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Svebor Sečak[1]

Transformation of an Archival Recording of a Neoclassical Ballet Hamlet Into a New Artistic Dance Video Hamlet Revisited

Abstract: This text is a distillation of the author's exegesis that is an integral part of the PhD in Creative Practice project and is complementary to the dance video titled *Hamlet Revisited*. It shows the transformation of a video recording of the author's own choreography of the ballet *Hamlet* into a contemporary post-postmodern dance video DVD *Hamlet Revisited,* answering the following research question: *How to transform an archival recording of a neoclassical ballet performance into a new artistic dance video by implementing postmodern philosophical concepts?*
The goal of the project is to elucidate the transformation of *Hamlet* to *Hamlet Revisited,* from a neoclassical choreographic approach to the recent postmodern approach that traverses into a transmodern dance video of an eclectic blend of styles and techniques in accordance with the paradigm of digimodernism.
Key words: Dance Video, Ballet, *Hamlet*, Transmodernism, Digimodernism

[1] Associate Professor Svebor Sečak (PhD) is dean of AMEU Dance academy and national ballet principal of the Croatian national theatre in Zagreb. / Izr. prof. dr. Svebor Sečak je dekan AMEU Akademije za ples in nacionalni prvak Hrvaškega nacionalnega gledališča v Zagrebu. E-pošta: svebor.secak@almamater.si.

Transformacija arhivskega posnetka neoklasicističnega baleta Hamlet v nov umetniški plesni video Hamlet Revisited

Izvleček: To besedilo je rafiniranje avtorjeve eksegeze, ki je integralni del doktorskega projekta Creative Practice, ki se dopolnjuje s plesnim videom z naslovom Hamlet Revisited. Besedilo prikazuje proces transformacije videoposnetka avtorjeve samostojne koreografije za balet Hamlet v sodobni post-postmoderni plesni DVD video Hamlet Revisited, pri čemer odgovarja na naslednje raziskovalno vprašanje: Kako z implementacijo postmodernih filozofskih konceptov preoblikovati arhivski posnetek neoklasične baletne predstave v nov umetniški plesni video?
Cilj projekta je razjasniti prehod od "Hamleta" do "Hamlet Revisited", iz neoklasičnega koreografskega pristopa do sodobnega postmodernega pristopa, ki, skladno s paradigmo digimodernizma, prehaja v transmoderni plesni video eklektične mešanice stilov in tehnik.

1 INTRODUCTION

The post-postmodern paradigm of the 21st century has many names such as metamodernism (Vermeulen and van den Akker 2010, para. 15-16), transmodernism (Dussel cited in Cole 2007, 68-69) which is in accordance with the integral theory of Ken Wilbur (Visser 2003, xii) and digimodernism discussed in the *book Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture* written by Alan Kirby (2009). Accordingly, the dance video emerges as a new artistic medium which is different from a documentary recording or a music film, resulting in a new form of art – edited dance that does not exist outside the medium of film and/or video.[2]

[2] My article on post-postmodernism and dance video has been published

In this text I present my PhD research[3] which shows the transformation from a recording of a neoclassical ballet performance *Hamlet* into a post-postmodern artistic dance video *Hamlet Revisited*.

1.1 Purpose and goals

I decided to turn to my own choreography of the ballet *Hamlet* which premiered at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb in 2004, in order to revise it with a goal to demonstrate the neoclassical and the contemporary postmodern approach, following the research question: *How to transform an archival recording of a neoclassical ballet performance into a new artistic dance video by implementing postmodern philosophical concepts?*

The main objective of my research was to present the neoclassical choreographic approach I used in my original choreography *Hamlet,* and the postmodern approach I wanted to research. I created an experimental dance video that is not just a documentary, but a separate work of art[4]. Its significance lies in establishing communi-

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in the Proceedings Book with Peer Review on Professional Contributions on Dance at: https://dance-academy.almamater.si/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Proceedings-Book-of-the-Dance-Section-of-the-9th-Conference-All-About-People-1.pdf.

