

Instead of doing specialized activities of the category called art he is intent on doing normal activities but dwelling on their possible meaning until a process of transformation occurs. And over this eight-year period a transformation does take place. The political rationale fell away and he moved from being a "street fighting man" to, what? — to something else. Most importantly he encountered the feminine, the earth, the mother; in Jungian terms the anima. There is something radical in this, something courageous. It is important, I would say the most important thing we can do as a species. So there is this sense of going down into the earth, making contact with something larger, here, now, in the place where you are. In all of this there is a sense of weight and relevance, things which need to be revisited. For Baruchello it is an answer to this masculine domination over nature and a response to the exploration of space, which he sees as "a refusal of the earth as an experience of the unconscious." "The idea then that we'd do better to return to the earth as an almost polemical reply to the exploration of space is the idea that I really started with in this adventure called Agricola Cornelia."

So you don't go flying off into space with the attitude that it's O.K. to smear this stuff on the planet then flush it down the universe to start again somewhere else. You look carefully at your resources and at the waste you're producing and you say well, maybe it's better to turn our attention to this planet and learn how to live with it. That's our task. But there is still this spirit we have, which, for example, drove those men in their little wooden ships from northwest Europe across the globe. That's part of history, but now, I wonder, can we afford to foster it in the same way with almost five billion people and more to come? I mean it's still there in us, so what do we do with it? Well, one answer may be with Baruchello's experience. To all appearances his farm was just a farm, with a given size, but by working on it he produced other dimensions. It is in the production of these other dimensions that the art lies. By working on the objects they are transcended, they become vehicles of a meaning which gives our spirit a place to grow.

This is a wonderful book. There are things I would like to have mentioned but I simply ran out of space. Van Gogh, Thoreau and Duchamp are three names; Duchamp is at the heart of the book as he is in the heart of the author. Here is a quote of his from the book: "I like the word 'believe'. Generally when people say 'I know,' they don't know at all, they believe... I believe that art is the only form of activity through which a person can manifest himself as a real individual. It's the only way they can go beyond the stage of animal, since art looks out onto regions that are controlled by neither time nor space. To live is to believe...or at least that's what I believe."

#### Notes

1. *The Night Country*, Loren Eiseley, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1984; referring to Francis Bacon, 1561-1626.
2. c.f. *Creative Mythology*, Joseph Campbell, Penguin Books, 1976.

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## MOVEMENTS AND MESSAGES: Media and Radical Politics in Quebec

by Marc Raboy  
translated from French by  
David Homel  
(Toronto, Between the Lines,  
1984)



immediately appealing quality of Marc Raboy's study of radical media in Quebec is that at least half of its length is devoted to an examination of the 1970s. Writing on social movements of the last 25 years too often slides into a perspective from which that decade represents nothing more than the playing out of tensions and contradictions rooted in the Epic Sixties, like the fade-out of a particularly raucous record. *Movements and Messages* is at its most useful and novel in discussing magazines, newspapers and cooperatives after 1970, with an attentiveness to the particularities of specific conditions rather than a reliance on shopworn "life cycle" theories of radical movements.

Any examination of Quebec politics from the sixties onward must account for the relationships between oppositional movements there and those widespread throughout the industrialized and developing world during the same period. Specifically, this involves disentangling the long-term itinerary of a nationalist politics in Quebec from the more global but less enduring impact of generational conflict. How one unties these knots will have a significant effect on how one accounts for the relative decline of radical politics in Quebec over the last decade.

Jacques Parizeau, the Parti Québécois' ex-Minister of Finance, has spoken frequently and glowingly in recent years of the *garde montante*, the ascendant generation of Quebec business school graduates, moving to occupy command posts within the Quebec economy. To see in this development a political event of any significance is to find a continuity in post-war Quebec politics: the nationalist impulse, for Parizeau, has passed through the political and professional classes and is now fuelling an entrepreneurial revolution. At one level, this account is simply symptomatic of the tenuous link between a nationalist politics and a project of radical social transformation. More importantly, however, it is a reading of recent Quebec history based in a narrative on cumulative and autonomous social development, rather than one of shifts across the ideological spectrum.

