

GATEHOUSE GAZETTE

ISSUE 6

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TINKERING WITH TIME

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Thanks to the rest of the team for the ideas!



BY COL. HAZARD

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EDITORIAL



NICK OTTENS

How'd you like your past, Sir?

ALTERNATE HISTORY IS AT THE VERY BASIS OF steampunk and dieselpunk. The answer to "what if?" defines the outlook of both genres: each picks a different time in history to drop that question upon which like a terribly refined and particular bomb obliterates all that it disagrees with; all that could have been bigger, better, and more beautiful. The aftermath is steampunk, or dieselpunk: a peculiar conglomerate of old and new; of rusting and shining; of honest and deceptive. There is always ambiguity; always uncertainty about what to find behind the next corner or upon the next page. Is that the sound of a rogue baron's airship? The clattering of a gargantuan steam powered spider machine? Or just the noise of an old building being torn down to make way for modernity?

Because steampunk and perhaps dieselpunk even more isn't all about despising all that is new. It is not about a fear of the future or a hate of the futuristic. Quite to the contrary! It is nostalgia about times when tomorrow seemed exciting; times without climate change and consumerist hysteria; times when one could see progress all around; when one could blissfully believe in the scientific and industrial accomplishments of the human species—even when those times, in reality, were plagued with troubles of their own: pollution, poverty, war and, later, when we enter the domain of dieselpunk, nuclear paranoia, more pollution, still poverty and still more war.

No matter! We are here to make the past look better. Simply kill a king here and invent a technology some years earlier and there you go, history fixed! The Victorian era, though all filled with smog and tuberculosis, suddenly seems like a time worth living in, for the brass is shining and the stars are within reach! If your tastes are actually a bit twisted, there is no reason to despair; we just invent more smog and more disease and you can go back in time *Jack the Ripper*-style.

We of the *Gatehouse Gazette* welcome all kinds of tinkering with time, therefore we dedicate this whole issue to the business of alternate history. Some of our familiar contributors ponder what could have been: Mr Rauchfuß, for example, imagines how much better things would have been had Emperor Friedrich III lived just a tad longer while Miss Ella Kremper warns just how much worse the world of *Brazil* seems compared to ours. Mr Trubetskoy wonders why the First World War is so often overlooked in alternate history but offers a review of a book that touches upon the subject, if only in passing.

You will also find plenty of the usual in this edition: Mr Daniel's "Liquor Cabinet"; "Local Steampunk" in Antwerp this time; Miss Hilde Heyvaert's "Steampunk Wardrobe" about the mad scientist look; and Ella's "Hammer Horrors". And we welcome a new columnist: Mr David Townsend, "Gentleman Traveler"!

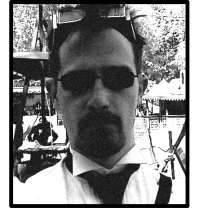
Some old faces return to contribute once again: Mr Toby Frost, author of *Space Captain Smith* and its sequel, *God Emperor of Didcot*, provides a review of the fourth *Call of Duty* video game and Mr Guy Dampier writes the first in a series of articles about the *Quatermass* franchise. Also, we welcome Mr Andii as guest author who writes about his band Ghostfire.

Lastly, the good Colonel and I sat down with Hilde for a long and pleasant chat about her clothes and costuming. (Quite worth the trip to Belgium—by airship, of course.) She previously interviewed two designers for our magazine so the least we could do was return the favor! You will find the transcript of our talk on the final pages of this issue; a fine conclusion to yet another fine publication indeed!

I thank all this issue's contributors for their hard work again and would like to remind you, dear reader, that we always care to hear from you. Visit our website, www.ottens.co.uk/gatehouse/gazette to learn more! ■

ARTICLE AN ALTERNATE HISTORY

The reign of Friedrich III



MARCIUS
RAUCHFUR

HISTORICALLY, FRIEDRICH III WAS already terminally ill with cancer when he ascended the throne in 1888 and died ninety-nine days thereafter. He was married to Princess Victoria, eldest child of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and held Great Britain in high regard (half of his personal medical staff was British). Friedrich was on excellent terms with his parents-in-law; took rather liberal views and there are indications that he wished to turn the German Empire into a constitutional monarchy modeled after the British.

What he might have done. Had his reign been longer and had he not been wrecked by cancer he might have brought several changes to Germany: he would have curtailed the power of the chancellor, something he already tried during his short time in power but was unable to pass on into law. This might have prevented the ultra-conservative Bismarck from passing his anti-socialism laws.

He might have turned the German Empire into a more liberal state and although there is no consensus among historians, the majority seems to support this view. As Von Poschinger in her biography of Frederick states (pp. 355-356): "In firm accordance with his idealistic tendencies he regarded



the modification of class distinctions, recognition of intellectual claims, personal 'rapprochement' of employers and employed, and kindly intercourse between men, as the chief means of compensation for the inevitable hardships of industrial life. Freedom from economic distress would, he hoped, result from the spiritual

liberty and elevation of the nation. He became in course of time, the center and initiator of all charitable efforts in the country." He might have been a very progressive ruler indeed.

What he would most likely not have done or would have prevented. Friedrich III was by no means the militarist; his son and successor Wilhelm II was. He also was not nearly as enthusiastic about the navy. Therefore we can assume that there would not have been a massive build-up of the German armed forces and no naval race with the United Kingdom.

Likewise, Germany's relation with Britain, which suffered greatly due to several blunders on the part of Wilhelm II, would likely have remained stable for a long time.

A stable, friendly relationship with Britain would likely have prevented the Austro-Hungarian and the German empires from becoming such staunch allies. Historically Wilhelm II sought this alliance partly because in the years leading up towards the Great War, Britain, France (which held a grudge anyway) and Russia had become increasingly cold or hostile towards Germany.

So a likely situation at the turn of the twentieth century would have been: The German Empire on

friendly terms with the United Kingdom; France still rather isolated by the old alliances forged by Wilhelm I (Friedrich III's father and the first Hohenzollern Emperor); and the Austro-Hungarian Empire possibly courting both Germany and Britain or in relative isolation.

(As to the relation with Russia, I dare not speculate for lack of knowledge.)

With this setting established, let us explore two alternate history scenarios.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand still takes place:

Since there is no strong German-Austro-Hungarian alliance, Germany would not side with the Austrians in its conflict with Serbia and Austro-Hungary would have to face the might of the Russian Empire alone. Judging from the historical performance of Austro-Hungarian troops against their Russian counterparts in the Great War without German assistance, we can safely assume Vienna would have sought peace real soon—if ever it went to war. The Austro-Hungarian Empire might have continued to exist in a diminished form or (I consider this more likely) would have been torn apart by inner turmoil pretty quickly. The German-speaking parts would very likely have sought entry into the German Empire, while Hungary and parts of the Balkan would have become independent.

No assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand:

This would have been a brilliant option. Ferdinand was very much aware of the state the Austro-Hungarian Empire was in and had already drafted plans for rather drastic reforms, giving equal rights

to ethnic groups other than Austrians and Hungarians. He actually had a plan to transform his Empire into a federal state modeled after the United States of America. This could have prevented many of the ethnic troubles still plaguing the Balkans today but to go into detail now would lead too far. Suffice to say, as emperor, Franz Ferdinand would have radically changed the face of Central Europe.

As for the colonies: Germany lost its overseas possessions as a result of the Versailles treaty. All other colonial powers lost their colonies after World War II which, of course, came as a direct result of the first war. I dare not speculate on how long the European empires would have been able to sustain themselves before someone realized it was about time to let other people govern themselves but I think it may have started around the time when Dr. Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement came to prominence in the United States. From then on it still could have been a long way to full sovereignty of the colonies (including Canada and Australia), maybe starting in the 1970s with the release of the British Dominions. Let us for now not ponder in detail the implications this could have had for the native populations. Some might have suffered more severely yet than they did historically as wars of decolonization could have been more brutal than they actually were.

So, what would relative peace in Europe have meant in terms of steampunk? In one word: zeppelins!

As a result of the First World War, Germany did not receive helium for her zeppelins. Thus, they were floated using cheap but dangerous hydrogen. This led directly to the *Hindenburg*

catastrophe on 6 May 1937 which put an end to the civilian use of airships. Without it they might still be around today and we would not mourn their passing into obscurity.

Also, World War II was a major factor in the development of the jet engine. Without World War I there would probably not have been a World War II and the development of jet propulsion would lag behind compared to what it is today. So, zeppelins would still be around in both military and civilian capacity in very much the same way Boeing and Airbus jets dominate the skies today. Oh, what a happy thought indeed!

To conclude this essay I provide a quotation from Dr. Fritz-Konrad Kriiger's "Government and Politics of the German Empire":

"With Kaiser Frederick III died the hope of the liberal educated class of Germany. During his whole life, while not a political liberal he had been the champion of free thought and tolerance. *Audiat et altera pars* ('Let the other side also be heard') was his fundamental principle. Justice to every opinion of a serious minded man could be expected from him. From his firm attitude towards Bismarck before 1866, and his insistence on the dismissal of Puttkammer (*Authors note: Puttkammer had manipulated the parliamentary election results in favor of the conservatives*), we may draw the conclusion that he would have been a factor in the German government had destiny given him more time. Although by nature liberal minded, he had a very strong historic sense, and had expressed himself against the introduction of the responsible ministerial form of government. With the radical liberal parties he disagreed entirely in his ideas on the army and navy." ■

COLUMN THE LIQUOR CABINET



CRAIG B. DANIEL

Pour oh pour t' pirate sherry!

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1868, THE *CONFESSIONS OF* Martin Calico are a boon to those who wish to study the everyday life of mid-nineteenth century airship piracy. While they are known to be a hoax (for example, the Confederate States of America did not issue letters of marque to airship captains until 1863, two years after the real Martin Calico died), they agree in many particulars with other primary sources on the matter and were probably written by someone with firsthand knowledge of pirate life. Plus, they include several references to drinks.

Surprisingly perhaps to modern-day steampunks, who tend to imagine airship pirates drinking rum like their seagoing forbears, Calico (who grew up on the streets of London) is known to have favored gin, and Captain McKay (under whom he served in the early 1850s) is quoted in the *Confessions* as demanding “whisky plain or nowt at all.” Yet there are references to rum in a number of forms throughout the narrative.

