BOOKS

J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet, editors, *Canadian Education: A. History.* Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1970. Pp. 528. $9.95.

In 1959, W. J. Gage published *The Development of Education in Canada* by C. E. Phillips. Prior to this event, the average Canadian student of educational history seemed destined for W. S. Gilbert's little list in that he so often studied "all centuries but this, and every country but his own." After the appearance of Phillips' book, however, student historical attention sometimes took a more introspective turn, thanks to scholars like F. Henry Johnson and Louis-Philippe Audet whose subsequent provincial and national interpretations built productively on the Phillips theme of Canadian unity in diversity.

When Professor Phillips wrote of "these dangerous times," cautioning that in Canada, "divergent forces should continue to operate," he scarcely could have predicted the outer limits of diversity which, as I write, menace Canadian solidarity. Perhaps, though, he would recognize as timely revisionism the Prentice-Hall issue of *Canadian Education: A History,* competently edited by J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet. On several counts, students, political and civil servants, teachers, and scholars will afford this new book welcome shelf space. For one thing, it illustrates a decade of exciting changes in historiographic emphasis. For another, it somehow accommodates different styles and standpoints without riding off in all directions like Leacock's hero. As a rule, it adopts a challenging concept of what education may consist of. Moreover, its culminating chapters confirm an aggressive editorship that embraces some pretty recent publication dates. In short, its structure, substance, and interpretation legitimately place *Canadian Education: A History* in the forefront of continuing efforts from many quarters to confront Canadians with increasingly sophisticated renderings of cultural forces affecting their daily lives. Such criticisms as follows are thus founded on the congratulatory premise that here is a volume to be reckoned with.

My initial observation is that a certain awkward historiographic posturing marks the otherwise disarmingly modest preface. Ignored, it allows ensuing chapters to stand more freely on their own considerable merits. Taken seriously, it becomes something of a Pandora's box. For instance, C. E. Phillips' prior work, correctly dubbed "monumental," is said to be "comparable in many ways to E. P. Cubberley's *Public Education in the United States.*" This, it occurs to me, is surely gratuitous. Half a century ago, Cubberley heralded the triumph of American public

education as the preordained outcome of a struggle between good and evil. A mere thirteen years back, Phillips wrote *entre autre* about Canadian newspapers and books, apprenticeships and Sunday schools, "bibulous conviviality" and public hangings, for, as he reminded us in *his* preface, "people are educated not only by the school but also by the whole environment . . ." Such dissimilar historical orientations as those guiding Cubberley's and Phillips' work in my opinion defy rather than invite comparison. Nevertheless, the editors of *Canadian Education: A History* employ this caricature of Professor Phillips as Canada's latter-day Cubberley to introduce readers to some further matters of revisionist concern articulated ten years ago by Professor Bernard Bailyn. Admittedly, the editors exercise punctiliousness in their representation of the Bailyn hypothesis that education may be viewed "as the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations." But in their apparent priority placement of Bailyn's "entire process" above Phillips' "whole environment," they deny the latter point of view the originality I think it deserves.

Now, it seems to me that this fashionable yet unrestrained enthusiasm for Professor Bailyn's brilliant *Education in the Forming of American Society* triggers a rather risky shot at a conclusion I find hard to accept, notably, that Bailyn's approach "spelled doom to the history of schools and schooling." Nothing, in fact, could be further from the truth. Bailyn himself calls for more detailed work in areas like the charity schools of colonial Pennsylvania, individual town schools in colonial New England, 18th century American colleges, teachers and college professors, and schools as preservers of ethnic identity. Books such as Robert Middlekauff's *Ancients and Axioms: Secondary Education in Eighteenth Century New England* (1963) continue to gain recognition as distinguished components of a complex field of research. Indeed, they receive rapt attention throughout *Canadian Education: A History*. What is more, contributors to this volume themselves warm very quickly to the topic of schools and school history. In the most Bailynesque chapter of all (a splendid one, by the way) Alison Prentice gets around to mentioning schools in paragraph two. And the book as a whole waxes distinctly oracular when it comes to categories like elementary schools, high schools, rural schools, city schools, free schools, separate schools, monitorial schools, private schools, normal schools, pioneer schools, common schools, grammar schools, denominational schools, progressive schools, traditional schools, and *écoles de fabrique* to mention a few. This last fact alone creates a certain structural tension between preface and book. Put another way, *Canadian Education: A History* suffers a prefatory disharmony with its own major themes. And this thematic confusion alerts one to a second stridency which might otherwise have escaped notice. I refer here to failure on the part of several essentially convincing writers to press their arguments with the degree of "sociological" rigor that the introductory remarks appear to urge.

