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**The Wide Gap of Sixteen Years: The Performance of Time in *The Winter's Tale* in Britain,  
2001-2017**

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In common with other late plays in Shakespeare's career, *The Winter's Tale* contains a moment of ostentatious stagecraft: in this play, the appearance of the choric personification of Time. Similar to the arrival of Jupiter riding on an eagle in *Cymbeline*, and the goddesses in the masque in *The Tempest*, Time provides a potentially spectacular moment that can be meaningful and striking in performance. As the narrow neck between the two halves of his emblematic hourglass, the scene at the beginning of the fourth act of *The Winter's Tale* marks a point of inflection in the play. Time himself embodies the seasonal transition between the Sicilian winter of the first half and the Bohemian spring of the second, marking the move from tragic conflict to the hope of a new beginning. But beyond its function as a structural device marking the elision of sixteen years, a number of scholars have pointed out, Time in this play embodies one of its primary concerns: in many ways, *The Winter's Tale* is a play about time and its effects. As Matthew D. Wagner has stated, "No other play [in the Shakespearian canon] comes across as so deeply concerned with temporality—thematically, structurally, imagistically, and performatively—as this one" (98-99). Soji Iwasaki even declared that, as a character, "Time, in fact, is responsible for the whole action of *The Winter's Tale*" (261). In this respect, Time and the brief scene in which he appears has been consistently used in modern productions to focus the audience's attention on this underlying central theme. As Susan Snyder and Deborah T. Curren-Aquino noted in their 2007 New Cambridge edition of the play, far from cutting the

character out in performance, modern productions have shown “an increasingly ubiquitous Time [...as] the overarching teller of the tale” (38). In his 2010 Arden edition, John Pitcher summarizes the stage history of the character in the twentieth century as follows: “On the modern stage Time has been played as a wizard, with planets and stars on his robe, as a stately octogenarian (a svelte version of the Shepherd), and as a traditional Father Time, the stooping figure on weather vane” (81). The twenty-first century, however, seems to have drawn on the Renaissance iconography alluded to in the text only selectively. The common emblematic attributes recognizable to a London audience in the early years of the seventeenth century were clearly the scythe, the hourglass, and the wings.<sup>1</sup> Recent productions have shown that although the hourglass is still meaningful to modern audiences, the wings and the scythe are no longer generally recognizable. The traditional depiction of Time as some kind of wise old man has also become much less dominant, and modern directors have chosen to present the character in other guises, or to double or amalgamate it with other roles in the play. And, as the most recent productions have demonstrated, Time does not need to be male. In this essay, I will be examining the different ways in which eleven major British productions—by the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, Propeller, Shakespeare’s Globe, and Cheek by Jowl, among other companies—have chosen to present Time in the first years of this century. They demonstrate a range of varied and stimulating approaches to the centrality of the theme in performance by presenting Time in surprisingly creative ways. As the discussion will show, with one exception, these productions have all chosen to retain the scene, and some of them have turned it into a crucial moment of revelation. This effect has been particularly striking with respect to the use of meaningful doubling with other characters. Since Time’s appearance is too brief to justify, generally, the deployment of a separate actor to play the part exclusively, the

choice of which other roles to double Time with is significant. As these productions will show, it is entirely different to assign the part to an actor playing a major role or to give it to someone from the supporting cast. In some cases, Time's lines have been interestingly subsumed into another part, and only an informed spectator would notice that the actor is performing dialogue originally intended to be spoken by a mythical choric figure, rather than, for instance, by Mamillius or Paulina. As we will see, most of the productions that this essay analyzes have taken the presentation of Time as a refreshing opportunity for dramaturgical innovation.

