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Jules Verne and the Media. [Review of *Jules Verne et la culture médiatique*, eds. Guillaume Pinson and Maxime Prévost. Québec, Canada: Presses universitaires de Laval, 2019]

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Jules Verne and the Media. Guillaume Pinson and Maxime Prévost, eds. *Jules Verne et la culture médiatique* [Jules Verne and Media Culture]. Québec, Canada: Presses de l'Université Laval, COLLECTION LITTÉRATURE ET IMAGINAIRE CONTEMPORAIN, 2019. viii+256 pp. CAN\$29.95 pbk and ebk.

In their introduction to this recent collection of essays on Verne, the editors make the observation that few authors of world literature were as deeply immersed in the media culture of their time as Jules Verne. They may be right. During his writing career Verne leaned heavily on newspapers, popular magazines, and scientific journals both for plot ideas and technical documentation for the 50+ novels of his *Voyages Extraordinaires*. As he explained during one of his many interviews:

I am a great reader, and ... I always read pencil in hand. I always carry a notebook about with me and immediately jot down ... anything that interests me or may appear to be of possible use in my books. To give you an idea of my reading, I come here every day after lunch and immediately set to work to read through fifteen different papers, always the same fifteen, and I can tell you that very little in any of them escapes my attention. When I see anything of interest, down it goes. Then I read the reviews, such as the *Revue Bleue*, the *Revue Rose*, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, *Cosmos*, Tissandier's *La Nature*, and Flammarion's *L'Astronomie*. I also read through the bulletins of the scientific societies, especially those of the Geographical Society.... (R.H. Sherard, "Jules Verne at Home." *McClure's Magazine* 2.2 [Jan. 1894]: 120-21)

It is also important to remember that the majority of Verne's novels first appeared in his publisher Hetzel's semimonthly periodical, the *Magasin d'éducation et de récréation* [Magazine of Education and Recreation], before being reprinted as octavo books and translated into many languages. As a lucrative follow-up to his early work in the theater, Verne had a hand in adapting several of his more popular novels to the stage; *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1874), for example, played to sell-out crowds in over 3000 performances between the late 1870s and 1940 (see Jean-Michel Margot, "Jules Verne, Playwright" *SFS* 32.1 [2005]: 150-71). The nineteenth-century press is further represented by the many newspaper reporters and journalists who populate Verne's narratives, including Gédéon Spilett in *The Mysterious Island* (1870), Alcide Jolivet and Harry Blount in *Michael Strogoff* (1876), Claudius Bombarnac in the novel of the same name (1892), and Harris Kymbale in *The Will of an Eccentric* (1899). In the American pulp magazines of the 1920s and 1930s, editors such as Hugo Gernsback popularized the notion of Verne as one of the inventors of "scientifiction" (a drawing of Verne's tombstone even appeared on the title page of *Amazing Stories*). And Verne later became universally recognized as "the father of science fiction on screen" (Brian Taves, *Hollywood Presents Jules Verne*, 2015) with several blockbuster films such as *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* (1916, 1954), *From the Earth to the Moon* (1958), *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1959, 1999), *Master of the World* (1961) and *Mysterious Island* (1961, 2012). Finally, beginning in the late 1980s, Verne's *romans scientifiques* and their

many spin-offs are credited with having inspired the retrofuturistic neo-Victorian sf subgenre known as steampunk.

