



What Use is Canadian Culture?

Tom Wayman

Whenever free trade with the U.S. is denounced, or when the arts in Canada face cutbacks in government funding, the threat to Canadian culture is raised as an issue. In these debates the *value* of Canadian culture is often accepted as a given, or is touched on only briefly. But the question of how useful our culture is to our society has never seemed that simple to me. I find the commonly-given explanations as to why Canadian culture has worth are unconvincing at best and transparently false at worst. Yet I believe Canadian culture does have merit. Determining what is valuable in our culture is a tricky matter, however, as I hope to show in what follows.

Before I continue, though, let me be more precise about what I mean by "culture." A review article by Ian McKay in Memorial University's *Labour/Le Travailleur* a number of years ago (8/9 [1981-82]) pointed out there are nearly 300 definitions for the word in current use (for instance, "logging camp culture," "women's culture," etc.). I intend to refer here to a non-anthropological sense of the word. By "Canadian culture" I mean those artifacts produced by Canadians that are commonly referred to as part of the fine arts, performing arts, literary arts, etc.

To begin to assessing the worth of Canadian culture, I have to note English-speaking Canada's history as a cultural colony first of England and then the U.S.A. This has resulted in many of us being affected by culture in bizarre ways. I was giving a talk in 1987 to a class at Vancouver Technical Secondary School. The teacher of this English class had chosen, despite

the approved curriculum, to present her students with a whole term of contemporary poetry about Vancouver. I told the class how lucky they were to have this still-rare opportunity. When I was growing up in B.C. in the 1950s and 1960s, the culture I was aware of was entirely produced by and about people who lived elsewhere—either geographically or in time. Thus, for example, we learned poetry was written by dead Englishmen. And as for the culture we were exposed to outside of school, the idea of a rock n' roll star being based in Vancouver was unthinkable.

I described for the class my own experience of driving from Vancouver to California for the first time in 1966, and how when I initially drove into Los Angeles I felt that I was at last present in a real place. Of course I knew Vancouver was real. But I was tremendously excited to be among the place-names that I had so often heard mentioned in books and songs, or seen in movies. To be heading at high speed down the freeway, past the signs for *Hollywood Boulevard, La Cienega Boulevard, Sunset Boulevard*, was for me to have finally arrived on the planet Earth.

And I did not gain much sense of perspective, I informed the class, until a couple of years later when I took a job in northern Colorado as a university instructor. The town where I taught, Fort Collins, is close to Laramie, Wyoming. Since Laramie is the setting for, or referred to in, a number of Western stories, movies, cowboy ballads and so on, I was anxious to see the place. Yet when I finally visited, I was shocked to discover that it appeared to be a small town, not

much bigger than, say, Squamish, at the head of Howe Sound north of Vancouver. I left Laramie thinking hard about why *Squamish* wasn't famed in song and story. Surely fascinating events had happened to the people who had settled and worked in and around that town. And even if not, why couldn't Squamish be a locale for fictional occurrences, just as Laramie was, given that the towns were of similar size? I also pondered what a difference it must be to grow up in or near places that are considered worth celebrating in the culture around you.

"Culturally, things are somewhat better for you," I told the class. "After all, Canadian literature is now taught in our colleges. And here and there in certain high schools like this, you students are shown writing about your own city and your own era, as we never were."

"Of course, there's still an enormous distance to go," I continued. "For example, you'll see lots of movies about teenagers attending high schools. But," I intoned, "these films won't be based on what it's like to go to *this* school. You'll see movies about Hollywood High, but nobody is making a movie about Van Tech Secondary."

At this, the class broke into loud laughter. I stared at them, bewildered, until the teacher came to my rescue. A U.S. film crew had recently spent some days at Van Tech filming a movie, she explained. But, like many of the movies made in the last few years in B.C., the locale was supposed to be the U.S. In fact, the setting for the film shot in the halls and classrooms of Van Tech was supposed to be...Hollywood High.

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These students were aware that part of their own reality was about to be presented to them transformed into somebody else's. And yet they also had a teacher willing to show them that their own streets and mountains, and the experiences of their parents and fellow citizens, could also be the subject of culture (in the poems they were considering this term). Unlike my introduction to culture, these students were at least conscious that different possibilities for culture exist.

