

ISSUE 1

# GATEHOUSE GAZETTE

JUL '08



THE NEW STEAMPUNK & DIESELPUNK MAGAZINE

# Foreword

It is with great pride and pleasure that I can present before you, dear reader, this first issue of the *Gatehouse Gazette*, a publication aimed at steampunk and dieselpunk enthusiasts, dedicated to collect reviews and interviews and essays and articles within the scope of these both genres and, in case of the former at least, movement, to which we gladly adhere.

This publication could not have been without the enthusiasm of many earnest volunteers to whom I remain sincerely grateful. You will encounter their names or aliases throughout this gazette, yet I wish to list them here more prominently, for it is truly the product of their zeal you are holding or gazing at, and it is my hope that for our next installment I shall be able to mention these very same names again, perhaps even among several more, for equally outstanding work submitted!

—Nick Ottens, *Editor*

## List of Contributors:

Guy Dampier - 'Col. Adrianna Hazard'  
 Hilde Heyvaert - 'Octavius' - 'Piecrafter'  
 Jack Rose - James Roberts - 'The Czar'  
 Robert Rodgers - Delphinus Tucker

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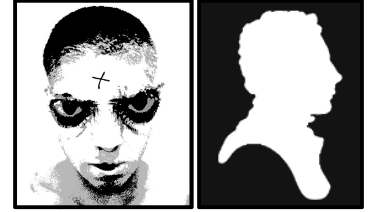
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Inquiries in regard to this publication should be forwarded to the editor, Nick Ottens, per [n.ottens@gmail.com](mailto:n.ottens@gmail.com).

# Discovering Dieselpunk

With Mr. 'Piecrafft' and  
Mr. Nick Ottens



By 'PIECRAFT'  
& NICK OTTENS

The term 'dieselpunk' was invented by *Children of the Sun*-game designer Lewis Pollak in 2001, to describe the steampunkesque character of his video game. Dieselpunk, however, according to Pollak, is "darker [and] dirtier" than steampunk; a world "of grit and oil, dust and mud [...] in which magic and technology are combined." Since, the genre has evolved considerably, dismissing, often, some of the elements of Pollak's dieselpunk while augmenting it with further influences, notably retro-futurism and Adventure Pulp.

In this article two gentlemen significant to the development of the genre discuss and define dieselpunk, its history, its characteristics and its significance, in the form of a discourse, they being Mr 'Piecrafft', who was the first to propound dieselpunk to wikipedia, as well as Mr Nick Ottens, who maintains the website, *The Gatehouse*, partly dedicated to dieselpunk. Seeking to define the genre, Mr Ottens provides the following interpretation:

**Ottens:** Dieselpunk is a literary genre derived from both cyber- and well as steampunk. Like steampunk, it is set in an anachronized past, specifically characterized by the rise of petroleum power and technocratic perception, incorporating, like cyberpunk, neo-noir elements, and sharing themes with Adventure Pulp.

**Piecrafft:** Basically dieselpunk from my understanding is exactly as you described, now as for its origins we could attribute it to two different sources; I feel the true origins of dieselpunk from my own indiscriminate research presented me with two camps from which the term originated from and eventually became definitive. On one side we have it

being coined to describe the 'world' in which Lewis Pollak has created his role-playing game *Children of the Sun* and in order to justify it from all other science fiction genres. On the other hand, it emanated from those aficionados of the literary 'punk genre' within science fiction who felt caught between cyberpunk overtones and the idealization of steampunk—connoting a distinct appreciation of the era that existed between the World Wars and their affects upon which an alternative world was invented during this time-setting.

At first it was accepted as a later adaptation of steampunk, set in the years following the Roaring Twenties. However many users and individuals pointed out the discrepancy of the technology and the distinct 'feel' of the environment being more relevant to the technology prevalent of those times; and thus the term followed adopting a new sub-genre to define a sub-category post-steampunk and pre-cyberpunk.

Many different names were given at first in the cacophony of trying to bring about a definitive understanding (this was without being aware of Lewis Pollak's already recognized term in RPG circles); atomicpunk, decopunk, aeropunk, and nazipunk were the few that were usually attributed. Pollak's definition related primarily to a more fantasy-based world with diesel-powered technology and also with the influence and ambience of the 1930s and 40s.

**Ottens:** There are certainly differences between the two: where Pollak's dieselpunk combines technology with magic in an obviously dystopian though rather fantastic setting, the dieselpunk that emerged as a true continuum between steam- and cyberpunk leans

more toward the former in terms of sensibilities and aesthetic, adopting characteristics of the time in which it is set—the Interbellum—more than Pollak's dieselpunk.

**Piecraft:** Yet I feel that at the same time the fans of steampunk and cyberpunk who felt an affection to alternate-historical pulp literature and games and movies felt a need to define this realm that was caught in a static limbo between both genres, one of perpetual transition between the continued publications of alternate World War II literature in which the Nazis won the war, and others in which the war had already started.

Between the fans of the steampunk genre adopting Pollak's term definitively to structure and give substance to the genre existing within that Interbellum period that had prior to this not been officially recognized as a genre but more so a spin-off or off-shoot of steampunk in later years or as simply alternate-history fiction. And the purpose for this was that most of the themes observed in dieselpunk literature were World War II-related and the process leading up to it as well as the consequences that followed it—including the Cold War and potential nuclear holocaust.

I think the first clear distinction that put dieselpunk on the conscious map of pop culture was the release of *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*. However, it is humorous to notice how many other films and literature as well as games share the same retro-futuristic themes found therein prior to this film having become popular and released. But this film seems to have made its mark as the first definitively accepted dieselpunk movie

**Ottens:** In regard to retro-futurism, I feel only the 'Ottensian' dieselpunk—that is, dieselpunk set before World War II—adopts retro-futurist elements in terms of design and technology. Dieselpunk set during the war or thereafter is obviously much less shiny and optimistic than fiction reminiscent of 1930s pulp adventures.

**Piecraft:** It is interesting for say, Wikipedia to try to define everything correlated to the style and look of the 1930s as being retro-futuristic, yet oddly enough many of the listed forms of retro-futuristic fiction seem to bear more of a significance to a less dystopic nature; i.e.: *The Jetsons*, *Astroboy* and so forth and would thus perhaps be seen as the post-cyberpunk to dieselpunk so as an utopian view of the progression as you stated in the pre-World War II environment ('Ottensian'). However, this leads into the domain of the potential of a further sub-genre because *The Jetsons* and *Astroboy* also possess a 'spacepunk' element, borrowing mostly just the look and feel of the retro-futuristic world.

**Ottens:** Retro-futurism, in my view, refers to the whimsical and optimistic, and nowadays obviously outdated, predictions about the future as produced throughout the 1920s and 1930s and early-Cold War years—the former in the shape of Futurism and related *avant-garde* movements; the latter inspired by the Space Age, dominated by nuclear enthusiasm and the conquest of outer space, when people began to look toward the future again with great hopes and dreams.

**Piecraft:** So would you perhaps say that retro-futurism is more so the perception of a utopian enthusiasm for the future in space and beyond, although it is still very much set in the world, as opposed to going further into space which would be my understanding of what would later lead into a spacepunk or space opera setting, like *Barbarella*, *Flash Gordon* and so on. So in other words, retro-futurism is the utopian side of dieselpunk within an Ottensian environment—being that it predates a horrible arduous World War, or perhaps leads after the war only things become much more settled and peaceful?

