

ISSUE 5

# GATEHOUSE GAZETTE

MAR '09



EXTRAORDINARY VOYAGES

# Contents

## Editorial

**T**hank you, dear reader, for having downloaded our fifth issue. Last month we commemorated the birthday of Jules Verne and this month we happily continue our celebration by embracing the very genesis of steampunk: the *voyages extraordinaires* which have inspired so many authors and artists out there who continue the steampunk tradition.

This edition is not quite as packed as our previous holiday issue, but we feature plenty of interest still. Read an interview with the extraordinary fashion designer Miss Vecona and learn more about the adventure look from Miss Hilde Heyvaert's "The Steampunk Wardrobe" column. She also tells you just how to be a good villain, that is, in a review of the book that does. So if you are scheming any evildoing some time soon, be sure not to miss out on it!

In London, there will be plenty of opportunity for both evil and steampunk the next two months, for March sees the latest edition of the *Vampyre Villains vs. Steampunk Slayers* event while in April, Abney Park comes over to Albion for two concerts!



Nick Ottens

Speaking of vampires, we welcome Miss Ella Kremper to the group of contributors this issue as she presents her first review, of Hammer Film's 1958 *Dracula*. And she is not the only new writer: from Mr Marcius Rauchfuß we learn that in the city of Munich, there is lots for the steampunk enthusiast to enjoy.

We feature two more excellent reviews by Mr Trubetskoy, as well as the third and final part in Mr Piecraft's "History of Dieselpunk". Read how dieselpunk and punk relate in this concluding installment. And finally, Mr Craig Daniel writes his column again, this time on liquors befitting pulp-style romance and adventure.

We are always curious to learn what our readers have to say. Know that there is a forum out there ([www.ottens.co.uk/lounge](http://www.ottens.co.uk/lounge)) where you can leave your opinions about our periodical. Plus, we invite you to send in your thoughts for publication. So this issue, you find for example Mr William Landis' view about the steampunk genre. Beg to differ? Let us know!

Happy reading! ■

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# No gears please

Interview | Vecona



Hilde Heyvaert

**M**any steampunks will know of the German fashion designer Vecona, whose innovative designs have amazed and delighted those that have seen them on her website or at her catwalk shows—which are fabulous events on their own! She gracefully agreed to let us interview her after her sublime fashion show at Gala Nocturna 2009 in Belgium.

*Your creations are a truly original blend of history, Gothic and steampunk. What inspires you to come to such wonderful clothing and accessories?*

My interest started with the Goth scene, but since it's only black and gowns you have to find new horizons and challenges when you grow older. As you have to invent something new all the time, you have to get inspiration everywhere you can. It's cool to bring something totally new into a scene that used to wear black or maybe pink or bright colours for the girls. Now we have earth tones to mix with all of that. I do try to avoid the clichés. For example I totally hate goggles and I think there's too much going on with these gears. There's so much more elements to steampunk that you could use and combine with different styles.

Also there's the stories behind steampunk, like the Jules Verne stories in the deep sea. I totally adore the deep sea, and so I

created the octopus set and then I went on to the '30s and '40s sailor girl dress, which I needed for a swing party. After that came a *Titanic* party so I made a 1900s dress and everything remained within that sea theme. Once you get started, it's so easy to go on with something different in the same theme. I started out having one piece, and before I knew it the whole collection was already there.



*You mentioned Jules Verne; is the adventurism the part of steampunk that appeals to you most?*

To be honest, a year ago I didn't even know there was something like steampunk.

I read the Jules Verne books when I was nine years old. I had these rough brown-greyish East-German paperback books and I was so totally into them because, especially when you're younger, it's so easy to understand and imagine how this world could look like. And now that I'm older I suddenly came to realise that there's a whole scene around them! That's awesome! But I don't want to be restricted to this scene, I take elements out of different drawers and eras and mix selective parts together while I try to meld it together into something new. Maybe someday we'll have another scene that has a different name but the same elements as this one. Who knows?

*You worked with artists like Emily Autumn and Sopor Aeternus. If you could choose one artist, dead or alive, to work with, who would it be? It would definitely be Tim Burton. I would love to make the costumes for a Tim Burton movie. I'm convinced he doesn't need my stuff because the movies and garments are already perfect, even when it's 3D animation. But it would be a great challenge for me. That's the level I want to reach.*

*If you could choose one project, and you could dress Tim Burton's entire cast, what would you like to do?*

I know *Alice in Wonderland* is already his next film, but that would be great! Imagine that! I already saw the picture of Johnny Depp of the Mad Hatter and oh wow, imagine it would be me who made that outfit!

*Do you feel that the current media attention that steampunk is receiving is directly relevant to you, or to the scene in Germany?*

I must convince that scenes and common trends aren't relevant for me, but I'm always surprised that somehow everybody is in the stream. I'm there too. So when I look into a fashion magazine, let's say *Vogue*, I see trends like the '20s and I'm thinking "oh my God, I'm into the twenties, wow, how did they know that?" And with steampunk it's exactly the same, as I think it will be the next trend. I think that maybe we have this certain feeling of what will be next, because you cannot be stuck in one



thing as that would be boring in time. You'll look at a different era and find something that inspires you there.

This will continue happening, I cannot deny I'm in the flow, but it's not relevant to me because I do what I do and I would do it anyway, regardless of the scene or its popularity.

*Inquiring gentlemen want to know: can they expect more steampunk pieces from you in the near future?*

There will definitely be a collection. It's all still very hush hush at the moment. But this year there will be something for men and women and it has to do with the ocean.

*Is there any other coolness that you can give us a sneak peek at?*

Hah who knows! I don't even know what I do next week! ■

For more, visit the designer's website at [vecona.de](http://vecona.de). Photographs courtesy of the author and *Viona-Art*, [viona-art.com](http://viona-art.com).

