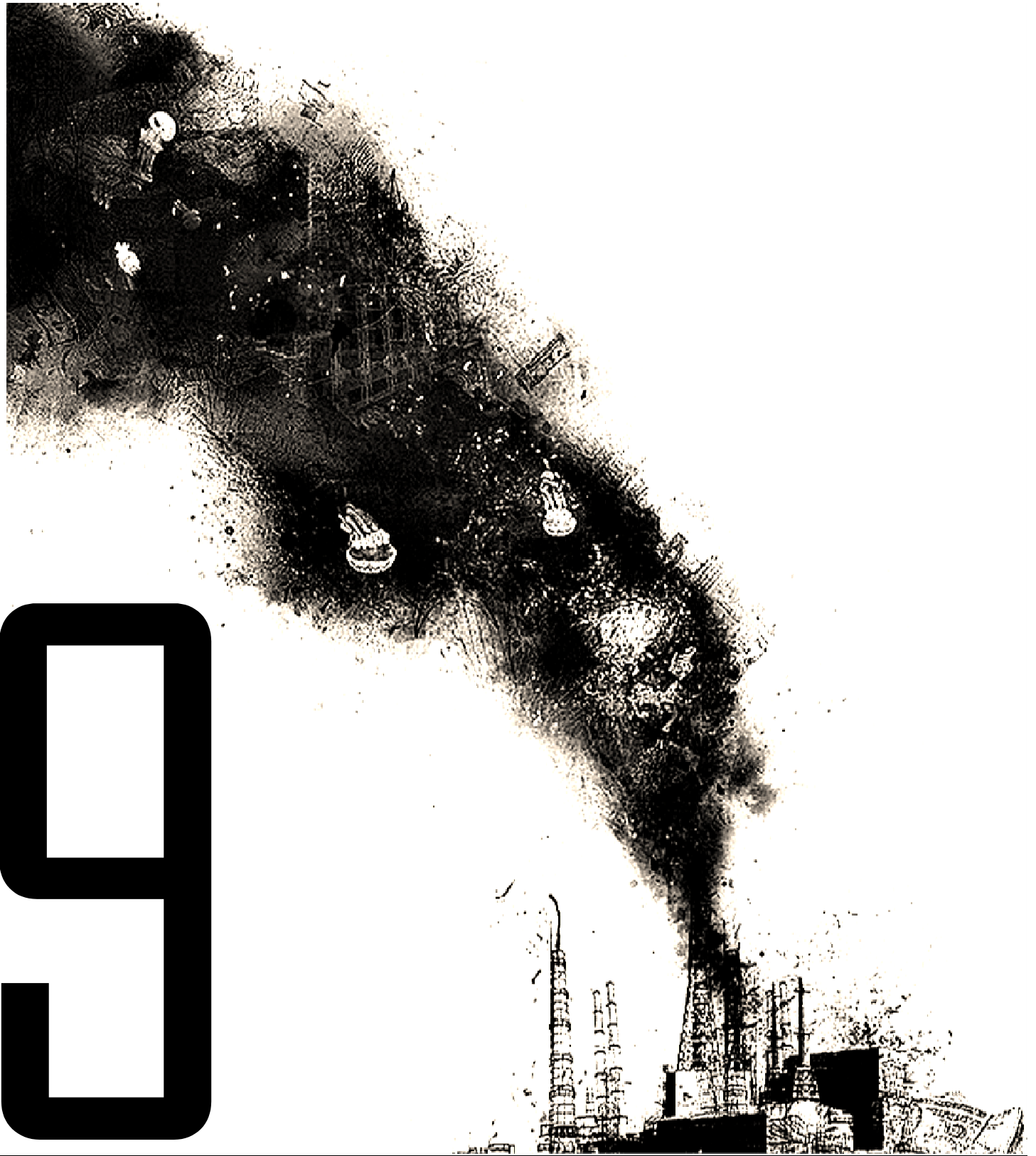


# GATEHOUSE GAZETTE

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# 9

# BEAUTIFUL INDUSTRY

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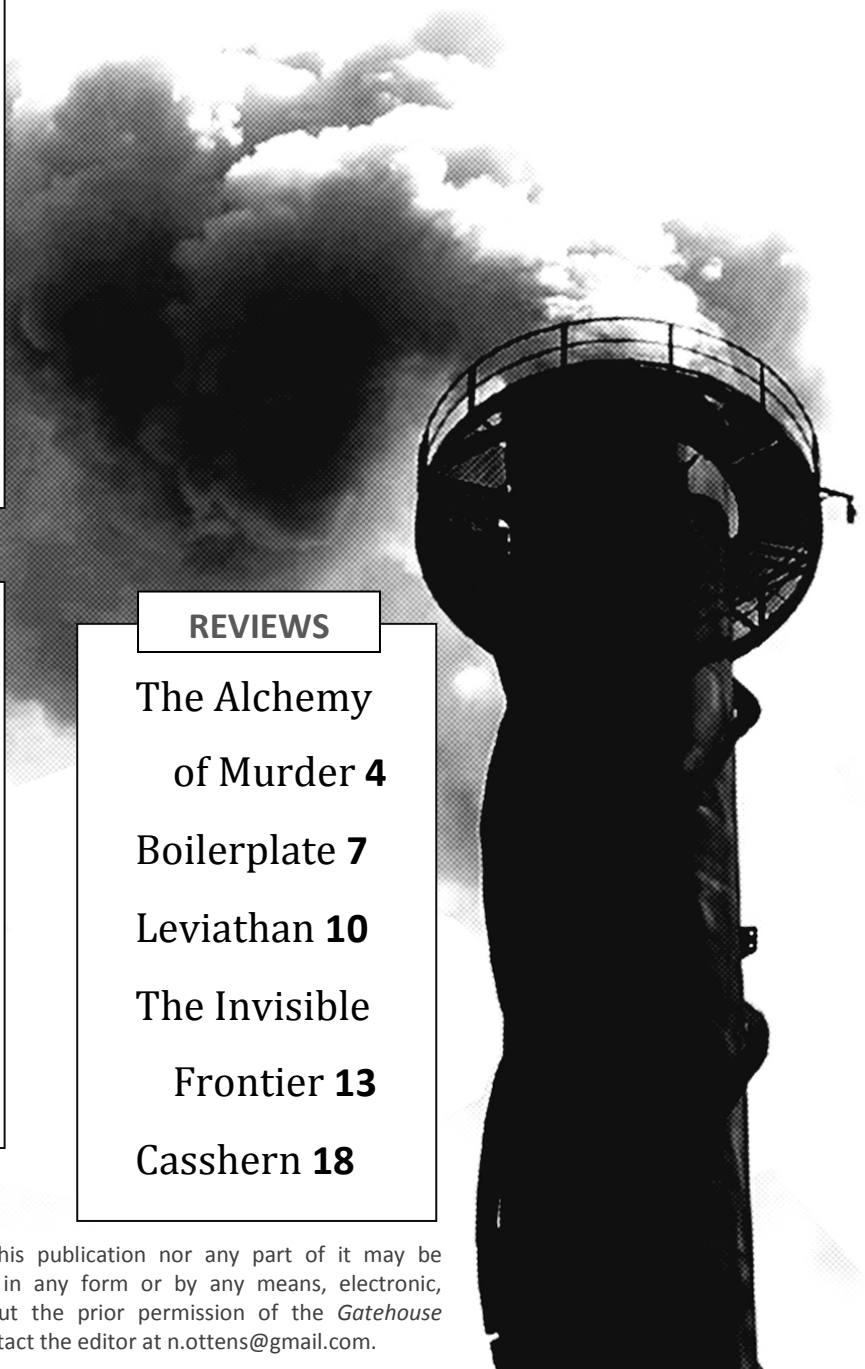
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The *Gatehouse Gazette* is an online magazine in publication since July 2008, dedicated to the speculative fiction genres of steampunk and dieselpunk.



## EDITORIAL

# LOVING THE FACTORY, TOO



NICK OTTENS

THERE ARE STARK AND UNDENIABLE DIFFERENCES between the mindsets of steampunk and dieselpunk in spite of the close bonds between both genres and those who enjoy exploring them. Steampunk has evolved considerably over the past few years, from Victorian science fiction to a movement that makes its own fashion and lifestyle statement very boldly. Steampunk enthusiasts are prone to resist the mindless use of technology prevalent in our society nowadays. As editor C. Allegra Hawksmoor put it in the latest edition of *SteamPunk Magazine*, “We adore the machines that come from an age before endless replication reduced everything into soulless copies of itself—lacking any sort of individuality, and plastered with labels warning us not to interfere with machines whose workings we cannot possibly understand.” She goes so far as to declare steampunk “non-industrial”—the genre loves the machine, she writes, but hates the factory.

Whether she professes a contradiction in terms here or a particularly poignant comprehension of the steampunk ethos, I shall leave undecided for a moment. What I wish to declare is that dieselpunk does not make this distinction.

“Dieselpunk technology exudes an aim to express the energetic, dynamic, and violent quality of contemporary life,” writes Mr Piecraft in Issue #5 of this magazine (March 2009), “especially as embodied in the motion and force of modern machinery.” We find this sentiment expressed in the sort of dieselpunk fiction the weblog *The Flying Fortress* labeled as ‘Ottensian’: the *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* side of the genre which we can easily associate with Futurism and 1930s pulp science fiction, but also in the ‘Piecraftian’ dieselpunk where “a darker side to this romanticism” emerges that is almost absent entirely from steampunk. The darker, grittier, petroleum-fueled world of

dieselpunk, more distinctly informed by cyberpunk sensibilities, is more likely to become a dystopia than its steampunk counterpart. “Despondency and despair” subsequently “linger upon society,” according to Piecraft (Issue #4, January 2009), one that has “long forgotten the novelty or dynamism of the old glory days of the Jazz Age.” No longer is the machine a beacon of hope and modernity; it embodies the sad and depressing truth of pollution and oppression in the Piecraftian nightmare.