**Ottens:** Considering that World War II produced the Cold War, with its Red Scare and nuclear paranoia, I am reluctant to regard post-war retro-futurism as a symptom of peace; rather, it was a means by which people could escape the scariness of their own time by imagining the potential of technology. This,

however, did not require a confidence in the future similar to the optimism of the pre-war years. Where in the 1920s and 30s, belief in progress implied trust in both technology as well as human potential, in the 50s, people considered that by the year 2000, the world could either be a utopia of progress, or a post-nuclear wasteland.

**Piecraft:** I feel it is more relative to the hope and dreams of venturing further into outer space with the onslaught of the eminent Space Age. And this is perhaps demonstrated in the design and architecture and even environment of such a world. For instance we take the Chrysler Building in New York City as a prime example of the retro-futuristic design concept. This perhaps illustrates an enthusiasm for skyscrapers to be almost spacecraft-like structures bringing about an exciting idealism of the times, that people could live in what was once conceived by some sociologists as a possibility in the near future—Arcologies; large structures that could contain entire cities, not too different from Hannah-Barbera's own concept in their cartoon *The Jetsons*.

**Ottens:** Indeed! That something which was but a fantasy mere decades prior (skyscrapers) became a reality and a facet of daily life, strengthened the notion that the future would be a bright one.

**Piecraft:** Would it be acceptable to say retro-futurism is a sub-genre within dieselpunk? Being an artistic style it predates dieselpunk in regards to the namesake, and for a long time people at first started referring to dieselpunk as retro-futurist fiction. This was why I wanted to bring awareness to the juxtaposition of both.

**Ottens:** While retro-futurism is purely optimistic, and depicts even otherwise nasty affairs like war in almost cheerful fashion, dieselpunk, however utopian it may seem, is never ignorant to reality. Dieselpunk may adopt the aesthetic and sentiments of retro-futurism, but it never imitates it entirely. In dieselpunk, there is always the realization that the world and people and their technologies, are not

perfect, and that technology alone will not bring about the utopia of retro-futurism.

**Piecraft:** The only comparison is the fact that both share the time-period and artistic styles of the times. I would agree too—I see retro-futurism being the alternative utopian view of the 1930s predating a possible dieselpunk future setting.

**Ottens:** And, with that, certain sentiments inherent to those times and styles. But mostly, it is indeed the 'outside' the two share, but I consider retro-futurism basically hallow, predicting not realistically what could have been, while dieselpunk has more substance and explores a world that might actually have existed.

**Piecraft:** So then dieselpunk is very much dystopian in nature—however this is where we reach a quagmire with the discussion because *Sky Captain* is often noted as being retro-futuristic, yet I still see elements of the dieselpunk attitude present in the film. Of course this leads us to further scrutinize the different aspects within dieselpunk. I share in agreement the idea that it is split into two distinct environments, one prior or during the war and the other being towards the end or set after the war or in some cases after a great cataclysm that occurs due to the outcome of the war.

**Ottens:** I like to consider World War II the breaking point too. With the war begun, we have abandoned the 'Ottensian' and its characteristics—futuristic optimism and deco design and perhaps pulp influence also?

**Piecraft:** I think the pulp influence still exists in a post-war torn world but it is more of a semblance of the pulp ideology: a mere reflection, similar to the nostalgia one latches on to throughout time, especially given in a setting where there is no clear remains of civilization after a nuclear holocaust.

There are still many elements of the retro-futuristic, however, they have become distorted and warped into a negative outlook. I think the 'Piecraftian'

world of dieselpunk is concerned mostly with the effects the war has had or has with the world and the time it is set in. There clearly is a distinction because it presents the outcome as being more so bleak and gloomy, and in some cases even within a post-apocalyptic scenario. So unlike an 'Ottensian' setting, even though we are in a dystopian environment there is still hope. Whereas in the 'Piecrafterian' world there is no hope, and it is more of a continual dystopian view presented in such a case as Orwell's *1984* for instance. I would not say that the 'Ottensian' is particularly optimistic; it is still within a dystopian environment only it is more hopeful, because the war has not really presented the great downfall that is existing in the 'Piecrafterian' model.

**Ottens:** Is the 'Piecrafterian' about showing then how the war affected the 'Ottensian,' that is, obliterating the optimism of the latter, or about depicting rather how a, presumably prolonged and more violent, war affected the real world?

**Piecrafter:** I think I would say how it affected the world and society rather than the 'Ottensian' world because both are two different times. Of course we could assume that it also could be how it affected the world since the time of the 'Ottensian,' because one would assume the 'Piecrafterian' model follows suit.

**Ottens:** If both are exaggerations of reality, the 'Ottensian' dieselpunk being much more sophisticated and ambitious than the Interbellum really was, and the early-'Piecrafterian' much more hopeless than World War II and the immediate post-war years truly were, on what real-world time or place then is the late-'Piecrafterian' based, in which apocalypse seems imminent or has already occurred? If, of course, it is based upon any real-world time or place at all. Might it else be more similar to Pollak's original dieselpunk, a more fantastic world in which sometimes magic and technology are combined?

**Piecrafter:** Pollak's view embodied elements of the fantastic that in my view may not be present in such a world. Unless we take into account the more

ambitious view of for instance the Nazis having the capability of occult powers and alien technology which could be reinforced in such a world that would later on be either completely overthrown by the enemy or by a nuclear holocaust.

I think the 'Piecrafterian' has two outcomes; either a world in which the enemy or ruling authoritarian state are a controlling force, unveiling a truly hopeless dystopian future reminiscent of *1984* or *Brazil*, or the post-apocalyptic outcome seen in such movies as *Six-String Samurai* and *Mad Max*. However, the former is not always entirely horrible. Consider, for instance, *Fatherland*, in which the Nazis won the war and the world is albeit still in an authoritarian realm but things are not so bad.

*Mad Max* is perhaps the definitive work of fiction in a 'Piecrafterian' world of dieselpunk, because the story takes place in a world that has suffered the changes of a near-cataclysmic event which was sparked by the end of World War II.

**Ottens:** While I definitely consider *Mad Max* dieselpunk—how could a world on the verge of collapse, surviving solely by petroleum-based technology, not be?—are novels like *1984* and *Fatherland* not alternate history rather? What, besides that they depict a world shaped, presumably, by a different outcome to World War II, is really 'dieselpunk' about them?

**Piecrafter:** Take Philip K. Dick's novel, *The Man in the High Castle*, that is set in a 1960s in which the Nazis won the war, and Dick describes the Nazis as "bustling robotic factories across the solar system." It is further suggested that, "Nazi Germany continued their rocketry programs so that by 1962, they had a working system of commercial rockets used for intercontinental travel and also pursued space exploration, by sending rockets to the Moon, Mars and Venus." The technology is still prevalent, only a slight progression has occurred with a referential 'projection' of the technology from the result of the war.

**Ottens:** I consider *The Man in the High Castle* dieselpunk too. The novel is the perfect antithesis to the retro-futurism of 'Ottensian' dieselpunk. Novel like *1984* and *Fatherland* and *V for Vendetta*, however, do not change the world as it was at the time in which they are set, in terms of technology and culture. They change their histories, thus making them alternate history, yet I am reluctant to label them 'dieselpunk'.

