

ISSUE 8

GATEHOUSE GAZETTE

SEP '09



8

FORBIDDEN TALES OF FERVOR AND FRIGHT

CONTENTS

Columns

A STEAMPUNK HALLOWEEN

The Steampunk Wardrobe 3

POISONOUS!!

The Liquor Cabinet 24

Series

THE DEVIL RIDES OUT

Hammer Horrors 6

QUATERMASS II

Quatermass 9

CITY OF SECRETS

Local Steampunk 25

Articles

MASTER OF THE GENRE IN DEATH

H.P. Lovecraft 7

DELIRIOUS STUFF

Absinthe and steampunk 10

METAL CASTING FOR EVERYONE

Tutorial 20

MEMORABILIA

Holiday cards 27

Fiction

DR. ADDERSON'S LENS

By Natania Barron 12

Reviews

THE NEW SOVIET MONSTER

You Are Empty 11

DEMONS IN 1930S JAPAN

Devil Summoner 2 17

NEON-NOIR

Nightside series 19

NAZI MADNESS

Wolfenstein 26

Interview

DIESELPUNK'S L'ENFANT TERRIBLE

Sam Van Olffen 4

EDITOR Nick Ottens
COVER ARTIST Myke Amend
FEATURED AUTHOR Natania Barron

COLUMNISTS

CONTRIBUTORS Dave Claus, Guy Dampier, Ella Kremper, Christian Matzke, Sigurjón Njálsson, Marcius Rauchfuß, James Roberts, 'Trubetskoy'



NICK OTTENS

EDITORIAL

Halloween is almost upon us once again thus we celebrate "Forbidden Tales of Fervor and Fright" this issue behind an outstanding cover provided by steampunk artists Mr Myke Amend of mykeamend.com.

We have for you, besides the familiar columns and reviews, an article about H.P. Lovecraft, master of the horror genre; a short story by Ms Natania Barron; the third and final installment in Ella's "Hammer Horrors" series; "Metal casting for everyone" by Dave Claus; a review of the latest *Wolfenstein* game; and original Halloween holiday cards by Hilde Heyvaert. Allow me to express my gratitude hereby to all the fine people, including the ones I haven't mentioned here, who contributed to this issue!

Much to our delight, dieselpunk artist Mr Sam Van Olffen agreed to be interviewed for this issue and allowed us to feature some of his outstanding artworks of "big cities, pollution, oppressive atmospheres and death" along with it! Check it out, on page 4.

Due to technical difficulties on our part, we have not been able to receive any messages sent to the nick@ottens.co.uk address that was given as contact information in our last issue. Please resend your inquiry.

The *Gatehouse Gazette* is an online magazine in publication since July 2008, dedicated to the speculative fiction genres of steampunk and dieselpunk. For past issues as well as further information, please visit: <http://www.ottens.co.uk/gatehouse/gazette>

For discussion about this magazine as well as steampunk and dieselpunk in general, visit: <http://www.ottens.co.uk/lounge>

©2009 *Gatehouse Gazette*. All rights reserved. Neither this publication nor any part of it may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the *Gatehouse Gazette* with the exception of the use of small excerpts for announcements and reviews. Published every two months by *The Gatehouse*.

September 2009 Halloween Edition, released 30 August at www.ottens.co.uk/gatehouse.

For letters and inquiries **EMAIL** n.ottens@gmail.com.

COLUMN THE STEAMPUNK WARDROBE

A steampunk Halloween

MANY STEAMPUNKS ALL ACROSS the globe love the spooky holiday known as Hallowe'en. Therefore it is time that we direct some of the spotlight onto that celebration of dressing up, scary fun and trick-or-treating, and have a look at Halloween during a time that is so special to so many within the movement: the Victorian Age.

Halloween is, in spite of its increasing popularity in Europe, still mainly an American event. And it became that when the industrial revolution hit America. It made its debut in the upper echelons of American society during the early 1870s. There it was interpreted as a quaint and entertaining English practice.

The holiday had been introduced to the American people by European immigrants, the Irish in particular, who had come to the New World in the hope of a better future, escaping the famine and poor living conditions of their home countries. They brought with them their own culture, customs and holidays, Halloween, or *Samhain*, being one of them.

The media of those times, books, papers and magazines advertised an inaccurate historical background to the holiday, which helped its growth considerably

however.

American society of the Gilded Age thought it essential to remove any association with witchcraft, the dead, sacrifices and offerings and concentrated on the more entertaining side of things. It was,



Halloween in the late 1800s.

acceptable nonetheless to attempt to communicate with the dead for one's romantic interests, and this practise grew in popularity, especially among young people.

Indeed, generally it was felt that Halloween was only for the young,

and the parties thus were a wonderful excuse for matchmaking. And enjoying light hearted spooky fun and *faux séances* of course.

The high society held costumed balls and charity parties. Magazines and newspapers profited as they published articles on how to give a proper Halloween party, design invitations, carve Jack o' Lanterns as well as recipes and other Halloween features.

The Americans did much to remove the significant historical value of the holiday, slowly transforming it into a brand new concept purely for entertainment which the children could claim for themselves, resulting in the holiday we all know today. Steampunk enthusiasts have picked up on the holiday just like everyone else who celebrates it. Some are recreating Victorian Halloween costumes from days past, and some are incorporating Halloween into their steampunk outfits. This produces both gorgeous historically accurate replica costumes and modern

day outfits with details like Jack o' Lanterns and traditional Halloween imagery. And yet others choose to be steampunks just for the day, getting a taste of our wonderful subculture on everyone's favourite costume holiday.



HILDE HEYVAERT

INTERVIEW SAM VAN OLFFEN

Dieselpunk's l'enfant terrible



NICK OTTENS

SAM VAN OLFFEN IS A TALENTED dieselpunk artist from France whose work has been featured at exhibitions throughout the world. For this issue, he kindly agreed to answer some questions about himself, his work and his thoughts about the genres his creations are associated with.

Please, tell us a bit about yourself.
I live and work in Montpellier, in the South of France, where I was born. I have always wanted to create universes and characters, tell stories. I have always been attracted by science fiction and fantasy worlds, robots and monsters.

I am self-taught, a self made man. I had to stop going to school and I started reading classical literature such as Virgil, Ovid, Gustave Flaubert and Hemingway. I grew up in a modest family. I never missed anything, but that is because all I needed were my comics when I was a child, cinema and VHS tapes when I was a teenager, and time to work now. Free time to live my passion is a luxury.

How did you first become interested in steampunk and dieselpunk and

"Dieselpunk is the psychopathic son of steampunk."

what attracted you to the genres?

You might be surprised but the first time I heard about steampunk was not with regard to Jules Verne or Wells but when I read the comic book *Steampunk* by Chris Bacchlo. I have always found this universe extremely interesting. What fascinated me the most was how this period merged almost molecularly with my working technique.

Your more recent works seem darker and more distinctively dieselpunk. Do you find this aesthetic fits your own style better?

You know, I like big cities, pollution, oppressive atmospheres and everything connected with death. I like architecture and above all I like history. I let things happen. With all these elements combined you get dieselpunk

I have learned that art is not a restricted circle and that with new technologies and a bit of ideas, you can create interesting things.



You are right when you think dieselpunk fits my own style more. It is darker. Dieselpunk is the psychopathic son of steampunk.

How would you explain for the increasing appeal of steampunk?

I do not believe steampunk took so long to become popular. It came just at the right time.

The century we live in is a peculiar one. A large part of teenagers sinks into depths of ignorance while, and this is the main paradox, they have an unrestricted access to absolute knowledge. It is in that respect that steampunk is a sheer product of our time and could not have been created at any other time. It represents the obsolete values of a bygone era, the *Belle Époque*, mixed with the technological aspect of our time. All

this, we can clearly see, provides for projection, dream, fantasy using customs and codes from a romantic past while keeping a technological link with the present.

Only a misled century like ours could give birth to steampunk. As far as I know, this attempt to create a link, to recycle the past did not exist in the nineteenth century. There was no fictional rebirth or industrial royalty at the time of Baudelaire or Verne. It could have happened though, as imagination was flourishing back then.

Do you think it will continue to grow and gather popularity?

That steampunk will gain popularity is obvious. For example, no main steampunk feature has been directed yet. You might object that *Wild Wild West* was one but I would not say that such film, or even Otomo's *Steamboy* does justice to the genre such as *Blade Runner* once did with cyberpunk for instance. After *Blade Runner*, no cyberpunk fiction could avoid the comparison with Ridley Scott's masterpiece. After *Wild Wild West*, everything still needs to be done. As regards Otomo's *Steamboy*, its only merit in my opinion is that he took eight years to direct it, i.e. he anticipated the movement by almost a decade. This is common ground with Ridley Scott: being so early that he was totally out of sync with the expectations of his time. Also with

Steamboy, we cannot really say that he gave the best in him... three spinning gears are not enough to build a whole universe.

To me *Captain Sky* was the only one to play his game well, but this is another story more on the dieselpunk side. Let's see what the Finish *Iron Sky* will do. For now though, film harvest is quite poor.

What would you consider to be the greatest influences on your work? Are there any artists in particular that you seek to imitate or do you draw from films or novels?

Giger of course, Gustave Doré, Alfons Mucha, the architect Victor Horta, Joseph Poallert who created this crazy building used as Brussels Court of Justice (obviously the work of a mad man).

I also greatly admire architectural deliria by Anton First, François Schuiten and Etienne Robida among others, many others...

Have period writers like Victor Hugo, but also Mary Shelley and Edgar Allan Poe, significantly shaped your view of steampunk and your work? Not at all. For me, literature is a



virus that gets inoculated in people's minds and quoted authors happen to belong to a time when there was no remedy against it.

Are there any steampunk or dieselpunk artists or authors you admire in particular?

I have read an excellent French book, *La lune seule le sait* ("Only the moon knows") by Yoahan Eliot. The visual impact of this story was incredible! There were aliens, Jules Verne as a secret agent sent to the moon to rescue Louise Michel, and Victor Hugo in a castle acting as the puppet master of the revolution against a robotic Napoleon the Third! Sheer genius! (By a strange irony of fate, I made the cover for the new edition of the same book some years later)

And you have done other book covers too, correct?

Right, for Gallimard and Press Pocket, two large French publishing companies, but this is not this type of work that will pay me a big house with a swimming pool.

Your work has been on display at several exhibitions throughout the world. Could you tell us about this?

Yes, my work was shown in the United States, the Netherlands and France, but I would like to exhibit in England, Japan, Russia, everywhere people are interested. The only boundaries I have met are not territorial but mental. ■

Visit <http://vanolffen.blogspot.com> to learn more about the artist.