In 2001, a few months before he was appointed to succeed Trevor Nunn as the Artistic Director of the National Theatre, Nicholas Hytner directed his version of the play at the Olivier. According to its director, the production was particularly concerned with time as one of its central themes: "It's a play that constantly harks on how painful the passage of time is. Sometimes time heals, but mostly time brings difficulty and disappointment" (Davies 6). Time as a central theme was clearly established at the beginning of the performance with an hourglass pre-set on a table in "the private apartments of King Leontes, gleaming and modern," John Peter observed. Mamillius, played by a boy actor (Thomas Brown-Lowe alternating with Liam Hess), then appeared in an iconographic costume as Time, "with a scythe, wings and black cloak," reciting Shakespeare's sonnet 12, "When I do count the clock that tells the time" (Rokison-Woodall 102). The lights then came up to reveal that Mamillius had been reciting the sonnet as a party piece in a social gathering in his parents' apartment, proceeding then to entertain their guests "playing a classical study on the grand piano" (Dobson, "Performances, 2001" 318). After the interval, Mamillius re-entered as Time wearing the same costume, to speak the first four lines of 4.1. As Abigail Rokison-Woodall has described the moment:

As the adult Perdita entered to take up the next section of the speech (“Impute it not ... seems to it (4.1.4-15)), Mamillius sat down beside the basket containing the baby Perdita, watching over her. When Polixenes, who took up the next lines (4.1.15-23), spoke the words “I turn my glass”, it was Mamillius who turned over the hour glass, as if controlling the shift of [sixteen] years. Finally, he picked up the baby basket and exited, hand in hand with the Old Shepherd.

(Rokison Woodall 103)

Michael Dobson has argued that this was “a mistake on two counts, firstly because it seemed to imply that the character wasn’t really dead, and secondly because although both of the children the production used could just about cope with a sonnet they became inaudible and hard to follow over sixteen rather complicated rhyming couplets” (“Performances, 2001,” 319). But Time’s iconographic costume may have actually confused some members of the audience: Mamillius’ pair of wings were mistaken by one of the reviewers, Jane Edwardes, as his “sentimental appearance as an angel guarding over Perdita’s cradle.” We can probably assume that this Time Out reviewer was not alone in her mistake, and that other audience members confused the classical significance of the wings with a spurious Christian emblem. Hytner’s interpretation of the play was thus partially thwarted, as Mamillius’s identification with an angel clearly imperilled the connection between the choric character, the central temporal theme on which the production wanted to elaborate, and the dead boy. Although at the beginning of Act V “the walls of the Sicilian court were decked with huge portraits of Hermione and her dead son” (Rokison-Woodall 103), the character never reappeared on stage after that moment. However, at the very end of the performance “the incidental music recapitulated the dead Mamillius’s piano study from the first scene” (Dobson “Performances, 2001,” 321), musically suggesting that the

bleak ending of the production, in which the reconciliation between Leontes and Hermione was presented almost as a formality, was further cast in shadows by the memory of the lost boy. The reviewers' reactions suggest that a doubling that seems to have been calculated to highlight the dead Mamillius's latent presence throughout the rest of the play may not have actually achieved the expected result of stressing the centrality of time as a theme. Mamillius was performing as Time first as a party piece in the opening scene and then as a post-mortem personification that was somewhat incoherent with the rest of a production in which the supernatural elements were all but obliterated. Perhaps more importantly, with this blending of Time and Mamillius, rather than a performance distinguishing the two roles, the powerful choric figure ceased to be a distinct individual character who is in control of the plot to be reduced to a costume choice, even if the intention was to make it a meaningful one. This device, as the reviews suggest, was potentially confusing to an audience unfamiliar with the text a priori or with classical iconography, and Time's speech was levelled in status to that of the inserted sonnet: a reassigned text that felt external to the central action of the play. It is perhaps intriguing to think what the effect might have been had Hytner decided to bookend the production explicitly with a third appearance of Mamillius in his choric disguise, rather than only suggesting his latent memory through musical quotation.

