This book is an excellent example of what a futuristic visionary is capable of if given enough time, resources, and information. Manaugh has produced a book that not only excites the imagination but reinforces the current realities of the field. He begins the book with an inside cover heavily bordering on science fiction. Throughout the book his writings and those of his contributors seem to continue this trend of seamlessly blending science fiction and science fact with architectural reality and fantasy.

No landscape is sacred to Manaugh. He discusses the underground channels and tunnels of cities as though they are uncharted landscapes of a distant land and the suburban streets of contemporary cities as long dead and deserted vistas. He, and his contributors, brings a visionary approach to design that is both aesthetically pleasing and grotesquely disturbing.

Mr. Manaugh is only missing the works of Wells or Verne to make his book complete. Reading through some of the futuristic pieces of how the world will or could be in 2010, 2050, or 2100, one imagines what Captain Nemo would have said about his Nautilus being reviewed in 1790. Would Nemo be less impressed with the future since he piloted his submersible around the world seeing wonders beyond belief? The reader is left with an image of a world quite different from the one we currently think we have; however, the author thrusts upon us the world in which we really do exist. Anyone who is not familiar with the BldgBlog (http://bldgblog.blogspot.com/) should be; Manaugh presents an excellent case for architecture as storytelling in the way he interprets the designs and applications of buildings, structures, and their aftermath.

There is a new genre of literature and popular culture currently being referred to as “Steampunk” or “Gaslight”. The philosophy is that it would be more ‘fun’ or entertaining to live in a world where steam is still the mode of power. These authors, designers, and engineers of the new past look to the aforementioned works of Wells and Verne and ask, why can’t we remake our future to be more in line with the better part of our past? When a Steampunk library is finally created and catalogued this book will be prominent on those shelves. Designers, architects, and engineers will look at this book, look out the window, and ask themselves what Manaugh wants most to be asked: Why not? This ‘why not’ attitude is what makes this book so appealing and why it is essential to all students, faculty, and professionals in the fields of architecture, city planning, landscape architecture, and construction science.

Gypsey Elaine Teague, Branch Head, Gunnin Architecture Library, Clemson University, gteague@clemson.edu