# Steam & slayers

## Article | Local Steampunk



Nick Ottens

This spring in London, "deadly nightstalkers, elegant children of the night and Lords and Ladies of the undead step out with sartorial scholars, scientists and inventors, cosmopolitan ladies of action and intrigue, gentleman adventurers, gunslingers and airship pilots," for

one peculiar outing called *Vampyre Villains vs. Steampunk Slayers*. We ask the main organizer of this event, Mr Darren Jack Powell, just what all the fuss is about and tell you what more to expect in The Big Smoke.

"It occurred to me," says Mr Powell, "to run an atypical vampire

party where the event is a 'competitive costume showdown' between the vampire enthusiasts and the steampunks both of whom have a love of elegant and interesting clothing and a penchant for dressing well for parties and events." While we would not presume to speak for aficionados



of blood and horror, we can second the latter part of the statement, that is to say, steampunk enthusiasts very much enjoy a night out in a glamorous outfit. Besides, what good is that ray gun when there are no undead creatures around to neutralize?

The next gathering will take place this March “and will also have some little decadent distraction.” For the last there was a catwalk show of lingerie and fantasy outfits and Mr Powell is hoping to “track down a steampunk burlesque performance or floor show,” for the upcoming gala.

*Vampyre Villains* is not the only thing happening in London these days. You might already be familiar with *White Mischief* (“friendly evenings of suitable entertainments,” says Mr Powell) whose last show was on New

Year’s Eve this year and saw bullfighters, flamenco dancers, Mexican luchadors, Cuban heels and Tropicana girls. (This may be wistful thinking on our part, but such a Las Vegas-esque performance seems much more befitting dieselpunk, wouldn’t you say?)

Last year also saw the Telectroscope and its meet-ups, a dinosaur-hunting pick nick organized through *Brass Goggles* and according to Mr Powell, “steampunks can now be seen at the Whitby Goth Weekend and I daresay they will be seen at the annual London Cemetery Open Days.” And on top of that, steampunk band Abney Park will play in London on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of next April! “This will be good for the momentum of the scene,” says Mr Powell, “as I hope the London date will become something of a

festival.” He foresees more events and more enthusiasts in the future: “more fun for everybody that wants to get involved. It may possibly be ‘the next big thing!’”

So if you are thinking about visiting the Capital of the Empire any time soon—and perhaps we ought to work to make it the Capital of Steampunk too?—either this month or the last weekend of April is the time to go and, in the latter case, Whitby the place to be. Onto a great steampunk city trip, we say! ■

“Steampunk  
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thing.”

# Through Hell

## Review | *Iron Storm*

With the gaming marketplace dominated by a glut of World War II-themed shooters, it is always refreshing to see titles experiment with depictions of obscure or allohistorical conflicts. While *Iron Storm*, created by defunct French developer 4x Studio and released in 2002, takes the First World War as its starting point, it borrows and combines elements from the long history of twentieth century warfare to create a darkly surreal

experience that should surely appeal to particularly the dieselpunk enthusiast.

Rather appropriately, *Iron Storm* is set in an odd little history that would warm the heart of a 1920s pulp novelist. In the closing months of 1918, the war is unexpectedly reinvigorated by a mad Russian general named Baron Nikolai Aleksandrovich Ugenberg, a figure loosely based on the history figure of White Russian general and Mongolian Khan Baron

Fyodor Romanovich von Ungern-Sternberg. After crushing the Bolshevik Revolution, Ugenberg ushers in the formation of a Buddhist “Russo-Mongolian Empire,” whose first act is a war of conquest against Europe. By 1964, fifty years after the start of the war, both the Russo-Mongolians and the armies of the United States of Western Europe (USWE) are deadlocked in a vast trench network carved through the middle of Germany, with both sides



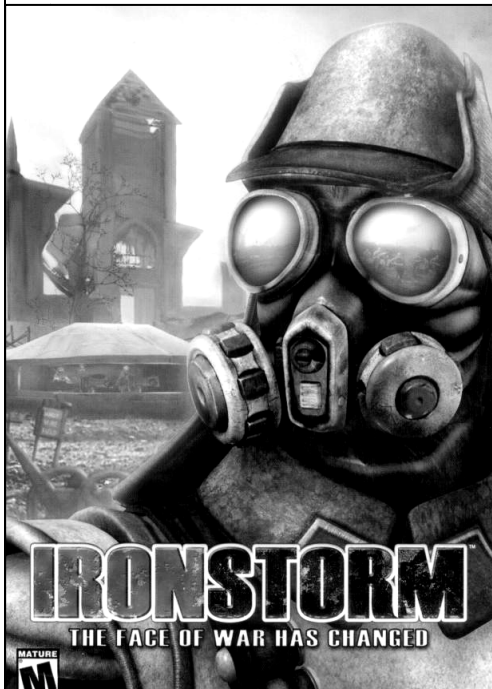
Trubetskoy

quoting their armies and industries on the stock market to fund the war effort.

The player is thrust into this maelstrom as Lieutenant James Anderson, a USWE veteran tasked with infiltrating the Russo-Mongolian lines and destroying a key weapons research center close to the front lines. Overall, the gameplay is fairly standard for a shooter. The player is given the basic FPS arsenal to play with, and most of the levels are rather linear. Still, the Western Front is no cakewalk. The trenches and towns of Germany are swarming with snipers and rocket launchers, so stealth and careful aiming are a must. Brainpower is also a necessity, for most levels have areas that can only be passed through careful exploration and clever use of the environment.

