door opened. Novins was sitting in a mass-produced imitation of a Saarinen pedestal chair, its seat treated with Scotch-Gard. He had been staring out the window at the geometric irrelevancy of the glass-wall buildings. It was near dusk, and the city was grey as cardboard.

He turned at the sound of the door opening and was not surprised to see himself walk in.

Jay's nose and cheeks were still red from the cold outside. He unzipped his jacket and stuffed his kid gloves into a pocket, removed the jacket and threw it on the unmade bed. 'Really cold out there,' he said. He went into the bathroom and Novins heard the sound of water running.

Jay returned in a few minutes, rubbing his hands together.

'That helps,' he said. He sat down on the edge of the bed and looked at Novins.

'You look terrible, Peter,' he said.

'I haven't been at all well,' Novins answered drily. 'I don't seem to be myself these days.'

Jay smiled briefly. 'I see you're coming to terms with it. That ought to help.'

Novins stood up. The thin light from the room-long window shone through him like white fire through milk glass. 'You're looking well,' he said.

'I'm getting better, Peter. It'll be a while, but I'm going to be okay.'

Novins walked across the room and stood against the wall, hands clasped behind his back. 'I remember the archetypes from Jung. Are you my shadow, my persona, my anima or my animus?'

'What am I now, or what was I when I got loose?'

'Either way.'

'I suppose I was your shadow. Now I'm the self.'

'And I'm becoming the shadow.'

'No, you're becoming a memory. A bad memory.'

'That's pretty ungracious.'

'I was sick for a long time, Peter. I don't know what the trigger was that broke us apart, but it happened and I can't be too sorry about it. If it hadn't happened I'd have been you till I died. It would have been a lousy life and a miserable death.'

Novins shrugged. 'Too late to worry about it now. Things working out with Jamie?'

Jay nodded. 'Mom comes in Tuesday afternoon. I'm renting a car to pick her up at Kennedy. I talked to her doctors. They say she doesn't have too long. But for whatever she's got, I'm determined to make up for the last twenty-five years since Dad died.'

Novins smiled and nodded. 'That's good.'

'Listen,' Jay said slowly, with difficulty, 'I just came over to ask if there was anything you wanted me to do . . . anything *you* would've done if . . . if it had been different.'

Novins spread his hands and thought about it for a moment. 'No, I don't think so, nothing special. You might try and get some money to Jeanine's mother, for Jeanine's care, maybe. That wouldn't hurt.'

'I already took care of it. I figured that would be on your mind.'

Novins smiled. 'That's good. Thanks.'

'Anything else . . .?'

Novins shook his head. They stayed that way, hardly moving, till night had fallen outside the window. In the darkness, Jay could barely see Novins standing against the wall.

Finally, Jay stood and put on his jacket, zipped up and put on his left glove. 'I've got to go.'

Novins spoke from the shadows. 'Yeah. Well, take care of me, will you?'

Jay didn't answer. He walked to Novins and extended his right hand. The touch of Novins' hand on his was like the whisper of a cold wind; there was no pressure.

Then he left.

Novins walked back to the window and stared out.

### vii: Shatterday

When the maid came in to make up the bed, she found the room empty. It was terribly cold in the room on the forty-fifth floor. When Peter Novins did not return that day, or the next, the management of the Americana marked him as a skip, and turned it over to a collection agency.

The bill was sent to Peter Novins' apartment on Manhattan's upper east side.

It was promptly paid, by Peter Jay Novins, with a brief, but sincere note of apology. ☹

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## Nebula Award Stories 9

Edited by Kate Wilhelm

Published by Victor Gollancz, 1974  
287pp, £3

Reviewed by James Goddard

Avid readers of sf will be well aware of the regular plethora of 'Best SF' anthologies which spring from publishing houses like hardy annuals. Currently there are at least four such volumes: The Annual Best SF edited by that terrible two-some Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss; Terry Carr's The Best Science Fiction of the Year; Lester Del Rey's Best SF Stories of the Year, and Donald Wollheim's The Annual World's Best SF. With such awe inspiring titles as these one could well be forgiven for suspecting a vast degree of interchangeability between the contents of the anthologies, but this is not the case; each book is as individual as its editor, and whereas sometimes the same story does crop up in more than one book, someone who collects all these annual products, as I do, will have a wide selection of what these estimable gentlemen consider to be the best stories of any given year. That is the thing about these anthologies you see—they represent, to a very large degree, individual tastes as to what is good or bad in the genre. So, to find out what you regard as best you need only match your tastes with those of the respective editors, and see whose choices you agree with most closely. What could be simpler? For myself, I rank the Harrison/Aldiss selection tops and Terry Carr's a close second, but that's another story.

There is, however, a further addition to this surfeit of annual anthologies, which operates on a different principle from any of the others; a principle which is probably more trustworthy than the idiosyncracies of individual editors. For a start the editorship is largely an honorary title; the editor has virtually no control over the fictional contents of the volume. This anthology has been published annually for nine years now, and it's called Nebula Award Stories. This is a brief explanatory quotation from the book, which shows how the stories are chosen for inclusion:

The method of choosing the winners of the Nebula Awards is of the utmost simplicity. During the course of the year the active members of The Science Fiction Writers of America nominate stories and novels as they appear in print. There is no limit to this list that grows to an unwieldy length as the year draws to an end. There is then a final nominating ballot and this time there is a limit in order that the final ballot be short enough for everyone to read everything on it. At every stage only the active members of the organisation are permitted

to vote. The final ballot, and the winning stories are selected by writers judging other writers.

In other words, the works of the nominated writers are judged by a jury of their peers, albeit a large jury. This anthology contains the winning stories in the shorter than novel-length categories, a selection of the runners-up, and supplementary material consisting of an erudite introduction, a science article by Ben Bova, an afterword by Damon Knight, notes on the authors, a complete list of Nebula Award winners since the award's inception, and a beautifully unclassifiable 'short story' by Carol Emshwiller.

The award for best novella of 1973 went to a story called The Death of Dr Island by Gene Wolfe. This same author published a story entitled The Island of Dr Death and Other Stories in Orbit 7 (1970) which was also nominated for a Nebula award, a remarkable near double in titles, as well as a clever play on words. Some readers may already be familiar with Gene Wolfe's work, though little of it has been published in this country to date. Gollancz have published his novel The Fifth Head of Cerberus, a remarkably controlled performance which seems to have passed by almost unnoticed. The present story is a beautifully-written, poignant tale of a young boy who is so incurably mad that he is used as a catalyst in psychiatric experiments to treat other insane people. The experiments take place on a small artificial planet, in complete isolation, where nothing can interfere with the clinical conditions. No humans, apart from the patients, are present, and the planet itself is the roboticised psychiatrist who watches over their progress and decides when they are fit to rejoin society. When the story opens, the boy, Nicholas Kenneth de Vore, is becoming aware of his surroundings. Before much time has passed, he encounters the patient his presence is to aid, Ignacio, a strange and Messianic figure, a homicidal maniac with a high IQ. We learn that Dr Island expects Ignacio to exorcise his madness by killing Nicholas, and then be able to return to useful society, where, Dr Island believes, he is destined for greatness.

The only other occupant of this strange hospital is a girl, Diane, who could also be helped by Nicholas's presence. Things don't turn out quite as Dr Island expects. Ignacio is helped and returned to the outside world, but he exorcises his madness by slaughtering the pathetic figure of Diane, rather than the somewhat pugnacious Nicholas. Nicholas is then left alone, to be recycled along with the planet, and to await a new inmate.

It's very easy to see why this story won the award, it has power and poetry about it which lend it a remarkable quality even among the literate sf we've become accustomed to in these enlightened days. The prefatory quote, the poem 'Heaven-Haven: A nun takes the veil'

by that remarkable Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins is also pleasingly apt.

Vonda N McIntyre is another name that will be unfamiliar to most readers of Science Fiction Monthly. Her story, Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand from Analog, won the award for best novelette of 1973. Despite the metaphysical sounding title, this story deals with very tangible things, even if they are, at the moment, to be found only in the realms of fiction. Its main ingredient reads like a fusion of science and magic, but a form of magic that has achieved the proportions of a science within the context of the story. Mist, Grass and Sand are snakes, but snakes which are somehow under the power of their keeper, a strange and beautiful young woman called Snake. Snake and her cohorts form a kind of symbiotic relationship. She feeds and guards them and in return the snakes help her perform her functions as a healer. By impregnating the snakes with various drugs she is able to transform the nature of their venom, thus producing palliatives, and use them as a kind of animated syringe.

The action takes place in a small village of ignorant peasants who regard Snake's abilities as close to witchcraft, but are, nevertheless, forced to call upon her when a child becomes seriously ill. The village's own priests and leaders are unable to offer a cure and Snake is their final hope. Despite the fact that she is there to help, Snake has to do battle with the prejudice, superstition and ignorance of the villagers, and the story provides a good illustration of how people will try to reject unusual things which they don't understand, even when they hold out the prospect of good.

The authoress of this tale is a trained biologist, which lends at least a degree of viability to the processes described in her narrative. A further vindication of its precepts is the fact that the story first appeared in Analog the most scientific of the science fiction magazines. On the basis of this success alone, Vonda McIntyre is a name to watch for in the future, especially as she also had a story placed as a 'runner up' in the short story category of the awards. Let's hope her works soon become more familiar to British readers.

The third award winning story in this volume, and the successful candidate for the short story award, is by James Tiptree Jr and is entitled Love is the Plan the Plan is Death. Tiptree has established himself as a phenomenal talent in the short time he's been writing sf, and quite a few of his stories seem destined for 'classic' status within the field. To find out more about this remarkable man I would direct you to Ten Thousand Light-Years From Home (Ace Books, New York, 1973), a collection of fifteen of Tiptree's short stories, and a representative cross-section of his work.

Unfortunately, the story included here does not strike me as the best of his year. Far

superior to it is The Girl who Was Plugged In, another nominated story, but in the novelette class, and a runner-up to the Vonda McIntyre story discussed above. Competition was hot this year! To be quite frank, the story included here was almost meaningless to me, it just didn't make sense, which might be as much my fault as the author's. Briefly, I think it was about creatures of an alien life form living on a planet which suffers from extremes of temperature. Only a few of them can survive the bitter winters, and then only by feeding off their fellows. The females of the race are larger and stronger, and in order to perpetuate the species it is they who must survive the winter. They achieve this by lulling their mates with a sense of 'love', live off their food-gathering efforts for a while, get themselves impregnated and, as they come to term, change for the worst and eat their husbands. All this sounds rather trite, and I'm afraid Mr Tiptree has, unusually, failed to communicate with me. I found this to be the most disappointing story in the book. To be fair to the author, there are passages of beauty, pathos and poetry in the story, but the style is so fragmental that, for me, it failed to present a whole.

The remainder of the fictional contents of the anthology consists of a selection of the runners-up. Edward Bryant's Shark deals with a somewhat abortive attempt to transfer the intelligence of humans to sharks in order to use them as agents provocateurs in a war. It's a well done story, and the dénouement is nicely downbeat for a change. With Morning Comes Mistfall by George RR Martin is a whimsical story about a mist-shrouded planet and its possible habitation by Yeti-type monsters with a touch of Loch Ness. Harlan Ellison's The Deathbird is about a monumental quest across a vast span of time and a barren future landscape inhabited by spectres; this is very nicely done, and it should have received an award, but Harlan has a full shelf already, and it's good to have awards more widely distributed. Finally, Norman Spinrad has A Thing of Beauty, the only light relief in the book, about a souvenir hunter from Japan.

If I may, I will refer back very briefly to my opening remarks. You can put your trust in one of the individual editors, and read his personal selections. (Terry Carr's 1973 anthology is the only one which actually contains any of these award stories, and he hit two out of three, which in this difficult field is a good score.) Or you can trust the hundreds of SFWA members, who 'elected' the stories in this volume, perhaps the highest accolade. If you are interested in diversity as well as quality then Nebula Award Stories 9 is highly recommended, for not only is it a record of the best by consent, but also adds to a living and growing record of what the field thinks of itself—and therein lies the difference!