The effect of doubling Mamillius and Time, or, perhaps more accurately, to make Mamillius become Time, was further developed by Edward Hall in his version for Propeller. This 2005 production, revived with alterations in 2012, presented time as the overarching theme of the play, dominating the staging from the pre-show: a continuous stream of sand flowed from the heavens into a small toy wagon in the middle of the playing space, effectively transforming the entire stage into an hourglass. A frail Mamillius (Tam Williams in 2005 and Ben Allen in

2012) came on wearing striped pyjamas, underscored by the sound of a ticking clock, which stopped when he touched the sand. Throughout the first half, he witnessed from the gallery the effects of his father's madness and his mother's banishment, and the subsequent trial scene. He then stage-managed the storm and the bear in the final scene of Act III, playing with a toy ship and a teddy bear, taking agency in the action of the play beyond his role as silent witness:

Mamillius was not a passive observer but clearly a powerful force behind the plot. After the interval, an hourglass was preset centre-stage, with the sand in the lower half; Mamillius ran on stage, mimicked the movement of a pendulum with his arm to the sound of a ticking clock, and then he picked up the hourglass and started delivering Time's speech while the Bohemian characters appeared one by one. When naming Perdita, he put on a flowery crown and prepared himself to play the role of his own sister. The final lines of the speech were shared by the whole cast, after which, Mamillius/Time/Perdita turned the hourglass to start the second half of the show. At the conclusion of the final scene, the actor, playing Perdita, quickly disrobed and changed back into the pyjamas to become Mamillius once again. As Steve Mentz described:

He came back, finally, as a ghost. In a shocking, wordless coda to the performance, the boy Mamillius re-appeared holding a candle after the royal parties cleared the stage for the last time. His father saw him and returned, his face fractured into disbelief and unlooked-for hope. [...] He kept staring at the candle cupped in his hand as his father awkwardly moved downstage toward him. At the last minute, he looked up at the twisted face straining down at him, and blew out the candle.

(Mentz 61)

The identification of Mamillius and Perdita as a theatrical continuum rendered a powerful result: after Time's speech, Perdita seemed to embody Leontes' second chance quite literally, as if

death—and Time—had only produced a gentle and seamless transformation of one character into the other.<sup>2</sup> But Hall managed to subvert that effect with that final image: through the agency of a circular Time, the recovery of Perdita cannot compensate for the loss of Mamillius, whose death still haunts their father. In a provocative metatheatrical game, the boy from the past who had travelled in time ultimately returned to remind the guilty father that the present cannot be a clean slate. In this sense, the Propeller production presented a circular reading of the play in which, problematically, there was no possibility of redemption or reconciliation as the past is as much part of the present as the new life heralded by Perdita's recovery and Hermione's re-appearance. In contrast with Hytner's interpretation, in which the possibility of reconciliation during the final scene did not seem to be real, Hall asked his actors to play the scene with full emotional commitment to the possibility of better times—only to remind its guilt-ridden protagonist quite poignantly at the very end that life will never be the same, as the boy who died will not return to life nor will his memory disappear. The fact that Mamillius used his physicality in 4.1 to suggest the pendulum of a clock, in conjunction with the hourglass theme represented by the sand falling on the stage and the actual hourglass used as a prop, drove home to the audience that Time—its passage, its healing effects, its inexorability—was clearly the central theme of the production. By giving Mamillius a metatheatrical agency in the unfolding of the plot by making him the causer of Antigonus' shipwreck and Perdita's recovery, Hall bestowed on the character the powers that Time possesses in the text as the plot-driving Chorus. Time was not presented as a distinct figure, but rather as an aspect of the same theatrical continuum: two mirroring siblings embodied by the same actor, establishing a powerful trans-temporal presence that drove and haunted the play.