Perhaps the most enthralling aspect of *Iron Storm* is the setting. Despite the dated graphics, the world of 1964 comes to life as a grim mélange of industrial warfare through the decades. From the First World War, the trench, the concrete bunker, the poison gas grenade, and the cumbersome, infantry-slaughtering tank all make an appearance. In what must be a first for a video game, allusions are made to the Russian Civil War, particularly with the names and uniforms of the Russo-Mongolian army and the great armored trains of that conflict. World War II provides the styling for the machinery of the war, as well as such forgotten ideas as the bomb-armed "mine dog" unsuccessfully used by the Soviets against German tanks. Finally, *Iron Storm* has an odd postcolonial glaze, with the common use of commandos and

small-squad tactics, the presence of beetle-like helicopter gunships forever buzzing just out of reach and, rather surprisingly, the mass media. In the game, the player gathers most of his information by accessing "DRTs," battlefield television and radar sets that parrot out a barrage of advertisements for advanced weapons systems thinly disguised as "war journalism."



With the memories of all these past conflicts in its matrix, *Iron Storm* is a rather grim game. The world of 1964 is a dying one, filled with tarnished steel, crumbling concrete, rotten wood, mud, and the dead. Everything built before the war has either been destroyed or abandoned, and everything new is big, heavy, and functional. (Perhaps the best of example of this can be found in the final level of the game, set in a Reichstag that has been converted into an armory, a barracks, and Buddhist shrine.)

The weapons are great, heavy engines of death that make loud, metallic thuds when fired. Along with the decaying world, the war between the two great empires has become a cynical, brutal thing. Neither side no longer has any qualms with using infantry-splattering rocket launchers in regular combat. Neither side has any issues with disposing of POWs with battlefield executions or mutilating torture. However, this violence is not of the typical gratuitous "blood and guts" videogame violence done solely for the purpose of voyeurism. Rather, by showing the viler aspects of war without resorting to dramatics or irony, it gives the player a sense of just how horrible the endless war actually is.

Of course, no game is without its flaws, and *Iron Storm* is no exception. While the game runs solidly on current computers when properly patched, most of the graphics, particularly the character models, unfortunately show their age. Despite input from battlefield intelligence and your commanding officer, mission directives are often unclear, leaving the player to stumble around through trial and error. While the game has a stealth system, its effectiveness is often hit-or-miss, with enemies being either acutely sensitive to or blithely ignorant of your presence. Finally, the game has a rushed, vague resolution, that does not really provide anything in the way of closure.

Still, despite these flaws, *Iron Storm* is a game worth checking out, if only as a reminder that, while this is not the best of all possible worlds, it could have been much, much worse. ■

# The Adventurer



## Column | The Steampunk Wardrobe

Hilde Heyvaert

The adventurer is crucial to steampunk, for he explores the boundaries of empires and brings back new and exiting things from his journeys into the previously unknown. Adventurers are brave, daring and most importantly, looking the part, no matter where they go—be they the brave explorers of lost civilizations in deep jungles or underneath the mighty oceans, the gallant aviators that soar the skies, or anything in between.

There is the servant of the Empire, in his neat uniform coat and pith helmet, wearing his insignias with pride. Some wear goggles to protect their eyes, others prefer a monocle as a sign of elevated rank. If you wish to get



authentic spats, *eBay* and *Etsy* are good places to look. Other spats are easy to make or have made with the many tutorials and patterns circulating the web and sewing supply stores.

As far as headwear is concerned the pith helmet is not only popular with the imperialist, it is in fact a bit of a symbol for many adventurers of all ilk. Thus the exploring aristocrat will happily exchange his or her normal headwear for a pith helmet of choice and the more practically dressed adventurer will wear it because well, it looks good and protects your head against the insidious heat at the same time.

For those who have no desire to wear uniforms there are the beige and khakis of exploration garb. You can often find wonderful pieces for an outfit like that in stores specialising in outdoors activities or traveling. And even army supply stores tend to carry this sort of garment.

The actual wardrobe varies from very casual to very chique. Some favour the so-called safari garb, others go for comfortable skirts or cargo trousers or shorts. Yet others prefer to look as adventurously dressed aristocrats, wealthy ladies and gentlemen leading the expedition they have funded. Outfits range from historically accurate to contemporary with elements that could be real or made up. Heck if

you want you can even look like a steamed-up Indiana Jones, if that's what rocks your boat!

Footwear also ranges from different kinds of styles but consists of comfortable yet sturdy and matching boots, often combined with spats. A handy bag, notebook with pen, and often belts to hang things from provide the finishing touches of this outfit. After all, reaching into your belt bag for your compass or being able to draw your gun from that hip holster makes life so much easier (not to mention the rising survival chances you get through easy access of essentials). Equipment-wise many more modern adventurers add a camera of some sort to their tools of the trade.

The adventurer look is one of the easiest types of steampunk to shop for. As mentioned above, traveling garb in the appropriate colours is easily purchased from speciality shops. Other parts and accessories can be gotten at a variety of shops, or made via various DIY techniques like the customising for toy guns for the adventurer's weaponry. Also many stores that sell LARP supplies, as well as high street shops and thrift stores are a veritable treasure trove for the adventurer's accessories. ■

Photograph courtesy of 'Captain Robert Brown' of Abney Park, [abneypark.com](http://abneypark.com).

# Diesel's punk

## Article | The History of Dieselpunk, Part 3



*Piecraft*

Punk is not a synonym for era; rather the era is defined by the prevalent technology ever-present in the context of a science fiction world. In actuality there is confusion in regards to the differentiation largely of a literary (prevalent in cinema, games and literature) understanding of pulp fiction, alternative history as well as modern steampunk with the genre of dieselpunk. It must be understood that dieselpunk has borrowed and is influenced by elements from all three—which creates the entity that is dieselpunk as understood today.

From steampunk it becomes inspired by the derivative mind-set originally outlined by the amoeba that is cyberpunk of an anti-hero characterization within a troubled world that is most often reflected through the dystopian or at times abstract utopian values of an advanced technocratic world. This idea although a brief glimpse of all the facets to which cyberpunk as well as its many counterparts divulge on, make up the integrity of its science fiction.