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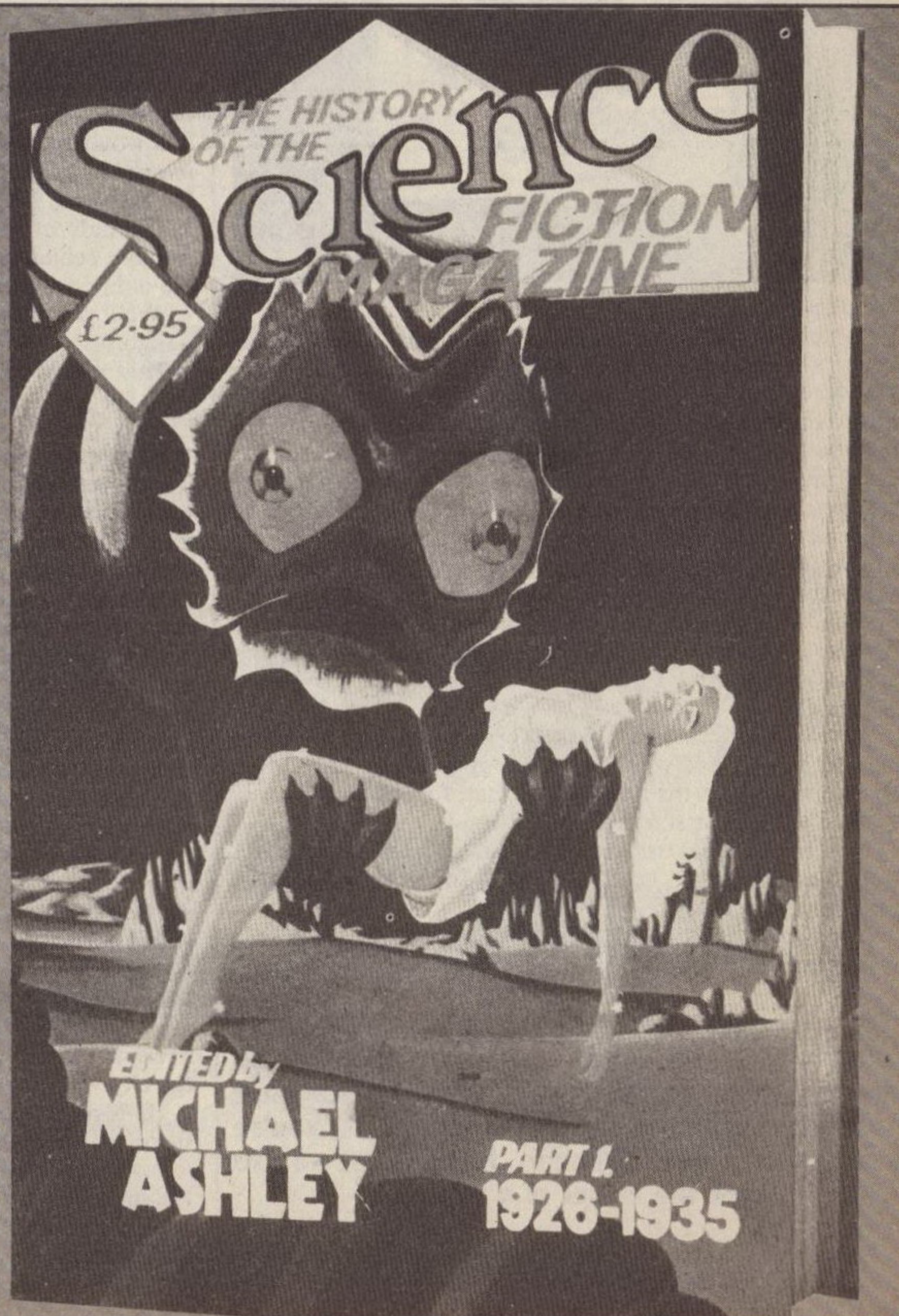
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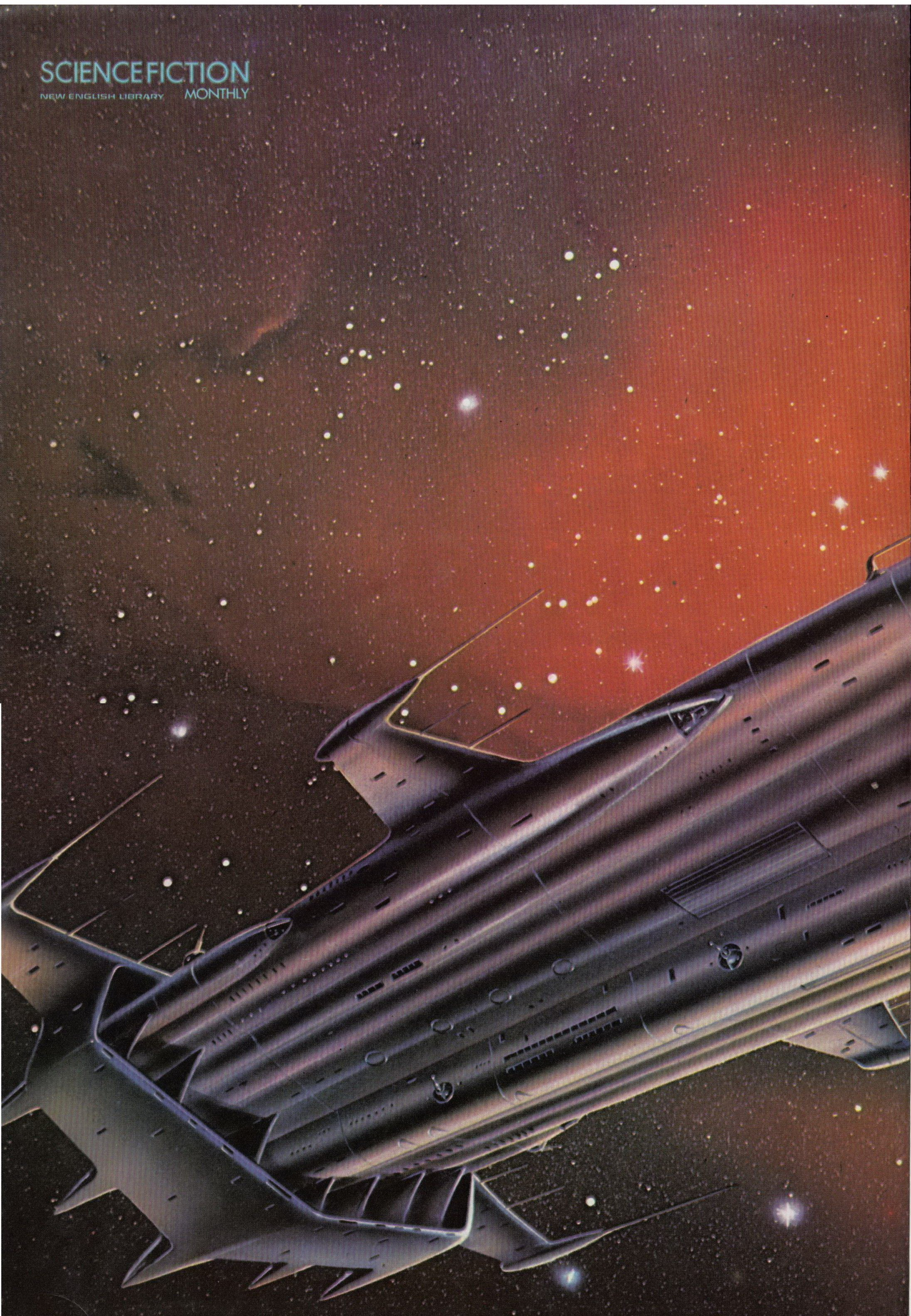








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# TRURL'S ELECTRONIC BARD

BY STANISLAW LEM

This tale is just one of the many adventures of Trurl and Klapaucius that STANISLAW LEM has very kindly, and very adroitly, recorded for us in his new book, 'The Cyberiad', which will be published by Secker and Warburg in September. The main characters are a couple of 'cosmic constructors' who are consistently trying to out-invent each other. In this episode Trurl attempts to restore his reputation, after building a calculating machine that makes two plus two equal seven, by inventing a machine that writes poetry. The idea is a great success but, although it wins the admiration of Klapaucius, it has some quite disastrous repercussions.

Trurl had once had the misfortune to build an enormous calculating machine that was capable of only one operation, namely the addition of two and two, and *that* it did incorrectly. The machine also proved to be extremely stubborn, and the quarrel that ensued between it and its creator almost cost the latter his life. From that time on Klapaucius teased Trurl unmercifully, making comments at every opportunity, until Trurl decided to silence him once and for all by building a machine that could write poetry. First Trurl collected eight hundred and twenty tons of books on cybernetics and twelve thousand tons of the finest poetry, then sat down to read it all. Whenever he felt he just couldn't take another chart or equation, he would switch over to verse, and vice versa. After a while it became clear to him that the construction of the machine itself was child's play in comparison with the writing of the programme. The programme found in the head of an average poet, after all was written by the poet's civilisation, and that civilisation was in turn programmed by the civilisation that preceded it, and so on to the very Dawn of Time, when those bits of information that concerned the poet-to-be were still swirling about in the primordial chaos of the cosmic deep. Hence in order to programme a poetry machine, one would first have to repeat the entire Universe from the beginning—or at least a good piece of it.

Anyone else in Trurl's place would have given up then and there, but our intrepid constructor was nothing daunted. He built a machine and fashioned a digital model of the Void, an Electrostatic Spirit to move upon the face of the electrolytic waters, and he introduced the parameter of light, a protogalactic cloud or two, and by degrees worked his way up to the First Ice Age—Trurl could move at this rate because his machine was able, in one five-billionth of a second, to simulate one hundred septillion events at forty octillion different locations simultaneously. And if anyone questions these figures, let him work it out for himself.

Next Trurl began to model Civilisation, the striking of

fires with flints and the tanning of hides, and he provided for dinosaurs and floods, bipedality and taillessness, then made the paleopaleface (*Albuminidis sapientia*), which begat the paleface, which begat the gadget, and so it went, from aeon to millennium, in the endless hum of electrical currents and eddies. Often the machine turned out to be too small for the computer simulation of a new epoch, and Trurl would have to tack on an auxiliary unit—until he ended up, at last, with a veritable metropolis of tubes and terminals, circuits and shunts, all so tangled and involved that the devil himself couldn't have made head or tail of it. But Trurl managed somehow, he only had to go back twice—once, almost to the beginning, when he discovered that Abel had murdered Cain and not Cain Abel (the result, apparently, of a defective fuse), and once, only three hundred million years back to the middle of the Mesozoic stages, when after going from fish to amphibian to reptile to mammal, something odd took place among the primates and instead of great apes he came out with grey drapes. A fly, it seems, had gotten into the machine and shorted out the polyphase step-down directional widget. Otherwise everything went like a dream. Antiquity and the Middle Ages were recreated, then the period of revolutions and reforms—which gave the machine a few nasty jolts—and then civilisation progressed in such leaps and bounds that Trurl had to hose down the coils and cores repeatedly to keep them from overheating.

