Embodying Idleness:
Shakespearean Performance
and the Queerness of Theatrical Time

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Abstract

This dissertation argues that Shakespearean performance allows for a meaningful recuperation of the derogatory notion of idleness, as it has been understood in both early modern and contemporary contexts. The project draws upon theories of queer time in order to explore how embodying idleness within the theatrical forum challenges bourgeois reproduction, longevity, and linear progress and productivity by forging vibrant pathways of affective, imaginative, and desirous non-reproductive motion. This opens up a way to consider idleness as a queer temporal force embodied in theatrical time, as well as a new way of understanding the queerness of Shakespeare performance.

The first chapter links idleness to the marginalized body, particularly the early modern conceptualization of the "phlegmatic" female. It then illustrates how the "idle" body is pleasurably reframed by *Anthony and Cleopatra*'s Egyptian Queen as well as within contemporary performance practice (The Hive's *Midsummer*, 2013). Each of the following chapters explore different modalities of embodying idleness. Chapter 2 describes the pleasurable affective circulations at work within the utopian temporalities of a contemporary, immersive Studio-54 version of *Midsummer*, *The Donkey Show*. Next, it examines the "suspended" time of Illyria in Propeller's all-male *Twelfth Night*, analyzing how theatricality may offer a queer mode of non-linear productivity or "sideways growth." Lastly, it analyzes dis/orientation in Punchdrunk's immersive *Macbeth* adaptation, *Sleep No More*, illustrating how destabilizing the body opens up queer relationships between bodies, objects, and even time itself.

Résumé

Cette thèse avance que la représentation shakespearienne permet une récupération signifiante de la notion dénigrante d'oisiveté, telle qu'elle a été comprise au début des temps modernes et dans le contexte contemporain. Ce projet s'inspire des théories du temps queer afin d'explorer comment l'oisiveté shakespearienne conteste la reproduction bourgeoise, la longévité, le progrès et la productivité linéaires en forgeant les vibrants chemins d'un mouvement non-reproducteur qui est affectif, imaginatif et désireux. Ceci donne lieu à une manière d'envisager l'oisiveté comme une force temporelle queer incarnée dans le temps théâtral, ainsi qu'à une nouvelle compréhension du caractère queer de la représentation shakespearienne.

Le premier chapitre lie l'oisiveté au corps marginalisé, en particulier à la conceptualisation de la femme « flegmatique » au début des temps modernes. Il illustre ensuite comment le corps « oisif » est agréablement reformulé par la reine égyptienne d'*Antoine et Cléopâtre*, ainsi que dans la pratique théâtrale contemporaine (le *Songe d'une nuit d'été* du Hive en 2013). Chacun des chapitres suivants explorent différentes modalités de l'oisiveté shakespearienne. Le deuxième chapitre décrit les agréables circulations affectives qui sont à l'œuvre dans les temporalités utopiques de la version absorbante contemporaine du Studio-54 du *Songe*, *The Donkey Show*. Il examine ensuite le temps « suspendu » de l'Illyrie dans la production entièrement masculine de *La Nuit des rois*, en analysant comment la théâtralité shakesperienne peut offrir un mode queer de productivité non-linéaire, ou « croissance latérale ». Enfin, il analyse la dés/orientation dans l'adaptation immersif de *Macbeth* du Punchdrunk, *Sleep No More*, illustrant comment le corps déstabilisant crée des relations queer entre les corps, les objets, ainsi

qu’avec le temps lui-même.

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About halfway through my writing process, a friend suggested to me that the struggle of writing a dissertation is as much psychological as intellectual. Now I certainly know this to be true. The emotional support provided by my parents, sister, and close friends has helped me through my own bouts of idleness and personal challenges. My dear student-colleagues from both McGill and Tufts have been a wonderful source of inspiration and encouragement. To name just a few: Anna Lewton-Brain, J Shea, Amanda Clarke, Marc Ducusin, Paul Masters, Megan Hammer Stahl, and Sean Edgecomb.

Introduction

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In a sequent toil all forwards do contend.
(Sonnet 60, lines 1-4)

Shakespeare's Sonnet 60 offers a rather melancholic view of time. Time moves forward only to slip back again in a repeated succession. It progresses, moving youth towards maturity, but "wherewith being crown'd…Time that gave doth now his gift confound" (6-8). It is a controller: both maker and destroyer. This somber image is contrasted perhaps only by the simile of the wave that opens the sonnet, which does not imply a violent tide so much as a gentle current advancing towards the pebbled shore, ad infinitum. In *The Winter's Tale*, time is controlled by a more supple temporal logic, unleashed from its "sequent toil" and minutes that "hasten." Those familiar with Shakespeare's romance will immediately acknowledge the irregular temporal scheme that drives the play. Central to this is the appearance of the character of Time, what would be "Father Time," who appears at the top of act four to announce a "swift passage" over a "wide gap" of "sixteen years" (4.1.5-6). This leap of time takes the young Perdita, abandoned by her father in Bohemia and left to die, from her discovery as an infant by shepherds through to the sixteenth year of her birth. In Propeller's 2005 (revived 2011/12) all-male production of the play, Father Time was now a boy, played by a youthful adult actor as a whimsical barefoot child in pajamas. During his soliloquy, the actor flipped a large hourglass that sat downstage—"I turn my glass" (4.1.15)—as he, the actor, became time's manipulator (image 1). His turn of the hourglass indicated not only a shift of time in the play, but also a shift in power from male to female. As he described

Perdita "now grown in grace" (4.1.24), her transition of sixteen years, the boy did a dainty leap in the air and landed in a curtsy. He placed a floral wreath on his head symbolizing his adoption of the female role of Perdita, while also leaping the play forward sixteen years, taking his new character from infancy to the intended day of her betrothal (image 2).[1] Time's literal and figurative leap mixed up both gender and the passage of time in one redefining action and moment.

While Time could take a playful leap forwards, crossing into the future, even crossing into a new gender, Time could slip backwards as well. The character of Time in Propeller's production was played by Mamillius, King Leontes's child, who dies early on in the play, hereby rupturing the succession of his own family line. In this production, Mamillius, playing both Time and Perdita, refused death's end. Carol Rutter in *Shakespeare and Child's Play* shows how Propeller's Mamillius allowed childhood "to persist" through the boy's ongoing presence and temporal manipulations (113, see also 147). This created a theatrical embodiment of the play's notion of the "boy eternal" (1.2.66). In the final moments of the production, the child's surprising reappearance reflected what Rutter calls "the crisis of paternity," Leontes's ongoing tensions and anxieties over his role as a father (vii). In the final scene, Leontes is reunited with his wife, Hermione, who being removed from him for years, reanimates from a statued form. As written, the play's ending is assembled like a fairy tale, with temporal order, family lineage, and patriarchy all reestablished. It reaffirms Catherine Belsey's description of

[1] Susan Snyder argues that Mamillius, due to has young age, is not yet "separated from the female matrix," yet has a father that tries to pull him into manhood prematurely (218). Mamillius lives in a world of polarized genders in which he can not thrive or even survive. Interestingly, Propeller offers a feminine role to the boy through his sister Perdita. This also builds off the feminine reference embedded within the name Mamillius as well (with "mamm" for "breast" in Latin).

The Winter's Tale as "Shakespeare's most detailed depiction of the affective nuclear family" (187). However, the final moments of Propeller's production enacted a rupture of this trajectory, what Rutter describes as "a nightmare, a remembering, repeating and working through of traumatic experience" (102). In the final lines of the play, Leontes's attempts to usher the family offstage so they can fill each other in on events that passed during "this wide gap of time since first/We were dissevered" (5.3. 154-5). In Propeller's production, this action was cut short. Lights faded into a deep blue that bathed the stage in shadows and, instead of heading off to celebrate their reunion, the actors broke away from Leontes, crossing offstage in different directions. The King reached out towards his wife and other company members who ignored his gesture, leaving him bewildered and alone center stage. The audience then watched as Perdita removed her female garb, changing back into the haunting figure of the child, Mamillius. The production's final image was of Leontes turning to see his son, alive, and eagerly calling the boy towards him, reaching his arms out wide in a desperate gesture of embrace. Yet as the lights fell, the boy steadfastly refused to move towards him.

This ending offered a dark, even nightmarish vision, yet for any critic eager to problematize *The Winter Tale*'s heteronormative closure and affirmation of patriarchy, this production offered a powerful alternative. Time was unable to resume its "proper" course. With the play's final words, Leontes commands the group to, "*Hastily* lead away" (5.3.155), yet these words and this temporal movement were blocked. The production, jumping time as it jumped gender, offered a different temporal logic. Time in this theatrical world served as a countercurrent, embodied by echoes of traumatic experience, but also by time being seen through the lens of a playful child. Like the wave in

Shakespeare's sonnet, it demonstrated how theatrical time's "current"—both as present moment *and* force— could challenge the command to "hasten." In what follows, I will argue that contemporary productions of Shakespeare's plays can issue such a challenge in the various ways they "embody idleness" – performing queer non-reproductive circulations, both affective and desirous, which critique normative modes of productivity, linearity, and social imperatives to hasten.

A Queer Temporal Force

How can one describe the countercurrents of time throughout Propeller's production? If Mamillius as Time did a little jump crossing roles and gender into Perdita, how might this relate to *temporal* crossing, rather than just gender crossing? And, how might one describe the contemporary all-male company's relationship to early modern convention, specifically how they borrow from, yet resist, historical reproduction? This project uses the notion of queer temporalities to think through these issues.

Queer is a multifaceted, even challenging term. This project builds off Eve Sedgwick's classic definition of "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't* be made) to signify monolithically" (8). Carolyn Dinshaw also provides a useful way to think of queerness as a practice and one that, furthermore, could be readily applied to theatrical practice: "queerness works by contiguity and displacement, knocking signifiers loose, ungrounding bodies, making them strange…Queerness articulates not a determinate thing but a relation to existent structures of power…and it provokes inquiry into the 'natural'

that has been produced by particular discursive matrices of heteronormativity" (*Getting Medieval* 76-77). Queer theorists working as part of the "temporal turn" take the premise of queer as a type of "ungrounding" and use it to displace and challenge normative and "natural" temporal schemes, including forms of progress, legacy, development, and maturation.

As a field of scholarship, queer theories of time focus on the way queer bodies and communities, often synonymous with the cultural margins, adopt creative relationships to time through their subcultural practices and artistic works. It focuses on the surprising asynchrony or anachronism by which time is embodied by queer lives and practices. This lens may suggest that the gender-crossing Mamillius/Time/Perdita has access to a more supple temporal logic by virtue of the queer body "out of synch" with normative time frames. Jack Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Place* serves as one of the defining works of queer theory's "temporal turn." It critically investigates the means by which time is socially constructed in ways that privilege established power structures, but also how queer temporalities, found "once one leaves the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance," can thwart this process (6). Halberstam adopts the notion of queerness as a "temporal force" from Stephen Barber and David Clark who develop it in their introduction to a book of essays on Eve Sedgwick (*Regarding Sedgwick*). Their notion of queerness as a temporality develops from references made by Sedgwick in *Tendencies* to a "queer moment," although Barber and Clark illustrate how a "conception and unfolding of temporality, a

specifically queer temporality" can be traced throughout Sedgwick's body of work ("Queer Moments" 2).[2]

The notion of queer time stems from Sedgwick's description in *Tendencies* of "the immemorial current that queer represents," also referred to as "a continuing moment" (xii). "Immemorial" suggests beyond memory and history, whereas "current" affirms the here and now, present, today. As Barber and Clark aptly point out, "current" is also meant to suggest a steady flow of movement, such as liquid or electricity (8). This becomes not just a temporal force, this "conveys *critical* force…a countercurrent" (8), described by Sedgwick as, "continuing movement," "recurrent, eddying, *troublant*" (xii). One of Barber and Clark's useful examples of this involves Sedgwick's writings on Proust's *A la recherché du temps perdu*. She recognizes that "the complete temporal disorientations that initiate him (the Narrator) into this revelatory space would have been impossible in a heterosexual *père de famille*, in one who had meanwhile been embodying, in the form of inexorably 'progressing' identities and roles, the regular arrival of children and grandchildren" (in Barber and Clark 26). Sedgwick opens up the question: what sorts of moments, possibilities exist when one steps outside of normative temporal bounds?

In sum, queerness becomes "a 'moment,'" but it also represents a force, "or rather it is a crossing of temporality with a force" (Barber and Clark 11). A Queer temporal

[2] Through their introduction, Barber and Clark trace Sedgwick's interest in queer time to her preoccupation with AIDS and AIDS activism. During the 1980s and early 1990s, issues of gender and sexuality become complicit with perhaps the most prominent of temporal markers, the boundary of life and death. This period marked the frequent erasure of queer AIDS histories, signifying another temporal preoccupation, but for survivors also brought about the sense of escaping death's end, whether from AIDS or adolescent suicide.

force signifies this "revelatory space," a countercurrent to normative temporal structures and regimes of progress. Significantly, this poses queerness as a critical, yet positive force, opening one up possibilities otherwise foreclosed or unknown. Sedgwick offers a brand of queer theory that resists the "anti-relationist" approach and negativity espoused by queer theorists such as Leo Bersani or Lee Edelman. By drawing upon Sedgwick, and like minded thinkers such at José Esteban Muñoz, this project positions itself within a like-minded ethos. It identifies how theater can open up new horizons of experience by cruising outside of normative temporal bounds, rather than through antagonistic practices. Queerness as a temporal force, a countercurrent, resists the bounds of time and the call to hasten, uncovering space (and time) for pleasure, discovery, even adventure. This project identifies how such moments operate in the theater, allowing participants to "embody idleness" and experience this countercurrent firsthand.

This use of a "queer temporal force" diverges from the notion of force commonly found within definitions of performativity. In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler identifies a force within the reiterating power of the performative. Building upon J. L. Austin's speech act theory, the forceful expression of gender, like the expression of words, stems from its ongoing reiteration, drawing upon normative practices and traditions. Austin's famous reference to marriage vows, "I do," identifies the way these words, in order to have meaning or power, invoke traditions of heteronormative institutions. Butler's notion of the performative identifies force in the reiterating act, expanding upon this to identify a queer political potential in the act of reiterating with a critical difference ("Critically Queer" 17). Butler's lens is focused on the endurance of cultural practice and longevity, emphasizing forward motion, with any queer political power still tied to these traditions

as types of citations. However, this project diverges from this perspective by focusing on a queer force, a "counter-*current*," embodied in theatrical moments that challenge heteronormative regimes of time.

Theories of performativity and regimes of behavior have allowed a significant body of theatrical scholarship to develop from a "long view" perspective, mining theater's relationship and breaks from traditions and regimes of performance. One of the most notable of these works would be W. B. Worthen's *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance*. Worthen expands on Butler's notion to illustrate how Shakespearean theater can be an instance of dramatic performativity—defined as "the relationship between the verbal text and the conventions (or, to use Butler's term, 'regimes') of behavior that give it meaningful *force* as performed action" (Worthen *Force* 3). Rather than locating forceful reiteration in simply words, Worthen argues that the regimes of behavior in the theater equates to regimes of performance, from powerful traditions of nineteenth-century realism to various avante-garde explorations. This critical move forges space for notions of performativity within the context of the theater; within the context of Shakespearean performance it illustrates the forceful "sense that a Shakespeare play can, or sometimes should, evoke the pastness of the text and what the text represents—early modern values, behaviors, subjects—in the present action of performance" (29). In a parallel way to Butler's notion of gender as a set of repeatedly performed conventions, theatrical conventions can accumulate over time in Shakespearean performance lending itself to a forceful sense of authority (9).

Worthen identifies the incessant way Shakespearean performance inevitably cites regimes of the past that would grant it authority; but he also points to moments of

slippage in such citations that make the Shakespeare performative "infelicitous" or without their intended effect. The notion of a "force of authority" identifies a rather conservative function; it centers on regimes of performance that—although only existing in the fleeting moment—capitalize on the sense of authentic origins, creating accumulations that develop and strengthen over time, lending itself to a fairly "straight," linear view of Shakespearean performance as a history of inheritance. This is exemplified perhaps best by The Shakespeare's Globe's experiments in original practice; for instance, the Globe's all-male *Twelfth Night* conscientiously cited the Shakespearean tradition of the boy actor, thereby invoking performance's "force of authority" in action.

In addition to using Butler, Worthen's argument usefully employs Joseph Roach's *Cities of the Dead*, a work that explores the process of cultural inheritance, passing down tradition in rather "straight" lines of lineage. Through a process Roach refers to as surrogation, performance traditions are passed down through generations and work to cover up the non-essential nature of cultural origins, invariably creating slippage in the process of cultural reproduction nonetheless. This slippage may occur, perhaps, by the very nature of live bodies being unable to replicate performance practices exactly as before, especially over long spans of time or across continental divides. Drawing upon Roach's concepts, Worthen illustrates how innovative theatrical artists can conscientiously play in the "slippage between bodies and texts in performance" (77). However, is the best social critique that theater can hope for a model of reproduction with a critical difference?

Queer theory's temporal turn offers a way to challenge the incessant progress built into Butler-based conceptualizations of time. It reveals a different model of change

that makes room for cultural objects (and even persons) devalued by straight time's privileging of forward-moving adaptation and progress. This makes room for queer bodies, histories, objects, and actions, which often fail to re/produce in normative ways. Elizabeth Freeman's *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* offers such a model. It advocates for "temporal drag," a political strategy that mines and embraces "archiving culture's throwaway objects," specifically its failed political movements or modes of antiquated LGBTQ expression (xxiii). These waste products, such as outmoded masculinities and femininities, when brought to the foreground, can function as a literal "drag" on narratives of progress, which would assume that the past inevitably develops, or one might say evolves, into a better, brighter future. Freeman's "backward" and anachronistic theory stems from her significant critique of the way Butler privileged "transformative differences" in *Gender Trouble*, developing a model of time as "basically progressive, insofar as repetitions with a difference hold the most promises" (62). Such a model fails to adequately address cultural cast-offs from feminist and queer histories that miss the train of progress and development: "whatever looks newer or more-radical-than-thou has more purchase over prior signs" (63). For instance, this would overlook remnants of second-wave feminism, such as the lesbian "butch" body, that could serve as a reminder of essentialist underpinnings and potentially disrupt third-wave conceptualizations of gender. In doing so, it "disregards citations of pasts that actually signal the presence of life lived otherwise than in the present" (63). Similar to Heather Love (*Feeling Backwards*) and Halberstam (*The Queer Art of Failure*), Freeman acknowledges the political significance of the *non*-progressive, *non*-reproductive failures that Butler's theory disregards.

This project explores how idleness crystallizes a theatrical embodiment of non-reproductive "failure." Scholars such as Worthen and Roach, who use Butler's "progressive" notion of performativity as their conceptual anchor, have focused attention on the chain of cultural reproduction and the slippage opened up in this process. By doing so, they offer useful ways of translating regimes of behavior into regimes of performance, illustrating how performance traditions embody their own force, driving tradition and cultural inheritance. Yet, this approach places the power and agency in what Butler describes as the forceful "reiterated acting that *is* power in its persistence and instability" (*Bodies that Matter* 225). Any reference backwards or to the past "gives the performative its binding or conferring power" (Butler "Critically Queer" 17). Unlike Butler-based models, queer theory's temporal turn does not locate its power in the process of reiteration. It focuses on queer bodies and histories, their forgotten pasts and future promises, as a forceful temporal counter-"current," here and now, which Barber and Clark cleverly refer to as "the persistent *queer and now*" (21). This works from the notion that queer bodies are often out of synch with time. Instead of viewing this as a problem, queer theory inverts this logic: it heralds queer bodies *for* their temporal difference. In what follows, I argue that Shakespearean theatrical performance, through its idle characters, spaces, and time schemes, can similarly embody a forceful, queer counter-current that challenges unilateral notions of progressive time and productivity.

Straight Time and its Discontents

Queer theory's interest in time responds in large part to contemporary issues concerning LGBTQ politics. Many lesbians, gays, and transgender in America are now

trying to decide whether they want to invest in their own lines of tradition, perhaps through marriage or childrearing, or whether they want to redefine these concepts or discard them in favor of different ways of being. Even surrogation, which Roach uses as a metaphor for the substitution practice involved in handed-down performance traditions, becomes a practical concern for LGBT individuals of privilege who now have their own way to hand down inheritance through a reproductive practice founded on substitution, a sidestepping act that makes genetic/biological lineage-forging possible. In *Twilight of Equity*, Lisa Duggan analyzes the effects of neoliberalism on LGBT politics. She develops the term "homonormative" to describe a "politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (50). A growing number of the LGBTQ community in the Western world are modeling themselves after dominant temporal structures regarding work, development, progress, and reproduction that support their own positions of privilege. This acknowledges a normalizing trend, a mode of assimilation, within the contemporary gay rights movement, and one that is all too complicit with global capitalism. A significant critique has centered around the increased focus on marriage rights, whereas other issues of LGBT inequality, such as basic housing rights and employment rights, have gone disregarded by many US states.[3] Queer critiques, such as Duggan and Michael Warner (*The Trouble with Normal*), find the increased focus on marriage reflects a way to continue to support a privileged

[3] This study was completed before the US Supreme Court decision (Obergefell v. Hodges) granted national equal marriage protection under the law on 26 June, 2015. Since its subjects of analysis predate this ruling, it has not been rewritten from this perspective.

constituency while overlooking the needs of the transgender, the lower class, and queers of color. A similar concern is echoed by theater scholar Sara Warner in *Acts of Gaiety*; she use the term "homoliberalism" (or "homoliberal") to describe "the economic, political, and social enfranchisement of certain normative-leaning, straight acting homosexuals" and how this comes at the expense of "inassimilable sexual minorities" (xi).

Issues of lineage, tradition, even regimes of behavior, have become both practical and theoretical concerns for contemporary queer theorists, like Duggan and Sara Warner, who develop Marxist-inspired critiques that challenge normative temporal regimes. Recent queer theoretical work on time provides ways to conceptualize the mechanisms of these temporal movements. In *Time Binds,* Freeman counterposes Walter Benjamin's notion of "homogeneous, empty time" with a conception of time as composed of multiple regimes. Benjamin's homogeneous, empty time is a monolithic, featureless, calendrical time that sweeps across history (*Illuminations* 264). For Freeman, however, time is more accurately perceived as multiple discursive regimes—such as notions of development, domesticity, family, genealogy, liberation, the progress of movement—"all of which take their meaning from, and contribute to, a vision of time as seamless, unified, and forward moving" (xxii). Like sexuality or gender, time too has a normative tendency, which Freeman names "chrononormativity": "the use of time to organize individual human bodies toward maximum productivity" (3). Importantly, Freeman's term identifies the way in which notions of time and temporality are implicitly linked to notions of industry and progress. Various mechanisms from schedules, calendars, time zones, and even wristwatches form a "temporal experience that seems natural to those whom they

privilege." This becomes linked to the insistent logic of time-as-productive, creating a "past that seems useless unless it predicts and becomes material for a future" (5). Lee Edelman in *No Future* uses the term "reproductive futurism" to describe a socially pervasive drive towards the future. He argues that the ubiquitous image of the child, Western culture's symbolic embodiment of psychic demands to promote futurism, has become the placeholder for a never-to-be-reached future. Figures within the visual field, like Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale* or little orphan Annie with her triumphant declaration, "Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love you, tomorrow," cultivate a social investment in reproductive futurism. Along similar lines, in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, David Harvey argues that our experience of time as a form of natural progression troubles our capabilities to notice its construction. Normative temporal structures ensure the stability of long-standing tradition, which often amounts to a regimented structuring of time. Basic examples of this could be the Lenten period, a time invested with a religious orthodoxy, or the practice of inheritance as a means to forge lineages of power and accumulation over and through generations.

Queer theorists of time draw attention precisely to how time is constructed and pinpoint how such constructions benefit some at the cost of others. Each theorist articulates a related phenomenon: a normative, pervasive movement towards reproduction, progress, and linearity. For the purposes of this project, I refer to this collective temporal movement across institutions of family, state, and economy as "straight time."

A queer theoretical lens also provides a way to shift the focus from authoritative temporal movements within performance traditions—inheritance and legacy making—to

highlight instead the divergent temporalities *embodied by* and often *central to* queer lives and marginalized persons. Theories of queer time provide critical insight and discussion of micro temporalities that challenge straight time, including rebellious, even subversive subcultural time schemes. "Straight" lines of lineage do not play a central role in queer communities, which—as Halberstam, Freeman, José Muñoz, and Kathryn Stockton have argued—almost by definition do not pass "down" in customary ways. As Paul Connerton describes the cultural politics of time:

> But what is lacking in the life histories of those who belong to subordinate groups is precisely those terms of reference that conduce to and reinforce this sense of linear trajectory, a sequential narrative shape: above all, in relation to the past, the notion of legitimating origins, and in relation to the future, the sense of an accumulation in power or money or influence. (19)

Marginalized persons, under this view, become synonymous with a sort of temporal disenfranchisement. Indeed, in *Feeling Backward*, Heather Love shows how queer historical narratives are not smooth, happy lineages of triumph, but are often narratives synonymous with failure and riddled with painful affects. These accounts, Love contests, are often disregarded in gay and lesbian studies since they don't reaffirm progressive narratives or assist in the dream for a better life for queer people (1-3). The line of queer legacy is, often, one of loss rather than happy endings; recuperating this history and its "negative" affects becomes a anti-teleological gesture that usefully pulls "backwards" as the title of her book suggests. Similarly, Halberstam has reclaimed failure as a queer practice and one synonymous with queer lives and histories. In *The Queer Art of Failure*, Halberstam's persuasively locates failure as a practice that can challenge the success

stories of progress while embracing more communal models of being and belonging that aren't reliant on the fiction of the "self made man." Like the ghosting Mamillius of Propeller's production who leaps time and gender, queer persons and a queer practice invent models of growth, change, adaptation that diverge from normative teleological lines. They challenge time constraints, such as the demand to grow "up" out of childhood into adulthood.

Queer Shakespeare, Queer Time

By focusing on time, my project takes the study of queer Shakespeare in a significant new direction. Contemporary theater productions that fall under the rubric of "queer Shakespeare" are often characterized as such because of their playfulness with the performance of gender through cross-casting in which men play female roles and/or women play male roles. These cross-cast productions, and particularly the all-male variety, are the most common locus of academic investigation into notions of queer Shakespeare in contemporary performance, which sees in these productions the potential for queer erotics and the expansion of gender categories. Much of this scholarly interest in cross-casting as a mode of "queering" in performance has been framed around queer theoretical works from the early 1990s, when the field was consolidating. Working from Butler's notion of gender performativity, critics such as Jill Dolan (*Presence and Desire*) and Elin Diamond (*Unmaking Mimesis*) have explored multiple ways in which the theatrical forum can work to reveal gender as construction. A similar theoretical lens has been applied to the study of early modern texts in contemporary performance in works such as Alisa Solomon's *Redressing the Canon*, Chad Allen Thomas's "Performing

Queer Shakespeare," Elizabeth Klett's *Cross-gender Shakespeare and English National Identity*, and James Bulman's edited collection, *Shakespeare Re-dressed*.[4] All of these projects have focused primarily, if not exclusively, on the cross-cast body in performance and its political effects, thoroughly mining the various ways that cross-casting can open up Shakespeare to queer readings, moments of queer erotic *frisson*, or feminist critique.

This project shifts the inquiry towards the performance of time in Shakespearean drama and in contemporary performance practice. Specifically, I ask: how can Shakespearean performance and its enactment of disparate time schemes allow audiences to imagine and experience temporalities that lie outside of the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction, longevity, and linear progress and productivity? Moreover, as the opening example from *The Winter Tale* suggests, how can contemporary Shakespearean performance challenge straight time and its regimes? How might Shakespearean drama present what Hamlet describes as a "time out of joint" (1.5.90)? In turn, how might contemporary Shakespearean performance's embodiment of a "time out of joint" broaden an audience's experience or conceptualization of time?

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[4] Alisa Solomon's *Re-dressing the Canon* (1997) provides a useful consideration of cross-casting's relationship to appropriation of canonical texts. Although she doesn't focus exclusively on Shakespeare, her opening chapter focuses on the Cheek By Jowl's early nineties *As You Like It* and the cross-dressed Shakespearean boy actor to illustrate how the staging of gender performance can disrupt naturalized categories of identity (18). She ultimately argues the production participates in what Jonathan Dollimore calls "transgressive reinscription," which produces "not an escape from existing structures but rather a subversive reinscription within them, and in the process their dislocation or displacement" (45). Chad Allen Thomas considers the lineage of all-male casting from Seventies gay liberation performances to recent practice, and Elizabeth Klett thoughtfully links cross-dressed feminist Shakespeare on the British stage to issues of national identity. James Bulman's edited collection *Redressing Shakespeare* (2008) includes a series of case studies on the practice, ranging from Roberta Barker's consideration of Poel and Harley Granville Barker's early twentieth century all-male experiments to examination of several of the Shakespeare's Globe's cross-cast productions.

To consider this, I focus in on the micro, rather than macro, aspects of time. As the last section set forth, queer time challenges the large scale temporal movements that make up straight time, such as what Freeman calls "chrononormativity" or Edelman calls "reproductive futurism." Viewing time exclusively from a perspective of the *longue durée* runs the risk of overlooking "queer moments," queer histories, and as well the power of the theatrical moment. For this reason, theorists preoccupied with "macro" understanding of time, such as Bakhtin, and following him scholars such as Michael Bristol (*Big-time Shakespeare*), have been substituted with contemporary queer theorists, affect theorists, and phenomenologists who consider the power of the individual moment. For instance, in Chapter 2, Sara Warner's discussion of the progressive potential of "ludic" time is incorporated, but not Bakhtin's notion of carnival. Warner offers a feminist perspective on a carnivalesque-type performance that resists the closure of Bakhtin's formalist categorization. By shifting the focus onto the theatrical moment, she uncovers a circulation of pleasurable affects of gaiety. This holds a significant political potential by drawing subcultural persons together in and through pleasure, while also motivating political action. Bakhtin's lens, however, is more interested in identifying and categorizing enduring temporal structures, as evident in his significant work on "chronotopes," identifying different genres of time. From a "macro" view, carnival can easily be construed as a "feast before the fast," a sanctioned period of upheaval that simply works to support dominant culture. Warner, however, offers a different understanding of the ludic by looking at its moments and affective circulations from a queer, feminist perspective. As Sedgwick suggests, the queer "current," as a temporal force, exists in the here and now. Its individual moments, although ephemeral even

nonreproductive, have their own forceful impact. In order to uncover a queerness in and through time it becomes necessary to shift attention to the theatrical moment and away from "macro" notions of time and preoccupations with Shakespeare's longevity and cultural authority that characteristically render queer nuances, readings, and perspectives invisible.

Shakespeare seems to show his own preoccupation with time and time telling in the theatrical moment, sounding a clock or giving mention to a sounding clock about 40 times throughout his dramas and stating the word "o'clock" 46 times (Wagner 50). In addition, there are numerous mentions of the hourglass, sundial, and even the appearance of a character bearing Time's name. Matthew Wagner's recent monograph, *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time* (2012) offers a useful starting point for unpacking the characteristics of Shakespearean time. Wagner examines the role of time in Shakespearean drama and in theatrical practice, providing an overview of critical accounts on Shakespearean time dating back fifty years. Through this survey, it becomes readily apparent that any consensus about Shakespearean time centers on its lack of consistency or its disjointed nature. Wagner's argument, in sum, is that time in Shakespearean performance has three main characteristics: it is "material, thick, and in continual and varying forms of disharmony" (2). Time being material suggests it has a bodily presence in varying forms, whereas "thick" time articulates the way the present moment can be "weighted by the past and the future." Lastly, Wagner identifies Shakespearean time as being "dissonant and 'rough,' rather than smooth and harmonious," what could otherwise be called a "time out of joint" (5).

Wagner suggests that Shakespeare's disparate time schemes might be the product of his historical moment in which conceptualizations of time were themselves shifting. One large change he details was the rising prevalence of clocks as household items during the period, whether mechanical clocks, such as the table clock, the lantern clock, and the turret clock, or the portable time piece, which dates from 1530 (51, 53). Before the Renaissance, time was measured by the water clock or hourglass, which did not divide time into minutes and seconds. Time, then, wasn't punctiform or nearly as exacting. Wylie Sypher describes the clock as "an instrument that brought a new consciousness of discontinuous time into Renaissance experience" (67). It gave a sense of being "in" or "out" of time. A similarly discontinuous understanding of time is evident in Shakespearean drama's dissonant and rough time schemes, which reflect both a poetic understanding of time and a temporally disjointed historical moment.

Moreover, two different calendars were in use concurrently in Europe during the Renaissance: : the "new style" Gregorian calendar introduced in 1582, a Counter-Reformation tool to foreground the superiority of the Catholic church, and the "old style" which remained in England for politico-religious motives. These reflect another layer of disjointed time. Steve Sohmer uses these calendars as a way to consider the illogical time schemes embedded in *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*. In *Othello* inconsistencies abound; to start, the Moor suspects he has been cuckolded by Michael Cassio and his wife, yet Cassio did not come with her from Venice and only arrived that morning, Lodovico makes an untimely arrival in 4.1, and Cassio is to have kept away from Bianca for a whole week, yet dialogue claims he'd only been in in Cyprus for one day.[5] Time-schemes

[5] For more temporal inconsistencies, see Sohmer's "The 'Double-Time' Crux" 214-16.

in *Romeo and Juliet* are similarly obscure. Commentators struggle to determine the exact number of days that span the play, the date of Nurse's earthquake, the occasion for Old Capulet's "old accustomd feast" (1.2.20), or how the Chorus promises "two houres traffic of our Stage" (Pro. 12) for a play that easily runs near three hours.[6] Sohmer provides a compelling solution to many of the plays's temporal riddles by relating these to the shifting Renaissance and liturgical calendars after the Gregorian calendar reform of 1582.

With respect to *Romeo and Juliet*, Sohmer speculates it was set in 1582, the shortest year in Europe in 2000 years, and "calendrically the most confused since 46 BC" (408). Shakespeare conscientiously packs the play with post-Gregorian reform inconsistencies of time and the mention of out-of-date saints's days. He seems to conscientiously be articulating some of the challenges of living in-between time schemes, using these as poetic fuel for the tragedy's concentrated sense of time, paralleling the fervency of the young lovers. *Othello*, on the other hand, takes place in both Venice and Cyprus, the former running on the "new style" calendar and the latter, in accordance with the Eastern Orthodox Church, on the "old style" as a way to reject Roman reform. One may sense two time-schemes, a "double time," running concurrently in *Othello* because historically, between Venice and Cyprus, this would have been the case. Time could be literally mixed-up as dueling calendars converge, yet this sense of disjointed time could also reflect an irrational Othello whose powerful emotions drive misconceptions. Sohmer

[6] The most well known solutions have involved the notion of "double time" first started in the mid-nineteenth century by John Wilson writing as "Christopher North" (*Blackwood's Magazine*, Nov. 1849, Apr. 1850, May 1850). In this view, conflicting time schemes concurrently run, one being "true time" or historical time, and the other a subjective view of time that reflects the main characters' torrent of passion. Raymond Chapman expands on this theory, applying it to Shakespeare's mixing of short and long-time references in *Romeo and Juliet*, which enhance the effect of "double time" (372).

describes a Shakespeare who wasn't merely interested in time poetically, but as a man with a "profound interest in chronometry" who "possessed a most exacting knowledge of the rival calendars of the Renaissance" (428).

The temporally mixed-up, asynchronous time in Shakespeare's plays could be, at least in part, a byproduct of the temporally mixed-up, asynchronous world in which he lived, a world in which time was literally changing. England, in defiance of Roman practice and in contrast with continental Europe, conscientiously lagged behind, maintaining a system readily deemed scientifically inferior (Sohmer "*Othello*" 217). This leads Sohmer to speculate as to whether the opening lines of *Romeo and Juliet* announcing the "two houres traffic of our Stage" might even mark an insider's joke, since early modern audience members would have known how time in London was out of synch with "fair Verona where we lay our scene" (1.1.2). In addition, this was coupled with the prominence of the clock, which drastically altered the organization and ordering of the day. As Wagner describes, the invention of the clock had far reaching effects, such as aligning the cosmic and the scientific order (53). Early modern England reflected a shifting socio-political, religious, and even scientific terrain, embodied in its temporal discord.

Whether deemed poetical or historical—though arguably a conflation of the two—Shakespeare's disharmonious time schemes allow for a reconceptualization of modern regimes of linear progress. It offers a certain queer potential by enacting a "time out of joint." Recent scholarship has pointed towards the queerness of Shakespearean time, yet the majority of this has not focused on the role of theatrical performance or

theatrical time.[7] Though not invested in queer theory or cultural politics, in the final chapter of *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time,* Wagner foregrounds the importance of live performance in the creation and dissemination of Shakespeare's embodied, "rough," disharmonious time scheme. He argues that this may allow for cognitive shifts as "Shakespeare heightens the audience's sense of temporality, and primes the audience for thinking about time" (100).

The queerness of these disharmonious temporalities in performance is my focus here. I approach notions of time differently from previous scholarship considering performativity in theatrical performance, such as Worthen and Roach, by considering theater's own mechanics of time, how it creates its own temporal rhythms that may synch with or challenge commonly experienced time schemes and, in particular, the powerful rhythms of straight time. This shifts the emphasis away from concerns over performativity towards questions regarding the mechanisms and sign-systems that constitute and *create* the experience of time for audience members. This lens, focused on

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[7] Madhavi Menon's *Unhistorical Shakespeare* develops the notion of *unhistoricism* or *homohistory* as a means to "challenge the historicist investment in a progressive chronology according to which the stable present becomes the point from which to map an unstable past" (3). Menon's edited collection *Shakesqueer* (2011) provides a few readings engaging with issues of queer time (see Berry, O'Malley, Morrison, Howie). Prominent queer theorists such as Edelman and Freeman have used Shakespearean literature to develop their theoretical notions about the function of queer time. Edelman's "Queerness in a Time That's Out of Joint" offers a reading of Hamlet through his theory of anti-futurity and the figure of The Child. In *Time Binds*, Freeman draws upon *Hamlet* and *Midsummer* to locate a "*pleasurably* visceral sense of temporal and historical dissidence" (14; see 14-18). David Peterson's scholarship on clowning and Shakespeare has uncovered a way queer time may relate to contemporary performance practice. Drawing upon Halberstam's celebration of queer failure, Peterson locates the contemporary clowning practice of the "flop" within *Macbeth* adaptation *500 Clown Macbeth* as a way to reimagine social and political power structures through "playing" with authority (30-72).

the theatrical moment and the mechanics of time, allows me to uncover another layer of queer potential within the theatrical forum: how theater's divergent temporalities prime audiences not just to think about time, but also to *feel* time as a form of critique.

Phenomenology, Affect, and Theatrical Time

My argument develops from the premise that theatrical performance can allow audiences to imagine and experience temporalities that lie outside of the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction, longevity, and linear progress and productivity. It can provide a different way of envisioning a life outside of straight time, what José Esteban Muñoz describes as a "structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see beyond…the present" (1). But how does theatrical time shift perceptions of time? Moreover, what are the byproducts of these temporal shifts and how do they relate to queer theory?

