

Painchaud replies...

Sir,

Officially, *International Perspectives* is a journal of "opinion". It was with this in mind that I wrote my article on cultural diplomacy that appeared in the May/June 1977 issue and has drawn comments from certain readers. I had no intention of presenting a complete, scientific analysis of the subject. To do this, the journal would have had to be of a different nature, and, in particular, I should have needed more space to discuss the wide variety of problems involved. I chose, therefore, to take a controversial approach to the subject, and my clearly-stated purpose was to provoke discussion, which is the first stage in any truly relevant scientific research activity.

The use that Canada intends to make of culture in its external relations is based primarily on unspoken principles, which should — I still believe — be reconsidered. Furthermore, this discussion is not unrelated to another debate on culture that is beginning to develop within Canada and finds expression in the bizarre statements made by certain ministers regarding the role of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It is obvious that, henceforth, culture will be a major political theme, and I feel that an examination of culture in terms of the ideological viewpoints it conveys is not without its merits.

Furthermore, to judge from their reactions, the opinions of some of your readers reflect these viewpoints. I cannot blame them for this, even though they are blithely doing themselves what they seem to be criticizing me for. Their reaction proves very simply that, before embarking on any scientific analysis, the debate on culture first calls certain basic options into question. I wanted to bring these options out into the open, as it were, and submit them for general discussion.

Having said this, I should like to point out that I was not specifically alluding to any of the articles by Department of External Affairs officials published in the preceding issue of the journal and, if I was critical of certain aspects of Government activity in the cultural field, my intention was not to condemn all our cultural-diplomacy programs. However, I did feel that these officials had had the opportunity to present an adequate defence of their views and that I was, therefore, free to draw attention to other aspects of the problem.

Moreover, I find it rather strange that, in a single issue, *International Perspectives* published three articles on Canadian cultural relations by Department of External Affairs officials that expressed the Government's official views, although the views expressed were supposed to be those of the authors. These articles were also incorporated in a booklet and distributed by the Department. At no time was it thought advisable to set them in a broader context, where they could have been compared with points of view other than those of the Department.* In fact, what emerged was nothing more than a defence of official policies. This, I believe, is an excellent example of a subtle but very real form of Government propaganda, which is difficult to attack because it appears to be carried out with the best intentions in the world.

It is precisely this kind of propaganda that can be used in cultural diplomacy.

Paul Painchaud
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* *Editor's note:* It was precisely because they thought it "advisable" to set these articles "in a broader context, where they could be compared with points of view other than those of the Department" that the Editors invited Professor Painchaud to make his contribution to the May/June issue.