

GATEHOUSE GAZETTE

JOIE de



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

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EDITORIAL THE GREAT STEAMPUNK DEBATE

By Nick Ottens

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, AFTER THE ELEVENTH ISSUE of this magazine, dedicated to “Victoriantism” sparked fierce debate among the steampunk community about the genre’s complicated relationship with colonialism and race, the owners and editors of some of the community’s most prominent of blogs and publications gathered to explore the possibility of organizing a “Great Steampunk Debate” where, for a limited time, steampunk enthusiasts could come together and discuss the political side of the movement.

The debate would entail the whole of the spectrum of steampunk and ideology with discussions ranging from the roles of class and gender in the genre to topics about the influence of anarchism and the significance of steampunk’s maker culture.

Many months of preparation preceded the debate with the administrators deciding on topics, forum rules and anticipating how to cope with events that might frustrate the proceedings. We agreed that to be as open and welcoming as possible, therefore no topics or users were banned beforehand; “official” questions were posed in order to inspire discussion but members would be free to start threads of their own. The debate was widely advertized at the websites involved and attracted many curious steampunks.

Within short time, two separate developments began to trouble the debate, one of which had not been foreseen by the administrators. We did expect that some of the discussions would be intense, including the topic about steampunk and race and one on the importance of maker culture. Both ended up requiring heavy moderation; the former was even removed from public viewing after one member contacted our hosting service to complain about alleged racism in the thread.

We did not anticipate that a very vocal minority of users would be able to monopolize the debate and discourage others from participating fully. The administrators discussed the issue at length with most of us reluctant to ban these members outright. While they were obviously obstructive and some even continually accused the moderators of censorship whenever it was requested that a topic not be derailed further, we could not agree whether they were actually in violation of the rules which had been drafted in advance.

After urging them repeatedly to be more constructive and reminding them that the purpose of the Great Steampunk Debate was to explore steampunk ideology, not to impose anyone’s views on others, the

administrations ultimately decided on a temporary ban for those members who wouldn’t change their ways. It was probably too late. Many users had already been driven away from the forum, having little appetite for a discussion in which their opinions were being shouted down by a few disillusioned steampunks with little patience for dissent.

Fortunately, plenty of participants noted that they had enjoyed the opportunity to discuss some of the political questions that steampunk inevitably forces upon us. The Great Steampunk Debate did manage to bring people from different places together for a broad discussion on matters that are hardly ever explicitly addressed.

Sadly, it also brought a few people together who reinforced each others’ self-victimization and proved able to disturb an entire online event. Clearly there are steampunk enthusiasts who are disappointed with what steampunk has become. There are steampunk enthusiasts who feel that that their hobby has been “hijacked” while others still believe that a prominent few intend to impose their views on the whole of the movement.

Above all there is no denying that steampunk is certainly not a unified front of similarly minded people. Different polls conducted at the Great

Steampunk Debate showed that steampunks hail from many different places, belong to many different cultures and religions, and maintain very different political affiliations, ranging from anarchist to conservative, with the majority identifying as moderate. It is important to remember that for many, steampunk is either a hobby or a lifestyle; not a political or social philosophy. Therefore, I’m quite convinced that it’s impossible to gather the whole of the movement for one expression or idea—or even a shared vision of just what steampunk is.

If anything, the Great Steampunk Debate has proven once again that steampunks are very different in many ways. We should remember that steampunk enthusiasts are as diverse as steampunk itself can be. There is no simple answer to the question, “What is steampunk?” •

Steampunk is certainly
Not a unified front of
similarly minded people.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BUSY TIMES HAVE COME AND gone and now I can finally get to responding to the twelfth issue of the *Gatehouse Gazette*. The new layout is a little plainer than the original, but it is also cleaner, and may reduce the size of the download file. As with any gift, the packaging is nice, but what's really important is the contents. Looking very good so far...

I have wanted to participate in the Great Steampunk Debate, and I've signed up for it, too, but there just hasn't been time for it. I could spend all day on various steampunk websites and forums and bulletin boards and *Facebook* pages. I will readily admit that while steampunk does interest me greatly, the primary interest within it for me is the costuming. For the first time, I have designed my own costumes, have put them together, and have gotten praise for them. I have other ideas in mind for the future. Living the steampunk lifestyle may be good for some, but not feasible for me. Gotta make a living.

And there's old friend Chris Garcia. He's right, the logical process of just about any interest is the splintering off of other interests. This has certainly happened in the eighty-year history of science fiction fandom, and it will continue. Science fiction fandom has two sayings: FIAWOL, Fandom Is A Way of Life, and FIJAGH, Fandom Is Just A Goddamned Hobby. These are two philosophies that seem to describe the attitudes of science fiction fans. At this point, I think you could replace the word "fandom" and substitute the word "steampunk". I think there's enough room here for the same two philosophies, and enough give for both to exist together. Jacqueline Christi's article reflects that, too.

I have always liked *Alice in Wonderland*, which has become an

iconic story, like *The Wizard of Oz*, also with steampunk elements. The current movie is now out on DVD, and we do intend to get it. The Hatter is a typical Johnny Depp character; no one else could have played him, in my opinion. As the movie progresses, it was interesting to see Tim Burton turn Alice into Joan of Arc. Even Tweedledee and Tweedledum were a treat. It was good to see some of the Hatter's back story, and intriguing to see that when the Hatter was happy, he used a cultured English accent, but as madness approached, his accent became more and more Scottish.

Hilde Heyvaert's Steampunk Wardrobe has to be my favorite part of the magazine, for it not only caters to the costumer I've become once again, but also to my interests in recycling. Much of my costumes have come from thrift shops and antique shows, but also from the back of my wardrobe, and the junk drawer, too. Now have two costumes, the railway conductor and the businessman, and the labourer is in the design stage right now.

As for Col. Hazard's Ad Astra report, I was there, and in charge of the table area the Toronto Steampunk Society was in. I am not sure if Ad Astra will continue with steampunk programming, but I hope the Colonel will press them to do so. The costumes on display this year were something to see.

