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Love in the Time of Capitalism: A Marxist Feminist Reading of Modern Times

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> I was riding in my car one day and saw a mass of people coming out of a factory, punching time-clocks, and was overwhelmed with the knowledge that the theme note of modern times is mass production. I wondered what would happen to the progress of the mechanical age if one person decided to act like a bull in a china shop.—*Charlie Chaplin on* Modern Times *(*New York Times *interview, 2 February 1936)*

Some see the opening of the *Modern Times* sequence "Dreams of Everyday Life" as the image of love: A husband leaves for work, lunchbox in hand. His wife follows him a few steps into the yard to kiss him goodbye not once, but twice. She waves as he departs, then skips joyfully back into the house. At first glance, it seems that even the Little Tramp and his gamine, watching from the curb, witness this sequence as such. They imagine themselves into the snapshot, further embellished by juicy steaks at the dinner hour. Emerging from the reverie, the Little Tramp vows to his gamine, "We'll get a home, even if I have to work for it."

And yet, because work is precisely what the Little Tramp does not do, the two never get a home; they never *are* this image of love. In this essay, I take this image of love to be a representation of the sex/gender system[1] endemic to modern capitalism — an image of the patriarchy part and parcel of what Walter Benjamin terms "the inhospitable, blinding age of big-scale industrialism,"[2] in its requisite production and reproduction of labor-power. In shutting their eyes to this experience by living "no place — anywhere," I suggest that the Little Tramp and his gamine occupy a space analogous to that which Walter Benjamin assigns Henri Bergson's philosophy, in relation to capitalism: "An experience of a complementary nature in the form of its [capitalism's] spontaneous after-image." Ultimately, I argue that seeing the

Little Tramp and his gamine as an *after*-image of patriarchy in the age of capitalism offers spectators a clue to a change in the structure of their sexual experience; processing *Modern Times*, we "fix it [Chaplin's film] as a permanent record" of a radically different definition of love in the time of capitalism (157).

Dreams of Everyday Life Under Capitalism

In her attempt to isolate the origin of the oppression and social subordination of women perceived by many as endemic to modern capitalism — the origin of such dreams of everyday life wherein men perform wage labor outside the home while women perform unpaid labor at home — Gayle Rubin (qua Marx) asks:

> What is a domesticated woman? A female of the species. The one explanation is as good as the other. A woman is a woman. She only becomes a domestic, a wife, a chattel, a playboy bunny, a prostitute, or a human dictaphone in certain relations. Torn from these relationships, she is no more the helpmate of man than gold in itself is money.

Seeking to map out these relationships whereby women become domestics, wives, chattel, playboy bunnies, prostitutes, or human dictaphones in her essay, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," Rubin enumerates multiple Marxist analyses of this oppression and social subordination of women, from the argument that women are a reserve labor force for capitalism, to the argument that their unpaid housework transforms raw goods into products for consumption by (male) wage earners. But in her estimation such analyses inevitably fall short because, while more or less accurate in their descriptions, they nonetheless fail to explain why the division of labor under capitalism has from the start consistently been drawn along the line of sexual difference (they fail to explain, for example, why men have by and large not become domestics, wives, chattel, playboy bunnies, prostitutes, or human dictaphones).

In the interests of addressing this failure, Rubin returns to Marx and Engels. First, in terms of the needs of the (male) worker living under capitalism which must be met in order to produce and reproduce labor, Rubin notes that in addition to needs determined according to biology and physical environment, in *Capital, Volume I*, Marx circumscribes "a historical and moral element" that gives rise to additional needs determined by cultural tradition — wherein "wife" can and does figure as a necessity (171). Rounding out this circumscription, Rubin turns to *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State,* wherein Engels clearly separates the "relations of production" from the "relations of sexuality," asserting that

> the social organization under which people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production [the production of the means of existence and the production of human beings themselves]: by the stage of development of labor on the one hand, and of the family on the other [71–72].