[3] This text is a distillation of the author's exegesis that is an integral part of the PhD in Creative Practice project in the School of Arts at the University of New England, New South Wales, Australia for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and has not been published elsewhere, but is stored in the repository of UNE and has open access: https://rune.une.edu.au/web/bitstream/1959.11/18259/6/open/SOURCE04.pdf

[4] I have experience in making experimental dance videos and my video titled *The Fifth Instrument* was shown at the *Napolidanza* International Festival of Video Dance in Italy in 2010. Furthermore, I have experience in shooting movies since I have participated in a TV series Good Intentions (2007) in the role of the *Mystery Man* getting an insight into the practical aspect of shooting films—different angles and shots: close up, medium and long shots; high, reverse and low angles; establishing and

cation between neoclassical and postmodern approaches, resulting in a contemporary post-postmodern artistic work that elucidates the process in the artist's mind during the creative practice.

1.2 Methods

My initial methodology consisted of field research—I followed various contemporary ballet and dance performances created on the repertoire of the CNT Ballet in Zagreb[5] and web video excerpts spanning from early modern to recent postmodern works[6]—and desk research in which I became acquainted with recent contemporary theories and concepts relevant to my project. In the field of performance and dance analyses, besides Janet Adshead's *Dance Analysis* (1988), the initial bibliography included Patrice Pavis' *Analysing Performance* (2006) and Susan Leigh Foster's *Reading Dancing* (1986). Foster claims that her *Reading Dancing* "charts … progression from structuralist to post-structuralist theoretical positions… through a semiological analysis of choreographic conventions to a historical consideration of those conventions…" (1986, 234). In relation to the field of semiotics, Terence Hawkes's *Structuralism & Semiotics* published in 1977 examines the foundational work about the topic including Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, etc. Keir Elam's book *Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (2002) for which Hawkes is the general editor,

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tracking shots; aerial, dolly, handheld and zoom shots; swish pan shots; arc, head on and point of view shots and match cut shots as explained in an online tutorial (Sabourin n.d.:online). Many of these were used in recording and the postproduction of *Hamlet Revisited*.

[5] *Five Tangos* (Hans van Manen); *Suite, Suite, Suite* (Marco Goecke); *Herman Schmerman* (William Forsythe); *Por Vos Muero* (Nacho Duato); *The Second Symphony* (Uwe Scholtz), etc.

[6] Youtube and other web sites provide a plenitude of video excerpts spanning from works of Loie Fuller to recent works of Jérôme Bel, Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, etc.

continues with the Prague School and discusses semiotics in the field of theatre, while Pavis in his book *Languages of the Stage* (1993) follows Michel Foucault and traces the semiological approach to theatre studies back to the Prague linguistic circle, as well as Charles Sanders Peirce and Saussure and discusses the difference between semiology and semiotics. In *Understanding of the Theatre* (2006) Marco De Marinis discusses the semiotics of reception. Furthermore, I decided to acquaint myself with the work of postmodern theoreticians from early Barthes in the 1960s onwards as gathered and analysed in Philip Auslander's *Theory for Performance Studies* (2008), as well as with the *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006) by Hans Thies-Lehmann, Linda Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) as well as *Performance Analysis*, edited by Colin Counsell and Laurie Wolf (2001). Particularly significant in the field of postmodern dance is Sally Banes's *Terpsichore in Sneakers* (1987). Other important sources relating to the dance field for this exegesis are Selma Jeanne Cohen's *Dance as a Theatre Art* (1992); Tim Scholl's *From Petipa to Balanchine* (1994), Foster's *Choreography and Narrative* (1996), Jane C. Desmond's edited book *Meaning in Motion* (2006), Martha Bremser and Lorna Sanders's *50 Contemporary Choreographers* (2011), etc.

My discussion on dance video is based on Erin Brannigan's *Dancefilm: Choreography and the Moving Image* (2011) that also provides relevant video links and the intertextual approach to the interpretation of this project is based on *Dancing Texts: Intertextuality in Interpretation* (1999) edited by Janet Adshead-Lansdale as well as Graham Allen's book *Intertextuality* (2011) where he, in a wider historical context, considers the fact that no text has its meaning alone; all texts have meaning in relation to other texts.