Some quick news I can pass along: Steampunk Canada may be the sponsors of a new steampunk convention to take place in Toronto the end of March 2011. All this is tentative but we've offered our services to them, and we'll see what happens.

Yours,
Lloyd Penney

I AM WRITING TO EXPRESS MY disappointment with Marcus Rauchfuß' article on German militarism in the May 2010 issue. I cannot accept that a discussion or even an introduction to German nineteenth and twentieth century militarism could be passed for publication without mentioning Prussia. Prussia, which from the late seventeenth century onward was so militarized that Voltaire once said, "Where some states have an army, the Prussian Army has a state!" Prussia, which twentieth century military historian W.H. Koch called "the New Sparta." Prussia, the driving force behind Germany's unification, which set the tone to which the other principalities marched, is nowhere to be found in this article.

The problem is further compounded by placing the blame for German militarism squarely on the epaulette-encrusted shoulders of Wilhelm II. Here the "Great Man" theory of history is strained to the limit of credibility by asking the reader to accept that rather than being guided by the currents of centuries of established Prussian culture, Wilhelm, easily influenced, neurotic, insecure, was guiding the nation with him. At least two centuries of Prussian martial culture created and enabled Wilhelm II's militaristic pose, not the other way around.

To span over a hundred years in a short article is a daunting task but I take issue with how many and what steps were skipped to get to the genuinely insightful parts of the article on contemporary German attitudes to things martial.

Regards,
I. Brackley

Read Mr Rauchfuß' response at:
<http://daily-steampunk.com/steampunk-blog/prussian-and-german-militarism/>



OP-ED STEAMPUNK IS GREAT

By Marcus Rauchfuß

BEING A STEAMPUNK SIMPLY FEELS GREAT, THAT'S the long and the short of it, really, but—I have several reasons to prove my point.

First, I feel very comfortable within the steampunk community. I have yet to encounter another group of people who are similarly well behaved on- and offline. In all the time I spent on dedicated steampunk message board communities, I have met just one person who was genuinely unfriendly and put this down as mere teenage insecurity. Even in this particular instance, no swearing, name calling or inappropriate comparisons were used. Rather, the general atmosphere is welcoming and open. You have only to be on a steampunk forum for a short time to recognize the polite conversational tone. Some people actually make an effort to adjust their postings to an older style of sorts. Really neat.

The most telling factor concerning friendliness is the complete absence of trolls and h8ers. Most online forums have at least one thread or section where people can post pictures of themselves, either in full gear or not. Having moderated forums myself before, I know quite well how fast these can attract trolls. I have at more than one occasion lurked for a troll to come along on a steampunk forum after a non-anorexic person put up their picture. So far, I have lurked in vain. I do not know the reason why there are no trolls around on steampunk boards, but I happily accept the fact.

So, the steampunk community is exceptionally friendly, inclusive and welcoming. Judging from my personal experience it is also very cooperative. If you ask for advice, you'll get it. People will respond enthusiastically if you ask for help, especially when it comes to tinkering, art, DIY, sewing, etc. You may get similar reactions on certain boards within the Goth community, though, sadly, not on all of them.

Next, steampunk really sharpens your senses toward recognizing and appreciating the achievements of the past. You start seeing the modern world not as an autonomous thing that in some undefined way has always been like this. (For some people it seems to be. That is, the kind who wonder what is all the fuss with

bird flu about. After all, poultry is available in the supermarket so who needs farms?) Steampunks understand the foundation of modern industrial power as an achievement of the past. The presents becomes intimately connected with it. It doesn't stand on itself.

What's more, the steampunk community strikes me as particularly optimistic. If you read through the forums, blogs and websites, you find a lot of happy people. This happiness is not of the naïve and dreamy kind rather it is genuine optimism. I guess it is somewhat connected to the crafts and DIY tendency. Steampunks largely maintain a certain hands-on mentality to life. If something is broken, they fix it. Their optimism is contagious.

Then there is this amazing range of creative pursuits and projects steampunks display. You can find photographic work, movies ranging from computer animations to stop-motion to life-action film, house-improvement, jewellery making, sewing and the whole range of literary creativity in the steampunk scene. And you may of course not fail to mention all the music and the wonderful weird technology created by Datamancer, Mr Von Slatt and others.

Another thing I noticed about steampunk is its inspirational influence on non-steampunks. I am running a steampunk RPG and two of my players (a physicist and a software engineer) regularly come up with steampunk devices that are truly mind boggling. All they do is adapt the scientific method and their technical knowledge to the laws of nature of a steampunk universe and then they let their minds run rampant. Contagious creativity—it is a wonderful thing.

Being a bit more on the dieselpunk side, or a steampunk with dieselpunk leanings, gives me a good reason to wear a suit and trench coat more often than it might be considered proper or necessary in today's world. Some time ago, I was approached by a (now former) colleague, who told me my suit was completely "out" and he would never wear it. To which I responded something along the lines of, "My tastes are more retro and I'm glad I'm not you."

It feels good to be able to stand out of the crowd and do so in style!

So, all in all, it is great being a steampunk. You get to participate in an interesting, creative and educated worldwide community. Everybody is welcoming and helpful, no animosities whatsoever and you belong to a subculture that, despite its extravagant and conspicuous looks doesn't attract flag from mainstream media. Indeed, the contrary is the case. •

OP-ED IN DEFENSE OF THE LIGHTER SIDE OF STEAMPUNK

By Amanda Stock

I AM GLAD THAT THE GREAT STEAMPUNK DEBATE IS coming to a close. Don't get me wrong—I loved participating in and helping moderate it for the past two months. It has challenged my opinions about the genre, aesthetic, fandom, subculture; made me think long and hard about why people perceive it in such different ways; and occasionally frustrated me. The opportunity to get a better hold on the opinions of steampunk enthusiasts everywhere was valuable, but it's time for a break from all the arguments. Most of them will never be resolved anyway; the community is too diverse a group, geographically, politically and otherwise to ever fully agree on the serious sides of steampunk.