During a stop McKay's crew makes in the Florida Keys, for example, there is a mention of men getting drunk on bimbo—probably a typographical mistake, as “bumbo,” sweetened spiced rum, was a favorite of eighteenth century naval pirates; recipes vary, but one version is made by adding half an ounce of simple syrup and a pinch of grated nutmeg to a jigger of gold rum. *Jerry Thomas' Bartender's Guide*, roughly contemporary with the *Confessions*, also mentions a “bimbo punch” made from brandy, a little Arrack (an Indian beverage made by distilling palm wine), lemons, sugar, and water, but this is far less likely to have been consumed in Florida. Also mentioned is an unnamed mix of rum, sugar, lime, and “Curacoa” (orange Curaçao). While the author of the *Confessions* does not mention the proportions, Thomas includes a recipe for a “Santa Cruz Rum Daisy” consisting of a wine glass of rum (probably only about three or four ounces), the juice of half a

small lemon, and a few dashes each of gum syrup and Maraschino (a cherry liqueur) or Curaçao, topped off with soda water. Thomas also provides a recipe for a “white lion” which may be the same as the “Rum-Lion” Calico tastes in California. To make it, shake together a generous dash each of simple syrup, raspberry syrup, and orange Curaçao, the juice of half a lime, and three ounces of white rum, then strain into a cocktail glass.

Chapters 36-39 of the *Confessions* provide a fascinating outsider's view of high society during the period, as McKay sent some of his men on a reconnaissance mission to Washington, D.C. Kidnapping important people for ransom was among the most profitable activities an airship pirate could engage in, as heavy cargoes rarely traveled by air in the nineteenth century, and on learning that Franklin Pierce would be traveling by dirigible to England, Calico and a few other men allegedly infiltrated the local upper class in an unsuccessful attempt to learn which airship to attack. Calico is presented as being overwhelmed by the pastries and mentions a handful of genteel beverages as well. One is the mint julep, made by muddling a spoonful of sugar with a few sprigs of mint, adding a splash of soda water and stirring to dissolve as much of the sugar as you can, then adding two ounces of bourbon and another splash of soda water. Another is the “horse's neck;” originally ginger ale with lemon peel and a dash of Angostura bitters, this was often made with a shot of brandy or rye whiskey (which is used today), but it is unclear which spirit if any was used in the ones mentioned in the *Confessions*.

Of course, for the truly authentic, look no further than how Captain Calico greased his ropes with “lard, into which is kneaded linseed oil and pure spirits. To this some malodorous poison must be added, lest it be stolen by the crew.” We assume that it was the alcohol, not the prepared grease, which was at risk of theft! ■

SERIES LOCAL STEAMPUNK

Antwerp



HILDE HEYVAERT

ONE MIGHT NOT EXPECT BELGIAN CITIES TO BE VERY steampunk places, yet there are a great many of things to be found in Antwerp of interest to the steampunk enthusiast!

Antwerp has throughout history always been an important place, mainly because of the river Schelde, which was essential for water traffic and trade and commerce in ages past, and which is still of great significance in this day and age. But not only that, it has been home to many great artists including Peter Paul Rubens.

Let us start with arriving in Antwerp by train in the beautiful central station—sadly partly modernized which makes for a strange conglomerate of history and almost futurism—which was designed by the great architect Victor Horta. One must take notice of the gorgeous central arch that welcomes new arrivals. If you ascend into the central hall, you will see the real *art nouveau* splendour of the station. Thankfully these parts are protected monuments which ensures that they will always be preserved and the station is saved from a complete modernisation.

Rising high above the city skyline is the art deco *Boerentoren* depicted on this page. When the tower was built in 1931 it was the highest in all of Europe and actually one of the very first skyscrapers on the continent. Although the building was initially met with some resistance from the Antwerp residents, they have come to appreciate its height and modernist architecture over the years so much that when plans were made in the 1960s to replace the tower, the people protested en masse to prevent its demolition. And with success, for the building is a true landmark of the city today.

Where *art nouveau* inspired the design of the central railway station and deco is represented by the *Boerentoren*, Antwerp hosts many architectural styles, including *Beaux-Arts*; the exquisite Hilton Hotel graces the wide *Groenplaats* in the centre of the city with great glass windows, domes and elaborate stone ornaments empowering its façade. In gothic, Antwerp offers the Cathedral of Our Lady,



the tower of which is the only structure in the city taller than the *Boerentoren*. Construction began in the late fourteenth century and took almost 170 years, until the cathedral's completion in 1521 when it was the largest church in the Low Countries. Today, it contains numerous of significant works by Renaissance and Baroque painters, including Rubens, Jacob de Backer and Marten de Vos.

Another famous place in Antwerp is its zoo, where also *nouveau* and deco influences are visible in a great many of the buildings, making for beautiful scenery. Noteworthy are the entrance gates, which you can view from the outside, but inside there are some quite spectacular feats of architecture as well.

The zoo quite often organises exhibits with old zoo posters which makes for an ideal opportunity to see the artwork from times past and the styles that are entrenched in steampunk art. Entry to these exhibitions is granted with your zoo ticket, so you do not have to pay extra. Also, the zoo hosts a collection of vintage photographs (and more modern ones too) at www.zooantwerpen.be/beeldbank.asp of which they occasionally display a selection.

More into the city's heart, in the Hopland area, there is the Horta Café, build entirely in the *art nouveau* style, and it looks as though it could have been built by the master architect himself.

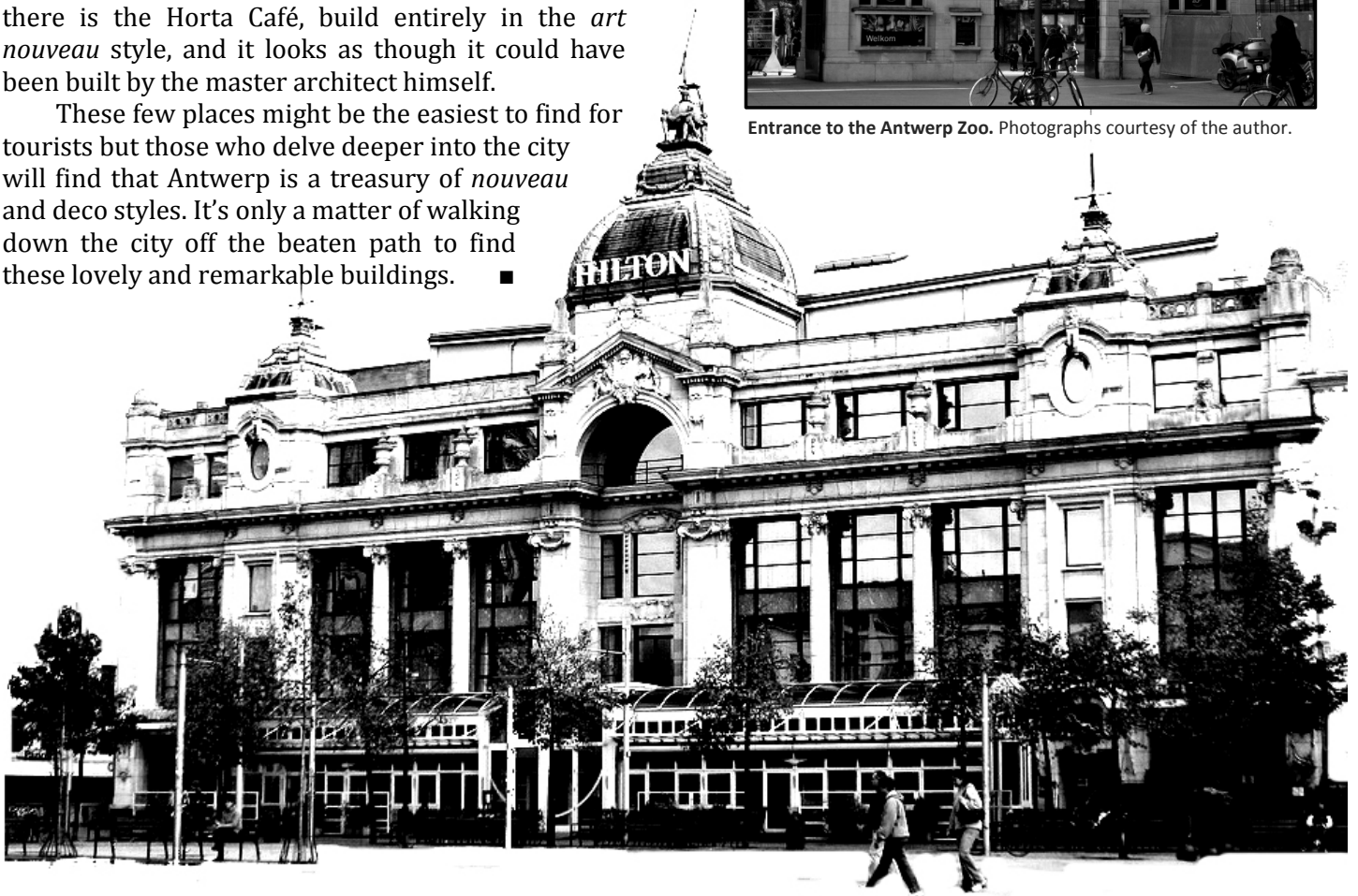
These few places might be the easiest to find for tourists but those who delve deeper into the city will find that Antwerp is a treasury of *nouveau* and deco styles. It's only a matter of walking down the city off the beaten path to find these lovely and remarkable buildings. ■



Antwerp central station.



Entrance to the Antwerp Zoo. Photographs courtesy of the author.



SERIES HAMMER HORRORS

The Curse of Frankenstein



ELLA KREMPER

THE SECOND IN THIS SERIES OF Hammer horror film reviews takes a look at another stalwart of the Gothic genre: the hapless Baron Victor Frankenstein and his monster-making ways.

Mary Shelley's famous novel has been put to the silver screen so many times that people always forget the name of the creator and apply it to the creation. Indeed, the focus of many a Frankenstein film is on the ghoulishness of the Monster, and poor Frankenstein himself is oft forgotten. Therefore, in true Hammer fashion, he reappears in several sequels to assert his legacy as the number-one monster maker of the nineteenth century.

As Christopher Lee became synonymous with the Hammer character of Dracula, Victor Frankenstein was epitomized by Peter Cushing. Cushing, renowned in the film industry for being a very nice man indeed, would portray Frankenstein as a man driven to excel in science and medicine to the point where morality is thrown out of the window. Indeed, Hammer's Frankenstein comments that people are too afraid to go deeper into darker realms of knowledge.

Frankenstein's Hammer debut was in 1957. In *The Curse of Frankenstein*, the story begins with a twist—a disheveled man is in

prison, awaiting execution for murder. A priest arrives at his cell, prepare to hear his final confession. However, the story that this man will tell will be nothing that the priest has ever heard before, for the man is Baron Victor Frankenstein (Peter Cushing).

