

added to all these — which, for want of a better expression I call: having regions in common.

### Cultural regions

Let me clarify that. The importance of regional diversity to the nation goes far beyond being a nice blend of ingredients. On the contrary, it is precisely to the degree that it is not blended that the region gives strength to the nation. It is the special characteristics of each region which can enrich all the rest. Canada is only just beginning to define its cultural regions — just beginning to express them and to become fully acquainted with them. The individualistic nature of Newfoundland is as indispensable to the concept of Canada as are the tradition and dignity of Quebec City. Whether it's Happy Valley or Abitibi, Victoria or Thunder Bay — or Toronto, for that matter, which is also a kind of region of its own — the richness of this diversity enriches us all.

In this, Canada is not alone. Every country treasures its regional uniqueness as a component part of the whole nation. All of France has the Marseille of Pagnol and Fernandel, all of the United States possesses Dixie and all of Italy has Neapolitan street songs. And in that way a sense of belonging develops. The individual in the region feels a sense of belonging to the whole and the country in turn belongs to all.

In this sense the region feeds the nation and the nation feeds the region. Thus the multiple diversity of the nation's regions do not, in the final analysis, divide it, but unite it, because they are integral parts of the whole....

It is from the intercourse between these two sources — regional and national — that national culture and national art are produced. I mention culture and art as separate entities because, as you know perfectly well, they are not synonyms. Roughly speaking culture represents certain aspects of society, of social organization. Art represents the individual — the individual as artist, the individual as audience-member.

### Art defines man

You can be sure, however, that I am not even going to attempt a definition of art. Too many have tried and failed. But I must confess that I was deeply moved by the statement made some time ago by an archaeologist on the most recent finding of cave drawings, which dated man's artistic accomplishments back several hundred thousand years earlier than had been previously estimated. He observed: "Evidently art is not characteristic of civilization; art is characteristic of man."

One can almost say, since art is characteristic of man, that art defines man — that man is an art-making creature. One can be even more specific and say that art not only tells us who we are, but also where we are. Michel Tremblay's *Marie-Lou*\* places the viewer as firmly in Montreal as the sight of St. Basil's cathedral places the viewer in Moscow.

In that sense, art is its own best self-defence against foreign cultural encroachment — no matter how powerful and all-pervasive the neighbour. One has only to look at the histories of the Czechs, the Hungarians or other art-cultures of the former Austrian Empire, or at the neighbours of Russia — such as Poland and Finland — to see how a

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\* *A toi pour toujours Marie-Lou*, a play.