Pulp literature seemingly comparable, focuses on the early 1930s tradition of promoting the iconic times with adventures experienced through the eyes of pulp heroes: characters who represented the prominent ideals of courage, a “macho” or strong-willed and fearless masculine personality (even inherent among

feminine pulp heroes) and daring qualities that people dreamt of in their nation's heroes.

Therefore we observe that dieselpunk is a constituent of both steampunk and the pulp style of literature and can be considered another counter-part of the literary “-punk” derivative from cyberpunk.

Dieselpunk combines the anti-hero entity that is modified within steampunk's “Great White Colonial Explorer” (i.e. Allan Quatermain)

“Dieselpunk is a constituent of both steampunk and pulp.”

archetype or “Daring Adventurer” (i.e. Doc Savage)—which were originally derived from cyberpunk heroes—back to the “Misaligned Urban Detective” (Sam Spade), “Military Hero” (Biggles), “Adventurer” (Indiana Jones) or “Outcast” (Mad Max), who posses a stronger hold on moral values and works towards the ultimate good of his people, even though he is plagued by the darkened atmosphere of his time. There is also a dash of alternate history; not only in regards to the outcomes of

the Depression and World War II, but throughout the period dieselpunk is inspired by, being the 1930s and onwards.

Altogether dieselpunk should no longer be understood as simply a spin-off from either of these earlier literary genres. Instead it could be argued that each of these genres reside under an umbrella that incorporates or influences all styles from each, sometimes from one, which is where the confusion spurns from.

Perhaps it is best to accept that the “-punk” suffix added to these literary genres developed not out of the same sense as the punk musical scene, but out of the actual definition of the term. Punk referred to a label given to antagonize anyone who was seen as rebellious or anti-establishment; mostly designated to the younger generation, basically one who would go against the grain of society. This “punk” attitude was further enhanced with cyberpunk in an all too bleak view of the 1980s drowned in the Digital Age and mass consumerism, but it was later carried into the extraordinary adventures and inventions found in a curious age before the turn-of-the-century. An age that reveled in the world of steampunk, with high hopes about industry and progress, bringing about exciting technology but also social change. Thus the daring adventurers and anti-social inventors of this time could be



seen as the "punks" of their period, rejecting the status quo of the time to challenge and seek their true destinies. We observe that this was further enhanced by the inclusion of the urban, gritty and raw characters found in the 1930s, demonstrated through *film noir* and pulp literature.

The hero, whether one bearing an optimistic or pessimistic perspective, will always encounter the side effects of the society they live in—we most commonly find this to be true with works of fiction

taking place during World War II—caught up in sometimes despairing circumstances.

Therefore the understanding of the term dieselpunk refers to a form of literary science fiction that takes place during a time-span in which petroleum fuels machines while the atomic and combustibles are at its high-point; just as steam locomotives and steam- and gas-engineered machines are quintessential to steampunk. It is an ambiguous and yet general aspect of the neologism that

comprises the "punk" attitude or element of the strange, the "otherness" in juxtaposition to the type of society or world in which the adventure and stories take place.

Dieselpunk technology exudes an aim to express the energetic, dynamic, and violent quality of contemporary life, especially as embodied in the motion and force of modern machinery. And therefore one can see a darker side to this romanticism that has dropped since the previous era. ■

# Open the coffin

Review | *Dracula*



Ella Kremper

The horror film as a genre has changed over the decades. Not evolved, as that would suggest improvements in the genre, putting technology aside for a moment. On the other hand, I am not going to stand on my blood-stained altar and wave a similarly-adorned implement of pointy proportions and chant devilish on how horror was better in the old days. This is not entirely true.

For a start, you had Hammer Film Productions.

Now, Hammer films were not bad by any stretch of the word. Before I get to the review, I must say first and foremost that I love Hammer films, however, if there was a progenitor of the bad horror film sequel (and eventual franchise), the bony finger of the Grim Reaper is pointing right now at the ghoulish poison ivy-accosted

front door of the House of Hammer.

For historical reference, Hammer Film Productions is a British film company founded in 1934. It is from this company where the descriptor "Hammer horror" can be sourced, for their fame comes from the low-budget but lavish productions of Gothic horror tales between the 1950s and '70s. Taking on board the classic stories of *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, the *Mummy* and more, Hammer became well-known for their thrilling plots (often cut down versions of the original material), period sets and the rather generous helpings of blood and gore dolloped about the place. Many celebrated actors of the period were regulars on a Hammer film set, from Peter Cushing to Oliver Reed and most

famously, Christopher Lee.

Hammer also delved into science fiction, taking on board the adventures of Quatermass, as well as mystery with *The Hound of the Baskervilles* making an appearance. However, it was their horror films that are most remembered, for being notable in their franchises, and possibly for the Freudian slip into "hammy horror".

Moving from the haunted House of Hammer, we can enter the crypt, push open the coffin and come face to face with one of Hammer's most famous characters: Count *Dracula*, in his first eponymous Hammer film out of nine (renamed *Horror of Dracula* in the United States due to confusion with the Bela Lugosi *Dracula* that was still showing). The film was released in Britain in 1958 and originally given an X-rating by the

BBFC, due to its rather nasty content, for the time, that is. Directed by Terence Fisher, who had scored a big hit with the previous Hammer film *The Curse of Frankenstein*, it also starred Hammer stalwarts Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee as Dr Van Helsing and Count Dracula respectively.

