In the artificial chopping-up of time we could say that 1973 was the end of the 60s, and 1974 that of the 70s. In the United States, for example, there was this feeling when Nixon beat McGovern at the polls. A lot of paintings crossed the western world, for various and complex reasons. It was somewhat unexpected, some of them, in all manner of ways, took up residence in the country. How to imagine is to begin with an eight-year experience on a small farm in the countryside outside Rome. Gianfranco Baruchello moved there from Rome in 1973 with his compa- nion and wrote this book in 1980, in collaboration with his friend Henry Martin, from a month of daily conver- sations. The book is subtitled "A Narrative on Art and Agriculture" and the publishing category on the back cover reads art criticism/philosophy/agriculture. Well, there's a typo! Do I see Kenneth Clarke cavorting in a greenhouse? No, but there are con- sumers in this三位一体 which make for interesting reading. Baruchello is a natural raconteur, his narrative has a looping, elliptical quality and we are taken from the top of the hill down to the depths with a grace which keeps even heavy-duty ideas frivole and fertile. One moment we are sitting on the back of a tractor, the next ploughing beneath the fields on the farm of Daux's baron; we are treading along the rows of peas only to be groaning out of the kitchen with Theodora, along Arvid's thread. Baruchello is an artist who has been showing in Europe and America since 1961. He was politically active in Rome from 1966-73 when he started the farm he called "Agricola Cornella," which, roughly translated, means "Cornella Farming Enterprises." It was, he says, "all on real- ly a very small scale, a few fruit trees, a little salal, like I said, it's not all that we decided to come here to live be- cause I wanted to investigate the idea of a descent into the bowels of the earth. We just sort of came here to live." The eight years were a business of putting one foot in front of the other, feeling the way one step at a time, meditating on the objects which ap- peared, collected, and the consequences and im- plications of these objects. There was no particular program to be fol- lowed. The process was a carry-over from Baruchello's political activities. It was through politics that he first made a foray into an idea of a trans-aesthetic dimension to art, it was, he says, in terms of politics and political contusion. First he began to conceive of art as an exem- plary and moral discourse. Early one began to agriculturally square the un- used plots of land around his original house and garden, but as time went by he was cajoled by the owners into buying them, as money permitted. So, what started out as a political gesture ended up as a nice farm. But the old garden in the out- skirts of Rome with cartoonists of sugar beets and potatoes moulding out of the gateway. How could one call this art? How did it even move out the category of real life? After all, a potato is a potato and travels easily, everywhere, to fulfill the needs it must. There was this danger of turn- ing into a bourgeois gentleman farm- er, whereby Agricola Cornella would become just one part of his biography, a base for his efforts to work itself.

But, that's precisely what seems to have happened. The issue of what is farm and what is art is left open in the book, and it seems to a large extent that the farm did provide a basis, ob- jects for his work as an artist. Well, that was the work — paintings, drawings, films, photographs, note- books, and more, but apart from a drawing called "Crossing with Underground Systems" on the front cover of How to Imagine I don't have the work before me, only this book, which is part of the work. Well, these were the work in one sense, but Baru- chello is at pains to point out that these were a by-product, the real work lay with the objects themselves, the sugar beets, the hay, the fields, the earth and what was beneath the earth. Let live about it, there is nothing wrong with operating a farm and pro- ducing dice, it's just that Baru- chello's interests lay in a subtly dif- ferent direction; perhaps it would be better to say at another level. The essay's central point is how Baruchello's ideas regarding to the farm, what is its relationship to nature? Well, not a lot — Baruchello doesn't believe in the farm as not a happening or a staging ground for events, but an involve- ment itself as object to him as a subject. He asks, "What's a cavo?" or "What's the image of the farm?" and the nature of our relationship with the earth, with dirt? The meaning of the discovery of agriculture? What's a forest, a jungle? What's grass? And why do ani- mals feed themselves on grass? We read of cows and sheep and their des- perate hunger, how cows will eat all day in the field, return to the stall at night, and push and fight to get at the hay and eat and eat as though they hadn't had a bite for days, and this great tide of grass passes through them, through their four stomachs, almost as though the grass was using the cows for its own purposes, not the other way around. Out of the pages emerge images of these objects as part of a larger scheme of things, part of the universe, the cow standing like a "great big machine the sun is the fuel, intent and serious upon the produc- tion of its dung, on the death and reb-irth of the grass." You don't just stand there and have polished thoughts about the nitrogen cycle, you end up by asking and being asked the meaning of things, you end up wondering about the relationship you have with these mechanisms of animal savagery.

