Embark Upon the SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE of a Lifetime

 Bolt your steamer trunk and don your top hat, strap on your rigging knife and lace up your corset. You are about to embark upon a journey that will bring dramatic ritual and practical magic into your everyday life.

Drawing on her own experience as a practicing High Priestess and magician, Gypsey Elaine Teague introduces readers to an entirely new magical system. Enter the world of Steampunk Magic.

• Where the airship and its crew are your coven, and the Captain and Commander your High Priest and Priestess.

• Discover how to craft your own magical toolkit, including a compass, goggles, directional gear, key, wand, and more.

• Learn and perform Absinthe Rituals, Steam Up and Steam Down Salutes, plus rituals for birth, death, protection, banishing, and blessing.

“In Steampunk Magic the aether that we sail through, work in, and peer beyond allows us the power to perceive what is before us, unobstructed by the filters and layers of twenty-first century doubt and questioning.”

— FROM THE BOOK

Not only will you learn the secrets of ritual magic, you will also learn how to transcend time, space, and place to create a world and a lifestyle where magic can fully happen.

All Aboard!
STEAMPUNK MAGIC
Dear Spiritual Adventurer,

Congratulations on your choice to join the crew. As Captain of the airship, allow me to give you an idea of what you will be looking forward to in your years of service with us.

During your first year you will train with our more experienced crew members. You will receive a mentor who will guide you through the tools, spells, and rituals so necessary to Steampunk Magic. Your mentor will assist you in building or acquiring your tool kit—they can teach you to forge your own directional gear and help you procure your compass, rigging knife, and other vital magical tools. They will assist you in arranging your altar and teach you the invocations, salutes, and ceremonies unique to Steampunk Magic. At the end of your year-and-a-day training you will be afforded full membership into our ranks with all the rights and privileges of all the other members.

As you may have noticed on your first tour of the ship, there are numerous opportunities to advance in rank and skill. You may
choose to specialize in crafts, becoming one of our Shipwrights or Artificers: engineers and builders in the non Steampunk world. Perhaps you'll outfit the entire crew with a new set of goggles! Or instead you may choose to cook and become an official Mess Officer—preparing ritual tea cakes and absinthe. Or perhaps you'll discover that your skills with the compass are unsurpassed and decide to become Navigator, charting the course of our ship. It is even possible to advance to Commander of our ship or, in time, Captain of your own. As you can see, with the right training, there is no limit to what you may be able to do on board a Steampunk Magic airship.

Throughout the duration of your stay, if there are any questions that you have please feel free to contact either myself or any of the crew. We look forward to your membership and I am certain your time with us, as long or short as you may choose, will be exciting, rewarding, and satisfying. Again thank you and welcome aboard.

Gypsey Elaine Teague
Captain
Gypsy
Elaine
TEAGUE

STEAMPUNK MAGIC

Working MAGIC
Aboard the Airship

Weiser Books
San Francisco, CA / Newburyport, MA
To me a book is a message from the gods to mankind; or if not, it should never be published at all.

—Aleister Crowley
They start arriving around five o’clock in the evening. At six thirty a couple rings the bell on the porch of a renovated Victorian in a gentrified section of town and waits. She is wearing a long skirt with a bustle and lace neck blouse, and carrying a small clutch purse. On her head sits a top hat with a pair of brass goggles on the brim. Her hair falls from under the chapeau in tight curls. The gentleman leans on the carved wooden door casing. His long morning coat covers a crisp white shirt with pointed collars, a vest, pin-striped pants, and a shiny leather holster where a single action cap and ball pistol resides. He wears a bowler hat with matching goggles on the brim.

The host answers the door in work clothing and a stained leather apron. He has an old leather tool belt at his waist, and his face is slightly singed with what looks like soot. Goggles with very dark lenses hang from his neck, and his boots make a sharp clicking sound on the hardwood floors. As the old friends journey to the parlor, others are there—thirteen to be exact, since the two at the door were the last arrivals. The
newcomers greet the others. All are dressed in some form of strange Victorian garb: many men and women are carrying elaborate firearms; most are wearing goggles, some very ornate; and three of the women are in tight corsets.