The period is Victorian, and begins as Jonathan Harker (John Van Eyssen) arrives at Castle Dracula in the evening with the purpose of taking up the post of castle librarian. Initially greeted by a beautiful but strange lady (Valerie Gaunt) who pleads with him to help her, he finally meets the mysterious host himself, Count Dracula (Christopher Lee), who warns Harker of his absence past sunset, to the point of locking the hapless librarian into his provided chambers. In fact, Harker is a vampire hunter who intends to kill Dracula as soon as the moment is right, but falls victim to the charms of the beautiful woman he met previously—as well as her teeth.

This leads to the involvement of Dr Van Helsing (Peter Cushing), an acquaintance of Harker's who travels to Castle Dracula in search of his lost friend, only to find the castle empty, Harker's room a mess, and a photograph of Harker's fiancée, Lucy Holmwood, torn out of its frame. Down in the crypt, Van Helsing discovers that Harker has been turned into a vampire, and is forced to hammer a stake into his friend.

In the other location that is not Castle Dracula, the Holmwood household appears to be worried about an anaemic illness that Lucy Holmwood (Carol Marsh) has picked up, initially assumed to be

due to her missing her fiancé. Arthur (Michael Gough), Lucy's brother, does not take too kindly to the news that Harker has died, but his wife, Mina (Melissa Stribling), decides to get a second opinion from Van Helsing on Lucy's condition, who advises garlic flowers and to close the windows. However, Lucy objects to this and begs the maid to remove the flowers and open a window, for she feels choked—allowing a strange, tall dark stranger to arrive in the night and make his move...

The plot is a loose interpretation of the Bram Stoker novel, with many characters omitted and others condensed into each other (Jonathan Harker is engaged to Lucy Holmwood; Arthur Holmwood is Lucy's brother and is married to... Mina. *Dracula* aficionados, do not wince). Locations are also removed, with none of the plot apparently occurring in England and travel generally occurs between two

locales that can be easily reached by horse carriage. However, the sets and costumes are wonderfully descriptive of the period, with Peter Cushing clearly having fun working a recording phonograph (making a small joke at the expense of Van Helsing's butler with it), as well as an old-fashioned blood transfusion machine.

In my opinion, for those interested in classic horror, *Dracula* is a film that must be on the list to see, being one of Hammer's seminal releases, full of adventure, a plot that does not drag and also for bringing to life a portrayal of a malevolent character that Christopher Lee will always be associated with.

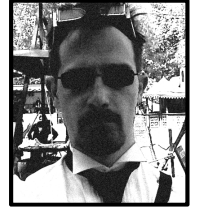
So, lock up your doors and windows, spray the windowpanes with garlic and wield those crucifixes and stakes, there is heaving bosoms, blood and strangely-behaving townsfolk galore in Castle Dracula tonight, if you care to join them—forever. ■



The original British quad poster from 1958.

# Munich

## Article | Local Steampunk



Marcius Rauchfuß

Although the steampunk density in Munich is rather low, the capital city of Bavaria, Germany offers a remarkable number of places a steampunk enthusiast can enjoy.

The Deutsches Museum along the banks of the Isar river, the world's largest museum of technology and science, should be first on the visitor's list. The museum was originally conceived in 1903 and construction began in 1906. The building as it stands today is a typical example of turn-of-the-century German classicist architecture. Exhibits cover everything from mining to aviation, from meteorology to nuclear physics. Of special interest to steampunk enthusiasts is the steam power section with several working models of steam engines and steam turbines on display.

Dieselpunks and steampunks alike will find rejoice in the aviation exhibit. The exposition covers everything from early gliders and motor-powered planes to Great War *Doppeldeckers* and models of zeppelins. Also on display is the much beloved Junkers Ju 25 "Tante Ju" as well as early fighter craft of the Nazi era. Some of the planes are supposedly still in operational conditions.

All in all one could spend a whole weekend strolling through the museum, admiring the various collections and participating in several guided tours—but after a



few hours the visitor might care for a refreshment. We recommend the Victorian House.

A fifteen- to twenty-minute walk from the museum, the Victorian House offers a wide range of English tea culture in authentic atmosphere. The establishment also maintains an online home worth checking out: those not planning on traveling to Munich any time soon must turn to [victorianhouse.de](http://victorianhouse.de) for a glimpse of this charming canteen; those who will find themselves in town are recommended the clotted cream!

For a pick nick there is the Englischer Garten, which can be accessed via various subway stations (among them U3 and U6 exit Universität) and bus and tram lines. Except for weekends the

Englischer Garten is remarkably quiet and there is ample space for even a crowded pick nick. The Monopteros, a giant gazebo found just a few hundred meters from the University entrance on top of a small hill, has a large area of grass at its foot and serves as a particularly picturesque setting for an outdoor lunch.

While in the general university area, you may want to check out the antique and vintage fashion stores which are found nearby in the grid between Schellingstrasse and Hohenzollernstrasse and (east to west) Ludwigstrasse to Augustenstrasse. Of special notice is Zsa Zsa (Schellingstrasse 68), a small but well stocked vintage fashion store which is a household name in south Germany's old-timer

community. There are, of course, many others, including Memory's in the Adalbertstrasse and quite a number of high-end antique stores, some of which specialize in English furniture and china. So, if you have the money to spend, here you can spend it in style!

Just a short stroll from the university along the Barerstrasse in the direction of the city center are the Pinakotheken, which are host to some of the finest collections of art in the world. Beware the "guards" however. In every room there is at least one person in official garb keeping watch lest anyone dare touch the artworks. Some of these are ill-tempered ne'er-do-wells lurking for hapless tourist and if you do not speak German, they will only talk louder. The art is very much worth your time, however.

From the "Golden Age of Bavaria" if you want to call it thus, there are a surprising number of historical buildings worth a visit.



The Odeonsplatz. Photograph courtesy of 'absche' of lightBOX-photography.de.

Check out the Odeonsplatz, the Königsplatz, Schloss Nymphenburg, Karolinenplatz, the Victory Arch about fifty paces from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität as well as the university main building. Most of these are classicist, some are baroque or even older than that.