At odds with Parizeau's history-telling, then, is one which sees the new entrepreneurship as a local variant of the ideological retrenchment now widespread in western/northern countries. This perspective is more likely to emphasize the ground shared by Quebec radicalism of the 1960s/1970s with counter-cultural and New Left movements elsewhere. Viewed from this vantage point, the decline of prosperity on a world scale and the political revolution of the baby-boomers acquire considerable explanatory weight as factors in the political shifts of the late 1970s in Quebec.

Raboy acknowledges, in passing, sociologist Serge Proulx's analysis of "political generations" in Quebec, the link between groups defined by age and class and those political entities which serve, for a time, as the embodiment of their aspirations (the provincial Liberals in the early sixties, the PQ, later). What the near future in Quebec will decide is not so much the accuracy of this notion — Bourassa's Liberals may well crystallize the younger generation's aspirations, however incoherently — but the inevitability of progressive development implicit in the model. Raboy's book was published just prior to two noteworthy events in Quebec's political life — the crisis in the PQ, and the formation of a new coalition of opposi-

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tional energies, the *Mouvement socialiste* — but it anticipates the first and would, one hopes, be read by those involved in the second.

Given Raboy's limited objectives, his political analysis of Quebec from 1960 to the present offers little more than an outline. Conflicts between class-based and nationalist politics, for example, are dealt with primarily as sources of tension within particular media projects, rather than as elements of the underlying political culture. Most readers are likely to be sufficiently familiar with the overall context to make these connections themselves, but one would welcome an analysis which posed the relationship of each media project to larger questions of political conjuncture and strategy in greater detail.

The merit 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 revues so important in the 1960s, the press cooperatives of the 1970s, the FLQ's use of radio, and so on. Of particular interest and detail is Raboy's account of the role of the media in transforming the Montreal Citizen's Movement, perhaps the most useful section of the book. While the strategic dilemmas and problems of coalition faced by the MCM were shared by similar urban reform movements in the 1970s, the extent to which the dominant media shaped the MCM's internal development still provides a revealing example of these processes at work. Montrealers familiar with ex-MCMer Nick Auf der Maur's ongoing self-justificatory 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 benefitted had Raboy focused exclusively on this period, reduced discussion of the 1960s to a preface, and analyzed other movements of the 1970s in greater detail.

The book's only weaknesses are those of omission, and as a regrettably brief account of an eventful period it will probably prove of even greater use to non- or English Quebecers in its translation than to its original francophone audience. Raboy himself may be said to exemplify two tendencies whose importance in shaping Montreal's rich political culture should not be overlooked. As a "freelance writer, journalist, broadcaster, and university lecturer" (the back cover) his work typifies the sorts of intersections between academic, journalistic and political activity 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 Quebec anglophones that theirs is not a univocal 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 in late 1984, was probably the largest radical newspaper in Quebec — only because its owners, depending on a sports section and lottery results to appeal to its public, gave a couple of politically-committed reporters an apparently free hand.)

My own, more limited contact with oppositional or alternative media in Quebec made me regret Raboy's skimming over the decline of Leninist politics in the late 1970s, and his acknowledged omission of discussions of specifically counter-cultural activity. When I moved to Montreal, in 1978, far-left groups like *En Lutte* or the Communist League were the loudest and most visible, to an extent that their rapid disappearance was all the more remarkable. What emerged in subsequent years was the role of a feminist critique in the dissolution of these groups, as stories of sexual harassment, Stalinist guru-ism and gender-based divisions of labour finally broke ground. Raboy's book is not intended as a history of radical politics in this period, but a feminist analysis of the practices which he studied, or which overlapped these, is called for.

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