Is that how we see the factory today? The Victorian era brought us industry and in spite of all its vices (pollution, poverty, uncontrolled urbanization and the terrible exploitation of workers) it paved the way for a new era of economic growth and prosperity. We live in that era today. The accomplishments of industry are undeniable. In fact, you are probably reading this on one of them. For all its majesty and grandeur it is sometimes easy to forget the downsides of technology however. Both steampunk and dieselpunk much rather revel in the beautiful products of the progress of times past than submerge in a constant depression about the many ills associated with the often sudden and violent arrival of change.

For that reason, we dedicate this issue to “Beautiful Industry” with several articles and reviews related to big machinery and the impact of progress. Besides, we feature an interview with author Carol McCleary of *The Alchemy of Murder* along with the familiar columns and a short story by Andrew Singleton, entitled “Stormbringer”.

As always, I hope that you will enjoy this latest issue of the *Gatehouse Gazette* and I would like to invite you to let us know whether you do. Should you wish to have a letter or even an article of your own published here, please, don’t hesitate to contact us! ■

*“Mass production techniques brought massively better material standards of living for many people and steampunks need to remember that.”*

—Arceye, *The Steampunk Forum*

## INTERVIEW CAROL McCLEARY

Author of *The Alchemy of Murder*, currently working on a sequel to this historical detective novel.



HILDE HEYVAERT

# ALCHEMY FOR MYSTERY

On the next page:  
a review of *The Alchemy of Murder*  
by the interviewer

*WHAT GAVE YOU THE IDEA TO USE historical characters for your book and why did you choose these?*

A friend of mine gave me Nellie Bly's exposé, *Ten Days In A Madhouse*, to read. Well, once I read it, I thought "wow, this is someone everyone should know"—she is a real life heroine—and perfect for a Victorian mystery.

I could relate to Nellie because as her editor told her, "Your grammar is rocky..." and so is mine. What I also discovered about Nellie was that she had a warm heart and cared very deeply about people, especially about the rights of woman, and fought relentlessly to make their lives better. She had immense courage.

The rest of the characters you might say chose themselves.

*Why choose Paris as the setting?*

So many of Victorian tales are set in London or New York, I thought, why not Paris? It was an interesting place during this time—Paris was brimming with discoveries, inventions and wild parties and the *Exposition Universelle*, the World's Fair was happening.

While researching who was hanging around Paris at this time, I discovered Jules Verne was there, 'inventing' science fiction, and had once served on a health committee with Louis Pasteur, the great microbe hunter, who was making

what some call the greatest single scientific discovery in history: the fact germs cause disease. And, of course, Oscar Wilde was there, titillating café society with his scandals and wit, Toulouse was painting his beloved whores, students were 'plotting' revolutions at café tables over absinthes and smokes, while anarchists were planting bombs under the tables (just like today).

The plot developed itself from the era, a time when inventions and scientific discoveries like those of Pasteur soared and the 'far-fetched' ideas of Jules Verne were becoming reality. The fact these two men represented the two extremes of 'science' intrigued me. Ultimately the plot was derived from Nellie's courage to right a wrong (as she was constantly doing), Jules Verne's fantastic ideas and the research of the great Pasteur as he blazed new paths in real science.

*You like the era for the same reason the steampunk movement does: the inventions, the science, the changes. Were you aware of steampunk when you wrote the book?*

No, I wasn't aware of 'steampunk,' but I love the Victorian Age and its quirky tales of steam era science like Mark Twain's *Connecticut*

*Yankee*, Shelly's *Frankenstein*, Jules Verne's balloon and submarine voyages, the marvellous H.G. Wells tales (even chasing the Ripper to San Francisco in *Time After Time*), *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (and anything else Sean Connery plays in). So, though I wasn't aware of the word, I enjoy the era; to be truthful, better than this computer age we are in. I also love the *Indiana Jones* movies, which have the same ambiance as steampunk in a diesel era.



*You lived in the Orient for quite a long time. Did that in any way inspire your writing and this book in particular?*

While I lived in the Orient only until I was six years old, it's been said that a person's personality is developed early and I believe living

in the Far East has had an enormous effect on me. I was able to experience different cultures and personalities which opened my mind to the fact that there is a wonderful world filled with all different kinds of interesting people and that has had a profound affect in my writing. Even today I find myself more attracted to eastern concepts of herbal remedies and mind-body connections than western ones.

*You're working on the next Nellie Bly novel, which is great news for all us fans out there. Is there anything you can tell us about it already?*

I'd be delighted! After Nellie gets back from Paris, she is taunted by Jules' remark at the train station that she can't beat the record of his fictional hero, Phileas Fogg, in his novel, *Around The World In Eighty Days*. So, one day she goes to her boss, Mr Pulitzer, and announces she wants to try and beat Fogg's record.

Of course, he says, "No, it's definitely not a job for a lady. With all the luggage a woman requires and the need of a protector it's impossible." With that said, Nellie tells him, "Fine, send a man and I will go to another newspaper and

beat him." Pulitzer knows Nellie will do exactly that, so he agrees to let her go.

It was an age of steam ships that had auxiliary sails for when the boiler broke down and steam locomotives called Iron Horses. Pulitzer's concerns were well taken—there were no airplanes, credit cards, ATMs or even cell phones! And Nellie refused to take a gun for protection.

Mystery, murder, the fate of nations, all stand in Nellie's way as she desperately tries to race around the world in less than eighty days. ■

## REVIEW *THE ALCHEMY OF MURDER*

Nellie Bly is a free spirited woman. Anything a man can do, she can do as least as good and she won't stop at anything to prove it. This doesn't sound too strange, were it not that she lived in the United States of the turn-of-the-century where the social situation of women wasn't exactly what it is now.

In *The Alchemy of Murder*, Bly is

an investigative reporter working for Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*. After going undercover in a mental asylum for a story she encounters a slasher who is responsible for the murder of a dear friend of hers. This is the start of a daring trip across the Atlantic where she finds Paris consumed by not just the glamour and excitement of the World's Fair, but also by a deadly Black Fever. It is a dangerous and dark Paris, consumed by civil unrest and the Bohemian free spiritness of Momartre. And it is exactly here that the narrative unfolds into a brilliant detective novel that will keep you in its grasp till the very end of the book.

Bly is determined to see justice served and she will do so aided by several great men of modern history including Louis Pasteur, Jules Verne and Oscar Wilde. Their combined skill links all events together into one mad dash to prevent Paris from succumbing to anarchist warfare and an unstoppable epidemic.

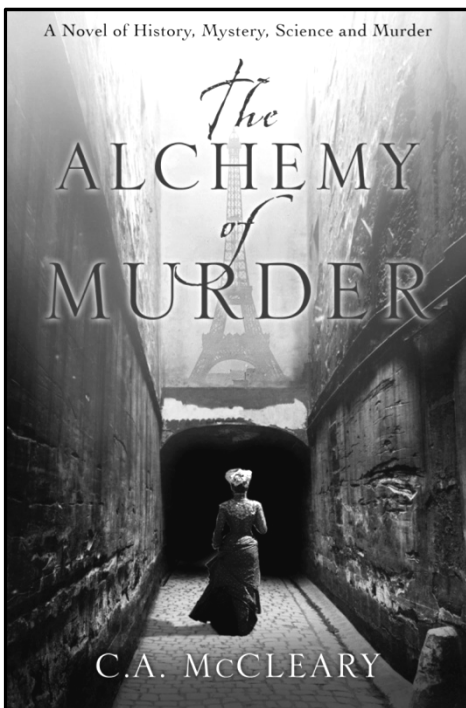
The book is thoroughly entertaining and innovative in its

mix of historical characters and fictional events. It is fast paced and written with the flair that one would expect from an adventure set in this period. There is romance, drama and suspense, made all the more pleasant a read by the meticulous attention for history the author demonstrates. She represents these historical characters with great skill and a fine touch of imagination.

While no steampunk novel, *The Alchemy of Murder* has all the elements celebrated by the culture and for that reason alone, should be added to the literary wish list of every genre enthusiast.

Even the inside imagery is a fabulous choice: instead of using a contemporary illustrator the pictures are by *Edouard Cucuel*, dated 1900, which really adds to the feel of the novel.

To make a long story short: it is an absolute must-read that will keep you in its grasp from the beginning to the very end then leaves you wanting for more and in total expectation of the next adventure of Nellie Bly! ■



## SERIES DIESELPUNK ONLINE

*An overview of what's new at the premier dieselpunk websites.*



THE FLYING FORTRESS:

### **“THE SECOND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION”**

A look at the technological leaps that helped give birth to the dieselpunk era at [flyingfortress.wordpress.com/the-second-industrial-revolution/](http://flyingfortress.wordpress.com/the-second-industrial-revolution/) (21 September).



DIESELPUNKS.ORG:

### **“INTERVIEW: J.R. PEPPER, SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHER”**

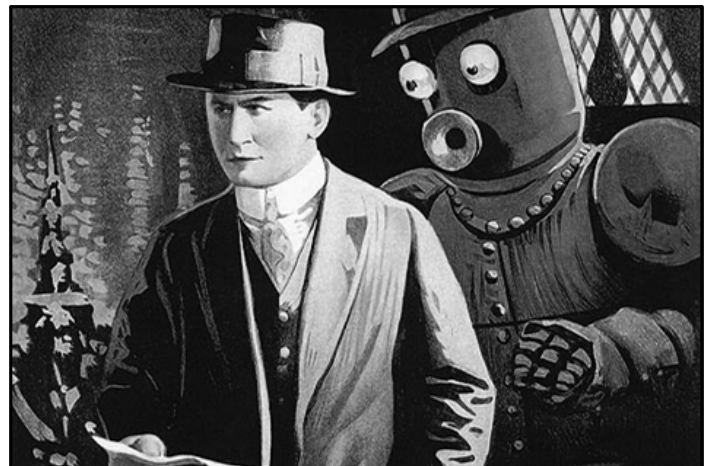
“How to photograph the afterlife” in the vein of Mumler and Buguet at [www.dieselpunks.org/profiles/blogs/interview-jr-pepper-spirit](http://www.dieselpunks.org/profiles/blogs/interview-jr-pepper-spirit) (8 October).