My methodology for the creative practice component of my PhD consisted of creating an experimental dance video in which I used the recording of my original *Hamlet* performance and some other existing

material that I juxtaposed against new material choreographed and recorded. In practice that means that for the creation of the *Hamlet Revisited* video, three dancers (Benjamin Duran, Ksenija Krutova and Pavla Mikolavčić) were shown the recording of my original *Hamlet* and then created their artistic response to it based on their reception and appreciation of it, without my interpretation or interference; then I watched their artistic response and used it on the basis of my reception of their work, also without their oral/written explanation of their artistic intentions allowing space for postmodern features such as aleatoric content, synchronicity, eclecticism, serendipity, etc. That way, we established communication on a receptive reader-response basis, thus blending the role of the spectator and the author. The dancers responded differently to the task, based upon their diverse dancing backgrounds and life experiences. I blended in the newly recorded material and juxtaposed our different approaches, editing the content and structure, that way transforming my original *Hamlet* into *Hamlet Revisited* based on my experience, but also on the experience of the performers who begin in the role of the audience observing video of the original ballet and transform into the role of the choreographer-performer. By blending the roles of the choreographer, performer and spectator, I hope I have created an original work of art whose significance lies in the relationship and communication between styles, old and new choreographic approaches, artists and audiences and the transformation of their traditional roles and relationships in accordance with Jacqueline Smith-Autard's educational and artistic concept of appreciating, creating and performing (2002). In editing and collating the newly recorded material I deliberately used some postmodern techniques such as fragmentation, repetition, self-reflexivity and simultaneity. I argue that by making a mixture of the old and the new material, classical and contemporary postmodern expression, the work resulted in a specific art piece which relates to the latest post-postmodern art theories.

2 RESULTS

Dance video *Hamlet Revisited* lasts approximately 60 minutes. It includes about 30 minutes of new choreographies, blended with the earlier material. The quality of the video and execution of choreography were made possible through cooperation with my associates. I worked with professional video technicians and dancers in professional working conditions that enabled the feasibility of the project. In the written exegesis, I focused on the multimedia presentation of my ideas as a director and choreographer, including the creation, collation and editing of my work and the work of my co-authors on the DVD, from the discourse of a ballet artist and choreographer, not a professional filmmaker.

It may be argued that my research proves that the postmodernists' prescriptive way of creating a work (Banes 1994, 309) can be applied to the re-reading or re-interpreting and transforming recorded ballet works. Some of the key postmodern concepts and techniques used are:

- **intertextuality** (Kristeva 1969; Adshead-Lansdale 1999; Allen 2011): is implemented not just as a tool for the analysis but also for the creation of this multi-layered work that is conceived as the writerly text open to multiple interpretations that is connected to the concept of deconstruction[7]
- **deconstruction** (Derrida 1967; Wood and Bernasconi 1985; Lansdale 2010): reveals the underlying multiple layers of the performance and puts equal significance on the already said and the not yet said, emphasising its process-driven and open-ended feature

[7] More in my paper "Intertextual dance analysis" published in the *Proceedings book on AMEU Dance Academy events 2018/2019*, Alma Mater Press, 2020.

- **diffuse authorship** (Barthes in Auslander 2008, 50): proves to be a concept that enhances the possibility of re-considering existing monolithic or readerly texts (Barthes cited in Foster 1986, 259): my associates and I selected this approach on a reader-response basis, but other options are open for further exploration. It is connected with the concept of the **rhizome** (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), where there is not just one root or source, in this case text source, as well as the concept of **carnival** (Bakhtin 1968) which accentuates the blurring of the boundaries between the spectator and the performer
- **supplement** (Derrida in Carlson 1985): refers to the additional choreographic and documentaristic video material. In a way I deconstructed the ballet *Hamlet* and re-built it, creating what Derrida calls supplement**,** resulting in an open-ended work of art, suitable for additional supplementation
- **death of the author** (Barthes 1968): is used to question my role as the author, drawing on Derrida and Foucault, positioning myself as the editor of various intertexts emphasising the notion of the **plurality of self** (Foucault 1969) by postmodern techniques such as **fragmentation**, **repetition** and **avoidance of a singular narrative** (which I used to depict the fragmented consciousness of Hamlet as a character, but also of the author/spectator) and **self-reflexivity** by adding autobiographical elements, thus personalising William Shakespeare's ontological themes in accordance with the postmodern condition of incredulity towards grand narratives
- **incredulity towards grand narratives** (Lyotard 1984): emphasises the importance of particulars as opposed to universals, in this case, by involving individual experience.
- **mirror**: three aspects of the concept of the mirror were applied—theatre as a metaphorical mirror (Lacan 1977b), a real mirror as a set element and the video that can serve as a time-transcending mirror

