AN EXPLOSIVE ISSUE

New Stories From Harlan Ellison and Stanislaw Lem

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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, Truf'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
Orbitville, is interviewed by John
Brosnan and, continuing with the
current theme, there'll be a new Bob Shaw
story called An UnComicon 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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SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY.

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SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY 1
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 substance of his more usual 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 honored writer. The following are just some of his awards:

5 Hugo s, 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 Instructions of 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 as fascinating as 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 Jack Raftery, 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 school and junior high school. His childhood was marred by unreliability, 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 horror series, and burned himself in the juvenile adventure pulp 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 Twaín, Conrad, Dickens, Heming-

way, 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 Gloscera. 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 left behind by Pinkerton detectives hired by his parents. Six months later he ran away again, this time lumberjacking in Canada. Such a period formed a regular part of his adolescence. In 1949 Ellison's father died, and the family moved back to Cleveland. It was then that he began his apprenticeship 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 Edmund 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 injecting inferior work and passing on the good material'. Obviously Ellison had judgement.

Later, when the Cleveland of 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, Mealt ime, which was published in the College humor magazine Sunlight, and would later reappear as A Case of Prominence 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 fan sites there, in 1951, he had been beaten up by such a gang. Shortly afterwards Ellison discovered the novels of Harlan Ellison 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 floogates would soon be open. But not before one further escape.

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'. So for seven 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 (1968) and Children of the Streets (1967, as The Jovians). It also resulted in his first professional sale, a piece called I Ran With a Kid Gang which appeared in Lowsdown, 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 Nite, it was here in this New York apartment in the autumn of 1955. In fairly quick succession he sold Gloweroom to Infinity, Life Hatch and The Crackpot to I, and Blind Lightning to Fantastic Universe. His next sale however was to Guilt, 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 had to devote more time to writing. Hibberts 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 good and bad in his work. After Gloweroom came Life Hatch 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 running. 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. Rain, Rain, Rain, Rain, Rain, Rain, So Away, which first saw the light of day in the British magazine Science Fiction in 1956, features a tale of revenge, with the protagonist's name being 'Rain'. By the end of 1956 it was becoming apparent that Ellison's inventive use of language was setting him apart from his contemporaries. His short stories appeared in such magazines as 'Rain, rain, go away. Come again another day'—Ellison proceeded to show what happens if you take that literally, and the rain pours down in a torrent.

By the end of 1956 it was becoming apparent that Ellison's work was setting him apart from his contemporaries. His short stories appeared in such magazines as 'Rain, rain, go away. Come again another day'—Ellison proceeded to show what happens if you take that literally, and the rain pours down in a torrent.

Ellison's fiction is simply an extension of himself, and one can imagine him relating the situations in his mind as he converts them into prose. His over-riding prediction for violence was particularly strong, even for the sf of the mid-Fifties, and that tone came with what was to come.

'Bookstalk scourecs 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, it is no surprise that he turned out four sf stories appeared in the sf magazines during 1957, several under pseudonyms like Conwyckine 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.

It was in the same decade that he wrote Rain, Rain so Away, in which the deluge of pit powers in a future society that shoots up.

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, he read the philosophy of the exiled Ananda Coomaraswamy. This had a profound impact on his thinking. He later wrote in his autobiography that, "I was in the army for two years, and I came out a socialist." His 1958 novel, The Starlit Gate, is a thinly veiled criticism of the US military.

In 1959, Ellison retired from the army and moved to New York. He worked on several projects, including a novel called The Cat's Cradle. In 1960, he published his first novel, The Foundation of the Country, which was a critical and commercial success.

Despite being a prolific writer, Ellison also maintained a strong interest in music. He was a member of the band The Rocker Live and was involved in the production of several albums.

Ellison's later works, such as The Man with the Iron Heart and The City on the Edge of Forever, are seen as some of his finest achievements. His unique ability to blend science fiction with social commentary has made him a significant figure in the genre.

"Ellison's work was characterised by his fascination with the counter-culture of the 1960s. He wrote about drugs, politics, and the » counterculture « in a way that was both witty and insightful."

"While his early works were often praised for their imaginative scope and clever plotting, it was his later novels that truly set him apart. With The Fifties, The Foundation of the Country, and The City on the Edge of Forever, Ellison created a rich, complex world filled with characters that are both sympathetic and complex."

