

Steampunk books

The Urth list — 20 messages, 12 voices, 13 May 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5024>

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Nicholas Gevers — 13 May 2008, 06:37

In addition to the VanderMeer Steampunk reprint anthology already mentioned in the current discussion, I myself have an original steampunk anthology coming out from Solaris in October: EXTRAORDINARY ENGINES. All new stories from Kage Baker, Keith Brooke, Jeffrey Ford, James Morrow, Ian R. MacLeod, Robert Reed, Jay Lake, Adam Roberts, Marly Youmans, Jeff VanderMeer, Margo Lanagan, and James Lovegrove.

For Wolfe fans, I'd recommend Jay Lake's steampunk novel MAINSPRING--he's a big Wolfe admirer, and there are certainly Wolfean echoes in the book.

Another steampunk epic worth reading is Brian Stableford's Werewolves of London trilogy--lots of metaphysics.

--Nick Gevers.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 13 May 2008, 16:15 · in reply to Nicholas Gevers

For those who like steampunk, I'd recommend the first novel by ALan Campbell, "Scar Night." It reminds me more than a little of China Mieville without being excessively derivative.

On Mon, May 12, 2008 at 11:37 PM, Nicholas Gevers <vermouliau at yahoo.com> wrote:

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Sent from Yahoo! Mail.
A Smarter Email <http://uk.docs.yahoo.com/nowyoucan.html>

Kerry Benton — 13 May 2008, 17:30 · in reply to Nicholas Gevers

I'll second the rec. for MAINSPRING. I'm not a steampunk aficionado by any stretch, but I quite enjoyed Lake's style and unexpectedly twisting story. Quite cool.

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Chris Laybourn — 13 May 2008, 18:02 · in reply to Kerry Benton

Kerry Benton — 13 May 2008, 18:17 · in reply to Chris Laybourn

It's basically a sort of homage to Jules Verne, et al in my mind.

Steampunk fiction tends to anachronisms featuring steam power, clockwork, and other Victorian-era technology (and frequently societal elements) providing the impetus for machines and devices that are firmly in the realm of science fiction (giant walking weapons platforms, for example, as in the anime Steamboy).

That's my quick 2 cent synopsis, anyway ;)

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On Tue, May 13, 2008 at 2:02 PM, Chris Laybourn <laybournchris at hotmail.com> wrote:

Sorry, I'm a little new. Can someone fill me in on "steampunk?"

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CC: urth at urth.net

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Chris Laybourn — 13 May 2008, 18:23 · in reply to Kerry Benton

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 13 May 2008, 18:38 · in reply to Chris Laybourn

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Chris Laybourn — 13 May 2008, 18:48 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

So, apologies for the very newbie-esque question. I just finished Book of the New Sun. Found it very challenging but very rewarding by the end. Is "Urth of the New Sun" now required reading for me?

Lane Haygood — 13 May 2008, 19:08 · in reply to Chris Laybourn

I don't know if I'd say "required" but it is the only way to make sense of what went on in the first four books. Well, as much sense as anything ever makes.

Lane

On May 13, 2008, at 1:48 PM, Chris Laybourn wrote:
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Jordan Dennis — 13 May 2008, 19:56 · follows Lane Haygood

If I could point out some really decent steampunk materials.

- I've always really enjoyed the short story "The Dog Said Bow-Wow" by Michael Swanwick. It's a fun far-future steampunk story. You can read it online at <http://www.asimovs.com/Nebulas03/bowwow.shtml>.

- Karl Schroeder has a Victorianaesque society in his book Sun of Suns. It's a very fun read. I have it as a legal, free download from the tor.com e-book giveaway. If anyone would like to read it, e-mail me and I'll forward the e-mail to you.

- A recent steampunk adventure novel is Whitechapel Gods by S.M. Peters. It's a fun urban fantasy read.

- I'm currently reading The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters by Gordon Dahlquist. It's really long and dense, but he has such a fun writing voice its hard to put down.

Also, from the cinema side, I think The City of Lost Children is one of the better steampunk movies.

Cheers!