SERIES HAMMER HORRORS

The Devil Rides Out

CHRISTOPHER LEE'S NAME automatically puts images of vampires, fangs, tall dark strangers and the act of just generally being evil into your mind. In fact, he is often seen as synonymous with the rather malevolent villain in film and television. That is not to say that it's a bad thing because Mr Lee does it so well. However, the mark of a good actor is to be able to slip into whatever character the script calls for, and Christopher Lee does this with admirable élan.

Yet for a Hammer production, it would be strange to see Lee cast in a role outside that of 'general nasty person', for he had become near-synonymous with Count Dracula. Nevertheless in *The Devil Rides Out* (1968), we see him take on the role of the hero.

The Devil Rides Out is based on the 1934 book of the same name by Dennis Wheatley. Set during the 1930s, the Duc de Richelieu (Christopher Lee) and his friend, Rex van Ryn (Leon Greene) meet after a while apart. Another friend, Simon Aron (Patrick Mower), fails to make their meeting at Richelieu's house, so the duo makes a trip to Simon's home to see what the problem is.

Simon seems to be having his own ideas about holding a party, for

Richelieu and Rex come across some rather interesting characters indeed, waiting for a celestial event to occur where the number of people present at the party is of direct importance.

One particular person, the charismatic Mocata (played by Charles Gray of *James Bond* fame) strikes Richelieu as having some sort of hold over Simon, which makes him suspicious. Rex also takes a liking to a young woman at the party, who refers to herself as Tanith (Nike Arrighi), but is also concerned by her confused behavior. When Richelieu and Rex are asked to leave by Simon, they twig that Something is Not Quite Right. They return later to Simon's house, where upstairs, they find a Satanic ritual circle. Inadvertently, they summon a demon, but Richelieu is able to banish it by throwing his crucifix at it.

Determined to get to the bottom of the situation and to prevent Simon and Tanith from losing their souls to Satan, Richelieu, who luckily has knowledge in the occult, seeks to hide Simon and Tanith from Mocata by taking them to the house of his cousin Marie Eaton and her husband, Richard

(Sarah Lawson and Paul Eddington). However, Mocata's powers are far stronger than anticipated, and they are forced to pool all their resources for their survival to defeat him and the ghastly Angel of Death he has summoned.

In comparison to more well-known Hammer films as the *Count Dracula* and *Frankenstein* series, *The Devil Rides Out* is fairly tight. Gone is the cliché, camp and predictable plotline and here we have something that is more coherent, with classic cars, black magic and all-round adventure. Granted, the special effects leave much to be desired (the forest orgy scene) but this is the Seventies. Christopher Lee plays wonderfully against type as the heroic Duc de Richelieu, well supported by Leon Greene, and Charles Gray is deliciously evil as the charismatic Mocata.

This does not feel like a typical Hammer film, which is why *The Devil Rides Out* is often cited as one of its more acclaimed productions. ■



Film poster by Tom Chantrell, courtesy of EMI Films.

ARTICLE H.P. LOVECRAFT

Master of the genre in death

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT was born into a rather wealthy New England family and enjoyed a comparably happy childhood. Comparably, because he was a sickly child, his health remained frail all his life, and because his father died when he was five years old. Lovecraft was also a prodigious child, capable of reciting short poems by two and able to read by three years of age.

This early ability to read later helped him to study on his own when illness prevented him from attending school for any length of time. His favorite book and main inspiration during his childhood was *Arabian Nights*, from which he would eventually draw the inspiration for one of his most famous characters: The mad Arab Abdul Alhazred, author of the dreaded *Necronomicon*.

In 1904, when Lovecraft was fourteen years old, the wealth of his family had dwindled and they had to move out of their estate, into a small apartment in Providence, Rhode Island. This experience affected Lovecraft severely and, as his biographer DeCamp notes, he contemplated suicide for a while. In retrospect, the loss of his father and his home may well have had an influence on the nihilistic worldview

present in his fiction. During this time he started his career as a writer. He first published as a columnist in the *Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner*, a local newspaper, in 1906. His first published Cthulhu Mythos related story was *Dagon*, featured in the magazine *Vagrant* in 1919.

Never learning a trade, Lovecraft supported himself mostly by ghostwriting stories for others. Among his clients was Harry Houdini for whom he penned *Imprisoned with the Pharaohs* (1924). His own work was published too sporadically to grant any sort of regular income. He was married once, from 1924 to 1926, to Sonia Greene, a fellow amateur writer. During the time of their marriage the couple lived in New York, a city Lovecraft despised. After separating from his wife, he returned to Providence, where he stayed with his aunts. He led the life of an eccentric, sometimes not sleeping for days and eating nothing but chocolate for weeks. Lovecraft was afraid to sleep, fearful of recurring nightmares. In those he would be dragged away by the Night Ghaunts, beings which later featured in his novel *The Dream Quest to Unknown Kadath*, to be dropped from high altitude.

Lovecraft died in 1937,

probably of kidney cancer. His aunt Annie Gamwell inherited the rights to his works which she later passed on to August Derleth.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft is buried at the Swan Point Cemetery in Providence, Rhode Island.

The Cthulhu Mythos

Most of Lovecraft's literary work concerns stories revolving around a pantheon of ancient, malevolent and extremely powerful aliens called the Great Old Ones. They in turn are servants, to a greater or lesser degree anyway, to the so-called Outer Gods. The Outer Gods are fairly obscure and for a mere human there is little difference in the power between Great Old Ones and Outer Gods. The line dividing and defining Outer Gods and Great Old Ones is also blurry, which is partly due to some inconsistencies in the use of the terms by Lovecraft himself and his literary heirs. For example, Shub-Niggurath is described as an Outer Goddess, if something like gender can be applied at all, but she is also the mate of Hastur. He is the father of her children, the Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, and a Great Old One. He is said to be the brother or cousin of Cthulhu, but sources differ concerning the nature of their relationship.



MARCIUS
RAUCHFUß

The Cthulhu Mythos also encompasses an almost complete alternate history of Earth (in which life is created more or less by accident by the Elder Things) in an alternate dimension called The Dreamlands into which a dreamer can pass over, and a host of intelligent races which have visited Earth or stayed here, like Cthulhu and his kin and the Mi-Go, or those which emerged on the world long before mankind, like the serpent people.

Even though Lovecraft was a little known author in his lifetime, he managed to make his influence felt. One of the most prominent authors of the pulp era, Robert E. Howard, creator of Conan the Barbarian, took many motifs from Lovecraft and incorporated them into his own work. Indeed, among the elements of the Cthulhu Mythos found in the stories about Conan and Kull the Conqueror are the Serpent People, Valusia (the mythical homeland of the Serpent People) and even Cthulhu himself.

Lovecraft's literature did not find popular acclaim until the late 1950s when August Derleth published it in an anthology titled *The Outsider and others*.

Relation with Pulp

Lovecraft's tales were published in pulp magazines as *Tales of Magic and Mystery*, to begin with, but his writings are far from the mainstream pulp material of the 1920s and '30s. Fantasy pulp was dominated by characters like Conan the Barbarian: masculine figures who conquered by force, got all the women and always emerged victorious in the end. Lovecraft's protagonists, in contrast, are everyday men while women are conspicuously absent other than in the role of witch and antagonist as

in *The Thing on the Doorstep*. His characters find themselves confronted with forces they can hardly begin to comprehend. Also, no story of Lovecraft's has a happy ending. The protagonists either die, go insane, transform into the very things they fight or become corrupted in some other way. All in all, the world of the Cthulhu Mythos is dark and ultimately hopeless. Ancient cosmic horrors and secrets better left undiscovered lurk just outside the boundaries of everyday life and will destroy everyone who dares to cross over.

The meme spreads further

The ideas on which the Cthulhu Mythos rests have proven to be quite contagious: they have become a meme and inspired modern masters of the genre like Ramsey Campbell and Stephen King. King himself once said about Lovecraft:

"I think it is beyond doubt that H.P. Lovecraft has yet to be surpassed

as the twentieth century's greatest practitioner of the classic horror tale."

Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman have both borrowed from the Mythos, but in a rather tongue-in-cheek way. Now you can find the dreaded *Necrotelecomnicon* (the Phonebook of the Dead) in the high-security area for dangerous books in the Unseen University of the Discworld. Lovecraft's was also one of the first literary works to be adapted as a role-playing game, *Call of Cthulhu* by Chaosium (1981), which very likely helped spread its popularity further.

Starting in the 1960s, Lovecraft's work was used as inspiration for or directly adapted to television and cinema, with varying degrees of faithfulness towards the original material. A number of his short stories have even been adapted into comic books, and elements of Lovecraft's stories have seeped into quite a



number of otherwise unrelated graphic novels, including Grant Morrison's *Arkham Asylum* (1989).

And last but certainly not least, H.P. Lovecraft has had more influence on the lives of dabblers into the occult than any other author who had no intentions of doing so. Despite his numerous allusions to ancient and evil gods, as well as the occult tomes and powers in his work, Lovecraft himself was an atheist if not a nihilist, convinced that life had no higher meaning. He had no interest in the occult at all.

Legacy

Lovecraft's most famous fictional book, the dreaded *Necronomicon*, is available in many different editions, most having nothing but the name in common yet all claim to be the original. Czandor LaVey, founder of the Church of Satan, gets confused in

his Satanic Bible and connects Shubb-Niggurath (as "The Black Goat," one of her titles) with Baphomet. Some even regard Lovecraft as some kind of prophet while those who adhere to Chaos Magic see no wrong in worshipping Cthulhu. So, after more than seventy years, Cthulhu has acquired a real cult. Lovecraft would be amused.

Besides, the darker shades of music (heavy metal and various musical styles related to the Goth scene) have been inspired by Lovecraft's work, including "The Thing that should not be" by Metallica, "Forseen" by God Module and basically everything performed by The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets. The list goes on.

With the arrival of the Internet it did not take long for the Cthulhu Mythos to take root there, too. The Internet has probably done more for

the spread of the Mythos than any other medium. The Lovecraft Community has found its place on the World Wide Web, encompassing amateur writers, like Lovecraft was himself, role-playing enthusiasts and even film makers. A simple search on *YouTube* will produce tons of videos. There is also at least one Cthulhu-themed MMORPG and a host of other computer games either directly related to the Mythos or inspired by it. There should be no doubt that few modern authors can claim to hold so much influence on the work of others.

