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The time of the ordinary

Bergson differentiates between time and duration, contrasting the clock with the sugar lump melting in tea. The clock proposes homogeneous time, a material divided into units. The melting sugar cube captures an image of duration that arises out of time's indivisibility. Deleuze adds nuance to the image by pointing out that the melting sugar distinguishes time from space, as time concerns differences in kind, while space concerns differences of degree. But what if both the rhythm of the clock and that of the sugar are simply constructs, not actual, but virtual, i.e. examples? To borrow from Cavell, we understand the example as the virtual micro-performance spun from the ordinary, or that which can be overlooked. Perhaps these examples both constitute time images that render duration visible. We extend our notion of the clock to include the calendar, recasting the ordinary as that which is ordered, or sequenced. Here we consider literary / theatrical works that take such temporal accounting as their structural strategy – Nicholas Breton's *The Fantasticks* (1626), and Suzan-Lori Parks' *365 Days 365 Plays* (2006) – situating the reader in the aporia between the experience of continuous duration, and the discontinuous virtual time example that renders that same duration visible; a situation which produces a degree of hysteria and desire, perhaps best captured by Marcel Proust's excitement upon reading on the playbill for an upcoming performance of *Phèdre* the words, "The doors will be closed at two o'clock sharp."