This section will introduce five particular points regarding theatrical time that will be developed further in subsequent chapters. **First, theater works to construct an audience member's experience and understanding of time.** Bert O. States describes how theater "plucks human experience from time" and "imitates the timely in order to remove it from time" (*Great Reckonings* 50). Theater has the capacity to restructure time, or as States describes, "give time a shape." It can return to an historical moment in the past, imagine years into the future, speed up in a frenetic farce, or slow down in an Absurdist drama. As the character of Time in *The Winter's Tale* indicates, time can be quite literally embodied within the theatrical forum, but also shifted in "swift passage…O'er sixteen years" (4.1.5-6). In his treatise on theater phenomenology, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms*, States describes Shakespeare's masterful effect on the

experience of time, how "in a stroke he has altered our customary relationship to time and space" (48). For his part, Herbert Blau centralizes the role of telling time in the theatrical forum; he writes, "whether prescribed or felt out, the determining of time is a universal of performance" (252). This rendering of time plays an important role since it determines "the relations between what seems…familiar and what strange, the artificial and the natural, the sense of just being of being someone…" (163-64). Time in the theater is ultimately compared to one's "natural" sense of time, supporting this as familiar—as realistic drama might—or challenging it as foreign, unusual, or strange.

This leads to **point two: the construction of time in the theater is a political engagement.** Theatrical realism, as Wagner asserts in *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time* only works if time looks "something like our time, the time of daily life" (120). The time of realistic theater replicates itself, mirrors itself after straight time, as it "favours a particular kind of order" in which "time is regulatory, a source of structure, consistency, and coherence." Yet, theatrical time can also conscientiously serve a political purpose by breaking expectations. Elin Diamond in *Unmaking Mimesis* explores this temporal engagement within feminist performance art. Specifically, she considers how performance time can be transformed into "a shifting time-sense" through a dialectical mode of theatrical time that can give "the performative 'present; the sense of the historical without invoking teleology (linearity, fulfillment)" ("Affect" 142).[8] In this model, forgotten objects of the past are "blasted out of history's continuum," working to break up myths of progress through their disjunctive work (146-7). Theatrical time can be

[8] Diamond's dialectical images is reminiscent of Elizabeth Freeman's notion of temporal drag. For more about dialectical images and the politics of theatrical time, see Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis*, Chapter 6, "Performance and Temporality: Feminism, Experience, and Mimetic Transformation," pp. 142-179.

given a shape that conscientiously breaks with realism's ordered account of time and teleological issues of linearity and fulfillment.

Third, theatrical time foregrounds a subjective experience of time. Theater is situated at the thresholds of time between objective, impersonal "clock" time and subjective, personal, phenomenological time schemes. Edmund Husserl would refer to theater's capability to 'bracket' objective time, "thereby stripping objective time of its reality" (Wagner 17). This helps audiences to experience how clock time is not necessarily—or even at all—'real' time, in spite of its prominence in our day-to-day lives (Wagner 18). Wagner argues that theater provides us a "sharpened awareness" of both time schemes, objective and subjective (18). This indicates a cognitive shift that can be gleaned from experiencing theatrical time, perhaps breaking down unilateral views of time's "nature." This may also shift the emphasis away from the purely semiotic aspects of time, such as, for instance, the appearance of a clock on stage, to the phenomenological, first-hand experience of time or temporal shifts. Echoing Blau, this foregrounds what States calls the "phenomenological attitude" by which one can "see through the film of familiarity" (States in Reinelt and Roach 27). Philosopher Bruce Wilshire would describe phenomenology as "the systematic attempt to unmask the obvious" (31). It can "purge" teleology, a view of time as minutes that "hasten to their end," or as States describes: "the menace of successiveness…falling haphazardly through time into accident and repetition" (*Great Reckonings* 49).

Fourth, shifting time shifts bodies. Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes how from a phenomenological standpoint "to perceive is to render oneself present to something through the body" (138). By moving away from objective time, theater "shapes" time in

ways that can be both consciously perceived and viscerally experienced by audience members. Time in the theater can be represented or embodied, like the character of Time in *The Winter's Tale*, which does both. But time is also *felt*. Shakespearean scansion provides one basic way to illustrate how rhythm, an aspect of time-telling, affects feeling. The scansion of the witches in *Macbeth*, for instance, often inverts the rhythm of the iambic pattern. This shift sends a sense that something is "off" with these characters. It reflects their alterity while assisting in giving them a foreboding presence. For an audience member, experiencing such a temporal shift, here with a normalized rhythm being reversed, can produce an autonomic physical response to the environmental change, which will be referred to as affect. Patricia Clough defines affect as a "substrate of potential bodily responses, often automatic responses" that can occur in an overwhelming and spontaneous way, working as Clough further describes, "in excess of consciousness" (2). This can represent a wide range of feelings of surprise, excitement, laughter, or even fear and disgust, affecting the observer viscerally. This may end up taking the shape of an emotion if the feeling enters the subject's conscious awareness and is articulated as a recognizable emotional state. Yet affect marks a realm in which the "narration of conscious states, are subtracted" (2).

Many feminist and queer theorists such as Lauren Berlant, Ann Cvetkovich, Sara Ahmed, Love, and Muñoz have been particularly interested in affect's political power since it is linked to the nebulous, even deconstructive realm in excess of consciousness, which allows affect to challenge containment while aligning or motivating bodies in powerful, even surprising ways. As Diamond describes, affect "revel[s] in a body's capacity to act, engage, and to connect outside of conscious intention" ("Affect" 260).

This opens up flexible routes of circulation, which due to their powerful, preconscious nature can destabilize subjects and realign bodies with bodies, objects, and space. Brian Massumi refers to this as "intensities" that pass impersonally "[from] body to body, human, non-human, part-human and otherwise" (Seigworth and Gregg 1). Additionally, affect's resistance to closure and confinement has particular appeal to many queer theorists interested in challenging normative binaries, whether this pertains to gender, sexuality, or even time, as in the youth/adulthood divide. They hold the promise of challenging teleology and "straight time" through what Clough calls their "non-linear complexity," a byproduct of its function in excess of consciousness (2).

In sum, theatrical time shapes time **(1)**, giving it the political potential to reaffirm or challenge normative modes of experiencing and representing time **(2),** while shaping subjective experiences of time **(3)** in ways that can generate bodily change and affect **(4)**. The fifth and final point is cumulative: **queerness works at the thresholds of theatrical time and the body**. Shifting time—and subsequently bodies—in the theater can serve a queer potential by opening up a new realm of temporal possibilities and with it the *feeling* of life lived to a different, more supple temporal rhythm. Queerness offers a flexible subjectivity that can be taken on and experienced in and through theatrical performance and not only by queer "subjects." It follows from the notion of queer reading strategies that can be readily adopted by a range of theater participants, yet as an embodied experience it challenges the notion of "reading" itself through phenomenological and bodily experience. As a countercurrent, it opens up a realm of possibilities, gaps, lapses, excesses of meaning. It can work in and through the theatrical moment, ungrounding bodies through affective and desirous circulations that are at once powerful and

indeterminate. Existing in this nebulous way, the "work" of queerness can embody its own critique of normative modes of productivity, development, and growth, while pointing towards the vitality and richness of experience outside the bounds of straight time.

Beyond any conscious, cognitive shifts, as Wagner suggests, queer time in the theater "works" principally through the body. This relates to what Garner has described as a "post-Brechtian theater" that goes against a Brechtian "strategic estrangement of the body as phenomenal site" ("Post-Brechtian Anatomies" 150). Instead, a phenomenologically grounded, even foregrounded model would suggest a reevaluation of the "political" that goes "against the Brechtian grain" (148). This works by "appropriating the body as locus of sensory interchange with its natural and social environments, and by investigating the subjective contours of this embodied world" (148). Techniques founded after Bertolt Brecht, as Diamond explains, "show how 'reality' and history are produced, like theatrical illusion, by economic, political, and (I must add), gender effects that only appear to be fixed and eternal" (146). According to Diamond, the Brechtian spectator finds "pleasure…in noting differences between past and present and within our contemporary moment" (145). The suggestion here is that the Brechtian theatrical model is more cognitively bound, whereas a post-Brechtian theater maintains the body as phenomenal site and as a focal point during the theatrical exchange. The contemporary Shakespearean productions analyzed in this study all offer a way to foreground the bodies of both participants and spectators, namely through immersive techniques and heightened imaginative engagement. Like a post-Brechtian model of engagement, the whole body—affective and cognitive capacities together—

becomes a primary source of political critique. Propeller's *The Winter's Tale* captures a sense of this movement towards corporeality and post-Brechtian aesthetic. The all-male cast harbors its political power less in its deconstructive capabilities—being able to "read" gender differently—than in its capability to allow its audience to take imaginative leaps across gender and time. Corporeality offers a primary source of political engagement, as the gender shift in the final moments embodies a critique to the imperative to "hastily lead away," a moment that finds its political power and theatrical enjoyment through its abrupt turn of the narrative's trajectory and, consequently, the audience's affective experience.

Some queer theorists have picked up on theater's temporal manipulation at work. Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Space* opens up a way to think about the queer potential of theater's manipulation of time. In the introduction, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* is offered as a challenge to straight time, referred to as a "treatise on the feeling of time wasted" (7). This reflects the closing sentiments of Leo Bersani's anti-relationist classic, *Homos,* in which Beckett's work, coupled with Jean Genet's, are referred to as models of queer oppositionality through their "cult of failure…and waste," which stands in opposition to normative notions of productivity (181). The theatrical forum is hereby able to embody a Marxist critique through its enactment of time in the play. With theater's capacity to "give time a shape," principally through a bracketing of objective time, the theatrical forum can subvert the normative logic of theater as a place of bourgeois productivity. In Beckett's play, this occurs through shifting the gears on straight time and stalling linear narrative development. Halberstam indicates the cognitive effects of manipulating time, that it "makes visible the formlessness of time,"

but also how these shifts are articulated through bodily experience, "the *feeling* of time wasted" (7, my emphasis). Garner calls Beckett's theater "intensely embodied," indicating not only the performers but also the audience's experience ("Still Living Flesh" 449; also see 455, 457). *Godot* throws a wrench in the progress of straight time, resulting in a "rather painful experience" for the audience members as they too discover, like Vladimir and Estragon, the experience of being trapped in a cycle of waiting (449).

Theater's capability to manipulate time, foreground subjective experience, and resonate in bodies allows theatrical time to become an embodied critique. It responds to Marx's claim in "Theses on Feuerbach" that the "chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism" is that "the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object or of contemplation*, but not as *sensuous human activity, practice*, not subjectively" (13). A post-Brechtian model centralizes the role of the sensuous body. This turn from a cognitive to a more corporeal-minded political theater is demonstrated by Diamond's own "affective" turn; in *Unmaking Mimesis*, Diamond studies feminist performance artists Deb Margolin, Robbie McCauley, and Peggy Shaw to develop her notion of dialectical images. More recently, she has revisited these same artists to study their contemporary works, now foregrounding the political promise of affect, which generates the potential to "bring bodily life into present awareness" ("Affect" 263).

There is a certain contradiction to the generative, yet deconstructive "work" of manipulating time in the theater, which can assist in giving it force. Its incarnation, embodied by Vladimir and Estragon, is a defiance of normative notions of reproduction; Beckett's *Waiting* stalls progress, yet the suggestion made by Halberstam, and echoed by Garner, is that this results in affective "products" nonetheless, as bodies challenge

engrained notions of time. This inverts capitalist logic since an "inactivity," rather than a classic model of productivity, creates its own surprising surplus of feeling. It defies a hetero-logic of time, which would indicate that "stalling" progress should concurrently stall its products.

Within the context of theatrical performance, I refer to this dynamic interplay of time, the body, and queer critique as "embodying idleness": a queer temporal force that opens up affective, imaginative, and often desirous circulations though its dissonant time schemes and embodied moments of "unformed, unstructured potential" (Clough 13). This study finds embodying idleness, both its theatrical pleasure and queer critique, as central to the mainstream contemporary theatrical production considered here. Each of the productions find their own way to challenge normative modes of time through foregrounding the bodies of performers and participants. They point towards a way Shakespearean drama in performance can embody a different, vibrant conceptualization of what idleness means by foregrounding the body, emotion, and imaginative and desirous circulations within the "now" of the theatrical moment.

The Cultural Politics of Idleness

Embodiments of idleness in performance, which will be further unpacked in the following chapter, can reflect an activity, motion, and vibrancy that challenges modern, derogatory notions of the term as well as the industry/idleness binary divide. This section will provide a brief cultural history of idleness from its ambivalent roots in the early modern period, which allowed for a certain flexibility around the notion, through to its

increasingly negative characterization during the Age of Industrialization, as it was further derided in order to esteem productivity.

Broadly speaking, idleness is a state of inactivity or a period of not working or unemployment, yet it can also mark a subversive mode of embodied temporality that challenges regimes of linear progress. A useful distinction can be drawn between the notion of leisure and idle behavior. Michel Foucault once described idleness as a "sort of deviation" "in our society where leisure is the rule" ("Of Other Spaces" 25). Idle activity situates itself as a challenge to productivity on multiple fronts. Leisure pursuits assist capitalist movements, whereas idleness marks a subversive practice as it thwarts economic development, marking what Foucault describes as "rebellion—the worst form of all" (*Madness* 56). Scholar Unhae Langis in his article, "Leisure, Idleness, and Virtuous Activity in Shakespearean Drama," identifies leisure as a privileged term modeled after the Greek *skolé* referring to the freedom from occupation afforded to the rich. Even then, "time off" for the rich or ruling class often falls into specific sanctioned times of leisure or festivity. Idleness can certainly exist within the wealthy or noble class, since individuals may still fail to follow time schemes that maximize productivity. A tension in and around this is evident in *Henry IV, Part 1* in the relationship between Falstaff and Hal. As Prince Henry describes, Falstaff has no need to know the time of day because of his sordid affairs, "Unless hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping-houses, and the blessed sun himself a hot wench in flame-colored taffeta" (1.2.5-8). Whereas for the Prince this riotous time will come to a close, rejected when he assumes the throne, Falstaff embodies

an anti-productivity that continually challenges straight time, an idleness that he is unwilling to let go.[9]

Walter Benjamin provides a further way to distinguish leisure from idleness. Idleness, he suggests, "seeks to avoid any sort of tie to the idler's line of work, and ultimately to the labor process in general. That distinguishes it from leisure" (AP 803). It also has a different temporality according to Benjamin, since it "has in view an unlimited duration, which fundamentally distinguishes it from simple sensuous pleasure, of whatever variety" (AP 806). In *Lazy Idle Schemers*, Gregory Dobbins's book on idleness, decolonization, and modern Irish literature, he draws upon Benjamin's theories to argue that idleness usefully interrupts progressive historicist teleologies. Dobbins notes how Benjamin's attempt to theorize the "labor" of the flâneur, the idle stroller celebrated in the works of Baudelaire, poses a difficulty: "Such speculation proves inconclusive, however, as ultimately idleness cannot be understood as a form of labor at all; yet it cannot be understood as a form of leisure either" (24). Idleness inhabits a different temporality, which "refusing any connection to the labor process as far as possible…strives to inhabit a perpetual present without work." Falstaff's perpetual present of idleness, then, would not consist of "breaks" from work, so much as a refusal of labor-time entirely.

Idleness is also commonly associated with marginalized populations. It becomes synonymous with "class and gender inferiors" (Langis 1), the elderly, the rogue adolescent, the physically or mentally disabled, or those in subcultural queer

[9] Hal finds opportunity to learn from these periods of idleness, see Abigail Scherer ("Early Modern Idleness" 77-109). Unlike with Falstaff, this represents a period of gestation for Hal, ultimately assisting him in his political labours.

communities who are unable or unwilling to follow "straight" paths of reproductivity or progress. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault describes how provisions against idleness targeting vagabonds, beggars, and the mentally ill were developed in the sixteenth century and continued throughout Europe through the beginning of the nineteenth century. These individuals would be placed in "Houses of Confinement" to ensure against agitation and uprising, but more importantly to ensure that these individuals were contributing to the labor force (50-1). Specific hospitals and confinement houses would become associated with certain labor tasks, and the prisoners or patients would be forced into working for a fourth of an actual earned wage. For these vagabonds and mentally ill, labor was viewed as a cure to their central ailment: idleness. As Foucault describes, "labor did not seem linked to the problems it was to provoke; it was regarded, on the contrary, as a general solution, an infallible panacea, a remedy to all forms of poverty" (55). Here, idleness relates to a marginalized population that fails to support the labor system and becomes a subordinate or inferior class. Along related lines, Foucault, drawing upon scientific books from the seventeenth century, suggests that female hysteria was considered in part a problem of idleness, with women being less susceptible to the ailment when working (149). It is laxity—internal resistance and lack of moral density—that allows for the penetration of the disorder, "which explains why so few women are hysterical when they are accustomed to a hard and laborious life, yet strongly incline to become so when they lead a soft, idle, luxurious, and lax existence" (145). In both of these instances, work expunges/cures the disease of idleness associated with ailing, marginalized persons.

Karl Marx provides some additional insights related to idleness within his discussion of "free time" and the pressures against it within the capitalist system.[10] Centrally, Marx recognized the importance of free time in a similar fashion as the Greeks, however he understood that the premodern system would afford time off to the wealthy only through extra work by the slave class; the ancients, Marx writes, "may perhaps have excused the slavery of one person as a means to the full human development of another" (quoted in Booth 10). Within the modern, capitalist structure, Marx believed that the meaning, if not value of free time was entirely emptied out; W.J. Booth describes Marx's premodern and modern distinction as follows:

> That unbound or free time was the vessel for human development, and ancient political economy accordingly looked at economic activity as serving the need for free time, time to be devoted to citizenship, philosophy, or, in general, to noneconomic pursuits. By contrast, modern political economy, reflecting the dominance of economic value over other types of values or social goods, conceives of time as surplus or necessary, profit or wages, and of time not engaged in production as wasted or, at best, as preparative for still greater productive exertions. (19)

Marx's wish for "free time" inspired by the Greek model serves as a utopian longing within a capitalist economy ruled—as Marx describes—by the factory's "despotic bell" (in Booth 19). Free time would allow for personal growth and development and unlike leisure would not work to support economic goals. It supports personal development

[10] E. P. Thompson's essay "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism" illustrates how the transition to a more industrialized form of capitalism shifted work habits dramatically and, in turn, workers's experience and understanding of time.

allowing independent activity to foster self-definition within the sphere of the political and social.[11] Capitalism, according to Marx, usurped time, meanwhile translating free time into a lack of productivity, "wasted" time, or down time used to ultimately support more labor. Either way, all time within this economic system was redefined in relationship to the drive to create new surplus value. An "economy of time" came to dominate humans and human activity to such an extreme that Marx describes it in *The Poverty of Philosophy* with the poignant phrase: "time is everything, man is nothing" (57). A system dedicated to the economic usages of time, such as minimizing production time, was also a process that bound the time of humans more than any other. Although Marx does not use the term idleness specifically, its definition is kindred to Marx's notion of "wasted" time. Within this economy of time, it is marked as a dead weight on the capitalist system.

Unsurprisingly, Foucault and Marx both identify an increasingly negative viewpoint towards idleness fostered in and through the development of the modern Western economy. This reached its height during the Age of Industrialization, which made supporting labor and degrading idleness a conscientious imperative. William Hogarth's series of plates, *Industry and Idleness* (1747), presents a useful way to illustrate how the two concepts were positioned in opposition, creating a binary relationship that favored progressive regimes. The two apprentices depicted in the series, the slacker Tom Idle and industrious Francis Goodchild, start off working as weavers in

[11] Contemporary queer theorists have worked to challenge normative patterning of human development. Halberstam, in *Gaga Feminism*, troubles the youth/adult binary. Similarly, Katherine Stockton Bond troubles the notion of "growing up" by positing that the queer child (and the child *as* temporally queer) opens up avenues of "sideways growth. Chapter 3 in this project will reconsider the notion of "sideways growth" within the context of theatrical metaphor's "sideways" motion.

the same shop. In the first plate, as their namesakes imply, Goodchild works away diligently, while Mr. Idle leans upon his loom, likely asleep and intoxicated by whatever is in his oversized mug nearby (image 3). In the next two plates, as Francis performs good Christian practice singing hymns at church, Tom plays in the church yard. Then, as Francis's prosperity grows and he becomes a wealthy sheriff married to the master's daughter (plates 4, 6, 8), Mr. Idle's penchant for prostitutes gets the better of him as one sells him out to the police for robbery and murder (plate 9), leading to his execution (plate 11). The final plate of the series heralds Mr. Goodchild as the newly appointed mayor of London as he rides in a carriage with hundreds of adoring onlookers (image 4). Hogarth's lesson is quite simple: industrious behavior leads to success, fame, and prosperity, whereas idleness leads to criminality, destitution, and death.

One of the loudest—and influential—cries that surfaced during the period was Adam Smith who, in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), finds man to be a laboring animal above and before all else. Scholars Sarah Jordan and Richard Adelman each delve into the effects of Smith's economy of labor and, as well, the effects of foregrounding productivity—and indicting idleness—on literary works during the period. Jordan's *Anxieties of Idleness* describes how idleness became an important quality against which to define Britishness in the eighteenth century. Adelman's *Idleness, Contemplation and the Aesthetic: 1750-1830* works from a similar premise, but argues that several authors during the period supported a model of idle contemplation, deliberately paradoxical intellectual activity that was idle, yet nonetheless "work-like in many important ways" (8). This established a time scheme for the practice of intellectual and artists pursuits, providing an elevated reconfiguration of idle time.

Eighteenth-century accounts of Shakespeare's own "labor" reflect an interest in reconfiguring notions of idleness/industry in a related way. With Shakespeare's "products," his significant theatrical contributions, already readily available, concern shifted to the nature of his productivity: whether this was effortless, thereby suggesting a natural genius, or the work of a scrupulous craftsman. Tensions over the nature of Shakespeare's labor are captured perhaps best in the debates regarding the first Folio claim that "his mind and hand went together, and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot on his papers" (Heminges and Condell viii), and Ben Jonson's heated rebuttal: "would he had blotted a thousand" (35). Eighteenth-century critics took this issue quite seriously, with Alexander Pope claiming that "there never was a more groundless report," citing Shakespeare's alterations of source texts as proof of his revision practice (Rogers 187).[12]

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[12] These considerations over idleness/industry may be usefully extended to consider Shakespeare's editors and their editorial process as well. Samuel Johnson is an interesting figure in this regard since he characterized himself as an arch-procrastinator and also as author of the *Idler*. Yet, he was also known for his industrious labor for his painstaking work on the *Dictionary*, a project that became so long overdue that it became subject of satire. Johnson critiqued predecessors Pope, Lewis Theobald, and William Warburton for having "laboured with the greatest diligence" in the emendation of "corrupt passages," "which has occasioned the most arrogant ostentation, and excited the keenest acrimony" (104). Also, there was Johnson's objection to Pope's characterization of "the dull duty of an editor" in his *Preface to Shakespeare*. Pope and Theobald's quarrels circulated around similar debates, as Theobald was characterized as a reader who "sees hairs and pores, examines bit by bit,' while Pope's editorial swiftness was framed as a byproduct of amateurism not mastery (Sutherland 202). Special thanks to Fiona Ritchie, Philip Smallwood, and Jack Lynch for their insights into how idleness and industry debates may have played out through characterizations of Shakespeare and his editorial process during the period.

Concerns over Shakespeare's industry surface in Samuel Johnson's *Preface* regarding the difference between the comedies, which he "seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve," and the tragedies, which "with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity" (69). Johnson later adds how, "In tragedy, his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more" (72-3) in comedy, however, "he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature" (69). When Shakespeare lets his "natural" faculties work he seems to rise to greatness, but "whenever he solicits his invention or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity" (73). Artistic genius, when made manifest, seems to reflect a categorization separate from regular labor and elevated from laborious pursuits. This supports Adelman's argument regarding "idle contemplation" during the period as a mode of "idle" yet highly productive artistic and intellectual gestation.

Fundamentally, Shakespeare's labor embodied a contradiction. As Johnson acknowledges in his critique of *Richard II*, "success in work of invention is not always proportionate to labour" (452). This logic emphasizes how Shakespeare, at his best, could be thought of as coupling a high degree of productivity with an effortlessness and ease, allowing the work to pour forth from him in such a natural way that it does not seem like "work" at all, or, as described by Johnson in the comparison of Shakespeare's genres: "his tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct" (69). The category of the eighteenth-century artistic genius seemed to lift above industry/idleness debates. Its superior status is very much a byproduct of the economy of time and its system of valuation: a "natural" genius, like Shakespeare, defies this logic, producing great "works"

without the labor, or as Johnson suggests, while in repose. Shakespeare offers a paradoxical way to merge idleness and industry, one that is also reflected in the Shakespearean performances studied here, which each embody idleness as a type of ironic activity, motion, or circulation.

Overview

This project takes up the question of how Shakespearean representations and enactments of idleness, as manifest in the text and, especially, through contemporary performance, challenges simplistic binary accounts of labor and idleness. Instead of esteeming essentialist categories, such as "natural" genius, idleness foregrounds the bodies and phenomenological experience of its theatrical participants—and simply that. It allows for a curious coupling of opposites: a vibrant force of non-reproductive motion to be felt and even shared.

The subsequent chapters provide case studies of "embodying idleness" in contemporary Shakespearean performance. They analyze material ranging from comedy to tragedy and from all-male Shakespeare to the recently popularized immersive adaptations. They locate a temporal queerness in the most curious of places: within mainstream models of Shakespearean performance, which look to appeal to the widest possible audience base, while satisfying commercial demands. The productions are linked by commercial success in this regard, with each generating long runs, remounts, or even international tours. Each production originated out of a large urban theatrical center, either London or New York, with many of the productions touring widely. The

"contemporary" time period of the productions range over a roughly fifteen-year period from the late nineties, with a couple of the productions still in open-ended runs to date.

The productions that are the focus of these case studies (Chapters 2-4) do not conscientiously engage with political concerns nor do they look to make overt political statements, with their focus being on creating enjoyable theatrical events that satisfy commercial demands. The queer theories of time that I draw upon in this study were all developed around the period these productions were being conceived and performed, yet there is no evidence of the producers and directors conscientiously engaging with these theories. Nonetheless, these theories provide a useful critical lens by which to investigate their manipulation of theatrical time. The overall suggestion is that queer time has played a central part in the widespread appeal and dynamic influence of these popular performances. While queer theoretical principles might be an unsurprising discovery within more overtly political models of theater, here I look to locate queerness, and particularly the concept of embodying idleness, as central to the *pleasure*—not just the politics—of theatrical production.

Methodologically, this study incorporates interviews, performance reviews, programs, images, and most importantly, first-hand experience of the productions. For Propeller's *Twelfth Night* production, a New York Public Library video recording of their 2007 Brooklyn, NY (Brooklyn Academy of Music) production was used in conjunction with first-hand observation (The Guthrie, Minneapolis, MN). As discussed earlier, time, like gender, reflects its own construct. Part of what I am interested in here is how time has been constructed in particular ways by these performances. One key consideration, echoing the work of States and Garner, is how time registers phenomenologically and

affectively through my own cognitive and sensuous experience. This plays a crucial role in unpacking how these productions manipulate time through various techniques, but also how this shaping of time affects how participants think and feel. My personal experience has been coupled with other first person accounts to consider the individualized ways of experiencing time within these events, as well as the broader, shared experiences.

Additionally, two of the case studies involve a participatory-based immersive model of theater that foregrounds the individualized experience of the patron. As described by Gareth White, immersive theater refers to the "widely adopted term to designate a trend for performances which use installations and expansive environments, which have mobile audiences, and which invite audience participation" (221). For these models of performance, first-hand accounts become exceedingly important, since patrons—to a large extent—craft their own experience as they individually roam the environment. Consequently, each patron encounters different performers, facets of the space, and even other patrons in different ways and at different times. Since there is no unified mise-en-scène, no two experiences are exactly alike. There are, therefore, challenges in researching this type of performance, since it is impossible to capture the range of ways to experience the event. By attending several different performances I have attempted to fill in some of these gaps, yet I acknowledge how this also shifts the way the performance registers, namely by taking away some of the elements of surprise. To counter this, I draw upon a combination of interviews, reviews, and personal observations to gain a sense of how the performances work on a subjective level. Additionally, I have collected detailed information about the more objective, technical aspects of the production, drawing from personal experience, interviews of attendees, and various

secondary sources. For one of these productions, *The Donkey Show* (Chapter 3), I have drawn extensively from first-hand experience of performing in the show for over six months, which has provided useful insights into the mechanics of immersive theater, or more particularly, into the mechanics of its theatrical time.

This project analyzes contemporary Shakespearean performance by developing a theoretical lens in and around the notion of embodying idleness, borrowing largely from queer theory and affect studies (Chapter 1). As intended, this is likely to read more as a piece of contemporary performance criticism or queer performance criticism than as a piece of "Shakespearean" scholarship per se. This project has made engaging with queer thinkers—and for that matter feminist scholars and people of color—a priority over drawing upon recognizable Shakespearean scholars. In doing so, the study looks to have a cross-disciplinary appeal that stretches beyond Shakespearean circles to include those interested in queer performance, contemporary theatrical performance, and the cultural politics of time.[13] Secondary Shakespearean sources have been limited to material necessary to unpack the mechanics of theatrical time, including scholarship relating to time in contemporary Shakespearean performance and time within the specific Shakespearean plays adapted in the case study productions. This project does not enter into debates about the "nature" of Shakespearean time so much as to identify a specific way by which Shakespearean performance enacts a queer mode of temporality. Also, although this project deals with several productions that could be considered adaptations, specific concerns over adaptation theory and Shakespearean adaptation fall outside the

[13] One way this project might be usefully expanded is by forging more links between queer theoretical thought and Shakespearean scholarship, hereby opening it up to a more "traditional" Shakespearean audience.

scope of the project. This could, however, mark a useful area for further development. Similarly, the issue of authority, a central preoccupation within Shakespearean cultural politics, has been largely avoided in order to focus away from a "macro" lens and onto particular moments of idleness, countercurrents that surface through a "micro" lens.[14]

This project looks to make a few key methodological moves. By turning to the notion of idleness, this project looks to find some critical maneuverability by reappropriating a derogatory term. In this way it patterns itself after the reappropriation of the homophobic slander, "queer," as a positive identification in queer political practice. It looks to retain the margins/marginalized as central to the conceptualization of idleness, inverting this derogatory mode of inactivity to harness a power in non-reproductive motion. This patterns itself off the practice of "reverse" discourse as set forth by Foucault in *The History of Sexuality*. In the nineteenth century, the development of "a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and 'psychic hermaphroditism' made possible a strong advance of social controls into this area of 'perversity'" (101). Consistent with Foucault's view of power/discourse relations, these practices can produce certain populations as marginal, working to affirm and strengthen the preexisting power structure. However, Foucault acknowledges that this development also allows new, dissenting voices to surface. As he describes, "it also made possible the formation of a 'reverse' discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturality' be acknowledged…" (101). Idleness,

[14] As a means for future development, this project could develop this link to Shakespearean scholarship on authority for fully, most particularly W.B. Worthen's scholarship.

although pejorative in its conception, can similarly open up a reverse discourse that critiques the regimes of social progress that drove its own formulation.

The concept of "embodying idleness" adds a new dimension to conceptualizations of queer Shakespeare by focusing on time, theatricality, and performance through a "micro" lens. This illustrates how Shakespearean performance and the theatrical forum fit into to a body of queer scholarship on time and productivity. Embodying idleness reworks social imperatives of progress or the sense that queer theory's only hope for change is through citations with a difference. This queer theoretical approach positions queer lives and histories as "bodies that matter": it uncovers a way the idle body in theatrical performance points towards non-reproductive pathways of pleasure and forms of motion, "development," and even ironic "growth." Shakespearean performance connects back to a pre-industrial period with a vibrant, even at times positively-charged view of idleness that provides a way to refigure the industry/idleness binary solidified in later years. This movement backwards marks its own queer critique of social imperatives of linearity and progressive futurity. Additionally, the early modern period as a locus of idleness, as the next chapter details, recuperates the early modern phlegmatic body associated with marginalized persons and in particular the female body. This allows for queer theory to recuperate the female body that third wave feminism eschews. By rereading idleness through Shakespearean performance, heralding the "queer" idle body, a more supple account of "productivity" develops, which values non-reproductive circulations, both affective and desirous, as trademarks of the theatrical forum, a virtual idle playground.

The first chapter, Shakespearean Idleness, offers a reconceptualization of idleness as a queer temporal force embodied in and through Shakespearean drama and performance. It begins by considering the notion of idleness within the early modern period, and then investigates its relationship to the marginalized female body and the cold, wet phlegmatic disposition. In order to explore how Shakespeare pleasurably redefines the idle body, the chapter alternates between readings of contemporary performance and Shakespearean plays, looking in particular at *Anthony and Cleopatra* and a raucous contemporary *Midsummer* adaptation by a New York-based theater company called The Hive. Cleopatra's idleness is described in the play as "sweating labour" suggesting a paradoxical type of productivity within a non-reproductive state, serving as an ideal metaphor for the idle body's affective "products" (1.3.94). Next, the chapter considers the "idle" moon and its associated nocturnal spaces to see how idleness, as temporality, also forges what Halberstam has called "queer space." Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the chapter highlights the relationship between idleness and the theatrical forum itself, using Cleopatra's theatricality and The Hive's theatricality as ways to redefine idleness as ironically generative and queer. The chapter concludes by drawing an important distinction between idleness as "wasted" or "empty" time and idleness in Shakespearean performance as vibrant motion.

The remaining three chapters each locates and explores a different mode of queer time in contemporary performance. The first of these chapters, "Gay Time," considers queer time in relation to affect and commercialism by examining another *Midsummer* adaptation, *The Donkey Show*. First mounted off-Broadway in 1999 and still running to date, Diane Paulus and Randy Werner's immersive production set in a nightclub modeled

after Studio 54 marks one of the longest running and commercially popular contemporary Shakespearean adaptations. The chapter first explores how the production creates a "gay time" for the circulation of pleasurable affects of gaiety. Various components, such as disco music or lighting effects, mark what Erin Hurley would describe as "feeling-labour," the production's attempt to solicit and manage the circulation of affect amongst its participants (Hurley 4). Club Oberon, the nightclub housing the event, serves as a virtual affect machine, translating the affective surplus into capital gain as part of a bourgeois leisure industry. Moreover, patrons are able to embody queer time through the production's surplus of gaiety and ludic environment. The following section, "Embodying Gay Time," considers the playful exploration of gender and queer sexuality that happens within Club Oberon's time schemes. Lastly, drawing upon theories by Dolan and Muñoz, it suggests how *The Donkey Show*'s reimagining and reliving an idealized disco past may reflect a utopian temporal movement: its gay time, gesturing backwards to propel forwards, embodies idleness as it denies the "presentness" of straight time.

Chapter 3, "Suspended Time," revisits Edward Hall's all-male troupe Propeller, which has been performing and touring internationally to critical acclaim since 1997. The company couples certain Renaissance stage conventions, such as the all-male company, minimalist set and properties, and an active audience-actor interaction, with a modern, physical aesthetic. The first half of the chapter investigates the company's production of *Twelfth Night* (2007, remounted 2012-13), examining the various ways the production embodied the stasis of suspension central to the world of Illyria and its inhabitants. I argue that the production embodies idleness through its recursive gestures and active

resistance to linear progress and productivity. The next section, drawing upon Stockton's notion of "growing sideways," considers how theatricality itself can embody the vibrant non-reproductive motion of Shakespearean idleness.

The final chapter, "Twisted Time," examines queer time in Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*, a contemporary adaptation that weaves a deconstructed narrative of *Macbeth* and Hitchcock's *Rebecca* in and around a sprawling gothic space. *Sleep No More* is a model of commercial, immersive mainstream entertainment that was first produced in London in 2003, remounted in Boston in 2009, and is to date currently engaged in an open-ended run in New York City at the McKinttrick Hotel in Chelsea (since 2011). This study builds upon recent scholarship on Punchdrunk (Worthen, Machon) by unpacking the company's mechanics of dis/orientation and how this relates to affect production and queer time. Building off Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*, it examines how *Sleep No More* twists patrons' "straight" orientations, both spatial and temporal. The second half draws upon Lee Edelman's controversial *No Future* to consider how the production, like *Macbeth* itself—"tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" (5.5.18)—creates a landscape that dissolves orientations towards the future. Unlike Edelman's polemical approach, Punchdrunk's brand of anti-futurity foregrounds the queer body or body queered, opening up the surprising pleasures, both affective and erotic, of orientation failure.

Ultimately, by exploring discordant time schemes, whether "gay," "suspended," or "twisted," this project looks to uncover a vibrant non-reproductive motion, a queer temporal force cultivated in and through the theatrical forum. These Shakespearean time warps embody a pursuit towards a more pleasurable, affectively rich way of being. They

invite us, as spectator-participants, to cruise outside of normative temporal bounds, resulting in arousing, sensuous, and imaginatively engaging encounters between bodies, space, and time. At their best, they allow the theatrical forum to offer what Sedgwick calls a "revelatory space," as they reshape one's sense of time to revitalize one's sense of being.

Chapter 1

Embodying Idleness

The Love-in-idleness, a flower known for its special amorous powers, is described in *Midsummer* as being struck by Cupid's fiery shaft, making the "little western flower—/Before, milk-white; now purple with love's wound" (2.1.166-7). It is the nectar from the pansy, placed in the eyes of the various lovers, which helps spark the series of turbulent romances in the forest. In The Hive's off-off Broadway version of the play (2011), the Love-in-idleness worked to unleash particularly queer desirous pursuits widely and wildly. When Titania woke from her "flowery bed" to gaze upon Bottom, her newfound love, she discovered him in a S & M inspired donkey costume. The fairy queen, played by a male actor, appeared herself as a sexy, yet imposing figure; she wore a sultry red evening dress, stood well over six feet tall in heels, and chased after her beloved mechanical with a voracious sexual appetite (image 1). Even the Changeling boy, cast as a youthful adult male actor, became a sort of sex toy to satisfy the libidinous lady in red (image 2). The "straight" pairs of lovers were mixed up in a rather queer way as well. For the production, actresses played Lysander and Hermia as two female characters, while male actors played Demetrius and Helena as two men. This figured the former as a lesbian couple who eagerly looked to marry within an Athenian court that stood in strict opposition, while the later couple consisted of a love-stricken effeminate gay male, Helena, frenetically chasing after a closet-case Demetrius. Then, with a few drops of the elixir, wild attractions emerged as the couples were drawn into new romantic alignments. This reached a climactic moment when the butch (female) Lysander began

stripping off her clothes to try to mount the shell-shocked (male) Helena, who grew increasingly terrified by lesbian Lysander's surprising affections.

With all its focus on gender play and same-sex pursuits, The Hive's production was unsurprisingly renamed *A Midsummer Night's (Queer) Dream* for its revival the following year (May 2012). Its queerness stemmed in large part from its non-traditional casting, but also by virtue of the special white and purple pansy struck by a "bolt of Cupid" (2.1.165), which sent (re)productivity into a frenetic tailspin. Within The Hive's *Midsummer* forest, a sort of idle playground, pleasurable affective and desirous circulations flowed between lover and lover and even between lovers and audience. Shakespearean idleness, here exemplified by the aftershocks of the Love-in-Idleness flower, offers a key conceptual term for this project; it links queer theoretical concerns over temporal progress to marginalized bodies and their energetic nonreproductive pursuits. This project suggests a reconceptualization of idleness by considering its embodiment in Shakespearean drama and performance as a queer temporal force. It will illustrate ways by which the idle body within Shakespearean theater refigures idleness from a "waste" of time into a resistance of straight time in paradoxical vibrant motion and (e)motion.