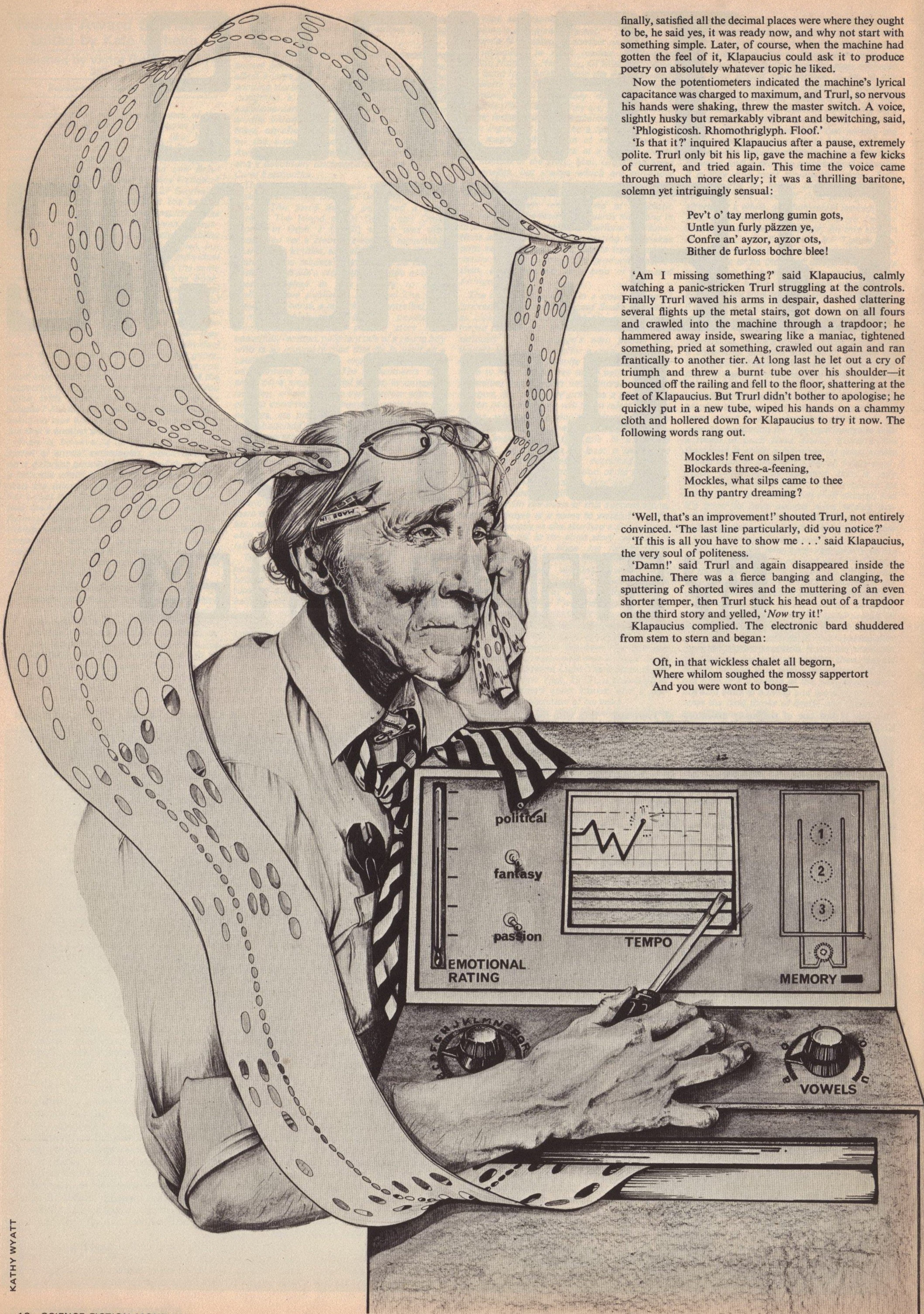
Towards the end of the twentieth century the machine began to tremble, first sideways, then lengthwise—for no apparent reason. This alarmed Trurl; he brought out cement and grappling irons just in case. But fortunately these weren't needed; instead of jumping its moorings, the machine settled down and soon had left the twentieth century far behind. Civilisations came and went thereafter in fifty-thousand-year intervals: these were the fully intelligent beings from whom Trurl himself stemmed. Spool upon spool of computerised history was filled and ejected into storage bins; soon there were so many spools that, even if you stood at the top of the machine with high-power binoculars, you wouldn't see the end of them. And all to construct some versifier! But then, such is the way of scientific fanaticism. At last the programmes were ready; all that remained was to pick out the most applicable—else the electropoet's education would take several million years at the very least.

During the next two weeks Trurl fed general instructions into his future electropoet, then set up all the necessary logic circuits, emotive elements, semantic centres. He was

about to invite Klapaucius to attend a trial run, but thought better of it and started the machine himself. It immediately proceeded to deliver a lecture on the grinding of crystallographical surfaces as an introduction to the study of sub-molecular magnetic anomalies. Trurl bypassed half the logic circuits and made the emotive more electromotive; the machine sobbed, went into hysterics, then finally said, blubbering terribly, what a cruel, cruel world this was. Trurl intensified the semantic fields and attached a strength of character component; the machine informed him that from now on he would carry out its every wish and to begin with add six floors to the nine it already had, so it could better meditate upon the meaning of existence. Trurl installed a philosophical throttle instead; the machine fell silent and sulked. Only after endless pleading and cajoling was he able to get it to recite something: 'I had a little froggy.' That appeared to exhaust its repertoire. Trurl adjusted, modulated, expostulated, disconnected, ran checks, reconnected, reset, did everything he could think of, and the machine presented him with a poem that made him thank heaven Klapaucius wasn't there to laugh—imagine, simulating the whole Universe from scratch, not to mention Civilisation in every particular, and to end up with such dreadful doggerel! Trurl put in six cliché filters, but they snapped like matches; he had to make them out of pure corundum steel. This seemed to work, so he jacked the semanticity up all the way, plugged in an alternating rhyme generator—which nearly ruined everything, since the machine resolved to become a missionary among destitute tribes on far-flung planets. But at the very last minute, just as he was ready to give up and take a hammer to it, Trurl was struck by an inspiration; tossing out all the logic circuits, he replaced them with self-regulating egocentripetal narcissists. The machine simpered a little, whimpered a little, laughed bitterly, complained of an awful pain on its third floor, said that in general it was fed up, though, life was beautiful but men were such beasts and how sorry they'd all be when it was dead and gone. Then it asked for pen and paper. Trurl sighed with relief, switched it off and went to bed. The next morning he went to see Klapaucius. Klapaucius, hearing that he was invited to attend the début of Trurl's electronic bard, dropped everything and followed—so eager was he to be an eyewitness to his friend's humiliation.

Trurl let the machine warm up first, kept the power low, ran up the metal stairs several times to take readings (the machine was like the engine of a giant steamer galleried, with rows of rivets, dials and valves on every tier), till





finally, satisfied all the decimal places were where they ought to be, he said yes, it was ready now, and why not start with something simple. Later, of course, when the machine had gotten the feel of it, Klapaucius could ask it to produce poetry on absolutely whatever topic he liked.

Now the potentiometers indicated the machine's lyrical capacitance was charged to maximum, and Trurl, so nervous his hands were shaking, threw the master switch. A voice, slightly husky but remarkably vibrant and bewitching, said, 'Phlogisticosh. Rhomothriglyph. Floof.'

'Is that it?' inquired Klapaucius after a pause, extremely polite. Trurl only bit his lip, gave the machine a few kicks of current, and tried again. This time the voice came through much more clearly; it was a thrilling baritone, solemn yet intriguingly sensual:

Pev't o' tay merlong gumin got,  
Untle yun furly päzzen ye,  
Confre an' ayzor, ayzor ots,  
Bither de furloss bochre blee!

'Am I missing something?' said Klapaucius, calmly watching a panic-stricken Trurl struggling at the controls. Finally Trurl waved his arms in despair, dashed clattering several flights up the metal stairs, got down on all fours and crawled into the machine through a trapdoor; he hammered away inside, swearing like a maniac, tightened something, pried at something, crawled out again and ran frantically to another tier. At long last he let out a cry of triumph and threw a burnt tube over his shoulder—it bounced off the railing and fell to the floor, shattering at the feet of Klapaucius. But Trurl didn't bother to apologise; he quickly put in a new tube, wiped his hands on a chammy cloth and hollered down for Klapaucius to try it now. The following words rang out.

Mockles! Fent on silpen tree,  
Blockards three-a-feening,  
Mockles, what silps came to thee  
In thy pantry dreaming?

'Well, that's an improvement!' shouted Trurl, not entirely convinced. 'The last line particularly, did you notice?'

'If this is all you have to show me . . .' said Klapaucius, the very soul of politeness.

'Damn!' said Trurl and again disappeared inside the machine. There was a fierce banging and clanging, the sputtering of shorted wires and the muttering of an even shorter temper, then Trurl stuck his head out of a trapdoor on the third story and yelled, 'Now try it!'

Klapaucius complied. The electronic bard shuddered from stem to stern and began:

Oft, in that wickless chalet all begorn,  
Where whilom sougled the mossy sappertort  
And you were wont to bong—



Trurl yanked out a few cables in a fury, something rattled and wheezed, the machine fell silent. Klapaucius laughed so hard he had to sit on the floor. Then suddenly, as Trurl was rushing back and forth, there was a crackle, a clack, and the machine with perfect poise said:

The Petty and the Small  
Are overcome with gall  
When Genius, having faltered, fails to fall.

Klapaucius too, I ween,  
Will turn the deepest green  
To hear such flawless verse from Trurl's machine.

'There you are, an epigram! And wonderfully apropos!' laughed Trurl, racing down the metal stairs and flinging himself delightedly into his colleague's arms. Klapaucius, quite taken aback, was no longer laughing.

'What, *that*?' he said. 'That's nothing. Besides, you had it all set up beforehand.'

'Set up!'

'Oh, it's quite obvious . . . the ill-disguised hostility, the poverty of thought, the crudeness of execution.'

'All right, then ask it something else! Whatever you like! Go on! What are you waiting for? Afraid?'

'Just a minute,' said Klapaucius, annoyed. He was trying to think of a request as difficult as possible, aware that any argument on the quality of the verse the machine might be able to produce would be hard if not impossible to settle either way. Suddenly he brightened and said,

'Have it compose a poem—a poem about a haircut! But lofty, noble, tragic, timeless, full of love, treachery, retribution, quiet heroism in the face of certain doom! Six lines, cleverly rhymed, and every word beginning with the letter *s*!'

'And why not throw in a full exposition of the general theory of nonlinear automata while you're at it?' growled Trurl. 'You can't give it such idiotic . . .'

But he didn't finish. A melodious voice filled the hall with the following:

Seduced, shaggy Samson snored.  
She scissored short. Sorely shorn,  
Soon shackled slave, Samson sighed,  
Silently scheming,  
Sightlessly seeking  
Some savage, spectacular suicide.

'Well, what do you say to that?' asked Trurl, his arms folded proudly. But Klapaucius was already shouting,

'Now all in *g*! A sonnet, trochaic hexameter, about an old cyclotron who kept sixteen artificial mistresses, blue and radioactive, had four wings, three purple pavilions, two lacquered chests, each containing exactly one thousand medallions bearing the likeness of Czar Murdicog the Headless . . .'

'Grinding gleeful gears, Gerontogyron grabbed/Giggling gynecobalt-60 golems,' began the machine, but Trurl leaped to the console, shut off the power and turned, defending the machine with his body.

'Enough!' he said, hoarse with indignation. 'How dare you waste a great talent on such drivel? Either give it decent poems to write or I call the whole thing off!'

'What, those aren't decent poems?' protested Klapaucius. 'Certainly not! I didn't build a machine to solve ridiculous crossword puzzles! That's hack work, not Great Art! Just give it a topic, any topic, as difficult as you like . . .'

Klapaucius thought, and thought some more. Finally he nodded and said,

'Very well. Let's have a love poem, lyrical, pastoral, and expressed in the language of pure mathematics. Tensor algebra mainly, with a little topology and higher calculus, if need be. But with feeling, you understand, and in the cybernetic spirit.'

'Love and tensor algebra? Have you taken leave of your senses?' Trurl began, but stopped, for his electronic bard was already declaiming:

Come, let us hasten to a higher plane,  
Where dyads tread the fairy fields of Venn,  
Their indices bedecked from one to  $n$ ,  
Commingle in an endless Markov chain!

Come, every frustum longs to be a cone,  
And every vector dreams of matrices.  
Hark to the gentle gradient of the breeze:  
It whispers of a more ergodic zone.

In Riemann, Hilbert or in Banach space  
Let superscripts and subscripts go their ways.  
Our asymptotes no longer out of phase,  
We shall encounter, counting, face to face.

I'll grant thee random access to my heart,  
Thou'lt tell me all the constants of thy love;  
And so we two shall all love's lemmas prove,  
And in our bound partition never part.

For what did Cauchy know, or Christoffel,  
Or Fourier, or any Boole or Euler,  
Wielding their compasses, their pens and rulers,  
Of thy supernal sinusoidal spell?

Cancel me not—for what then shall remain?  
Abscissas, some mantissas, modules, modes,  
A root or two, a torus and a node:  
The inverse of my verse, a null domain.

Ellipse of bliss, converge, O lips divine!  
The product of our scalars is defined!  
*Cyberiad* draws nigh, and the skew mind  
Cuts capers like a happy haversine.

I see the eigenvalue in thine eye,  
I hear the tender tensor in thy sigh.  
Bernoulli would have been content to die,  
Had he but known such  $a^2 \cos 2 \theta$ !

This concluded the poetic competition, since Klapaucius suddenly had to leave, saying he would return shortly with more topics for the machine; but he never did, afraid that in so doing, he might give Trurl more cause to boast. Trurl of course let it be known that Klapaucius had fled in order to hide his envy and chagrin. Klapaucius meanwhile spread the word that Trurl had more than one screw loose on the subject of that so-called mechanical versifier.