- **psycho-schizoanalysis**: from Freud`s psychoanalysis (1900) through Jung`s archetypes (1968), *Hamlet Revisited* arrived at the concept of schizoanalysis proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1983).

I argue that the postmodern choreographers prefer the formalistic mode of choreographing and deconstruct the topics they deal with and demand an adaptation, modernisation and even departure from the literary text. However, in *Hamlet Revisited,* the eclectic combination of the old and new material and the constant oscillation of different discourses upon the same topic resulted in a transmodern integrationist recent work of art.

This research has shown that some of the problems present in staged neoclassical ballets can more easily be solved through the medium of dance video. Techniques such as **reverse-motion** can be used to achieve travelling through time. **Multiplication of images**, **slow-motion, split screen** and **freeze-frame** were used in an attempt to illuminate what is occurring in one's mind, while **overlaying X-rays** presented the inside of a dancing body.

Simultaneity was used to achieve communication between various styles and approaches. Additionally, computer technique such as **image scratching** was used to emphasise that although it is a process driven work of art, it is not a documentary or an archival video; it is present only in the virtual world of the medium—that way somehow metaphorically imagined as a **simulacrum** (Baudrillard 1983; Auslander 2008) drawing on Foster (2006). It may be argued that this all corresponds with the digital age and the concept of digimodernism.

3 DISCUSSION

The research follows the notion that there are no texts without intertexts (Hutcheon 1988, vi). However, there are works of art

that are deliberately made up of intertextual components such as my *Hamlet Revisited,* according to Barthes's readerly/writerly concept (cited in Foster 1986, 259). Such an analysis has shown that more traditional, neoclassical ballet performances such as *Hamlet* drew on the heritage of classical tradition and the ballet vocabulary developed to its peak by the end of the 19th century in Petipa's ballets that was modified by modern influences in the works of cornerstone choreographers such as Mikhail Fokine and George Balanchine. Furthermore, I argue that the two artistic lines that emerged from Imperial St. Petersburg after the Revolution were connected by Sergei Prokofiev-Leonid Lavrovsky's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* (1938) that incited a new interest in the West for grand narrative ballets which resulted in a plenitude of choreographers such as Kenneth Macmillan, John Cranko, John Neumeier and many others. I argue that narrative ballets based on canonical literature synergise theories of art as imitation, expression and form (Copeland and Cohen 1983) that is also evident in my *Hamlet*. Such ballets can be seen as a surrogation of its literary model (cited in Wharton 2005, 7). They keep more or less a simplified linear narrative libretto counting on the spectators' past knowledge of the plot, illustrating that the transformation of the spoken word into ballet is not the only goal of the choreographer (Worthen cited in Wharton 2005, 11) but exploring the ballet medium as well.

I argue that physical aspects of the play, like dancing and fencing as well as love scenes and expressions of emotions are suitable for ballet expression, as well as for depicting the main characters. Nevertheless, some of the inner thoughts can be too complex to express in the medium of ballet. Only in combination with other stage elements that can be used as a reference point for some of the unspoken text, as well as acting, pantomime or other choreo-

graphic devices, may it be considered as a sign system containing visual, gestural, kinetic and spatial elements that to a certain extent in a semiotic sense may be paralleled with a verbal language. However, there are situations when the choreographer/director has to be more inventive to be able to transfer more subtle concepts and information from the literary model, such as what has happened in the past or is planned to occur in the future, as well as discussions of a third person not present on the stage. This problem I tried to solve by a set element—the mirror.

