



STEAMPUNK VS.  
DIESELPUNK

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*Say What??*

# *Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk*

- First, let's examine the "punk" suffix. Punk rock as a music style developed in the 70's and quickly came to represent political anti-establishment and anarchism, also developing a unique DIY aesthetic with distinctive clothing, hairstyles and adornments. It was dirty, raw, edgy, underground, and heavily influenced by those who were self sufficient – most people not only made their own clothing, but produced and distributed their own records as well.
- Using -punk as a modifier in this manner has come to mean much of the same thing – a breakdown in social structure, an alternative, normally self-made variation of a traditionally historical aesthetic, a parody that examines the atrocities of our society through a fantastical lens. It normally has strong Dystopian connotations.
- Dieselpunk is the antithesis of Steampunk. Not its enemy, but the counterweight on the other end of the scale. In terms of style, it's not merely a question of the fuel that drives the machines (steam over gas), but of the way the machines are viewed.

# Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk

- **Steampunk**

- **Noun**

- *A subgenre of speculative science fiction set in an anachronistic 19th century society.*
- *“Steampunk Moves Between 2 Worlds” article in the New York Times in 2008 defined it as “a subculture that is the aesthetic expression of a time-traveling fantasy world, one that embraces music, film, design and now fashion, all inspired by the extravagantly inventive age of dirigibles and steam locomotives, brass diving bells and jar-shaped protosubmarines.*
- *A person cosplaying as a Steampunk character.*

# Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk

- **Dieselpunk**

- **Noun**

- *A postmodern genre of art as well as a budding subculture that combines the aesthetics of the interbellum period through World War II and ending circa (a range of time often referred to as the “diesel era” by the Dieselpunk community) with contemporary creations.*
- *Also sometimes referred to as “Decopunk”*
- *A person cosplaying as a Dieselpunk character.*

# *Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk*

- Steampunk exists to glorify the tinkerer, the DIY maker with his tools and pockets full of replacement gears. It fetishizes the inner workings of things and the way that they function (or don't) in a world where all technology is new, strange, bespoke and infinitely fallible.
- Dieselpunk, on the other hand, fetishizes the machines themselves—the fast car, the impossible airplane, the smooth perfection of a body panel or radiator coil when it is doing exactly what it is meant to do.

# Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk

- **Steampunk**

- We will start with Steampunk, as it is the most visible, most commonly talked about, and the number one way characters are re-imagined within the cosplay community. Steampunk is most often set in the Victorian & Edwardian eras, when steam-power was at its peak. It most commonly has a color palette of browns, ivories, golds, brass and copper, although anything can be used successfully in Steampunk – especially lush velvet and brocade fabrics. Most often it has an air of the aristocratic; high tea and polite society. Corsets are common, as well as top hats, monocles, mustaches, vests, goggles, pocket watches, tailored jackets and suits. It is not always set in Victorian era, as Steampunk blends equally well with other time periods – turn of the century, as well as Western Steampunk ensembles are common.
- But the important thing to remember in Steampunk is that everything is *steam* powered. Really, it is an alternate history where during the Industrial Revolution steam was the ideal source of power. It's pretty common to see aspects of clockwork and intricate mechanical details (although sometimes people refer to this aspect as clockpunk) – Steampunk has lots of independent moving parts. Most things are “overdesigned.” Of course, Steampunk doesn't only have the high society of the aristocrats, there are also the mechanics and tinkerers, the mad scientists and alchemists that represent the grittier aspects of the genre – these are the folks who keep the world moving. Steampunk tends to be the most comical, most beautiful, and most delicate of the genres.

# Steampunk Vs. Goths

- NOTE: traditional neo-Victorian Gothic ensemble does not have the elements of “Steam”
- Alternative culture has been incorporating Victorian elegance into their wardrobe since long before Steampunk was commonplace.
- Does not have the science fiction element, but is dark and moody and mostly vampire focused.

# *Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk*

- The Transition:

- Steampunk & Dieselpunk differ both in timeline and themes, the only overlapping being the First World War era.
- The war created a cleave between the era of National revolutions and romanticism, of progressive improvement of human life through science and expansion of European Western Civilization and the following era, characterized by totalitarian systems and mass communication, technological, systematic destruction of human soul and body and the last stand of a declining Europe crushed between his New World offspring and the emerging Asiatic masses. As the war itself includes both the end of the former era and the beginning of the latter, its imagery is often claimed by both genres.