For this reason, as Rubin determines from this juxtaposition of Marx and Engels, it is of utmost importance "to maintain a distinction between the human capacity and necessity to create a sexual world, and the empirically oppressive ways in which sexual worlds have been organized" (168). One therefore does well to not presume that patriarchy — which, as Rubin pointedly notes, long predates capitalism — is indistinguishable from big-scale industrialism simply because the two are coeval. Implicit in Rubin's jeremiad is the suspicion that such presumption renders invisible those cracks in the patriarchal façade of modern capitalism through which one catches glimpses of alternative sex/gender systems.

The Patriarchal Façade of Modern Times

But before one can detect cracks, one must be able to see the façade. Charlie Chaplin's 1936 *Modern Times* offers up just such a façade of patriarchy. In the opening sequence of *Modern Times*, we see many, many men. We see men in suits and hats shuffling out of a subway opening. The film cuts to these men hurrying along city sidewalks to their factory jobs, where they punch their timecards and "man" their stations at Electro Steel Corporation. While an officious male President supervises from within his panopticon, a multitude of men in various states of attire ranging from the bare-chested watchman (hailed by his boss as "Man!") to the overall-clad Little Tramp industriously commit their manual labor to the interests of corporate profit. With the exception of a lone female secretary ("a human dictaphone"), whom we see performing such menial tasks as bringing the president a glass of water and opening the door for a salesman, capitalism is for all intents and purposes an all-male operation.

Every other representation of capitalist political economy that *Modern Times* presents spectators is similarly all male, from street vendors to law enforcement to sales teams, to the shipyards to the Jetson Mills, to the multistoried department store, to yet another factory, to every strike and breadline. The film leaves one to presume that women work in the home, as does the "Mrs." figure in the afore-mentioned image of love — cooking, cleaning, catering to the whims of work-weary husbands, and (in time, as the romantic narrative unfolds) caring for children. Although women shop, dine in certain restaurants offering "Tables for Ladies," and accompany their husbands on

certain excursions (the minister's wife, for example), we never see women working outside the home — except, that is, for the gamine.

In the context of *Modern Times*, the gamine cracks the patriarchal façade of capitalism. We first meet the gamine as she shamelessly steals bananas to feed her motherless sisters and unemployed father. Watching as she rushes home to proudly present the booty to her hungry family, spectators quickly realize that the gamine is the breadwinner of this house. In successfully displacing and replacing her family's nominal patriarch, the gamine outs the proverbial wizard from behind his curtain. But the gamine and her sisters soon lose not only their father — who meets a violent end in a strike — but also their house, when the State mandates that she and her orphaned siblings enter into foster care. Powerless to do anything but flee, the gamine does just that, choosing to instead live "no place — anywhere." Which is precisely where and how she meets the Little Tramp — a human being similarly and repeatedly cast into the shadows of capitalism in his many and varied efforts to enter into its blinding light.

The Little Tramp, a Little Misfit

Precisely why the character played by Charlie Chaplin — the Little Tramp — repeatedly finds himself cast from the bright lights of industrial capitalism to its shadows is essential to understanding how it is that he and his gamine together come to occupy a space analogous to that which Benjamin assigns Bergson's philosophy, in relation to capitalism, rather that the "Dreams of Everyday Life" inhabited by "Mr. and Mrs." For while the gamine has been cast into the shadows in the wake of her father's progressive disenfranchisement vis-à-vis unemployment and violent death in the midst of a workers' strike — forcibly expunged from the wageless workplace of the home reserved for female relatives of working men — the Little Tramp shuffles onto the scene from a diegetic nowhere.

