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Stage movement at the Globe

Everett B. Robertson

The University of Montana

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STAGE MOVEMENT AT THE GLOBE

By

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to define the physical manner in which the Elizabethan actor conducted himself on stage. The Globe Theatre has been used as a focal point of discussion to represent the Elizabethan theatre in general.

Webster's New-Collegiate Dictionary defines a stage as a raised platform in a theatre that includes the acting area. Movement is termed the act or process of moving, especially the changing of place, position, or posture. For the purposes of this study, stage movement will be defined as any and all aspects of the actor's physical movement on a stage.

Very little historical data is available on the style of Elizabethan acting and even less on the manner in which the actor moved on stage. Therefore, much of the study must be speculative. Information presented in the work has been obtained from a variety of source materials including historical data, theories of scholars, actors and directors of many periods, and personal experience. Personal information is based on experience as actor, director and stage manager in nineteen Elizabethan plays. Nine of these were presented on an adapted replica of the Old Globe by the Utah Shakespeare Festival in Cedar City, Utah. Other personal data includes observations of over fifty other productions of Elizabethan plays.

Particular areas of discussion include: the spirit of the Elizabethan Age, the Globe's physical plant, the audience, the English Masque, dancing, the art of rhetoric, and the life of the actor. In studying the Globe's physical plant, the theories of John Cranford Adams as presented by Cecile de Banke in Shakespearean Stage Production Then and Now has been relied on. There are many theories on the configuration of the Globe Theatre and each would have affected the actor differently. Adam's theories have been
selected because they are more popular at present and have been used in the construction of most existing replicas of the Old Globe.

The arguments presented in the study are built around the practicalities of stage movement as opposed to a pure historical study. Hence, the use of many ideas and theories presented long after the Elizabethan period. It is hoped the study will be of particular value to the actor and director of Shakespeare's plays.
CHAPTER I

THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

Stage movement by the twentieth century actor is representative of the age in which he lives. Slouching American actors who greet each other by the shaking of the right hand represent modern social conduct. The Elizabethan actor used his left hand primarily in gestures representing theft or deceit. "The Elizabethans may merely have been presenting on the stage what was true of social behavior off it."\(^1\)

Probing the Elizabethan actor's movement on stage requires a basic understanding of physical conduct in that age. The spirit, freedom and size of the Elizabethan actor's movement would have been influenced to some extent by the world in which he lived. Shakespeare states in Hamlet's advice to the player that the actor is not to exceed the "modesty of nature" but in his performance should hold a "mirror up to nature."\(^2\) The manner in which the actor executed this would have depended greatly on his knowledge and experience with his environment.

To some extent a knowledge of the details of Elizabethan behavior off the stage can guide us to the practice of the actors on it.\(^3\) An understanding therefore of Elizabethan beliefs, customs, manners and approach to life is of prime importance in defining the actor's conduct on stage.

When William Shakespeare arrived in London in the late 1580s the


\(^3\)Joseph, p. 105.
English Renaissance was in full swing. All aspects of the English way of life were in an "extremely fluid and formative condition." New ideas, new notions of beauty and convenience were the fashion of the time and these perpetuated a spirit which was "lusty and all conquering."

The people were very imaginative and credulous with a child-like curiosity for the strange and new. A strong individualism prevailing through all aspects of society was exemplified in the pride of tradesmen and craftsmen in their work. High adventure was present for everyone, whether sailing abroad or touring the countryside at home. With the plague raging almost every summer, death was always near. Cities had no sewage facilities and reeked with stench, yet this never really worried the Elizabethans; "Their noses seemed to match the lustiness of their times."

A towering figure in this exciting age was Elizabeth I. Her personal drive for a free existence was exemplified in an exhausting pursuit of new and exciting ideas. As the daughter of Henry VIII, she was "very

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8 Oxenford, p. 136.

9 Ibid., p. 137.

10 Ibid., p. 135.
much her father's heir in her love of magnificence." In an age when
news traveled slowly, Elizabeth's summer "progresses" throughout her king-
dom must have assisted in the spread of her ideas.12

This bursting freedom of the Elizabethan was dampened somewhat by
the church, a dominant force in everyday life. "Church dignitaries were
treated respectfully; people crossed themselves before the altar, at
the news of death and at the mention of witchcraft; but the simple, over-
whelming faith of the Middle Ages had gone forever."13

Thus, these three influences prevailed heavily in Elizabethan society.
The new freedoms provided by the Renaissance and Elizabeth were basically
uncontrolled by the church.

As a result of these influences, customs developed ranging from the
ceremonial to the boisterous.14 The ceremonial was represented by stiff,
padded clothing that restricted body movement, suggesting an air of
formality. The boisterous was exhibited through the free and lusty spirit
prevailing in the period.15

The rural life of the Middle Ages gave way to a focus on urban
living during the Renaissance and manners illustrated this. Books were
published telling a young man how to behave when he came to London and
entered polite society.16 City manners and deportment were taught by

11 Lincoln Kirstein, Dance, A Short History of Classic Theatrical
12 Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, A Study in the Relationship
Between Poetry And The Revels (Cambridge: The University Press, 1927),
p. 158.
13 Ibid., p. 131.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
dancing masters. The influence of these men was such that in the 17th century manners became increasingly artificial, "so much so that it was hard on occasions to separate them from dancing."\(^17\)

The serving of meals was a dramatic event\(^18\) evidenced by their frequent use by Shakespeare. Banquet scenes and/or their preparations are of primary importance in *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet* as well as other plays. The Elizabethan actor certainly would have used eating habits familiar to him in these scenes.

Meals were served with a spirit of great ceremony, yet the process was almost devoid of modern table etiquette. Diners were seated in allotted places with servants performing appointed tasks.\(^20\) Most of the food was consumed by the use of the fingers, although knives and spoons were used sparingly. Forks, however, did not come into general use until the end of the 17th century.\(^21\)

An Elizabethan Englishman happily picked up the juiciest pieces of meat on his plate with his fingers and cheerfully licked his spoon clean of gravy before plunging it into the communal custard.\(^22\) Waiters carried a bowl of water allowing diners to wash their hands before and after a meal.\(^23\) Gentlemen carried handy mirrors in the rim of their hats to see if any food remained on their beard or mustache after a meal.

\(^18\) Hole, p. 22. 
\(^19\) Oxenford, p. 119. 
\(^20\) Hole, p. 22. 
\(^21\) Ibid. 
\(^22\) Oxenford, p. 134. 
\(^23\) Hole, p. 22.
"The extreme gallant would also whip out a small comb and tidy his beard into a spade shape, a fish shape or a small point."\textsuperscript{24}

The acceptance of primping by the Elizabethan male was contrasted by his physical prowess which was important and admired.\textsuperscript{25} In fact, his physical dexterity was such that he became almost a super human. Roger Ascham, a writer of the period, stated that every man's training should include the

noble exercises of riding, tilting, shooting, running, leaping, games, and all pastimes generally, which be joynd with labor, used in open places, and on the daylight, containing either some fitte exercise for warre, or some pleasant pastime for peace.\textsuperscript{26}

This physical expertise was contrasted sharply by his dress which included "lockets, rings, jewelled daggers, earrings, lace collars, lace cuffs and a wide sash about the shoulders or waist."\textsuperscript{27}

Tobacco was smoked in clay pipes or chewed. The pipes were lit by tinder boxes, and tobacco pouches were carried at the belt. Ornamented toothpicks and pocket watches were worn by the fashion-minded. Also, canes, waist-high, with carved heads or ribbons on them were carried.\textsuperscript{28}

Personal servants cleaned and polished items owned by their master. "A manservant was also expected to brush, comb and curl his master's hair, beard and moustache, but a barber would be more likely to be called in to cut and dye it."\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{24} Oxenford, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 100.
\textsuperscript{26} Roger Ascham, The Scholemaster, 1570, quoted by Hole, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{27} Oxenford, pp. 111-112.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p. 111.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. 121.
Women of the period were trained and expected to cope with any and all household emergencies. "Even Lady Macbeth had to give orders to prepare for the visit of the King, before she presumably looked in her address book for the names of useful cheap murderers."\(^{30}\) Ladies-in-waiting copied the manners of the ladies of their household and the Queen's ladies-in-waiting were expected to keep their eyes cast down in her presence.\(^{31}\)

Favorite Elizabethan pastimes included indoor and outdoor games, dancing, singing, sports, as well as live entertainment. Of these dancing was the most important, particularly the galliard. "Its' running, leaping, high-kicking steps make it a perfect expression of the robust exuberance of the Elizabethan Age."\(^{32}\)

Shakespeare capitalized on these pastimes in his work. Dancing, singing and orchestrated music are important parts of his plays. Music was so popular that the actor would have been forced to be a musician. "Every household could provide its own singers and its players upon the harpsichord, lute, virginals, and viol, as every village in that musical age could produce its choir and team of bell ringers."\(^{33}\)

The rough and tumble attitudes of the period were expressed best in the outdoor activities. One of the more favorite sports was bear-and-bull-baiting, referred to often by Shakespeare. "This brutal sport was popular with all classes."\(^{34}\) Duels, although outlawed by Queen Elizabeth,
were often fought for private or public reasons. A rougher sport was a crude form of football played by village lads. The game was played without rules or teams and was referred to as more of a "friendly kinde of fight than a play or recreation; a bloody and murthering practice than a fellowly sorte or pastime." A game called kayles, actually ninepins played with a stick thrown at cone-shaped pins, was also popular.

