



Victorian Archetypes in a Steampunk World

or

"Good Heavens [your character's name here], those are the [fill in the blank] of a giant [fill in the blank]!"

by Jess Nevins

William Stoddard's *GURPS Steampunk* is an excellent guide to roleplaying in a steampunk world, and the following is in no way meant as a critique of it. However, one thing *GURPS Steampunk*, like most steampunk games, does not cover is the wide variety of quite gameable concepts that can be found in Victorian literature, both High (mainstream fiction) and Low (penny dreadfuls and story papers). Every player and GM wants to be original, but using ideas which are genuinely Victorian in origin and tone can only help a campaign. To that end, here are nine Victorian archetypes, their historical sources and contexts, and some possible uses for them in a *GURPS Steampunk* campaign.

Adventuresses

The role of women in Victorian society was quite different from today's popular stereotype. There were certainly societal pressures applied to women to act in the ways that we think of today as stereotypically Victorian. But there were many women who were not confined to the morality of the upper classes and who not only acted independently but flaunted their unconventional lifestyles. And further contrary to the current popular stereotype, many of these women, from demi-mondaines to world travelers to reporters, were not only not socially ostracized by Victorian high society but were in fact accepted into the most exclusive parties and occasions, idolized by many young women, watched with admiration by mothers and daughters, and had their fashions copied by "respectable" women. High society often did not condemn these women but instead celebrated them as daringly unconventional.

This was reflected in Victorian literature and in the surprisingly large amount of adventure and mystery fiction in which the heroines, female love interests, or adversaries of the male hero were significantly more independent and less subservient than modern readers would imagine of Victorian-era fictional heroines. The obvious example is Irene Adler, who so memorably stymied Sherlock Holmes in "A Scandal in Bohemia." She is hardly the first adventuress, however. "L____," the first of at least two dozen female professional detectives in Victorian literature, appeared in 1837, four years before Poe's Dupin debuted in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"; the first British novel to feature a female detective, William S. Hayward's *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, appeared in 1861, 26 years before Holmes' debut. Victorian literature had female adventurer-explorers, such as Adolphe Belot's Laura de Guéran (from *A Parisian Sultana*, 1879). There are female Anarchists, including the formidable Zalma de Pahlen (from T. Mullett Ellis' *Zalma*, 1895). There were even female arch-criminals, such as the infernal Madame Sara, from L.T. Meade's *The Sorceress of the Strand* (1903).

The commonly used term during the Victorian era for independent women of this kind was "adventuress." The adventuresses was a part of the Victorian consciousness and can be freely used in a Steampunk world. A *GURPS Steampunk-Old West* campaign might have friends or

competitors of Annie Oakley strolling into London on missions of vengeance or simply as tourists. The Great Detective who helps the players solve the Whitechapel murders could easily be a woman. A **GURPS Steampunk-Rogues** campaign might feature a set of sisters who are demure merchants' daughters by day and second-story women by night. You could redo **GURPS Scarlet Pimpernel**, only set against a Steampunk background and with a party of female adventurers smuggling intellectuals, Jews, and other innocents out from the horrors of Tsarist Russia, or helping African nobleman or European protestors escape from Leopold II's "Congo Free State." In a **GURPS Steampunk-Atlantis** campaign the Clockwork Armies of Leopold's Belgians might besiege an Atlantean colony -- Kôr, perhaps -- in the Congo, and it would be up to a group of adventuresses, dressed as nuns or as the followers of Florence Nightingale, to rescue them.