Not much time went by before news of Trurl's computer laureate reached the genuine—that is, the ordinary—poets. Deeply offended, they resolved to ignore the machine's existence. A few, however, were curious enough to visit Trurl's electronic bard in secret. It received them courteously, in a hall piled high with closely written paper (for it worked day and night without pause). Now these poets were all avant-garde, and Trurl's machine wrote only in the traditional manner; Trurl, no connoisseur of poetry, had relied heavily on the classics in setting up its programme. The machine's guests jeered and left in triumph. The machine was self-programming, however, and in addition had a special ambition-amplifying mechanism with glory-seeking circuits, and very soon a great change took place. Its poems became difficult, ambiguous, so intricate and charged with meaning that they were totally incomprehensible. When the next group of poets came to mock and laugh, the machine replied with an improvisation that was so modern, it took their breath away, and the second poem seriously weakened a certain sonneteer who had two State awards to his name, not to mention a statue in the city park. After that, no poet could resist the fatal urge to cross lyrical swords with Trurl's electronic bard. They came from far and wide, carrying trunks and suitcases full of manuscripts. The machine would let each challenger recite, instantly grasp the algorithm of his verse, and use it to compose an answer in exactly the same style, only two hundred and twenty to three hundred and forty-seven times better.

The machine quickly grew so adept at this, that it could cut down a first-class rhapsodist with no more than one or two quatrains. But the worst of it was, all the third-rate poets emerged unscathed; being third-rate, they didn't know good poetry from bad and consequently had no inkling of their crushing defeat. One of them, true, broke his leg when, on the way out, he tripped over an epic poem the machine had just completed, a prodigious work beginning with the words:

Arms, and machines I sing, that, forc'd by fate,  
And haughty Homo's unrelenting hate,  
Expell'd and exil'd, left the Terran shore . . .

The true poets, on the other hand, were decimated by Trurl's electronic bard, though it never laid a finger on them. First an aged elegiast, then two modernists committed suicide, leaping off a cliff that unfortunately happened to lie hard by the road leading from Trurl's place to the nearest train station.

There were many poet protests staged, demonstrations, demands that the machine be served an injunction to cease and desist. But no one else appeared to care. In fact, magazine editors generally approved: Trurl's electronic bard writing under several thousand different pseudonyms at once, had a poem for every occasion, to fit whatever length might be required, and of such high quality that the magazine would be torn from hand to hand by eager readers. On the street one could see enraptured faces, bemused smiles, sometimes even hear a quiet sob. Everyone knew the poems of Trurl's electronic bard, the air rang with its delightful rhymes. Not infrequently, those citizens of a greater sensitivity, struck by a particularly marvellous metaphor or assonance, would actually fall into a faint. But this colossus of inspiration was prepared even for that eventuality; it would immediately supply the necessary number of restorative rondelets.

Truel himself had no little trouble in connection with his invention. The classicists, generally elderly, were fairly harmless; they confined themselves to throwing stones through his windows and smearing the sides of his house with an unmentionable substance. But it was much worse with the younger poets. One, for example, as powerful in body as his verse was in imagery, beat Trurl to a pulp. And while the constructor lay in the hospital, events marched on. Not a day passed without a suicide or a funeral; picket lines formed around the hospital; one could hear gunfire in the distance—instead of manuscripts in their suitcases, more and more poets were bringing rifles to defeat Trurl's electronic bard. But the bullets merely bounced off its calm exterior. After his return from the hospital, Trurl, weak and desperate, finally decided one night to dismantle the homeostatic Homer he had created.

But when he approached the machine, limping slightly, it noticed the pliers in his hand and the grim glitter in his eye, and delivered such an eloquent, impassioned plea for mercy, that the constructor burst into tears, threw down his tools and hurried back to his room, wading through new works of genius, an ocean of paper that filled the hall chest-high from end to end and rustled incessantly.

The following month Trurl received a bill for the electricity consumed by the machine and almost fell off his chair. If only he could have consulted his old friend Klapaucius! But Klapaucius was nowhere to be found. So Trurl had to come up with something by himself. One dark night he unplugged the machine, took it apart, loaded it on to a ship, flew to a certain small asteroid, and there assembled it again, giving it an atomic pile for its source of creative energy.

Then he sneaked home. But that wasn't the end of it. The electronic bard, deprived now of the possibility of having its masterpieces published, began to broadcast them on all wave lengths, which soon sent the passengers and crews of passing rockets into states of stanzaic stupefaction, and more delicate souls were seized with severe attacks of aesthetic ecstasy besides. Having determined the cause of this disturbance, the Cosmic Fleet Command issued Trurl an official request for the immediate termination of his device, which was seriously impairing the health and well-being of all travellers.

At that point Trurl went into hiding, so they dropped a team of technicians on the asteroid to gag the machine's output unit. It overwhelmed them with a few ballads, however, and the mission had to be abandoned. Deaf technicians were sent next, but the machine employed pantomime. After that, there began to be talk of an eventual punitive expedition, of bombing the electropoet into submission. But just then some ruler from a neighbouring star system came, bought the machine and hauled it off, asteroid and all, to his kingdom.

Now Trurl could appear in public again and breathe easy. True, lately there had been supernovae exploding on the southern horizon, the like of which no one had ever seen before, and there were rumours that this had something to do with poetry. According to one report, that same ruler, moved by some strange whim, had ordered his astroengineers to connect the electronic bard to a constellation of white supergiants, thereby transforming each line of verse into a stupendous solar prominence; thus the Greatest Poet in the Universe was able to transmit its thermonuclear creations to all the illimitable reaches of space at once. But even if there were any truth to this, it was all too far away to bother Trurl, who vowed by everything that was ever held sacred, never, never again to make a cybernetic model of the Muse. ☹

# TRURL'S ELECTRONIC BARD



# NEWS

By Julie Davis

## Dune at the Movies!

Frank Herbert's marathon novel *Dune* is about to be made into a film; shooting begins next month (September) in Mexico. Alexandro Jodorowsky, well known for two of his earlier films, *El Topo* and *The Sacred Mountain*, will direct *Dune* and Douglas Trumbull who worked on Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* will handle the special effects. The film will be produced by Michel Seydoux of Camera One.

It is rumoured that Orson Welles and Charlotte Rampling have been signed for the movie and Salvador Dali has been approached for the part of the Emperor.

Jodorowsky has prepared a summary of the script for the actors and future distributors of the film; only fifty copies were printed and *SFM* has been lucky enough to get hold of one. The booklet contains several colour drawings of the main characters, all by Jean Giraud who is a French artist well known for his work with sf magazines. The artist has also illustrated the prologue of the novel and, in fact, turned it into a comic strip which is how Jodorowsky intends to use it in the film.

Further details of casting and production will appear on this News page as soon as they are available.

## Nasty Rumours

Maxim Jakubowski (*SFM*'s record reviewer) has prepared an anthology of sf and fantasy stories about rock, jazz and classical music, to appear early next year. It will probably be published by Charisma Books, a subsidiary of Charisma Records, and will include stories from Mike Moorcock, JG Ballard, Theodore Sturgeon, Philip K Dick, DG Compton, John Kippax, Lang Jones, Charles Platt, Norman Spinrad, M John Harrison and many others . . . Ian Watson's first novel *The Embedding* won this year's French Apollo prize for best sf novel of the past year; previous recipients of the award were John Brunner for *Stand on Zanzibar* and Roger Zelazny for *Isle of the Dead* . . . Ben Bova, editor of *Analog* magazine, has bought *Dune III* (or is it *Children of Dune*, *Son of Dune* or *Dune Returns from the Grave*?) and will serialise it from January 1976 for the following four or five issues . . . *Billion Year Spree*, Brian Aldiss' magnificent history of sf, is now available in paperback from Corgi at 75p . . . You can also get *Dhalgren* by Samuel Delany from the same people at the same price . . . Gordon Dickson and Joe Haldeman will be at a special One Tun meeting (Saffron Hill, London EC1) on Thursday, 16 October, at 7.30pm.

## Sf Study Groups

For the sixth year running *Science Fiction in Perspective*, a series of informal lectures on sf, will be presented at the Stanhope Institute. The course has been organised by the University of London, Department of Extramural Studies, and will be held on Friday evenings beginning 26 September 1975 and ending on 26 March 1976. Chris Priest will be tutoring the course and will discuss books by Anthony Burgess, Brian Aldiss, Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, JG Ballard, Ian Watson and many others. Details can be obtained from the Department of Extramural Studies, University of London, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AD (Tel: 01-636 8000).

Apart from the well-established University of London sf course there will be three other courses, all in various parts of Surrey:

### *The Science Fiction Story*

This will be a comprehensive survey of the styles and themes of sf writing with detailed analysis and discussion of such major novelists as HG Wells, Jules Verne, Ray Bradbury, Arthur Clarke, Robert Heinlein, Kurt Vonnegut and Brian Aldiss. Course tutors will be Philip Strick and David Walters. Meetings will be held every Tuesday at 7.30pm from 23 September 1975 for twenty-four weeks. The location is to be The Wallington Girls High School, Woodcote Road, Wallington, Surrey. Mrs Butler at 23 Heathdene Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 0TB (Tel: 01-647 7689) will provide enrolment details.

### *Science Fiction in the Contemporary Arts*

A multi-media survey of the many sides of science fiction which will be discussed both as literature and as an influence on the other arts. A number of feature films will be shown and analysed and there will be sessions on music, poetry, painting and humour. As well as considering the origins of the genre, recent writers will also be reviewed and a writer's workshop will be included. Philip Strick will tutor the course which will be held every Thursday from 25 September 1975 for twenty-four weeks. The location will be Fetcham Junior School, Bell Lane, Fetcham, Surrey. Mrs P Watling at 22 Post House Lane, Great Bookham, Surrey (Tel: Bookham 54848) is dealing with enrolment enquiries.

### *Adventures in Science Fiction*

Investigations into the outer reaches of science fiction, considered as the present-day medium for legend and mythology. Writers to be discussed will include Thomas M Disch, Roger Zelazny, JG Ballard, Michael Moorcock, Harlan Ellison and Philip K Dick. Tutors will be David Walters and Philip Strick and the course will be held every Friday at 7.30pm from 26 September 1975 for twenty-four weeks. The venue is yet to be announced but it will be in Horley, Surrey. This course depends on sufficient interest being indicated by the number of enrolments. Anyone wishing to take part is advised to write *immediately* to: Richard Stevens, 2 Brookside, Brookhill Road, Copthorne, Nr Crawley, Sussex.

## Alexandra Palace Faces the Future

Contributed by Fred Clarke

Over 50,000 visitors poured through the Space Age Exhibition at the Alexandra Palace Centenary Celebrations held at the end of May.

The twelve members of the Astronomical Society of Haringey who designed, assembled and manned the display were completely overwhelmed, but delighted with the undoubted success of their efforts.

Despite the fact that many of the models were extremely delicate and some

of the exhibits were very valuable, nothing was damaged and a very deep interest was shown in the work of the society.

Young astronomers in particular were encouraged to know that two of the professional-looking telescopes on Alan Foster's display were in fact built by members of the society, one by Alan and one by Russel Baker, while still at school.

A scale model of the Moon Buggy stood on the stage, surrounded by children longing for rides, but the nearest they could get was to stroke Phred, the society's mascot, attentively on guard with both ears to the ground. The children were also intrigued with the display of *Star Trek* models and showed their superior knowledge of the equipment to their parents.

Older students were adding to their knowledge of space by studying working models, lent by the BBC Open University, explaining such mysteries as Black Holes.

A selection of science fiction books drew a stream of browsers, one of whom attended for three days and finally joined the society. Of particular interest to local readers was the manuscript of *Rendezvous with Rama* written by Wood Green author Arthur C Clarke.

A number of beautiful paintings by space artist David Hardy graced the exhibition and these were supported by winners of the *SFM* painting competition held last year.

A kaleidoscope of moving colour was provided by two automatic slide projectors showing space photographs and a coloured wheel showing David Hardy space impressions.

In addition to the realistic models of spacecraft built by Mat Irvine were models of communication satellites lent by the Post Office and Hawker Siddeley Dynamics, and a model planetarium.

A collection of space-age stamps presented by Mrs Winter gave a history in miniature of Man's conquest of space, and a commemorative cover was available which was specially franked by the Post Office at the end of the exhibition.