But it becomes readily apparent that this diegetic nowhere — whatever it may have been — has ill-prepared the Little Tramp for the exigencies of modern times, a.k.a. capitalism. We first meet the Little Tramp on the assembly line of Electro Steel Corporation, where he performs his perfunctory duties more-or-less to the satisfaction of the president, observing his all-male operation from afar. Soon enough, however, the president decides that the section to which the Little Tramp belongs is not working fast enough, and he orders the bare-chested watchman, "Section 5, speed her up, 4–1!" This instantaneous acceleration, followed by yet another — "Section 5, more speed, 4–7!" — and another still — "Section 5, give 'em the limit!" which the Little Tramp cannot accommodate, is the first in a series of motifs suggesting that the Little

Tramp's inability to enter into the blinding light of big-scale industrialism has everything to do with his inability to meet the demands of a socioeconomic structure whose singular objective is to extract surplus value from labor to produce capital. In the context of such a structure — wherein his time is the entrepreneur's money, inasmuch as he makes capital use of his time — the Little Tramp is singularly unable and/or unwilling to fill the space of this time with ever greater numbers of bodily repetitions befitting such robotic contraptions as the Bellows Feeding Machine; for the Little Tramp, a qualitative, individual experience of time does not readily convert into that quantitative, mechanistic experience of time required by mass reproduction.

Nor does it for Bergson, whose philosophy largely addresses this very gap between time as a lived, bodily experience and time in its abstracted, calculable sense. Like Bergson, the Little Tramp pauses in the gap between these two very different experiences of time — and, invariably, these pauses cost him his job. As the opening credits of *Modern Times* foreshadow (the second hand of a clock winds ever closer to the hour, juxtaposed with a herd of sheep hustling to slaughter), the compliant subject of modern capitalism is first and foremost bound to a particular conceptualization of time wherein the extraction of surplus value from labor depends upon the degree to which he is willing and/or able to suspend what Bergson terms "pure memory," and wholly devote himself to "habit-memory." As we shall see in a further exploration of Bergson's philosophy, the worker in the age of big-scale industrialism who succumbs to the tyranny of factory whistles, alarm bells, and time cards suspends — at least for the duration of the workday — the experience of lived, bodily time.

Habit-Memory and the Time of Capitalism

In his analysis of *Matter and Memory*, Walter Benjamin suggests, "It is ... not at all Bergson's intention to attach any specific historical label to memory. On the contrary, he rejects any historical determination of memory" (157). But this suggestion stands in stark contrast to the assertion that ensues: that Bergson's philosophy "evolved, or rather, [arose] in reaction to" the age of big-scale industrialism. This is to say that Bergson's effort to develop a uniquely a historical conceptual apparatus for memory is itself historically determined by capitalism. In order to grasp this reading of Bergson, one must insert the wage-laborer into Bergson's conceptual apparatus for memory, perhaps best captured in this passage from *Matter and Memory*:

> It may be said that we have no grasp of the future without an equal and corresponding outlook over the past, that the onrush of our activity makes a void

> behind it into which memories flow, and that memory is thus the reverberation, in the sphere of consciousness, of the indetermination of our will [70].

Bergson suggests that this "onrush of our activity" assumes one of two forms: First, there is habit-memory—the sort of kinetic memory one acquires by repeating a series of actions over and over again. Whether one learns to walk or to sing a song by heart, habit-memory is "set in motion as a whole by an initial impulse, in a closed system of automatic movements which succeed each other in the same order and, together, take the same length of time" (90). Habit-memory may be distinguished from the second form of activity—"pure" memory—in that it does not mediate, or alter, the onrush of activity in whose midst one finds oneself; rather, it simply perpetuates, or repeats, it; simply put, habit-memory "prolongs their [its] useful effect into the present moment." (For this reason, Bergson is reluctant to accord the process of habit-memory the name "memory" at all [93].) Needless to say, habit-memory serves many useful functions—from remembering how to tighten the nuts on an assembly line, to remembering to use the "In" door when entering a busy restaurant kitchen to pick up your customer's dinner, to remembering which lever disables a dangerous piece of machinery.