In the same year of the first Propeller show, 2005, the Globe produced an original practices (OP) staging in which, Lucy Munro observed, “The cast were dressed in sumptuous high-Jacobean costumes—huge farthingales for the high-status women; exaggerated breeches for the men—and the superb band, including sackbuts, rackets, hurdy-gurdies and the like, was able to create a pastoral milieu through musical detail alone” (8). It was an uncomplicated entertainment in which, as Munro argued with disappointment, the directorial choice of highlighting the comic elements of the text in an almost exclusive way underplayed the potentially transcendental seriousness of the final scene, as “the same spirit infected the play’s climax” (9). The staging of *Time* reinforced this sense: “This lightness of touch was maintained in the figure of Time (Roger McKern), a black-cowled figure stalking the stage with the air of a stand-up comedian” (9). Time, an old man robed in a long black hooded cloak, emerged from the central discovery space with Polixenes and Camillo, who remained immobile upstage at either side of the choric figure while he delivered the speech, capitalizing on the powerful sense of audience interaction that is possible in the Globe. A gentle shower of snow started falling on the stage, reminiscent of the strong seasonal connotations of the play’s title and its structure. Time did not carry any props—hourglass, mirror or scythe—and he had no wings. He illustrated some of his lines with appropriate movements suggested by the text, but in unexpected ways: at the line “I slide / O’er sixteen years” (5-6), he actually slid downstage centre to the edge of the platform towards the audience, and he accompanied the line “I turn my glass” (16) with a 360° turn on his heels, making his cloak fly around him. After presenting Florizel, Polixenes and Camillo started speaking the beginning of 4.2, while Time remained centre-stage listening to them. A few lines into the scene, Time interrupted the conversation, and with a magic gesture the two characters froze again, while Time finished his speech. At the end of it he dismissed

Polixenes and Camillo, who exited, and just before leaving the stage he addressed the audience again: “There will now be a sixteen- [long pause] minute interval,” which prompted the audience’s laughter. Perhaps oddly for an OP production at the Globe, no attempt was made to recreate a Renaissance Father Time figure, as might have been predictable, perhaps, in accordance with the OP idea of trying to reconstruct the original staging of the play. The doubling of the part with Dion and the Second Gentleman does not seem an especially imaginative choice, though the doubling with a minor character succeeded in giving Time an independent existence, thus preventing any confusion.

A year later, in 2006, as part of the RSC’s Complete Works Festival, Dominic Cooke staged the play as a semi-promenade experience in the intimate Swan Theatre in Stratford, with a winding slope around the centre of the auditorium. The beginning of the performance was set a few minutes before midnight on New Year’s Eve, a meaningful choice, as Michael Dobson noted:

A mirror ball and a clock, awaiting the stroke of twelve, are suspended above the stalls floor; elegant couples are dancing among the spectators, and occasionally separating to invite individual audience members to dance with them. [...] Cooke, it appears, has made a virtue of having his *Winter’s Tale* squeezed into a short time slot over December and early January by setting its opening at a New Year’s Eve ball; this turns out to be a much cannier way of previewing time’s role in the action than Nicholas Hytner’s interpolated sonnet at the National in 2001.

(Dobson, “Performances, 2007,” 320)

Temporality was thus highlighted from the very start with the physical presence of the clock and the atmosphere anticipating the stroke of midnight. The second half of the performance started

when a rustic figure dressed in plain trousers, a white shirt, and a waistcoat, and wearing a tweed flat-cap, came on stage to cut some flowers from a flower pot. He delivered Time's speech standing half the way down the slope in a sympathetic way, engaging the audience in the speech by direct address, using a rural accent. Time was not an allegorical, supernatural figure, but an ordinary gardener, appropriately linking him with the progress of the seasons. He delivered the line "I now name to you" (23, my italics) pointing at a single member of the audience, and prompting some laughter. When he said "Now take upon me in the name of Time" (3), he pointed at himself and then tapped his wrist-watch, in case the audience might have missed who he was meant to be; towards the end of the speech he pointed again at his chest with both hands when saying "Time himself doth say" (31). He then switched his portable radio on again, playing "California Dreamin'" by The Mamas & the Papas, to the audience's amusement. The actor, Robin Lawrence, doubled as an officer and had been visible during the performance in different parts of the auditorium. During the last scene of the play, he remained standing at the back of the stalls watching the royal family's reunion. Just before the final blackout, Time the gardener walked to the middle of the stage and started to sweep the floor. As in the Globe production, Cooke avoided doubling Time with a major character, again preserving Time's choric singularity, while, in this case, reimagining his status by making him a common man.

