Although not treated at length in Shadbolt’s book, this painting, owned by the Art Gallery of Ontario, gives us an insight into the divine nature of the artist’s God. It portrays a tiny Indian church almost consumed by the great Western forests; in this painting, God (the Church) and Nature (the Forest) are one. Until her introduction to theosophy in 1927, Carr had only perceived God as persisting in a church. This painting thus marks Carr’s transition, as she recognizes the God in everything animate and inanimate.

Some people believe that in order to understand an artist’s inner life, it is necessary to resort to a form of psychoanalysis. (The application of psychoanalysis to art history was developed, as is well known, from Sigmund Freud’s study of Leonardo da Vinci.) Doris Shadbolt has attempted to apply this method of understanding the inner self to the art of Emily Carr (p. 140). The importance of the theme of life, growth, and rebirth, for example, is treated in this way, but the results are somehow unsatisfactory. Relating Carr’s forest landscape paintings to sexual images and, in particular, to phallic symbols strikes one as being simplistic. Not mentioned is the artist’s interest in natural themes, which relates to her firm belief in a rejuvenating infinite life force, created by God. Since psychoanalysis required immediate knowledge of the individual’s subconscious, Doris Shadbolt’s inference of sexual imagery in Carr’s work can only be speculative.

In the final analysis, Doris Shadbolt’s The Art of Emily Carr is significant because it constitutes a more comprehensive study of the art of this great artist than previous publications. It also appears at the end of a decade in which several similar studies about Canadian artists have been written by Canadian art historians and published by Canadian publishers. Unfortunately, the quality of the reproductions in Shadbolt’s book is poor; they show little resemblance to the true pigmentation of the original paintings. Of vital importance to the Canadian art scene, this book falls short, in this regard, to previously published examples.

The continuing fascination with the art of Emily Carr and the eccentric person behind the art should encourage art historians to continue their research on this Canadian artist. The appearance, in the past two years, of three major books dealing with Emily Carr (Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher, Emily Carr: The Untold Story, Saanichton, B.C., 1978; Maria Tippett, Emily Carr: A Biography, Toronto, 1979, reviewed above; and this book by Doris Shadbolt) has revealed much new information about the artist and her work. These studies serve to open the door to further advanced research on Emily Carr’s life and art.

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Paul-Emile Borduas Écrits/Writings

Twenty years after writing to his friend Claude Gauvreau that the correct treatment for his failing spirits and health ‘would be affection in my luminously beautiful country,’ Paul-Emile Borduas is being feted in Canada. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts held a Borduas retrospective in 1962; Guy Robert’s book Borduas, ou le dilemme culturel québécois (1977) was shortly followed by François-Marc Gagnon’s Biographie et analyse de l’œuvre (1978); Artscanada devoted its issue of December 1978-January 1979 to Borduas.

The latest tribute to Borduas is the bilingual edition of his writings by Dennis Young and Gagnon, many of which are available for the first time in English (Fig. 4). This extension to the anglophone audience would have pleased Borduas. In the last letter of this collection, entitled ‘One small corner-stone is the turf of my old prejudices,’ he realizes that his old assumption about being Canadian – ‘as we say when we unreasonably identify this epithet with our “French superiority”’ – was a betrayal of a much more valid unity which was Canadian.

This kind of reversal is typical of Borduas and frustrating to those who want to ascertain Borduas’s position on art, on politics, on the effectiveness of art as political devise, on nationalism, on internationalism, and so on. It is what leads Robert to devote a central section of his book to what he calls Dilemmes – the apparent contradictions and conflicts in Borduas’s thought. Fortunately, in this collection we are given no directives for understanding Borduas, only Borduas’s writings and a short introduction to each of the three sections: Montreal and Saint-Hilaire, New York, and Paris. These introductions contain brief biographical information and what has become the mandatory apology for Borduas’s awkward, untutored use of language. My own command of French is too crude to detect any crudities on Borduas’s part, but the English version (and this is undoubtedly due in part to the careful, sensitive translation by Young and Gagnon) contains simple, lucid, and at times amazingly beautiful prose. The introduction also, in an attempt to locate Borduas in the tradition of famous manifesto writers, compares him to Marinetti – to whom he is nothing like. There is in Borduas no rejection of the past, no shrill macho stance, no rigidity of ideology that could ever become Fascist. There is instead that
baffling transformation continuelle: Real things require relationships repeatedly renewed, or challenged, or put to question: relationships impalpable, exciting and dependent on the vivifying force of action.

