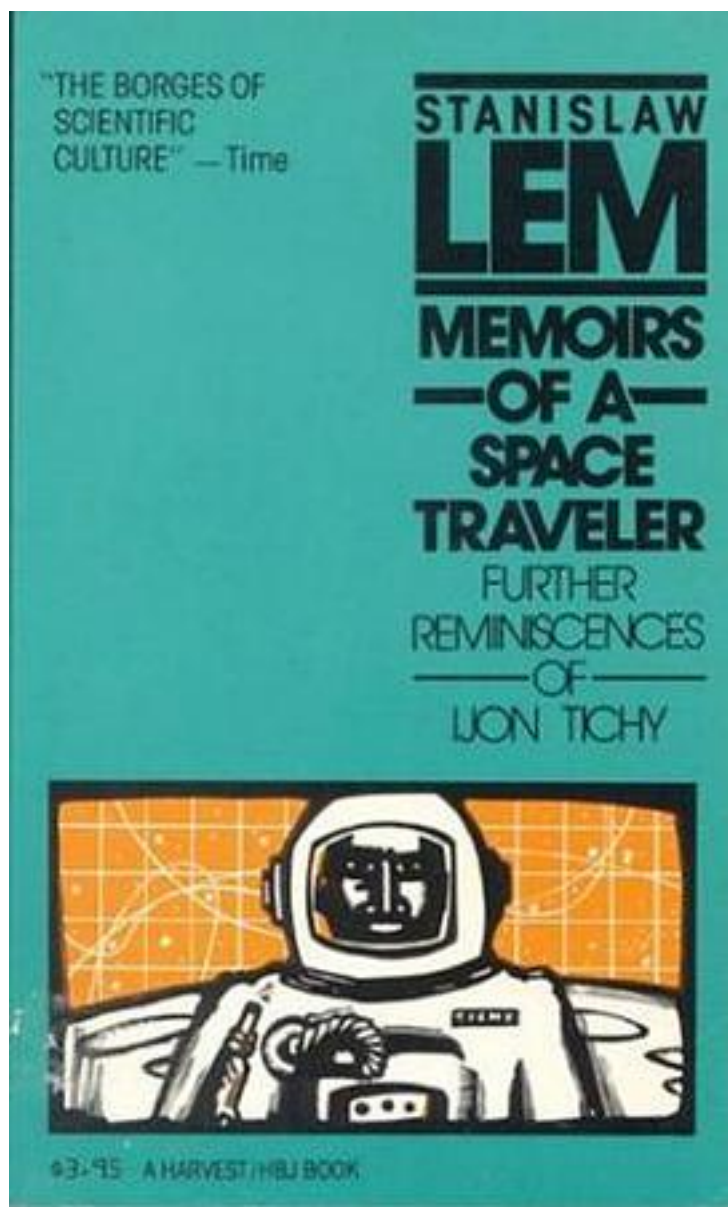


Memoirs of a Space Traveler



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Ijon Tichy is an ordinary space traveler who always follows his extraordinary curiosity, especially when it leads him to scientists working on the fringes of knowledge. Their plans are grandiose, and the bargains they make too often Faustian, for the ends they pursue concern humanity's greatest obsessions: immortality, artificial intelligence, and consumer goods. By turns philosophical, satirical, and absurd, Lem's stories find Tichy both a participant in and an observer of strange experiments. One scientist has created artificial consciousness in black boxes, fooling machines into thinking they're human; another has created a gelatinous substance that shows disturbing signs of free will; still another has fallen victim to his own doppelganger. But there are triumphs, however temporary. The revolution in laundry brought on by rival manufacturers of intelligent washing machines gives way to chaos as ever more sophisticated machines seduce their owners or turn to crime. Faulty time machines, intergalactic tourists, intelligent (but suicidal) potatoes -- Ijon Tichy navigates them all with common sense and resourcefulness and in so doing shows why he endures as one of Lem's most popular characters.

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