Within this project, I conscientiously look to explore the queer contours of idleness within Shakespearean performance, but to do so I have to resist jumping to certain conclusions about the role of idleness that might suggest that it routinely services a conservative agenda. Drawing upon my initial example, some might assume that The Hive's production's idle frivolity was merely a tactic—or even a ruse—to support a progressive, homoliberal message in favor of lesbian and gay marriage. I aim to look

beyond a containment reading of the production—or for that matter *Midsummer* as a play—that might dismiss the impact of its subversive qualities. One might assert, for example, that any idle activity by queer bodies in the *Midsummer* forest only functions to support the conservative ends of Shakespearean comic closure.[15] This could lend itself to a reductionist "stop-valve" reading of the theatrical event, viewing its cultural work solely as a feast to support later fast or as a sanctioned period of transgression that ultimately works only to contain rebellion.[16] While conservative dynamics certainly were at work, assuming this type of unilateral reading runs the risk of ironing out The Hive's *Midsummer*'s playfully deviant contours. This rather "straight" reading strategy ignores the messy non-reproductive products that make up idleness in practice and the queer bodies that are often at the helm.

Instead, this project looks to mine mainstream cultural products for their temporally subversive elements, recognizing that these often interplay with conservative impulses in dynamic ways. Michael Bronski in his forward to Halberstam's *Gaga Feminism* provides a useful way to reconcile how contradictory political gestures surface and often co-mingle in commercial entertainment forms: "[they] contain within them both a blueprint of dominant culture and its emphasis of stasis, norms, and convention, and a vivacious and joyful template for how we can transform the world into a place that no longer depends upon norms, and values maverick improvisations of difference and freedom" (Halberstam *Gaga* x). Bronski recognizes Halberstam's work as exemplary for

[15] For one such example, see Alan Sinfield, "Cultural Materialism and Intertextuality: The Limits of Queer Reading in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Two Noble Kingsmen*."
[16] For further discussion of this theory and its critiques, see Michael Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England*. New York: Methuen, 1985.

considering both of these facets. Other scholars of queer and feminist performance, such as Jill Dolan and Stacy Wolf, have illustrated the significance of thoroughly mining feminist or queer readings that may be latent at times. These readings can forge non-normative desires even within mainstream performances that may otherwise be deemed fairly conservative or "straight."[17] Focusing solely on a production or play's comic closure—or for that matter the sanctioned nature of the performance event— could problematically discredit or disregard aspects that are central to queer readership.

Additionally, scholarship by Alexander Doty (*Making Things Perfectly Queer*) and David Savran ("Disarticulation of Identity") has demonstrated how subversive elements, such as queer desire, while being carefully situated not to overstep into the realm of the transgressive, can actually be a great source of pleasure for mainstream audiences. A commercial production looking to appeal to the widest possible audience base will often contain both subversive and conservative elements that rub up against each other to produce a certain *frisson*. Laurence Senelick describes this dynamic as central to mainstream theater:

> Historically it (the theatre) has always walked this knife-edge: a socially sanctioned institution with roots in religion and myth, expected to clarify and convey the establishment ethos in the public forum; and a haven for outcasts, misfits and uncomfortable temperaments of all stripes, offering opportunities for self-expression that are otherwise unavailable. (9)

[17] See Jill Dolan's *The Feminist Spectator as Critique*, a foundational work on the process of feminist reading in performance, or Stacy Wolf's *A Problem like Maria: Gender Sexuality in the American Musical* which illustrates how popular American musicals generate queer meaning and offer queer pleasures for audiences (3-4).

According to Senelick, it is from the "oscillating tension between these two callings," that theater finds much of its excitement and pleasure. Instead of than focusing on whether a theatrical event services conservative or liberal agendas, Senelick inverts the paradigm to suggest that these opposing dynamics work to service the theatrical forum itself, offering a source of vitality. This chapter and greater project works from this approach: it considers idleness as a dynamic temporal function, a mechanics of *frisson*, embodied in and by the theatrical forum.

Early Modern Idleness

The early modern notion of idleness, according to Brian Vickers, had its own "preponderantly negative associations;" yet I will ague in this section that Shakespearean drama and performance allows for a way to reframe this understanding ("Leisure and Idleness" 134). Idleness could function as pejorative, but could also reflect an ambivalence similar to that found with the corresponding Roman term *otium.* Vickers finds *otium*'s closest equivalents to be the English terms "ease," "repose," or "idleness," with the latter carrying a particularly derogatory association during the Renaissance. Julia Bondanella describes *otium* as revealing "a long ambivalent history, with definitions ranging from the idleness that encourages vice to a condition in which one cultivates intellectual or spiritual gifts to achieve virtue" (14). According to the historian Peter Burke, for the Romans *otium* was associated with the seasonal withdrawal of the upper classes from the city to their country villas, a term that was a complementary opposite to political activity, or *negotium* (140). Yet for Tertullian and Jerome, and to Augustine and Ambrose to a lesser extent, idleness was a wholly pejorative term. It was the quote from

Saint Jerome's letters, "*fac et aliquid operis, ut semper te diabolus inveniat occupatum*," or "do something, so that the devil may always find you busy," that likely led to the popularized indictment of inactivity: "idle hands are the devil's workshop." This viewpoint is further substantiated biblically by the prohibitions against idle activity found in 2 Thessalonians 3:7-8 and 3:11, and 1 Timothy 5:13.

Within the early modern period, a certain ambivalence over the notion of idleness continued, with some viewing it as a vice that led to or was synonymous with sin and with others viewing it as an essential aspect of a humanist devotion to a life of study or a central aspect of religious practice. Burke's work on leisure in the early modern period describes the shifting and often contradictory notions concerning free time during the period, "where most people spoke of 'passing' time, the Reformers thought in terms of wasting it" (143). This identifies different demographics in the population that perpetuate contradictory notions of the same general concept of time. As Abigail Scherer explains in *Idleness in Early Modern Literature*, "the move to commend labor was consistent with the rise of certain theological principles that originate in the Protestant Reformation" (15). The Reformed Church viewed the Roman Church as encouraging "luxury and ostentation," so they placed increased value on "industry and thrift" (Tawney *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* in Scherer 15). Unsurprisingly, several pamphlets and treatises during the period strongly condemn idleness as immoral activity, most famous of these would be John Northbrook's scathing critique on idle pastimes, which he describes as "the onely nourisher and mayntainer of all filthinesse (First Book 68-74, 55).

It is important to remember, as Burke acknowledges, that these concerns over idleness often reflected the religious fervor of members of the Reformed church, yet it

would be problematic to assume this necessarily reflected the general viewpoint of the populace in London during the time. While many Reformers were likely to link idleness to sin, some writers during the period opened up room to favor it. One tactic used was to distinguish different kinds of idleness, such as *ozio vile* and *ozio onesto*, the later identifying a justifiable form of repose and the former identifying a notion synonymous with that used by the Reformers (Burke 144). Unlike the critical moralists, medical discourses during the period would highlight the positive benefits of *ozio onesto*, both pastimes and relaxation, for health reasons. Also, as Scherer notes, developing humanistic thought during the period also encouraged "a new kind of secular idleness" based on contemplation (26).

Unlike the Reformers who articulate a clear, negative point of view of idleness, Shakespearean idleness refuses any simple, clear-cut estimation. Partly this is due to its multifaceted expressions as it is reflected through words, embodied by characters and fictitious space for idle activity, and even by the theatrical forum as an expression of idleness in real time. The term itself was fairly popular within the Shakespearean canon, appearing in various incarnations over 100 times, in virtually every play and in several sonnets. Their meaning often stems from the word's original meaning, "empty" or "worthless" from the Old English and German. As the OED details, the term can mean being void of anything of real worth. *Timon*'s "No Gods, I am no idle Votarist" (4.3.27) is charged with the meaning no insincere or inconstant supplicant, as well as with the homonym idol, suggesting a refusal to use gold for idol worship. Moreover, idleness can be used to indicate foolish or silly behavior or the "idle-headed" (*Merry Wives* 4.4.34). The term can also relate directly to work, indicating persons doing nothing or

unemployed, as Julius Caesar commands the Plebeians in the opening of the play: "Home, you idle creatures get you home! Is this a holiday?" (1.1.1-2). It can also characterize a more general unoccupied time as in, "Break off betimes; And every man hence, to his idle bed" (*Julius Caesar* 2.1.116). Or, as mentioned in *Romeo and Juliet*, the practice is humorously thought to breed "idle worms" out the idler's hands (1.4.67).

The use of the term idleness throughout Shakespeare, articulated through the point of view of character, creates more self-reflexivity in and around the notion than one finds in a first-hand account, such as that of the Reformers. Scherer illustrates the way in which conflicting attitudes over idleness played out in popular literature during the period. Like the differing attitudes over the Roman *otium*, Scherer finds that early modern literature reflects, "overlapping pressures to embrace idleness and to resist its call" (*Idleness in Early Modern* v). She identifies an ambivalence over the notion, viewed by many as "a growing social threat," yet for some the "very stamp of social acceptance" (1). Like Burke's conclusions, Scherer finds the culture to be "caught up in a struggle between the moralist's emphasis on virtuous action and the humanist's praise of contemplative studies" (2). This tension manifests in frustrations and fascinations regarding idleness that are further reflected in the authors she studies: Spenser, Middleton, and Shakespeare.

At the theater, early modern audiences explore idleness from differing viewpoints—such as the opposing views articulated by Rome and Egypt in *Antony and Cleopatra* or by the Athenian and forest realm of *Midsummer*. This project builds on Scherer's compelling argument that Shakespeare offered a way to recuperate idleness and in turn theater's associations with the early modern notion of the term. In *Henry IV Part 1*, for example, Scherer finds a "challenge to anti-theatricalists who fume against theater

as a corruptive influence," since "indeed the theater of Falstaff s idleness, is redeemed as a means to a virtuous end" (27).[18]

Shakespeare offers a sophisticated model and understanding of idleness—and theater's relationship to it—that differs from the clear-cut derogatory points of view being articulated by moralists. Scherer also considers the dichotomous worlds set forth in *Antony and Cleopatra* and how they reconceive idleness, shifting favor away from Rome and even throwing unilateral regimes of progress into question. Shakespeare's recuperative work, finding favor in Cleopatra's Egypt, plays a significant dramaturgical function, allowing the tragic genre to take hold in a powerful way. While it may challenge early modern conceptualizations, as Scherer argues, it also offers a different sort of binary divide than the one forged through the Industrial Revolution. If Egypt reflects a realm of idleness, its stature is far more elevated and beauteous than Tom Idle's world within the Hogarth engravings could ever hope to be.

Scherer offers a useful argument regarding Shakespeare's recuperation of idleness, yet there are key issues of cultural politics tied to idleness that fall beyond the scope of her work. As suggested earlier, idleness is inevitably tied to concerns over cultural politics and regimes of labor or dissent, either supporting or transgressing a capitalist system/power structure. A reconceptualization of idleness, therefore, has implications that stretch beyond redeeming the questionable reputation of the early modern stage. Shakespearean embodiments of idleness offer a way to breathe new vitality into a notion that—under industrialism's "despotic bell"—was increasingly

[18] Scherer also examines three of Middleton's plays arguing that they do not "oblige the reader to side with either purpose or idleness, as each play permits idleness to literally prosper alongside purpose" (34).

defamed in the service of straight time. This methodological move draws upon Carolyn Dinshaw's strategies in her work on the queerness of amateurism; Dinshaw reads between the medieval period and contemporary medievalist fan culture to show how returning to these early texts for pleasure, instead of profit, can reframe our understanding of productivity and challenge the incessant need for professionalization today (*Amateurism*). This project attempts a similarly styled anachronistic, anti-teleological gesture by drawing upon an earlier period's conceptualization, here a Shakespearean embodiment of idleness, as means for contemporary critique of straight time in performance.

Idleness within the early modern context was also routinely associated with marginalized bodies and their spaces of non-reproductive activity. The following sections explore the queerness of the phlegmatic idle body, the "lunar" affiliation of idle bodies and spaces, and the theatrical forum as its own idle space. The discussion will range from tragedy to comedy and from play text to contemporary performance practice, as it continues to draw upon *Antony and Cleopatra* and The Hive's *Midsummer* performance as its primary examples. Ultimately, this analysis does not aim to be exhaustive; rather, it aims to introduce a way by which embodying idleness can be viewed as a queer temporal force in both principle and practice that will be further exemplified in later chapters.

Idle Bodies

Within Shakespearean performance, how can the body provide a model of queer time, and further, one that revalues idleness? The idle bodies, as reflected by Cleopatra or within The Hive's production, are often critiqued in the plays for their idle pursuits, yet

what gives these expressions of Shakespearean idleness their force and particular character is that they are not merely a drag, a halt or a strain on progressive movement: these idle bodies redefine "waste" into ironic sources of vitality and non-reproductive motion. This section will reconsider a giant "wet blanket" on temporal progress: the cold, clammy early modern phlegmatic body and its predisposition towards idleness.

The association between idleness and the marginalized body will be a key through line for this study. The early modern period, in particular, offers a conceptualization of idleness affiliated with the female body. Returning to the early modern female body marks its own anti-teleological movement akin to Freeman's recuperation of outmoded forms of political expression in *Time Binds*, as outlined in the introductory chapter. Such a move critiques the progressive aspects of Butler's model of time by reclaiming outdated, waste products of the past (Freeman 63). Significantly, idleness in the early modern period was routinely characterized as female, which Lawrence Humphrey described as "the mother and beldame of al mischieves" (68), or Sir Forest in a 1548 guide to "Princelie Practise" claims, "of all maner myschief shee is Patrones" (in Scherer 4). It was synonymous with a playful misbehavior or troublemaking that principally goes against regimes of productivity. Abigail Scherer finds the female associations with idleness stemming from the perception of idleness—like the reproductive female body—as "generally perceived as being exceptionally fecund" ("The Sweet Toyle," 3.5).

The connection between idleness and women can also be usefully traced back to scientific beliefs during the period, specifically the Galenic theory that distinguished four human temperaments based on a predominance of a particular humor. Phlegm, or the "phlegmatic" disposition, was associated with winter, the moon, and the feminine.

Following Gail Stern Paster's article "The Unbearable Coldness of Female Being," women were believed to have cold, moist, clammy bodies—lacking the heat associated with men (420). Paster provides evidence from woodcuts from the late medieval period that illustrate the four different humors, with the common associations of each being performed by both male and female characters. She identifies how the depictions show the "correlation among heat, gender, and conceptions of agency," with the female temperament appearing, unsurprisingly, as the "colder melancholic and phlegmatic complexions" (422). It is only in the woodcut's depiction of phlegm that the female figure assumes an active role and is posed as an equal to her male counterpart (123).

The cold female body was found to be lacking the heat necessary for powerful activity in the social sphere. Heat, associated with the yellow bile humor or the choleric temperament, stimulated action, while cold, associated with phlegm, depressed it. Yellow bile, specifically associated with men, was also associated with agency, power, ambition and the qualities of rulers. With an overabundance, it could be associated with outbursts of anger or aggression. Within women, however, this type of "hot" behavior became distemper. The role of heat, central to these conceptualizations of gender, is of critical importance to the Galenic account; according to Thomas Laqueur: "It is, to begin with, the sign of perfection, of one's place in the hierarchical great chain of being. Humans are the most perfect of animals, and men are more perfect than women by reason of their 'excess of heat'" (4). Furthermore, Laqueur's scholarship has helped to popularize the "one sex" theory of gender, also founded on the principles of heat, in which a female's sexual organ is believed to be an inverted version of the male's; the female is essentially a male, but without the adequate heat in gestation for the female member to "drop" into a

penis, making the female "the cooler, less perfect version of the male." The ideological precept by which the woman is unable to exhibit the strength, fortitude and action of the male is built into the constitution of the female sex. It is perhaps for this reason that special accommodations were often made to accept women in positions of power and authority. Queen Elizabeth, for instance, made conscientious efforts to combat the common perceptions of the woman's weaker body and idle disposition; at her speech at Tilbury in 1588, she insisted in the now famous words, "I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king" (Collinson *Oxford Dictionary*). In this public performance, the Queen recognized the insufficiency of her female body, yet amended her disposition by claiming her most vital organs were that of a man.

During the late medieval and early modern period, those with too much moisture and lacking heat could be thought inclined towards idleness. Seventeenth-century Christian theologian Richard Baxter found that "those are most subject to this sin [idleness] who have a phlegmatic constitution, or dullness of spirits, or other bodily indisposition to cherish it" (Chapter X 381). While phlegmatic dispositions were thought to cause this sinful behavior, idleness could also work to change a body's makeup as well: Following Ficino and Hippocrates, Robert Burton describes the effects of physical idleness, such as the accumulation of phlegm and "gross humors" that grow "as fern…in untilled grounds and all manner of weeds" (114). Idleness, once again, is depicted as particularly fecund, a surprisingly infectious growth pattern for a characteristic that was defined by lack of activity or productivity. This could very well account for increased anxieties over idleness—like anxieties generally associated with female body—which

often center around its "porous" nature and the inability, like female sexuality, to control or contain it.

At times idleness was directly linked back to gender roles. Helkiah Crooke, court physician to James I, explains that "it behoued…that man should be hotter, because his body was made to endure labour and trauell […]" (Crooke 274 in Paster 428). Here, Crooke finds a man to be formulated biologically with the heat of action in order to be industrious, while a woman—whose ideal role was thought to be limited to the domestic sphere—lacked the need for such excess energy or heat. In *Marks of Distinction*, Irven Resnick finds that historically, "idleness was a characteristic assigned to women's cold, phlegmatic complexion and reinforced their social and economic roles" (187). One example of this that Resnick provides is from Constantine the African from the late medieval period, who describes how "from the fact their hands are idle, women are shown to be colder" (188). Idleness as an inferior state of being became synonymous with women as the inferior sex.

Sweating Labor

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare offers a different way of associating the female body with idleness, allowing it to defy its cold, phlegmatic disposition while embodying a type of pleasurable, non-reproduction motion. Certainly the play, from the perspective of the Romans, represents a pejorative understanding of *otium*. From the opening, the Romans frame the lovers and their idle revels in the Egyptian court as a malignancy (1.1.2-6), then later, Antony, after finding out of his wife's death, is resolute to end his sordid affair, fearing that "ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,/My

idleness doth hatch" (1.2.128-9). Idleness is framed, once again, as a type of contagion, here affiliated with a Roman male figure that has fallen out of rank by allowing himself to be sidetracked by Egypt from his industrious pursuits. Yet if this is a battle between idleness and industrious activity, Egypt may have the cards stacked in its favor, despite its role in the tragic outcome of the play's two protagonist. There are numerous critical discussions of the play's dichotomous worlds that offer ways to favor Egypt over Rome among which Scherer is one (Scherer "Celebrating Idleness" 19).[19]

For the purposes of this project, I am less interested in arguing who "wins," if there is in fact such a way to claim a victor, and more interested in how the play offers a model of idleness that challenges straight time, while opening up pleasurable forms of non-reproductive motion. How might Shakespeare rework an early modern conceptualization of idleness allowing it not only to be valued different—or better—but actually change the terms of valuation themselves? Scherer offers one useful way of understanding how *Antony and Cleopatra* reworks and even celebrates idleness; she finds that the play, through the interaction of its main lovers, "gives over completely to the aesthetic impulses within humanism, namely, the notion (the nightmare for many early modern polemicists) that idleness serves no greater purpose than its creative ends" (28). The heightened language and exalted beauty of the Egyptian world shows how idle abandon can spawn "a higher, more aesthetically graceful world" than the polemicists forecast. According to Scherer, Egypt presents a return to an earlier, Greek notion of play. It celebrates a utopian gesture recovering the freedom of "mimetic-play," from

[19] Scherer notes that she is hardly the first scholar to "side" with Egypt, but is the first to isolate the notion of idleness and explore its role in relationship to the play's dichotomous worlds (3). For critical debates over the dichotomous worlds, see Scherer 19, note 4.

Mihai Spariosu's *Dionysus Reborn*, as opposed to a Platonic conceptualization of "mimesis-imitation," which situates the duplication involved in imitation as an inferior substitute to Being. "Mimesis-play," on the other hand, doesn't aim to reproduce the original so much as "simulate or invoke the raw power of delight in the feeling of freedom" (280). In this sense it reflects Elin Diamond's feminist project of "unmaking mimesis," offering a way to challenge, ruin, or alter a conventional, Platonic mimesis. Mimesis-play serves as a way to find pleasure and freedom in *mimos*, moreover it offers a way to liberate the lovers and audiences alike from reality's "precipitate rush of successive moments" (Scherer 7).

Scherer presents an excellent way to rethink *Antony of Cleopatra* through the notion of play and successfully identifies how it may combat derogatory judgments against idleness, voiced by the Romans in the play or by the Reformers against the theater. Although my project does not take up play theory within its scope, it may open up a useful avenue for investigation into further models of queer time. The type of play that surfaces in Scherer's article, however, might seem problematic from a queer perspective, since its language of "elevation" might work to sanitize the notion of idleness, cleansing it from its derogatory baseness in its heightened pursuits towards the more divine. In order to illustrate that Shakespeare is "celebrating" idleness, Scherer describes an Egyptian world "elevated" through beautiful rhetorical turns of phrases and metatheatrical performances that are positioned as opposing the negative aspects of idleness, which tend to be affiliated with the marginalized body. This reading views the "heat" of the lover's encounter as essentially warming their phlegmatic, idle bodies, lifting them out of their otherwise derogatory state. From a contemporary queer

perspective, this reading does little to challenge normative teleologies since dominant hierarchies would still be left established.[19] Though this Platonic inspired reading, Eros seems to become, ironically, less about the body or sensuous encounters. Yet the lover's practice of idleness, elevated to new rhetorical heights as it may be, remains an embodied practice and one driven by their erotic pursuits. The couple attempts to forge a forbidden bond that cannot exist by Roman law and temporal order. Their rhetorical heights are, largely, an expression of their affections and arousals that lifts them to new figurative heights. This may be useful compared to historic associations between queers and high styles, from dandies to aesthetes. This concentration on aesthetic, which Cleopatra depicts, highlights how practicing idleness enacts a search for a beauty and pleasurable experience that actually "lifts" beyond the bounds of straight time and its focus on readily commodified products.

While lifting to its aesthetic heights, idleness remains embodied in performance; on its most basic level with the words delivered by live actors, or as the boy playing Cleopatra describes himself as "some squeaking Cleopatra boys my Greatness" (5.2.220). Michael Shapiro calls such moments "theatrical vibrancy," a term used to describe moments when the audience's attention could be drawn to the simultaneous presence of multiple layers of gender identity. Shakespeare flashes attention towards the live body of

[19] This may be a byproduct of Scherer drawing primarily from Eugen Fink's "ontology of play," which offers a formalist account of play which foregrounds purity. The closing lines of Fink's essay, for example, highlight the importance of childlike play, while reminding readers of its biblical implications: "When poets and thinkers point to the immense importance of play in the profoundest manner of which man is capable, then we should also remember those other words: that we will not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven, if we do not first become as children" (30). Other examples in Scherer's study, however, particularly her reading of Falstaff, offer additional ways of "celebrating" idleness that don't hinge upon the same type of elevation or divine pursuits.

the boy actor, "boying" the Greatness of Cleopatra. Another layer of "Greatness," through theatrical vibrancy, is uncovered but not by lifting *up*, as Scherer's model suggests, but through the use of a self-reflexive gesture. The moment, in Egyptian fashion, paradoxically "undid did" (2.2.212). It inverts a problematic hierarchy in favor of a theatrical model of non-reproductive motion, a queer embodiment of idleness set in vibrant motion.[20] The play, with such pleasurable moments, creates a way not to disavow but to celebrate the "gross" idle body and its embodiment of a queer temporal critique.

Cleopatra is described as the literal embodiment of idleness, yet the Queen also reworks the Roman understanding of this notion. Antony, when threatening to leave Egypt, accuses the queen: "But that your royalty/Holds Idleness your subject, I should take you for Idleness itself" (1.3.91-3). Cleopatra's response is a clever turn of phrase that opens up a further way to conceptualize Shakespearean idleness; to this potential insult, Cleopatra compounds the seemingly oppositional *otium* and labour: "'Tis sweating labour/To bear such idleness so near the heart/As Cleopatra this. But sir, forgive me,/Since my becomings kill me when they do not/Eye well to you" (1.3.94-8). "Sweating labour" serves as a useful image to suggest idleness as a sort of non-reproductive temporal force. Her passionate desires and her emotional turmoil over Antony mark a vibrant activity, evident in the sweat, yet offering no tangible product or value. It also ties back to the wet, leaky female body, thought to be too weak in disposition to hold back emotion. The profuseness of sweat, like the fecund nature of idleness and the phlegmatic disposition, capture the paradoxical position of the female body: at once stagnate, idle, and yet at the same time porous, child bearing and

[20] The queer productivity of theatricality will be investigated in greater detail in Chapter 3, "Suspended Time."

abundantly reproductive. It also correlates with the paradoxical nature of idleness as a queer temporal force: a challenge to productivity that fuels its own, ironic mode of motion, or as Cleopatra describes, "my becomings" (1.3.97), unleashing desirous flows and affective circulations in its wake.

A similar dynamic can be found in the play's motif of paradox and, as Adelman identifies, the Queen's capability to "embrace contradictions…to confound all our logical categories" (115). Hereby, the play challenges the simplistic Roman view of idleness as a mere drain on productivity, since the Queen "makes hungry/Where most she satisfies (2.2.244-5) and as Phlio vehemently describes how Antony's "captain's heart" has "become the bellows and the fan/To cool a gypsy's lust" (1.1.6-10). Upon her entrance to the final scene of the play, Cleopatra claims paradoxically, "desolation does begin to make/A better life" (5.2.1-2). Enobarus' Cydnus speech also captures the inverse logic of Egypt's doing and undoing in idleness; he describes the glorious view of Cleopatra appearing at sea with "pretty, dimple boys…with divers-coloured fans, whose wind did seem/To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,/And what they undid did" (2.2.209-212). At once this reflects Cleopatra's repose, yet as Scherer describes, the beauty that can be reached in idleness: a contradictory notion as the dank, phlegmatic body is positively reframed. Significantly, this reframing that seems to "elevate" idleness through "rhetorical divines" does not rid the body of idleness so much as redefines it. It opens up new prospects for and understandings the mobility of this seemingly negative disposition.

Cleopatra also offers a way to reconsider the relationship between idleness and the "complete" human self. As discussed in the Introduction, for Marx the pivotal role of

idleness was to allow time for intellectual pursuits, citizenship, and "free time" activities. Idleness here seems to be related to life span, serving its own purpose by allowing individuals independence for self-defining action and a sense of being well-rounded by being able to engage in a diverse number of independent activities. Scholar Unhae Langis describes Cleopatra's paradoxical nature, such as "sweating labour," as "part and parcel of a cohesive 'becoming' (1.3.97), all affirmed as ongoing vital motion and emotion towards fulfillment of complete life" (6). This "complete life," from Langis's view, refers to the dualities embodied by Cleopatra, which includes her integration of Eastern and Western thought and her manifestation of Egyptian/Greco traditions and neoplatonic thought, "in which apparent diversities are manifestations of the One" (6). Along these lines, the Egyptian queen is even more "constant to the ideals of the complete life and Roman constancy than Antony ever was" (7). For Langis, Cleopatra's idleness services a "complete life" by merging oppositional temporal forces into a complete whole.

Conceiving of Shakespearean idleness as a queer temporal force suggests another notion of being "complete" that highlights the idle body and its "becomings" as the source of ironically productive vital motion and emotion. As I argue in later chapters on immersive Shakespearean performance, theatrical idleness allows spectator-participants to feel and "think" through the body, as they make sense of the event through all their senses, rather than by privileging cognition. This can be considered "complete" in the sense of forging a union of body/intellect that challenges Cartesian dualities, yet not within the sense of reaching a "complete" endpoint or finality. This process-based notion of idleness is manifest in individual moments, not the purview of life span. It can, therefore, become manifest within the live theatrical moment, as a locus of vibrancy and

motion. While Shakespearean characters may serve as symbolic embodiments of idleness, the theatrical exchange between performers and audiences within a shared space can create its literal embodiment. This can serve as vital motion and emotion, yet its objective is not the fulfillment of a complete life in the Roman sense of constancy. Following Benjamin's notion of idleness, it "strives to inhabit a perpetual present" outside of traditional economies of production.

Through Cleopatra's "becomings," Roman constancy and Egyptian instability combine to redefine idleness. In doing so, they produce a surprising majesty using a marginalized female body and her vibrant affective and desirous circulations. As manifest in performance, Shakespearean idleness can bring surprising majesty to life in the theatrical forum as well, allowing performers and audiences to share vibrant affective and desirous circulations in "real" time.

This Palpable-Gross Play

The Hive's *Midsummer* offers a further way to uncover the queer, idle body in performance. The fairies in the production were like an idle entourage of characters, envisioned as cultural cast-offs. This colorful assortment included an overweight geisha drag queen, a 70s disco dancer, and a squirrely-looking bearded man dressed as a nurse (image 3). One of the ensemble characters, a female cop equipped with black aviator glasses and a baton, performed the classic "butch" figure, highlighting not only her masculine femininity, but also her queer sexuality. At times, the actress would wear a dildo strapped around her waist, offering a proud, even potentially transgressive display of her possession of the penis. Such depiction, as Sue-Ellen Case describes in "Towards a

Butch-Femme Aesthetic," can "lend agency and self-determination to the historically passive subject, providing her with…options for gender identification and, with the aid of camp, an irony that allows her perception to be constructed from outside ideology, with a gender role that makes her appear as if she is inside it" (65). The on-stage depiction embodied a butch lesbianism, an echo of the past, that forward-thinking neoliberalism—and a "progressive" queer theory—would prefer stuff back into the closet.

The ensemble of vintage figures reflected "idle" bodies through their pleasurable, even sensual display. Like remnants of bygone eras and queer pasts, the fairies enacted what Freeman terms "temporal drag": a recycling of culture's outmoded, discarded objects, including dated masculinities and femininities (xxiii). They stood in stark contrast to Hermia and Lysander as depicted in the production's opening, a lesbian couple whose polished clothing in white reflected an upright nature, effacing individuality or personal expression. If The Hive's fairies were "queer," the lovers were predisposed to what Lisa Duggan calls "homonormativity." The Hive's production seemed to articulate the contradictory tensions at work within the gay/queer political debate, with certain forces moving towards productivity and other forces embodying resistance through engaging in non-reproductive activities and pleasures. Within the production, the fairies reflected this anti-teleological gesture, serving as an arousing, vibrant "drag" on progress.

In *Midsummer*, idle bodies explore the threshold of sexuality and queer time. This perhaps draws upon the Ovidian connection of idleness with sensuous, fleshly delight (Langis 1). In The Hive's production, this link was manifested by the group of fairies. When not featured within a given scene, the ensemble spent a majority of time just

loitering about the set, often dangling from rafters built around the periphery of the stage, observing the action. Yet from their first introduction to the production, through a highly eroticized Bacchanalian music and dance sequence, the group was associated with a sexual frivolity and a play on gender norms. Thus, even in these passive moments of observing the stage action, they added a sexual undertone to the forest. This embodiment of idleness did not function as a "dead weight" on the theatrical display. Their bodies tied queer sexuality to the act of lingering. As mentioned in the Introduction, if Halberstam finds Beckett to offer a queer critique against temporal progress—"I can't go on. I must go on. I'll go on"—The Hive offered a way to align "waiting" as non-productive activity with bountiful queer desire.

A further way to perform Shakespearean idleness was built into The Hive's casting. This worked to trouble a simplistic reading of the play, which might favor Athenian industry over the forest's anarchic rule. Generally, if one looks to find a victor of the tension between these two forces that drive the play, it is easy to read its comic closure as a clear victory for the camp of "progress." After all, the fairies that stand in opposition to an Athenian productivity end up, quite literally, sweeping the stage: "I am sent with broom before/To sweep the dust behind the door (5.1.380-1). Furthermore, the ending offers its own heteronormative dream, not only with the lovers united in marriage, but with the misfit fairies even blessing their nuptial beds. Within the context of The Hive's production, the Athenian world could end up representing what Duggan might describe as a homonormative one, ultimately curtailing "unproductive" idle behavior into monogamous courtships that can support re/productive regimes (inheritance, legacy, domesticity, procreation/surrogation, etc).

In The Hive's production, however, the Greek "homonormative" world did not seem to have primacy or to be valued more highly. This was, in large part, because of the production's casting. Although double casting is not at all uncommon for this play, the production mixed this practice with cross-gender casting as well. Hippolyta, for instance, who commonly plays Titania, doubled as Oberon in drag. Interestingly, the black actor playing Titania doubled as a Theseus modeled after President Obama. The first scene was staged at a press conference for an election campaign with Theseus addressing his constituents with a poster playing off Obama's own campaign slogan: "Theseus 2012 Your Future Tomorrow" (image 4). Although the actor wasn't crossing-gender in these moments, his performance was, from a temporal perspective its own "drag" act. He presented a parodic display, an exaggerated imitation of the President, which did not enact the progressive drive behind "Your Future Tomorrow" so much as function as a mode of mimesis-play. By crafting Theseus in the likes of Obama, the production offered a self-conscious imitation. It took the productivity and industry normally associated with the Theseus and the Athenian realm and converted this into a playful, unrealistic, exaggerated imitation. This follows Diamond's model by "unmaking mimesis," supporting a mode of mimesis-play over a model of industry and realistic theatrical convention. The artificial display of gender in drag performance is here dressed up to critique straight time, reworking the notion of the drag body—from a Butler "drag act" sense— to highlight its queer *temporal* critique. The performance paradoxically "undid" in its doing action. This made the world of Athens ironically parallel to the fairy kingdom, as both modeled off of a playful destabilization of industry. This was also supported by the body of the actor playing Obama who shifted between roles to also

embody Titania during the performance. Here, the actor's idle body, slipping between seemingly dichotomous time schemes, represented the connection between queer pleasures and queer temporality. The Theseus/Titania actor offered an embodied way to challenge normative temporal order, while arousing queer erotic pleasures in and through his/her jumps across both gender and time.

Towards the close of the play, the Mechanicals, who also played drag fairies, offered another way of connecting the "drag" body to idleness. Freeman might say they served as a temporal drag, placing a useful "weight" to halt temporal progress. Rather than being a "dead" weight, however, this "palpable gross play" (5.1.358) opened space for pleasure centered on the queer, idle body. For instance, at the performance I watched, the actor who played Tom Snout, and doubled as the oversized Geisha queen, seemed overwhelmed and exhausted during the start of the wedding performance of Pyramus and Thisbe. Throughout the performance, the actor had shifted between two roles and divergent time schemes, from the Athenian world as a Mechanical, into the nocturnal forest realm as a fairy. The actor's fatigue may not have been feigned, since the character had been continually switching between two physically demanding roles throughout the duration of the performance. Sweat glistening from his forehead, attempting to catch his breath, the actor pulled his Geisha fan from his pocket as he stood center stage and began to fan himself. Moments later, he noticed his reflexive action then looked out at the audience recognizing he had been "caught" breaking the theatrical illusion of the Athenian court. His alarm was evident as he tried to figure out what to do with the Asian fan. Ultimately, he passed it off to Peter Quince, the stage manager, and then assumed his role as "the Wall" in the play within the play, his queer body enacting the literal barrier

between the would-be hetero-coupling. The moment created a playfully queer anachronism that went beyond the convention of role doubling to further blur the boundaries between the two worlds within the play. It served as a reminder of the fairies's critique of hetero-normativity, bringing this directly into the marriage celebration at the Athenian court. Their "gross" play also offered an inadvertent parody of straight romance, using "drag" bodies to highlight, even convert, the performance of hetero-courtship into a laughable failure.

The Mechanical's play, illustrated by The Hive's performance, allows for its own "wondrous strange" comparison with the idle body in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Like The Hive's Tom Snout, Cleopatra comes equipped with her own fans as well and an entourage of servants to help cool what the Roman's call her "gypsy's lust" (1.1.6-10). For Cleopatra, bearing "idleness so near the heart" is hard work, generating a "heat," affective and even erotic. Similarly, the actor playing Snout in The Hive's production was, quite literally, "sweating labour," and profusely at times, as the actor shifted fairly erratically from Mechanical to dancing fairy and back. His body echoed Valerie Traub's critique of Falstaff, embodied here in contemporary performance. Traub describes the way Falstaff's body brings "such a focus on the bulging and the protuberant, the openings, permeabilities" that Traub likens Falstaff to a female "grotesque" body, allowing it to kindle homoerotic desire between him and Hal (56, 59). Within the Hive's performance, Snout's "idle" disposition, "the protuberant, the openings, permeabilities"

were fully and erotically exposed in his cross-dressed Geisha attire, yet he also embodied openings, permeabilities for *temporal* critique as well.[21]

Although working in two different genres, both The Hive's *Midsummer* and *Antony and Cleopatra* embody idleness in wondrous motion. As Scherer argues, for Cleopatra this motion is an elevation from idleness's derogatory stature, marking a type of transcendence. Yet Antony, who is "undone" by his associations with idle Egypt, is also paradoxically able to defy his constitution. As Cleopatra describes: "His delights/Were dolphin-like; they showed his back above/The element they lived in" (5.2.307-9). During the early modern period, dolphins were considered fish and were associated with water elements. Here, the dolphin's joy, like Antony's joy, propels him—for fleeting moments—from water into air. In doing so, Antony defies his "water" disposition and idle disposition through majestic display. The Hive's production, though far from majestic, offers a way to view the idle body in pleasurable motion as well. If Egypt elevates the idle body to new heights, the raucous Hive's actors, through their own "gross" display, show how the idle body can challenge straight time by getting down and dirty.

Minions of the Moon

Like the Egyptian queen, Antony captures an ironic sense of vital motion upon his death. Cleopatra describes him in colossal terms: "His face was as the heavens, and therein stuck/A sun and moon, which kept their course and lighted/The little O o'th'earth" (5.2.80-81). Antony is emblematic of the heavens, with the sun and moon as

[21] In *Time Binds*, Freeman links her concept of temporal drag to fatness as well (90-1). Here the concept ties to early modern conceptualizations of the "gross" body.

once “therein stuck,” yet also set in a revolving motion as they lit “The little O”. Although it is not uncommon to use the eyes in reference to the sun in romantic poetry, placing both the sun and moon in his gaze symbolically balances the Egyptian and Roman forces that govern the play. It stands for an ongoing paradoxical motion, a balance of oppositional forces that challenges his finite death. Additionally, the reference to “the little O” adds a subtle metatheatrical element as well, suggesting that the character, or even the actor, has “lighted/The little O” shaped Globe as well. Additional references to the moon are made throughout the play, suggesting idleness as set into motion through the moon’s nocturnal revolving course. The Egyptian queen can readily be compared to Isis, the moon goddess of fertility that was historically the subject of cult worship in Egypt. Caesar describes how Cleopatra frequently appears “In th’habiliments of the goddess Isis” (3.6.17) and her enthroned death sequence, suckled at the breast by serpents, also suggests the likeness of the moon goddess.