The baron's tale begins at age 14, at the funeral of his mother. Victor Frankenstein succeeded to the Frankenstein barony at a young age but it seemed that his mother took care of the finances, for he is approached by an aunt who asks him to continue the allowance that his mother gave them. She also introduces the teenage Victor to a young girl, his cousin Elizabeth.

Victor is no spotty, lazy adolescent, however. He has already got to work with advertising for a tutor, who soon arrives in the shape of Paul Krempe (Robert Urquhart). Initially mistaking the young Victor for the Baron's son, Paul is hired to live in Castle Frankenstein and tutor the baron in all things educational. Victor proves to be a talented student in science and medicine, whilst he and Paul become good friends.

As time goes on, and Victor has exhausted Paul's pool of knowledge (whilst growing into Peter Cushing), the pair continue in their scientific explorations and design a peculiar

machine capable of bringing life back to the dead—performed on a rather confused and adorable (yet dead) puppy. Paul is adamant that their discovery could revolutionize medicine and surgery as a whole, whereas Victor is more interested in starting from scratch with creating life. The use of bits of people gives Paul cold feet, and their relationship begins to sour even further with the arrival of Elizabeth (Hazel Court), now a beautiful woman and engaged to Victor, totally oblivious to what he is doing in his laboratory downstairs.

Also starring *Dracula* actors Valerie Gaunt and Christopher Lee as the maid Justine and the Monster respectively, *The Curse of Frankenstein* is a great example of steampunk horror. From the crackling machinery of the anachro-tech resurrection machine, to the macabre Gothic methods of Mary Shelley's protagonist digging through charnel houses to collect body parts, it feels much longer than *Dracula*, although both films are just a minute shy of one another. The setting and costuming is wonderful for the time period, again, the use of few sets makes it seem that everywhere is close to Castle Frankenstein. The other interesting point is that this film focuses more on Frankenstein and his

relationships with people, being a loving fiancé to Elizabeth, his friendship with Paul and his lustful dalliances with Justine, with the Monster taking a backseat for most of the film. It does deviate from the novel considerably, with Victor, Elizabeth and the Monster being the only notable characters by name, and the ending being rather ambiguous.

Having seen *Dracula* before *The Curse of Frankenstein*, I had become quite accustomed to Peter Cushing's Dr. Van Helsing as a nice Victorian action gent. Now, as Baron Victor Frankenstein, that was all thrown out of the window with this power-hungry mad scientist of loose morals and murderous intent. The ability of Cushing to go from nice to nasty is a joy to watch, and he is

indeed the star of the show. I feel that the film would go well next to Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein*, which also focuses more on character development (and comedy). Fans of mad science, steampunk and Gothic horror should find this film one to see! ■

SERIES QUATERMASS

A star is born



GUY DAMPIER

IN 1953 THREE HOURS OF TELEVISION changed the BBC for ever. The three hours were a six part TV serial called *The Quatermass Experiment*. Britain's first television science fiction hero, perhaps even its first real television hero, had arrived.

Professor Bernard Quatermass was a deliberate answer to the prevailing science fiction heroes of the day: young, square jawed types who solved their problems with violence. Quatermass solved his by talking. He was humane, inquisitive and highly moral. Perhaps more he was scientific. Unlike much popular British media about the supernatural like *Night of the Demon* (1957) superstition was not treated as truth. Quatermass faced the fantastic and revealed it as science. Advanced science perhaps, science as magic, science beyond humanity's current grasp but nonetheless, science.

The original six-part serial was so popular that the BBC brought Quatermass back for a further two

serials in 1955 and 1958-9. After this he disappeared from TV until 1979 when the ITV channel broadcast a four-part serial. Another lengthy wait followed. In 2005 the BBC resurrected Quatermass, remaking the original *The Quatermass Experiment* as a two-hour live broadcast. In the interim periods the three original Quatermass TV serials were adapted to film by the legendary Hammer Horror studio in 1955, 1957 and 1967. The first four serials were also adapted as novels whilst a radio program was made in 1996 mixing original drama and documentary about the character.

Quatermass' biggest impact was in the influence it had on another program. *Dr Who* has carried many homages over the years and much of the original program, the character of the doctor, the nature of conflict and so forth was influenced by Quatermass though none would go so far as to speak of plagiarism. Rather it is a philosophical

influence: the aversion to violence, the delight taken in exploration and most important, the humanity.

Despite his popularity at the time Quatermass has become something of a lost figure in British popular history. Like much British output of the time he has been simply forgotten. However the arrival of the Internet and the DVD has seen a renaissance in the influence of Quatermass with the availability of the franchise's entire back catalogue for the first time ever. The BBC's 2005 rebirth of the character proved very popular considering its broadcast on an obscure channel and perhaps it may be hoped that with the success of the new version of *Dr Who* that we might see Bernard Quatermass return to screens worldwide. Its not likely but then Quatermass never has been likely. And surely the BBC Director General isn't much worse than the monsters Quatermass has already bested... ■

COLUMN THE STEAMPUNK WARDROBE

Mad scientists



HILDE HEYVAERT

SURELY, EVERYONE IS AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE importance of science to the steampunk movement. We all have heard about the scientific importance of the Victorian era, thus it comes as no surprise that this lives on in the steampunk of this day.

Inventions and scientific revelation and discoveries and the entire DIY feel that comes with them, are vital to the movement and many members build their own mechanical contraptions and spend many an hour on some kind of experiment. And what better way to do this than in style?

One of the defining garments of this look is no doubt the apron or lab coat, often modified. Or a garment augmented to look like it. There are some lovely dress patterns out there for both ladies and gentlemen that would make for fabulous scientist or inventor garb.

Underneath the apron or lab coat one can wear whichever style that suits your persona or personality best. If you wish to be an airship-dwelling or -exploring inventor doing fieldwork, you will likely wear the garb that allows you a lot of movement; after all, you will be

on the go a lot (see issues #3 and #4). Are you a Neo-Victorian scientist? Then you might favour the aristocrat look (see issue #2) as basis for your ensemble. The more casual inclined lab-rat might even prefer a shirt, trousers and protective stumpy boots (with or without spats) underneath the protective gear. Some prefer to not wear a lab coat at all, but instead modify a tunic or dress or another garment of their choice to suit their tastes.

Accessories to this style are rather universal in general, no matter which base you start from. Of course there are the goggles or glasses, because your eyes do need protection. Then there are belts to hang material from. Some might even prefer an actual tool belt. Belts with test tubes as well as belt bags to hold various tools and other things of importance are also common with this style. Apart from that it is really up to you however else you wish to accessorize!

As an endnote I would like to leave all the scientists and inventors working on their kit with the following handy notes. LARP stores often sell belt bags especially made to hold potion tubes, together with all sorts of

little glassware. Hunting supply stores sell cartridge belts, some models hold tubes, which is extremely handy if you wish to carry a lot of them. If you cannot sew and want to have a nice apron without spending a lot of money, try to find a plain one in the color of your choice at a store that sells cooking supplies and decorate it with painted on gears (most craft supply stores sell fabric paint) or sewn on gears and/or lock washers. If you want to go for the really mad look, you could always splatter fake blood, noxious green paint or smear grease on it! ■



Photograph of Dr. Kranken-Shaft and G.D. Falksen. Courtesy of Mr Tyrus Flynn of www.tyrusflynn.com.

REVIEW BRAZIL



Beneath an amber moon



ELLA KREMPER

I'LL SLIP IN A CURRENT AFFAIRS reference into this article for let's face it, recession's not exactly painting the landscape in bright, Wizard of Oz Technicolor shades of glorified self-smugness. It is grey and gloomy; distinct features of the misery of dreary, dire dystopia. But I will not go so far as to say that society at the moment is sliding deeper into Orwellian doom, because that would be a rather grim view and detract from the fact that this is meant to segue into a positive review about a jolly good film.

By definition a film by Terry Gilliam is not going to be an easy ride. A member of the famous comedy group Monty Python, Gilliam's surreal animations for *Monty Python's Flying Circus* reflect his unique and—shall we say—highly imaginative styles that can be seen throughout his films, which include *Twelve Monkeys*, set in a post-apocalyptic future, and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. It could be said that his cinematic *pièce de résistance* is *Brazil*.

The film was released in 1985 and nominated for two Academy Awards. We enter the life of one Sam Lowry (Jonathan Pryce), a menial office lackey in the Ministry of Information. Sam is a dreamer who imagines himself to be a flying hero rescuing an unknown blonde

woman from the evil of the fantasy around them, but he constantly finds his dreams interrupted by the stark grey bureaucracy of his life. Sam's mother, Ida Lowry (Katherine Helmond) is an unsympathetic socialite who is more interested in advancing her son's career and her own cosmetic surgery than listening to his problems. From these seemingly pleasant-sounding scenes comes a darker side to Sam's world.

Sam becomes dragged into Kafkaesque intrigue when a typing error causes the wrong man to be brought in for 'special' questioning by Information Retrieval, resulting in the man's death. Things take a turn for the strange when Jill (Kim Greist), the woman who witnesses the man being taken in, appears to look like the woman who Sam has been dreaming about saving. From here, Gilliam leads the viewer on a chiaroscuro of confusion, wonder and dark abandon to how Sam's actions at breaking the bureaucratic system lead to the film's ultimately bittersweet end.

Also starring Michael Palin (also of Python fame), Robert De Niro and Ian Holm, *Brazil* is a masterpiece of the dystopian genre. I would not class it as an all-out dieselpunk film, perhaps even proto-cyberpunk, but the styling and costuming would not be out of

place in a *film noir* setting, with Elsa Schiaparelli-inspired hats worn by Ida Lowry. The transport vehicles are both modern and futurist in glance, with lorries and vans next to the peculiar 'bubble car' that Sam drives in the early part of the film. Technology is also original, with telephones missing numbers and requiring the plugging in of wires to contact people (plugging in and pipes make up a lot of *Brazil's* universe). The computers are retro in appearance, but not reminiscent of any era (not even the 1980s). Posters seen around the film read like a cross between World War II-inspirational posters and Soviet propaganda, with taglines as:

*The Truth Will Make You Free
Don't Suspect A Friend, Report Him
Be Safe: Be Suspicious*

Gilliam uses colors and setting to his advantage, with Ida Lowry's shock, almost clown-like orange hair and muted grays to depict Sam's despairing reality compared to the blue skies and bright sunlight of his dreamworld.

