Gesticulated Shakespeare: Gesture and Movement in Silent Shakespeare Films

Thesis

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to dissect the gesticulation used in the films made during the silent era that were adaptations of William Shakespeare's plays. In particular, this study investigates the use of nineteenth and twentieth century established gesture in the Shakespearean film adaptations from 1899-1922. The gestures described and illustrated by published gesture manuals are juxtaposed with at least one leading actor from each film.

The research involves films from the experimental phase (1899-1907), the transitional phase (1908-1913), and the feature film phase (1912-1922). Specifically, the films are: King John (1899), Le Duel d'Hamlet (1900), La Diable et la Statue (1901), Duel Scene from Macbeth (1905), The Taming of the Shrew (1908), The Tempest (1908), A Midsummer Night's Dream (1909), Il Mercante di Venezia (1910), Re Lear (1910), Romeo Turns Bandit (1910), Twelfth Night (1910), A Winter's Tale (1910), Desdemona (1911), Richard III (1911), The Life and Death of King Richard III (1912), Romeo e Giulietta (1912), Cymbeline (1913), Hamlet (1913), King Lear (1916), Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance (1920), and Othello (1922). The gestures used by actors in the films are compared with Gilbert Austin's Chironomia or A Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery (1806), Henry Siddons' Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action; Adapted to The English Drama: From a Work on the Subject by M. Engel (1822), Gustave Garcia's The Actors' Art: A Practical Treatise on Stage
Declamation, Public Speaking and Deportment, for the Use of Artists, Students and Amateurs (1882), and Charles Aubert's *L'Art Mimique* (1901).

The conclusion of this study finds that silent Shakespeare films document not only stage productions of the period, but also document the gestures performed by trained actors in continuous moving images. Because silent film is a visual medium, the film adaptations generally depict scenes that are described in Shakespeare's texts. From the descriptions and illustrations in these manuals, each film presents visual record of established nineteenth century gesticulation. This study also finds that, as the performance codes shift around 1910, more inter-title cards begin to be used and affect the use of established gesture by the actors in the films. Still, established gesture is maintained by actors who were trained staged performers prior to the invention of film, by actors who portray "villainous" characters, and by actors who must exemplify his or her character in intense emotional situations.
Dedication

Dedicated to my mother and father

and those who love silent Shakespeare films
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Chapter 1: Introduction

In an interview quoted in The Brooklyn Eagle, Frederick Warde addressed the importance of gesture in silent film performance: "Of course, to make certain things comprehensible without the voice it is necessary to interpolate certain incidents to show the motive, but the bard himself would hardly object to this" (The Life and Death). Indeed, William Shakespeare had included one of the most significant dumb shows in one of his most famous plays, Hamlet. In III.ii of Shakespeare's Hamlet, a dumb show, devised by Hamlet, is performed in order to elicit a gesture from his uncle that would indicate his guilt of murdering Hamlet's father. The action is a symbolic representation of the events concerning the death of Hamlet's father and a dramatization of events explained by the Ghost to Hamlet in I.v. The players use pantomime to communicate the action of the play to their audience, the court. This one sequence in the play is devoid of words and completely reliant on gesture and movement. The significance of gesture and movement in Hamlet III.ii is similar to the importance of gesture and movement in silent Shakespeare films.

The plays of William Shakespeare, one of the most renowned playwrights of all time, are analogous to poetry. However, when Shakespeare's plays were photographed during the pioneering years of film, motion pictures themselves were completely devoid of those poetic words. But silent film also enabled a transitional phase from stage acting to cinema acting in the early twentieth century. The new
proscenium stage was a projection screen on which the actors' performances did not vary from each presentation. Silent films did not have the option of synchronized sound. The audience had to rely on his or her familiarity with the story, inter-title cards, music, and the actor's ability to convey the story through his or her gestures and movements. Pantomime, an art form that originated in ancient Greece, was the only communication the actors had with the audience to convey feelings and thoughts. Portraying the character of the play through pantomime was the most vital aspect to an audiences' understanding of the silent films.

Because Shakespeare's plays are the most studied plays of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Era, the stories presented in the silent films were undoubtedly familiar to most audience members. The inter-title cards provided a narration for the scenes or actual lines from Shakespeare's plays. The music varied from simple piano accompaniment to full orchestration and sometimes included foley sound effects juxtaposed with the film's action and even an actor's recitation of lines from the play in a live performance. However, the most important aspects of Shakespeare's plays performed in silent films are the movements and gestures of the actors in the films, without which, little communication with the audience could occur.

Exploring the gestures and movements in silent Shakespeare films1 is important for several reasons. These gestures show an integral period of transition from stage acting to cinema acting, and they authenticate the performances of

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1 This term is used to designate the films that are made during the silent era and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. The term has been previously used by other authors, including Robert Hamilton Ball in Shakespeare on Silent Film: A Strange Eventful History and Judith Buchanan in Shakespeare on Film and Shakespeare on Silent Film: An Excellent Dumb Discourse.
legendary stage actors of the period. Silent film allowed numerous audiences to view the same version and performance of Shakespeare's plays. The films also show the application of pantomime in acting and provide primary documentation of how to perform certain gestures. Most importantly, the silent Shakespeare films express the primary visual record of early gesture and movement still relevant to actors on stage and in motion pictures today. This study explores, dissects, and documents the gestures in the silent film era and its effectiveness in conveying Shakespeare's texts.

Silent films began to use picture narrative techniques as early as 1896 when Joseph Jefferson portrayed Rip Van Winkle in a brief short (Corrigan and White 230). The picture narrative technique began to be applied to Shakespeare films only three years later. Unfortunately, most silent Shakespeare films no longer exist since they have been lost, disintegrated, or destroyed, which consequently limits the films that are available for viewing. The cellulose-nitrate composition of the films used prior to the 1950s could spontaneously combust and was easily damaged by moisture and temperature changes (Katz 861). Other prints were intentionally destroyed. After a marketing ploy to increase attendance during a six-week run of William Barker and Herbert Beerbohm Tree's Henry VIII (1911), the prints were incinerated by Barker himself (Ball Silent Film 82). Most of the films of the silent era have "gone missing, been destroyed, or have disintegrated beyond the point of possible restoration" (Buchanan Silent Film 2).

Despite this, the most effective way of exploring the movement of the silent Shakespeare films is to view those films still in existence. According to Judith

One source for viewing the silent Shakespeare films is *Silent Shakespeare*, a digital video disc released by Milestone Film in 2000. This compilation includes surviving footage from Biograph's *King John* (1899), Percy Stow's *The Tempest* (1908), Charles Kent's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1909), Gerolamo Lo Savio's *Re Lear* (1910), Charles Kent's *Twelfth Night* (1910), Gerolamo Lo Savio's *Il Mercante di Venezia* (1910), and Frank Benson's *Richard III* (1911). Clément Maurice's *Le Duel d'Hamlet* (1900), George Méliès' *La Diable et la Statue* (1901), Svend Gade's *Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance* (1920), and Geralmo Lo Savio and Ugo Falena's *Romeo e Giulietta* (1912) are available online via the internet. James Keane's *The Life and Death of King Richard III* (1912) and Ernest Warde's *King Lear* (1916) are available from Kino Video and Televista, respectively. Dimitri Buchowetzki's *Othello* (1922) is available from Kino Video and includes *The Duel Scene from Macbeth* (1905), D. W.

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2 Méliès *La Diable et la Statue* (1901) is commercially available on *George Méliès: First Wizard of Cinema* (1896-1913), digital video disc.
Griffith's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1908), Romeo Bosetti's *Romeo Turns Bandit* (1910), and August Blom's *Desdemona* (1911) as special features. Barry O'Neil's *A Winter's Tale* (1910), Frederick Sullivan's *Cymbeline* (1913), and an abridged version of Ernest Warde's *King Lear* (1916) are available on the *Thanhouser Collection, volume 7*. Many of these films, as well as others, are located at the British Film Institute, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the Motion Picture and Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress. From the films viewed, this study focuses on communication through gesture and movement juxtaposed with Shakespeare's text.

The silent film era provided numerous versions of Shakespeare's plays in adaptation. Although most of the silent Shakespeare films have not survived, there were approximately 500 silent Shakespeare films created, according to Maurice Hindle, and 253 Shakespeare films dating from 1899-1927, according to Judith Buchanan (20; *Silent Film* 1). The discrepancy concerning the number of silent Shakespeare films could be attributed to films such as Sam Taylor's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1929), starring Errol Flynn and Mary Pickford. This film was originally photographed as a silent film but had sound dubbed in for theatres that were equipped to support sound, making it the "first feature-length Shakespeare talkie" (Hindle 29). The difference in number could also be attributed to the films that are only loosely based on Shakespeare's play, such as Edison Company's*³* *Burlesque on Romeo and Juliet* (1902), Méliès' *Cléopâtre* (1899), *Le Diable et la Statue* (1901), *Le Miroir de*

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³ *Burlesque on Romeo and Juliet* is listed in The Edison Films' Catalogue under "Imported Films" (Ball *Silent Film* 32).
Venise (Une Mésaventure de Shylock) (1905), Vitagraph's A Midwinter Night's Dream / Little Joe's Luck (1906), and Selig's All's Well That Ends Well (1907).

Although the films themselves are the most essential source for this thesis, other sources likewise play an integral role. Several authors have published books on the subject of Shakespeare on film. However, while most authors include a broad range of Shakespeare films, only two authors focus purely on silent Shakespeare films. In 1968, Robert Hamilton Ball published the first extensive research into the silent Shakespeare films. In Shakespeare on Silent Film: A Strange Eventful History, Ball provides information on Shakespeare films that were made between 1899 and 1925, including descriptions of the action found on each reel of film. Many of the films, such as The Life and Death of King Richard III (1912), were presumed lost before Ball's death only to be found years later; yet, impressively, his analysis of the films, based on reviews, promotions, and the programs for each film that include a list of episodes, are remarkably correct. Ball also published many essays on the subject, including "The Shakespeare Film as Record: Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree," "Shakespeare in One Reel," and "Tree's King John Film: An Addendum." Ball's research and documentation of the silent Shakespeare films is held at The Robert Hamilton Ball Collection at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Judith Buchanan's Shakespeare on Silent Film: An Excellent Dumb Discourse re-evaluates Ball's research and provides further analysis of the silent Shakespeare films. The book was published in 2009, after many of the films that were presumed lost had been located and restored. Buchanan touches briefly on gesture and movement in silent Shakespeare films; however, her
research is limited to stating the importance of pantomime as a codified means of communication, only using *Hamlet* (1913) for an example, without directly comparing an action to a description in the gesture and acting manuals.

Roberta E. Pearson's *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films*, however, focuses heavily on gesture in performance. Particularly, Pearson traces the transition from histrionic performance codes to verisimilar acting codes. She specifically looks at silent films directed by D. W. Griffith and produced by Biograph between 1908 and 1913. Hilary Hart similarly emphasizes gesture in performance in "Do You See What I See? The Impact of Delsarte on Silent Film Acting." In this article, Hart focuses on François Delsarte's influence on three D. W. Griffith films: *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Broken Blossoms* (1919), and *Orphans of the Storm* (1921). Hart takes one still of Lillian Gish from each of these films and consults Delsarte's system in order to interpret the gesture's meaning.

In order to understand the codified performance styles used in silent Shakespeare films, it is necessary to be familiar with the various acting manuals published in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because the acting performance codes of the period relied heavily on gesture and movement, the number of gesture and acting manuals from this period is large. Perhaps the most useful manuals are Gilbert Austin's *Chironomia or A Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806), Henry Siddons' *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action; Adapted to The English Drama: From a Work on the Subject by M. Engel* (1822), Gustave Garcia's
The Actors' Art: A Practical Treatise on Stage Declamation, Public Speaking and Deportment, for the Use of Artists, Students and Amateurs (1882), and Charles Aubert's L'Art Mimique⁴ (1901). These manuals provide detailed descriptions as well as illustrations for performing gestures and movements.

In addition to the research on silent Shakespeare films and the gesture manuals, other published materials that provide useful information are from the actors themselves. Herbert Beerbohm Tree, who appears in the title role in King John (1899), published an essay in 1897, entitled "Some Aspects of the Drama To-day." In it, he discusses the growing interest in theatre, acting, and the importance of an actor-manager to make a successful theatre. Frederick B. Warde, who appears in The Life and Death of King Richard III (1912) and King Lear (1916), dedicated the end of his career mainly to lecturing on Shakespeare and published three books: The Fools Of Shakespeare: An Interpretation Of Their Wit Wisdom And Personalities (1913), his auto-biography, Fifty Years of Make-Believe (1923), and Shakespearean Studies Simplified (1925). Warde also was a lecturer on Shakespearean plays and published several articles and essays. In "The Legitimate Player in the Films," Warde addresses the importance of gesture and movement in performance, stating "The expression of the face must carry with it the conviction of sincere emotion. The walk, the carriage of the limbs, every action must be in harmony with the feeling of the moment or the effect is only artificial and worthless" (Warde "Legitimate" 400). Johnston Forbes-Robertson, who appears in Hamlet (1913), published his autobiography, A Player

⁴ L'Art Mimique was translated into English in 1927 as The Art of Pantomime.
Under Three Reigns, in 1925. The Last Diva: Francesca Bertini (1982) is a documentary about Francesca Bertini, who appears in Il Mercante di Venezia (1910), Re Lear (1910), and Romeo e Giulietta (1912). This film footage includes interviews with Bertini and her insight regarding the details of acting in silent films as she watches Assunta Spina (1914).

The Moving Picture World is one of the most important sources regarding reviews of the silent Shakespeare films. The weekly trade journal began publication on March 9, 1907 and ended publication on December 31, 1927 (D'Agostino 5). The journal was dedicated to specifically addressing motion pictures in the silent film era. In addition to reviews, the journal also included promotional publications on the films and articles regarding the censorship of silent films, such as Macbeth (1908), the popularity of silent Shakespeare films, and the use of pantomime in silent films.

The study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter two provides a brief history of motion pictures. The prominent contributors to the film industry include Étienne Jules Marey, Eadward Muybrudge, Thomas Alva Edison, William K. L. Dickson, Auguste and Louis Lumière, George Méliès, and D. W. Griffith. Each of these individuals invented recording devices and/or discovered effects that affected silent Shakespeare films. The birth of film can be traced to magic lantern shows, which were performed as early as 1666; however, it was not until 1872, with Muybridge's first attempt at photographing a horse running, that the foundation was established for the contemporary film industry. Various versions of cameras and projectors were invented in the following years. The first films were short, lasting
under one minute and a half. Until film projectors were invented, the short films were shown in Kinetoscope parlors. Once inventions allowed films to become longer, they were shown in Nickelodeons.

Méliès and Griffith provided some of the most important contributions to silent film. Méliès invented special effects that would be used in many of the silent Shakespeare films that required fairies and ghosts to appear and disappear within the shot, as in *The Tempest* (1908), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1909), *Richard III* (1911), and *Hamlet* (1913). Edwin Porter first used the technique of close-ups in *The Great Train Robbery* (1903); however, D. W. Griffith consistently made use of close-ups in his films, thereby increasing the popularity of the technique. Because of the extensive use of close-ups, the later silent Shakespeare films, such as *King Lear* (1916), *Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance* (1920), and *Othello* (1922), provide excellent footage of facial gestures.

Chapter three traces back the use of gesture and movement in stage performance and the censorship that, in effect, created and propelled the new performance codes that still existed and were used in silent Shakespeare films. This chapter discusses Robert William Elliston's 1809 stage version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which is considered the first wordless Shakespearean performance, the Licensing Act of 1737, which separated patented theatre from unpatented theatres, and the censorship of silent Shakespeare films. Morality issues, which had influenced the censorship of stage productions, continued to plague the film industry. Shakespearean films were an answer to the less desirable film topics of crime and sex: Ironically,
Shakespeare's plays themselves involve the very thing that the Shakespeare films were thought to correct. The public and censors, however, looked more favorably on Shakespearean topics because they were classical literature. Chapter three also addresses the fact that silent Shakespeare films were not truly silent. Music, sound effects, and even live lecture accompanied these films.

Chapter four includes relevant information and documentation on the differences between Shakespeare's scripts and the films. For example, in Percy Stow's *The Tempest* (1908), the film begins with Prospero's arrival on the island with a toddler-aged Miranda, shows Prospero releasing Ariel from captivity, and shows Caliban attempting to violate Miranda ten years later (*The Tempest*). Although these scenes are not in Shakespeare's plays, the text of his plays reveals that these events occurred prior to Shakespeare's opening scene. Vitagraph's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1909) similarly strays from Shakespeare's original text by changing the male character, Oberon, into a female character, Penelope (*Midsummer*). Svend Gade's *Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance* (1920) changes a character's gender as well; it is discovered after Hamlet dies that Hamlet is actually female (*Hamlet:Drama*; Rosenthal 19). Other silent film adaptations also veer from the original Shakespearian text for various reasons. Most changes are due to the need to tell the story effectively through movement rather than words, and the films generally show the actions that are described only in the plays.

Chapter five of this study compares the relevant gestures and movements of the actors in the silent Shakespeare films to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century
gesture manuals and provides a concise history of gesture. According to Dene Barnett in *The Art of Gesture: The Practices and Principles of 18th Century Acting*, the art of gesture established in the eighteenth century was as detailed as the text which it complemented, and "its basic gestures were distinct and discrete, but elegantly linked together, they proceeded in ordered and coherent sequence, like any good discourse" (18). From the early nineteenth century well into the early twentieth century, there was a renewed importance placed on the gestures of actors. Aaron Hill’s *The Art of Acting* (1801), Gilbert Austin's *Chironomia or A Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806), Henry Siddons' *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action; Adapted to The English Drama: From a Work on the Subject by M. Engel* (1822), Gustave Garcia's *The Actors' Art: A Practical Treatise on Stage Declamation, Public Speaking and Deportment, for the Use of Artists, Students and Amateurs* (1882), and Charles Aubert’s *L’Art Mimique*5 (1901) all provide explanations of movements as well as descriptions of character types while stressing the importance of gestures. In his essay, Hill maintains:

> Above all, the art of expression is the fundamental element of the theater, action being the clearest, the most impressive, and may one say the most contagious language because the spectator who sees a more or less intense emotion portrayed by acting, finds himself drawn by the power of the quality of imitation, to share and to feel himself the emotion of which all the signs are shown to him (9).

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5 Charles Aubert's *L’Art Mimique* was translated in 1927 and re-titled *The Art of Pantomime.*
Chapter 19 of Garcia's book describes gestures and actions of actors but stresses the importance of the actor's facial expressions, which should correlate with the character's feelings. These facial expressions are movements in themselves and are more prominent with the intimacy of cinema's close-ups than with stage performances. The films provide documented proof of Garcia's techniques, as well as the acting techniques described by Austin, Siddons, and Aubert. These four authors provide essential information on the performance codes used on stage that were integrated into the early film acting technique. It is important to note that the acting manuals from Austin, Aubert, and Garcia combined oratory with gesture. Charles Aubert's *L'Art Mimique* is one of the few manuals devoted to pantomimic gesture alone.

In *The Actors' Art*, Garcia advises that there may be differences of movement and gesture according to nationality and that "[e]very nation . . . has its typical actions, movements, expression, and separate dialects" (Garcia 28). Regardless of those differences, because films in the early twentieth century were silent, the universal language of movement and gesture bridged the language barrier between different countries such as Germany, Italy, and America. For example, *King Lear* was first adapted for film in 1905 in Germany. The film tells the same story as the 1910 Italian version, directed by Gerolamo Lo Savio, and the 1916 American version, directed by Ernest Warde (Brode 205).

Chapter six of this study examines the gesture and movement made by at least one principle actor in the Shakespearean films juxtaposed with the acting and pantomime manuals, including actors' mouthing words, and the camera movement,
specifically close-ups, which captures the actors' facial gestures. The various forms of movement dealing mainly with specific expressions, such as the nuances signifying the different kinds of love, fear, hatred, as well as other human emotions portrayed in Shakespeare's texts, is dissected and juxtaposed against the pantomime and acting manuals written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, in Gerolamo Lo Savio's *King Lear* (1910), a doctor informs Cordelia of her father's condition, an action that corresponds to Shakespeare's IV.vii. She places her hand on her brow while turning her head to her right (*King Lear*). According to Charles Aubert, the Cordelia's gesture signifies *despair*. *Despair* is performed by "one hand pressing the slightly turned head, and the other arm straight, a trifle apart from the body" (Aubert 45). Several gestures and movements can have multiple meanings, such as when "both legs [are] pressed closed together, one knee slightly covering the other" which could signify *physical suffering from cold* or *shame* (Aubert 32). Because certain gestures can be used to convey several meanings, the movements within silent films must not only be dissected by themselves but also analyzed in context to other movements and visual indicators.

Chapter six also documents the reception and acceptance of the silent Shakespeare films and any review pertinent to gesture and movement in silent Shakespeare films. On March 19, 1910, *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly* described the acting in Gaumont's *Romeo and Juliet* (1908) as very realistic, so much so that one could forget that the film was not a live performance in a theatre (Ball *Silent Film* 76). By 1916, W. Stephen Bush for the *Moving Picture World* wrote "I freely admit that I
have the most profound respect and admiration for a medium which interprets Shakespeare to the masses without a word of dialogue and which holds these masses spellbound from the parting of the curtain" (Bush "Classics" 863). In 1916, George Blaisdell for the *Moving Picture World* reviewed Metro Picture Corporation's *Romeo and Juliet* (1916), directed by John W. Noble, and stated "Metro has done the screen a distinct service" (685).

This study further explores movement as applied to the actors' mouthing words, also known as mugging, and specifically addresses when mouthing the words ceases in the later silent Shakespeare films. One example of an actor's mouthing words occurs in *King John* (1899). On September 20, 1899, Biograph Company released a promotional film of Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's *King John*, from which only a fragment depicting Shakespeare's V.vii survives (Hindle 19). The scene includes four actors: Tree as King John, Dora Senior as Prince Henry, S. A. Cookson as the Earl of Salisbury and James Fisher White as the Earl of Pembroke. Interestingly, the scene begins with all four actors looking towards the camera, possibly waiting for the direction to begin the scene (*King John*). Once the action begins, King John "writhes in pain, earnestly mouths inaudible words, grips his chair, frantically wipes his hand apparently to rid himself of Prince Henry's solicitous attentions, shrinks from contact" and then shows his despair through his outstretched arms and finally collapses back into his chair, obviously on the brink of death (Buchanan *Silent Film* 63).

The camera, also, plays an important part in not only capturing the nuances of gesture and movement of the actors, but also emphasizing movement itself by either
remaining stationary or redirecting the audiences' focus. Changing the "camera-to-subject distance, the filmmaker can manipulate the viewer's emotional involvement with the material in complex ways" (Prince 13). After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917, Soviet filmmakers were highly influenced by the constructivist movement and inspired new techniques of filming, such as montage (Corrigan and White 305). German expressionism affected the film industry as early as 1920 with *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Prince 301). The influence of this movement is apparent in Svend Gade's *Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance* (1920).

Chapter seven provides a conclusion of the findings of this study. The silent Shakespeare films provide a documentation of the codified performance techniques of the period. They also present photographed documentation of stage productions of legendary actors. Many actors resisted performing in motion pictures because it was considered at that time to be a less-than-respectable art form. Filmmakers began to produce adaptations of Shakespeare's plays in order gain respectability with the public and attract successful stage actors to the screen, including Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Sarah Bernhardt, Frank Benson, Frederick B. Warde, Johnston Forbes-Robertson, and Emil Jannings. Though the acting conventions have changed, some of the gestures used in silent Shakespeare films are still relevant today in live theatre as well as in film, especially in regards to the many facial gestures described by Austin, Siddons, Aubert, and Garcia. The idea of wordless Shakespeare has even become the enterprise of a current theatre company based in Arlington, Virginia, The Synetic Theater

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6 This film stars Werner Kraus who appears as Iago in *Othello* (1922).
Company, underscoring the importance of gesture and movement in developing the acceptance of such ventures.
Chapter 2: Concise History of Film

It is necessary to cover the key aspects of the invention of film because, without those advancements and inventions, film as we know it today would not have been possible nor would the silent Shakespeare film ever have been made. Therefore, the objective of this chapter is not to provide a comprehensive history of film as a technology but rather to provide a concise history of film and focus on the necessary advancements that made silent Shakespeare films possible. Nor does this chapter discuss the discrepancies and controversies regarding the inventions, but accepts the views of those who are typically cited. This chapter also provides background on major production companies involved in producing silent Shakespeare films (1899-1929).