On Tue, May 13, 2008 at 3:08 PM, <urth-request at lists.urth.net> wrote:
Send Urth mailing list submissions to
urth at lists.urth.net

To subscribe or unsubscribe via the World Wide Web, visit
<http://lists.urth.net/listinfo.cgi/urth-urth.net>
 or, via email, send a message with subject or body 'help' to
 urth-request at lists.urth.net

You can reach the person managing the list at
urth-owner at lists.urth.net

When replying, please edit your Subject line so it is more specific than "Re: Contents of Urth digest..."

Today's Topics:

1. Re: Steampunk books (Chris Laybourn)
2. Re: Steampunk books (Lane Haygood)

Message: 1
Date: Tue, 13 May 2008 11:48:27 -0700
From: Chris Laybourn <laybournchris at hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: (urth) Steampunk books
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Message-ID: <BLU141-W1874E04F43B4FC1125EBC9BCCF0 at phx.gbl>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

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<http://www.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) Steampunk books

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Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"; Format="flowed";
DelSp="yes"

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Andy Robertson — 13 May 2008, 20:11 · in reply to Jordan Dennis

Jordan Dennis writes:

If I could point out some really decent steampunk materials.

If we're branching out . . .

Currently reading the Eric Corbeyran & Marc Moreno opus **Le R?gulateur**, which is *bandes dessin?es* Steampunk and the best thing I've seen in a month of moons. The architecture!! The machines!! The sexy assassin-ladies in leather and suspenders!!

Not much linkage to Wolfe, though.

- hartshorn

<http://www.thenightland.co.uk>

01273-488272 / 0777-214-9545

Matthew Knight — 13 May 2008, 20:51 · in reply to Andy Robertson

Adding to the "steampunk" roll:

Has anyone given Sean McMullen's "Greatwinter Trilogy" a try? I really enjoyed the first and second books (Souls in the Great Machine and The Miocene Arrow). It's an Australio-centric look at a neo-feudal society 1500 years in the future. Some wildly inventive ideas along with some horribly frustrating characters and ridiculous circumstances, but a good deal of swashbuckling action. Unfortunately, the trilogy doesn't end so well...

I also enjoyed "The Music of Razors" by...Cameron Rogers? It struck me strongly as the kind of book that would appeal to Wolfe fans (lots of arcane references and barely-alluded-to events that require some deduction), although it reminds me also of some of Gaiman's work.

James Crossley — 14 May 2008, 03:58 · in reply to Kerry Benton

To be pedantic for a moment, that's not the whole story. True steampunk isn't just an extrapolation of Victorian-era science, but has to include an element of technology-induced anxiety. In other words, steampunk, like cyberpunk, from which it gets its name, shows the discomforts of rapid advancements in technology, and its mood is usually dystopic.

If a story features atomic zeppelins or steam-powered robots without attendant tension, it's something else. Suggested terms include "gaslight romance" and "retrofuturism."

James

On 5/13/08 11:17 AM, "Kerry Benton" <k.benton at gmail.com> wrote:
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Steven Hall — 14 May 2008, 13:18 · in reply to James Crossley

To add to this, science fiction is well understood to be about the present in which it was written, not the future.

Steampunk, then, is a combination of alternate history and science fiction. It is what we imagine the science fiction of the Victoria era might have been.

Or to put it another way: in the present, we go back to the past to re-imagine the future.

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Recursive Loop — 14 May 2008, 13:44 · in reply to Nicholas Gevers

Greetings:

Lots of steampunky good stuff out there.

Here's a recent discovery. Warning! Vast cosmic timesink ahead!!!

<<http://www.girlgeniusonline.com/>>

Fred Kiesche

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 14 May 2008, 16:06 · in reply to Steven Hall

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I quibble: this is only true for some values of the words "about," "science fiction," and even "is."

I.e., there is no doubt that in some important sense *The Space Merchants* "is about" the advertising/marketing industry of the 1950s. But there is another sense in which one can meaningfully say it is about a future extrapolated from that time.