It would not be right to ignore that *Brazil* bears much resemblance to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, itself a grim metaphor for totalitarian régimes, also involving a protagonist who wants to break the

oppressive system for a fleeting glimpse of what used to be better. However, one could argue that Gilliam's film looks more at the repetitive bureaucracy and also the increasingly commercial nature of society, whilst Orwell's novel has political overtones.

Brazil is indeed my favorite film. It is both funny and sad, deep and light, beautiful to look at whilst

gritty and dark, weird and wonderful, fantasy yet a reflection on reality. There are moments of violence, often juxtaposed with a scene of calm, almost encroaching on horror, but in Gilliam's dystopia, you would not expect anything less.

It should be warned that there are two versions of *Brazil*: one featuring the accepted, and Gilliam's preferred, ending, and one with the

'Love Conquers All'-end demanded by the producers that butchers the film. See the accepted ending. The other one just doesn't work. People may like a happy end but this statement simply does not agree with the film. Trust me.

In the end, *Brazil* is a must-see for all fans of dystopian cinema and it looks good on your DVD shelf next to *Dark City* and *Blade Runner*. ■

REVIEW CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR



A ferocious war game



TOBY FROST

AFTER A BRIEF DIVERSION IN *Call of Duty 4* to the modern world, we are back in World War II again, but not quite the U.S. vs. Germany fight one might expect. In *World at War* you play two characters: one Russian, one American, and your missions swap between fighting in the Russian assault on Berlin and the American Pacific landings. The missions are first-person and feature you along with a horde of friendly bots trying to capture the objective. There are a few diversions in which you are able to pilot a tank or man a plane, and these help break things up.

The graphics are excellent although the characters can look oddly shiny when caught by the light. Personally I am not too fond of the 'swarm of bots'-style of gameplay but the inclusion of a senior officer to guide you through

the missions is a good idea. In the Pacific you get Kiefer Sutherland as a marine; in Berlin, Gary Oldman, as a Russian in a furry hat who sounds like Dracula (why not employ, say, a Russian?). Despite that, it can be quite confusing—which feels both irritating and realistic. It is very easy to stop at any point in the game and ask yourself "Where am I going, and how do I survive this?"

Action is fast and vicious: the Germans are tough and don't die easily as you would expect, but the real shock is the Pacific. Hordes of screaming Japanese leap out of nowhere and try to bayonet you, and you generally respond by setting them on fire. The Germany levels seemed almost like a respite by comparison.

The two-player co-operative is great and the online team option plays smoothly and even includes a

number of original upgrades, giving the usual setup a bit of variety. There is also a sub-game involving fighting off hordes of Nazi zombies, but the single-player has to be completed to unlock it.

Which brings me onto the violence. You shoot people, as might be expected, but the cut-scenes are strong stuff for any game: captives are tortured and killed and the mission explanations show real war footage. This is good in the sense that it rightly shows the combatants as they were, the Japanese especially, but *World at War* is certainly not one for children.

I actually came away somewhat awed, not just by the game itself but by the sheer mayhem that these battles must have been. The zombie-fighting, though a bonus, seems rather out of place because of it, but the game is altogether engrossing. ■

ARTICLE THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN ALTERNATE HISTORY

A war without alternative



TRUBETSKOY

THE FIRST WORLD WAR WAS ONE of the great catastrophes of human history. In four years of fighting, almost ten million soldiers were killed and wounded, with great swathes of the European continent laid to waste. By the end of the war, the political landscape of Europe had changed irrevocably, with the German, Austrian, Russian and Ottoman empires crumbling into a rabble of new nation-states straddling Central Europe and the Middle East. For the victorious powers, Britain and France, the triumph came at immeasurable cost, with both nations suffering from economic instability, political unrest and anti-imperialist sentiment for decades to come. The war gave the world the Soviet Union and paved the way for an expanded American role in international affairs. Finally, the aftermath of the carnage left the fragile nations of Europe prey to the siren song of ethnic nationalism and fascism, setting the stage for future tragedies.

With such a tremendous impact on world history, it is all the more puzzling that the First World War is a rather neglected subject in alternate history. While stories that discuss allohistorical versions of World War II and the American Civil War number into the hundreds, the amount of stories written since

1918 describing alternate versions of WWI barely breaks sixty, with the vast majority of them consisting of short stories and essays rather than full-length novels.*

Despite the small body of texts, stories about alternate WWIs tend to divide into certain types. Far and away the largest subgroup would be 'escapist' alternate histories. These are stories written simply to entertain, to reuse the tropes and images associated with the war as a setting for a stereotypical adventure story or a satirical romp. A good example of this type would be William Sanders' *The Wild Blue and Grey* (1991) which chronicles the exploits of a Cherokee pilot serving in the Confederate air force on the Western Front. Kim Newman's *The Bloody Red Baron* (1995), part of the "Anni Dracula" series, treats the subject matter similarly, depicting a war where both Entente and Central Powers deploy vampire-backed air forces, though it plays with more postmodern elements (particularly

in the use of various characters from period fiction as protagonists within the narrative) than most stories of this type. Even when these novels do not directly discuss an alternate version of WWI, such as Robert Conroy's *1901* (1995), an account of a German naval assault on New York City loosely based on German war plans from the prewar era, they spend a great deal of time alluding to various figures and events from the actual conflict.

Of course, some stories of alternate WWIs do attempt to seriously consider alternate outcomes of the war. While relatively uncommon, there is a tendency for authors to attempt to sidestep the horrors of the twentieth century by ending WWI earlier in a negotiated "peace without victors." Martin Gidron's *The Severed Wing* (2002), a profound meditation of the effects of the Holocaust on Jewish identity, imagines an earlier American intervention, thanks to a reelected Teddy Roosevelt, as well as an antiwar movement assembled by French socialist Jean Jaurès bringing the war to end in 1917 and producing a Europe freed of the legacy of World War II. Interestingly, Gidron's Europe is not much of utopia; by the end of the twentieth century Europe is in the

* Courtesy of www.uchronia.net. The figure was taken as a rough count of all stories with a point of historical divergence between 1910 and 1918, excluding those dealing specifically with the Russian Revolution. Given the limitations of the database and the tendency for stories to have points of divergence long before the events they describe, this figure should be considered no more than an estimate.

midst of a sort of “long 1930s,” with slowly decaying British and French colonial empires and an increasingly vicious power struggle between Germany and Russia in Eastern Europe. A more optimistic version of this scenario can be found in the backstory of Insomniac Games’ first-person shooter *Resistance: Fall of Man* (2006), which depicts a slightly altered WWI ending in another negotiated peace in 1918, resulting in the formation of a proto-European Union and the swift nullification of fascism and the Great Depression, only to be spoiled by the destruction of Europe by alien invaders in 1949.

Relatively more common is the speculation on the results of a Central Powers victory in the war. A few writers, such as Niall Ferguson in his WWI history *The Pity of War* (1999), have speculated that a quick German victory in 1914 would have been a positive event, allowing Britain to maintain its empire and Germany to create a unified European economy to foster national integration and prevent the emergence of both fascism and communism. Nevertheless, most writers prefer to discuss German victory in starkly negative terms. Stephen Baxter’s 1994 short story “Mittelwelt,” for example, depicts a victorious Second Reich, infatuated with the writings of Nietzsche rather than Hitler, on the brink of launching a war against Japan in 1940 over the remains of British India. The Germans and Japanese battle once again in David Kowalski’s sprawling *The Company of the Dead* (2007), where a change to the fate of the *Titanic* inadvertently allows for a German victory in 1917 and the fragmentation of the United States in the late 1920s, setting the stage for the division and consolidation of

the world for over a century into mutually hostile German and Japanese world-empires. A slightly subtler approach is taken in Tesseract Games’ naval simulator *Enigma: Rising Tide* (2003), where by 1937 a furious naval arms race has broken out between the United States, German Europe, and Japanese East Asia, with routine flare-ups in the north Atlantic, Latin America, and the Pacific.

Despite these varied titles, they are a far cry from the avalanche of titles depicting alternate World War IIs, American Civil Wars, and even Napoleonic Wars. If the stories described above show that the First World War is a fertile ground for counterfactual speculation, why, then, has it been so neglected as a source of story ideas?

Part of the problem may be that World War I is a conflict whose time has passed. While counterfactual speculation of historical events has arguably existed since the emergence of the study of history itself, it has only been since the late 1960s, with the great postwar renaissance of science fiction, that alternate history has emerged as a full-fledged subgenre. Given the personal and contextual background of the authors experimenting with alternate history, the genre’s predominant focus on WWII and the American Civil War makes a certain amount of sense. Many writers of science fiction by this time had participated in the Second World War, knew people who did, or were inclined to see WWII as the source of many of the current ills of the modern world, from the Cold War to the nuclear arms race to the decline of the European empires. Similarly, the civil rights movement and the struggle over segregation naturally left many American writers with a renewed interest in the divisive

politics of the Civil War. By contrast, in the 1960s the generation that had fought in the First World War were passing from public life, with even the youngest veterans entering their 60s and 70s by the end of the decade. Furthermore, despite the colonial battles and the American intervention, WWI has always been considered a European conflict. In American memory, the First World War has disappeared almost entirely, supplanted by the shock of the Great Depression and the Second World War. Even in Europe, memories of WWII often overpower those of WWI, leaving discussions of alternatives to that conflict of interest to only a few enthusiasts.

Along with the issues of time and other distractions, World War I’s place in alternate history has also been greatly determined by the ways the war itself is remembered. As the cultural historian Modris Eksteins once noted, the ‘real’ First World War was long ago “swallowed by imagination in the guise of memory.” The sheer scale of the battles, unprecedented in European history, and the immensity of the destruction and loss of life have led many people, historians and laymen alike, to look for a suitably great, overarching rationale for all the carnage. Unlike the Second World War, a conflict that is still seen as the primary responsibility of a few key decision-makers, filled with battles that relied on chance, contingency, and good luck, World War I has evolved into a great force beyond human comprehension or modification. While a few modern historians like Niall Ferguson and David Stevenson place the responsibility for the war on the actions of a few key Austrian and German leaders during the long September of 1914, most historians prefer to cast the net wider. For

decades now, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 has traditionally been depicted as the spark that ignited the long fuse to 1914, with its rearrangement of the European order and the emergence of a powerful, expansionist Germany. Some historians, such as A.J.P. Taylor, go back even further, looking at the revolutions of 1848 and the Crimean War as the death knell of the post-Napoleonic order in Europe and the flashpoint of WWI. Depending on the source, World War I was caused by anything from an Anglo-German arms race, increasingly dangerous global competition for colonial influence, the inherent contradictions of capitalism coming to the fore as imperialism ran out of new lands to conquer, paranoia regarding the relative economic expansion and decline of various powers, the emergence of new weapon technologies no one understood and the creation of mobilization plans so complex that their mere implementation automatically led to war. Similarly, the scale of the battles has tended to discourage counterfactual speculation on how the individual battles of WWI could have evolved differently, beyond the initial moves of 1914 and the mobile final battles of 1918. With such an intellectual background, speculating about alternatives to the First World War may seem pointless to aspiring writers. After all, how could anything have gone differently if it was all decided decades ago by thousands of people for hundreds of different reasons?

