



American Sunshine: Diseases of Darkness and the Quest for Natural Light

Daniel Freund

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In the second half of the nineteenth century, American cities began to go dark. Hulking new buildings overspread blocks, pollution obscured the skies, and glass and smog screened out the health-giving rays of the sun. Doctors fed anxieties about these new conditions with claims about a rising tide of the "diseases of darkness," especially rickets and tuberculosis.

In *American Sunshine*, Daniel Freund tracks the obsession with sunlight from those bleak days into the twentieth century. Before long, social reformers, medical professionals, scientists, and a growing nudist movement proffered remedies for America's new dark age. Architects, city planners, and politicians made access to sunlight central to public housing and public health. and entrepreneurs, dairymen, and tourism boosters transformed the pursuit of sunlight and its effects into a commodity. Within this historical context, Freund sheds light on important questions about the commodification of health and nature and makes an original contribution to the histories of cities, consumerism, the environment, and medicine.

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