

Literature, Text and Context: Insights regarding Alternative History, Humour, Zen and more (Supplementary Material English)

LIBRARIATLIEGIC
HYPOTHESIS
HISTORIA
PERIODICAL

201

Chronicle of the First (And Last...) Multipunk Convention¹

João Ventura

The Portuguese Steampunk Convention had opened its doors. At the entrance table, Sofia and Joana, wearing tight corsets and the rest of their clothes to match, received the participants with a smile, proceeding with their registration. Many had entered the proposed Steampunk Cosplay Contest and appeared dressed in very imaginative ways.

An unexpected fact that unfortunately only became evident too late is that the high concentration of punk elements caused a bending in the space-time continuum, creating a strange attractor that made everything that is punk in the known universe converge at that point. At the same time, the word punk suffers a viral infection, beginning to produce metastases.

João Barreiros, the well-known specialist in punk literature and the like, is already sitting down and preparing the notes on his tablet to talk about Electropunk. Someone suggests he change the name of his lecture to “Teslapunk”, but he refuses, arguing that although he is an admirer of Tesla, he fears that this may give rise to a multiplicity of variants, such as Edisonpunk, Faradaypunk, etc. “We already have enough punk”, Barreiros will have commented to the author of the suggestion.

Suddenly, a group of people to whom all eyes are turned enters the room. In front, a man in a white tunic, followed by two slaves carrying an artefact consisting of a brazier with a sphere on top, equipped with two curved tubes through which steam comes out. The sphere rotates around an axis, supported by two supports. Closing the group were two soldiers, wearing leather skirts and metal armour, armed with shield and sword and wearing feathered helmets.

“We bring greetings from Alexandria,” spoke the man in front, with a friendly countenance.

“Sandalpunk!” identified André, who was an expert on punk with more retro features. “And I just hope that we won’t have too... OMFG!”

The exclamation had been triggered by the appearance of two groups, each with three members, bearded, dishevelled hair. Those in front wore clothes made of tanned leather, each wielding a metal-headed axe. In the second group the bodies were covered with animal skins, and held stone axes. Fortunately none showed any threatening attitude.

“Bronzepunk and Stonepunk,” André explained. And I’m afraid this has only just started...”

As if to confirm his words, a loud noise in the garden adjacent to the house made everyone run to

1 Originally published in *Almanaque Steampunk 2013*. Joana Neto Lima, Sofia Romualdo, André Nóbrega, Rogério Ribeiro (eds), *Clockwork Portugal*, Lisboa. English translation by the author. All the names belong to friends of the author who are actively involved in the fandom and enjoyed to appear in the story.

the windows. A ship had just landed, calcinating the surrounding bushes, which had been carefully trimmed the week before.

“What a clumsy pilot! Now we’ll have to compensate the building owners for the damaged plants...”, muttered Rogerio, taking off the glasses that characterised him as a mad scientist and running down the stairs to meet the ship passengers.

The door of the ship opened and out of it came a man clad in medieval robes, who removing his helmet with visor from his head, announced:

“We are Spacepunk, of course, but we gave a lift to some others we met on the way.” And into the ship, he shouted:

“We’re here, guys! This is the Convention!”

First a cowboy came out, adjusting his Colt 45 belt. He carefully checked and adjusted two hands on the bracelet he was wearing on his left wrist, looked around curiously and headed towards the building.

“Westernpunk,” Rogerio thought, looking now at two new characters emerging from the ship. One of them was easily identified as an alchemist, wearing a gibbon that showed some stains and burns, certainly resulting from his manipulations in the search for the philosopher’s stone. He was wearing a gold necklace with cabalistic symbols, and he was talking animatedly to another man, with a long white beard, who was carefully carrying a device with a large number of gears that spun at different speeds, having on top a pair of wings that beat rhythmically. The latter was saying to the alchemist, “But lately I have been abandoning inventions a little, I had an order to paint the last supper...”

“Candlepunk and Clockpunk, today we have it all,” muttered Rogerio, as he addressed the newcomers with words of welcome.

In the midst of the generalised confusion, the arrival of a car whose engine thumped noisily and emitted a huge puff of smoke through its double exhaust almost went unnoticed.

“These Dieselpunk people need to learn how to tune injectors...”, Luís commented, leafing through the books on display, and occasionally peeking at the terrace where the Solarpunk people were putting the finishing touches to a machine whose purpose was obscure to everyone, except possibly to the builders.

The audience settled down for the inaugural session. At that moment, a man in an army uniform from the beginning of the 20th century entered the room, carrying a small barrel of wine under his arm.

“Even Winepunk didn’t miss it!”, commented the other Luis.

As silence fell in the room, and the organisers were about to formally open the Convention, an individual wearing an outfit that changed colour when he moved approached the table and announced:

“I represent Timepunk here. I come from the future, yes! The disruption in the space-time fabric caused by this Convention has reflected unpleasantly on the time from which I come. And it was necessary to take action. I am a clone of the officer responsible for maintaining temporal order.”

He let the audience digest his words and continued:

“You may also consider me a representative of Nuclearpunk. Why? Because the object that I have here” - and showed in the palm of his hand what appeared to be a small metallic sphere - “is a nano bomb that when it explodes will make this building disappear, with all its occupants of course, but will restore the tessiture of space. Unfortunately, the process will cause some collateral damage in a two to three kilometre radius around this point. If it is any consolation, just think that your disappearance will restore order in the universe.

The small sphere suddenly took on a blinding blue colour and...

203

According to galactic records, Porto was a beautiful city...

Author's note/thanks: Idea originated from reading 2 posts by Romeu Martins on his blog Cidade Phantástica (<http://cidade-phantastica.blogspot.pt>), entitled Festival Punk and Festival Punk 2.