Much like steampunk—which owes its popularity more to its aesthetic (fashion, art objects, and architectural style) than its print narratives—Verne’s relationship to media culture goes much deeper than his literary production. As Jean-Michel Margot correctly observes, during his lifetime Verne “became an icon, an archetype separate from the man and his writings” (“Un Archétype populaire: Jules Verne,” *Verniana* 6 [2014]: 81). That is to say, the international media increasingly portrayed Verne not only as a best-selling author but also as a social phenomenon: a seer of tomorrow and a prophet of humanity’s technological future. In 1889-1890 Nelly Bly’s race around the globe in the footsteps of Phileas Fogg—including her brief stop in Amiens to pay her respects to Verne—became a widely acclaimed news event celebrating her circumnavigation of the world in 72 days (today the prize given for the fastest yacht sailing around the world is still called the Jules Verne Trophy). True to his reputation as prognosticator, Verne contributed a short essay to the American magazine *Popular Mechanics* (6 [June 1904]: 629-31) titled the “Future of the Submarine,” in which he predicted that its primary use in years to come would be as a weapon of war. And what name did the European Space Agency choose for its new Automated Transfer Vehicle (ATV), first launched in 2008 to resupply the International Space Station? The *Jules Verne*.

In the context of the above, it is not surprising that the essays featured in *Jules Verne et la culture médiatique* are wide-ranging both in topic and scope. (An interesting fact: according to Google’s Ngram, the French word “médiatique”—signifying “of the media” or “newsworthy”—did not exist in the nineteenth century and came into common parlance only in the 1980s.) The volume’s coverage is spelled out in the subtitle listed on the book’s cover and its title page, describing it as *De la presse du XIXe siècle au steampunk* [From the Press of the Nineteenth Century to Steampunk], suggesting an historical timeline of well over 100 years.

The introduction by Guillaume Pinson and Maxime Prévost entitled “Jules Verne avant et après Jules Verne” [Jules Verne Before and After Jules Verne] stands as the only fully diachronic essay in the book, tracing how the author made use of media in crafting his *Voyages Extraordinaires* and how the latter “constitue un point d’observation idéal pour cartographier certaines topiques de l’imaginaire social” [constitute an ideal lens for mapping certain aspects of the social imaginary] (8) after Verne’s oeuvre gained world-wide celebrity.

Pascal Durand’s essay, “La Ligne et la boucle: *Michel Strogoff* ou l’involution technologique” [The Line and the Buckle: *Michael Strogoff* or Technological Involution] discusses the narratological structure of this Verne novel, in particular how its many forms of linearity and circularity work together to express an ideologically mixed message about technology and human values.

Claire Barel-Moisan’s “Du *Magasin* à *La Science illustrée*: Hybridation du roman vernien dans l’écosystème de la revue” [From the *Magasin* to *La Science illustrée*: The Hybridization of the Vernian Novel in the Ecosystem

of the Periodical Journal] seeks to demonstrate “comment le roman vernien s’inscrit dans l’économie globale de la revue mais aussi, réciproquement, comment son insertion transforme l’identité même du support qu’il investit” [how Verne’s novels fit in with the global economy of periodical journals and also, reciprocally, how they transform the very identity of the medium in which they appear] (41).

Gérard Fabre’s “Aux Sources médiatiques du *Volcan d’or*” [On the Media Sources for the *Golden Volcano*] does exactly what its title says: it examines the press coverage of the fin-de-siècle gold rush and those media sources that Verne consulted in 1899-1900 when writing his novel about the Klondike. The novel was published posthumously in 1906 and revised by his son, Michel.

Thomas Carrier-Lafleur’s essay “L’Extraordinaire en série: démesures verniennes chez Albert Robida et Gustave Le Rouge” [The Extraordinary in Serials: Pushing the Vernian Envelope in the Works of Albert Robida and Gustave Le Rouge] compares Verne’s *romans scientifiques* with the science fantasies of Robida and Le Rouge. (See my “Science fiction vs. Scientific Fiction in France: From Jules Verne to J-H. Rosny Aîné” in *SFS* 15.1 [1988]: 1-11 and “Gustave Le Rouge, Pioneer of French Science Fiction” in *SFS* 29.1 [2002]: 1-14.)

Jean Rime’s “De Jules Verne à Hergé: L’interface médiatique comme alternative au modèle de l’influence” [From Jules Verne to Hergé: Media Interface as an Alternative to the Model of Influence] discusses the well-known parallels between a number of Verne novels and several of Hergé’s popular *Aventures de Tintin* comic albums (1929-1983), especially notable because of Hergé’s repeated denials of plagiarism. Rime argues that the majority of these overlaps are not really examples of Hervé “borrowing” from Verne but, rather, the result of a kind of unavoidable metatextuality due to a modern media completely saturated with Vernian topoi.