It is difficult to pinpoint precisely when the fascination with inventing moving pictures began. Before the creation of the first Shakespeare film, *King John* (1899), several individuals invented and implemented many technological developments. In *The Film Experience*, Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White primarily credit Eadward Muybridge, Thomas Alva Edison, Auguste and Louis Lumière, George Méliès, and Edwin S. Porter with pioneering the film industry (384). Robert Sklar in *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* likewise credits Muybridge, Edison, and Méliès, but he also considers prominent contributions by Étienne Jules Marey,
William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, and D. W. Griffith. The most notable individuals who propelled the film medium forward and those who had the most impact on early Shakespearean film include Marey, Muybridge, Edison, Dickson, Auguste and Louis Lumière, Méliès, and Griffith.

There is record of a reference to moving pictures as early as the mid-seventeenth century when a simple projector for slides emerged. On August 19, 1666, Samuel Pepys made an entry into his diary of a new invention, "a lantern with pictures in glass to make strange things to appear on a wall, very pretty" (Giannetti and Eyman 4). In 1713, Jonathan Swift wrote about a lantern show that he had observed: "I went afterwards to see a famous moving picture, and I never saw anything so pretty" (Mannoni 121). By the late nineteenth century, motion toys were already creating the illusion of movement, and magic lantern shows were projecting illustrations. However, Robert Sklar states in Movie-Made America, "the story of the photographic motion picture begins with [Étienne Jules] Marey and [Eadward] Muybridge" (5). Through combined efforts, Marey and Muybridge would take the first steps towards what we consider the present day motion picture.

Marey, a French scientist, began to study motion in animals and humans as early as 1867, when he was appointed a professor of natural science at the Collège de France. In the study, the subject would wear an apparatus to record his or her movements on a graph which "physiologists and anatomists made drawings representing sixteen progressive stages in [the] movements" and the drawings were placed around a circumference wheel on Plateau's Phenakistoscope, a motion device
(Sklar 5). As the wheel rotated, it produced the illusion of a man walking which could be slowed down so each succession of movement could be analyzed (Sklar 5-6).

In 1872, Eadward Muybridge, a British-born photographer, was commissioned by Leland Stanford, governor of California, to prove that a horse takes all four hooves off the ground when it is in full stride. Muybridge's first attempt was unsuccessful and was followed by several more unsuccessful attempts. However, in 1877 Muybridge fitted each camera with an electromagnetic shutter and laid various tripping devices on the track so that the horse's strides would be captured in succession. This time Muybridge was successful, and his Palo Alto photographs[7] were published in *La Nature*, a scientific journal, in December 1878. Marey, who had attempted an experiment of his own by placing rubber bulbs in the horse's hooves and graphing the results of the movement, wrote Muybridge after seeing the Palo Alto photographs, observing that they would make beautiful Zoetrapes[8] (Sklar 7). In 1879, Muybridge made an effort to recreate his previous experiment but this time increased the number of cameras used and "developed a machine, the Zoopraxiscope, which could project the images large-sized on a screen from a motion wheel" (Sklar 7).

Thomas Alva Edison, who was working on his phonograph invention, heard of Jean Louis Meissonier, a Parisian painter, who had converted Muybridge's photographs so that they could be viewed on a Zoetrope apparatus (Giannetti and Eyman 5). Edison wanted to unite sound from his phonograph with projected images.

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7 Palo Alto California is the location at which the photographs were taken.
8 A Zoetrape is a common motion device of the nineteenth century. It involves "a revolving disc holding the transparencies and is lit from behind" (Giannetti and Eyman 5). The main objective is to create persistence of vision so that a viewer will remember what is seen even after an object disappears.
In 1888, Edison and Muybridge met to discuss combining the phonograph with the Zoopraxiscope. Because only a few people could hear the phonograph at once and the Zoopraxiscope could show only a few dozen photographs, uniting sound with vision came to no avail (Sklar 10). Edison decided to assign his assistant, William K. L. Dickson, to design a machine that could be used to project a set of photographs that he had purchased from Muybridge. Dickson worked with celluloid reprints of Muybridge's photographs that were placed on cylindrical devices similar to those used for the phonograph. Edison met with Marey, who showed him his work with transparent filmstrips after George Eastman invented perforated celluloid film in 1889. The cylinder was abandoned for the flat filmstrip, and Edison and Dickson began producing 35mm film that would run at equidistant intervals past the lens. In 1889, Dickson demonstrated the Kinetophonograph, which is an exhibition device capable of showing images while accompanied by a phonograph record. By 1893, Edison's new inventions, the Kinetograph camera and the Kinetoscope viewer, became a sensation. Edison, who believed that mass viewing would never become popular, wanted to keep viewing personal, and "peep shows" could only be viewed by one person at a time.

In 1894, Edison's Kinetoscope was demonstrated in Paris. Louis and Auguste Lumière began to work on their invention, the Cimématographe, which was patented

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9 The Kinetoscope is the apparatus invented by Edison and Dickson in 1889 for viewing the strips of films they made with their Kinetograph, credited as the world's first motion picture camera developed in 1888 by Edison and Dickson. Both the Kinetoscope and the Kinetograph were patented in 1891 (Katz 655). The Kinetoscope involved a "continuous loop of film that passed over a series of rollers and in front of the lens" (Giannetti and Eyman 6).
in 1895. The Cimématographe "incorporated the ideas and inventions of . . . Marey, Muybridge, and Edison, plus several of his own, notable and eccentrically driven claw for moving film strip" (Katz 743). The camera-projector allowed images to be recorded and projected, unlike Edison's Kinetoscope, which could only record images.

In the same year that Edison introduced his Kinetoscope, Herman Casler patented his own viewing machine, the Mutoscope. This device was essentially employed the same principles as a flip-card device and contained pieces of cardboard mounted on a wheel; when the device was mechanically cranked, each photo would rapidly pass by, creating an illusion of movement (Giannetti and Eyman 9). These machines were also used in many peep-show parlors.

Dickson, who had established Edison's first film studio, Black Maria, in West Orange, New Jersey, and directed some of Edison's first films, began work on his own invention, the Biograph projection apparatus. It was officially patented as the American Biograph so that it would not be confused which a French projector of the same name, which had been patented in 1894 (Katz 120). In 1896, Dickson became a competitor to Edison when he co-founded the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company. Dickson's Biograph used "nonperforated film of a much larger frame area than was customary at the time, resulting in a much sharper screen image but requiring very careful handling by the projectionists" and was introduced to the public at New York's Olympia Music Hall on October 12, 1896 (Katz 120).

On April 23, 1896, Thomas Armat and Norman Raff premiered the Vitascope at Koster and Bial's Music Hall in New York. Armat had experimented with projectors
holding film in place as cameras did, and Norman Raff, unlike Edison, believed that projection of images on the wall for mass viewing could be successful (Giannetti and Eyman 8, 7). After paying Edison a fee, Raff billed the projector as "Edison's latest marvel, the Vitascope" despite Edison's lack of interest in and little involvement with the invention (Giannetti and Eyman 9). Still, the best projection equipment was the Lumière Brother's Cimématographe, who had "followed Shakespeare's dictum to 'hold up a mirror to nature' when they ventured into newsreel production" and other documentary-like films (Giannetti and Eyman 10).

Though the motion picture industry would encompass many more inventions, perfections, and alterations, by the turn of the century, the foundations of motion pictures had been established. By 1895, films could last up to ten minutes in length; however, up to this point, films were relatively short (most lasted around thirty seconds to a minute and a half) and usually documented life instead of telling a story. Films were made in single-takes, showing the entire action of one scene.

Edwin S. Porter is credited as a "transitional figure between the early experimenters with the film image and the makers of later narrative movies" (Corrigan and White 384). Porter's The Great Train Robbery (1903) was produced by Edison studios and was the most famous film until D. W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation (Giannetti and Eyman 14). It is "one of the earliest and most successful developments of narrative form and cinematic language taking film image to narrative" (Corrigan and White 384). Porter created a narrative of action within one scene, cutting to different shots within the same scene, virtually without any inter-title cards.
Shakespeare films would begin to use narrative instead of single scenes after Porter's movie was made; however, it was not until 1907 that Shakespeare films would tell a complete story in narrative form.

One of the important contributions of *The Great Train Robbery* is that it uses the camera in different ways. An early special effect was used to show a train passing through a stationhouse window. Porter also mounted the camera on top of the train in order to capture a fight sequence there. The actors in the film do not move only stage right to stage left but also move toward and away from the camera. Up to this point, most cameras were stationary during filming, but Porter actually used a camera pan to follow the actors, such as when the bandits escape from the train and run down a hill. Porter also places the camera to get a close-up of one of the actors and hand-tinted frames to add color to the original black-and-white footage. D. W. Griffith would employ the close-up technique in his later films and would consequently influence the silent Shakespeare films made in the later transitional phase and feature film phase.

A year before Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) was made, George Méliès\(^\text{10}\) directed *A Trip to the Moon* (1902). His contributions of special effects to the film industry are prominent in *The Tempest* (1908), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1909), *Richard III* (1911), *The Life and Death of King Richard III* (1912), *Hamlet* (1913), and *Othello* (1922). Fairies and spirits appear, disappear, and fly in the frames of *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ghostly figures appear and disappear in the frame or have their ghostly nature emphasized by means of double

\(^{10}\) Méliès was a French magician who had studied under Robert Houdini in Paris.
exposure in both the 1911 and 1912 versions of Richard III and in the 1913 version of Hamlet. Double exposure is used again when Othello dreams of Desdemona's indiscretions in Othello (1922).

Méliès began to experiment with film around 1896. During filming of a Paris street, his camera jammed. After he cleaned it, he began cranking the camera again. When he viewed the film, he saw that the bus that he had filmed was instantly transformed into a hearse. Méliès then began to develop filming methods that used dissolves, double exposures, and fade-outs. These camera techniques were used in not only Méliès' films, but also other films of the silent period, including silent Shakespeare films, and have continued to be used today.

Méliès not only contributed indirectly to the silent Shakespeare period but also impacted the period directly. He directed several Shakespeare inspired films, such as Cléopâtre (1899), La Diable et la Statue\textsuperscript{11} (1901), LeMiroir de Venise (Une Mésaventure de Shylock)\textsuperscript{12} (1905), Hamlet (1907), and Le Rêve de Shakespeare or La Mort de Jules César\textsuperscript{13} (1907). Most of these films, however, have little to do with Shakespeare's plays except for character names, the use of one scene, or fragments of the plot (Ball Silent Film 32, 34). For example, Cléopâtre\textsuperscript{14} was once thought to be influenced by Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra, but in reality shows little connection to the play (Ball Silent Film 34). In 2005, it was discovered in a storeroom

\textsuperscript{11} The English title of La Diable et la Statue (1901) is The Devil and the Statue.
\textsuperscript{12} The English title of Le Miroir de Venise (Une Mésaventure de Shylock) (1905) is The Venetian Looking-Glass (A Misfortune of Shylock).
\textsuperscript{13} Le Rêve de Shakespeare or La Mort de Jules César (1907) is most commonly referred to in English as Shakespeare writing Julius Caesar.
\textsuperscript{14} Cléopâtre (1899) is also titled Cleopatra's Tomb.
in France and has proved to be one of the first horror movies. The film shows a man breaking into Cleopatra's tomb and bringing her back to life, instead of Cleopatra's death scene, as many researchers had previously mistakenly thought. Méliès La Diable et la Statue also takes little from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet other than the main characters' names and the inclusion of a balcony scene. Its plot centers around a devil, who attempts to attack Juliet, and a statue of a Madonna figure, which saves Juliet before Romeo can return via the balcony. Likewise, Robert Hamilton Ball similarly surmises that presumed lost LeMiroir de Venise (Une Mésaventure de Shylock), has only a slight relationship to Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice (Silent Film 34).  

Still, Hamlet and Le Rêve de Shakespeare, both presumed lost, show greater influence of Shakespeare on Méliès than on his previous works. Not only did Méliès direct two Shakespeare films in one year, but he also played the title role in Hamlet and even Shakespeare himself in Le Rêve de Shakespeare. A full summary of the movie from Gaston Méliès was printed in Star Film Catalogue describing Méliès' film of Shakespeare's play as a rearranged version. Méliès' version begins at the graveyard scene and uses flashbacks and visions to depict other scenes of Shakespeare's play (Ball Silent Film 34-35). Le Rêve de Shakespeare was advertised as "How Shakespeare conceived his world-famed death scene. An elaborate reproduction costumed and staged according to the history of ancient Rome" (Ball Silent Film 35). The scene depicted the character Shakespeare making several unsatisfactory attempts

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15 Though not directed by Méliès, Ernst Lubitsch's Anna Boleyn (1920) bears no similarity to Shakespeare's Henry VIII, with the exception of character names and some historical accuracy.  
16 George Méliès' brother and general manager in the United States.
to write Julius Caesar's death scene. With Méliès' signature trick photography, the characters in Shakespeare's play appear and perform the events in the Roman setting. After the visions disappear, the character Shakespeare repeats the actions by himself before "the scene dissolved into a bust of William Shakespeare, around which all the nations wave flags and garland" (Ball *Silent Film* 36).

Despite Edison's desire to eliminate live theatre by "achieving direct transmission of live events into the home," film had to go through several more steps before bringing Edison's idea to fruition (Sklar 11). Films had gained popularity through the Kinetoscope "peep-show" parlors, which allowed up to a minute and a half of entertainment. Once films were longer, they were shown as "chasers" in vaudeville shows, usually lasting around ten minutes and shown during the intermission between acts. The Vitagrap and other projection machines premiered in Vaudeville houses, and the projected films were normally used by managers to indicate that the program was over and/or shown as patrons found their seats for the show.

The less than appealing name "chasers" misrepresents the popularity of which these films had with the public. They were so popular that when vaudeville performers went on strike in 1900 to protest managers taking five to ten percent of their salaries as an "agent's fee," the managers filled the programs with films. Because audiences kept coming despite the absence of live performances, the strike had to be abandoned.

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17 Judith Buchanan in *Shakespeare on Silent Film: An Excellent Dumb Discourse* states that the scenario is printed in *Complete Catalogue of Genuine and Original 'Star' Films (Moving Pictures) manufactured by Geo. Méliès of Paris*, compiled in 1908. Robert Hamilton Ball quotes the published summary in *Shakespeare on Silent Film: A Strange Eventful History*.
(Sklar 14). By this time a films were largely one-reelers and lasted about ten minutes in length.

By 1905, most Kinetoscope parlors began to be converted into nickelodeons, which were located mostly in working-class and middle-class neighborhoods. For the admission price of a nickel, an audience member could view about an hour's worth of short films. In comparison to the small field of vision that Kinetoscopes provided, projectors allowed many to view motion pictures simultaneously. It was not until around 1914 that movie palaces began to replace nickelodeons. The palaces were more expensive to attend and, therefore, targeted wealthier patrons (Phillips 487). By 1920, most nickelodeons converted into movie palaces, which still had a tendency to combine live vaudeville acts with film. Many production company empires, such as Warner Brothers, began as nickelodeons (Giannetti and Eyman 15). The leading production companies at the beginning of the nickelodeon period were the American Mutoscope & Biograph,¹⁸ Vitagraph, Edison, and Kalem (Giannetti and Eyman 23).

In The Transformation of Cinema, 1907-1915, Eileen Bowser gives an illustrative description of Nickelodeons in 1908:

There were twenty-one nickelodeons and three ten-cent theatres in 1908, only three years after the first nickelodeon had appeared there. Each nickelodeon in [Indianapolis] gave a show consisting of one reel of film, which might contain two or three different subjects, and an illustrated song, with the show taking twenty or twenty-five minutes -

¹⁸ The American Mutoscope & Biograph which is most commonly referred to as Biograph.
"except when there is a crowd waiting, then it is speeded up to fifteen to seventeen minutes." The shows in Indianapolis were open from nine in the morning till eleven at night, which allowed about twenty to thirty shows a day. If you could afford ten cents, you could go to one of the three high-class theatres and get an evening of three to four reels of pictures with live entertainment consisting of illustrated songs, vaudeville acts, and slide lectures lasting from one to one-and-a-half hours. By 1911, the number had increased to seventy-six motion-picture theatres alone, not including regular theatres that changed over to movies during the summer. However, only fifteen of the movie houses remained downtown in 1911, because of high rents (6).

Shakespeare adaptations were among films shown in these nickelodeons. The two largest production companies in the early days of cinema were The American Mutoscope & Biograph, and the Edison Company, both of which were manufacturers of film equipment and, therefore, large enough to actually have a division of labor (Sklar 19). In most other production companies, the titles producer and filmmaker usually indicated the same person.

Biograph was founded in 1896 after William K. L. Dickson, Elias Koopman, Henry Marvin, and Herman Casler were refused a regular supply of films by the Edison Company (Katz 120). Naturally, The American Mutoscope & Biograph
Company\textsuperscript{19} (AMBC) used and promoted the Biograph camera-projector and began to show films at Keith-Albee's vaudeville theatres beginning around 1896 and continued to do so for a decade (Abel 30). Some of the luminaries involved with Biograph include D. W. Griffith, Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Florence Lawrence, who was dubbed "The Biograph Girl" and who appears in Griffith's \textit{The Taming of the Shrew} (1908), and Mary Pickford, who appears in Sam Taylor's \textit{The Taming of the Shrew} (1929). By 1903 Biograph began to use 35mm film, which made longer productions possible and also could be shown on a standard projector (Abel 30). Though Biograph was a fierce competitor with the Edison Company, the United States Government dissolved the two companies, who were both members of the Motion Picture Patents Company,\textsuperscript{20} in 1915 after the antitrust action.

In 1897, Biograph expanded to producing and distributing films outside of North America and established a short-lived British-financed branch, the British Mutoscope and Biograph Company (BMBC), of which Koopman became the business manager. "Throughout Europe, Biograph films were exhibited at prominent vaudeville theatres and music halls and shown on the company's peep-show Mutoscopes" (Abel 122). Films were actively produced by the British branch from 1897-1903. In 1899, BMBC produced the first silent Shakespeare film, \textit{King John}, starring Herbert Beerbohm Tree. By 1905, production of film slowed, and the company disbanded in 1908.

\textsuperscript{19} The AMBC went through several name changes. In 1899 the American branch formally adopted the name American Mutoscope and Biograph Company. In 1909 the company again changed its name to simply Biograph Company .

\textsuperscript{20} The Motion Picture Patents Company was comprised of Edison, Vitagraph, Biograph, Kalem, Lubin, Selig, Essanay, Pathé-Exchange, Méliès, and Gaumont.
In the same year that the Biograph Company was established, J. Stuart Blackton and Albert E. Smith founded the American Vitagraph Company. The company's films were originally shown with live vaudeville acts. Though Vitagraph primarily used the projector that Thomas Armat and Norman Raff had invented and was billed as Edison's invention, it also competed with the Edison Company. Several of their films were "mostly topical material with little regard to authenticity" for the purposes of cutting travel costs, such as filming the Passaic Falls and advertising it as the Niagra Falls and filming the Battle of Santiago Bay in a water tank (Katz 1197). By 1897, Vitagraph presented its first fictional film, *The Burglar on the Roof*, which was filmed in the company's studio in New York City. Like Biograph, Vitagraph went through a series of expansions; establishing studios in Brooklyn's Flatbaush in 1906 and in California in 1911. Vitagraph also became a member of the Motion Picture Patents Company and was the only company that was not dissolved after the Government's antitrust decision. In 1925, Warner Brothers purchased Vitagraph. Some of the notable persons associated with Vitagraph are Florence Turner, dubbed "The Vitagraph Girl" and who appears in *Twelfth Night* (1910), and Rudolph Valentino. Between 1906 and 1916, Vitagraph produced possibly around fifteen silent Shakespeare films, at least seven of which survive.

Though the Edison Company and Biograph Company were the largest and most influential film production companies in the United States, the Pathé-Frères Company was the largest motion picture producer in the world, and "it is likely that Pathé-Frères also became the single largest producer of films shown in nickelodeons"
Founded in 1896 by Charles Pathé and his brothers, Émile, Jacques, and Théophile, Pathé built his first studio in 1902 in Vincennes, the same year that he obtained the Lumière patents. The company expanded rapidly, and by 1908 Pathé had branches in London, Moscow, New York, Kiev, Budapest, Calcutta, and Singapore, "selling twice as many films in the U.S. as all American companies combined" (Katz 900). The company not only contributed to the advancement of film through manufacturing raw film and motion picture equipment, but also developed Pathé-Color, a color process for film, and Pathé-Journal, the first weekly newsreel (Katz 900). World War I created problems for the company in France and other European branches, and, although Pathé moved his operations to the United States by 1915 under Pathé-Exchange, his other studios began to close between 1918 and 1929, when he sold his last interest in the business. In 1910, Pathé-Frères produced Romeo Turns Bandit, a short-film and loose adaptation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. The company also produced two more films Shakespearean themed films, though unconfirmed since they are presumed lost, Max et Son Rival (All's Well That Ends Well) (1910) and Antony and Cleopatra (1914).

Another company and pioneer giant of the French film industry was Léon Gaumont. Founded in 1895, the Gaumont Company originally manufactured the Chronographe, a camera-projector invented by Georges Demeny. In 1902, he invented the Chronophone, a sound system meant to synchronize film with a record player. Gaumont began to produce films, and, by 1907, his company had expanded to include

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21 Charles Pathé sold Edison phonographs and motion picture projectors prior to forming his own company.
studios, laboratories, and movie theatres in England, Germany, Russia, and the United States. In 1912, Gaumont introduced an improved, though still less than ideal, version of the Chronophone in Paris (Katz 472). In 1913, Gaumont produced in collaboration with Hepworth a film version of *Hamlet* starring Johnston Forbes-Robertson and Gertrude Elliott.

Other production-like companies began to spring up all over the world. In France, Henry Lioret's and Clement Maurie Gratioulet's Phono-Cinéma-Théâtre produced *Le Duel d'Hamlet* (1900) at the Universal Exposition in 1900, a film which runs just under a minute and a half and stars Sarah Bernhardt as Hamlet and Pierre Magnier as Laertes in a fencing scene ending with Hamlet's death. Despite the involvement of other well-known stage stars of the time, the exposition was relatively unsuccessful. Its primary purpose was to demonstrate synchronization between a projector and a phonograph that provided recorded sound. In England, Clarendon Film Company had mild success from 1904 until the company was taken over by Harma in 1918 (Able 184). Percy Stow directed most of the comedies produced by Clarendon, including Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1908). Finding greater success, the Nordisk Film Company was established in 1906, was a leading producer of film in the world market, and is "the oldest film production company in the world in continuous existence" (Katz 863). Nordisk produced August Blom's *Desdemona* (1911), which was based on Shakespeare's *Othello*. Asta Nielsen was often associated with this company, though her performance as the title character in *Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance* (1920) was produced by Art-Film.
In Italy, Film d'Arte Italiana (FAI) was founded in 1909 by the Italian branch office of Pathé-Frères to elevate motion pictures from mere vaudeville "chasers" to a tribute to theatre (Giannetti and Eyman 16). It was comprised mainly of highly respected directors and actors from the legitimate stage, such as Sarah Bernhardt and other actors from the Comédie Française, composers such as Camille Saint-Saëns, and writers such as Edmund Rotand. Film d'Arte Italiana also "specialized in bringing Italy’s most celebrated theatrical figures to the screen" (Able 340). The company had short lived success but notable films, including Otello (1909), Re Lear (1910), Il Mercante di Venezia (1910), Queen Elizabeth (1912), Il Trovatore (1911), and Romeo e Giulietta (1912). Re Lear, Il Mercante di Venezia, and Romeo e Giulietta, the film versions of Shakespeare's King Lear, The Merchant of Venice, and Romeo and Juliet, respectively, all star a young Francesca Bertini, who later would greatly impact gesture in silent film (Last Diva).