# *Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk*

- Airships are pretty common in both genres.
- Dirigibles and hot air balloons are more steampunk, while zeppelins fall more in the dieselpunk genre.

# Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk

- **Examples of Steampunk in film, video games, music and pop culture:**
- *Wild Wild West* (Film, Steampunk set in Western times), *The Time Machine* (book and film, arguably the original Steampunk), the works of *Jules Verne* (*Around the World in 80 Days*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*)
- **HP Lovecraft's** works are also sometimes associated with Steampunk in a more horror vein, although there is some argument there. There are tons of images for "Steampunk Cthulhu," though.

# Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk

## ● **Dieselpunk**

- Dieselpunk, similarly to Steampunk, also takes its name from its representative power source - in this case, diesel fuel. Dieselpunk is most commonly set in the 1920s up until the World War II era of the 1940s and the first half of the 1950s and is marked by the aesthetic of the time. Because of this, it often has a strong military influence in the costuming and look of the vehicles, which are generally slow, clunky, massive, and powerful. Unlike Steampunk, function trumps form in Dieselpunk – they are often crude things, meant to be machines of war rather than luxury vehicles used on your way to tea. Rivets, steel, iron and coal replace the brass and copper and delicate workings of Steampunk.
- Clothing often consists of military style dress, most commonly from American and German WWII regalia. There is less variation in the traditional clothing of the time in Dieselpunk than you'll find in the other genres, although you will find some exaggerated helmets, goggles, and robotic enhancements. Think of old wartime propaganda posters, the pinups of Vargas, and the Art Deco\*, World's Fair and industrial revolution eras and you'll be going the right direction. Everything was much grittier, darker, but with the promise of a better, brighter future. Dieselpunk is all about fighting to build the world of tomorrow.

\*Because of the Art Deco aesthetic, some prefer to call it Decopunk.

# Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk

- **Examples of Dieselpunk in film, video games, music and pop culture:**
- *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (Film, robot and war film set in a noir style 1930's), *Iron Sky* (Finnish film, using WWII themes set in a modern era), *Rocketeer* (Film, about as classic Dieselpunk as you can get), *Sucker Punch* (Elements of dieselpunk, especially in the costuming), *City of Lost Children*

# *Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk*

- Steampunk reflects not only the functions (often intricate) of “tech” combined with design. It reflects the Industrial Age with new inventions and innovations.
- In Dieselpunk, the tech is frequently already ever-present, and reflects a major change, not only in fuel, but in attitude.
- The technology is no longer new, and mass production increases accessibility, often at the expense of design.

# Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk

	<b><i>Steampunk</i></b>	<b><i>Dieselpunk</i></b>
<b>Hats</b>	Top Hats	Fedoras
<b>Fuel</b>	Steam engines and gears	Unleaded gasoline and Diesel Fuel
<b>Ruling governments</b>	Monarchy vs Anarchy	Fascists vs Capitalisim
<b>Metals</b>	Brass, Gold, Copper, Bronze	Steel, Iron, Aluminum, Chrome
<b>Vehicles</b>	Horses and Buggies, Bicycles and Trains	Motorcycles, Buses and Planes
<b>Weapons</b>	Lever-action Rifles and Revolvers	Tommy Guns and MP40s Mausers and 1911 pistols

# *Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk*

- The benefit of being the “biggest dog” in this particular fight is that the Steampunks get more stuff—more books, more movies, more costume options for Halloween and Comic-Con. By being the current alpha punks, the Steampunk pop culture DNA is spreading the furthest, multiplying the fastest and having the largest cumulative effect on the modern conception of the fantastic.
- But the downside (as evidenced by the above question) is the potential for a loss of purity - of focus. There's real danger in the co-opting of the physical accoutrements of the style by hacks and dimwits who don't get what made Steampunk so cool in the first place.

# Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk

- Dieselpunk, however, is on the rise as more people become aware of it.
- It is not as “extreme” as Steampunk and elements of Dieselpunk “costuming” fit nicely into society as “Vintage” clothing.
- It is more “socially acceptable” in society.



# Steampunk Vs. Dieselpunk

- Is one superior to or better than the other?
- Can a person be involved in both?
- Can they co-exist?



# TIME TRAVELERS' BALL

**Sat 11 pm – Sun 1 am**