Of particular significance for this study is the fact that amateur acting existed at all levels in English society. Amateurs performed in court masques, folk plays, university plays, civic plays, and private performances in the homes of nobles. "It is even safe to say that the greater part of the Globe audience had some knowledge or experience of acting and dramatic presentation and that they looked upon plays and spectacles from the actor's as well as from the audience's point of view." Even in rural areas special productions were planned to greet the Queen on her summer progresses. These were, "a genre akin to but not identical with the masque, for the main business of the performers is to offer gifts, make complimentary speeches, engage in a debate or slight dramatic action..."

The Elizabethan actor worked in an age of "rampant action and violent contrasts." His way of life was influenced strongly by the

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36 P. Stubbes, The Anatomie of Abuses, 1583, quoted by Hole, p. 31.
37 Oxenford, p. 124.
39 Ibid., pp. 102-103.
40 Welsford, p. 158.
41 Oxenford, p. 81.
Renaissance, Elizabeth I and the church. He wore stiff clothing, yet must have exhibited the spirited freedom evident in the pastimes and meals. Finally, at the Globe his performances were under the auspices of not just an audience, but a host of amateur actors scrutinizing his every move.

"Acting must usually convey to the audience something within that audience's comprehension." The Elizabethan's life of robust gaiety, adventurous spirit and love of freedom must have been echoed and embellished by the actor. This was after all the basis of communication between actor and audience.

42Ibid., pp. 1-2.
CHAPTER II
THE GLOBE THEATRE

Movement on a small arena stage is considerably different from that required on a large outdoor stage. The modern director and designer is aware that the shape and form of a playing area determines the style of movement. The physical makeup of the Globe Playhouse must have influenced the actor's movement.¹

Unfortunately, we have no information concerning the dimensions of the actual Globe Theatre. However, surviving builders' contracts on two other theatres, the Fortune and Hope, have been used by scholars to determine guidelines for a better understanding of the Globe.² The Fortune was constructed in 1600, one year after the Globe, by Alleyn and Henslowe. They hired Peter Streete, Contractor of the Globe, to construct their theatre and in the process copied many elements of the Globe.³

The Globe broke theatre tradition of the era by being built "by actors, for actors,"⁴ namely the Lord Chamberlain's Men.⁵ James Burbage, a carpenter turned actor who had built The Theatre in 1576, was a key figure in the design and construction.⁶ The planners aimed at achieving

²Ibid., p. 9.
⁴Ibid., p. ix.
⁵Ibid., p. xi.
an intimacy between actor and audience. The entire structure was only fifty-eight feet wide, thirty-five feet high, and probably octagonal in shape.

The stage itself was forty-three feet wide upstage and twenty-nine feet deep with 1100 square feet of acting space. It was tapered toward the down-stage area projecting into the audience, and trimmed with a small rail. This arrangement placed spectators on three sides of the stage providing "various angles of vision of the actor." In fact an actor could, "almost touch the nearest of the spectators." At the foot of the platform, on the thrust, the actor would have been in the center of the house. Here he could be fully scrutinized by the audience, almost as if he were under a microscope. This closeness of the audience established a peculiar intimacy between actor and spectator that was later destroyed by the proscenium arch stage. The intimacy provided a style in which the actors played, almost from the audience instead of at it.

\[\text{\underline{Ibid.}, p. 60.}\]
\[\text{\underline{John Cranford Adams, \textit{The Globe Playhouse}}, sketch reprinted in DeBanke, p. 27.}\]
\[\text{\underline{DeBanke, p. 33.}}\]
\[\text{\underline{Gerald Eades Bentley, \textit{Shakespeare And His Theatre} (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 57.}}\]
\[\text{\underline{Webster, p. 65.}}\]
\[\text{\underline{Styan, p. 16.}}\]
\[\text{\underline{Lawrence, p. 221.}}\]
\[\text{\underline{Webster, p. 65.}}\]
The Globe contained several acting areas in addition to the thrust. Immediately behind the forestage was an area often called the middle stage, and behind that an inner below. This inner acting area was an alcove with dimensions estimated from twenty to twenty-five feet in width and ten to twelve feet in depth. The height of the ceiling was about twelve feet. The area resembled a room with a door and window in the back wall. When opened, the door revealed the foot of a staircase leading to the second story, and a curtained alcove in the center. This was similar to the modern box set except that sidewalls were composed of curtains, "with an overlap wide enough to enable an eavesdropper to listen to characters speaking on the inner stage." In modern productions, the inner below is often used to spring interior scenes onto the middle stage or forestage. In a 1968 production of The Merchant of Venice at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, the caskets were placed in the downstage portion of the inner below. As the curtains opened, they were moved onto the middle stage where most of the scene was played. Movement during the scene was limited to suggest the confines of a room. It is probable the Elizabethan used a similar technique for interior scenes.

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15 DeBanke, p. 36.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Utah Shakespeare Festival, Performance of The Merchant of Venice, Cedar City, Utah, July, 1968.
19 DeBanke, p. 37.
Directly above the inner below was an area often termed the inner above. This area jutted out ten inches over the inner below and was dressed with curtains and removable railings in front. When the curtains opened, an interior was revealed similar to the one below. At this same level, to the right and left of the stage, were bay windows, excellent settings for balcony scenes.

Over the inner above was a third level used primarily as a musicians gallery; however, occasionally it could have been used by single actors, i.e. Prospero in The Tempest. Running from the ceiling line of this area high over the middle stage was an area termed 'the shadowe'. It was supported from the main stage by two round pillars that rested on square bases. The underneath portion of this structure was visible from below and often was painted to represent the sky. This accounted for its occasionally being called 'the heavens'. The area supported the superstructure called "huts" where cloud machines and sound equipment were housed.

Surrounding the main-stage were three galleries reaching to the height of the Heavens. The second and third galleries were built similar to Elizabethan houses with an overhang of ten inches on each level.

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20 Ibid., p. 31.
21 Ibid., p. 4.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., p. 43.
24 Ibid., pp. 43-44.
25 Ibid., p. 38.
This not only prevented seepage of rain onto the uprights supporting the structure, but presented better hearing and seeing facilities to spectators sitting farther from the stage. Within the galleries were "tiers of benches with standing room at the highest level in the back, and partitions of varying heights divided the tiers into sections." The smaller sections with high partitions close to the stage in the first and second galleries were termed 'gentlemen's rooms'. The larger sections, 'two penny rooms', contained smaller partitions and were located farther from the stage. The third gallery and the unpartitioned parts of the first and second floors were, conceivably, the 'penny' and 'two-penny' galleries. The 'yard' or 'pit' curved down to the stage area from the first gallery. Here the 'groundlings' stood or sat on the ground; the curve enabling those in the rear to see over the heads of those immediately in front. Thus, the Elizabethan actor found himself surrounded and almost covered with spectators.

These sectioned areas with their different prices would have divided the audience according to social status. The actor who rolled and tumbled to entertain the groundlings also had to achieve the respect of the courtiers above him.

The stage equipment of the Globe's acting areas improved the actors versatility and maneuverability. For example, there were five traps spread over the main stage area - a small one at each of the four corners

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26 Ibid., p. 31.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., p. 32.
29 Oxenford, p. 84.
large enough to carry one person, and a long, narrow one across the center that could "bear as many as eight persons and, at the same time, elaborate and heavy properties."^30 The ghost which must suddenly appear and disappear in Hamlet would not necessarily need long entrances from the tiring house across the thrust, but could appear through traps.^31 Consequently, his movement could be slower and more stately without forcing pauses in line delivery to cover long, slow crosses. In a production of Hamlet at the Utah Shakespeare Festival in 1967, the director decided to sacrifice pace in the opening scenes to achieve stateliness in the ghost. Excessive stage business was invented to pad the short rapid-fire exchanges of Marcellus, Horatio, Bernardo and in I,iii, Hamlet.^32 The results were disastrous. The excitement of these scenes was lost to the detriment of the production. If Shakespeare had intended the ghost to make long crosses about the stage, he would have written additional dialogue. The traps were a logical method to achieve the pace needed.

In the 'huts' additional stage equipment included "ropes or wires, pulleys, and hand-turned windlasses."^33 These were used to fly in props, heavier set pieces and even actors.^34 Ariel, for example, could have been flown down from the 'heavens'.

Everything that could conceivably be shown to the Elizabethan audience

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^31 Lawrence, Pre-Restoration Stage Studies, p. 104.


^33 DeBanke, p. 79.

^34 Ibid.
was shown, and that which physically could not was conveyed imaginatively. Props were "tangibly and visually accurate: hence the squirts full of red liquid for the blood which a modern audience would far rather not see, Antigonus' real bear from the neighboring bear pit, and the artificial rain." Many of the playwrights of the period notably Marlowe and the other University Wits exploited the meager technical possibilities of their stage. But when realism was impossible, symbolism came into play.

It did not remain for modern psychology to demonstrate the powers of suggestion: the Elizabethan players were past masters of that science. In night scenes they had a dual method of attack, by textual insinuation and by the bringing on of lights.

