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

works, its unique character lies at least in two features: a systematization and clarification of his prolonged concerns, and the renewal of his challenge to the future of man.

Here education is, of course, viewed as one of the major cultural agents involved in Brameld's challenge through which a new order of world community is envisioned and studied. While contemporary popular romantics such as Edgar Friedenberg and Paul Goodman tend to pay little attention to cultural reconstruction through education, Brameld's view is bifocal in that he regards *culture* and *individual* as equally important interrelated aspects in a continuum of transactional process of enculturation. Put in a different way, education as an agent of enculturation, contends Brameld, should be an instrument of both cultural and individual renewal.

The Climactic Decades includes twelve revised papers originally published in journals and an appendix where the definition of Reconstructionism is given, adopted from *The Dictionary of Christian Education.* The twelve chapters, by and large, hang together cogently although there is a certain degree of redundancy and incongruent diversity which could have been eliminated. The weakness of the book lies in the first, fourth, and ninth chapters, which do not maintain the eloquence of argument, insight, analytical forcefulness, and depth comparable to those in the other chapters. For instance, Chapter One, "Agenda for an Ecumenical Congress in Education," I am afraid, will hardly arouse the reader's active interest because it tends to catalogue a number of issues. Perhaps he may get a similar impression in Chapter Four, "Illusions and Disillusions in Education." Meanwhile Brameld's recent thought is most brilliantly presented in the last three chapters in an enriched perspective of humanism.

Brameld's focal concern may be characterized and enlivened by several key terms: *future, world civilization, mankind, goals, values, commitment.* Pessimistic though he is over the contemporary world of mankind, he expresses a faith in man's ability and courage to reshape his goals and the course of his cultural evolution. The future dimension in a time continuum acquires the most vital significance in his faith. "The mandate to education," thus, is to make it a vital agent of goal-directed cultural change. The school has been for too long a passive transmitter of culture with almost exclusive emphasis upon the past and present. To correct this, Brameld proposes experimental designs for undergraduate general education, programs of teacher education, and the establishment of "futurology", which features interdisciplinary programs of study focused on the great problems inherent in the future of man and in our culture.

Closely related to the notion of the future is his proposal for Experimental Centers for the Creation of World Civilization. World civilization — a new order of a convergent mankind, contends Brameld, is a

galvanizing goal of education. Meanwhile another crucial task of education is to develop a methodological framework for the study of the common bases of mankind and community experience. He suggests methodologies of "consensual validation," "psychocultural approach," and "anthropotherapy."

These proposals must be, however, appreciated in reference to the problems of values and goals in education. Brameld is no less critical than Friedenberg and Goodman, of the school's failure to integrate the student's emotional, organic, and intellectual experience into a dynamic whole. Public school curricula, he fears, are fast becoming immoral and disintegrating. The ultimate purpose of education is a synthesis of life, of "outer" and "inner" freedom symbolized by social-self-realization. Brameld encourages the discipline of selfhood, of cooperative learning and teaching, and of active, responsible community experience.

A comment should be made on the existential humanism mentioned earlier. It is a religious frame of devotion and commitment transcending the shortcomings of pragmatism-progressivism and Thomistic and idealistic dogmatisms; it is *religious* in the sense that "religious experience is the search for, identification with, and commitment to the largest and most significant whole that man may envisage." (p. 164) Brameld delineates three kinds of obligation of existential humanism. The "obligation of commitment," the first of the three, is to identify ultimate purposes of man expressed in the goals of a convergent mankind which education is now required to crystalize, in a utopia, and a new "mythology." The second is the obligation of critical creativity. Education is responsible for enhancing creativity of each individual and the integrity of self. Finally, the obligation of design is to develop the order of experience which can render a meaningful synthesis of critical creativity and ends of cultural evolution. It is to create a design for the curriculum of tomorrow's education infused with the first and second obligations.

This book deserves the extensive attention of Brameld's sympathizers as well as his critics.

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