THE GATEHOUSE:

### **“CINEMA IS CINEMA”**

A new hosted blog by Sjón Refur about 1940s-1960s film at [www.ottens.co.uk/gatehouse/author/Sigurjon](http://www.ottens.co.uk/gatehouse/author/Sigurjon) that takes its name from an Akira Kurosawa quote.



DIESELPUNKS.ORG

### **“SERIAL KILLERS”**

Reminiscing about the days of serial adventures with broadcasts of Golden Era classic cinema installments at [www.dieselpunks.org/profiles/blog/list?tag=serial](http://www.dieselpunks.org/profiles/blog/list?tag=serial).

REVIEW *BOILETPLATE*

Paul Guinan's robot of the Victorian era has entered the realm of the graphic novel.



KEVIN COONEY

# MARVEL OF MECHANICS

PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE MANY modern men and women lack. Patience, to most, can be tested when queued up at Starbucks or waiting for your email to load. Yet the patience of most folks is the blink of an eye when compared to the creative endurance of artists Paul Guinan and Anina Bennett.

The husband and wife have put together the stunning *Boilerplate: History's Mechanical Marvel* (2009). The hardcover artbook, all 168 pages and 350 color illustrations (along with numerous black and white photos, sketches and scribbles,) covers the fictional (yet lovingly pitched as real) life of Boilerplate, a robot soldier and adventurer, creation of inventor Professor Archibald Campion.

The pair meticulously researched decades of history then stitched together real characters and events to form a breathlessly earnest speculative history. Bennett and Guinan searched thousands of photos, daguerreotypes and stereoscope images to cull out a few hundred, then work, digitally cajole, alter and remake those same images to devise a photographic legacy for Boilerplate.

As a writer I love

history. As a reader I love history. I read four non-fiction books for every fictional tale that lands at my bedside. So I appreciate—no, lust after—the levels of historic detail lavished upon the universe of Boilerplate. When real history is effectively, believably entwined into the world of a character like Boilerplate, the story has historical, but entertaining gravitas. From meetings with Teddy Roosevelt and Nicola Tesla as well as jaunts through World's Columbian Exhibition and battles at Belleau Wood, Boilerplate is there at history's turning points. He is shaking hands and rubbing elbows with the titans of the steampunk era; he is a metal Count Saint Germain, a Baron Munchausen with gears for guts, a silent witness to all the major events from 1893 to 1918.

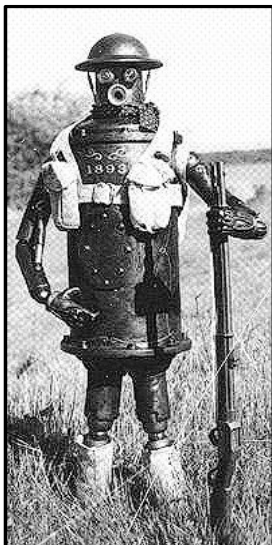
Boilerplate is built to spare man from war yet the adventure of war, once romanticized by Victorian and Gilded Age authors, is a world that he flourishes in. Sure he is there for domestic follies and fairs, but Boilerplate excels as a truly peripatetic American myth by leaving the United States for broader adventurous climes.

The automaton is

fashioned by Campion after his brother-in-law: an officer in the U.S. military who is killed during the Korean War of 1871. A real war, a little known war, seamlessly welded to the world of Boilerplate. The next formative incident in Boilerplate's prehistory is the Great Chicago Fire. The conflagration, according to the Boilerplate history and some real life authorities, might have been caused by the disintegrating Biela's Comet. Real facts, events and yes, some odd ball theories, form the realistic background that Boilerplate is projected against.

Guinan's skill as an artist, able to mimic many different styles of illustration and media, give Boilerplate historic legitimacy. Whether the robot is in a heavily grained photograph, featured on the cover of a dime store novel or subject of a cubist artist, Guinan's ability as illustrator allows him to master them all. Every minute leafing through this book produces a historical tid-bit or fact expertly woven into the story. So well done are some events and characters, you might not be able to discern fact from fiction!

Truly a master work, inventive and engaging, *Boilerplate: History's Mechanical Marvel* is worth every dime and entertaining until the very last page. A book, which will keep you wondering, what is real and what is Boilerplate? ■



*Not a man with wings but a champion of the steam railway.*

# THE FLYING SCOTSMAN



J. PARKIN

DESIGNED AND BUILT IN 1923 BY Sir Nigel Gresley, one of Britain's most prominent steam locomotive engineers, Flying Scotsman was the pride of the fleet of London and the North East Railway company (LNER) and its successors: they used it to represent themselves at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924 and in 1925.

Built at the Doncaster Works, Doncaster, Yorkshire, at a cost of £7,944 it was picked by LNER as its flagship for the London-Edinburgh service. The locomotive was in fact named after this service: the 10 AM London to Edinburgh Flying Scotsman service which has run since 1862 and other than a slight disruption to timetables caused by

World War II, is still running today—although they do use modern locomotives these days unfortunately.

Flying Scotsman, A3 Class, Number 4472, the sole surviving example of this type of locomotive, made its inaugural trip on 14 May 1928 and in its livery of shining apple green, with red, black and white details it steamed through the countryside of Britain and traveled the 392 miles from London to

Edinburgh non-stop: a record at the time for a commercial train, completing the trip in around ten and a half hours. A train of this kind would normally have to stop for a change of crew and to stock up on coal and water, but the design of a new corridor tender—a coal and water storage truck pulled directly behind the engine—which had a small room for the off duty crew in it, allowed the crews to swap over halfway through.

The train had been designed to the largest specifications possible and had a large round topped boiler





and wide firebox which gave it a long and sleek look only interrupted by the funnel. Weighing in at around 400 tons, it had a new designs of combustion chambers and new value and cylinders systems, to improve speed and efficiency.

In 1934, it became the first steam locomotive to be officially recorded at 100 miles per hour and it starred in the first ever full-length feature film with sound produced in Britain called *The Flying Scotsman*. Originally shot in 1929 as a silent film, it told the story of a young fireman on the route who falls in love with a beautiful woman. She turns out to be the daughter of the previous fireman who was fired for drinking on the job so he vows to get revenge on the company. Sound was added to the movie in 1930 and the whole film is very atmospheric and includes some daring stunts

filmed on the moving train.

Bought by British Rail in 1950 it continued in service on the mainlines of the United Kingdom till 1963, during which time it was upgraded in a variety of ways. It continued to run until 1968, the year steam traction officially ended under British Rail. Alan Pegler, a British railway preservationist, bought the locomotive when it was scheduled to be scraped and undertook to restore it as closely as he could to its original state.

In 1969 it became an international star when Peglar traveled to the United States with Flying Scotsman where it went on a promotional tour, although it had to be fitted with a cacophony of parts to fit the American rail safety standards of the time. Sadly enough, the backers of the trip withdrew their funding while the train was

still across the Atlantic. Peglar went bankrupt and there were serious fears that the British Flying Scotsman would have to stay in America for good. But, in early 1973, William McAlpine came to the rescue and Flying Scotsman could be repatriated and repaired. During the 1980s it went on another international voyage, to Australia, to spend a year traveling across it, including a transcontinental trip from Sydney to Perth. In Australia it broke another record,

travelling the 442 miles from Parkes to Broken Hill non-stop: the longest run by a steam locomotive ever recorded. It also then became the first locomotive to circumnavigate the globe when it travelled back to the United Kingdom via Cape Horn—quite a record breaking piece of machinery!

After its return Flying Scotsman wasn't seen until 1995 when it faced being dismantled again. Another buyer came along though: Dr Tony Marchington spent the sum of some £750,000 to restore it to a condition in which it could run again but costs continued to mount and it needed a new home. The National Railway Museum stepped up to the plate in 2004 and saved this iconic locomotive for history. Now part of the National Collection, the money was raised by the public as well as Lottery Grants and donations from people such as Richard Branson.

The museum has been busy working on the overhaul of Flying Scotsman in a effort to get it steaming again by 2010. This depends entirely on public support however.

The Steam Our Scotsman Appeal was launched in January 2009, on Burns Night. Aiming to raise the £250,000 needed for the restoration, the appeal so far has progressed well, having raised approximately £118,000 by 9 October but there is still a way to go to get Flying Scotsman steaming again by next year. The SOS appeal offers the chance to sponsor vital components of Flying Scotsman, from bolts for £25 to tins of paint for £50 and the entire outer firebox for £100,000. You get a certificate to that effect and can get cuff-links made from the Axle box metal or you can go all out and buy a sculpture incorporating metal from the Flying Scotsman Firebox. ■



REVIEW *LEVIATHAN*

Scott Westerfeld reimagines the Great War in full steampunk glory.



TRUBETSKOY

# ADVENTURES AT ARMAGEDDON

THE ERA OF STEAMPUNK ENDS with the First World War. While authors have played with twilit eras of brass and steam existing deep in the twentieth century before, these tend to be aberrant epochs, places where the life of the Gilded Age has been unnaturally prolonged. When the war breaks out, as it does in Ian R. MacLeod's *House of Storms* (2005), and as it is implied to do in Stephen Baxter's *Anti-Ice* (1993), it symbolizes the end of an age, the final verdict of a world too frivolous to last, yet too innocent to deserve the coming judgment.

However, Scott Westerfeld, a specialist in young-adult science fiction who made his mark with the popular *Uglies* series, has taken a different tack. Rather than positioning the Great War as the end of steampunk, *Leviathan* imagines a war that has been colonized by the steampunk aesthetic. While conflict breaks out in August of 1914 upon the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand, it is not one between monarchs, empires, or markets, but between industrial ideologies. On one side are the "Darwinist" empires of Britain, France, and Russia which, thanks to the discovery of DNA by Charles Darwin in the 1860s, have created societies powered by artificially-created life forms. Arrayed against them are the "Clanker" powers of Central Europe and the Middle East, which have

taken a hyperindustrial route to power, with fleets of airships and heavily armored walkers prowling the forests. (The arsenals of both sides are beautifully rendered by the magazine serial-inspired sketches of Keith Thompson which flit about the book.)