If after an extended visit, you find yourself tired of Munich, know that there are regular trains running from Munich Central Station to cities as Prague and Vienna, as well Rome, Milan and Venice. Take the night train and wake up in a different country by morning! ■

## VOYAGE TO THE STARS



# Genre in haze

## Article | What's Biopunk?



Nick Ottens

It seems uncertain who first coined the phrase “biopunk,” but presumably the term was invented after steampunk had been established as a genre; at least, it was not until steampunk had entered mainstream that biopunk emerged. Like steampunk, this proposed literary genre finds its origins in cyberpunk fiction. It replaces the information technology of cybernetics with the synthetic biology of genetic engineering, but maintains most of the other elements which define the genre. Which begs the question: should biopunk be regarded a genre separate from cyberpunk?

According to Lawrence Person, leading cyberpunk theorist, the genre depicts a future “where daily life [is] impacted by rapid technological change, an ubiquitous datasphere of computerized information, and invasive modification of the human body.” Cyberpunk fiction typically features marginalized, alienated loners who live on the edge of that society, hence the reference to punk subculture, echoing the atmosphere of *film noir* and inspired by hard-boiled detective novels. The genre’s vision of a troubled future represents the antithesis of utopian science fiction, evident from its post-industrial dystopian setting characterized by extraordinary cultural ferment and the

application of technology in ways never anticipated by its creators.

Cyberpunk literature is (or was, considering the less dystopian perceptions of postcyberpunk) significant, because it represented contemporary concerns about the shortcomings of urban society, warning against government corruption and corporate greed, the dangers of pervasive surveillance technology, and alienation and indifference. Where cyberpunk is skeptical about progress, postcyberpunk tends to focus on its upsides rather. Biopunk, however, changes little to the basic premise of cyberpunk, maintaining its dystopian overtones while merely replacing cybernetics with biotechnology.

Rather than depicting the marginalized drifters of a society grown indifferent by a rapid evolution of information technology, biopunk stories portray the underground side of a biotechnological revolution. Its rebels may be the products of human experimentation, their struggles set against the backdrop of totalitarian governments or megacorporations which abuse biotechnologoy as a means of social control or profiteering.

An author typically hailed as having defined the biopunk genre is Paul Di Filippo, whose collection of short stories published as *Ribofunk* (“ribo” referring to the full name of RNA; ribonucleic acid)

is more reminiscent of detective pulp than cyberpunk. Movies like the 1997 science fiction drama *Gattaca*, which depicts selective breeding through preimplantation genetic diagnosis, as well as the 2006 film adaption of *V for Vendetta*, which features a protagonist with superhuman traits fighting an oppressive fascist regime, are considered biopunk, in spite of their departure from other classic cyberpunk (and, in the case of *V for Vendetta*, Alan Moore’s original, political) themes.

Perhaps the most successful biopunk installment to date is the 2007 video game *BioShock*, set amidst the chaos of what was supposed to be an underwater utopia, now infested with the products of biotechnological abuse. *BioShock*, however, takes place in 1960, and while obviously warning against the dangers of genetic engineering, its setting and technology are more diesel- than biopunk. Indeed, it seems that most, if not all, works of biopunk fiction struggle with the genre to which they ought to adhere: either they can be considered cyberpunk, differing only in terms of technology, or they could be labeled dieselpunk instead, focusing on the ill effects of genetic engineering in the vain of Nazi human experimentation as depicted in a game as *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* (2001).

If the bulk of biopunk fiction



differs little from cyberpunk, it might better be considered a continuation of that latter genre, inspired by postcyberpunk, rather than a new genre in its own right. Those few biopunk installments not particularly influenced by cyberpunk, as Paul Di Filippo's *Ribofunk* as well as *BioShock*, incorporate neo-noir elements and share themes with Adventure Pulp instead; they may better be labeled dieselpunk therefore.

However, if we should not regard biopunk a separate genre because it differs from cyberpunk only in terms of technology, we must consider whether steam- and dieselpunk are separate genres still. Unlike biopunk, however, these two genres have less in

common with cyberpunk and greater distinctive characteristics of their own. Steampunk in particular shares little with cyberpunk at all, changing the setting from the future to the past, the technology from modern to old, and the protagonists from outcasts to elite. Steampunk is generally more optimistic, romanticizing the past and averse not to modern technology itself, but to the lack of appreciation for it. Dieselpunk may thematically be more similar to cyberpunk and differs not in its perception of contemporary society but its lack thereof rather. Dieselpunk is strictly a literary genre, more dystopian than steampunk and influenced by mid-century pulp rather than nine-

teenth century scientific romance, but it implies no critique of modern-day sensibilities and developments.

Biopunk changes little to the basic premise of cyberpunk, depicting rapid technological change and invasive modification of the human body, albeit not by cybernetics but biotechnology. Influenced by the less dystopian outlook of postcyberpunk fiction, biopunk represents contemporary concerns about the shortcomings of modern society, warning against government and corporate corruption and the lack of control over skepticism about the increasing pervasiveness of genetic engineering and the resurgence of eugenics. ■

# Empire dreams

## Opinion | The Spirit of Steampunk



William Landis

During my short time within the steampunk community I have come to recognize the values that this subculture espouses. I have come to understand that it is not simply awesome attire, great gadgets and strange people that make up the genre. There is a spirit in it that encourages ingenuity and curiosity that is not found in our modern times. In a world where the ability to wonder is seen as a mental illness and media seem to brainwash the masses into a state of conformity steampunk stands out.

While it may appear to be only fun and games it is much more than that. It is a renaissance, a salute to the glory of the British Empire. The Empire had a spirit of exploration, fearlessness, and wonder about it. There was a yearning for knowledge of strange people and places; a yearning to understand the world.