This could be the opening scene of a new Victorian movie or the first two paragraphs of a young adult novel; but these are real people, and they are part of a growing group of Steampunk Magicians.

At first glance steampunk and magic are not two subjects that are thought of as neighbors, or even friends. However, I realized a few years ago that magic has evolved so much in the past three generations that the skin that wraps our culture and path can be painted in a myriad of colors and styles. Because of this and the basic substance of steampunk I found that the two are indeed connective at many points along both continua.

Growing up I heard somewhere that magic was applied mathematics. Since I was never good at mathematics, I discounted the chance of ever being good at magic. I didn’t understand at that time (I was six years old) that applied mathematics in this case was actually just doing the same thing \((a + b + c = d)\) over and over again with the same results. Again, it didn’t matter what the process looked like, as long as the process was identical each time.

Now, as an elder and high priestess, I do indeed understand and teach my students that although the nomenclature of Steampunk Magic might differ from what they are used to, that doesn’t make it any more or less effective or “real.” With that clarity I began the synthesis of melding steampunk and magic into a practical method of processes and effects for the Victorian futurists. I have hosted a steampunk conference in South Carolina, written on the subject, appeared in books on
the style and fashion of the genre, and studied how this all may be applied to the magical path that I follow. This book is the result of my efforts.

This volume is a beginning text. It is not meant to be the be-all and end-all of Steampunk Magic, nor is it meant to be kept secret from the world. This introduction is simply that—a starting place meant to be used, modified, and expanded upon as its spells and potions are refined. I only ask that you keep copious notes to be passed on to the next generation of magical historical futurists.
“Would you like to see the Time Machine itself?” asked the Time Traveler. And therewith, taking the lamp in his hand, he led the way down the long, draughty corridor to his laboratory. I remember vividly the flickering light, his queer, broad head in silhouette, the dance of the shadows, how we all followed him, puzzled but incredulous, and how there in the laboratory we beheld a larger edition of the little mechanism which we had seen vanish from before our eyes. Parts were of nickel, parts of ivory, parts had certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal. The thing was generally complete, but the twisted crystalline bars lay unfinished upon the bench beside some sheets of drawings, and I took one up for a better look at it. Quartz it seemed to be.

—H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine*

Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls of all ages, let me take you to a world of steam and brass, guns and goggles, where electricity never caught on and if you
fly it’s with helium and hydrogen in large airships. A world where there is fog and smog and smoke and flame. A world of war and peace, and bustles—from the city and the ladies. Where Victoria is Queen, and the sun never sets on the British Empire. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to offer you a world of steampunk.

In steampunk, the brass is shinier, the guns are deadlier, the women are prettier, and the men are more muscular. Everything is bigger and sharper and cuter and edgier while being reserved, genteel, and holding to nineteenth-century morals and ethics. Men tip their hats and hold doors for ladies. Ladies bow in long skirts and corsets.

Before I discuss the path of Steampunk Magic, let me try to explain exactly what I mean by “steampunk.” Steampunk is the juxtaposition of nineteenth-century science fiction and twenty-first-century reality; or, put more simply, it can be thought of as Victorian science fiction grown up, a futuristic Victoriana, where anything is possible as long as you don’t use too much electricity, gas, diesel, or atomic power.

Steampunk takes the works of Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, and other science fiction writers of the Victorian era and transports them to our time—or at least a time that could have been, if steam had remained the primary power source. Steampunk is a Victorian “what if.” And there lies the rub, as they say. There is no real definition...
of what steampunk is or can be, since there is no limit to the number of alternate histories that could have evolved from the time of Victoria.