Here is a strange and rather fitting analogy between Lovecraft and Cthulhu: Both are dead, but as Cthulhu does in fiction, so does Lovecraft in real life: Their dreams still influence the world around them, the dreamer is dead, yet the dream continues. ■

SERIES QUATERMASS

Quatermass II



GUY DAMPIER

PROFESSOR QUATERMASS IS IN despair. His carefully laid plans lie blackened, scorched and radioactive on the Australian sands. His rocket ship is faulty, an Australian launch resulting in a nuclear explosion. The second rocket, there in England, bears the same mistakes. Any attempt to launch it will prompt detonation of the nuclear motor. The Space Program is finished. Then when his daughter's boyfriend, Captain Steve Dillon turns up with an odd meteorite Quatermass finds himself stumbling into a hideous conspiracy from beyond the Earth.

Writer Nigel Kneale takes Quatermass onto another extraordinary adventure. There are few other places where brainwashing, trade unionism and suspiciously large amounts of ammonia mix. Here though they do so superbly. Like most of the franchise, this is a six-part, black and white wonder, made for almost nothing with only the crudest special effects and a cast of superb actors. Only the BBC could create a show where a man can overthrow brainwashing by being told to pull himself together.

Good acting and lush black and

white make a script that blends science fiction, horror and conspiracy together into an exotic melting pot. For the dieselpunk fan there is a lot on display. From the visual starkness of the 'Zombies' with their Tommy Guns and gasmasks to the industrial nightmare of the secret government facility and one of the first televisual scenes set in space. If you enjoy good drama, if you have ever wanted a 1950s British equivalent to *The X-Files* or just want a hero whose first reaction isn't to shoot from the hip then this is for you. ■

ARTICLE ABSINTHE AND STEAMPUNK

Delirious stuff



CHRISTIAN MATZKE

"WHATEVER ABSINTHE MEANS, IT IS NOT A BEAKER full of the warm south. It is an industrial product, as synthetic as Dr. Jekyll's potion, and whatever metonymies are in play are not from the rural landscape but from urban culture. Aestheticism, decadence, and Bohemianism are well to the fore, along with the idea of nineteenth-century Paris and 1890s London."

Thus wrote Phil Baker in *The Book of Absinthe: A Cultural History* (2003). While perhaps he stresses the urban connection too strongly for a drink that originated in the Jura, there is no doubt that when one thinks of absinthe, one thinks of nineteenth century urban nightlife. From the Green Hour to the Moulin Rouge, absinthe will forever be linked to the artists and writers of that period.

But that is only half of the story. Absinthe was consumed on a daily basis for decades by millions of people from all walks of life. It was the drink of soldiers and farmers, lawyers and chimney sweeps. It granted neither artistic visions nor hallucinations, but its high proof and intriguing flavor offered a much-needed diversion from daily life. From the French Quarter in New Orleans to French Indo-China, absinthe went everywhere the empire did. In fact, the French military issued it to their troops to purify their water during campaigns.

What sets absinthe apart from other drinks is the ritual of its preparation, and the unique accoutrements required. The slow dripping of cold water turns the translucent green absinthe into a milky white, a process the French named the *Louche* (literally "clouding"). This aspect of preparation evokes the elixirs of Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll or Wells' Invisible Man. That a desired ratio must be met for a satisfying drink heightens this aura of deviant home chemistry. To achieve this one can always use a simple carafe of water and a slotted spoon, but over the decades a number of elaborate options were invented, from fountains and *Brouilleur* drippers to the most steampunk item of all, the *Cusenier Auto Verseur*. This marvelous device

features a see-saw beneath the pinhole opening of the reservoir. As the drops hit the see-saw they are dispersed across the surface of the drink to maximize the release of the flavorful oils.

It should come as no surprise that absinthe is encountered throughout steampunk fiction. In *The Difference Engine* by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling (1990) we are treated to our first absinthe reference. Toward the end of the book when the action shifts to Paris we are told the Clackers (the period equivalent of cyberpunk's Hackers) drink *Pernod Fils*, while our heroine can only stomach "scavenger's absinthe", that is, absinthe mixed with red wine. *Pernod Fils* was the

premiere brand of absinthe at the time. Because of its price and quality, the Clackers drinking it imbues them with a certain elitist snobbery. Scavenger's absinthe on the other hand was much looked down upon. As the name suggests, there is a coarseness to the practice, with the implication that one has simply mixed together the remnants of someone else's drinks. As our heroine is a prostitute, this befits her social standing.

Jay Lake's "The God-Clown is Near" (2008) takes place in a far more fantastic world than *The Difference Engine*, and so it is appropriate that the effect of drinking absinthe is heightened as well.

The main character drinks to forget the awful job he has been hired to do, but instead suffers terrible absinthe induced nightmares. A nice touch by the author is the fact that anise bread is served in the bar along with the drink; anise being one of the dominant flavors in absinthe.

Also drinking to forget is an Edwardian man in Mark Romanek's video for "The Perfect Drug" by Nine Inch Nails (1997). We are treated to images of the absinthe ritual just as the video enters its most kinetic—and steampunk—phase when the man is illuminated only by the flashes of a gigantic Tesla coil-like device. While the plot may be as cloudy as a glass of absinthe, the video clearly evokes the genre spirit. ■



REVIEW *YOU ARE EMPTY*

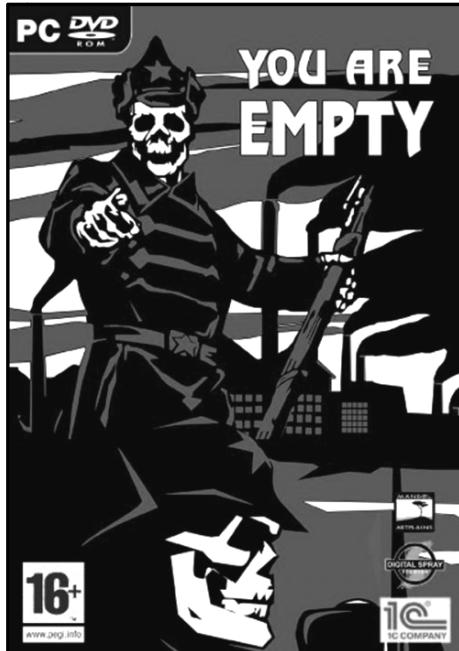
The new Soviet monster



TRUBETSKOY

YOU ARE EMPTY, CREATED BY defunct Ukrainian developer Digital Spray, is not a good video game. The graphics are out of date, relying on shopworn polygons and flat textures more common to games from the beginning of the decade rather than anything on the shelves today. The gameplay sticks solidly to the tenets of first-person shooterdom, with nothing in the way of innovative new mechanics. From the outset, the player is intended to play the game running on a narrow track, with most attempts at exploration resulting in punishment. The player moves through the world at a crawl, and can easily be trapped by the scenery. The enemies do little more than charge mindlessly, and most of them are more ridiculous than terrifying. So little is revealed about the game's storyline that it almost appears as though the story were simply dropped during the game's translation to English. Finally, the area around the player appears to have been curiously foreshortened, making basic melee and grenade attacks a hit-and-miss proposition.

So, why talk about *You Are Empty*? Why talk about a fly-under-the-radar game that was panned by every North American reviewer when it was released back in 2007? In a word: atmosphere.



You Are Empty is set in an unnamed Soviet megapolis sometime in the early 1950s, during the final years of Stalin's reign. The player assumes the role of an unnamed militiaman, one of the city's faceless thousands, whose average day is brought to a halt by a traffic accident. Regaining consciousness some weeks later in a wrecked and abandoned sanitarium, and haunted by dreams of a massive tower topped by a great red star, the player must escape the sanitarium, journey to the dead city, and discover the cause of the disaster.

While the plot is bog-standard,

the game makes exemplary use of its setting. The levels are a whistle-stop tour of mid-century Soviet life, moving from collective farm to factory to workers' tenements to the metropolis itself, with its great bridges, monuments, cinemas, theaters, and subway. The game blends high Stalinism and the apocalypse perfectly, with every locale adorned with mass-produced posters, faded banners, severed power lines, broken trucks and trams, and scratchy radios burbling out endlessly repeated warning bulletins. The enemies themselves are given a similarly Soviet bent, with the player being beset by over-muscled welders, scarecrow kolkhoz workers, insectoid electricians, and half-dead soldiers in Civil War-era uniforms. The weapons available to the player continue this theme, mixing WW2-era weapons (Mosin-Nagant rifle, Shpigin machine pistol, Molotov cocktails) and scavenged factory equipment (pipe wrench, nail gun, and a sort of electricity thrower).

However, the real horror in the game comes not from the fighting, but from the environment. For much of the game, the player will be wandering through an urban core designed as monument of Stalinist gothic. Every street and plaza is surrounded by great pseudo-

classical buildings, bloated with concrete, that glare down at the street from every direction. It is a type of architecture common in the great urban spaces of Russia, and it has the effect of making the pedestrian either aspire to godhood or feel crushed into insignificance. It is an effect that *You Are Empty* captures perfectly. The haunted ambience is further enhanced by the game's sound, which balances between a smooth techno-industrial soundtrack, the grunts, masked snuffles, and nasal Slavic moans of

the transformed populace, and the dead silence of a mausoleum city, where there is no one left but you. Just to keep the tension ratcheted, the game occasionally provides cutscenes animated in a stark, expressionist style that fits perfectly with this world of shadowy cruel figures and overbearing machinery.

While the mystery is never quite unraveled, the game makes some attempts at explaining itself. Veterans of *BioShock* will probably find the outcome of *You Are Empty* familiar, as both games draw on

ideas and theories of the biological perfectibility of man that were common in both the Soviet Union and the West in the early twentieth century. Overall, with the game now at clearance-sale prices, *You Are Empty* is worth an evening or two of monster-blasting and Soviet sightseeing. Despite the many design flaws, it can still conjure unsettling visions of a world that never was.

Oh, and after playing this game, you will never look at firefighters the same way again. ■

SHORT STORY

Dr. Adderson's Lens



NATANIA BARRON

THE DAY I LEARNED ABOUT THE Birds began with all the mundanity I had come to expect as Dr. Adderson's laboratory aid. I was working at his home laboratory, toiling through one his more nebulous equation exercises—the series assigned to quell my propensity toward hysterics, as he claimed—when I heard something fall with a hollow *thunk* in the entryway. I sat up from my work, moving the green glass lamp to see a little better, but nothing looked out of the ordinary.

"Doctor Adderson?"

There was no answer, just a low, mournful moan. Thinking it was the doctor himself, and that he had done something irreversible—

tried to off himself, for instance, since even then he talked about it far too often—and I rushed to the door toward the source of the sound, a brass candlestick in hand, just in case.

However, my fear was unfounded, for it was not Dr. Adderson at all, but my brother Anton.

"You shouldn't..." he said, his voice ragged and full, as if he were speaking through a mouth of glass beads.