A backcloth of photos, paintings and posters from the Science Museum, the Smithsonian Institution, the British Interplanetary Society and many other sources, filled the Alexandra Room with a wealth of interesting detail. The exhibition made many people realise that there is still a great deal being done towards the exploration of space and the improvement of communications and control of the world we live in.

## Talent Spotting

Faber and Faber Ltd, the publishers, are about to launch a new anthology series called *SF Introduction* which will feature stories by previously unpublished authors. They want to extend the theme of the books by using cover artwork by new sf artists whose work has also not been seen before. If any of you hopeful sf artists are interested, this is the brief for the book jacket: The design will be in no more than two colours plus black, will have a distinctive quality which will set it apart from the general run of designs to be found on mass-market paperbacks, and will allow for the typographical work necessary on a jacket.

Details are available from June Hall at Faber and Faber Ltd, 3 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AU.

## Locus

*Locus* is 'the newspaper of the science fiction field', it's an amateur magazine produced in America and it's invaluable for getting all the sf news and gossip hot from the States. Dena and Charlie Brown edit and publish it at roughly tri-weekly intervals and you can get it on subscription from them at this address: Box 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119, USA. The rate is \$12 for fifteen copies if sent airmail or \$6 if they come by sea; all subscriptions are payable directly in US Funds, cheques and money orders should be made payable to Locus Publications.

## BOOKS

**The Destruction of the Temple** by Barry N Malzberg published by New English Library; 40p

The year is 2016, the scene is the assassination of President Kennedy, but the re-enactment goes wrong and Kennedy is repeatedly assassinated.

**ESP: Beyond Time and Distance** by TC Lethbridge published by New English Library; 45p

The author demonstrates that the mind of man is immortal and thus explains telepathy, clairvoyance, healing and 'sixth' sense.

**More than Superhuman** by AE Van Vogt published by New English Library; 50p

English edition of an Ace paperback of short stories which all discuss in one way or another the nature of gods.

## Some recent SF titles from Faber

JAMES BLISH

### Doctor Mirabilis

A reissue by popular demand of this remarkable novel about that lonely prophet of experimental science and suspected sorcerer, Roger Bacon. £2.50

### The Quincunx of Time

The sparkling, gripping story of the Dirac transmitter, on which Earth's interstellar empire was based. Someone was doing the impossible—tapping the transmissions before they were made! £2.50

HARRY HARRISON

### The California Iceberg

A project to bring pure water to drought-stricken areas by towing icebergs from the Antarctic involves danger and excitement before they reach their destination. £1.60

**FABER & FABER** 3 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AU

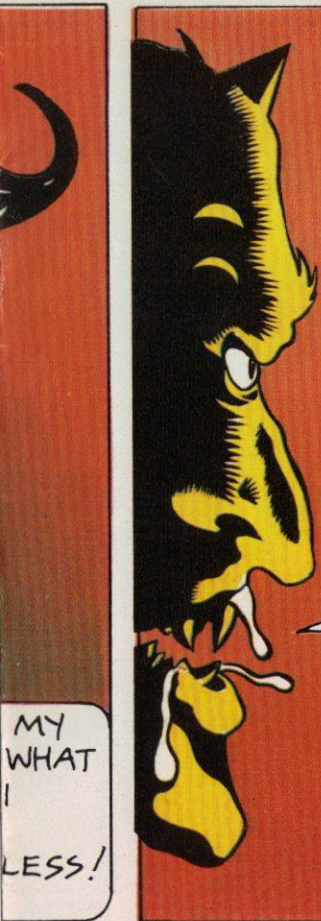








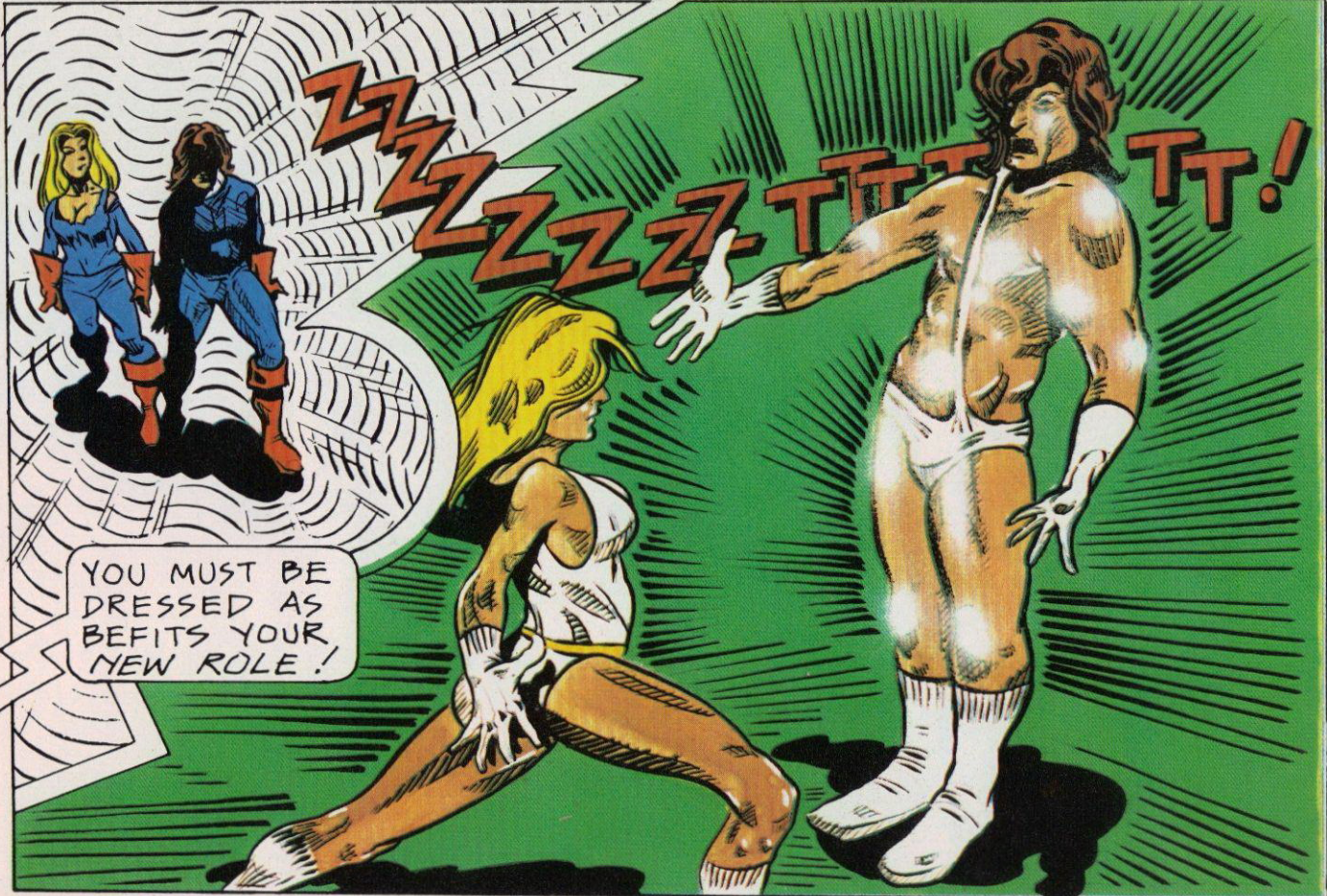




I SHALL EXPLAIN WHY I BROUGHT YOU HERE


I HAVE CHOSEN YOU TO BE MY HERALDS! IT IS AN HONOUR TO BE CHOSEN AS THE HERALD OF INCUBUS. YOUR TASKS WILL BE MANY... I DEMAND MUCH! ABOVE ALL I COMMAND LOYALTY! QUESTION ME, AND YOU MIGHT CEASE TO EXIST!

MY WHAT! LESS!



YOU MUST BE DRESSED AS BEFITS YOUR NEW ROLE!


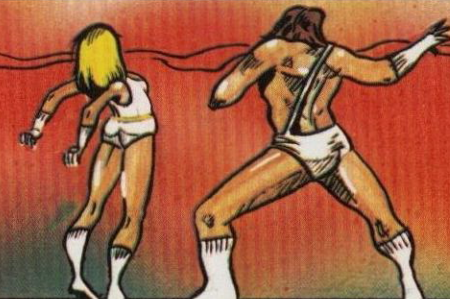
ZZZZZZZ-TT-TT!



LISTEN NOVA, YOU DON'T ARGUE WITH ME, YOU CAN'T ARGUE, BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT. FROM NOW ON YOUR WILL IS MY WILL, AND THAT GOES FOR YOUR PRETTY LITTLE FRIEND TOO! ANYWAY, DEAR CHAP, YOU HAVEN'T HEARD WHAT IT IS YOU HAVE TO DO. THE JOB OF A HERALD CAN BE A VERY PLEASANT ONE. YOUR MISSION IS TO GO BEFORE ME AND SEEK OUT CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS. YOU HAVE SEEN WHAT I CAN CREATE. NOW I HAVE DECIDED TO USE MY POWERS, SHALL WE SAY...CREATIVELY...EVEN BENEFICIALLY! IN SHORT, I'M GOING TO MAKE DREAMS COME TRUE!!

WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO INCUBUS? WORK FOR PEANUTS, LIKE MINDLESS SLAVES WHILE YOU SIT WATCHING US SWEAT BLOOD! SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT ANYTHING CONNECTED WITH YOU IS GONNA STINK! GO FIND YOURSELF TWO OTHER SUCKERS!

YOUR TASK IS TO GO OUT INTO OTHER WORLDS AND SEEK OUT CERTAIN BEINGS THAT SPEND THEIR WHOLE LIVES YEARNING FOR THE UNOBTAINABLE, THE SAD, THE LONELY, THE GREEDY, THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY. FIND THOSE WHO YEARN FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE! SEE IF THEY ARE WORTHY, AND I WILL MAKE DREAMS COME TRUE. FIND BOTH THE MOST BASE AND THE MOST VIRTUOUS, SPY ON THEM, THEN TELL ME OF THEIR DESIRES!

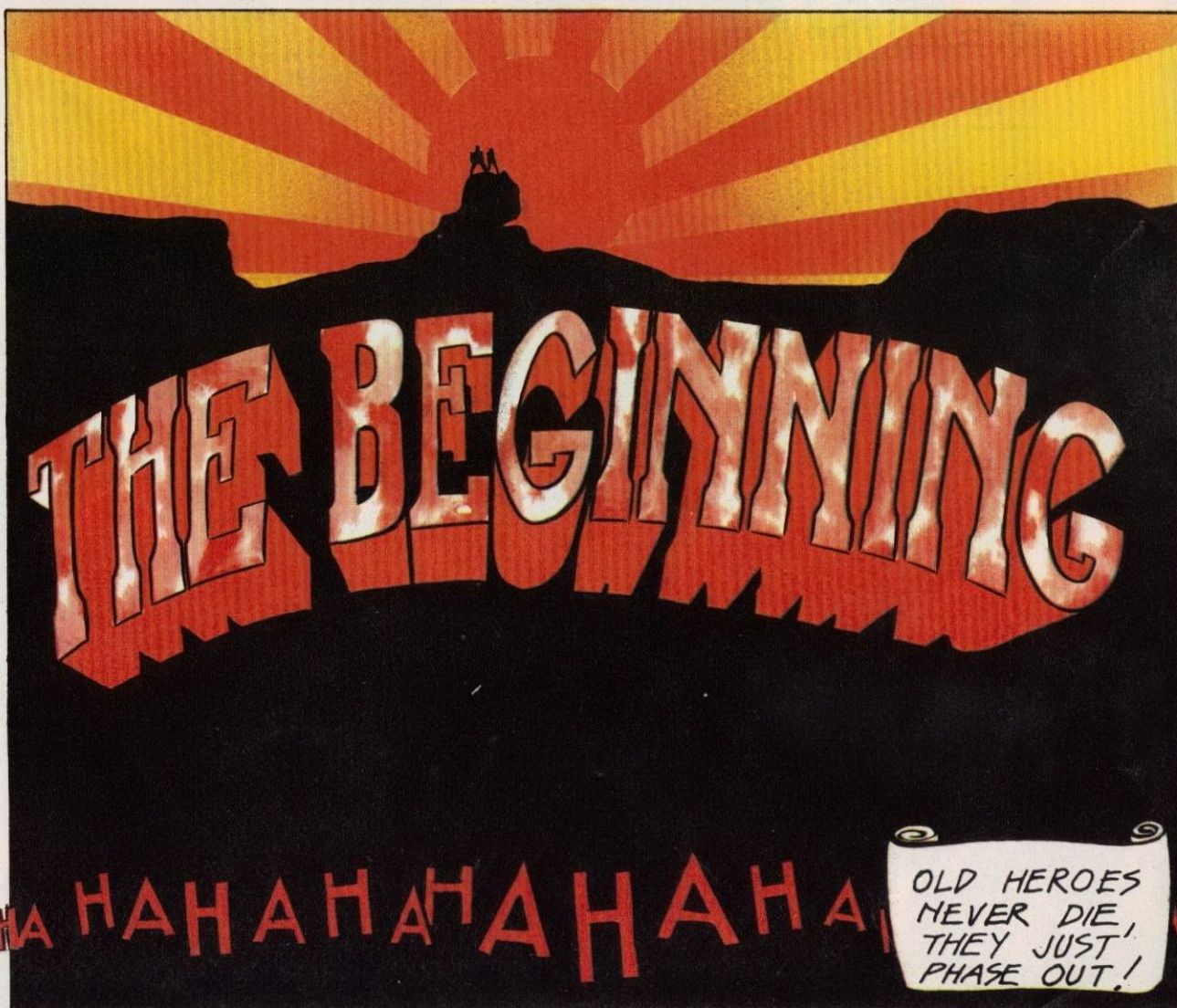




YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO US... I'LL...