In The Film Encyclopedia, Ephraim Katz states that the short-lived success of Film d'Arte Italiana was due to the nature of its productions. The "filmic result was photographed theatre, static and uninspired, which virtually halted the development of cinema for several years" (Katz 418). Yet Katz also gives three reasons why the company was beneficial to motion pictures:

It brought better-educated audiences to the movie theatres and enhanced the medium's prestige. It also had an important impact on the American film industry. In 1912 Adolph Zukor acquired the American exhibition rights to the 3-4 reel Bernhardt film Queen Elizabeth. Its
success encouraged him to establish his Famous Players in Famous Plays, the American equivalent of the Film d'Art. But most important, it convinced American production companies, which had been turning out single-reel films only, of the commercial viability of feature-length films (418).

Indeed, in the same year that FAI released *Romeo e Giulietta*, the Le Film d'Art and Sterling Camera and Film Company released feature film length *The Life and Death of King Richard III*, starring Frederick Warde, which the American Film Institute recognizes as "the first feature film based on a Shakespeare play" and "the oldest surviving complete American feature film" (*The Life and Death*). The film was released in the United States on October 15, 1912, and ran approximately fifty-five minutes (about five reels worth). Although *Romeo e Giulietta* was released in Italy nine months earlier on January 25, 1912, it was not released in the United States until January 3, 1913, and ran approximately thirty-five minutes (about four reels worth).

In 1909, Edwin Thanhouser established the Thanhouser Film Corporation in New York City. Along with Vitagraph, Thanhouser is possibly one of the largest producers of silent Shakespeare films. By 1912, the Thanhouser Film Corporation was a world-renown production company and achieved success until 1917, when the industry underwent a depression and Thanhouser disbanded (*Thanhouser Company Film Preservation*). Between 1910 and 1916, Thanhouser filmed at least nine Shakespeare films; at least four survive.
Many inventions were needed in order to bring about silent films. Marey, Muybrudge, Edison, Dickson, the Lumière brothers, Eastman, and Méliès all made significant contributions to the film industry that would allow silent films to be made. From the primitive Zoetrapes and Zoopraxiscope to the more intricate Biographs, Vitagraphs, and Mutoscopes, advancements in cameras and projectors took viewing moving pictures from an individual experience to a mass viewing experience.

When dealing specifically with silent Shakespeare films, it is important to look at the differences that developed over time. The silent Shakespeare movies can be broken down into several periods. The first period is the initial or experimental phase characterized by short films that show a scene or two from Shakespeare's plays. Usually these plays had already been produced on the live stage and are documentation of those performances. They could also be used as an advertisement during vaudeville shows. The initial period lasts roughly from 1899, when Herbert Beerbohm Tree's *King John* was first photographed, to roughly 1907.

The second phase is often referred to as the transitional phase, lasting roughly from 1908-1913. Characteristics of transitional-phase films include very few inter-title cards that give only a general outline of the scene and condensed (and sometimes inaccurate) versions of the plays. Very few Shakespeare-inspired films of this period utilized Porter's and D. W. Griffith's techniques of the close-up but, instead, tended to use long shots, which resulted in representing the actors as an audience would view them on the live stage.
The feature film period of silent Shakespeare films begins in 1912 with Frederick Warde's *The Life and Death of King Richard III* (1912) and ends before Errol Flynn and Mary Pickford's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1929). Like the transitional phase, the films are not always true to Shakespeare's text; however, they differ in characteristic primarily by being longer versions of the plays, thanks to the use of more reels and the use of inter-title cards, which often contained at least an adaptation of Shakespeare's text to convey character lines.
Chapter 3: Silent Shakespeare Begins

Before the silent Shakespeare films, a great deal of nineteenth-century theatre had already significantly abandoned Shakespeare's language (Buchanan *Silent Film* 42). Robert William Elliston's 1809 stage version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is often referred to as the first wordless Shakespeare performance. By the first silent Shakespeare film, nearly a century later, audiences were accustomed to seeing live stage productions replacing dialogue with pantomimes, movements, and gestures. Although pantomime can be traced back to ancient Greece, performing wordless adaptations of plays that originally contained dialogue can be traced back to the Restoration period in England. However, the censorship that would propel events towards silent Shakespeare began to be actively exercised, ironically, in Shakespeare's time.

The first person to exercise the power of licensing and revising plays for public performance was Edmund Tilney. In 1579, Tilney was appointed the third Master of the Revels by Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603), a position which oversaw court dramas. In 1581, Tinley was allowed to authorize plays for public performance and "seems regularly to have reviewed plays prior to their performance, ordered revisions or excisions, and signed the manuscripts of plays to indicate his approval" (Liesenfeld 9-10). Until this time other authoritative figures already had the power to intervene in
order to control or prohibit public performances, such as justices of the peace, municipal officers of towns, the Lord Mayor of London, and the Lord Chamberlain. Tinley's nephew, Sir George Buck, assumed his office upon Tinley's death in 1610. Under Buck, there was a decline of censorship of plays. However, his successor, Sir Henry Herbert, not only assumed authority in 1623 over licensing plays, but also over publishable books containing verse (Liesenfeld 10).

The hostile environment for drama and theatre continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Because of "religious opposition to dramatic entertainments," theatres in England had closed from 1642 to 1660 (Liesenfeld 3). In 1698, Jeremy Collier criticized drama in his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*. Theatres went through a period affected by royal patents and legal restrictions. Playhouses were denounced as "hotbeds of vice and immorality" (Crean 246). Expressions deemed to be indecent were prohibited by various laws unless they were approved by the Master of the Revels or the Lord Chamberlain. Even if permission was granted, those who found themselves accused of an infraction and appealed to the Crown seldom prevailed (Liesenfeld 13).

Royal patents were granted to two theatres within a twenty-mile radius of London in 1660: Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Both were known interchangeably as Royal Theatres and Patent Theatres, because of licensing by the Crown and the patent legislation, respectively. By 1688, public criticism influenced officials to specifically consider the censorship of plays that contained debauchery or profanity within the dialogue (Liesenfeld 11). One of the most prominent examples of
censorship of a Shakespeare play due to political implications occurred in 1698. The entire first act of Colley Cibber's version of Shakespeare's *Richard III* was eliminated by the Master of the Revels, Sir Charles Killigrew. Cibber appealed this decision and tried to have at least some speeches and dialogue from the first act permitted, but Sir Killigrew refused claiming that "the Distresses of *Henry the Sixth*, who is kill'd [sic] by Richard in the first Act, would put weak People too much in mind of King *James*, then living in *France*" [sic] (Cibber 152).

Throughout this period and well into the 1720s, the main thrust of censorship was to prevent unfavorable political consequences. Attacks on the church were forbidden; however, there was no law against politically offensive plays except if the play constituted seditious libel (Liesenfeld 13). The enforcement of patents and licenses was usually less than effective, and credibility of threats to close theatres was often diminished (Liesenfeld 15). Restoration plays often ridiculed government officials such as Sir Henry Warpole, the first minister of England. John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (1728), Henry Fielding's *Tom Thumb* (1730), and Henry Carey's *Chronohotonthologos* (1734) are among some of the plays which censured Walpole.

On March 5, 1736, Henry Fielding's *Pasquin, a dramatic satire of the times* (1736) opened and ran for at least sixty-three uninterrupted performances. It was the primary play that directly resulted in the Licensing Act of 1737 (Crean 248-249). The first act contains a rehearsal for "A Comedy, call'd [sic] The Election" in which

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22 Not only the popularity of Fielding's *Pasquin*, but the continuous run of the play from March 5, 1736, to June 17, 1736, with some performances even after June 17th, was considered an insult to the two Royal Theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden (Crean 249).
"parliamentary candidates and voters are shown alike to be devoid of political principle" skewering Walpole's excesses which were paid for by the taxpayers (Crean 249). The second act of Pasquin rehearses "The Life and Death of Common Sense," a tragedy. At the end of the second act, the character Commonsense is destroyed. The second part, which focuses its criticism on law, medicine, and religion, provides little additional commentary on Walpole, who is attacked primarily in the first act (Crean 250).

Fielding's Pasquin, along with the various attempts of censorship throughout the Restoration period, were catalysts for The Licensing Act of 1737. This Act is the most influential legal action that would influence the audiences' viewing of the silent films (Buchanan Silent Film 42). The Lord Chamberlain was given power to prohibit any theatrical performance and required "new plays, additions to old plays, prologues, and epilogues" to be "forwarded for approval fourteen days before they were intended to be acted" (Crean 254). It not only established the censorship powers of the Lord Chamberlain and his "Examiners of plays," but it legislatively divided theatres into two categories: major theatres and minor theatres. Only major theatres were permitted to perform "legitimate" theatre, full-length plays comprised of five acts, and were allowed to use verbal dialogue throughout the play. In 1751 and 1755, further regulations were added to The Licensing Act of 1737. In 1766, Haymarket was granted a patent, though it was less secure than the patents given to Drury Lane and

23 Walpole had tried to pass a similar Act in 1735, but the legislation in parliament failed.
Covent Garden (Buchanan *Silent Film* 42). The major theatres maintained a monopoly on legitimate theatre until the Licensing Act of 1737 was repealed in 1843.

After parliament passed the Licensing Act of 1737, minor theatres were under heavy legal restrictions. One notable instance in which a minor theatre was found to be in violation of the Licensing Act of 1737 is the case of John Palmer. In 1789, Palmer was found to be in violation of the Act and imprisoned as a vagrant for attempting to use dialogue in *The Fall of the Bastille* (Murray 19). Minor theatres could only perform short plays of two or three acts, burlettas, and illustrated lectures. Furthermore, the Act classified "itinerant players as rogues and vagabonds, subject to penalties as such" (Maginnes 50). Unpatented theatres were essentially forced to create new plays and find an acceptable way of performing to escape legal action. They "became adept at developing inventive maneuvers to minimize the constraints upon their productions that the ban necessarily imposed" (Buchanan *Silent Film* 43). It was during this time period that pantomimes and ballets of action began to be staged in order to circumvent legal infractions.

The Royal Circus theatre was reopened in 1795, after being closed in 1790 following Palmer's second infraction of the law, and "the managers, John Cross and James Jones, took good care to present little better than inexplicable dumbshows and noise, or, more accurately, pantomimes, ballets of actions, and burletta scenes involving songs and doggerel chanted to a piano accompaniment" (Murray 20). John

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24 According to A. C. Sprague, "there is little agreement as to just what a burletta was, though songs were associated with it, and such spoken dialogue as it contained was likely to be accompanied by music" (80).
Cross was the primary composer of the pantomimes and ballets of action, many of which have been published in *Circusiana* (1809).

In 1809, Robert William Elliston left his employment with Drury Lane, having decided to join the Royal Circus. His first work at the Royal Circus, an adaptation of John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* in which Ellison himself played the character Macheath, premiered on June 15, 1809. His next project at the Royal Circus was a burletta version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which was publicized in *The Morning Advertiser* on August 24, 1809: "Ellison is about to bring out Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, at the Circus, as a burletta! *Hamlet* we expect to see transformed into a farce, and a ballet made of *King Lear*" (Sprague 81n).

Elliston's adaptation of *Macbeth* premiered August 30, 1809. John Cross "virtually translated *Macbeth* into the medium of serious pantomime," leaving only 326 lines, which were sung, and converting the original five act play into three acts (Murray 23). In a press release on August 30, 1809 of the *Times*, *Macbeth* was advertised as a "Ballet of Music and Action, founded on MACBETH [sic]" (Murray 22). According to the playbill, all of Shakespeare's characters were accounted for and Elliston played Macbeth. However, along with the three Weird Sisters and Hecate, the production included a large choral of witches as well as apparitions and sprites (Sprague 84). The majority of the "lines" that were verbalized were delivered by the Weird Sisters, the Chorus of Witches, and Hecate.25

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25 A. C. Sprague published the entire promptbook, which also includes the cast list and the prologue, of Elliston's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in his essay *Macbeth of a Few Words*. The essay was published in *...All These to Teach; Essays in Honor of C. A. Robertson* (1965). My observations of the production are taken from Sprague's publication of the promptbook unless otherwise indicated.
A prologue written and delivered by Elliston, addresses the conversion of Shakespeare's play into pantomime:

Faithful to nature and the drama's law, / From this great source our promis'd scenes we draw / Macbeth . . . Though not indulg'd with fullest pow'rs of speech / The poet's object we aspire to reach; / The emphatic gesture, eloquence of eye, / Scenes, music, every energy we try . . . To prove we keep our duties full in view, / And what we must not say, resolve to do; / Convinc'd that you will deem our zeal sincere, / Since more by deeds than words it will appear [sic] (Sprague 86).

Elliston's version of Macbeth has even more in common with silent Shakespeare films in addition to gesture and movement replacing Shakespeare's language. At several points in the production, banners were used to provide references to the audience. The banners served the same purpose as the inter-title cards used in silent films. In particular, Elliston's production's banners were similarly composed as inter-title cards used in transitional phase of the silent Shakespeare films (1908-1913).26 Like silent films' inter-title cards, the banners replaced Shakespeare's dialogue with "pared-down plot summaries and snatches of dialogue" (Buchanan Silent Film 45). During Act I, scene iii of the production, a messenger enters carrying a banner that states, "By Sinel's death, Macbeth is Thane of Glamis" after which Macduff enters

26Although similarities exist in terms of the use of gesture, movement, and banners with Elliston's Macbeth and silent Shakespeare films, it is important to note that the use of banners and inter-title cards were employed for different reasons. The 1809 production could not use speech in the performance as an unpatented theatre, whereas silent films simply did not have the perfected means by which to match recorded sound to the photographs.
holding a banner which says "Duncan doth create Macbeth Thane of Cawdor" (Sprague 90). Other banners include "Macbeth ordains a solemn Banquet;" a message to Macduff: "Your Castle is surprised, and wife and babes murdered;" a message to Macbeth: "Ten thousand English approach;" commentary of Malcolm and Macduff: "Destruction to the Tyrant;" and messages to Macbeth: "The Queen is dead" and "The wood of Birnam moves toward Dunsunane"27 (Sprague 95, 99, 100).

The reception of the play by the audience was overwhelmingly good. The day after Macbeth premiered, The Morning Chronicle indicated "with the exception of dialogue, the performance was almost exactly the play of Shakespeare" and on September 1, 1809, the Times declared the performance to be "uncommonly expressive and clear" (Murray 24). The production ran through the month of September to "overflowing houses" as the title page of the published promptbook proclaims (Sprague 83). The title page also declares Macbeth as a "matchless piece of pantomime and choral performance" (Sprague 83). Wordless, pantomimic performance became the popular trend, which continued even after the Licensing Act was repealed in 1843 and was not limited to England, but had expanded to other European theatres and American theatres (Buchanan Silent Film 48). However, even after the repeal in 1843, the speech ban was still in effect for music halls which continued to promote the "practice of wordless, pantomimic performance in popular theatrical life" and inspire "creativity and legal circumvention in the late nineteenth-century music halls" (Buchanan Silent Film 46).

27 The banners' scripts are printed directly in the promptbook.
With *Macbeth*, the counterpoint relationship to silent films of adapting Shakespeare's dialogue to wordless adaptations was established and began to further develop the relationship though magic lantern shows. The banners that were used in Elliston's *Macbeth* gradually were replaced or supplemented with lanternslides in productions, such as in Edmund Kean's revival of *King Lear* at Drury Lane in 1821. Well-known actors of the period could reach audiences without touring by having his or her image as a Shakespeare character memorialized with the invention of lantern shows. The images tend either to show an actor in a role, such as "Mr. Kean in the Character of Richard III," "Mrs. Siddon in the Characters of Queen Catherine," and "Ellen terry as Lady Macbeth" or the action of the play, including "The Combat between McDuff and Macbeth," "Scene from Hamlet," and "The Death of Richard" (Buchanan *Silent Film* 29). Similar to the development of silent Shakespeare films, lantern shows first began as simple images and gradually evolved into telling complete stories.

An early attempt in the incorporation of video in stage performance is found in Herbert Beerbohm Tree's stage production of *The Tempest* in 1905. Lantern slides had already been used as scenery in performance; however, Tree photographed a real ship scene and used the Biograph to project the film during the first scene of the play. The films were tinted in an attempt to make the film more realistic. This is the first instance on record in which film is integrated into a stage production. On September 17, 1905, the *Era* wrote "In the production at His Majesty's, modern science has
enabled Mr. Tree to fairly stagger us by some wonderful shipwreck that opens the play" (Ball *Silent Film* 31).

Shakespeare slides were not the standard repertory of lantern shows and were usually included with other slides that dealt with other topics. However, Casper W. Briggs was the largest commercial producer of lantern slides that primarily portrayed scenes from Shakespeare plays (Buchanan *Silent Film* 29). His Shakespeare Illustrated series included multiple scenes from each of the following plays: *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *Timon of Athens*, *Twelfth Night*, and *A Winter's Tale*. The slides that are still in existence are stored at the George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

The immoral reputation of theatre that propelled the legal restrictions instituted in the Licensing Act of 1737, in a way, impacted silent films. Laws were passed to prohibit placing nickelodeons and motion picture theatres within close proximity to churches. An article in the *Motion Picture World* magazine from June 13, 1908, blames nickelodeons for the corruption of America's youth. The article states:

> Nickelodeons are so interesting and alluring that they are making all the little boys wicked . . . [because they] are so found of going to see the pictures that they commit petty thefts . . . to get the money to gratify their taste for the romantic and exciting scenes which are displayed in moving pictures" (*MPW "Nickelodeons* 511).
Later the same year, the *Evening News* in Newark, New Jersey reported that a fourteen year old boy was arraigned on charges of incorrigibility, filed by his mother who blamed moving pictures for "his criminal propensities" (*MPW "Influence"* 446). The sentence was suspended after the boy promised to stay away from motion picture shows. The article continues to explain how moving picture shows are "realistic, attractive, and often very instructive" and although they can provide entertainment, they should be censored (*MPW "Influence"* 446). Nickelodeons and moving picture theatres were believed by "guardians of public morality" to be places where sins were committed and "belonged in the same class as brothels, gambling dens, and the hangouts of criminal gangs" (Sklar 18). Little had changed since the Restoration period regarding moralistic sentiments.

Films based on Shakespeare's plays had been a means to circumvent the immoral reputation of film and to gain respectability for the medium (Buchanan *Shakespeare on Film* 22). More Shakespeare films were made from 1908 to 1911, with the greatest number in a single year in 1908\(^{28}\) (Ball *Silent Film* 39). One of the first cases of censorship of film occurred in 1899 targeting BMBC's animated picture *Studio Troubles*. The film was controversial for two reasons. Not only did it present "saucy action featuring an inflammatory combination of an adolescent boy and a naked female model" but it also "parodied a prudish disapproval of saucy fun and the insistence that an end should be put to it" by the boy's mother (Buchanan *Silent Film*).

\(^{28}\) Though approximately 18 Shakespearean films were made in 1908, more than any other year, it is worth noting that only five are presently extant: Cines' *Hamlet*, Vitagraph's *Julius Caesar* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Biograph's *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Clarendon's *The Tempest*. 

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Citizens, clergy, and even some members of Parliament demanded that the film be suppressed (Buchanan *Silent Film* 59). BMBC’s next project was the respectable Shakespeare film, *King John* (1899). However, by 1907 many popular narratives in films involved depictions of crime, like Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*, and seemingly risqué situations (Ball *Silent Film* 39). Because Shakespeare was considered the best dramatist, films based on his plays were not only a safe choice, but, in response to the amount of vulgar films, virtually endorsed by the public (Ball *Silent Film* 39).

On occasion, however, officials did attempt to censor certain silent Shakespeare films, such as Vitagraph's *Macbeth* (1908). Chicago Police Lieutenant Joel A. Smith was granted the authority to censor films by Police Chief Shippy. He took issue with the stabbing scene, stating that the scene is not prominent in Shakespeare's play and the film version amplifies the violence and gore:

> The stabbing scene in the play is not predominant. But in the picture show it is the feature. In the play the stabbing is forgotten in the other exciting and artful and artistic creations that divert the imagination. On the canvas you see the dagger enter and come out and see the blood flow and see the wound that's left. Shakespeare is art, but it's not adapted altogether for the 5-cent style of art (MPW "Macbeth" 511).

In the end, the scenes that involved the stabbing of King Duncan and the duel between Macbeth and Macduff were ordered to be cut. Importantly, however, because the film
is presumably lost, the article in the *Motion Picture World* gives us at least an idea of
the nature of the film.

Despite some censorship, silent films were not under equally restrictive
regulations concerning thematic elements nor were they subjected to constant revision
by government officials as were the plays from the eighteenth century. Films, like the
unpatented theatres, were unable to permit each actor to deliver his or her own
dialogue because the use of synchronized sound in films was not successful until
1927. Nevertheless, silent films were rarely, if ever, silent. Live music, sound effects,
and even live lecturers often accompanied the action projected on the screen. Lectures
had been adapted from the magic lantern tradition. W. Stephen Bush, a critic for the
*Moving Picture World*, declared that he "never discovered an audience which was not
eager and thankful for a good lecture and which did not gladly pay an advance in the
price of admission" (*MPW* "Moving Pictures" 137). W. Stephen Bush and Frederick
B. Warde are the most recognized of these lecturers today because of resources
available on their lectures.

In August 1908, W. Stephen Bush wrote "Lectures on Moving Pictures,"
which set forth requirements of how to deliver a lecture. The following is an excerpt
of some of those requirements:

Be sure above all things not to talk over the heads of your audience. As
a rule, plain and simple language is the most effective. An occasional
rise to the heights of eloquence will come naturally to the man who has
the vocation and nothing will please an audience better. Avoid the sing-
song style and never repeat. Speak only on the scenes that invite and need comment. Never lecture on a subject that requires no lecture. . . If you are not sure about the range of your voice, learn from the man in the most remote corner of the theatre whether he understands every word you utter. Lecturing on dramatic subjects, follow as far as possible the language of the dramatist; . . . never shout, and avoid as the most fatal fault of all the "barker" style (MPW "Lectures"137).

Referencing a viewing of Macbeth,29 Bush stated that the audience could be "thrilled and delighted with a proper presentation of [Shakespeare's] work," without which, audiences would be "bewildered" (MPW "Moving Pictures" 137).

Frederick B. Warde was already an experienced lecturer before filming The Life and Death of King Richard III in 1912. He had toured giving Shakespearean lectures "extensively on the Lyceum/Chautauqua circuits" (Woods 335). After Warde made The Life and Death of King Richard III, he lectured as the film was presented. Along with the action of the film, pictures showing prominent characters of the play were shown, presumably to introduce them as Warde lectured. The Times Charleston News and Courier January 12, 1913 describes one of Warde's lectures on Richard III:

Mr. Warde offers five reels of moving pictures, depicting the great play, King Richard III [sic]. While the eyes rest in the intermissions between the showing of the reels, Mr. Warde entertains the audience with a dramatic recital of famous passages in the play, elucidating them

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29 Although there is not conclusive evidence, this Macbeth may possibly be the same Macbeth that was censored in Chicago in June of 1908. Bush's article was published in August of the same year.
at the same time. During the showing of the pictures he explains the situations. The result if amazingly good. In educational value, from the historical viewpoint, it is better than the presentation of the play itself. Indeed the offering is the best combination moving pictures entertainment that has yet been brought to this city. It is truly wonderful (Ball Silent Film 159).

For the most part, the evidence on motion picture lectures comes from reviews like the aforementioned. However, a written record exists of an entire lecture given in Berlin, Germany during a showing of Othello. Professor Dr. Sellman transcribed everything the lecturer said and published the entire transcript in his essay "Literatur und the Kinematograph" in Eckart - Ein Deustches Literaturblatt. In the transcription, Sellman notes the lecturer's thick Berlin accent several times. The following is an excerpt of the transcript in which the lecturer describes the final scene that results in Desdemona's death:

Now just look at how the black monster watches his pretty wife in this bit. You can see that - (gentleman in the front right there: smoking's not allowed in here, so would you mind . . . ?) - so, where were we? Oh yes, that the jealousy is a passion which seeks out its own suffering. So now he just lets rip at her and drags her out of her sweet slumber. Look now- she's protesting her innocence. But what does the black monster do? (I have to insist on silence for this gripping section of the drama. If you want to giggle, I'd thank you to go over to Luna Park.) so what
does her do? He strangles the loveliest creature the world has ever seen. Don't miss this bit: one last spasm, see, and now she's dead\textsuperscript{30} [sic] (Buchanan \textit{Silent Film} 12).