He was only a few paces from the heavy brass-enforced front door, curled up like a wood shaving. His face was waxy and wan, his lips chapped and white, the flesh at his neck bearing a striking resemblance

to curdled milk. However, considering that Anton had been dead for the last year, his appearance did not surprise me. He had succumbed to an infection the year before, brought on by acute gangrene to the genitalia—acquired, no doubt, during one of his forays to the brothels of the Market District.

The singular fact that he was now here, at least marginally animated and speaking, raised a series of uncomfortable questions in my mind, not the least of which was how I was going to remove the gray-green fluid he had leaked on the front carpet.

With a quick look about me, I deduced that Anton had entered the top level from the basement, for the

door was open. He'd had access to the laundry room as well, for he was also clothed haphazardly in garments belonging both to the Doctor and myself. The blue striped bloomers were a particularly nice touch, I thought distantly. And while I had heard of some people falling into a death-like sleep for a few months due to illness, drink, or drug, I was certain that the Anton I knew had truly died, and by all rational means, should still be in that state.

"Don't... touch...." he said.

"I assure you, I had no intention," I replied.

"The Doctor... needs you...."

As he thrashed his head in an apparent seizure, I noticed for the first time an odd device secured about his neck. It was of a similar design I'd seen Doctor Adderson employ to control his dogs; made of surprisingly rudimentary copper and iron, it was set with magnetic fittings that, when engaged properly, caused the creature wearing it a great deal of pain.

Or perhaps, caused enough of an electromagnetic charge to animate them. That seemed the only likely explanation as to the increasingly peculiar situation. Dr. Adderson often completed his inventions without my knowing, and it did not surprise me that he had discovered unspoken capabilities of such a collar.

I was just beginning to feel irritated at the Doctor, for leaving me to puzzle out his equations while he animated corpses, when I was hit with the sad realization that, in spite of Anton's unexpected appearance, I was not in the least happy to see him.

"So, the Doctor needs me. Where is he?" I asked, speaking slowly, as if he were hard of hearing. Which I imagined might be a side

effect of his being a moving corpse.

Anton shuddered and a clear liquid began oozing from one of his cobweb colored eyes.

"Library... big Library..."

Then he fell still.

I waited, and stared at his grotesque form and face, doing as best I could to absorb the situation, still bothered that I wasn't happier to have a chance to speak to Anton again. I couldn't recall having thought of him much since his death, save an occasional wistful recollection of our childhood. I had not cried when he died; I did not think I missed him.

I remembered asking my mother, when I was scarcely six, if I *had* to love Anton, and she told me that I did already, and just didn't realize it; she insisted that someday I'd grow up and understand that you loved your family no matter what. But even then I knew she was quite mistaken.

Regardless of my philosophies, the Doctor was waiting and I had been called for. I knew the routine. Though I was used to the Doctor's more common methods of message delivery, like the peasant post or his trained rat-couriers, his decision today was not up for debate. Clearly it was important or he wouldn't have wasted a perfectly good corpse.

Anton did not move again, and rather than touch him, I simply walked over him and opened the front door. He smelled of formaldehyde, and something more nefarious I couldn't place. Rather than linger on that thought, I retrieved my umbrella, hat, cloak, and purse from the rack by the side of the door, and continued out of the laboratory into the alleyway, over the familiarly cobbled stones, and out in the street.

Though it was dark, I half

expected to see a plume of smoke rising to the east of the city, where the Library was. There had been more than a half-dozen occasions during my apprenticeship where an urgent message was followed by a clear indication of the Doctor's predicament, whether it be smoke, fog, hail, fire, or, on one sunny day last spring, a gaping chasm in them middle of Euphrastus Street Cemetery across the street.

I had just decided upon my route—going through the cemetery rather than around it, for fear of running into any unsavory individuals in the Market District—when I heard a wet belch from behind me.

It was Anton, again. He had taken one of Doctor Adderson's spare cloaks, a moldy old thing he used for gardening, and slung it backwards so it fell down to his knees in front. Paired with the bloomers, I realized for the first time just how much he'd favored our mother's looks.

He also wore a boot on his head, and a hat on his hand.

"Anton?" he said, apparently quite recovered.

"That's right," I said. I pointed to him. "Anton. I suppose."

"Anton come?"

He looked at me with a pitiful kind of expression, something I had never seen him do during his first life. His hairless eyebrows rose ever so slightly and his gray teeth emerged from behind his chapped lips. I think it was a pleading smile, and it was almost endearing.

"All right," I said. "But let me fix this for you."

I righted his clothing and found the other boot a few paces behind. With the cloak righted and the wide-brimmed hat now on his head, he looked like a passable living being, albeit slightly crooked about the

middle, and even more pungent than the typical specimen.

"See Doctor?" asked Anton.

"Yes, we're about to go see Doctor Henrick Adderson. Now if you wouldn't mind, please stop gnawing the daisies. We have an appointment to keep."

It occurred to me that perhaps Anton was not so different as he had been in his first life.

The walk through the cemetery was uneventful; but for the rhythmic toiling of the gravediggers, it was utterly silent. Occasionally Anton shuffled particularly clumsily or wheezed. I was not in a mood to keep up conversation with him, and doubted that he would have anything of import to add to the current situation, but I could not deny that Anton's presence made me feel a bit safer as we walked through the verdant darkness of the Euphrastus Street Cemetery.

The Sir Waverly Nicholson Library—the "big Library" that Anton had indicated—was three city blocks from the Euphrastus Street Cemetery, in the shell of a former temple dedicated to the war goddess A'ra. It was common by architectural standards, the familiar hexagonal design seen in temples from the Eastern Sweep down to the borders of Valira, in small towns as well as capital cities. But here in the Elusian province, we had decided on a significantly more eccentric approach to the outside ornamentation than the typical sandstone-and-silver so characteristic of civil buildings and temples. The chief restorer had decided that incorporating as many pure elements as possible in the renovation would be representative of the growth of science and learning since the fall of the Old Religion. Although he was rumored

to included nearly one hundred elements before his death from exposure to a variety of harmful compounds, the resulting structure made most use of more common elements like copper, silver, gold, tin and the like, in the way of triangular tiles on the roof. It is rumored that the basement held coffers filled with more unusual and dangerous elements, stored away from the public eye but still present in the structure.

I never did understand art, I suppose.

Anton lumbered and I walked past the main gate to the side entrance, to which I had a key. Doctor Adderson, as one of the libraries most esteemed patrons, had been granted full access to the collections at any time of day he deemed necessary.

We walked down the narrow hall and past the boiler room, where the familiar ticks and whirs I was so accustomed to accompanied the humid air. Anton neither asked any questions, nor paused to look at anything unusual. He had never been here, to my knowledge—but I was not certain that his reanimated brain held any of his previous memories. He certainly hadn't recognized me as his sister.

I was not certain which part of the library the Doctor would be in, so I looked for the telltale light and sound that would issue forth from anyone reading at night. There was no indication he was in the Religion section though that was not surprising, but it was the same with Literature, Art, and Music. He often spent his time in the Literature section, particularly among the ballads, for reasons I had yet to discern at the time.

"Light?"

It was Anton. He was pointing ahead, one crooked finger arcing

toward the Celestial Collections, the works assembled, meager though they were, by none other than Waverly Nicholson himself during his short, and somewhat scandalous run as mayor of Elusia City.

Though I could not fathom how the corpse of my brother noticed the light before I did, I nodded in agreement. He was right.

We continued across the threshold, between two lead and ivory columns, and into the Celestial Collection room. There, to our left, sat Doctor Adderson, bent over a pile of metal-bound books, his monocle shoved up before his eye, and one of his own lamps—powered by the portable briefcase-sized boiler he carried with him at all times—emitting a pale yellow glow. He had not lit any of the other oil lamps.

"Dellacarta, dear. I'm quite glad you're here."

"Good evening, Doctor Adderson," I said.

He did not look up at me, but held up a hand and beckoned me forward.

I inhaled briefly, trying to prepare myself for the next few moments. These were always the hardest.

"I was right, you know, the Doctor said. *Terribly* right. And I'm sorry for that."

"For?" I asked.

"Birdies," said Anton.

The Doctor continued. "There was a problem. There *is* a problem, I should say. You see, *they* don't know I can see them. Yet. Though I imagine it won't take long. They are remarkably smart! Adaptive! Which is more than I can say for our species."

He still did not look up at me, and instead flipped one of the pages he was reading, and then slid the glass magnifier over it to both weigh

it down and make it easier for him to read.

Now I could see what he was looking at: a book on optics. And there, too, was a scattering of lenses, peppered over books and the surface of the desk itself, like pocket-watch sized raindrops.

"You see, of course, I was right in my thinking as, you know, I most always am," he said.

He did look up now, and his gaze slipped quickly from me to Anton who said:

"Birdies."

"I half expected his head to have imploded by now, said the Doctor, but I see he's holding up rather well. Splendid! The last time I tried to use the collar on Mrs. Brovick, the remainder of her gray matter splattered all over the basement. And I'd only gotten her to stand."

It was no wonder the last cleaners had fled the house in terror.

"I'm still not quite following you, Doctor," I said.

"Haven't been doing your equations I see," he replied.

"Dutifully, I have."

"Well, I suppose I'll have to show you. Would you like to see?"

Doctor Adderson stood then, removing the monocle from his eye and blinking exactly six times, a habit he did from the first day I encountered him. But I noticed the monocle was unusually wrought, with silver filigree, not the usual brass model he wore on most excursions.

"I needed a quiet place to work, he continued. A place where I wouldn't be interrupted. And I had imagined that this evening might be momentous, which is why I decided to risk the use of Anton. I am rather happy he works so well. I think he's part of this whole mystery."

"Birdies," said Anton, and coughed up something red and wet.

"My point exactly."

Doctor Adderson was now quite close to me, and I am ashamed to admit, but I felt a touch of desire for him as he stared intently at me, adjusting his monocle. He was tall and weathered, his white hair tinged with yellow and streaks of darker gray, and he smelled of smoke and camphor, so I assure you, looks were not the primary reason. It was the way he looked at me, as if I were important; that was where the desire lay. We had our moments together, but his mind was elsewhere that day.

He began speaking frantically, "This is the grand experiment, of course! Up until now I've been the only one to notice, and it's only been through looking at the janitor, and the occasional glimpse at passers by. I admit to having shrieked like a belfry gypsy the first time I noticed them, but well, one gets used anything after a time, I suppose. Here: you stand there, and I'll walk over to the lamp. Then, on the count of six, if you'd please take a glance through—"

He walked back toward the lamp, still monologuing to himself. For my part, I was beginning to think he had finally descended into a state of dementia. He was quite old, even then.

"You recall my work, about ten years ago, was centered primarily on the strange sound waves—wavelengths—that I was able to detect with that remarkable device you broke."