To guide the reader through his world, Westerfeld relies on a number of archetypes and plotlines familiar to any reader of period adventure fiction and to any reader of steampunk in fact. The Clanker side of the conflict is explored by Aleksandar von Hohenberg, allo-historical son to the late Archduke, who is forced to flee into the Austrian wilderness with a loyal retinue and a small stormwalker after catching wind of a German conspiracy against his life. The Darwinists, on the other hands, are represented by Deryn Sharp, a

classic girl in midshipman's clothing swept into a mock-Napoleonic sailing/zeppelin story aboard the titular HMAS *Leviathan*, a great aerial whale carrying an ecosystem of offensive weaponry. Westerfeld cleaves quite close to the pulp-adventure roots of his story, with plenty of chases, pitched battles,



paces against the clock, secret castles, budding romance, and secret weapons to go around. While the story is kept at a brisk pace, some of the characterization and world-building does come off as flatter than an adult reader would expect, with the characters occasionally being overshadowed by the exotic machinery they interact with.

This flatness, however, is alleviated by hints Westerfeld drops of broader forces in his world. Despite the pulpy exoticism of the struggles between the Darwinist and Clanker forces, there is a very real sense that both sides are fighting blind, with little understanding of how to get a

proper handle on their opponents. Akin to our world, both sides have plenty of technology but little doctrine, a flaw made all the more unsettling by the fact that the Darwinists and the Clankers are quite capable of fighting a WW2-esque conflict continent-wide. While the philosophies of both sides are kept in the dark (though there are intriguing hints that the Social Darwinism of our history has been replaced by a vaguely modern conception of ecosystems and webs of cooperation), the analogy to our history does suggest that the course of the war, and the era of totalitarianism beyond it, could develop in potentially horrifying

directions.

As *Leviathan* is billed as the first part of a trilogy (the second book, *Behemoth*, is scheduled for release in 2010), Westerfeld will no doubt be coming back to address some of these issues. As it stands, *Leviathan* is a solid introductory novel. While not a transcendent work, it sets up a neat little world with the potential for future growth, while providing a superb introduction to steampunk for younger readers. It is not the Great Steampunk Great War novel, but is it an enjoyable romp through a gadget-festooned landscape, a sort of final breath of mechanical irreverence before the coming winter. ■

## SERIES QUATERMASS

*Guy Dampier discusses the installments featuring this icon of British science fiction.*

# QUATERMASS AND THE PIT .X.



DESCRIBED ONCE BY THE BCC AS the finest thing they'd ever done it is easy to see why. A construction crew working in London uncover something in the ground. Something that even diamond can't cut. Professor Quatermass is drawn in by a friend only to realize with

growing horror that whatever it is they've just discovered is still alive!

Like all the *Quatermass* programs this one features a mix of social and political commentary, in this case based on race riots and similar bigotries which had just blighted Notting Hill at the time it

was made. Beginning as science fiction, descending into horror and finally emerging, triumphant, bloody and fully-formed into the apocalypse this is not a series that shrinks from confronting issues. With a plot sufficiently large to awe and a tight six-part script this is one of the, if not the best, in the *Quatermass* series.

Scenes stay with you. A workman face etched with horror running through the streets of London. A hand lying on a bed of gravel that moves and flows like waves in the ocean. A military man, eyes wide, just staring. This is horror at its best. No gore, no frights, just a gaze into the most horrible sight possible: the evil within humanity. ■



GUY DAMPIER

## COLUMN THE STEAMPUNK WARDROBE

Hilde Heyvaert takes the reader on a tour of steampunk and dieselpunk fashion every issue.



HILDE HEYVAERT

# DIESELPUNK SEASON

IT IS A MISUNDERSTANDING THAT dieselpunk fashion should be any less varied than its steampunk counterpart. While steampunk can boast a wider time period, dieselpunk covers an era that is marked by its changes in fashions: from the Roaring Twenties to the early years of the Cold War, with events of great significance in between. It is those garments of days past that make up the diversity in the dieselpunk fashion styles.

There is the gangster in his zoot suit with Tommy Guns and Charleston Jazz girls and aristocratic ladies with haircuts and dresses to match, elegant and stylish at the same time. There is the more common dress of slacks, shirts, suspenders and baker boy caps or hats of the man in the street also, for those that don't feel like dressing the more upper class style of that particular time period.

But the era was not marked by music, gangsters and Prohibition alone, although these do provide

great inspiration. The Second World War, the start of the Cold War and period film are just as important.

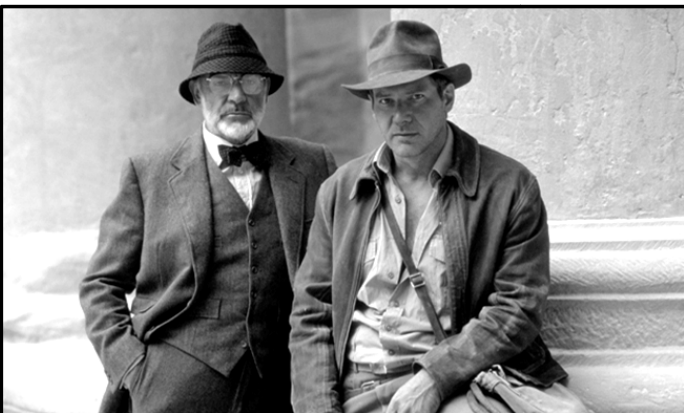
Uniforms are inspired by both the war and movies like *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004) and *The Rocketeer* (1991). More than one militaristically inclined dieselpunk enthusiast has taken a good look at not just the real thing but also at the uniforms of Captain Joe Sullivan's Flying Legion. The elegant and strong outfits worn by Polly Perkins serve as excellent examples for the female dieselpunk.

Other dieselpunks choose the more desperate, apocalyptic look from movies like the latest *Terminator Salvation* (2009) or classics as the *Mad Max* saga. Going for a more worn-down or even ragged, wasted and less hopeful outlook on the world.

The more adventure prone might choose an outfit akin to that of good old Indiana Jones whose wardrobe has been an inspiration for many who wish that they could go relic hunting themselves. And

those who like to remain a bit closer to home can draw from the fashions of '40s and '50s and even the more classic styles of the 1960s (think about the wonderful outfits from the TV series *Mad Men*) which might be more appealing.

That dieselpunk is a style that is very much alive is seen in the collection of many great fashion houses every season. Winter season is no exception. Several designers sent their models up the runway wearing outfits clearly inspired by the eras encompassing this style. Dolce & Gabbana even came up with several looks clearly inspired by Elsa Schiaparelli!



REVIEW *THE INVISIBLE FRONTIER*

An installment in the famed *Les Cités Obscures* series that exemplifies European dieselpunk.

# ROMANTIC ILLUSIONS



TRUBETSKOY

WHILE DIESELPUNK IS COMMONLY associated with a pulpy, *noir*-and-Jazz America, there remains a fascination in the subgenre for the crepuscular world of interwar Europe. It was a time of artistic ferment and architectural genius, of electricity and of the machine entwining themselves into the fabric of urban life, of cultural clashes and sexual politics, of ambitious administrators uttering proclamations and of humbled citizens trying to find a place in the brave new world. It is this brief epoch, and the imaginative potential it nurtured, that finds a new home in the ethereal world of *Les Cités Obscures*.

*Les Cités Obscures*, marketed in English as *Cities of the Fantastic*, is a series of graphic novels created by the Belgian team of François Schuiten and Benoît Peeters. Set on an unseen "Counter-Earth" connected to our own through certain landmarks, *Les Cités Obscures* imagines a great continent made up of countless city-states, each with a story that rhymes with the struggles of the last century. In terms of technology, architecture, and philosophy, the world of the *Cités* could be thought of as 1930s by way of Jules Verne, with great glider-like airships filling the skies, rounded beetle-like tanks prowling the dirt, and government ministries situated within great brick domes. It is a world that does not take

reality as seriously as our own, with cryptozoology a thriving practice and with the flow of time shifting according to some unknowable will. While all this holds true for *The Invisible Frontier*, the messy, unsatisfactory world we know echoes throughout the narrative.

The first part of the story begins innocuously enough, treading in territory familiar to readers of Schuiten and Peeters' earlier works. The action centers around Roland de Cremer, the inauspicious young scion of a noble family, and his assignment to a minor position in the great Cartography Center in the state of

Sodrovno-Voldachia. The center itself has fallen on hard times; its great dome sits in the middle of a wasteland of crumbling concrete and mountains of paper, while the cartographers inside struggle with outdated facilities and a shortage of personnel. Despite his chronic inexperience, De Cremer soon acclimatizes himself to the center, learning how to appreciate the subtle nature of mapmaking, of representing the fractal nature of physical space and human within the limits of a two dimensional drawing. However, Roland is not the sum of his responsibilities; he spends his nights with a mysterious



call girl Shkodra, bearer of a curious birthmark she forever hides from the world, and by day he maintains a awkward professional relationship with Ismail Djunov, a sharply dressed young man overseeing the introduction of automated map-drawing plotters into the center; a blood brother of the well-spoken modernizers that populate the realm of the *Cités*.

This comfortable situation is thrown into disarray, however, with the appearance of Marshal Radsic, leader of Sodrovno-Voldachia. At the close of the first book, he makes the surprising declaration that the Cartography Center will become one of the central sites for the birth of "Greater Sodrovny," charged with recompiling the maps to show the new additions to the realm as well as becoming a new cultural center for the masses. As the second book opens, the center has become a hive of activity, with Roland accreting promotions weekly and Djunov's machines supplanting the traditional forms of map-making. As the tension rises, Shkodra becomes a bone of contention between the two men, with Roland believing her birthmark to hold some great secret about the historical border of Sodrovno-Voldachia that would unmake the Marshal's plans. As Djunov circles closer to the pair, they abandon the center and flee to the ever-receding border.