As a public stage, the Globe's chief characteristic was "its neutrality, and its corresponding virtue flexibility." John Drinkwater says, "There was nothing that Shakespeare and his players wanted to do that they could not do; their stage was an instrument magnificently equal to every demand that could be made on it."

With few scenic elements to block the flow of action the playwright was able to demand "space for the unimpeded flow of scene after scene, for the instantaneous creation of any place in this world or the next."

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35 Lawrence, Pre-Restoration Stage Studies, p. 199.
36 Webster, p. 78.
38 Lawrence, Pre-Restoration Stage Studies, p. 128.
39 Bradbrook, p. 30.
40 John Drinkwater, Great Lines, quoted by DeBanke, p. 23.
41 Beckerman, p. 63.
Consequently, the playwright often specified a place at large, but not a particular section of it: "Now we are in Arden" and "This is the coast of Illyria." In such instances the stage stood for, rather than represented, a fictional locale, the confines of which could not be fully represented on the stage area. 42

Shakespeare "conjured up his visions with the dramatic potency of words; and he relied for the rest, on the imagination of the spectators, on their ability and willingness to take part in the process of creation." 43 He relied on the power of his characters to hold the attention and arouse the emotion of the audience and to particularly relay ideas not expressed due to shortcomings of the physical production. 44 In the opening scene of The Tempest the lines of the Boatswain and the Master merely indicate the panic and action of a shipwreck taking place around them; and in Henry V, 'once more into the breach' is simply a cry for the action of battle that is to follow. 45

If the power of suggestion was important to the playwright, it must have been echoed by the actor. In The Tempest, for example, it is impossible to bring a ship on stage for a shipwreck. Director Michael Addison solved the problem at the Utah Festival by coordinating the movement of every actor into great swaying motions. He used the entire stage including the inner above and combined crashes of lightening, thunder and wind for

42 Ibid., p. 66.
43 Webster, p. 63.
44 Ibid., p. 83.
a very spectacular effect. Spectators related that it looked so real that
dizziness, even a feeling of sea-sickness occurred.46

Another example is Hamlet, III, ii, where the note appears, "Danish
march. A Flourish. Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz,
Guildenstern, and others."47 When Shakespeare said, "and others," he
probably meant every available person. The use of spectacle was intended;
otherwise the play could have immediately lost the respect of courtiers
in the galleries. If these men were familiar with spectacle at court,
they certainly would have expected it at the theatre. The Globe's large
mainstage provided great potential for a long entrance exploding the
stage into motion as it filled with courtiers. Another possibility is
that the King, Queen and others first appeared in the inner above for the
opening exchange of lines.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?
Ham. Excellent, 'faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air,
primise-crammed; you cannot feed capons so.
King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are
not mine.48

The King could then break abruptly, cross down the stairs at the back of
the inner above through the inner below and on to the mainstage. This
move would provide additional time for spectacle involving final prepara­
tions for the play and the scurrying of courtiers to find good seats.

The thrust into the audience allowed the actor to communicate quickly
and simply with his audience.49 That is probably why successful modern

46Utah Shakespeare Festival Performance of The Tempest, Cedar City,
47Shakespeare, III, ii, 1. 92.
48Ibid., II. 94-98.
49Styan, p. 16.
reproductions of Shakespeare's plays have more often than not occurred on thrust or open stages. Most major Shakespeare Festivals in North America mount productions on an open stage, thus freeing the actor from playing through a fourth wall. Shakespeare's plays come to life more quickly because of this freedom. A production of Romeo and Juliet on the proscenium stage at the New Orleans Repertory Theatre by a full equity company was stale and lifeless. The acting and directing were completely professional, but the exciting passion of the play never reached the audience. Productions by lesser companies on open stages at the Ashland Oregon and Utah Festivals sparkled with an energy and excitement lacking on the proscenium stage. These productions exhibited a bolder, more brash form of movement that was thrust into the audience. The closeness of the actor allowed the spectators easy involvement in the action.

A 1972 production of Hamlet by the Montana Repertory Touring Company played one performance on a small thrust stage in Wolf Point, Montana. The production was staged for proscenium arch theatres, but the company made temporary blocking changes to project intimate scenes onto the thrust. The result was a performance that enjoyed a response from the audience, and a freedom of movement generally missing in other performances. Members

51 New Orleans Repertory Theatre, Production of Romeo and Juliet, January, 1967.
52 Ashland Shakespeare Festival, Production of Romeo and Juliet, Summer, 1969.
53 Utah Shakespeare Festival, Production of Romeo and Juliet, July, 1968.
of the company commented after the performance on the enjoyment of playing in the intimacy and freedom of the open stage.54

Thus, the Globe presented the actor with an enormous area to fill with stage action. When dramatic action did not demand the tiring house be filled with spectacle, the forestage allowed a lone actor to address his audience simply and quietly. Yet the three stories of acting area behind the forestage could explode in seconds with actors, battles, shipwrecks and storm sounds.

The theatre of Shakespeare was fundamentally a theatre for actors... Elizabethan conventions provided a large measure of physical freedom and evocative artistry, of unhampered motion, of direct contact with the audience.55

Thus, the freedom and explosive quality of the Elizabethan age was provided a place to erupt in the form of a play. Free, explosive, yet controlled movement by the actor would have been expressive of the era and the facility on which he worked.

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CHAPTER III
DIRECT INFLUENCES ON THE ACTOR

The Elizabethan audience was representative of the great contrasts existent in the era. On one side they were unruly and boisterous. They delighted in "bloody sights and acts of cruelty" and were firm believers in ghosts, devils, witches and hob goblins. They eagerly awaited "vigorous encounters and rough and tumble fun" and enjoyed particularly bawdy and low comedy. Yet, they could listen complacently "to a grave oration replete with wise saws and modern instances." Their interests included love songs and philosophy and apparently they "looked for and enjoyed long rhetorical passages." They evidently were just as interested in the philosophy meted out by Prospero as in the clowning of Sebastian and Trinculo.

The imagination of the audience was particularly important. Modern Director William Ball explains the power of this imagination: "The audience's imagined spectacle can be counted on as more vital and real because it arises from the creative participation of each individual. It is more vivid because it springs from the total wealth of his past.

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1 DeBanke, p. 127.
3 Ibid.
4 Bradbrook, p. 59.
5 Lawrence, Shakespeare's Workshop, p. 4.
6 Bradbrook, p. 59.
7 DeBanke, p. 127.
experience." When the Elizabethan spectator came to the Globe, he entered with a hugely voracious appetite for a form of entertainment which was still novel, plastic, and capable of being molded to its will. In the theater, as in the streets, it was vigorous and uninhibited; and it had an enormous capacity for make-believe. It did not have to be coaxed, lured, teased, and cajoled into accepting the illusions of the theater; it positively rushed to embrace and further them.9

This lack of inhibition is further illustrated by the fact that fops sitting on the stage with a dislike for the author were advised to "rail against him; and peradventure so behave yourself that you may enforce the author to know you."10 While the actor might be able to physically and vocally overpower a fop sitting on stage, he could hardly manage an unsatisfied audience. "No power on earth would stop them from expressing their unexpurgated opinion at every pause in the action."11 Edmund Gayton in Pleasant Notes Upon Don Quixote explains that if a serious play was disliked, particularly during holidays, an audience might force the actors to put off their tragick habits, and conclude the day with The Merry Milkmaids. And unless this were done, and the popular humour satisfied, as sometimes it so fortun'd, that the players were refractory; the benches, the tiles, the laths, the stones, oranges, apples, nuts, flew about most liberally, and as there were mechanicks of all professions, who fell everyone to his trade, and dissolved a house in an instant, and made a ruine of a stately fabrick.12

Gayton goes on to describe how an audience actually entered the stage

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9 Webster, p. 78.
11 Oxenford, p. 83.
12 Edmund Gayton, Pleasant Notes Upon Don Quixote, quoted by W. J. Lawrence, Old Theatre Days, pp. 113-114.
during a battle scene, "making a more bloody catastrophe amongst themselves, than the players did."\(^\text{13}\)

Such actions by the audience would have a drastic effect on the manner in which the actor performed. Pauses, particularly long ones, might be filled with ad libs from the audience.\(^\text{14}\) A late entrance would have given eager groundlings the opportunity to make their own play. The actor's concentration must have been perfect. His execution of stage business and movement surely were flawless, for he was being judged by a highly critical audience, many of whom were amateur actors.

The audience lauded the actor's splendid stage clothes, expecting them to be rich and beautiful. Normally the actor paid for his own wardrobe, though occasionally more expensive costumes were obtained by the company.\(^\text{15}\) The dress was always contemporary regardless of the period of the play. To the Elizabethan "the characters were not strange and distant beings from another world, but old acquaintances who had somehow acquired another dimension."\(^\text{16}\)

Costumes are a vital part of stage production and by probing their particular characteristics in the Elizabethan era, we can pinpoint their affect on the actor.\(^\text{17}\) By modern standards, the Elizabethan actor was considerably hampered in movement by Elizabethan clothes.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 113.

\(^{14}\)Lawrence, Old Theatre Days, p. 110.

\(^{15}\)DeBanke, p. 141.

\(^{16}\)Webster, p. 78.