But habit-memory, taken to the extremes required by modern capitalism's strident injunction to "increase your production and decrease your overhead," radically distorts the way in which one might otherwise experience the world. For example, if the image of, say, nuts on a conveyor belt, in its repetition of a past sequence of events triggered by the very first nut I ever learned to tighten, makes of my present a closed system within which I automatically repeat this sequence-of-events again and again in a perennial *now*, then my experience of time as "a wholly qualitative multiplicity, an absolute heterogeneity of elements which pass over into one another" is indefinitely suspended by an out-of-time wholesale transplant from the past (Bergson, *Time* 229). (Chaplin parodies this phenomenon first in the factory sequence in which the Little Tramp's co-workers furiously chase him down, only to be thwarted in their efforts when he sets their assembly line going with a flip of the switch, thereby automatically summoning them back to their respective worker duties, and again when the Little Tramp cannot will himself out of the habit-memory of the assembly line, going through the motion of tightening nuts on a fire hydrant and the buttons on women's dresses.) In other words, in the grip of habit-memory, my present is cannibalized by my past; or, if you will, my past is indefinitely prolonged into my present.

Pure Memory and the Time of the Little Tramp

But as Bergson notes, one can never fully dispense with habit-memory. Were one to do so, one would be unable to walk, talk, or find one's way from

the bedroom to the bathroom in the night; one would be effectively reduced to the status of a newborn infant, for whom each moment is brand spanking new. However, human beings tend to experience time on a spectrum ranging from habit-memory to pure memory. Where habit-memory merely *acts* the past in response to present stimuli, pure memory *imagines* the past, calling forth uniquely personal, highly contextualized memories that speak to present needs in a way that enables one to shape his/her reception and mediation of oncoming activity. Habit-memory sets the Little Tramp's body in motion in response to an initial impulse, automatically twisting nut after nut after nut; pure memory requires that he "call up the past in the form of an image ... to withdraw [himself] ... from the action of the moment." In order for pure memory to come into play, Bergson argues, "we must have the power to value the useless, we must have the will to dream" (94).

If the assembly line best captures habit-memory, the dream best captures pure memory in that it is, by definition, beyond reach of present stimuli of habit-memory.[3] For all practical purposes, dreams are useless. And while, as Bergson notes, "a human being who should dream his life instead of living it would no doubt thus keep before his eyes at each moment the infinite multitude of the details of his past history," the ability to dream — to shut one's eyes to habit-memory and instead summon those uniquely personal memories that, by Bergson's account, make for character and intuition — is indispensable if one is to mediate oncoming activity in a way that would not indefinitely prolong it as one's present (201). Only in this way — dredging up the real moments of a personal past to mediate rather than repeat present perception — can we "grasp in a single intuition multiple moments of duration," thereby "continuing and retaining the past in a present enriched by it" (303). To experience life in such a way that one's present generates ever-widening circles of connections to one's past, Bergson concludes, is "to touch the reality of spirit" (313). Just as the telescope collapses great distance at the twist of a hand, the person who can see a multitude of past moments in the present telescopes time (216).

But dreams, spirit, and a telescopic understanding of time are no good for capitalism. Even a moment of daydreaming — say, in the bathroom, over a smoke, at lunch — incites the ire of the president of Electro Steel Corp., who orders the Little Tramp to "quit stalling! Get back to work! Go on!" For the corporate head whose sole interest in the worker is to use him to "increase your production and decrease your overhead," there is no such thing as "off the clock." Time and again, the Little Tramp gets into trouble for dilly-dallying, dawdling, and daydreaming — figuratively (and, once, literally) throwing a monkey wrench into the whole works. In the spectrum ranging from habit-memory to pure memory, the Little Tramp registers on the side

of pure memory: he cannot remember a song or a lever to save his boss's life, much less his own job. Further, the Little Tramp consistently interrupts the habit-memory time of big-scale industrialism with his own irrepressible character and intuition, not hesitating to stop the show in order to scratch his armpit or pick at his nails, or to look away from such duties as the night watch of a department store to join the gamine in eating cake and ice skating into the wee hours of the morning. In the blinding age of big-scale industrialism, wherein, as Richard Glasser observes

> time was spatialized in order to satisfy the general need for security. Future possibilities were directed into a restricted number of channels. This conception of things, which determined the future both as regards time and space with the greatest exactitude, might be symbolized as a railway system and a timetable [288].