"His work was celebrated for its sharp social commentary and its ability to explore the darker aspects of human nature. Ellison's writing was often praised for its ability to make readers question their own beliefs and assumptions."
Since 1966 Ellison has ridden the crest of a wave of exciting and effervescence 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 Towerer in the City to new heights of acclaim, a terrifying look at what could happen if Jack the Ripper was envisaged and brought into the future where everything was sterile and clean. The vision of something fearful manifesting a perfect world had already been employed in Eyes of Dust and The Discarded (Fanatik, April 1959 as The Abominable), but it was with Prowler... that the idea really scored.

Prowler's closest friend since he had moved to California was his dog Abhhu. 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 Abhhu died in 1972 it had a profound effect on Ellison. and the tragedy was incorporated in his recent Hugo-winning novellette The Deathbird (SF, March 1973) in one of the most powerful and moving sequences Ellison has ever written.

Ellison is openly opposed to war, but in writing The Sleeper with Stiff Hands (It. 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 if 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 desert for six hundred years until one man finds a way to shield his mind from telepathic influence.

Authors have often said how difficult it is to write in collaboration with others, although Pohl and Kornbluth, Kuttner and at the end of the thirteenth century and Garrett, for example, have succeeded. Ellison upholds that statement although early in his career he worked on a novel with Bud Boll. Joe L. Henesty. 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 Silverberg. Ellison produced one of his longest stories: A Man Sitting on a Chair and the Chair is Bitting his Leg. Theodore Sturgeon, AE Van Vugt... 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 his life at which time Ellison claimed he had never written for Analog and was therefore not a Campbell writer. However, he claimed this 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 novel may lead to a second for a television series.

Brillo 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 mass generation starship which he conceived and was script with Bova acting as technical advisor. However the project was never attempted. and he bitterly, but little solace. The final series was shortlisted in the States, but the plot film, which was Ellison's entitled Painless. 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 buff 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 Cabin 12, telling of the horrific arrival of the ancient god Dis in Manhattan to exact his revenge. The March 1970 Galaxy gave a very nonconformist treatment to The Regius Chamber. a story originally written for both Laume'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 protest-The Suncleric-true man's ultimate revelation that Bailey is far more than he seemed.

Baastik (F & SF, August 1972) is certainly one of Ellison's finest anti-war stories. It concerns the baastik entity occupying the mind of a prisoner-of-war and unleashing its power whenever its host is permitted to write. Since then Ellison has maintained a peak of power in his fiction that exhausts his readers. Stories like The Deathbird, Bleeding Stones (Vortex April 1972) and the incredibly entitled Animal Just Off the Islets of Langerhans: Latitudes 38°S 4°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 1976) 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, this is a massive dose of form, experimental, controversial but spectacular writing.

Harlan Ellison is now 41 and, as they say, 'life begins at 40,' (be hell) only knows what he will experiment with next. Recently he further astounded the publishing world by concluding what is basically 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 originals and new material, such as Shatterday, a new collection of fantasies, No Doors, No Escape, No Name, and a novel. Sladersmill Enchantment which is the first of a series about Kraken, a modern mermaid, 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 selected anti-war stories. It controlled the Baastik entity occupying out of the fantasy field, such as an upcoming two-hour dramatic special which The Fugitives are loud and 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 his list of books would be unending. 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 honed out a special category just for himself within that genre, a sort of illusional Fantasy, Gams like Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes telling of girl's inner self, or soul, transfers to a slut-romantic who is in the same situation (The House Circus from Silverberg's original anthology New Dimensions 1) which is as close to time travel as Ellison has come in his fiction, and which he claims is written by anyone rather than Ellison. Story-line aside it is the padding that is quintessential Ellison-those ticks-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 left free. There is no sudden in Ellison's style, that's not his nature; but there is one hell of a lot of feeding, 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-changer. It will not lead to a force for changing the world into a better place.' 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.
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.

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

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

YOU ARE IMMORTAL . . !

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 WILL NEED CERTAIN POWERS TO HELP YOU IN YOUR WORK!

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

THE POWER TO CONTROL THE MINDS OF EVERY MORTAL!

THE POWER TO SEE BEYOND THE LIMITS OF ORDINARY BEINGS!

CRACKLE!
It was a Sunday.
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 as it is:

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 diner 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?"

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 3-6199, right?"
"Warly, "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're 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 Neither had he 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.

"I suppose," Novins answered. 'Not that I really want to.

You're scaring the shit out of me.

"Hey, what do you think about it?

"Probably the same way I feel about it."