The moon presents another link to idleness based on early modern scientific thought. Calendars and charts from the late medieval and early modern period identify the humors not only beside their related temperament and gender, but also by their related seasons and astrological figures (Paster 424-7). Phlegm was related to women, but also the winter, the nocturnal, and the moon. One may think of lunar time, like the phlegmatic disposition, as associated with repose, rather than work or activity, just as winter may be considered a time of agricultural rest in which little harvest is reaped. Yet, significant scholarship by Craig Koslovsky (*Evening’s Empire*) and Roger Ekirch (*At Day’s Close*) reframes the early modern preindustrial nighttime as an active period for numerous types of labor and a wide array of activities, from devotion and prayerful meditation to

socializing and drunken revels. Koslovsky argues for the period's "nocturnalization," a revolution that expanded the usages of night (2). Central to this was the early modern individual's "segmented" sleep cycles as described in Ekirch's research ("Sleep We Have Lost"). Going to bed not long after dusk, it was common for one to have an episode of wakefulness for an hour or more breaking up one's sleep cycle. This created a nightly interim for active engagement. Nighttime marked a period for both productive and playful activities, working to disrupt a binary view of day as a time for labor and night for a time of rest. It offers what Kosloksy describes as a "fascinating yet contradictory picture": "we see a diabolical night, nocturnal devotion, honest labor at night, and a night of drunken excess and indiscipline" (5). Certain marginalized persons—such as poor women commonly referred to as "night walkers"—could still be negatively associated with nighttime (8). While night and a segmented sleep cycle could serve as a period for prayer, to be closer to Divine presence, nighttime also fostered anxieties around the demonic and fears of witchcraft, which were commonly projected onto marginalized and poor communities (Ekirch *At Day's Close* 19-21).

If early modern idleness was associated with the lunar and the nocturnal, perhaps it too could serve as a "fascinating, yet contradictory picture." Shakespeare offers a symbolic ways of setting the "idle" moon and its affiliated nighttime into vibrant motion through the idle bodies of his characters. Cleopatra embodies idle time through her lunar associations and, as previous discussed, her association with the goddess Isis repositions the idle moon to an elevated, powerful status, while highlighting a changeability characteristic of the queen's "becomings." This activity of the moon, as embodied idleness, is associated with nighttime, but also the spaces of nighttime that often become

synonymous with idle activity. For example, Cleopatra's Egypt, governed by Isis, is symbolically governed by the moon as well. The role of the "idle" moon, governing both bodies and spaces, illustrates how spaces too can "embody idleness" as they symbolically and literally work to foster idle activity.

One of Shakespeare's greatest idlers, Falstaff, is similarly associated with the moon. In *Henry IV*, *Part One*, when he tries to convince Prince Hal not to judge too harshly on his behaviors, he punningly describes himself and his comrades as "us that are squires of the night's body" (1.2.23). Further, Falstaff suggests that when Hal becomes king he views them as "Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon," "men of good government" that are simply governed by a different authority: "our noble and chaste mistress of the moon" (1.2.24-7). Like the way Isis lifts idleness's derogatory associations, here Falstaff defends his idle activity with divine associations. Falstaff's practice of wasting away excessive time is reframed—even jokingly—as a sort of religious practice. When the Prince argues that Falstaff has no need to know the time, Falstaff agrees with his assertion, claiming jokingly: "for we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars, and not by Phoebus, he that wand'ring knight so fair" (1.2.13-5). As thieves, Falstaff and his entourage find it safer to travel by moonlight, instead of by the light of Apollo, the sun. According to W. G. Guthrie, if the "seven sisters" are the stars of Plough these could be used to tell time at night or if this references the Seven Sisters, the Pleiades, this could mean he is superstitiously relying on the "well-known benevolent influence" of the figures from Greek mythology (203). Either way, these examples identify a union between idle activities as transgressive and the moon as gendered female.

In the Henry plays, idleness is synonymous with the tavern, whereas the space of the forest in *Midsummer*, governed by the moon and fairy inhabitants, becomes its own idle space for temporal inversion. Whether moon worshipping or late night drinking, activity in these idle spaces are, by definition, not commonly associated with traditional labor. From a contemporary, postindustrial perspective, nighttime activity often breaks with a pattern supporting productivity if it is not used as an opportunity for rest to maximize productivity for the next day. Like the way certain temporal modes support normative productivity, certain spaces can challenge these modes of productivity and progress. Halberstam uses the concept "queer spaces" to describe subcultural spaces that work against normative temporal regimes (6). As Halberstam explains in *A Queer Time and Place*, queer subcultural practices are set to their own clocks, since they aren't customarily scheduled to promote childrearing or productivity in a normative sense. Halberstam defines "queer space" as "the place-making practices within postmodernism in which queer people engage" and also "the new understanding of space enabled by the production of queer counterpublics" (6). For the purposes of the present study, the parameters of "queer space" will be expanded to include Shakespearean spaces, including certain contemporary Shakespearean performances and the spaces they inhabit. Shakespearean conceptualizations of nighttime space can present a useful, contradictory notion of idleness as a space for playful queer circulations.

The Hive's *Midsummer* offers a further way to consider space as embodying idleness and enacting queer critique. The set was designed as a sort of underground rave, associated with thumping techno music, and the ensemble of fairies as subcultural creatures that linger about the scaffolding, sensuously dancing around in various modes

of undress, while taunting the lost lovers throughout the forest. In The Hive's production, a queer space was enacted through the fairyland "urban wasteland" world. Around the edge of the stage were levels of scaffolding that held piles of junk, inspiring one reviewer to call the production "gritty, industrial Shakespeare" (Vitolo; image 5). Gritty, perhaps, but there was no "industry" in the junkyard, a deathbed for items that have lost their use value. The scaffolding that surrounded the stage was a kind of repository for and of the non-reproductive, full of dismembered mannequins, old furniture pieces, a toilet, and disused art pieces. This "wasteland" lent itself to non-reproductive activities and, importantly, the non-reproductive sexual exchanges as mentioned in the opening of the chapter. This was echoed by the fairies whose flirtatious and flexible sexual preferences bounced around from type to type with the beat of the pulsing techno bass line.

In *Time Binds*, Freeman describes *Midsummer* as creating a realm in which "nighttime and the nonsequential logic of dreams enable all kinds of illicit alliances" offering "a model of time as embodied" that disorients notions of time through queer bodies and pleasures (16-18). The Hive's production seemed to foreground these queer temporal currents within the play, primarily though the work of queer bodies and their non-reproductive erotic pursuits within a nighttime space .

Although nighttime is not definitional for all queer spaces, it is a common link, in part because it situates itself as activity in a time commonly set aside for repose. Within this project, it is perhaps unsurprising that the setting for these contemporary theatrical events, from a nightclub modeled after Studio 54 (Chapter 2), an Illyria blanketed in shadows (Chapter 3), or a gothic immersive warehouse space (Chapter 4), are like The Hive's production: shrouded in the nocturnal and filled with queer bodies and cross-

gender casts. They mark "queer spaces" associated with the nocturnal and embodying idleness. But they also mark theatrical spaces. Similarly, Falstaff's tavern and Cleopatra's Egypt offer nighttime spaces governed by the idle moon, but also spaces for theatrical activity, whether Cleopatra's histrionics or Falstaff and Hal's role-playing games. With this in mind, the next section will turn to consider the final, cumulative aspect of Shakespearean idleness: its relationship to the stage and live performance.

Idle Playgrounds

In *Hamlet*, when the court begins to arrive to watch the "the Mouse-trap," the prince declares, "They are coming to the play. I must be idle" (3.2.88). This subtle comment gestures towards a further way of relating idleness to Shakespearean performance. It suggests that the act of participating in the theater itself, here for Hamlet as spectator, is a type of idle activity. During the early modern period, the theater was often critiqued for being an idle playground of sorts.[22] Several early modern publications specifically linked theatrical activities and idleness, deemed by one early modern source as "a nurseris of idelnesse" (Gosson 60). Perhaps the earliest of these was by Henry the Eighth, who issued a proclamation in 1545 against "Vagabonds, Ruffians, and idle persons" that specifically references "common players," calling for their reformation (Hazlitt). Phillip Stubbes, in *Anatomie of Abuses*, found theater to be an ideal forum to learn the art of idleness: "you neede to goe to no other Schoole, for all these good examples maie you see painted before your eyes in Enterludes and Plaies" (Gosson 204). On the other hand, theater could be viewed as a useful diversion, a relatively safe idle

[22] Scherer does an excellent job foregrounding this link her linkage between idle activity and the early modern theatrical forum. For more examples see: "Early Modern Idleness."

activity. Thomas Nashe found it to be "light toyes to busie their heads withall, cast before them as bones to gnaw upon, which may keepe them from having leisure to intermeddle with higher matters" (*Pierce Penilesse* n.p.). When not preoccupied by plays, Nashe envisions that the audience member "sits melancholie in his Chamber, devising upon felonie or treason, and howe he may best exalt himselfe by mischief."

Theater exemplified an early modern ambivalence over the notion of idleness. It stood at the threshold of idleness and industry, between Protestant critiques and a humanistic support of contemplation. It reflected both an idle activity and a way to learn idleness from the examples set forth in the plays and by the players. Yet it offered an escape from other, more trangressive activities that may threaten the state, perhaps offering a diversion that could ultimately support heightened productivity at work. In a scathing critique of players, I.G.'s *Refutation of the Apologie for Actors* (1615), reflects some of these tensions:

> They [Players] are idle for they can take no paynes, they know not how to worke, nor in any lawfull calling to get their liuing: but to auoid labour and worke, like braue and noble beggers, they stand to take money of euery one that comes to see them loyter and play. Hence it is that they are Vicious; for idlenesse is the mother of vice, and they cannot exercise their offices but in vices, and treating of and with vicious men. (55)

I.G. demonstrates an anxiety over the notion of work in the playhouse and how theatrical playing could represent truly industrious activity. Scherer identifies this as one of the central concerns regarding theater during the period, in which "a private indulgence is

thus transformed into a public battleground, upon which the conflict and accord between purpose and idleness is continually tested" (24).

How might the theatrical forum, and specifically for our purposes the Shakespearean theater, function as a queer space for the circulation of idleness? In doing so, how might it also reframe derogatory associations between idleness and theater? Theater becomes a space for embodied modes of idleness, challenging normative temporal regimes with arousing affective and erotic circulations, and converting a "waste of time" or school for misfits, into positive moments of *frisson*

"I'll give thee leave to play till doomsday"

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the association between idleness and the theater resonates, in part, with Cleopatra's own self-conscious theatricality. This culminates with the staging of her suicide, which paradoxically reframes the undoing of dying into a type of monumentalizing performance. The Queen calls upon her servants to costume her appropriately: "Show me, my women, like a queen. Go fetch/My best attires… I am again for Cydnus, to meet Mark Antony…bring our crown and all" (5.2.227-33). She looks to reenact her first meeting of Mark Antony, traveling down the River of Cydnus, as described by the beauteous speech by Enobarbus in act 2, scene 2. As before, with the "barge she sat in, like a burnished throne," Cleopatra has similar royal aspirations in her death. Through her lofty theatrical performance, Cleopatra seeks to combat the lowly performances she envisions memorializing her in Rome as "The quick comedians/Extemporally will stage us, and present/Our Alexandrian revels" (5.2.215-18), then self-consciously and anachronistically referring the Elizabethan boy player, "some

squeaking Cleopatra boy my Greatness" (5.2.220). In a theatrical *dédoublement*, the self-conscious performance of her death is aligned with the live theatrical event as witnessed by the play's spectators. Even the dual meanings of word "play" are captured in the final moments of the death sequence when Cleopatra tells her servant Charmian that after assisting her in her preparations, "I'll give thee/leave/to play till doomsday" (5.2.231-3), a sentiment that is later painfully echoed by the servant who, moments following the Queen's death, still looks to perfect her image, "Your crown's awry,/I'll mend it, and then play—" (5.2.316-7).

If Cleopatra embodies idleness, her "infinite variety" (2.2.243), nonetheless, is able to shift her constitution into a type of resilient fortitude not commonly associated with an early modern female's constitution: "My resolution's placed, and I have nothing/Of woman in me—now from head to foot/I am marble constant; now the fleeting moon/No planet is of mine" (5.2.238-241). Even the "fleeting" moon—relating back to her symbolic role as Isis—no longer exists as it once did. Here, she remains a women and—paradoxically—assumes a constitution commonly associated with the male sex. This movement works to satisfy her "immortal longings" (5.2.280) as her movement is—quite literally—conceived as a movement from the base to the divine, as she later describes, "I am fire and air—my other elements I give to baser life" (5.2.288). This self-description figures a movement towards the afterlife as she leaves the mortal elements behind and solidifies her path towards the heavens and death. Although women were likely to be associated with the elements of earth and water—and particularly for this Queen water—Cleopatra undoes her own elements in a reversal of gender, although her female appearance remains the same. Her "unsexing" and ascension marks its own

testimony to Cleopatra and her refiguring of idleness: it illustrates the power of Shakespearean idleness that can transcend the marginalized idle body to new heights.[23]

Cleopatra's theatrical display also embodies her paradoxical "undid did." In the character's final moments she self-consciously constructs a performance that is at once ephemeral and self-monumentalizing. She embodies idleness in and through her suicide, preventing capture by the Romans and, in turn, disavowing a Roman mode of industry and progress. She looks beyond worldly ambition, common to the Roman point of view, to acquire what Scherer describes as a type of transcendence through idleness (293-4). Following Scherer's argument, her theatrical death, like her theatrical liveliness, enacts a triumphant display that challenges early modern derogatory associations between idleness and the theater. But moreover, it shows theater, through "play," as space for a queer mode of temporality that defies the Roman mode of reproduction. It reflects the dual—even paradoxical—nature of mimesis that Diamond describes "as an impossible double" that "in imitating (upholding the truth value of) the model…" also becomes "an other…thus a shapeshifting Proteus, a panderer of reflections, a destroyer of forms" (v). Cleopatra's drive to perform is grounded in her fervent desire to create her own legacy in a world in which legacy, permanency, and progress are the mode of her Roman—male driven—opposition. She sets her sights above this worldly gain favoring more idle pursuits, to "play till doomsday." The death sequence allows for a playful undoing of mimesis, which not only inverts normative modes of productivity, but also reclaims the

[23] This contrasts in an interesting way with Lady Macbeth's "unsexing." While both characters fortify themselves, they do so in very different ways and to different ends. Lady Macbeth seeks worldly ambition (as opposed to Cleopatra's "divine" pursuits) and calls upon dark spirits to fortify her female sex.

idle body of the female character and the boy player. This double-layered imitation—Cleopatra as player and actor as player—confounds traditional mimesis, since it doesn't render a duplicate as inferior, but instead, through self-conscious reference, allows for a playful recognition of the boy player's own "Greatness" as his theatrical prowess elevates himself over "some squeaking Cleopatra boy." Theater becomes a queer vehicle to "what they undo did." It propels beyond Roman straight lines of productivity by virtue of a theatrical becoming that paradoxically takes life as it gives legacy birth.

"And this weak and idle theme"

The Hive's *Midsummer* offers further ways of exploring the link among Shakespearean idleness, queerness, and the theatrical forum. One of these was through the shadow puppetry that was used as a storytelling device during select moments throughout the play. After the intermission, Puck relayed the story of Titania's sexual encounter with Bottom (as an ass) to Oberon through the use of fairly elaborate shadow-puppets. This blatantly sexual, even grotesque display highlighted the queerness of the gender-bending sex act, with certain images showing the female-clad, male Titania penetrating Bottom's bottom from every which way (image 6 and 7). These depictions, a step removed from live depictions of sex, offered a safe way to narrate the sexual escapades without transgressing boundaries of decorum. The use of the shadow puppets related back to the play's associations with the fairy world as a world of shadows, such as King Oberon who is described by Puck as the "King of shadows" (3.2.347). At the same time, it made explicit the tie between the *Midsummer* fairies and queer sexuality. During segments, the fairies would themselves appear backlit behind translucent curtains,

making their own shadows visible to the audience (image 8). Their exuberant activity, which highlighted its ephemeral nature through the use of shadows, captured a sense of Spariosu's notion of "mimesis-play," which Scherer describes as working to "simulate or invoke the raw power of delight in the feeling of freedom" ("Celebrating Idleness" 280). Yet, unlike Fink's notion of play, which can easily seem sanctimonious, here we have unadulterated moments of idleness, which highlight queer sexuality in its own "raw power of delight."

I would suggest that the production's shadow play represented a mode of theatrical idleness: a storytelling device that set non-reproductive activity into vibrant motion. By using the term vibrant, I refer to its opposition to traditional notions of idleness as inactivity. Shakespearean idleness marks the site of ironic activity that is resonant and energetic, whether desirously, affectively, or imaginatively. The practice highlighted the ephemeral nature of theatrical "playing," becoming an embodiment of the popular metaphor of the player as a "shadow," which Puck employs—"if we shadows have offended" (5.1.414)—as means to assuage any offended audience members at the end of the play. Simultaneously, as a storytelling device it circulated queer desire through the erotic images it created using puppets, not the bodies of the performers themselves. The traces of the story did not live on or with the live bodies of the actors. Audiences were able to playfully relive this highly eroticized moment of the past, then when the playful episode was finished and the puppets were removed, the mode of production vanished completely as well. The practice can usefully be related to Peggy Phelan's work on the ontology of performance. She writes, "Performance clogs the smooth machinery of reproductive representation necessary to the circulation of capital" (148). Left without a

clear cultural product to have and to hold, there remains something illogical, about the economy of performance's trade under capitalism. The shadow sequence also recalls the shadows within Plato's cave, which were degraded for their illusionary nature that could keep man from Truth. Here, however, the illusionary shadows revel in their own mimetic freedom. Shakespearean idleness can provide such a paradoxical motion within mimesis, offering a storytelling device that defies reproductive economies, a central tenant to the progress of straight time.

The Hive developed a self-conscious, ephemeral mode of production, but perhaps more importantly one that ties Shakespearean idleness back to the queer body. Their shadows circulated queer desire through their dramatic display, yet at the same time they embodied a theatrical display that relates back to Cleopatra's own self-conscious theatrical display of idleness on the barge upon the river Cydnus. Enobarbus's description of the Queen and "what they undid did" provides a fairly erotic image of an entourage of "pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids" who while fanning the Egyptian Queen did, paradoxically, seem to "glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool." The Hive's shadow play offered an erotic display in which, similarly, "what they undid did." And the "delicate cheeks" in question were far more explicit.

Notably, Puck's final monologue in The Hive's interpretation did not sweep the urban wasteland from the stage or return things to a more stable, linear, or productive Athenian world. Puck's final monologue resonated greatly with the production's mode of theatrical idleness, explicitly acknowledging this relationship. Here, Puck highlights the non-reproductive nature of the performance as a theatrical "dream":

> If we shadows have offended,

Think but this, and all is mended:

That you have but slumbered here,

While these visions did appear;

And this weak and idle theme,

No more yielding but a dream,

Gentles, do not reprehend.

If you pardon, we will mend.

(5.1.414-422)

Given the production's linkage between queerness and non-reproduction, whether that be the fairies's queer sex acts, the ephemeral puppet play, or the symbolic waste remains surrounding the stage, Puck's evocation of the words "no more *yielding* but a dream" to describe the effect of the play's "idle theme" stood out in a poignant way. The term "yielding," according to the OED, means "bearing produce, productive, fertile." In Puck's soliloquy, the theatrical event's "idle themes" are linked with the non-reproductive queer ontology of performance. During the final monologue, Puck circled the stage "blowing out" several practical lights scattered around the stage. One by one, as if they were candles, each turned off, ending with one final orb, which created an ominous glow as it up-lit the actor's face (image 8). Slowly, the stage and the audience were brought back into darkness, returning towards nothing. And with the final blow from his lips, the last light dimmed, and the performance itself was "undid."

Conclusion: *Are We Just Wasting Time?*

The Hive's theatrical event, with the urban wasteland at its core, embodied the pleasurable circulations of Shakespearean idleness; but how is this unproductivity, "no more yielding than a dream," different from a derogatory "waste of time"? To consider this, I'll turn briefly to another Shakespearean forest. In *As You Like It*, Rosalind describes her "time out" experience in the forest of Arden as a wasted time, yet this appears with a positive connotation: "I like this place and willingly could waste my time in it." As Wagner in *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time* details, the forest of Arden serves as a useful metaphor for the time scheme of the theatrical forum, which warps perceptions of clock time (12). The Shakespearean theater creates a space for idle time in which audiences, like Rosalind, would similarly want to willingly waste their time. Arden's time, like theater's time, suggests a different, even positively charged valence for time wasted, one different from time wasted in the "economy of time" as detailed by Marx.

Shakespearean idleness offers a way to describe these pleasurable moments of wasted time that challenge industrialization's progressive time scheme. The melancholic Jacques, like the stereotypical gay figure of the "bitter queen," lives out of synch with normative timelines. His capability to comment on the nature of time, as in the seven ages of man speech, is a byproduct of being outside of clock time within the forest realm. For audiences at the theatrical event, placed somewhere between clock time and the time of the theatrical display, one is similarly afforded a space and time to reconsider temporal constructions. Here, audiences are guided by Jacques in a rapid time-traveling journey through the progressive ages. This may allow audiences to consider central tenants about

the "nature" of time: its embodiment and its construction. Along these lines, it is within this forest space that Rosalind can reflect on how "time travels in divers paces with divers persons," recognizing the individualized experience of time, which can shift based on circumstances and emotional life (3.2.308-9). She playfully explains who, "Time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal and who he stands still withal" (3.2.309-11). Her description suggests the "natural" ways that time flows according to various vocations. For Freeman, "'timing' engenders a sense of being and belonging that feels natural," an argument she further supports by turning to Bourdieu and the "rhythms of habitus" (18). When Rosalind describes how time travels in various ways she recognizes how time travels differently through bodies of different classes; she distinguishes the quick time of the eager young maid soon to wed, the ambling "rich man," and the stillness of the "lawyers in the vacation" (3.2.303-18). A more thorough understanding of time can be gleaned from Arden's "time out" space. It describes not only the subjectivity of time, but also how time is embodied and felt differently by different persons.

Significantly, this passage also centralizes queer bodies and sexuality while it focuses attention onto the constructed nature of time itself. Rosalind talks about time while she (dressed as a boy) attempts to woo a boy in the forest, meanwhile assuming the surname Ganymede, an alias with homoerotic connotations.[24] Her discussion of time, a "schooling" on the nature of time, stems not only from being in the forest, but also from her attractions to Orlando. When Rosalind asks Orlando for the time "o'clock," he replies

[24] While this project focuses on contemporary performance, not early modern performance, the convention of cross-dressing on the Elizabethan stage may add another layer of gender-bending and homoerotics to assist in the theater/queerness/idleness corollary.

that she should ask "what time o'day. There's no clock in the forest" (3.2.290-2). To this, Rosalind describes how the body can tell its own time through its strong attractions: "Then there is no true lover in the forest, else sighing every minute and groaning every hour would detect the lazy foot of time as well as a clock" (3.2.293-5). Rosalind, of course, speaks from personal experience having had to recently deal with the extreme anticipation of waiting to meet Orlando again. The homoerotics coded in their exchange and within Rosalind's cross-gendered experience creates an embodied experience of time, further linking queer bodies to queer time.

Shakespearean idleness, as represented by Arden, or for that matter *Antony and Cleopatra* or The Hive's production, marks an ironically energetic type of idle time. Later, in Chapter 5, I will discuss the "dissolution of time" within the context of the *Macbeth* adaptation *Sleep No More*, but even this type of emptying out—"like a player who struts and frets his hour upon the stage and is heard no more"—is embodied vibrantly in this performance (5.5.25). Idleness offers a rich type of "wasted" of time that can be usefully contrasted with the waste of time described and experienced by Richard II while trapped in his jail cell: "I wasted time and now doth time waste me" (5.5.49). Richard describes not escaping time, or being removed from the incessant drive of the clock, but being emptied out *himself*, as he turns into his own time-keeping measure:

> For now hath time made me his numb'ring clock:
> My thoughts are minutes and with sighs they jar
> Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch,
> Whereto my finger like a dial's point
> Is pointing still in cleansing them from tears.

(5.5.50-54)

Although Richard is held suspended in the tower, this doesn't seem to "suspend" clock time. Upon hearing the bittersweet chords of music, he is unable to escape his relationship to time and the awareness of "my true time broke" (5.5.48). Stripped of his crown, Richard describes himself as "straight am nothing," and while this means "straight away" it also describes his removal from the "straight" temporal scheme as he is stripped of his possibilities for worldly ambition (5.5.38). He describes himself turned *into* a "Jack o'the clock," an *embodied* experience of being literally taken over by a monolithic, featureless sort of time (5.5.60). Reminiscent of Benjamin's "homogeneous, empty time," this is fully grafted onto the body. It acts as a painfully restrictive force, unlike theatrical idleness, which uses the idle body as a temporal force for energetic circulations. His selfhood, both his body and its agency, are lost as he becomes a literal personification of an empty time: "Now sir, the sound that tells what hour it is/Are clamorous groans, that strike upon my heart,/Which is the bell. So sighs and tears and groans/Show minutes, hours, and times" (5.5.55-57). It is almost as though time, not being held without, becomes painfully held within.

The experience that Richard describes, being taken over by a force of time itself, illustrates time as an homogenizing force with a powerful sway. It provides an almost eerie corollary to Marx's view that "time is everything, man is nothing," as time becomes a monolithic sweep that literally consumes bodies in its drive to labor production. Even a "time out" is no escape from the "despotic bell." I would like to make a significant distinction between this sort of temporal break—a type of "empty" time—and what this project refers to as embodying idleness, which uncovers a liveliness that exists outside

the bounds of straight time. The difference between these two modes of "wasted" time may stem from the difference between suspension and imprisonment. The factory, as conceptualized by Marx and echoed by the works of Benjamin and Frankfurt school, marked its own sort on prison, governing all action. Bodies, evacuated of freedom, become literal impressions of time, mere conduits of time registered through their bodily actions whether "at" work or "off." Following the view adopted by Marx, humans not only lose time for themselves, they lose their very selfhood. Richards's tower similarly provides a model of wasted time in which time itself, its force, pressure, and drone cannot be escaped and yet is held still. Within this empty time, the body quite literally and painfully turns itself over to the greater force of straight time, which simultaneously evacuates selfhood.

Yet Cleopatra's Egypt and The Hive's *Midsummer*, like Arden, offer different models of time wasted. They serve as idle playgrounds in which selfhood, sexuality, and gender can be actively explored, while being queerly "undid did." Center stage to this paradoxical activity, one is likely to discover an unlikely actor: the cold, clammy idle body, challenging regimes of temporal progress in the heat of the theatrical moment through her labours of sweat.

Chapter 2

Gay Time

Between the various drag king performances and the go-go dancing Fairies's rendition of YMCA, there was something rather queer—or perhaps more specifically *gay*—about *The Donkey Show*, Diane Paulus and Randy Werner's immersive adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* set in a nightclub modeled after Studio 54. Gay, in this instance, refers to both the production's play with gay identity markers and its surges of gaiety, which Sara Warner describes as "affective experiences of joy and jubilation, wishing and longing, felicity and good cheer" (xv). This playful merger was perhaps captured best in the moment that gave the production its namesake, the actual "donkey show": Titania's crude and rather queer sexual union with Bottom.[25] A pair of glittery Fairies carried the scantily clad Titania in a ceremonial procession over the heads of the spectators. Awaiting the Fairy Queen on the other side of the disco-floor was "Bottom," here interpreted as two characters, "The Vinnies," a pair of goofy, over-eager club-goers from the Bronx, equipped with platform shoes and huge Afro wigs. Played by two female performers in drag, one of the Vinnies assumed the head of the donkey and the other the tail. As Titania glided through the air, her leg's splayed, additional muscle-clad Fairies pounded large staffs into the ground in rhythm to the downbeats of Peter Brown's 1977 sultry disco-anthem, "Do You Want to Get Funky?." Meanwhile, strobe lights pulsed as

[25] A "donkey show" is code for an urban legend of the Tijuana sex trade, a way to lure naïve tourists hoping to see a woman having sex with an ass. By drawing upon this name, the adaptation seeks to lure potential audiences in a similar way, tantalizing them with the promise of licentiousness on the dance floor (Caggiano).

audience members gyrated to the music, awaiting in any mixture of shock or pleasurable anticipation the sex act about to take place.

This chapter will explore how the manipulation of time within *The Donkey Show*'s theatrical forum relates to affect production, autonomic response to environmental change. In the theater, affect can play a significant role, whether politically—by reaffirming or challenging the status quo—or as an entity commodified as part of popular entertainment forms. Collective components in theatrical performance, such as *The Donkey Show*'s disco music, drag performance, or lighting effects, are what Erin Hurley would call "feeling-technologies," the production apparatuses that solicit and manage the circulation of affect amongst its participants (4). To borrow from Nicholas Ridout's work on theater's relationship to capitalism, Club Oberon could be viewed as a virtual affect machine, translating affect into capital gain as part of a bourgeois leisure industry. This chapter will first consider how the production's immersive revival of disco created a surplus of pleasurable "gay" affects. Then, it will consider how these surges in affect created a space in which participants, both performers and club-patrons alike, could feel, explore, and idealize a freer, even more pleasurable way of relating to gender, sexuality, and even one another.

First mounted off-Broadway in 1999, *The Donkey Show* is one of the longest-running Shakespeare adaptations of the twenty-first century.[26] The original production

[26] The impulse behind *The Donkey Show* began when Werner and his wife Paulus were involved in a summer stock production of *Midsummer* in the Midwestern United States back in the mid-nineties. According to an anecdote Paulus relayed during rehearsal, Werner was frustrated by the family-friendly way the production sugarcoated the bestial sex act at the heart of the play, driving the couple to come up with another way of envisioning the production. Paulus found the disco-world of Studio 54 presented the perfect contemporary corollary to Shakespeare's enchanted forest and its sense of

ran in New York for six years, going on to tour internationally to Madrid, London, and Edinburgh. More recently, the show has appeared in Cambridge, Massachusetts in an open-ended run since 2009, Miami's South Beach (2012), and in its longest run to date, Seoul, Korea, for over ten years. My research has focused primarily on the Cambridge version, which was mounted as Diane Paulus' debut as the newly minted artistic director of the American Repertory Theater (ART). Though I first attended the New York production back in May of 2001, it is the ART production with which I have the most first-hand experience. From August to the end of 2009, while a studying as a graduate student in Boston, I moonlighted as Moth, one of Titania's Fairies in the show. I draw here upon reviews, interviews, press materials, as well as my observations from the rehearsal process and performances in the show.[27]

The Donkey Show represented a "mainstream" model of Shakespearean adaptation, reflected in its widespread popularity, both over a wide geographical span and a long span of time. As with the other productions in this study, I am once again making a challenging suggestion by discussing queerness within a "mainstream" model of theater. By using the term "gay time" to describe *The Donkey Show*'s temporal scheme, as opposed to, say, ludic time, I look to highlight both the affects of gaiety involved, but also its political valence. The notion "gay time" is meant to distinguish itself, in part, from queer temporalities, drawing upon the poignant critiques that have surfaced in recent queer scholarship. Halberstam (*The Queer Art of Failure*) and Love (*Feeling*

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escapism. That summer the couple began conceptualizing their disco-version, conscientiously seeking to incorporate a playful eroticism and a heightened degree of audience participation.

[27] I will use past tense throughout here, even though the production—to date—continues to run, since I'm drawing upon my past experience with the show.

Backward) have critiqued the lack of affects that are deemed less socially desirable, like shame, anguish, or ambivalence, in LGBT cultural products. These underrepresented affects are still central to the experience of queer lives and queer histories. The problematic trend would be to drown these negative affects with the celebratory ones commonly associated with identity politics and its progressive gains. Thus, the challenges of queer experience both historically and today—especially felt by those further marginalized by race, disability, transphobia, etc.—may go disregarded or may even be effaced. *The Donkey Show*'s "gay time" finds its kindred spirit with pleasurable, positively charged performance experiences like the highly commercialized gay pride parade or even a late-night raucous screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. It fostered pleasurable gaiety instead of potentially unpleasant or painful affects. Its affective valence mirrored a "forward thinking" political strategy that looks to make LGBT affiliated cultural products pleasurable for a wider public consumption.

Seemingly frivolous, *The Donkey Show* might easily be categorized as postmodern pastiche and subsequently dismissed. Yet this idle playground offered a sophisticated model of ironic productivity within a mainstream theatrical forum. One might say that the production reflected the ambivalent function of disco music that Richard Dyer describes in his "Defense of Disco" as being at once whole-heartedly capitalistic and a source of critique. He argues that "cultural production is necessarily contradictory, and second, that it may well be the case that capitalist cultural products are most likely to be contradictory at just those points—such as disco—where they are most commercial and professional, where the urge to profit is the strongest" (103). This relates back to Senelick's evaluation of theater's conflicting frictions: its mainstream and

subcultural tensions offer a certain frisson factor that works to propel the popularity of the cultural product. Gay time swirls in pleasurable affects recuperated for commercial gain, while generating what Clough might describe as "the self-feeling of being alive" (2).

Feeling Disco

The Donkey Show began on the streets outside Club Oberon, ART's club/cabaret style venue, as part of the "pre-show," a loosely structured series of environmental events and improvisational interactions that began the evening's performance. The patrons lined up behind the red rope that partitions off the entrance to the club. Meanwhile, the Vinnies roamed the line of patrons, flirting with the ladies. Paulus orchestrated the thirty to forty-five minute pre-show so that audiences were introduced to the various characters and developing storyline in an immersive way.[28] Titania entered into the theater with an eruption of anger at the Mafioso club owner, Oberon, knocking down the red rope and charging into the club, setting up the feud that incites the evening's drama. Later, inside the club, a complete disco dance party was in full swing (image 1). An assortment of energetic "go-go" Fairies would encourage the crowd to dance, while the unrequited Helen (Helena) chased after Demetri (Demetrius) the champion dancer of the club, soliciting audience members to help her get his attention and maybe a dance. The pre-show would then seamlessly transition into the "actual" *Donkey Show* performance, which would consisted of a 55-minute track of disco anthems that (loosely) weaved the

[28] The description of this event as "immersive" follows scholarship by Josephine Machon and Gareth White, but it also satisfies the characteristics of Schechner's environmental theater as laid out in " 6 Axioms for Environmental Theatre," *TDR* 12.3 (Spring 1968), 41-63.

story of *Midsummer* throughout the club. The company members sang along to disco hits, while they moved throughout the entire space, climbing onto tables, the counters of the bar, and occasionally into the laps of patrons. Once finished, the performance would seamlessly transition back into a disco dance party as the performers emptied back out into the crowd.

The ART production was featured as part of a series of three Shakespeare adaptations that each looked to expand or invert theatrical convention. In addition to *The Donkey Show*, this included the UK theater company Punchdrunk's *Macbeth* adaptation *Sleep No More* (see Chapter 5), and Paulus and Werner's R & B musical adaptation of *The Winter's Tale*, *Best of Both Worlds.* The title of the series of adaptations, "Shakespeare Exploded," hinged on a subtle but significant implication: it rested on the notion that Shakespeare's plays are confined and that these performances are a means of liberation. One of the "confines" of Shakespeare may be the verse, and each of the adaptations liberally substituted Shakespearean dialogue for music, as in *The Donkey Show* and *Best of Both Worlds*, or for dance, as in Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*. In marketing material for the *Midsummer* adaptation, Paulus strongly emphasized the substitution of disco music for Shakespearean language as a selling point for the show.[29] These models fit with several of Paulus and Werner's previous theatrical works. Their first theater company, Project 400, developed their signature style: mash-ups of classical literature and popular musical genres, such a blues *Phaedra*, a rock *Tempest*, and a version of *Comedy of Errors* set in a Karaoke club. This entertainment model aimed to satisfy Paulus' self-consciously populist aesthetic, bringing Shakespeare "into the hands

[29] This is clearly emphasized in a promotional video statement Paulus recorded for ART featured on the ART website (Paulus ART video 2009).

of the people." In *The Donkey Show*, various feeling technologies, particularly its immersive performance model and disco music, could activate bodies in surprising and pleasurable ways, literally bringing the performance into the hands of the people, as well as into their sweat glands, ringing ears, and pelvic gyrations.

Paulus's theatrical model, drawing upon Shakespeare's pop-appeal and popular music, builds in a type of consumer satisfaction guarantee. In *The Theater Will Rock*, Elizabeth Wollman uses *The Donkey Show* as an example of the popularized rock-influenced musical at the turn of the century, placing it alongside the revivals of *Jesus Christ Superstar* (2000) and *The Rocky Horror Show* (2001), as well as *Saturday Night Fever* (1999), a musical version of the film, and *Mamma Mia!*, the Abba musical (1999). According to Wollman, these rock musicals produce virtual "risk-free" properties, like the staged versions of popular films, television shows, and novels, which has a particular appeal to producers who, in the face of rising corporatization and costs of production, aim to appeal to the largest possible target audience to downsize risk and maximize profit. These models also relate to David Savran's notion of "middlebrow" since they are committed to both artistic and commercial success by blending "legitimate," even culturally elite forms, with popular music. Like the influx of jazz within the theater of the 1920s, *Midsummer* coupled with disco music immediately engages audiences, creating a fairly promiscuous blend of high and low (*Highbrow/Lowdown* 59-64).

These various models of adaptation draw upon—and cash in on—the cultural products they recycle. At one point of rehearsals for *The Donkey Show*, Paulus considered swapping out the Bee Gee's "Hearts of Fire" for another disco anthem, taking a poll of the ensemble to find out the disco songs with which we were most familiar. She

learned to be conscientious of the popularity of each individual disco song the hard way. When the production toured to Madrid years ago, they discovered that several of the show's disco tunes had never hit the Spanish airways, forcing them to make last minute swap outs. With unrecognizable songs, the show fell flat.

The "popular" component of this theatrical model draws upon the participant's associative memory, but also upon histories of affect circulation and even accumulation. Sara Ahmed describes in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* how affect doesn't reside in objects or subjects but is the effect of circulation, producing "affective economies" as these emotions "accumulate over time as a form of affective value" (8, 11). The cultural producers of these theatrical events can cash in on the "affective value" embedded within the popular music, storylines, characters, and arguably even "Shakespeare" himself. How the theatrical event and its feeling technologies effect or "impress upon us" will depend "on histories that remain alive insofar as they have already left their impression" (8). Ahmed offers a theory that can be usefully applied to cultural transmission's relationship with capital production. The notion also offers a way to reconsider one of Bakhtin's claims, foregrounding the impressions of affect: "Shakespeare, like every artist, constructed his works not out of dead elements, not out of bricks, but out of forms already heavy with meanings, filled with them" (*Speech Genres* 4). The formulation of literary value becomes "not a property of the work itself but of its transmission" (Guillory 55). Feeling technologies used in performance are already "heavy with meanings" carrying affective impressions that have built over time. *The Donkey Show*'s use of disco, from its popular music, glitter, costumes, and famous dance moves, heighten the circulation of pleasurable affects by tapping into the impressions that have already been

made. The term nostalgic, easily applied to both disco and *The Donkey Show*, may even suggest this overabundance of readily available affects, whether positive or bittersweet, teeming within the various objects, sights, and sounds associated with the seventies.