But if we start to consider in more detail that cultural possibility called "Canadian culture," to better understand what value it might have, then the first problem surely is: *which* Canadians are we talking about? What is the range of experiences and ideas currently included in Canadian cultural artifacts? *Whose* Canada do we mean when we speak of "Canadian culture?"

We can see this problem illustrated by a trip, say, to the B.C. Provincial Museum. Visitors are shown, among other exhibits, the interior of a "typical Victorian-era house." But this is false. On display is the interior of a home belonging to people of a certain social class—in this case, a fairly well-to-do family. We are not shown the interior of a "Victorian-era house" belonging to, for instance, a mine employee or a millworker. Then, as now, there was not one British Columbia, but many existing simultaneously. If we are to assess the worth of Canadian culture, we had better start by being clear about the particular Canada a given cultural artifact speaks about or to.

I've noticed cultural producers or commentators sometimes attempt to avoid this task by explicitly or implicitly denying that economic divisions between Canadians exist. Or, if these divisions are observed, their cultural significance is denied. A fascinating attempt to simultaneously recognize these economic differences, while downplaying their significance, was made by Petro-Canada in their television ads promoting the oil company's sponsorship of the 1988 Winter Olympics torch relay. In the ad, the inhabitants of a small town are shown getting ready to watch the relay runners carry the torch through their community. We see a well-dressed businessman shutting up his shop, and we also see a welder turn off his torch and push his goggles up onto his forehead, in preparation to leave to witness this momentous event.

Seconds later we observe these representatives of the two major economic divisions of Canadian society, employers and employees, stand side-by-side in a crowd watching with evident pride and joy the Olympic torch being carried past. The welder turns to the businessman and give him a mild, comradely punch on the shoulder, as evidence that the emotions surrounding this event have dissolved class distinctions and, by gosh, we Canadians are all in this together. The businessman wipes away a tiny tear from his eye. This is of course crude propaganda, but it arises out of an actual wish people have for

unity, for a feeling of community. That wish may not be the motivation that inspires museum directors, cultural commentators and corporations to blur the distinctions between the lives of the majority of Canadians and the lives of the minority who have economic control over us. But it is certainly that wish that causes many Canadians to uncritically accept this view of their own society and culture.

In fact, not even colossally expensive public spectacles like Calgary's 1988 Winter Olympics or Vancouver's Expo 86 can abolish the differences in economic interest between those who are employed for a living and those who employ others for a living. Large taxpayer-funded spectacles are inevitably the occasion for corporate advertisers and public relations experts to generate a great wave of sentimentality about a region or the nation in the hope of motivating sales of various products. But the reality remains that no businessperson would reverse a decision to fire somebody on the grounds that the person affected is an Olympic supporter, or because the man or woman to be fired is a fellow *Albertan* or *Canadian*. Nor would any employer refrain from automating or moving operations to a different part of the world in search of cheaper labour costs on the grounds of patriotism.

Corporations like Petro-Canada may call themselves "proudly Canadian." But the same federal government that owns both Petro-Canada and Canada Post did not hesitate for an instant to employ scabs to attempt to break the strikes by Canadian postal workers in the summer of 1987. The issue at stake, as in most strikes, was the employer's wish to save money. On the other side of the dispute was employee resistance to measures that would worsen working conditions and lower their standard of living. The consequence of a victory for the employer's demands would be to depress the quality of life for one group of Canadians. This is surely a strange technique for demonstrating pride in one's country.

Always, then, we have to watch closely when people begin to invoke "Canada" to justify culture—or any other activity or cause. Who represents this "Canada" we're asked to identify with? And while sorting this out, we have to be clear about a second matter: our own idea of what a *country* is. In other words, what is Canada *for*? Does it primarily exist to provide a place where men and women who own enterprises can maximize profits? Or is it intended to be a sort of co-operative venture, whereby all those who live here work jointly to ensure the maximum happiness for each other? When the federal government decides to spend \$8 billion to obtain a nuclear submarine fleet rather than, say, to provide food for the users of Food Banks in the country's cities and towns, the government acts on a specific belief in the purpose of Canada.