Aliens

The Victorians were fascinated by the idea of aliens. The notion of life on other planets certainly predated the 19th century, as did fictional portrayals of aliens, but the late 19th century saw the first real flowering of what today we think of as science fiction featuring aliens. H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* (1897) is the archetypal Victorian alien story, and while there were stories of alien invasions before *War of the Worlds* -- France and Brazil were invaded in Guy de Maupassant's "The Horla" (1887), Australia was invaded in Robert Potter's *The Germ Growers* (1892), and the North Pole was invaded in Kurd Lasswitz's *Between Two Planets* (1897) -- Wells' Martians have always been the quintessential hostile Victorian aliens. But Victorian writers portrayed aliens as having natures other than hostile. Some are tourists, as with the Venusian Aleriel in the Reverend Lach-Szyrma's *A Voice From Another World* (1882) and the Neptunian Zoe in Charles Rowcroft's *The Triumphs of Woman* (1848). Some are friendly ambassadors who fall victim to humanity's evils, as with the Marsman, a victim of vivisection, in Ritson & Stanley Stewart's *The Professor's Last Experiment* (1888). And in stories and novels too numerous to mention humans traveling to other planets encountered aliens of a wide variety of personalities.

Naturally, this all will work well in a Steampunk campaign. **GURPS Steampunk** already more than adequately covered the possibilities for meeting aliens on planets, but the possibilities are endless for campaigns involving aliens visiting Earth. The War of the Worlds could easily be adapted to a Steampunk campaign. A **GURPS Steampunk-Illuminati-Black Ops-Special Ops** campaign is one of the more obvious choices, especially if the meteor landing at Horsell Common is met not by bemused civilians but by a squad of MI5 Men in Black Invernesses. In a **GURPS Steampunk-Illuminati** campaign the Martians might be defeated not by an ordinary virus, but an Illuminati-designed retrovirus. Or perhaps, in a **GURPS Steampunk-Delta Green/Black Ops** campaign, the Illuminati didn't design the virus - the Illuminati are allied with the Martians - but someone else did, either a counter-conspiracy or Someone Else lurking beneath the Pacific, not dead, only sleeping, who already called dibs on Earth and isn't welcoming to newcomers.

Alien invasions, though, were only a small part of Victorian fantastic literature, and you needn't use them at all. The aliens might be just tourists, slumming among the provincials or lured here by the galactic reputation of Atlantis (**GURPS Steampunk-Places of Mystery**) or the Plateau of Leng. Perhaps the aliens are from not just another solar system but another timeline altogether and have come back to see Earth in the days before Boskone (**GURPS Steampunk-Lensmen-Time Travel**) began to corrupt the galaxy. Or, just possibly, they aren't aliens at all, just Centran agents (**GURPS Steampunk-Time Travel**) with TL10 illusion casters? If so, Infinity Unlimited agents surely can't be far behind. Make your campaign the destination of the Time Travelers rather than the starting point, and watch the Time Travelers' when their their stunners are met with Hand Flashers.

Anarchists

The mid- and late-nineteenth century was a time of great unease for the Victorians. Many of the social and religious certainties were changing or disappearing, from social caste to Man's place in the universe. One of the most unnerving changes for the Victorians was the disappearance of safety

from Britain, which had formerly been preserved from foreign harm by the English Channel. Not only was there the perceived threat of Communist subversion of the working classes, there was the very real threat of anarchism and terrorism. The worst episode of terrorism was the Fenian Brotherhood dynamite campaign in the 1880s across southern Britain, which culminated with Fenian dynamitards placing "infernal machines" (bags of dynamite) in the Palace of Westminster and the Tower of London in January 1885.