The Donkey Show was able to maximize affect production through bringing the disco past into the present using various feeling technologies. One of the most influential of these was the setting, which was modeled after an immersive disco nightclub experience, specifically Studio 54.[30] While The Hive's adaptation illustrated a way by which the theatrical event itself, including the Athenian world of order, could *represent* a mode of queer time, Paulus's adaptation fully engulfed its participants in its queer temporal order. This shift in the audience's temporal experience allowed them to embody time differently by virtue of their more hands-on engagement with the theatrical event. Within the space, patron-participants roamed the club freely, danced to the disco music, or sat on the sidelines intoxicated by their cocktails and the swirl of the disco ball. Patrons had the option to purchase "dance floor" tickets so they could engage with the performance in a more direct way. Alternatively, patrons could purchase table seating that allowed them a more private viewing experience, although many ended up abandoning their seats for the more immersive experience on the dance floor. The performers were also immersed in and around the audience in quite spectacular ways. Moments before Titania was drugged by a roller-skating Puck character, Dr. Wheelgood, she entered above the audience twirling acrobatically on silks. Her Fairies, who had been dancing around the four corners of the space, hanging from railings and gyrating on

[30] Paulus was very explicit in rehearsals about *The Donkey Show* experience being modeled specifically after Studio 54. She relayed to the cast her own experience at the nightclub, having snuck in as a teenager in the early 80s.

cocktail tables, gathered together to assist the Fairy Queen as she descended from her silks, laying her down to rest. Titania's vibrant circus act, precariously positioned directly above the crowd, worked to heighten excitement through its virtuosity, but also its intimacy. Fitting with the ethos of the show, it provided participant-patrons a sense of being part of the spectacle in a more active way.

The immersive space could also offer audience members a sense of liberation reflecting *Midsummer*'s own sense of upheaval. Disco's immersive environment was crafted to unleash audiences from the confines they may feel within a more common theatrical exchange, which would situate audiences in the dark and make them subject to strict rules of decorum. Patron-participants found themselves free to use their cell phones, take pictures, go to the bar, use the restrooms, follow their favorite performers around the space, or choose to ignore the show entirely.[31] Paulus explains her interest in immersive theater as a way to challenge this contemporary notion: "Historically, theater hasn't always been this quiet sit-down affair. It certainly wasn't in Shakespeare's day…I think we have the possibility of letting other sorts of behavior be released, and enlivening what we think theater is and what it can do" (Caggiano). One example of this "enlivening" in *The Donkey Show* took place through interactive moments built into the mise-en-scène. In these moments, club patrons engaged directly with the show's performers in a highly visible way. During the number "Car Wash," a young lady would be selected from the audience to "take a ride" with the Vinnies on the dance-floor boxes (image 2). Such moments would pleasantly surprise participant-patrons who found themselves thrust into

[31] Although the participants in this model of theater have more choice, they are not necessarily agents. It is for this reason that Gareth White has challenged the use of the term *immersion* to describe this model of theatrical event (222).

the center of the action, now open to a surge of new sensory-input by abruptly being placed in the limelight. During Titania's rebellious opening number, Alicia Bridges's "I Love the Nightlife," a male patron would be pulled up onto the bar to dance with the Fairy Queen as she attempted to goad the jealous Oberon (image 3). The man would find himself gyrating closely to the sultry, scantily clad Titania, who would then remove the man's shirt in front of Club Oberon's crowd. Although the moment was intricately crafted by the production, it created a sense of spontaneity for the participating man—and the observers—offering a strong affective rush by "letting other sorts of behavior be released," breaking with theatrical convention while showing some extra skin.

By triggering the senses, visual, aural, and haptic, in ways that do not normally occur during a night at the theater, the production worked to ensure that the audience's sensorium remained activated and enlivened throughout the event. These environmental changes could affect patron-participants by engaging what Clough describes as a "substrate of potential bodily responses, often automatic responses" (1-2). The show's performers moved at a frenetic pace around the club, keeping the audience literally and figuratively "on their toes." Meanwhile, the audience had to negotiate with fellow mobile, loud, and often drunk audience members, who became a crucial part of the liveliness of the show. Dan Cronin, a *Donkey Show* regular, who has seen the production over 150 times, credited the audience's shifting energy as one of the reasons why he keeps coming back: "the one thing I tell people is that this show *never* gets old. Although the performance is the same, the energy that the audience brings with them to every performance is what makes *The Donkey Show* unlike any other show out there today." On top of the energy of the crowd, the performers, the disco tunes, the swirling disco ball,

and Oberon's various high-tech lighting effects marked additional ways of keeping the audience's range of senses engaged. This was furthered by the surprising, immersive moments when glitter or colorful butterfly paper cutouts would drop from the sky in colorful displays, landing on top of the crowd (image 4). From the physical vibrations of music or the touch of a Fairy rubbing glitter on your skin, the performance also engaged haptic senses. In this way, *The Donkey Show* could be coupled with other interactive contemporary popular entertainment forms that also utilize surprising tactile sensations as feeling technology, such as the Blue Man Group or the internationally acclaimed circus-spectacles *De La Guarda* and *Fuerzabruta.*

Josephine Machon's work on contemporary models of visceral performance offers a useful way of understanding the mechanics of *The Donkey Show's* immersive aesthetic. One of her key propositions is that the "fusing of sense ('meaning making') with sense (feeling, both sensation and emotion) established a double-edged rendering of making-sense/sense making" (14). The performance event is mediated and made through the entire body, rather than privileging the mind over the body. The body, engulfed in the disco environment, is making-sense/sense making through the "gross" body. As the last chapter detailed, embodying idleness is foregrounded in somatic experience. Here, "gay time," through with the work of (syn)aesthetics, generated a performance guided principally by affective surges. It focused attention on the bodily and the "visceral," hereby offering the playful sense of liberation key to Paulus's populist model of theatrical performance.

Through its combination of feeling technologies, the production created a tactile, even exhilarating (syn)aesthetic experience. Reviewers have described the show's

physical rush as “so visceral that words seem almost beside the point…a show aimed straight at your adrenal glands” or “the most alive, immersive piece of theater I've even been dunked in” (Aucoin, Clay). The production used this experiential quality as a means of marketing the show, highlighting the pleasurable sensations that would be experienced on the dance floor. The ART website called it “the ultimate disco experience—a crazy circus of mirror balls and feathered divas, of roller skates and hustle queens,” allowing you to “live out your own fantasy disco fever!” The disco realm, with its own historical associations with ludic revelry, was central to marketing the production’s sense of liberation. Similarly, marketing images for the production linked disco to a visceral playfulness. One of the most popular marketing images from the New York production, a staged image, featured audience and cast members in a moment of shared celebratory—if not euphoric—exuberance as glitter dropped upon them from above (image 5).

The production’s gay time was effective in generating capital from its affective circulations, yet the snapshot of the production’s glitter drop captures a rebellious nature as well. These moments could energize the body into a pleasurable self-awareness, while simultaneously offering a “non-linear complexity,” foregrounding bodily sensation and affects of gaiety over the storytelling capacity of emotion and the mind. As a mode of Shakespearean idleness, gay time served as a queer temporal critique : sensuous, fleeting, and glimmering of a freedom outside of normative bounds.

Embodying Gay Time

In the following two sections, I will consider how Club Oberon offered audiences and performers alike a way to explore outside the bounds of straight time through its

playful exploration of gender, sexuality, and utopian temporality. Upon arrival at the performance, patron-participants were likely to meet the club-owner Oberon, dressed in a sharp white suit and seventies aviator glasses, warmly welcoming guests with his thick New York accent (image 6). Yet the 5'5" boss man, with his tough guy image, was actually played by a female performer. This gender-twist, encountered upon arrival, was significant in defining the playful ethos of the production, while defining the space itself as a space for gender play: Club Oberon was, after all, governed by a drag king. *The Donkey Show* offered a gay time for participants, but it also served as a nocturnal queer space. As discussed in the previous chapter, Halberstam has illustrated the way queer spaces are subcultural spaces that abide by a queer, nonreproductive temporal logic. Club Oberon, instead of servicing exclusively the "queer" or subcultural, created a space that could service the subcultural *and* the "mainstream," fostering a ludic mode of temporality that encouraged exploration of gender and sexuality.

The space had a playful "gay" temporal logic defined by its frequent use of drag and role doubling. The leading male roles were each played by women in drag, with the actresses also doubling as two characters throughout the course of the show. With the lovers all played by women, the plot of the show consisted of tracing the skirting passions of rather queer attractions around the immersive disco space (image 7). Oberon and Titania doubled as lovers Mia and Sander (Hermia and Lysander) and the Vinnies doubled as Helen and Demetri. This allowed for a suspension of hierarchical ranks through what Laurence Senelick describes as "a usurpation...[of] male preserves" (*Changing Room* 270). In a personal interview, Lucille Duncan, who began playing the Vinnie/Demetri track in 2001, identified playing men as one the greatest pleasures of

performing in the show. She described it as "a powerful experience" and an exciting, ongoing acting challenge in which "you can't let the suit wear you." For Duncan, the practice seemed to function in a similar way to Diane Torr's model of drag as personified by her popular "Man for a Day" workshops. It created a space for "personal empowerment, the idea that experiencing the world through 'another set of eyes' or being perceived differently by others" that held the potential to "open up new perspectives and possibilities" (Torr and Bottoms 144). This queer possibility to open up new perspectives and possibilities was extended to audience members who were equally invited to explore various modes of gender performance when they attended the show. The New York production became a regular stomping ground for drag queens and the Cambridge production also drew a number of audience members interested in using the space as a forum for gender exploration, such as Edward Everette, a regular who attended alternately in male and female attire. The theatrical space could work as a type of "laboratory" that, as Jill Dolan describes, works not to "expunge gender ambiguity cathartically from society, but to play with, confound, and deconstruct gender categories" (Dolan in Senelick, *Gender in Performance* 8).

Club Oberon provided an opportunity for audiences and performers to enact what Sara Warner calls "acts of gaiety," creative, playful performances that challenge normative constraints (of gender, sexuality, time) working principally through pleasure. With the divide between performer and audience broken down in the immersive environment, the space for these playful acts to surface, between spectator-participant and performer, was increased as well. The drag king Vinnies hit on all the women entering the club, as did the sexy Demetri, who was eager to find a dance partner amongst

the female club patrons. Duncan reveled in moments when "somebody wasn't sure if I was a girl or a guy." "I love it!," she exclaimed in interview, "You are attracted but you don't know what I am." When Duncan began performing in the show herself, she began "to pack"—place a fake penis in her pants—because of her erotic run-ins with women, lesbian and "straight": "I would have my crotch grabbed," Duncan recalled, "and I'd have women staring up at where I should have a penis and I thought, 'I need a penis.'" Audience members, straight and gay alike, could engage in playful crotch grabbing, as a sexually suggestive action permitted within the queer space.

Paulus built improvisation, specifically between performer and patron, into the production's structure itself, encouraging acts of gaiety. Duncan relayed her own initial surprise—and bewilderment—when she first attended the show and had a run-in that briefly troubled her hetero-persuasion: "I saw Anna as Sander and it was that special feeling of, like, she pointed at *me* when I was up on the balcony. And she was *so* sexy. It's not cross-gender, it's just sexy or not, no matter what you supposedly are." Duncan even recalled how the exchange playfully, and momentarily, challenged her own hetero-persuasion: "I remember riding home on the subway going, 'What's happened to me?!" The go-go Fairies are, amongst the performers, the most devoted to one-on-one engagement with the patron-participants, doing their own fair share in spreading queer desire through playful acts. The modus operandi of the disco-Fairy is flirtation, and flirtation with each and every audience member, regardless of their gender or perceived sexual persuasion.[32] Paulus directed the Fairies to engage with each of the audience

[32] Unsurprisingly, the show has always had a strong following among the LGBTQ community. In a feature for *The Advocate*, the New York version's producer described its original venue as "Rupaul's stomping ground," before it moved to the El Flamingo club

members in some friendly way before the show. My own favorite tactic was to feed club-goers cherries while standing on the bar, jubilantly displaying the cherry stem I tied in a knot with my teeth. Although seemingly frivolous, the Fairies's established an important contract with club-goers through these direct interactions. We shared an enthusiasm that fostered a sense of discovery and an eagerness to become as directly engaged with the performance as possible.

The production's experimentation with gender and queer sexuality was perhaps best exemplified with the spectacular reveal of the role and gender doubling during the final moments of the curtain call. The lovers Sander and Mia were the last to take their bow before the company danced a short refrain of Donna Summer's "Last Dance," which ended in a triumphant stage picture. The audience cheered, thinking this was the end of the show. Mia was then handed part of the costume for the Oberon character, the wig, jacket and glasses, which she put on in front of the audience. The actress immediately transformed her mannerisms into the other role by giving a signature Oberon thumbs-up gesture and repeating one of his standard exclamations, "Oooooh, Yaaaaa!" to the audience. Then, Sander reached down and spontaneously pulled open his shirt to reveal his cross-dressing disguise, exposing Titania's breasts with signature butterfly pasties underneath. During each performance, in response, audience members would gasp and their jaws would literally drop. I interviewed a few spectators who described this as their favorite moment in the show, recalling their own shock of recognition when they first

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in the heart of Chelsea (Drake). Cambridge's Club Oberon has also become a popular spot for the LGBTQ community. The cabaret-style venue has become a space that commonly features a variety of queer or queer-themed performances for ART, although it does not subscribe to any mission associated directly gay or queer politics. Club Oberon has featured productions of *Rocky Horror Show*, *Cabaret* with The Dresden Doll's Amanda Palmer as a drag king Emcee, and Taylor Mac's *Lily's Revenge*.

attended and also their enjoyment at watching unknowing attendees experience this same shock at subsequent performances they have attended (Nelson, Tung). The spectacular moment was then buttoned with a refrain of the earlier dance-break, closing the formal *Donkey Show* performance with an even more triumphant finish.

The moment demonstrated a virtuosity that resulted in a pleasurable rush for audience members, providing a "reveal" common within popular entertainment forms.[33] Such an affective rush would be translated into commercial gain for the production, yet at the same time, it offered a playful moment by which gender was potentially reconceptualized; it defied expectations of how gender may normally be performed, reveling in and even revealing gender itself as a performative. Importantly, as well, it represented a way in which a diverse group of people could come together in "gay" celebration of gender play. The moment, as a collective discovery, also brought the patrons together with the performers and with one another through the communal knowledge that was gained.

Significantly, the reveal of the gender reversing/role swapping in the curtain call did not create a finite resolution to the production—a button to end the ritualistic release, or even a formal climax—but seemed to reverberate for the audience who was left with a pleasurable bafflement, often trying to piece together how the role doubling and gender swapping was able to take place without their recognition all along. Given that Alan Sinfield has argued that *Midsummer* reflects a strictly heterosexual ideology, even presenting limits on the practice of queer reading, it becomes all the more important that this adaptation turned the final hetero-couplings in which "Jack shall have Jill/Nought

[33] This popular tactic was commonly incorporated within music hall and vaudeville drag performances to give audiences one final thrill (Senelick *Changing Room* 306).

shall go ill," into particularly queer ones (3.2.461-2). This marked a significant refusal of closure in a play that could be viewed as reinscribing queer mayhem to bless the nuptial bed of the hetero-couples.

Similarly, even though the "donkey show" sequence, described in the opening of this chapter, may have symbolically and literally represented a "climax," it failed to create a climax within the sense of dramatic structuring or the rhythm of the production. Only moments later, Donna Summer's "Last Dance" faded into the loud speakers, keeping the incessant movement and rhythmic structure of disco pulsing through the theater. To further this refusal of closure, even at the end of the formal production, after the curtain call, no curtain dropped; the performers merely exited into the audience as the music continued and the dance party pulsed on, thereby thwarting the more traditional closure of theatrical events.

The Donkey Show, through this refusal of closure and ongoing incessant drive, reflected the temporality of the disco music central to the show. Disco functions differently than other genres of popular music, particularly by the way it generates a surplus of emotional energy and desire. Richard Dyer's "Defense of Disco" describes how disco music manifests itself through an ongoing, driving, repetitious rhythm and structure that, unlike rock music, is not "phallic." It creates an on-going payoff, instead of a build to a single climax. By doing so, it "never stops being erotic, but restores eroticism to the whole of the body and for both sexes…it leads to the expressive, sinuous movement of a type of full-bodied eroticism" (105). It can, quite literally, resonate in and with the bodies of club-goers in a sensuous way and in a way that resists linear development and a climax associated with straight time. Disco may be loaded with

nostalgic affective impressions, but its own rhythms actually resists a sense of security and containment. It challenges the safety of the closed (AABA), self-contained model of popular tunes. This was modeled in *The Donkey Show*'s mise-en-scène, which also "releases you in an open-ended succession of repetitions" but never quite "peaks" entirely or offers one moment of resolution (105). This created for the audience an on-going affective pay-off through a queer mode of time, driven by disco's rhythms and expressed through the sinuous movements of Club Oberon's patron-participants.

Divers Paces, Utopian Pleasures

The Donkey Show's return to an idealized disco past also enacted a utopian temporal movement through its gesture towards a hopeful future. Muñoz explores the way in which "queerness exists for us as an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future" (1). This reflects a queer time, a refusal of normative temporal logic, gesturing towards the past to propel towards a more hopeful vision of the future. It deals less with tangible products and commodities in and of the here and now and more with possibilities gleaned from remembrances or relics of the past brought into the present moment. The production's utopian time was particularly evident during my first encounter with the show back in March of 2001. Part of my passion and eagerness to participate in the Cambridge revival stemmed from my experience attending the New York production, and more particularly the way in which the show created a place—and time—for my own "divers pace." At the club, I was taken aback by the swirling sense of liberation that I felt from the music and the way the immersive environment allowed me to feel and enjoy my active participation in the creation of the theatrical event. What I

recall mostly strongly was a feeling of acceptance, of belonging, of a sense of being part of a collective, an experience that I didn't normally access when I went to the theater. Borrowing from Jill Dolan, I would describe these as "utopian performatives":

> […] small but profound moments in which performance calls the attention of the audience in a way that lifts everyone slightly above the present, into a hopeful feeling of what the world might be like if every moment of our lives were as emotionally voluminous, generous, aesthetically striking, and intersubjectively intense. (*Utopia* 5)

Dolan's description of lifting "slightly above the present" supports Muñoz's notion of utopian time as reflecting a queer potential by refusing to settle for the present moment. Through utopian performatives, Club Oberon was able to "make palpable an affective vision of how the world might be better" (6).

Through its gender and sexuality play, the production also offered a fleeting vision and pleasurable experience of life outside the bounds of heteronormativity. Notably, Muñoz's work conscientiously proposes a useful, and arguably necessary, alternative to anti-relationist camps of queer sentiment. It provides room for "a critical modality of hope and not simply dramatization of loss and despair," which can combat a world that "makes queers think that both the past and the future do not belong to them" through homophobia, stigmas associated with AIDS, the erasure of queers from histories, or prejudice against minoritarian positions in the gay community itself, like the particular challenges of being a queer of color (112).[34] When I first attended the production in 2001,

[34] It is important for me to acknowledge as well that the production, which reflects characteristics of a "queer utopian" temporality, also distinguishes itself from the examples set forth by Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia* in key ways. The "utopian

its open-mindedness to queer sexuality and gender performance felt particularly poignant since "gay" was not as crafted into the mainstream at the time. Also, the production seemed to counter contemporary stigmas around AIDS and shame around sexuality.

Part of this recuperative work was due to the communal sense of the production. Building off Victor Turner, Dolan identifies utopian performatives as letting "audiences experience a processual, *momentary* feeling of affinity, in which spectators experience themselves as part of a congenial public constituted by the performance's address" (14, my emphasis). The momentary aspect of this process is crucial; like the shadow play found in The Hive's production, it does not allow for a tangible product to be held or sustained. Its visceral, affective charge feels fuller, richer than everyday moments, with its allusive nature driving forward with the hope for future moments that are similarly abundant. Significantly, the production's interactive/immersive elements, notwithstanding their commercial payoff, became central in the construction of this communal feel. The work of (syn)aesthetics pushed audiences into surprising terrain, creating affective rushes and sensations. The experience, though driven by the individualized experience, allowed spectators to not only see themselves as part of a collective vision, but also to play a part in the construction of the vision itself. This could create a poignant experience for marginalized persons in particular who, by definition, are disenfranchised from playing an equal role as part of a congenial, broader public.

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hermeneutics" that Muñoz outlines is queer, but also Marxist. They reflect Bloch's notion of an *aesthetic* surplus over the traditional notion of a surplus value through the way they "exceed the function of capitalist flows" (147). Also, the various examples he puts forth, artistic work by pre-lib 1960s queer artists, reflect the margins of cultural production, not the commercial mainstream.

Paulus, as part of her populist aesthetic, worked to establish a sense of pleasurable togetherness between the production's performers and participants [35] This was partly since Club Oberon, though arguably a queer space, was never defined as a gay nightclub, instead it blurred the boundaries between the subcultural and "mainstream." It effectively offered a gathering space for a surprisingly wide demographic. During the time I was with the Cambridge cast, we catered to television celebrities, chancellors from Harvard, politicians, hoards of college students, gaggles of gays, and more than a fair share of bachelorette parties. Disco also had a wide appeal to older audiences nostalgic for the seventies. Audience members would frequently reminisce about the Studio 54 days of their youth, often claiming that they had not had this much fun since the real thing. At the same time, the nightclub environment was Paulus's effective tool to attract younger audiences to ART. The disco sensibility assembled people in a unique way, ensuring that "even the stodgiest of theater patrons will be shaking their groove thangs" (ART website). One college-aged audience member described the diverse crowd as "the great thing about *The Donkey Show*…I saw college kids, young women celebrating a bachelorette party, a group of adults in business attire and over-the-hill men and women getting their groove on" (Lewis).

The production's diverse public, while assisting commercial demands, worked to foster what Muñoz calls "the essential need for an understanding of queerness as collectivity" (11). Duncan identifies the "whole acceptance within the community" as the

[35] What I am describing here seems to align more clearly with Muñoz's notion of "queer utopia" than Elizabeth Freeman's theory of "temporal drag." Although *The Donkey Show* draws from the remnants of the disco past, its objects remain part of dominant discourse and continue to have a strong commercial value, unlike the "cultural castoffs and potentially embarrassing prehistories" that Freeman makes use of in her study (68).

"huge power of the show," which informed audiences "I can look any way, be any way." She credits the disco world for helping create this environment: "The 70s discotheque was all about acceptance." But she also credits the individual performers and their relationship to the audience for bringing this sense of acceptance as well. When she describes the Vinnies, she highlights the fact they "love *all* the ladies," from elderly women, freshman college students, and even the men dressed in drag (image 8). One of the most pleasurable and memorable moments for myself as a company member was early on in the run when I had the chance to disco-dance with an 82-year old woman on the disco-box above the heads of the crowd. The cheers from the surrounding crowd as she gyrated pleasurably between myself and another Fairy reflected a type of enthusiastic approval; it redressed the commonly found denials in American culture of an older woman's sexual expressiveness. Relatedly, when club veteran Cronin describes the atmosphere of Club Oberon he likens it to the sense of togetherness he experienced at a Cambridge nightclub that had closed down several years prior:

> I have many flashbacks when a much more toned (and younger) version of me would dance the night away to disco music while mingling with drag queens and drag kings, bikers, transvestites, goths, ravers, glow-stick ninjas, jocks, preps, and every other walk of life that walked through their doors. Much like ManRay, the thing that I like about *The Donkey Show* is that you can be whoever you want to be. (Cronin)

For the gay thirty-something Cronin, queerness represented a certain collectivity that was modeled at Club Oberon. Like Dolan, he also describes the theatrical forum as a sort of laboratory for the exploration of gender, sexuality, and self-expression.

Paulus finds the production's communal freedom to be a byproduct of disco music and its power to bring people together, but also finds it stemming from the performers in the show, who are "so comfortable in their bodies that this tells everyone there, you can feel good too…It's ok, you can be whoever you are" (Bowen). The communal nature of the show was most strongly experienced with "dance floor" tickets at Club Oberon, which, for Paulus, "replicates the sprit of the Old Globe…mixing patrician and plebian" (Ireland). In rehearsal, Paulus described Studio 54 as creating a "democracy on the dance floor," viewing the space as a meeting ground for different classes, ages, sexual orientations, and races that could all come together to celebrate collectively under the guiding light of the disco ball. Club Oberon was conscientiously crafted to replicate this dynamic: audience members would rub elbows with various patrons, creating a time for the promiscuous interplay of traditional social markers.

United under the disco ball, the utopian potential of Oberon manifested largely in dance moves, which opened up further ways to explore self-expression. Scholarship on Latin/o dance points towards a way disco could set politics in motion by "bringing people together in rhythmic affinity" (Delgado and Muñoz 9). Ramón Rivera-Servera argues that dance offers "interventions into dominant discourses of sexuality, gender, race, and ethnicity, among others, that construct the very geography of the dance floor as an alternative to structures of oppression and prohibition elsewhere" (272). Rivera-Servera also describes how queer dance functions as a "training of sorts, both in techniques of self-affirmation as dancers attempt to perform themselves in public, and in communitarian practice as they share the moments of cultural performance with others" (272). This occurs *not* through an homogenous crowd, but specifically from the "multiple

communities" (271), the divers persons, assembled. Club dance "allows for the free expression of queer sexuality within its 'safe' structure" and creates a type of dress rehearsal for how to behave differently and even more openly in the world, one that can potentially be carried outside of the nightclub and into other social spaces (270).

A key role of the Fairies at Club Oberon was modeling this different relationship to one's own body, one another, and the environmental theatrical space, namely through dance. During the pre-show, the Fairies would train audiences on various disco dance steps, including "the Hustle." When the disco-classic "Love Train" was played, we would begin a conga line with the audience, becoming our own "love train" around the space. The Fairies established a contract of theatrical exchange and invited the audience members to experience a sense of liberation and freedom of bodily expression, one that the Fairies enacted with their own queer dance moves and acts of gaiety. Muñoz highlights the way that the ephemeral moments of dance can have a surprisingly lasting effect: queer dance "like energy, never disappears; it is simply transformed…The ephemeral does not equal unmateriality. It is more nearly about another understanding of what matters. It matters to get lost in dance or to use dance to get lost: lost from the evidentiary logic of heterosexuality" (81). Club Oberon presented such an environment in which audience members could lose themselves in a queer temporal logic, embodied in disco rhythms and *Midsummer*'s idle forest realm.

The show's utopian sense of belonging was captured at various moments within the show's mise-en-scène, however a particularly strong example occurred when Dr. Wheelgood (as the Puck character) drugged the lovers the second time to reestablish order to the mayhem. The production script describes this moment as follows:

Their fight spills into the DJ booth, where they knock the DJ away from his turntables. The music and the fight go into slow motion. Dr. Wheelgood comes over and forces antidote pills into the lovers' mouths. The lovers fall unconscious, and disappear one by one behind the DJ booth. Dr. Wheelgood wipes his brow in relief, and disappears as well. For the first time in the evening, the music comes to a stop.

The DJ reappears and puts a new record on.

SONG: "I NEVER KNEW LOVE LIKE THIS BEFORE."

The lovers rise from behind the DJ booth, transformed.

During performance, the audience was held in a moment of suspension, staring up at the empty DJ booth, when the music stopped for the first time in the evening. When the DJ appeared, he pulled out a vinyl record, his smirk indicating to the audience that he had found a solution to the problem. He held the record out over the onlooking crowd, actively soliciting support—as applause and cheers—from the masses to restart the music. Working off the crowd's enthusiastic response, the DJ put his earphones back on and placed the record on the turntable, starting the melodic chords of Stephanie Mills's anthem. The lovers collectively rose up slowly and in unison from behind the booth, symbolically resurrected by the music. They sang along with the romantic lyrics as the women and their "proper" drag king lovers embraced and kissed (image 9). Caught up in the heat of the (rather queer) moment, the male Dr. Wheelgood planted a kiss on the male DJ as well. The moment's elevation above "presentness" was reflected in the lyrics of song, sung by the lovers and underscored by the voice of Mills on the track: "cause I never knew love like this before. Open my eyes. Cause I never knew love like this before.

What I surprise." What would normally mark the end of the play's carnivalesque structure—and the revelry within the forest—ended up inverting *Midsummer*'s (hetero)normative comic closure: it celebrated the queerness of utopian time, enabling participants to "imagine a space outside of heteronormativity" (Muñoz 35).

Fitting with the production's refusal of closure, this moment continued to build its affective charge like a series of ongoing climaxes. Werner's stage directions describe how this "*love in the air*" continued to spread through the immersive environment: "*Dr. Wheelgood and the DJ blow a kiss to one of the Fairies, who catches it, and passes it on to each, spreading the love throughout the club."* The "fairy love" the Fairies caught was represented by hand puppets that moved like butterflies.[36] When each Fairy "caught the love" they fluttered their hands as wings, looking down over the audience to include them in the motion. Since the Fairies were situated around the entire club space, the "love" was able to surround the entire crowd as it travelled. One of the Fairies who originated his role in Cambridge would involve an audience member in the sequence, taking the patron's hands to gesture catching the "fairy love" together, swaying back and forth before letting "the fairy love" fly over to the next participant. During the entire sequence, a company member would stand in front of the audience waving his arm back and forth, leading the club-goers to sway their arms in unison as well, like an audience might customarily do in tempo with their favorite ballad at a concert. Everyone engaged became a participant in the creation of the "fairy love" and this utopian collective vision. Through

[36] Paulus used the term "fairy love" often in rehearsal to describe moments in which we engaged with audiences in an individualized way. Throughout the production, and particularly in the pre-show, performers were directed to "spread the fairy love." This reflected a quality of acceptance and joy in sharing moments with a stranger.

such a moment, as Dolan describes, participants "can imagine, together, the affective potential of a future in which this rich feeling of warmth, even of love, could be experienced regularly and effectively outside the theater" (Dolan 14). That would be a gay time indeed.

Conclusion: *Glitter Tips from a Fairy*

Building to yet another climax, at the end of Mill's love anthem, after the "fairy love" had been passed about, the audience was further immersed in this experience of pleasurable togetherness: the lovers and Fairies who surrounded the crowd threw fistfuls of silver mylar squares into the air, while simultaneously stage management dropped thousands more of the small pieces of shiny squares onto the crowd below, engulfing them in a flutter of shimmering lights (see image 5 for general effect). The moment was referred to by the production as the "glitter drop" and it was one of the most intricately crafted, immersive moments of the performance. Between every show, the stage crew would sweep the stage of the silver droppings, collecting them into a net to prepare for the next show's glitter explosion; fairly painstakingly work for an effect that would last five to ten seconds at best.

The Donkey Show would not be much without its glitter, whether dropping from the ceiling in spectacular display or glistening on the bodies of the performers. The Cambridge production had a bathroom that was renamed the "Glitter room" for the exclusive purpose of housing the glitter used by performers. Before every show, the Fairies would bathe themselves from head to toe in the tiny metallic fragments in a rainbow of colors. The most important aspect of glitter maintenance that we quickly

learned: it is nearly impossible to contain. Following performances we would shower multiple times and scrub our bodies, but this still would not rid us of the shiny specks, which we began to humorously refer to as the "herpes of arts and crafts." There seemed to be a glitter rite of passage for each performer; it started off with the fervent, energetic attempt to remove each speck, then proceeded to a moment of giving in to the glitter: accepting that no matter how hard you try it will still end up spread upon your body, clothing, furniture, and even lovers.

Seemingly frivolous, glitter served a crucial role in the production as feeling technology, but one that also embodied the production's utopian principles. The "glitter drop" provided a model of (syn)aesthetics in action, activating the sensorium of the audience in surprising, pleasurable ways. But it also reflected a "desire for another way of being in the world, another way of knowing of the world" (Muñoz 130), an effervescent moment that, through its sparkles of light, felt as though it was "gleaming with potentiality" (Muñoz 130). In such a moment, under the swirling disco ball, divers persons could be united through the embodiment of idleness. Gay time could lift club-goers slightly above the present; its pleasurable affects passed between sweaty bodies like glitter—ever fleeting and ever infectious.

Chapter 3

Suspended Time

The world of Illyria in *Twelfth Night* is a suspended time, held in delay by mourning, forlorn love, and the isolation of an island space. It is a place that, as Matthew Wagner in *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time* describes, works at "slowing or halting the forward movement of time as it is normally understood" (143). In Propeller's 2007 (revived 2012) production of the play, Edward Hall, the director of the British all-male Shakespearean troupe, found numerous ways to make the play's sense of suspension come to life theatrically.[37] While the lights were still up in the house, the actor playing Feste roamed the audience as he headed towards the stage in a leisurely fashion. His casual cadence reflected an environment in which belatedness was the norm and urgency the exception. Once on stage, he began to sing "Come Away Death," the song he would later perform for the Duke in act two, scene four of the play. Gradually, a masked ensemble in matching dark suits began to appear. While adding to the song's vocal arrangement, the chorus crouched and leered from behind disused furniture pieces and underneath white tarps, making the group an extension of a world of obsolescence from which they were drawn. The ensemble's masks, which covered the top half of their face, were gray and skull-like, giving the impression of half dead figures animated back into life (image 1). These ghost-like actors, which director Hall refers to as the fool's

[37] Their *Twelfth Night* was first mounted in 1999 at the Watermill in Newbury, then in 2006-2007 at the Watermill, the Old Vic, and for an international tour. Most recently, the production appeared in 2012-2013 for an additional UK and international tour. I draw here from my observations of the Guthrie, MN (2013) production and a production video of the Brooklyn Academy of Music performance (2007).

"Zanies," lingered onstage throughout the duration of the performance, becoming theatrical embodiments of a time held in delay (Hall and Warren 23).

Suspended time, as the evocative Zanies suggest, was far from stagnant. It embodied the vibrancy of theatrical idleness, inverting a "dead weight" on performance into an invigoration and open-ended system of theatrical exchange. The first section in this chapter will illustrate how Propeller's *Twelfth Night* (2007, 2013) embodied idleness through its ironically active performance of suspension, involving vibrant recursive gestures and delaying actions. The following section will add another angle to the notion of suspended time by considering the imaginative role of the audience in creating the theatrical experience. Drawing upon Kathryn Bond Stockton's notion of "growing sideways," it will unpack how Propeller's brand of theatricality created motion, even ironic growth, on non-reproductive pathways of suspension. Although I focus here on Propeller exclusively, this reading will hopefully offer a useful way to consider how theatricality, more generally, may offer a way to reconsider idleness through its vibrant non-activity within a suspended time.

The Whirligig of Time

A close look at Propeller's *Twelfth Night* illustrates how the company created a theatrical realm of suspended time: a mode of temporality that placed straight time's linear, progressive motion on delay. The stage setting at the opening of the play featured a ghostly environment that gave the sense of a lingering past, described by one reviewer as "bleak obsolescence, as a house under renovation" (Blume 154) (image 2). An oversized chest of drawers and two closet-sized wardrobes sat on either side of the stage,

each partly covered by white tarps. On the back scrim an image of dark clouds added the threat of imminent storm. An empty clothing rack and a couple of chairs overturned on the floor signified an abandoned, neglected space. White party streamers were scattered across the stage and hung from an imposingly large chandelier that rested on the ground upstage. The luxurious chandelier fallen into disuse and the scattered party streamers gave a sense of happiness and prosperity in the past that had since fallen away. With no visible future, the household reflected what the company's set designer Michael Pavelka calls "air space for a family suspended in the holding pattern of liminal mourning" (Pavelka 13). The vacuous space became a theatrical embodiment of Wagner's description of Illyria: a place "governed by nothing so much as human inaction" (82). Significantly, it was the home, a central place for sustaining temporal regimes of lineage-making and productivity that was placed on hold.

During Feste's opening song, one of the masked chorus members swiftly pulled a white tarp off of one of the furniture pieces to reveal the character of Orsino, disheveled and barefoot, holding a wine bottle and glass. Orsino, trapped in a cycle of melancholy over his unrequited love for Olivia, had similarly been trapped in the static set design for an indefinite period of time (image 3). He became an embodiment of the lyrics of Feste's song: "My shroud in white, stuck all with yew,/O prepare it" (2.4.54-5). A man "slain by a fair cruel maid," Orsino remained living, yet placed in a state of limbo (2.4.53). Propeller's music designer describes how Feste's song contributed to this sense of suspension, "It occurred to me that musically we could represent this trapped, monochrome world by humming a single note, out of which Feste's songs like 'Come away death' would emerge in a melancholic minor key, with the same cycle of minor

chords repeated throughout the play" (Trenchard). When Feste repeated the song later in act two, scene four, where it traditionally appears, the chorus members reappeared and joined the accompaniment. The repetition of the song and the humming of the chorus in the minor "C" chord placed the characters in a state of perpetual return, which actor Joseph Chance, Viola in the 2013 revival, described as being "trapped in a loop" (Chance).

Like the "C" chord which continued to haunt the play, the chorus of masked actors continued to haunt the performance. They observed the action from the sidelines, moved scenery in-between scenes, and provided various musical and sound effects. The chorus members were conceptualized as the "Zanies" of the commedia dell' arte, yet stripped of any comedic appeal (Hall and Warren 23). The company's designer Pavelka calls them "Feste's followers" who "revel and delight in oiling the whirligig of time," constituting "the 'pack' that bedevils Malvolio and perhaps anyone else who dares to dream" (13). Like the recursive motion of a swirling whirligig, the Zanies were oppositional to straight time's incessant pull towards the future. The pack of Zanies embodied a theatrical idleness through their belabored activities; they lingered idly, lacked any clear role in driving the plot, and refused to be stagnate figures by actively "oiling the whirligig of time." Similar to the Fairies in The Hive's *Midsummer*, they became a "temporal drag" on the world of the play; the figures became embodiments of how Illyria is unable to move forward or progress because it continues to harbor ghosts of the past. Their presence throughout the play and particularly in romantic scenes between Viola/Cesario and the Duke tempered the general mood, stymying movements out of the holding pattern of grief. The couple's intimate, often erotically charged moments took on

a darker hue when the chorus, as figures of forlorn hope, surrounded them, lurching with their skull-shaped masks only feet away. Their vocal accompaniment to Feste's "Come Away Death," a serenade for Viola/Cesario and the Duke, echoed the play's haunting opening, creating a somber atmosphere for the budding lovers that further stifled the mood.

The chorus also took on an antagonizing function by challenging the forward-thinking aspirations of the love-struck Malvolio. Wagner, in his analysis of time in the play, finds that Malvolio stands apart from the other characters, with the exception of Olivia, because he actively and aggressively pursues a future. Malvolio's crime, in his analysis, is not just pride, but is also a *temporal* crime: "in the world of Illyria, where time is slowed down, and distinctly out of the hands of human beings, Malvolio has attempted to overturn both those conditions" (83). It is perhaps unsurprising then that in Propeller's production Malvolio is persecuted by the Zanies, the figures that incarnate a brand of suspended time that opposes forward linear progress. When Malvolio mentioned the "fools' zanies," he indicated the masked chorus that was surrounding him and closing in on him threateningly at that very moment (Hall and Warren 35). Significantly, the Zanies were also featured prominently in and around Malvolio's shaming. During act two, scene five, the garden scene in which Malvolio reads the letter from Olivia, they stood like statues of the three wise monkeys, "see, hear, speak no evil," and when Malvolio was taken to the "dark house" for punishment, they became what Hall calls a "sinister procession," carrying flaming torches to lead the way (Hall and Warren 85).