They thought about that for a long moment. Then Jay said, 'I can't be too old to do things."

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

Jay took this a lot calmer than I am, it seems to me," said Jay.

Novins was startled. "You really think so? I was just about to tell you."

"You're wrong. I really think otherwise."

"People are doing all sorts of things.

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

"You're thinking it too a lot calmer than I am, it seems to me," said Jay.

Novins thought 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?"

"That's easy enough," Jay said. "There's only one question."

"What is it?"

"What are the two things you think are most important in life?"

"If you're really me then I suppose so. We ought to try and test that."

"They've been speaking, he heard what he was saying, and it seemed stupid. This isn't going to work," Novins said. "What the hell is the question? Was there anything in that that 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."

"What is the important question?"

"What's that supposed to mean? Get rid of him? What the hell's that supposed to mean?"

"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 muggy logic. First of all, who's to say you're not going to be back where you came from as soon as I hang up..."

"Bullshit," Jay answered.

"You're a crazy ass," Novins said, "and 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 way we can 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 being over here?"

And he stopped; of course Jay knew about it. All about it.

"You're better start facing reality, Novins. You'll be coming out of that one, and you had better learn how to do it. Maybe it'll make the end come easier."

Novins wanted to slam the receiver into his rack. He was at once startled and disgusted. He knew what he was talking about, but 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, looking for me. 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, "I'm a virtual being. I exist in the virtual world. I've got three rooms in the virtual world."

Jay turned to the other Novins. "I'm sure there's something to be said for being inside. The amazing thing is we both have accepted this thing so quickly."

Novins 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. Novins told Jay that he had bluffed it, 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 stayed 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: MOUNDAY

He took special precautions. First the bank, to clean out the current account. He thanked God he 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 bank of a depot 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 that little 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 work in his absence, would have to follow through on the important campaigns for Topper and McKenzie, would have to take all the monotonous calls from Lepman and his insulting saw, would have to answer all the mail, would have to keep popping Titularac all day just to stay ahead of the heartbeat. He felt gloriously free and almost astoundingly 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 Jamie.

Back in his hotel room in the Americas 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 squire's rights in my apartment; please go up there and arrest him.' No, he was on his own, and he had to exercise 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 and a couple 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 water running.

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 stood out the forty-fifth floor window of the hotel room, at the sole-lit 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, and 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 New York City.

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

"I'll come," Novins said. 'How'd you enjoy your first day out 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 an aerial 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, what's your problem?"

'Hold it,' Novins interrupted, 'that's a sensational theory, but it's stuffed full of wild blueberry muffins, if you'll pardon my blunt forward as to agree with a smarmy voice that's probably disembodied and doesn't have enough ectoplasms 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 like that.

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

Novins felt a hand squeeze his chest. "What did she say?"

'He said she knew you lived where you were 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 contact with his mother, had been reared 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 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 read. . . ."

"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: Tuesday
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, wearily raising his arms. ‘I’m human, aren’t I?"

‘You don’t believe that for a second, Novins,’ Jay said.

‘You’re a misanthrope. You hate people.’

‘Not at all true; I just don’t like some of the things people do.

‘Like what, for instance? Like, for instance, you’re always having to tell people 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.

‘Now, if you could get back at him, you have the audacity to beef about that and you took on the Cumberland account.

‘That’s pure out 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 low 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 had 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 that, I would be a do nothing freak. They’ve got a restoration programme, don’t forget that. They’ll put that land back in shape.’

"Jay laughed, and said, "Eichman said, ‘We have a terrible restoration programme, we’ll put them Jew right back in shape, just a little gas to spill ’em up.’ He was just going to a job too, Novins. Have I mentioned lately that you stink on ice.’"

Novins was shaking again. ‘I suppose you’ve 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. They were pi$$ed off, and I intend 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 Tuscan sun streaming in enormous flares past the forty-fifth floor windows. Slowly, he let the receiver settle into the cradle. Only three days and his life was drifting away, and he knew it would never 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.

V: Thursday
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-per-view 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 alone 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, he was flavourless. There were no phone calls that day. It was Thursday. Shortly before midnight, the fever broke, and he cried himself back to sleep.

vi: Freday
A key turning 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-Guard. His hair had started going out at the ground in a few small bald patches, regardless of the irrelevancy of the glass-wall buildings. It was near dusk, and the city was grey as cardboard.