Or, is the nation's aim is to provide a free and democratic environment in which the people who live here can make their own decisions and solve

their own problems? If so, how far should this democracy extend? Within the past 75 years we have seen political democracy spread to women and Orientals—two groups formerly denied the vote. But have we now attained a fully democratic society? Is it right that, as at present, democracy ceases for the majority of us the moment we enter the office door or the factory gate? If we're adult enough to decide the affairs of state in national elections, are we not adult enough to democratically control the enterprises where we work? How democratic is a situation where a handful of non-elected Canadians have enormous economic and social power over the rest of us during our hours each day at the job?

For me, thinking about the value of Canadian culture includes being definite about what group of Canadians are referred to, and whose vision of the country's purpose is being openly or indirectly endorsed. Yet the impassioned spokespersons on behalf of Canadian culture seldom stipulate which Canadians and what concept of Canada they mean. Instead, I hear three major arguments repeated when these spokespersons do try to indicate *why* Canadian culture might be worth protecting.

One explanation they give for culture's importance in Canadian society is that culture, especially high culture, raises us out of the humdrum of daily life, *inspires* us, gives us new vision. "Culture lifts us out of ourselves," as one speaker put it at an anti-cutback rally I attended in Edmonton some years ago.

However, the capacity to lift us out of ourselves is the characteristic of a narcotic. Any narcotic—whether alcohol or some other recreational drug—gives us the illusion of escape from the everyday, fills us with dreams of other possibilities for our lives, and then cruelly returns us to the same daily existence from which we sought to remove ourselves. Far from being a means of escape from our present situation, a narcotic reinforces present realities by keeping us occupied with illusions, instead of us letting us gain knowledge or skills to solve our personal and social problems. Any narcotic, such as going to cultural events, is potentially addictive precisely because it does *not* lead to changes in our daily life. The only way we can feel that good again is to have another hit, to take another trip into a beautiful never-never land.

Mainstream ballet, for example, seems to me to teach that the essential truths of this world are to be found in fantasy, far away from the joys and difficulties of everyday existence. Like much of mainstream culture, ballet's celebrations of artificial and impossible characters and situations appears to offer me escape from the sources of my daily unhappinesses and problems. As we've seen, though, such escape is bogus, since nothing is altered in my daily life by this cultural product. I gain neither understanding about the causes of my difficulties nor ideas about overcoming injustices inflicted on myself or others. At the end of





the performance I am returned to a world that is exactly as I left it. I may have gained a memory of some delightful moments, but I also know what I must purchase to experience those moments again.

And as for the Romantic concept that exposure to high culture will influence people's day-to-day behaviour for the better, World War II appears to have put an end to that notion. The image of Germany, once considered the most cultured nation in Europe, adopting Nazism as a means out of its difficulties demonstrates conclusively mainstream culture's narcotic, rather than rehabilitative, function. Consider the symphony orchestras the Germans organized from concentration camp inmates for the enjoyment of the camps' guards. How responsive to human feelings did experiencing this wonderful music make the guards?

A second attempt to explain the usefulness of Canadian culture I hear from time to time is that Canadian culture defines who we are. Without specifying the "we" here, this argument seems to me absurd. I certainly don't feel defined by Karen Kain's dancing, or Margaret Atwood's new nov-

Since the governing influence on our lives is the job we do (or our lack of employment), any cultural artifact intending to articulate our personal and social existences would have to take into account what happens while we are at work and the ways our employment affects our time off the job.

el, or Bryan Adams' new record, or some video artist showing her or his work to a group of fellow artists at a state-supported gallery. I personally don't know anybody who does feel their lives defined by such activity.



And in British Columbia, at least, the gap in attitudes between various sectors of the population has become so pronounced that it would be difficult to imagine any encompassing "British Columbian"

point of view that a cultural artifact could define. The B.C. government, duly elected by a slim majority, reduced already-inadequate welfare payments to offset its growing deficit. Funds then were allotted to provide \$5,000 worth of fireworks every night for the six months of Expo 86. The gulf in values is enormous between those British Columbians who believe a community has a duty to help its members who require assistance, and those British Columbians who believe the community's first duty is to use its financial resources to attract tourists (i.e., customers with money from elsewhere). I've yet to see cultural artifacts that incorporate both sets of values, to the satisfaction of those who hold these divergent views. Who, then, is the "we" this culture supposedly defines?