At no time in the social history of England do we find such all-pervading magnificence and extravagance of costume as in the period that coincides with the rise and decline of Elizabethan drama. Men and women were robed in assertive, glittering, stiff attire. The enormous farthingales were representative of women's clothing while "doublet and hose" were prominent with men.

The drum-shaped farthingales often were "wired or caned to produce the desired right-angled break in the fabric, for the upper edge of the drum shape is usually defined." The excessive girth of the skirt was balanced by the shoulder-wide ruffs and huge padded leg-of-mutton sleeves. The ruffs required wire support. "The blimp-like sleeves were in proportion to the width of the drum-shaped skirts and handicapped the wearer still further." This girth in the dress poses many problems for the modern actress. Obstacles, human or otherwise, are easily bumped unless care is taken in plotting one's course. During the ball scene in Romeo and Juliet at Baylor, an actress being escorted required plenty of room for walking. The actor's right arm was extended perpendicular to the torso and bent at the elbow, lightly supporting the actress' left arm, arranged similarly. This position was used in escorting the lady. The arm was used in a similar way to assist the lady in maintaining her

18 DeBanke, p. 139.
19 Oxenford, p. 96.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., p. 312.
balance when sitting. When an actress was directly in front of the actor, care had to be taken not to step on the train of the dress. It was impossible for the actress to abruptly make a one-hundred and eighty degree turn without stepping on the dress. Consequently, small circles were used in turning. If the actress had to walk quickly or run, the front portion of the dress was picked up by the right hand and held just above the waist to allow needed leg room. The size of the farthingale forced the wearer to walk in a bouncing manner that was very provocative. This affected the over-all movement which became very sprightly. If a woman seated herself, the problems implicit in the maneuver are explained by Lyn Oxenford:

The actress who is going to sit down in a farthingale must approach the chair warily. Her hands must guide the width of the skirt past the chair and lift the back breadth slightly so that it bags up at the back and she is actually sitting on the part that falls behind her knees. When she gets up she must rise onto whichever foot is forward so that the skirt falls clear of the chair and the material hangs in straight folds behind her.

The waists of aristocratic women were forced into tight corsets made of whalebone, wood or iron. This prohibited the crossing of the legs while seated. However, lower class wenches rarely wore corsets and consequently were much freer in movement whether standing or sitting. Bowing from the waist for a corseted woman was impossible, consequently

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24 Baylor Theatre, Production of *Romeo and Juliet*, Waco, Texas, Spring, 1966.


27 Kelley, p. 36.

the derivation of the sinking curtsey. 29 "The arms were stretched out to
the side with the hands resting on the edge of the farthingale. The
skirt was not lifted. Both knees were bent slightly and the head was in-
clined towards the person to whom the curtsy was directed." 30 In the
Queen's presence the knees were bent more to achieve a lower level. 31

Although the size of the farthingale presents problems, it offers
the actress an excellent vehicle for large expression and reaction. The
space encompassed by the material alone makes a simple wave of the arm a
strong and dynamic gesture. In Romeo and Juliet the approach of the
nurse with a message for Romeo prompts Mercutio to proclaim "A sail, a
sail." 32 To him the extreme size of the nurse in her apparel offered an
excellent opportunity for punning. The boy actors who played the women's
roles at the Globe must have been adroit at handling this large, bulky
dress. 33

By the later Elizabethan period, most of the extravagant headwear
for women had disappeared; thus the head could be tossed and moved with
considerable freedom. "The head-dress had dwindled first to a light and
becoming coronet, and then to a lace cap, worn at home, and jewels or
flowers for ceremonial occasions." 34

Fans were often carried by the women and these were "the folding

29 Oxenford, Design for Movement, p. 38.
30 Oxenford, Playing Period Plays, p. 132.
31 Ibid.
33 DeBanke, p. 121.
34 Oxenford, Design for Movement, p. 37.
type made of chicken skin painted with portraits of scenes of dalliance on
gilded flowers.″35 Fans were maneuvered from the shoulder36, thus provid­
ing a large, bold movement.

Despite the dimensions of the farthingale, the indication is that the boys carried out every maneuver required in the dramatic action of the play. In *Hamlet*, V,ii, 1. 316, the script states, "The Queen falls."37 Execution of the normal stage fall, i.e. to the side, would have been very difficult if not impossible due to "wiring and caning." One possibility is that a chair or some other set piece was used for partial support during the fall. This method was used in a production at Victoria, B.C., Canada in 1969.38 Another possibility is that the boy collapsed first to the knees and then either directly back or forward, using one arm for support as he neared the floor. A method very similar to this (falling forward) was used in a production at the Utah Festival in 1967.39

The basic dress for the Elizabethan male was a doublet and hose. Jerkins, close fitting garments, were worn over the doublet, as were waistcoats. The doublet was "a close body-garment reaching to the waist or a little below."40 The body of the doublet was padded and good tailoring demanded that it fit over the trunk without a wrinkle. Coarse, stiff

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35 Oxenford, Playing Period Plays, p. 100.
36 Ibid.
37 Shakespeare, Hamlet, V,ii, 1. 321.
38 Victoria Fair Repertory Company, Production of Hamlet, Victoria, B.C., Canada, McPherson Playhouse, Summer, 1969.
39 Utah Shakespeare Festival, Hamlet.
40 Kelley, p. 9.
material, i.e. canvas, buckram, or padding was used to effect the rigid fit. Busks, or paste-board belly-pieces, were sometimes used. The doublet body reached the waist and then tapered along the sides to a point in the front. In the late 16th century the front was padded out to form, "a peascod belly: a great hanging paunch that sagged over the girdle." 41

Upright collars of varying height topped the doublet. They were wide so that the neck could move with reasonable freedom. 42 The actor playing Gratiano in The Merchant of Venice discovered that severe turns to the right or left could be accomplished only by lifting the chin. 43 The sleeves were long and full, fitting close to the wrist. Very extravagant leg-of-mutton and bishop sleeves were also worn. The fullness of these often had to be borne out with whalebone to hold their shape. 44 This causes the arms to be carried further from the body than in modern attire. The position not only makes the actor broader, but allows him to quickly develop large, fluid gestures.

Legwear was composed primarily of hose, similar to what we term today, tights. The hose were attached to the doublet by buttons and were tight-fitting due to knitting improvements. The upper-stocks in the thigh area were sometimes padded to form pumpkin-hose. 45 This draws attention to the pelvic area and many modern directors train actors to lead with the insides of the thighs when walking in Shakespearean plays.

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., p. 10.
43 Utah Shakespeare Festival, Merchant of Venice.
44 Kelley, pp. 10-11.
During the 1967-68 seasons at the Utah Festival, the company was coached in movement by Sabin Epstein. Varied exercises were used to improve the actor's movement. Basic ballet exercises were aimed at opening out the thighs, and developing a straight back to improve posture. The actors spent hours walking, gesturing, bowing, and sitting until the thigh-turnout and straight posture looked and felt natural. Wearing tights in this physical position makes brisk walking, kneeling and other movements involving the legs considerably easier than in modern street clothes.\textsuperscript{46}

The Elizabethan bow was flamboyant, although courteous. Informal bows were simple with the feet brought together and the head dropped slightly, care being taken not to drop a hat or wig. "Formal bows invariably had some type of preparatory step, forwards, sideways, or backwards, some amount of toe pointing, and a gesture of the hand towards the heart of the lady to whom the bow was made.\textsuperscript{47}

Girdles or belts were worn over the jerkins for fashion and also to hold swords. Small pieces called hangars were attached to the belt and held the sheathed sword. The sword and hangars could be removed without taking off the belt.\textsuperscript{48} These were used in a production of Richard III at Baylor University in 1968. Since the swords were free-swinging at the left side, it was necessary to rest the left hand on the sword to steady

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Utah Shakespeare Festival, Class in Stage Movement, Summers, 1967-68.
\item Oxenford, Design for Movement, p. 39.
\item Kelley, p. 33.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
and control it when moving. Otherwise the sword could swing in the back striking other actors and stage pieces.\textsuperscript{49}

Shoes, other than boots, were close-fitting and light, providing for the sprightly, quick movement of the age.\textsuperscript{50} Boots were of varying weights, but the heavier types provided a swashbuckling manner of movement.\textsuperscript{51} Capes were worn of various sizes, but rarely dipped below the knees. "Elizabeth forbade the wearing of cloaks of more than knee-length in her presence."\textsuperscript{52} These capes increase the amount of stage area filled by the actor and when walking quickly or running, they trail in a floating fashion. When used in gesturing, the cape fills the air between arm and body, strengthening each move. The cape is particularly useful in punctuating gestures or moves. If the actor makes a sharp turn, a thigh-length cape will make the same turn a split second later, thus increasing the size and strength of the move.

Clothes of this era gave the Elizabethan actor an excellent medium for the expansion of Shakespeare's verse into large, visually rhythmical movements. A 1970 production of \textit{Love's Labours Lost} by the National Theatre at the Old Vic in London was particularly successful in this respect. Directed by Lawrence Olivier, the production was a symphony of swaying dresses and floating capes, all used for the maximum dramatic

\textsuperscript{49} Baylor Theatre, Production of \textit{Richard III}, Spring, 1968.
\textsuperscript{50} Kelley, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{51} Oxenford, \textit{Design for Movement}, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{52} Kelley, p. 17.
impact. It is inconceivable that the Elizabethan actor did not use every part of his clothing in much the same manner, at least occasionally. Farthingales must have swept across the stage in a caleidoscope of color, just as enormous sleeves and large capes magnified gestures. The size of the costume alone provided the Elizabethan actor with a medium foreign to the modern actor.

