The triumph of the barometer strengthened this notion. But the barometer (and other meteorological instruments) were only marginally about the quantification of the weather. They moved from polite conversation and status aspiration to gendered psychology and literary metaphors. Thus rather than being a method of collecting "scientific" data, the eighteenth-century "instrumental" meteorology was a complex field of human interactions characterized by conflicting ideas about reason's capacity to grasp and foretell atmospheric contingency.

Nowhere was this contingency more vitally relevant than in the debates on the influence of atmospheric conditions on the body's constitution and epidemic disease. Following Sydenham's Hippocratic model approach to seasonality and the progress of disease, physicians employed diaristic methods to spell out a correlation between acute disorders and weather patterns. The results were inconclusive and remedies not agreed upon. What most, however, did agree upon was the pathology of the increasingly "un-natural" lifestyles. For many, the widely acknowledged susceptibility to atmospheric change had less to do with an inborn infirmity or the extremes of climate than with the artificial culture of sensibility and affectation. Moralists argued that the abuse of the non-naturals and dietary excess, led to a hypersensitivity to external stress that enfeebled the body and blemished the mind. In this context, Golinski sees the eighteenth-century's claims about climatic vulnerability as claims about social change and moral "decline".

It is not entirely clear whether the charges mounted against sensibility reflected social reality or ethical norms. It is a question whether this can be decided on textual grounds only. In political theory, Golinski explains in the last chapter, much thought went into how much, if at all, the rise of (European) civilization owed to its environmental idiosyncrasy. As colonial rule expanded the knowledge of "the other", climate provided a tool to account for the observed differences in racial, moral and legal customs of world peoples. In some instances, such explanations were self-serving but in others they dramatically reconceptualized the notion of the political, moving it away from an emphasis on protocolar forms of rule to material conditions of life. In particular, the manner in which contemporary scholars negotiated these issues on anthropological, physiological, and psychological grounds makes the weather and climate elements in the Enlightenment's preoccupation with the definition of the individual, progress, nature, and plasticity of character.

More generally, argues Golinski, eighteenth-century reflections on the atmospheric environment mirrored a belief that human actions and identities remained entwined with the environment. Golinski wisely uses this premise as a corrective to readings of the Enlightenment as the source of today's exploitation of nature. Even as modernity brought nature under limited control, he maintains, societies remained fragile in the face of environmental stress, the point which defines our own twenty-first-century predicament.

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Michelle Allen, *Cleansing the city: sanitary geographies in Victorian London*, Athens, Ohio University Press, 2008, pp. x, 225, illus., £34.50, $49.95 (hardback 978-0-8214-1770-6), £17.50, $24.95 (paperback 978-0-8214-1771-3).

With *Cleansing the city*, Michelle Allen contributes to the growing body of recent scholarship on the nineteenth-century sanitary movement in London and Victorian literature. Although much has been done over the last decades on this topic, Allen emphasizes the important and provocative point that sanitary reforms were fraught with ambivalence, not merely from those property owners resisting government interference in their affairs, as historians have long made clear, but also from

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those whose nostalgia for the urban past made such improvements at best a bittersweet prospect, and at worst, a desecration. Her book focuses on resistance to the "purification" of the city, with all the emotionally and culturally loaded significance such a term implies.

The chapters address the sewering of London, the controversy around the pollution of the Thames that resulted, slum clearance and housing reform. Allen draws on a varied store of documentary evidence ranging from the periodical press to parliamentary papers to private letters. The "literary" authors Allen reads in depth are Charles Dickens and George Gissing; the Afterword also touches on Bernard Shaw. Dickens, of course, is well-known as a promoter of sanitary reform, but Allen persuasively and usefully makes the case that he was also profoundly disturbed by the destruction of picturesque London and of communities that had thrived in such urban localities until these areas were laid waste by "improvements". Some of Dickens's negative response resulted from his pragmatic understanding of the problems created by slum clearance when it dealt (as it generally did) only with the destruction of overcrowded buildings and not with the relocation of the people who lived in them—who then immediately packed into impoverished areas nearby, creating much worse slums than before. But it was also motivated by a more inchoate sense of loss—loss of a familiar geography reflecting continuity of community and history. As polluted, dirty and smelly as the urban environment could be, it also had a certain grungy glamour that sometimes inspired a surprising affection. As Allen points out, citing the insights of social geography, people's emotional experience of and attachment to place is as important an element in shaping urban space as any more tangible consideration.

In addition to nostalgia, there were more pragmatic reasons why many Victorians doubted the utility of sanitary reforms. Allen is more concerned with the emotions and perceptions surrounding urban sanitary improvement than with making judgements about effectiveness. But the book still provides some fascinating material that may challenge assumptions about the self-evidence of the value of the purifying project. For example, although one generally thinks of the installation of modern sewerage in London as one of the great accomplishments of the age, Allen provides ample evidence that for quite a while the abolition of the cesspool system created more problems than it solved. Plans to recycle vast amounts of sewage proved impracticable, and the dumping of sewage into the Thames was less a planned outcome gone wrong than a path of least resistance that most people recognized at the time as an environmental disaster.

Of the literary readings, the Gissing material is particularly useful. In tracing Gissing's detailed representations of urban space, Allen shows his awareness that "oppressive social forces exert themselves spatially . . . the interests of the powerful are expressed and reproduced through the environment, through physical space" (p. 161). Allen's book helps us to understand some of the complexities of the Victorian experience of an important era in London's modernization, and is clear enough to be of benefit to undergraduate students, in addition to offering something of value to more advanced scholars.

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Josep Lluís Barona and **Josep Bernabeu-Mestre,** *La salud y el estado: el movimiento sanitario internacional y la administración española (1851–1945)*, Universitat de València, 2008, pp. 366, illus., no price given (paperback 978-84-370-6974-6).

Once an almost neglected issue, the international dimension of health has become one of the most widely explored areas of historical research over the past fifteen years. Spanish scholars have fully participated in this general trend, to which the authors of this

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