The Zanies who "oiled the whirligig of time" became the literal orchestrators of time within the production as well. For the several clock sound cues in the play, one of

the chorus members, made visible to the audience, would repeatedly strike a chime to indicate the ringing of the clock. At one moment in the production, Olivia agitatedly responded to this cue with her line, "the clock upbraids me with the waste of time" (3.I.128). The Zanies reminded Olivia—and in turn the audience—of the superseding function of clock time within the suspended time of Illyria, while the chorus also became an embodiment of "the waste of time" to which Olivia refers through their lingering action and opposition to futurity. The Zanies' chiming clock also created an abrupt, even ominous end to act two, scene three, the scene in which Feste performs "O mistress mine" for the drunk Sir Andrew and Sir Toby. From the scene's opening lines of dialogue Sir Andrew reveals his inverted temporal logic: "To be up after midnight and to go to bed then is early; so that to go to bed after midnight is to go to bed betimes" (2.3.6-7). The revelry that ensued, which Hall describes as a "mad, anarchic celebration," became like a wake ceremony, since it prominently featured the coffin of Olivia's dead brother (46) (image 4). With the masked chorus members blaring loud trumpets and trombones, the scene served as its own nocturnal playground for a large rambunctious crew who, as the sleep-deprived Malvolio reminds us, fail to properly respect the rules of time (2.3.86). The scene's slapstick comedy, a prominent feature throughout the production, illustrated the playfulness available outside the bounds of "straight time," while also balancing out the production's dark undertones. At the close of the scene the clock striking midnight brought the festivities to an abrupt end. The actors froze in silence, some staring upstage and others at the ground. They remained suspended till the clock finished its drone. The noise of the clock, the reminder night turning to day, was followed by Sir Toby melancholically calling the Zanies to leave, "Come, come, I'll burn some sack, 'tis too

late to go to bed now" (2.4.177). For these idlers, the drone of the clock and the impending daylight took on a sorrowful note and the company slowly departed from the visible playing area on the stage.

The coffin, which was featured prominently throughout the first three acts of the production, served as its own lingering reminder of the past, hindering forward momentum. Olivia's opening scene began with her brother's funeral processional and ended with her grieving at the side of her dead brother. With the coffin left on stage through the next couple acts, the audience, like the characters, was continually looped back into remembrance of loss. In the "wake scene" previously discussed, the coffin was referenced at selected moments, tempering the revelry. When Feste sang how "youthful stuff won't endure," Sir Aguecheek echoed the last phrase sadly and looked down at the casket to recall, "a mellifluous voice, as I am a true knight" in sorrowful remembrance of Olivia's lost brother (2.3.51). For Orsino and Viola/Cesario's intimate exchange in act two, scene four, the pair actually sat upon the coffin through much of the scene, creating a somber resonance with Feste's refrain of "Come Away Death." Like the presence of the masked chorus, the coffin created another theatrical "drag," an imagistic, recursive gesture on the performance. While the plot was allowed to progress, it reflected the characters's inability to progress themselves, as they remain suspended by loss.

The suspended time of Propeller's *Twelfth Night* stemmed in part from one of the production team's central influences: Alain Resnais's enigmatic French New Wave film *Last Year at Marienbad.* The film, which was entirely shot at a palace resort, consists of mysterious repetitions and flashbacks. Its multilayered and puzzling narrative concerns a man, "X," who tries to convince the female lead, "A," that they met the year before at

Marienbad. Wealthy guests roam the corridors of a palace with no evident history and no clear future, leaving its guests, as screenwriter Robbe-Grillet describes, in a "labyrinth where time is apparently abolished" (Robbe-Grillet 27). The chorus in Propeller's production filled a similar role to the anonymous palace guests aimlessly wandering through the space in the film. Propeller's artistic team found themselves drawn to the way both the characters in the film and in Illyria are similarly "trapped" in time. Jon Trenchard, the company's sound designer, writes: "When we watched it, we were struck by how the characters in that monochrome world were trapped in repetitive cycles, just as each character in Illyria is trapped in their own behavioral patterns" (15). Trenchard used this as a cue to develop the repetitive "C" chord that would surface throughout the play, underscoring moments of painful recollection. Similarly, actor Ben Allen, Olivia in the production, found that the characters in *Marienbad* "were stuck in a rhythm, which they cannot escape out of" (Allen correspondence). Allen likened this to Olivia's cycle of grief and Orsino's cycle of melancholy over his unrequited love.

Both the film and Propeller's production enact time schemes governed by subjective experiences of time and psychic temporalities. Robbe-Grillet conscientiously tried to capture this effect: "In reality, our mind goes faster—or slower, on occasion. It skips certain passages, it preserves an exact record of certain 'unimportant' details, it repeats and doubles back on itself" (23). It was this type of subjective time with its "peculiarities, its gaps, its obsessions, its obscure areas," that became the interest of the film, since "it is the tempo of our emotions, of our life" (23). In Propeller's production, a similar preoccupation with recursive time, particularly the traumatic reoccurrence of past memories, was theatrically expressed through various flashbacks crafted into the

performance. For example, when Sebastian asked Antonio, "Shall we go see the relics of the town?," Antonio was immediately reminded of his violent history in Illyria (3.3.19). Before he began to detail the events, the recreation of the story began to theatricalize on stage. The Zanies created a statue representing the sea-fight with a boat in a bottle and two actors armed with guns (image 5). The strange, ominous sounds of a "waterphone," an instrument that Trenchard calls their "pièce de résistance" filled the space (15). The instrument is built in the shape of a hollow metal cylinder, filled with water, and has extended metal rods that can be played with a bow. When the water is swirled while the bows are played it produces an otherworldly sound not unlike a whale call (Myles). After the memories began to be enacted on stage, Antonio explained why he does not "without danger walk these streets" (3.3.25). With the swirling sounds, Antonio's dark past swirled back into animation. Then, as quickly as the memory was called into being, the performers disappeared into the surrounding shadows, as the image almost evaporated from sight.

The loss of a sibling drew Viola and Sebastian into their own sort of suspended temporal limbo. In a program note, script editor Roger Warren relates the tragedy of the twins in the play to Shakespeare's own twin children, Judith and Hamnet, and the death of Hamnet at the age of eleven. He writes, "Shakespeare may have known about the modern research that would have illustrated how the surviving twin tries to compensate for the loss by assuming the other's identity, as Viola does when she assumes her brother's persona for her male disguise" (Guthrie program). For Viola to take on her own brother's persona becomes an embodiment of melancholia, offering another expression of the psychic temporalities that govern the production. This historical knowledge

influenced actor Chance's understanding of his character; he described in interview how Viola "believed in spirits" and her capability to bring the "lost child back" through assuming his likeness (Chance). On a level, Viola's disguise offered a living memorial to her lost brother, a drag in the sense of time and in the sense of costume. It served as a mode of suspension, presenting a physical inhibition on social mandates to "move on."

This haunting was theatricalized at select moments during the production. When Sebastian recounted the storm that separated him from his sister, a light appeared in one of the mirrored dressers revealing Viola from within. Serving as a double-image to Sebastian, she became a ghostly presence, a memory of the past made theatrically manifest. Simultaneously, as he recalled her drowning, the musical accompaniment drew time back into a loop with the return of the swirling glass sounds and the eerie noise of the waterphone. Later, during a nightmare sequence concocted by Hall, a spot-lit Sebastian relived his parting with Viola on the ship. The Zanies, once again the manipulators of time and theatricality in the play, assisted in recreating the turbulent tide. Viola was once again thrown overboard in a recreation of the storm from earlier on in the play. Moments later, when Antonio entered, the lights abruptly shifted from the darker hues of a nightmare sequence to the normal light of day. The moment offered an expressionistic snapshot into the subjective time of Sebastian, whose temporal experience remained haunted by the past. Simultaneously, and more fundamentally, it served as a clever, vibrant reminder for the audience of an event that took place almost two hours earlier in "audience time."

The ending of the production found subtle ways to imply a break from the suspended state that had such a strong hold on the theatrical world. In the final minutes of

the performance, during Feste's final song, a bright blue hue showered the stage. He entered alone and began to sing, "When I was a little boy," in a repetition of the action from the opening. Once again, the masked chorus, featuring the entire company, began to enter slowly from around the stage. What shifted, however, was the perpetual "C" minor chord that had haunted the entire production. Slowly the humming sounds of the chorus in the "C" minor chord opened into a resonant "Ahh" sound in a calm "A" flat major chord (Trenchard 15). This offered its own sense of temporal release out of the suspended time of the play. There was a ring of stars that appeared on the backdrop, a contrast to the storm that was cast in the opening scenes that also suggested the matrimonial rings of the united lovers. On the final lyric, "strive to please us every day," the actors turned to go, then abruptly turned back, throwing white party streamers into the air towards the audience. In the moment, time revolved backwards, bringing us back to the start of the play, but by capturing the falling streamers in motion. The ending suggested life and vitality, unlike the stale, useless streamers scattered upon the stage at the play's opening; it captured an ephemeral burst of celebration, but resisted letting the production's opening sense of decay set back into the world of Illyria. The ending's musical key change, backdrop, and flying streamers suggested a lift out of the holding pattern of the production. These marked significant types of feeling technology, manipulating the audience's experience of time in order to shift affective registers. With this ending, as Blume in his review of the play writes, "the solemn tone of the opening thus lifted…paralleling and framing the story's movement from despair to hope to joy" (154).[38]

[38] This could be contrasted with a play such as *Waiting For Godot*, which Halberstam

Despite the ending's hopeful gestures, certain reviewers found themselves haunted by the production's prolonged investment in suspended time and its consequent somber tone; Lyn Gardner described the production as "heart-breaking" and Steve Mentz writes "although the play ends with three marriages, however, it was the darker scenes that lingered" (142). Perhaps this was because the production's movement out of suspension at the end was not crafted as a celebratory, dramatic shift. Some of Hall's directorial decisions worked, as Mentz writes in his review of the play, to "discolor the sentimental indulgences of comic closure" (143). After the reveal of the twins was made, when the lovers left the stage, Sebastian and Viola exited hand-in-hand, leaving Olivia and the Duke trailing behind. This altered the more traditional comic resolution that would pair the lovers for the exit and hereby suggest a movement towards prosperity, even procreation. This could be coupled with the hints of resistance embedded in the play itself: the gendered return to order is left incomplete since Viola doesn't return to her "women's weeds" (5.1.266) within the frame of the play itself, nor do the characters leave Illyria, since Orsino comments: "we will not part from hence" (5.1.382).

As a mainstream, commercial model of theater, it should be unsurprising that the production released, however subtly, the temporal holding pattern of the characters. This could provide its own release for the audience's emotions, which had been similarly "suspended" in a holding pattern, like the pervasive melancholy that saturated many of the characters of the production. Along similar lines, the production was able to stay pleasurable throughout in large part due to reoccurring moments of slapstick humor and

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refers to as "a treatise on the feeling of time wasted, of inertia or time outside of capitalist propulsion," since it remains in a state of perpetual waiting, adamantly refusing to the bitter end to offer its audience temporal release (7).

clowning play. This aspect, highlighted in the majority of scenes featuring Aguecheek and Belch, represent their own opposition to straight time. Not unlike the temporal mode driven by Falstaff, these characters could please the audience with humor, while they still reflected an underlining resistance: a delight in the nocturnal and a servitude to play over productivity.

In a kindred way to how cross-gender casting may resist normative notions of gender performance, Propeller's *Twelfth Night* enacted a resistance to normative notions of time on multiple fronts. Although perhaps not the goals of the commercial endeavor, one might say that the production offered a way to heighten the audience's understanding of the work and works of time. Wagner helps to explain how theater can heighten a certain temporal awareness: "theatre helps us to experience…how clock time is not necessarily—or even at all—'real' time, in spite of its prominence in our day-to-day lives….because theatre places us between phenomenological and objective time…It provides us a sharpened awareness of both" (18). This suggests that theatrical time can offer potential insights into the multifaceted nature of temporality, hereby working to oppose unilateral notions of time as "straight," a monolithic, featureless sweep that is governed solely by a ticking clock. Wagner finds this juxtaposition to be particularly strong in *Twelfth Night*, as "Illyria becomes the place from where we can see the order of time precisely because we are removed from it" (82).

An example of such a juxtaposition takes place at the close of the play with Feste's final song, offering its own subtle resistance to comic closure. The lyrics can be read as temporal critique, challenging a normative model of time. Throughout the verses, Feste describes the various stages of life, reflecting a progression of straight time: the

normative temporal movement from childhood ("when I was a little tiny boy"), into inheritance ("But when I came to man's estate"), into marriage ("But when I came to, alas, to wive") (5.1.379-387). But when each of these events are cited by Feste, they are coupled with the somber refrain "with hey, ho the wind and the rain." Furthermore, each event is not met with success, but with a certain degree of failure: as a boy "a foolish thing was but a toy," at "man's estate…Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate," upon marriage "by swaggering could I never thrive," and "came unto my beds…with tosspots still had drunken heads." The cycles of life are coupled and even *overcome* by a resistance to progress. The final lines then move to extend the ages of man to the entire history of man: "a great while ago the world begun" (5.1.395). This is then coupled through its rhyme with the play itself, hereby conflating the end of the theatrical event with the end of time: "But that's all one, our play is done" (5.1.397). In this final song, as Wagner describes, Feste straddles the borders of time, both of the world of the play and the world of the audience/theater (81). Yet, when he does so he frames the "progress" of time not as success, but highlights its resistance, even failure. The stages of life, after all, are not met with sunny skies and bright futures, but wind and rain, as each refrain suggests.

Indeed, one might say that Propeller's production focused more on the melancholic refrain of the "wind and the rain," instead of the sunny skies or bright futures. Like *The Donkey Show*, it illustrated the way the performance of temporality can serve as a type of feeling technology, manipulated to heighten a certain affective experience. From its chorus of Zanies, the arbiters of the whirligig of time, to its set pieces and flashback sequences, Hall found numerous ways to theatrically embody a state

of suspension, which collectively worked to bring in time's "revenges." The temporal journey of the production may not have been transgressive or overtly subversive, but it nonetheless offered a rather queer exploration into the whirligig nature of a straight time suspended.

Theatrical Suspension

"Still be kind, and eke out our performance with your mind"
Chorus, *Henry V* (3.1.32-5)

This section will add another dimension to the notion of embodying idleness by focusing on Propeller's brand of theatricality. It considers: what is queer about suspension in the "suspension of disbelief"? To do so, I will draw upon Stockton's notion of "growing sideways," which provides a useful way to think about how suspended time is not simply oppositional to linear, traditional notions of progress, but can be ironically generative in non-reproductive ways. In *The Queer Child*, Stockton picks apart the popular notion of "growing up" by illustrating through an assortment of twentieth-century texts how the gay child, devoid of a future to "grow up" into, creates imaginative pathways to move and grow in sideways directions. She defines sideways growth as "something that locates energy, pleasure, vitality, and (e)motion in the back-and-forth connections and extensions that are not reproductive" (13). I will argue here that Propeller fosters a type of sideways growth through their theatrical suspension: the energetic, non-reproductive back-and forth connections and extensions produced by theatricality. By this, I look to push beyond stage representations of various "suspended"

temporal modes (the subject of the last section) to examine the way Propeller co-creates with their audience as active, imaginative contributors.

To begin to consider how suspended time might "grow sideways," I'll turn to one of the most powerful descriptions of suspension in *Twelfth Night*: the image of "patience on a monument." When Viola, cross-dressed as the male servant Cesario, finds herself painfully unable to express her love for the Duke, she uses the story of an imaginary "sister" to ventriloquize her own state: "She pined in thought,/And with a green and yellow melancholy/She sat like patience on a monument,/Smiling at grief" (2.4.112-115). The description of Patience on a monument does not suggest suspension as empty, non-productivity, but as offering its own emotional richness and activity. Casting herself as Patience, Viola thickens the audience's understanding of her own emotional state. In her definition of sideways growth, Stockton refers to (e)motion with parentheses around the "e" to highlight the motion implicit in such a circulation. This also relates to the term's Latin root, which the OED denotes as *emovere*: *e* ("out")+ *movere (*"move"*).* Although there might not be outward momentum or reproduction, there is a suggestion of *inward* movement, a non-reproductive sideways growth, as Viola remains in her own state of suspended (e)motion, not sitting with grief, but actively *smiling* at it. For the audience, one could say that a sideways movement also takes place when Viola describes her own grief through the story of the sister; the audience moves to connect across the simile (the sister *like* Patience on a monument) to metaphorically connect the speaker, the male-clad Viola, to the "sister" of whom he/she speaks. Within this expression of idleness, inactivity is reworked as vitality, motivated through desirous longing.

The use of the term "sideways" in regards to metaphor indicates a movement along non-reproductive pathways that elides "straight" forms of production. In Stockton's study of the gay child, this specifically refers to the social imperatives to "grow up" elided by the queer child's sideways movement. Metaphor may not conceptually seem to move sideways, at least not as it might with simile, which seems to place individual items side by side in order to draw comparison. But in regards to metaphor, moving sideways here is meant to be understood—perhaps unsurprisingly— in more figurative terms; its sideways movements or connections stand for an ironically "productive" alternative not only to "growing up," but also, for the purposes of this study, a deviation that fails to move "straight" ahead.

Within the theater, back-and-forth connections between the audience and performers are, quite often, their own literal sideways movement, even though this side-by-side arrangement may be more a product of nineteenth-century theatrical custom than anything else. But just as metaphor playfully blurs the boundaries between objects and others (Christians *are* sheep, The world *is* a stage), theatrical suspension can blur the distinction between the simplistic arrangement of audiences and actors as entirely separate, placed side-by-side. In Propeller's theater, quite often, the customary boundary between audience and actors is routinely broken, such as when Feste wandered through the audience and onto the stage in the opening moments of *Twelfth Night*. This marked a literal break of implied boundaries, the "side-by-side." Perhaps even more vibrant, however, are the "invisible" products that move interactively through this exchange, such

as the energetic non-reproductive pathways by which the image of Patience on a monument could move Viola's grief "sideways" to become the audience's own.[39]

During the "suspended" image of Patience on a monument, when the back-and-forth connections of Propeller's cross-gender casting are considered, the idle moment may seem ironically frenetic: the moment featured a *male* actor as the *female* Viola, disguised as the *male* Cesario, describing his/her emotions through reference to a sister, which was "really" herself, or rather, *him*self. A transversal of these layers of gender could be predicated by Cesario's reference to her "sister," reminding the audience of the multilayered performance of gender that is taking place. The moment allowed audiences to move across a non-reproductive connection, throwing the layers of gender play into relief as its own source of energy, pleasure, and vitality. In performance, the audience could imaginatively move between the duality of the Viola/male player as the actor playing Viola stood, motionless, akin to the image of the memorial statue. In such a moment "straight time" would not progress, yet motion within suspension could take place. The "suspended" audience, like Stockton's child who can't "grow up," could discover their own imaginative pathways of movement. Moving playfully across gender (the boy as girl as boy) the audience may find themselves, as well, not only experiencing grief, but also smiling at it. Each of these hypothetical lines of motion relies on the audience's active engagement in the theatrical event, hereby disrupting the stasis implied

[39] Stockton's utilization of the term (e)motion seems to offer a different formulation than Ed Cohen's usage in his chapter, "Who Are 'We'? Gay 'Identity' As Political (E)motion," which appears in Diana Fuss's edited collection *Inside/out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*. Cohen specifically uses (e)motion to highlight the way feelings move bodies into political action (84). Similarly, Deborah Gould's *Moving Politics* is founded on the motion in emotion and the way social *movement* implies affect as social force (2-3).

by Patience on a monument. Notably, they also rupture a stagnant understanding of idleness, opening it up to a dynamic reconceptualization.

Propeller's primary focus is on the spectator's imaginative engagement. Shakespeare Globe's all-male *Twelfth Night* presents a useful contrast to Propeller's work in this regard. Both all-male productions have found themselves widely popular with contemporary audiences, but they approach issues of Shakespearean authority in widely different ways. Whereas Propeller's all-male productions incorporate a modern aesthetic that borrows from early modern conventions, The Globe's attempts historical recreation. Abigail Rokison likens The Globe's attempt to reconstruct the Renaissance theater to the work of William Poel and Propeller's attempt to "rediscover" the plays for a modern audience to the work of Harley Granville Barker (73). This offers Propeller, as Rokison explains, a "different form of authenticity through a closer replication of [the early modern] *audience* experience rather than a greater accuracy of reproduction" (85, my emphasis).

Propeller looks to liberate the plays for modern audiences by stripping them down to function on a more "metaphorical" level. Rokinson illustrates how Propeller attempts this liberation through "an appeal to the symbolic, representational qualities of the Renaissance stage" (76). Although they are not trying to replicate original practices, like The Globe's production, they are incorporating tactics of symbolic representation either borrowed from or equivalent to those incorporated on the Elizabethan stage. The cross-gendered body, as Rokison identifies, becomes one of these symbolic, representational features, like the fluid set design, the chorus, or the use of music, which each work to move the play out of the realm of realism, towards a more "Shakespearean" figurative

level. In interview, Hall describes this approach: " […] I was taking away a few of the modern gifts of the theater and stripping things back a bit." By doing so, he was hoping to be "more imaginative in a metaphorical sense, and therefore hoping to engage the audience's imagination in sometimes surprising ways" (Hall, What's on Stage). Hall describes how cross-gender casting relates to this process:

> It [the company] started because I directed a production of Othello with a mixed cast [i.e. male and female] and I couldn't help them to get to a level of metaphor that a poetic play like that demanded. So when the opportunity came to direct *Henry V*, I was looking around for some new way of really being true to the text, but also giving it our contemporary response. The all-male cast unlocked that for me. (Ravenhill)

This "stripping back" worked to emphasize the distance between the "real world" and the stage by removing primary stage icons or reducing theatrical iconicity, such as the female actor as the female character. With this, one might say the company wants to use cross-gender casting in a parallel way to how Edward Gordon Craig's substitution of actors with puppets or the ubermarionnette.

By opening up the theatrical gap between "reality" and theatrical illusion, Hall looks to access this level of "metaphor." For Hall, this is where "Shakespearean" authority lies in their practice: in the imaginative labours it solicits from the audience (Rokison 73). It is well understood that Shakespeare's poetry and minimalist stage aesthetic called upon the audience to be co-contributors in creating the theatrical event. This is evident perhaps most acutely with the Chorus in *Henry V*, who directly asks the audience, "can this cockpit hold the vasty fields of France? Or may we cram within this

wooden O the very casques that did affright the air at Agincourt? (1.1.13-15). The Chorus presents a solution to this problem by engendering the audience's imaginative labours: "On your imaginary forces work" (1.1.19). For Propeller, cross-casting offers a key way to open up a theatrical divide, working to make their theater more "imaginative in a metaphorical sense" and, consequently, more "Shakespearean." It creates space for the audience to make imaginative transversals, "unlocking" the plays in Hall's estimation. This becomes possible by increasing the distance between the theatrical world and the real world. Ben Allen, who played Olivia in their *Twelfth Night*, describes their use of cross-gendering in similar terms to Hall, "By having men playing women we are making the audience complicit in the theatricality of the piece and the storytelling, rather than trying to make them believe what they are seeing is 'real' " (Propeller website). According to Allen, for the company, the design elements and extensive use of music are all designed to put them in a "theatrical world," instead of a "more naturalistic or filmic or TV kind of world." In a personal interview, Allen described how this process lends itself to a heightened imaginative engagement on the part of the spectator: "…if you can believe that I can be a woman then you can believe that we are in Illyria, or that this ship in a bottle *is* a ship. The aim is to get them on the theatrical journey from the beginning." For Allen, the "theatrical journey" is not the movement through Shakespearean plot so much as the movement along imaginative pathways created by the audience's suspension of disbelief. The theatrical journey, for that matter, doesn't move so much "straight" ahead as sideways, along energetic, non-reproductive pathways between the audience and the stage.

To further describe how Propeller's brand of theatricality may create a moving suspension, I will consider one of Stockton's primary examples of sideway growth: metaphor. The word "metaphor" is synonymous with movement, derived from the Greek *meta-pherein*, which means "carry another place." Drawing from the widely adopted description by I. A. Richards, metaphor is said to have a "tenor" (the subject) and a "vehicle" (a figure of speech) to which the tenor is applied. According to Richards, the meaning of a metaphor is the product of the interaction, both through resemblances and disparities, between vehicle and tenor (107-8). Stockton specifically describes this interval of active comparison as a "moving suspension," since between the tenor and vehicle, "meaning is moving and growing in a metaphor even while time seems to hang in delay" (92). Within this duration, motion and growth of understanding occurs, but straight time remains suspended.

How might increasing the distance between the "real world" and the stage, a trademark of Propeller's theater, take the audience on a ride, a "theatrical journey," in an analogous way to the movement of metaphor? Without engaging too much with the multi-layered, complex notion of theatricality in general terms, I would like to highlight one aspect: its interplay or movement between reality and fiction.[40] Josette Féral describes how objects or events being represented on stage are "inscribed both in reality (by the very bodies of the actors as well as by the actions taking place there) and in the fiction (since the simulated actions and events usually refer to a fiction)." One of the

[40] I limit myself here to a consideration of theatricality and its relationship to metaphor and do not consider the relationship between metaphor and performance or performativity, via the work of Butler and performance studies. For a discussion of the interrelationship between metaphor and performance, see States ("Performance as Metaphor").

conditions of theatricality exists "in this back-and-forth movement that simultaneously opposes and unites two mutually exclusive yet superimposed worlds" (11). Expanding upon Féral's definition, Ragnhild Tronstad describes the link between the metaphor figure and that of theatricality, which he finds is based on the following structure:

> […] like the metaphor, theatricality creates new meaning by connecting two different spheres. Following the analogy, theatricality could now be seen as "metaphorical performance." In contrast to real life performances, which are supposed to be literal, theatrical performances are based on a metaphorical gap between the real and the fictitious. Thus, the theatrical performance is at the same time both real and fictitious, but for the performance to be seen as theater, the spectator must identify the theatrical framing. (Tronstad 219)

Building off Tronstad, I would argue that Propeller theater's "stripping down" opens up and allows for movement within this "metaphorical gap." In other words, their reduction of theatrical iconicity allows the audience's theatrical journey to consist of imaginative transversals, "connecting two different spheres," the "real and the fictitious," a sideways growth across "different spheres."

For Stockton, metaphors, as implied comparisons, "grow" meaning in that they "(increase [them] in quantity, size, degree) by putting people and things rather oddly beside themselves" (91). So when Jacques in *As You Like It* proclaims, "all the world is a stage," he places the image of the "world" besides the image of "stage," allowing one to compare the features of both of these items. As Stockton would describe, we put this concept of the world by the concept of the stage and "find" the stage inside the world,

growing, expanding the meaning of "the world" by putting the concept of "the stage" by its side (92). Through the course of Jacques's monologue, one might say, this expansion continues to grow with each of the seven ages of man he personifies; the tenor gets inside the vehicle and takes a ride. Stockton significantly points out that in the act of "domesticating meaning or making meaning more familiar and accessible," a "strangeness" is often used, though "such a move is so familiar, fattening up a concept through the use of metaphor, we may not notice its reliance on both strangeness and time" or, one might say, difference and interval (92). Jacques' popular metaphor may seem commonplace, but on a certain level it enacts a strangeness, developing resemblance as it "fattens" our understanding of the world around us and the "roles" we play. How might theatricality "fatten" understanding in an analogous way, relying as well on strangeness? Féral, borrowing from Elizabeth Burn's well-known definition, writes that theatricality occurs "when certain behavior seems to be not natural or spontaneous" but is rather "composed according to this grammar of rhetorical and authenticating conventions in order to achieve some particular effect on its viewers" (6). Theatricality, a grammar of structure for articulating meaning making, is conditioned upon its atypical nature, the fact it stems from the out of the ordinary or strange. Similarly, the "work" of metaphor is predicated not only on the similarities between tenor and vehicle, but also upon their strangeness and differences.

Propeller's brand of theatricality is predicated on highlighting the out of the ordinary. Chris Myles, a fifteen-year company veteran, provided a rich description in interview of how the company's heightened engagement of the audience's imagination grows, through strangeness, over time: "The minute you've seen Viola washed up on

shore and you've been told this is a woman. And you've seen Joe and said, 'He's a man.' By the end of the scene with the Sea Captain you have forgotten. What you find is a woman washed ashore who has lost her brother." According to Myles, the audience is making the play "in their own head" because they are having to "do a little jump." Once an audience member makes the "little jump" of gender, Myles find them learning how to become complicit in their active, imaginative role: "And you do that little jump on the rest of the play actually, on all the other characters. You put them all in Illyria. And that little disconnect between the gender of the character and the gender of the performer, that you have to do a little jump for, you then jump the rest of the time all through the play." The audience learns to domesticate new meanings over time, making the "strange" familiar. He writes of the chorus of Zanies: "And so you see the guys in masks doing things and playing and you accept the fact that in Illyria there are people in masks who play music and that tell you what's happened. That there are people in masks who move wardrobes about [that] people come out of." Myles goes as far as to describe the audience member and their imagination as the "fifteenth member of the company," to which he adds, "Ed's [director Hall] very sure about that. He loves what the all-male company does to the audience's imaginative engagement" (Myles). For Propeller's productions, the audience member is constantly "doing a little jump," a "jump" that plays a crucial role in the conceptualization of the theatrical event. Although the company's cross-gendering may not be conscientiously engaged with queer sexual politics, it finds itself resonating, nonetheless, with queer temporal concerns and the forging of non-reproductive lines of growth and motion.[41]

[41] For more on the relationship between Propeller's cross-casting and queer erotics, see

Interestingly, the strangeness that one encounters watching a Propeller production does not seem to ultimately alienate the viewer so much as serve as an invitation for one to develop new meanings. The prominent use of a visible chorus in their productions, such as the Zanies in *Twelfth Night*, could easy be described as a Brechtian convention. The logic behind this stems from the fact they continually remind the audience that they are watching a play, highlighting the various modes of production, here the actor *as* actor. Yet, I would highlight that Propeller doesn't seem to achieve traditional Brechtian political aims, since their work does not seem to foster a particularly critical lens on the part of the spectator. Also, as suggested before, its performance of suspension worked as feeling technology, an alienation *affect*, fostering their audience's rich affective engagement. The company's techniques, instead of alienating the audience, arguably work in the opposite way by drawing the audience deeper into the performance through personal imaginative investments. In interview, actor Allen contrasted their techniques with the Brechtian *verfemdungseffekt*, which would, he describes briefly, work to "make the familiar strange." He playfully titles the company's techniques as "our Propellereffekt," which "basically doing the opposite in that we are making the strange *familiar*." Theatricality, in this instance, works in a parallel way to metaphor: it transverses strangeness as it fattens meaning. It works to domesticate new meanings—or grow—over time, while the actual "product" of the interaction remains elusive. This also relates to Garner's notion of "post-Brechtian" aesthetic that inverts Brechtian techniques to open new terrain for imaginative and affective exchange, not cognitive alienation.

Chad Allen Thomas, "Performing Queer Shakespeare."

When it comes to gender in Propeller's productions, the imaginative jump the audience makes is not often a small one. In fact, one might say that the company pushes the boundaries of the audience's imaginative capabilities through their approach to cross-gender casting since they attempt little verisimilitude when assuming the female roles. Hall describes how believability is the last thing on his mind when casting: "Essentially I just look for a good actor. I don't necessarily go for the most delicate, petite man to play a woman. When we did *A Midsummer Nights Dream* our Titania was a six foot two inches guy, with his torso and a big hairy chest visible above this wonderful dress" (Croall). This was similar in their production of *Twelfth Night* (2007), which featured a Maria who had an abundance of chest hair and a broad-shouldered Olivia who was large enough to be captain of a rugby team.

Critical responses to Propeller' s brand of cross-gender casting always point out how the men rarely, if ever, look like women (Blume 153, Collins 118, Jones). Myles's portrayal of Maria (2007) exemplified this approach to cross-gender performance, which I would describe as coupling a Charles Ludlam style, continually reminding the audience that a man is performing the female role, with the no-nonsense attitude of British comedian Eddie Izzard (image 6). Upon Myles's mere entrance to the play, his surprising appearance, a hybrid of male and female signifiers graced with high heels and masculine swagger, elicited laughter amongst the audience. Myles used minor feminine gesticulations and body posturing, while also speaking in a low vocal register. This was used for comedic effect at various moments in the production, such as when he invited Aguecheek to the "buttery bar" to drink, lifting his skirt to reveal his extra hairy leg. Such

moments of broad comedy, resurfacing throughout the production, worked to balance the melancholic mood associated with a world held in suspension.

However, critics often identify a level of sophistication in Propeller's cross-gender play that undermines any simplistic association with bawdy popular entertainment. Blume describes in his review of *Twelfth Night* that "the spectator was enabled to both forget and remain aware of the fact that the actors were men" creating a sort of "doubleness" (153). In her *Shakespeare Bulletin* review of Propeller's *Midsummer* (2004), Jane Collins identifies a similar movement over the course the performance. She recognizes that the company's "casting choices do nothing to minimize the obvious physical differences between men and women," then acknowledges, "however, by the end of the production the audience both sees the bulging Adam's apple that marks Hermia as a very short man, yet also believes in the happy magic of her successful union with Lysander (also a short man)" (118). Blume's "doubleness" speaks to the duality created by Propeller's "metaphorical" approach, allowing movement between the male actor and the fictitious female character he represents. The spectator, according to Blume, is able to hold an awareness of both these aspects, traversing the metaphorical "gap," so to speak. Collins suggests a way she domesticated new meanings across "strangeness," uniting the (very male appearing) Hermia with the female character the actor played, even while the two (the male actor and female character) could retain their differences as well.

This moment could be likened to the state of "criticality" as proposed by Brian Massumi in "Event Horizon." During such moments, alternatives which are normally mutually exclusive, are compounded within a system, here within the system of

representation of the performance event. The "male" is compounded with the "female," yet does not translate to "female" entirely, entering into the "strange" terrain that Propeller cast members discuss. Such a conflation of opposites, Massumi would say, produces a type of rupture: the system of representation is no longer "unfolding in a linear fashion," the system suspends. Interestingly, this state of "going critical" actually creates a heightened state of *transformability*, "churning, running over its own possible states" (154). It offers a possibility for new horizons: imaginative, desirous, affective, and strange. Propeller's metaphorical gap, implicit in their cross-gendered play, opens to new traversals within a "suspended" state. While one may consider the "system" within this context to refer to the system of representation in the performance event, criticality expands this; for Massumi, within these moments "the system is you." This turns the attention back to the audience member themself as, for Propeller, one realizes their own imaginative, co-creating role as their fifteenth company member. It can mark a exhilarating, even visceral moment of self-discovery, as one discovers their role as an active collaborator in with the performance event. This brand of theatricality, founded on the expansion of the metaphorical gap within a "suspended" system, can open new imaginative possibilities by confounding preconceived notions about gender. It reflects a new way of conceptualizing the queerness of theatricality in practice.

In conclusion, I would like to briefly consider how Viola in Propeller's production of *Twelfth Night* (2013) could solicit a similar kind of theatrical suspension. When Chance first appeared, he was propelled back-and-forth by the Zanies, who theatrically represented the movement of a turbulent tide at sea (image 7). A ship in a bottle, held by one of the chorus members upstage, swayed back and forth to represent their ship lost at

sea. Shipwrecked, the captain replaced Viola's long white sleeping gown with a suit jacket, the same that was worn by the ensemble of Zanies. In the scene that followed, the audience witnessed the transformation of this male actor from Viola into Cesario as he put on the attire. The "transformation" occurred before any dialogue, and was the only stage action at the time, focusing the audience's eyes onto this cross-dressing activity. Following, Viola examined her new appearance as Cesario in front of a mirror for a prolonged moment, as the audience watched through the reflection. The actor was transformed into the image of the male chorus: "I am the man," he will later exclaim, and he was indeed, doubly right. The play's non-realistic setting, featuring the oversized wardrobe and hanging racks, created a space in which this type of "strange" transition of gender seemed not only possible, but natural in its own peculiar way. More importantly, perhaps, the audience learned from early moments that this is a realm in which you are encouraged to "do a little jump." The audience could pick up on the pleasurable, sideways transversals solicited by this style of theatrical performance, allowing the Zanies to shift between being masked men and the restless tide and allowing Chance to shift between being a noticeably male actor and the female Viola.

There was a fluidity and simplicity Chance achieved as he passed from girl to boy and back again, without presenting much notable change through gesticulation or voice. He remained consistently youthful and naive throughout, and consistently androgynous in his gesticulation. Actor Joseph Chance's Viola, unlike Myles's Maria, was more androgynous, although still noticeably male. He had a slighter frame than the other male actors playing female roles, and his hair cut in a way that could lend itself to either a male or a female character. His voice remained consistently pitched in a slightly higher vocal

register throughout the performance as though boyish or slightly effeminate. His clothing alone was able to "make the man," since he made no active or visible attempt to "play female" or the "play male" within his performance through female/masculine behaviorism. And yet, the choice not to "take on the man" seemed suitable within the context of the play: Cesario is, after all, supposed to be a eunuch, representing his own sort of "suspended" gender.

Blume's comment about the "doubleness" of gender in the performance resonates strongly with my own experience of watching Chance's Viola, as I found myself shifting between a conscious awareness of his male gender and an acceptance of the male actor as the female character, despite his overtly male appearance. At particular moments during the play, this doubleness was brought into relief by the play's dialogue; for instance, when Chance stated, "I am not what I am," the line took on an added layer of irony, bringing the performativity of gender into awareness by the fact that the recognizably male Viola was playing a women playing a man. Beyond the moment's deconstructive capabilities, it also created a motion within the production's suspended time. After moving across the "gap" of gender, such a moment reminded myself, the audience member as passenger, "*this* is the vehicle." In such a moment, I experienced a quick, energetic movement across the "metaphorical gap," along a back-and-forth non-reproductive pathway. The moment, an interruption of the line of action, brought gender into relief, but also created a "critical" conjuncture of oppositions as, following Massumi, "mutually exclusive alternatives pack into the materiality of the system" (154). This forced my imaginative capabilities to yield to new results and possibilities, while bringing this interactive engagement into self-conscious awareness. Perhaps this relates

to the “different kind of resonance” that Hall locates in their productions of plays "where disguises are used and gender-swapping occurs” (Croall). These moments of recognition, built into the play and highlighted by Propeller in performance, solicited undeniably pleasurable affective response in their audience at large. The audience seemed to acknowledge, “Viola is the man, no, *really* the man,” as they acknowledged another layer of meaning available by virtue of the male performer. Such moments had a large affective payoff, garnering some of the largest laughs of the evening, particularly Olivia's triumphant discovery, “Most wonderful!,” in which she discovered her beloved Cesario had acquired a double, suggesting for her—or in the case of the all-male cast, *him*— that Olivia was in for double the fun.

Considering theatricality as a mode of “sideways growth” opens up an interesting way to conceptualize the queerness of cross-gender performance, as well as this project’s notion of emodying idleness. It suggests a way cross-gender performance locates its affective and imaginative power by traversing non-reproductive pathways within a queerly suspended time. This could apply not only to Propeller, but also to The Hive’s *Midsummer* and *The Donkey Show*, which both had cross-gender performance play a central role. Stockton offers a way to think of the generative aspects of the process of cross-casting, expanding beyond its commonly recognized deconstructive tactics: how the imaginative transversals of cross-gendered playing offer a source of “energy, pleasure, vitality, and (e)motion.” This offers a new slant into a preoccupation with the queerness of gender-crossing’s “doubleness” that is far from new. Alisa Solomon describes in her influential work on cross-dressing in the theater, how the practice can provide a type of “double vision” that enables the spectator to “see both (or more) layers

of fiction and reality at the same time" (16). Also, drawing upon the work of Barthes, Lesley Ferris argues in her introduction to *Crossing the Stage* that cross-dressing in performance presents a "work that forces the reader/spectator to see multiple meanings in the very act of reading itself, of listening, watching a performance. [....] We are forced to concede with multiple meanings, to ambiguities of thought, feeling, categorization, to refuse closure (8). The cross-gendered play can create a non-linear suspended state, a vibrant criticality, with its requisite potentiality and openness.