The third defense of the worth of Canadian culture that gets articulated is a monetary one. In this argument, culture has value and should be supported because government subsidies to the arts generate profits for business. Advocates of this line of reasoning have the figures to show that each symphony ticket sold results in extra consumer spending on restaurant meals, taxis, baby-sitters, drinks after the concert, and so on. Similarly, the Canada Council program of support for public readings by Canadian authors is regarded as a subsidy of the airlines, plus a boost in book sales to the benefit of printers, paper-makers and book stores.

Where this argument seems faulty to me is that it tries to create the impression that people are attracted to become artists in order to benefit business. I don't believe this is true. People I know who have become writers, painters, musicians, etc., didn't do so out of a philanthropic wish to aid the downtrodden business community. They became involved in producing cultural artifacts because they want to express some truth as they see it, or because they enjoy play with words or sounds or forms or colours, or because they find being involved with the arts enables them to feel and think and observe life in new and exciting ways. Their obsession with whatever cultural form or forms they adopt amounts to a rejection of the concept so beloved of business that the only means to measure value on this planet is the dollar.

In my experience, the business community senses this fundamental clash of values between the cultural world and themselves. If the dollar is *not* the paramount means of assessing worth in our society, then somebody who has adopted this philosophy has made a hideous error in her or his life. Overall, that's one main message of culture. So I don't find it surprising I've never seen anyone opposed to an appreciation of the arts who was won over on the grounds that culture is good for some businesses.

In contrast to the three standard justifications of the usefulness of Canadian culture, I have a different reason for regarding Canadian culture as important. I believe culture that is about a clearly defined group of Canadians, that celebrates and explores their lives, can help provide these people with a sense of self-confidence. Such cultural artifacts suggest to these women and men that their lives are worthy of being the subject of art, and thus that what happens to them is significant.

On the other hand, a lack of this self-confidence tangibly harms these people, individually and as a group, and leads themselves and the rest of the human family to overlook their achievements and potential.

The group of people I feel should be the central focus of Canadian culture is the majority of those who inhabit our portion of the globe--those of us who are employed for a living. Since the governing influence on our lives is the job we

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do (or our lack of employment), any cultural artifact intending to articulate our personal and social existences would have to take into account what happens while we are at work and the ways our employment affects our time off the job. Further, since many aspects and most nuances of how our work shapes us are known only to an *insider* to our situation, it is up to ourselves to create the culture that reflects and illuminates our lives.

At present, as I have written about at length elsewhere, a strict taboo surrounds an accurate portrayal of work in Canadian culture. With few exceptions, an insider's look at what it is like to go to work each day in contemporary society is missing. And this taboo hurts people. For example, because daily work is not considered culturally important, its history, present form and possible futures are largely ignored in school curriculums. As a result, students frequently embark on years of training for a trade or profession with only the haziest or glossiest notion of what a job is like and of how this employment affects the human beings who perform it. The absence in our culture of any accurate depiction of our work also leads to a profound sense of isolation. We are aware we have certain problems at the job, or problems that arise away from work because of our employment. But perhaps we are the only ones who feel this way? Left unsure and isolated, we are less likely to search for a collective answer to our difficulties, a collective means to improve our lives.

A further negative consequence of the taboo is a mystification of how products and services come to exist. One consequence of this mystification is that when we don't know much about each other's jobs, don't know much about how the goods and services we need or want are created, it becomes easier to believe negative reports about people who in reality are very much like ourselves. That is, we are willing to accept the received idea that postal workers are lazy, people on strike are greedy, etc. Yet the more we accurately understand about each other's working lives, the more readily we can feel a kinship with them, and can practice solidarity with them when they run into difficulties.

All of this begins to change if our cultural world recognizes the importance of the work we do: how that work determines our standard of living and the amount of time and energy we have off the job, plus the ways our employment influences our beliefs, friendships, where we live and much more. As *Canadian* employees, we are doubly disadvantaged when the cultural artifacts around us present neither our working lives nor our geographic and historical experiences. And since an accurate consideration of the working lives of women and of people of colour also has been largely absent from mainstream culture, these individuals face a triple and/or quadruple disadvantage in looking to Canadian culture as a source of self-esteem.