Interestingly, the choice of casting Time with a supporting member of the company who otherwise played a very minor role has been shared by the many of the revivals mounted in Stratford since the beginning of the twentieth century: six out of the fifteen productions in the period between 1919 and 2013 have done this.<sup>3</sup> David Farr used this device in his 2009 version at the Courtyard Theatre as part of the "long ensemble" repertory promoted by Michael Boyd just before the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre was re-opened.<sup>4</sup> The production is the only other

one in this selection, apart from the Globe's, to have resorted to a more or less traditional visual presentation of Time as a venerable old man with supernatural powers: the frail elderly figure of Patrick Romer, scantily clad with a white loincloth and wearing a white cap, was lowered from the heavens sitting on a concave translucent dish hanging from wires, and after his speech he was raised again out of sight. There was no attempt to make this a more meaningful moment.

In the same year, 2009, Sam Mendes directed his version as part of the first season of the Bridge Project, which brought together British and American actors to perform in a three-year period, presenting two plays in repertory each season which would go on a world tour including the Old Vic in London and the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York City. *The Winter's Tale* was staged in repertory with Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, in which Simon Russell Beale, Leontes, played Lopakhin, and Sinead Cusack, Paulina, took on Ranevskaya; both productions shared a similar setting in the late nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> As in the case of Hall's Propeller production, Mendes's *The Winter's Tale* managed to establish the emblematic centrality of time even before the action began. A line from *Richard II* was projected in brightly lit letters on the white wooden back wall: "O, call back yesterday, bid time return" (Salisbury in 3.2.65). Time was thus visibly set as the textual key to read the plot, drawing the audience's attention to it and trying to guide their interpretation of the play in terms of its time sequence and its effect on the characters and their attitudes. The Canadian actor Richard Easton, then aged 76, doubled as the Old Shepherd and Time, presenting a performance that was positively reviewed as the "sunny presence . . . that carries the [central] section" (Miller). After *Antigonus* (Dakin Matthews) left the baby Perdita in her basket while followed by a convincingly animated bear, Easton entered as the Shepherd, clad in simple brown leather clothes and wearing a flat, wide-brimmed straw hat, composing a deeply sympathetic character, immensely tender when holding

up the baby he had just found. Though clean-shaven, his long white flattened hair, neatly coming down over his shoulders, established his advanced, but lively, age. During the meeting with his son, the Clown (Tobias Segal), his line “thou metst with things dying, I with things new-born” (3.3.110-11) effectively prefigured his sudden transformation into Time a few moments later. Still holding the baby in his arms, Easton rapidly turned towards the spectators, taking off the Shepherd’s hat, directly addressing them “in the name of Time” (3), indicating with his hand that he was now playing another character. Keeping with the transatlantic concept of this production, in which British actors played the Sicilian characters and Americans the Bohemians, Easton dropped the broadly American accent he was using, and spoke Time’s lines in RP English.<sup>6</sup> Easton’s uncomplicated and profoundly engaging presentation of Time, with a wide, happy smile and glittering eyes, gave a powerful sense of hope for the future things to come. Time’s argument, “A shepherd’s daughter” (27), was skilfully visualized by making Easton, the Old Shepherd, hold up the baby of whom Time is speaking, in a convincing metatheatrical moment. The characterization was humbly reduced to a minimum adjustment of costume and speech. In fact, such simple gestures did effectively differentiate both parts—at least for an informed audience. But it can be argued that the doubling, perhaps unwittingly, further engages with a classical trope that is at the heart of the play: *veritas filia temporis*, “Truth is the daughter of Time.” Perdita, the herald of truth and revelation in the final scene of the play in her return to her family, was here the adoptive child of the Old Shepherd, the only father she has known to love and respect, and through the effect of the metatheatrical coup she was made to be the daughter of Time himself.

The 2013 RSC production directed by Lucy Bailey at the refurbished Royal Shakespeare Theatre is the only anomaly in the general pattern. If all other productions retained the character

and the speech, and tried to use different strategies to underline (or not) its centrality, Bailey decided to cut it out of her production altogether. Time and its passage were not elements that were particularly highlighted in the production in any other way.