In a similar way, taking a "little jump" with Propeller is about making new meanings while refusing closure: it marks an invitation to embark on the rather strange journey of Shakespearean idleness, moving along vibrant pathways of theatrical suspension.

Chapter 4

Twisted Time

While exploring the New York production of *Sleep No More*, Punchdrunk's immersive adaptation of *Macbeth* set in over a hundred rooms within three intricately designed warehouses, I wandered into a nursery with an empty infant's crib and a mobile dangling twelve or more decapitated Victorian dolls. While the rest of the room was in darkness, a single light bulb over the crib isolated my attention onto the crumpled up baby's blanket that lay inside. I suddenly felt a sense of discomfort at the suggestion of the absent child's ill-fated end, and immediately I recalled the various ghostly children that haunt the Scottish play: Macduff's murdered offspring, the bloody child of the Weïrd Sisters's apparition, even the missing infant Lady Macbeth claims to "have given suck" (1.7.54). During Bill Worthen's *Sleep No More* experience, he similarly found himself struck by "a space emptied of children," in which "their bloody, dismembered absence is palpable, physically and metaphorically memorialized" (87). The nursery offered one of many such macabre, twisted memorials. And in the 2009 Boston *Sleep No More* production, things in the nursery got even more twisted: at one point, the actor playing Macbeth chased a visibly pregnant Lady Macduff into the room, violently smashing her abdomen into a wall, murdering both her and her unborn child. Her corpse was left discarded in the crib, the headless dolls above mirroring her child's gruesome demise.

Like *Sleep No More*'s violent nursery scene, *Macbeth* depicts a war on temporal order. Central to the play's disruption of natural order—"nature is dead" (2.1.50)—is its disruption of reproductive order, since Macbeth will have no heirs; he wears a "fruitless

crown" and carries a "barren sceptre" (3.1.60, 61). Cleanth Brooks has shown how the Scottish king makes a "war on children" (35), an argument Carol Chillington Rutter in *Shakespeare and Child's Play* links to the notion of futurity: "Having no children, he (Macbeth) has no future. To keep that future at bay, he must kill it—by crushing the 'seeds of time' (1.3.56) that are the future. The children" (165). Building off Rutter, the play could be said to enact a powerful disruption of straight time's orientation towards the future, a disruption that is embodied in *Sleep No More* through the ghosting of the child. Drawing upon Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*, this chapter will examine how the production manufactures dis/orientation, a queer twist on spectators' "straight" orientations, whether spatial, sexual, or—as I shall focus on in the second half of the chapter—temporal. By doing so, I look to expand upon Ahmed's primary focus on dis/orientation as the "queer effect… created by bodies out of place" (61) by considering dis/orientation as the "queer effect" created by of bodies out of time as well.

The production, co-directed by Punchdrunk's artistic directors Felix Barrett and Maxine Doyle, crafts a surreal vision of *Macbeth* and Hitchcock's *Rebecca* through a lens of film noir. It was first staged in London in 2003 and then revived in Brookline, MA in 2009 for a three-month run co-produced by American Repertory Theater. Currently, a revamped version has been playing in an open-ended run since March 2011 in New York's Chelsea district in their performance space dubbed the McKittrick Hotel.[42] Punchdrunk has made significant modifications for each mounting, in part a necessity given the different "found" spaces the company uses, yet many details remain the same.

[42] The McKittrick Hotel is not an actual hotel space, nor has it ever been, although in a clever publicity stunt Emursive, the show's co-producers, spread rumors that the space was the site of an abandoned hotel left vacant since the Second World War. The hotel's name is derived from the hotel featured in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*.

For the purposes of this study, I will focus primarily on the New York-based production, the one with which I am most familiar. However, I will occasionally draw upon my knowledge of the Boston production, making specific notation of this when necessary.

Upon arrival at *Sleep No More*, patrons are given a single playing card and are ushered to a darkened, candle-lit tunnel. While Bernard Hermann's prelude to Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* swells in the background, the spectator-participant blindly maneuvers their way along the corridor as it curves about. As I made my way along during my first visit, I was alarmed by the lack of direction: not only did I not know where I was going or how long I would be traveling to get there, I didn't know what or who I might encounter along the way. Scholar Sean Bartley describes how, "In my own first visit, I found this to be the most uncomfortable and frightening aspect of the performance. Disoriented and squinting, I was forced to grope along the maze's walls…" (Bartley 4). Similarly, Richardson and Shohet in their article for *Borrowers and Lenders* account how the corridor made them feel "spatially dislocated" (3). The passageway offers a transition into the world of the performance, hereby establishing a new theatrical contract with new rules. This may be why director Barrett has referred to this tunnel as "a decompression chamber to acclimate to the world before being set free in it" (Machon 90-91). It cues the audience on how to engage with the immersive style and the ambulatory and sensorial tasks required of patrons (Bartley 4).

Significantly, guests do not walk along a well-lit corridor straight ahead to begin their journey, but fumble along a path that, without the aid of adequate vision, twists and turns in surprising ways. By stirring up customary orientations, the tunnel solicits a sense of danger, working to stir up an assortment of feelings in the spectator-participant, such

as fear, discomfort, anticipation, even excitement. Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology* offers a useful way to consider the queerness of dis/orientation, spatial, sexual and otherwise. Drawing upon Fabio Cleto, Ahmed notes how the term queer, first a spatial term derived from the Indo-European word "twist," becomes a sexual term, "a term for a twisted sexuality that does not follow a 'straight line,' a sexuality that is bent or crooked or bending" (67). Queerness offers a destabilizing twist on "straight" lines or orientations, creating the effect—and associated affects—of dis/orientation. It is in moments of orientation failure, "when things do not stay in place or cohere as place," that dis/orientation happens (170). Otherwise put, it is the queer effect of bodies out of place (61).

In her monograph, Ahmed unpacks how orientation as a phenomenological notion relates to issues of cultural politics, such as in the orient root of orientalism (for race) and the notion of sexual *orientation* (for sexuality). Spaces become racialized or follow sexual norms by how they are oriented to follow a specific line of desire, marking other pathways as "twisted" aberrations (120). When bodies take up new spaces, or spaces they are not supposed to occupy, there is the possibility that reproduction can fail, creating the "hope for new impressions, new lines to emerge, new objects, or even new bodies…" (62). This queer experience serves a political utility in this way by being "out of place" of the social. It can serve as a productive model of orientation failure, challenging pervasive, customary orientations within space, creating more twisted, oblique relationships with other bodies and objects. Further, when bodies are introduced to new orientations new impressions can emerge; throwing customary relationships off-kilter, new possibilities, both affective and erotic, can open up.

Though housed within Punchdrunk's mainstream, commercial project, there seems to be a rather queer dis/orientation at work. Through the remainder of the chapter, I will highlight various ways that the production, within its sanctioned space, creates a realm in which spectators can explore twisted, oblique relationships to space, other bodies, and to time. This will build upon previous chapters by considering how the McKittrick Hotel, embodying idleness, uses its immersive environment to foreground dis/orientation, unsettling bodies in a visceral way to open affective, sensuous, or desirous potentialities. Though it shares temporal components with Propeller's *Twelfth Night*, namely recursive motion and delaying actions, its environmental realm cues a more visceral engagement and a different horizon of experience for the spectator, which will be explored here.

According to Ahmed, the process of "orientation failure" involves the body losing support, "shattering one's sense of confidence in the ground" (157). If theatrical production, as Ridout suggests, is a virtual affect-machine, a key mechanism in *Sleep No More*'s enduring success, I would argue, is orientation failure. By "pulling the rug out" from underneath audiences, the company can generate an assortment of exhilarating, pleasurable affects. As director Barrett describes the "visceral" in performance, "It's the sense of unease, it's the fact that your comfort zone is removed, you don't know what to do" (Barrett *BST*). Machon's notion of (syn)aesthetics, introduced in Chapter 2, provides a useful way to understand how the practice of dis/orientation and its associated affects relates to the aesthetics of contemporary immersive performance. (Syn)aesthesia (derived from the ancient Greek *syn* for "together" and *aisthesis*, meaning "sensation" or "perception") is a medical term used to define a neurological condition that involves a

fusing of sensations. For those experiencing the condition, the stimulation of one of the senses produces a reaction in another sense. A touch might trigger a taste sensation or hearing a musical tone might result in seeing a color. (Syn)aesthetics becomes the trademark of immersive contemporary performances, like *The Donkey Show* or *Sleep No More*, which fuse sensory perceptual experience in ways which, like in the medical condition, are both experiential and affective (14, 15). As a performance style, it uses various techniques to engage the somatic/haptic and the semantic/cognitive in the individual moment (16). By doing so, these performances involve an "interpretative (re)cognition by the audience" that disturbs the audience's thinking by forcing a reliance on what is viscerally felt, instead of relying exclusively on reason in order to formulate understanding and appreciation (21).

Dis/orientation plays a foundational role in Punchdrunk's (syn)aesthetics. According to Machon, for a performance to "be wholly (syn)aesthetic there must be this element of *disturbance* and *(re)cognition* within appreciation" (21 my emphasis). Walking down the twisting, darkened corridor, *Sleep No More* implements dis/orientation tactics that both disturb and force (re)cognition. In his own words, director Barrett describes the mechanics behind generating affect in *Sleep No More* in a relatable way: the company "likes to pull the rug out from under the audience's feet," because "when you step out of your comfort zone, your adrenaline is fueled and your brain has to work that much harder" (Barrett *Broadway.com*). While Barrett suggests the brain has to work harder, adrenaline implies that the body is also doing its own work in excess of consciousness. Also, without a map or clear "lines" to follow, each individual's

knowledge acquisition must rely on various senses to make their way, forcing a more haptic, holistic model of experiencing and understanding the performance event.

The Mechanics of Dis/orientation

Punchdrunk's dis/orientation tactics are calculated disturbances that force the spectator's senses to enliven in surprising ways. In this section, I will describe five such devices: removing navigational tools, overstimulation, deprioritizing story/lines, opening "desire lines," and time slippage. Although this list is not exhaustive, most of their strategies seem to fall within one of these general categories.

In order for dis/orientation to effectively take place, the production company must find a delicate balance; they must work to destabilize guests, but they must also ensure that this sense of imbalance and defamiliarization does not push to transgressive extremes. The use of a welcoming speakeasy offers a transitional step at the beginning and end of the performance. Following the tense corridor journey, guests are given time to unwind, sip period cocktails, and relax to live jazz music in the Manderley bar (image 1). Later, when patrons receive the "rules of conduct" for the evening, they are informed that if the experience ever "gets too much," "you are always welcome to return to Manderley." The location works to acclimate patrons before and after the immersive experience and provides a necessary break for those who find the ambulatory experience fatiguing or the sensorial experience overwhelming. Those who discover that the immersive event is not to their personal taste are still likely to enjoy themselves if they make their way back to the speakeasy for specialty cocktails, live vocals, or witty discourse with the flirtatious Mr. de Winter, Manderley's host. In a sense, the location

functions as its own crucial orientation device; it is a pleasant "safe space" that spectators can knowingly return to at any point during the evening, thereby offering a baseline sense of comfort or control within an immersive experience that can feel, for all intents and purposes, very "out of joint."

The first of the dis/orientation tactics, ***the removal or obscuring of orientation tools***, was foregrounded from the beginning of my experience, first with the blind tunnel journey, then with a surprising elevator ride. While waiting in the bar, my playing card was announced by Mr. de Winter and I was asked to join a line that had formed at the side of the room. Each patron was given a Venetian-style mask to wear and was instructed on the ground rules for the evening: no cell phones, no talking, and no removing your mask (image 2). The group, a dozen or so, was guided into an elevator and the bellhop let patrons off on various floors, conscientiously breaking up couples and pairs from time to time.[43] Richardson and Shohet describe how the elevator, which lacks floor-selection buttons, "seems to move of its own accord, eventually opening onto an unnumbered, unlabeled floor," creating a "disorienting elevator journey" (3). Spectator-participants were initiated into their immersive experience with a wrench already thrown into their orientation devices. The presence of familiar bodies—such as the guest one

[43] During the first couple years of the New York production's run a select few patrons would be let off the elevator alone and would have access to a private sixth floor. According to a guest I interviewed, when he arrived on the floor he was placed in a wheelchair by a nurse and wheeled around in a virtually pitch-black environment (Masters). Then, he was stopped at one point and shown the opening of Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, before being ushered off the floor. The experience was removed by December of 2013 to make way for a restaurant on the sixth floor.

During visits in 2013 and 2014, the group was let off into a staircase, with some patrons instructed to go up, others down. This suggests that the elevator may no longer be used as part of the production, perhaps being used for access to the restaurant and rooftop bar instead.

arrived with—was removed. Without the use of cell phones, the capability to contact others for guidance or use the Internet for information was taken away. Even the routine practice of checking in with social networks and "home" pages, which offer their own sense of orientation, was impossible. Also, since patrons did not know which floor they started off on, or even how many floors there were to explore, orientation was further challenged from the onset.

Ahmed reminds us how the concept of direction "takes us somewhere by the requirement that we follow a line drawn in advance" (16). Being "direct" relates to "being straight" or "getting straight to the point," so to follow a line, a direction, could be thought of as a way of "becoming straight." This could be contrasted with the queer act of cruising, which avoids "straight" lines by trolling for erotic possibilities. Within *Sleep No More*, spectator-participants who are given few directions are not able to follow direct pathways. Navigational devices are removed inside the space, with the only real directional guidance being an "E" and "W" marked at the entrance of the stairwells on either side of each floor (Worthen 80). Yet many patrons, myself included, never even notice these markings.

With the production's multiple floors and over a hundred rooms, getting one's bearings without orientation markers or clear directions to follow can seem a nearly impossible task. During my time at the performance, I often found myself looking to discover new rooms, only to end up back where I started, confused at how I could have possibly gotten there. At one point, I decided to return to the speakeasy for a break, yet returning to this "safe space" proved to be its own challenging task, particularly since I did not know what floor the speakeasy was on or what floor I was on. After searching

around for ten or fifteen minutes, I gave up on my attempt, only to find myself stumbling upon the speakeasy by accident thirty or forty minutes later.

The McKittrick is also considerably dark, making it a struggle to gain a clear relationship to one's physical surrounding. Sensory deprivation, as illustrated with the darkened tunnel in the opening, functions as another way of removing orientation devices. Without clear vision, it makes it a challenge to find physical markers in the space by which one can orient oneself. Director Barrett describes how darkness plays a crucial role in making the show work. It forces the audience to slow down and take in each installation individually. This provides a necessary "sense of discovery" that is lost when audiences find it too easy to negotiate the space (24). Darkness can draw attention onto the experiential qualities or process of sensory perception itself, which may go unnoticed in more "traditional" performance environments. Martin Welton's study of theater performed in the dark highlights the link between the senses and orientation making. He finds that performance in the dark "draws one's attention to the motility of feeling as something to be sensed in its own right" (49). Similarly, Punchdrunk's darkened rooms and passageway allow audiences to make-meaning in experiential ways, while also focusing spectators in on their own feeling of sensory dis/orientation, the affects, both negative and positive, associated with moving blindly through space, and even the feeling of darkness itself. This process enacts a queer phenomenology by the way it forces patrons to establish new ways of orienting their body to their immediate physical surroundings, to other bodies, and to objects in space. Individuals can uncover a pleasurable "sense of discovery" as they "feel out" ways of moving through the darkened

space, often having to rely on impulse and intuition as a guide since orientation markers or "straight" lines to follow are not visible.

Secondly, the production company uses ***overstimulation*** to arouse and destabilize patrons. Part of this is implicit in the McKittrick's massive size; the masked spectator-participant is free to roam a space, which in New York features five floors and over 100,000 square feet. Part art installation and part haunted house, its enormous scope includes: a ballroom and King Duncan's quarters and a crypt (first floor), a hotel lobby and a dining room (second floor), the Macbeth residence, the Macduff residence, and graveyard (third floor), the town of Gallow Green, with a detective agency, tailor shop, sweet shop, taxidermy, a funeral home, a speakeasy, an additional bar, and Hecate's apothecary (fourth floor), and King James Sanitorium and a forest maze (fifth floor). The rooms, varying in sizes, connect in a labyrinthine way, seemingly void of any sort of coherent layout.

The bombardment of sensorial information within the space challenges orientation. Its massive scale produces an alarming abundance of options, what one reviewer refers to as "the overwhelming anxiety of choice," a common tactic in immersive style performances that plays off "audience members' natural disorientation" (T. Burton). Not only is there an overabundance of choice in terms of the number of rooms to explore, within the rooms there is an overabundance of choice as well. The "forest maze," a dark series of winding pathways built with dead twigs and branches, functions as a small-scale labyrinth. Malcolm, who is modeled in the production as a private detective, has an office literally filled from floor to ceiling with investigatory material that spectators can peruse, from a darkroom filled with photographs to hundreds

of cataloged, multihued hair lockets (image 3). There is an old-fashioned candy store with an entire wall filled with jars loaded with various candies that daring guests can sample (image 4), and Hecate's apothecary houses a vast amount of dead herbs and items for guest to touch and smell, from empty birdcages to small jars with mysterious ingredients for crafting potions (image 5). Each room invites seemingly endless exploration, filled with meticulous detail, a wide number of physical objects to examine, and an appeal to the participant's entire range of senses, including the haptic and olfactory. At the same time, rooms are sprinkled with surprising, even disturbing details that surface upon closer examination, like a live eel in one of the Sanatorium bathtubs (Boston) or the occasional decayed tooth buried in a candy jar.

The overwhelming spatial landscape of the production stirs up orientations in sometimes alarming ways, but this seems to instill a pleasurable sense of discovery in many patron-participants. One reviewer details how he "truly did get lost within the building, finding myself on floors I had already visited and then finding places I couldn't believe I had passed the first time I was in the general area" (Benton). But rather than finding this overly distressing, he describes it as being "disorienting in a great and exciting way." One patron describes how they were initially anxious, "freaked out" and "lost and confused," after being set loose in Boston *Sleep No More*, however this transitioned after an actress playing a servant in a bar glared directly at them, giving them a visceral thrill that shifted their perspective (theatrejunkie). Subsequently, the patron uncovered a different logic or approach to the performance event, which they enthusiastically described as being "armed with my new, see-what-I-feel-like-explore-what-I-want attitude." Significantly, dis/orientation in these instances, an overabundance

of sensory and cognitive inputs, did not immobilize the guests, but instead opened up a pleasurable (re)cognition, forging new ways of orienting themselves in space, to other bodies, and within time.

The ***deprioritizing of story/lines*** serves as another significant dis/orientation technique. On a most basic level, story/lines offer a mode of orientation to a performance. Spectators follow them like lines on a map or directions through the entertainment event, with the inability to follow them marking a point of failure. Not being able to follow story/lines or losing a story/line part of the way through troubles orientation. In *Sleep No More*, deprioritizing story/lines forces the spectator to chart a different course through the performance event using more twisted or oblique lines. Patrons can try to find or follow the story of *Macbeth*, but often find their attempts thwarted. The most popular characters to follow, such as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, are often surrounded by a mob of onlookers, which makes following their action difficult at times. Also, the sheer size of the space can make locating performers challenging. The loosely adapted plot of *Macbeth* is woven with characters from Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, making it difficult to follow either story since new moments are developed as the two source texts and their characters overlap. Overall, patrons seem more likely to find *Macbeth* in traces throughout the performance, either familiar characters, symbols, or certain recognizable scenes, however these often evaporate as quickly as they manifest themselves.

Dance provides another way to forge twisted, sinuous lines throughout the McKittrick's labyrinthine world. By replacing words with movement, the production attempts to heighten the immediacy of the performance event, matching the affective power of the immersive space. Choreography was originally brought into Punchdrunk's

events because the producers found that dialogue could not compete with the intricately designed environment; as Barrett describes, “the space was fantastic but the action wouldn’t hold the audience” (Barrett *BST*). When immersive audiences came across a dialogue scene they would ultimately trail off to explore the space, which seemed to carry a greater affective pull. There is also a logistical aspect to replacing dialogue scenes with dance since immersive audiences can encounter the performers at any point during the action. Audiences may be able to catch the tail end of a dance and still enter into the experience (syn)aesthetically, getting an affective payoff immediately without backstory.

For Punchdrunk, dance functions on a more haptic level, like the immersive space. One of the reasons stems from the extremely close proximity that can arise between performers and patrons. Both parties have to be very physically aware of other to ensure that no one gets injured during the performance’s fairly violent choreography. Barrett finds that the “hard, fast, staccato physicality” of dance offers a “danger element.” Audience members are aroused to become more direct participants since they “have to become part of the choreography, have to engage on a kinetic level in order to survive…you have to develop your physical intuition” (*Perspectives*). The sharp choreography becomes a series of surprising, even threatening jolts on the patron’s sense. As Barrett succinctly states: “Rather than being for the intellectual, for the brain, Punchdrunk is for the body.” Survival instincts and haptic senses are engaged by dance in the production, allowing these to take priority over the pursuit of story/line.

While a number of the dances are based on episodes in *Macbeth*, their aim is less storytelling than the visceral effect of dis/orientation. The patron’s hand-on experience

with the dancers works like the relationship to space, satisfying the company's principle (re)cognition of the sense. Machon describes how this takes place:

> The individual audience member experiences space and bodies both internally *and* externally. This provides a reciprocal exchange of feeling within this communal event. Such shared feeling, activated by haptic reciprocity, comes to the forefront in the experience of the tactive and kinaesthetic moments between performer/s, audience member/s and space. (*Perspectives*)

While moments in linear storytelling may build to climax then subside, this more haptic engagement favors the moments themselves "between performer/s, audience member/s and space." The experience becomes less about attaching moments to moments to create story than feeling the moment and making sense out of it (syn)aesthetically. Its focus on the haptic and its anti-progressive movement likens it to Club Oberon and the disco rhythms described in Chapter 2, although with a different tenor of associated affects. Rather than offering story/line for arousal, *Sleep No More* works to ensure that their patrons's bodies are continuously aroused during the event through a series of affectively arousing jolts initiated by the performance's choreography and the haptic space.

Perhaps due to its film noir styling, the production entices patrons to seek out clues in attempt to "solve" the performance, like a detective might investigate a mystery. In her article on the audiences of *Sleep No More*, Jennifer Flaherty discusses how this has led to an onslaught of blogs and "evidence" circulating around the internet pertaining to the secrets that can be uncovered within the world of the performance (144). In an example that Flaherty details, one fortunate patron—perhaps one of the only in the

show's long run—had a sense of "solving" the production after he completed a series of mysterious tasks for the Hecate character. After delivering a series of private messages between Hecate and the Porter character, a final delivery led to his "reward": an alluring private exchange with the seductive witch that ended in a long embrace (144). That this patron was given a specific task by one of the performers is extremely rare and the fact he was able to *complete* the task made it even rarer indeed. The guest had the unusual experience of uncovering a satisfying arc within the performance: a set of challenges led to a victory, climax, and even denouement. For most, any such attempts remain futile. Yet, as Flaherty accounts, "the mysteries of the fractured narrative, the interactive set, the private encounters, and the secret rooms encourage audiences to dig into the production, hinting at an answer that can be uncovered" (145). The audience seems to continually invest meaning into the world of the performance in a similar way to an audience's investment in a MacGuffin in a Hitchcock film: we invest meaning into meaningless objects in order to satisfy our own need for lines that lead to climax and resolution. These straight orientations, however, are typically thwarted by the performance environment itself and challenged by the dis/orientation tactics previously mentioned.

According to *Sleep No More*'s co-director and choreographer, Maxine Doyle, the experience of story in the production is modeled after the way that stories in everyday life tend to unfold in a disjointed way, since, "Life is full of stories, yet we don't experience them in a linear way" (SNM program 23-4). In order to make this "lifelike," the company incorporates a tight narrative structure—each character in *Sleep No More* has a "distinct arc, with a beginning, middle and end"—even though the overall experience is one of fragmentation. Although some patrons may find themselves upset by the lack of

"Shakespeare" or coherent story, one of the most interesting dynamics of the production is how it often successfully woos guests away from any strict reliance on story, tantalizing them with, in part, the overabundance of items and rooms to explore and a variety of fascinating—and often sexually alluring—characters to follow. One guest describes how they were "won over" after an intimate exchange with one of such characters: "I'd gotten a kick ass thrill, but most importantly, I no longer cared if I even got one iota of 'story' out of my night, or understood even remotely more than I did at that moment" (theatrejunkie).

This last example points towards the next dis/orientation tactic: how *Sleep No More* opens ***desire lines*** to re/orient bodies queerly in space. The patron uncovered a "kick ass thrill" within the immersive event by forgoing story/line, what Ahmed might call a "straightening out" of sorts, in order to forge a different line of action led by personal interest, intrigue, and desire. Ahmed refers to the architectural term "desire lines" as a form of queer phenomenology: like paths trod in the dirt that avoid the sidewalk nearby, these are instances in which bodies veer away from traditional routes and pave their own more direct paths to access where they desire to go (19). Within the context of *Sleep No More*, rather than having the patrons veer off a well-trod path, it might be more accurate to say that traditional, paved routes are themselves removed, allowing the audience to follow their own impulses, interests and desires within the space. The opening stages of the performance, as previously discussed, from the darkened corridor to the elevator ride, provide little freedom of exploration or ability to forge new lines of desire, but they serve as significant acclimation techniques to set up the immersive experience. Once "set free" in the hotel, audience members pave their own

routes through the space's labyrinthine architecture, traveling up and down multiple levels and through its various rooms, making one's own sinuous trails. The sense of freedom this entail creates a playful sense of discovery that some patrons have associated with childhood "Choose your own Adventure" books, in which the reader makes decisions along the way to uncover one of many multiple endings (Silman, Koenig).

The production creates a landscape for desire lines in part through the tactics of dis/orientation previously discussed, which make traditional, direct, and guided pathways either unavailable for access or, quite frankly, less pleasurable to follow. The most significant tool to activate this sense of liberation is the mask that patrons are required to use while exploring the McKittrick. For director Boyle, the masks make the rest of the audience "dissolve into generic, ghostly presences, so that each person can explore the space alone" (program 24). It opens up a freedom of exploration that might not otherwise by available and allows audiences to "be more selfish and more voyeuristic," allowing them to "lose some of their inhibitions." Notably, there is an eroticized sense, a sexual charge that can be associated with the mask's anonymity. Critics and patrons alike have recognized the titillation that accompanies the use of masks. Ben Brantley's review calls the experience a "voyeur's delight, with all the creepy shameful pleasures that entails." He describes how during the performance "anonymous lugs in white face masks…keep elbowing one another out of the way to get a better view of the sex and violence." Although no actual sex takes place, several patrons and reviewers (Zaborowski, Hilton, Cartelli, Dziemianowicz) have likened the production's masking to the masked group sex scenes in Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*. Even a popular television show, *Law & Order: SVU*, fixated and expanded on the production's eroticized voyeurism; episode

eleven of season thirteen centered around the sexual assault of an actress before a group of unwitting onlookers at an immersive performance modeled after *Sleep No More*.

While voyeurism can mark its own violation and is commonly associated with Laura Mulvey's classic work on the male gaze, within the context of Punchdrunk's performance it doesn't necessarily operate in "straight" ways. At times the production's voyeurism can follow sexually "straight" lines, for example a heterosexual male may choose to fixate on Lady Macbeth or the female witches throughout the space, but it can also open lines of queer desire as well. To relate back to Ahmed, these lines may not simply be directed toward the "same sex," but would be seen as following "twisted" directions, not "straight" ones (70).

Twisted lines of sexual desire are built into the intersections of various characters in the performance. For instance, the role modeled after Mrs. Danvers retains the strong, even obsessive lesbian desire of the character in *Rebecca*. When I attended the performance, at one moment I found her trailing Lady Macduff, trying to feed her milk in a violent, yet erotically charged exchange. At another moment, I came across her dancing intimately with Lady Macbeth in an exchange that ended with a kiss. These homoerotic moments can satisfy the male gaze, yet it would be problematic to suggest that they function exclusively this way. The dancing bodies and their ongoing physical contact prompts the circulation of queer desire. The twisted lines of the characters, going off the source material story/line, explores new erotic possibilities between oddly paired, often same-sex couples. This can draw patrons "off line" as well, as they follow performers that interest them along twisted lines, finding arousal in surprising desirous exchanges.

This reaches a figurative climax during "one-on-ones," select moments in the

production when a performer invites a patron into a private room. These exchanges, which one reviewer referred to as an "erotic pas-de-deux," can orient bodies towards new body types, while at times opening up homoerotic possibilities (T. Burton). They can open up queer orientations that, for Ahmed, puts "within reach bodies that have been made unreachable by the lines of conventional genealogy" (Ahmed 107). One attendee writes about his one-on-one with a character he believes was Malcolm: "he then led me into an interrogation room and had a VERY intimate, homoerotic, sexual, hot experience with him, some eggs, and some close encounters in the dark. I walked out a little flustered after he fled, put my mask back on, and continued" (Cartelli 4). Another patron describes how a woman, presumably Lady Macbeth:

> …grabbed my hand, and forced me to run with her up two flights of stairs before stopping in front of her bathtub and undressing to complete nudity. She then said I smelled odd and noted my soft skin before falling backwards in the tub and washing off blood from her body, (she claimed the blood had come from two recent murders her husband had committed). (Zimmerman)

Since the spectator was gay, the instance created a sexual twist, orienting one body with another in an exhilarating, surprisingly sexually charged way. As he describes, "I was a bit shocked to have a naked woman inches away, telling me how soft my hands were." The disturbance here "pulled the rug out" from underneath the gay man's orientation, which would assume that his line of desire directs exclusively towards other male bodies.

Similarly, one of the evenings I attended *Sleep No More* I was able to follow desire lines that lead me to both homoerotic and dis/orientingly queer encounters. At one

point a young attractive actress playing Agnes Naismith, a character modeled after *Rebecca*'s protagonist, the second Mrs. de Winter, pulled out a key and unlocked a door to a room, then turned to look at me to invite me inside. I readily accepted the offer, in part because I had heard of such "one-on-one" exchanges yet had never had one myself. We stepped inside a small parlor room with a vanity sitting on one side and large armoire on the other. In the sequence that followed, the woman sat me down on a sofa and removed my mask. She then began to tell me a story, which began, "Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley…". Later, I came to discover this was the opening voiceover monologue from the film *Rebecca*. While the monologue continued, the actress drew me back onto my feet and began to walk me backwards towards the armoire. I began to resist a bit, uncomfortable with where I thought I was going, but the actress guided me with a bit more force, eventually pushing me inside the tight armoire. She entered in as well and closed the doors behind her. Now in pitch-blackness, she wrapped her arms around me, then leaning in close, kissed me on the cheek and whispered in my ear, "We can never go back to Manderley again. That much is certain." The sensory-deprivation and the confined space forced my body to be completely in tune and receptive to hers, her touch, the warmth of her breath, even the delicate vibration of her words. Despite my own gay sexual orientation, my body—whether I resisted or not, was fully oriented towards a new body type in an erotically charged environment. I felt a tingle down my spine as she whispered in my ear and as she kissed my cheek; I wondered in pleasurable—and surprising—anticipation, what may happen next. Immediately, she pushed me forcibly out of the back of the armoire through a hidden door, propelling me into a room I had never seen before, leaving me both baffled and tantalized.

Later that evening, I had a similar encounter with the character referred to as the "Sexy witch" who pulled me inside the same room, then into the same armoire, this time using a gumball from Paisley Sweets as a seductive lure. Once in the dark, in another curiously erotic exchange, she fed me the candy before repelling me, as before, out the back. Not long after this, another witch, the male one, pinpointed me out of a crowd and offered me his hand, which I readily accepted. The man guided me into a phone booth and pushed me down onto a seat as he stared intensely into my eyes. We remained there for a prolonged time, maybe ten seconds, with his body pushed up against mine with his imposing figure blocking the door. Then, he removed a necklace and placed it around my neck and whispered in my ear: "The trees will burn, Macbeth will perish, but this charm will keep you safe." And then he was gone. Unlike the armoire, the phone booth was well lit, but the small confines and lack of visibility forced my complete attention onto the performer in a similar way. There was a sense of danger or threat as he stood above me, initiating a fight-or-flight exhilaration that was equally matched by the homoerotic frisson of the encounter.

The one-on-ones offer an invitation to follow lines of desire to unknown, even erotically charged destinations. After considering the various intimate encounters that I had with strangers during that evening, I finally understood why a friend who had seen the Boston production had likened the experience to cruising (Nelson). In a similar way, the event allowed me the opportunity to be "out of line" and chart a surprising course of desire that twisted straight orientations (Ahmed 71). The *Sleep No More* experience, "cruising *Macbeth,*" can dis/orient bodies in space, "pulling the rug out" so to speak, but

it can also dis/orient a spectator's customary relationship to other bodies, charting not-so-straight lines of desire.

It is important to note that the audience's freedom to forge new, twisted lines during the performance has its limits. In order to logistically orchestrate and maintain the production, masked figures in black are positioned in virtually every room. These ominous, shadowy figures ensure the safety of the performers and also that the production flows smoothly. They prohibit guests from certain entrances and exits, placing limitations on the model of "freedom" that the immersive production style implies. The production is orchestrated to ensure that all the patrons witness Macbeth's death at the close of the performance. Towards the end of the event, the guards gradually shut down the levels of the hotel from the top down. This forces all the patrons into the large basement ballroom space to watch Macbeth being hung above the crowd in a startling display. From there, the audience is exited smoothly back to the Manderley bar while the Glenn Miller arrangement of the 1939 song "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square" plays, making for a more jovial climate. This highly coordinated sequence serves a logistical purpose (easy removal of patrons from the vast space), while also offering a capstone to the performance. For most patrons, coming across the massive group in the ballroom marks its own dis/orienting turn. If a patron is new to the production, they do not often realize that their discovery of Macbeth's death scene was carefully coordinated. Also, the moment can present a startling contrast to the isolated journeys traveled by the spectator-participant. Now, rather than following individual desire lines, patrons become collective bystanders watching Macbeth's demise.

The production also pleasurably dis/orientates through "**time slippage**," sensuously blurring the lines between the "present" moment and a 1930s world. The opening tunnel experience, for example, helps to link the shifting perception of time to dis/orientation. The suspenseful film noir music, dated to the late fifties, coupled with the darkened corridor, offered its own time warp. As I wandered through, I felt dislodged from the contemporary period and had the sense I was traveling back in time, possibly to the late-1950s or early 1960s, as suggested by the soundtrack. Exiting the dark tunnel, however, I ended up in the 1930s, at the speakeasy dubbed the Manderley bar. Glenn Ricci has explained how music in *Sleep No More* "serves to heighten the dream-like qualities of the experience by dislocating us from time" (4). The score, which features songs from the 1930s extending into the 50s and 60s, has an anachronistic way of jumping years, contrasting with the production setting and costumes which recreate a 1930s world fairly consistently. This results in a feeling that this is a hazy dream—or perhaps nightmare—of a 1930s world as experienced in a contemporary flashback (4).

At select moments in the production, the continuity of the 1930s word ruptures to produce an unsettling effect. When Macbeth receives the series of prophecies from the Weïrd Sisters, the witches gather together to the sound of pulsing downbeats of loud techno music (The Brash's "Mute"). The rhythms, jarring and contemporary, stand out from the film noir soundtracks that underscore much of the event. The music, which starts like a low ongoing pulse, acts like a beacon drawing audience members along new "lines" as they investigate the anachronistic sounds. The shift in music gathers together a large crowd for the scene, which is often referred to as the "witches's rave" or the "witches's orgy" (image 6). The song's techno "house" rhythm builds as the witches, one

male and two female, begin to dance ecstatically, disrobe, kiss, and fondle each other playfully. Then, after the music shifts to a series of low, anticipatory pulses, it abruptly breaks into a Drum 'n' Bass rhythm (Ed Rush & Optical's Reece), a genre of electronic music that couples quick break beats with a heavy bass line. After the music builds to a climax, a strobe light begins to pulse as the male witch appears naked, wearing a goat's head as a mask. Subsequently, the witches enact each of the three prophecies, the most jarring being the vision of the naked baby covered in blood. The infant's blood ends up covering the bodies of each of the witches as well as Macbeth. Then, as quickly as it began, the scene dissipates as the witches begin to disappear. The strobe stops and the loud music shifts to softer atmospheric sounds. The scene's techno music rhythms and lighting effects serve as effective dis/orientation devices to stimulate excitement and fear amongst spectators. It foregrounds the alterity of the witches as nocturnal beings who move to a different rhythm, just as their language in Shakespeare's play often inverts the customary iambic pentameter beats. These are characters who, for all intents and purposes, are out of synch. At the same time, the scene allows Macbeth's "vision" to become our own. Spectator-participants experience this "queer" out of synch embodiment in a visceral way through a contemporary interlude that stands apart both stylistically and temporally.

This time slippage, the sense of travelling or moving between time periods, extends beyond the function of music into the way the patron-participant engages with the physical environment. The patrons are at once present in the contemporary moment, as attendees of a theatrical event, yet are transported as well to a 1930s realm through the immersive experience. Many guests spend an entire evening handling the seemingly

endless amount of fascinating objects and antique props that inhabit the space, such as period telephones, books, medical documents, detective records, handwritten letters and more. Following Husserl's notion of phenomenology, part of the interest in exploring these objects might come from their estrangement, allowing individuals to attend to the flow of perception itself (Ahmed 37). One of the most notable ways estrangement occurs is through the commonly found repurposing of objects into superstitious means of spiritual protection. The hotel dining room features an entire wall made up of crucifixes made of silverware, each sitting in a small mound of salt. The production's program shows an image of one of the crucifixes and underneath highlights its supernatural power, since salt as a "symbol of purity…has long been thought to have the power to repel evil spiritual and magical evil" (31). Along similar superstitious lines, the collection of hair locks in the detective office relates back to witchcraft, since "witches had the power to attract any person whose hair had fallen into their hands" (Stacey).

An estrangement occurs as these objects are placed into unusual arrangements, stripped of their customary, contemporary use value. They reference a history of superstition, yet "live" as embodiments in a 1930s theatrical world. Furthermore, they are encountered in an often hands-on way through the patron-participant's contemporary experience. Guests may encounter objects and make impressions on their physical environment, such as by handling a bible on a nightstand and placing it back upside down. Occasionally this engagement is more active and intentional, such as with the multitude of patrons who have, over the course of the performance run, added their own lock of hair to Detective Malcolm's collection.