Sometimes it is easy to forget about what it is that draws all these people together. Steampunk is, at its core, fun! Fictions spun in the steampunk style are escapism at its best. Who can read them and not start daydreaming about traveling to unknown lands in their airship? After a long day of work or school, what is better to curl up with than a book that lets you relax and have a little adventure? That's certainly what drew me to it in the first place. Recapturing the spirit of a past time, recreating the Age of Discovery and redrawing all of it in a modern light.

That's not to say that more serious topics are off-limits. It is important to produce more than just pulp technofantasy. Steampunk as legitimate literature or social critique is important. A book with substance, not just style, is something steampunk could use more of. I have yet to read Dexter Palmer's *The Dream of Perpetual Motion*, but right now I'm having a rip-roaring good time turning the pages of Cherie Priest's *Boneshaker*. Both have their place, but when you're looking for a bit of fun, it's definitely the latter that gets chosen. The lighter side of steampunk is a wonderful thing, even with all of its silly clichés and token imagery. Let us not forget that one of the first popularisers of steampunk in the early part of this millennium, the *Brass Goggles* blog, was expressly devoted to "The lighter side of steampunk." It is that image that captured imaginations

across the world and ignited the creation of a new fandom or subculture, depending on how you choose to define it.

This ability to inspire fantastic fabrications is still evident in many places. Last month my local steampunk group, the Toronto Steampunk Society

got dressed up in some of our pseudo-Victorian fineries and held a scavenger hunt in the historic Distillery District. That area of the city is a popular destination during the weekends, and steampunk enthusiasts can often be found there enjoying the old buildings and lovely restaurants. A passing tourist asked their guide who the people in strange outfits were. He actually recognized us, and explained why we were there: "They are interested in the history of our city, holding educational, fun events and lending color to the area." The area is also popular for weddings, and a couple of them were having photo shoots amongst the old industrial buildings. As we gallivanted around, two separate newlywed couples requested that we join their wedding photos. The photographers gladly positioned the monogoggled lady, bespectacled bobby, skyship captain and clockwork doll around the brides and grooms. The children stared wide-eyed at us and smiled. In ten years, looking at the wedding photos, they may wonder who the strange, old-fashioned, technocentric people are. Who knows, perhaps it will spark an idea in their heads and lead to the creation of a brand new work of steampunk fiction? That is the power of the lighter side of steampunk. •

After a long day of work or school, what is better to curl up with than a book that lets you relax and have a little adventure?

Amanda Stock chairs the Toronto Steampunk Society. Look at facebook.com/group.php?gid=22444561659 for more information.

The Life and Times of Nellie Bly

BY CAROL MCCLEARY

A concise biography by the author of the Nellie Bly adventure *The Alchemy of Murder* (2010).

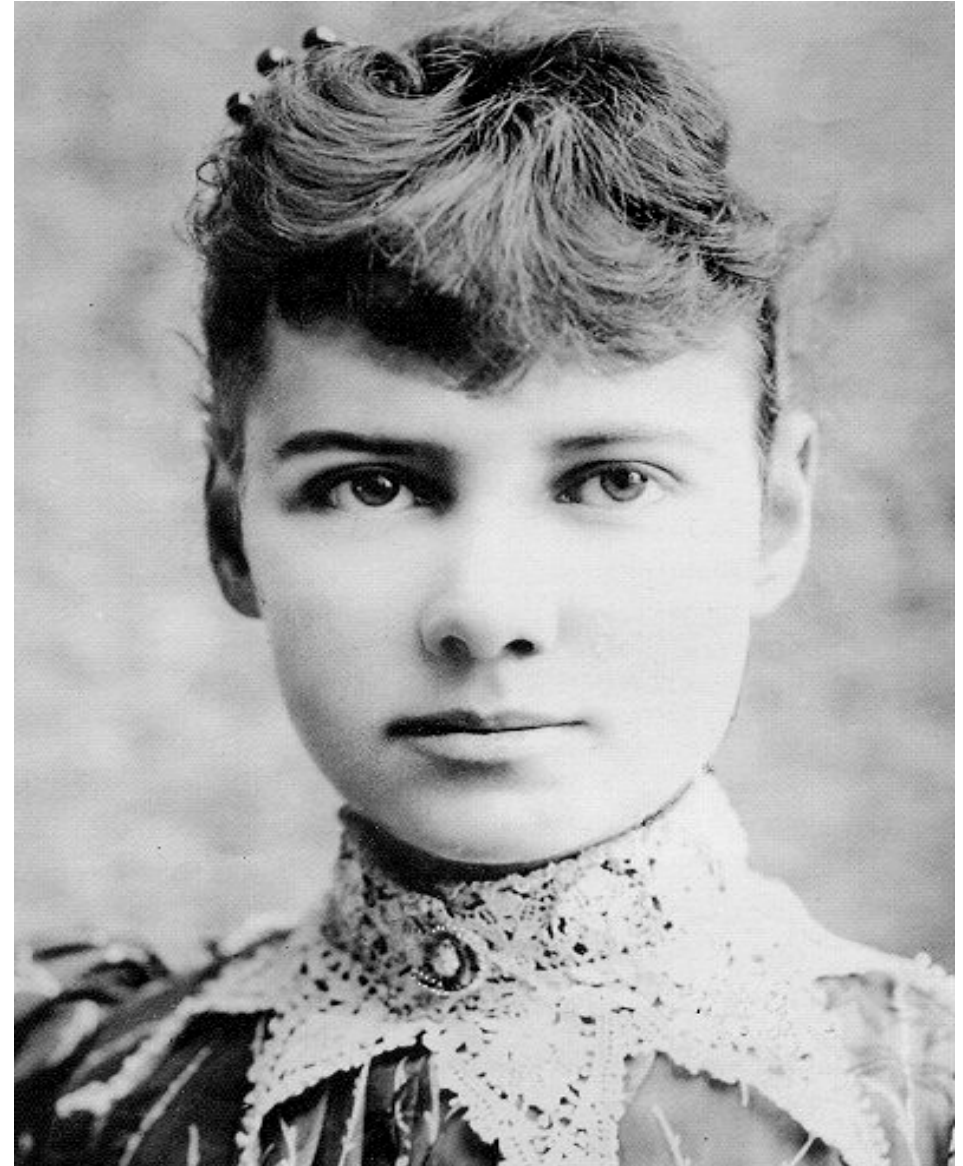
DURING THE NINETEENTH century scientific discoveries were ablaze, new industries and new sciences were popping up everyday and people considered the world theirs to conquer. They realized that the world had changed more in the prior fifty years than it had in the past five thousand.