He turned and the sound of the door opening 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.
Avoid readers of sf will be well aware of the regular plethora of 'Best SF' anthologies which appear annually. Currently there are at least four such volumes: The Annual Best SF edited by that terrible two-tone 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 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 to read all the books in question, and see whose choices you agree with most closely. What could be simpler? For myself, I rank the Harrison/Aldiss selection tops, and Carr's a close second, but that's another story.

There is, however, a further addition to this surfeit of anthologies: the annuals which appear on a different principle from any of the others: a collection which is probably more trustworthy than the idiosyncrasies of individual editors. For a start the editorship is largely an honorary task, the selection is done by a selection of the most informed and literate of the ficthorians, and the contents of the volume are almost totally free from the fictional contents of the volume. This anthology has been published annually for some 15 years now, and it's called Nebula Award Stories. This is a brief explanatory quotation from the book's introduction, 'Spades have no choice 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 League of America nominate stories and novels as they appear in print. There is no limit to this list that grows to an unwieldy length, and the final ballot of selections is short enough for everyone to read. In all every single active member of the organization is permitted to vote. The final ballot, and the winning stories are chosen by writers judging other writers.

In other words, the works of the nominated writers are not chosen by a jury from a selection, but by a large jury. This anthology contains the winning stories in the shorter than novel-length form, written in English, not originally published as a separate book, and possibly different from the original novel or short story. The Nebula award is judged by an eminent panel of judges, and the Nebula Award winners are the winners of the award's inception, and a beautifully unclassifiable 'short story' by Cordwainer Smith. The award for best novels of 1973 went to the story called The Death of Dr. Ignacio de la Herra by James Wang. This same author published a story entitled The Island of Dr Death and Other Stories in Otis T (1970) which was also nominated for a Nebula award, a remarkable number in tides, as well as a clever play on words. Some readers may already be familiar with James Wang's work, though 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 participants, are present, and the boy, played by the robotised psychiatrist who watches over their progress and decides when they are fit to return society. When the story opens, the boy, already insane, is living on the planet of Dr. de la Herra's of his surroundings. Before much time has passed, he encounters the patient's presence on the island of Dr Death and other stories. The story develops, and a climactic moment is reached when the mad boy, in another form, makes its way back to society, where Dr de la Herra is destined for greatness.

The only other occupant of this strange hospital is a girl, Diana, who could also be helped by Nicholson's presence. Things don't turn out quite as Dr de la Herra imagines. Ignacio's plan to exorcise the boys' madness by slaughtering the psychotic type is thwarted, and the girl, as the somewhat pugnacious Nicholson. Nicholas is then left alone, to be recycled along with the mad boy. The story ends with the inevitable appeal for increased rights for the insane.

It's very easy to see why this story won the award. It is a story of horror and poetry about which lend it a remarkable quality even among the literature of the western genre. This review is not a complete one, but it is the complete selection by the authors who have stayed faithful to the genre over the years, at least seeing the big SF boom in the 1960s. This is a volume that should be in every science fiction collection.

This review section has been written by Mike Ashley, who has also selected two stories which he feels best represent the fiction available in the magazines of the time. At the end of the book are a few selected appendices (for instance, a list of all the stories in the 1939 World's Best Science Fiction, which can also be enjoyed as an introduction to the other science fiction magazines, and to an important part of the 20th century's science fiction.
This tale is just one of the many adventures of Trurl and Klapaucius that STANISLAW LEM has very kindly, and very admirably, 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 constantly 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 taunted 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 protoplastic cloud of 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-fifth-hundredth 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 Boids, bipedality and taillessness, then made the paleopaleopse (Albomunnta sapiens), which beat the paleface, which began 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 shafts, 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 seemed, 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. Speol upon speol of computerised history was filled and ejected into storage bins; soon there were so many spoils 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 fantasies. 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 crystallo-graphical 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 thruster 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, experimentated, disconnected, ran checks, reconnected, reset, did everything he could think of, and the machine presented him with a poem that made him think back to 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 elche 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 primitive 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 megacerebral narcissists. The machine simmered 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 galleryed, 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, Klapschius 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, “Phlogisticoom. Rhomothriphly. Floof.”

“Is that it?” inquired Klapschius 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.

Penn’t o’ say merlong gamin gots,
Untle yun fury pizen ye.
Contrre an’ azyor, azyor ots.
Bisher de furrous bochre bleb!