At this point, the reader may be forgiven for assuming that the story concludes in the type of heroic liberation common to fiction of this plot structure. It is to the credit of



writer Benoît Peeters, then, that this resolution is avoided. Indeed, Roland's quest is subjected to a brutal deconstruction that ultimately raises hard questions about the relationship between the heroic quest and simple self-deception.

This self-deception is deftly allegorized in the art of François Schuiten. As can be seen in his earlier work in the *Cités Obscures*, he maintains a draftsman's level of precision, depicting meticulously rendered buildings whose very detail allow us to forget the unreality of the whole. In fact, much of the artwork in *The Invisible Frontier* verges into surrealism, with realistic characters wandering around wholly otherworldly machinery, or suddenly switching from being dominated by great arches and vaulted ceilings to striding the countryside as a colossus as in a dream. (In a setup familiar to readers of Schuiten and Peeters' earlier work *Brüssel*, a great

space inside the center is taken up by a enormous scale model of Sodrovno-Voldachia, forever trodden by giants sticking miniature trees down or arguing about the placement of walls.)

Ultimately, despite the fantastic qualities, *The Invisible Frontier* is a story about our own world and our reactions to it. The story is steeped in symbolism to Europe's eternal problems with borders and the nationalities they contain. Aside from Roland, most of the cast has names of a Turkish and South Slavic background: a reference to the upheaval suffered

by the Balkans throughout the twentieth century. As the Cartography Center expands, Roland finds himself in continual disagreements with his subordinates who simply slap the border on the cities in the world-room under dubious instructions from Djunov's machines. As Roland and Shkodra travel to the outer reaches of Greater Sodrovny, the landscape shows the scars of nationalist strife, with ruined cities bisected by half-finished walls and fields paved with spent shell casings. The world bears the scars of its makers, though how long they will remain in the unknowable *Cités Obscures* is impossible to say.

Still, in the end, it is the mingling of reality and dreamlike fantasy that makes Schuiten and Peeters' series so remarkable. It is this combination of modern issues and startling technology, of present and imagined past, that makes *The Invisible Frontier* a timeless work of European dieselpunk. ■

## COLUMN THE LIQUOR CABINET

Every issue, Mr Daniel introduces the reader to another fascinating part of the world of alcohol.



CRAIG B. DANIEL

# THE MARTINI

IT IS 1934 AND YOU ARE IN AN American bar—the kind that's been in operation since at least last November. You sit down in a shadowy corner, set your violin case down at your feet, and order a drink while you wait for your contact to show up. The drink you sip while you wait is, naturally, a martini—the cocktail that was synonymous with serious drinking from before the first war until well after the second.

The modern martini is the gin drink *par excellence*—properly mixed, it's nothing but gin with just enough other ingredients to heighten the herbal flavor. But it wasn't always this way—the oldest recipe I've been able to find is Jerry Thomas's 1887 recipe for the "Martinez Cocktail," which calls for a wine glass full of vermouth and only an ounce of gin, and ends with the instruction, "If the guest prefers it very sweet, add two dashes of gum syrup." The recipe also calls for bitters and Maraschino (a cherry liqueur). Today, by contrast, the standard proportions are about four parts gin to one of dry vermouth, with no other ingredients save the olives that have replaced the lemon Thomas used to garnish his drink.

There are a lot of variations on the martini—and a lot of unrelated drinks with the word "martini" in their name. On the latter I will waste no more space, except to note that referring to them as martinis is a faux pas among serious cocktail drinkers. As for the variations, these are of two sorts. One is a set of ways of specifying slight changes to the

standard recipe when ordering to perfectly tailor the drink to your own preferences. These include specifying that you like your martini dryer than normal, "dirty" (with a little olive brine added) or "perfect" (not a value judgment but a request that equal parts sweet and dry vermouth be used).

The other sort of variation is the drinks which originated as alternate martinis but are now cocktails in their own right. The Bronx, popular in the 1930s, is a fairly wet perfect martini with a generous dash of orange juice added (and, of course, no olive). For Jerry Thomas, the Manhattan Cocktail was just a Martinez made with whiskey instead of the gin, but today it is understood as being made with sweet vermouth rather than dry, and a little bit more of it than the martini, with 5:2 a commonly-used proportion; Manhattans also still contain a dash of bitters and are most usually served on the rocks with a cherry for garnish.

Another notable example is the Vesper, James Bond's tippie of choice in *Casino Royale* (both the book and the recent film); while the required ingredients are difficult to come by (Kina Lillet, which contained quinine, is not made anymore while the specified Gordon's gin is not as strong today as when the drink was written), *Esquire* magazine has proposed the following recipe as duplicating the original flavor: "3 oz Tanqueray gin, 1 oz 100-proof Stolichnaya vodka, 1/2 oz Lillet Blanc, 1/8 teaspoon (or



less) quinine powder or, in desperation, 2 dashes of bitters." It is to be stirred or shaken with ice, strained into a glass, and garnished with a lemon peel.

Bond is also, of course, famous for his "vodka martini, shaken, not stirred"—a drink widely ridiculed by martini fans. While vodka should not be entirely flavorless, its flavor is subtle and easily overwhelmed by the vermouth; gin, on the other hand, has a strongly herbal flavor that pairs well with its martini co-star. Shaking versus stirring is a personal preference; the former will chill the drink more, which has a significant effect on the flavor, and is less popular among martini enthusiasts. ■

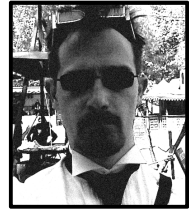


NICK OTTENS

## PERSPECTIVE THE POWER OF INDUSTRY

*The industrialization of Britain, Germany and France compared.*

# START UP THE BIG MACHINES

MARCIVS  
RAUCHFUB

GREAT BRITAIN WAS THE FIRST COUNTRY IN THE history of man that industrialized and as a consequence, it found itself on top of the world for well over a century. British manufactures spread across the globe throughout the nineteenth century and close behind, the advent of empire followed suit. Not before long, this small island on the outskirts of Europe dominated not just the seas that represented its commercial gateway to the rest of the world; not just a formidable collection of outposts and colonies on every continent; rather entire regions and cultures found itself ruled by the British Crown and carefully watched over by its scores of representatives that came in the shape of administrators, traders and officers.

The Industrial Revolution that propelled Britain into the modern age before any other power could has long been a subject of study. "Why Britain?" is a question difficult to answer. Nineteenth century historian Max Weber (1864-1920) cited the "protestant ethic" as being of major influence while Joel Mokyr (1974) considers the idea of capitalism itself, best expressed by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), as pivotal to the industrialization of Britain and the western world. Others scholars like Immanuel Wallerstein (1930) and Douglass North (1920) stress the exceptional institutional circumstances in Britain, its relatively mobile social ladder and parliamentary rule, as having contributed greatly to the development of industry. Whatever one chooses to call it (religious, ideological, institutional), Britain had an advantage over pretty much everyone else and with profound consequences. Between the end of the long eighteenth century and 1901, that era we call the Victorian, British economic and military power grew immensely. Although the

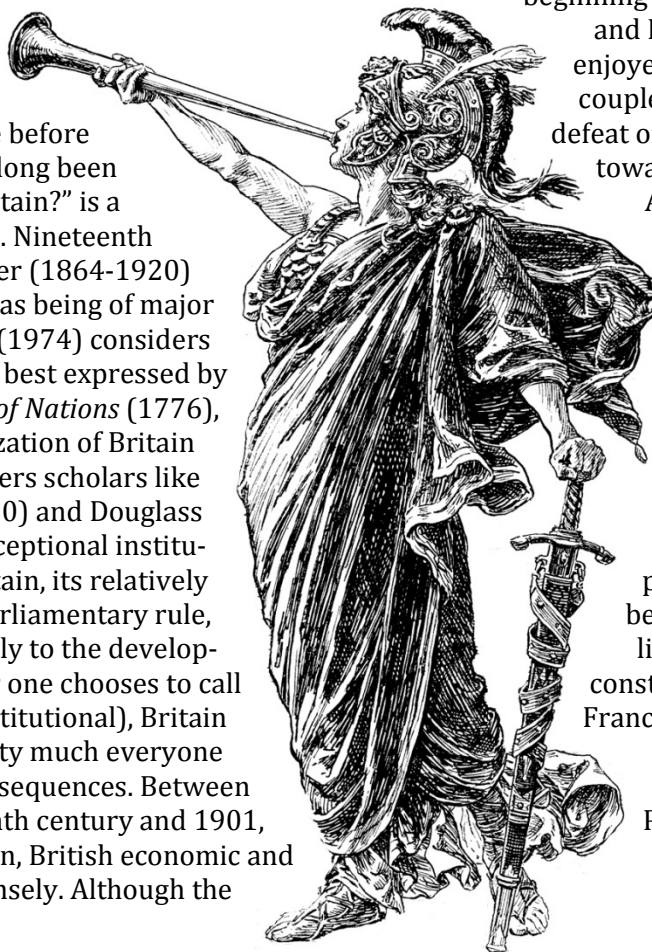
DURING THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY THERE were only two powers in Europe which had any chance of economically competing with the British Empire: France, the leading economic power of the previous two centuries, and the loose confederation of German states dominated by Prussia.

Both nations had significantly different economic backgrounds which would lead to equally significant differences in the course of their industrialization.

France had been a unified nation-state since the Renaissance while Germany was still a conglomerate of federated states with different levels of dependency amongst each other and two powers dominating at the beginning of the century: Austria in the south and Prussia in the north. The prosperity enjoyed by France during the last century coupled with the weariness following the defeat of Napoleon led to a certain caution toward the adopting of new technology.