To the Victorians these acts were shocking, and this shock was reflected in the fiction of the time. Turn of the century treatments of these "anarchists" treated the subject less seriously, as in Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907) and Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908), but in the 1880s and 1890s, when the dynamitards were active, Victorian authors took anarchists quite seriously, portraying them in numerous short stories, serials, and novels as wickedness personified. Sometimes they were portrayed as pure evil; Dr. Schultz, in Edward Jenkins' *A Week of Passion* (1884), "continues the work of Satan by sowing the seeds of evil in the world" and "would commit a crime . . . simply for the excitement and peril of the thing." Sometimes they were shown as ruthless, thrill-seeking political fanatics; Virginia Claire, in J.H. Shorthouse's *Sir Percival* (1886), is a duke's niece who is also a "petroleuse" and the "sworn enemy" of the English social system. Sometimes they were portrayed as immoral agents of foreign powers; Lady Bretwyche, of Frances Notley's *Red Riding Hood* (1883), is in the employ of the Russians and will stop at nothing to hurt England and help the Motherland. Some portrayals were even positive: Zalma von der Pahlen, in T. Mullett Ellis' *Zalma* (1895), tries to drop anthrax-infested balloons into every capital in Europe, but the novel shows Zalma (the main character) a great deal of understanding if not sympathy. And Natas, in George Griffith's *Angel of the Revolution* (1893), is a brilliant anarchist whose torture at the hands of the Russian government leads to his retaliation against it, his eventual conquest of the world, and the imposition of a New World Order, along the lines of an armed and enforced world peace. Natas, in *Angel*, is the hero.

Anarchists are an essential part of the late 19th century British experience, and their addition to a **GURPS Steampunk** campaign would inject an authentically Victorian note into the proceedings. **GURPS Steampunk-Special Ops-Espionage** is the most obvious choice, with hand-picked agents of the British government's Intelligence Department (the Victorian equivalent of the CIA) tracking down agents of a foreign power. Perhaps a group of goblins (**GURPS Steampunk-Goblins**) have gone beyond griping about the government and decided to do something violent about it. The anarchy could also be just an unfortunate by-product of a greater secret war, either between Heaven and Hell (**GURPS Steampunk-In Nomine**) or between the League of Notable Gentlepersons and the August Emperor in Ruby (**GURPS Steampunk-Supers**). Or perhaps, in a **GURPS Steampunk-Cthulhu-by-Gaslight** campaign, the dynamitards are from another, even more secret branch of the Intelligence Department, using the most powerful weapons they possess against enemies not just of the crown, but of all humanity. Your players may discover that the choice between apprehending the "anarchists" or letting them go on to more "terrorist" acts is really no choice at all. While the Victorian era was not full of moral ambiguity, steampunk fiction is, and Anarchists can be great vehicles for conveying that.

Edisonades

The Edisonade is a somewhat obscure character type, one not given nearly the attention in steampunk texts that other Victorian archetypes have been shown. This is due in large part to the American, rather than British, origin of the character type. But the Edisonade is nonetheless Victorian in origin and tone.

The Edisonade is a young, male, American inventor who uses his inventions to travel to distant locations, escape from difficulties, kill his enemies (who are almost always non-white), and enrich himself while defeating the enemies of Right, as defined by provincial 19th century Americans. Edisonade inventions are usually technologically advanced steam- (and later electricity-) powered vehicles, heavily armed and capable of speeds almost unthinkable to the Edisonade's contemporaries. These vehicles allow the Edisonade to steal from and slaughter dozens or

hundreds of natives, from Native Americans to Lost Race Aztecs and Incans to Africans.

The five major Edisonades were Johnny Brainerd, from Edward Ellis' "The Huge Hunter" (1868), Frank Reade, created by Harold Cohen and first appearing in "Frank Reade and his Steam Man of the Plains" (1876), Tom Edison, Jr., created by "Philip Reade" and first appearing in "Tom Edison, Jr.'s Sky-Scraping Trip" (1891), Jack Wright, created by Luis Senarens and first appearing in "Jack Wright, the Boy Inventor" (1891), and Electric Bob, created by Robert Toombs and first appearing in "Electric Bob and His White Alligator" (1893). All match the definition given above, with only Electric Bob not continually displaying ethnic biases.

The traditional Edisonade, the brilliant inventor of advanced steam vehicles and weapons, will not seem so revolutionary in a steampunk world: Johnny Brainerd's Steam Man, so singular and unusual in "The Huge Hunter," is nothing more than a human-shaped Iron Horse. But the importance of the Edisonade, and the character's essential playability in a *GURPS Steampunk* campaign, lies in the character's genius, especially when compared to those around him. The Edisonade is always the most brilliant and heroic man in his world; those around him can be smart, and his enemies, who also make advanced vehicles and weapons, are always intelligent, but the Edisonade is more brilliant still.