While horse-drawn carriages and trains with steam engines were the height of travel technology, people were climbing the highest mountains, exploring the seas, crossing trackless deserts and probing dark jungles.

The telephone had been invented, electricity was slowly replacing gas lights along wide boulevards, flight had been conquered with hot air balloons, and it wasn't hard to imagine that automobiles and airplanes were just around the corner.

It was an exciting epoch, a time of brave hearts and warm souls, of poetry and great art and inquiring minds, of duels fought for honor and affairs of the heart. A time when women were treated like chattels and their names were only suppose to appear in newspapers thrice—when she was born, when she got married, and when she died.

During this time a young factory girl, Elizabeth Jane Cochran, from Cochrane Mills, Pennsylvania, population exactly 504, read an article, "What Girls Are Made For," in the Quiet Observations column of the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*. The writer, Erasmus Wilson, had the cheek to say: "Man was made the highest of God's creation and given dominion over all. Woman retains the same relation to man that Eve did to



Adam—a helpmate, a partner, an assistant, a wife.

Whenever a woman is found outside her sphere, whenever she assumes the place of man and makes him her complement, then she is abnormal. A man-woman—that is a woman who ignores her mission, denies her station and usurps the place of man—is a monstrosity, an abnormal creature, a lusus naturae."

Outraged, Elizabeth Cochran

decided this attack upon women should be challenged. So, she sat down with pen and paper and responded.

Knowing that she could lose her job in the factory if her boss saw what she wrote, she signed her letter, "Lonely Orphan Girl."

A few days later in Our Mail Pouch column in the *Dispatch*, Elizabeth found a cryptic message requesting that once they received

her name and address, she could expect a favor.

Ms Cochran decided to appear at the *Pittsburg Dispatch* and speak to Mr Maddox, the editor, in person.

From this bold move, Elizabeth Cochran ended up obtaining a reporter's job at the *Pittsburg Dispatch*, but being a woman she could not use her real name.

Mr Madden yelled into the newsroom and asked the men for ideas. He wanted a name that was "neat and catchy" instead of "Lonely Orphan Girl." One newspaperman started singing a song written by one of Pittsburgh's favorite sons, Stephen Collins Foster—"Nelly Bly, Nelly Bly, bring de broom along, we'll sweep de kitchen clean, my dear, and have a little song ... Heigh! Nelly, HO! Nelly!"

Hence came the birth of Nelly Bly. Because Nellie's spelling and grammar was "rocky," as her editor put it, she misspelled Nelly and became Nellie forever after.

For Nellie Bly, the pen and paper became her weapon of choice to change conditions for people.

Nellie would never forget the first time she had used the pen and paper—when she was six years old her father, whom she loved dearly, died. In need of help her mother a year later married a man that turned out to be a mean drunk. In 1878 when her mother filed for divorce, Nellie, who was only fifteen, wrote a letter to the judge which helped her mother obtain a divorce.

Mrs Cochran was one of only fifteen divorce actions that year and one of only five in which the wife was the plaintiff. Eighty-four divorces were granted in that ten-year period.

To help support the family, Nellie had to quit school and go to work in a factory. There she witnessed women working just as hard as the men and not only get lower pay but never being

promoted. This never left Nellie's mind or heart.

While men and women were thrilled at the adventures and scientific marvels, Nellie Bly wanted to be a part of it. She didn't want to sit at home and just cook and sew. Nellie wanted to experience life, to make a difference.

When her boss, Mr Maddox, would not let her do investigative reporting because she was a woman, she set off with her mother in tow and went to wild and dangerous Mexico during a time of revolt and wrote about what she saw. Not only were her articles well received, she was doing such a good job exposing the corruption, she was told to leave the country. Upon coming home she was sure she had proved that a woman could be sent out into the world to report the news. Instead she was scolded for being so foolish. She could have been raped and murdered! Promptly she was put back to writing about tea parties and weddings.

Infuriated, Nellie once again took off, this time to New York, positive she would be able to get a real newspaper reporting job. Four months came and went and no job. Hearing that Joseph Pulitzer, the publisher, had returned from abroad, she stationed herself inside his newspaper, *The World*, determined to see him. She even informed the guard she was not leaving until she saw him and sat for hours until an elderly newspaperman took pity on her and snuck her into Mr Pulitzer's office.

Not one to mince words, Nellie blurted out, "I want a job."

Mr Pulitzer, surprised, and probably finding her a little humorous, told her, "Reporting is no job for a lady."

Desperate for a job, Nellie told him she'd get herself committed to the notorious madhouse for women at Blackwell's Island and expose the horrors.

Shocked, he agreed and she went out the next day and convinced the women at a boarding house she was so crazy the proprietor called the police to have her taken away. Then she convinced a judge and two doctors she was nuts and was sent off to Blackwell's Island, where afterwards she wrote articles that forced the government to improve conditions at the madhouse.

From that point on Nellie Bly went undercover to expose wrongs. She wrote an article on jail life, which brought about the appointment of female guards to look after women prisoners. She became a house servant to write about what they had to endure. She disguised herself as a prostitute for one day to write about their lives. She played the role of an unwed mother wanting to get rid of a child and exposed a notorious "baby farm"—a place that relieved parents of unwanted children.

Nellie proved to be a superb actress as she turned herself into a trembling old lady, a homeless orphan boy, a cow-girl in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, a ballerina, elephant trainer, thief and a dozen other roles to expose corruption and the injustices done to people.

She was praised as "an angel of light" and the newspapermen at *The World* started joking that the newspaper should be called *The New York Nellie* since she dominated the front page.

