

providing today's unionists with inspiration — is uncertain. In the opinion of this reviewer, White's *A Hard Man to Beat* (Vancouver, 1983) remains a much more compelling account of the same era. Despite their considerable stylistic differences, both books cover much the same territory, providing partisan accounts of labour's battles during the years around the Second World War. In addition, both authors share a similar analysis; Stanton's experiences with the province's judicial system, for example, corroborate Bill White's frank assessment that "the courts have been one of the establishment's most effective tools in fighting unionism." Stanton's memoirs, like White's, shed much light on a crucial period in B.C.'s history, and those people who wish to understand the sources and genesis of this province's polarized climate should read his book with care.

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*The Life of Emily Carr*, by Paula Blanchard. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987. Pp. vi, 331.

Emily Carr is well known to most westerners as an artist with a powerful vision of the B.C. forests and as a writer of the award-winning *Klee Wyck*, her memoir of experiences among the coastal Indians. Born in 1871, she grew up in Victoria, and after studying art in San Francisco and later in England and Paris, returned to her native city to teach, paint, raise dogs, run a boarding house, and lead for her times the unconventional life of a single woman whose passion was art.

Last fall an Emily Carr painting sold at auction in Toronto for the unexpectedly high price of \$290,000. This is a barometer of the growing interest in and reputation of this artist, who is at last being recognized as one of Canada's best painters. Feminists have also discovered her, and found in Carr's eccentricities and creative struggles material for plays, television documentaries, and academic theses.

It is a pity that Paula Blanchard chose to cast her study of Carr in the form of biography, for she adds no new material to the detailed and penetrating study by Maria Tippett which first appeared in 1979. Blanchard is a good writer, a specialist in English and American literature who has previously written a biography of the American transcendentalist Margaret Fuller. Her avowed interest in Carr was to investigate the "inner conflicts of a woman painter." She notes that in Emily Carr "we see a clear example of anger contributing substantially to a creative career." This perspective,

feminist and psychologizing, yields perceptive insights when applied to specific paintings or writings, but there is surprisingly little discussion of Carr's art or her prose. Although Blanchard had access to some biographical material unavailable to Tippet (the collection of J. A. Parnall), little use is made of it. Instead, Blanchard prefers to tell the story of Carr's life with a structure obviously indebted to Tippet.

What Blanchard does well, however, is to re-create, almost like a novelist, incidents, places, and states of mind. While this makes for a good read, what the reader should not forget is how speculative such an approach can be. One central issue, treated vividly by Blanchard, is the nature of the breakdown Carr experienced in England in 1903. Tippet convincingly argued a case for the original diagnosis of hysteria (now called conversion reaction), where repressed anxieties are converted to physical symptoms. However, Blanchard rejects the evidence of Emily's probable mistreatment by her dominating father, and conjectures the root cause of Carr's symptoms — headache, partial paralysis, depression — to be a combination of emotional exhaustion and pressure to succeed as an artist. This fits well into Blanchard's desire to see in Carr's life the pattern of the struggle of the female artist, but it chooses to overlook the violence of the symptoms so carefully documented by Tippet.

There are times, however, when Blanchard's feminist viewpoint is surely on the mark. Writing of Carr's first meeting with the Group of Seven, which affected her profoundly, Blanchard notes:

The outdoor aesthetic of the Seven, the communal experience from which their painting grew, was perforce a male experience. . . . And with the best will in the world on both their side and Emily's, she was right to perceive that to them she was an outsider, not only as a westerner, but also as a woman. (p. 177)

It was Lawren Harris who assured Emily that "you are one of us," and Blanchard successfully re-creates the excitement of those first meetings with Harris in 1927.

This book will not supplant Tippet's as the definitive biography of Emily Carr, but its readability may further popularize her story.