When Herbert George Wells wrote *The Time Machine* in 1895, his genre was termed “scientific fiction.” At that time the future was a wild and wonderful place to long for. It was a future with no war, famine, pestilence, fear, or poverty. There would be unlimited travel by submersible, airship, and fast train and carriage. The world would be what they had promised it was going to be—instead of the tawdry, lousy, fouled up mess that the Victorian populace of England and America were all too familiar with.
Add to the historic works of H. G. Wells the undersea submersible of Nemo in Jules Verne’s *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, and finally stir in the architecture of the Victorian age, and you have a breeding ground for a future not quite realized but possibly attainable.

Now, more than one hundred years later, some of us long to return to this time of steam, brass, copper, and gas. We forget the short life expectancies of that time, the filthy living con-
ditions, and the deplorable sanitation of the early Victorian era. We would be appalled at the medical and technological backwardness as compared to our hospitals and digital world. But hindsight is always filtered from reality, and the steampunk genre has become the new and more cleaned up, pressed, and polished history of the world. It is a genre that spans art and science to include everything from computers to books, hardware to fashion.

The Beginning of Steampunk

It all started in the 1980s. At that time a subculture of science fiction found a foothold in literature and science fiction conventions. These paths-not-taken alternative histories spurred on by the goth followers became a new mini-genre to follow. K. W. Jeter, an American science fiction and horror writer, first coined the phrase “steampunk” in April, 1987, as a way to identify what he and others of his time were writing. With books such as *Infernal Devices*, *Morlock Night*, and the seminal work *The Difference Engine* by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, steampunk burst onto the horizon of those who enjoyed the different, the alternative, or the dystopic. Very slowly at first readers of these works took them to heart and began asking, and then demanding, more. The costumes came next; pieces from thrift stores and other remnant houses, and original Victorian hand-me-downs found in chests and trunks in attics. By the turn of this century,

You could say that steampunk is “goth in earth tones,” but that would be a gross simplification.

What Is Steampunk Culture?
and one hundred years after the death of Victoria, the fans of steampunk were spreading everywhere.

Another definition of steampunk is “what goth grew up to be.” This is a limited definition and not completely accurate, but it does touch on the history of the movement. The goth trend of the 1980s seems to have many tenets of the steampunk movement of the 1990s and 2000s, but it is neither completely accurate nor applicable. Steampunk is a genre that is many things to many people. While the goths wore dark clothing, darker hair, and even darker attitudes, espousing a neo-Victorian appearance of a bleak postpunk genre, the cyberpunk movement (a subgroup of the goths) incorporated the high-tech future of movies such as *Blade Runner* and *The Matrix*. You could say that steampunk is “goth in earth tones,” but that would be a gross simplification.

One of the things making “steampunk” a difficult work to define is the word “punk.” Many in the mainstream, whatever the mainstream may be, think of punk in a pejorative view and associate punks with punk rock or the anti-establishment of the early goth movement. However, it is important to remember that the term punk refers to a do-it-yourself attitude, and

*Steampunk is the DIY subculture of anything that has to do with steam.*
punks are a subculture of a larger group. So, punk rock would be a subculture of rock music; cyberpunk is a subculture of the technological mainstream; and steampunk is the DIY subculture of anything that has to do with steam.

**Steampunk Today**

In March, 2010, the Library of Congress created a subject heading for Steampunk. Up until that time you had to forage through Alternative Histories or Speculative Fictions to find what you were looking for. This is a great leap in the realm of steampunk, because now the genre has gained acceptance in the field with a standardized vocabulary, subjects, and keywords. In the March 4, 2010 issue of *Library Journal*, John Klima published a list of classic and new core titles for the genre. Nick Gevers’ *Extraordinary Engines: The Definitive Steampunk Anthology* is a fine collection of short stories that revolve around the alternative history of steam. A novel I’d recommend for young adults is Scott Westerfeld’s *Leviathan*. There are a few hundred-plus steampunk novels and anthologies currently available, and they run the gamut of very fine to very poor. See the Resources section in the back of this book for a list of more steampunk books.