In a *GURPS Steampunk* campaign an Edisonade could be building TL10 mechas and using them to adventure abroad; the Edisonade would still be a genius compared to his contemporaries. The Edisonade could be the Miles Dyson who causes the steam-A.I.s to band together and overthrow humanity in a *GURPS Steampunk-Reign of Steel* campaign, or merely creates super-tanks in a *GURPS Steampunk-Ogre* campaign. Or the Edisonade could have already come and gone, a victim of the Illuminati, and the supervehicles could be currently gathering dust in the Steampunk Britain equivalent of Warehouse 23.

But the nature of the Edisonade would be shown best by making him (or her -- just because the traditional Edisonade was always a racist white male does not mean the Edisonade in your campaign has to be) a genius in areas where no one else is, both scientifically and geographically. So you could have a Haitian Edisonade who uses the gifts of the loa to build giant aircrafts made from human and animal bones (*GURPS Steampunk-Voodoo*); the other houngans would be astounded at the strength of the Edisonade's spells, and the outside world would be shocked that magic and voodoo are real. A *GURPS Steampunk-Bio-tech* game could have a successful Dr. Moreau type making living warships (see the Human-Made Monsters below) out of whale/shark crossbreeds and terrorizing the world's shipping with his creations. An Edisonade in a *GURPS Steampunk-Psionics* campaign might create deadly aircraft using the power of her mind. Perhaps the Edisonade has somehow accessed technomancy (*GURPS Steampunk-Technomancer*). An Edisonade who has mastered a Weird Science that the rest of humanity barely understands and which is at odds with the steampunk science of the world would retain the nature of the originals while still being gameable. In *GURPS Steampunk* terms, this kind of Edisonade might exist in a TL (5+1) world but create TL (4+2) tech.

Future War

The Victorians were uneasy in victory. Even before they became the virtual masters of the world, they worried about Britain losing status and suffering military defeat. Beginning in 1871 with George Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking*, dozens of Future War stories, short stories and serials and novels were published in which England was invaded and conquered, or simply threatened with the same. The cause of the Future War varies; sometimes it is Asian enmity (see *The Yellow Danger*, under Yellow Perils below), sometimes it is the hatred of the Germans, or the Russians, or the French, as in George Griffith's "The Raid of Le Vengeur" (1901), or both the French and the Russians, as in Fred Jane's Blake of the "Rattlesnake" (1895), and sometimes it is Anarchists. But war was coming, many of these books forecast, and Britain would suffer; if Britain finally triumphed, it was only at the cost of tens of thousands of casualties and the destruction of Britain

and much of the Empire.

A Future War Campaign set in a Steampunk world can be taken in many directions. World War One might take place a few decades early in a *GURPS Steampunk-WW2* campaign full of steam mechas and dirigibles rampaging across Europe and Russia. If you want to invoke the threat of the Asian Hordes, the scale of the war could be global, and the discovery that the Asians, lacking steam technology, fall back on magic (in a *GURPS Steampunk-Magic* genre clash) will increase the fervor of the clash as well as the casualty count. The Storyteller can throw a corkscrew twist into the campaign by having an Asian sorcerer invoke a final, terrible spell, one that negates all steam power and sets humanity back centuries. In this *GURPS Steampunk-Magic-Y2K-Low Tech* campaign the players, now forced to rely on brute strength and pursued by the spells and magical monsters of the evil Asian occupiers, range across a ruined and powerless London, fighting the invaders and searching for a power source that the magics won't negate. Bring the Greys into it, and suddenly England's fighting not just for the Queen but for all humanity -- unless the Queen Herself is one of the Greys' pawns. If the Future War involves magic, perhaps one of the byproducts is the return of supposedly mythical creatures (*GURPS Steampunk-Fantasy Bestiary*). If the Future War uses only steamtech, one of the byproducts might be warped and mutated animals (*GURPS Steampunk-Atomic Horrors*).