On a level, *Sleep No More* offers what could be described as a sensuous encounter between temporal moments. By doing so, the production resonates with Freeman's notion of erotohistoriography, in which "historicity itself might appear as a structure of *tactile* feeling, a mode of touch, even an erotic practice" (120). Freeman offers this mode of haptic historiography as a way to combat "chrononormativity"—her model of straight time—in order to open queerer ways to engage with the past. In a related way, *Sleep No More*'s "time out of joint" allows patrons to touch or rub up against objects and bodies "of" another historical period in an often erotically charged, but also *temporally* promiscuous encounter. As patron-participants examine their physical environment, there is a feeling of cruising the past; while exploring uncharted, even forbidden territory, one roams through the shadows looking for their next delight, which often comes from delving into the details of the 1930s décor, fondling objects of the past in a titillating encounter. Touch and individual exploration draw the patron deeper into the theatrical experience spurring an assortment of affects that shape the experience. One reviewer, recommending ways to best approach the immersive event, suggests what they call "the Search" method: in which patron-participants ignore the performers entirely, spending their time "methodically absorbing the atmosphere, props, and incredible set design." For those new to the production, the reviewer finds "the thrill of the 'Search' to be the most compelling" way to engage with the interactive world. Doyle describes the affectively engaging charge that he tries to create with the objects in the space: "We all remember the things that we shouldn't touch but do and then the excitement when we have. I think this work is about that—inviting the sort of forbidden touch" (Kennedy). This feeling, I would suggest, stems from the sense of exploring "out of bounds," following lines of

desire into uncharted territory. Not only is "uncharted" a spatial term, working off "line" so to speak or out of bounds, but it is also *temporal*. With the assistance of the mask's anonymity, patron-participants explore the strangeness of this 1930s world. Its various objects drive fascination, imparting a sense of intrigue. They allow patron-participants to be "out of line" by inspecting more closely, even fondle objects to get a closer view.

The engagement with superstitious items in the production marks its own way of making a haptic, affectively charged connection with estranged objects drawn from the past. During one such moment, while in the Manderley bar, a performer dressed as a 1930s fortuneteller who called herself Annabella invited me to her table, which had an assortment of herbs and vials of liquids laid out. For five or so minutes, she discussed the significance of each of the potion ingredients, telling me the history of each of them as she slowly assembled me a concoction. Upon completion, she offered it as a necklace that she recommended I wear since, "there are things living beneath these walls." As I allowed her to place the necklace on me, another layer was added to my experience of the 1930s speakeasy; it was imbibed with the accounts of the superstitious item that, though outdated today, had been revitalized. The necklace fueled the moment with excitement through the pleasure of being privy to secret knowledge, but also the anticipation of the ominous "things living beneath these walls." Throughout my explorations that evening, the curious object around my neck reminded me at times of the strange encounter with the fortuneteller and her curious tale of outdated histories. It invited me to engage my own childlike imagination and play along by allowing the superstitious items to reclaim their obsolete historical role, if only for the night.

On another occasion when I attended the production, my sensuous engagement with superstitious items was intertwined with erotic experiences. With the male witch, at the end of our one-on-one exchange, he placed a necklace with a Roman-looking charm figure around my neck while he stared into my eyes. Simultaneously, he recited a prophecy about Macbeth's ominous demise while ensuring, through the charm, my own spiritual protection. As with Annabella, this object, reflecting a past spiritual practice and even outdated spiritual tradition, became part of my own contemporary experience, but here it was also part of one-on-one exchanges that also had a particularly erotic resonance. The private exchange rubbed past against present and body against body as it rendered a sense of intimacy and connection between myself and the world of the performance. It served as its own "forbidden touch," resulting in an exhilarating affective and erotic charge.

Superstitious items are found throughout the McKittrick, but often in very peculiar usages. As mentioned earlier, one of the best examples of this is the wall in the hotel dining room covered from head to foot with crucifixes made out of silverware, sitting in individual piles of salt. This estranges Christian iconography and draws upon the salt as historical spiritual remedy. Such a depiction, whose strangeness can draw patron's "off line," may bring bodies and objects into fresh alignment. This produces its own dis/orientation effect, but it also has a temporal component. It creates a haptic, affective-charged engagement with an outmoded history, but it can also undermine the item's "productive" use value, such as silverware not being used for it "proper" function, eating. By estranging items this way, the items can be seen, explored, and experienced differently, embodying a mode of queer phenomenology. Implicit in this exchange,

straight time and its reproductive regimes are momentarily suspended, even challenged as items stripped of their productive use-value become conduits of fascination.

The notion of erotohistoriography can extend beyond superstitious items to describe the phenomenological way participant-patrons are invited to interact with the world of the performance as a temporal phenomenon. Barrett describes the visceral effect of interacting with the production's "sensuous details: "you can open the drawer, you can root around, see the pen that wrote that letter, smell that ink, just so that it intoxicates them, they become part of it and it has a greater impact" (*Perspectives*). Estranged objects can spark curiosity, enticing bodies into new alignments with objects, but also the history embedded in the objects themselves. Through this queer temporal encounter, patrons are invited to have a visceral, sensuous experience: a moment outside the litany of straight time that allows them to attend to the flow of perception itself.

Failed Futures

The mechanics of dis/orientation in *Sleep No More* stir up spatial, even sexual orientations in viscerally charged ways, but this activity also stirs up temporal orientations as well. By twisting straight lines through dis/orientation tactics, the production challenges previously charted lines. In *Queer Phenomenology*, Ahmed opens up a temporal understanding of dis/orientation by considering the "lines" of genealogy as a type of "straight line" (173). Some queers may not be able to follow this straight line or may choose not to follow it, while it may extended to another selection of queers who look to inherit the future through forms such as marriage or parenting (173). Following Halberstam, Ahmed recognizes how life's course through temporal markers, such as

engagement, marriage, and parenting, form a type of orientation "in line" as well (21). I would like to consider Ahmed's notion of the "line" or lineage of time being a type of "straight" orientation. These pathways support "straight" temporal regimes that often disavow idleness, non-reproductive activity, and queer desire.

Straight time is fundamentally oriented towards the future, following its own "straight" line as Ahmed would say, yet *Sleep No More* finds numerous ways to challenge this orientation. The haunted nursery scene described in the opening of this chapter provides one example of how the production "twists" this line; it takes a room used to nurture youth, society's future, and twists it into a grotesque display with echoes of death. It effectively works to "pull the rug out" from under temporal orientations in an affectively charged way. In this section, I will consider the ways *Sleep No More* dis/orients the "straight" lines of genealogy through its anti-futurity gestures: its spiraling temporality that is both recursive and dissolving, and its continual, haunting references to the absent or dead child.

Spiraling Time

Macbeth is obsessed with futures, but remains set on a path of temporal dissolution, reflecting what Harold Bloom has referred to as the play's "cosmological emptiness" (125, 3). Horst Breuer draws upon Macbeth's "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" speech to locate a "disintegration of time" central to the Scottish play (256). He finds "the view into the future is hopeless" as "time has become entropic for Macbeth" (263). Throughout his essay, Breuer draws comparison between the disintegration of time in *Macbeth* and in the plays of Samuel Beckett, a playwright whose

works are replete with characters engaged in repetitious, nonreproductive action that undoes notions of progress and futurity. Macbeth's soliloquy too performs its own dissolve, enacting a "petty pace" that ends, ultimately, "signifying nothing." It charts an empty course of life that resonates with the final words of Beckett's novel *The Unnamable*: "You must go on. I can't go on. I'll go on." Here, Macbeth effectively rewrites all of history ("all our yesterdays") and the future ("To the last syllable of recorded time") as hopeless, evaporating like a "brief candle."

Without a claim to kinship and legacy—"No son of mine succeeding" (3.1.63)—by the fifth act of the play, Macbeth's future has been all but completely emptied out as well. Ahmed reminds us how queerness presents itself as a "death threat" since it "threatens to discontinue the father's line" (77). This soliloquy, but also the structure of the play as a whole, can be usefully viewed in relationship to the line of progeny, a line that Macbeth and his wife cannot follow. Even the ghost child that Lady Macbeth claims to "have given suck" never manifests. In his speech, Macbeth recognizes, arguably for the first time, how he is trapped in his own repetitive cycle that is also a form of temporal dissolution. This temporal mode, a spiraling time, involves both recursive gestures and an emptying out. It slowly unwinds towards Macbeth's own "emptying out" in death. In the soliloquy, this pattern is modeled in the poetic structure of the verse, reflecting its own anti-futurity; it enacts a repetitious cycle through the opening words "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow," then continues to empty out till it. ends with the two dangling words, "signifying nothing," as the verse structure dissolves as well (5.5.18-28). The final words, like Macbeth himself, stand "out of time" and undone. They reflect a man who now, due in part to his wife's recent death, fully "signifies nothing." He stands apart from

all possible lines of lineage, progress or productivity.

Sleep No More couples recursive gestures with temporal dissolution in order to enact this spiraling effect that is so central to the structure and poetics of the Scottish play. One of the primary ways this repetition occurs is through the performers' "looped" physical score. Their blocking in the performance is constructed "in three repeat cycles so that you can choose to revisit incidents, or stumble across them by chance" (Barrett "An Interview" 26). Each performance cycle enacts key plot points of *Macbeth* such as Duncan's murder, the witches's prophecies, the banquet scene, and Macbeth's death. All this is done primarily through the use of modern dance and without speech (with the exception of the occasional delusional utterance by Lady Macbeth). Additional characters not taken from Shakespeare's play, such as a taxidermist or the sanatorium nurses, intertwine with the characters of Shakespeare's tragedy while engaging in their own looped cycle.

The deconstructed narrative works to break down linearity, but it also challenges futurity through the repetition of its three performance cycles. Each cycle leads to Macbeth's death only to immediately begin all over to work towards Macbeth's death once again. Following the plot of Shakespeare's original, several characters, such as Banquo and Lady Macduff, also die along the course of the cycle, yet in this production they are "reborn" like undead creatures or ghosts. This cycle of return runs antithetical to straight time's progressive movement, reflecting instead a temporal return akin to the Freudian death drive or perhaps to Nietzsche's notion of eternal recurrence. Through the lens of Edelman, who considers the death drive's relationship to futurity in his monograph, *No Future*, the lines of these performers, trapped in their own (seemingly

endless) death driven cycles, reflect a model of anti-futuristic queer temporality.[44] Although I would not suggest that the death drive is *definitional* of queerness, as Edelman argues, this circular death-driven motion does reflect a powerful way to dis/orient time; not only does the production work to undo linearity through repetition and dissolution, perhaps even more importantly, its "twisted" temporality undoes the pillars of progress—inheritance, lineage, and genealogy— that are so fundamental to the Scottish play and to the notion of straight time. Within *Sleep No More*, unlike with the "empty time" characterized by Richard II's prison cell in chapter One, the death drive offers a way to open up and cruise new experiences, erotic/desirous/affective, through the haptic, sensual process of dis/orientation. It reworks Edelman's characterization of the queerness of the death drive as anti-relational foreclosure to suggest how foreclosing futurity and linearity can serve as a way to open up untrodden, queer directions.

Due to the three consecutive cycles, patron-participants can reencounter events in ways that shift temporal orientations. When I attended the performance, at one moment I watched the three witches enter in from various sides of the town of Gallow Green convening side-by-side. The three placed their arms over each other's shoulders, then began to slowly walk backwards in a ritualistic fashion. It occurred to me that I had witnessed the exact same moment in a previous cycle. This created an abrupt

[44] Death here does not represent a specific event, an individualized death that is plotted on the course of life and placed in the future. Death in this view is a drive, which in Greek mythology could be related to the god Thanatos (in opposition to its counterpart Eros). As drive, rather than specific event, it represents an ongoing, perpetual movement towards death, not the articulation of a specific death. This is why, for instance, undead figures, such as zombies, are considered symbolic enactments of the death drive since death rarely offers finality for these figures, only rebirth into a movement towards death. One might say in this conceptualization that death itself is held in its own suspended state, reflecting its own challenge to straight time's forward moving trajectory.

reorientation of my perception of time: the freedom of the immersive event without strict adherence to following story/lines, now aligned time into an ongoing cycle of repetition. The sense of freedom now felt like a sense of confinement. I had the eerie recognition that I was, like the characters, trapped in a cycle of time. The brief moment created a quick surge of unease, wonder, and even excitement, all due to an abrupt shift, the temporal twist, that re/oriented myself to the cycles of the performers, who enacted their own type of queer temporality through their gestures towards perpetual return.

The production's spiraling gestures extend to the scenic elements and choreography of the performers as well. On one occasion, while in the King James Sanitarium on the top floor, I followed a nurse into a room with a long wooden table, dimly lit by one hanging light. Around the table, the walls were completely covered with chalk writings; like the scribbling of a mad person, the words or phrases themselves were hard to make out. The nurse began to dance on the table in violent motions, as though exorcizing a demon. Her body quivered. Her legs swung up and knocked the light above, which swung back and forth creating a beautiful effect. After she finished the dance, three or four minutes later, she uncovered a piece of chalk and frantically began writing on the table. I wondered: to whom was she writing? What did the scribbled words say? Why was it so urgent? I could see residue left over on the chalkboard indicating that these words had been written before, perhaps countless times, then wiped away, only to be rewritten. I was able to briefly make out the top of her writings: the words "My Dearest Love." The writings were a message to someone. I surveyed the walls for clues and saw the words "My Dearest Love" and "I have learned by perfect report" repeated several times on the wall.

Then, I recalled a letter that I had found earlier while exploring Macbeth's bedroom that began with the line, "My dearest love, I have learned by perfect report…" The lines the nurse was frantically writing, as well as the words on the wall, were fragments of the letter Lady Macbeth reads in act one, scene five reporting that Macbeth has become Thane of Cawdor. Now, the lines were deconstructed to reflect the nurse's and/or Lady Macbeth's spiral into madness. This resonated with a later moment in the performance track when Lady Macbeth, at the height of her madness, wandered through the rooms of the Sanitarium while guided by the nurse. With this discovery, my detective search, a search to orient myself to the story/line one might say, only led to uncover a spiraling time—both repetitious and emptying out—built into the framework of the performance event. The residue of past performances lost, a cycle of seemingly endless repetition, lived like a palimpsest on the table and walls, reflecting the nightly performance cycles and ill-fated repetitions—the "tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,"—to which the characters and the performers themselves were continually bound.

One moment that does a particularly effective job at highlighting this spiraling temporality *and* its queerness is when the male witch performs a lip-synch of Peggy Lee's 1960s ballad, "Is That All There Is?"[45] The performance occurs in a small cabaret bar setting at the beginning of the performer's "cycle," so either immediately at the start of the show or immediately following Macbeth's death. The lyrics of the song, which detail an existential crisis of sorts, mark its own negation of life and death. It describes exciting events in the life of the singer, including watching her childhood home burn

[45] According to Ricci, Hecate also performs a lip-synch version, but to a man's voice.

down, her first trip to the circus, and her first time falling in love. The description of each of these events is followed by the refrain, "Is that all there is? Is that all there is? If that's all there is, my friends, then let's keep dancing. Let's break out the booze and have a ball, if that's all there is." The tone of the refrain, however, remains fairly somber, with its chorus essentially suggesting that we raise our glasses to toast the meaninglessness of life. Lee interrupts herself at the end of her final refrain to explain why she continues to go on, rather than "end it all" despite her apparent cynicism, replying, "Oh no, not me. I'm not ready for that final disappointment." According to Lee, even death itself will end with her singing the same sorry refrain, "Is that all there is?"

The song presents a similar pattern to Feste's final song in *Twelfth Night*, which was considered in chapter three. Like the sweep of Feste's song that encompasses the entire scope of time ("a long time ago the world begun"), Lee's lyrics encompass the scope of her entire life from early childhood memories to her own imagined death. Each verse describes a consecutive moment in the stages of life, following a "straight" line of orientation, yet the celebration is emptied out from each, similar to the function of Feste's refrain, "For the rain it raineth every day." Placed at the top of the cycle of the performance, the song presents an interesting opportunity to comment on the meaningless of Macbeth's death and, perhaps, on the meaningless of the male witch's own recursive, twisted "line" of performance.

The male witch has an air of seduction while he lip-syncs Lee's words, which, coupled with the female voice, may create a moment of sexual dis/orientation for spectators who, like myself, find their "desire line" diverted by attraction to him and/or his performance. But this moment enacts a queerness on other levels as well: the male

witch—itself a twist on contemporary casting practices—performs to the voice of woman, but his performance is "emptied out" of the humor that might commonly be associated with drag performance.[46] He wears 1930s male formalwear, rather than exaggerated or flamboyant female attire. Lee's voice and his gender create a marked dissonance. Simultaneously, as Ricci notes in his article, "Tracking the Scottish Play," Lee's song, drawn from 1960s, marks a dissonance in time since it is anachronistically placed within the 1930s world. One could say that in this moment time and gender are each "out of joint," so to speak. The song offers a few minutes of "time out" to comment on the empty, yet perpetually ongoing nature of time, as patron-participants experience a theatrical temporality that is pleasurably spiraling away.

The Absent Child

During a one-on-one exchange reported earlier, a patron describes how he had a "VERY intimate, homoerotic, sexual, hot experience with him (the performer), some eggs, and some close encounters in the dark." During moments like these, as Worthen reports, an egg will be cracked to reveal not yoke, but only dust inside (93). Through this symbolic gesture, the eggs illustrate a future that is empty, dried up. Similarly, numerous objects and rooms are synonymous with death or decay. There is a huge graveyard space, a forest maze of dead branches, a coffin in Gallow Green, and an asylum ward with empty beds (one looks like there is a figure inside, but if you remove the blanket, you find only a collection of rocks). Dead animals abound as well, not only in the taxidermy

[46] At some point during the performance cycle, the gender here is reversed as the character of Hecate, played by a women, sings to a version of "Is That's All There Is?" covered by a man. Since I did not get to watch this in performance, I have focused exclusively on the male witch's rendition.

shop, but sprinkled throughout (the hotel dining room features the imposing figure of a large stuffed deer in the corner) (image 7). Dryness, its own symbol of death, becomes a reoccurring motif, through dried out animal carcasses or dried out plants in Hecate's apothecary. On the fourth floor, there is even a replica of the Manderley bar that patrons first encountered, however it is covered in dust and cobwebs and stripped of its liveliness (80).

It would be easy to say that in *Sleep No More* the sense of death looms in the air. But the yokeless egg, as Worthen describes, takes on added value by metaphorically representing the death of the child, specifically the murder of Macduff's son, whose murderer cries during the slaying, "What, you egg!/Young fry of treachery" (4.2.83-84) (87). Worthen also points out how the appearance of deer in the space takes on a similar metaphorical significance, relating to the infanticide of Macduff's children, described as "these murdered deer" in the play (86). With the child metaphor in mind, the dried out deer and eggs take on added significance as gestures of anti-futurity. This movement towards metaphor resonates with Stockton's notion of growing sideways as the foreclosure of death ironically becomes the source of creative "growth" in a non-linear trajectory. In a moment such as the one-on-one involving the yokeless egg cited earlier, the performance couples the metaphorical and the queer. It draws upon the symbolic, metaphorical resonance between the dried out egg and the non-reproductive homoerotic encounter.

As alluded to in the opening of the chapter, the production is continually returning to the image of the ghost child, symbolically or metaphorically embodied, as a means to challenge futurity. In *No Future*, Lee Edelman illustrates how the ubiquitous image of the

child becomes the placeholder for a never-to-be-reached future. A figure like little orphan Annie with her triumphant, hopeful declaration, "Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love you, tomorrow," offers a social investment in reproductive futurism. For Edelman, the queer takes on a strong anti-relationist stance as they come to figure "the bar to every realization of futurity, the resistance, internal to the social, to every social structure or form" (4). Queerness, according to Edelman, stands in opposition to reproductive futurism. It marks the side that is not "fighting for the children," reflecting the social order's death drive (3). Borrowing the Lacanian term sinthome, he coins the neologism, *Sinthom*osexual, to represent the figural embodiment of the death drive, a figure that attacks the image of the child (119).[47] In simple terms, in order to have a Tiny Tim and invest in his future, you must have a Scrooge, the *sinthom*osexual, who threatens the child. For Edelman, queerness is this Scrooge.[48] In this theory, as psychic processes are translated in the realm of the social, it is inevitable that oppositional figures will continually be invented and reinvented to threaten the child figure (which Edelman refers to as "the Child").[49] In a controversial move, Edelman argues that queers should self-consciously claim this oppositional cultural position as the *sinthom*osexual to which they

[47] Edelman borrows from the Lacanian term sinthome to develop his concept. The sinthome operates, for Lacan, "as the knot that holds the subject together, that ties or binds the subject to its constitutive libidinal career, and assures that no subject, try as it may, can ever 'get over' itself—'get over,' that is, the fixation of the drive that determines its jouissance (Edelman 35-6). Cultural fantasy places homosexuality "in intimate relation to fatal, even murderous, jouissance—a fantasy that locates homosexuality in the place of the sinthome, constructing it always as…*sinthom*osexuality" (39).
[48] For Edelman's reading of *A Christmas Carol*, see 47.
[49] Edelman will often capitalize the word Child to denote this psychic/symbolic formulation.

are continually inscribed.[50]

I find the pattern that Edelman identifies, the opposition to the child within the realm of the symbolic, plays a significant role within the cultural politics of temporality, even though I fail to subscribe to Edelman's notion that queerness is synonymous with the death drive and that it is a role queers should necessarily take up.[51] Unsurprisingly, a number of scholars, such as Muñoz, Freeman, Warner and others, have also resisted Edelman's brand of radical negativity in which queerness, as he describes, is a "refusal of every substantialization of identity" (4). One of my greatest critiques of Edelman would be of the privilege necessary to realize this call to action. For gay white males (especially those with academic tenure) this form of anti-relationist strategy may be viable, but this is not necessarily the case for queers from different class backgrounds or from marginalized races. Although I fail to agree with Edelman's course of action, I find the symbolic child, a figure continually under attack, a worthwhile notion, particularly in relationship to the Scottish play. The theory demonstrates how a classic dramatic structure becomes cultural meme with an emotional investment developing in and around the child figure. This agonistic structure is implicit to *Macbeth* through the play's investment in "straight" reproductive lines of descent, an investment that is articulated and *felt* by readers and audiences by virtue of the various figures, from the Weyward Sisters to Macbeth and his wife, that insist—perhaps necessarily—that "in them nature's copy's not eterne" (3.2.41).

Edelman offers a rather nihilistic critical lens, but one that provides a fitting way

[50] Examples may include common associations of homosexuality with pedophilia, and the way political anti-gay rights legislation commonly positions gays and lesbians as a threat to the future of children. Edelman emphasizes that this operates purely in the realm of the symbolic, as the image of the Child, not to be confused with actual, historical children (11).

to unpack a *Macbeth* adaptation with its own rather nihilistic predilections. In *Sleep No More*, the child is represented in various ghosted forms. This often occurs by incorporating objects in the space that are associated with children or childhood, though any actual child performers remain absent. For instance, several black prams are placed in particular rooms, either filled with stones, potatoes, unwrapped presents (in Boston), or just left empty (image 8). One of these can be found in the graveyard, juxtaposing the pram as a symbol of the child—and futurity—with a space allocated for the dead (image 9). In the hospital ward, amidst ten or so empty hospital beds, another pram sits, filled with stones (image 10).

In the Boston production, one reviewer found himself at the end of the evening, "alone in a long hallway that was completely dark save for a baby carriage" that contained three presents inside and was "eerily bathed in a spotlight" (Aucoin). To further highlight the sense of the missing child, this version, like the original London production, was performed in an abandoned schoolhouse (image 11). These spaces encapsulated, even performed, a childless future, reflecting Macbeth's own childless future. In the New York production, although the building itself does not allude to missing children, it similarly gestures towards "no future" through the gothic undertones of the space, its labyrinthine structure and its strong associations with the nocturnal. In these spaces of "no future," the repetitive, death-driven lines of the performers resonate even more with the category of the "undead," symbolic embodiments of the death drive. Yet unlike Edelman's proposal, these lines open up and expand possibilities for desirous and affective pleasure, rather than focus primarily on shutting down futurity as a political anti-relationist strategy.

The intermingling of bodies, a literal relational element, is central to the spectator-participant's encounter with anti-futurity and the figure of the missing child during the performance. For select guests that have "one-on-one" exchanges, stories about missing children are featured prominently. In an article for the *New Statesman*, one reviewer describes how the actress playing Hecate singled her out and led her into a private room, after "removing my mask and feeding me a vial of tears…she seized hold of my wrists, leading me into a pitch-black forest, forcing my hands against a series of branches, telling me the haunting story of a child lost in a wood" (T. Burton). A spectator from the Boston production recounted how during her one-on-one with the young actress playing the Second Mrs. de Winters character, she was pulled into a private room, sat on a couch, and told a "sad story about a child trapped in a well" (Libonati). Performers will, on occasion, whisper to guests, "Are you Fleance?," searching for the absent child that represents hope for the future in *Macbeth* (Worthen "Written Troubles" 94). When I attended the production, while lining up in the Manderley bar to enter the elevator room, Maximillan hushed me up by whispering in my ear, "Shhh!…you'll wake the babies."

One of the most powerful, affectively charged embodiments of the missing child occurs in the Macduff's family quarters. While exploring the New York production, I wandered into a young children's room (image 12). There was a porcelain doll resting on the pillow of the bed, with a *Beautiful Treasures Children's Bible* on the nightstand nearby. A toddler's outfit and a pair of shoes were laid out on the floor, with a doll's house and a sled on the far side of the room. Everything was neat and tidy and the bed well made, but when I turned to look at the mirror on the side wall, I did not see my own reflection, but the image of the child's bed unraveled and stained with blood.

Immediately, the room became the site of a horrific crime and I became a ghost-voyeur (image 13). This was one of the key shocks that I had during the evening. It marked a point of disturbance, a mechanism by which Punchdrunk was able to pull the rug out from underneath me. It twisted my relationship to time, taking me back suddenly and vibrantly to the scene of a past crime, while also foreclosing on my own emotional or psychic investment in the child as a symbol of futurity.

Like the Hitchcock references throughout *No Future*, *Sleep No More* seems to present a Hitchcock-inspired forum in which anti-futurity presents a queer challenge to normative demands of temporal order. But the production also seems to address one of Freeman's central concerns with Edelman's brand of anti-futurity. Freeman finds that his psychoanalytic readings evacuate the role of the queer body within the social, thereby removing the "messiest thing about being queer: the actual meeting of bodies with other bodies and with objects" (xxi). The production provides a useful way of addressing this concern. Through (syn)aesthetics, it foregrounds the body through a mode of (re)cognition, allowing it to serve as a vehicle for affective pleasure. The process reflects Ahmed's notion of orientation failure, which does not work to simply thwart established order—as Edelman's work suggests, but functions as a way to open up bodies to the unsettling enjoyment of being "out of line" (107).

Sleep No More fosters a mode of queer time founded in the wayward body set in pleasurable non-reproductive motion, with the McKittrick serving as its "messy" idle playground. Anti-futurity becomes a relational, affective and desirously charged encounter inside its corridors. Bodies are encouraged to cruise both space and non-linear

time, forging twisted lines as they search for visceral pleasures, tantalizing objects echoing of the past, or perhaps a sexy witch lurking somewhere in the dark…

Conclusion

One month before the 2008 US presidential election, literary critic Stephen Greenblatt made an appearance on the satirical news show, *The Colbert Report*. During the humorous segment, Stephen Colbert and the Harvard professor tried to match each of the candidates with a Shakespearean character. After playing footage of several of Obama's pundits, Colbert declares, "There you have it: he is an egg-headed elitist who can't make up his mind; clearly, Obama is Hamlet." In his article on the figure of Hamlet in the US socio-political sphere, Todd Landon Barnes traces several such examples from both before and after the election degrading Obama as an intellectual, ineffectual, and stymied by his "unproductive over-thinking" (346). This derogatory Shakespearean identification, however, is not new, as Barnes illustrates; the Kennedy administration was similarly critiqued by Richard Nixon for its "Hamlet-like psychosis which seems to paralyze it every time decisive action is required." Such examples illustrate the way that political ideology positions a derogatory idleness against a righteous productivity on the US political stage.

During the 2016 Presidential campaign, Republican primary candidates have incorporated similarly divisive rhetoric. Donald Trump has lambasted Jeb Bush for his lack of energy, which he describes as being able to put anyone to sleep. In Trump's attack ad, Bush is seen speaking in front of a large group at a campaign event, then the camera focuses in on a woman in the background sound asleep with her head resting on her arm. The voiceover targets the candidate for being soporific: "Jeb: For all your sleeping needs" (Cillizza). During one of the debates, Marco Rubio announced—although erroneously—that "welders make more money than philosophers. We need more welders

and less philosophers" (Sola). The association here, like those with Obama, positions a "doer" against a "thinker," favoring the former for its productivity and economic growth. Under attack, once again, is intellectualism or contemplation for their seeming inactivity and uselessness.

Moving from the political stage to the theatrical stage allows for a different conceptualization, even (re)conceptualization of the industry/idleness divide. As this study has detailed, Shakespearean characters, such as Falstaff or Cleopatra, and spaces, such as the forest of Arden or the theatre as its own metaphorical Arden, energize the notion of idleness, offering it a queer sort of vitality. The concept of idleness put forth in this project and embodied within its case studies is energetic and vibrant, even inherently paradoxical as it confounds ideological divides. To return briefly to *Midsummer*, it is reminiscent of the rational, industrious King Theseus and his baffled response when first hearing of the Mechanical's performance: 'Merry' *and* 'tragical'? 'Tedious' *and* 'brief'?—That is, hot ice and wondrous strange black snow. How shall we find the concord of this discord? (5.1.58-60). For the reasoned Theseus, who has recently dismissed the lover's account of their perils in the forest as mere "fairy toys," the performance's contradictory gestures become the site of fascination. Egeus, trying to deter the King from the selection, calls the play "nothing, nothing in the world," and in a certain sense he is correct: the performance is fairly lacking in *material* value, driven by the illogical passion of "hard-handed men…which never laboured in their minds till now" (5.1.72-3). So in a sense the "welders" are trying their hand at "philosophy." The performance, though "nothing," is still productive in an unconventional sense. It results

in an affective and desirous surplus that allows the court to "find sport in their intents, extremely stretched" (5.1.79-80).

Similarly, the case-studies that I have investigated offer contradictory models of embodying idleness, challenging modes of normative logic. *The Donkey Show* tapped into the affectively-charged disco era to form its own utopian temporal return: a pull to an idealized past that allows for a re-envisioning of possibilities for the present moment and the future. The suspended time of Propeller's all-male theatre opened up a way to conceptualize suspension as motion and (e)motion, which could even be embodied in the queer productivity and sideways growth of the production's mode of theatricality. Lastly, *Sleep No More* solicited moments of positively-charged dis/orientation; it created a landscape to unsettle and produce new affectively and desirously-charged relationships between bodies, objects, and time. To borrow from José Esteban Muñoz, the scholar to whom this project is perhaps most indebted, these shows, through their temporal manipulations, each create "a desire for another way of being in the world, another way of knowing the world" and a world "gleaming with potentiality" (130). Theatrical idleness reminds us that such vibrancy is not generated solely from forward momentum. Following Massumi's notion of criticality, it emerges out of a critical juncture: paradoxical moments of motion, (e)motion, and vitality within suspended time. Shakespearean theater can reflect an idle playground for such non-reproductive circulations. It pleasures as it unsettles, revitalizing participants, while inviting them not just to imagine, but to experience, new horizons.

Through emphasizing phenomenology and affective circulations, embodying idleness offers a conceptual framework, but more importantly a strategic tactic, a

practical way that social critique can be enacted within the theatrical forum and within Shakespearean performance. It looks to usefully expand what queerness in performance is thought to be, stretching it beyond the enactment of homoerotic moments or the deconstructive power of cross-casting. A focus on queer time, nonetheless, relates back to queer bodies and their own lived experience: the way queer lives can present a useful pressure, expanding alternatives to normative regimes of time. Yet, it also recognizes that the contemporary display of same-sex desire on stage is not necessarily the site of social-political critique as it may have been in the past, especially since the burgeoning of what Duggan and contemporary queer theorists describe as "homonormativity," which offers a way by which lesbians and gays can support fairly normative modes of productivity.

Embodying idleness, rather, locates queerness as a force enacted in moments that challenge straight time and its cultural authority. It opens up to the pleasure, danger, even bliss of stepping outside of normative temporal bounds. These moments, ephemeral as they may be, can have a lasting effect as they continue to resonate in bodies and minds. Understanding queerness as a temporal force may also offer a useful way for the academy to challenge its own ingrained binary divides; by entertaining the notion of theatrical idleness in this project, one runs the risk of locating queerness in its perceived opposite: the mainstream, the capitalist, even in the "Shakespearean"—a term all too commonly affiliated with cultural authority, legacy, and Empire. Ideally, this project would dis/orientate some scholars, as it would the rationally-bound Theseus, forcing one to recalibrate and seek out new—hopefully queerer—modes of valuation that allow for pleasurable, paradoxical conflation.

On the flipside, these productions challenge Shakespearean authority as they make their locus of pleasure the frisson of queer times—gay, suspended, or twisted—rather than through more traditional associations with Shakespeare, whether his plots or texts. The pleasure of *Sleep No More*, for instance, is arguably more indebted to the aesthetics of Hitchcock and its nocturnal, gothic realm, than to *Macbeth* as story. These productions embody idleness as spectator-participants are able to take pleasure, quite literally, into their own hands, finding (syn)aesthetic and imaginative ways to experience outside of normative temporal bounds. It houses its critique not by offering agency, but by privileging the experiential, the sensual, over the productive and cognitive associated with straight time and its regimes. With this, it moves away from a Butler-based strategy, which would locate political power through repetitions with a difference, embodying a countercurrent, a queer temporal force, that challenges the incessant forward movement implied through Butler-based chronologies. As adaptations, these productions do not stand side-by-side with their source text, allowing for a strict comparison that relates back, and often supports, the authority of the "original." They offer up a metaphorical landscape, opening a way—to borrow from Worthen—to play in the "slippage between bodies and texts in performance" (*Force* 77). They allow "Shakespeare" to, arguably, grow *sideways*. Audiences forgo Shakespearean "lines" of authority for the pleasurable opportunity to move along and forge vibrant non-reproductive pathways.

This project, like the productions studied, invests less into "Shakespearean" meanings, shifting focus towards queer time, phenomenology, and affect as loci of pleasure within contemporary performance. Arguably, this project focuses its attention on what the productions and its participants focus their *own* attention the most: the sensate

body and the role of participant. One might say that is how this project functions as queer critique: it unpacks the rich, vibrant circulations and queer temporalities that contemporary performance, even Shakespearean performance, has to offer, yet it mines Shakespearean performance, necessarily producing "Shakespearean" scholarship, per se. By doing so, it refuses to assist "Shakespearean" scholarly and disciplinary lines, as it enacts its own sideways movement.

Methodologically, by returning to a pre-industrial age and an era in which conceptualizations of time were literally shifting, this project seeks to offer a useful pressure on contemporary temporal norms and the current idleness/industry divide. This aims to recuperate not just idleness, but the early modern female or feminine body in all its phlegmatic glory as a source of embodied critique. Hopefully, it can also revitalize queer as a useful, even necessary, way to engage with issues of cultural politics, illustrating how theatrical stages—as Jill Dolan has argued—continue to be useful "laboratories" for performers and spectator-participants to deconstruct gender, but also, now, understandings of time (Dolan in Senelick *Gender in Performance* 8). These play/grounds, situated in idle space/time and situated between the "fictitious" and the "real," will ideally cast a light on the regimes of time at "work" in public life, while also creating roadmaps towards freer conceptualizations of time as lived experience.

Lastly, perhaps embodying idleness as a counter-*current*, a queer temporal force, offers a way to rethink the concept of "the wave" central to feminism and queer theory: the first, second, and third movements that differentiate historic moments of change and growth with their own particular strategies of political engagement. Instead of focusing on "the wave's" forward progress and gains, perhaps the wave as metaphor, growing

sideways, could be unpacked further. This draws upon the image of the wave as a long body of water curling into an arched form and breaking on the shore. But the wave as a literal and metaphorical "movement" also reminds us of the dynamic interplay of regression and forward-motion, how the tide rolling backwards plays an intricate part in its expansion upwards, beauteous and fleeting. This body of water, like Cleopatra's appearance at sea, makes room for the aesthetic in "the wave." It places power in the experiential, the "current" moment, even the theatrical. Shifting and dynamic, the wave surges through its "becomings," reaching breathtaking literal and figurative heights.

As it makes its way towards the pebbled shore, this wave offers a needed respite from the "minutes that hasten," the temporal logic that governs Shakespeare's Sonnet 60, the epigraph to this project. It takes the "sequent toil" of straight time and reworks this into expanded possibilities for pleasure and even non-reproductive "growth." And like the Egyptian Queen, this wave embodies a queer temporal force. Rather than being governed by normative logic or constraints, she forges new pathways, new "currents," as a minion of the moon.

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Image Appendix

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Image 1. Mamillius appears as Time. Note the large hourglass at his feet.

Image 2. Actor Ben Allen, who also played Mamillius and Time, appears as Perdita.

Image 3. Francis works away diligently, while Tom leans against his loom, likely asleep and likely intoxicated. *Industry and Idleness* (1747), plate 1.

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Image 3. "Theseus 2012: Your Future Tomorrow"

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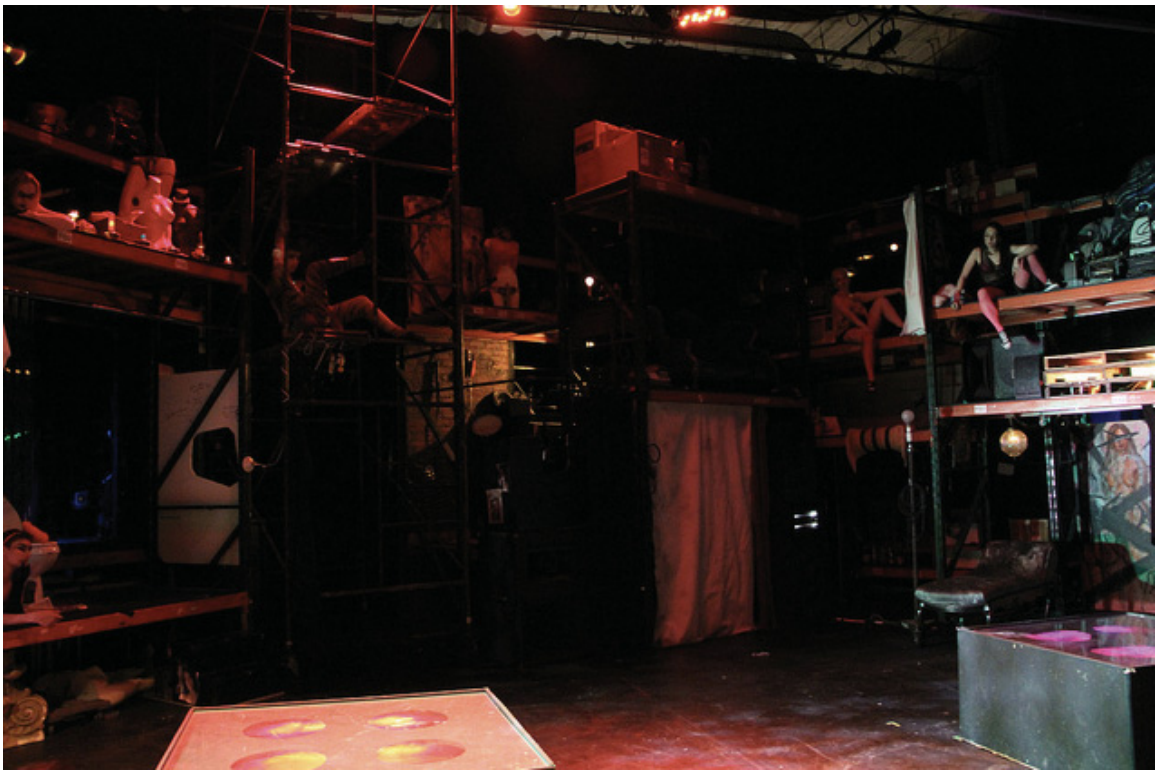

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