The Little Tramp's will to dream, touch the reality of spirit, and telescope time persistently derails the train of modern times.

Derailing the Dreams of Everyday Life Under Capitalism

Walter Benjamin makes a similar case for Bergson. Of the title, *Matter and Memory*, Benjamin suggests that "it regards the structure of memory as decisive for the philosophical pattern of experience." Affirming this suggestion, Benjamin further adds that, apropos of Bergson's 1896 work:

> Experience is indeed a matter of tradition, in collective existence as well as private life. It is less the product of facts firmly anchored in memory than of a convergence in memory of accumulated and frequently unconscious data.

With this synopsis, Benjamin enters into Bergson's understanding of what it would mean to understand one's private life not as a logical, readily accessible, and infinitely repeatable sequence of events[4] but instead as a singular memory-image impregnated by those pieces of one's past that meet the needs of one's present—"so to suggest to us that decision which is most useful" to oneself now (*M&M* 303). As such, authentic causality derives not simply from a set of remembered facts, but rather from a convergence of matter and memory described in Bergson's earlier work, *Time and Free Will*, as "a wholly qualitative multiplicity, an absolute heterogeneity of elements which pass over into one another " (229). As Gilles Deleuze notes, "Bergsonian duration is defined less by succession than by coexistence" (60).

Benjamin maps Bergson's contrasting descriptions of private life according to habit-memory and according to pure memory onto, respectively, private life according to a capitalist logic and private life according to a pre-capitalist logic. Where a naïve spectator might deem the private life, or

"image of love," of Mr. and Mrs. — a starter home in the suburbs where Mrs. cooks and cleans all day while Mr. works 9-to-5 at the local factory — an effect of a romance narrative wherein a co-ed's joyful mission is to bag a boy to bring home the bacon and help her to get a bun in the oven, a Benjaminian-Bergsonian reading sources it from present demands that these two work, both inside and outside of their home, to produce and reproduce labor-power. Similarly, where Mr. and Mrs. conceive of themselves as occupying the trajectory of this romance narrative of their own volition simply because they are "in love" — dating, getting engaged, getting married, setting up house together, etc. — according to a Benjaminian-Bergsonian reading, the private life afforded by such a narrative cannot be extricated from the exigencies of modern capitalism.

In this vein, and in accordance with Rubin's articulation of the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism, an experience of womanhood is "less the product of facts firmly anchored in memory," than of the convergence in one's memory of "accumulated and frequently unconscious data." In other words, "woman" is a singular memory-image impregnated by those pieces of the past which best meet present sexual needs born of a particular social transformation of biological sexuality into products of human activity. Given the overriding objective of modern capitalism — to use capital to extract surplus value from labor to produce ever more capital — the sexual needs any woman living in "the inhospitable, blinding age of big-scale industrialism" experiences will have been wrested from biology for the express purpose of creating and expanding capital vis-à-vis the exploitation of wage-laborers. If, then, one is to imagine — to call up from the uniquely personal accumulated and frequently unconscious data of one's own past (and not simply repeat that closed system of automatic movements constituting a romance narrative that perpetuates the gender-stratified division of labor that has characterized and continues to characterize capitalism) — a sex/gender system that would not conflate the relations of production with love and romance, then one must be able, like Bergson, the Little Tramp, and the gamine, to shut one's eyes to the blinding age of big-scale industrialism. At which moment one begins to think photographically.