The lecturer should have heeded W. Stephen Bush's advice to make "his description conform to the scenes or else leave it out entirely" stated in his article "Lecture It Right or Not at All" (\textit{MPW} "Lecture It Right" 943).

\textsuperscript{30} The complete transcript is provided in Steffen Wolf's "Geschichte der Shakespeare-Verfilmungen (1899-1964)" and in Max Lippman's (ed.) \textit{Shakespeare im Film} (1964).
Chapter 4: Variations of Plays in Films

Although Shakespeare's plays formed the basis of the storyline for silent Shakespeare films, liberties were often taken with the texts of Shakespeare's plays. The most liberties with Shakespeare's texts were taken during the transitional years of cinema, a period that lasted roughly from 1907 to 1913, during the film industry's developmental phase. Only a handful of these films are still in existence. However, of the relatively few Shakespearean-based films from the silent era, the majority of films readily available to the general public are from the transitional period. These films are Claredon's *The Tempest* (1908), Biograph's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1908), Vitagraph's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1909) and *Twelfth Night* (1910), Film d'Arte Italiana's *Il Mercante di Venezia* (1910), *Re Lear* (1910) and *Romeo e Giulietta* (1912), Pâthé-Frères' *Romeo Turns Bandit* (1910), Thanhouser's *A Winter's Tale* (1910) and *Cymbeline* (1913), British Co-operative Cinematograph Company's *Richard III* (1912), Nordisk Film Company's *Desdemona* (1911), and Shakespeare Film Company's *Richard III* (1912).

Although these films are more often than not adaptations of Shakespeare's plays instead of a truthful restaging of the text, film productions during the transitional phase became stories in their own right. According to W. Stephen Bush's article "Classics and the Screen," motion pictures had several advantages over stage
productions: 1. Motion pictures could utilize the technique of double exposure and "visions and apparitions on the speaking stage . . . are always unsatisfactory" (863); 2. Motion pictures can show the action that can intensify the effect instead of relaying an account of the events (863).

Many films of the silent era that seem to be based on the works of William Shakespeare are also deceptive in their Shakespearean origins, such as Edison Company's \(^{31}\) Burlesque on Romeo and Juliet (1902) and Méliès' Le Diable et la Statue (1901). Both films have little to do with the Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet except for an inclusion of a balcony scene (Ball Silent Film 32). Likewise, Vitagraph's A Midwinter Night's Dream / Little Joe's Luck (1906), Selig's All's Well That Ends Well (1907), Méliès' Cléopâtre (1899), and Méliès' LeMiroir de Venise (Une Mésaventure de Shylock) (1905) borrow little from Shakespeare plays other than the titles, character names, the setting, or plot elements (Ball Silent Film 32, 34). This chapter focuses on the inaccuracies in the silent Shakespeare films. The films include experimental phase films King John (1899), Le Duel d'Hamlet (1900), and Duel Scene from Macbeth (1905); transitional phase films The Taming of the Shrew (1908), The Tempest (1908), A Midsummer Night's Dream (1909), Il Mercante di Venezia (1910), Re Lear (1910), Twelfth Night (1910), A Winter's Tale (1910), Romeo Turns Bandit (1910), Desdemona (1911), Cymbeline (1913), and Richard III (1911); and feature films Romeo e Giulietta (1912), The Life and Death of King Richard III (1912), Hamlet (1913), King Lear (1916), Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance (1920), and Othello (1922).

\(^{31}\) Burlesque on Romeo and Juliet is listed in The Edison Films' Catalogue under "Imported Films" (Ball 32).
For the most part, many of the silent Shakespeare films maintain Shakespeare's storylines. However, the liberties that the silent films take with the plots, characters, and settings of Shakespeare's plays are almost too numerous to discuss in great detail. In the experimental phase, the silent films concentrate on one scene from Shakespeare's plays, as in *King John* (1899), *Le Duel d'Hamlet* (1900), and *Duel Scene from Macbeth* (1905). All of these films were made in the pioneering days of cinema, before each film lasted more than a few minutes. Once silent Shakespeare films reached narrative form in the transitional phase, scenes from the plays were eliminated, combined, or altered. Yet, even once films reached the feature film phase, silent Shakespeare films continued to be rearranged, edited, and altered.

As William H. Phillips writes in *Film: An Introduction*, "In the early days of cinema, many fictional films closely imitated plays . . . many early films look like awkwardly filmed theatre" (Phillips 222). In the case of British Mutoscope and Biograph Company's *King John* (1899), this is true. Herbert Beerbohm Tree had played the title role at Her Majesty's Theatre from September 1899 through January 1900. In the stage production of *King John*, Shakespeare's play had already experienced cuts and reordering of scenes in order to tell the story in a "quick, coherent and logical manner" (Buchanan *Silent Film* 60).

Although it is unlikely that "the finished product was ever publicly exhibited or brought any returns," the film, which was photographed by William K. L. Dickson and co-directed by Dickson and Walter Pfeffer Dando, originally lasted around three to

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32 The quote is from a pamphlet that Tree included with the program.
four minutes in length (Buchanan *Silent Film* 62). The surviving scene fragment involves the death of King John, who is seated in a throne in front of a backdrop. The cast includes Tree as King John, Dora Senior as Prince Henry, F. M. Paget as Robert Bigot, and James Fisher as the Earl of Pembroke. All of these characters are present in Shakespeare's V.vii, but two characters are missing: Salisbury and the Bastard. With the film version, King John has already been carried in and the scene ends shortly after King John expires, eliminating the "dialogue" of the remaining characters. It is unknown if the lost footage included an extension of this scene or other scenes from the play.

Like *King John*, there is similar condensing of the presented scene in *Le Duel d'Hamlet* (1900) and *Duel Scene from Macbeth* (1905). Bernhardt's Hamlet dies relatively quickly in comparison to Shakespeare's play, and it is unknown what happens to Pierre Magnier's Leartes, who exits the frame once he wounds Hamlet. In *Duel Scene from Macbeth*, Shakespeare's V.vii and V.viii are abridged into a continuous fight between Macbeth and Young Siward and Macbeth and Macduff, respectively. Like *King John*, the action of both short films is photographed in front of a theatrical backdrop. However, both *Le Duel d'Hamlet* and *Duel Scene from Macbeth* were publicly exhibited at the Universal Exposition in 1900 in Paris along with other films showing a variety of historical combats in a program entitled "Fights of Nations," respectively (*Silent Shakespeare*). Billy Bitzer photographed the latter of the films and was the cinematographer for Biograph's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1908), as well as many other films directed by D. W. Griffith.
Far more variations occur in the transitional-phase silent Shakespeare films. For example, Biograph's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1908) severely cuts the plot line concerning Bianca and Lucentio, Hortensio and Gremio are virtually non-existent, and Baptista visits Pertuchio's home at the end. Still, the story-line of Petruchio's "taming" Katherine, though slightly altered, is intact. The entire film is comprised of ten sequences, many that use the same scenery, and five inter-title cards. The scenery itself is worth noting because it is three-dimensional instead of a painted backdrop. This is one of the first instances in silent Shakespeare that an actual set is erected.\(^3\) *The Taming of the Shrew* not only was the first Shakespearean enterprise by D. W. Griffith, but also starred "The Biograph Girl," Florence Lawrence, as Katherine. Biograph itself promoted the elimination of scenes in the "Biograph Bulletin" from 1908: ". . . one of the snappiest, funniest films of the kind ever made . . . only the stirring, interesting portions of the play are depicted; at the same time the story is clearly, though concisely told" (Sammons 135).

Clarendon's *The Tempest* (1908), directed by Percy Stow, takes far more liberties with the film than Biograph's *The Taming of the Shrew*. The film shows several events that take place prior to Shakespeare's play. Whereas Shakespeare's I.i begins with the ship's crew struggling in a storm, the action of the film begins with Prospero leaving a large vessel and climbing into a small boat with a very young Miranda and his book. The inter-title card reflects this stating "Prospero Seeks Refuge

\(^{33}\) Upon close observation, the set in Méliès' *La Diable et la Statue* (1901) is a backdrop, though a well-crafted one, that creates an illusion of an actual set.
on an Island" (*The Tempest*). Three more extra scenes preceding the beginning of Shakespeare's play follow the action of the film with corresponding inter-title cards. We see Prospero discover Caliban, Prospero save Ariel from a cloven pine, and Ariel protect Miranda from Caliban. It is only after these four scenes that Shakespeare's actual play begins, but even then, the focus is on Prospero and Miranda during the storm rather than on the sailors and passengers on the ship. The rest of the story is condensed and, for the most part, focuses on Miranda and Ferdinand's relationship. Antonio, Sebastian, and Alonso are introduced only near the end in one continuous scene involving Ariel's magical banquet and reconciliation between Antonio and Prospero. The comedic scenes involving Trinculo, Stephano, and Caliban are completely eliminated.

The elimination of these scenes, however, most likely did not affect public opinion of the film. Stow uses Méliès' techniques to create special effects at several points in the film. An explosion turns into doves, a ship is made to look as though it is in the distance and sinking, Arial disappears and reappears when leading Ferdinand to Miranda, Ariel turns into a monkey to scare Caliban and then back again into the spirit's previous state, and food appears and quickly vanishes. Even in Shakespeare's play, magic is used by Ariel to lure Ferdinand and to make a banquet appear and vanish.

Vitagraph's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1909), directed by J. Stuart Blackton and Charles Kent, maintains the plot structure provided by Shakespeare's play better than Clarendons' *The Tempest*; however, it has one of the most interesting
changes to Shakespeare's play. A female character, Penelope, replaces the character Oberon. In general, Penelope serves the same purpose as Oberon: The character has a disagreement with Tatiana in the beginning, Penelope puts the disenchantment drops into Titania's eyes afterward, and the two fairy queens have reconciliation at the end. Vitagraph did not offer an explanation of the change and critics failed to mention the change in their reviews (Buchanan *Silent Film* 133). There is likewise no record of the actor's name.

Judith Buchanan in *Shakespeare on Silent Film* hypothesized two reasons why Oberon was changed to Penelope. Her first suggestion centers on the fact that Vitagraph may have had more famous female actors than male actors. According to Britain's *The Bioscope* from March 3, 1910, the film featured "only conventional appearances of Oberon," and the title cards at the European distributors may not have reflected the change in casting if the actor playing Oberon was replaced at the last minute with a female actor playing Penelope (Buchanan *Silent Film* 135). Her second suggestion reflects the nineteenth-century idea that fairyland was a female domain (135). Shakespeare's characters Puck and Ariel were both often cast with female actors in the nineteenth century. Madame Vestris also began the movement of gender cross-casting Oberon with a female actor in the 1840s, and subsequent stage productions continued the practice in Augustin Daly's production at Daly's Theatre in 1895 and Herbert Beerbohm Tree's production at Her Majesty's Theatre in 1900 (Buchanan *Silent Film* 135). Buchanan also states that present day observation may lead some
viewers to mistakenly conclude that Vitagraph was introducing the suggestion of a intimate same-sex relationship (*Silent Film* 136).

In comparison to the rest of the film, the end differs the most from Shakespeare's play. Tatiana and Penelope forgive each other, Theseus blesses the lovers, and Bottom rejoins the mechanicals. However, the film version ends before the lovers are married and before the performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe* by the mechanicals. Still, the 1909 version shows an increasing use of special effects. Like Ariel in *The Tempest*, Puck appears and vanishes multiple times, but also flies in and out of the frame and across the Earth. It is also important to note that this film contains a misprint on an inter-title card that states: "The eloping lovers become weary in the forest. Puck places the magic herb upon the eyes of Hermia [emphasis added] and Lysander. Lysander awakes and falls in love with Helena" (*Midsummer*). In Shakespeare's play, Puck never anoints Hermia's eyes with the juice from the magic herb, nor does this occur in the action of film.

Biograph's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1908) may have significantly limited the subplot involving Bianca and her suitors, but Film d'Artes Italiana's *Il Mercante di Venezia* (1910), directed by Gerolamo Lo Savio, reduces the lead female role, Portia. Portia and Bassino's relationship plays a minor role in the film. The main emphasis of *Il Mercante di Venezia* is on the agreement between Shylock and Antonio and the relationship between Jessica and Lorenzo. Portia's role is reduced to just a few scenes and is very minor until the last two scenes when she comes to Antonio's rescue.
Perhaps one reason why Jessica's role is highlighted more than Portia in this version is that Francesca Bertini was already increasing in popularity in Italian films. She had only made one film prior to 1910, but she made approximately seven other films in the same year as *Il Mercante di Venezia*, including *Re Lear*, in which she portrays Cordelia. Film d'Artes Italiana's *Re Lear* (1910), also directed by Gerolamo Lo Savio, omits the subplot involving Gloucester and his sons, but overall conveys Shakespeare's story. It was produced prior to *Il Mercante di Venezia*: both films show similarities in not only the color tinting of each frame but also in the casting. Along with Bertini, Ermete Novello and Olga Giannini Novelli, who are Shylock and Portia, respectively, in *Il Mercante di Venezia*, had been previously cast as Lear and Goneril. It is possible that Lo Savio saw something in Bertini's performance as Cordelia and decided to reduce the role of Portia in favor of drawing attention to the performer who would eventually become one of the most famous Italian actors and the most famous of the silent film period in Italy.

Vitagraph's *Twelfth Night* (1910) is one of the first surviving attempts at including Shakespeare's main plot and subplot without reducing either drastically. Consequently, at the time of its release, *Twelfth Night* was criticized for "attempting to put too much of the plot in a short time and unnecessary inter-titles, which, though possibly complementary to the actors, is hardly complimentary to the author" (Sammons 160). Of course, because films were still photographed on one reel, the plots still needed to be condensed and some scenes had to be cut. As the *Moving Picture World* acknowledged in a review of the film, "much must be eliminated,
otherwise it would be impossible to make any adequate reproduction of the play" and argued that shortening Shakespeare's play "does not mar the piece itself" (MPW "Twelfth Night" 257). This version begins with the arrival of Viola on the shore in Shakespeare's I.ii and cuts many of the scenes involving Malvolio, Sir Toby, Maria, and Sir Andrew Augecheeck as well as Feste. Despite the criticism, the film received many favorable reviews, such as one from the Moving Picture World which claimed that the film "elevates and improves the literary taste and appreciation of the great mass of the people, performing in this way service [sic] which cannot be measured in material terms. Such work is in the nature of an educational service . . ." (MPW "Twelfth Night" 257). It is important to note that this was Vitagraph's last silent Shakespeare film produced on one reel, and some of the missing scenes may be attributed to lost footage34 (Ball Silent Film 56).

Like the other one reel films, Thanhouser's A Winter's Tale (1910) condenses Shakespeare's play but maintains the primary story concerning Leontes, and, although he is reunited with Perdita at the end of the film, it is never revealed to him that Hermione escaped alive. The reason for Hermione's "death" changes in the film to occur when she hears the news of her infant daughter's fate35 instead of the death of her son, Mamillius, who is eliminated from the film. Other characters, as well, are either reduced or eliminated. However, in addition to never revealing that Hermione lives, the elimination of Mamillius, a relatively minor character concerning stage presence, is one of the most notable and important changes to Shakespeare's play.

34 Only 743 feet survive of the original 970 feet (Ball Silent Film 56).
35 Leontes orders their daughter to be abandoned to die outside the kingdom.
Two films made around the same time provide interesting interpretations of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Páthé-Frères' *Romeo Turns Bandit* (1910), which boasts to be a "colored motion picture" in the opening credits, gives Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* a contemporary setting, changes characters' names, and replaces the tragic ending with a happy ending (*Romeo Turns Bandit*). Although the film's characters are based on Shakespeare's characters, the film has very little in common with Shakespeare's play: an inter-title card designates Juliet's father as *Montagu* instead of *Capulet*, Romeo and three of his friends abduct Montagu and tie him to a tree, Juliet elopes with Romeo, Montagu receives a ransom note stating his daughter will be returned to him upon payment of one-thousand dollars, and the main characters presumably live happily ever after.

The ransom note left for Montagu is particularly interesting because the letter is signed "Hernani," which references Victor Hugo's romantic drama by the same name written in 1830s. *Hernani* actually bears more similarities to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* than *Romeo Turns Bandit* simply for the fact that the two lovers, Doña Sol and Hernani, cannot marry and both resolve to commit suicide. Incidentally, the character Hernani is a bandit. The French drama may have been just as influential on the French film as Shakespeare's play and the film is more likely to be a variation of combining the drama, *Hernani*, with the play, *Romeo and Juliet*.

Film d'Artes Italiana's *Romeo e Giulietta* (1912) preserves Shakespeare's characters and preserves Shakespeare's setting and ending. However, there is a slight change in the story concerning Juliet's betrothal. Instead of promising Juliet to Paris,
as in Shakespeare's play, Capulet betroths his daughter to Tybalt. One other notable change is in the last scene. In Shakespeare's play, Romeo drinks poison purchased from an apothecary. In the film, Juliet stabs herself with the same dagger used by Romeo to kill himself. Despite these changes, there is little difference from the story in the play. Romeo and Juliet still fall in love and have secret meeting aided by her nurse, Romeo is banished from Verona, and both main characters commit suicide at the end.

Nordisk Film Company's *Desdemona* (1911) updates Shakespeare's *Othello* to make it more contemporary, but also creates an interesting interpretation and adaptation. *Desdemona* takes Shakespeare's play and mirrors a real life situation in which the character that portrays Desdemona in a production is guilty of dishonesty. The majority of the film concerns Einar Lowe and his wife Maria, who are both preparing for a stage production of *Othello* in which they play the title role and Desdemona, respectively. We shortly find out that Maria is pursued by the man who is playing Iago in the stage production, and she is also having an affair with another man. Her shunned lover witnesses her indiscretion and he then proceeds to plant the seeds of jealousy by relating the love affair to Einar Lowe. Upon his finding a picture of his wife's lover, Einar changes his appearance to trick Maria into thinking he is the other man and then confronts his wife with her indiscretion. During the stage performance, Einar kills his wife, making the final scene true to Shakespeare's play. Despite the differences with Shakespeare's play, the film provides shots of *Othello* being rehearsed, backstage during a performance, and a scene of the stage performance.
Even though Thanhouser's *Cymbeline* (1913) closely follows the story of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, there are a few alterations to the film from the play. The first major difference between the film and the play involves II.ii of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*. In the play, Iachimo is smuggled into Imogen's bedchamber in a trunk. In the film, he sneaks into her room and climbs into the trunk in order to hide from Imogen's maid. After he has taken Imogen's bracelet, he exits the room and does not climb back into the trunk, which he does in Shakespeare's play. The change most likely occurs because the film's previous scene ends Shakespeare's I.vi before Iachimo lays his plan of having the trunk delivered to Imogen's room.

A few other differences between the film and the play involve Imogen's disguise, which is presented in the film one scene earlier than in the play and not from Pisanio's suggestion. When the two arrive at the countryside near Milford Haven, Imogen is already dressed as a boy. In Shakespeare's III.iv, she is still in women's garments; after Pisanio tells her of Posthumus' request to have her killed, he suggests she disguise herself. The film version also includes a sequence wherein Posthumus receives Pisanio's letter confirming Imogen's execution, which is information told by Pisanio in Shakespeare's IV.iii. The most alterations to the play occur in the last few sequences of the film, all relating to Shakespeare's V.v. Posthumus is forgiven by Cymbeline before Imogen's identity is revealed, inter-title cards use several quotes that are abbreviated versions of Shakespeare's text, Imogen, not Pisanio, reveals her identity, and the film ends before anyone learns of the Queen's or Cloten's death.

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36 Only three of the inter-title cards use Shakespeare's text.
British Co-operative Cinematograph Company's *Richard III* (1911) is a "record of the Stratford Memorial Theatre production" (Sammons 154). Because it is a "filmed record," the camera work resembles the early silent Shakespeare films; the entire film is shot on one set with no close-ups of the actors. The film also adds several scenes to Shakespeare's play as general illustration of what is described in Shakespeare's text. The film begins with a several scenes from Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 3*: The relinquishment of the crown by Henry VI and murder of his son, Edward, in Shakespeare's V.v and the murder of Henry VI by Gloucester in Shakespeare's V.vi. The film also adds a scene that shows Edward V ordering Clarence's arrest and Richard's hiring men to murder Clarence.

Another major difference in the film *Richard III* and Shakespeare's play is the inclusion of a scene wherein Hastings visits the two princes and Queen Elizabeth in the Tower. In the play, the two young princes are sent to the Tower to await Prince Edward's coronation, but that is the last time the audience sees them until they appear to Richard as ghosts. Also, there is nothing in Shakespeare's text which indicates that Queen Elizabeth visited her sons while they were in the Tower. In fact, in Shakespeare's IV.i, she is prevented from entering the Tower. Hasting does meet with Prince Edward in Shakespeare's III.1, but it before the Prince enters the Tower.

Another added scene involves the coronation of Richard III. In the film, Lady Anne is present. However, in the play, Lady Anne is told that she is to go to Westminster to be crowned Queen in IV.i, but the play does not include a scene showing her at the coronation. In fact, there is no coronation scene in the play. In
Shakespeare's III.vii, Richard accepts the crown and agrees that his coronation will be the next day. The next time the audience sees Richard in IV.ii, he has been crowned and it is in Shakespeare's IV.i when Richard informs the audience that Lady Anne has died. The scene in the film, however, moves directly into IV.ii, when Richard refuses to give Buckingham an earldom.

The next scene in the film is an addition as well. Instead of Tyrrel describing how he has hired Dighton and Forrest to kill the two young princes in Shakespeare's IV.iii, the film shows Tyrrel hiding the bodies in the floor. Tyrrel's killing the boys himself and disposing of the bodies contradicts Shakespeare's text, in which he states "The chaplain of the Tower hath buried them; / But where, to say the truth, I do not know" (Richard 4.3.29-30). The next few scenes also stray from the text of the play. Richmond is introduced earlier in the film than in Shakespeare's V.ii before the Duchess of York curses Richard in IV.iv.

The greatest deviation occurring in one scene concerns Shakespeare's IV.iv. In the play, Richard tries to convince Queen Elizabeth to woo her daughter for him in his attempt to further solidify his grasp on the crown. In the film, Princess Elizabeth is present when Richard makes this "request." Buckingham also is shown instead of simply described as under arrest. Even with all the differences and because silent films are a visual medium instead of an audio medium, the story is preserved and most of the variation ends up showing events instead of relating events through speeches.37

37 Along with general accuracy to the story instead of the text, there are several instances of true accuracy to the text. For instance, many of the inter-title cards have actual script accompanying the scene description. Also, the ghost sequence during V.iii is incredibly accurate, showing characters appear in the succession designated by the play.
In the case of Gaumont-Hepworth's *Hamlet* (1913), it is difficult to assess the accuracy of the film to Shakespeare's play because only fragments of the film that originally lasted around one hundred minutes, have survived (Sammons 31). One of the surviving scenes, "Ghost Scene," is based on Shakespeare's I.v, the scene that involves Hamlet's encounter with his father's ghost. The inaccuracies in the film version centers around the text used on the inter-title cards. The first inter-title card begins with text from I.ii and the second from I.i. The third and fourth inter-title cards use accurate text from I.v. The "Closet scene" in the film begins in Shakespeare's III.iii, when Claudius prays and Hamlet contemplates killing him. The clip has a quick fade indicating a new scene is beginning. Polonius and Gertrude enter and begin Shakespeare's III.iv, but the inter-title card shows "Let his Queen mother all alone entreat him / And I'll be placed, so please you, in the / ear of all their conference," Polonius' dialogue from Shakespeare's III.i (*Hamlet*; 3.2.186-190). The last inter-title card accurately reflects Shakespeare's text in III.iv, and the scene correctly shows both Hamlet's stabbing Polonius and Gertrude's distress.