To me, then, culture has value when it breaks the taboo and gives a majority of Canadians self-confidence. And I don't say this just because I think self-confidence is a nice quality for people to have. I believe self-confidence is the root of democracy. If I don't consider myself important, why would I think I have the right to participate in determining what happens to me and to my community? Self-confidence on the part of the majority is *necessary* for the maintenance and extension of democracy. Since I consider democracy to be the form of social organization that offers the best chance for creating a fair, equitable and happy society, I regard a culture that promotes self-confidence as a *requirement* for the preservation and enhancement of human dignity.

A culture that diminishes or retards people's self-confidence, either through what it proposes or omits, I believe is a threat to democracy. When what we do and who we are is not considered culturally significant, when our contribution to society is hidden behind "big names" (for example, when a corporate executive is said to "make" the product our labour and imagination help create, or an architect is described as having "built" the building we worked on), then the worth of our lives is diminished compared to the value of a comparatively few other people. It is only a step from this to thinking that a "name" person is more important than we are, and hence that his or her thoughts, activities, opinions, etc. are more worthy and should have more weight than our own. This last idea, of course, is counter to the very basis of democracy.

And if we don't consider our lives important, then it is unlikely we will do much to change our lives for the better. Most movements in history that lead to a deepening and broadening of democracy begin with a belief among the activists that they *deserve* the changes they are battling for. In short, people involved with achieving social change have self-confidence. The barons who confronted King John to obtain the Magna Carta, no less than the men and women who fought for and won the eight-hour day, no less than the women who successfully struggled for the right to vote all had the self-confidence that led them to demand changes that were considered radical, unnatural, impossible to the established wisdom of their day. If Canadian employees are to achieve an extension of democracy to that part

of our lives where we don't yet have the right to vote—the workplace—we will need the self-confidence that we *deserve* democracy in every aspect of our social existence. Similarly, if Canada is to survive as a nation, Canadians will need the self-confidence that they *deserve* to be a separate country.

I look to Canadian culture to give us this self-confidence, but in a positive, enabling way. This means the self-confidence as provided by culture must not shade over into arrogance, into myths of unity or power that are harmful to ourselves or others in the long run. We have the U.S. example of the myth of the cowboy. This myth leads to the mentality of the man with the gun who is a law unto himself. As celebrated in culture, the cowboy myth can pave the way for U.S. armed intervention in Third World struggles. This myth, incidentally, also obscures the *reality* of the cowboy as an underpaid agricultural labourer, whose protests against living and working conditions have included from time to time strikes and efforts to organize unions.

Even with all these qualifiers I see as necessary for Canadian culture to be of value, I remain convinced that the cultural artifacts produced by Canadians can rise to the challenge. I am heartened by the appearance here of the new poetry, fiction and drama written by people about their own daily work—however overwhelmed this material still is by the bulk of our cultural products. Because all Canadians share the strange experience of being culturally invisible in their own land, Canadian artists have the ideal background to understand the importance of articulating the lives of the previously hidden majority. I do not think it is an accident that the new imaginative writing about work appears more often in anthologies of contemporary literature by Canadians—and by U.S. women and people of colour—than it does in anthologies of writing by mainstream (i.e., mostly white and male) U.S. authors.

I am therefore optimistic that Canadian culture will assist the majority of Canadians to find the self-confidence we require. I am aware, however, that the success of this project must involve a serious change in the artistic and academic status quo, since up to the present an accurate depiction of the lives of the majority of us has not been the goal of Canada's artistic or academic taste-makers—mainstream or avant-garde. Indeed, over the long haul the resistance of these authorities to admit the concerns of most Canadians into our artistic or academic agenda may pose a larger threat to the development of Canadian culture than either free trade or cut-backs in state sponsorship of the arts.

Tom Wayman is a poet and educator living in Vancouver. The poems that accompany this article will appear in his new collection, *In a Small House on the Outskirts of Heaven*, due out later this year.



MARSHALL-WELLS ILLUMINATION

for Jim Daniels

One bright morning, I was sent
to the wholesale cash-and-carry hardware,
glad to be out of the pounding and saws
of the jobsite, to drive the city streets
and walk into the wooden-floored building.