Thinking Photographically

To grasp what Benjamin meant by suggesting that in Bergson's philosophy one sees the spontaneous after-image produced by shutting out the experience of the blinding age of big-scale industrialism — that Bergson thinks photographically — one must remember that the image, intersection of thing and representation, foregrounds Bergson's entire discussion of time in *Matter*

and Memory. Every image — including the body (also an image) — is for Bergson continually orienting in a particular way toward every other image, "like a compass that is being moved about," or a camera focusing on one particular part of the whole of the universe (10, 171). Moreover, because "[human] perception ... consists in detaching, from the totality of objects, the possible action of my body upon them," "images outrun perception on every side" (304–305). One might think of the image as an emulsion lifted in the process of making a Polaroid transfer: one peels away from a material object a necessary surface, but discards the remainder. As such, there is inherent to every perception a "necessary poverty" born of the discarded remainder that we fail to perceive in our singular orientation toward that "slice" of matter upon which we act.

For Bergson, this orientation is at once and always indivisibly spatial and temporal, and always in flux. The body is but a "central telephonic exchange" for receiving and transmitting, in varying intensities, other images in motion. An oncoming image acts in such a way that its movement is diffused along the multitudinous nervous networks of the body, to be channeled onward in a delayed release, or transmitted along rapid-response channels in its mobile journey through a universe that happens to traverse the body in question. Bergson thus likens perception to the passage of light through different media that sometimes reflect and sometimes refract it, according to their respective densities (*M&M* 29–30). For this reason, "if you abolish my consciousness," Bergson writes, "matter resolves into numberless vibrations, all linked together in uninterrupted continuity, all bound up with each other, and traveling in every direction like shivers" (276). But where there is consciousness, there is memory — a means of receiving and preserving the images in whose company one finds oneself, and of using accumulated images to mediate oncoming images.

In Chapter I of *Matter and Memory*, "Of the Selection of Images for Conscious Presentation. What Our Body Means and Does," Bergson offers photography as a metaphor for the way in which we have perceived and largely continue to perceive this reception and preservation of images—for our understanding of human consciousness. He writes:

> The whole difficulty that occupies us [in the application of this metaphor] comes from the fact that we imagine perception to be a kind of photographic view of things, taken from a fixed point by that special apparatus which is called an organ of perception — a photograph which would then be developed in the brain-matter by some unknown chemical and psychical process of elaboration.

The difficulty for Bergson in thinking photographically lies precisely in its requisite fixity, for such fixity requires that one convert qualitative experience into quantitative experience. To take a photograph is to simultaneously

capture a moment in time and to take this moment out of time. This, Bergson argues, is what we do when we imagine that we represent to ourselves the real movement of time and space he terms *durée*. The best we can hope for is to filter this movement through our consciousness such that it registers upon us as if we were "the black screen ... behind the [translucent photographic] plate ... already taken, already developed in the very heart of things and at all points of space" (31–32). Understanding human consciousness as that which would register a moving still of the universe places heightened emphasis on the after-image as the intersection of the storehouse of uniquely personal memories that is individual consciousness with any given object of perception. Thus it is that Bergson concludes that an after-image consists of "images photographed upon the [perceived] object itself, and with memories following immediately upon the perception of which they are the echo" (125). That which consciousness registers, it registers as an after-image.