Fortunately, Sterling Camera and Film Company's and M. B. Dudley's *The Life and Death of King Richard III* (1912) has not shared the same fate as Gaumont-Hepworth's *Hamlet*, and the entire print is believed to exist. Similarity to the Cooperative Cinematograph Company's *Richard III*, the 1912 film version begins with several scenes prior to Shakespeare's *Richard III*. The film includes the murder of Edward Plantagenet after the Battle of Tewksbury, Gloucester's traveling to London, and the murder of Henry VI as Edward IV enters London. This version also shows
King Edward IV receiving the letter that leads him to believe that Clarence will kill him. The audience has actually observed Gloucester\textsuperscript{38} orchestrate the letter instead of his delivering it in his opening monologue. In fact, the letter projected on the screen accurately quotes from the monologue "G' / Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be" (Shakespeare Richard I.1.39-40). The film shows Clarence's arrest, an event which has occurred prior to the beginning of the play.

The film also shows many scenes placed in different settings, described through dialogue in the play, or not in the play at all. In the play, Shakespeare's first scene is set on a London Street; however, in the film Gloucester feigns sympathy to Clarence when he visits him in the Tower. The film includes scenes showing the death of Edward IV, the murder of the two young princes by Dighton and Forrest, the coronation of Richard, and the death of Lady Anne. Some scenes that are not in the play include Lady Anne's pleading with Richard III, Richard's wooing Princess Elizabeth, and Richmond's meeting with Queen Elizabeth and Princess Elizabeth when he arrives from France.

The 1912 film provides a few variations in the details of Shakespeare's Richard III. In Shakespeare's play, Lady Anne's death is reported in IV.iii, before Richard pursues Queen Elizabeth's daughter in IV.iv. The film changes the sequence of these two events and shows Lady Anne's death after Richard has wooed Princess Elizabeth. Also, immediately following Richard's visit to Princess Elizabeth, Queen Elizabeth writes Richmond for help. In Shakespeare's play, the Queen has already sent Dorset to

\textsuperscript{38} Gloucester is spelled Gloster in the 1912 film.
Richmond in IV.i. Another slight variation from Shakespeare's version shows both of the young Princes living with the Duchess of York and traveling to London together after the death of Edward IV. In Shakespeare's III.i, Prince Edward is waiting for his brother Richard, Duke of York. In the play, the young Duke has resided with the Duchess, but it is stated in II.iv that the Queen and he sought sanctuary. A fourth variation is the inclusion of a scene showing the young princes forcefully taken from their mother and sent to the Tower. In Shakespeare's III.i, Prince Edward and the young Duke are not forced into the Tower, but hesitantly enter it to prepare for the Prince's coronation. Another more prominent difference from the play involves Richard's dream before the battle at Bosworth Field. All of the murdered spirits are shown together briefly instead of "speaking" individually as they do in V.iii.

Despite the many variations of the film from the play, *The Life and Death of King Richard III* does not stray from Shakespeare's story and effectively adapts the play into a visual narrative. Even though the film was not known to be extant when Robert Hamilton Ball wrote *Shakespeare on Silent Film*, he was correct in his assessment that:

> What the continuity writer has done is to take the outline of the narrative, eliminate a good many of the unintelligible court intrigues thereby simplifying the story line, stress some of Shakespeare's big scenes, especially those which involve Richard, rearrange to show oppositions, allowing in some cases for alternation between characters, and invent freely to connect major episodes with each other, to indicate
localities or allow travel between them, and to feature crowds and the spectacular (162).

At the end of The Life and Death of King Richard III, Frederick B. Warde, who stars in the film as Richard, is shown out of costume taking bows, showing gratitude towards his audience. His next film, Thanhouser's King Lear (1916), begins similarly, showing the actor before costume and make-up are applied (Buchanan Silent Film 201). The film then dissolves the actor into the character King Lear, in complete costume and make-up. Whereas Thanshouser's previous Shakespearean enterprise, Cymbeline, has a few inter-title cards which either contained Shakespeare's text or an abbreviated version of Shakespeare's text, King Lear has more inter-title cards along the same vein. The film stays true to Shakespeare's story and includes the subplot which involves the characters Gloucester, Edmund, and Edgar. The fool, who is incidentally the director and son of Frederick B. Warde, Ernest Warde, is also very prominent in this film.

According to Eddie Sammons in Shakespeare: A Hundred Years on Film, Wörner-Filmgesellschaft's Othello (1922) "is based both on Shakespeare and the original tale by Cinthio" (Sammons 103). Even so, the opening scene of the film only somewhat resembles Shakespeare's I.i and serves as more of an exhibition to introduce the characters and their relationships. In the opening scene, the audience learns of

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39 Frederick Warde had performed both Richard III and King Lear prior to both films.
40 King Lear was originally five reels, but the print from the George Eastman House is an abridged two and a half reels. The DVD version released by Televista is the sixty-four minute version.
41 The version available through Thanhouser Company Film Preservation web site and available on the DVD Thanhouser Collection, Vol. 7 does not include the dissolve at the beginning. However, a print at the Folger does include it (Buchanan 201n).
Iago's hope to be designated as Othello's Lieutenant and sees his disappointment when Cassio is named. The audience also witnesses a bond of trust established between Cassio and Othello, Desdemona and Othello's attraction to each other, Brabantio's displeasure of seeing his daughter with Othello, and Roderigo's jealousy and desire for Desdemona. In the next scenes Iago and Roderigo plan to tell Brabantio that Desdemona has fled with Othello, and Desdemona and Othello share a scene together to further convey their relationship. It is only after these scenes that Shakespeare's play really begins.

Resembling other silent Shakespeare films, *Othello* shows many of the scenes which are described by characters in the play. Several of the scenes that are only related in the play but shown in the film include Othello and Desdemona's marriage and Othello's giving Desdemona the handkerchief. As Cassio becomes drunk, the film interjects scenes of Othello and Desdemona in their bedchamber. Other slight variations of the film from the play include Desdemona's and Othello's entering the council chamber together, Desdemona's greeting Othello in her bed chamber instead of on the street when he arrives in Cyprus, Othello's first fit of jealousy provoked by Roderigo's singing outside Desdemona's window instead of Desdemona's pleading Cassio's case in III.iii, and Emilia's attempting to get the handkerchief back from Iago once Desdemona discovers it is missing.

The most prominent differences between the film and the play is Othello's discovery that Desdemona has lost the handkerchief that he gave her and the final sequence. In Shakespeare's play, Othello and Iago secretly observe Cassio's interaction
with Bianca. Bianca becomes jealous and throws the handkerchief at Cassio in IV.i. Perhaps because Bianca is cut from the film version, Othello instead dreams of Desdemona's indiscretion with Cassio and is comforted by Iago, who uses the handkerchief on Othello, telling Othello that he took it from Cassio's quarters. In the final sequence of the film includes several variations to Shakespeare's play. In the film, Othello kills Desdemona on the first attempt, Iago enters after Othello has killed Desdemona, Emilia survives and escapes before Iago can kill her, and Othello kills Iago before speaking with Cassio and killing himself.

An interesting note concerns variation in the inter-title cards. For the most part, abbreviated quotes from Shakespeare's text are used. The slight variation in text may be attributed to the original inter-title cards' translation into English. Thomas O. Brandt's "Die Eindeutschung Shakespeares" focuses on this evolution of translating Shakespeare's texts into German, showing the progression from non-poetic text into German blank prose (Brandt 33-36). At times, however, the quotes on the inter-title cards do not match the proper scenes. For example, the inter-title cards displayed in a scene between Desdemona and Othello uses lines from Shakespeare's II.i and IV.ii in the same scene. In the film, Othello says "If thou be false, then Heaven mocks itself" to which Desdemona replies "I hope my lord esteems me honest" (Othello film). In Shakespeare's play, Othello's line "If she be false, O then heaven mocks itself" is stated in a soliloquy in Shakespeare's II.i. Desdemona's line "I hope my noble lord esteems me honest" occurs in IV.ii (Othello 3.3.278; 4.2.64).
Of all the feature films, Art-Film's *Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance* (1920) displays the most dissimilarity to the play from which it is adapted. Sarah Bernhardt had already played the role of Hamlet on stage and in *Le Duel d'Hamlet*. Nevertheless, Svend Gade's direction not only allows a woman, Asta Nielsen, to play the role of Hamlet, but actually makes Hamlet a woman disguised as a man. According to Robert Hamilton Ball, "[t]he conception that a woman is playing a male role is easily assimilated by an audience, but that none of the characters in the film except those in on the secret recognize that Hamlet is a woman at times strains credulity" (Ball *Silent Film* 278). However, Judith Buchanan cites Patrice Petro's *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany* and attributes the change as:

destabilising [sic] the "polar opposition between masculine and feminine," in this film and elsewhere, that "paved the way for the popular acceptance of female androgyny in the cinema." Renouncing a vision of femininity that was merely "pretty" . . . [that] had become Hollywood's stock in trade (Buchanan *Silent Film* 227).

In addition to the change of Hamlet into a woman, there are several other variations to Shakespeare's play, most of which stem from the gender change. To begin with, the film begins prior to Shakespeare's play, showing Hamlet's birth and Gertrude's decision to disguise Hamlet as a boy. Because Hamlet is female, changes are also made to her relationship with Ophelia and Horatio. In the film, Horatio is in love with Ophelia, and Hamlet chooses to court Ophelia to prevent a relationship between the man she loves and Ophelia. Hamlet is banished to Norway, not England
as in the play, where she aids Fortinbras in planning an invasion of Denmark. Once she returns from Norway, Hamlet kills Claudius in a fire, thus leaving Gertrude and Laertes to plan Hamlet's murder. During the duel, Gertrude realizes that she has mistakenly drunk poison and dies, distracting Hamlet who is then mortally wounded by Laertes. Hamlet dies from the wound created by the sword instead of from poison on the sword. Upon her death, Horatio discovers that Hamlet is female.

No motion picture version in the silent film era perfectly presents Shakespeare's play. Film, after all, is a visual medium and by the feature film phase, could provide visual indicators to an audience that events were occurring simultaneously. By the transitional phase, film also allowed for an assortment of settings and, unlike stage presentations, was not limited by set pieces and a single performance location. The evolution of Shakespeare's plays into film began as photographing action as it would occur on stage; as film developed, it adapted the plays to better suit wordless Shakespeare. From the transitional phase to the feature film phase, the scenes in Shakespeare's plays experienced slight changes, but the themes of his plays, along with the stories, are preserved.
Chapter 5: Gesture Manuals

As it is necessary to provide a brief history of film, it is also necessary to discuss the acting manuals that most actors used as guidelines for gesture and movement in order to understand the language of silent Shakespeare. It must be noted that most acting and gesture manuals may have been aimed more toward amateurs and individuals thinking about pursuing an acting career. Many of the manuals are also geared toward oratorical speakers rather than toward actors. However, because they are a written record of the vocabulary of gesture and movement, it is important to consider them when viewing silent Shakespeare films.

Gesture and movement refer to different areas of motion in the body. The term *gesture* normally refers to the more nuanced motion of the hands and face (Alberts 2). This includes the direction that the palm of the hand is facing (towards the actor's body or away from it), position of the fingers (outstretched or bent toward the palm in a fist), the direction the head is tilted, and the facial expressions including the mouth, eyes, eyebrows, and nose. The term *movement* refers to the motion and positions of the torso and limbs (arms and legs) and results in larger motion of the body than gestures (Alberts 2).

Even though there is little evidence to suggest that the revival of Greek dance affected stage acting as much as dance during the early twentieth century, it is
important to explore briefly the origins of gesture and movement in performance which can be traced to the pantomimes of ancient Greece. However, one encounters several problems when attempting to understand Classical Greek dance performance. A large extent of the knowledge of festivals and celebrations utilizing pantomime, along with the various religious and social messages and the meanings of the gestures in Classical Greek culture has been lost (Lonsdale 1). No treatise on dance was written before Lucian\textsuperscript{42} and Athenaeus, both whom lived during the second and third centuries CE. Also, there was no system in Classical Greece for recording dance such as \textit{Labanotation}\textsuperscript{43} (Lonsdale 2). Consequently, in modern times many scholarly explorations of Classical Greek dance are limited and share the same sources. They piece together fragments from the Classical and Hellenistic periods in order to make educated guesses about how Greek dances were performed and in what social context they were used.

Scholars often divide the fragmented evidence differently. According to Steven H. Lonsdale, contemporary studies that explore the origins of Greek dance include three principle studies: written, archeological, and anthropological. Written sources include "hexameter poetry, choral lyric, Athenian drama, fifth- and fourth-century orators, historical and philosophical writers, and inscriptions relating to cults and festivals" (Lonsdale 3). Archaeological sources include representations of dance and gestures on vases (Lonsdale 3). Anthropological sources are limited to modern

\textsuperscript{42} Lucian wrote extensively on pantomime during the Roman Period, i.e., several centuries after the plays of Euripides, Sophocles, and writings of Plato.

\textsuperscript{43} Labanotation is a dance notation system used to record gestures so that choreography may later be reconstructed.
interpretations of the "importance of patterns of behavior and collective activities among social groups who define themselves in part by the type of actions they regularly engage in," as well as the social and religious dimensions of the Greek polis (Lonsdale 16).

In comparison, Maurice Emmanuel divides the surviving sources into three slightly different categories: figures, rhythms, and writings. Figures include painted vases and bas-reliefs; rhythms include the meters the poets used to "furnish the foundation of the rhythm of the dance;" and writings include descriptions and analysis of the dances (Emmanuel 3). Emmanuel's The Antique Greek Dance also serves as a manual of the gestures and movements associated with Greek dance and attempts to re-create the Greek dance form. T. B. L. Webster, alternatively, divides the sources of Greek dance into just two categories: archaeological sources, i.e., the artifacts and monuments that illustrate performance, and literary sources, i.e., the various meters or measures in songs to determine the performance of dance (1, 46). Lillian Lawler's study of Greek dance in The Dance of the Ancient Greek Theatre (1964) provides some of the most useful information documenting sources of Greek dance and the dances within Classical Greek tragedy, comedy, dithyrambs, and satyr plays. However, she focuses very little on meter, and, for the most part, she ignores the social context in which dances in Greece were performed.

The main problem of these studies is that they are based on limited and fragmented evidence, and a great deal of the available data are not from the Classical period. Still, there are useful sources in trying to understand the roots of pantomime
from the Classical Greek period. One of the most useful written sources on dance in Classical Greece comes from Plato's *Laws*, Plato's last work, which was left unfinished by the author in 348 BCE. In *Laws*, Plato's views are presented through a dialogue between Cleinias, an Athenian politician and lawyer, and Megillus, a Spartan citizen. The majority of Book II and Book VII are devoted to the discussion of dance. Plato briefly discusses Bacchaic dances, provides classifications for gymnastic training and civic choreographic types, and examines dance's role in moral education. Some other written sources that provide a glimpse into Classical Greek dance are the plays from the Classical Greek period, including Euripides' *The Bacchae*, which throws some light into the origins of tragedy in the processional dithyramb, and Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which has a religious civic choral dance (Zarifi 234-235).

In the early twentieth century, many artists attempted to reconstruct Classical Greek dance. Among these the three most notable were Maurice Emmanuel, who composed *The Antique Greek Dance*; Ruby Ginner, who formed the Classical Greek Dance Association in 1923; and Isadora Duncan. F. G. Naerebout in *Attractive Performances: Ancient Greek Dance: Three Preliminary Studies* states that Duncan's influence on everyone who wrote on Ancient and Classical Greek dance during the

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44 Ruby Ginner also was inspired by the choruses of Greek Tragedy, but, unlike, Duncan, more willingly admits the influence on her method. Still, in the introduction of her *The Technique of the Revived Greek Dance*, Ginner states that she was originally inspired by "the arts and ideals of Ancient Greece" but applied her own interpretation into the modern idiom (Ginner 1). Similarly to Duncan, Ginner is concerned primarily with dance as an expressive tool (Ginner 2).
beginning of the twentieth century were "influenced in some way or another by [her] presence, whether she is explicitly mentioned or not" (62-63).\footnote{Naerebout footnotes that Duncan was often mentioned, listing F. Weege's \textit{Der Tanz in der Antike} and L. Séchan's \textit{La Danse Grecque Antigue}, among others (63). Ruby Ginner however makes no mention of Duncan in her \textit{The Technique of the Revived Greek Dance}.}

Since the pantomimes of the Classical Greek and Roman period provide fragmented accounts of the uses of movement in performance as well as little explanation of the meaning of gestures and movement, it is important to look at the other gesture manuals that do provide written record. Like language, movement itself has a vocabulary. In \textit{Courtly Dance of the Renaissance: A New Translation and Edition of the "Nobiltà di Dame"} (1600), Fabritio Caroso devotes an entire chapter addressing the way in which one should conduct oneself. Caroso presents the dialogue between a teacher, himself, and a student, similar to the style of Plato in \textit{Ion}. Descriptions of how one should bow, sit, and dance are among some of the described movements included. Caroso's chapter "Notes on Conduct" primarily addresses social movement, including how one should sit, stand, and bow, but he also discusses correct posture when dancing. Particularly, Caroso focuses on the positions of the hands: The way they are held and presented.

Caroso describes the proper way a man should bow:

\begin{quote}
You need to know, then, that should a prince or gentleman be required to approach a great king to kiss his hand, the sides of his cape or mantle (whichever it is) should be of equal length, for aside from the fact that [any unevenness] looks quite ugly, it is also necessary that he reveal the
front of his body, and *keep his hands down* [emphasis added], holding both ends of his cape or riding cloak with them, so that the king will have no reason whatsoever to suspect him of carrying something beneath them that could harm him (as we have seen occur in our own day, and not too many years since). It is good, therefore, to reveal your hands and to wear your cape or riding cloak as I have said above [sic] (Caroso 136).

Caroso also provides meticulous instructions on the way a man should position his hands when seated: "Sit with your left arm completely stretched out on one arm of the chair, and your right (which has the simple but joint duties of commanding and of leaning) resting similarly on the other arm, but in such a way that your right hand drops from your wrist" (137). In comparison, a woman should rest "her left arm completely in the arm of her chair, with her right elbow resting [on the other arm of the chair], and her right hand toward her lap" (Caroso 143). However, if the chair does not have arms, "she should keep her hands in her lap, her left hand under her right" (Caroso 144).

When bowing to a person of higher social status or in the *Reverence*, both men and women are urged to kiss his or her right hand "without, however, bringing it near [the] mouth, but holding it at some distance" and "bending it a little, and not

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*Reverence* is the first movement in Renaissance dance and involves each party bowing or curtsying to the other while they pretend to kiss his or her right hand. It involves placing the left foot slightly behind the right and bending the knees slightly.

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holding it so rigidly that it appears to be crippled" (Caroso 142). When "kissing" your own hand or another's hand, it must only be the right hand, not the left hand.

Though the rule for "right hand gestures only" is established and stated in many manuals, John Bulwer's *Chirologia Or the Natural Language of the Hand* (1644) addresses in detail the importance of right hand gestures over left hand gestures (93-116). In his manifesto, Bulwer cites classical and Biblical references supporting his argument that the right hand indicates truthfulness and the left hand, when used before the right or in such a gesture as a handshake, indicates dishonesty (100-101):

> And verily faith consists wholly in the *Right Hand* [sic], and the left hand hath no obligatory for of virtue in it. For to give the left, hand, or to take anothers [sic] given *Right Hand* [sic] with the left, is not binding in point of naturall [sic] *Faith* [sic]. And therefore when *Josippus Gorio* [sic] the Jew, desired a Roman Souldier [sic] to give him his *Right Hand* [sic] in signe [sic] of Faith, he gave him his left, and drawing his sword with his *Right Hand* [sic], slew him; and yet he cannot properly be said to have falsified his promise, since he gave him but his left hand, whose touch hath no assurance, but was ever held deceitfull [sic] and ominous [sic] (Bulwer 101-102).

The association of the right hand with truthfulness and the left hand with deceitfulness still exists today. Current court room procedure is rooted in the same belief. As witnesses are sworn onto the witness chair, they are asked to raise his or her right hand.
and swear to tell the truth. Initiators of handshakes also primarily use his or her right hand instead of the left.

In *Chironomia or A Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806), Gilbert Austin defines gesture as "the action and position of all the parts of the body; of the head, the shoulders, the body or trunk; of the arms, hands, and fingers; of the lower limbs, and of the feet" (Austin 133). Austin contends that hand gestures are the most important in communication: "Without the aid of the hands, action would be mutilated and void of energy, but it is hardly possible, since they are almost as copious as words themselves, to enumerate the variety of motion of which they are capable" (321). However, he also states that the gestures may be of use to actors, but "not as an individual language" and only briefly mentions the English pantomimes and criticizes them for borrowing gestures from Italian comedy (Austin 321, 266).

Contrary to Bulwer's view that the right hand must make the principal gesture, Austin specifically addresses occasions on which the left hand may be used to make gestures without accompanying the right hand:

1. When the persons addressed are on the left side, the left hand naturally performs the principal gesture in order to avoid the awkwardness of gesticulating much across the body.

2. The necessary discrimination of objects opposed to each other, requires the left hand alternately to assume the principal gesture. This Cresollius himself has allowed.

3. The advantage of variety.
4. The power of giving not only variety but force by occasionally elevating and bestowing, as it were, upon the retired hand all the spirit and authority of the gesture (Austin 403-404).

Goethe also recommended left hand gestures in the early nineteenth century if certain rules were followed. According to him, left hand gestures should be made so that the actor does not cross his or her body when indicating. In Goethe's Regeln für Schauspieler, he states in Rule sixty that the actor "who stands on the right side acts with the left hand . . . so that the breast be covered as little as possible" (Goethe).

Dene Barnet outlines the acceptable uses of left hand gestures by actors and orators in The Art of Gesture: The Practices of 18th Century Acting:

1. to support the right hand in the more intense or violent passages
2. to express disparagement
3. when depicting or indicating imaginary things in a descriptive passage or a narration, one sometimes ran out of space on the right hand-side - one could then use the left hand to depict other objects on the left side (25).

Importantly, Barnett also outlines the basic gestures of the eighteenth century. These include: indicative, imitative, expressive, gestures of address, gestures of emphasis, commencing gestures, terminating gestures, and complex gestures (18).

Charles Gildon similarly emphasizes the importance of hand gestures in The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton, stating that "it is impossible to have any great emotion or gesture of the body, without the action of the hands, to answer the figures of
discourse, which are made use of in all Poetical, as well as rhetorical diction" and cites an example from Medea declaring that the action must be "expressed by the hands to give it all its force" (Gildon 76). However, not only the importance of hand gestures is discussed by Austin, but also which hand is primary. One of the basic rules of acting that had survived from the time of Quintilian into the nineteenth century was that gestures were normally made with the right hand and the left hand as an accompaniment (Barnett 21). Many engravings in acting manuals published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries support this rule in illustration.

In 1822, Henry Siddons published Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action, a treatise was based on the work of M. Engel. Siddons, unlike several authors of later gesture manuals, which focus either more on elocution or on gesture in oratorical speaking, concentrates his attention on pantomime in acting, dividing gestures into two categories: picturesque and expressive. Siddons admits:

The pantomime of modern times has no advantage over that of ancient date; for, whilst renouncing known and common actions, it pretends to the executing subjects mixed with intrigue, and, of its own invention, it finds itself in an alternative either of painting in signs as expressive as it can possibly create, of leaving to a hazard that which their vague and uncertain signification will allow the spectators to lay hold of, or appealing to the aide of the interpreter to explain, by word [sic], that which the look, attitude, and gesture are inadequate to express (Siddons 241).
Throughout his book, Siddons attempts to explain in detail what each action means, focusing on facial and hand gestures. For example, the hand held with the palm facing out away from the actor's body expresses *repulsion* and *dismissal* (Siddons 131). Siddons also stresses the significance of using the right hand instead of the left to indicate heaven (Siddons 130). However, hand gestures do not communicate the entire meaning of the emotion; the entire body's position must be taken into account, along with the tempo that the gesture is performed. Siddons also criticizes Le Brun, who had written on gesture in the seventeenth century, for not being detailed enough when dealing with expressions of hatred. Many of his examples use Shakespeare plays as the subject, including *Hamlet*, *Henry VIII*, and *Othello*.