The 2015/16 season saw two productions of the play coexisting in London at either side of the Thames. Kenneth Branagh chose *The Winter's Tale* to inaugurate the six-play season that he mounted with his newly-formed theater company at the Garrick Theatre from November 2015.<sup>7</sup> Dominic Dromgoole included it as well in his farewell season as Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe: an unprecedented Shakespeare-only season in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse around the late plays that included *The Winter's Tale* in a production directed by Michael Longhurst. Coincidentally, in both productions Time's speech was retained and was given to the actor playing Paulina. The potential of this doubling is indeed great, and, upon reflection, it seems unusual that it has not been employed in any other major British production on record. This choice of doubling connects Paulina, the stage manager of the play's resolution, with the all-knowing choric figure who introduces that second half of the action. The choice to switch the character's traditional gender has a modern precedent on the British stage: in the Russian-language production directed by Declan Donnellan at the Maly Theatre in St Petersburg in 1997, and that toured the United Kingdom in 1999, Time emerged as a beautiful young woman who had been disguised as an ageing babushka (Pitcher 81-82). As we will see, Donnellan would retain this in his 2016-17 English-language production.

In the two London productions, however, the effect was quite dissimilar. At the beginning of the second half of Branagh and Rob Ashford's production, after the interval, Judi Dench appeared in a white robe that was noticeably different from the dark Victorian clothes she wore in the rest of the show as Paulina. A concentric web of light was projected onto the stage

while she stood in its centre, delivering the speech statically, with no hand gesturing. The tone of her delivery was markedly melancholic, an effect that was reinforced by Patrick Doyle's musical score. However, Dench's performance of Time's speech did not really try to differentiate the two characters. Given that the reviewers in the press did not comment on this doubling, we can assume that most of the audience may have not even noticed that the lines were written for a different character, and the passage strongly felt like Paulina's reflective reverie. We might even consider, as Richard Wilson has speculated, that because of her status as a preeminent Shakespearian actress and "national treasure" at the very end of her career she was meant to be interpreted here as a kind of surrogate authorial figure, almost standing for the Shakespearian establishment, and perhaps even for Shakespeare himself.

In the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse production, Niamh Cusack also appeared at the beginning of the second half after the interval, dressed in a white classical robe and wearing a golden coronet. She smiled at the audience and addressed them directly, conveying a sense of optimism for the upcoming events. But a marked difference in the physical and vocal characterization, and a minimal textual alteration, made it clear that she was playing Time and not Paulina; the final couplet was changed into "If never, yet that Time herself doth say / She wishes earnestly you never may" (4.1.31-32, my italics). The potential confusion between the two characters was successfully negotiated, although no further effort was made to expand the chorus beyond her brief scene.

The last show in this survey is Declan Donnellan's English-language production for *Cheek by Jowl*, which opened in Les Gémeaux, Sceaux, Paris, in January 2016 and toured France, Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy, Luxembourg, the United States of America, Greece, and Russia until June 2017. In common with the other two 2016 productions, Time was also

represented as female, played by Grace Andrews, who doubled the minor role of Emilia. The performance began with a seemingly female figure dressed in a red anorak and wearing a dark scarf around her head sitting on a brightly-lit white bench (a row of white wooden crates) with her back to the audience. The figure was otherwise unrecognizable, but the inspiration was clearly the “aging babushka” of Donnellan’s Russian production of 1997-99. The lights went down, and, after the blackout, Leontes (Orlando James) was shown sitting on the same bench, stage left, with his face to the audience. The female figure in the red anorak reappeared at the beginning of the second half of the show, after a replay of the ending of the scene between the Old Shepherd (Peter Moreton) and the Clown (Sam McArdle) that concluded the first half of the show, with the lines “thou met’s with things dying, I with things newborn” (3.3.110-11) displaced to the end of the dialogue. After the noise of thunder, the central scenic element of Nick Ormerod’s design—a long and thin wooden white box upstage that was used to perform some scenes—was made to rotate once around its central axis under a faint blue light. The audience could hear the ominous cries of the baby Perdita and the slow chimes of a bell, and, once the lights went up, the figure in the red anorak made her entrance from stage-left, and walked to the centre of the stage. She let the anorak and scarf fall to reveal a young woman dressed in a low-cut white dress patterned with flowers, her long blonde hair falling on her bare shoulders. She looked around at the audience and started to deliver, in a northern English accent, a heavily truncated and reworked version of Time’s speech that included a reference to the wings, but not to the hourglass or the scythe:

I that please some, try all. Be not affronted

That my name is Time

And if I use my wings. Impute it not a crime



To me or my swift passage that I slide  
O'er sixteen years and leave the growth untried  
As you had slept between. Leontes leaving—  
Th'effects of his fond jealousies so grieving  
That he shuts himself up—imagine me,  
Gentle spectators, that I now may be  
In fair Bohemia.