Great Detectives

The figure of the Great Detective is perhaps the most familiar of all the Victorian characters, due to the ongoing popularity of Sherlock Holmes. And A. Conan Doyle, through Holmes, was almost entirely responsible for the change in the portrayal of detectives in Victorian literature from stolid Inspector Bucket (from Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* in 1853) police-types to incisive consulting gentleman detectives widely admired by all around them and capable of great feats of inductive and deductive reasoning.

But Holmes is not the first Great Detective in Victorian literature, nor even the first detective with what we today think of as Holmesian characteristics. Great Detective characters appeared before Holmes' 1887 debut, with the Holmes-like James Brooke appearing in James Skipp Borlase's *The Night Fossickers* in 1867 and the very Holmes-like Maximilien Heller appearing in Henri Cauvain's *Maximilien Heller* in 1871. Great Detective characters appeared contemporaneously with Holmes, most notably Arthur Morrison's *Martin Hewitt*, who debuted in the pages of *The Strand* in 1894. And Great Detectives continued to appear after the last Holmes story, the most popular being Sexton Blake, whose Golden Age was in the 1920s and 1930s.

Great Detectives are quite Victorian in tone, and can add a great deal to any Steampunk campaign. Players may likely want to play a Great Detective, but this isn't a problem; there can be more than one Great Detective, or competing Great Detectives. The other Great Detective can be part of the Illuminati, or working against the Illuminati, or entirely unaware of the Illuminati, or could be a myth created by the Illuminati to fool the public; after all, how much of the London population ever actually saw the reclusive and disguise-loving Sherlock Holmes? What if the Great Detective turns out to be not quite human (*GURPS Steampunk-Aliens/Goblins/Spirits*)? What if the Great Detective only *used* to be human (*GURPS Steampunk-Blood Types*)? An undead Great Detective could add a Kim Newman frisson to your game. And your Great Detective needn't be a master of reasoning alone, or at all; what if the source of his genius turns out to be extremely potent scrying and clairvoyance spells (*GURPS Steampunk-Magic*)? A psionic Great Detective is a natural, if you're bent that way (*GURPS Steampunk-Psionics*), and the brain with the psionics needn't be a human one (see Human-Made Monsters, below). Finally, who says the Great Detective has to be a good guy? Guy Boothby's Simon Carne, a gentleman thief who debuted in 1897, posed as the brilliant detective Klimo in order to facilitate his crimes. Perhaps the Great Detective in your campaign could do the same. Great Detectives can be fun; Great Detectives who are not what the players expect are even more fun.

Human Monsters

Victorian fiction is replete with humans who are, for whatever reason, different from or better than other humans. With the rise of science fiction as a discernible literary genre and the commercialization of the popular press, increasing numbers of stories were written which used themes formerly seen in fairy tales or which incorporated current concerns (evolution, the dangers of too much scientific experimentation) into a science fictional framework. Many times these themes were embodied in an individual, to better explore the themes or demonstrate the pros or cons of a specific issue.

The most familiar example of these Human Monsters is Dr. Jekyll, from Robert L. Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). There were numerous others, though, and they are just as gameable as Dr. Jekyll: the energy vampire Julius Courtney (from J. Cobben's *Master of His Fate*, 1890), the super-fast Professor Gibberne (from H.G. Wells' "A New Accelerator," 1899), the shape-changing priestess of Isis (from Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*, 1897), the mesmerist Ptahmes, former wizard to the Pharaohs (from Guy Boothby's *Pharos the Egyptian*, 1899), the detective Seligman, who has clairvoyant "second-sight" (from W.I. James' "Heller's Pupil," 1894), and so on. The Victorians had a surprising taste for stories in which the protagonists or villains possessed superhuman abilities. There were even stories in which characters were given these powers, comic-book-style, as in Arthur Conan Doyle's "Los Amigos Fiasco" (1892), in which a convict is rendered invulnerable and immortal from a botched electrocution, and in Edgar Fawcett's "The Ghost of Guy Thyrlle" (1895), in which Guy Thyrlle, while experimenting with astral projection, is stuck in that form.

