MOVERS 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 late 25 years: the intellectual reviews so important in the 1960s, the press cooperatives, the radio groups in the 1970s, the LUC’s use of radio, and so on. Of particular interest and detail is Raboy’s account of the development of the Montreal Citizen’s Movement, perhaps the most useful section of the book. The main problem of the strategic dilemmas and problems of coalition faced by the MCM is well documented by similar changes in reform movements in the 1970s, to the extent that which the dominant media shape consciousness, Raboy’s book will provide a revealing new analysis of these processes at work. Montrealers familiar with ex-CMCM pick-up Auz’s many useful, well-informed, municipal politics will find this useful background. The book might have benefited had Raboy focused exclusively on the period, reduced discussion of the 1960s to a preface, and analyzed either movements of the 1970s in greater detail.

The book’s only weaknesses are those of omission, and a regrettable brief account of an eventful period will not probably prove of value here to non-English Canadian novices in its translation than to its original francophone audience. Raboy himself may be said to exemplify two tendencies which importance in shaping Montreal’s political culture will not be overlooked. As a “freelance writer, journalist, broadcaster, and university teacher,” his work typifies the sorts of interests between academic, journalistic and popular culture which are so common in Quebec and crucial to its politics. Secondly, as a radical Anglophone, he is in a tradition of those whose political positions and activities provide a useful reminder to other Quebecers that their is not a unique politics.

One day the story will be told of the Sunday Express, an Anglophone weekly published by a conglomerate which, in the year or so preceding its demise, became the largest daily in the English language in Quebec. 

N O T E S

1 The Night Country, Loren Brace, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1979, referring to the growth of the redwood forest.


3 Simon Harwood is a Toronto artist.