She then walked backwards towards the wooden wall and the stage was invaded by the bustle of the Bohemian characters who seemed to be laboring on the ground. She delivered the rest of the speech—largely rewritten in loosely rhyming couplets that mimicked the effect of the original text—walking around the stage and gesturing, in turns, to Polixenes, Camillo, Florizel, and Perdita:

From Sicilia, leagues away,  
Where King Polixenes doth still keep sway,  
To serve his new king, Camillo leaves undone,  
Not to guard Florizel, Polixenes' son,  
And now with speed so pains  
To speak of Perdita, now grown in grace  
Equal with wondering. What of her ensues  
I will not prophesy, but let Time's news  
Be known, when 'tis brought forth  
A shepherd's daughter, but a daughter to a king.  
And what to her adheres, which follows after,

Is the argument of Time.<sup>8</sup>

She then left the stage while Autolycus (Ryan Donaldson) started his improvisation with the audience. Time reappeared at the end of the performance. After the whole cast had embraced, as Justin B. Hopkins described, “in an odd but strangely moving huddle [...] Mamillius emerged from behind the stack of crates, crossed slowly down to the gathering, and reached out his hand as if to touch his father’s head [...] and the prince turned to join the figure of Time, waiting upstage” (342). Time, then, served the same purpose as its re-appearance in Hytner’s and Hall’s productions: to remind the audience that the loss of Mamillius crucially problematizes the happy resolution of the play, as his death cannot be undone. If the doubling of Time with Emilia was not particularly meaningful, since during the Sicilian half the audience could not know who the scarfed figure might have been, or that she was being played by Andrews, it is relevant that Time was performed as a feminine supernatural power. For the last few years we have seen a tendency to diversify the casting of Shakespeare productions in the UK by employing limited color-blind and gender-blind casting criteria. To palliate the intrinsic gender imbalance written into these plays, the roles that have been most frequently recrafted as female or have been performed by women in mixed-gender productions have been supporting roles—lords and noblemen, as well as choric and allegorical figures—and less frequently principal roles, though this is changing rapidly.<sup>9</sup> It is unsurprising, then, that the three latest major British productions of *The Winter’s Tale*, even if directed by three men, chose to reserve the role of Time to women, exploring the agency of Time in the play as a powerful female force within its dramatic fabric.

In conclusion, the general tendency in the first sixteen years of the century has been to retain Time’s speech and, in most cases, to try to turn it into a meaningful moment to focus the audience’s attention on time’s effect on the characters and their personal conflicts. In particular,

Hytner, Hall, and Mendes, and to a certain extent Donnellan, concurred that Time, the allegorical figure and the theme, is the central obsession of the play, choosing to read the whole action in terms of its temporality, turning the scene into a crucial moment in the performance and achieving distinctively different effects. However, in the first three cases, when the part was doubled with a major role, an uninformed audience may have missed that the speech was written to be spoken by a different character. As with Dench's performance, they may have assumed that the actors were not doubling other roles, but that the speech is part of the main action as originally scripted for Mamillius or the Old Shepherd. But to an informed audience who knew the play beforehand, these directorial choices were stimulating and refreshing, managing to re-imagine successfully a character who would be unreadable for some contemporary playgoers if presented in full iconographic regalia. It seems that when the speech has been doubled with a major role—whether the distinction between the characters was made explicit or was obliterated—it has become a moment of revelation that offered a key to read the whole play in terms of its arguably central theme. It may be argued that when the doubling was not meant to differentiate between the Chorus and a character in the main plot, Time lost its individuality and powerful authorial presence in the play to some extent, although Hall's production did attempt to give Mamillius/Time/Perdita a clear agency in the unfolding of events. As I have shown, all these approaches rendered interesting and suggestively dissimilar results that prove, against Bailey's choice, that preserving the character and the scene, and reinterpreting them for a modern audience, can prove to bear great significance even today.