The device he spoke of was unceremoniously called The Silver Ear, on account of it being silver and much like a large version of the human ear. I had broken it on my first day at the lab, under his instructions, by taking a

sledgehammer to it.

"I wrote down all the sounds I collected over the years with the Silver Ear and mapped them, then connected them. Patterns emerged. Strange spirals, points of concentration—well, of course you'd know. You've been working on the equations for six years! Well, here we are then. *One two three four five six.*"

It took me a moment to register he had indeed counted to six, and I hesitated to look through the lens.

"Birdies," Anton said, gently, almost encouragingly.

I took the monocle, pointed toward the Doctor, and did *not* shriek. However, it was not for trying. Inside my head I knew the exact timbre and tone I would use to convey my absolute horror and surprise at what I saw—I just seemed to have lost the capacity to do it. Nor could I move the monocle from my face—I was frozen as still as the wax statues at City Hall.

Of course, we all know what they look like now, the Birds. And the Doctor was right, you did get used to them after a time; or at least, eventually I did. But the first time for me, never having seen a drawing done as you likely have, never having been prepared, had me believe that I had completely lost my mind, and was, in fact, about to journey into the very pits of the Underland. And I suppose there is an irony there, considering how things turned out.

You know, I'm sure, all too well the form and function of the Birds—their featherless bodies slick with oil, their empty black eyes and open bony beaks, fanged and dripping with phosphorescent mucous, hovering just behind their Claimed. And the way their bodies seem to flicker in and out of existence, so dark the night seems bright...

"Anton," said the Doctor.

Anton leaned over and moved my hand away from my face. With the monocle lowered, I could no longer see the Bird hovering over the Doctor, blue and green tendrils of energy coursing from its mouth, fire kindling about it in the air. It was just Doctor Adderson, looking placidly at me, hands folded.

"Well?"

I wanted to burst into tears, but it had been so long since I wept, even in my utter terror, I could not summon the emotion. Instead, I felt numb and trembled.

"It's taking something from you, I said. Flowing from you—"

"I call it the *aetherspore*. I noticed it flowing from the others as well—what color was mine?"

"Blue and... green."

"Oh that's rather excellent; I quite like those colors."

I wheeled around, putting up the monocle, daring the creature behind me to show its face, but I saw nothing. Then the form of Anton appeared in my vision, and this time I did shriek.

I saw a form very like a man, but merely in shape. The eyes were empty black holes, the skin a luminescent white. He was much like a photograph reversed, but with less relief, less definition. He was almost beautiful, through the lens, far from the monstrosity I saw with my natural eye, a bright angel.

But strangely, there was no Bird at his back.

"She's a smart girl, I always said," muttered the Doctor.

"Birdies," said Anton, as I removed the monocle again and handed it back to Doctor Adderson with trembling fingers.

"You do not have one presently," he continued, "because they stay away from dead things. No, not you my dear! Your *brother*.

Anton, as you've observed, is simply reanimated. It scares the flight right out of them, for some reason, and it has to do with the wavelengths emitted by that collar you've seen on Anton; it amplifies his death sound. That sound not only scares them, but is also extremely useful when combined with low electromagnetic charges in the ways of reanimation."

I had too many questions, and I felt as if my brain's own workings had come to a rusty halt. I was breathing heavily, and my corset was not affording me much in the way of air. So I sat down across from where Doctor Adderson had been when I entered the Celestial Collections room, and buried my head in my hands and waited until I could speak again.

"So, what are they?" I asked, at last.

"As Anton has said, they're the Birds. They're old. Very, very old. I'm certain your mother told you stories of the Birdmen when you were young?"

"Of course... but those are stories—and they were always noble!" I said, remembering well.

"Even the most outlandish myths often are planted with seeds of truth. By my calculations, they are likely the first inhabitants of our pretty little green sphere. At least, the first sentient ones. We were likely scarcely more than quivering clumps of cells at the height of their culture."

"But what are they doing here now?"

"Slowly killing us all, of course," Dr. Adderson said, vaguely. "Well, sucking the life right out of us—that's where the *aetherspore* comes in. I believe it is our own life forces from which they feed. And the Birds are multiplying, too. Or have been. Their frequency was constantly

gaining during my studies, and if they've continued at the same rate, then, there are presently at least three Birds for every human living on the sphere now. I imagine if you were to take this monocle out with you now you'd see three, four, even five Birds hovering behind our fellow men and women."

"Can we stop them?" I asked.

"We can try. Doubt it'll do us much good so long as we're up here where they can get to us! We've been blaming premature deaths on Doctor Villison's theories of micro-beings infesting our blood. But it's more, much more. Something no tincture, poultice, or essence can cure."

I stared at the metal-bound books, occultist looking and curious, strewn about the desk. Had I not seen what I just did, I would have blamed them on Doctor Adderson's madness. Perhaps there was no blame, but there was a gun, holding open one the pages of Lenses and the Otherworld.

"You brought a gun? I don't expect you can shoot these Birds," I said.

"No, no, that was for me. Just in case you couldn't see them. I resigned myself to the idea that offing oneself is a much better fate than losing one's mind to strange hallucinations and fits of dementia. Would you mind bringing Anton a little closer? I'd feel better knowing that Bird is off my back."

"What do we do now?" I asked.

"We do what we always have. Keep one step ahead. You'll be in charge of finding fresh bodies to build our sentries, and I'll alert the Senate, I suppose."

You'll know what happened next, of course. The mass-hysteria, the political upheaval, the undead army. In the end we could find the Birds,

and we could stop them for a time with our undead brothers and sisters, but we could not rid ourselves of them. We retreated from the cities, and built shelters underground where we could pulse long, droning wavelengths and post our undead sentries. Every family got their own Anton, and Doctor Adderson made a fortune at first. Though was a savior, we never did return to our lives as we knew them again. And I think he felt himself a bit of a failure for it.

As the years passed by and no definitive way to destroy the Birds became apparent, and the Doctor became more withdrawn, even from me. He did try; for years he tried. But to see something, to understand it, yet not be able to hurt it in spite of the fact it is *killing* you—why, that is madness.

I do wonder, sometimes, what the Library must look like now, clouds of hungry Birds encircling it like vultures...

I came to understand the Doctor's research, and worked on in his stead. I employed his previous inventions to make life Below more tolerable, charted out the new cities, and the like. I do not deny that I have been useful, but truly some praise I get is unwarranted. I would have been able to do nothing were it not for Dr. Adderson.

But I am still cautious. It has been years since we heard from Doctor Adderson—he planned to take small undead guard with him, five or six perhaps, and live Above to see for himself what the Birds were up to now that they had such limited Claimed. So few people

remained Above. He hoped to find answers, but we have heard nothing.

With the strange plague last year that took out so many of our sentries, I can only imagine what must have happened to him. Though I have no doubt he took matters into his own hands, should the need have arisen. He always did want the chance to off himself, I think.

What never ceases to haunt me, though, in spite of our present peace, are the words Dr. Adderson left me with. The day before he left for Above, he placed the original silvered monocle in my hands, and pressed my fingers down, wrapping against the cold metal.

"We must give credit where credit is due, dear Dellacarta," he said. "And in all truth, the Birds were here first." ■

REVIEW *DEVIL SUMMONER: RAIDOU KUZUNOHA VS. KING ABADDON*

Demons in 1930s Japan



SIGURJÓN
NJÁLSSON

WHEN ONE SAYS THAT ATLUS' *Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner 2: Raidou Kuzunoha vs. King Abaddon* is set in an alternate history Japan where the Taisho era (1912 to 1926) has continued on into the 1930s, one might expect this alternate history setting to play heavily into the plot of the game. "How would Japan be different if the Taisho era had not given way to the strong militarism of the 1930s that

foreshadowed Japan's involvement in World War II?" For better or worse, this is not the case. The story is, instead, highly reminiscent of detective novels of that era, such as the Kindaichi series written by Seishi Yokomizo, but with the addition of the standard theme of all *Shin Megami Tensei* games: demons, devils, and dark magic.

The resulting world is curiously fascinating, and somewhat hard to

fit in a specific genre. Considering the darker nature of the occult aspect of the game mixed with the detective story and the fact that it is placed in the rather large capital city, a *film noir* feel would seem obvious, but this aesthetic is largely missing. Overall, visuals in the 'normal' world are bright and warm, and sometimes even comical. That is not to say that you won't be investigating gambling rings with

greasy mob bosses, but that even these characters often exist as caricatures. The dungeons, however, exist in the 'dark realm', which is sometimes an entirely new map, but oftentimes a macabre, demon-infested version of locations already visited in the normal world. Instead of the open navigation of the human world, where areas can be accessed by various streets and alleyways as in any city, certain paths are blocked in the dark realm, snaking you through the entirety of the city locale until you confront the boss at the end. This parallel light/dark world is nothing new to video games, but where it may lack in innovation, their handling of the two worlds is well executed.

Combat, on the other hand, shows off Atlus' skill at combining tried and true formulas in creative new ways. The only human you control is Raidou Kuzunoha, a student, detective, and first-class Devil Summoner who is entrusted to protect the capital city from evil. In essence, the rest of your party is composed of the summoned demons. So how do you acquire new demons? By negotiating with them on the battlefield, of course! Amid the normal battle commands, Raidou has the option to Negotiate, in which you may cease battle and attempt talking to one of the enemy demons. Each type of demon will have a different personality, ranging from cocky teenager to humble old man all the way to raving lunatic. In each case, you need to feel out the appropriate responses so they will work with you. For example, bragging about your skills may impress one demon but anger

another. During negotiation, the two demons you currently have out can help by flirting, debating, flattering, and so forth, all depending on their special negotiation skill. Each demon your recruit will build up Loyalty the more you use it, which helps you improve your skills as a summoner and will inspire them to give you presents, used in improving your sword.

As for battle itself, it generally runs in a typical action RPG style. While a menu can be brought up for dismissing and summoning demons, issuing new commands, and so forth, much of the combat is controlled through real time action. Raidou can shoot his revolver, attack with his sword, perform special attacks, guard, evade, and help his demons to avoid attacks. Demons act by repeating a move of your choosing unless commanded otherwise. In addition to the standard RPG tendency for elemental strengths and weaknesses, *Devil Summoner 2* also adds Frailness. While the damage increase is comparable to a normal weakness, when demons are hit with attacks they are frail to, they are also temporarily stunned. By physically attacking stunned demons, MAG is recovered. MAG is essentially MP, the points expended when using special attacks or magic. This extreme emphasis on utilizing

the weak point of your enemy is highly characteristic of *Shin Megami Tensei* games, and adds an element of strategy. Frailty can quickly swing the tides of battle, and players would be foolish not to quickly master the strategy. All of this makes a combat system that is fun and engaging, and often left me poised at the edge of my seat. Of course, demons have uses outside of battle too. They possess one or two skills to use in investigations, such as mindreading, disguise, and scouting. This means that a well rounded party is not simply one with a good battle plan, but one with some useful negotiation and investigation skills as well.