Nellie had a secret life, too, one only revealed recently when the old building that had housed *The World* was demolished and a book containing her further adventures was found.

While there are those who claim I made up these adventures, you can be the judge yourself when you read about Nellie's encounters with Jules Verne in Paris in *The Alchemy of Murder* and the dangers she faced racing around the world in *The Illusion of Murder*. •

A Tempestuous Affair

BY NICK OTTENS

BOTH WERE CELEBRITIES WHEN they married in 1951, but his career subsequently collapsed while hers quickly blossomed.

Ava Gardner, who during the 1950s had become one of Hollywood's leading actresses, was widely admired for her beauty and highly regarded for her acting skills. Frank Sinatra was her third and last husband and—she later noted in her autobiography—the love of her life. The singer left his wife, Nancy Barbato, for Ava and their marriage

was bound to make headlines. Sinatra was savaged by gossip press and fans alike for leaving “the good wife” for an exotic *femme fatale*. About his first marriage, the singer later said, “What I had mistaken for love, was only the warm friendship Nancy had brought me.” His popularity suffered nonetheless while Gardner prospered: the scandal only helped solidify her sexy screen siren image.

Their marriage was tempestuous and included

passionate fighting, jealousy, at least one alleged suicide attempt by Sinatra, two abortions, and numerous separations. In spite of it all, Gardner volunteered to use her Hollywood influence in order to get Sinatra cast in his Oscar-winning role in *From Here to Eternity* (1953). The role and his Academy Award revitalized both his acting and singing careers.

Gardner would later say about her relationship with Sinatra: “We were great in bed. It was usually on the way to the bidet when the trouble began.” The marriage never produced any children. “We couldn’t even take care of ourselves,” joked Gardner. “How were we going to take care of a baby?”

The separation inspired Sinatra to record one of most successful albums until then: *In the Wee Small Hours*, released in 1955 with arrangements by Nelson Riddle. Unlike previous albums, all songs were specifically selected for this recording, using only ballads that related to late night isolation and aching lost love.

Ava and Frank remained good friends for the rest of their lives. Gardner died in 1990. Sinatra died eight years later. •



The Rocketeer

A REVIEW BY HILDE HEYVAERT



ONCE IN A BLUE MOON WALT Disney Disney Pictures surprises friend and foe with a steampunk or dieselpunk masterpiece. *The Rocketeer* (1991) is one of those master pieces. The movie is based on the dieselpunk comic book of the same name by writer and artist Dave Stevens. Stevens also served as co-producer to the film, which was a very wise choice as surely he knew the story best.

The year is 1938 and the place Los Angeles where the events focus around a young stunt pilot called Clifford "Cliff" Secord with big dreams of winning the national championship airshow. He's having a bad day at the beginning of the movie, ending a test flight with a crash landing that would make Ducktales' Launchpad McQuack proud. The plane he and his friends worked on for two years ends up a total wreck, ruining his chances for the nationals, and his girlfriend, aspiring actress Jenny Blake, gets quite cross at him for not telling her the whole story when they go out that evening. When he and his friend and housemate, the brilliant mechanic Peevy find a rocketpack in

their garage, it's the beginning of a big adventure. Because while for Cliff and Peevy the rocket is just a way to make a quick buck to get a new plane, to the FBI, mob boss Eddie Valentine, Hollywood star Neville Sinclair and the Nazis, it's far more than just a rocket. And when he makes the news and gets dubbed "the Rocketeer" due to an action where he saves a friend from a crashing airplane, he is quickly running with all the abovementioned on his tail, ending in a climactic event featuring as big a flying machine as a *Hindenberg*!

All the dieselpunk elements that make a movie within the genre great are there: mobsters, fashion, a Nazi spy, a zeppelin, a hideous assassin, and the good guys winning in the end. It's what makes films like the Indiana Jones series great but this time, it comes with some extras.

It has momentum, historical figures like Howard Hughes and Clark Gable (though you have to be very quick for the last one); even a Nazi propaganda movie (made by Disney especially for the feature). The connotations to real world events are a nice touch though you

don't have to know much about history to enjoy the story. While it's a fun filled family adventure, it can be enjoyed by viewers of all ages, and it's definitely a must see for aficionados of dieselpunk! •



All the dieselpunk elements that make a movie within the genre great are there: mobsters, fashion, a Nazi spy, a zeppelin, a hideous assassin, and the good guys winning in the end.

Want to review or write for the *Gatehouse Gazette*? Let us know! We always welcome new contributors. Visit gatehouse.ottens.co.uk for more information.

Android Karenina

A REVIEW BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß



ANDROID KARENINA BY BEN WINTERS is a steampunk take on Leo Tolstoy's classic novel and indeed, the plot resembles the original to a great degree with all familiar protagonists present. They are incarnated in a way befitting a steampunk setting though. *Android Karenina* is set against a high tech steampunk background, placed in a pseudo nineteenth century Russia.

What first struck me was the easiness with which the human protagonists interact with their robotic alter-egos/side-kicks, the Class III companions. Obviously, these robots have been around quite a while by the time the events of the novel unfold and have helped create a unique society.

That society, indeed the whole country, could have been taken from a *Belle Époque* vision of the year 2000. Fashion and decorum haven't changed; only technology has advanced and provides novel ways of travel, new methods to treat illnesses and new forms of entertainment. The three-dimensional dance early in the novel and the grav-skating are just two particularly delightful examples.

The first part of the novel takes the reader into a very intricate and detailed vision of a *Belle Époque* utopia, brought about by the discovery of the mysterious and almost magical metal Groznium, which has transformed society "since the days of the Tsars" and brought about amazing advances.

The Class III companions are the most visible part of this extraordinary progress. The Class IIIs are sentient machines, extensions and complementaries of their owners' personality. They are also part of coming-of-age. Children do not have Class III companions.

The gift of a Class III marks the entry into adult life.