Ironically, this interpretation of World War I, as a sort of inevitable event in the history of the modern world, is what has resonated the most with writers of alternate history. Rather than being dependent on the actions of

individuals, the First World War has become a sort of 'natural' event in history that occurs whenever a world reaches a certain stage of industrial and political development. In Kim Stanley Robinson's 2002 novel *The Years of Rice and Salt*, set in a world where Europe was removed from history due to the Black Death, a great civilizational world war breaks out between the Islamic world and a Chinese-Indian-Iroquois alliance in the early twentieth century, fought for over six decades with trenches and artillery on a dozen different fronts worldwide. Ian R. MacLeod's *House of Storms* (2005), set in an England powered by a magic-based

*The image of WW1
has become far
more powerful than
the memory of the
conflict itself.*

industrial revolution, details the origins and course of a vicious civil war between Bristol and London sometime in the mid-twenty-first century (starting in an "unseasonably hot" August during "year 114 of the Age of Light," no less), with plenty of trenches and artillery to spare. Harry Turtledove's *Great War* trilogy (1998-2000), set in his extended "Timeline 191" series of novels, imagines the outbreak of war in Europe triggering another, even more brutal war between the United States and the Confederacy, due to the integration of both countries into the European alliance system. Even in stories not explicitly discussing it, WWI often finds a way to occur,

even if only as the brief "Emperor's War" of Ward Moore's classic American Civil War counterfactual *Bring the Jubilee* (1955).

And even when WWI breaks out in timelines similar to our own, the literary and artistic legacy of the actual war often causes it to evolve into surreal, phantasmagoric directions. 4X Studio's first-person shooter *Iron Storm* (2002), quickly heads in this direction, imagining a world where the war has continued for fifty years, evolving from a brawl within Europe to a death struggle between Western civilization and an Pan-Asian Russian empire. Stephen Baxter's *The Time Ships* (1995) a loving sequel to H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, depicts an oddly Wellsian vision of 1938 where Britain and Imperial Germany fight each other with gigantic "land ironclads" and automated bombing planes while hiding in city-spanning concrete domes. A subtler example of this trend can be found in Mike Mignola's and Christopher Golden's *Baltimore; or The Steadfast Tin Soldier and the Vampire* (2007), where a First World War in a Europe slightly different from our own peters out as a horrifying supernatural plague begins to sweep the graves of the Western Front and beyond.

In the final analysis, it may not be entirely true that the First World War has been neglected by alternate history. Rather, it is more fitting to say that the image of WWI in the minds of writers has become far more powerful than the memory of the physical conflict itself. World War I has become a subject, not so much of alternate history, but of dark fantasy, a fantasy of nightmarish battles of mud and iron and horror, one that will live long after the original events have faded away. ■

COLUMN THE GENTLEMAN TRAVELER

DAVID
TOWNSEND

Onto Jo'burg!

TO ALL THE PERSUERS OF THIS FINE AND LEARNED journal, I should wish to take the liberty to introduce myself to the assembled cognoscenti. I am David Townsend and, until recently, I have been serving Her Majesty the Queen as an advisor and mentor to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the field of judicial reform and counter-narcotics with the entirely honorary rank of Major. Beforehand, I had the honor and duty to be an Associate Prosecutor with Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service within the great metropolis of London.

As my time beyond the North-West Frontier came to an end, I became aware that I had a substantial amount of leave owing to myself and the wherewithal to engage in peregrinations about the globe, visiting our far-flung colonies and dominions. As I have always been of the belief that there are only two civilized ways to travel, and given that armored zeppelin development has sadly lagged behind the *zeitgeist*, I have determined to do as much of the journey as possible by train. I will not be able to take in all the great train journeys on this particular trip as the Trans-Siberian is ill-placed for my route, and quite frankly a tad barbaric, and the Orient-Express does not seem to involve all that much train travel within its itinerary as much as being intent on selling hotel rooms in *Mittleuropa*. Still, I hope that I might be able to give you some taste of the possibilities available for a civilized traveler in today's hectic hurly-burly world of cattle-class flights and security checks that go beyond the rude into the realm of the physically intrusive.

I suspect that it is incumbent upon myself to define what I mean by a proper train journey. Merely being an overnight sleeper train is not enough, as I discovered to my disappointment in South East Asia. Too many of those trips involved being squeezed into far too small bunk-beds shielded from the corridor by an inadequate curtain, much as in *Some Like it Hot*, without even the faintest sniff of Marilyn Monroe. Instead, trains should involve dining cars and lounge bars, places to take a snorter once the sun is over the yardarm whilst casually glancing at your fellow passengers, determining their

stories and their past. After all, how else is a fellow to determine who is the Bolshevik spy sent to eliminate the eccentric genius who is fleeing to Ruritania with the plans to the Von Goggentropf Death Ray? A proper train journey requires staff in uniform, available to provide another pink gin at the merest flicker of the traveler's whimsy, possibly whilst secretly plotting the murder of Lord Hollingbroke for leaving his sister to die in a poorhouse after the Lord had done her wrong!

So, onto the first leg of the continental train journeys commencing in South Africa. I had decided to travel from Cape Town to Johannesburg in order to visit the place of my nativity for the first time in over forty years and had looked at the possibility of traveling on the world-famous Blue Train but blanched and spluttered at the cost of that particular journey, especially as it terminated at Pretoria rather than my intended destination. With a dark mutter of 'Too rich for my blood', I instead looked at the Premiere Class train that ran down the same track. Designed as an alternative for business and the tourist trade, it runs twice a week carrying up to 128 passengers and accompanying automobiles. Tickets are purchasable from the train company direct which involved faxing my details to their sales representative. Thus prepared with a ticket, I attended the waiting room in good time and with as good a will as you will ever get from me when I have to be present too dashed early for my liking. Even to my sleep and port travailed eyes, Cape Town railway station is not one of the Empire's great architectural remnants. Manufactured out of grim concrete, it nestled alongside a bus depot with the air of a sixties afterthought. Now, to be fair, it could be being rebuilt because, to be honest, everything else in South Africa appears to be in a state of construction, destruction and/or reconstruction as they apparently build the entire infrastructure of the country in preparation for the 2010 World Cup (in Association Football for the non-sporting oiks amongst the readership). Apparently the advertising puff being employed by the South African Tourist Board is 'Visit South Africa in 2010.' I suspect that it should come with a corollary 'But please,

Dear Lord, not just yet'. To be a visitor to the RSA at present feels like being at one of those parties when you have misread the time for the party and turned up an hour early. The host is still in the bath, the soufflé is not yet in the oven and so you are left standing around with a hastily prepared drink making desperate small talk with the hostess who is torn between her natural good manners and a deeply held desire to strangle you and bury you under the rose bushes in order to properly prepare for the real party.

Still, back to the train journey. I was ushered into the car park and from there into a reasonably accoutered waiting room waiting to board at the scheduled time of 09:05 hours. I might comment that a train that allegedly has space for 128 passengers might consider enlarging the waiting room to have more than twenty five seats or so but that was a minor detail. Much needed coffee and cake was provided and the heavy suitcase from which I had removed all the 'Needed on Voyage' materiel was labeled and taken from me. I bid it a fond farewell imagining that it was going to its own separate traveling car where it could sit and converse with the other steamer trunks and travel paraphernalia whilst I enjoyed the cabin to myself. I was a tad surprised to find the beast had merely taken a lead on me and was

awaiting me in my travel cabin, squatting on the other seat much like a bad tempered gremlin. I had already been disappointed by the engine of the train and the initial look of the carriages. Whilst I had accepted in my mind that it was not going to be the Flying Scotsman or the Blue Streak, I was secretly hoping for something a bit more exotic than two grubby diesels yoked together. The color scheme chosen was a somewhat unendearing shade of purple. Ah well, it is not as if the passengers have to spend any time looking at the train, after all. The cabin itself was comfortable enough and pleasantly roomy, once I had persuaded one of the staff to kennel my case in an unused room next door, consisting in daytime of two couches facing each other across a smallish table besides the window and with a couple of cupboards to place the necessities of the trip. The coats were hung from the cabin wall and, at night, both couches became surprisingly comfortable beds with, the heavens be praised, enough length for me to stretch my full six foot and a bit out without banging my head. The toilet and shower compartment is shared at the end

end of the carriages. An envelope gave the schedule and the instructions of how to behave which was duly reiterated



by the train manager who called us into the dining car for a welcoming glass of champagne and a briefing. Personally, given the amount that people had paid for their tickets, I would not have felt it necessary to repeat the warning that the bathrobe and towels remained the property of the train company and we were not to elope with them but I suppose that he had his instructions. It may or may not be worth noting that all the passengers on the train were white with the exception of a single Indian couple whilst the staff were all black. Whilst South Africa has made incredible advances in the last fifteen years, there is clearly some way to go. At this point we were traveling through one of the poorer areas of the city. Cape Town lures you in to thinking that you could be back in Europe with the tree-lined avenues and western houses then all of a sudden you pass into one of the intensely crowded townships on the outskirts and you realize that you aren't in Kansas anymore. The train drew to a halt at a station in these suburbs and the platform was full of the huddled masses of what were clearly very poor people indeed, many with their assembled worldly possessions at their feet.

At this point I became acutely aware of two matters. Firstly that I was casually swigging champagne in front of the proletariat in a manner liable to incite an entirely understandable second October uprising and secondly that the windows of the train had armored shutters of a kind not seen since young Winston took the early train from Durban to Ladysmith. Fortunately, I then discovered a third pertinent fact in that we had apparently become invisible as not one person on the platform paid the faintest scintilla of attention to the train. It could be that the color of the livery acted as an active discouragement to viewing the middle class within reach or, more likely, in the myriad of woes that affect and influence their lives, we were not of enough importance to even care about.

