Among the stars

generated by Hollywood over the past 50 years are a few whose names and faces have become universal signifiers: rather than simply referring to a particular film genre or style of acting, they have come to connote a way of being in the world, or a 'world' itself. James Dean can be thought of in this way: I would argue that the same is true of Bogart; in a more complex fashion. As an image, Bogart represents not only a way of being in a world now gone, but also a profound sense of loss in our own era. It is in this light that I would like to examine him: not the gangster Bogey, or the adventurer of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, but that more general image which encompasses and transcends these particular figures.

This image is, perhaps, best represented by the ubiquitous wall posters which signpost, in the restaurants, offices and apartments of the land, a cult of remembrance which is, or was, more than an appreciation of talent or technique; more than a cataloguing of 'great films' and certainly more than the collection of movie trivia. Rather, this is a remembrance focused on images which are a mixture of movie and life. The parting on the airfield; the piano lounge sequence; Lauren, her baby, and Bogey the devoted husband and father; the valiant final fight against cancer—all these devolve into one image in a variety of incarnations: that craggy, unlovely and immensely melancholy face at once familiar and enigmatic, reassuring and saddening.

In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'[1], Walter Benjamin discussed a broad historical transformation both in the definition of and the relation to works of art as a result of technological developments that have made possible the mass reproduction of images. As John Berger has noted, this transformation made the 'original' both utterly meaningless and simultaneously the object of veneration (because of the economic role it plays in the constitution of an art market).

Benjamin refers to this shift from cult value to exhibition value as a transformation of parameters for judging and responding to works of art. Before the age of mechancial reproduction, the cult value of a work of art lay in its uniqueness and in the way in which it set up a relation to itself which absorbed those who came into contact with it. On the other hand, exhibition value is predicated on the removal of the reproduced (or reproducible) work of art from its context, its interpellation into a world of symbolic exchange as one image among others (a consequence of its reproducibility) and its consumption by a distracted audience which literally passes it by as it takes it in.

The photograph, as such, is infinitely reproducible. Yet, says Benjamin, in the earliest portrait photographs, the consequences of this reproducibility are both anticipated and not yet fully worked out: such photographs still bespeak the cult of loved ones lost, and this constitutes the air of melancholy and 'incomparable beauty' still to be discovered in them.

If, in the image of Bogart, we have something akin to a cult of remembrance (all the more poignant given the infinite reproducibility of its object)—a melancholic evocation of things forever past—then the question arises as to what has been lost. What has left its trace in this face, and how is it in any way still important to us?

Part of the answer might be found in the character of Philip Marlowe. Like Bogart's face, Chandler's detective is evocative of some quality larger than himself which he yet personifies, a personality, a time, a culture, a sense of the world. It has been argued (as in a recent CBC *Ideas* program on Chandler) that Marlowe symbolizes for the middle decades of this century a new kind of 'urban man' of a sort later developed (albeit more crudely) by Spillane and dozens of others. This is the cynical bachelor with many contacts and no ties, living in a dingy apartment (an important signifier of a certain lack to be filled or not filled in later life), the half-empty bottle of passably good scotch on the greasy table besides the week's worth of unopened mail his only companion: the man who is saved from despair by sporadic adventure, world weary at the age of 35, flitting from job to job, liaison to liaison, driven by an eternal restlessness best symbolized by his predatory way with women who both fascinate but must always faintly bore him. This is a man who would be in search of salvation if he believed in it, or even knew what it meant. In a sense, Bogey is this man, translated onto the screen: it is no accident that so many of us think Marlowe and see Bogart.

This kind of character would scoff at the possibility of salvation, but he is bedevilled nonetheless by a sense of loss translated into cynicism. Its polar opposite is the continual chance that a situation larger than himself —the love of a good woman, a call to protect someone in danger—will raise him out of himself and redeem him to live in the twilight of the American frontier myth as the good man, the provider and protector who was there all along but never thought to be worth invoking.

As we know, Bogey in real life was so redeemed, to fade away in his own golden twilight leaving an ever loyal wife and child to grieve him. In the modern age, the good man has no basis for existence: made more noble by his death, he is pure memory.