*Steampunk Magazine* (www.steampunkmagazine.com) showcases the work of budding artists, authors, and inventors. The magazine is free to the public, although they do ask for donations if possible, and they sell paper copies for a subscription rate. The magazine has only been in production since October of 2009, but it presents a professional product and seems to be very popular. I’ve seen it sold and traded at many conventions such as Dragon*Con and The Steampunk Exhibition Ball.

*What Is Steampunk Culture?*
Not to be outdone by graphic novels and journals, Antarctic Press has released *Steampunk Palin*, a less-than-politically-correct comic about Sarah Palin, John McCain, and Barack Obama fighting the forces of Big Oil and Nuke led by Al Gore. Ben Dunn, the illustrator, dresses Palin in the typical bodice and accessories so favored by steampunk fans, while Jim Felkner writes great one-liners for Palin to deliver as she saves the planet.

Steampunk’s influence can be seen on the big and small screens as well. Movies are often the escape of the masses, as well as a window to the world of the future. Even though the time period is early Victorian, the movie remake of the popular television show *Wild Wild West* (1999) has excellent steampunk gimmicks, such as the flying bicycle of Artemis Gordon, and the steam-powered wheelchair and giant spider of Dr. Loveless. Other examples include: *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, the BBC 2010 and American 2012 Sherlock Holmes movies, *Van Helsing*, and the flying airships of *The Mummy Returns* and *The Golden Compass*. All have the requisite ma-
chines and contraptions that are so popular with the new movement of steam over nuclear and electricity.

As I write this, I’m listening to one of the better steampunk bands of the moment. The group is called Abney Park, and they’re from the Seattle area. This group not only uses industrial sounds such as airship engines and propellers in their soundtracks, but they have their entire band outfitted in steampunk clothing and retrofitted instruments. Although at times their lyrics are hard to understand, their music is not. It’s haunting at times and hard-driving at others. Many of Abney Park’s songs, such as “Airship Pirates” and “Herr Drosselmeyer’s Doll,” revolve around the motifs of robotics with gears and flying airships—both popular subjects in steampunk literature. What makes Abney Park somewhat unique

---

There are four main tenets you can use to identify someone who is in a steampunk persona or costume: goggles, corsets (or vests), hats, and guns.

---

What Is Steampunk Culture? 13
is their take on the retrofitting of their instruments. They use a lot of industrial copper, brass, and Tesla-like special effects during their videos and live performances. For a list of other steampunk bands playing today, see the Resources section.

For a number of years I have been involved in steampunk as a hobby and getaway. It started at Dragon*Con, the largest science fiction and fantasy convention in the Southeast, held each year over Labor Day weekend in Atlanta. In 2011, Dragon*Con had a self-reported attendance of more than 52,000 people. There among the many Star Trek, Star Wars, Firefly, and comic book characters were a growing number of men and women in hats, goggles, and corsets, some carrying guns. These participants were young, old, male, female, married, single, and all the other permutations that make up society.

When I first saw them, I thought, what an odd assortment of characters. I didn’t see the connection to the genre of literature and originally thought that they were a troupe of actors and actresses preparing for some special role. As a performer myself (I was a member of the Society of Creative
Anachronism for many years), I appreciated the costuming and the craftsmanship it took to sew, glue, screw, and fabricate their elaborate pieces.

Although conventions such as Dragon*Con and others are generalist conventions, meaning they cater to all forms of science fiction, fantasy, and gaming, other conventions are specifically targeted to the steampunk aficionado. Upstate Steampunk, held in Greenville/Anderson, South Carolina, is a perfect example of a targeted convention that will gather fans from all over the Southeast for a weekend of all things steam. While at generalist conventions you may see a few steampunk venders and programs, at this ball you will see exclusively steampunk interests represented. This is an excellent example of how popular the movement has become.