The issue is one of attitude to nature, both as an individual and as a society. This is no small issue, it's been the meat and potatoes of religion and reli- gious persecution since time out of mind. Just up the road from Agricola Cornella, in Florence, in 1600 Giorgi- dano Bruno was burned to death for denying that God was both imma- nent and transcendent. It's really a question of ways of being in the world. On the one hand, immanence implies that the Creator is the crea- tion, the creator is a part of the Crea- tor, there is an in-dwelling presence of God in the world. On the other hand the Creator is outside of creation, transcendent to it. This is the main- stream Judeo-Christian belief. The first attitude portrays a reverence for nature, the second gives one license to use nature as a natural resource, it grees us as we go! Grief and confusion result. Woman are inevitably involved, the real sexuality falls into disarray, huge one-sided breasts move into positions of power. Things become, in a word, unnatural.

So we have here what could be a description of the ways subjects relate to objects. It would be interesting to see a history of art from this standpoint, to compare Picasso's and Braque's connection to their objects with that of Pop art, for example. "It's easier and more meaningful to think about a seed that to contemplate or reason about a plastic bottle for decorative dergeters." Baru- chello is concerned throughout the book with the meaning of art, the possibilities of "testing the powers of art against the power of the much more potent social structures that stand adjacent to it."
MOVEMENTS AND MESSAGES: Media and Radical Politics in Quebec by Marc Raboy translated from French by David Homel (Toronto, Between the Lines, 1984)

The merits of the book is that it looks, in an ordered and informed fashion, at most of the significant oppositional media practices of the last 25 years; the intellectual review is so important in the 1960s, the press cooperatives formed in 1973, the PLC's use of radio, and so on. Of particular interest and detail is Raboy's account of Quebec's radical media. While examining the Montreal Citizen's Movement, perhaps the most useful section of the book is Raboy's detailed account of the strategic dilemmas and problems of coalition faced by the MCV. Raboy's style is clear, tidy, and reform movements in the 1970s, the extent to which the dominant media shaped or copied MCV's external development still provides a revealing example of these processes at work. More recent developments with co-organized 19Cricky Pick Auf der Macc's ongoing self-justification use of his Gazette column to drag Nouveaux Philosophes and end-of-ideology rhetoric into municipal politics will find this useful background. The book might have benefited had Raboy focused exclusively on the reduced discussion of the 1960s to a preface, and analysed other movements of the 1970s in greater detail.

The book's only weaknesses is those of omission, and as a regrettable brief accounts of an eventful period it will probably prove of interest to all students. But the text, especially in sections on the nature of the semiology and political culture that would not be overlooked. As a "freelance writer, journalist, broadcaster, and university teacher," his work typifies the sorts of intersecions between academic, journalistic and activist activity which are so common in Quebec and crucial to its policies. Secondly, as a radical anglophone, he is in a tracity of those whose political positions and activities provide a useful reminder to other Quebec oragnizers that theirs is not a universal politics.

One day the story will be told of the Sunday Express, a steelworker weekly published by a conglomerate which, in the year or so preceding its demise, the largest radical newspaper in Quebec--only because its owners, depending on the terms of a successful strike, could appeal to the public, gave a couple of politically-connected reporter an opportunity to "write the book." My own, more limited contact with oppositional or alternative media in Quebec suggests that Raboy's description of Quebec's shrinking over the decline of Lennie's politics in the late 1970s, and its acknowledged omission of discussions of specifically counter-cultural activity. When I moved to Montreal in 1978, the Sabre in English or the Communist League were the frouzlin and most visible, to an extent closer to major Quebec.兔 really all of them are the more remarkable. What emerged in subsequent years was the growth of a counter-culture in the discipline of these groups, as studies of sexual politics, Quebec's political and gender-based distinctions of Labour finally broke ground. Raboy's book is not in vain, as an example, as one of the most admirable, and a model for those who continue to work in this period, but a feminist analysis of the practices which he studied, or which overlooked these, is called for.

Will Straw teaches film studies at Simon Fraser University and writes about contemporary popular media and culture.