Like Caroso who emphasized proper social mannerisms, Gustov Garcia also focuses on public gesticulation. In chapter three of *The Actor's Art* (1882), Garcia gives clear instructions of the rules one should follow while in a concert-room. His chapter, like Caroso, gives instructions on how to sit, bow, and where to rest one's arms and hands. Above all, Garcia states that awkwardness and vulgarity should be avoided (28). One must never bend too much at the waist when bowing, cross the legs while sitting, extend the arms too far away from the body while holding music, and "the expression of the face must be pleasant" (Garcia 28-30).

In chapter four "General Observations about Acting," Garcia stresses the importance of verisimilitude in the character:

> Who would care to see Othello short, feeble, with a meagre [sic] voice?

> It is necessary that in his appearance the Moor should relise [sic]
Shakespeare's ideal of the warrior, the man of the camp who loves the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war." Whatever may be the line of acting an artiste chooses, tragedy, melodrama, high or low comedy, he must always idealize his impersonation according to the character he has to represent, and also follow the gradations of nature, which always vary in our passions with more or less intensity. In so doing he will be natural (Garcia 31-32).

The rest of Garcia's book primarily focuses on the different movements actors use to communicate with the audience. Generally, Garcia's instruction on gesture and movement are in agreement with his predecessors on the subject. Interestingly, Garcia, like Bulwer, Austin, Siddons, and Gildon, gives extra attention to the gestures of the hand. Garcia asserts that:

We express our sentiments by the direction we give to the palm of the hand. If the sentiment we wish to indicate is favorable, the hand will take an upward direction, and the reverse where the sentiment is unfavorable. The hand repels with the palm, or protects with the senses affected; these gestures having a downward direction. On the contrary, in prayer, or the expression of friendship, love, etc., the hand displays the palm and assumes an upward direction (59).

In order to illustrate Garcia's instruction on gesture, we must consider Garcia's first study of the hand that deals specifically with a line from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*:
The pupil . . . will address the person on his right [sic], and his first movement will correspond to an impassioned expression, such as: "What you have spoke, it may be so, perchance." The arm scarcely moved from the body; the palm of the hand slightly turned upward, the fingers bent without effort (Garcia 59).

Garcia also focuses on facial expressions. Though his book was published years before the first motion picture was projected onto a screen, the facial expression actors used on film would eventually become more accessible to the motion picture audience than actors who used facial expressions on stage. Actors in film also may have used facial expressions more than stage actors because they lacked the very thing which an audience member in the back of the auditorium could detect and gain the most information: the voice. Looking through the Garcia's manual, many of the illustrated postures and gestures could easily be drawings of silent film actors in performance.

In 1901, Charles Aubert wrote *L'Art Mimique*, which was translated into English by Edith Sears in 1927 as *The Art of Pantomime*. Aubert divides hand gestures into three classes: 1. Indicative Gestures; 2. Descriptive Gestures; and 3. Active Gestures. Indicative Gestures are used to "designate a person, an object, a spot, [or] a direction" and are made with a straight arm, except when indicating oneself (78). The index finger is used and pointed directly toward the indicated object. If an open hand is used, with all five fingers straight, the gesture conveys the "idea of possession and of a larger sense of self" especially when pressing the hand to the chest. If both hands
are used, the intensity of expression grows. Primarily, Indicative Gestures are used to express, but not limited to, You, Me, This Below, Above, Down There, To the Right or Left, Mine, All my Being, My Soul, Numbers (one, two, etc.), A Little, and Not That.

Descriptive Gestures are used to "produce the idea of a person or object by the rapid delineation of its size or shape when this size or shape is sufficiently characteristic" (Aubert 81). Because Descriptive Gestures describe size or shape, it is reasonable that the hand is used to outline sizes and shapes. Aubert stresses that accuracy must be observed and the hand must actually simulate the movement of really passing over the object or touching the object. Descriptive Gestures are used to convey Little, Large, Flat, Thin, Pointed, Round, and Short (Aubert 82).

Active Gestures "illustrate the action they sketch" (Aubert 78). Aubert concedes that the number of gestures that the hands can make is numerous and attempts only to "point out the principles governing those movements which possess a definite meaning" (78). In comparison to Indicative and Descriptive Gestures, there are many more Active Gestures which Aubert attempts to describe. A few of the Active Gestures express Nervousness, Irritation, Desire for Revenge, Scorn, Taking Possession, Approach, Kindness, Disperse Yourselves, Disgust, Fright, I Oppose It, Proof of Confidence, Esteem, Ferocity, Go to Bed, Pardon, Mercy, Denials, Threats, Confessions, and Mockery (82-94).

Just as it is difficult to pinpoint precisely who was the first to invent projectors, motion cameras, and film in the early days of cinema, it is likewise difficult to know what acting manual was primarily used by actors of the silent Shakespeare era.
However, we do know that François Delsarte's technique of gesture and movement was one of the primary methods used in the United States from the beginning of the twentieth century until the early 1920's, when Constantin Stanislavsky's acting method replaced it in popularity. Delsarte may have been the most influential on the acting styles employed in the silent film era. He was one of the driving forces that influenced the movement to recreate Greek dance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Delsarte believed that "the conditions of the Beautiful come to us directly from antiquity" (Stebbins 372). His method's influence is primarily evident with modern dancers Ted Shawn, Ruth St. Dennis, and Isadora Duncan, who also claimed inspiration from Greek statues and the writing of Plato.

Delsarte's works are discussed extensively in James Naremore's *Acting in the Cinema*, along with those of Charles Aubert and Steele MacKaye. Naremore argues that Delsarte's "influence persisted alongside psychological realism during the period of silent cinema, and in some ways he deserves reconsideration in our own time" and further states that "We make an error . . . if we assume that theorists like Delsarte and Aubert are relevant only in the realm of arcane histrionics" (52, 65). D. W. Griffith, who directed Biograph's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1908), actually required his actors, such as Lillian Gish, to attend the Denishawn school of dance twice a week in order "to learn expression through movement" (Shelton 137). The Denishawn School was founded by Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis and used Delsartean techniques. Hilary Hart's "Do You See What I See? The Impact of Delsarte on Silent Film" specifically

47 MacKaye studied with Delsarte in 1869, became Delsarte's assistant in 1870, and founded his own acting school in the United States in 1884.
explores the Delsartean influence on the acting techniques used by Lillian Gish in D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Broken Blossoms* (1919), and *Orphans of the Storms* (1921).

Delsarte's method is comprised of nine laws of movement: Altitude, Force, Motion, Sequence, Direction, Form, Reaction, Velocity, and Extension, with the three primary laws being Altitude, Force, and Motion (Stebbins 257). Gesture, according to Delsarte, can be broken down into two categories: 1. that which accompanies speech and 2. that which expresses thought without speech (Stebbins 462). The latter is pantomimic gesture, which until the advent of synchronized sound in motion pictures, was the kind of gesture used by actors on the motion picture screen.

Nonverbal communication specifically focusing on Delsarte's method was recently explored in 2006 in a study conducted by Stacy C. Marsella, Sharon Marie Carnicke, Jonathan Gratch, Anna Okhmatovskaia, and Albert Rizzo titled *An Exploration of Delsarte's Structural Acting System*. In the study, human subjects were asked to expressly focus on hand gestures and to use Delsarte's Cube, an imaginary cube that a speaker theoretically grasps in various ways for expression, to designate differences in meanings. The test subjects were asked to watch an animation and fill out a questionnaire correlating the gesture expressed to what he or she believed the gesture to be expressing. The results were then compared to the researcher's predictions, which were based on Delsarte's model. The results showed "considerable consistency in the subject's interpretations" and consistency with the results in the researcher's predictions (Marsella, Carnicke, Gratch, Okhmatovskaia, and Rizzo).
The instructions guiding gesture in gesture and movement manuals since the seventeenth century provide valuable information on the acting conventions used in the early days of cinema. In spite of slight differences, the manuals are fairly consistent in describing the various gestures and movements for the expression of emotions. It is, however, unknown how long these conventions have been in existence, as it is difficult to find written records on the subject prior to the seventeenth century. It must be noted that these acting manuals primarily affect western culture. In most countries, "fear is manifested by means of the same basic movements, in which only secondary aspects are subject to variation: the body contracts, the shoulders rise, the head is protected, the back is bent over" (Lecoq 7-8). Analysis of descriptions and illustrations by Gilbert Austin, Henry Siddons, Charles Aubert, and Gustave Garcia all provide strikingly similar gestures to communicate fear, terror and horror. Even so, countries without readily accessible media sources have maintained their gestures and movement styles that are indicative to their own culture. However, "all members of a society learn how to read the expressions and gestures of other people as a way of inferring what they are thinking or feeling" (Prince 13-14). For example, in some parts of Bulgaria and Turkey, nodding the head up and down means no and shaking the head back and forth means yes which is the opposite in most western cultures ("Saying Yes").
Chapter 6: Gesture and Movement in Silent Shakespeare Films

Because silent films were made in a time before sound could be effectively synchronized with the moving picture, silent film actors had to rely on gestures and movements to convey Shakespeare's story. Films that were adapted from plays, in which gesture replaced dialogue, were much like the non-patented theatres after the Licensing Act of 1737, and created a greater need for effective gestures. These gestures and movements used by actors were established in the eighteenth-century acting manuals. As noted in the previous chapter, the principle of using right hand gestures was established by Quintilian and was emphasized by seventeenth- and nineteenth-century writers Bulwer, Gildon, and Austin.

Many of the silent screen actors who starred in silent Shakespeare films were well-trained, successful stage actors, such as Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Sarah Bernhardt, Frederick B. Warde, and Johnston Forbes-Robertson. In fact, the earliest surviving Shakespeare films were photographed segments of the stage production, such as *King John* (1899), *Le Duel de Hamlet* (1900), *Richard III* (1911), and *Hamlet* (1913). These four silent Shakespeare films, as well as *Richard III* (1912) and *King Lear* (1916) which both star Warde, give the greatest insight to acting techniques of the day because of the prominent stage actors starring in them. The film documents of the gestures and movements of the stage actors are important both to convey
Shakespeare's story to an audience and to provide archival evidence of the performance codes of the period. However, gesture in Shakespeare's plays goes back to the plays themselves.

In studying Shakespeare, emphases are often placed on Shakespeare's language, political references, and other contextual analyses, but his plays also include aspects of gesture and movement in dances and in the dialogue. In *Shakespeare and the Dance*, Alan Brissenden suggests, "dance is an important element in Shakespeare's plays . . ." (109). It is difficult to determine exactly what the dances really looked like, although studies in Renaissance dance illuminate various steps and rhythms used in the dances of the period.

Different kinds of dances communicated different moods and meanings to an audience. For example, a Bergomask is a "clownish rustic dance" and used towards the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* V.ii by the mechanicals after their performance of *Pirimus and Thisbe* (Brissenden 112). Indeed, most of Shakespeare's plays include a dance, as in *Antony and Cleopatra* II.ii, *As You Like It* V.iv, *Henry VIII* I.iv, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* V.v, *Much Ado About Nothing* II.i and V.iv, *The Tempest* III.iii, *Timon of Athens* I.ii, *Twelfth Night* I.iii, *The Winter's Tale* IV.iv, and of course *Romeo and Juliet* I.v, or at least some kind of reference to dance, such as the Lavolta in *Henry V* V.v, the Coranto in *All's Well that Ends Well* II.3, Measures in *As You Like It* V.iv, and the Jig in *Hamlet* II.i and II.ii.

While Shakespeare's plays are full of indicators of movement such as *here, there, sit, rise*, he also uses dialogue to indicate that the actor should make a specific
gesture or movement. For example, in *Romeo and Juliet* I.i, Abraham asks Sampson "Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?" thus indicating that as Abraham and Balthasar enter, Sampson makes a gestures towards them (Shakespeare 1.1.50). In *Twelfth Night* III.iv, Olivia asks Malvolio "Why dost thou smile so / and kiss thy hand so oft?" indicating Malvolio's actions (Shakespeare 3.4.33-34). In *Macbeth* V.i, a Doctor observes Lady Macbeth's gesture, stating "Look how she / rubs her hands" which gives direction to the actor playing Lady Macbeth to mimic washing her hands (Shakespeare 5.1.28-29). In *Richard III*, Gloucester asks Anne, "Why dost thou spit at me?," an action that shows Anne's scorn for him (Shakespeare 2.2.145).

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has two long passages devoted to gesture. In II.i, Ophelia describes her encounter with the prince to her father, Polonius. She states:

| his knees knocking each other, / And with a look so piteous in purport / as is he had been loosed out of hell / To speak of horrors, he comes before me . . . He took me by the wrist and held me hard; / Then goes he to the length of all his arm, / And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow, / He falls to such perusal of my face / As 'a would draw it. Long stay'd he so; / At last, a little shaking of mine arm / And thrice his head thus waving up and down, / . . . That done, he lets me go, / And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd, / He seem'd to find his way without his eyes; / For out o' doors he went without their help, / And, to the last, bended their light on me [sic] (2.1.77-100). |
This description of an event that did not occur on stage not only informs Polonius of what has happened, but also informs the audience of Hamlet's behavior.

Perhaps the most famous Shakespearean reference to gesture is in Hamlet III.ii. In the scene's opening monologue, Hamlet addresses gesture briefly: "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" [sic] (Shakespeare 3.2.4-8). Hamlet goes on to say that groundlings are really only capable of understanding "inexplicable dumb-shows and noise" (Shakespeare 3.2.12-13).

Contrary to Hamlet's advice, the "inexplicable dumb-shows" became a necessity after 1660 and the Licensing Act of 1737 for non-patented theatres in England, when actors had to rely on pantomimic gestures to convey the story of the play to an audience (Buchanan Silent Film 174). By the nineteenth century, performance codes were established regarding the gestures and movements that were eventually used in silent Shakespeare films. Actors, such as Frederick B. Warde, were trained tragedians who had worked with legendary stage performers accustomed to the codified performance techniques of pantomimic gesture, such as Edwin Booth. Other actors, such as Lillian Gish, were required to attend Delsarte movement classes.

Roberta Pearson in Eloquent Gestures defines gesture as a "whole phrase which cannot be further broken down" (23). She divides the performance styles into
histrionic codes\textsuperscript{48} and verisimilar codes. Histrionic, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is "theatrical in character or style, stagey" ("Histrionic" OED). Pearson describes histrionic as a "stylized fashion," and observed that actors selected "their gestures from a conventional standardized repertoire passed on not only through an 'oral' tradition and stock-company training but through descriptions and illustrations in acting manuals and handbooks" (21). From this description, it is easy to understand that histrionic codes are presentational rather than representational in nature. Histrionic acting used three primary emphases: 1. The length of time each gesture was held, 2. The stress and speed, which the gesture was executed, and 3. The movement's direction (Pearson 26-7). In films, scenes fall into at least one of the five categories of histrionic codes: 1. the tableau, 2. everyday activity, 3. conversations, 4. heightened emotions and action scenes with more than one performer, and 5. gestural soliloquies (Pearson 38).

Verisimilar is a term that begins to appear alongside mimesis in theatre criticism in Aristotle's Poetics; however, to Pearson, the term refers "to a particular culture's coded expectations about the artistic representation of reality" (28). Pearson states that the movement toward verisimilar codes coincided with the movement toward theatrical realism and that "the construction of character through detail and nuance is obviously related to the literary realists' giving their characters psychological depth" (33-5). Because actors using verisimilar acting codes focused on the psychological character development and attempted to imitate reality, instruction

\textsuperscript{48} Histrionic is also referred to as "old style" by Pearson and "expressive technique" by James Naremore in Acting in the Cinema.
manuals were considered formulas and prescriptions and used only by histrionic performance code actors (Pearson 43). Within the Shakespeare film spanning from 1899-1922, the audience can see this code shift in acting style, especially in the reviews of the films.

The first Shakespeare film is King John (1899), starring Herbert Beerbohm Tree. Although only a fragment of the original survives, the audience can see Tree primarily using his right hand to make gestures and only using his left hand to accompany his right hand. Tree's general position in a chair correlates to Siddons' illustration of sickness (Siddons 54). At several points during the clip, Tree clasps his chest. The scene itself is from Shakespeare's V.vii, in which King John describes the poison that is in his body. Through gesture, "Tree graphically expresses . . . the various stages of burning, shrinking up, urgent desire for cool relief and rejection of the Prince Henry's tears" (Buchanan Silent Film 63). Tree relays the character's despair by placing both of his hands on his temples, perfectly executing Figure 45 of Garcia's The Actors' Art and figure 47 of Aubert's L'Art Mimique, both figures showing how to perform despair (Garcia 76; Aubert 45). King John (Tree) pulling his hand from Prince Henry (Dora Senior), who had held the Tree's hand to her cheek, shows the rejection of the Prince's tears as Tree violently wipes the back of his hand.

King John is also the first instance of mouthing the words in a silent Shakespeare film. Mouthing words during a silent film was eventually termed "mugging" and was harshly criticized by critics by the second decade of the twentieth century. Although no review exists concerning Tree's film performance of King John,
the Illustrated London News stated that Tree's stage performance of the same role was "a little over emphatic in detail and at one point needlessly hysterical" (Buchanan Silent Film 64).

Because Le Duel d'Hamlet (1900) and Duel Scene from Macbeth (1905) are both short clips showing duel scenes, there is very little to observe in regards to gesture and movement. However, the two films document fight choreography from the early twentieth century. To be sure, there are instances of gesture within the short clips. In Le Duel d'Hamlet, Sarah Bernhardt forcefully gestures with her right hand after Laertes has mortally wounded her; she thrusts her right hand downward and then raises it to her forehead. The gesture of placing the right hand on the forehead could indicate extreme embarrassment, as shown in Figure 46 of Aubert's L'Art Mimique (44). However, because Bernhardt's head is slightly raised up, the complex gesture conveys surrender, as shown in Figure 58 of Aubert's L'Art Mimique (53).

In Duel Scene from Macbeth (1905), Macbeth exits the frame laughing, showing the audience the character's perverseness after he kills Young Siward. Macduff enters and positions his body to indicate surprise at finding his comrade slain. A corresponding illustration is found in Figure 10 (Aubert 15). This figure indicates a character that is off balance, which is a result of surprise. Before Young Siward dies, he uses an indicative gesture to Macduff that Macbeth wounded him. After the duel, Macduff, who noticeably mouths words throughout the entire scene, stands with his right foot on Macbeth's body, arms outstretched towards the sky. Arms outstretched
toward the sky indicates *Heaven*, as shown in Figure 32 of Garcia's *The Actors' Art*; thus, Mcduff shows his triumph over evil (65).

By 1908, filmmakers had turned toward Shakespeare and other literary sources in order to gain respectability not only from the classics themselves, but also in order to attract playwrights and actors from the stage (Ball *Shakespeare in One* 145). Two examples of these films from 1908, Biograph's *The Taming of the Shrew* and Clarendon's *The Tempest*, survive. *The Taming of the Shrew* was directed by D. W. Griffith and photographed by Billy Bitzer, who had previously photographed *Duel Scene from Macbeth*.

Concerning gesture and movement, *The Taming of the Shrew* provides some of the most interesting insights of how to execute the tempo and attack, or stress and speed, of the gesture and movement. Florence Lawrence's wild gestures and movements as the shrew, Katherine, and Arthur V. Johnson's self-confidence and domineering Petruchio come across effectively. In a review of the film printed in the *Moving Picture World*, W. Stephen Bush briefly mentions the couple: "After seeing the play in moving pictures my first duty is to speak in unreserved praise of the lady who took the part of the shrew, and the gentleman who portrayed Petruchio. There is not a false move anywhere. The staging is good . . ." (Ball *Silent Film* 66).

Both characters exude violent, forceful movements throughout the play, signifying ill tempers, though Petruchio's actions are merely a performance for Katherine rather than an expression of the character's true sentiment. Movements that entail hitting other characters with objects are understandable to everyone. However,
the more detailed aspects of the performance give greater insight into the characters. To begin with, Lawrence's body posture is the most telling of her character's attitude. Aubert's Figure 8 shows the position of the body "erect, legs straight, heels together" to illustrate the sentiments of modesty, timidity, and humility (13). Instead, Lawrence often hunches her back and walks with arms swinging wildly, contradicting Aubert's description and showing the "shrewishness" of her character. Lawrence stamps her foot at several points in the film, signifying I am furious (Aubert 33). To show perplexity, Figure 46, and the sentiment what will become of me? as well as it will drive me crazy!, Figure 47, at various moments she places one hand, fingers outstretched, against her cheek and performs "both hands grasping the head," respectively (Aubert 44-6). The former gesture also corresponds to Siddons' illustration of distraction (49). As Petruchio beats his servants, Lawrence as Katherine exhibits surprise as described by Garcia: "We throw our head and body slightly back, we raise our hands quickly and symmetrically; this last action being the result of the rapid passage from one sentiment to the other" (128). During the haberdasher scene, Lawrence performs Garcia's Figure 42 to signify terror; she leans back in a chair and stretches her arm out, palm facing away from her body (73). This pose also corresponds to Aubert's Figure 128, showing the palm facing out to signify fright (86).

Arthur V. Johnson's Petruchio likewise provides insight to gesture and movement in the early days of cinema. When introducing himself to Baptista, Johnson executes Aubert's direction for curtsey (29). Before and after each episode of beating his servants, Johnson laughs, Aubert's Figure 180, and smiles, Aubert's Figure 179,
indicating that his character is putting on a show for Katherine (Aubert 132-3). During several instances in the film, Johnson curls his moustache, indicating *vanity* (Garcia 115).

*The Tempest* (1908) shows even greater characterization resulting from studying Caliban's gestures. The actor is unknown; many of the actors were not credited in the one-reel films of early cinema. Similar to Lawrence's Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*, the actor portraying Caliban hunches his back to illustrate his wildness, but maintains this body position through the entire film instead of only in specific moments. The actor's hands are also quite suggestive of his character. He separates and hooks his fingers, showing the Caliban's *avarice* and *ferocity* (Aubert 86-7). It is important to note that until Tree's performance of the role in 1904, Caliban was portrayed as a monster. Tree's performance added "pathos and humanity in his Caliban in ways that partially redeemed him from the ungrateful savage monster that had been his dominant identity as played on the nineteenth-century stage" (Buchanan *Silent Film* 85).

The actor in the 1908 film may have been influenced by the new way of performing the role and finds specific instances in which the audience is apt to feel sympathy for the character. One such instance occurs as Prospero creates the tempest. In the scene, Caliban positions himself close to the ground and covers his face with one hand while outstretches the other, both palms facing away from his body. According to Garcia's Figure 43, this indicates *terror*, and Siddons' illustration of *horror* (74; 24). Siddons' illustration of *terror* is similar; however, the palm closest to
the head turns inward towards the body (23). At the end of the film, Caliban is left alone on shore as the other characters board a ship. Caliban's arms are raised and outstretched, palms facing up. This gesture closely resembles Garcia's *appeal to Heaven* except that Caliban is distinctly reaching towards various characters instead of the sky (65). Therefore, Caliban's appeal is made to the characters as he is pleading with them to take him with them.

For the most part, every actor in *The Tempest* makes gestures primarily using his or her right hand. Actors in silent Shakespeare film made prior to *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Tempest* make gestures only with his or her right hand unless the left hand accompanies the right. Although there are a few instances of actors still using his or her right as the primary gesturing hand in the remainder of the silent Shakespeare films, Goethe's suggestion that actors gesture using the hand and arm that does not cross the body appears to be implemented into the Shakespeare films after 1908. In these films, however, right hand gestures remained more prominent in European films after 1908, than in American films.

Vitagraph's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1909) not only offers many moments of gesture dealing with the themes of love and friendship, but also presents intensified versions of those same sentiments. In the opening sequence, Demetrius, played by Walter Ackerman, rejects Helena, played by Julia Swayne Gordon. Gordon stands with her left hand over her heart and her face tilted forward and down. The position of her head indicates *grief*, as shown in Garcia's Figure 10 (Garcia 86). Gordon signifies the Helena's love for Demetrius by the position of her hand over her
heart and focus directed toward him. Garcia describes the sentiment of love and admiration through the gesture of placing the hand on the heart and extending the arm "towards the object of our admiration" (Garcia 63). As Helena reaches towards Demetrius, her fingers are curled up. Garcia further describes this action as signifying "a sense of desire" and the curl of the fingers "as in the act of receiving or grasping" (63). According to Aubert, a gesture performed with both hands "gives a greater power to the expression" (81). Helena reaches both hands towards Demetrius, which, according to Aubert's description, communicates a powerful love and admiration, more so than just one arm extended towards him. This gesture also correlates to Siddons' illustration of adoration (65).