Thinking Sex Photographically, in the Durée

Despite the fact that, as Martin Jay notes, "there is little evidence that he [Bergson] thought very deeply about the body as a gendered, libidinally charged source of desire" (192), Bergson's argument is that the body is "an instrument of action, and of action only ... [and] in no sense, under no aspect, does it serve to prepare, far less to explain, a representation" (*M&M* 299) provides a useful way of thinking sex. For if one accepts Bergson's understanding of the lived experience of the body as the center of perception, rather than merely peripheral to and/or receptacle of external perception, and if one further distinguishes biological sex (matter) from the products of human activity (memory), then one begins to perceive "sex" less as the inevitable outcome of the past than as a particular and potentially paradigm-shifting convergence of "accumulated and frequently unconscious" data with an object perceived in the present. For women to experience themselves as second-class citizens, according to Bergson's logic, would therefore be to mistakenly "identify our selves with the external images available to others in the social world, rather than with the internal experience of individually endured time, the private reality of *durée*" (Jay 197). Patriarchy is therefore nothing more (and nothing less) than "images photographed upon the [perceived] object itself," but *not* the object itself. Theoretically, then, different images can be photographed upon "the object itself ... with memories following immediately upon the perception of which they are the echo" that do not further cannibalize the present with the patriarchal past.

But how to derail the train that is the habit-memory of patriarchy and

open up new channels in our experience of sex? How to dismantle any constellation of ritual practices within a system so highly invested in reproducing itself? To put it in Chaplin's terms: How to act like a bull in the china shop that is patriarchy in modern times? For although patriarchy is likely, per Rubin's assertion, not endemic to capitalism, it has been and continues to be synchronous with it. And inasmuch as capitalism protects and defends the status quo, reifying any and all social systems that conserve and increase capital by substituting the habit memory of a perennial present for the pure memory that might remind us that what *is* is not what *must be*, the inherited, gender-stratified division of labor that is patriarchy cannot change unless and until its participants close their eyes to big-scale industrialism. Like the gamine, who of necessity pays little or no heed to the division of labor drawn along the line of sexual difference, occupying such "male" roles as breadwinner, waiter, and homesteader and paying her own way in the world (when she's not stealing), and like the Little Tramp, who assures her with a smile, "We'll get along" without the trappings of private property, women and men must crack the façade of patriarchy on which capitalism has long relied for the production and reproduction of labor-power. Indeed, if we are to take the Little Tramp and the gamine as any indication, one's ability to crack this façade and to glimpse alternate sex/gender systems through the cracks may be absolutely contingent upon the degree to which one is personally invested in the survival of capitalism. And it is only when someone throws a monkey wrench — be this wrench figurative or literal — into the works that the structural inequality of the sex/gender system at the disposal of capitalist political economy echoes through human consciousness in the form of ever-stronger after-images.

If we are to understand the way in which the structure of sexual experience changes, we must seek not only ever more occasions to look away from the blinding age of big-scale industrialism — as do the Little Tramp and his gamine, who finally turn their backs on the dreams of everyday life under capitalism, trading them for the symbolic *durée* of the open road — but also the permanent records of after-images of capitalism as manifested in and through patriarchy that others have seen.

For despite Bergson's conviction, as summarized by Mary Ann Doane — that "movement cannot be reconstituted from immobilities" (174) — such testaments as *Modern Times* alert us to the necessary poverty of our perceptions and remind us, as they reflect back to us our inability to represent real, embodied time — our inability to partake post facto "of duration, of waiting — of the gap between stimulus (sensation) and response" — that the sex-gender system we act is a far cry from the sex/gender system we are capable of imagining, given time (76).

Notes

1. In her essay "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," Gayle Rubin uses "sex/gender system" in lieu of "patriarchy," which she feels "ought to be confined to the Old Testament-type pastoral nomads from whom the term comes" (168). However, for the purposes of this essay, I wield the term in its more connotative sense, as "broadly" defined by *Merriam Webster* as "control by men of a disproportionately large share of power," for lack of a better term.

2. For the purposes of this paper, I assume Benjamin's use of the phrase "big-scale industrialism" to be more or less synonymous with capitalism.

3. By this definition, then, the "Dream of Everyday Life" is not really a dream, but rather habit memory.

4. "Science assures me that all phenomena must succeed and condition one another according to a determined order, in which effects are strictly proportioned to causes." This is for Bergson "the reef upon which all idealism is wrecked" (*M&M* 300–01).

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