‘Am I missing something?’ said Klapschius, 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, sweating like a maniac, tightened something, cried at something, crawled out again and ran frantically to another tier. At last long he let out a cry of triumph and threw a burst tube over his shoulder—it bounced off the railing and fell to the floor, shattering at the feet of Klapschius. But Trurl didn’t bother to apologize; he quickly put in a new tube, wiped his hands on a chamois cloth and hollered down for Klapschius to try it now. The following words rang out.

Mockles! Fent on silpin tree,
Blockard three-a-feenin,
Mockles, what slip said 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 Klapschius, the very soul of politeness.

‘Darn!’ 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!’

Klapschius compiled. The electronic bard shuddered from stem to stern and began:

Oft, in that wakeless slumber all begorn,
Where whisom soughed the mossy sappertor
And you were wont to bong—

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Truel yanked out a few cables in a fury, something rattled and clattered inside the cabinet. Klaukiasa laughed so hard he had to sit on the floor. Then suddenly, as Truel 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 it all.
When Genius, having falttered, fails to fall.

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

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

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

"Set up?"

"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 sitting there for? Afraid?"

"Just a minute," said Klaukiasa, annoyed. He was trying to think of a request as difficult as possible, so 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 lefty, noble, tragic, timeless, full of love, treachery, retribution, the whole vast, deep, stirring gamut. Six lines, freely rhymed, and every word beginning with the letter 'l'."

"And why not throw in a fall in expansion of the general idea of your desires? A keepsake, something unusual enough to visit Truel's electronic bard in secret. It received them courteously, in a half piled high with closely written paper (for it worked day and night without pause). Now these poets were all avant-garde, and Truel's machine wrote only in the traditional manner; Truel, no connoisseur of poetry, had relied heavily on the classics in setting up its program. The machine's guests jeered and left in triumph. The machine was self-programming, however, and in addition had a special arrangement. 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 them 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 urge to cross lyrical swords with Truel's electronic bard. They came from far and wide, carrying carts and trucks 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 sixty-three to twenty and three hundred and forty-seven times better.

The machine quickly grew so adept at this, that it could cut down a first-class haiku poet 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, for'th 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 Truel's electronic bard to a finger on them. First an aged elegist, then two modernists committed suicide, leaping of a cliff that unfortunately happened to lie hard by the road leading from Truel's place to the nearest train station.

There were many poet protests staged, demonstrations demanding, among other things, that the machine be shut down and its programming reverted to the same state as before. But no one else appeared to care. In fact, magazine editors generally approved: Truel's electronic bard writing under various pseudonyms was a different proposition. Once, at least, on an occasion to fit whatever length might be required, and of such high quality that the magazine would be torn out and eagerly read. On the street one could see emacrated faces, bemused smiles, sometimes even hear a quiet sob. Everyone knew the poems of Truel'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 assurance, would actually fall into a faint. But this colossal inspiration was prepared even for that eventuality; it would immediately supply the necessary number of resorative rondests.

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 snarling 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, bested Truel to a pulp. And while the constructor lay in the hospital, events marched on. Not a day passed without a suicide or a funeral; pigeon lines formed around the hospital; one could hear gramophone in the distance —instead of manuscripts in their suitcases, more and more poets were bringing rifles to defeat Truel's electronic bard. But the bullets merely bounced off its cold interior. After his return from the hospital, the author of the first poem, finally decided one night to dismantle the homeostatic Homer he had created.

Then he approached the machine, limping slightly, noticed the pliers in his hand and grim glower in his eye, delivered such an eloquent, impassioned plea for an understanding relationship that the constructor took his tools and hurried back to his room, wandering 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 Truel received a bill for the electricity consumed by the machine and almost fell off his chair. If only he had consulted his old friend Klaukiasa! But Klaukiasa was nowhere to be found. So Truel 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 staccato stupification, 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 Truel an official request for the immediate termination of his device, which was seriously impairing the health and well-being of all travelers.

That night Truel went into hiding, so they dropped a team of technicians on the asteroid to gage the machine's output unit. It overwhelmed them with a few balls, however, and in the ensuing mayhem the device was destroyed before it was finished, the machine's creator employed pantomime. After that, there began to be talked of an eventual punitive expedition, the purpose of bombarding the electronic rotor into submission. But just then some ruler from a neighbouring star system came, bought the machine and hauled it off, astounded and all, to his capital.}

Now Truel 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 glow that had haunted his astronomers, had ordered his astronomers and engineers to connect the electronic bard to a constellation of huge megaphones, thereby bringing the whole hemisphere to a state of stuporous solar prominence; thus the Greatest Poet in the Universe was able to transmit its thermoelectrical creations to all the inhabited stars. For even if there were any truth to this, it was all too far away to bother Truel, who vowed by everything that was ever held dear to him, never, never again to make a cybernetic model of the Muse.
of the exhibits were very valuable, nothing was damaged and a very deep interest was shown in the work of the society.