The use of visual spectacle was very familiar to the actor because of the English Masque which had its beginnings in the reign of Henry VIII. Elaborate productions of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones were the "courtly counterparts of the great tragedies and comedies by Shakespeare." Jones used the masque as an excuse for mounting scenic marvels, while Jonson sought for "formal dramatic employment, using color and music, but not depending on tricks alone." To him the masque was a "vehicle for serious criticism of life." The English masque was formed through the fusion of various pastimes, many of which were foreign. Portions of it were a performance by the paid masquers, but it always contained some audience participation in grand dances. The audience was composed of the court, guests and servants, and so manners were always formal.

The use of a masque in The Tempest is evidence that the actor used

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55 Kirstein, p. 174.
56 Welsford, p. 325.
57 Ibid., pp. 166-167.
58 Oxenford, Playing Period Plays, p. 119.
59 Shakespeare, Complete Works, The Tempest, IV,i, 1. 59.
its formality on stage.

The resemblances between the inserted masque (in The Tempest) and Jonson's Hymenaei have often been pointed out and it has been suggested that Shakespeare, when he conceived Ariel, had in his mind those musicians who in Ben Jonson's masque Hymenaei were seated upon the rainbow 'figuring airy spirits, their habits various, and resembling the several colors caused in that part of the air by reflection.'

The masque was a direct influence on not only this play, but the rhythm and pacing in many of Shakespeare's works. How much of this formal, god-like movement existed on stage at the Globe is of course speculative. However, the very fact that it did exist shows yet another style of movement required of the actor.

Despite the popularity of the masque at court, it was never able to reach the level of development of drama of the same era. "From the beginning to the end of its history, the essence of the masque was the arrival of certain persons vizored and disguised to dance a dance or present an offering."  

Dancing was an activity of great social importance in Elizabethan England and the masque was only one of its many forms of expression.

The Elizabethan men were known everywhere for the excellence of their dancing, and spared no pains to keep that reputation. English dancing schools flourished and many hours a day were spent there by gallants determined to master the energetic steps and the expert arrangements of the dances. The steps in themselves were tricky, but the real skill lay in adapting them to music.

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60 Welsford, p. 336.
61 Kirstein, p. 174.
62 Welsford, p. 3.
63 Oxenford, Playing Period Plays, p. 137.
The virtuoso dancing which prevailed during the period was a male preserve. It served as an excellent chance for men to show off and they took full advantage of it. The ladies were primarily an admiring audience. They did dance occasionally, but their role was mainly decorous. When a man felt he was an expert dancer, he escorted a lady on each side of him "to applaud his ballon." The galliarde with its leaping and prancing steps was the favorite dance of the period. Because it is quick and vigorous, it expressed perfectly the robust exuberance of the Elizabethan age. It could be danced forward, back, or in a circle and numerous steps were available. These maneuvers were basically light running steps; however, the man could improvise with these, putting them in the order he wished. "On him rested the responsibility for planning the steps so that they made an attractive pattern, making a pleasing alternation of high and low jumping steps and an extra flourish for the finish." The galliarde is mentioned specifically in Twelfth Night and is danced by Andrew Aguecheek.70

The pavane was a slow and stately dance used primarily to open balls. The name pavane was derived from either the town of Padua; the French word

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65 Oxenford, Playing Period Plays, p. 137.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., p. 138.
68 Ibid., p. 140.
69 Ibid., p. 137.
70 Shakespeare, Complete Works, Twelfth Night, I,iii, l. 139.
71 Oxenford, Playing Period Plays, p. 138.
paon meaning peacock; the manner in which the ladies handled their long trains; or from one of its figures, "where the dancers are arranged in a circle in the manner of a peacock spreading its tail." It was a dance of "ceremonial dignity and grave pride." The Grand Ball was a form of the pavane used throughout the masques. This dance is particularly useful in Romeo and Juliet for the ball scene and was used in the production at Baylor. Because the pavane was slow, emphasis was placed on individual moves requiring great physical control. The muscular feeling while dancing the pavane was similar to that experienced in ballet.

The courante was a country dance adapted to the court. It was similar to the pavane with running and jumping steps instead of walking. The mood of the dance was light, swift and lively. "It consisted of brief advances and retreats, with flexible, smooth, knee-movements. It was also known as courant and corranto" and is mentioned in Twelfth Night.

In the La Volta, a gay dance, the lady was lifted in the air and swung around her partner. The dance was considered vulgar by the elite and a description of it by Arbeau explains why.

Turning to the right, you should place your right hand on the damsel's back and the left below her bust, and, pushing her with your right thigh beneath her rump, turn her in the reverse direction. And mark that it requires dexterity to seize and clasp the damsel

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72Kairstein, p. 158.
73DeBanke, p. 224.
74Ibid.
75Ibid.
76Baylor Theatre, Romeo and Juliet.
76DeBanke, pp. 232-233.
77Kirstein, p. 159.
78Shakespeare, Complete Works, Twelfth Night, I,iii, 1.139.
to you, for this must be accomplished in two bars of triple time; so that, on the first bar, you take a step to place yourself in front of her, at the end of the second you have one hand on her hip and the other below her bust, and are ready by the third bar, to begin to turn according to the steps contained in the tabulation.\textsuperscript{79}

The cinquepace was a vigorous form of the galliard taken in a gay, even boisterous mood.\textsuperscript{80} The branle, from the French word \textit{branler}, to shake, was a rough dance and the basis for our own word, brawls. The gavotte was simply the arrangement of several branles in sequence.\textsuperscript{81}

The morisque was a very old dance with its beginnings in Roman times. Arbeau describes a young boy dancing the morisque:

\begin{quote}
In my young days, at supper-time in good society, I have seen a daubed and blackened little boy, his forehead bound with a white or yellow scarf, who, with bells on his legs, danced the Morisques and, walking the length of the room, made a kind of passage. Then, retracing his steps, he returned to the place where he began and made another new passage, and continued thus, making various passages very agreeable to the onlookers.\textsuperscript{82}
\end{quote}

The canary was composed of light running steps, and skips. The mood is one of "wooing and devotional on the part of the gentlemen and modestly receptive on the part of the ladies."\textsuperscript{83}

The morris dance was a country dance that was often inserted into plays.\textsuperscript{84} Will Kemp, a famous fool of the period and a comedian in Shakespeare's company, was famous for his portrayal in this dance. He once

\textsuperscript{80}DeBanke, p. 229.
\textsuperscript{81}Kirstein, pp. 159-160.
\textsuperscript{82}Arbeau, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{83}DeBanke, p. 231.
\textsuperscript{84}Welsford, p. 29.
danced it all the way from London to Norwich, from which he wrote a book, *Kemp's Nine Daies Wonder.*

Torch dances and sword dances were popular at fairs and fetes. "These were done by the comics mentioned in the masques and would have grotesque or acrobatic variations, if enough ale had been taken before hand."^^

The primary folk or country dance of the period was Sellinger's round, a simple circular dance around the Maypole in May Day festivities. The steps of certain court dances were similar to this country dance, but the performance of the steps was drastically different.

The masquerie was an impromptu masking used primarily to crash parties and cause devilment. Shakespeare probably had this in mind for the meeting of Romeo and Juliet at the ball. The masquerade was a formal masking used in dances.

Generally, the dances were indicative of the age. They were forever changing to the dismay of Arbeau. Certainly the actors must have improvised on them. At the end of I,iii in *Twelfth Night* the following exchange occurs:

Sir Toby. Why dost thou not go to church in a galliard, and come home in a coranto? My very walk should be a jig: I would not so much as make water but in a sink-a-pace.

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^^Kirstein, p. 96.


88DeBanke, p. 236.

89Welsford, p. 102.

What dost thou mean? Is it a world to hide virtues in?
I did think, by the excellent constitution of thy leg, it
was formed under the star of the galliard.

Sir Andrew. Ay, 'tis strong, and it does indifferent well in a
flame-coloured stock. Shall we set about some revels?
Sir Toby. What shall we do else? were we not born under Taurus?
Sir Andrew. Taurus! that's sides and heart.
Sir Toby. No, sir, it is legs and thighs, Let me see thee caper.
Ha! higher: ha, ha! excellent!91

Sir Andrew exits in a wild medley of dances. The playing of this scene
requires not only some virtuosity as a dancer, but an enormous amount of
energy. In a production of the play at Baylor University in 1969 Sir
Andrew was directed to dance the galliard, coranto and jig. By the end
of the scene these culminated in a wild expression of all three combined
into one series of maneuvers.92 The Elizabethan actor certainly would
have presented the dances in an excellent fashion, because his audience
was filled with dancers. This shows us not only another ability of the
actor but his physical stamina as well, for these are wild, running,
jumping dances that require enormous amounts of energy.