At the counter, the lone clerk
I had spoken with several times before
—an old man, surely past retirement—
fussed at his order books, precise
as his usual shirt and tie
concerning *common or finishing*,
galvanized or not,
lengths and amounts needed.
The stock numbers were passed
to somebody else for fulfillment
and I stood waiting, in my workclothes and boots.
Motes of dust
rose and drifted in the sunlight
that leaned in from windows down the long room
where a dozen other people toiled at desks.
Then a man entered
from outside, older than me,
younger than the clerk, dressed in coveralls
and leather carpenter's apron.
He pulled a list from a pocket
and stepped aside, as the counter clerk
bent once more to flip the pages of the catalogs
to set the number of each item
on the proper form.

And the man in coveralls,
perhaps for pleasure at the new day,
suddenly shifted his heavy boots back and forth
in a clumsy part of a dance
and stopped, grinning.

The motion caught the clerk's eye, and he frowned.
But the man
stomped his boots
in another quick pattern. He paused
under the clerk's dour gaze,
then resumed: the thick soles toeing the planks
and tipping back on heels,
nails falling from the pouches of his apron
as his arms flew out for balance. The man,
laughing, looked over at me for approval.
And the clerk also faced in my direction
shaking his head to invite me to mock
the ridiculous swaying.

But at this moment

I knew
neither gravity nor
centrifugal force
spins the Earth through space.
Our planet revolves
under the dancing feet of this man
and those like him: through their efforts
the immense bulk of our home
is moved. And I understood
as the boots crashed down, this joy
finds even in the dreadful agreements we labour in
what we have been given
under our invincible shoes.

Yet the three of us

hung suspended
in the amber light:
Grandfather Paper and Order,
Father Happiness and Measuring Tape
and myself. The rest of the office watched us
from their file drawers and typewriters
as I saw the planet lurch forward
with each kick of these feet
and the Earth also pushed on
by the weight of an invoice
dropped from an aged hand, saw Father and
Grandfather
both turned to ask me to choose
—one motionless, the other beginning to slow:

what could I do
but dance?

THE WRECKERS

One morning, along the lake road
it was as though vandals had passed by in the dark
and torn each mailbox from its post
at the top of the gravel driveways
and then hammered the metal containers
flat on the ground.
Where the mail receptacles could not be ripped
away from their supports
the entire structure had been pulled over
before the metal was dented in.
And when we, one by one, showed up
at the village post office to request them to
hold our mail while we repaired the damage,
we found the small building gutted by fire:
the blackened boards still steaming
in the noon light.

We telephoned the police
to report our loss and to inquire
who could have done these things
and why. But the constable at the other end
sounded uneasy. *It was authorized*,
he said. Later we learned
this is what he told everybody,
yet at the time we were each staggered
by his statement. Disbelieving,
we attempted to obtain more details from him,
beginning to argue. *That is all I can tell you*,
he said curtly. *Any other information
will have to come from
your elected representative.*

But they, too,
were little help. Those men and women we voted for
who belong to the groups out of office
blame the ruling party for what happened, promising
if we change who has the majority
there is a good chance matters will improve
—as long as what we want is
fiscally responsible.
The women and men in power
seemed sympathetic at first,
blaming these unfortunate events on decisions by
past office management
they vowed to look into
in the near future. But when we continued
to ask for assistance
these representatives

became sterner, said our attitude
is monetarily unwise. They announced to the media
country highways are more environmentally appealing
without the clutter of individual mailboxes
and hence their removal will increase tourism,
benefiting the entire community.
They proclaimed the village building
was not burned down
but spontaneously aged and decayed overnight.
They added that the wisdom
of the post office executives they appointed
will be evident in five or ten years
provided the new policies are given an opportunity to
work,
and the resultant improved cash flow
will demonstrate to every Canadian
that those who opposed these measure
are liars.

Yet as we listened to the speeches to reporters
and to the chambers and houses of legislation,
we noticed one noun
that flashes and sparkles
repeatedly among the statements and rebuttals,
two syllables
rolled lovingly around these tongues,
a word uttered with awe,
the way orators had once pronounced
God or the people. That cherished word
is *money*.
More significant than our needs
or wishes, this substance is invoked
to explain and defend
all these legislators
do. By how they speak the word,
it is obvious dollars are what they represent
in their assemblies: cash, not ourselves,
has elected them
to govern on behalf of cash;
they are the honorable members
from Money.