Consider for example, Audet's chapter entitled "The French Heritage." It is a very generous, down-to-earth chapter providing informative statistical data on birth/death rates. But whereas French birth rate figures carry the usual label *"la revanche des berceaux,"* the offsetting infant mortality rates appear without comment. Here, it seems to me, the opportunity is lost to speculate on how much of an emotional investment a French parent might make in a child with a 35% chance of dying young, and how psychological caution in such situations might affect the child's general treatment and specific education. Not that such speculation would be in any sense unique. In a stimulating introduction to *John Locke on Education* (1964) Peter Gay showed the connection between "casual treatment of children" and "their uncertain life expectancy." But by waiving at least an observation or two at just such junctures, Audet at times remains almost stubbornly disconnected from the very editorial postulates shoring up the larger book. I might further remark that such works as Gay's *The Rise of Modern Paganism* and *The Science of Freedom* or Sigmund Diamond's "Old Patterns and New Societies: Virginia and French Canada in the Seventeenth Century" don't show up. This is a great pity. In their absence, Professor Audet's "Philosophes" turn out to be insincere, inconsistent, cruel men who never read Horace Mann on the benefits of universal education. M. Audet's contention that 17th and 18th century New France reflected "the social structure of the mother country" also loses something of its fine edge through lack of honing against counter proposals, soundly advanced, I think, by Diamond and others, that in recruiting a voluntary labor force, 17th century France "created in Canada a social basis for disobedience."

Lest my criticism along these lines be construed as regionally parochial, allow me to add here that others' work is at times just as vulnerable on this one particular of eventual development in light of editorial design. A case in point would be Robert M. Stamp's perplexing remark that in English Canada, "cultural and artistic expression were just beginning to develop . . . in the 1870's." Of course, if by culture we mean luxury books or advanced theatre, then late 19th century Ontario doubtless left much to be desired. But isn't our task to examine the entire process of cultural transmission? And if such be the case, wouldn't a side trip to Upper Canada Village serve to restrain premature generalizations about when culture starts or stops? A mere tourist reconstruction, you say? Perhaps so. But its crisp Loyalist architecture, home industries, furniture manufactury, sawmill, smithy, church halls, tavern, stores, York boat, tow paths, stump pullers, cannon, *and* schoolhouse do give one the feeling that from the child's point of view, cultural and aesthetic expression defy too fine a periodization. Culture of some sort makes its daily statement, though as McLuhan insists, our response may well be subconscious.

These marked discrepancies at times separating editorial intent from authorial execution will doubtless puzzle a post-Bailyn readership. I

hasten to add, though, that they by no means disqualify the book from well-deserved attention. In fact, most other problems are of a minor nature and may be either reconsidered or amended in subsequent printings or editions. I am not convinced, for example, that as Alison Prentice suggests, the McGuffey readers were as deliberately "American" as all that. As Henry Steele Commager points out, what McGuffey shows more strongly than nationalistic propaganda is his skill "in providing the school children of the mid-nineteenth century with a common body of allusion . . ." Recall that McGuffey offers selections from Southey, Goldsmith, Leigh Hunt, Dickens, Tennyson, Samuel Johnson, Byron, Scott, Coleridge, and numerous other Britishers. Less important, though still noticeable, Cubberley at least once comes in for what seems these days to be an almost ceremonial misspelling. So, too, does Royal Grammar Schoolmaster Alexander Skakel. And one James Early [sic] Russell founds Teachers College, Columbia, maybe to catch the first educational worm. And speaking of vivacity, Lawrence A. Cremin's *Classics in Education* at this point number over twice as many titles as Alison Prentice indicates. As a further aside, brace yourself for an index that lists "Scotland" before "School." But these are minutiae which shouldn't detract from the book's bolder strokes which I happily acknowledge in conclusion.