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<sup>1</sup> For a full discussion of the visual iconography associated with Time in the Renaissance, see Ewbank, Iwasaki, Kiefer, and Rundus.

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<sup>2</sup> Doubling Mamillius and Perdita was also Sam Mendes's choice for his 2009 production with the Bridge Project, asking the Scottish actress Morven Christie to use a British RP accent as Mamillius and an American accent for Perdita, following the production's concept (see below).

<sup>3</sup> Before 2006, Time was doubled in Stratford by Duncan Yarrow as the First Lord (dir. Dorothy Green, 1943), Anton Kumalo as one of the shepherds in the festival (dir. Trevor Nunn, 1969), John Nettles as the bear (dir. John Barton, 1976), and Henry Goodman as Paulina's steward (dir. Terry Hands, 1986). Otherwise, three productions had doubled the role with Archidamus (John Collins in W. Bridges-Adams's production, 1919; Duncan Yarrow in B. Iden Payne's 1942; and William Squire in Anthony Quayle's, 1948), three with Antigonus (Robert Eddison in Ronald Eyre's production, 1981; Paul Webster in Adrian Noble's, 1984; and Jeffrey Wickham in Gregory Doran's, 1999), one with Cleomenes (Ronald Simpson in Bridges-Adams's production, 1921), and one with Dion (Bruno Barnabe in Bridges-Adams's production, 1931).

<sup>4</sup> The other plays in that season were Lucy Bailey's production of Julius Caesar and Boyd's own *As You Like It*, to which they added in 2010 Rupert Goold's *Romeo and Juliet*, Boyd's *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Farr's *King Lear*.

<sup>5</sup> It was planned that the second season would feature another pair of Shakespeare and Chekhov revivals, which were initially announced as being *Hamlet* and *The Three Sisters*, but in the event it presented a Shakespearian double bill: *As You Like It* and *The Tempest* with Stephen Dillane playing Jacques and Prospero, instead of the role of Hamlet, as had been advertised originally. The third and final season consisted of only one play due to budgetary constraints: *Richard III* with Kevin Spacey in the title role.

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<sup>6</sup> In her review for Shakespeare, Lisa Hopkins negatively commented on Easton’s accent, saying that he “made no attempt at an American accent”; however, at least in the two performances I saw in Madrid, he distinctly shifted his accent at this point.

<sup>7</sup> The season also included a double bill of plays by Terence Rattigan—*Harlequinade* and *All On Her Own*—as well as Lolita Chakrabarti’s *Red Velvet*, Francis Veber’s *The Painkiller* (adapted by Sean Foley), *Romeo and Juliet*, and John Osborne’s *The Entertainer*, in which Branagh tackled the role of Archie Rice, originally written for Laurence Olivier.

<sup>7</sup> The other three plays were *Pericles* and *The Tempest*, directed by Dromgoole himself, and *Cymbeline*, directed by Sam Yates.

<sup>8</sup> This is a transcription of the livestream broadcast which may contain inaccuracies. The lineation is tentative, as some lines do not seem to scan as iambic pentameters, and only some of them correspond with the original text.

<sup>9</sup> The tendency seems to be veering towards further inclusiveness, particularly in productions directed by women: for example, Maxine Peake as Hamlet and Gillian Bevan as Polonia in the Manchester Royal Exchange production of *Hamlet* (Dir. Sarah Frankcom, 2014), Bevan again as Queen Cymbeline in the 2016 RSC version (Dir. Melly Still), Glenda Jackson as Lear in the Old Vic (Dir. Deborah Warner, 2016) or Sinead Cusack as the Countess of Kent in Chichester’s Minerva Theatre (Dir. Jonathan Munby, 2017).

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