Many technological advancements allowed for the expansion of the British Empire such as the steam

engine, which made exploration and colonization possible. There were many scientific discoveries that changed the world as we know it. Yes there was a spirit in the Empire that influenced the world as we know it today. But sadly in today's world men and women appear to be content with life in its present form. They accept everything around them not daring to question society or challenge its dogmas.

But behold come the people of steampunk. While steampunk may appear to be just fun and games it is much more than that. It is the spirit of the British Empire manifesting itself in the next generation. People in this subculture are not just actors. We shall be the next David Livingstone, Charles Darwin, Olaudah Equiano, or James Watts. Steampunk is not just playing dress-up; it is a renaissance of adventure, ingenuity, curiosity, and everything else that makes the world great. ■

# Exotic elixirs

## Column | The Liquor Cabinet



Craig B. Daniel

One of the establishments that found itself forced out of business when the United States banned the sale of intoxicating liquors was a bar in San Francisco named the "Bank Exchange," which was apparently a favorite among aviators during the First World War. Locally, they were known for their pisco punch recipe, first mixed in 1893 by using an exotic foreign liquor. When the bar died, so did the drink—but the recipe is still out there, and if you are willing to acquire a couple special ingredients for it you could still make some for your next gathering of dieselpunk adventurers.

The first thing you will need is gum syrup. In modern mixology this is just a name for a very strong sugar solution, but originally it also contained gum arabic. To make it, dissolve one pound of powdered food-grade gum arabic in a pint of water. (This will take a day.) Then, combine a quart of water and four pounds of cane sugar in a pot and boil until the temperature of the solution reaches 220 degrees Fahrenheit (105 degrees Celsius). Add the gum arabic solution and let the mixture cool to room temperature before bottling it for later use. This syrup produces a smoother mouthfeel on cocktails than the modern variety of gum syrup.

The other unusual ingredient required is *pisco*, a South American

brandy first introduced to California in 1830. Today, it can be a bit hard to find and because it does not look nor taste like other brandies, there is no substitute available. The recipe, taken from a hand-written note by the manager of the Bank Exchange, is found in the center block.

### Pisco Punch

1. Take a fresh pine-apple. Cut it in squares about 1 by 1.5 inches. Put these squares of fresh pineapple in a bowl of gum syrup to soak overnight. That serves the double purpose of flavoring the gum syrup with the pineapple and soaking the pineapple, both of which are used afterwards in the punch.

2. In the morning mix in a big bowl the following: 1/2 pint (8 oz) of the gum syrup, pineapple flavored as above, 1 pint (16 oz) distilled water, 3/4 pint (10 oz) lemon juice, 1 bottle (24 oz) Peruvian pisco brandy.

Serve very cold but be careful not to keep the ice in too long because of dilution. Use 3 or 4 oz punch glasses. Put one of the above squares of pineapple in each glass. Lemon juice or gum syrup may be added to taste.

From: the California Historical Society

Other drinks with exotic connotations are not quite so labor-intensive and will be available at your friendly neighborhood bar. The most obvious is the gin and tonic, a drink

that dates back to the eighteenth century. Tonic water contains quinine, used to treat malaria, but most people find its flavor unpalatable on its own—hence the gin. Mix one jigger of gin with three of tonic water and serve it over ice with a lemon wedge.

A period drink from a tropical island, the classic mixture of rum and Coke originated shortly after the Spanish-American War of 1898. Mixed with Cuban rum and American cola, with a slice of lime for garnish, it is properly known as a *Cuba libre* in celebration of Cuban independence. And while we are on the subject of rum and Cuba, the town of Daiquirí lends its name to a cocktail traditionally made by shaking three ounces of rum, one and a half ounces of lime juice, and half an ounce of simple syrup vigorously with ice.

If you have any pisco left over from the punch, you can always make pisco sours. Shake together three ounces of pisco, two of lime or lemon juice, and one of simple syrup, along with a little bit of egg white. Strain into a tumbler and top with a dash or two of Angostura bitters.

Of course, for those that would rather not drink, you cannot beat the pulp authenticity of Doc Savage's favorite beverage—which, at least if the 1974 film is to be believed, happens to be Coca-cola. I like to add a splash of grenadine and a little bit of bitters to mine. ■

# Bygone legacy

## Review | George Griffith's *Astronef* series

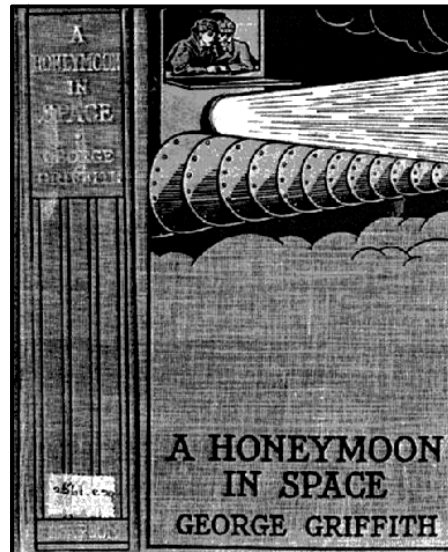


Trubetskoj

George Chetwynd Griffith-Jones is one of the forgotten luminaries of the classic British scientific romance. A best-selling author and sometime rival of H.G. Wells' at the beginning of the twentieth century, his work has been mostly forgotten by later generations. While much of them are steeped in the opinions and prejudices of his day, Griffith's tales contain many elements that would lay the basis for the first great boom of science fiction.