**Piecraft:** I think when we bring into account the term 'punk' within the technological prowess of the world, so in this case diesel-fuel or combustible engines and so on, we have to agree it relies heavily on the dystopian view of the world due to the circumstances that have arisen for that period in time, and in most cases a direct reflection in the attitude of society from that technological prowess and advancement.

Therefore, 'Piecraftian' dieselpunk encompasses two outcomes from the dieselpunk environment that takes place after the Second World War or towards the end of it which leads to a predominantly dystopian and hopeless future that is either controlled by the ruling power of the war or completely in disarray within a post-apocalyptic landscape caused by a near-fatal cataclysm.

So what do you think would define the 'Ottensian' form of dieselpunk?

**Ottens:** We have already mentioned *Sky Captain*, which is probably the quintessential installment of 'Ottensian' dieselpunk. The *Indiana Jones* films, possibly with the exception of *The Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, as well as *The Mummy*, ought to be considered 'Ottensian' also, displaying an obvious pulp influence.

**Piecraft:** What about the darker side of the 'Ottensian'? Because as a 'Piecraftian' I believe the 'Ottensian' also shares two outcomes.

**Ottens:** The darker side of the 'Ottensian'? I did not realize there was one!

**Piecraft:** Where the 'Ottensian' goes wrong, yet there is still hope. I think within the 'Ottensian' there is the optimistic—or, as I prefer to call it, hopeful side—as well as a darker side. Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* would be a prime example of dieselpunk simply because of the style and technology as well as the visualization of the factory and cityscape.

**Ottens:** Yet at the time *Metropolis* was made, it was considered science fiction; dieselpunk did not yet exist. We do not normally consider the novels of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells 'steampunk' either.

**Piecraft:** Although set in a distant future—beyond the typical time period within dieselpunk—it is perhaps much more of an influence upon the style and technology prevalent in such a future dystopian society, large factories and big pumping machinery and other forms of radical technology and science that at the time of this film's making were purely fantasy. Also the design and setting of the cityscape presents a very Futurist artistic style which is coherent with the dieselpunk setting.

**Ottens:** 'Proto-dieselpunk' perhaps?

**Piecraft:** Yes, why not. I think it is necessary to still reference it as a good indication towards the understanding of the dieselpunk mentality even if it was made before the genre was formed.

Further darker 'Ottensian' dieselpunk could include anime such as *Last Exile*, *Casshern*, or even films as *Perfect Creature*, and to a degree Tim Burton's *Batman* series. I know many are liable to not acknowledge them as such but they do possess a darker dieselpunk world.

**Ottens:** Tim Burton's *Batman* has a definite deco influence; Burton himself even cited *Metropolis* as an inspiration for his films.

**Piecraft:** Bearing in mind *Batman* was very gothic which defined it as much darker in its outlook. Another quirky film that could be presented as dark 'Ottensian' is the obscure *Eraserhead* which has very

dark overtones, and yet still sustains itself within the similar time period and attributes themes and elements found within dieselpunk—the industry setting and mechanisms and styles of the time-period.

What we can come to understand then, is that dieselpunk is an upcoming new genre of the literary punk movement which has inherently been (albeit without having been defined) developed and employed into multiple areas of media. Its birth owes a lot to the alternative history fiction as well as the enthusiasm that was brought about with the sudden interest in anachronistic ideas such as demonstrated with the current sweeping movement found in steampunk. I think dieselpunk is still very young in its days but with further interest and encouragement we will find that along the way a more refined version of it will perhaps be borne from what is now a still large-scale genre, encompassing elements that over-lap with others such as retro-uturism, atomicpunk, space opera (or some times spacepunk), steampunk and even basic alternative history narratives.

As a genre dieselpunk possesses a lot of energy and potential. We can observe that it occurs predominantly within the spectrum of the 1930s leading up to the Second World War, however it is also worth noting that because it borrows the styles and attitude that were still prevalent towards the end of World War I, we can assume that the overlap between steampunk—which we know has often continued into the early 1900s—is perhaps inter-linked with the start of dieselpunk which we can ascribe to the year of 1918. The only differentiation would be the sudden drastic change in mind-set, attitudes, environment (after a worn-torn landscape from WW1) and ideas brought about with advances in technology, science and society which is clearly the case with the end of the war. We see a greater enthusiasm for life and a change in the world which brings about the Jazz Age and the Roaring Twenties. This is further endorsed by movies such as *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* found in the idealization of the hopeful ‘Ottensian’ dieselpunk.

However we can also observe negative events brought about by the ‘laissez-faire’ attitude of the previous decade, such as the Great Depression and the rise of Communism and Fascism and this in turn promotes a more grim and darker mood which we find in such examples of the dark Ottensian; *Delicatessen* and *Eraserhead*—the world all of a sudden does not feel so great as a looming war permeates above society and the technology once engaged in by the great purveyors of futurism and mechanics seems to have brought about a dirtier, grimmer world with pollution, now presenting a threat of the mechanical against mankind.

On the other side of the timeline one can imagine that the future from a dieselpunk world would be very different from that illustrated in cyberpunk. However, this does not purport to be entirely the case; we often find conflicting themes within both genres that inter-link. The future of dieselpunk is very uncertain but more so ends up becoming the precursor of cyberpunk—illustrated with such works as *Metropolis* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; two examples of the dystopian ‘Piecrafterian’. This is further promoted with the fact that many ascribe films such as *Mad Max*, *Tank Girl* and *Dark City* as examples of cyberpunk, but once again we can see that they invariably possess many dieselpunk qualities and therefore it can be assumed that whatever the bleak outcome from a ‘Piecrafterian’ dieselpunk setting is, the genre would more or less end within the timeframe of the 1960s and early-1970s—this is debatable still as everything is always left open to interpretation. But it is generally accepted that a post-apocalyptic setting occurs from the consequences of a great cataclysm, usually derived from a Third World War (as a continuation of the Cold War) or from the horrible effects of an ambiguous nuclear holocaust (usually perpetuated from the Second World War).

In conclusion there is still a lot to be said about dieselpunk, however it is firstly necessary that this amazing genre be recognized by the literary world as it has appeared out of the random mix of punk mentality formed through steampunk and cyberpunk



and its dysfunctional marriage with alternative World War II history. And so, I am hopeful to see a much more distinct presence of the genre appear gradually, as it has already germinated in an abstract fashion in previous works of fiction—albeit without a solid term—that empowered the era of the 1930s through the 1950s with science fiction. ■

Listed below are a few examples of films and other media that relate in context to dieselpunk whether it be thematic or in terms of style or attitude.