A perfect example of this reluctance occurred in 1813 when William Cockerill smuggled a modern steam engine into Belgium.

In spite of this opportunity the French government as well as private entrepreneurs failed to adopt steam technology early and on a large scale. France also had a network of channels that had been able to accommodate it during the previous century but now proved to be insufficient to supply an industrializing economy. Instead it stalled the construction of railroads for a long time. France eventually saw a huge increase in overall economic capacity in the decades leading up to the Franco-Prussian War but it continued to lag behind Britain and increasingly, behind neighboring Germany.







North American colonies had fought themselves free, they remained among Britain's foremost trading partners, as did the newly-independent states of South America. In Asia, Britain maintained a whole separate empire in India while settlements in Singapore and Hong-Kong provided entry to the fabulous wealth of China.

There were signs of trouble though by the turn-of-the-century already. Germany and the United States were quickly catching up while France and Russia posed serious imperial adversaries. Until the early 1900s, Britain found itself in really-not-so-splendid isolation while its industrial advantage was in decline. The twentieth century would not belong to British cotton and commerce: it belonged to electricity and chemicals; two areas in which the Germans excelled. From 1901 onward, the year in which the Queen died,

Britain had to accept that it could no longer rule the world all by itself: an unfortunate awareness for history's greatest empire. ■

The German situation at the same time offers a markedly different picture. Although the German-speaking lands struggled with the early effects of the Industrial Revolution (poverty among traditional craftsmen; the plight of the starving Silesian spinners in 1844), a drastic increase in industrial capacity occurred from the mid 1840s onward. With the proverbial, stereotypical and rather clichéd Teutonic Efficiency new technologies were imported from Britain and oftentimes copied, refined and put into action. Especially the railway system grew with a rapid pace, further aiding trade and also boosting the steel and mining industries.

Industrialization was most prominent in Prussia, where most of the railroads were built. This in part allowed the kingdom to defeat Austria in 1866 and lead the rest of Germany toward unification after the war with France of 1870-'71. Thereafter, the development of both countries diverged even further. Germany, united and with the resource-rich provinces of Alsace and Lorraine in its possession, enjoyed a growth not seen before and was able to outdo the British in industrial capacity by 1913. France's industry continued to grow, although at a slower pace. Its colonies provided a certain stimulation but never had the sort of impact that the Empire had on Britain.

Germany did especially well during the so-called Second Industrial Revolution and its astonishing growth and military successes contributed to a sense of invincibility. Its newfound national identity, economic power and military strength all combined to foster an arrogance that, coupled with French revanchism, would prove to be fertile ground for another war.

On a lighter note, in those days of mass industrialization in Continental Europe, in what is often called the *Belle Époque*, two staple characters of the less serious side of steampunk first emerged as bad stereotypes depicting the spirit of their respective nations: The Frenchman, more interested in enjoying the good things in life and lacking a certain discipline and the Pickelhaube-wearing German on the other hand, doing everything with a militaristic efficiency. Looking back on the course of industrialization in both nations, one can sort of see those stereotypes at work. ■



REVIEW *CASSHERN*

*Piecraftian dieselpunk in a visually masterful remake of 1970s anime.*



SIGURJÓN  
NJÁLSSON

# MUTATION OF ANIME & DIESEL

THE LIVE ACTION FILM *CASSHERN* (directed by Kazuaki Kiriya, 2004) is based on the 1973 anime of the same name. This fact is a sore spot for fans of the original, who generally seem to be unanimous in their dislike of the filmic remake. On the other hand, fans of the movie may not enjoy the anime upon viewing. I have to admit that I've only seen a few fragments of that original 1970s animation, but I think I've seen enough to say that I actually enjoy both, for their own reasons.

Needless to say, the '70s anime is generally bright and campy. The film is, however, dark and extravagant (perhaps to excess). This already forces a wedge between the two, which is driven deeper by some drastic changes to the plot. Admittedly, I can see why fans of the old series don't like the remake, but I think if taken on its own terms, it can still be quite the enjoyable experience.

Visually, the film *Casshern* is quite the spectacle. The computer graphics already look a bit dated, but unlike many special effects driven movies, the focus is not on creating a sense of "realism," but rather to create an extremely stylized look. The film is full of highly manipulated color and contrast, resulting in a veritable feast for the eyes. The kind of stylization I'm talking about is quite

reminiscent of other 'artistic' action-based films as Zack Snyder's *300* (2007) and Kerry Conran's *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004). These films are visually stunning, and quite a pleasure to watch, although some may argue that the visuals are overdone and overbearing, and in this way it amounts to personal taste.

I mentioned *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, which seems to work oddly well as a companion to *Casshern*. Both came out in the same year and feature a dieselpunk-based setting, though they differ greatly in plot and represent different sides of the genre. *Sky Captain* is certainly of

the optimistic 'Ottensian' realm, while *Casshern* nestles itself nicely into the world of the dystopian 'Piecraftian' dieselpunk.

Of course, *Casshern* branches out from dieselpunk with its more biopunk genetic experimentation, particularly the creation of 'Neo-Humans' through the use of 'Neo-Cells.' The general visual aesthetic is chiefly diesel in nature however, drawing from *film noir* in its shadowy atmosphere and focusing on an alternate history in which Asia defeated Europa in a great world war and subsequently became involved in a battle with terrorists from the ambiguous geographic



region "Zone 7". These terrorists steal Europa's now abandoned robot armies to wreak havoc on their enemies, robots that the Neo-Human Casshern must defeat in kung fu-esque fight sequences.

Personally, I enjoy the film. It's incredibly entertaining, although I think I would enjoy it just as much without subtitles as I do with. Really, the plot and dialogue is chiefly inconsequential for me. The entire point seems to be the lavish visuals, which overwhelm and dazzle in their extravagance. The style reminds me a lot of Dave McKean's artwork, well known for his collaborations with Neil Gaiman, their cinematic work being *Mirromask* (2005), which likewise dazzles with its beautiful visuals. It's

just a joy to see such painterly use of color and form on the big screen.

That said, while quite different from the campiness found in the '70s original, there is a certain element of kitsch to the whole thing. I think it's important to realize that the creators of this film knew the campy status of the source material, and while there are more 'serious moments' in the film, even these seem to be handled with a bit of irreverent humor. Though very different in mood, this film's handling of its original source reminds me of another 2004 live action reboot of a classic '70s anime, Hideaki Anno's *Cutie Honey*. The overproduction of the dramatic action scenes and visuals harkens back to the melodramatic nature of

those old classics. I think of it more of a graphical overhaul and modernization of the *spirit* of the source material rather than a literal translation of it to the silver screen. Their sense of fun and extravagance remains in tact, even if the poor animation quality and strong retro vibes are removed and replaced with over-the-top production and a contemporary feel.

For fans of the 'punks, I think this film could easily be considered a 'must watch,' although some may not like the overproduced visuals. Fans of the original series beware, though. It's going to be different, but I think it still works in its own weird way, and captures an essential part of those old classics: spectacle and ridiculous melodrama. ■

*Thoughts on the steampunk convivial, 11-13 September 2009, Lincoln, England.*

# THE ASYLUM



TOBY FROST

THE ASYLUM CONVIVAL TOOK place over the weekend of the 11th to the 13th of September and was held at Charlotte House in the old part of Lincoln. Major Thaddeus Tinker and Lady Elsie were our genteel hosts for what was, as far as I know, the first specifically steampunk weekend in the United Kingdom—and, I'm pleased to say, what seems destined to be a long way from being the last.

I went along both as an enthusiast and as a contributor, in order to give a reading and signing of my *Space Captain Smith* books. The city of Lincoln made an excellent setting for the convivial. Alright, there are no motorways

anywhere near it, but if I had to choose between a motorway and a city centre with its own castle and cathedral, the old buildings win every time.

Festivities began on Friday night with a meet-up at the Victoria, a pub by the impressive entrance to Lincoln Castle and opposite the main venue. I didn't really know what to expect: would I seem overdressed in my waistcoat and cravat? Well, no. Definitely not.

Very soon I was saying hello to Mr Peter Harrow and the guest of honor, author Robert Rankin, and realizing that to socialize properly a man about town really does need a hat—preferably a time-travelling

hat with accompanying brass eyewear. Pimms, beer and some splendid work on the steel drums by Lady Raygun helped the evening go well. We had live music from Sunday Driver and comedy from Andrew O'Neill, whose splendid reassessment of the industrial age set the tone for the weekend's Victorian frivolity. Shame about the burgers though—still, can you have a proper convention without some sort of dubious food?

One of the most appealing things about steampunk is the range of ways people express their enthusiasm for the genre. You've got artists, writers, prop and costume makers, experts in Victorian lifestyle

and pastimes, and people with many other interests ranging from the jovial to the really quite scholarly. It's not just dressing up.

The organizers did a good job of showing just what steampunk can involve in the events throughout Saturday daytime. Steampunks could see all kinds of clothes, devices and accessories for sale at the Bazaar Eclectica, as well as demonstrations of an extraordinary array of pastimes for the discerning retro-futurist, including Victorian formal dancing, snuff-taking, belly dancing, ray-gun construction and even a demonstration of Bartitsu, a martial art favored by Sherlock Holmes.

I attended a talk by Robert Rankin, which was less a question and answer session than an hour of stand-up comedy, as Robert demonstrated his skill at ventriloquism and the electric ukulele, interspersed with a range of very funny anecdotes. Sadly, I had to miss the Bartitsu demonstration, as it clashed with me doing a reading from my books. It was great to talk to steampunks about writing in the genre—although reading to an audience within throwing distance is actually quite nerve-racking! Of course, steampunks are a well-behaved lot, and I survived intact and even was called upon to sign someone's teacup!

To my surprise, I found myself helping to judge the costume contest, flamboyantly compared by Mr Rankin. There were over a dozen entries, all of them excellent, and it

was very hard to pick a winner. I was impressed not just by the quality of the outfits but by the ingenuity of the characters and stories behind them. It's good to see that people are going suitably equipped in their travels across the Empire: steampunk really does reward creativity.