In spite of the rather small scale release of *Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner 2: Raidou Kuzunoha vs. King Abaddon*, the game is certainly worth seeking out, and likely soon before its rarity causes prices to skyrocket, as happened with its predecessor. The game provides *Shin Megami Tensei*'s usual blend of humor and macabre in a very 1920s and '30s world of detectives, mad scientists, and all other sorts of pulp fiction goodness. For fans of good game play, witty writing, and a touch of the occult, it's a hard game to pass up. ■



Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner 2: Raidou Kuzunoha vs. King Abaddon, the game is certainly worth seeking out, and likely soon before its rarity causes prices to skyrocket, as happened with its predecessor. The game provides *Shin Megami Tensei*'s usual blend of humor and macabre in a very 1920s and '30s world of detectives, mad scientists, and all other sorts of pulp fiction goodness. For fans of good game play, witty writing, and a touch of the occult, it's a hard game to pass up. ■

"To be generous, the dieselpunk DIY scene is, well, nascent."

The Flying Fortress (flyingfortress.wordpress.com)

REVIEW NIGHTSIDE SERIES

Neon-noir

HIDDEN WITHIN THE SQUARE mile of Central London lies the sick, dark heart of the City, a vibrating dangerous place filled with supernatural beings and agents of both Heaven and Hell who try to use the humanity of the area for their own (often corrupted) agendas.

This place is the Nightside, where 3 AM, the hour of the wolf, never ends and the neon has never been darker and bright at the same time. Where dreams and more often nightmares come true whether you want them or not, and your soul might be ripped away the second you don't pay attention.

It is in this place we find our unlikely hero, private investigator John Taylor. He looks human, but he isn't, quite. For four books long the reader is left to wonder just what his other half on Mother's side is, and I shan't spoil it for you here. Taylor is a man of honour: he has his own code of morality and the gift of finding whoever or whatever he wants to, just because he can. That doesn't make him your typical good guy though. He will happily do acts considered bad or even evil by some to save either himself, his friends, the day in general or simply to finish a job to a good ending. He is stubborn, persistent, and more than often chased by a motley crew of villains of all ilk, often types you don't see pop up in other types of horror or detective literature. And even if you recognize them, you certainly wouldn't expect the author to have turned them in what he has.

When his gift fails him, there



are friends and fellow-monsters (as he calls them) to either come to his aid or hunt him down. There is Razor Eddie, the Punk God of the Straight Razor, who cannot die and has godlike powers, trailing the streets to do good, whether Good wants him as an agent or not;

Suzie Shooter, AKA Shotgun Suzie, the Nightside's infamous bounty hunter who never misses unless she chooses to and the reference made at hearing her name of "oh shit it's her, run" is well deserved;

Alex Moressey, the barkeeper of Strangefellows, the oldest drinking hole in the world and last descendent of Merlin Satanspawn;

And last but not least: Walker, the man who preserves the status quo between the Powers That Be. Walker is every inch the Londoner



HILDE HEYVAERT

city gent, impeccably dressed and everyone always does his bidding, for he has the Voice of Authority. It is whispered that once he made a corpse sit up to answer him.

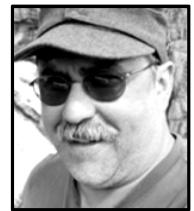
It is around these principal characters that the stories unfold: *film noir* type tales of missing persons and objects, intrigue, love and lust. Rather than normal human antagonists the evildoers in these tales are fuelled with supernatural abilities ever so imaginative. Each character has its own back story and the author never fails to startle.

Green has to this point written nine instalments in this brilliant series and it is easy to see why people love it so much. *Nightside* books grip their reader and don't let go until the story is complete. The stories action-packed and the pace so steady that you are likely to lose track of time while reading. After each novel you simply cannot help but wonder what he'll come up with next in the extraordinary lives of John Taylor and his friends and foes.

The great thing about these books is that you don't have to read them in chronological order. Every book very briefly covers what came before so that the reader who has started at a later point never has to wonder what happened previously, yet is left curious enough to want to find out for himself. Also with each book, you discover more and more about that dark heart of London, the Nightside itself, which gives a fabulous background to the entire story as it focuses on the place as much as the characters. ■

TUTORIAL

Metal casting for everyone



DAVE CLAUS

WOULD YOU LIKE TO FABRICATE small parts for your project? Are you looking for a way to make jewelry or buttons for your steampunk wardrobe? Read on and learn some basic skills and methods to do so easily and cheaply.

The modern age has changed people, they have become increasingly out-of-touch with basic technologies that were once common knowledge. We have gotten used to a 'buy, use, and discard' frame of mind. In days past, we were more apt to make what we needed. Purchased items would have been repaired or modified for reuse rather than discarded. All people needed to possess skills of materials and methods that have been all but forgotten today. Everyone needed a fair amount of practical technical knowledge and skill just for simple daily tasks that we take for granted.

Today, a small segment of the population tries to keep this information and these skills alive. Steampunks are a part of that group and very enthusiastic part. In this short article, I will show that small scale metal casting is within the means of almost everyone, even those with minimal to modest skill and facilities. The methods outlined will allow you to safely cast small metal items without spending much

money.

First and foremost is safety. We need to remember this, at all times, and I will give reminders at appropriate points in the project. The recommended metals are of extremely low toxicity and fairly low melting point, below the temperature of ignition for wood and paper. However, you can still receive serious burns if careless. Safety goggles that completely surround the eyes are necessary, a full-face safety shield would be even better. You will need leather gloves that fit sufficiently well to allow you to pick up small objects easily and without clumsiness. I will outline other safety matters as we continue, but it is important to completely read this entire article, more than once if it helps you understand something better.

Please understand that even though this process has been made as safe and simple as possible, there are still possible hazards involved. If you choose to try these methods, it is your personal responsibility to determine whether or not to accept the risks.

Now, let's get started. For this article, I'll stick to what are known as "Low Melt" or "Low Melting Temperature" alloys. For the most part, these

are known as "Cerro" alloys, and each has a name such as Cerrobase or Cerrobend. They are all silver in color and don't tarnish. I won't bore you with a full technical write-up on these metals, but will show a small chart with the names, component metals, and the approximate melting temperatures. Their main appeal for this project is that the varied alloys can melt at slightly above body temperature (rare and expensive) on up to over 300°F. The down side is that most but not all of these alloys contain a percentage of lead. The lead-free alloys offer low toxicity with only slight increase in cost and are my suggestion for beginning with metal casting. The alloy that I recommend for this type of project is "Cerrocast" and is very low in toxicity because there is no lead or cadmium in the makeup.

This alloy melts between 218°F and 338°F and doesn't discolor when heated or cast. Most "Low-Melt" type alloys are generally sold



in one-pound increments with discounts when ordering higher quantities. I'll give a list of possible suppliers, but I recommend shopping on-line for the best price with shipping for your location. Remember, shipping will be almost the same for one pound as for five pounds.

These temperatures don't warrant a real crucible, so a small steel or aluminum can, with an added handle, will be sufficient. For simplicity, a set of cheap stainless steel measuring cups can be purchased which will allow a choice of sizes and have smooth inside surfaces and a handle. For pouring small amounts more precisely, a stainless steel tea spoon works well.

For this article, I'll stay with silicone rubber molds. You can purchase finished silicone molds for

a number of suppliers of two-part silicone in either a pour-able type or knead-able putty. For this project, I used the putty with very good results. The brand, Amazing Mold Putty by Alumilite Corporation was purchased at a local hobby and craft store and isn't noted as being silicone, but probably is. After reading the instruction sheet, it shows that the material is capable of withstanding 400°F, which is fairly typical of most silicones. The original to be reproduced is attached to a polyethylene container lid with two-sided foam tape, then coated with a mold release agent so the silicone will not stick to it. There are a variety of release agents such as Mold Release and Conditioner by Castin Craft (also purchased at the hobby and craft store), or Liquid Wrench Dry Lubricant with Teflon.

Equal parts of the silicone putty are

kneaded together, rolled into a smooth ball, and pressed over the coated item. Press the putty evenly around the original trying to get all trapped air out. Finish the mold by pressing a flat item onto the putty so the finished mold will sit flat. This putty sets up in only

twenty minutes and is ready to

excess. The talc allows a microscopic path for air to escape when the metal is poured, without it, air bubbles will show up in the surface of the finished casting. Sit the mold level in the pie pan or cookie sheet, and prepare the alloy metal for melting. Work outside if possible or near an open window for good ventilation

To avoid food contamination, I suggest not using your stove-top to melt metal. A small electric hot-plate or a camp stove will work very well but shouldn't be used for food afterward. Choose a melting container. Small aluminum or steel cans will work if you attach a handle with screws or pop-rivets. For simplicity, I prefer a stainless steel measuring cup with a handle. The cup should be large enough to get the end of an alloy ingot in.

Use safety glasses or shield from this point on!

Larger ingots can be broken into smaller pieces by propping over two blocks of wood and cracking in the middle with a hammer. Put the pieces in the cup and put on the hot plate set at a medium to medium-high heat. You'll have to experiment with your own heating system. The metal will melt shortly, slowly at first, then more rapidly. Carefully and gently, stir the metal with the wood Popsicle stick or tongue depressor to make sure the metal is completely molten and not slushy. If the heat is too high, the surface of



- #1 Silicone mold putty
- #2 Stainless steel measuring cups with handles
- #3 Mold release spray (Castin Craft brand)
- #4 Trilobite fossil mounted to polyethylene lid and finished silicone mold
- #5 Medallion mounted on brass plate and finished silicone mold
- #6 Double sided foam tape (3M brand)
- #7 Purchased silicone candy mold with sea shell impressions

various crafts such as candies, soaps, and jewelry. You can also easily make your own molds from two-part RTV silicone rubber using an original item as a form. There are

remove the original. If the mold doesn't have any bubbles or defects, it's ready to use. Sprinkle the inside of the mold with talc and blow out the



the alloy will start to get a blue shimmering film of oxide that will need to be skimmed off and the heat turned down slightly.