As the film continues, the gesture of placing the hand over the heart is a prominent and repeated gesture by Helena, Hermia, Demetrius, and Lysander. These are, after all, the lovers of the play. The Queen of the Fairies, Tatiana, played by Florence Turner, however, performs unfavorable sentiments towards Penelope. Titania stands with the changeling child, and, after Penelope appears, she makes a sweeping motion with her arm, palm facing outwards towards Penelope. As shown in Garcia's Figure 37, this gesture illustrates the suggestion "of throwing something that is distasteful" (70).

In Film d'Arte Italiana's Il Mercante di Venezia (1910), Jessica, played by Francesca Bertini, receives a letter from Lorenzo. After reading the letter, she raises her right hand beside her face, palm facing outwards, and leans slightly to the right. This pose seems at first to indicate that she is listening for Lorenzo, but according to
Siddons' illustration, to which the movement is identical, this pose communicates *expectation* (20). Lorenzo's entrance on the left side of the frame supports this as well; if Jessica were listening for Lorenzo, she would have used her left hand and leaned to the left.

In the film, Shylock makes an agreement to lend Antonio money so that he may help Bassino. As Shylock shakes Bassino's hand, he turns his head away, smiles, and looks out the left corners of his eyes. This facial gesture, "Eyelids half closed. Sideways look . . . Forced smile. Cheeks raised, wrinkles under the eyes" shows *falseness, deceit, and treachery* (Garcia 102). After signing an agreement with Antonio, Shylock, performed by Ermete Novelli, opens his hand and closes it several times sequentially. This gesture, according to Garcia's Figure 124, means *I take or I seize* (83). In the final scene of *Il Mercante di Venezia*, Shylock learns that, by shedding Antonio's blood, he would violate Venetian law. Shylock uses both hands to grasp his head and leans forward. According to Garcia, this gesture indicates *despair*, but not with the same intensity as if he leaned backwards (45-6). In fact, the movement's intensity is appropriate because he almost immediately begins to plead his case to the Duke.

At least three of the primary characters that appear in leading roles in *Il Mercante di Venezia* also appear in Film d'Arte Italiana's *Re Lear* (1910): Ermete Novelli, Olga Giannini Novelli, and Francesca Bertini. This provides an interesting counterpoint because the viewer can observe the different ways in which each actor positions and moves his or her body and the different gestures the actors use to
communicate with an audience. Ermete Novelli as Shylock often bends slightly over, hunching his back and makes smaller gestures overall, keeping most gestures relatively close to his body. Novelli as King Lear stands erect and often makes sweeping motions. As he rejects Cordelia, portrayed by Bertini, Novelli performs the gesture indicating that he is "throwing away something that is distasteful" (Garcia 70). However, Novelli performs the complete action as described by Garcia, and withdraws his hand back to himself, "to avoid contact that might sully it" (Garcia 70-1). He performs this action again after Goneril, Olga Giannini Novelli, refuses to house Lear, but this time his gesture is more forceful and intense, showing his progression into madness. As Regan rejects Lear, Novelli presses both hands, with palms open, on his chest. This gesture, according to Aubert, indicates all my being, my soul, or mine and the meaning is intensified by using both hands (79).

As Lear descends into madness, Novelli's facial gestures are notable; however, his hand and arm gestures are likewise as communicative. As his men comfort Lear after both Goneril and Regan have rejected him, he moves directly from Siddons' illustration of sickness, sitting with arms limp and slouched over, directly into Siddons' illustration of reproach, raising his left arm in the air (54, 51). His right hand is close to his chest as in Siddons' illustration, but, because the character needs to be supported in order to stand, the other actors hold his right arm. After this pose, his arms once again become limp, as in the sickness gesture.

Florence Turner, who had previously preformed the role of Tatiana in Vitagraph's A Midsummer Night's Dream (1909), portrays Viola in Vitagraph's
Twelfth Night (1910). As Viola/Cesario prepares to woo Olivia for Orsino, she stands outside, leaning against a pillar, head cast downwards and right arm bent over her brow. A procession of people entering Olivia's house interrupts Viola's moment of grief, and she hides around the corner, touching her forehead with her index finger and quickly pointing it outward. This gesture means *a thought rises to my brain* or *I have an idea* (Aubert 92-3). When Viola/Cesario meets with Olivia, credited as Julia Swayne Gordon, for the first time, Turner leans forward, raises her eyebrows, widens her eyes, purses her lips, and raises her index finger to her lips. This movement as described by Aubert indicates *silence* (148). Olivia then gestures for her attendants to leave by sweeping her arm, palm facing outwards. The gesture itself is slow in tempo and smooth in execution, with less intensity than described in Garcia's Figure 37, *throwing away*, which signifies that the character is of a mild temperament and not angry or rudely dismissive (Garcia 70).

After Viola leaves Olivia after their second meeting in the film, Olivia presses her hands to her heart, showing the audience her affection for Viola/Cesario. She then kisses her left hand several times, extending it toward the direction in which Viola exited in-between each kiss. Garcia's Figures 29 and 30 show this action to mean *Dear love adieu!* (63). Malvolio then enters the frame in yellow stockings and repeats the same gesture to Olivia, as she exits the frame. In the last scene of the film, Viola and Sebastian are reunited. Once they see each other, they both reach toward each other with their arms at a slightly lower than ninety degree angle to their bodies. This gesture is illustrated by Siddons to show a *hearty welcome* (66). Arms are outstretched
and raised higher than a ninety-degree angle is designated to communicate *sublime adoration* instead (Siddons 65).

In Thanhouser's *A Winter's Tale*, Martin Faust as Leontes provides a good example of violent gesticulation. In the opening sequences, his gestures are quick, rough, and forceful. One of his first gestures in the film is Garcia's *appeal to Heaven* (65). This gesture involves both arms outstretched upwards in a wide circular shape with the palms of the hands facing up. Faust then clenches his right hand into a fist and thrusts it upwards and towards Polixenes and Hermione after they have exited the frame. The inter-title card provides a summary that Leontes is jealous for no reason, and Faust's gesture reflects the sentiment of jealousy by executing Siddons' illustration of *jealous rage* (36). Through the scene, Faust shakes his limbs and hands, indicating anger and rage as described by Garcia: "All the muscles of the body acquire a convulsive power. . . . The hands contract violently . . . the movements are violent" (149). In the following sequence, Leontes spies on Polixes and Hermione. Leontes sweeps his arm and points toward the couple, then quickly raises and lowers the same arm, still pointing his index finger, telling Camillo to kill Polixenes. This gesture is similar to Garcia's gesture *command*, in which the index finger points down (77). Garcia's gesture is illustrated in his Figure 46 and is captioned "This fellow, let me ne'er see again" (77). Leontes then raises both arms, hands clenched, brings one arm down to his brow and exits with his left arm outstretched, palm facing the couple. The gesture of the right hand over the brow is a variation of Aubert's Figure 46, *despair*, except in Aubert's illustration, the hand is grasping the forehead (44). The hand is
clenched into a fist and the violent movements signify a greater intensity of emotion. The gesture itself resembles Garcia's illustration of *terror*, as one hand shield the actor's eyes while the other hand pushes away the image; however, Faust's elbow is raised above ninety-degrees instead of lower as shown in Garcia's illustration (74).

*A Winter's Tale* received a favorable review from the *Moving Picture World*. The acting in the film was particularly praised by the review, which states "We have never seen better acting in any moving picture that has come before our eyes" ("Thanhouser Triumph" 876). In regards to gesture used in the film, "Every movement, every gesture, every action, was suited to the text of the story" ("Thanhouser Triumph" 876).

As Romeo approaches Montagu and Juliet in Pathé-Frères' *Romeo Turns Bandit* (1910), he reaches for them, palms facing down, then turns his palms over and brings his hands into his chest over his heart before reaching out again, palms facing upwards. Montagu crosses his arms over his chest and then quickly lifts his left arm upwards, pointing his index finger, and swings his right arm with his hand in a fist. As Montagu exits with Juliet, Romeo raises both his arms.

In Romeo's first gesture in this sequence, his palms are facing down. Although this gesture may symbolize Romeo's attempt at attempting to stop Montagu so that he may talk with him, according to Aubert "[h]ands horizontal, arms straight, palms, down" means *I protect, I defend*, and *I shelter* (88). Romeo's changing his hands to palms up, according to Aubert, means *speak to me or explain yourself* (88). According to Garcia this gesture may also symbolize *imploring* (49). Montogu's crossing his arms
over his chest demonstrates an unfavorable sentiment, but it may also suggest a moment of *inaction* or *to brave a threat* (Garcia 68; Aubert 46). Montagu then gestures a *command* by pointing his index finger, telling Romeo to leave the way by which he entered (Garcia 77). This gesture is followed by Austin's description of *striking* and *recoiling*, which involves "the whole fore arm [sic] and the hand along with it descend from a higher elevation rapidly, and with a degree of force . . ." and after the *striking* gesture is made, "the arm and hand return back to the position from whence they proceeded" (Austin 344). Aubert also describes "[t]hrusting out the closed hand and opening it, palm down" as communicating *scorn* and *a hand full of injuries* (Aubert 83). Montagu's gestures are rough and quick, indicating heightened emotions. Romeo's last pose is Garcia's *appeal to Heaven* gesture (Garcia 65).

Overall, Nodisk Film Company's *Desdemona* (1911) employs less gesture and movement as described by the acting manuals; however, the actors use a few gestures as described and illustrated in the acting manuals in the heightened melodramatic moments of the film. One such example occurs as Valdemar Psilander, who portrays Einar Lowe and Othello, confronts his wife of indiscretion with another man. Afterward, Lowe commands his wife to leave by pointing his index finger to the door. After she exits, Psilander raises his fists and covers his face with his hands, his head sinking downward. This gesture illustrates *despair* as described by Garcia, and is similar to *grief*, described by Austin as "arising from sudden and afflicting intelligence covers the eyes with one hand . . ." (490). Psilander maintains this gesture while sinking to the floor. Another moment of established gesture occurs in the final
sequences of the film, when Lowe is in costume as Othello. In the first scene of this sequence, Psilander stands with his arms crossed over his chest, showing an adverse sentiment (Garcia 68).

Although Desdemona does not offer many moments of established gestures as indicated in acting manuals, British Co-operative Cinematograph Company's Richard III (1911) contains an abundant amount. One possible reason for the use of more gesticulation is that this film was a photographed record of the Stratford Memorial Theatre production. In the opening scene, Queen Margaret raises her right fist to Edward IV and shakes it at him. The gesture itself shows passionate anger as illustrated by Garcia's Figure 40 (72). The shaking, or convulsion, intensifies the gesture (Garcia 149). The command gesture illustrated by Garcia's Figures 39 and 46 is used throughout the film by various authoritative characters, such as Edward IV (Alfred Brydon), Henry VI (James Berry), and Richard III (Frank Benson) (71, 77).

In the scene in which Richard woos Anne (Constance Benson), Anne kneels on the ground, clasps her hands together and looks to the sky. This gesture is a modification of Aubert's description on a religious prayer; his description requires the tips of the fingers to be pointed up instead of folded (Aubert 90). Garcia describes the gesture of devotion as the eyes directed upwards and the hands joined while kneeling (138-9). When she sees Richard, Anne reaches up with her right arm, hand clenched, and thrusts the same arm down, opening her palm, performing Aubert's gesture of scorn and moves directly into displaying fear and terror as the left arm stretches out
toward Richard, palm down, while the right arm and hand shield her face, palm out (Aubert 83; Garcia 74).

Francesca Bertini’s performance as Juliet in Film d' Arte Italiana’s Romeo e Giulietta (1912) focuses primarily on head and facial gestures. Throughout the film, she bends her head forward and down, exhibiting modesty and acquiescence (Aubert 97). In addition, her eye gestures indicate modesty, as well, because they are often cast downward (Aubert 75). During the scene in which Capulet orders his daughter to accept Tybalt’s marriage proposal, Bertini tilts her head back and shakes her head. A backward tilt to the head indicates revolt, challenge, as well as indolence, and defiance (Aubert 119, 54). In the opening sequence, Bertini looks up as Romeo kisses her hand. This eye gesture can mean veneration and ecstasy (Garcia 84; Aubert 144). In the second scene of the film, Juliet sits, head resting on her right hand. The gesture of the head resting on one hand indicates preoccupation and intellectual effort (Aubert 43). Bertini repeats this gesture in the dance scene.

To be sure, Bertini also performs gestures with the hands and arms. Shortly after the preoccupation gesture, Juliet crosses to her window, where she expresses the sentiments of love and admiration to Romeo by kissing her right hand and extending it toward Romeo, who stands below (Garcia 63). Both actors again repeat this gesture when Juliet and Romeo say goodbye after the dance. When Friar Lawrence offers Juliet the sleeping potion, Bertini turns her body away from him and extends her right arm, palm down, towards Friar Lawrence, indicating that she is rejecting the idea (Garcia 70-1).
Florence La Badie, as Imogen, makes a similar gesture in Thanhouser's *Cymbeline* (1913) when Pisanio tries to persuade her to return to court. La Badie shakes her head, covers her heart with her right hand, and sweeps her left arm away, palm down. Like Juliet, whose gesture indicates initial rejection of the sleeping potion, Imogen likewise rejects returning to court. In the scene that takes place in the cave, La Badie grasps her head with her hand, showing the character's *anguish* and *moral tortures* (Aubert 44). When Posthumus receives news of Imogen's death, his head bends forward, giving "a deeper and more troubled sadness to the look" (Aubert 117). He then covers his eyes with his arm, palm out, conforming to both Austin's and Garcia's description of *grief* (Austin 489; Garcia 186). In the battle sequence, there is a close-up of La Badie showing Imogen's *surprise* and *fright* as she widens her eyes and opens her mouth (Garcia 88; Aubert 64).

Johnston Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet in the "Ghost Scene" displays the sentiment of *surprise* and *astonishment* in Gaumont-Hepworth's *Hamlet* (1913). Garcia's description of *astonishment* and *surprise* involve throwing the "head and body slightly back," and rising the "hands quickly and symmetrically; this last action being the result of the rapid passage from one sentiment to another" (Garcia 128). Aubert's description of *surprise* and *astonishment* focuses primarily on the facial gestures of the actor, including raised eyebrows, open mouth, and widened eyes (Aubert 142-3). Indeed, for most of the clip, Forbes-Robertson stands with his arms
outstretched to his sides. However, Forbes-Robertson also exhibits *fear* and *terror* by covering his ears\(^{49}\) and falling to his knees (Garcia 151).

In the "Closet Scene," Forbes-Robertson raises his sword in an attempt to impale Claudius, who is praying. Although he does not carry through with the action, wielding a sword above the head indicates violent *anger* (Garcia 72). Forbes-Robertson also makes a gesture towards the actor portraying Gertrude. She jumps up to prevent Hamlet from discovering Polonius hidden behind the tapestry, but Hamlet stops her by stretching out his arms and directing her back to her chair. Forbes-Robertson holds his hands horizontal and palms down. Although this movement means *I protect* and *I defend*, it also means *to calm* and *to quiet*, which is more likely given the circumstances (Aubert 88-9).

The performance of Forbes-Robertson was criticized in the *Moving Picture World*, which stated that he "was easily the least effective player in the cast," and, although he was a good actor, "he insisted upon using the technique of the dramatic stage when he played before the camera, and fitted the gesture to the speech, as Shakespeare advises, instead of suiting the gesture to the action as advised by the director" ("B. Nichols Talks" 721). Despite this unfavorable review, *Hamlet* was added to the General Film Company's regular program in 1915 ("Sir J. Forbes Robertson" 312). In another review for the *Moving Picture World*, Hanford C. Judson stated that the film "illustrates Forbes Robertson's [sic] acting very well and is surely a

\(^{49}\) The second part of the "Ghost Scene" is Shakespeare's I.i. The Ghost in this scene implores Hamlet to hear what how he was murdered. The words *hear* and *hearing* are used numerous time through the play's scene and may have influenced Forbes-Robertson's performance in choosing to cover his ears, a gesture to indicate *fear* and *terror*, instead of his eyes, which indicates the same sentiments but appears more often in silent Shakespeare films.
valuable contribution to stage history" and that "no actor to-day[sic] whose playing of this character reaches so noble a height as Forbes Robertson [sic]" (Judson 317). Judson further added:

The person who cares nothing for Shakespeare, or Forbes Robertson [sic], or for good acting, will be entertained not only by a powerfully moving story clearly told, but solely by the inherent grace of the illustrations such as an artist might place in a book. . . . The picture . . . gives that part of the acting which is not dependent on the words of the poet, but solely on the actor's knowledge of their meaning (Judson 317).

In an interview quoted in The Brooklyn Eagle, Frederick Warde addressed the importance of gesture in silent film performance: "Of course, to make certain things comprehensible without the voice it is necessary to interpolate certain incidents to show the motive, but the bard himself would hardly object to this" (The Life and Death). Frederick B. Warde as Richard III hunches his shoulders forward throughout the film. This gesture and position of the body indicates stealth and arrogance (Aubert 21-3, 13). After Richard kills Henry VI, he wipes the blood from his sword with his fingers and then expresses contempt through gesture by throwing his blood stained hand rapidly towards Henry's body (Garcia 70). This gesture can also indicate scorn (Aubert 83). In the first scene between Richard and Lady Anne after her exit, Warde has an outburst of laughter depicted by a smile "carried out to the maximum,"
including raised brows and cheeks pushed up\textsuperscript{50} (Aubert 132-3). This gesture "manifests a complete satisfaction of physical appetites or being tickled by a sensual and gross idea" and is more intense that expressing contentment and physical satisfaction (Aubert 132). After Richard agrees to be king, Warde raises his right hand above his head and circles it in the air. This gesture is a flourish (Austin 535). Because Warde performs the gesture quickly,\textsuperscript{51} the gesture communicates pride and confidence and can communicate power as well (Austin 535). In Richard's last scene with Buckingham, Warde holds his right hand above his head without circling it. This gesture means reproach as described by Siddons and power in violent anger as described by Garcia (Siddons 51; Garcia 72). After Richard awakens from a dream in which he saw the ghosts of those whom he had murdered, Warde expresses the character's terror and despair by grasping his head with both hands (Garcia 76; Aubert 45).

Because Warde also appears in the title role of Thanhouser's King Lear (1916), his versatility as an actor is apparent. Warde as Lear moves more slowly than in his portrayal as Richard, showing not only the character's age, but also the character's apathy in comparison to Richard III's ambition. Warde as Lear does not hunch his shoulders, which he did in The Life and Death of King Richard III. In the opening sequence of the film, Cordelia refuses to swear that she loves her father more than she loves anything else. As Cordelia responds, Warde clenches his hand, which implies

\textsuperscript{50} Florence Turner as Viola in Twelfth Night (1910) performs the same gesture after Olivia sends Viola the ring via Malvolio, and Viola realizes that Olivia believes she is a woman and favors her than Orsino.

\textsuperscript{51} This gesture performed slowly indicates grief, solemnity, and resignation (Austin 535).
anger and irritation (Garcia 72; Aubert 83). In the same scene, Warde as Lear shakes his index finger at Cordelia before disowning her. This gesture symbolizes "striking with a stick" and communicates *I threaten you and you will be punished* (Aubert 91-2). In a scene with Goneril after Lear discovers her ungratefulness and scorn for him, Warde expresses the character's suffering by drooping his head, eyes cast down, and hunching his body forward with his arms listless at his sides (Garcia 194-5).

Warde utilizes the gesture *appeal to Heaven* several times throughout the film, but most notably in the storm scene; as he stands in the rain, he stretches both of his arms upward at an 120 degree angle (Garcia 65). This gesture varies slightly from Austin's description, in which "the right hand is first laid on the breast, then the left is projected supine upwards . . ." (Austin 489). When Lear is reunited with Cordelia, Warde expresses the character's *paternal love*; the scene in the film is very similar to how Garcia describes it in his book: "... he presses her to his bosom, kisses her, smooths [sic] her hair so as to remove all obstacles that might conceal her from his sight! His solicitude, his caresses, his tears of joy, are the expressions of his entire soul. Such sentiments are so natural that they seem simple and easy to represent; and yet it requires the sensitiveness and heart of a great artist to render them in their true purity" (Garcia 135). In the film, Lear smoothes Cordelia's hair, presses her to his chest, and trembles his hands and arms; the last gesture shows the character's *shame* (Garcia 154).

By 1916, the practice of mouthing words, or "mugging," was harshly criticized. The *Moving Picture World* wrote:
Unless words are heard falling from the lips all these maxillary exercises mean nothing at all to the spectator. A dialogue may aid in times in indicating certain emotions, but the dialogue is only a contributory cause. . . . A screen actor depending for expression on lips, mouth and jaws is intolerable. The more violently he talks the less we understand what he is talking about, The camera does not record and cannot reproduce this dreadful mouthing. Emotions exist before the words expressing them are uttered. It is the art of the screen artist to express these emotions without words ("Facts and Comments" 825).

To be sure, Herbert Beerbohm Tree and Johnston Forbes-Robertson were not the only actors in silent Shakespeare films guilty of "mugging." In fact, most of the earlier silent Shakespeare films until 1911 have actors who commit varying degrees of "mugging," including Sarah Bernhardt in *Le Duel d'Hamlet*, Florence Lawrence in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Frederick B. Warde in *The Life and Death of King Richard III*. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1910), William V. Ranous as Bottom even has a string to move the mask's mouth. The practice of mouthing words began to decline even before the *Moving Picture World* article in 1916; this is observable in the leading role performances of Francesca Bertini in *Romeo e Giulietta* and Frederick B. Warde in *King Lear*. The histrionic performance codes gradually transitioned into verisimilar performance codes, and, eventually, the silent Shakespeare films implemented little "mugging," if any at all, as with Emile Jannings in *Othello* and Asta Nielsen in *Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance*. It must be taken into account that these were stage
actors entering a new medium. Frederick Warde, for example, had already performed "the greater portion of the Shakespearean repertoire" by the time he appeared in *Richard III* ("Warde" 1296). Considerations should also be given to which movements of the mouth constitute "mugging" and which are maxillary gestures.

As "mugging" declined, so did the influence of published gesture manuals; the two silent Shakespeare films produced in the 1920s show less influence of published gesture manuals than the previous silent Shakespeare films. In Arte-Film's *Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance* (1920), Asta Nielsen portrays the Danish prince as a female disguised as a male. Other than indicative gestures that focus on commands such as *go, come,* and *me,* there are far fewer instances of large gestures than in previous silent Shakespeare films. The progression away from established nineteenth-century acting gestures is further evident in Wörner-Filmgesellschaft's *Othello* (1922). Most of the actors focus on using facial gestures, except in intense emotional scenes. Nevertheless, established nineteenth-century acting gestures survive in both films, usually during scenes involving heightened emotions.

One such moment occurs when Nielsen as Hamlet receives the news of her father's death. Nielsen expresses *anguish* and *moral tortures* over her loved one's death by grasping her head and hair with her right hand and pressing her hands to her chest

52 (Aubert 44; Garcia 63). After Hamlet discovers Claudius' dagger, she sits on a bench, contemplating. Nielsen uses the gesture that normally means *I have an idea* by quickly touching her index finger to her forehead; the same gesture made slowly

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52 Siddons also illustrates (plate seven) and describes the grasping gesture (Siddons 338).
would indicate *I remember* (Aubert 93). However, the gesture has a double meaning; the inter-title card indicates that Hamlet has decided to act crazy (*Hamlet: Drama*). When Hamlet observes her mother and uncle kissing, Nielsen widens her eyes, gapes her mouth, and presses her fist to her chest while she closes her eyes. Her facial gestures communicate *despair* and *overwhelming horror*, and the hand gesture communicates *pride*, thus showing Hamlet's horror and wounded pride (Aubert 118; Garcia 62). As Hamlet approaches Claudius and Gertrude, Nielsen raises her arms and quickly lowers them, palms facing out, performing an intensified version of contempt (Garcia 70). While Hamlet visits her father's tomb, Nielsen stretches her arms, performing the same arms and hand gesture as in *appeal to Heaven*; however, her focus is on the tomb, showing the character's appeal to her father instead. (Garcia 65). In the third act, Hamlet lies on the ground with Horatio. Nielsen as Hamlet reaches for his head as if to smooth his hair, but withdraws her hand, presses the same hand to her chest and then grasps her hair. From these three gestures, the audience can observe Hamlet's *love, anguish, and despair* that are the result of her love for Horatio (Garcia 135; Aubert 44-5). In many scenes, Nielsen narrows her eyes while looking out the corners of them. This gesture means *I pretend* and *I spy on*; it is appropriate because Hamlet performs this gesture in scenes in which she is feigning madness (Aubert 75).