Finally, we come to the center of all of this. There must be a plan or architecture to the story, right? Without the architecture of a new history or the art to envision it, there would only be literature; and although that is still the original medium for entertainment it is more effective in the three dimensional world to have toys and tools. Because of this even computers and other electronic devices now so essential to our world have become a favorite for steampunk creationists. Keyboards are retrofitted with antique typewriter keys and mounted in heavy brass and exotic woods. Computer towers are outfitted with gauges, pipes, and gears protruding from all sides of the machine. Even the lowly mouse and thumb drive are made to look historically futuristic.

Steampunk design is artful, and it’s the little touches that make it so much fun. There are steampunk bathtubs, watch gear jewelry, and mainstream clothiers that are designing for individuals and the home that they live in. There is a myriad

What Is Steampunk Culture?
of options for steampunk costumes, from the ornate to the bizarre. Basically, if it is Victorian, then most will accept the fashion as a form of steampunk.

I contend that there are four main tenets you can use to identify someone who is in a steampunk persona or costume: goggles, corsets (or vests), hats, and guns.

The first is some form of goggles. The goggles don’t have to be functional, and in fact the more fanciful and augmented they are, the more they are admired. Some goggles even have removable lenses and may be fitted with standard round lenses from optometrists.

The second indicators are corsets or vests. These are not necessarily the tight-fitting Victorian wasp waist corsets of the period, but they are waist adornments nonetheless. They may be waist cinchers or another piece of clothing that approximates the look of corsets of the time. It is interesting to note that men also use a waist covering. Many of the steampunk men wear buttoned vests.

Third are hats. There are hats for all occasions: top, bowler, wide or narrow brim, Cowboy Stetson, with feathers, without, leather, and some are even miniature. They are prevalent everywhere at conventions and gatherings. Hats are also used to hold the goggles on the brim, although many build elaborate hats that support entire fantasy structures.
Finally, there are guns. While many steampunk folks collect or wear real antique guns, most carry the most exotic built pistols and rifles ever seen. There are some guns so large that they have built-in straps to carry them. Others are motorized with smoke emitters for authenticity.

Oftentimes steampunks will make their own costumes. One class offered at Dragon*Con as part of the Alternate History track covered making fantasy weapons as well as weapons that were period during the time. Another class on the Costuming track discussed how to make corsets, distress denim, and put together a complete steampunk look. Many of these classes ran through the night and into the very early morning hours and were standing room only.

Steampunk has become more than a hobby to some and less than a lifestyle to others. I was at Dragon*Con in September, and every time I would pass someone who was in some form of steampunk garb we would nod knowingly to each other, very much as when I had an MG sports car and I would flash my lights when I saw another MG. It is a club that we are all members of, without dues or rules. We enjoy the uniqueness of our clothing, tools, and accoutrements without being flashy or secretive. Ask anyone in Steampunk garb about their costume and they will gladly spend hours talking with you about where and how they came up with each piece. It is the all-inclusive nature of the genre.

What Is Steampunk Culture?
WHAT IS STEAMPUNK MAGIC?

Indubitably, Magick is one of the subtlest and most difficult of the sciences and arts. There is more opportunity for errors of comprehension, judgment and practice than in any other branch of physics.

—Aleister Crowley, The Confessions of Aleister Crowley

So, why steampunk magic? Why not? Perhaps we wish history were different, because so much of it was actually very grim, and we want to remember the glamorous and romantic parts. Steampunk gives us the opportunity to take the best and dump the rest. We all want the future to be better, and we all have a unique approach to what we see for the future. In Steampunk Magic the aether that we sail through, work in, and peer beyond allows us the power to perceive what is before us, unobstructed by the filters and layers of twenty-first century doubt and questioning.
How Is Steampunk Magic Different from Other Systems of Magic?

