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engineer, the company, and the aggregated groups known as the consumer" (p. 190).

In such a slim volume, Cooper is not able to take her story to a wider gauge and examine the broader implications of creating artificial internal environments in modern cities, or even to question whether megalopolises like Houston could even exist without the technology. Also missing is an in-depth discussion of the social and cultural impacts of changing environments and essentially changing seasons for the average person, human tolerance for heat and cold, transformation of building technology, and so forth. Treatment of these issues, however, is too much to ask from this book. It is an important volume and certainly worth reading, because Cooper addresses several key issues concerning the application of an influential technology in the twentieth century. In so doing, she has helped to forge a new historical path by asking critical questions.

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STEVEN J. HOLMES. *The Young John Muir: An Environmental Biography*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1999. Pp. xv, 309. Cloth $55.00, paper $22.95.

As a central figure in American environmentalism and a founder of the Sierra Club, John Muir has been the subject of a number of biographies. Steven J. Holmes's study of Muir's early life is, in part, a response to the ways in which previous biographers have relied on and nourished traditional images of Muir's early life, including "the wild child" (p. 4) and his ecstatic conversion experience at Yosemite. In this work, Holmes reexamines "the Muir myth" (p. 14) not merely to assess its truthfulness but to test its moral utility in our own time.

This is an environmental biography that focuses on Muir's developing relationship with the natural world. But it is also a psychosocial biography that employs a variety of psychoanalysis called the "object relations" approach (p. 11). Going beyond the Freudian concentration on the dynamics between parent and child, it asks which relationships—including those involving the non-human environment—are the important ones for the individual. Holmes's main sources are the writings of Muir himself, which he subjects to a close textual analysis. He makes extensive use of letters, especially those between Muir and important women in his life, most notably his friend Jeanne Carr.

The book's first chapter deals with Muir's formative years in Scotland and Wisconsin. It provides fascinating glimpses of his relations with his family and nature and explores the image of the wild child with a critical eye. It must be said, however, that the psychosocial approach does not appear promising at first. Holmes begins with a narrative involving the two-year-old Muir and his mother, drawn from *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth* (1913), and seems to burden the event with more interpretation than it can bear. The same could be said of his description of Muir's childhood habit of stealing food from farmers' fields, which he views as part of a "lived experience of the natural world as 'mother earth'—at an age when the psychosexual legacy of the oral urge for the breast" was still a "felt reality" (p. 32).

Holmes's approach to biography becomes more interesting as the source material becomes richer. Holmes's analysis of Muir's university years and his quest for a vocation bring to life the intensity of his religious fervor but also his confusion over how he was to avoid being doomed to a life "at odds with his own desires" (p. 137). For a time, he found his identity as an inventor of labor-saving devices and measuring instruments, all of which, as Holmes points out, provided ways of mechanically regulating life and the body; his early-rising machine, for example, was a bed that tipped the sleeper onto the floor at a predetermined time (pp. 52, 92). His scientific studies and the influence of friends gradually drew him toward botany as a vocation, and Holmes eloquently conveys Muir's growing sense of himself as a romantic adventurer in the image of Alexander von Humboldt.

Following sojourns in Canada West and Indiana during his mid-twenties, Muir set out on foot in 1867 on a remarkable journey to the South. As he progressed, his pleasure in encountering strange new plant life contrasted with his growing alienation from the primal wilderness he encountered. As a consequence, Holmes argues, Muir was by this point neither anthropocentric nor ecocentric but religiocentric, having come to believe that good and evil coexist in the natural world as well as in human life, and that the divine, wherever it is found, is "at the centre of value and power" (pp. 182–83).

Equally fascinating is the final chapter on Muir's first years in California, where he finally found his wilderness "home." His letters to Carr richly document his growing devotion to Yosemite and his religious evolution toward a belief in the presence of God in all things. Holmes brings to life Muir's highly sensuous relationship with the natural world—not just with living beings but with (for example) the play of light in an environment. Most importantly, the author shows how Muir learned to live with contradictions, to live with the tension between "human connection *and* solitude, familiarity *and* adventure, domesticity *and* wildness" (p. 248). Holmes's deep involvement with his subject is evident throughout this biography, and his conclusion, while it describes Muir as a figure "to walk beside" rather than to follow, clearly seeks to present "the new Muir myth" as a source of spiritual inspiration.

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MARK DAVID SPENCE. *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1999. Pp. viii, 190. $35.00.