Werner Krauss as Iago makes more use of gesture than all other actors in *Othello* (1922). After Othello names Cassio his lieutenant, Iago crosses his arms on his chest and drops his head down. His arms' position can mean *reflection* and expresses
an unfavorable sentiment (Aubert 43; Garcia 67). This position can also be interpreted to mean self-sufficiency (Austin 490). Krauss' head gesture communicates preparation for a fight (Aubert 54). As Iago speaks with Rodrigo telling him to put money in his purse, Krauss gestures with his index finger pointed up. This gesture may mean one only (Aubert 80-1). However, it is also an authoritative command gesture because the finger is straight and not slightly curved (Garcia 47-8). During the scene in which Roderigo sings outside Desdemona's window, Krauss looks out the sides of his eyes, indicating that he is listening (Aubert 74). Iago walks to the door and then gestures to Othello, communicating that the person singing is probably a lovesick fool. This gesture is made by pointing to his heart several times, signifying love, and then lowering both his arms, palms down, as if throwing something away53 (Garcia 70-1). Krauss as Iago then stretches his arms horizontally from his body, palms up. This gesture shows Iago's request of Othello to dismiss the singing (Garcia 61-2).

Compared to earlier silent Shakespeare films produced prior to 1916, Krauss's use of gesture is more limited. By 1922, performance codes had shifted from histrionic to verisimilar (Pearson 50). A 1923 review of Othello in the New York Times reflected this shift and, inevitably, Krauss was criticized for too much gesticulation:

Werner Kraus's Iago will probably strike different people differently. Some will like the character, while others will think the part overplayed and dissipated in too much jumping about, grimacing and gesticulating.

It all depends on the Iago you want. If you can conceive of this Italian

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53 The gesture suggestive of throwing something away can mean contempt if the facial gesture matches and is executed more violently (Garcia 70-1).
villain not only as emphatically Italian, but as a traditional Italian of the Middle Ages, you will not think that Kraus goes too far. You will feel, rather, that he stamps his rôle [sic] realistically, and also puts himself in effective contrast with Othello. And certainly he is vital and clearly understandable at all times—and this is an asset in any screen performance ("From Sing").

The same review credits Emile Jannings' performance in the title role as "an impressive piece of work" and further praises the rest of the film:

The acting of the photoplay, as a whole, is distinctive. These Europeans do make themselves mean something. They do not just pose and promenade. They act. And even if their style is different, even if they sometimes seem to exaggerate, the spectator usually forgets the difference, and fails to note the exaggeration as he is carried along by the sweep and the significance of motions, of expressions, of gestures, of postures that reveal the people he is supposed to be looking in upon ("From Sing").

Jannings' use of gesture is primarily limited to facial gestures until near the end of the film. During the scene in which Roderigo sings outside Desdemona's window, Jannings as Othello greatly widens his eyes and opens his mouth. Both of these facial gestures show fear and physical torture (Aubert 63-4). After Othello confronts Desdemona regarding the handkerchief, Jannings covers his eyes and forehead with his right arm, showing grief (Austin 489). In the next scene, Jannings grasps the
handkerchief and then trembles both fists by his forehead before tearing the handkerchief in his mouth. This gesture of his hands beating his forehead is an intensified version of despair (Aubert 45-6). The muscle convulsions and violently tearing the handkerchief express intensified anger (Garcia 146). After Iago asks Othello what he will do with Desdemona, Othello pushes Iago away. In this moment, Jannings gestures doubt replaced with disgust and contempt as well as terror and despair by holding both hands away from his body, palms facing outward, and then placing both hands on his eyes and forehead, palms turned inward (Garcia 69, 74, 76). Once Othello has killed Desdemona, Jannings repeats the gesture that expresses terror while backing away from her body (Garcia 74).

Generally, Gustave Garcia, Charles Aubert, Henry Siddons, and Gilbert Austin have similar descriptions of the meaning of the gestures. Many of the gestures also have multiple meanings from a given source. For instance, according to Garcia, terror and despair may be performed with the same gesture, specifically the hands grasping the forehead (Garcia 76). Aubert normally lists several meanings for one gesture; the same gesture previously mentioned may mean what shall I do, all is lost, my head bursts, despair, what will become of me, and it will drive me crazy; with a dropped jaw, it may mean ecstasy, joy, ignorance, fear, stupor, and ruination (Aubert 45, 63). Both Austin and Siddons are more precise by providing only one meaning for each gesture. Due to a number of possible meanings when assigning and interpreting gestures in the silent Shakespeare films, one must consider the content of the plot and story from studying Shakespeare's plays and the inter-title cards provided in the films.
To properly interpret the gesture, the context in which the gesture is often necessary when there are multiple meanings involved.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

From 1899 until 1922, silent Shakespeare films evolved from experimental nickelodeon films with virtually no inter-title cards into full length feature films with many inter-title cards that provided not only summaries of the action but also dialogue based on Shakespeare's texts. An examination of the films reveals that mouthing words, or mugging, decreased as films began to adopt verisimilar performance codes.

From *King John* (1899) to *Hamlet* (1913), mugging was practiced by the majority of actors in the selection of silent Shakespeare films explored in this paper. *The Tempest* (1908) is the earliest surviving silent Shakespeare film in which very little mugging is exercised.

The year 1912 was pivotal in the shift of performance codes. The research of Roberta E. Pearson found that the performance acting codes began to shift as early as 1910; however, in the case of Biograph films, the verisimilar performance code was not fully embraced until 1912 (Pearson 50-1). The shift from histrionic to verisimilar performance codes arguably began around 1899 with Tree's performance in *King John*. In 1897, Tree stated, "The power of affecting the imagination is not merely a matter of external disguise or make-up; it is something that comes from within," suggesting that Tree took a psychological approach to his acting (Tree 71-2). However, established nineteenth-century gestures were prominently implemented in
silent Shakespeare films from Biograph's *King John* to Nordisk Film Company's *Desdemona* (1911), notably around the same period indicated by Pearson's research. Similarly, Charles Aubert acknowledged the internal effect of performance, stating that "[p]antomime . . . speaks a language quick, spontaneous, and common to all: it is not only the accepted symbol of a sensation, it is the sensation itself. And that is why this language is not only understood, but felt" (Aubert 153). Still, based on the silent Shakespeare films explored in this paper, histrionic performance codes continued after 1912 with Forbes-Robertson in *Hamlet* (1913).

Advancements in film technology may have also affected the use of gesture in silent films. Close-ups were used as early as 1903 in Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*, but they were widely employed by D. W. Griffith. Close-ups enable an audience to see the actor's face more clearly for recognition of facial gestures. Griffith likewise used the camera to create mobile shots instead of static photographs, as seen in the experimental period films and even early transitional phase films and "experimented with naturalistic light sources," such as fireplaces and windows, "more realistic sets, and increased use of locations," all adding to cultivation of verisimilar performance codes within films (Giannetti and Eyman 26). In 1913, Griffith stated in an interview with *The New York Review* that "[t]he motion picture . . . should be a picture of real life . . . and emotions should be depicted as they would be in real life" (Pearson 92). Although Griffith required his actors to attend movement classes, Griffith often preferred less experienced actors to "the crude, lumbering gesticulations
of the stage-trained actors who were the staples of early films" (Giannetti and Eyman 26).

Perhaps the most influential invention to reduce the use of prescribed gesture in the silent Shakespeare films is the inter-title card. First used as banners as a means to communicate with an audience during stage performances by un-patented theatres after the Licensing Act of 1737, inter-title cards supply an audience with summaries of the action or character's dialogue. There is a direct correlation between the number of inter-title cards and amount of gesture in the silent Shakespeare films; the more frequent use of inter-title cards results in less gesturing by actors. The experimental-phase films, King John (1899), Le Duel d'Hamlet (1900), and Duel Scene from Macbeth (1905), and transitional-phase films, The Taming of the Shrew (1908), The Tempest (1908), A Midsummer Night's Dream (1909), Il Mercante di Venezia (1910), Re Lear (1910), Twelfth Night (1910), A Winter's Tale (1910), and Romeo Turns Bandit (1910), have no or relatively very few inter-title cards that provide summaries of the action. The transitional-phase films, Romeo e Giulietta (1912), Cymbeline (1913), and Richard III (1911), and the feature films, Hamlet (1913), The Life and Death of King Richard III (1912), and King Lear (1916), have more inter-title cards. The majority of the inter-title cards in these films not only include brief summaries of the action, but also text, or a variation of the text, from the Shakespeare plays from which they are adapted. These films provide the most balanced inter-title card/gesture ratio. The silent Shakespeare films which have the most inter-title cards and least amount of established nineteenth-century gesture are Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance
(1920) and Othello (1922). The outlier in the sample is Desdemona (1911), which exhibits a relatively low amount of gesture with very few inter-title cards.

This is not to say that inter-title cards directly resulted in reduction of gesture in silent Shakespeare films. The sample of films researched constitutes roughly 55.0% percent\textsuperscript{54} of the existing silent Shakespeare films. Because many of the silent Shakespeare films are presumed lost and because this sample constitutes only approximately 8.7%\textsuperscript{55} of the total number of silent Shakespeare films, conclusive results are likely imprecise. However, the same inter-title card/gesture ratio may be present or yield similar results in other silent films that are not adapted from Shakespeare's plays.

Although the use of established gesture significantly decreased in Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance (1920) and Othello (1922), it should also be noted that facial gestures were still highly exploited with the aid of close-ups. Though arm and hand gestures became less prevalent in later silent Shakespeare films, they were the primary means of expression when dealing with heightened passions in emotionally intense scenes, such as Hamlet's receiving news of her\textsuperscript{56} father's death and Othello's struggling with his perception of his wife's indiscretion. Although the use of established nineteenth-century gesture by actors decreased in later silent Shakespeare films, it must be noted that actors continued to gesticulate when portraying "villainous" characters. Werner Kraus received negative reviews stating that he gesticulated too

\textsuperscript{54} The number of existing silent Shakespeare films numbers approximately forty films.

\textsuperscript{55} Sample is based on the two hundred fifty three silent Shakespeare films that were made between 1899 and 1927 (Buchanan 1). The total number of silent Shakespeare films explored at length in this thesis totals twenty-two.

\textsuperscript{56} In Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance (1920), Hamlet's gender is female.
much as Iago in *Othello* (1922) and Eduard von Winterstein as Claudius contorts his face using facial gestures more prominently than any other actor in *Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance* (1920). Perhaps it is easier to observe villains' gesticulations more than other characters because unfavorable sentiments are more prominent in performance; large, swift movements often execute unfavorable sentiments that are more attention-grabbing than favorable sentiments, which are generally smaller and performed at a comparatively slower speed. Likewise, unfavorable sentiments expressed by facial gestures are not the normal gestures people see every day and are more apparent than the more reserved facial gestures that express favorable sentiments.

Studying silent Shakespeare films is important for three reasons. First, the films provide visual, continuous moving images as an illustration of how to perform the gestures described and illustrated by Gilbert Austin, Henry Siddons, Charles Aubert, and Gustave Garcia. All four acting manuals provide at least some sort of illustration as to how to execute the gestures and movements, yet they are limited in fully describing the gestures and movements in print. These manuals not only provide important historical information regarding oratory and social mannerisms of the period, but, to the theatre historian, the films that implemented established nineteenth-century gesture provide a vital glimpse into the theatre conventions of the period. Too much theatre history has been either lost or destroyed, For example, we will never really know how pantomime was performed in Classical Greek theatre. Silent Shakespeare films, in a way, safeguard against losing more theatre history by providing archival evidence.
Second, the films not only provide visual instruction as to how to perform nineteenth-century gestures and movements, but also provide visual records of successful stage luminaries of the period. According to Robert Hamilton Ball, silent Shakespeare films are "for the stage-historian . . . extremely valuable records, first because they show actors in motion, and second, because they are photographs of stage productions" (Shakespeare Film as Record 228). Most notably, the existing silent Shakespeare films preserve performances of Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Sara Bernhardt, Frederick B. Warde, and Johnston Forbes-Robertson, all of whom were prominent stage actors from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In an essay written in 1917, Frederick B, Warde reflects on the importance of stage actors' appearing in films: "The actor's work upon the stage leaves but a memory . . . while new generations will admire and praise his art and skill long after he has passed away" (Warde "Legitimate Player" 400).

Shakespearean films were a means to attract esteemed stage actors, thereby gaining respectability for the film industry that had undergone censoring and was often considered to be morally compromising. Not only did Shakespeare films garner respect for the film industry, but they became one of the most popular topics for films from 1908 to 1916. In 1908, W. Stephen Bush predicted that there would be a "more continued demand [for Shakespeare films] than for ordinary subjects" ("Shakespeare in Moving" 446). More Shakespeare films were produced in 1908 than during any other year in history, and approximately seventy silent Shakespeare films, or at least
Shakespeare inspired films, were produced in the following eight years. According to a report from 1916:

Shakespeare on Fourteenth street - playing to capacity in two big theatres within one block of each other - is a most interesting phenomenon. Shakespeare "turning them away" on the lower East Side, where vast audiences sit spellbound by one of his greatest tragedies, is proof enough of the timely educational character of the screen. . . incomparably more wholesome than the melodramatic "mush" and the studio-room stuff that is frequently offered to the public. . . Such pictures, be it emphasized once more, are of the greatest value and importance to the reputation and the prestige of the screen" (MPW 825).

Third, studying silent Shakespeare films is relevant to stage and film performances today. Actors still "express emotion and intention in ways that go beyond the words they speak" and "[p]osture, gesture, facial expressions, eye contact, and vocal inflection express feelings and help to define relationships" (Prince 13). On stage and in film, actors employ many of the same facial, arms, and hand gestures established in the nineteenth-century gesture manuals: crossing the arms across the chest to communicate an unfavorable sentiment, positioning the palm away from the body and turning the head when expressing fear, and stretching the arms horizontally with palm facing up to greet others. Actors continue to use various levels of intensity,
range, and magnitude of their gestures and movements to communicate to the audience the intensity of the character's feelings.

In film, silent sequences sometimes communicate a message more poignantly than words. Jason Reitman's *Juno* (2007) provides such an example. Juno arrives at an abortion clinic and is told by a fellow student that unborn children have fingernails. This statement sets up the next scene, which revolves entirely around hand gestures. The film juxtaposes various shots of actors' hands tapping their nails, scratching with their nails, and picking their nails with close-ups of Ellen Page's Juno. The scene is preformed without dialogue; however, the audience sees the character's struggle with the decision of aborting her child. Although most films do not have long periods without dialogue, Peter Jackson's *The Lovely Bones* (2009) shows an actor communicating with the audience through facial gestures. During the scene in which the character Jack Salmon offers to help George Harvey, he has a moment of realization that is amplified by silence. No words are spoken, yet the audience perceives that the character has realized who murdered his daughter.

Even though film actors still use gesture to show the character's sentiments to an audience, gesture is rarely performed without dialogue. Even in montage sequences in which no dialogue is spoken, the images are more often than not used as a discontinuous reflective device through images rather than as a continuous image allowing gesture to communicate.

Recently, silent film has inspired the creation of two new theatre companies: The Chicago based theatre company, Redmoon, and the Synetic Theater Company,
located in Arlington, Virginia. In 2010, Redmoon premiered *The Cabinet* with acclamation from numerous theatre critics. The play was adapted from the German Expressionist silent film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) ("The Cabinet"). Although the play is not "wordless," it shows the potential success of the adaptation of silent films for stage. Synetic Theatre Company, however, launched its silent Shakespeare series in 2002 with a wordless adaptation of *Hamlet*. *Hamlet...the rest is silence* (2002) was followed by *Macbeth* (2007), *Romeo and Juliet* (2008), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2009), *Antony and Cleopatra* (2010), *Othello* (2010), and *King Lear* (2011), along with several revivals of these adaptations. These "silent" plays have received outstanding reviews from theatre critics, and most of the plays from the series have received the Helen Hayes Award in various categories, including choreography, directing, and design.

Synetic Theatre Company's Artistic Director, Paata Tsikurishvili, received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting and Master of Fine Arts in Film-Directing from the T'bilisi Georgia State University. In a 2007 interview, Tsikurshvili stated:

I already had experience of doing Shakespeare without words at college in Georgia and Shakespeare is not only the words of course. I wanted to catch Shakespeare's thoughts, Shakespeare imagery, the archetypes, the hidden agendas and find a way of showing them. So we do this through another language, an international language that allows

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57 The theatre company also adapts literary classics into "wordless" plays, such as *Dracula* (2007) and *King Arthur* (2011).
in more people. And it really touched people in deep places, in their souls. . . . We always read and argue and think with and from the text. . . . We find that actions speak louder than words - actions are not better, they're just louder . . . I have a vocabulary to tell a story through the body, through dance, through movements, so I tell stories that way. . . . working without words can reach people in a different way, and sometimes a more profound way. . . . partly, we try to translate [sic] the poetry through movement, finding equivalent images in translated form, and partly we try to capture the thought the poetry came from [sic] (Buchanan Silent Film 256-7).

Silent Shakespeare films may not have directly influenced Tsikurshvili, but his principle of expressing words through gesture and translating words into gesture and movement are the same principles followed by silent Shakespeare film actors. Consequently, everything old is new again.
References


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"Twelfth Night (Vitagraph)." Moving Picture World 6.7 (February 1910): 257. Print.


Appendix A: Experimental Phase Silent Shakespeare Films

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Film Title</th>
<th>Shakespeare's Play</th>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Director/Production Personnel</th>
<th>Principal Cast</th>
<th>Availability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td><em>King John</em></td>
<td><em>King John</em></td>
<td>British Mutoscope &amp; Biograph (BMBC)</td>
<td>William K-L Dickson, Walter Pfeffer Dando</td>
<td>H. Beerbohm Tree, Dora Senior</td>
<td>Silent Shakespeare DVD</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td><em>Le Duel d'Hamlet</em></td>
<td><em>Hamlet</em></td>
<td>Phono-Cinema-Theatre</td>
<td>Clement Maurice</td>
<td>Sarah Bernhardt, Pierre Magnier</td>
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<td>1905</td>
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Appendix B: Transitional Phase Silent Shakespeare Films

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<td>Charles Kent</td>
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<td><em>Romeo &amp; Juliet</em></td>
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<td>Romeo Bosetti</td>
<td>Max Linder, Romeo Bosetti</td>
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## Appendix C: Silent Shakespeare Feature Films

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## Appendix D: Filmography

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<td>Year</td>
<td>Film Title</td>
<td>Shakespeare's Play</td>
<td>Production Company</td>
<td>Director/Production Personnel</td>
<td>Principal Cast</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td><em>The Taming of the Shrew</em></td>
<td><em>The Taming of the Shrew</em></td>
<td>Biograph</td>
<td>D.W. Griffith</td>
<td>Florence Lawrence, Paul Panzer, unknown</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td><em>The Tempest</em></td>
<td><em>The Tempest</em></td>
<td>Clarendon</td>
<td>Percy Stow</td>
<td>Billy Ranous, Maurice Costello, Florence Turner, Julia Swayne Gordon</td>
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<td>1909</td>
<td><em>A Midsummer Night's Dream</em></td>
<td><em>A Midsummer Night's Dream</em></td>
<td>Vitagraph</td>
<td>Charles Kent, J. Stuart Blackton</td>
<td>Florence Turner, Maurice Costello, Julia Swayne Gordon</td>
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<td>1909</td>
<td><em>Otello</em></td>
<td><em>Othello</em></td>
<td>Film d'Arte Italiana (FAI)</td>
<td>Ugo Falena</td>
<td>Ferruccio Garavaglia, Vittoria Lepanto</td>
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<td>1910</td>
<td><em>Il Mercante di Venezia</em></td>
<td><em>The Merchant of Venice</em></td>
<td>Film d'Arte Italiana (FAI)</td>
<td>Gerolamo Lo Savio</td>
<td>Francesca Bertini, Olga Giannini Novelli, Ermete Novelli</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td><em>Max et Son Rival</em></td>
<td><em>All's Well That Ends Well</em></td>
<td>Pathé-Frères</td>
<td>Lucien Nonguent</td>
<td>Max Linder</td>
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<td>1910</td>
<td><em>Twelfth Night</em></td>
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<td>Vitagraph</td>
<td>Charles Kent</td>
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<td><em>Romeo Turns Bandit</em></td>
<td><em>Romeo &amp; Juliet</em></td>
<td>Pathé's Frères</td>
<td>Romeo Bosetti</td>
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<td><em>A Winter's Tale</em></td>
<td><em>A Winter's Tale</em></td>
<td>Thanhouser</td>
<td>Barry O'Neil</td>
<td>Martin Faust, Alfred Hanlon, Amelia Barleon</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td><em>Re Lear</em></td>
<td><em>King Lear</em></td>
<td>Film d'Arte Italiana (FAI)</td>
<td>Gerolamo Lo Savio</td>
<td>Francesca Bertini, Ermete Novelli</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1911</td>
<td>Il Trovatore</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Richard III</td>
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<td>British Co-operative Cinematograph Company</td>
<td>Frank Benson</td>
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<td>1911</td>
<td>Desdemona</td>
<td>Othello</td>
<td>Nordisk film Company</td>
<td>August Blom</td>
<td>Valdemar Psilander, Thyra Reimann</td>
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<td>1912</td>
<td>The Life and Death of Richard III</td>
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<td>Sterling Camera and Film Company</td>
<td>James Keane</td>
<td>Frederick Warde</td>
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<td>1912</td>
<td>Queen Elizabeth</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Film d'Arte Italiana (FAI)</td>
<td>Henri Desfontaines, Louis Mercanton</td>
<td>Sarah Bernhardt, Lou Tellegen</td>
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<td>1913</td>
<td>Cymbeline</td>
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<td>Thanhouser</td>
<td>Frederick Sullivan</td>
<td>Florence LaBadie, James Cruze, Gertrude Elliott</td>
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<td>1913</td>
<td>Hamlet</td>
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<td>Gaumont-Hepworth</td>
<td>Hay Plumb</td>
<td>Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Frederick Warde, Ernest Warde</td>
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<td>1914</td>
<td>Antony and Cleopatra</td>
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<td>Pathé-Frères</td>
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<td>The Birth of a Nation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>David W. Griffith Corp.</td>
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<td>King Lear</td>
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<td>Thanhouser Film Corp.</td>
<td>Ernest Warde</td>
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<td>1920</td>
<td>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Decla-Bioscop</td>
<td>Robert Wiene</td>
<td>Werner Krauss, Conrad Veidt, Friedrich Feher</td>
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<td>1920</td>
<td>Hamlet: Drama of Vengeance</td>
<td>Hamlet</td>
<td>Art-Film</td>
<td>Svend Gade, Heinz Schall</td>
<td>Asta Nielsen, Heinz Stieda, Eduard von Winterstein</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1922</td>
<td>Othello</td>
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<td>Wörner-Filmgesellschaft</td>
<td>Dimitri Buchowetzki, Carl Frölich</td>
<td>Emil Jannings, Werner Krauss</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>The Taming of the Shrew</td>
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<td>Pickford Corp. and Elton Corp for United Artists</td>
<td>Sam Taylor</td>
<td>Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Immortal Beloved</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Icon Entertainment</td>
<td>Bernard Rose</td>
<td>Gary Oldman, Jeroen Krabbé</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Juno</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20th Century Fox</td>
<td>Jason Reitman</td>
<td>Ellen Page, Michael Cera</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>The Lovely Bones</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>DreamWorks</td>
<td>Peter Jackson</td>
<td>Mark Wahlberg, Rachel Weiz</td>
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