I believe that in Steampunk Magic the visions are more accurate. The spells are more concentrated and directed to the task at hand. Even though you may, and I say may with trepidation, perform magic naked with an index finger, in Steampunk Magic the tools enhance the magic and therefore the result.

In the very earliest pre-recorded history, the magicians, mages, and wise men and women looked around at their surroundings and worked with what was at hand. Herbs, seasons, tides, animals, and the cycles of the crops were known to these elders, and with that knowledge the community prospered.

In a way, Steampunk Magic isn't so different from many other magical traditions and paths that have retained what is successful over the years and eliminated what was not: we look at what works, we write those spells and procedures in our grimoires, and we keep experimenting. Magic works because the process employed works.

Many of us have become complacent in our application to magic and therefore lost much of the connection to what worked for us, and, most importantly, what was familiar. We read a book that we purchase at the airport and that makes up the bulk of our knowledge of twenty-first-century magic. We expect, or hope, that if we read the book enough, we will glean something useful that will work for us. In reality, though, we don't understand what the author is trying to convey since
we aren’t familiar with the principles of the path. Without a point of reference, the book becomes a sale item at a yard sale; then we buy another book, hoping that this time things will be different.

In any magic system you must start with the basics that you recognize. If you are a woman who follows an earth-based path, it is unrealistic to expect you to understand and follow a masculine Norse-based tradition. Your points of reference are not there. It’s the same with Steampunk Magic. Although this system will work for anyone, those who are already familiar with steampunk and magic will quickly grasp the concepts of this new style of magic and grok the meanings more easily.

The Aether

What is different about this system of magic? The answer is simple yet quite complex: it’s the aether. In ancient times the aether was considered the material above our planet and the other planets and bodies of space. It was the clear air that the gods breathed in their celestial palaces, and mortal men and women aspired to breathe it to be more godlike.

The Greeks took this idea to such a level that they created a deity for the substance. In the first century BC, Latin author Gaius Julius Hyginus wrote in Fabulae that Aether was the child of Chaos. Further, and this is the connection that ties
Aether to our world and our traditions, Alcman writes in his fifth surviving fragment from the Scholia that Aether was the father of Gaia, the mother of us all.

Icarus and Daedalus flew high into the heavens to escape their captivity, and man has always aspired to escape the confines of the Earth as the gods. On November 21, 1783, Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier and François Laurent d’Arlandes flew the first hot air balloon in France after petitioning King Louis XVI for the honor. In December, 1903, at that now famous beach off Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the Wright brothers from Ohio flew the first heavier-than-air craft, proving again that man’s desire to gain the aether knew no limits. On April 12, 1961, the Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin flew the first manned spacecraft to escape the Earth’s atmosphere and actually fly into the aether. All these accomplishments were considered magical in either nature or practicality at the time; and each example brought us closer to our gods.

According to Aristotle the aether was devoid of all properties. It was neither hot nor cold, wet nor dry. The aether given to us by the philosophers and alchemists existed but could not be proven by any of the senses. We cannot see it, taste it, touch
it, feel it, or prove that it surrounds us in our daily lives. However, even if we cannot experience something in the physical sense it does not mean that we cannot experience that property in the ethereal or non-physical sense. Just as gravity exists, though we cannot experience it with any of our senses, the aether is all around us; and we must learn to harness that which is without by the powers within.

Our airships fly through this aether, surrounding us with the essences and inspiration of the gods. And as we get closer to our gods, we hope to derive wisdom and knowledge in the process. Therefore we go ever higher and farther, searching for our definition of the Divine.

Although Steampunk Magic is practical in all settings of magical work, it is specifically useful for visioning and divination. The aether is everywhere, and with the use of the aether the magician may see what is sought, discover what is hidden, and formulate what is required. The Steampunk Magician has the tools that many other systems do not and the aether that many other systems only give a cursory reference to. The Steampunk Magician flies high and deep into the aether and returns better for the experience.

