

## **Imaginary Places**

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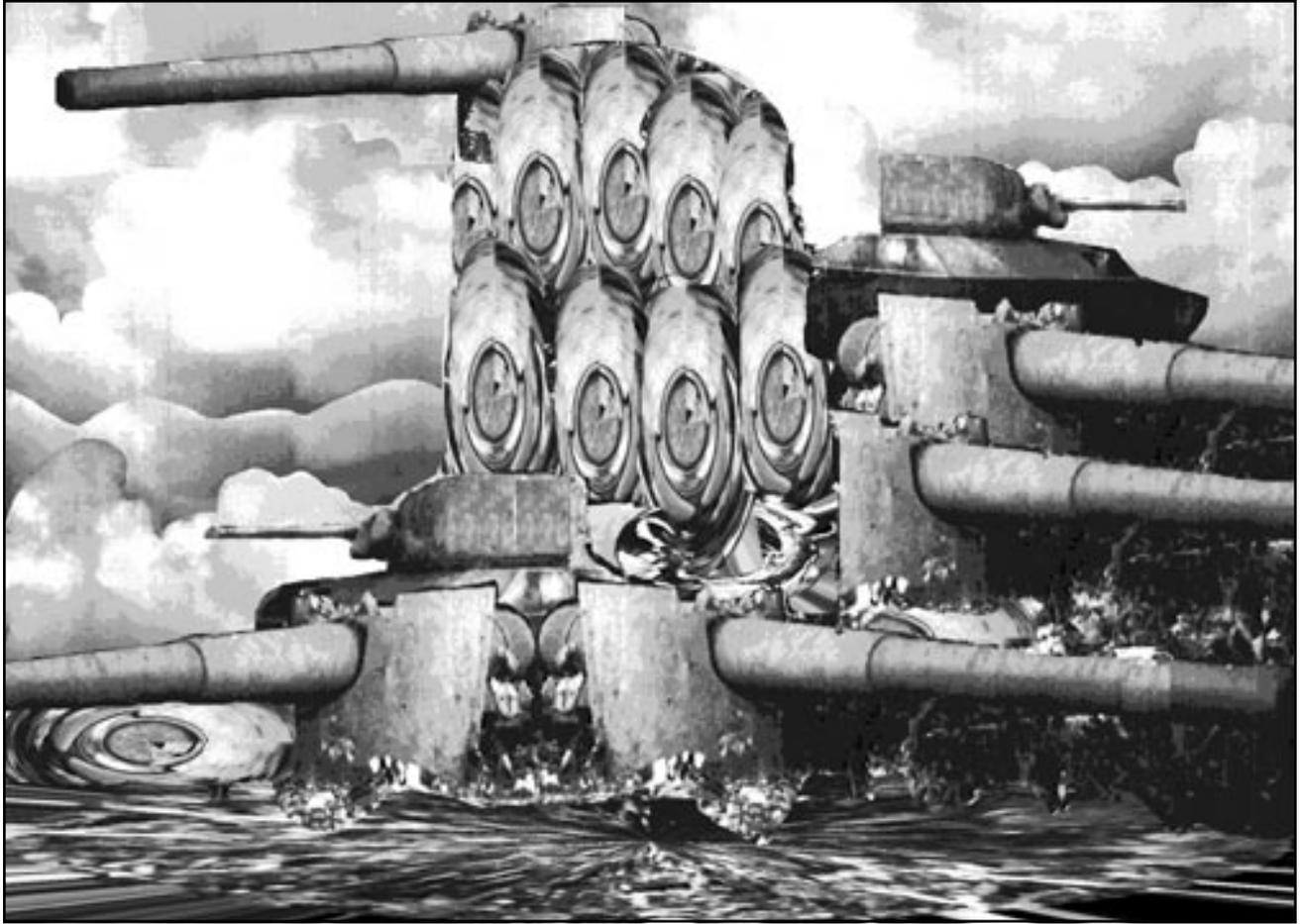
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# IMAGINARY PLACES III

# **Fortress of the Dead**

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## Fortress of the Dead

In the center of the Indian Ocean there is a fortress island where time has no meaning and **no sound is ever heard**. Its inhabitants are the dead of the ages, and, being perfect reflections of the living, they build their monuments with the materials at hand, using for mortar a mixture in equal portions of hatred and fear. It is a place where **arrivals** are frequent and departures unheard of, though there is no fear of overcrowding, the dead having in common a certain compactness that lends itself to superimposition.

The armaments that mount the barricades and **turrets** are several and all are lethal, though there is no record of them being exercised in the defense of the territory. They are likely only sentimental expressions that the living sometimes attach to themselves at the moment of death, especially among those who enlist as volunteers.

Though it is no paradise, it is a perfect democracy open to all, including the partisans of every struggle regardless of affiliation. No telling about the weather, however. It seems ever unsettled.



### Listening for the Voices of the Dead

Shortly after the end of WW I, acting under the auspices of the League of Nations, a force of men and equipment was sent forth to establish listening stations away from the bustle of civilization for the purpose of discovering the whereabouts of the accumulated dead of nations, causes, and passions. The expedition was led by Captain R. K. Williams, U.S. Army Signal Corps, whose reports have been widely published in *True Detective* magazine and other journals of high repute. Though no verifiable results were ever reported, Captain Williams was awarded medals and accorded other honors by several of the League's member states.



### Immigrants

Around the globe, in every season, immigrants await processing. While the paperwork is minimal, delays do occur when the **reception center** is caught short handed.

One hears rumors that Parliament will consider a budget increase in the coming year to ease the pressures on staff and administrators. Chances for approval will hinge, per usual, on the prevailing public mood when the matter actually comes to the floor for a vote.



### Reception Center

The staff of the reception center takes great pride in their work. Here they prepare a new arrival for **stacking** until such time as a function can be assigned. Those who come with good credentials—a college education or technical skills—can look forward to quick placement.



### The Stacks in First Class

Initiates who have accumulated sufficient frequent-flier points are eligible for first-class accommodations, where vertical stacking and regulated temperatures afford a greater degree of comfort.



## Turret Interior

A photographer commissioned by the heavy-metal band **Big Plastic Willy** secured this interior shot of turret number 7. It was subsequently used on the cover of the band's best-selling CD, *Who's Your Mother, Mother?*

Sociologists are having a holiday with it, of course. Several papers have already appeared in print in Norway, Germany, and in the Bahamas. The best of the crop is titled *What's in a brain?* by Paco Wang, a leading socio-absurdist at the famed Mumford College of Social Research. Wang postulates that clear stylistic connections can be made between the turret friezes and certain Indo-European folk art, but that precise interpretation requires the utmost care and restraint. In urging restraint, Wang puts himself squarely with Heinrich Wölfflin, who said one might learn as much from a shoe as a cathedral.