Forgotten Futures

THE SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE ROLE PLAYING GAME
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Introduction

I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past.
Thomas Jefferson

Draw the blinds on yesterday and it's all so much scarier....
David Bowie

WHAT will the future be like? Every generation has its own set of ideas and predictions. At the turn of this century most pundits thought that the mighty power of steam and electricity would usher in a new age of peace and prosperity. In the fifties the future was mostly seen as doom, gloom, and nuclear destruction. In the nineties we are obsessed with computers, and convinced that the future will revolve around information technology. Each of the earlier views was valid for its era; each was at least partially wrong. By looking at earlier guesses we may be able to discover what is wrong with our own vision of the future - and make even worse mistakes when we try to correct it!

Forgotten Futures is a role playing game based on these discarded possibilities; the futures that could never have been, and the pasts that might have led to them, as they were imagined by the authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Role playing games (usually shortened to RPGs) are story-telling games. One player is the referee who runs the game, and has an idea of what is to happen in the story, while the other players run characters in the story. Characters are defined by a name, a description, and a list of characteristics (such as 'MIND') and skills (such as 'Marksman'). Players describe the actions of their characters, while the referee describes everyone and everything they encounter. This may sound like an impossible job for the referee, but it's easy if players are prepared to co-operate.

The *Forgotten Futures* rules work well when dealing with the activities of normal people, but don't easily stretch to deal with magic, superhuman powers, and the like. Some of the appendices deal with magic, exceptional characters, melodrama, and other matters that the core rules don't cover; mostly this is material that was originally written for one or another of the *Forgotten Futures* settings, but seems to have more general application.

One aspect of the *Forgotten Futures* rules may annoy players who prefer high levels of violence; it is easy to get hurt or killed in all forms of weapon-based combat, it takes a long time to recover if you are wounded, and most wounds require medical treatment. This seems more realistic than the systems offered by some other RPGs, in which a character can be shot three or four times and still come back for more. If you dislike this approach please feel free to amend the injury system, but please DO NOT distribute modified rules.

About This Release

SINCE *Forgotten Futures* was originally published as shareware in 1993 there have been nine on-line releases, printed versions from two publishers, and numerous conversions to pdf and html format. In all this the actual rules have stayed much the same. This release isn't going to change that; it's mainly tidying things up a little, adding in material originally written for one or another of the game settings which seems more generally useful, fixing some errors, improving layout, and generally making things more user-friendly. Most of the new material is in the