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 Prince Philip'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.

One student was adding a human touch to a model of an original working model, lent by the BBC Open University, explaining such mysteries as the warp drive.

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's 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 from them, a booklet was available which was specially franched by the Post Office at the end of the exhibition.

A batch 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-Journey 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 of sf artists, 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 on a shoestring called SF-Journey 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 of sf artists, this is the brief for the book jacket.

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BOOKS

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

The year is 1515, the scene is the assassination of Pope Alexander VI and the downfall of the Borgia dynasty, and the Papacy. The Pope is the first to hear of Francis, a young Melchizedek who may very well be the promised Messiah. Francis is the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Christ, and his mission is to overthrow the forces of evil. The forces of evil, represented by the Pope, the Inquisition, the Knights Templar, and the Knights of Malta, are determined to stop him... The action is fast-paced and involves intrigue, mystery and murder. This is a gripping, action-packed adventure story. It is a remarkable achievement, and will be enjoyed by fans of the genre.

The price is £1.50, and it is available from all good bookshops.

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

The author demonstrates that the mind of man is immortal and thus explains telepathy, clairvoyance, healing and 'sixth' sense. A collection of essays which will be enjoyed by fans of the genre.

The price is £1.50, and it is available from all good bookshops.

Some recent SF titles from Faber

JAMES BLISH

Doctor Mirabilis

A reissue by popular demand of this remarkable novel about a lone psychoanalyst who becomes obsessed with the idea of communicating with the spirit world. The story is told through the eyes of several characters, each of whom is drawn into the mystery. The novel is a blend of science fiction and psychological thriller, and is a classic of the genre.

The price is £1.50, and it is available from all good bookshops.

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. £1.50

FABER & FABER

3 Queen Square, London WCIN 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.

You must be dressed as befits your new role.

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.

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 earn 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 set out there is your new destiny!

Go and find it, and remember. Enjoy dal lik oloc abko nau ghalt as int.

The beginning.

Old heroes never die. They just phase out!
As Stuart Bell picked his way among the rubble he experienced, raving eyes 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 runing bedstead. He recalled that the house 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 entertaining 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 Finguard. Twenty Playboy mags and an old monochrome TV. Then there were those Seventeens' 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-a-brac (if they were being kind), or rubbish (if they were being honest). The items he was eyeing in this case was catching on 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 fairs, 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 bunche was confirmed as a round tipped 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 falling light of the golden evening he could just make out the word BRUNSWICK in fancy white letters on a dark background, delicately etched. He took off his jacket and, removing the remainder of the records, folded it around there gently. These were a real find. Occasionally a slim disc from the Seventeens or Eighteens 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 Seventeens 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 the disc 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 utility apartment until he found a roll of polyester 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 to the transfer company, rather than selling it. If he thought of the money he could make with master tapes taken from a few of his records.

The librarian handed him a brown card and he dropped his identification 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 sliding through a hole in the wall, suspended from a track set in the ceiling. The tray stopped at his desk and descended. One side flipped 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, trying to see whether anything else was going to happen, before relacing the cover of the volume in front of him. The first page read ENGLISH POPULAR MUSIC PAPERS, REPRESENTATIVE SELECTION. 1867 JANUARY SIX MONTHS COMPLETE. PLEASE TREAT THIS VOLUME WITH CARE. BOUND UNRESTORED.

He hadn't been sure exactly when to start looking, (1907 1907?), but this seemed a good random compromise. 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-section, 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 UK milk bottles on to the unpolished flat. 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.

A letter popped Stuart Bell returned the letter to its envelope and took out the cassette. He pushed it into the player and switched on. And from that moment on, for a junk dealer from South London and eventually for many others, an record quite the same somehow,
'Boiler 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.'
spindly metal shins and arms... The moonship stood, stabilised, with two knobbled 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 moonscapes 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 dome of the ship's control cabinet. Two dark holes rimmed by bronze collar bars back through. Through these throb his hands, which came out the other side in coppery gloves of metal cloth. These lengthened into sleeves as he pressed his arms through to the shoulders. Thus gauged he set a few keys and made two driving toggles in his fingers.

