ticles specifically on the bioregion of Cascadia (in the Pacific Northwest), including one by Tony Pearse on the Nisga'a band's use of advanced information technology, especially Geographical Information Systems (GIS), to map their land claims, monitor resource use, and devise ecological management strategies.

The cities section was a little sketchy, with the previously mentioned gaps, but it stands as a useful introduction to some important themes of Green City design. I particularly liked the "ecological planning for wildlife" section, which was a single long article by Reed Noss. It described "systems of interlinked wilderness areas and other large nature reserves, surrounded by multiple-use buffer zones managed in an ecologically intelligent manner." True to bioregional priorities, this section came *before* the section on "ecological planning for human use", a single article which I felt was less substantial, more like conventional planning, than the rest of the book.

Futures by Design, complete with its introductory blessing by David Suzuki, is a worthwhile read. It's subtitle – "the practice of ecological planning" – may be a little ambitious for such a short book. And Aberley's introduction may be a little presumptuous in insisting that bioregionalism is a complete and ready-made umbrella philosophy for all other social movements to rush under. But it is a fine introduction to some important dimensions of bioregional design.

• • • **Brian Milani** is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Environmental Studies at York University. . . . . .

Boundaries of Home: Mapping for Local Empowerment by Doug Aberley (ed.), Gabriola Island, BC and Philadelphia PA: New Society Publishers, 1993.

Reviewed by Jennifer Morrow

This slim volume attempts to do two things. First, it tries to bring mapping into the bioregionalism discussion, presenting it as a tool for carrying out local initiatives. Second, it tries to be a how-to book for people interested in mapping their bioregions. The premise appears to be something like this: mapping has been appropriated by the military-industrial complex for "more and more sinister" ends. But in fact, "maps hold some primal attraction for the human animal" and if we draw our own maps and close our eyes and spread around a little good will, we will solve all of the world's problems. Space constraints, vagueness and contradictions cause the book to fail in its first task, to bring mapping and bioregionalism together. The "how-to" part, therefore, is severely weakened in its practical intent and implementation.

Editor Doug Aberley begins the book with a brief description of "aboriginal mapping," tossed in for "inspiration." Brief seems to be the name of the game, because the next section squeezes into twenty pages eight stories (some of which might actually have been interesting but for the space constraints) from people who have created maps of their own "bioregions." For instance, one good, concrete discussion about a British Columbia community whose map was an important tool in arguing for the public's inclusion in the area's management plan ends with this *deus ex machina:* "One final thought: no amount of mapping can be useful unless we talk with the spirits of the place before, during, and after the exercise in abstraction which a mapping project necessarily is." Fair enough, I guess, but nowhere else in the book do we get even a hint of what it means to talk to spirits.

It would be nice to excuse this text's endemic vagueness by the shortness of its sections. But I don't think it unreasonable to ask for a few lines' explanation of the word home. Used throughout the book, not to mention in the title, all the editor can come up with is that it is "that most fundamental aspect of life." Bioregionalism is better explained. Its goal is "to wed dynamic human populations to distinct physical territories defined by continuities of land and life." Fair enough. But what does "our bioregional future is based not on what has never been, but on that which is most familiar to our species" mean? A few pages later, that which is most familiar to us is defined as "a genetic memory of ancient skills" which aboriginal mapping should remind us of. Has the human genome project identified the mapping gene yet?

The book is wrought with contradictions, the most troublesome of which is between urban bioregionalism and escape-the-city bioregionalism. Aberley explains how aboriginal maps stored information on "where to hunt; where protection from invaders was best found; what plants were edible or medicinal, and where they could be reliably located; the location of trails, dens of dangerous animals, fords, lookouts, places of protection from weather, and fuel for heating." One wonders really how relevant this kind of information is to the book's contributors from the Chicago and Toronto bioregions.

Many other contributors evince an unexamined hatred of cities. Two writers describe their bioregion as being made up of "refugees from urban industrial centers." Another strives to "change from an urban to a wild region" without explaining "wild" (although he makes urban ills quite clear). Still another contributor describes an area of rural California which was "reinhabited by a flurry of people escaping the city." The use of the term "reinhabited" in this quotation is in itself interesting. Aberley uses "the reinhabitant movement" interchangeably with "bioregionalism" but in this context it implies that the people escaping the city are returning to a place they have left. By what right do these urbanites claim (reinhabit) the area to which they flee. With all these people fleeing cities, why would anyone stay? And what's to be done with all these people, should they decide to flee the city? The two urban contributors (one is local activist Whitney Smith) are in the distinct minority in this book.

Most of the book's contributors conveniently overlook the fact that many urban dwellers actually prefer to live in cities, citing reasons such as cultural expression and freedom from harassment. Perhaps the main flaw of this book is that while it offers some good pointers about mapping as a tool for specific local initiatives, it overlooks human cultural diversity within a given region. A community cannot only be defined by its biogeochemistry, its physical borders, or its animals' annual migrations. No quantity of locally harvested mushrooms is going to address such particular human concerns as sex, race and class inequities. When you celebrate those features of your locale which, in the words of one contributor, "make your place different from the next," what is to stop you from spitting on the next bioregion for its difference? This book's portrayal of bioregions seems to assume some homogeneity of culture which is not reflected in the real world. After reading this book, I am left with the nagging suspicion that Aberley's paradigm is really designed for Anglo-Saxon heterosexuals. Perhaps this is because of his nauseating but undefended repetition that social justice and environmental protection will simply fall into place once everyone has drawn a line around their "home" and traced its climate patterns and human settlements.

It is perhaps fortunate that bioregionalism has almost as many definitions as adherents. One's interest in the movement need not, therefore, be tainted by Aberley's unrealistically optimistic, but ultimately arrogant and unanalyzed, view of it. As with many other movements – most particularly environmentalism and the conservation movement – one must carefully sift through the rubbish and rhetoric before deciding how, if at all, to get involved.

• • • **Jennifer Morrow** studies at York's Faculty of Environmental Studies, from whence she looks northward. . . . . .