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empires and their occupation of foreign lands, but his goal is not to add to this theoretical literature. He makes much of the military's suburban ethos, but does not connect it to suburbanization in the United States or to its emergence as a global phenomenon. Also, he articulates the absurdity of rule-based planning, but does not use it to theorize how states "see." In short, he has no single point of view that would bring coherence to his many criticisms and concerns.

That said, I recommend the book for its portrayal of a fascinating and overlooked arena of planning practice, one that reflects back on the U.S. planning profession's rationalist-comprehensive pretensions, its ongoing struggles with power, and its subservience to developer-driven models of urbanism. I only wish Gillem had addressed these issues more directly.

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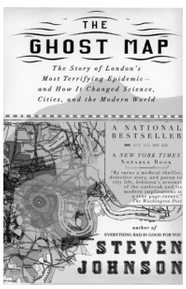
Beauregard is a professor of urban planning in the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University. His latest book is *When America Became Suburban* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006). He writes on U.S. postwar urbanization, social theory, and urban planning and redevelopment.



The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World

Steven Johnson. Riverhead, New York, 2007. 320 pages, $26.95, $15 (paperback), $15 (ebook).

In his latest work, *The Ghost Map,* Johnson tackles the London cholera epidemic of 1854, but with a contrarian streak: Certainly, this epidemic was horrendous, but it also brought about major improvements to our cities and our science, including public water authorities, rational sewer systems, and modern planning paradigms. He tells the story of this epidemic, during which over 700 people, comparable to 10% of London's SoHo/Broad Street neighborhood, died in a two-week period by following the lives and deaths of individuals through these city streets. Johnson helps the reader to understand the evolution of an epidemic and the public health reforms it ushered in.

The book follows a cast of characters: the peregrinations of Reverend Henry Whitehead as he ministers to slum-dwellers; the epidemiological sleuthing of John Snow, gathering evidence in the case against *Vibrio cholerae,* while the majority of established medical science chases down the false leads of the "miasmists"; the proto-wonk William Farr, London's Registrar General, who modernized public health statistics generations before his time; and even the insidious, calculating tactics of the disease itself, as it migrates and mutates to exploit humanity's emerging urban lifestyles. Johnson profiles the victims and their stories: the girl who represents the "index case" of the epidemic, the widower, and the society dame importing contaminated water from outside her upscale neighborhood, providing the case's "*experimentum crucis*."

For the modern-day practitioner, Johnson's story calls for a hybrid planning paradigm, combining dispassionate number crunching and the more human-scale local knowledge. Consider the following passage:

> Equally important [to his observational talents] was the social connection Snow had to the subjects he observed. . . . Like Henry Whitehead, Snow brought genuine local knowledge to the Broad Street case . . . that gave him both an awareness of how the neighborhood actually worked, and . . . credibility with the residents, on whose intimate knowledge of the outbreak [his] inquiry depended. (p. 147)

Only by relating the statistics and geographic patterns of our data to an "on-the-ground" understanding of a neighborhood, built up from local experts and participant observation, can we sift through the haze of data to see the whole picture.

The final chapters move beyond the history to demonstrate the relevance of the topic today, including a discussion of squatter settlements and an enthusiastic discussion of the parallels between Snow's early cholera maps to the emerging fields of community mapping, Internet "tagging," and other ways to combine geographic analysis and local knowledge. Unfortunately, Johnson offers little guidance on the application of this approach to new situations where experts either disagree or are unable to drive policy action. Whether the issue is pandemic avian flu, rising coastlines due to global warming, or the eventual exhaustion of the world's energy sources, what lessons can we learn from 1854 to avoid the next crisis? After raising these frightening questions, the book offers little beyond vague optimism and a heartening faith in urbanism's ability to rise to 21st-century challenges.

As with many historical accounts that have been made "accessible," readers closer to the subject are likely to level charges of oversimplification and speculation, both of which are warranted. Nonetheless, thanks to its compelling storyline and the broad connections it draws between biology, public health, urban planning, public policy, history of science, and other areas, *The Ghost Map* is an ideal book to fit into an introductory course in urban history, city planning, or environmental/public health. It is also a great read for any planners yearning for the days when they took those introductory courses and reveled in the interconnectedness of the field.

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