The wood stirrer is also for skimming as well as being your temperature indicator. The wood should just start to brown slowly if the temperature is in the proper range, smoking and charring means that it is too hot and needs to be turned down. Use the stirrer to stroke the surface of the molten alloy, dragging the oxides and contaminants to one side where they can be scooped out and put aside to cool on the metal pan before discarding. The clean molten alloy is now ready to pour. Small amounts of oxides won't cause problems. You can either pour directly from the measuring cup into the mold, or

you can be more precise by using a stainless steel tea spoon. It needs to be heated to the temperature of the molten metal by stirring the metal until it no longer freezes on the spoon. Hold the handle of the measuring cup with a leather glove, and spoon the metal into the mold to the desired level. A couple of light taps on the mold with the spoon will help level the metal and work out any air. Return the cup to the hot plate and allow the mold to cool. When molten, the metal will appear

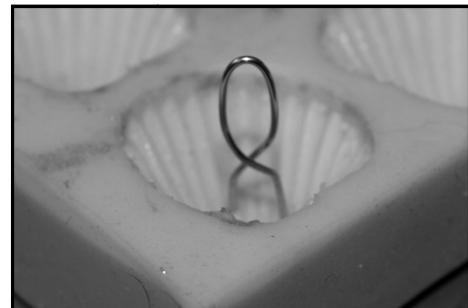
fairly shiny, as it cools it will get a frosty or crystalline finish as it gets slushy until entirely frozen. Wait five minutes or more to touch the surface with the spoon or wood stick, if frozen, the cast piece can be removed from the mold. The metal is still hot enough to burn you, so

use care. Generally, the mold can be turned over with gloves and flexed to remove the piece. If the piece is satisfactory, set it aside to cool before finishing. If it's flawed, put it back into the cup to re-melt. You may have to repeat this process a number of times to get

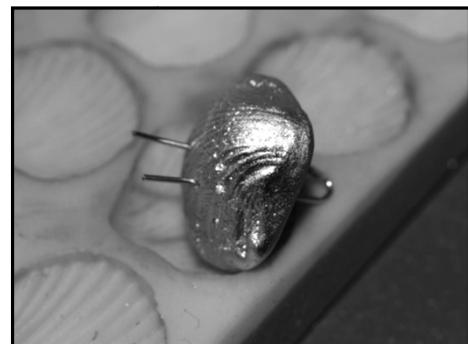
comfortable doing it and to get a decent result. Don't feel bad, the metal can be re-used each time, so there isn't any waste. There's a lot of trial and

error involved so don't be afraid to experiment a bit. Just work safely.

Small cast items can be used to make clothing buttons with an additional step in the casting process. A loop to sew the button on the garment can be made by casting the item around a wire loop which will protrude from the rear. The easiest method that I've found for doing this is to make a short "U" piece of wire, and give it a single 180° twist in the middle to keep the wire from pulling out of the button.



The two ends of the wire will still be parallel and are stuck into the silicone mold with a short length of the loop sticking above the mold. When the button is cast, the end of the loop will protrude from the back of the button if the process is successful.



If the button doesn't turn out as expected, just put it back in the pot to re-melt. The wire will float on the surface and can be skimmed off with the oxides and contaminants. If the button looks good, cut the protruding wire ends with the flush-cuts, and with a very fine file, lightly file even with the surface. The ends should be almost invisible. All the cast items can be filed or sanded to remove excess material and dress the edges to a desired shape. An alternate method of making a button would be to drill small holes for threads in the cast piece.

The finished casting can be used as is, or it can be lightly polished to bring up the high points. You can use any metal polish for a shine, or Scotch-Brite for a brushed



The finished items with the original medallion and trilobite to the right of the cast pieces. Above them are the two seashell buttons.

look. As for the trilobite and such low temperatures, soldering is difficult but not impossible. The

pins or brooches by fastening a pin-back mechanism to the back side. An easy method would be to use epoxy, or it could be held in place with wires and the molten alloy metal cast around it. Since these alloys melt at

alloy itself will solder if you use soldering flux on the joint.

I hope that you'll find this procedure useful and fun. Even if you purchase all the items at once, you shouldn't even need to spend \$100 (or the equivalent). As mentioned, a list of suggested suppliers is provided below. Once you've cast a few items, you'll probably want to try more ambitious projects. The skies are the limit. ■

Low Melting Temperature Alloys

Materials and melting properties:

Material Composition Notes

255°F	Cerrobase	55.5% Bismuth, 44.5% Lead
158°F	Cerrobend	50% Bismuth, 26.7% Lead, 13.3% Tin, 10% Cadmium
218°F – 338°F	Cerrocast	40% Bismuth, 60% Tin
117°F	Cerrolow-117	44.7% Bismuth, 22.6% Lead, 8.3% Tin, 5.3% Cadmium, 19.1% Indium
134°F – 149°F	Cerrolow-136	49% Bismuth, 18% Lead, 12% Tin, 21% Indium
134°F – 139°F	Cerrolow-140	47.5% Bismuth, 25.4% Lead, 12.6% Tin, 9.5%
147°F – 149°F	Cerrolow-147	48% Bismuth, 25.6% Lead, 12.8% Tin, 9.6% Cadmium, 4% Indium
174°F	Cerrolow-174	57% Bismuth, 17% Tin, 26% Indium
162°F	Woods Metal	50% Bismuth, 25% Lead, 12% Tin, 12.5% Cadmium
218°F – 440°F	Cerromatrix	48% Bismuth, 28.5% Lead, 14.5% Tin, 9% Antimony
160°F – 190°F	Cerrosafe	42.5% Bismuth, 37.7% Lead, 11.3% Tin, 8.5% Cadmium
240°F – 260°F	Cerroseal	50% Tin, 50% Indium
240°F – 260°F	Cerroseal-35	50% Tin, 50% Indium
203°F	Cerroshield	52.5% Bismuth, 32% Lead, 15.5% Tin
281°F	Cerrotru	58% Bismuth, 42% Tin
449°F	Tin	100% Tin
621°F	Lead	100% Lead

Chart information from:
McMaster-Carr Supply Company

Sources for Materials and Supplies

These are just a few suppliers, there are many more worldwide.

Low-Melt Cerro Alloys:

Cerro Metal Products Company
www.cerrometal.com/lowmelt.html
 McMaster-Carr Supply Company
www.mcmaster.com Search under Foundry Metals
 HiTech Alloys
www.hitechalloys.com/hitechalloys.htm
 Hallmark Metals Corporation
www.hallmarkmetals.net/?src=overture

Two-part RTV silicone:

Amazing Mold Putty by Alumalite Corporation, Kalamazoo, Michigan
www.moldputty.com
 C R Resins
www.cresins.com
 Environmental Technology Inc.
www.eti-usa.com

Mold Release Agents

Environmental Technology Inc.
www.eti-usa.com
 Liquid Wrench Dry Lubricant with Cerflon (Teflon)
www.gunk.com

Flush-Cut Side Cutters

www.budgetgadgets.com
 E-Bay store: budgetgadgets_com
 Part No. TU-21 or TU-22

None of the companies listed here are in any way affiliated with this magazine.

COLUMN THE LIQUOR CABINET

Poisonous!!

THE NEFARIOUS
DOKTOR HARMON

LIKE MOST SPECIALIST IN ETHICALLY-QUESTIONABLE fringe scientific research, I regularly entertain guests so as to maintain the social ties that will be necessary for effective governance when I ultimately establish my complete dominion over this planet. When hobnobbing with a genius such as myself, these guests tend to have certain expectations with regards to the refreshments, and I make an effort not to disappoint them. Unfortunately, serving random chemicals from around the lab isn't really the best way to care for your future minions' survival and potential usefulness, so I tend to serve more conventional beverages, with a bit more effort put into appearances.

The simplest approach, though only an inexpensive one for those of us with extensive laboratories, is glassware. Test tubes large enough to hold two ounces of fluid make the perfect shot glasses, while beakers and Erlenmeyer flasks of various sizes can double as tumblers and highball glasses. Equally simple is serving brightly-colored drinks that resemble your more exotic reagents. The most widely-used ingredient for this is blue Curaçao, a liqueur flavored with bitter oranges that comes in a lovely indigo color and can readily be used in place of triple sec in almost any cocktail to turn it bright blue. Midori melon liqueur, which is a loud green color, can be used to produce drinks the color of stereotypical radioactive waste. (In fact, as all real gentlemen of science know, the real thing is far less aesthetically appealing—and far less delicious.) One typical use for Midori is the Japanese slipper, a shot consisting of equal parts Midori, triple sec, and lemon juice.

Another ingredient deserving special mention is tonic water, which glows brilliantly under ultraviolet light. For something more colorful than just a gin and tonic, consider a highball glass (or a 400 mL beaker) full of ice with a shot of rum, a shot of blue Curaçao, and enough tonic water to fill it, for something bright blue and fluorescent. When made with ordinary triple sec instead of the blue Curaçao, this is known as a Penguin.

For those whose controversial research tends more toward the biological, cocktails that resemble specimens are achievable. Most people are sufficiently used to red beverages that they just don't cut it when it comes to blood, but that's fine; any dense red syrup (grenadine works, but the color is better and the flavor less commonplace if you use raspberry syrup instead) can be poured through a cocktail to form a layer on the bottom that resembles a bloodstain. This takes a little practice, and works best if you pour it from a significant height. Personally, I suggest adding a splash of raspberry liqueur on the bottom of a White Russian (equal parts Kahlua, vodka, and cream). You could also try mixing something with a purer white color to make the blood effect more dramatic, such as equal parts white rum, white crème de cacao, and cream, with raspberry on the bottom.

Then there are always special effects. Flaming cocktails have a venerable history; in fact, what might just be the world's first piece of flairtending was a nineteenth century drink called the blue blazer. You will need two mugs, one with two and a half ounces of rye whiskey in it and the other with two and a half ounces of boiling water. Light the whiskey on fire, pour it into the water, and pour the mix back and forth from one cup to the other until the flames go out, then add a teaspoon of sugar and a piece of lemon peel. A simpler but no less dramatic option is the flaming Dr. Pepper. To make it, fill a shot glass three quarters of the way with amaretto and by float a bit of high-proof liquor such as Everclear on top. Light it on fire, then drop it into a pint of your favorite ale.

For those not interested in playing with fire (but honestly, what gentleman of science does not play with fire on occasion?) the familiar look of many of our more sinister experiments can be replicated by making a drink traditionally served on the rocks, but straining it onto a few small pieces of dry ice. It will produce a delightful fog while simultaneously keeping the cocktail chilled.

What gentleman of science does not play with fire on occasion?

SERIES LOCAL STEAMPUNK

City of secrets



HILDE HEYVAERT



LOUVAIN IS PROBABLY THE LARGEST STUDENT CITY of Belgium, or perhaps better said: the city with the largest concentration of students. And therefore, it is a lively, busy and largely youthful place. This however, does not mean that we cannot find steampunk there.