Graydon's view was close to Moon surface, through his camera-eyes. In the ship's screen he saw others watch the tankette move forward and back, circle around a figure eight, and make a motion of tracks on the moon's surface. Graydon lowered the light 'dozer blade and scraping, spilling dust first side and then the other. He finished the blade high and tilted it left and right, returned it to rest. He lighted the darkest shadows with his bead lights and the spotlights above his camera.

"Soil sampling, core drilling and instrument operations can wait until we wish to proceed," said Bolger. "Disembarkation of the main thing now. Hands ready?"

Graydon alighted his bucket seat on and laid his hands over the tankette's steering arms. 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 gauges shuddered gently around his fingers and hands, and the mesh along his arms firmly and moulded itself to his muscles. Wire contact rings around arms and legs, linked by linear sinews, showed Bolger's driving, racing veins.

Unfolding, Graydon held his arms out in the well of the console. After time-lag two hinged sections unfurled and reached out from the front of the tankette, where Bolger rolled his wrap and fixed his fingers. The tankette's wrist links and hands did the same, every metal joint marginally visible. Graydon pressed down and forward on the tankette's long, slightly curved, forward impelled by two steel upper arms like piston rods, whose ball-shoulder lubricated smoothly in the metal socket of a little knuckle in front of the carapace. Graydon and the tankette were now in walking position.


When he perceived Tankette and acknowledging her 'by name would please Graydon. Through the ship's links Bolger turned to the others who had observed the original, impersonal, operator-programmed Tankette. "The APT-1 develops, in its evolution, something like a partner, 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, of course, since the tankette could not talk. But she was capable of responding. But Graydon, despite his air of tronic detachment in most things, clearly held her in high affection.

It was much the same with young Hale and his tankette. He walked with it, although through them were dials and more like brothers. Bolger even had to admit a special affection for Tankette in himself—less evident (of course!) but there to some degree. He had known his moments—when he alone was seeking through the eyes of the ship, orbiting the Moon before landing, for example—secreted in his beam feeling, through the ship's sensors, thinking with her for her, and her responding so willingly to his touch. Tankette's responses were not always what he expected, but were part of another one.

The experience of men of course. Through the ages it had happened then and again between men and their warships, ships, their ships—steam engines, motor cars, aeroplanes... Contrast with the Organic ship which had shared a man some great achievement, some ordeal, some danger, some joy. When at last some part of them had reached in to graduate into trusted partner, valued friend. "It's the thing," he had said—coupled with a personality, even a kind of sentimentality. The ship itself it is what happen with space vehicles, computers, robots.

Bolger took pleasure in quoting, from a generation back, an old dandy metaphor in partnership: 'Two bodies, one beauty, old, new, now mean literally as well—'She is a real bunch of machinery, that one!' And so Graydon gave Bolger the compliment of waving to him from the Moon. Then she gave it back in right, in left, in right, in both 'mits' in the sportman's salute.

"She's ready," said Graydon. "Send 'em home!"

From inside the ship a shining metal ball, fuzzy and that Tankette had rolled the ball out and dropped to a stop in the dust's thumb's length. Removing both hands wide he lifted them, holding them in the air. The ball shuddered. Four plate-like sections blunted off its underside and were replaced by four flat, five-fingered hands 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 double the size of the bottom, dropped off. When clear, the section turned upside-down and pushed the tankette's antenna to the black sky. In the next minute, two by two, six more discs sliced off and slung the ball's waist, and arms came out at odd angles to expose instruments and sensors.

"The Alpha lane is clear on his feet," reported Graydon. He backed Tankette well away, turned, and took station again. 'Now for Beta—Solar Wind. We carry her, I think..."

S U P H E R T H E R M A L I n J o n t Detector at Epsilon Ophiuchi, Simonwens Deth, S P E C O M E T e r at Gammas—Hale named each robot on its side, checking the photo-chart while Bolger pinned them back to the uneven semi-circle of standing, squatting, squatting out of the Moon's orbit. He connected to all robot sensors programmed to transmit through ship's system, reported Graydon. 'Ready for activation.'

If it was evening at Woomera, the Moon was low and pale in the blue sky beyond Western Australia. Vision by video on the monitor was good, but the shadowing, the minute Woomeras would be turned away, over the Earth, the Woomera's position where they were. There are!' "Then, Hale reimbursed him, his back to his console. 'We're not in the act yet.'