Thus, in the image of Bogart, we find entwined both his life and the roles he played. Together, they invoke more than a persona. They are, rather, a remembrance of times, and of a way of being in the world, forever past. But both the times and the nostalgia are complex. Bogart stood for something new—the rootless urban American male—and also for something lost—the male as anchor of a community, as provider, protector, as the 'good and steady man' rooted foursquare in the land, as the hero with no need to look a hero, as the man who was what he was, the man-in-himself. Further, insofar as Bogart symbolizes *both as one* he is at once the *last man* and the *first image*. This is the key to the melancholy of his gaze. He evokes for us the man who is no more, but *he does so as an image*. He is at one and the same time the cynical and immensely sad last man in a new world of images, and the melancholy image (for 'us') of an irretrievable past. Symbolically, he marks a turning point in American male culture: the death (marked by his own) of the 'good man' of the frontier rural community, but more importantly, the transformation of that figure into an image—a signifier to be bought and sold in the marketplace of symbols.

If Bogart's significance is as a sense of loss, what is the significance of his cult? It is, to begin with, a celebration of loss. But one might ask, insofar as the cult has itself become an industry (part of the larger industry of 'camp') in competition or collaboration with the Presley industry, the James Dean industry and others, whether the celebration has not doubled and thereby cancelled itself. In a world where any image is exchangeable with any other (all exchanges are possible; only some are 'bad deals'), have we lost our sense of loss?

One might explore this possibility by examining the present equivalent of the urban male played by Bogart at mid-century: that phenomenon Barbara Ehrenreich tagged in an article for the *New York Times Magazine* as the 'New Man'.[2] This man, too, is an apartment-dweller; he too is single, if not singular. But he no longer, apparently, hangs his hat in a dive marked by the absence of any good woman to turn it into his home and castle. The New Man feels none of this sense of loss. Instead, he decorates. He can grow plants. He knows art, and its investment value; good music, and what kind of system will make it fit the acoustical requirements of his residence. He has learned to cook and regards with disdain the man who still relies on—or worse boasts about—his one spaghetti recipe. He can colour-coordinate.

More importantly, this man feels no need to be saved, to protect or to provide. He has learned the discourse of equality as well as that of fashion: he is enlightened, sensitive and wears good clothes. He is the perfect companion for a night out to the right places. He works out, swims or plays tennis, pursues interests rather than hobbies and is implusive. He also works hard, not at a good job, but at a promising career. He has shed both the myth of the frontier male and the cynicism and despair which characterized the myth of Marlowe. The former he regards as tacky and the latter as camp. He perceives his loss as good: he wants no part of images of male dominance that are looked upon askance in the right circles, except perhaps insofar as they form a recurring theme in the wall decorations of the places in which the circles meet.

But all is not well with the New Man. Ehrenreich articulates a growing dissatisfaction with him and illustrates it with quotations:

Brian Clarke, 33, puts in 14-hour days as a network tv production assistant in New York, reads *Interior Design* magazine and *Playboy* ('for the fashions') and tells first-time dates: 'No commitments!'[3]

Stephen G. Dent, 29, spends 10 hours a day at a New York investment firm, half an hour exercising and five minutes arranging dates. 'Sensitivity is very important to being a man,' he says.[4]

As one might have expected, women resent being seen as entries in a schedule. But there is a more important issue. Ehrenreich raises the question whether the New Man has not leapfrogged the gains of the women's movement: having freed himself from family responsibilities and having invested that freedom with consumer goods, his thanks to women, whose critique of the family aided his escape, are summed up in the slogan, 'No commitments, please.'

The resentment evinced by the New Male takes a number of forms. One can see it, for example, in Deborah Laake's description of 'wormboys': males so afraid of commitment they hesitate to ask women out to dinner.[5] One can see it in popular literature on how to spot the wrong man: a recent article on 'creeps' in *Mademoiselle*[6] represents them as warm and open at first (contrary to a more traditional definition of the term), but unable to respond to the emotional demands of women. The flaws of the New Man have even been made the subject of a pop psychology industry, and have been given a term: the 'Peter Pan' syndrome.

In an interview for CBC *Ideas*, Ehrenreich made passing reference to this lack of commitment as involving an abhorrence of the possibility of being clung to and restricted by women: an abhorrence which involves a judgement about women which it is hard not to call misogynous. One might, in light of this, see a darker significance in the comments often made by such males about 'being burned'. This is not necessarily new. But what is notable here is the way in which the popular imagery of the New Male has apparently translated the love of a woman (or at least some of its corollaries) as perdition, rather than as salvation.

But while misogyny may be a characteristic of the 'New Male' ideology, it is not possible to make it out to be the latter's most important causal factor nor its only effect. There is more going on. Apparently, New Men, like single career women, do on occasion get lonely. This, in turn, has given rise to a new genre: round table interviews in the mass media with representative single men and women of the right age and class, voicing their frustrations at being unable, in the face of approaching age, to find a good man/good woman for something more than an opening night. One finds a new nostalgia for the settled relationship. If men have a horror of commitment, it appears that it is not universal. If they fear the emotional demands of women, it is apparently not all women that they are judging, but rather the ones they have met to date.

