

In 1979, the Task Force on Canadian Unity offered two separate definitions of culture:

*In day-to-day usage, culture is often considered to be the intellectual and artistic aspect of life in a community or society*

...and a broader meaning related to the character of a whole community:

*In this context, culture may be defined as the sum of the characteristics of a community acquired through education, training and social experience. It includes knowledge in all fields, language, traditions and values. It adds up to a collective way of thinking, feeling and doing, a collective way of being. The Task Force on Canadian Unity, Ottawa, 1979, p. 4, *Coming to Terms: The Words of the Debate*.*

One witness quoted another definition of culture from the works of the late Northrop Frye:

*First, there is culture as a lifestyle, shown by the way a society eats, drinks, clothes itself, and carries on its normal social rituals. ...Second, there is culture as a shared heritage of historical memories and customs, carried out mainly through a common language. Third, there is culture in the shape of what is genuinely created in its society; its literature, music, architecture, science, scholarship and applied arts. — Northrop Frye, quoted by Shirley Thomson, Director, National Gallery of Canada (Issue 5:7).*

It is important to note the reference to a common language in this definition, a reference which touches on Canada's distinctive policy of two official languages. There can be no doubt that our linguistic duality makes national cultural development in Canada more complex, but it also makes it more challenging and enriching. The distinction which our two official languages bring to our nation will always be part of the discussion of culture and the Constitution. They will, therefore, always require our most sensitive consideration. It is in a spirit of respect, tolerance and mutual understanding that Canadians will resolve and reconcile their differences, and enhance the building of their nation.

Another way of looking at culture is to make the distinction between *traditional culture*, and *popular culture*. As one witness put it:

*...popular culture is what is binding people together within national boundaries. The older forms of academic culture tend to reinforce the traditions and histories, but popular culture is that unifying force. — George MacDonald, Director, Canadian Museum of Civilization (Issue 7:14).*

Yet another way of looking at culture is through the cultural policy traditions of both our French-speaking and English-speaking ancestors. It is held that in the French tradition, support for art and culture was considered to be a legitimate role for the state, whereas this view was not so prevalent in the English tradition. Yet, in Canada it is the federal government (patterned to a large extent on the English parliamentary tradition) that is credited with setting the stage for cultural support.