The *Astronef* series is a good case in point. Originally serialized in *Pearson's Magazine* over the course of 1899-1900, the stories were later novelized with some additional material in 1901's *A Honeymoon in Space*. They follow the adventures of Rollo Lenox Smeaton Aubrey, Earl of Redgrave, and his new bride, the American Lillia Zaidie, as they travel through the solar system in the *Astronef*, a vehicle propelled by the gravity-repelling "R. force" developed by Zaidie's late father. In each of the stories, the couple visits a new planet to explore and occasionally to battle its natives, unruly fauna and environmental hazards.

Overall, this type of narrative bears a close resemblance to the American "Edisonades" popular in this period, with heroic genius-inventor characters traveling to exotic locales in vehicles of their own creation. Though similar in some aspects to the works of Jules



Verne—himself a dabbler in the Edisonade from time to time—the *Astronef* stories are pure adventure, with less of an emphasis on the technical aspects of space travel (or on character development, for that matter) and more on the exploration of the solar system. With their focus on alien monsters, ancient necropoli and aerial skirmishes, the *Astronef* stories lay a considerable amount of groundwork for later pulp science fiction of the interwar era.

Similarly, Griffith's notion of space shares many assumptions with later works. The solar system discovered by the *Astronef* is organic, with different planets representing different stages of Earth's "life-cycle." Naturally, most of the stories focus on the worlds that represent the future of Earth, namely the Moon, Mars, and the

Jovian moon Ganymede, which are all inhabited by technologically utopian civilizations struggling to maintain themselves amid diminishing resources and ionizing atmospheres. For the rest of the solar system, life exists in either a vicious Hobbesian state-of-nature or, as in the case of Venus, an Edenic pleasure garden untouched by war or sin. (For a modern reworking of this concept, the reviewer would recommend the novels of S.M. Stirling's alternate-historical *Lords of Creation* series.)

Overall, this conception is very much in keeping with the perception of Darwinian evolution prevalent at the time as a struggle towards perfection. Unfortunately, this attitude tends to seep into the narrative. In *Honeymoon*, there are multiple assertions to the "higher" nature of the Anglo-Saxon race and many of the battle scenes do fall into the "kill without mercy for they do not deserve it" mindset. While this attitude never overwhelms the stories, it does give them an uncomfortable subtext that a modern audience must frown upon.

The voyages of the *Astronef* may not be great literature yet they provide a fascinating look at a long-forgotten chapter in the history of science fiction. ■

All *Astronef* stories are available for reading at Mr Rowland's [forgottenfutures.com](http://forgottenfutures.com).

# Learn to be evil



Hilde Heyvaert

## Review | *How to be a Villain*

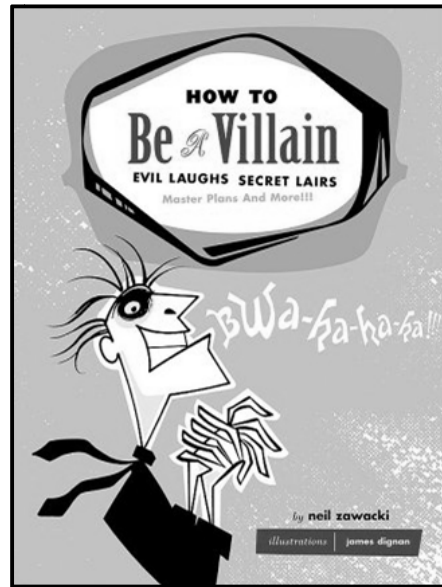
"This book is dedicated to everyone who ever thought evil was just a dream. Rejoice, would-be miscreants, your time has come!"

With these words begins one of the most amusing how-to-books in literary history.

Author Neil Zawacki and illustrator James Dignan take inquiring minds on an extremely hilarious and comprehensive five-step program on becoming the perfect villain.

With a lot of humour involved they explain you how to get started with the forces of evil covering all the basics from what kind of villain to choose from, evil overlord type names, appearances and let's not forget a very important aspect: the evil laugh!

Once the ~~subject~~ reader has familiarised himself with the basics, it is time to move on to the villainous careers. Corporate bastard, mad scientist, black knight, horror-movie villain, avatar for a god or demon or supernatural creature beyond all comprehension and marketing



executive are all thoroughly covered.

Of course, when you have figured out how to go about in your evil ways, you must also learn how to deal with those pesky heroes and do-gooders in appropriate and most importantly, effective ways. Chapter three thus not only covers the mindset of the forces of good, but also on how to get rid of them, in an as permanent manner as evilly possible.

When the good guys have been eradicated time has come to check out the tools of the trade: evil lairs, henchmen, fashion (look terrifying!) and evil fundraising because, well, every villain needs these things.

And in the fifth and last chapter the "evil plan" is covered, complete with an evil plan generator for the uninspired evildoers amongst us.

*How to be a Villain* is guaranteed to make you laugh out loud and amuse you for hours on end, as it teaches all the basics of true nasty and villainous behaviour. For those aspiring men and women of the forces of Evil, it is most certainly a must-have (and also for people who just like a good laugh and fun illustrations).

Let us conclude with the wise words of master villain Darth Vader (who is also quoted at the beginning of chapter one): "If you only knew the power of the Dark Side!"

I say it's high time you discover for yourself in this absolutely delightful volume! ■

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Inquiries regarding this publication should be forwarded to the editor, Nick Ottens, via [nick@ottens.com](mailto:nick@ottens.com).

## Featured Photo

Every issue the *Gatehouse Gazette* selects one photograph submitted for feature. This edition's winner is a picture by Yann Pendaries featuring a most elegant outfit of French designer Malam. The photo was taken in the woods just outside of Paris and might serve as perfect inspiration to those working on assembling their winter outfit quickly now, before spring is upon us once again!



To nominate a photograph of your own, send it to the editor via [nick@ottens.com](mailto:nick@ottens.com). The winner will see their picture featured here!

## Colophon

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

The articles published in this magazine are written by a group of earnest volunteers. Listed below are the people involved in the production of this issue.

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