Examples of hopeful ‘Ottensian’ dieselpunk:

- \* *Just Imagine* (1930)
- \* *The Secret of Treasure Island* (1938)
- \* *The Spider Returns* (1941)
- \* *King of the Rocket Men* (1949)
- \* *The Invisible Monster* (1950)
- \* *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968)
- \* *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981)
- \* *The Rocketeer* (1991)
- \* *The Iron Giant* (1999)
- \* *Full Metal Alchemist* (2003)
- \* *Last Exile* (2003)
- \* *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004)
- \* *Monarch of the Moon* (2005)

Examples of dark ‘Ottensian’ dieselpunk:

- \* *Eraserhead* (1977)
- \* *Biggles* (1986)
- \* Tim Burton’s *Batman* (1989)
- \* *Delicatessen* (1991)
- \* *Kafka* (1991)

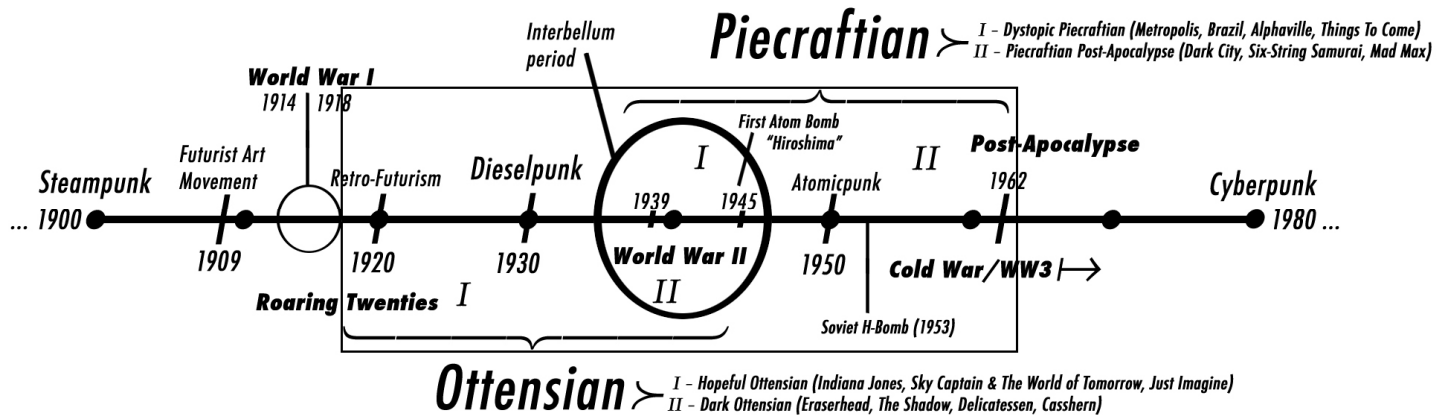
- \* *The Shadow* (1994)
- \* *The Big O* (1999)
- \* *Hellsing* (2001)
- \* *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* (2001)
- \* *Casshern* (2004)

Examples of dystopic ‘Piecraftian’ dieselpunk:

- \* *Things to Come* (1936)
- \* *Alphaville* (1965)
- \* *Fahrenheit 451* (1966)
- \* *Stalker* (1979)
- \* *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots* (1981)
- \* *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1984)
- \* *Brazil* (1985)
- \* *Fatherland* (1994)
- \* *La Cité des Enfants Perdus* (1995)
- \* *Metropolis* (2001)
- \* *Perfect Creature* (2006)

Examples of ‘Piecraftian’ post-apocalypse dieselpunk:

- \* *A Boy and His Dog* (1975)
- \* *Wizards* (1977)
- \* *Mad Max* (1979)
- \* *Diesel* (1985)
- \* *Radioactive Dreams* (1985)
- \* *Tetsuo* (1989)
- \* *Spirits of the Air, Gremlins of the Clouds* (1989)
- \* *Battle Angel Alita* (1993)
- \* *Six-String Samurai* (1998)
- \* *Blue Submarine No. 6* (1998)
- \* *Dark City* (1998)



# Steampunk Wardrobe

## "The Steampunk Summer"



By HILDE  
HEYVAERT

I have said it many times before, and I will say it again: steampunk is *not* a summery fashion style. It consists of many layers, many of them figure hugging which, unless you are able to withstand the heat of the summer climate very well, is frankly quite unpleasant. This does not mean however, that one should despair when summer lurks around the corner; we must merely adjust ourselves to the weather.

First of all, and I cannot stress this enough; sunblock. A high factor will not only ensure that you do not burn, it will also ensure that you do not tan. Sunglasses will protect your eyes; there are lovely pairs of vintage sunglasses available through the usual online stores and if you cannot find any of those, find a proper and distinguished pair at a shop in town. Lovely lace and Edwardian (pagoda) parasols and umbrellas, as well as sun hats and caps or shawls will also provide a good protection against the sun.

Now that we have covered ways to not turn lobster red or sick in bed with a sun- or heat stroke, we will start on the good part: the summer wardrobe. First of all, there is really no shame in not wearing a three-piece suit in summer! If you do not feel comfortable in a t-shirt with a wonderful steampunk print and don't wish to venture too far away from your suit, then there are several ways of not overheating. Wear shirts made out of linen or light weight cotton; they are a lot more airy than normal shirts and will allow your skin to breathe. Roll up the sleeves or wear short sleeved shirts. If you insist on wearing a waistcoat, also make sure that it is made out of light fabrics.

Those who do not have any problems with stepping away from the full steampunk outfits can buy fabulous shorts (distinguished Bermudas or slightly

more baggy and many-pocketed shorts for men and cute yet lovely bloomer shorts in many different lengths for women) combined with earth-tone t-shirts and tops with or without steampunk prints. For women poufed sleeved t-shirts also work perfectly.



For the women wanting to look feminine and proper in all weather there are the *Belle Epoch* inspired blouses with any kind of sleeve length (or no sleeves at all) on sale in several high street and designer stores that can be combined with flowing skirts of your preferred length. Make sure to pack a fan in your handbag for whenever the weather does become temporarily too much, or just as a fabulous ladies accessory to finish off your summer steam outfit.

*Et voila!* With just only a minimal effort and quite possibly some shopping you can keep on dressing in the steampunk styles you love! ■

*Photographs of Miss Hilde Heyvaert and Mr Tom Vanherck by Mr Bert Van den Wyngaert and Miss Els Vandesande.*

# An Interview

With Toby Frost, author  
of 'Space Captain Smith'.



By JAMES  
ROBERTS

In June 2008, Mr. James Roberts sat down for an inter-view with the author of the smashing interstellar steampunk adventure, *Space Captain Smith*, Mr. Toby Frost. Their conversation is faithfully transcribed below.

**Mr. Steiner:** *Thank you on behalf of the Gatehouse Gazette for sparing your time and attention to answer these questions. Also my personal thanks as a fan of your fine novel; Space Captain Smith.*

*Firstly Toby, you seem to be a busy man. You studied law and have worked in the legal profession since 2001, as if that wasn't enough you also found time to write for Solander; the historical novelist magazine, and also for The DVD Stack. Where did you find the time to work on Space Captain Smith (SCS)?*

**Mr. Frost:** *"Space Captain Smith was written in little bits, usually in the evening, a page at a time. As a result, it took about a year to write. I was able to find time after work—I suppose if you're keen enough to do something, you find the time to do it."*

*Your novel has been put under a number of genres; Humour and Sci-Fi mostly, but also classed as 'steampunk' by the steampunk community. What do you feel about this, and was a steampunk novel your intention when you set about writing SCS?*

*"When I started writing Space Captain Smith I wanted an old-fashioned, very British hero, and space seemed to give him the widest possible range of opportunities for adventure and comedy. With a lead character like that I suppose it was inevitable that he would end up in a sort of steampunk world: I think*