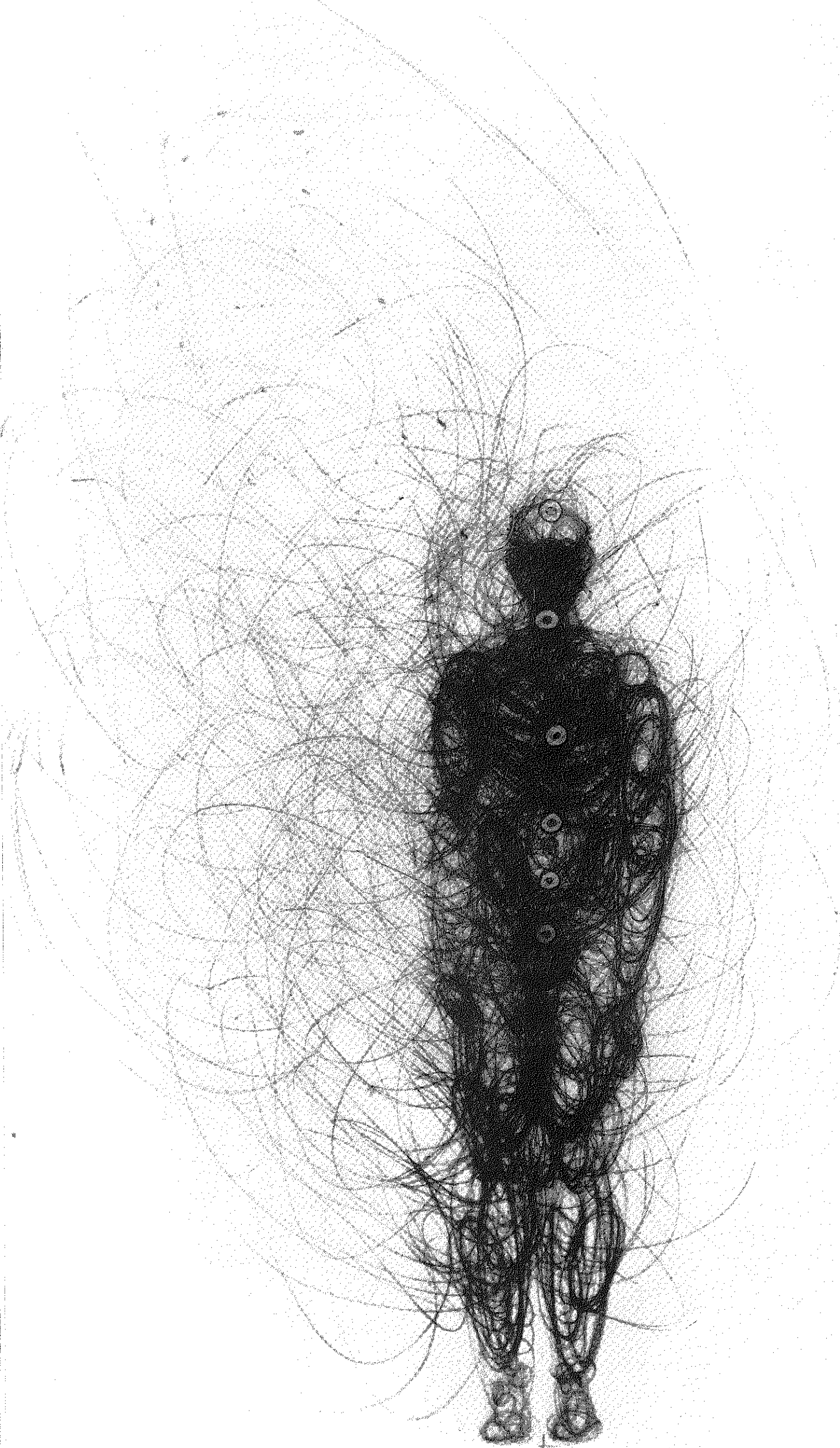
No wonder when we arrive before them
with our delegations and petitions
they appear resentful
and confused: we don't look like money,
we don't behave like money.
Why shouldn't they be anxious
to brush us aside
to meet with the real folks from home:
dollars?

Thus as we gather
to discuss among ourselves and create
from our lives—on the ruins
other men and women have caused—
different values,

by such acts we sustain
a fragile concept
older than the first settlement
at the north end of this valley,
a belief that endures through poverty and better years.
Each time we together refuse
what diminishes us,
what those who rule us have ordered us to accept,
it is not only rural dignity we
struggle to give birth to
and help grow,
but
human dignity.