Saturday night was the Empire Ball, a chance to dress impressively and sample a few pints to musical accompaniment. Our hosts set the tone for the evening by formally greeting every attendee, and there



were some truly splendid outfits on display. We had a wide range of bands and entertainment, but for me the stand-out point was Ghostfire's Waltz. It was a really memorable moment, and encapsulated the whole day: a great variety of like-minded people having a really good time.

Sadly, my adventure had to end on Sunday, as the real world beckoned once more. I travelled back to the asylum one last time to thank our hosts and say goodbye, and headed off to the grayness of

the twenty-first century.

Favorite moments? It's difficult to pick out individual things, but for me one of the best aspects of the convivial was the chance to meet other steampunks: to put names to faces and discuss the various aspects of the genre. I was pleased—but not surprised—to find that everyone was thoroughly amenable. Not an uncouth word was spoken—for as Major Tinker so rightly put it at the Empire Ball, steampunk is welcoming, friendly and growing ever more popular.

Asylum was always going to be an ambitious venture, and the fact that it ran so well is tribute to the sheer effort put in by Major Tinker, Lady Elsie and all their staff. They did a terrific job, and it was their hard work that made things go just right. Any negatives? None worth mentioning. It's not my intention to say what should or shouldn't be at the next convivial (although anything

involving time machines or zeppelin racing would be nice) but suffice it to say that even if Asylum had been an established event I would have said that it all went remarkably smoothly. Given that this was the first time, the events ran exceptionally well: nothing I saw seemed jarring or out of place. I gather that next year's event will be even more ambitious, involving perhaps even the castle itself! Quite how the Asylum will develop between now and then I can't say, but I will be there to find out! ■

## SHORT STORY

# STORMBRINGER

By ANDREW SINGLETON

*All entries pertaining to Eugene Smith's account of the Wandering Pilgrim take place within 1884 and are to be cross-referenced with reports made by Captain Edward Fawkes concerning the death of his third crew (Report #43 according to the old indexing system, and #1884—4 under the new catalog. If other relevant documents are found at a later date they are to be filed, or re-filed under the new system). The journal entries listed below have been copied and archived with permission from Robert Smith, eldest surviving descendent (legal documentation on the matter should be filed with these entries).*

*The following entries are taken from the journal of Eugene Smith (1857 - 1914).*

## May 4th

It has been a month since we've originally set out from Independence. Much of that time has been spent either in the saddle, or belly down on the ground observing. I'm simply thankful that my initial fears of disagreements and or violence sparked by Bell's African ancestry and Yuri's supposed allegiance to the Confederacy have so far been unfounded. Regardless, it seemed advantageous to get an agreement amongst our entire party to agree to leave politics, religion, and other equally sensitive topics unspoken for the duration. Are we not, after all, here for a common cause?

Beyond the mundane and routine problems that arise from any trip of this length, broken equipment, occasional grumbling, and other minor issues; our luck has been favorable and kind. The plains have met us with their gentle and expansive beauty. Our base camp is in good order and well provisioned. Hunting has been tolerable, though consisting exclusively of small game till this point. We will take what we can get, but given the price of Buffalo hides back east I would prefer these great lumbering beasts to our current fare.

There have, as yet, been no sign of Indian activity in these parts; for which I am truly grateful. We are in their territory and hunt the same animals they make their livelihood off of. Though I fully understand and sympathize with their desire to be left alone and to keep outsiders at bay, for they have made a living off of this land for longer than any of our families have existed on

this continent and view us, rightly so in my opinion, as invaders. Having said this and feeling as I do I still must continue in my current efforts, for this work has proven to be the only thing I find myself both capable of as a means to earn a living, and enjoy doing.

## May 7th

It's been three days since I've written last and do so now to record that we've sighted a heard of Buffalo. I wish I were capable of drawing, or that Thomas could be convinced to reproduce the scene. As soon as the horses have been readied Yuri, bell, and myself shall follow the herd close while the rest of our party follows at a far slower pace due to the need to carry the mules, supplies, extra provisions, and the general necessities should we be fortunate enough to fall any of the massive creatures.

## Evening

Yuri and I discuss what had brought us out here while Bell was tending the horses. Yuri, it seems, had grown disillusioned with those that continued to try reviving the Confederacy. When pressed he cited that those that claimed to pine for the way things were had degenerated from the ideals of proper conduct and, while blaming their sorry lot on everything but themselves, took their anger and frustrations out on the colored population. He admitted to possessing slaves and showed no remorse for having done so, for that was how things were at the time. While he admits that he was wrong in doing so, he had done what he could to give those that worked under him the best care he had available to him.

At some point during Yuri's explanation Bell had returned. Not wanting him to feel left out I had asked for his take on the matter. His reply struck me both as genuinely unexpected, and yet at the same time it feels profoundly fitting so I leave his exact words here for the sake of posterity.

"The buying and selling of human families is immoral and sinful, but it would be equally immoral and sinful for me to do anything but ask that they seek forgiveness for what they have done and do my best to

not seek retribution for events no man can change.”

These views summed up my two companions nicely. The conflict I had feared might come about seems to have no chance at materializing and, so far as I can tell, the two men seem to get along quite well with each other. This relieves me, since hearing improbable and tawdry tales around the fire at night, and good-natured banter during the day is most preferable to the alternative.

### *May 8th*

We sit hunkered in the darkness dumbfounded and in awe of the apparitions clashing amid the storm. I know not if we share some sickness or madness, but each agrees that we are seeing the same things. So I continue to record these events despite never being able to share this experience with the wider world for fear of being declared mad and locked away from society.

What we first took for a giant statue, or monument left for reasons unknown, has been boarded by no less than a dozen men, possibly more for I was alerted to this activity midway through their efforts. After these men entered the misshapen figure through an opening in its hind section it rose from its crouching position, extending and flexing misshapen elongated arms, smoke billowing from its mouth, and loped across the plains on all four of its limbs. It appears man-shaped, though its legs appear far shorter and uniformly thick, and its arms reach down, in my estimates, to below its knees were this impossible construct to stand to its full height. This feat, in my opinion, is an impossibility because of the large cannons, which Yuri insists are naval guns though I fail to see the distinction between the two terms, mounted one over each shoulder blade and seemingly able to use the shoulder joints themselves to pivot and aim.

Yuri and I both agree that if these cannon are functional rather than decorative the behemoth's purpose as a war machine is plain as day. Where we disagree is on who would be capable of its construction, or even gathering the money needed to buy the materials for its construction. He believes that it is a weapon the Union army had created, much as it had created the Monitor, but I disagree. While the Ironclads are an impressive and terrifying sight, they pale in both difficulty of construction and ability to induce fear as this is capable of.

Perhaps an hour has passed since the Giant had started moving, and though it advances towards us I gain no sense that it even notices our presence here. Its movements remain a mystery as we seek shelter from a

fierce storm that's blown from all around us. Our horses are frightened and, despite Bell's best efforts and years as a horse handler neither Yuri nor myself wish to approach. The tether that keeps them from running should hold despite their efforts. I hope it does, since I don't look forward to having to walk back to camp and I fear what the others, seeing our horses running fearful and riderless, would believe.

More time has passed, the horses finally calmed and beginning to settle despite the wind, and we've caught sight of what the Goliath construct is here for. When I first saw it I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me, it has always been my experience that birds do not fly in this weather, yet all of us agree it was out there. As I watched it dive and claw at the iron beast, which produced little if any reaction, I tried to take note of its features in hopes of asking any friendly natives we might come across at a later time.

It had to be large, as big if not bigger than a draft horse, and covered in strange feathers. Look at it once when the lightning flashes and they might be so dark as to be black. Look again and they might be the color of dried blood. This, however, could simply be a trick of the eye, but I include it here for the sake of completeness. The plumage around its head and neck appears to be either a very pale yellow, or possibly white, and similar colored feathering along its chest and one or two white feathers within its tail. Its beak, shaped like a predatory bird's is a dull yellow and, again this could simply be tricks of the mind or the eye, seemingly filled with sharp backward slanting teeth.

Despite its wicked claws and doubtlessly sharp beak, this creature scarcely made a mark on the iron creature. However ineffective its attacks might have been it had to fend off attacks against swats from its opponent's arms, blows that if they had connected I'm sure would have snapped the great bird like so much kindling. Now it tries going for the 'head', digging its claws into the great beast's neck to gain purchase while it flapped its wings furiously into the hellish maw of its opponent. This prompted what sounded like the billowing of a heard of enraged bulls before a giant hand slapped against the bird's chest in an attempt to pry it loose.

Bell has the spyglass now, leaving me unable to tell what exactly is going on. In a way this is a blessing, as it forces me to focus on the sounds the great and terrible combatants make. Though their noises are surely muffled and obscured by the thunderstorm overhead; the clatter and screaming of iron, animal, and nature must sound like the coming of demons from Hell by

anyone and everyone that isn't either deaf as a post, or dead. Yuri and I exchanged glances. For the time being we were well removed from the fighting, but that could well change at a moment's notice.

No. That's not thunder. It sounds different, and I feel it is a more ominous noise that seems to come from the vicinity of where the twin colossi battle. Yuri, after taking the spyglass from Bell, has informed the rest of us that the Goliath has begun firing on the bird. His voice sounds contemptuous as he explains the futility of trying to hit something that agile and relatively small in these conditions even with cannon shot, which he informs me the beast is likely not firing.

Lightning. The bird, I'm sure it is responsible for this storm as well, has somehow called lightning down on its foe. One strike would have been enough to rend most homes sundered and ablaze. Yet here this iron monstrosity was being subjected to repeated strikes, one right after the other such that the thunder produced has left our ears ringing and, hopefully temporarily, deaf to any other noise. The giant does not move, as surely the men inside that animate it have been rendered into charred and burnt masses by this point. Poor bastards. They might have been in the wrong here, maybe, maybe not. This is no way to die though, stuffed in with over a dozen other men in the hot confines of a strange beast, sweating and swearing, as they surely must be within its confines.