Soon we had made our way out of town into the Stellenbosch wine growing region of Cape Province. The Franschhoek and Drakenstein Mountains provided an epic and jagged backdrop to the neat and carefully cultivated rows of vines in the foreground, providing one of the great wine regions of the world nowadays. What also became quite apparent was that the train was not moving with any great urgency, dawdling along the track with moderately random stops for no apparent reason. Obviously, as I was in no hurry and indeed wished the trip to take as long as possible, I was entirely in favor of this leisurely progress but I did wonder whether the intent was to ensure that the train did not

arrive too early at Jo'burg. Taking a wild guess that it might be lunchtime despite no information being supplied by the staff, I made my way to the dining car. Having been shown to my table, the menu was presented to me. Now, it is hard to say this without sounding snobbish but the meal was relentlessly middle-class. A terrine of smoked trout was followed by that delight of 1980s dinner, chicken kiev with a peppermint crisp ice cream for pudding. All very pleasant, mind you, and presented in an efficient manner if a tad soullessly, I finished it off with a glass of South African port (at under 50p a glass, something of a given item). There was also a formidable wine list, as one would expect from the regions traveled. After lunch, I retired to the lounge car to watch the world go by whilst catching up with my reading of the local newspapers, a never-ending source of fascinating glimpses into a world with which I have no connection. The lounge was well presented with comfortable seats being clustered around tables on one side of the carriage and bar stools up against the windows on the other. It was perhaps a little snug but, as there was nobody else there, the lack of space can hardly be said to matter. The bar was reasonably well-stocked with a good supply of wines, spirits, beers and ciders when the barman deigned to attend, and there was a DVD entertainment system but no DVDs; a variant on Bring Your Own Bottle, I suppose. The view outside the window had changed to plains of scrubby succulents which stretched out to hills in the distance on both sides and I was curious as to how far we had gone. This is where a major failing in the whole journey revealed itself. With the exception of a single map in the brochure which could be summarized as 'you start in Cape Town and end in Johannesburg', there was not a single clue anywhere on the train as to the distance traveled or any information on the regions traveled through. I asked the staff about this, when I was able to track them down to their hiding places between meals, and was greeted with an expression of blank incredulity as if I had suggested an individually composed running commentary in blank verse being narrated by the voice of God, or Morgan Freeman, whomsoever is first available.

Gazing back at the passing wilderness, it struck me quite how empty it was. I was mentally prepared for the fact that the train was not going to pass through migrating herds of wildebeest with giraffes running alongside the train in the style of a Hollywood movie on Joy Adamson's life but I had not anticipated the sheer emptiness of the land. In the entire trip, until we

reached the outskirts of Johannesburg, I only saw one small group of animals. Whilst I am no Joseph Banks, I tentatively identified them as sheep so was somewhat underwhelmed by that particular encounter with the fauna of South Africa, without even cattle or other kine to break up the monotony. Despite, or perhaps because, of this lack of animation outside the window, there was something immensely relaxing about sitting back in an armchair whilst watching the miles roll away outside the window. In this way, with the imbibing of the occasional bottle of cider that I captured from the ever-elusive barman and the intake of the free tea and coffee provided, I whiled away my time until changing for dinner. Now, I would not like to claim that the meal was not memorable but without access to my notes, all I can remember is that it involved some variety of stew. Further research reveals that apparently it was asparagus and potato soup followed by Kingklip (a fish) deep-fried with a Remoularde sauce with a main course of 'African Goulash' (as I said, beef stew) ending with cheesecake and cheese. I actually do now remember a pleasant blue cheese which went well with the mandatory glass of port but the rest has disappeared into that blank and vast hinterland of competent but unexceptional fare.

The evening was spent thundering on through the almost absolute darkness which fell at around 7 p.m. Compared with night-trains in Europe, the darkness was not interrupted by the glow of a settlement in the distance or the explosion of light resulting from the furious passing of a suburban station. Instead, the intensity and unvarying nature of the night-time pulled attention inside the carriages. The lounge slowly filled up and I found myself talking to an interesting selection of the fellow travelers. It is hard to call them varied as

they were mostly of a certain age and financial status but I talked to a bush pilot operating in Lesotho, a couple traveling the golf courses of the world and a New Zealander who had decided to dedicate his retirement to writing self-published books about obscure forms of transport. With the bar in full swing, I retired in a definitely mellow state towards my cabin where, lying on the bed, I gazed up through the window into the night sky where the lack of light pollution allowed the stars to cascade upwards and outwards with layer upon layer of constellations always being just on the edge of thought and visibility. I was not aware of finding either the noise or the motion of the train to be disturbing yet spent a fairly difficult night broken by odd dreams and strange thoughts—much as usual, I fear.

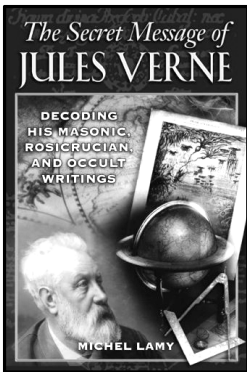
Next day dawned with the knock on the door of a waiter with my pre-ordered cup of coffee, a shower in the reasonably sized compartment followed by my proceeding to the dining car for a full cooked breakfast from the heart of Empire of eggs, tomatoes, mushrooms, bacon and boerwoer (or possibly borewar for readers of Sellar and Yeatman) sausages. All dashedly pleasant and worthy of commendation. Outside of the carriage, the landscape had morphed into grasslands of a far more familiar form of M.M.B.A. (Miles and Miles of Bloody Africa) which is the description often used by expatriates to describe the endless veldt that sweeps up through to East Africa. Yellow, white and purple wildflowers started to break up the monotony of greens and browns and soon signs of civilization could be seen as the farms and mining lands of Gauteng crept up alongside the tracks with townships and prim, neat, but heavily protected with walls and razor-wire, suburbs rubbed up against the train tracks and each other. It was not long until the train entered into Johannesburg itself and spent an hour crawling through the city.

Now, I can report that Johannesburg has a fine and elegant turn-of-the-century train platform of white painted wrought iron construction. Unfortunately, the tracks have now moved so it is no longer being used and is apparently being allowed to rot alongside the concrete coach depot on top of which lurks the train terminus. The train arrived on time after a 26 hour journey, or at least close enough for army work, but as unfortunately had become standard, the staff all disappeared immediately after breakfast so I had to retrieve my suitcase and lug it down onto the platform. After a bit of misdirection by a police officer and being steered into an unmetered cab by a railway employee, I was able to make my way out of the grey labyrinth and continued on with my trip through South Africa. ■



Lounge on board the Premier Classe. Photograph courtesy of the author.

REVIEW THE SECRET MESSAGE OF JULES VERNE



Verne unraveled?



HILDE HEYVAERT

“DECODING HIS MASONIC, ROSICRUCIAN, and occult writings,” promises author Michel Lamy in the subtitle of his book about Jules Verne’s famous writings, and this is exactly what he does.

Let me start by saying that if you are not a fan of occultist fantasies and secret societies, or in fact Jules Verne, this book is probably not your cup of tea. If in fact you do love conspiracy theories or have an interest in a ‘hidden message’ in Verne’s novels, you may find this a fascinating work. It does not only offer a close comparison and explanation of occult elements in some of Mr Verne’s stories, but also an explanation of several existing occult legends and esoteric events mixed in with the occasional speculation. Furthermore, it holds the theory that Jules Verne was member of several occult societies (amongst which the Freemasons) and the author claims that he gives the reader ample truth for that.

I do not necessarily object to conspiracy theories but have little interest in them and therefore, limited background knowledge about the subject matter. I will happily admit that I only purchased the book because of my great enthusiasm about Jules Verne and the concept of this work seemed interesting and worth reading. Does

this book make me see Verne’s novels in a different light? No, it does not. Nor does it make me want to rush out and get several other books Lamy is, sometimes overly extensively, referring too; or attempt to get my hands on the many works listed in the bibliography; or in fact look up more about the theories he presents; or even look into the mysteries he so lengthily addresses.

I feel that if you have no or little background with classic conspiracy theories like the mystery of Rennes-le-Château, the Cathars and the Holy Grail, the gold of King Solomon and secret societies like the Freemasons and Rosicrucians to name but a few (and trust me, the author mentions many more), you will encounter severe difficulty in reading this book. First of all it is difficult to ascertain whether the information presented is in any way historically correct. And sadly in many places this really hinders whilst reading, because the author obviously assumes that the reader is well versed in the basics of everything he writes about. Also the author often gives very little information about several matters he addresses, which leaves a lot of questions with the reader, and often hardly any means to gain more insight. More than once I found that information was just

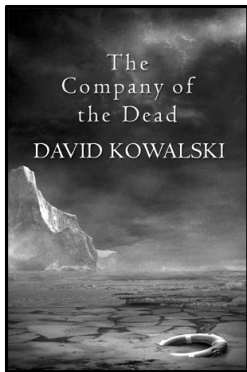
too lacking to be able to get a firm grip on the text at hand. Sure, there is an extensive bibliography at the back of the book, but then, most of the books listed have gone out of print and are not exactly available at one’s local library. And we all know just how much we can trust the Internet. Besides when you have no real interest in these matters, it simply annoys when the author goes on about something only to leave the reader puzzled with half-explained conclusions.

Added to that, the book is overly dull and longwinded in many places. The language in itself is comprehensible enough but the translator (it was originally written in French in 1984) does love to throw in a ‘fancy word’ once in a while, nothing that makes you want to reach for the dictionary though.

The parts that did interest me were far fewer than the ones that put me in a state of distinctive fatigue. Many a caffeinated beverage was consumed in the process of reading this book to help me get through it. Frankly, if I had not promised the chief editor this review I likely would have given up about halfway! ■

The editor feels compelled to especially thank the reviewer hereby for her persistence!

REVIEW THE COMPANY OF THE DEAD



A century adrift



TRUBETSKOY

IT IS A TRUISM OF ALTERNATE history that no good deed ever goes unpunished. Whenever someone attempts to change the world for the better, the intervention all too often allows some greater calamity to transpire. Kill Hitler and the Soviet Union will conquer Europe. Start an industrial revolution in Renaissance Europe and nuclear war will break out by the end of the sixteenth century. Give the prehistoric peoples of the Americas seed grain and livestock, and their conquest by Sung dynasty China is assured.