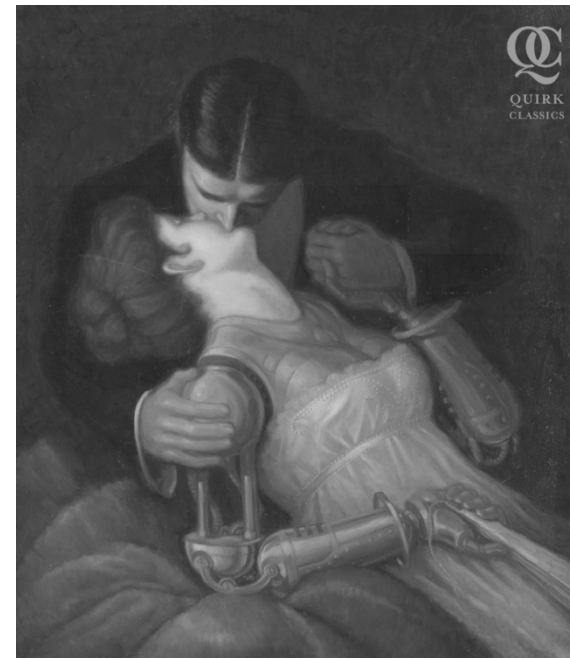
Society still resembles the highly stratified classism of late-Tsarist Russia. All protagonists are part of the upper echelons of society; commoners are absent from the novel. Their absence is so drastic, at times I wondered whether they had not been completely replaced by Class II (menial work) robots. This fear was elevated later in the novel though. Interestingly, the automatons seem to have a standing covering the entire spectrum from slaves to trusted friends. Levin, Stiva and Anna Karenina treat their companions with respect, while other members of high society delight in cruel games involving their mechanical servants, like the treatment of serfs in Tsarist Russia depended very much on their lords.

The first part of the novel is entirely dedicated to introducing the main characters and their various companions. As a result, *Android Karenina* has a rather slow start. Still, the high tech vision of an extended nineteenth century as depicted in the novel is quite enthralling.

As Winter's tale progresses and the reader learns more about the world, the utopia is tarnished. An underground movement of scientists appears who use strange and advanced technologies to create emotion-bombs and god-mouths (I think they are miniature black holes of some sort) to wreak havoc.

There is also the shadow of an alien presence, the Honored Guests, which is cast over some occultist fringes of Moscow's elite. There is even a religion based around these aliens, but the government acts rather harshly against it.

Another quite fascinating but rather disturbing feature is the almost complete absence of other parts of the world. Count Vronsky and Anna Karenina sometimes converse in French and Vronsky's *mecanicien* is an Englishman. At a later point, Vronsky accompanies a "foreign prince" and shows him



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CLASSICS

ANDROID KARENINA

BY LEO TOLSTOY AND BEN H. WINTERS

around Russia, but that is it. The rest of the world only exists in the margins. Even during part two of the novel, "Voyage of the Shcherbatskys," in which the reader is taken along a journey into space, we meet only Russians. I was left with the impression that *Android Karenina*'s Russia was not quite a real place, even in the context of the novel. Rather, it seems to exist in some other, dreamlike state, all on its own. This isolation becomes even more apparent in the last part, when

the people of Russia are faced with a dire threat that surely would have caused neighboring countries to intervene on Russia's side.

Without wanting to spoil anything, the plot of *Android Karenina* offers quite a few interesting twists. This is one of the most enjoyable factors of the novel, but also one of its flaws. At first, I was surprised and delighted when a new element surfaced, but there are

too many of such occurrences. The plot contains elements of *I, Robot*, *Terminator*, *Aliens* and *The War of the Worlds*. One may argue that one scene is particularly reminiscent of *Starship Troopers*. Leaving out some of these elements would not have hurt the plot and prevented it from becoming somewhat overburdened near the end. The second, and final, element I found somewhat irritating are the lengthy descriptions of everyday events and looks inside the minds and musings of the protagonists. It made me skip pages on a few occasions and miss an important bit, just half a page in length, which turned out to be a key scene in the novel.


On the whole, *Android Karenina* is thoroughly entertaining nevertheless, enthralling and inspiring. I especially enjoyed the Russian flavor to steampunk, something I hadn't encountered before.

Sadly, I cannot completely credit Mr Winters with the creation of the very believable characters, since they are closely based on

Tolstoy's work. His Class III companions, especially Lupo and Little Stiva, deserve all the credit that is due however.

On a final note, *Android Karenina* does something I have not encountered before: the book, not just the novel, breaches the fourth barrier. There are elements in the book, little details, that presume the book is printed in a world where the events of *Android Karenina* are as likely as the events of *Anna Karenina* are in our world. All I can say is: Special thanks to II/ENGLISHRENDERER/94!

In conclusion, *Android Karenina* is an engaging and at times heavy read with unnecessary lengthy stretches and a few too many elements in the plot. It is also a beautiful, harrowing and sad tale of a technological utopia descending slowly into a strange form of Orwellian steampunk Stalinism. It is rich in detail and creates a very unique and even by steampunk standards, strange and dreamlike world within its pages that strives to reach out towards the reader. •



Android Karenina is a beautiful, harrowing tale of a technological utopia descending slowly into a strange form of Orwellian steampunk Stalinism.

COLUMN THE STEAMPUNK WARDROBE

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

AS MANY OF YOU NO DOUBT HAVE NOTICED, SUMMER is upon us, most of the time at least, and the time for strolls in the sunshine, picnics and other outdoor fun has arrived. Now we all know that steampunk, with all its layers, might not be the most comfortable of fashions during the summer season. With the temperature high already, warm clothing will only lead to discomfort and heaven forbid, overheating or sunburn. There are, however, ways to keep your wardrobe distinctively steamy in a season appropriate way while protecting yourself from the elements that thwart us these long summer months.

In Edwardian times, ladies would carry a parasol to protect their skin against the harmful sunlight. These days, pagoda umbrellas made after the parasols of the *Belle Époque*, are quite popular and most of the times made to withstand both rain and sunshine, sheltering

you from sunburn and making for a stylish accessory that goes well with any outfit, whether you are going for a street urchin look or something more aristocratic.

