

Community. Two Communities may be represented as scattered enclaves within the ecotone that separates them. Some Communities correspond closely to Biomes, but others do not."

Additional chapters discuss environmental changes through the geological periods, factors influencing the distribution of life, aquatic distributions, and the evolution and geography of man and his effects on other organisms. Several short sections on the history of zoogeography and phytogeography are welcome, though contributions outside the faunistic and floristic approach to biogeography are neglected (Schimper, Warming, and Clements, for instance, are not mentioned). There are occasional errors of fact: for example, Neill credits Christen Raunkiaer with inventing (in 1903) the "life-form" approach to plant geography, ignoring the classification of life-forms that was devised by Humboldt a hundred years earlier.

The major fault of "The Geography of Life" is its conservative and traditional approach. Neill's synthesis is one of dried biological specimens, grade-school geography, and archaic distributional classifications. The book does not suggest, let alone treat, an explanatory, dynamic, and useful view of biogeography. Modern biogeography must amalgamate information and concepts from population biology, physiology, environmental sciences, and theoretical geography. Perhaps the nature of the volume is partly explained and redeemed by the aphorism, from Francis Bacon, that "books must follow sciences, and not sciences books."

At a similar level, another recent book from the same publisher, "The Natural Geography of Plants," by Henry A. Gleason and Arthur Cronquist (New York and London, 1964), is more stimulating; it questions the "why" and the "how" of plant distributions, not merely the "what" and the "where."—THOMAS R. DETWYLER

THE FUTURE OF THE FUTURE. By JOHN McHALE. xiv and 322 pp.; diags., ills., bibliogr., index. George Braziller, New York, 1969. \$7.95. 8½ x 5¾ inches.

The literature devoted to futuristics and long-term planning is growing at a rate alarming to those who try to keep up with it. Our ability to manipulate and disrupt social and ecological systems, both accidentally and by design, now makes it impossible to ignore the long-term consequences of today's decisions. Applied science has enabled us to organize the world into a single planetary community, and the explosion of futuristic works is a response to the problems inherent in the shift from regional and national scales of social, economic, and political organization to a single global system.

McHale's book is a useful summary of the current philosophy of a rapidly developing science. He emphasizes the goals and strategies of long-term planning and devotes less attention to forecasting techniques. This relative emphasis follows from McHale's basic theorem, that the essence of futuristics is not prediction of what *will* happen but rather choices to be made now about what we *want* to happen in the next several decades. The future is a largely endogenous variable in human affairs. It is not a time we have not yet visited; it is a state of affairs we help create every day. McHale's overriding concern is to convince his readers that societies can no longer afford to remain oblivious of the fact that the future is a direct product of the present. Contemporary decision makers must consciously reject traditional thought patterns in order to conceptualize the entire array of possible futures before us.

But conceptualizing and choosing among possible futures does not allow us to ignore the past. Because the future is compounded of past and present, "the records of that past are our experimental data for charting the future." Only by studying the past and present can we identify attitudinal constraints and outmoded images of man that endanger desirable futures. In order to invent the future, it is necessary to reinvent the past. In the same way that the future is implicit in the present and past, the past will constantly be re-created in the future. Past, present, and future are inseparable time categories, since all three commingle in any one instant. This philosophical position underlies McHale's paradoxical postulates: "The future of the past is in the future; the future of the present is in the past; the future of the future is in the present."

Most geographers will find McHale's ideas concerning the impact of transportation and communication technology on distance and space the most interesting sections of the book. As a truly planetary society evolves, McHale argues, the geopolitical notions of the past become dangerous myths. At the same time, people will come to accept the planet as their life space as easily as they accepted earlier extensions of life space from the childhood area to the home town, to the region, and to the nation. McHale's treatment of the trend toward a planetary society is more sensitive than that of some less perceptive analysts. He recognizes that the world community created to date is more scientific and technological than political, ideological, and cultural, and though he does not rule out the emergence of a unified world culture, he argues that recent reductions of local individuality are more apparent than real. If anything, progress in interpersonal communications media will make the world more, rather than less, diverse.

McHale could have devoted more attention to problems of developing techniques for making accurate long-term forecasts. Even though determining what will occur in the future is more a matter of making choices than predictions, choosing wisely among alternative futures is predicated on the ability to describe all possible futures accurately. However, such problems are being solved by others in the field, and given the goals McHale set for himself in the work, his short treatment of this topic is a minor drawback.

"The Future of the Future" provides an excellent introduction for those unacquainted with futurist literature. Those familiar with such thinking will find Part 1 ("The Sense of the Future"), Part 2 ("The Future of the Past"), and Part 6 ("Toward a Planetary Society") more innovative than Parts 3, 4, and 5 ("The Future of the Present," "The Future of the Future," and "Prophets of the Future"), which review short- and long-term forecasts. No one should ignore these parts, however, since they contain much useful information and some especially stimulating illustrations. I strongly recommend the book to all who are interested in the geography of the future.—RONALD ABLER