The Company of the Dead, the first novel by Australian author David Kowalski, shares this basic conceit, describing a world not entirely unlike our own doomed to destruction by the actions of a single honest man. The man in question, a temporally-displaced surgeon by the name of Jonathan Wells, makes his appearance on the first voyage of the R.M.S. *Titanic* at the beginning of the story and attempts to give a set of modern binoculars to the night watchman. While his actions fail to save the ship, there is a subtle changes in the fates of several onboard the doomed liner. The main action of the story starts a century later, on the eve of a war between the German and Japanese empires, when the captain of a new *Titanic* is recruited by a intelligence officer

named Kennedy for a mysterious project involving a forgotten diary salvaged from the wreckage of the original ship and a strange device buried in the Nevada desert.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the novel is the historical speculation Kowalski indulges in. The world of his novel is one in which the authoritarians of the world have come into their own. Thanks to American neutrality in the First World War, Wilhelmitic Germany has emerged as the pre-eminent power of Europe. By the 1960s, Berlin is the hegemon of northern Eurasia and Africa while Japan has absorbed all of East Asia. The U.S., battered by bad debts and a vicious war with Mexico, has collapsed in the 1930s with a new Texas-based Confederacy separating from the Union. Despite attempts at reconciliation, the submission of the northern states to Japan in the late 1940s quickly makes the division permanent, turning America into another front in the struggle between Kaiser and Emperor.

For the next sixty years, both sides engage in cold war tactics of proxy wars, provocations, and conventional military buildup. By the year 2012, social progress is a thing of the past, aristocratic privilege and respect for tradition are the norm, even for wholly-

manufactured 'traditions' such as the Confederacy's use of antebellum iconography and the reappearance of a Diocletianesque office of dual 'shoguns' ruling Japan. Technology hovers at around the level of our world's 1950s, with some odd variations as the kilometer-long zeppelin-like 'stratolites,' capable of dropping planes and bombs with no resistance anywhere in the world. While it would be hard to call the scenario entirely plausible, enough detail and twists on familiar themes are given to allow the reader to accept it on its own terms.

The novel itself is a standard spy thriller and war story, with the characters trying to make their way to Nevada while avoiding the machinations of the Confederate secret police and the outbreak of world war. There are plenty of action set pieces, though the book does rise above the constraints of the genre. There is some discussion on the effects and wisdom of time travel though the story grapples awkwardly with its thornier concepts. The characterization is not the book's strong suit but most of the protagonists are sympathetic and some, like the eternally doomed Wells, are rather touching in their own way. Overall, it makes for an enjoyable alternate history spy thriller! ■

ARTICLE THE BAND 'GHOSTFIRE'



ANDII

A nightmare of steam & sound

"IN THE DARKNESS MY STORY begins." The nucleus of Ghostfire came together in the late summer of 2007. Our drummer, Al, answered an online ad which I was running everywhere I could think of in a desperate attempt to get a group of decent, intuitive musicians together and form a band. I was being driven slowly insane by the endless wash of unreliable musical flotsam which constantly drifted my way, but when I met Al everything changed. He had played in signed bands and his inherent professionalism was apparent from the start. It immediately raised the ante. I remember thinking, at our initial meeting over a few beers in the Ben Crouch—as effortlessly steampunk a hostelry as anybody could wish for—"this band could actually go somewhere..."

I had a bunch of songs written in a basic format—me playing my beaten up Spanish guitar and singing—but I had a definite vision of where I wanted them to go. I wanted to create a sound that echoed the wildly eloquent lyricism and raw energy of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, but mix it up with the widescreen visuals of Sergio Leone and spine-tingling, atmospheric soundscapes of Ennio Morricone. I wanted to create songs that told compelling stories, while putting all

kinds of weird musical images into the listeners' minds. Like wandering around a Caspar Friedrich painting while Tom Waits is playing on your iPod...

When a song you have written is playing in your head so clearly and so completely that it is like a radio blasting, it is sometimes difficult to get that vision across to your band mates—usually due to lack of imagination/skill and mismatched musical influences. Therefore it was important to seek out the right players, with similar influences, cohesive goals and prepared to put in the vast amount of work that turns a good band into a great one. With some carefully worded ads and patience, we recruited a promising bassist, who recently left us to medicate the world—and swiftly replaced by awesome chimney sweep Peter. We also scored a bloody amazing singer in the form of Steven: the only vocalist (of many), who turned up to the audition and actually knew the melody lines to the songs! We didn't fully realize back then what kind of extraordinary performer we had gotten ourselves into the bargain... Call it providence.

We rehearsed as a four piece for four months—working on arrangements, musicianship, trying not to fall over on the frankly

dangerous carpet and building up a cohesive set—all the time searching for a keyboard player capable of supplying the subtle atmospherics and dynamics we needed. Two weeks before we were due to record our first EP, "Drunk Lullabies," we found Rob. He had a Nord, a Leslie speaker cabinet and by God he knew how to use them! Suddenly we had Hammond! Ghostfire was go!

"This hellish symphony shall guide you well..."

Have you ever read a novel and been so spellbound by it, so caught up by the action and characters that you never want the story to end? That was *The Anubis Gates* by seminal steampunk author Tim Powers. I read it when I was 20 years old and I have never found anything to better it (even by Powers!). Years later I had a similar experience with a book called *London: The Executioner's City*. Not so unusual you might think—except this was a history book. Actually it was a criminal history book but its authors (David Brandon and Alan Brooke), brought the dusty records, decrepit city slums and barely-remembered miscreants so vividly to life that I felt as though I knew them all personally.

Steven is now writing more lyrics for the newer material, but

when I started creating songs and lyrics for the band that finally became Ghostfire, I felt it important to write what I was passionate about. English criminal history has been an enduring passion of mine for years. It is so richly populated with characters begging to have their stories told, I felt compelled to tell them. Sometimes heavily stylized to be sure, but ultimately it is those characters speaking and their voices are true. I wanted to bring history to life in a way that would inspire others and, without appearing sanctimonious, open their eyes to the inadequacies and deprivations that inspired and necessitated much of that shady activity.

By fortuitous happenstance, our musical output coincided with the burgeoning steampunk sub-culture: a scene so totally defined by history that to all intents and purposes it was a marriage made in heaven. We had found our niche!

“Come in and see the whole nightmare...”

The very essence of Ghostfire is passion. It permeates every chord and every lyric we produce. Each member of this band is passionate about the music we play and the way we perform it. There is an almost deranged attention to detail because, as everybody knows, the devil *is* in the detail! If you get it ever so slightly wrong, history has a habit of rearing up and biting you hard on the arse!

Our mission is to incite similar passion in our listeners; to create musical variances that are different enough to suck people into our murky, historic criminal underworld then spit them back out into the twenty-first century totally invigorated, energized, hooked on the experience and maybe even

laughing hysterically!

We want Ghostfire to mean something, because it means everything to us. It is not about money or fame, rather a real belief in what we are doing and the fact that music can empower people as well as entertain them. Maybe even educate them? There is too much pointless, thoughtless crap getting churned out right now, by artists and companies who don't seem to care about anything except getting rich—and it devalues music in the worst possible way. We live in a world where everything has been done to death, then done to death again—sometimes with irony;



usually not. But that doesn't make it impossible to be original or unique, it just means thinking outside of the box and believing in your own vision. When you have got the entire nasty side of history to draw from, how can it ever get boring?

“Come hear the call, come nail your colors to the wall...”

Steampunk for me personally, in its truest, purest sense, is *Dinner at Deviant's Palace* by Tim Powers. The cover on my paperback version depicts a 1950s Cadillac being drawn by two horses. That is total steampunk and the book is amazing.

Musically it is a little more complex. Steampunk to us Ghostfire

Brits is less about the whimsical, fantastical side of an alternative Victorian era, more about what really happened back then. For instance, I remember my family talking for years in hushed tones about the *Hindenburg* disaster. It kind of skewed my belief in airships.

We rehearse in a part of London called Bethnal Green: a stone's throw from Whitechapel where Jack the Ripper committed his most notorious murders. We are well acquainted with all aspects of Victoriana here in the United Kingdom. Remnants of it exist everywhere: buildings, road names, tube stations, forgotten coins in the ornamental shoe on your great aunt's windowsill... It echoes and resonates everywhere you look—if you know where to look.

Steampunk to us is about being true to our nationality, heritage and culture while still embracing the creativity and gloriously unrestrained aesthetics of the genre. Most of our great-grandparents were Victorians and I have always maintained that Ghostfire represent the dark side of steampunk: the grotty gin-, absinthe- and opium-steeped underworld that underpinned and undermined Victorian society. *From Hell* is the perfect visual representation of what our band is about.

A simple analogy is this: If you think of Abney Park as the Jack Sparrow of steampunk, then Ghostfire would have to be your Jack Rackham. Look him up—his pirate flag is amongst the best known ever, but that's about his lot.

“Beer in mind, wine long gone
On the last of my opium and they're
still screaming.” ■

For more: www.myspace.com/ghostfire.

INTERVIEW HILDE HEYVAERT

Hilde's House of Secrets



NICK OTTENS



COL. HAZARD

AFTER SHE INTERVIEWED FELLOW designers for the last two issues of the *Gazette* we believed it high time to sit down with our fashion expert Miss Hilde Heyvaert to talk about *her* work specifically.

Hilde maintains an independent designer identity called *House of Secrets Incorporated* which specialized in custom-made, high-quality clothing and costume. Her work is not exclusively steampunk but some of her most innovative designs certainly are and we dare say she offers an unique and refreshing perspective on the movement's styles with creations ranging from chic, upper-class stiff to casual, everyday wear.

Enjoy this interview with Miss Heyvaert!

When did you first launch House of Secrets Incorporated?

I think that was back in early 2005. Originally it was just a website to showcase the things I had made. I didn't start selling 'till somewhere in 2006 when I got my serger. I waited until then because I wanted to be able to provide garments that had been completely professionally finished.

What, if any, significance does the name hold?

I'm sure you're going to laugh, but it stems completely from geekery. I used to play in a *Changeling the Dreaming* tabletop role-playing game, where I played a character that was part of a House called "Eiluned," which was known for its secrecy, and at one point my boyfriend Bert said, "house of secrets" with reference to that house and I thought to myself, "hmm if I ever had a fashion line, that would be a perfect line." So when I did start sewing, I named my line *House of Secrets Incorporated*. I added the "incorporated" because I thought it sounded better that way, and it's a reference to *Monsters Inc*, which is one of my favourite movies. So no, it doesn't really mean anything, it just proves I'm a geek!

Your fashion designs extend beyond just steampunk and include a wide range of influences. You make everything from Renaissance doublets to kimonos to bondage tops to dance wear. What first inspired you to start designing clothing?