Minutes pass. The bird circles its inert opponent and even at one point perches on it to peer down the gullet of its mouth. The storm begins to clear, possibly having served its purpose. The ringing in our ears subsides and we give thanks that our injuries were only temporary. After tending to the horses, making sure they were still unharmed and being thankful that they were, and begun to make ready to leave this place lest the great bird decided we were somehow connected to the iron Goliath. That is, at the very least, what we had intended to do, but that idea was soon abandoned when we heard a great bellowing. The closest I can describe the noise is as a low long train whistle. However this comparison does not do justice to the scale and hair raising qualities of this noise. Our horses streaked and reared, my hair stood on end, and there was a general sense of dread.

Yuri demanded the spyglass, which was given to him with shaky hands. I apologize; I've been trying to recount these events now that we've settled down to, hopefully, obscurity. Unfortunately I'm not sure how to proceed. Between the lightning, thunder, what I believe is more canon fire, and my already frayed nerves I'm

unsure if I've made myself clear. Why does it matter if I'm the only one that will read these words? I don't know, I just want, just...just...need to make myself think straight. Yuri's handed the glass off to me and I'm scarcely sure what to write.

The iron beast is on its hind limbs, one of the great cannons on the ground slightly behind it. The other cannon appears to be held by its muzzle in the giant's enormous hands; apparently it cannot fire the thing, so seems to use the weapon as a makeshift club. It emitted another earth shattering banshee wail as it charged its foe, weapon swishing through the air wildly. Its entire posture and how it moves has changed, as if I were watching a wholly different creature. Where its movements were slow and methodical prior were now smooth, graceful in the same way a seasoned pugilist's movements can be graceful and brutal all in the same instance.

I've no thought or notion on how this is possible, for anyone even remotely near to the creature when it was struck should have died from the experience. Maybe the men served to restrain the beast in some fashion, to yoke its rage for their wishes. If this is true, now that they are dead, it has nothing restraining its actions. I've never heard of such a thing, I've never seen anything remotely like this, and I have no clue whatsoever if my reasoning is correct, but somehow it fits. Perhaps it only appears to fit when it is, in whole or part, wrong.

It is the only idea I have at this moment, and like everything else that has happened within the past evening it fills me with a sense of dread and loathing like I've scarcely felt before. I hope this thought is wrong and that the men I saw climb into the iron beast still control its movements. However what kind of men would wish to go about in such a creation? I hope they are moral men and that they wield the beast's power for the greater good rather than personal greed or glory.

There is a great shrieking from all about, but was centered on the two combatants. At first I thought it came from the iron golem, but then I realized it was coming from somewhere above the fighting. It is then that I heard Bell's screams insisting that we had to leave. I barely heard him though, as my mind was running through every prayer for shelter and salvation I could recall.

The shrieking grew in volume and lowered in pitch as the funnel cloud formed and descended. It was bigger than any I'd seen before; it was easily as thick as five men from my perspective, and surely the actual thickness was enough to lift a home in its entirety. The

horses screamed, broke the ropes and managed to render much of our camp site into ruins before we could get them under control. I couldn't blame their wanting to be anywhere but here. However what use would running be? We wouldn't be able to outrun it if it came our way, and I agree with Bell in that it surely was something the bird had summoned up as a final attempt to stave off its attacker.

What happened after this I cannot say because the tornado obscured what is happening. However at one point I saw something that surely was the cannon the giant was carrying being thrown followed soon by the bird exiting the funnel from a different direction only to dart into the maelstrom as soon as it could regain its forward momentum. Minutes passed with nothing visible save for the roaring and whirling Finger of God not moving, not lessening in intensity, just hovering there unnaturally.

What caused the funnel to dissipate I'm unsure, but I saw the iron giant fall to earth, one massive hand clinching the bird by one of its legs, preventing its escape. It then began beating its opponent about the neck and chest with its free hand till impact. Even with its body partway sunken into the ground the giant refused to lessen its grip and, even as it made efforts to rise, swung the bird about. For its part the great bird could only squawk and shriek as it was slammed and slung against the earth.

Eventually the iron beast had to release its grip on the bird in order to pry itself loose from the ground. I saw that the great bird lay broken, crying out plaintively as its body, clearly broken with its limbs laying at odd angles, lay out there unable to rise. My companions as well as myself feel pity, even if this creature would have devoured us if it had the chance nothing and no one should have to suffer enough to make the sounds that come from this broken creature. It seems that its adversary feels much the same, for, after it somehow reattached both guns to its back lifted the bird again and, with a force that is surely unequaled by anything Man or Nature can produce, slammed it against the ground such that we felt the tremors even from where our the remnants of pitiful camp had been made.

### *May 9th*

The sunrise after the storm broke is one that I will treasure above all others as long as I live. We've all survived the ordeal intact physically, though I suspect each of my companions will suffer nightmares, as I surely will for years to come. Camp, what little of it hasn't been ripped to pieces by the horses' panic and

the intensity of the storm, has been packed away. We didn't see the giant beast's departure, but neither it nor its foe were anywhere to be seen; the only evidence that the events of last night had actually taken place was to be found in the land itself.

It's entirely possible we're doing this to reassure ourselves that it was no hallucination, possibly out of misplaced curiosity, we've agreed to ride out to where the iron beast fought hoping to find... I can not say, conformation that we aren't mad and that what we saw actually happened, or do we seek conformation that things that things such as these do not, and I hope to God above cannot, exist? God help me I don't know which will be worse. If giants such as these inhabit the west in great numbers, then perhaps it is in our best interests that we remain east of these plains lest we incur their wrath.

This raises the obvious and inevitable question, which Bell voiced to Yuri and myself when he asked, and I quote, "Why haven't we heard of these beasts before?" I have an idea on that, but right now I must put my pen aside till after we've inspected the battlefield. Perhaps such things are common out here, but due to their unusual nature and the fact nothing that comes close to this happens anywhere else causes everyone who's witnessed such events to remain silent, lest they be considered mad.

It could also be that events such as these provide the inspirations for dime novels and the origins of hearsay and legend the world over. Maybe these things truly aren't as uncommon as I believe them to be. It could be that events such as we've witnessed lay at the heart of old stories of pagan deities, giants, dragons, and other such creatures of myth.

Should I feel more, or less, reassured by this thought?

My thoughts will remain on this question while we ride out to inspect where we think the two giants fought. God have mercy on your poor foolish servants, for that will be the only way we shall survive if we somehow encounter either of these hellish beasts.

After inspecting the site of the battle, we've collectively decided that the great rents in the ground; some of these like the dents a man's boot would make in the ground on a scale, others remind me more of what happens when a heavy log or other massive weight impacts. The former having a deeper impression at one place, where the majority of the weight settles. The other being a more evenly deep impression where any variations in depth would be explained away by the



object that fell being less dense in those places. Strange how observations made when you're a child come back later in life.

Though in this instance I'm grateful for the recollection as I'm not much at tracking or surviving outside of civilization, and neither of my companions are capable of tracking outside of keeping what they're after in their line of sight. Granted this is something of a handicap, but facts being what they are it isn't terribly difficult to spot or follow a herd of Buffalo. I realize I'm losing focus and wandering off track, but to be frank I'm unsure what to record beyond it looking like a giant had tumbled and flailed about, making great dents and tears in the prairie grasses. I wander about, book held in the crook of my left arm and wandering about the site aimlessly till I hear Bell's shouts.

He's found an Indian woman in a mass of flattened and bloodied grasses. On approaching her I at first think she is merely sleeping then realize, once I see how sharp an angle her neck is bent, that she's dead. She appeared quite young; she couldn't have been older than her early twenties by my guess, and in the way of most Indian women quite lovely. Strange that she would be here, stranger still that if she had died as a result of the giants duel that she is even recognizable rather than being a great and bloody smear across the earth. We cannot leave her like this, Yuri became quite insistent on this; even going so far as to threaten to fire on us if we do not give her as decent a burial as possible.

Thankfully there's plenty of rents and loose soil about to cover her over with a mound of earth, hopefully deep enough to prevent the local scavengers from getting at the body. Before we covered her over each of us left her a token to take with her into the hereafter. It saddened Yuri we cannot find her family, but given the impracticalities and impossibility of this we've agreed this is the best that can be done for her.

We arranged her in one of the larger rips in the soil so that she would appear, if you didn't look too closely, that she was sleeping. After puzzling at the snapped and broken jewelry that had fallen away from her in the process of relocating the body we did what we gathered

as much of it as we could then left it in a pile at the center of her chest, covered over with her hands.

Yuri placed his short brimmed cap and lain it over her face.

Bell added his tobacco pouch to the pile of broken jewelry.

I wracked my mind for something to add before finally recalling something that I had heard was supposedly a prayer from tribes that lived in these parts. I don't know if this is true, or if it came from her people if it is, but even though its only a fragment, I find it fitting so leave a folded note between the fingers of her left hand.

"Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes,

So that when life fades as the fading sunset,  
May my spirit come to you without shame."

After we did these things and Yuri said a prayer on her behalf we covered her over with dirt. At first we simply shoved, with the sides of our feet, the raised up portions of dirt around the body. When this dirt was exhausted, we took off our shirts, begin filling them with dirt, and dumping these bundles over where the mound was taking shape until we felt that she was properly covered. Farewell lady of the plains. I do not know who you were or if there was any connection between you and what we saw last night, but I am sorry that you died as young as you did.

*As a personal request I would like to investigate Eugene Smith's apparent connection with Kobayashi Saburo, otherwise known as Doctor Zeus. I feel that it isn't coincidence that this man was mixed up with Saburo. Unfortunately this journal ends August of 1884 and, even though I feel more records exist, I have been blocked at every turn by Eugene's living relatives. Without further resources I fear we may lose out here.*

*Respectfully*

*Jason Frost,*

*Investigator 3rd class*

*Report Filed August 4th 1955*

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