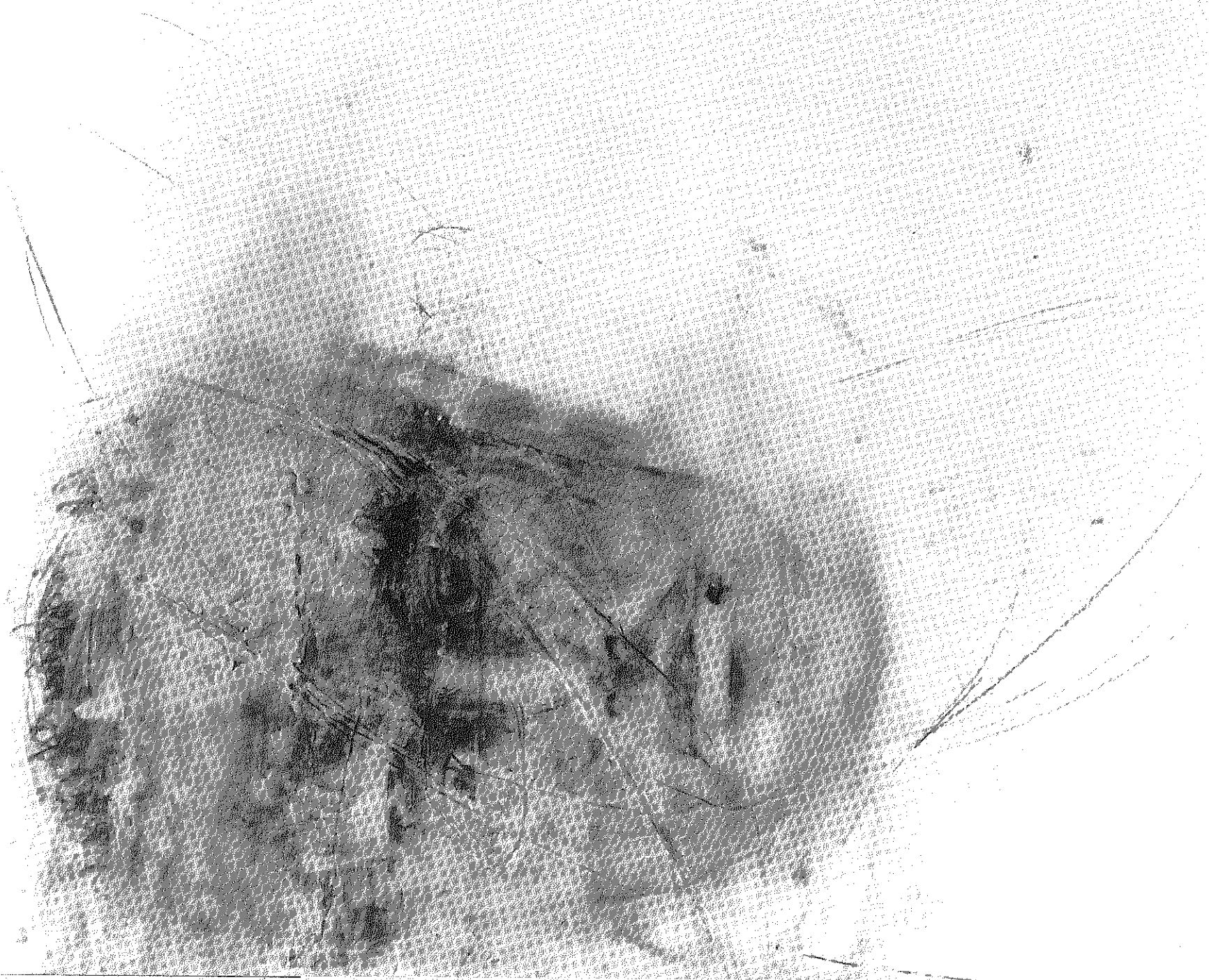
his body stephen andrews





28
31 11

here today, then poof, you're gone



they kept his head for an oracle so that when the time came the head might whisper its secrets

E
Atten
in V

Nothing is irre
defined and ca
unclear and ca