*steampunk allows a lot of scope for adventure, as well as allowing you to be tongue-in-cheek."*

*What connection do you have with the steampunk community? Do you consider yourself a steampunk?*

*"I've been into books like The Difference Engine for a very long time, but it's only in the last couple of years I've heard of steampunk as anything other than a type of writing. So I suppose that's a yes, although there are far better-attired people than me out there!"*

*Are there any of your favourite authors which stand out in your mind as particularly inspiring SCS or which you otherwise admire?*

*"Crikey. Favourite authors would be Mervyn Peake and George Orwell—not obvious influences in comedy, but both excellent writers in different ways. In comedy, I'm quite a fan of Blackadder, although I also liked P.G. Wodehouse's books quite a lot."*

*SCS has been compared to George MacDonald Fraser's Flashman, how do you feel about that?*

*"Flattered!"*

*There were some humorous references to a Martian assault on earth in your book. I don't want to give anything away and spoil things for potential readers, but would War of the Worlds or Space 1889 rank highly on your list of inspirations?*

*"I've never read Space 1889, but The War of the Worlds has always been an inspiration. I first read it at 10, and I still find the tripods quite creepy. It's one of the first real science fiction novels, and it's*

surprisingly hard-hitting even now. I don't think there's ever been a definitive film version, although Alan Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* [Volume II, red.] has some pretty good Martians."

*One of the aspects I most enjoyed about SCS was the observational humour of the world around you. It seems you have a tongue-in-cheek stab at a number of things; mostly hippies and the new Christian-Right. Apart from the appreciated comic effect, why did you put these in and did you find it difficult to so seamlessly fit contemporary comedy into the setting and genre of book?*

"The modern-day references fitted surprisingly easily into the book, but I never sat down to produce anything satirical, but I needed suitably daft people for Smith to run up against—comedy is as much about conflict as any other type of writing, I think—and they seemed right to fit into this role."

*Your colourful characters have got to be one of the best parts of the tale, Toby, particularly Captain Smith himself and, in my opinion, his alien side-kick; Suruk the Slayer. What inspired the creation of these brilliant characters?*

"I think both of them are quite recognisable types, Smith especially so. Smith is a sort of exaggerated British hero: as well as being very brave, he is also modest, socially inept and terrible with the ladies. I wrote Suruk partially as a parody of the noble-warrior stereotype that appears in a lot of science fiction, and partially as a heroic savage, Rider Haggard-style. I liked the idea of a character who could provide 'wise', largely useless advice at appropriate moments!"

*The Ghast Empire are the villains of the plot, for the benefit of our readers could you give us a quick over-*

*view of them, and how you came up with such wonderful antagonists?*

"Well, in brief they're man-sized ants who wear leather trenchcoats and steel helmets. They live in a big hive, where they spend their time watching propaganda, attending rallies and plotting to take over the galaxy on behalf of their master, Number One. They're also rather into genetics, which crops up in the novel.

"They weren't too hard to create: classic SF (and steam- and dieselpunk) often involves the hero and his mates fighting hordes of militaristic drones, and making the villains ants seemed the, er, "logical" way to do this in space."

*Would you ever consider writing a radio-adaptation or screenplay for Space Captain Smith?*

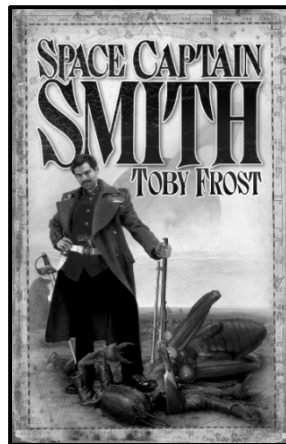
"That would depend on whether the pay satisfied my delicate artistic sensibilities! But in truth, if the opportunity arose to hear or see my book performed, I'd jump at the chance."

*I notice that in my copy of SCS there is reference to a sequel; Isambard Smith and The God Emperor Of Didcot. Due for release in September. Can you reveal anything about your latest novel?*

"Certainly: it's about a plot to deprive the British Space Empire of tea. Tea, which provides the Empire with moral fibre, is one of the most precious substances in the galaxy, and without it the morale of Earth would suffer a crippling blow. Much of the Empire's tea is grown on the planet Urn: when Urn is attacked by cultists and aliens, Smith is sent to save the planet and get the tea flowing again."

*Will Isambard Smith and The God-Emperor of Didcot see the end of Captain Smith? Or will we see further novels of his adventures?*

"Well, so long as people keep reading—and buying!—I'll keep writing!"



*May we ask if there are any other writing projects you're working on, or thinking of working on alongside or after Captain Smith? And what you're plans are for the future?*

"I've written a couple of stories set in a Renaissance where Leonardo da Vinci's machines all work—clockpunk, I suppose. They're much darker, with a *noir* feel, and I'd like to do something with those, but that's very much in the future. Keep watching this space..."

*Thanks again for your time and patience Toby. As a fan of your first novel, and eagerly awaiting the second, it's been a personal pleasure, but also one for the Gatehouse Gazette.*

***Space Captain Smith* is out now, available at Waterstones, Borders (UK) and Amazon. Mr. Frost's second novel is due for release in September.** ■



## *A Review*

### **Of Toby Frost's 'Space Captain Smith'.**



**By JAMES  
ROBERTS**

Toby Frost's début novel, *Space Captain Smith*, is a highly enjoyable read of daring-do and regular wit and humor. The book takes steampunk into the far flung future of the twenty-fifth-century British Space Empire, where our moustached, stiff-upper-lipped hero, Isambard Smith, battles a multitude of marvelous bad-guys such as the evil Empire of the Ghast, and the religious fanatics of The Republic of New Eden.

He is, however, not alone, which is just as well as he is unfortunately a buffoon. His colorful and eclectic crew include a renegade sex bot, a new-age hippy girl

and a skull-collecting but noble alien savage. The result is a delightfully tongue-in-cheek comedy, parodying well known science- and other fiction, expertly done in Toby Frost's observational-humor style.

There is a laugh on every page, often-times three, and Mr. Frost blends a ready and witty humour with the details one can expect about a British Space Empire. Stiff upper lips, tea and tiffen, and the Victorian aesthetic and values add such character to the tale and will surely be appreciated by those both steampunk and not! ■

# An Exclusive Preview

## Of Robert Rodgers' upcoming steampunk novel.



By **ROBERT RODGERS**

We present here an exclusive preview of the upcoming novel, *Arcadian Snips and the Steamwork Consortium* by Mr Robert Rodgers.

Basil Copper was seriously dead.

The entire workshop had been consumed in an explosion that had left the far wall and ceiling exposed to the elements; as Dunnigan, Miss Primrose, and Mr. Snips stepped in, they found themselves staring out of a shattered cavity and into the vast and bustling cityscape below.

It was the smell of the city that always hit you first—like a freight train filled with flaming manure plowing straight through a field of stinkweed. It stabbed its way to the back of the brain, signing its signature at the top of your spine. At times it would be husky and ripe, like freshly burnt gunpowder; then it would grow dry and brittle like dead leaves mixed with sand. It was a smell you could always recognize but never quite remember. Snips sucked the city air in through the gaping hole as if it were a fresh country breeze. Meanwhile, Miss Primrose covered her nose with a hanky and did her best not to retch.