Thus, the actor performed for an audience that could be captivated
by a beautiful speech one moment and was ready to physically enter the
stage the next. He had to parade in a stately manner in masques one mom-
ent and plunge into wild, orgiastic dances the next. These maneuvers had
to be executed with an excellence above the best in normal society for
dancers were in the audience to judge him. And, it was all accomplished
with sweeping farthingales, bulky doublets and large capes.

91 Shakespeare, Complete Works, Twelfth Night, I,iii, 11. 139-152.
92 Baylor Theatre, Production of Twelfth Night, Spring, 1969.
CHAPTER IV
THE ELIZABETHAN ORATOR AND HIS GESTURE

The teaching of rhetoric was widespread throughout England during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Most schools provided some basis for training in the "art of rhetorical pronunciation and gesture."¹ King's School in Canterbury, where Marlowe studied, insisted that the students be taught "due decorum both with their body and their mouth."² A basic understanding of this art and its function can perhaps give us some insight into the method of gesture used by the actor of that era.

Rhetoric played a vital role in the education and life of the Elizabethan man. From its study he could learn all that was known of the art and techniques of oral and written communication. Scholars of the school of formal acting have insisted that seventeenth century works on rhetorical delivery reflect an image of Elizabethan acting.³ To the Elizabethan, the term orator did not necessarily refer only to a person who made speeches or delivered orations. The word was used commonly to describe any person "skilled in the art of using language, whether he wrote or spoke fiction or non-fiction, in prose or verse."⁴ It was important that gesture insure a complete communication between speaker and listener.⁵ An actor would certainly fit under this description. Proficiency in oratory was also expected of lawyers, statesmen, and every polished, educated man.⁶ The actor would have been aware of

¹ Joseph, Acting Shakespeare, p. 8.
² Ibid.
³ Beckerman, p. 113.
⁴ Joseph, Elizabethan Acting, p. 56.
⁵ Joseph, Acting Shakespeare, p. 17.
The methods of oratory and rhetoric, simply because it was in existence about him. His knowledge of rhetorical gesture would have affected his stage gesture to some extent.

However far apart in colour, habits, manners, and religion people may be, the universal language of gesture can forge links between them. For gesture-language is practically the same in all human beings, and it follows that it must correspond to the primary level of existence, comprising instincts and emotions on the one hand and an elementary knowledge of objects on the other. It is only abstract-thought which cannot be expressed in the language of gesture.

John Brinsley, describing rhetorical training in **Ludus Literarius: Or the Grammar School**, published in 1612, stated that the boys were to be taught "to act the emotions which the words might happen to express, and that they may do everything according to the very nature." In a normal class session of reading and pronouncing Latin dialogue, they were taught to act "lively and naturally."

The gesture was to stem from the emotion within. As John Bulwer, a writer of the period states, the movements of the hands must "show the mental springs from whence they naturally arise." It was also a common feeling of these men that gesture never be imposed unless it expressed adequately the feeling within. This concurs with modern theories of

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acting. To the orator, action must be "an external image of an internal mind, or a shadow of affections." Thomas Wright, another writer of the period says:

as the internal affection is more vehement, so the external persuasion will be more potent: for the passion in the persuader seemeth to me to resemble the wind a trumpeter bloweth in at one end of the trumpet, and in what manner it proceedeth from him, so it issueth forth at the other end, and cometh to our ears; even so the passion proceedeth from the heart, and is blown about the body, face, eyes, hands, voice, and so by gestures passeth into our eyes, and by sounds into our ears.

Wright goes on to say it is impossible for the spectator to "sorrow, hate, envy, or fear anything...except all these notions...be first imprinted and marked in the orator himself."

If an emotion not readily available needed to be played, then the orator was to follow the theory of Marcus Fabius Quintilian on the use of the imagination.

There are certain experiences which...the Romans call 'visiones', whereby things absent are presented to our imagination with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our very eyes. It is the man who is really sensitive to such impressions who will have the greatest power over the emotions.

It was not enough to simply find the expressive action needed. It had to be textured and developed to fit precisely with the character and words. Bulwer warns, "Take care that variety of gesture may answer the

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13 Joseph, Acting Shakespeare, p. 91.
15 Wright, quoted by Joseph, Elizabethan Acting, p. 9.
16 Marcus Fabius Quintillian, Institutio Oratoria, quoted by Joseph, Elizabethan Acting, p. 10.
variety of voice and words. And gesture must attend upon every flexion of the voice."\(^{17}\) The actor, then, was expected to use variety as well as truthful gestures representative of nature. These writers observed a similarity in their art and the actor's because of a similarity in external action.\(^{18}\)

Through reoccurring on-stage illustration of the Elizabethan life, i.e. dancing, masques, manners, etc., we know that the actor observed the world about him. The same was true of the orator. Wright declares that he should observe how people react under the stress of emotion. Then the observer should "leave the excess and exorbitant levity of other defects, and keep the manner corrected with prudent mediocrity."\(^{19}\) To Wright the perfection of acting depended on this truthful imitation of others. "This the best may be marked in stage-players, who act excellently, for as the perfection of their exercise consisteth in imitation of others, so they that imitate best, act best."\(^{20}\) Bulwer recognized the actors as "counterfeitors of men's manners."\(^{21}\) He also felt that only through observation could orators and actors present individuality in character.

In all action nature bears the greatest sway: every man must consider his own nature and temperament...One action becomes one man, and another kind of behavior another. That which one does without art, cannot wholly be delivered by art. For there is a kind of hidden and ineffable reason, which to know is the head of art.\(^{22}\)

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\(^{17}\) Bulwer, Chironomia (1644), quoted by Joseph, Elizabethan Acting, p. 21.

\(^{18}\) Joseph, Acting Shakespeare, p. 93.

\(^{19}\) Wright, quoted by Joseph, Acting Shakespeare, p. 91.

\(^{20}\) Wright, quoted by Joseph, Elizabethan Acting, p. 19.

\(^{21}\) Bulwer, Chironomia, quoted by Joseph, Elizabethan Acting, p. 17.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., pp. 6-7.
By imitation of others, these men did not mean stereotyped movements. "What might suit one man," Bulwer says, "is not to be copied slavishly by another; each must develop his own individual action." In analysis of these theories, Joseph states, "There was nothing stereotyped, stiff or formal about this external action. It was not as esoteric art of conventional gesture. On the contrary, 'natural', 'familiar', and 'lively' are the words used of it just as they are the words used of stageplaying."

Bulwer, in Chirologia, sketches and describes many common gestures of the day that were used to express emotion. One of these, Chirothripsia, meant "to press hard, and wring another's hand." This is described as holding the hand between the palms and interlacing the fingers around it. The gesture was a token of duty and reverential love. Coriolanus evidently used this gesture with his mother, Volumnia, when, overcome by her earnest persuasions to withdraw his army from Rome, he cried out, "Oh, Mother. What have you done to me?" As he speaks these words, he is described as holding her hand by the right hand. The success of this gesture would not have been the expression of an arbitrary, external symbol. It allowed the actor to express the precise emotion. This complexity of inner feeling might be expressed simply by the way the modern actor takes her hand, and this avenue was open to the Elizabethan. "Yet, the Elizabethan

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23 Ibid., p. 7.
26 Joseph, Acting Shakespeare, p. 86.
27 Ibid., p. 88.
might really have wrung her hand in the manner described by Bulwer, simply because, in the tradition in which he lived and acted, to do so was as truthful a way of expressing his feeling as is the raising of the hat as a mark of respect today."  

Another gesture, the "fillip", was very insulting to the person in whose direction it was aimed, and historically caused numerous duels to be fought. It could certainly have been used on stage to bait an opponent. Gallants of the time claimed

that as the law offered them no protection for their honour they were forced to resort to the sword to defend themselves from what they considered 'a mortal wound to the reputation' conveyed by an insulting gesture known as the fillip.  

The gesture was formed by bending "the middle finger while it stiffly resteth upon the thumb, and so in jesting-wise to let it off." Although this gesture has little meaning to us today, another described by Bulwer does. To him the clenching of the fist indicated rage. The point here is the manner in which the actor handled these simple hand gestures. According to Bulwer they were "strangely enlarged by actors." Thus the actor took the simple, familiar gestures of his society and "enlarged" them on the stage. Fred Adams, founder and producing director of the Utah Festival, believes success in playing Shakespeare lies in enlarged, bold acting. "A slightly grand quality is needed to carry the weight of the

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28Ibid., pp. 87-88.  
29Ibid., p. 101.  
31Joseph, Acting Shakespeare, p. 106.  
32Bulwer, Chironomia, quoted by Joseph, Elizabethan Acting, p. 17.
character and costume, and to project the lines adequately."\textsuperscript{33} However, he warns that this should never develop into exaggerated, unbelievable symbols.\textsuperscript{34}

Thus, the indication is that the oratorical style and the acting style were not bombastic or declamatory. Gestures were enlarged, but not exaggerated. Evidently exaggeration occurred when the gesture became too large to be believable. The Elizabethan actor was well aware that "to saw the air"\textsuperscript{35} was to act badly. Therefore, his gestures had to be motivated by internal emotion which could be real or imagined. It was important that the physical representation of character stem from observations of nature. Yet these movements had to present the individuality of the character. Thomas Heywood in \textit{An Apology For Actors} observed that the actors "appear to you to be the self-same men as they impersonate."\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33}Telephone interview with Fred Adams, Producing Director, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Cedar City, Utah, March 15, 1973.
\item \textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{35}Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, III,ii, 1. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{36}Thomas Heywood, \textit{An Apology For Actors}, ed. Richard H. Perkinson (New York: Scholars Facsimiles & Reprints, 1941), p. iv.
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER V
THE ELIZABETHAN ACTOR AND HIS CRAFT

The Elizabethan actor was the product of generations of professional entertainers.¹ Frequently he was the son of an actor or another person associated with the stage and was born into the theater atmosphere and surroundings.² Sometimes he developed from early training in the children's companies or from groups of "tumbling boys", "itinerant jig-makers" and "interlude players under noble patronage."³

These actors, like their predecessors, contemporaries, and successors, reflect no common heritage, conform to no one social class, come from no one type of environment, but, in a strange way, illustrate the vicissitudes of all players down through the centuries.