YOU'LL NOTHING! NOW GO. LEARN TO USE YOUR NEW POWERS! PRACTISE CONSTANTLY!

FIND THE SUBJECTS I WANT! OUT THERE IS YOUR NEW DESTINY!

GO AND FIND IT, AND REMEMBER ENJOY DAL LIK OLOC ABKD YAU GHALT AS IHT!!



HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

OLD HEROES NEVER DIE, THEY JUST PHASE OUT!







# RAZZLEDAZZLE RAZZLE RAZZLEDAZZLE DAZZLE RAZZLEDAZZLE

BY STEPHEN HERBERT

As Stuart Bell picked his way among the rubble his experienced, roving eye caught sight of the half-buried box, its battered varnish gleaming in the yellow evening light. He approached it expectantly, trying to determine what it was, or had been, as he scrambled over an old rusting bedstead. He recalled that the houses which had been here until a few weeks before must have been built well over a hundred years ago. Who could tell what priceless relics may have escaped the demolition crew's sonar shake-up?

Two years had passed since the enterprising Mr Bell had established his own unique (so he told himself) business, and he had been luckier than usual these last few months. First there had been that old block of council flats at Putney, pulled down to make room for the Riverside Funground. Twenty *Playboy* mags and an old monochrome TV. Then there were those Seventies' lampshades rescued from an old lady's attic, one of the last on his patch to be converted (the attic, not the old lady). Unconverted attics were few and far between these days, he thought to himself, and he sighed as his left foot just missed a puddle of well-mixed plastic paint, shaken, not stirred, that was silently oozing from a long forgotten can.

Stuart Bell was a dealer in what he called antiques, or 'relics of the recent past'. Most people called his wares bric-à-brac (if they were being kind), or rubbish (if they were being honest). The collecting of these items was catching on in a big way, and even the ugly artefacts of the plastic age were selling quite well through what he referred to as his 'retail outlet' (a barrow at one of London's last street markets, in one of the more fashionable parts of Tooting).

Mr Bell soon reached the rectangular box,

which had apparently been abandoned in what must once have been the cellar of one of the old houses. He lifted the lid of the box and his hunch was confirmed as a rounded pick-up arm of cream plastic swung out. It was a gramophone, and a very old one; over a hundred years old at a guess. He opened one of the doors of the lower part of the cabinet and pulled out the top disc. Squinting in the failing light of the golden evening he could just make out the word BRUNSWICK in fancy white letters on a dusty black label. Excitedly, he took off his jacket and, removing the remainder of the records, folded it around them gently. These were a real find. Occasionally a slim disc from the Seventies or Eighties would turn up on a scavenging trip, but these were heavier, older—music from what had been known, once upon a time, as the Forbidden Era. After the pop riots of the late Seventies rock and beat music had been banned. Since the end of the Enforced Culture Period the cassette shops had been crying out for material such as this. The fact that the delicate shellac discs had survived for over a century was a miracle. It was unbelievable that they could have withstood a sonar demolition job.

Carefully, he made his way back to the van, holding his jacket against his chest. He could pick up the gramophone in the morning. Tonight, there was work to do.

When he had finished cleaning one of the records Mr Bell searched around his untidy apartment until he found a roll of polystyrene thermal sheet. He broke off a metre and folded it around the record. He then placed the plastic sandwich in an old video-disc case. He would deliver it himself to the transfer company, rather than risk trusting the post. He smiled as he thought of the money he could make with master tapes taken from a few of his records.

LASERDISC LTD  
TECHBLOCK 4  
CROYDON  
SURREY

31. 3. 63.

Dear Mr. Bell,  
Regarding the disc to master tape transfer (Ref:981/347D), we are pleased to inform you that our technicians have managed to temporarily convert one of our turntables to run at 78rpm, and we have also been able to borrow a pick-up head of the correct period from the Science Museum. We will be attempting a test transfer on to audio cassette tomorrow. Unfortunately, we have had to increase our total charge to £500, to enable us to recover the additional expense incurred. However, should you have any other discs of this type that you would like to be transferred to master tape, the cost would be far less, as most of the expense has arisen in setting up the necessary equipment. Should the transfer be successful, we will send you the test cassette, for your final approval, very shortly.

Yours sincerely,

A.G. Marson

Anthony G. Marson

Technical Services Co-ordinator.

PS Regarding your enquiry, I shall attempt to discover something about the artistes, 'Bill Haley and his Comets', at the Newspaper section of the British Museum Library, which survived the destruction of the Eighties.

The librarian handed him a brown card and he dropped his identidisc back inside his shirt. He followed her direction to the far end of the long, silent room and reached the door marked ORIGINALS—REQUESTS. He entered and sat down at one of the low desks inside the small room. He was alone. There were few people who needed to see original papers, most scholars and researchers were quite content to view the microfilm copies. Apart from being more convenient, this did away with the embarrassment of an original newspaper or magazine falling apart as the pages were turned. Some had been reinforced with plastic or, for more important editions, fine silk gauze, but that involved a long restoration job which would never be completed.

He gazed at the panel in the corner of the desk and located the slot. He leaned over and inserted the oxide-covered card. The REQUEST RECEIVED button lit up, and then nothing happened. He was just wondering what he was supposed to do next when he heard a rattle from the other end of the room and a tray came sailing through a hole in the wall, suspended from a track set in the ceiling. The tray stopped at his desk and descended. One side flapped down and the tray moved off, depositing its contents, a large, thick volume, on the desk. There was another flicker from the panel as the

PROGRAMME FOR RE-USE button lit up, and his card was ejected. He just sat there for a few seconds, waiting to see whether anything else was going to happen, before raising the cover of the volume in front of him. The first page read 'ENGLISH POPULAR MUSIC PAPERS. REPRESENTATIVE SELECTION. 1957 JAN/JUN SIX MONTHS COMPLETE. PLEASE TREAT THIS VOLUME WITH CARE. BOUND UNRESTORED.'

He hadn't been sure exactly when to start looking, (1950? 1960?), but this seemed a good random compromise, and as he turned the yellowed pages he saw that he was not going to be disappointed.

A few volumes later Anthony Marson left the building, his thirst for knowledge satisfied and his curiosity as to what the music would sound like heightened. He headed towards the mono-rail station in time to catch the Croydon train.

Stuart Bell closed the door with his foot, stepped over the package and carefully edged his way over to the table where he lowered his armful of UD milkbottles on to the unpolished surface. He envisaged them as novel lampstands as he tried to remember what he had done with those old lampshades. He wandered into the passage and picked up the package lying on the floor, then strolled back into the room and ripped open the wrapping.

LASERDISC LTD  
TECHBLOCK 4  
CROYDON  
SURREY

26. 3. 63

Dear Mr. Bell,

This is to inform you that our department has received the disc you handed in for transfer. As you are probably aware this is a sound - only (monaural) record manufactured before the era of video - discs. Although we are equipped to transfer vintage 'long-playing' records, this is a pre-micro-groove disc with a playing speed of 78rpm and consequently some adjustment to our transfer equipment is necessary. The approximate cost of the transfer to master tape will be £450. In our opinion such a transfer would be worth while, as most popular music discs from this period, and subsequent recordings from those discs, were destroyed in the 'cultural revolution' of the early Eighties. We will keep you informed of our progress.

Yours sincerely,

A.G. Marson

Anthony G. Marson

Technical Services Co-ordinator.

Ref.981/347D

2.4.63

Laserdisc Ltd,  
Techblock 4,  
Croydon, Surrey

Watcha me old mate Ding-Dong!  
This Bill Haley geamer's just the MOST. I aint stopped boppin' since we got that lil' ol' platter of yours spinnin' on the rock box. That plate o' wax has been shakin' the cobwebs outta this place all day! Got your parcel of discs today, we'll have 'em spinnin' just as soon as we can. I jus' took a break from down' the Razzle Dazzle to send you the cassette and to let you know that Bill Haley is THE King of Rock'n'Roll. Tomorrow we'll see what this bloke Elvis sounds like. See ya later alligator!  
Teddy 'Tone

A rather puzzled Stuart Bell returned the letter to its envelope and took out the cassette. He pushed it into his player and switched on. And from that moment on, for a junk dealer from South London and eventually for many others, music was never quite the same again somehow.



# LOST EXPLORER

BY  
FRANK  
BRYNING

**'Bolger was not unaware that his personifying Tankette and acknowledging "her" by name would please Graydon. Through their months of training together he had observed the original, impersonal operator-machine relationship between Graydon and the APT-1 develop gradually into something more like a partnership, then into a kind of friendship, then into something near the affection that grows between a man and his working dog, or a man and his horse. Hardly mutual, of course, since the tankette could not be thought capable of responding. But Graydon, despite his air of ironic detachment in most things, clearly held his robot in high affection'**

It was a good soft landing. In the remote control video screen three operators looked down on moondust fleeing outward from where the jet flame mushroomed against dark ground. The ship's foot plates touched. Her spider legs flexed with the load. The flame cut out. Leaping dust fell leisurely, without drifting, to the airless surface.

'First a look at her feet,' said Bolger, at his console, Moon Robot Control, Woomera. He flipped several keys on his board, set the timer, and switched to over-ride control of the camera-eye beneath the ship. And waited.

'Two point six-five-eight-three . . .' began Hale, Metal Ores Detector operator, intoning the ten-digit readout until it stopped on the instant a green light showed over-ride connection.

'Time-lag near as dammit to two and two-thirds seconds,' said Graydon, All Purpose Tankette operator. 'One and a third before they obey. Two and two thirds before we see them do so.'

'As calculated,' confirmed Bolger, who was Controller in Charge, and middle-aged. He laid hand on the camera-steering monitor. After two and two-thirds seconds his screen began a slow movement as the camera-eye found first one foot plate, lightly dusted, then another. 'She'll do,' he pronounced, seeing the fourth plate.

Bolger worked over his keyboard again. His screen went dark. Above it a second screen glowed, flickered, cleared. From overhead they now looked down upon the top of the bullet-like hull, two of the spider legs, and a small patch of ground. Seconds later a section peeled away from the lower part of the hull, hinged outwards and down to rest its end on the lunar surface.

'Ramp down. Now pictures.'

From the ramp at 'twelve o'clock' Bolger panned the overhead camera around the ship, filming a strip sixty feet wide. Returning to twelve o'clock he elevated the view and made a second circuit taking in about ninety feet and slightly overlapping the first strip. A third sweep brought in the surrounding

'countryside' for nearly a mile out with boulders, hillocks, outcropping escarpments, and small craters.

Hale extracted the can and despatched the film to Photo-Survey.

'Stand by Tankette Control,' said Bolger to Graydon, at the console to his left. He zoomed in on the ramp. 'Here comes your maid-of-all-work.'

Down the ramp, sedately, on caterpillar treads, moved a miniature tank. Gingerly it felt its way on to the Moon's surface. Straight ahead, dead slow, it printed its tracks in the moondust for two hundred feet, to stop just short of a clutch of boulders.