These characters don't need to be monstrous, and in a good Steampunk campaign many characters like this won't be, but in Victorian literature many of them are. "Monstrous" needn't equal "evil," either -- some of the Human Monsters were quite well-meaning. But thanks to flukes of genetics or experimentation, these beings are all different from ordinary humans and are gifted or cursed with extraordinary abilities. These sorts of characters can be easily included in a **GURPS Steampunk-Supers** campaign, where men and women with unusual abilities can lurk around every corner. Magic, religion, or psionics could cause these abilities, depending on what the GM wants to include in his campaign. An authentically Victorian campaign might have the Human Monsters as unusual eruptions of the monstrous and aberrant into an otherwise ordinary world, so that everyone is normal except for the one monster, which can lead to a **GURPS Steampunk-Horror** campaign or perhaps a **GURPS Steampunk-Horror-Supers** campaign in which the superpowered human thinks that he or she is a monster, but is really just a Super.

The aforementioned Julius Courtney might be a mutant who only thinks he's a vampire. There are other paths to take to incorporate Human Monsters into a steampunk campaign. A superpowered Fenian Anarchist could be an immortal Cuchulain (**GURPS Steampunk-Celtic Myth**). The person who's been killing all the criminals of London might be a Lensman (**GURPS Steampunk-Lensman**), in pursuit of time- or space-traveling Eddorians. Or the cause of someone's unusual vitality and recuperative abilities is the alien living inside his body (**GURPS Steampunk-Black Ops**) or the experiments he's performed on himself (**GURPS Steampunk-Bio-Tech**).

Human-made monsters (HMMs)

One of the recurring themes of Victorian literature is scientific curiosity leading to disaster, of questers after knowledge learning things that Man Was Not Meant To Know. In many cases these experiments created monsters; scientists tampering with the natural order of things inevitably created unnatural beings, and these beings usually came to bad ends. We can see in these stories part of the Victorians' deep distrust with science which upset the natural order of things or which had men "playing God." The ultimate example of this is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1816), but Frankenstein's Monster was only one of many. The Beast People from Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) qualifies, as does Solarion, the sympathetic dog with a transplanted human brain

from Edgar Fawcett's *Solarion* (1889). Other examples include the intelligent, childlike, vampiric humanoids from Louise Strong's "An Unscientific Story" (1903) and the brain-transplanted human "Baron Savitch" in E.P. Mitchell's "The Ablest Man in the World" (1879).

Although most Victorian HMMs were either human in form or had human parts in them, games needn't adhere to this. More efficient killing machines could be produced from crossbreeding wolverines and tigers or grafting their parts together; variant dinosaurs could be made from experiments on dinosaur bones and eggs. Transplanting a rat's brain into a body made of different animal parts might prove interesting. The possibilities are as endless as the animal kingdom. Perhaps the horrors of Whitechapel have returned, but this time the victims were torn apart not by a knife but by claws? In a ***GURPS Steampunk-Men In Black-Bio-Tech*** campaign Greys, assisted by their human lackeys, could be experimenting on citizens of the Crown and thereby creating HMMs. In a ***GURPS Steampunk-Illuminati*** campaign it might be an Illuminati-employed scientist who is creating HMMs from London's population, the better to foment fear and unrest and help the Illuminati more easily take power, or perhaps the scientist has gone rogue and the players have to find the scientist and his experiments before the Illuminati does. In a ***GURPS Steampunk-Bunnies & Burrows*** campaign, the players could be the animals experimented upon, and must face the fear and suspicion of humans and their fellow animals. The GM can play up the difference between Steampunk England and Steampunk America in a ***GURPS Steampunk-Deadlands*** campaign, with the players, stout Englishmen all, venture to America to investigate rumors of Indian sorceries and find, much to their regret, that the rumors are true. An additional layer of weirdness can be had in a "Valley of the Ultra Gwangi" ***GURPS Steampunk-Deadlands-Dinosaurs*** campaign; perhaps the Greys (***GURPS Steampunk-Deadlands-Dinosaurs-Men in Black***) are using Gwangi Valley as a scientific playground? Or perhaps the Valley of the Gwangi was the site of a previous nuclear blast, and the dinosaurs there are mutants (***GURPS Steampunk-Deadlands-Dinosaurs-Atomic Horror***)? Human-Made Monsters can serve the purpose of any monster in a roleplaying game, but the source of their creation can add a note of pathos or paranoia to your campaign.