While a good Edwardian umbrella can sadly be on the more expensive side, it is well worth to invest in one as they are generally build to last. Lace parasols are also lovely, but less protective and in my experience slightly hard to find. For those that prefer not to lug around a long umbrella or parasol, there are the foldable umbrellas with a ruffle edge, which can be found in pretty much every shop from high priced brands to the likes of H&M. Do take note that cheap alternatives generally either have a very flimsy UV protection coat or none at all, so you might provide yourself with shade when going for a high street alternative but still ending up sunburned!

Stylish hats, caps (bakerboy caps never seem to get out of style so they are easy to acquire, in any price range) or even headscarfs make for lovely accessories also. And, of course, most goggles make for excellent sunglasses too, provided they have dark lenses in them.

Now that we've covered the main accessories, let's move on to the clothing. If you wish to go for more historical styles, studying the fashion plates and photos from the era of your choice is bound to be of inspiration. You can either sew garments yourself, or buy them.

Plenty of shops, high street and otherwise, carry a range of romantic and military inspired garments this summer, which should suit steampunks both historical and modern alike. Men will find that linen and lightweight cottons make for a nice alternative to their standard outfits. You can even go as far as using cargo shorts if that suits your style or persona. Especially for the more adventurous types, this works rather well.

Footwear wise it can get quite daunting to have to wear boots all day, and if doing so bothers you, then you can go for lovely summery shoes like brogues, Victorian inspired Mary Janes, comfortable ballerina flats that match your outfits or lovely leather sandals. You could even buy a pair of comfortable flip flops and customise them by sewing, for example, a keyhole plate to each.

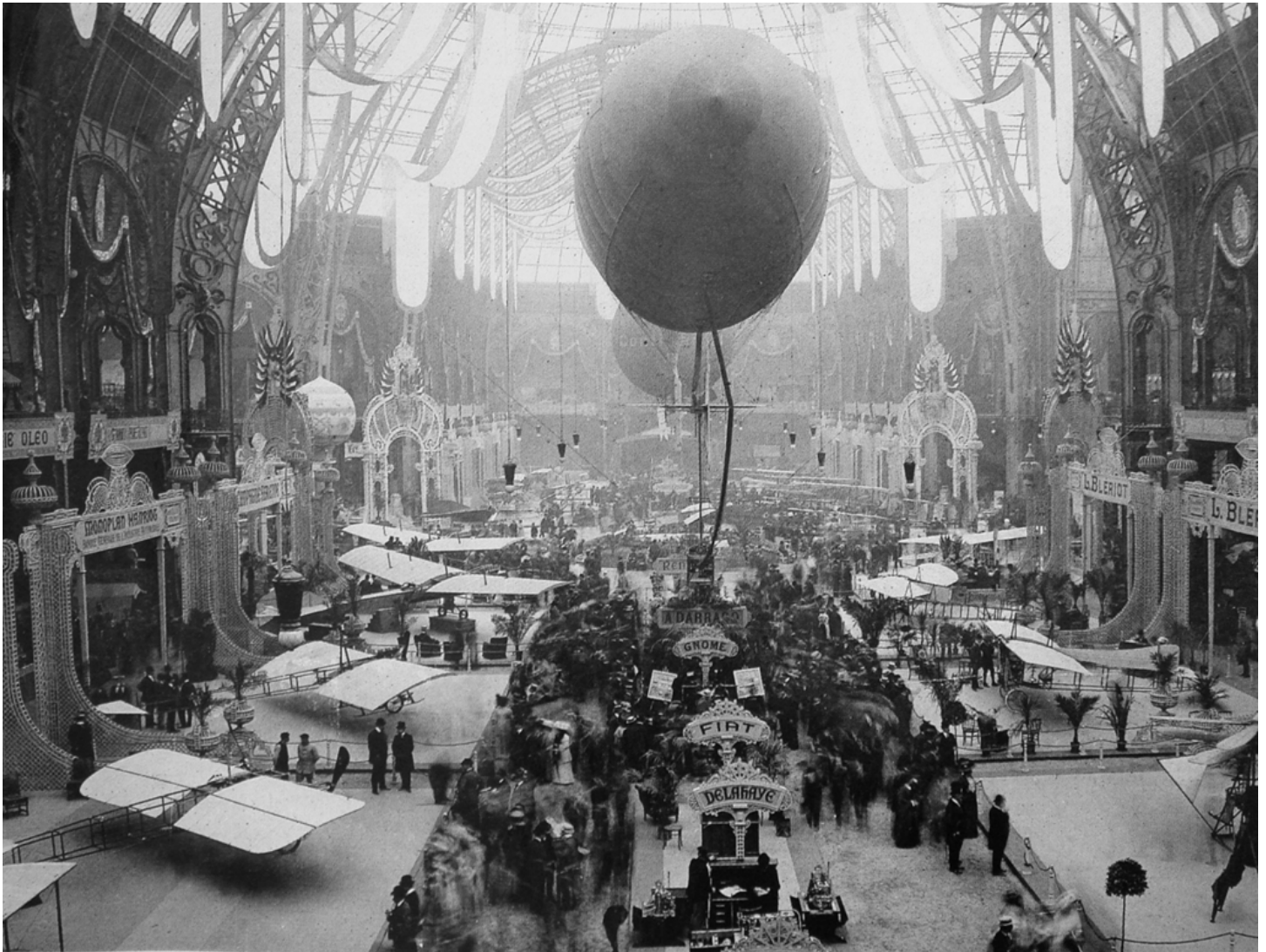
Even if you wish to go swimming or visit the beach you don't have to go without your steampunk. There are a lot of lovely vintage inspired bathing suits out there, and if you can sew, you should be able to acquire a pattern for a Victorian bathing suit and make one yourself.

Just one last thing not to forget, in any case: use sunblock! Because the summer is no fun when you're sore and lobster red!





SPECTACULAR AIRSHOW



PARIS (1909) – The first *Salon de Locomotion Aérienne* was held in Paris this year. The *Grand Palais*, erected for the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*, was site to the extraordinary occasion which had the latest in aircraft technology on display.