I would take a much more nuanced approach and say:

Science fiction of any ambition comments deliberately on the world of the present in which it is written, by setting up a contrafactual world in dialogue with that world.

Science fiction lacking in ambition comments inadvertently on the world of the present in which it is written, by setting up a world that, failing to differentiate significantly from that world, depicts its commonplaces as if they were inevitable.

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It is what we imagine the science fiction of the Victoria era might have been.

Put the word "some" before that sentence and I will have far less trouble with it. But, some of the best steampunk (I think for example of Alan Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* -- not to be confused with the grossly inferior movie based very loosely upon it) can meet that description only by an inversion, because it uses our current view backwards of the Victorian era in an ironic pose that would literally not be possible to one living in that era. (Not that irony would not be possible to a Victorian, you understand; only that this particular form of irony, based on a historical view of Victoriana, would not be possible without that perspective.)

Of course, "the science fiction of the Victorian era" existed, in the work of Verne and others; it merely did not yet have a name, or an ironic view. That was introduced very specifically by Wells, whose early SF was very much "about" the world in which he wrote it (e.g., *The War of the Worlds* as commentary on colonialism, or *The Island of Doctor Moreau* as commentary on "vivisection").

Or to put it another way: in the present, we go back to the past to re-imagine the future.

Rather: in the present, we go back to an imagined (and usually explicitly fictional) past to imagine its possible futures.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

I once absend-mindedly ordered Three Mile Island dressing in a restaurant and, with great presence of mind, they brought Thousand Island Dressing and a bottle of chili sauce. -- T. Pratchett

Steven Hall — 15 May 2008, 02:44 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Dan'l -

To paraphrase Stephen Colbert: "Thanks for agreeing with me, and I accept your apology."

Actually, I agree with everything that you wrote to clarify and provide nuance for my statement about steampunk.

(Well, everything except about *The Space Merchants*, that is; not that I disagree with you, but I am just not familiar with it enough to know that it is about the advertising/marketing industry of the 1950s. So it would be improper for me to claim to agree with that.)

When I said that science fiction was about the present, I did not mean to imply that literally. Rather, I was just hoping to dash off some quick thoughts about steampunk and science fiction without taking the conversation even farther off topic than it already was.

What I meant is that any evaluation of a work of science fiction usually reveals more about the time in which it was written than the future (or past, as the case may be) in which it is set.

I'm pretty sure you would agree with this, as your post lists three examples in support of this.

Thanks,
Steve

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

On Wed, May 14, 2008 at 6:18 AM, Steven Hall <sghall at comcast.net> wrote:

To add to this, science fiction is well understood to be about the present in which it was written, not the future.

I quibble: this is only true for some values of the words "about," "science fiction," and even "is."

I.e., there is no doubt that in some important sense *The Space Merchants* "is about" the advertising/marketing industry of the 1950s. But there is another sense in which one can meaningfully say it is about a future extrapolated from that time.

I would take a much more nuanced approach and say:

Science fiction of any ambition comments deliberately on the world of the present in which it is written, by setting up a contrafactual world in dialogue with that world.

Science fiction lacking in ambition comments inadvertently on the world of the present in which it is written, by setting up a world that, failing to differentiate significantly from that world, depicts its commonplaces as if they were inevitable.

Steampunk, then, is a combination of alternate history and science fiction. It is what we imagine the science fiction of the Victoria era might have been.

Put the word "some" before that sentence and I will have far less trouble with it. But, some of the best steampunk (I think for example of Alan Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* -- not to be confused with the grossly inferior movie based very loosely upon it) can meet that description only by an inversion, because it uses our current view backwards of the Victorian era in an ironic pose that would literally not be possible to one living in that era. (Not that irony would not be possible to a Victorian, you understand; only that this particular form of irony, based on a historical view of Victoriana, would not be possible without that perspective.)

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Rather: in the present, we go back to an imagined (and usually explicitly fictional) past to imagine its possible futures.