Yellow Perils

The threat of the Yellow Peril -- that is, the Asian genius plotting to take over the West or the world -- did not begin with Arthur Ward's Fu Manchu. In 19th century British literature the identity of the Sinister and Enigmatic Outsider shifted from Italian to Asian; the portrayal of Japanese and Chinese men changed from coolie stereotypes and simple-minded peasants to drug addicts, sexual threats, and finally criminal and military masterminds -- the Yellow Peril.

The first true Yellow Peril is Kiang-Ho, a Mongolian pirate and warlord who invents a supersubmarine and used it to prey on Western ships in the Yellow Sea in "Philip Reade"'s "Tom Edison, Jr.'s Electric Sea Spider" (1892). The second Yellow Peril is Yue-Laou, from Robert Chambers' *The Maker of Moons* (1896), a powerful Chinese sorcerer as well as the ruler of an empire in the middle of China. The third Yellow Peril character is Dr. Yen How, in M.P. Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* (1898). Dr. Yen How is a half-Japanese, half-Chinese warlord who connives his way to power in China, unites Japan and China, and then launches the armies of both countries at the West. The fifth Yellow Peril character is Quong Lung, from Dr. C.W. Doyle's *The Shadow of Quong Lung* (1900); Quong Lung, a Yale graduate, is also the most powerful crime lord in San Francisco and the undisputed ruler of that city's Chinatown.

What the preceding list shows is that the Yellow Peril does not have to be limited to a Fu Manchu-like character, a criminal mastermind hiding in the shadows and striking through his devoted followers. Yellow Perils can be military leaders, pirates, sorcerers, and local crime-lords. They can also be other things . . . academics, for example. Perhaps that new visiting professor (***GURPS Steampunk-IOU***) who has an unwholesome allure for the students has something more in mind than just raising the class GPA? A ***GURPS Steampunk-China*** campaign might have characters sent from the Heavenly Kingdom to London (or San Francisco or New York) to stop a Yellow Peril (a concubine who poses a threat to the Son of Heaven, perhaps, or the Emperor's disgraced nephew), or to help their rise to power. A ***GURPS Steampunk-China-Martial Arts*** campaign

might reprise *Shanghai Noon*, but with Jackie Chan's character as the villain. A **GURPS Steampunk-Cabal** campaign could see the players working their way up the Yellow Peril's command structure and stopping the flow of opium into London until they encounter the Yellow Peril's lieutenant, who seems immune to bullets but who has an aversion to sunlight. Perhaps, in a **GURPS Steampunk-Cabal-China** campaign, the Yellow Peril has made an alliance with the Cabal, in which case the Yellow Peril might have imported Ch'ang-Shih from back home. And, following the Yue-Laou example given above, the players in a **GURPS Steampunk-Magic** campaign might discover that the Yellow Peril doesn't need a Steam Man to run across a plain at 50 miles an hour, or that the rumors of his magical power (spread by heathen superstitious Chinese) are the truth.