The show, organized by André Granet and Robert Esnault-Pelterie, lasted from September 25 to October 17. More than 100,000 visitors attended to admire the innovations of 380 exhibitors.

It was not the first time for Paris to host such a magnificent event. Just a year earlier, the eleventh Paris Car Show witnessed France's first airplane demonstration. Planes, at the time, didn't exist as a separate category yet. Since, the industry has expanded considerably and could boast its most recent of advances in the glorious surroundings of the glass-domed monument to the *Beaux-Arts* which is the *Grand Palais*.

Since 1924 the Paris Air Show has been held every two years, interrupted only by the Second World War. In June 2011 the 49th edition will take place.

The Joy of Creativity

BY JACQUELINE CHRISTI

WHEN THINKING OF WHAT IT means to be creative people's minds jump to artists painting visual wonders and musicians composing great symphonies. Creativity conjures images of actors and performers displaying heroic deeds far beyond the grasp of our mundane comprehension.

Naturally thoughts upon creativity such as these could lead some to believe they would never be able to express themselves so boldly and never be creative. That is simply untrue! No matter who you are or what talents you have there is always a way to be creative.

The Greeks spoke of the nine muses, goddesses who embody and inspire the essence of creativity

No matter who you are or what talents you have there is always a way to be creative.

itself. Their presence has permeated culture throughout the ages to our very own, influencing our concepts of music, performance, and art. Yet many of these divine muses have been forgotten. Clio of History, Urania of Astronomy, Melpomene and Thalia, muses of Tragedy and Comedy... These too are examples of creativity and there is no reason for it to stop there. Creativity is never to be restricted to a commonly acceptable form. If it were, all would grow stagnant and dull. The ability to manifest your imagination into reality is the true nature of creativity. You must never stand by and allow the prominent standard views of the world to lead you to believe that you aren't creative. It is

a lie that must be dismissed from your mind as nonsense because everyone has both the capacity and right to express themselves. Creativity is never taught, merely inspired. It is the ability to transcend traditional notions, rules, patterns, or even relationships. Creativeness is a personal way to meaningfully express new ideas. It is not to be muted by regulated standards, but unbound from social constraints to be original, progressive, and free to be imagined. To place restrictions upon the imagination is to deny the unique qualities of what makes us human.

To begin you must find your muse. One thing that prevents creativity is not knowing where to begin. With the entire realm of imagination at your fingertips finding a specific focus for your creativity can be a daunting endeavor. There is no reason to become disheartened however. Try to direct your attention to something you enjoy in life. Don't restrict your mind to thinking of things that are merely aesthetic; allow yourself to follow your desires. But since the possibilities are endless, be sure to narrow the scope to something you feel passionate about.

If you enjoy riddles and puzzles focus upon confounding intellectual conundrums or torturously twisting angles. Consider the possibilities of developing a convoluted maze, deviously engineered to baffle even the most cunning of minds. You could incorporate elements that rely on specific answers that combine in a way to provide glimpses into a

wider scheme. Your machinations will create a harrowing experience for anyone willing to exert the mental effort in attempt to fathom the depths of your guile.

Video game enthusiasts may wish to imagine adventurous scenarios, new level designs, or even learn how to program one. The power to make an entire world of your own vision through the wonders of technology is abundant with innovative opportunities. Not only can you work towards conceptualizing an original story; you can imagine detailed quirks and unique aspects that generate dimension within your cosmos.

You may delight in collecting trivia and obscure knowledge; try building an interesting compilation. Think about your area of expertise and produce questions to interest people in what you know. Introduce distinct sections that clarify the themes of your specific knowledges. Perhaps you adore studying the past and immerse yourself into tales of bygone eras; it may be to your benefit to engage in hypothetical "what if?" reflections. If you make your quizzical inclinations entertaining by arranging a game or debate about featured perspectives you can guide people to a deeper understanding of your favored topic. Not only will you be presenting new insights into unfamiliar notions, but you grow to learn about your audience as well.

There is no need to fear you aren't good enough or you don't have the proper skills. Through curiosity, you can grow to understand the details behind your muse, but you must let inspiration enrapture your soul to reach it. It is not important to be perfect or even good; the desire to achieve your

objectives regardless of hindrance will liberate your mind and lead you towards your dreams. An important part of creativity is remaining optimistic. Never be discouraged because of a lack of immediate success; creativity grows through

persistence and dedication. Nothing you create can ever be considered a failure, even if it didn't turn out the way you planned, because it is still something that you brought into existence. By bringing a personal thought out of your mind and giving

it tangibility you have begun to develop your own creative process. It is important to know that you have the potential to be creative regardless of whether you can paint or compose music or poetry. Creativity can be simply telling stories to friends, or taking the time to write down your thoughts. Creativity can be daydreaming of flying biplanes and zeppelins above the clouds. It can scribbles on crumpled paper and metal scraps from a half built clockwork golem that will never work. Creativity can be an idea for a grand panacea. Creativity has the potential to be anything because it is your imagination manifested into reality.

Steampunk has a deep grounding built on the very foundations of human creativity. There are no reaches of the mind that steampunk has not managed to grasp. Its inherent passion for design and ingenuity places it above less inspired facets of the world. There is a yearning to find dynamic ways to mold reality and achieve success. Enthusiasm for life permeates the very essence of this culture driving it forward to discover and invent new solutions in science, history, art, fiction, or a multitude of infinite ambitions held by each person that is an insightful member of a wide community. This society breaths hope and lives on dreams. There is a place for everyone who has the desire to pursue their goals, regardless of the obstacles that lay before him. There is no soul amongst any human that lacks a spark of creativeness, but it is the steampunks that recognize it. It is the steampunks that revel in the knowledge both of fact and fiction. It is the steampunks that find inspiration and wonder in the mundane. The acknowledgement of greatness is not only within the ability to build a vision, but in the ability to conceive of it. •

Steampunks breaths
hope and lives on
dreams.



Artwork by Jeffrey Richter



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