The amazing thing about these developments is the way in which both men and women, in looking for the 'right' opposite number, look right past each other. The focal point of their gaze may be characterized in terms of a longing for commitment, but it is aimed at a set of characteristics, and it operates by way of comparison.

These themes—singlehood, upward mobility, the problems of commitment—are obviously of significance to our culture. But the basis and nature of that significance needs to be examined more thoroughly. How many New Men (or New Women, for that matter) are there?

What proportion of the total population do they form? What is the wormboy population of New York City? Of Toronto? Ehrenreich herself has pointed out that the 'New Man' phenomenon is characteristic of only a tiny proportion of the North American population. Yet, numerically unrepresentative as he may be, the New Man is the darling of the advertising industry, especially that aspect of it devoted to fashion and status consumer durables. Even his dark side has been industrialized insofar as jerkness, wimpdom or worminess have become personal characteristics (somewhat like yellow teeth a generation ago) to be bought off by the right book, the right therapy or, barring that, the right disguises. The New Man is representative precisely insofar as *he is no population*. He is any of us any time we are addressed by and respond to any of his signifiers.

The New Man, then, is at least in part an image-commodity. Insofar as he is any one of us, we are bought out by the goods we purchase to furnish his lifestyle. The New Man shuns commitments because commodities do not form commitments; they are only exchanged in terms of relations external to themselves. Commodities feel neither melancholy nor a sense of loss. It is in such a world that Bogey becomes a poster, part of the decor.

Discontent with the New Man, then, will be subverted as long as it is allowed to be drawn into the commodity trap, thereby becoming little more than a critique of a bad product. What deserves attention instead is the way in which the commodification of men structures in a flight from commitment and an abhorrence of community. And the task is to address the possibility of forms of commitment and of community as imaginative and compelling as those aspects of commodity culture that momentarily but continually escape the dull repetition of fetishism. In this, Bogart is no longer of any help, if he ever was. The persona for which he was remembered was already insupportable: that is why, after his salvation, he would have had to die anyway. Remembrance indicates a loss: only imagination can address our lack.

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Notes

1. W. Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations* (ed. H. Arendt), Schocken, 1969, pp.217-251.
2. B. Ehrenreich, 'A Feminist View of the New Man', *New York Times Magazine*, May 20, 1984, p.36.
3. Ibid, p.38.
4. Ibid, p.41.
5. Ibid, p.48
6. *Mademoiselle*, November 1984, p.148.

The Economics of Toronto's Culture

by
Ioan Davies

Tom Hendry's

report on Toronto Culture (*Cultural Capital: The Care and Feeding of Toronto's Artistic Assets*, Toronto Arts Council, January 1985) is an important document, written at white-hot speed (ten months from being commissioned) and full of the correct position-statements against the present mania for hacking the arts down to Reaganite or Thatcherite size. It is also correct about the locus that we should adopt in confronting the cutbacks, the philistinism, the narrow ideological definitions of what is good for the people. Tom Hendry's locus is here; the city we inhabit.

We start, not with the terrorism of ideas, that the way to Nirvana is by bowing to the almighty American buck or the International Monetary Fund's definition of what we should do to keep their books straight, but with what we have been doing and what we need to do it better. And it is important that Tom Hendry is both an accountant and a playwright. He can both write plays and add (a rare combination in these puking times of the two new cultures where people write but can't calculate or calculate and wonder why they can't write). The report is therefore written with an honest anger against those who would be so stupid to think that writing or dancing or acting or making photography comes easily and that the 'industry' (in the jargon of Paul Audley) cannot just go on making big bucks, that the artists are there (somewhere? anywhere? nowhere?) because they have always been there.

It is sad that Hendry had to spend his time writing this report. He *should* be writing plays. But this is a time to do accounting because the cretins who have taken over our culture need an accountant to do the homework they never did. *Cultural Capital* is Tom's best play to date, much as Bert Brecht's appearance before the House Unamerican Activities committee was his best play. There is a moment when you stop the play and say 'there is a more important play'. Tom Hendry has done that with this report.