On first sight, it doesn't look like much of a steamy place at all, but when we go down to the city park we find a wonderful sort of pagoda, in Regency style, which offers a nice view on the park and shelter from bad weathers—or simply a nifty place to hang out.

Following that path, we come across the beautiful Chinese globe statue, on the square outside of the Chinese Institute, almost hidden away from the busier traffic of the Naamsestraat by nothing but a small covered gateway. This makes for a lovely little area that explorers and aristocrats alike will approve off no doubt. Actually it might require a bit of a search to find it, so you could make it your own little inner city expedition or quest to uncover it.

Going onto the Great Market there is the café known as Bar Louis (pretty much opposite the Renaissance City Hall and a few doors down from St. Peter's Church) with its steamy and art deco decor. Besides the atmosphere there are golden and comfortable sofas, ornaments and above all the fireplace converted to bookshelf with novels and magazines available for clients to read at their leisure. Reading material ranges from design to architecture to politics and entertainment. The Belgian

members of the *Gazette* team have often invaded it for drinks and photoshoots.

Only a few meters from Bar Louis, on the crossing point between Kortestraat and the Old Market we have the lovely store known as Louvanist. It is specialised in vintage, selling everything from adorable little cards to perfume, to wines, furniture and period-inspired costume (mostly dieselpunk styles). The proprietors are fine people and always ready for a conversation or helping out their customers (and allowing the *Gazette* to take pictures in their store, for which we cannot thank them enough). If you love steampunk, or vintage, chances are that you will find something you like here. Bring enough money though, as you know these things can be a bit on the pricey side.

Another café of interest is The Wiering in the Wieringstraat. Filled to the brim with antiques, you can see a collection of accordions, vintage photos, pipes, and many other things from days past here.

On Saturdays there is a market around the Brusselse and Mechelse streets. Many traditional and vintage items can always be found here. Also worth a peek is the attached flea market where people have great things like antique gramophones and telephones for sale.

Louvain is one of those places that is more than meets the eye. Things that might not look very steamy at first glance turn out to be magnificent upon closer scrutiny. And if you have the opportunity to investigate the city, it is well worth it. ■



REVIEW *WOLFENSTEIN*

Nazi madness

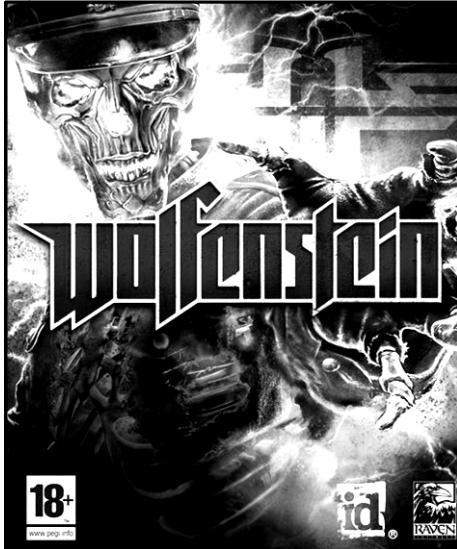


JAMES ROBERTS

THE *WOLFENSTEIN* SERIES HAS been around since 1981 for the Apple II computer. Things have much changed since then though and the games have seen many incarnations across numerous platforms with ever different plots. The latest is for the Playstation 3 and fits in with the more modern plotline of *Wolfenstein*'s canon (which builds on the 1990s game *Wolfenstein 3D* and the later sequel *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*) and like them is a first person shooter.

The player takes on the role of William 'B.J.' Blazkowicz; a special allied agent in the Second World War, in his fight against General Zetta and General Wilhelm 'Deathshead' Strauss of the SS Paranormal Division. These sinister antagonists are responsible for a plethora of evil experiments and research into potentially war-winning weapons, which B.J. must confound throughout the games. The latest installment surrounds the mysterious 'veil'; a shadowy dimension parallel to our own which possesses in its dark halls a power source (known as Black Sun energy) which the Nazis are hoping to harness into a war-winning weapon. As the game progresses, more is learned of this mysterious world beneath a black sun (which gives the powerful energy its name), and the ancient race known as the Thule, who tampered with that dark dimension.

The Veil's properties can be harnessed by B.J. to allow the player



to slow down his enemies or create a shield of energy about him. These powers are nothing new to gamers and merely provide other before-seen abilities. The weapons available are plentiful and each one can be upgraded with many features such as scopes, larger caliber boring and silencers which give you more of an edge as you advance through the different missions. The mechanics of the game are pleasant as are the graphics which, although not top-draw, are good. The variety of enemies is also challenging. B.J. must battle with normal *Heer* Infantry, sinister extra-dimensional beings, and much more in between. The levels are well designed, set about the town of Isenstadt where the Paranormal Division are conducting their research. The player gets to fight through many such levels like the streets of the town, an SS headquarters, and a

hospital. Of particular genre-interest: one of the last levels takes place onboard a giant Zeppelin which can be seen floating over the town in earlier parts of the game.

The only floor with game play is the seemingly linear mission set up. The two factions which one must report to for missions; the resistance and a society of occult scholars, just hand out objectives and tell you where to go. There is an illusion of free play, like that in *Far Cry 2*, but much, much weaker. In fact, the 'free-roaming areas' of Isenstadt are small and quickly become tedious as you must traverse them regularly between the faction safe houses and mission areas. This doesn't make it any less of a good game however, yet it would have been nice if these ideas had been further developed.

The multiplayer options are unremarkable with few match types and maps compared to say, *Call of Duty: World At War*, let alone *Far Cry 2*. This means that *Wolfenstein* misses out on what makes a game successful, among such competition. The plotline and science fiction details are admirable as a true benchmark of this 'Weird War' genre, but the game itself is lacking in explorative game play and online options. It would be great to see more games like *Wolfenstein*—the imagination that went into level design and characters is fantastic—but more game play options and expansive mission levels could have made this a real class A game. ■

“As far as dieselpunk goes, I think that Ayn Rand is to dieselpunk what Jules Verne is to steampunk.”

Thorvald Barrett on dieselpunks.org

EXTRA HOLIDAY CARDS

Memorabilia



HILDE HEYVAERT

SEPTEMBER HAS TALK LIKE AN AIR PIRATE DAY (THE steampunk and dieselpunk version of International Talk Like a Pirate Day of course!) on 19 September and in October, of course, comes everyone's favorite spooky holiday: Hallowe'en!

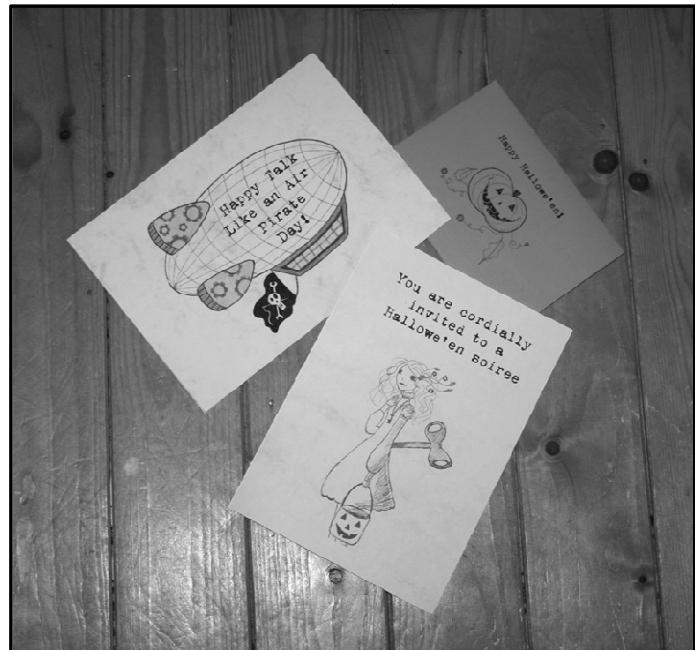
So for these happy occasion the *Gatehouse Gazette* presents you with these printables put together by Yours Truly. You can print them on any colour of paper you choose.

On the next pages is the Hallowe'en greeting card. Fold in the middle and then again in the other direction, giving you a postcard sized greeting card that wishes you a 'punktacular' Hallowe'en when you fold it open. Glue the blank sides together for the best result.

The Talk Like an Air Pirate Day greeting card works similar: fold double in the middle and glue the blank sides together. This way you get a nice landscape style postcard.

And we have not forgotten the party planners among our readers. For you we have the Hallowe'en soiree invitation with dainty clockwork doll and the gear Jack 'o Lantern. Just fold it like you've folded the Talk Like an Airship Pirate Day greeting card (only the

other way around, this is a portrait style invite) and glue the blank sides together *et voila*, an invite ready to be mailed out.



IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

We will take a look at the warmer side of dieselpunk with fashion by Hilde Heyvaert, an article about genre icon Howard Hughes, a review of *Polystom* by Trubetskoy and another short story.

We are still open to submissions so aspiring authors should not hesitate to contact us!

HOW TO REACH US

Do you want to be published in the *Gatehouse Gazette*? Comment upon one of our stories or submit one of your own! Please include your name (or nickname) as well as your location. Letters may be edited for purposes of space and clarity.

E-MAIL n.ottens@gmail.com

Where:

Date:

Time:

Dresscode:

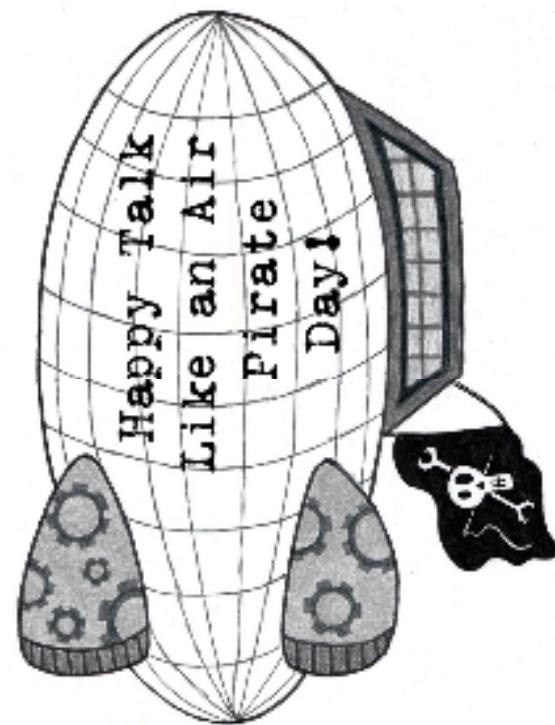
Costume:

Wear whatever
you like

You are cordially
invited to a
Hallowe'en soiree



Gatehouse Gazette





Gatehouse Gazette

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!



Wishing you a
'punktacular Hallowe'en!