Bolger pressed another key. After due time-lag a small circular hatch opened in the stern of the tankette and a yard-long pod of metallic mesh with ribs like a closed umbrella came up vertically. The umbrella opened from the top, the ribs fell outward, the mesh formed a flowerlike basket around a central pistil pointing up to space.

'She's yours,' said Bolger.

Graydon busied himself with keys and switches. They saw the high-gain basket antenna on the tankette swing slowly away from vertical to point into the top of Bolger's screen. Now it was pointing straight at Earth—more accurately, at Woomera—more precisely, at Graydon's own large parabolic antenna half a mile from his console.

Locked on, Graydon took full control. Still in Bolger's screen they presently saw twin television camera hoods rise on tubular stalks from each side of the tankette's carapace forward of the turret.

Graydon activated his video screen and waited until a double image, seen through the separate camera-eyes, appeared. He sharpened the picture into a single, stereoscopic close-up of the Moon boulders.

'How does the ship look?' asked Bolger. He and Hale came behind Graydon to see.

There was a giddy, blizzard effect as the tankette's eyes swept separately outwards and around. It cleared to show an intimate view of the tankette's own tracks. Graydon elevated his cameras and refocused.

A blunt silver bullet in a cat's-cradle of





and arms, linked by linear sinews, showed themselves like varicose veins.

Unfolding, Graydon held his arms out in the well of the console. After time-lag two steel forearms with five-fingered 'hands' unfolded and reached out from the front of the tankette. Graydon rolled his wrists and flexed his fingers. The tankette's wrists and hands did the same, every metal joint matching its flesh and bone monitor.

Graydon pressed down and forward on two elbow pads. The tankette's elbows slid forward impelled by two steel upper arms like piston rods, whose ball-like shoulder bearings dropped gently into sockets at the front of the carapace. Graydon and the tankette proceeded with their simple calisthenics.

'Ritual of dedication?' speculated Bolger. 'Ceremonial annexation of territory? Thanksgiving? Is your glamorous Tankette a priestess too?'

'Could be,' Graydon smiled.

Bolger was not unaware that his personifying Tankette and acknowledging 'her' by name would please Graydon. Through their months of training together he had observed the original, impersonal, operator-machine relationship between Graydon and the APT-1 develop gradually into something more like a partnership, then into a kind of friendship, then into something near the affection that grows between a man and his working dog, or a man and his horse. Hardly mutual, of course, since the tankette could not be thought capable of responding. But Graydon, despite his air of ironic detachment in most things, clearly held his robot in high affection.

It was much the same with young Hale and his 'metal sniffer', although those two were more like brothers. Bolger even had to admit a similar weakness in himself—less emotional (of course!) but there to some degree. He had known his moments—when he alone was seeing through the eyes of the ship, orbiting the Moon before landing, for example—seeing, hearing, feeling, through the ship's sensors, thinking with her and for her, and she responding so willingly to his touch. Truly there had been moments when he and she were part of one another.

Nothing new in the experience of men, of course. Through the ages it had happened time and again between men and their weapons, their tools, their ships, machines, steam engines, motor cars, aeroplanes . . . Countless times some mechanical device which had shared with a man some great achievement, some ordeal, some danger, some adventure, some part of his very life, had graduated into trusted partner, valued friend, beloved colleague—had been credited with a personality, even a kind of sentience. It would be strange if it were not to happen with space vehicles, computers, robots . . .

So Bolger took pleasure in quoting, from a generation back, an old slangy metaphor in praise of womanly beauty, which he could now mean literally as well—'She is a real bunch of machinery, that one!'

Tankette acknowledged the compliment by waving to him from the Moon. Then she clasped left hand in right and raised both 'mitts' in the sportsman's salute.

'We're ready,' said Graydon. 'Send 'em down.'

**'From inside the ship a shining metal ball, forty inches across, showed itself. Smoothly, in the one-sixth Earth gravity, it rolled down and dragged to a stop in the dust'**

PHOTO-Survey's chart was a photographic cyclorama composed from Bolger's pictures taken around the ship. On it nearly twenty sites were marked, each with a bold cross and a Greek letter. A stylised keyhole shape in the centre represented the ship, ramp down.

Through Tankette's eyes Graydon returned to the Moon. He moved in near the foot of the ramp.

From inside the ship a shining metal ball, forty inches across, showed itself. Smoothly, in the one-sixth Earth gravity, it rolled down and dragged to a stop in the dust.

Raising Tankette's 'dozer blade, Graydon approached slowly until contact. He could see clearly several of the dozen circles he knew were engraved on the shell. After due time-lag the two metal arms unfolded, rested on the blade, and held an open hand each side of the ball.

Tankette raised her eyes and located a bare flat area about eighty yards away—the Alpha site on the cyclorama. Gently she rolled the ball, steering carefully around boulders and small craters.

On site, camera-eyes craned high. This way and that Tankette rolled the ball until an orange-coloured Alpha was on top. With one hand she found the centre of the symbol and pressed a small circular engraving down a

thumb's length. Removing both hands wide she backed off and watched.

The ball shuddered. Four plate-like sections blistered off its underside and were pressed into the moondust by metal legs extruding from within. The telescoping legs lifted the ball to hold it thirty inches above the Moon's surface.

Moments later the ball's top section, nearly two feet wide, rose straight up on a tubular mast. When clear below, the section turned upside-down to present a dish antenna to the black sky. In the next minute, two by two, six more discs sloughed off around the ball's waist, and arms came out at odd angles to expose instruments and sensors.

'Meteoro Robot Alpha hatched and on his feet,' reported Graydon. He backed Tankette well away, turned, and took up station again. 'Now for Beta—Solar Wind. We carry her, I think.'

**SUPERHERMAL** Ion Detector at Epsilon . . . Passive Seismic at Delta . . . Magnetometer at Gamma . . . Hale named each robot on its site, checking the photo-chart while Bolger panned backwards around the uneven semi-circle of standing, squatting, sprawling mechanisms outside the ship. ' . . . Solar Wind Experiment at Beta . . . Meteoro at Alpha . . . The lot!'

'Umbilical cables connected to all robot sensors programmed to transmit through ship's system,' reported Graydon. 'Ready for activation.'

It was morning at Woomera. The Moon was low and pale in the blue sky beyond Western Australia. Vision by video on the Moon was still good, but in thirty-eight minutes Woomera would be turned away, out of line-of-sight contact.

'Someone claimed, back in the Sixties, that the first citizens of the Moon—and of Mars—would be robots,' said Bolger, panning forward again around the half-circle. 'Here's our first contingent.'

'Colonists, at least,' put in Graydon. 'More than we can say yet for humankind. We've merely touched down for a day or two, and gone. The first permanent settlers—that's the word, "settlers"—have to be robots. There they are!'

'Except for Sniffer,' Hale reminded them, his back to his console. 'We're not in the act yet.'

'Tomorrow Sniffer comes into his own,' Bolger reassured him. 'He'll go down that ramp like some Colonial Governor inspecting his advance guard. The Moon will be his oyster—and yours.'

**'Suddenly the head stopped scanning, locked on the one direction. His treads churned the dust, accelerating into violent speed'**

THE second Earth night of the Moon's long morning began, as promised, by landing the Semi-Autonomous Mobile Metal Ores Detector Robot, or 'metal sniffer' so called quite early in his experimental existence.

Some had thought he should be nicknamed SAM or SAMMO from the initials of his cumbersome name. But SAM traditionally belonged to Surface-Air Missile, of warlike connotation. Meanwhile 'metal sniffer' rapidly became 'the sniffer' by popular usage. It so aptly fitted the inquisitive little robot's behaviour and functions that it stuck, acquired the capital S, and dismissed all other names.

Sniffer resembled Tankette, although about half her size. He had no 'dozer blade or prehensile arms, but was rather spry. He was also capable of autonomous action when 'given his head'. Designed to 'quest' by means of a delicately attuned radar system for metallic traces in his vicinity, he could steer himself right on to their position. Thus he sometimes appeared to possess a kind of 'free will', and with it, perhaps, a capacity for sinful disobedience.

Hale, his operator, youngest of the three, was keen and dedicated. His hand was already on the antenna switch when Bolger stopped Sniffer fifty feet out and sent up the basket antenna.

Head almost inside his video hood, Hale saw through Sniffer's eyes and rode the moonscape with him. Forward and back, left and right, fast and slow, eye-stalks up and down, antenna rolling gently on its universal to point always at Woomera, they churned up a small dustbowl near the ship.

'Try questing,' suggested Bolger. 'Not much room, but enough if you're ready to over-ride.'

Hale retracted Sniffer's eyes to fifteen inches and sent up the questing head to its six-foot limit. Heading him for the opening between the Meteoro robot and the squat, dome-on-a-box Solar Wind recorder, Hale cut off over-ride control.

Sniffer crawled at questing speed, radar scanning a narrow arc ahead at thirty degrees below horizontal. Imperceptibly he veered

to the right. Then noticeably. Suddenly the head stopped scanning, locked on the one direction. His treads churned the dust, accelerating into violent speed.

'Cut!' snapped Bolger, in the same instant that Hale smacked the over-ride switch and stop button. They waited the required seconds. Sniffer halted.

'Never seen him take off so fast,' said Bolger.

'Fastest ever,' agreed Hale. 'The very low gravity, I think. One-sixth Earth weight under normal power. Surprisingly good traction in moondust.'

'Over-reaction to a concentrated mass of metal, also, of course,' added Graydon. 'They made him sensitive enough to respond to faint traces in rock and soil. He must be overwhelmed by a mass of pure metal. Intoxicated, you might say.' He grinned at the unlovely square body and stubby legs of the Solar Wind recorder just visible in the upper half of Hale's screen. 'Can't imagine what he finds so attractive in her, though!'

'Forget it!' protested Hale.

AN hour later, in the ship's screen, Bolger and Graydon watched Sniffer, out beyond the robot colony now, speed dead slow, radar questing around an arc of two hundred degrees.

Hale studied the ground close-up through Sniffer's eyes, ready to over-ride and steer away from trouble. Occasionally he elevated the view to see what lay before his valiant little wayfarer. More often he would glance across at the ship's screen.

He knew, before Sniffer, about the tumbled rocks ahead, at the tip of a spur rising steeply to the right. He over-rode and steered well clear of the end boulder before returning control to questing.

With Sniffer headed into open ground Hale consulted the ship's screen. He looked just in time to see Sniffer turn sharply right, radar head locked, and speed with swift eagerness such as he had shown for the Solar Wind robot.

Hale hit over-ride switch and stop button in the one motion.

'Sniffer! Come back you little . . . !'

Even in that moment Hale could not call Sniffer by a shameful word. He held his breath, agonising through the seconds that would tell if his robot had stopped in time.

Hale scowled at the moondust rushing back beneath the treads for exactly two and one-fifth seconds. Then the screen went blank. Sniffer had been cut off by the rising spur less than half a second before the stop signal could have reached him.

**'THIS,'** said Bolger, 'looks like a job for our shepherdess. With luck Sniffer may not be too far in there. What vertical angle, Hale?'

'Twenty below horizontal,' answered the crestfallen Hale. 'Maximum scan thirty-five feet each side.'

'Whatever trapped him can't be farther than that. Something highly metallised. A nickel-iron meteorite, most likely.'

'Tankette can look, at least, behind that spur,' said Graydon. 'If we can't go in far enough to get our hands on him without getting cut off ourselves, we might relay a channel for Hale to walk him out.'

**TANKETTE** the shepherdess passed the point of the spur, stopped, and pivoted right.

The shaded side of the outcrop rose up the right side of Graydon's screen, shadows inky and impenetrable. Against its base a rockfall littered the ground less than thirty feet in. There, half-in-half-out of shadow, was Sniffer.

Like a pointing dog, he stood, radar head tilted forward and down, marker pennant planted and stiffly aloft. His antenna had dropped and pointed straight behind him, almost at Tankette.

'He's still operating,' reported Graydon, turning up his sound. 'Listen to that wail! Isn't that his telemeter signal for ferrous metals?'

'I'll say!' said Hale. 'Those rocks must be pretty high-grade—nickel-iron for sure.'

Graydon turned on all lights and zoomed his lenses in close.

'Metal it is!' declared Bolger. 'But long since smelted and worked. That's a crashed space vehicle! It must have brought down those rocks.'

'A Moon probe!' exulted Hale. 'Sniffer—you beaut! Remember, in the early days, both the Russians and the Americans crashed quite a few before they soft-landed the first ones? Sniffer's discovered one!'