Our treasure is poetic resource: the emotional wealth on which the centuries to come will draw. It cannot be passed on unless it is transformed, and lacking this it is deformed. (p. 54)

The consistency inherent in these writings resides not so much in the argument (although there is much more coherence here than would appear at first), but in the temperament of the man himself — generous and disinterested. The Arndalian echoes are not gratuitous, for if we are going to locate Borduas within any tradition of aesthetic, political, or philosophical speculation it is Arnold to whom we would most profitably refer. Once placed in this tradition Borduas’s ostensibly lack of political platform or aesthetic directives would be seen not as a shortcoming, but as intentional. His abhorrence of the petty and the self-interested, in favour of the generous, the ardent, the spontaneous would not make us feel we are in the presence of the naive, but rather the wholly informed sensibility. Like Arnold, Borduas locates the revolutionary potential within the development of the best attributes of the human temperament: The self-seeking act is fettered to its author; it is stillborn.

The passionate act breaks free, through its very dynamism. (p. 51)

Political distractions cannot be more than short-term and without consequence for us, as captivating as they may appear: They may be thrust on us but we must turn away. Social action should be effected through personal relationships, by the unreserved giving of the most illuminated. (p. 120)

Friends of the present regime suspect us of supporting the ‘Revolution.’ Friends of the ‘Revolution’ call us merely rebels, saying we ’protest against what now exists but only to transform it not to displace it.’ As delicately as this is put, we think we understand.

It is a question of class. We are credited with the naive intention, ‘A wanting to “transform” society by exchanging the men in power with others of the same kind’ — and of ignoring the friends of the ‘revolution’.

But the only distinction between these ‘friends’ and those presently in power is that they belong to different classes — as if a change of class implied a change of civilization, a change of desires, a change of hope!

For us the risk of all in global refusal. (p. 52)

If Borduas was not going to allow his group to become les Autoamatisants au service de la révolution, he was equally adverse to their being enlisted into the service of the French Surrealists. To Breton’s overture of 1943 and his urgent request that the Québecois group participate in the 1947 Surrealist Exhibition, Borduas returned his sincere good wishes along with his evasive ‘perhaps when you know us better.’ That Borduas did not want to appear in a subordinate role where Breton was concerned is a possible, but rather facile, explanation and hardly in keeping with our sense of the man as it is derived from these writings. That Borduas found himself and his group in the Canadian cliché of needing to ‘catch up’ with the European avant garde while not wanting to be subsumed by it is a more common explanation, but really only a variant of the first. More to the point is to recognize that Borduas’s position as an artist and animator of a group of artists and poets is a direct parallel to his political position. Herein lies the key to what has come to be seen as one of the central paradoxes concerning Borduas. His sense of place rooted in the area of Saint-Hilaire is thought to conflict with his internationalism and his desire to see the young Canadian school enter the ‘cycle of world discussion.’ A man rooted and reaching out is not in an untenable position, rather the best of all possible ones. It is a question of response. He describes his people as ‘a little people,’ ‘huddled,’ ‘trapped,’ and ‘abandoned’ — spellbound by the annihilating prestige of remembered European masterpieces, and disdainful of the authentic creations of its own oppressed. The solution to this insularity was not trips abroad ‘for improved exploitation of the crowd upon return,’ nor the importation of international artists to serve as a kind of cultural blood transfusion for anemic Canadian art. When Alfred Pellan arrived in Montreal, Borduas and his group were conscious of the benefit to their movement, but also conscious of their own self-worth: ‘The work that this painter brought from Paris bore the rich perfume of its place of origin. It was, all in all, a Paris fruit which he offered. … But we were not to be swept off our feet! Pellan’s painting was not to be allowed to set a fashion. It was a wholesome element to be assimilated, just as it should have assimilated the best elements of the Montreal art among which he had chosen to live.’