"Tomorrow Swift comes into his own," Bolger reassured him. "He'll go down that hole and we'll monitor mechanics through his advance guard. The Moon will be his oyster—and yours..."

suddenly the head stopped scanning, then the one direction. The hands churned the dust, accelerating into violent speed

The second Earth night of the Moon's long journey began, landing the Semi-Autonomous Mobile Ores Detector Robot, or 'metal sniffer', on the moon's surface, an existence at least.

"Well, I thought he should be nicknamed SAM or SAMMO from the initials of his cumbersome name, But SAM traditionally be used in conjunction with the Alpha Greek letter. Consequently 'metal sniffer' rapidly became SAMMO in practice, by popular demand, aptly fitted the inquisitive little robot's role. It was suitably equipped to the required C.S. and damaged all other names.

Sniffer resembled Tankette, although about half the size. He had no dozer blade or power turret but was rather trickier also capable of automatic action when 'given his head'. Designed to 'quest' by the use of a continually alternating pattern for metallic traces in his vicinity, he could be sent to explore the whole Moon. Even now sometimes he seemed to possess a kind of sentient intelligence with it, perhaps, a capacity for sinful disobedience.

Hale, his operator, youngest of the three, was called to the antenna console already on the antenna switch when Bolger turned on the main. He swung out and up the basket antenna.

Head inside his video hood, Hale saw a huge semi-circle of moon landscape spin across with him. Forward and back, side to side in a figure eight, the antenna turned and down, antenna rolling gently on its universal to point always at Woomera, they understood the name of the place with stars. "Try questing," suggested Bolger. "Not too long. Just a little over-speed."

Tankette raised her eyes and located a target in range—right to left, right to left, eight to eight. Alpha site on the cyclorama. Gently she rolled the ball, staring carefully around it. Bolger called in to Tankette. "Alpha site on the cyclorama. Eight inches..."

Graydon said. Alpha site on the cyclorama. Eight inches..."

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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 2JH. These will be answered as soon as possible.

Requiem was reprinted in The Man WhoVotre Moon, by Charles Willard Dillin, in Famous Science Fiction Stories, Volume 1, and later appeared in a sequel called Brown of the Dark Moon. You can order a copy from GD Newby, Great Barr, Birmingham.

SUNSET BAY: In the Dark Moon, by Barbara Willard Dillin, is the third in the Sunset Bay series published by Clayton Magazines. Dark Moon first appeared in the May 1953 issue. The sequel you mention was a four-part serial novel which appeared in the August 1953 issue. A third story in the series, The Moon and the Stars, appeared in the April 1954 issue. I am not aware of any recent reprints of these tales.

PAGINING MR CANTERBURY: An American friend tells me if you can provide any information on a British fantasy and if you would like to correspond with the author of any story in the series "The Adventures of the Great Captain," published by Blackstone & Jackson, London (1961), I will forward it. I am told the author has published a number of other works since then and that your search may have been successful.

DOUBLE EVENT

The stories Sucker Ball (from The Martian War), by Isaac Asimov and Planet of No Return by Jack Williamson, both appeared in Astounding Science-Fiction in 1944. The "Planeto-to-bale" titles you mention were purely tentative and never included in the series as finally developed.

BOOK CLUB

I cannot obtain a good copy of a good book club which deals with science fiction. G Allan, Glascroft, Fife, A Science Fiction Book Club has existed in the UK since 1953, when it was started by Sidney Jackman. It is now one of the largest book clubs in the world and offers a wide range of fiction, from science fiction to romance. Members are kept informed of new issues and are offered discounts on purchases. You can take out a trial membership for a month and get a monthly newsletter if you don't wish to continue. Write to Science Fiction Book Club, PO Box 6, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 2TW.

Lost Brood

Lost Brood is the title of a short story by Martin C. girl, published in Science Fiction Quarterly in 1960. The story is about a group of humans who are stranded on a remote planet and must find a way to survive. The story was later adapted into a television series and a novel. You can order a copy from GD Newby, Great Barr, Birmingham.

HEINLEIN'S HISTORIES

The 1963 Pan edition of Robert Heinlein's The Moon and The Moon gives a list of connected stories of which six had yet to be written. Were they ever published? No one

I am a regular reader of SFAM and I particularly enjoy the articles. I would like to point out, however, that in the second part of John Brunner's article on TV in SFAM Vol 2 No 4 I agree that there are a few misspellings. The term "Dalek" is also misspelled in this article, as well as in previous ones.

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