Maxime Prévost’s “Jules Verne à Hollywood, années 1950: Un état (partiel) de l’imaginaire social” [Jules Verne in Hollywood, the 1950s: A (Partial) State of the Social Imaginary] looks at three highly influential Verne films of the 1950s: *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* (1954), *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956), and *Journey to Center of the Earth* (1959). Prévost rightly concludes that “l’univers visuel qu’évoque l’imaginaire romanesque de Jules Verne doit énormément aux trois adaptations cinématographiques marquantes des années 1950” [the visual universe evoked by Jules Verne’s fictional imaginary owes a great deal to these three outstanding movie adaptations made during the 1950s] (159).

Bounthavy Suvilay’s “Adaptation transmédiatique: *Le Tour du monde* en série animée hispano-japonaise” [A Transmedia Adaptation: *Around the World* in an Animated Spanish-Japanese Serial] explores a 1983 Spanish-Japanese television series called *La Vuelta al mundo de Willy Fog* [Around the World with Willy Fog] by Nippon Animation and the Spanish production company BRB and Televisión Española.

Nicolas Gautier’s “Romancier du passé, astronaute amateur, espion idéaliste: Le Jules Verne steampunk de *La Lune seule le sait*” [Novelist of the

Past, Amateur Astronaut, Idealistic Spy: The Jules Verne Steampunk of *Only the Moon Knows*] is the only essay in this volume to deal in great detail with Verne and steampunk. Or, rather, with Verne *in* steampunk, since the story by Johan Héliot published in 2000—and described as the first francophone steampunk novel—features a fictional Jules Verne as one of its main protagonists, along with other historical figures such as Victor Hugo, Arthur Rimbaud, Gustave Flaubert, and Emile Zola. Despite the pulpish nature of its storyline and the tongue-in-cheek tone of the narration, the novel raises a host of interesting questions about Verne's social identity as viewed through the steampunk perspective.

Mélodie Simard-Houde's "L'Emprunteur emprunté: Réécrire les *Voyages extraordinaires* à l'ère du projet Gutenberg" [Borrowing from the Borrower: Rewriting the *Extraordinary Voyages* in the Age of Project Gutenberg] presents another example of Vernian intertextuality that appears in a 2015 novel by Québécois author by Nicolas Dickner entitled *Six degrés de liberté* [Six Degrees of Liberty]. The essay also argues that, today, Verne's oeuvre is taking on a new life "par sa circulation sur la toile, en diverses langues, grâce au libre accès numérique" [through its circulation on the web, in many different languages, thanks to its cost-free digital availability] (240).

Jean-Christophe Valtat's "Mon Nom est *Nemo*: Transfictions verniennes" [My Name is *Nemo*: Vernian Transfictions], the final essay of the volume, examines the presence of Verne in several contemporary works of francophone fiction: Héliot's *La Lune seule le sait* (2001), Jean-David Morvan and Nesmo's 2-issue comic book *Univerne* (2011), Guillaume Lapeyre and Rémi Guérin's manga *City Hall* (2012), and the elaborately illustrated graphic novel *Un An dans les airs* [A Year in the Air] collectively authored by Raphaël Albert, Jeanne-A Debats, Raphaël Granier de Cassagnac, and Johan Héliot (2013). The essay contends that each of these works offers an homage to Verne while simultaneously replacing the real, historical Verne with a media-derived version that might be more accurately described as an "écrivain imaginaire" [imaginary writer] (242) rather than a writer of the imaginary.

In sum, for early sf scholars who can read French, Pinson and Prévost's *Jules Verne et la culture médiatique* offers a selection of essays on Verne that are cutting-edge and very engaging. Highly recommended for all university libraries.—**Arthur B. Evans, SFS**