Steampunk Magic gives the practitioner the specific tools and rituals to enter the aether, contact the gods and spirits within, and perceive what is there. It is grounded in historic traditions that are designed to harness the energies of the aether for the betterment of the airship and its

What Is Steampunk Magic?
members, and to succeed where other systems may have failed. For example, in circle and spell work, the adventurer penetrates the aether, and with goggles, compass, and lamp, all questions may be answered and all needs may be achieved.

Gods, Spirits, and Notables in Steampunk Magic

There are no specific gods or spirts in Steampunk Magic, though if there were to be one, truth be told, it would probably be She who began it all by ascending the throne: Victoria. But Steampunk Magic is a system of procedures that do not revolve around or depend upon a specific deity, and anyone can practice it, whether they are pagan or not. This allows the system to be attuned to the individual in a way that few if any other systems allow. All deities are welcomed in our system, and all deities are invoked, depending on your individual religious path.

Here are a few of the notable individuals who have contributed their knowledge, wisdom, or existence to the era and the fabric of the time.

Queen Victoria

The first and foremost notable in all steampunk history must be Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain,
Ireland, and Empress of India. Victoria was born May 24, 1819, ascended the throne on June 20, 1837, and passed away on January 22, 1901. During her reign England and the world achieved an unparalleled level of industrial accomplishment. It was during this time that many of the industrial inventors, writers, philosophers, and historians made their mark on the world, not only in the British Isles but in the Americas as well.

Figure 1. Queen Victoria in 1887.

What Is Steampunk Magic?
During the Victorian Era the population of England more than doubled due to increased birthrates in the British Isles and a decrease in the early mortality of the population. There were no major famines, plagues, or great catastrophes other than the Great Famine in Ireland early in Queen Victoria’s reign. Sewage disposal was introduced during this time, and the medical community, though still rather barbaric, made great strides ahead of where it had been during the Renaissance or the Middle Ages.

At this time the educational standards of the country also improved. In 1870 British state education became mandatory for every child under the age of ten, increasing the literacy of the country. This led to a smarter country, and a more productive one with the next generation. Lights were improved with the gas mantle, similar to today’s gas camping lights, and streets were better lit, so crime slowed slightly. Workers were also able to work longer hours under artificial light, so factories were kept running throughout the night, increasing production that was shipped on the new rail lines.

In Europe you had H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, Lewis Carroll, Charles Dickens, the Bronte sisters, and William Makepeace Thackeray. Across the pond, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville,
Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, and Henry David Thoreau were making their mark on the literary landscape. Every one of these authors donated something to the times and to steampunk, but the two who are most thought of as steampunk authors are H. G. Wells and Jules Verne.

**H. G. Wells**

As an author and historic prophet, Herbert George (H. G.) Wells shines above all others save Jules Verne, whom most consider his equal. Born in England in 1866, his writings came late in the Victorian period. *The Time Machine* wasn’t published until 1895—just six years before the Victorian era was to end. However, the lasting effect of Wells’ fiction was to forever impact the world.

Wells’ life was as turbulent as his writings, or the other way around, and he was a social commentator through his scientific fiction and nonfiction until his death. Wells was an early advocate of polyamory and had four children: two sons with his wife Lynn, and a son and daughter with other liaisons he enjoyed and his wife approved of. Although the term polyamory wasn’t around in Victorian times, the concept existed, and his dalliances, as noted in Andrea Lynn’s *Shadow Lovers: The Last*
Affairs of H. G. Wells, were well known to his wife and inner circle of friends. His personal life notwithstanding, he is lauded as one of the fathers of steampunk and must be remembered as such.

Jules Verne

The other grandmaster of steampunk, Jules Verne is probably best known for the Nautilus and Captain Nemo in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* with *War of the Worlds* coming in a close second. As far as classic steampunk novels go, I personally believe that *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* is the epitome of steampunk work of that time.