In a hushed theatre, there are arrayed the lost, forlorn roués from Adam Smith's faded script (alias Brian Mulroney, Marcel Masse, Barbara Amiel, Peter Worthington, with Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher just off-stage). On centre stage is Tom Hendry. 'You are here,' says the Crown Attorney, 'accused of saying that the artists of the city constitute the cultural capital of the city. Why aren't they making real money? They should be working on Bay Street, or helping to get Chrysler or AMC off the ground. Why should they be sitting around Queen Street West, eating donuts or renting gritty apartments (alias studios) on Sorauren Street? in old industrial backyards?' 'Because they are trying to make ends meet while the tourists come in to watch their exhibitions at A Space or see them act at Toronto Workshop Productions.' 'I must say that that is a reprehensible point of view,' says the CA. 'Have you never heard of Anne Murray, or William Shatner or Gordon Lightfoot?' The rest of the play you can imagine.

TABLE VII

Municipal Benefits Conferred on Toronto Arts and Cultural Organizations Other Than By Way of Cash Grants

	1981 City $	1981 Metro $	1982 City $	1982 Metro $
Tax Exemptions				
Roy Thomson Hall	22,336	26,221	315,523	370,397
Massey Hall	12,799	15,025	14,066	16,512
O'Keefe Centre	170,534	200,192	187,421	220,016
St. Lawrence Centre	114,493	134,405	125,831	147,715
Art Gallery of Ontario	166,151	183,308	171,613	201,459
Ontario College of Art	413	484	453	532
Royal Ontario Museum	182,592	214,347	200,673	235,573
Ontario Heritage Foundation	1,936	2,273	2,128	2,498
Eaton Auditorium	6,095	7,155	6,699	7,864
National Ballet School	26,459	31,060	34,442	40,432
Alumnae Theatre	3,526	4,139	3,875	4,548
TOTAL	697,334	818,609	1,062,724	1,247,546
Rent Grants:				
Alumnae Theatre	18,000	---	19,260	---
National Ballet of Canada				
St. Lawrence Hall	128,000	---	136,960	---
Young People's Theatre			14,625	---
	146,000		170,845	
St. Lawrence Centre				
Debt Charges - Building and Renovations	187,403	---	176,264	---
Operating Grants to Centre	489,240	---	656,440	---
	676,643		832,704	

But the play that Tom Hendry puts together is an accountant's play, a play which is put together on the basis of where the money comes from, what is done with it and how we might change the accounting system. The important feature of the play is that we—all of us—are short-changed and that there is an alternative version. We might look beyond this one to investigate how the elsewheres are managed. Hendry helps us to begin this exercise in allowing us to think about cities like Vancouver, Montréal, London (England), Paris, New York, Minneapolis, Vienna. Some of the experiences of these cities are worth exploring. The appendices on London, Paris, New York and Minneapolis are particularly instructive, though London is a watershed on whether the cultural life will be there anymore, and Paris (well-funded) tells us nothing about the elite version against the alternative culture. (This isn't Hendry's fault, but probably a fault of the way that the French provided their data for him, a problem which is present with collecting data from any city and depending on their version of what happens.)

But Hendry is very sensitive to the nuances of the internal cultures (from whatever city) and this helps us to make sense of Toronto. Why is it that we spend less on the arts than hierarchical Paris, and why is London (going bust) more important as a model than, say, Berlin, which is not quoted, or Budapest (which might be relevant because of great power marginality)?

The statistics are very impressive, simply because no one in Canada has tried to extrapolate a city before out of the maze of figures that come from Statistics Canada, the Canada Council, local government, etc. But before the statistics grab us in their sense of finitude, I have one complaint against this report. Are magazines not part of the art scene? If art is about being *there*, then part of that being is talking about *it*. Apart from asking for a municipal listing service, Hendry does not address publications. He might be right, of course, in implying that critics don't matter—they are, after all, the wrong accountants. What matters is that people go to the museums, the galleries, the theatres, the films, etc. and that these should be well-funded. But should people not think about what they are going to? New magazines get no support from any of the agencies. Hendry's report might have addressed that issue. Accounting for what goes on is one problem, but accounting for the accounting is another, and a serious one. As Shakespeare, that other accountant, wrote in *Timon of Athens:*

Gold, yellow, glittering precious gold. No, gods,
I am no idle votarist...

A culture is not built up by saying simply that the show must go on; it is the constant questioning of what show, what script.

With that caveat, Tom Hendry has produced a brilliant script which can be used for social and political action. Like any good morality play it proposes alternatives to the bat-eyed fiats of laissez-faire ideologies. By adopting the language of the ideologies it demonstrates the fallacy of their rhetoric.

The hand that signed the paper felled a city,
Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,
Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country;
These five kings did a king to death.

Via his accounting, Hendry invites us to listen and think, feel, move.

Within the limitations of an accounting metaphor, Hendry invites us to do just that by compelling us to start from where we are and use that as a base for thinking of what we might do.

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