The interest of Pellan and many of the members of the Contemporary Art Society were solely ‘cultural’ and centred on the notion of ‘catching-up.’ But for Borduas imitation, while perhaps the highest form of flattery, was not creation. Research in art ‘proceeds from a psychic state proper to the place where the work is done; this psychic state is the unconscious of the place. Who will ever know its wide ramifications?’ Part of the excitement of the book is derived from Borduas’s growing awareness of these ramifications: ‘My students came to realize they were involved in something no longer confinable within the four walls of a classroom, but with echoes outside.’

The choice of metaphor here is significant. It reflects the Canadian preoccupation with isolation and communication. Historically we are a country bribed into what little unity we have achieved with the promise of the means of communication. Always with us there is the consciousness of geographic and cultural alienation. When Borduas talks of Canadian art he does so in terms of the desire to communicate; and he acknowledges that Canadian answers, once out of the country, do not start any discussion. ‘Because from the outside they seem to be fixated on irrelevancies: the materials used have not been forged through an intense struggle, they seem loaded with sentimentality, and they have meaning only at home — or, if elsewhere, only for the under-developed classes.’

The solution is not to lapse into a kind of cultural solipsism, ‘creating an ivory tower around ourselves and recapitulating, just for our own benefit, formal notions done with so long ago.’ He grants the possibility for originality within the atavistic and cites those who have achieved it. ‘They are, for sure, unexpected answers to the preoccupations of contemporary art, and answers useless outside home.’
would be enough, for achieving the best of all possible worlds, simply
that nobler souls, better informed,
were free to spread some gentle-
ness around by means of lively
works (instead of being forced to
withdraw into themselves in a mor-
bidity that would look bad for any
country's health). But Canada may
even have the nucleus of something
well enough informed to generate
socially the relationship needed for
the spiritual adventure. And that is
already a great step!'

Borduas was radical in both
senses of the term. And this ex-
plains why he was seen as so great a
threat to the repressive ideological
climate of the Duplessis régime
while those whose interests were
solely 'cultural' were not—cultural
overlay is innocuous, radical
change threatens. The publication
of Global Refusal resulted in Bor-
duas's dismissal from his post as
professor of drawing at the École du
Meuble and the cancellation of his
upcoming exhibition; eventually it
necessitated his departure from
Canada.

The most obvious complaint
about the writings (one that can be
deduced even from the quotes I have
included) is that the answers
are poetic, not practical. There is,
to counter this complaint, the les-
son of the life. Borduas managed
for a time to live his solutions —
they are viable. And if he is lauded
for being a Canadian artist who has
achieved international recognition,
the praise has more to do with
national chauvinism than with Bor-
duas. The most appropriate praise
of Borduas is one he addressed to
his old master Ozias Leduc: 'So
many exceptional beings have lived
in ordinary places and made accu-
rate responses to them. Accurate
responses? That is to say poetic;
that is to say bountiful.'

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ANTHONY JACKSON The Democratiza-
tion of Canadian Architecture. Halif-

ANTHONY JACKSON The Future of
Canadian Architecture. Halifax,
Tech-Press, 1979. 32 p., 58 illus., $4.95.

Ces deux essais d'Anthony Jackson
sont les deux premiers de la série
Library of Canadian Architecture
du Nova Scotia Technical
College. Il faut se réjouir de ce
tableau et espérer que cette tri-
une sera ouverte à tous ceux qui
poursuivent des travaux de recher-
che sur l'architecture canadienne,
même si l'auteur des deux précéd-
res publications est un professeur
du N.S.T.C. Les deux ouvrages sont
de format 9 x 12 po, semblable à
celui de revues d'architecture, et
tous deux offrent des illustrations,
genre d'élégante qualité, qui
occupent autant de place que le
texte. La mise en page, qui n'est pas
absolument orthodoxe, et l'emploi
de plusieurs caractères typographi-
différents créent parfois une
certaine confusion qui a été large-
ment corrigée dans le deuxième
livre dont la présentation plus élé-
gante marque un progrès par rap-
port au premier.