Professional companies accepted apprentices at the age of ten. These boys were lodged and boarded by a member of the company who trained them.⁵

Thus, training of Elizabethan actors began at an early age. They "inherited, among other things, the variety of skill which their fathers' patrons had required. They could still sing, dance a jig, and give exhibitions of superlative swordsmanship in an age when every gentleman was an accomplished swordsman."⁶ By the end of the 16th century vaulting and tumbling had become increasingly popular in England. The actors found it necessary to include this in their regular performances and through

¹DeBanke, p. 102.
³DeBanke, p. 102.
⁴Ibid., p. 100.
⁵Ibid., p. 115.
⁶Webster, p. 31.
training became skilled in the activity.7

The actors had to be particularly adroit at dueling and sword fighting. "There were no fumbling, dangerous duels."8 Fencing masters were abundant and often fought on stage themselves.9 This explains Shakespeare's frequent use of the sword duel to obtain maximum dramatic impact.10 The primary weapons of the age were rapier and dagger. The dagger was held in the left hand and used primarily for defensive purposes, while the rapier was the offensive weapon and held in the right.11 Duels were a part of Elizabethan life, often being fought for private or public reasons, despite the fact they were outlawed by Elizabeth.12 With the audience's knowledge of dueling, the actor must have been skilled in stage duels. The modern actor has extreme difficulty with duels and the director is often pressed to simply make the fights believable to an audience. Particularly was this the case at the Utah Festival where young actors playing Hamlet and Laertes spent two hours per day for three weeks preparing a choreographed fight. Even then the fight did not conceivably reach the explosive quality of those at the Globe where the actor had years of training.13

7Lawrence, Old Theatre Days and Ways, p. 74.
8Ashley Thorndike, Shakespeare Today, quoted by Webster, p. 182.
11Ibid., p. 183.
13Utah Festival, Hamlet.
The apprentices at the Globe were trained to play the women's roles and by the age of twelve or thirteen "could evidently cope more than adequately with the technical demands of Rosalind, perhaps even those of Cleopatra or Lady Macbeth." The boys continued to play these roles as long as their voices and physical appearance allowed. The fact that these apprentices were in the constant company of professionals testifies to their total training in the life of an actor.

If the actor had been trained in one of the children's companies, he was familiar with the best contemporary plays, as these companies produced some of the words of Shakespeare and Jonson. In fact the young companies were so good, they became serious rivals to the adult companies. Originally, the youthful groups had been members of choirs, but the boys were evidently trained in poise and control through dancing and fencing.

There are records that Shakespeare's company included "skilful actors trained in the exquisite and sophisticated style of the children's companies." As mentioned before, some of the actors came from boy tumbling troupes and these were trained in "the art of music, dancing and vaulting on the ropes."

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14 Guthrie, p. 17.
15 DeBanke, p. 116.
16 Ibid., p. 121.
18 DeBanke, p. 18.
20 Emil-Behnke, p. 20.
21 Dodsley, p. 108.
22 Lawrence, *Old Theatre Days and Ways*, p. 65.
The actor, then, was well trained and he practiced his craft with the highest professional standards. Beckerman, in analysis of the actor says, "Responsive to the vicissitudes of political, hygienic, and economic conditions, the players within their strictly traditional guild organization maintained an empirical, not theoretical, professional attitude."\textsuperscript{23} Shakespeare demanded that the actor "show utter disregard for easily won laurels, and serious regard for the comments of the judicious critic."\textsuperscript{24}

An excellent memory was also required of the actor. Once a play was rehearsed and performed, it could remain in the repertory of the company for years. Often weeks, even months transpired between performances of a particular play and occasionally the actor might be asked to perform a play that had been long neglected. Each year there were an amazing number of new plays. "In the three-year period from June 5, 1594 to July 23, 1597, a leading actor of the Lord Admiral's Company, such as Edward Alleyn or Thomas Downton, had to secure and retain command of about seventy-one different roles."\textsuperscript{25} Of these seventy-one, fifty-three were new. On at least one occasion, eleven different plays were performed in a two week period.\textsuperscript{26} To accomplish this, the actor would have needed enormous energy and concentration. Compare this with the modern actor who rarely performs more than three plays in repertory. This is the procedure at the Utah Festival where line rehearsals are scheduled regularly to keep the actor in close familiarity with the script.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{23} Beckerman, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{24} DeBanke, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{25} Beckerman, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 2.
\textsuperscript{27} Utah Festival, productions of Shakespeare's Plays, summers, 1967-68.
The Elizabethan actor's style in playing was based on many of the free and easy crudities found in the days when plays were performed in the inn-yards. In the inn-yards the actor was conscious of the presence of the audience and accepted the elements of theater, stage, props, etc. for what they were. In acting in this style, he becomes "less the actor-character and more the actor-performer, while, at the same time, he maintains sufficient reality to achieve believability." Believability in acting was very important to Shakespeare and his company. Richard Burbage, the leading man in the troupe, was described by Richard Flecknoe as "wholly transforming himself into his part and putting off himself with his clothes...animating his words with speaking, and speed with action...an excellent actor still, never falling in his part when he done speaking, but with his looks and gesture maintaining it to the heighth." Burbage was certainly believable as a dramatic character to this writer. One of the reasons is that Burbage listened and responded to other actors, when "silent on the stage himself, always as if he were the character come to life." Thus rules were sustained throughout the action of a play, not just when the character was speaking. Movement, then, must have always been sustained. This is evident from an elegy commemorating Burbage:

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28 Webster, p. 86.
29 Schreck, p. 193.
30 Webster, p. 43.
31 Richard Flecknoe, A Short Discourse of the English Stage (1664), quoted by Joseph, Elizabethan Acting, p. 4.
32 Joseph, Elizabethan Acting, p. 4.
He's gone, and with him what a world are dead,
Which he reviv'd to be revived so,
No more young Hamlet, old Hieronymo,
King Lear, the grieved Moor, and more beside
That liv'd in him, have now for ever died.
Oft have I seen him leap into the grave,
Suiting the person which he seem'd to have
Of a sad lover with so true an eye,
That there I would have sworn he meant to die.
Oft have I seen him play this part in jest,
So lively that spectators and the rest
Of his sad crew, whilst he but seem'd to bleed,
Amaz'd, thought even then he died indeed.

To the eyes of this writer, Burbage lived his characters on stage; the actor and the character were synonymous. Only a complete projection of character through believable gesture and movement could have so affected a member of the audience. This style of playing was evidently the rule in Shakespeare's company.

From the plays, Hamlet in particular, we know that Shakespeare did not like "highly-colored" acting. The fact that he leans heavily on poetry indicates that the power of suggestion was more important to him than naturalism. In Hamlet's advice to the players he says:

Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say - whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.

In the production of Romeo and Juliet at Baylor the actor playing Romeo became so involved with the passion of the character that all control was

34 Bradbrook, p. 107.
35 Ibid.
37 Shakespeare, Hamlet, III, ii, 11. 4-8.
lost. The result was a serious sword injury to the actor playing Tybalt during the sword duel of the two characters. The actor was so involved with the emotion of Romeo that he had no control, not only in the fight, but throughout the play. His passionate commitment to the character was unquestionable; but, uncontrolled, he became not only dangerous to other actors on stage, but made the audience react nervously to his pure emotion. Gestures became wild and meaningless. The secret of all great acting, controlled emotion, was completely missed. This is evidently the type of acting Shakespeare detested.

Oh! It offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tears, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise: I would have such a fellow shipped for o'er doing Termagant; it out-herods Herod; pray you avoid it.

Ben Jonson agreed with Shakespeare on this point: "The actor does overact, and having got the habit of it, will be monstrous still in spite of counsel."