“Sweet as a bone virgin girl, eh? It'll put hair on your chest.”

“Some of us are uninterested in having hairy chests, Mr. Snips.”

Beneath their feet and outside of the workshop lay the Rookery. It was several dozen tight knots of vendors, carts, and houses tied along a crooked and winding length of road. The tall and looming brick walls drew so close in some places that no more than

two people could cross at a time—and the way they tilted inward toward the street implied an imminent avalanche of mortar and timber.

A gargantuan mechanical spider picked its way up and over the crowded streets, its delicate bronze legs scraping across cobblestone as thick ribbons of soot and steam belched out of its smokestack. A gondola containing a mobile smithery sat on top, filled to the brim with metalworkers in sweat-stained shirts who diligently reinforced any building that revealed signs of a potential collapse. Valves along the machine's metal belly hissed and released great clouds of vapor, thoroughly drenching anyone unfortunate enough to be below it; meanwhile, urchins in rags dashed in between the pincer-like feet to snatch up pieces of coal that inevitably tumbled down from the contraption's burning furnace. Sometimes, a coveted bit of smelted iron would fall, inciting the children into a frantic scramble.

Restaurants kept afloat by sheepskin balloons inflated with hot air or gas catered to the whims of their strange flying clientele, who would soar over the heads of the Rookery denizens and enjoy their lunch while people-watching from a lofty perch. A few of the nastier customers would dump their finished meals onto the people below, or even relieve themselves on some poor sod's head.

With great reluctance, Snips at last dragged himself away from the pleasantly familiar sights and smells of the Rookery, turning back to the investigation at hand. Whatever destructive force had been unleashed here had been quite thorough in its destruction; nary a tool or scrap of paper remained in a semi-recognizable state.

“So he blew himself up.”

“That would be the obvious assumption,” Miss Primrose said. She lifted her skirts up to step across the scorched debris, crouching down to more closely inspect the rubble. Immediately, the young woman grew pale. “Mr. Dunnigan,” she said, doing her best to smother the quaver in her voice. “Have you all ready performed a thorough search of this room for—ah, his remains?”

“Oh, aye, I swept up a little before you came in, Detective Primrose. Just thought it would be polite. Basil did always hate a mess,” he said.

“I think you might have missed—ahem.” Quickly, she stood up, straightening herself and pointing down at the pile. “I think you might have missed Mr. Copper’s ear.”

The aging janitor stepped next to her and peered down. “Well wouldn’t you know it—so I did! Huh. I’ll put it in the bag with the rest of him.” He plucked up the scorched scrap of skin and moved off.

Snips waited until he had left with the offending appendage, then turned to adjust his battered hat in a mirror shard that had fused with the wall. “So what’s your deal, ‘Detective’ Primrose?”

Miss Primrose returned to her bag, drawing the umbrella out from the handles and opening the

container with a click. Immediately, spring-driven gears whirled to life as an array of scientific oddities unfolded from within, providing several shelves brimming with beakers, flasks, and mechanical curiosities. Arming herself with a series of brass-framed magnifying lenses mounted atop of a leather head-strap, she turned to Snips and fired him an optically enhanced glare. “Whatever do you mean, Mr. Snips? Is there some reason you think me incapable of solving this crime?”

“Well, for starters, you—” And here Snips was about to say ‘are a woman,’ but he was suddenly seized by an impulse to shut his mouth. Deep beneath the layers of the brain that concern themselves with rational thought and what color tie would go best with that shirt, there exists a primordial knot of nerve endings that would be best described as a shiny button labeled ‘PANIC’. The look Miss Primrose shot him drilled straight down to that button and perched atop of it with an impressive looking sledge hammer.

“You what, Mr. Snips?”

“—don’t even have a proper magnifying glass! How can you detect anything with such shoddy equipment?” Snips said. “I’ll speak to the management at once! Pardon me.”

**Mr Robert Rodgers’s novel is currently under development.** ■



# Steampunk Wardrobe

"Steampunk in contemporary popular culture."



By HILDE HEYVAERT

**Or: how to find additions to your steampunk wardrobe in high street shops.**

This is not a piece on whether or not it is a good thing that steampunk has become more prominent in popular culture; that is a discussion for another time and place. No, this article is solely on the largely very well received fact that this season, one can expand ones wardrobe by scrounging around in high street shops.



This season the steampunk on a budget is really quite lucky. Established fashion houses like *Ralph Lauren* and *Véronique Branquinho*, to name but a few, have send out models on the runway dressed in the chic of times past, with emphasis on Victorian and Belle Epoch influences, and in some cases even the Roaring Twenties—which should make the dieselpunks amongst us rejoice, I would think.

As is always the case in fashion, high street shops pick up on what is paraded down the runway at the world's leading fashion weeks and make their own versions of these wonderful garments for the financially less fortunate. Hence this season we can find waistcoats in every *Target*, *Urban Outfitters*, *American Apparel*, *H&M*, and other assorted chains of popular shopping for both men and women.

Some shops, however, stand out. *Top Shop*, a British consortium (which luckily ships to most of the globe) has taken it a step further, selling beautiful *Belle Epoch* inspired tops, shirts and blouses which are not



only reasonably priced, but also of wonderful quality. Their male counterpart, *Top Man*, has expanded its waistcoat collection considerably, and sells high quality top hats and bowlers.

This spring and summer, fashion is heavily influenced by bygone times, and it is an absolute must to go look for additions to your wardrobe in stores you would otherwise not go to. The high street accessories shop generally only screaming with loud neon colours likely has some lovely romantic earrings in stock. The store popular with teenagers dressing in the latest fads might very well have that one perfect shirt in stock. It is a veritable treasure trove out there, if you only take the effort to look for them. ■



The two outfits depicted within this article are by Ralph Lauren and Véronique Branquinho, while the gentlemen's waistcoat (£35) and ladies' blouse (£18) above are from Top Man and Top Shop, respectively.



# A Review

## Of 'Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull'.



By JACK  
ROSE

Though they were conceived and produced long before the term 'dieselpunk' was coined, the *Indiana Jones* films remain some of the most seminal and enjoyable parts of the genre. They include many of the hallmarks of dieselpunk and pulp storytelling, including a protagonist who is at the top of his field but is not afraid to get his hands dirty, antagonists both political and mystical, and an atmosphere of Adventure!

While all three *Indiana Jones* films are recognized as popular successes, it is possible to argue that some are better than others. Some people prefer one leading lady or another; others simply feel the action in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* or the suspense of *The Last Crusade* makes for a better movie.

Like a good pulp serial of the 30s or 40s, Indy's adventures did not stop with the first successful story, either. Aside from the films, there was a television show featuring a younger Indiana and a number of novels and comic books that further defined his world. Some of the additional material was even more dieselpunk-feeling than the original, featuring ancient technology alongside occult influences. Anyone who enjoyed the films would be well-advised to seek these out as well.

With all that in mind, we must consider the latest addition to the *Indiana Jones* franchise, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. Set in 1957, *Crystal Skull* has a very different cultural feel than the earlier films. It is the height of the McCarthy era, and the filmmakers touch on that paranoia more than once, anchoring the film late in the dieselpunk era and giving us dirty Commies instead of dirty Nazis for our villains before Indy and company run

off into the timeless jungle.