Le feuillet publicitaire de l'édite-
teur annonce que The Future of
Canadian Architecture est un
- Companion volume to The Demo-
-cratization of Canadian Architecture -
Ce dernier pourrait en effet constitu-
ter l'introduction à un ouvrage
plus considérable dont le premier
chapitre serait The Future of Cana-
dian Architecture. The Democratiza-
dition... présente un contenu à carac-
tère plutôt général. En dépit du
titre, il ne comporte aucune réfé-
rence canadienne, si ce n'est par les
illustrations auxquelles le texte ne
réfère jamais explicitement. Il pose
la nécessité d'une architecture
adaptée aux masses populaires et
capable d'être comprise par elles.
Dans le deuxième livre, The Future
of Canadian Architecture, le point de
vue est plus spécifiquement cana-
dien, laissant valoir la nécessité de
réaliser une architecture nationale
ou, mieux, une architecture régiona-
elle. Les moyens qui sont proposés
pour y arriver sont sensiblement les
mêmes que ceux proposés dans le
premier livre pour produire une
architecture démocratique.

Par leur thème, ces deux
livres se situent au sein du débat
actuel sur l'architecture du XXe siè-
cle. Sans aller jusqu'à parler de la
faillite de l'architecture moderne,
Jackson n'en souligne pas moins
son caractère rigide et inadéquat
parce qu'elle cherche à tout niveler.
Les pionniers de l'architecture mo-
derne ne sont cependant pas les
seuls responsables de son échec.
Jackson l'attribue aussi aux généra-
tions suivantes qui n'ont pas été
capables de poursuivre les objectifs
de leurs prédécesseurs, en particu-
lier à l'égard du problème de la
décoration.

Ces deux livres trouvent aussi
leur place parmi la littérature
contemporaine sur l'architecture,
en encourageant le pluralisme, la
tolérance et en tentant de promou-
voir une architecture qui aurait une
base populaire.

Contrairement à l'architecte des
temps passés qui travaillait pour
une minorité de privilégiés, l'archi-
tecte contemporain travaille pour
la masse. Mais celui-ci, quels que
soient ses origines, n'est pas prépa-
rrer pour comprendre et traduire
les aspirations populaires. Plus ins-
truit que la moyenne, gagnant plus
que la moyenne et avec des goûts
différents de ceux de la majorité, il
est séparé de ceux pour qui il
construit. Le résultat de tout cela
est que le grand public ne
comprend pas l'architecture mo-
derne. Il ne s'y retrouve pas et il ne
s'y intéresse pas. L'auteur suggère à
l'architecte des moyens pour ap-
prendre à parler aux masses. Il faut
d'abord que son architecture soit
visuellement attrayante, ce qui,
conclu Jackson, fait défaut à l'archite-
ture du XXe siècle. L'architecte de-
va aussi chercher à satisfaire les
aspirations populaires. Loin de por-
ter un jugement hautain sur le goût
populaire et renonçant à son arro-
gante prétention de pouvoir edu-
quer les masses, l'architecte se rap-
pellera que même William Morris
mêprisait les objets d'art décoratif
auxquels les collectionneurs son-
disant cultivés accordent au-
jourd'hui une grande valeur.

Parmi d'autres recommandations
concrètes formulées par l'auteur,
notons le recours à la technique
courante plutôt qu'à une technique
complexes et coûteuse et la possi-
bilité pour l'utilisateur d'intervenir
même dans l'aménagement de l'ex-
térieur de sa demeure plutôt que de
tout soumettre à un contrôle morne
et sans vie qui ne reflète pas le
pluralisme de la société.

Les ouvrages récents sur l'archi-
tecture nous ont, bien sûr, habitués