I used to get more than a little exasperated at high street fashion, which was all I could afford on a student budget. And when I needed to get together costume for LARP it became even worse, because it's

often hard to find good kit on a budget. I made some accessories myself before, but felt the need to make my own clothes as well, because otherwise I'd never have the things I had in mind wardrobe- or costume-wise. So originally I started designing for myself, but that quickly evolved into designing for everyone looking for something different than what the big chains have to offer.

Could you elaborate a bit on how you try to differentiate your own designs from mainstream fashion?

Mainstream fashion generally focuses on the biggest trends and basic fashions. I don't, so I don't have to worry about it too much.

Sure I do some basic garments like waistcoats and bell skirts, but for the most my designs are not the type of thing you see on the rack in stores. And even then those are custom-made, so people are guaranteed to get their own size, and they can get them in fabrics and prints you don't see at stores either, so with basic stuff, I offer that to distinguish myself from normal fashions.

To be completely honest I don't sit down and think "how can I be different than this season's fashion?" The things I come up with

just mainly aren't the things you see in shops. Which is good of course, but I'm afraid that I can't give you some concrete elaborate way of working towards being different because there simply isn't one.

When did you first decide to start creating steampunk clothing and accessories? What prompted it?

I've always loved steampunk, even before I knew it was a popular movement and before I heard the name. I grew up reading works of Jules Verne and watching science fiction. So it was only a matter of time before I started dressing the part and really [got] into it.

And to be honest I still wonder what took me so long because I've only been doing it for less than a year. I think I waited this long because I had so little information about the movement in general. Over here in Belgium it's not well known at all, and I didn't really want to get into it without actually getting a firm idea in my head about it, and knowing which direction I wanted to go with it.

You often hear about people lurking on *LiveJournal* steampunk groups for ages before deciding what kind of persona they want to create for themselves. In my case it was a bit more extreme, because I lurked outside of the community completely right up to the point where I decided I where I wanted to take it for myself.

What do you think constitutes a steampunk outfit? Are there any certain elements that must be included to make it steampunk, and how do you work to make your creations distinctively steampunk?

First of all, I don't think there are any set rules to steampunk fashion like there are with various other subcultures. For example: you don't

have to have a cog print on your clothing, and you don't have to dress Victorian.

But there are guidelines really, and I think that to some degree there have to be, because otherwise we'll get people in a pink t-shirt and



blue jeans and white sneakers going "look at my new fabulous steampunk outfit."

I personally think it's most important to determine for yourself what kind of steampunk you want to be and take it from there. It's an incredibly varied subculture when it

comes to the aesthetic, which makes it impossible to say "this is what makes something steampunk."

I know it's pretty ephemeral, but the feel is very important to the outfit. With that I mean that you have to see the genre in it, the concept, the thing that attracts you the most to steampunk. If you are someone influenced by the Victorian age then it's logical you will dress in a wardrobe heavily influenced by that time. If you're a contemporary adventurous type, then your outfit might not look historical at all, but composed of things you got together thrifting or shopping and making parts yourself. And that's the beauty of the movement, because both will still be steampunk.

Accessories are also pretty vital with the style and when it comes to finishing the outfit I think. You get that with any style of course, but I feel with steampunk even more so, because they give you the opportunity to incorporate more of it to your total look. The finishing touches really do matter. Shades of brown and metallics like brass might be the popular colors, but that doesn't mean you have to stick to those. I've seen wonderful steampunk outfits with color to them. Heck, I've seen beautiful outfits made entirely out of color.

For my own designs in particular I start from the same point where I start from with all my designs: functionality and the concept they will have to be worn for. Are they for an aristocrat? A time-traveler? A pirate? Day-to-day wear? That's the kind of question I ask myself. And also, you need to be able to 'live' in clothes. Move in them, feel good in them, be comfortable in them. And then I apply the things I love in steampunk to them (not necessarily all together): cog prints, quirky

adventurous things, things influenced by times past like the Regency, Victorian and Edwardian age, Jules Verne, to name but a few. Or anything else that inspires me at the moment. It doesn't have to be steampunk to inspire me really. I know it sounds cliché but I can get inspired by a movie, a bunch of kids out in the street or talking to friends, or something else entirely. I work towards making the total look steampunk by combining loads of different parts to get a total that fits the movement.

How do you feel about the development of steampunk fashion throughout the past few years? And how this influence your own work?

Well I can only speak about the last year, but I think it has definitely gained popularity and has gotten a lot more attention within that time span. Mostly in the U.S. and London though, it seems. Here in Belgium it is still pretty underground, and from what I've heard from Dutch steampunks it's not much better there. France is pretty big on steam in certain parts, but France always has been that way out of national pride for Verne, which is great.

I think that the rising popularity has both its pros and cons. On the upside it has become more easily accessible for those interested, with an influx of events and places where steampunks can meet and shop be it in real life or on the Internet.

On the downside it does attract people that aren't serious about it and have simply jumped the bandwagon, which makes that a lot of stuff that isn't steamy is sneaking into the genre, and a lot [of] people aren't really putting their heart in it because they just want to be part of the current popular thing. I've quite often seen things fly by that are

being labeled as steampunk but that in reality aren't. It's too bad that this happens, but such things are only temporary, these people will either buckle up or jump on the next bandwagon when that passes by.

Another downside that I've noticed is people trying to enforce rules onto the movement. Like your wardrobe has to look so and so or it's not steampunk, and you have to shop at this or that store. Thankfully there are [but] few of those about, and the majority of people are still doing their own thing, which they should continue to do. Part of what makes steampunk great is the diversity and the individuality amongst steampunk enthusiasts!

In any case, the recent evolution has no influence on me. I have my own particular style and while it might evolve in a certain direction when I find inspiration in something, it certainly won't be inspired or influenced by steampunk being featured on MTV.

Do you feel that the increasing popularity of steampunk is affecting its fashion styles?

I don't think it's changing in general. I think that most steampunks are perfectly capable of separating the great stuff from the crap. And let's face it, there is a lot of great stuff out there too. Yes, there will be people that are only in it because it's popular, but they will be a minority and when the fad has passed, they will leave the scene again so their imprint will be at most temporary. The people that are serious about steampunk will still look a steamy as ever, whether they are people in the spotlight or not. They will separate the great stuff from the bad and use the publicity to their own advantage—when Victoriana becomes fashionable, it's the perfect time to

score some affordable blouses, for example. If a newbie makes a mistake, there will still be more than enough people serious about steam out there to help them out and improve their outfit.

Are you inspired by or interested in designing pulp and/or dieselpunk clothes? If so, what about the genres interests you?

I really do like the dieselpunk style, and I certainly wouldn't mind designing it, I've just not gotten around to it. There's only so many hours in one day after all, and I have so many things to do in those.

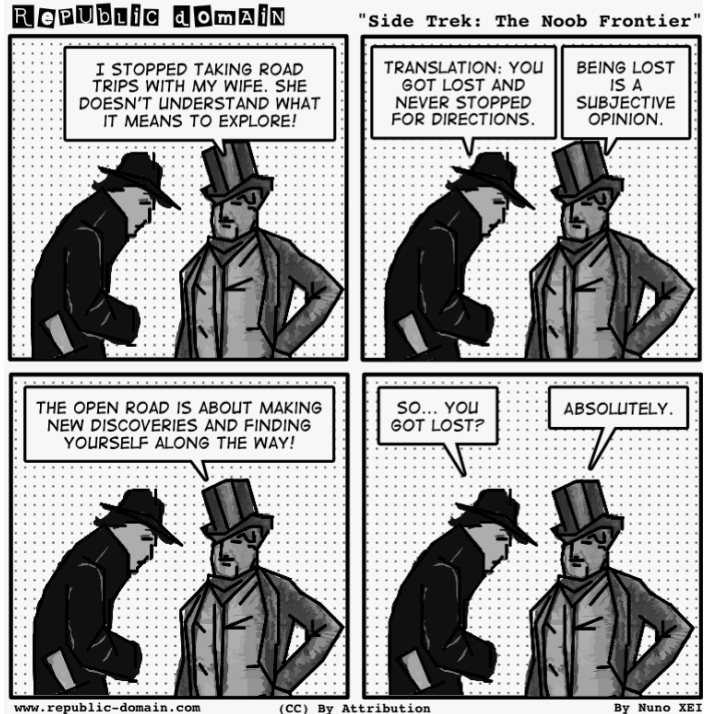
I like [that] it has a more contemporary approach to things than steampunk, and in some ways even darker side to it. I must admit I'm not that knowledgeable when it comes to dieselpunk, so I'd like to learn more about it in any case before I feel I can make a proper statement about it. I know even less about pulp, so I'm going to leave any kind of explanation about that to people that know what they're on about.

You wear your own designs whereas some fashion designers opt not to. Do you think that making pieces you are comfortable wearing helps you create clothing that others want to wear?

I don't have any kind of strategy or philosophy behind it really, I like what I've made, and I feel comfortable in it so I wear it. I do wear things made by others mind so it's not like I exclusively wear the things I've made myself. Basically if I like it and feel comfortable in it, I'll wear it. ■

For more, visit Hilde's website at www.houseofsecretsincorporated.be. Photograph courtesy of Hilde Heyvaert.

THE LAST PAGE



Every issue the *Gatehouse Gazette* selects one photograph submitted for feature. This edition's winner is a picture of a Miss Talloolah Love of www.talloolah.com.

To nominate a photograph of your own, send it to the editor via nick@ottens.co.uk. The winner will see their picture featured here!

Lament of the Royal Martian Marines by Clint Williams II

When the Zeppelins fly, take away to the sky, and look no more upon home.
When they call us to space, Men, take up your place, and to loftier altitudes
roam!

Call upon me for sky, land or sea, but if you must send me to the stars,
I'll do anything in service of Queen, but, please, God, don't send me to Mars!

I'll weather monsoons on Jupiter's moons, a smile never leaving my face.
To Mercury I'll go, or Venus, you know, for it isn't too bad of a place.
Yes, you can send me to a black Lunar Sea, I'll fly on our Aethership, best!
But to Mars, I insist that your request Desist, I'd rather stay home and just
rest.

For never again shall I walk through the sand of the Red World that's forth
from the Sun.

Never, no more, I thee do implore, shall I clean that red dust from my gun.
It's Wonders I've seen as Her Maj'sty's Marine, but I'd rather die in the
vacuum of space,

Than go back to Mars for there's not one decent bar in the whole of that
damnable place!

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IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

We explore The Metropolis; its deco glory and its gloomy underground with, among many other articles, a first look at the new *Unhallowed Necropolis*.