'And just look at him!' said Graydon. 'Standing there, head bowed, and wailing . . . As if he'd found the bones of a Ludwig Leichhardt, or some long-lost explorer! Lamenting, like a . . .'

'Well hasn't he?' demanded Hale. 'And who better to lament a lost explorer than one of his own kind?'

spindly metal shins and femurs . . . The moonship stood, stabilised, with two knobbed knees higher than the others, their feet on rising ground. Sunlight glared on dome and left side, on the camera-hood twenty feet overhead, on the left sides of all her limbs, and the ramp. Black shadows on every right side cut sharply against the brightness, as they did on every feature of the stark moonscape around her.

'She belongs,' breathed Bolger, well pleased. It was the first Earth night of the Moon's seven-day morning.

**'TIME** to exercise,' proposed Graydon, 'while we wait for Photo-Survey?'

At Bolger's nod he raised part of the desk-top of his console. Two dark holes ringed by brass collars stared back. Through these he thrust his hands, which came out the other side in coppery gloves of metal cloth. These lengthened into sleeves as he sent his arms through to the shoulders. Thus gauntleted he set a few keys and took two driving toggles in his fingers.

Graydon's view was close to Moon surface, through his camera-eyes. In the ship's screen the others watched the tankette move forward and back, circle around a figure eight, and make a medley of tracks in the moondust.

Graydon lowered the light 'dozer blade and scraped, spilling dust first one side and then the other. He flourished the blade high, tilted it left and right, returned it to rest. He lighted the darkest shadows with his headlights and the spotlights above his cameras.

'Soil sampling, core drilling and instrument operations can wait until we work those programmes,' said Bolger. 'Disembarkation's the main thing now. Hands ready?'

Graydon slid his bucket seat in and laid his chin in the U-shaped rest above the arm-holes. He relinquished driving and folded his arms.

With his jaw he pressed the yielding left side of the chin rest, an 'On' push-button. The fine metal gauntlets shrank gently around fingers and hands, and the mesh along his arms firmed and moulded itself to his muscles. Wire contact rings around fingers





I am a regular reader of *SFM* and I particularly enjoy the articles. I should like to point out, however, that in the second part of John Brosnan's article *SF on TV* (*SFM* Vol 2 No 5) there are a number of errors which may mislead readers:

The first *Dr Who* serial did create great excitement among viewers. To such an extent, in fact, that the very first episode had to be shown again the following week because so many people missed it.

The Daleks were not 'mere brains', but creatures who had lost the use of their bodies.

Terry Nation did not get the word 'Dalek' from a volume of an encyclopedia. I quote Terry Nation himself from the *Radio Times Dr Who Special*: 'In a desperate attempt to satisfy persistent journalists . . . I told them that I'd been inspired by the letters on a volume of an encyclopedia. But the fact is that no encyclopedia in print covers the letter DAL-LEK. Anyone checking the facts could have found me out. . . . As for the name it simply rolled off the typewriter.'

Patrick Macnee's first partner in *The Avengers* in 1961 was not Honor Blackman, but Ian Hendry. A further two partners, Julie Stevens and Jon Rollason also appeared before Diana Rigg and then Linda Thorsen took over.

*The Avengers* reached its peak in sophisticated episodes in 1967 not 1966.

*UFO* was not Gerry and Sylvia Anderson's first production to use real people. Before this, there was *Secret Service* (remember Father Unwin and the incredible shrinking Matthew) at least partially using real people, and the full-length feature film *Doppelganger*. Keith Pugh, (Walsall, West Midlands)

I am curious that a very good short story by Edmund Cooper *Jupiter Laughs* (*SFM* Vol 2 No 4) should have been described as an alternative history. This suggests that Rome might have survived as an imperial power had it not been defeated by the inspiration of a Christian ideal. In fact Rome at the time of its fall was nominally Christian and Alaric, although sympathetic to Christianity through his contact with Adrian, was a pagan. I venture to believe that the death or non-existence of Jesus Christ would, through no fault of his own or what he might have been, have saved the world uncountable massacres and religious wars and that Ireland would now be united, civilised happy and pagan. I agree that gods may well be symbols, but the decline and fall of Rome was not a result of the triumph of the symbol Christ over the symbol Jupiter, which an alternative history would suggest.

Ernest Hill (London SE9)

I must write to applaud the views expressed by your correspondent P Kingsbury in *SFM* Vol 2 No 4. He correctly identifies

'Fandom' as a 'lunatic fringe who have latched on to sf. They are a minority of your readership anyway and gave sf a bad name years ago.' Right on, Mr Kingsbury. Why, I only have to glance at my bookshelves to assemble a roster of shame—a list of those idiots who have dragged sf down from the heights it attained with the first Gernsback magazines. Isaac Asimov, James Blish, Ray Bradbury, John Brunner, Algis Budrys, Ken Bulmer, John Carnell, Terry Carr, Arthur Clarke, Michael Coney, Lester del Rey, Harlan Ellison, Harry Harrison, Damon Knight, CM Kornbluth, Henry Kuttner, Michael Moorcock, Frederik Pohl, Christopher Priest, Bob Shaw, Robert Silverberg, Brian Stableford, EC Tubb, Wilson Tucker, James White . . . I'm sure I've omitted many names, but you can easily see that fandom has a lot to answer for.

Nice to see a Karel Thole painting in *SFM* 2:4. Now there's an sf artist with real imagination.

Malcolm Edwards (Harrow, Middlesex)

PS Aside from being the sort of critic who can in one breath praise Asimov's robot stories and in the next call Elijah Baley 'twaddle' (Baley being the human hero of Asimov's two robot novels)—that is, a critic who doesn't know what he's talking about—Edmund Cooper is also a male chauvinist pig. An arrogant, condescending one, at that. With the exception of *A Far Sunset* (which Jim Goddard doesn't mention, oddly enough) I've always found his more recent novels unreadable and vaguely repellent. Now I know why. Did you send a copy to Joanne Russ?

Although I basically agree with Edmund Cooper's comments (*SFM* Vol 2 No 4) about the unlikelihood of such sf gadgetry as matter transmission ever becoming technologically feasible, I don't believe he has a valid argument for its complete impossibility.

The problem, as he states, would be of two atoms trying to occupy the same space at the same time, thus causing an atomic explosion.

The solution would be to evacuate the reception chamber of air an instant before the materialisation of the incoming object. This could be accomplished by dematerialising the air using the matter transmitter itself. Mr Cooper's statement about the impossibility of achieving a perfect vacuum would not hold true if a matter transmitter existed.

Such a system could be designed to power itself. The air transferred out of the reception chamber could be materialised in a reaction vessel, the interior of which would be at a near vacuum. The energy produced from the interaction of the incoming air molecules with the few molecules already in the vessel would make the system an efficient nuclear reactor.

Charles Harman (Finchley, London)

Conducted by THOMAS SHERIDAN

**READERS' questions on any aspect of science fiction are dealt with in this regular feature by THOMAS SHERIDAN, who is internationally known as one of the foremost experts on the medium. Address your questions to THE QUERY BOX, *Science Fiction Monthly*, New English Library Ltd, Barnard's Inn, Holborn, London EC1N 2JR. They will be answered as soon as possible.**

# THE QUERY BOX

## DOUBLE EVENT

The stories *Sucker Bait* (from *The Martian Way*) by Isaac Asimov and Poul Anderson's *Planet of No Return* have similarities which cannot be coincidental. Both are about an expedition to a double star in the Hercules cluster and a landing on a planet called Troas, nicknamed Junior, with a satellite called Illium, nicknamed Sister. What is the story behind these stories?

P Doran, Newton Heath, Manchester.

A good question—with a simple answer. The similarities were, in fact, deliberately prescribed by John W Campbell, editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*, in which both stories first appeared, each in two parts, in 1954. *Sucker Bait* ended in March; *Anderson's* story, originally titled *Question and Answer*, began in June. Announcing it in the May issue, editor Campbell wrote, 'The . . . stories are laid on Troas, in the Lagrange system. Each has the fundamental situation of the mysterious failure of the first expedition to Troas. But one of the really fascinating things is to see what an enormous difference of interpretation two skilled and experienced authors achieve from a single described situation!'

He also acknowledged his source of inspiration for the 'interesting gimmick'—a series of books published by Twayne, New York, under the title of 'Twayne Triplets' in which three different writers took a single story situation and developed it separately, all three stories being presented in the same volume. First of these was *The Petrified Planet* (1952), in which Fletcher Pratt, H Beam Piper and Judith Merrill combined in doing their own thing with a mythical planet called Uller and its neighbour world Niflheim—both invented for the occasion by Dr John D Clark. Campbell evidently decided it was a game that two could play . . .

## ETERNAL WHO

I would like to know whether *Dr Who*, for all its failings, is the longest-running sf show on television, or is there an American series which has lasted even longer?

A Lewis, Cowley, Oxford.

*Dr Who* has been running, on and off, since November 1963. The longest-running sf show on American TV, as far as I can ascertain, was *Captain Video*, which started in June 1949 and was booked to run for five years. In 1952 it was being presented, live and on film, over a twenty-four-station network to an estimated audience of three and a half million—five days a week. It set the pace for such shows, its nearest rival then being *Tom Corbett: Space Cadet*, which started in October 1950 with three shows a week and captured almost as big a following.

Since then, of course, the potential audience has multiplied while the number of shows—and the competition between them—has increased. *Star Trek*, which ran for three seasons in the USA starting in September 1966, presented nearly eighty episodes to an audience which, according to its sponsors, has never been accurately estimated. Its British following was put at nine and a half million—not much more than the last estimate of *Dr Who's* audience, of which more than half is believed to consist of 'grown-ups'.

## HEINLEIN'S HISTORIES

The 1963 Pan edition of Robert Heinlein's *The Man Who Sold the Moon* gives a list of connected stories of which six had yet to be written. Were they ever published? Nor can

I locate three others—*Requiem*, *If This Goes On*—and *Universe*. Are these included in any collections?

T Wallis, Horfield, Bristol.

The chart outlining Heinlein's 'Future History' series was used as end-papers in his first published collection some years after it had appeared in *Astounding Science-Fiction* in 1941. The 'Stories-to-be-told' titles you mention were purely tentative and never included in the series as it finally developed.

*Requiem* was reprinted in *The Man Who Sold the Moon* as published by Shasta, Chicago, in 1950; *If This Goes On*—in *Revolt in 2100* (Shasta 1953; Gollancz, London, 1964). *Universe*, originally intended for reprinting in a volume titled *The Endless Frontier*, appeared as a Dell paperback in 1951 and was included in *Orphans of the Sky*, published here by Gollancz in 1964. All three titles have since become available here in paperback, though it would seem that *Requiem* has been omitted from some editions.

## BOOK CLUB

Could you put me in touch with a good book club which deals with science fiction?

G Allan, Glenrothes, Fife.

A Science Fiction Book Club has existed in the UK since 1953, when it was started by Sidgwick & Jackson. It is now one of the Readers Union group of book clubs run by David & Charles, the enterprising publishers who cater for a wide range of specialist interests. The club offers regular monthly selections of books by leading authors, British and American, in hardcover editions at little more than paperback prices. Members are kept informed of new issues ahead of publication through a monthly bulletin.

You can take out a trial membership for six months and give a month's notice if you don't wish to continue. Write to Science Fiction Book Club, PO Box 6, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 2DW.

## LOST BROOD

Having read *Dark Moon*, by Charles Willard Diffin, in *Famous Science Fiction* No 8, I've been trying to trace a sequel called *Brood of the Dark Moon*. Can you help?

GD Newby, Great Barr, Birmingham.

Charles Willard Diffin was one of the better writers for the original *Astounding Stories*, published by Clayton Magazines. *Dark Moon* first appeared in the May 1931 issue. The sequel you mention was a four-part serial novel which opened in the August 1931 issue. A third story in the series, *The Finding of Haldgren*, followed in April 1932. I am not aware of any recent reprints of these tales.

## PAGING MR CANTERBURY

An American friend asks if I can provide any information on a British fantasy and sf writer, James Canterbury, who published several stories in US newspapers and magazines in the 1920s and '30s and then faded into obscurity. As I have found no trace of him, I would be grateful for any light you could shed on the mysterious Mr Canterbury.

Mona Blakely, Widnes, Lancs.

I've combed all my indexes and references and drawn blank. Can any reader help?







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