Steven Hall
sghall at comcast.net

Help me fight cancer at the East Nashville Relay for Life!
<http://main.acsevents.org/goto/StevenHall>
<http://main.acsevents.org/goto/LSNA>

Steven — 16 May 2008, 02:33 · in reply to Chris Laybourn

IMO -- Peace. And, of course, nearly all of the stories.

On May 13, 2008, at 2:48 PM, Chris Laybourn wrote:
Also - Is there a consensus on what Wolfe's best non-New Sun work is?

Steven

Fred Kiesche — 17 Jun 2008, 02:07 · in reply to Kerry Benton

The first written "steampunk" I came across was "The Difference Engine" by Gibson and Sterling.

Around the same time, I was running a SF-RPG called "Space: 1889". Mars had canals, heck there were "men" IN the Moon, various nations were trying to conquer space...

There's even a "steampunk comic":

<http://www.girlgeniusonline.com/>

I'm in love with Agatha!

F.P. Kiesche III "When you send a man out with a gun, you create a policymaker. When his ass is on the line, he will do whatever he needs to do...And if the implications of that bothers you, the time to do something about it is before you decide to send him out." (David Drake, Caught in the Crossfire) Blogging at TexasBestGrok!

--- On Tue, 5/13/08, Kerry Benton <k.benton at gmail.com> wrote: From: Kerry Benton <k.benton at gmail.com>; Subject: Re: (urth) Steampunk books To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>; Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2008, 2:17 PM

It's basically a sort of homage to Jules Verne, et al in my mind.

Steampunk fiction tends to anachronisms featuring steam power, clockwork, and other Victorian-era technology (and frequently societal elements) providing the impetus for machines and devices that are firmly in the realm of science fiction (giant walking weapons platforms, for example, as in the anime Steamboy).

That's my quick 2 cent synopsis, anyway ;)

-k

On Tue, May 13, 2008 at 2:02 PM, Chris Laybourn
<laybournchris at hotmail.com> wrote:

>
> Sorry, I'm a little new. Can someone fill me in on
"steampunk?"

>
> > Date: Tue, 13 May 2008 13:30:24 -0400
> > From: k.benton at gmail.com
> > To: urth at lists.urth.net
> > CC: urth at urth.net
> > Subject: Re: (urth) Steampunk books
>
>
> >

> > I'll second the rec. for MAINSPRING. I'm not a steampunk aficionado > > by any stretch, but I quite enjoyed Lake's style and unexpectedly > > twisting story. Quite cool.
> > > > -k > > > > > > > On Tue, May 13, 2008 at 2:37 AM, Nicholas Gevers <vermoulian at yahoo.com> > > wrote: > > > In addition to the VanderMeer Steampunk reprint > > > anthology already mentioned in the current discussion, > > > I myself have an original steampunk anthology coming > > > out from Solaris in October: EXTRAORDINARY ENGINES. > > > All new stories from Kage Baker, Keith Brooke, Jeffrey > > > Ford, James Morrow, Ian R. MacLeod, Robert Reed, Jay > > > Lake, Adam Roberts, Marly Youmans, Jeff VanderMeer, > > > Margo Lanagan, and James Lovegrove. > > > > > For Wolfe fans, I'd recommend Jay Lake's steampunk > > > novel MAINSPRING--he's a big Wolfe admirer, and there > > > are certainly Wolfean echoes in the book. > > > > > Another steampunk epic worth reading is Brian > > > Stableford's Werewolves of London trilogy--lots of > > > metaphysics. > > > > > --Nick Gevers. > > > > > > > > > > >

_____ > > > Sent from Yahoo! Mail.
> > > A Smarter Email <http://uk.docs.yahoo.com/nowyoucan.html> > > >
_____ > > > Urth Mailing List > > > To post, write urth at urth.net > > > Subscription/information: <http://www.urth.net> > > > > > _____ > > > Urth Mailing List > > > To post, write urth at urth.net > > > Subscription/information: <http://www.urth.net> > > > _____ > > > Windows Live SkyDrive lets you share files with faraway friends. Start > > > sharing. > > > _____ > > > Urth Mailing List > > > To post, write urth at urth.net > > > Subscription/information: <http://www.urth.net> > > >