Indiana is still Indiana, despite the passage of time and the mistreatment of his hat. Harrison Ford is clearly comfortable in the role and the magic is still there through most of his performance. Marion is the first leading lady to return in an Indy film, and in some ways that return heralds the biggest departure from the pulp genre. Pulp heroes are often lone wolves, moving from one woman to the next as the winds take them from adventure to adventure, and that has always been the case with Indy. Even in the novels, he seemed unable to hold on to a woman for more than two or three volumes. Karen Allen clearly had a ball returning to this role, and I have to confess Marion has always been my favorite of Indy's leading ladies.

The most surprising choice in my mind was the inclusion of Mutt, Indy's sidekick, as played by Shia LaBeouf. I was pleasantly surprised by Shia's performance, even if the script did seem determined to give Mutt the most awkward and ridiculous scenes possible. The villains are competently played, though Cate Blanchett occasionally seemed to have a hard time with her accent.

In the end, this film is both a part of the Indy mythos and a love letter to it, in the same way the *Indiana Jones* franchise is both a tribute to the pulp genre and a fine example of it. While the story is weak compared to *Raiders* or *Last Crusade*, it is still sufficient to be better than most adventure films and there is plenty for fans of *Indiana Jones* to enjoy!

***Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* was released worldwide on May 22, 2008. ■**

# Local Steampunk

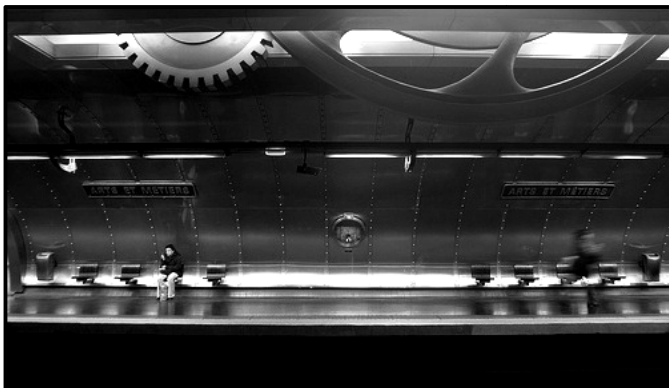
## Steampunk in the City of Light: visiting Paris.



By NICK OTTENS

Traveling at a speed of three-hundred kilometers per hour through northern France would have been an excellent steampunk experience, if it were not for the rather new-fashioned appearance of the *Thalys* train. Yet it does limit one's journey to but three hours, leaving plenty of time on the first day even to explore what they call, The City of Light.

*Gare du Nord*, the railway station where one arrives when traveling by train, makes for an impressive sight; erected in classicist style and topped with a glass roof, the station was originally constructed in 1846 and partly demolished and rebuilt in 1860 to accommodate a great increase in railway traffic. From the station, one accesses the city's extended *métro*-system which transports four-and-a-half million passengers per day and, with over three-hundred stations, should be able to take the visitor to every place worth seeing. In fact, one *métro* station should be of interest especially to steampunk enthusiasts; that is the *Arts et Métiers* station, situated near the *Musée des Arts et Métiers* and redesigned in 1994 in a style inspired by the works of Jules Verne!



Though built forty years later, for the 1900 world exhibition held in Paris, the *Grand Palais* is rather

reminiscent of the architecture of *Gare du Nord*. Built at the same time as the *Petit Palais* across the street, the exterior of the massive palace combines an imposing classical *sont façade* with a riot of *art nouveau* ironwork.



Walking from the palaces toward *Les Invalides*, one steps upon the most extravagant bridge crossing the Seine river: the *Pont Alexandre III*, completed for the 1900 world exhibition also and named after Tsar Alexander III of Russia in honor of the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1892. With its exuberant *art nouveau* lamps, cherubs, nymphs and winged horses at either end, the *Pont Alexandre III* is a marvel of nineteenth-century engineering and design.



At either end of the bridge, one also finds two statues of what appear to be British lions! These were apparently designed and sculptured by Jules Dalou and Georges Gardet, though why two such proud symbols of British imperialism were placed in the centre of the French capital, remains to us a mystery.

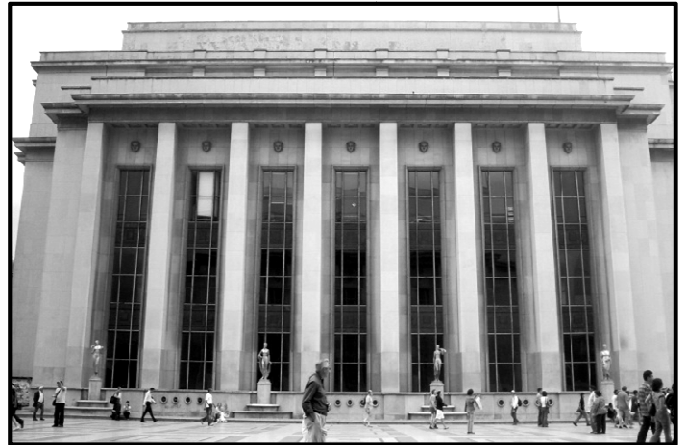


Another fine building to visit is the *Opéra Garnier*, where the Phantom dwells. Designed by Charles Garnier in neo-baroque style, French author Émile Zola thought the *Opéra*, “the opulent bastard of all styles.” The building is so ornate that wandering its grand foyer and stepping upon the *Grand Escalier* in its main hall, one feels like King Louis XIV himself, roaming the halls of his Versailles Palace.



When visiting Paris, one must of course see the Eiffel Tower. Before you do, however, consider the *Palais de Chaillot* across the river, generally known as the *Trocadéro* after the site upon which it stands. The *palais* which occupies the *Trocadéro* today was built for the 1937 world exhibition, replacing the old

*Palais du Trocadéro* which had been built for the world's fair of 1867. The building exists of two wings shaped to form a wide arc, separated by a square from which one has an excellent view of the Eiffel Tower. While the exteriors of the buildings are quite impressive, the museums which the house nowadays are best avoided unless one has exhausted all other Parisian landmarks.



Finally one arrives at what must be one of the most recognizable buildings in the world: the Eiffel Tower, designed by Gustave Eiffel for the 1889 world's fair. The tower is the city's most popular tourist attraction, meaning one must wait in line for often an hour or so to get up. Visit the tower near midnight therefore and catch the last elevator up for a spectacular view of Paris at night—and you will understand why they call it then, “The City of Light.” ■



Photograph of Arts et Métiers subway station by Mr 'Anesterik'.  
All other photographs by Nick Ottens.

# *Life in Victoria's Times*

**"Expectations of a young man,"  
by Delphinus 'J.C.' Tucker.**



By PROF. D.  
TUCKER

The life of a young man is complex. With the impositions of society weighing down on his shoulders, tearing him apart at the seams, and attempting to mold him into what it feels he should be, whether that be moral or not. The prominent themes in what a young man should act like, treat others like, and become have changed greatly over the last hundred years. From society raising the gentleman to the highest and making him most desirable, to today's view of "the bad boy" these themes have also shown what society is becoming. In this contrast we will compare the current expectations with the expectations of a young man in Victorian times, and show just how this change has lead to some small problems in modern times.