Verne was born in France in 1828 and married late in life to a widow with two daughters. They later had a son together. His family life was satisfactory until he was shot by his nephew while returning home one day. The first shot missed him, but the second shot struck Verne in the leg, and he limped for the rest of his life. The incident was never made public, and the nephew was sent away to an asylum out of reach of the press. This injury may have precipitated Verne’s death, but there is no evidence to prove that supposition. Toward the end of his life
Verne’s writings turned more somber, and by the time of his passing in 1905 he was more or less a dystopian writer.

**Edgar Allan Poe**

Edgar Allan Poe was writing early in the Victorian Era. Many people I talk to about steampunk literature say it’s a shame that Poe missed the cutoff to be considered a steampunk author, but I think he qualifies. Poe may have died during the early years of Victoria (he passed in 1849), but the fact remains that Poe does indeed fit the time frame and location of the Victorian era.

It is also interesting that both sides of the Mason–Dixon Line claim Poe as one of their own, and it seems perhaps to keep the two sides at bay he died somewhere in the middle. Poe was born in Boston and was orphaned early on. John and Frances Allen adopted Poe and moved him to Richmond, Virginia. When he was just forty years old Poe died in Baltimore, Maryland from any of a number of diseases and causes. Some say tuberculosis, alcohol, drugs, cholera, suicide, stroke, or even rabies. The final reason will be one of conjecture. Maybe for someone as morose and dark as Poe that’s the way he would have wanted to be remembered.

Whatever caused his death, Poe’s life was one of triumph at times for his writing. He is credited with inventing the gothic genre and the sub-class American gothic. He was the master of the macabre and the father, or grandfather, if you will, of

---

The three most noted authors of the Victorian era were troubled, conflicted men.

---

What Is Steampunk Magic?
gothic horror masters H. P. Lovecraft and Stephen King. Poe was also instrumental in the early adoption and acceptance of scientific fiction with such works as *The Balloon-Hoax* and *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. In the end he will be remembered for his writing as much as the odd circumstances of his death.

Similar to Wells and Verne, Poe was ahead of his time and died with children both within and without his marriage. The three most noted authors of the Victorian era were troubled, conflicted men who wrote as they saw the world, which was not the happy and carefree world we see in later fiction.

**Nikola Tesla**

Tesla was born in the village of Smiljan in the Serbian state of Austria. He immigrated to the United States in 1891 and became one of the proponents of alternating current. Although alternating current is not considered steampunk, Tesla’s use of the aether to transmit power puts him in the forefront of technical Steampunk Magicians.

During much of his life, Tesla experienced visions preceded by a blinding light. (We now believe these occurrences may have been due to a neurological condition or a type of migraine.) What would ensue was an idea or design that was fully formed and ready for construction. Tesla seldom drew or sketched any of his creations; rather, he began construction
from the schematics he saw in his vision and proceeded from there.

Mary Shelley

Mary Shelley died during the Victorian time; however, many may say that she is not a Victorian author. I contend that she was a Steampunk author without being a purely Victorian one. When Shelley wrote *The Modern Prometheus*, better known today as *Frankenstein*, Shelley was just twenty-two years old. She was also of the mind that “do it yourself” was more than a phrase to be used later. Victor Frankenstein was one of the most prominent and original do-it-yourselfers. Here is a man who took parts from others to create a unique life, albeit his version of it.
A close examination of *Frankenstein* shows the depths of knowledge that Shelley had of the laboratory and the creative process. While current steampunks do not attempt to create life, they do attempt to create something original from a pile of discards or used items. This is the ultimate creativity of the movement of steampunk and what Shelley conveyed in her novel. When I think of a steampunk heroine in literature, I draw inspiration from Shelley and her originality for creating something from something else.

*Victoria was the last monarch who claimed the House of Hanover. With her death and the ascension of Edward VII, the British crown became the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, ending both a movement yet to be created and a great House never again to return.*