In a 1968 production of Hamlet at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, Hamlet's third soliloquy was played with excessive movement about the stage, causing many of the lines to be lost. During the speech Hamlet raced up stairs to a platform representative of the inner above and on the line "Oh, vengeance" leaped to the floor below (about fifteen feet). As

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38 Baylor Theatre, Romeo and Juliet.
39 DeBanke, p. 123.
40 Baylor Theatre, Romeo and Juliet.
41 Shakespeare, Hamlet, III, ii, 11. 8-14.
42 Ben Jonson, quoted by Webster, p. 62.
a result of this theatrical action, the meaning of the soliloquy to that point was completely lost. The over-action by the actor was totally unbelievable, destroying the dramatic action and affect of the soliloquy.\textsuperscript{43}

Shakespeare also warns against underacting:

\begin{quote}
Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

A prime example of the action being suited to the word was the performance of Zoe Caldwell as Lady Anne in Richard III at Stratford, Ontario. In the opening of I,ii, Anne's lamentation over her dead husband Edward became an orgy of movement.\textsuperscript{45} Beginning with "Poor key-cold figure of a holy king!" Caldwell, on her knees over the casket, began to sway side to side in rhythm with the lines. The swaying grew in size and intensity to the end of the lamentation at line twenty-eight. Yet the arms, head and voice were used in such a manner that each idea in the speech was projected with perfect clarity of meaning. The basic emotion was lamentation over a dead husband and this was physically presented through the swaying. The gestures by the arms and head, as well as vocal pitch and intensity, were altered to pinpoint each spoken idea. These were large, bold, physical actions, yet they appeared natural because of perfect coordination with the lines.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{43}Old Globe Theatre, Performance of Hamlet, San Diego, California, Summer, 1968.

\textsuperscript{44}Shakespeare, Hamlet, III,ii, 11. 16-19.

\textsuperscript{45}Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Production of Richard III, Stratford, Ontario, Canada, Summer, 1968.

\textsuperscript{46}Shakespeare, Complete Works, Richard III, I,ii, 1. 5.

\textsuperscript{47}Stratford Shakespeare Festival.
This theory of complete coordination between line and action is followed by Fred Adams at the Utah Festival. He believes every major move needed in a Shakespearean play can be plotted directly from the lines. 48

Not only Shakespeare, but other Elizabethans including Heywood expressed strong feelings on coordination of action and words.

However good the style of his speech itself and the sound of his voice, yet without a comely and elegant gesture, a gracious and bewitching kind of action, a natural and familiar motion of the head, the hand, the body, and a moderate and fit countenance, suitable to all the rest, I hold all the rest as nothing. 49

Later in Hamlet's advice to the player, Shakespeare expands his opinion into a direct definition of over-acting.

... 0! there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. 50

An excellent example of this is the actor playing Aragon in The Merchant of Venice at the Utah Festival. Using a stilted, strutting, mechanical movement, the actor received scattered laughter on his first entrance; however, this soon died. The character ceased to be funny because his movement was totally unbelievable, destroying not only the character, but the dramatic action of the scene. The action onstage deteriorated to nothing more than the strutting of an actor. 51

48 Telephone interview with Fred Adams, Producing Director, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Cedar City, Utah, March 15, 1973.
49 Heywood, Sig. C4.
50 Shakespeare, Hamlet, III, ii, 11. 28-34.
51 Utah Shakespeare Festival, Merchant of Venice.
Determining the degree to which the Elizabethan actor expanded life on stage is difficult. Shakespeare seems to be suggesting that if we suspect an action is unnatural then the actor should avoid it. Therefore, the degree of successful expansion in movement should be determined by the particular actor and audience, not by an arbitrary rule. One example is the 1970 production of The Merchant of Venice by the National Theatre in England at the London Old Vic. The production was set in the late 19th century with great emphasis placed on subtlety of action. At the conclusion of the court scene, Shylock, portrayed by Lawrence Olivier, made a long cross to the exit which had a three to four foot high railing in front of it. Olivier turned to the audience, his face distorted with almost inhuman pain and suddenly collapsed over the rail in a bold dramatic move. This singular action was the most powerful this writer has ever observed on stage. The audience was in a stunned silence for minutes, yet the action was so bold that only an actor of Olivier's stature could have made it believable and natural. Otherwise, it would have been an over-dramatised, exaggerated stage action. One of the reasons for Olivier's success was identification of a terrible pain between actor and character, and audience and character. The Elizabethan actor's craft was based on just such an identification which helps explain his aptitude at imitation. When the Player in Hamlet portrays a witness of the terrible scene at the sack of Troy, "What he actually conceives does not remain intellectualized, but is experienced as something which is happening to himself, not to an eye-witness giving a description as imagined by a poet." The actor is able to express a life-like emotion based on the


53 Joseph, Acting Shakespeare, p. 92.
imagined situation. "The actor was identified; he behaved as if he were
the imaginary character come to life."\textsuperscript{54} Hamlet says in his third soli-
liquy:

\begin{verbatim}
Is it not monstrous that this player here 
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion 
Could force his soul so to his own conceit 
That from her working all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting 
With forms to his conceit.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{verbatim}

The character seems to have felt as if Hecuba mattered to him. The fic-
titious element was not the passion, but rather the imagined concern with
Troy and her queen.\textsuperscript{56}

In a production of \textit{Hamlet} at Stratford, Ontario in 1969, the player
delivered the described speech from a small platform using large, expanded
gestures. Suddenly, the actor's eyes became involved with the scene
being described, and though the gestures continued mechanically, his face
exploded in a flood of tears and distraction till he could not continue.
This provided an exciting theatrical moment.\textsuperscript{57} The player was able to
weep because he could imagine that Hecuba mattered.\textsuperscript{58} There is little
difference here from Stanislavski's use of the Magic If, a technique de-
veloped to assist in the freeing of the actor's imagination.\textsuperscript{59}

The Elizabethan's physical framework for acting, however, was dif-


\textsuperscript{56}Joseph, \textit{Elizabethan Acting}, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{57}Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Performance of \textit{Hamlet}, Stratford,
Ontario, Canada, Summer, 1969.

\textsuperscript{58}Joseph, \textit{Elizabethan Acting}, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{59}Constantin Stanislavski, \textit{Building A Character}, trans. Elizabeth
ferent from ours. This is evidenced by some of their accepted gestures, which seem peculiar to us. One of these was the clasping of the hands when laughing. A possible reason for this is that laughing on stage in a truly believable manner is difficult to accomplish, hence the clapping to cover some of the laughter. Another gesture, the striking of the forehead with the hand was used to express "dolour, shame and wonder." These gestures, however, would have certainly been produced by the Elizabethan actor in a believable manner. His entire background and training would have forced it. Johannes Rhenanus gives us further assurance this was the case when he wrote in 1613:

As far as actors are concerned they, as I noticed in England, are daily instructed as it were in a school so that even the most eminent actors have to allow themselves to be instructed by the dramatists, which arrangement gives life and ornament to a well-written play, so that it is no wonder that the English Players (I speak of the skilled ones) surpass and have the advantage of others.

Such instruction would have insured that the actor's movement be suitable to the character and play. The actor was not left alone to plot his character's movement, but directed into large scenes of spectacle.

The Elizabethan actor's training in an extensive and involved craft began at an early age. His skills included dueling, singing, dancing, tumbling, as well as character analysis and portrayal. Shakespeare expected the actor to control his emotion and not over-act, using subtlety

60 Joseph, *Elizabethan Acting*, p. 27.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., p. 57.
63 Johannes Rhenanus, preface to his adaptation of Tomkis' *Lingua, or the Combat of the Tongue and the Five Senses* (1613), quoted by DeBanke, p. 99.
and suggestion wherever possible. Thus, physical portrayal of character through movement and gesture had to be within the bounds of nature as accepted by the actor and audience. Finally, this stage action was coordinated in a form of instruction by playwrights, thus enhancing the dramatic strength of the actor's movement and gesture.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The actor at the Globe performed in an era of imaginative new ideas with a "free and lusty" spirit. The influences of the Renaissance, Elizabeth I and the church provided a highly varied social structure. The Globe was built by actors who designed it for a maximum of intimacy with the audience. Yet plenty of space was provided on stage for the production of spectacle. As a neutral, open thrust, the actor's working area allowed any place or action to be represented through the imagination of the audience.

The Globe's audience was indicative of the age in which they lived. They entered the theatre with vivid imaginations which enjoyed bawdry and bloody fights as well as supernatural figures, love songs and philosophical discussions. But if the actor failed to satisfy their imaginations, they could be unruly, even threatening, and on occasion might rip a theatre apart.

The dress of the era was stiff and bulky, yet the actors were expected to wear the best fashion available. The boy actors learned to run, turn, sit, and collapse in enormous farthingales. When they became adults they could parade, dance, tumble and kneel in doublet and hose. The actor could handle the music, dance and spectacle of the English masque. He could stroll in the stately pavane as well as run and jump in the galliarde.

The rhetoricians of the period noted that the actor developed character from observation, and action from internal stimulus. The actor's performance was lively and bold with a magnification of his life-like images. This boldness and internal stimulus developed from life
long training and was crucial for his technique. He was an excellent swordsman, tumbler, dancer, in an age when every gentleman participated avidly in these activities. Yet through poetry he relied on the power of suggestion throughout his performances.

In the representation of kings or courtiers, the actor's movement was formal, but never stereotyped. At the edge of the thrust he could speak asides or soliloquies softly and simply to his audience. The three levels of the tiring house presented plenty of space for vicious battles and duels or spectacular court scenes.

The Elizabethan actor could dance wildly like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, tumble like a clown, strut like Malvolio or Don Armado, yet glide with the grace of a goddess in The Tempest. He could boldly project these characters as a mirror of nature to a critical audience of some 2,000. His stage movement represented the boldness, liveliness, and excitement of the age in which he lived.
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