The biggest of all differences are those of conduct. In modern culture and society a young man must preserve his honor. He must be big, he must be able to rebut, and above all he must keep his reputation high. He has to be able to score with the women, and he has to be able to party hard. This is, usually, attributed, and rightly so, to the prevalence of the drugged up punk/rocker/rapper position in society. These people managed to get famous, and they have a big face, and they glamorize sex, drugs, and partying. It's almost as if the Hollywood aristocracy is intentionally trying to do this. In such a society where defending yourself, and being heard, is the most important value, ego is more than likely to become a large factor in the equation, and it seems that the more the Hollywood society invades the rest of the western world, the larger this ego factor becomes. It is a society of money and greed.

This is almost the exact opposite of the proper conduct of a young man in Victorian times. Go back, roughly, a hundred years, and find yourself in London, one of the great pop-culture Meccas, where gentlemen, and the other big names, were kind, small, unwanting of conflict, and more focused on helping others than himself. Along with Paris, and perhaps New York, these cities set the trends in fashion, design, entertainment, and the expectations of conduct. With these cities being, still, fixed on the aristocracy, it was unlikely that the trend would be anything less than gentlemanly conduct.

Much like little boys today want to be Batman, or other such characters, when they grow up, children in this time wanted to be like their great literary heroes, the great Allen Quatermain, and Sherlock Holmes, who were gentlemanly, intelligent, and, mostly, polite. These traits were exactly what the young men needed to become to keep society flowing smoothly; the proper treatment of others, politeness, being gentle, all of these ever important things that faded over time causing people to distrust, hate, and inflict so much damage to each other, for no other reason than a difference in subcultural opinion. The expectation of a young man to defend himself and his pride, has become one that has shaken society at it's very core, and may very well help to bring about the downfall of society. But more likely, with hope, is the emergence of a new kind of person. The kind of person idealists dream of becoming now: The Gentleman. The kind, helpful, faithful, desirable, and polite man that once was, and is now just a dream in old books, and, dare I say, romance movies.

Perhaps this is a bit romantic of me. We know that there were not as many gentlemen as books and

history would have us believe. There was obviously an abundance of people that held other ideals, or the ideals prominent in today's culture would not have become so important today. But the ideals, the expectations, and the etiquette, were all there, being taught, hoping to be learned, and applied. Even more amazing, though, is the fact that those etiquettes still exist, just waiting to be used, waiting to be learned, waiting to be applied, and with some hope, people will start listening, people will start learning, and

people will start acting to make this world society a better place to live. The steampunk movement has attempted to create this progression. By bringing these ideals back to life, in essence, it is as though instead of putting emphasis on punk, as one that pushes the system, we are a subculture that, along with a snazzy dress code, push for a betterment of the world society, and try to bring back the ideals of the gentlemen. ■

## *Steampunk Poetry*

**Two original steampunk poems,  
never published before!**

### *The Battle of Lound*

Steam-powered robots rain down from the skies  
None shall escape them, not even flub flies.  
But there goes a zeppelin to come make a stand,  
A zeppelin that hails from west gannagagand.  
Captained by furry Babelabuben  
who have the strength of roughly 7 men.  
The battle commences over dark ground,  
which happens to be the capital of lound.  
But the king of lound can do nothing but stare,  
and scratch at his fumpity wumpity hair.  
Tesla rays best all the robots with ease,  
Easier then a sneb-sneezler sneeze.  
The easiest sneeze you could sneeze, if you please.  
Now carcasses of iron fully ablaze,  
are salvaged by flame-proof flebonozoflaze.  
The proofiest, floofiest model of flaze.

*By "The Czar"*

### *The Young Dirigible*

There he lies, asleep you know,  
Steam dirigible flew not long ago.  
He rests now, hard days work done  
After viewing the setting sun.  
Floating o'er the Waxulloo trees  
None are as beautiful as forests of these.  
Crew of friendly Farfalloo-soo  
High up in the air with their cries of "haroo".  
The fly round the globe, traveling to distant lands  
Full of Sultans and Rajs and villages in sands.  
Bringing goods and happy gents  
To forests, velds and savannas lined with tents.  
They continue on their merry excursion  
Farfallo-soo singing a joyous diversion.  
Landing finally in the engines resting place  
Mechanic wiping his greasy, dirty face.  
Good night, noble craft  
Rest well, rest good.  
Tomorrow, travel far, as a good dirigible should.

*By "Octavius"*

# The Fahrpanzer

## Imperial Germany's mobile armor carriage.



By GUY  
DAMPIER

The *Fahrbare Panzerlafette* ("Moveable Armor Carriage"), later *Fahrpanzer* ("Mobile Armor"), was one of the few examples of a tank-like vehicle produced before the introduction of the British Mark I Tank in 1916. Designed to act as mobile artillery for German fortresses, the *Fahrpanzer* entered operation in 1890 before going on to see action in the First World War, noticeably with the German, Bulgarian and Greek armed forces (the Greeks had been equipped pre-war).



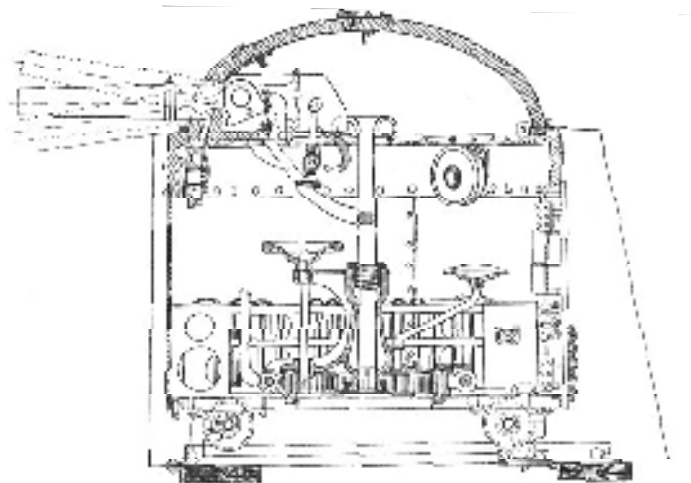
Armed with a 53mm Gruson gun, mounted in a mobile armored turret and operated by a crew of two, the *Fahrpanzer* was designed for use in German Border Fortresses where it was to be placed in unique concrete trenches with a 60cm gauge track. The idea was that the *Fahrpanzers* could be stored within the safety of a fortress and then be wheeled out to firing position when the enemy barrage stopped and the its assault began.

The weapon itself was a 53mm quick-fire gun. Quick-fire meant that the gun used a quick breach

and ammunition where the shell and the cartridge were one item, to speed up the loading process. The gun had an elevation of -5 to +10 and fired a 1.75kg shell with a muzzle velocity of 495 meters per second. Manned well, it could fire up to 30 shells a minute.

When World War I broke out the various nations equipped with the *Fahrpanzer* realized that they had too few artillery pieces and thus rushed them from fortresses to the firing lines where they were placed in frontline trenches.

The only real difference between the German and export versions was their method of transport. The Germans developed carriages for the guns to sit on whilst the other armies invented their own methods of transporting them.



Currently one *Fahrpanzer* rests in the Royal Museum of the Army and Military History, Brussels and another at the Athens War Museum. ■

# Gazette Cartoons



By ADRIANNA HAZARD  
& ROBERT RODGERS

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