GURPS Steampunk provides a rich setting for a campaign. But the adept use of Victorian archetypes can add to the historical authenticity of a campaign as well as make for great fun. Alan Moore's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* did this, and benefited from it. *Big Trouble in Little China* has been waiting to be recast in a steampunk mode for quite some time; why shouldn't you be the one to do it? Change the focus from San Francisco to Limehouse, make the kidnaped vehicle Sir Jack Burton's Steam Carriage, and let the fun begin. Better yet, begin the game with Sir Jack taking his "Welsh Rarebit Express" to the Scottish border, and you've got yourself a perfect **GURPS Steampunk-Magic-Autoduel** setting. With **GURPS Steampunk** and some real Victorian character types anything is possible.

Bibliography

Although some of the more famous stories and novels mentioned here are easily found in bookstores and public libraries, many of these books have been out of print since for decades or even since their first appearances. While e-text Web sites like Project Gutenberg (<http://promo.net/pg/>) and the Online Books Page (<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books/>) do have electronic versions of some of these otherwise out of print books, many others are not available online. Most libraries have some sort of Interlibrary Loan program by which rare books, like the ones mentioned here, can be borrowed, but many of the books mentioned here exist in only a handful of libraries in the United States, Canada and Britain, and those libraries will not loan out their copies.

So, with that in mind, here are some suggestions for either reading the original appearances of these characters and books or reading good critical descriptions of these characters and books.

- **Adventuresses:** There's been relatively little critical work done on the fictional Victorian adventuresses; most of what has been written has been about female Victorian detectives. Michele Slung's *Crime On Her Mind* (1976) and Colleen Barnett's *Mystery Women* (1997) are good critical looks at female Victorian detectives, as is Chris Willis' "The Female Sherlock," at <http://www.chriswillis.freemove.co.uk/femsherlock.htm>
- **Aliens:** There has been no good anthology devoted to Victorian alien stories, but Wells' *War of the Worlds* is easily found, and the 1971 English translation of Lasswitz's *Between Two Planets* is in several hundred libraries around the United States. The other books mentioned are not easily located, but there are any number of anthologies which contain Victorian alien stories.
- **Anarchists:** There has been no book-length examination of the figure of the anarchist in Victorian fiction, but Haia Shpayer-Makov wrote an excellent essay on the subject, "A Traitor to His Class," which appeared in *The Journal of European Studies* v26 n3 Sept. 1996.
- **Edisonades:** There has been no book-length examination of the figure of the Edisonade in Victorian fiction. The two best sources of information on the Edisonade, besides the original texts, are the Edisonade entry in the Clute/Nichols *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (1993) and my "Edisonade" and "Frank Reade" entries in the *British Story Paper Encyclopedia* (2002).
- **Future War:** The seminal Future War text was George Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking*, which is e-texted at <http://www.blackmask.com/books63c/dorkingdex.htm> . In 1999 George

Locke published an eight-volume set entitled *Sources of Science Fiction: Future War Novels of the 1890s*. These books should be easily found for you via your local public library's Interlibrary Loan service.

- **Great Detectives:** Several anthologies of Victorian detective fiction were published in the past decade. A few good ones are *Victorian Tales of Mystery and Detection* (Michael Cox, ed., 1992), *The Mammoth Book of Golden Age Detective Stories* (Marie Smith, ed., 1994), and *Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* (Alan Russell, ed., 1978).
- **Human Monsters:** Although there's been no book-length critical examination of the novels mentioned in this section, several of them have been reprinted in the past thirty years, including Cobben's *Master of His Fate*, Marsh's *The Beetle*, and Boothby's *Pharos the Egyptian*; the latter can also be found online at <http://www.blackmask.com/books47c/pharaos.htm>
- **Human-Made Monsters:** The most famous HMM novels, Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, are both easily found.
- **Yellow Perils:** Apart from the original texts, the single best examination of this stereotype and its use in fiction can be found in William Wu's *The Yellow Peril* (1979).

Finally, my Fantastic Victoriana site, at <http://www.geocities.com/jessnevins/vicintro.html>, has a great deal of information on all the characters and books mentioned here.

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