First, there is variety here. Alison Prentice's "The American Example," J. Donald Wilson's "Education in Upper Canada" and "The Ryerson Years in Canada West," and Hugh A. Stevenson's rendition of post-war Canada are fine examples of imaginative scholarship. More traditionally styled, Louis-Philippe Audet's major sections on French Canadian education (about 20% of the book) offer breadth at a time when comprehensiveness in Canadian social analysis was never more needed. Manoly R. Lupul's treatment of Western Canada and early confederation features a wide sweep as dramatic as the territories and times it displays. William B. Hamilton's work on British heritage and maritime school and society involves intriguing perspectives on the transit of culture. Robert M. Stamp writes with authority on governmental and economic factors. And Robert S. Patterson and Edward F. Sheffield round out the story with useful pieces periodized about wartime benchmarks.

Second, *Canadian Education: A History* comes as a substantial book which in addressing Canadian teachers-to-be rejects that genre of professional proselytizing transcending the data of many an introductory text. In so doing, it shuns crass oversimplifications attending less ambitious surveys. Throughout, the level of discussion remains high, as does a pervasive thoroughness that will ensure this book longevity as a fundamental reference.

Last, here is a dependable springboard into new research and writing. Suggestions for further reading include both up-to-date publications and unpublished material together with vintage classics. Chapters benefit from their own rich documentation too. This attention to detail not only

satisfies a convention of scholarship. It also demonstrates the intimate bond between a provocative query and the *kind* of data best likely to furnish a powerful answer. It follows, then, that writers presently casting about for responsive topics in Canadian educational history might profitably turn without delay to the Wilson, Stamp, and Audet work. This is especially so in the matter of European and American influences, the movement of ideas, the changing quality of childhood, the subtle web of church and state interests, and the persuasive force of initiative as revealed through detailed biographical study.

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Theodore Brameld. *The Climatic Decades: Mandate to Education.* New York: Praeger, 1970. Pp. 210. $7.95.

The human race is now confronted with a climactic time — a moment of unprecedented crisis which demands man's determination. The goals of his post-organic evolutionary process must be appraised with utmost clarity. Were he unable to redirect his course of culture-building with his potential power for cultural recreation and reconstruction, he would destroy both civilization and the human organic process itself. Thus the mandate of the present is unequivocally the remaking of the future if man is to choose the course for perpetuity. This is the theme of Theodore Brameld's latest book, *The Climactic Decades.* Its publication is timely at this critical juncture of global turmoil.

Because the book is written by a philosopher of education, the issues and proposals discussed are philosophically framed. But they are cogently and articulately presented for professional philosophers of education as well as for teachers and students of education. Brameld is not only one of the most creative living thinkers in education, but also an articulate spokesman of a multidisciplinary approach to education. This book is written brilliantly in a multidisciplinary perspective encompassing philosophy, anthropology, psychology, religion, and education. *The Climactic Decades* is indeed an important book for all people who share his concerns.

Brameld attempts to build a futuristic framework of educational commitment, creativity, and design. Being well aware of the danger that the label, Reconstructionism, of which Brameld has been a theoretical designer for more than two decades, may invite recurrent misgivings about his philosophical concern and commitment, he avoids it except in the preface and appendix. Instead, he adopts "existential humanism." Reconstructionism has become enriched with its fusion with religious, existential, and anthropological frames of reference. These labels are, however, secondary to him. While the major premises and arguments discussed in this book have been already developed in Brameld's earlier