These issues are more easily addressed by the new generation of choreographers that implement video on the stage or transfer the ballet medium into the dance video as is the case of *Hamlet Revisited*. I argue, drawing on Foster (1986, 92-93) that regarding choreographic syntax *Hamlet* worked on the principle of *mimesis* and *pathos,* while *Hamlet Revisited* includes *parataxis*: different intertexts were put together in juxtaposition, some of which were put randomly to allow space for coincidence and serendipity (drawing on the work of experimental ballet choreographers such as Merce Cunningham who merged ballet and modern dance and was the predecessor of the postmodernists); the others were blended together carefully trying to achieve communication between the old and the new approach to some of Shakespeare's themes such as love, grief, remorse, lust, or, to put the new material as an artistic commentary of the old one, departing from Shakespeare and character depiction.

Especially important text sources for conceiving *Hamlet Revisited* were the postmodernists from the 1980s that Banes (1994, 309) calls metaphoric and claims that since then postmodern is no longer a descriptive term, but a prescriptive one for the new generation of choreographers. This had impact on my work in which I tried to take advantage of this claim in transforming *Hamlet* into *Hamlet Revisited*. This stage of postmodernism Foster calls reflexive dance and is

further subdivided by Hal Foster (cited in Foster 1986, 225) into reactionary and resistive forms which blend the roles of choreographer, dancer and viewer, just the way I imagined *Hamlet Revisited*.

A paradigmatic example of a ballet choreographer who works according to postmodern philosophical concepts and whose work can be perceived as a significant intertextual source is William Forsythe, who deconstructs ballet vocabulary and syntax and uses concepts like intertextuality, fragmentation and diffuse authorship. He allows his dancers to improvise and give their contribution to the choreography, undermining the position of the author to a certain extent, but preserving the frame of the game he invented as he puts it: "I'm an initiator, and that's delightful—he who invents the game but not necessarily the rules" (Forsythe quoted in Littler, 1991, C6). This is of utmost importance for the way I set up my collaboration with my associates—we were working on a reader-response basis. They conceived their new choreographic material inspired by my choreography, which I then used according to my comprehension of what they had done without verbal explanations, leaving the interpretive possibilities more open. By putting myself in the position of the super-spectator and at the same time undermining my position as the author, and then restoring it by including some autobiographical elements, I have responded to what Hutcheon calls the poetics of postmodernism: she identifies a paradox within modernist interest in self-reflexivity and the postmodernist artistic approach to that urge, and she explains this as a challenge to the humanist assumption of a unified self and an integrated consciousness by both installing coherent subjectivity and subverting it (1988).

The intertextual approach is visible from the beginning of *Hamlet Revisited* where music, literal text and ballet bodies and vocabularies are presented as important text sources. Intertextuality is present in a way of referencing or quoting but even more

of drawing on relevant intertextual fields, as well as juxtaposing different texts together. Besides various choreographic materials, autobiographical elements and various shootings that emphasise the process of the creation of the work, architectural frames serve as references to the historico-political intertextual field that was important for the evolvement of ballet art in Croatia, as well as for my personal artistic transformation.

All of this was made possible only in the medium of dance video whose historical lineage also served as an important text source: so, drawing on the postmodern approach to video dance**,** I used computer manipulations drawing on contemporary work in the field. One of the pivotal ballet and dance choreographers whose work can serve as a reference is Philippe Decouflé who enhances the visual texture of film and merges disparate texts together[8].

In *Hamlet Revisited* I intentionally tried to establish this communication between the various texts by juxtaposing my neoclassical choreography with the new contemporary choreographic material; at some places randomly put together in a paratactic way and at others meticulously blending different approaches to the same motif (love, remorse, grief, etc.) and also by fragmenting Tchaikovsky's music score with newly composed music and adding diverse references such as architectural in an attempt to recall the historico-political context. By collaborating with my co-authors, I blended our choreographies into one new artistic work, which is in accordance with Barthes's idea on diffuse authorship, constructed through improvisation and experiment (Auslander 2008, 50) that corresponds to his concept of the death of the author (Barthes 1968). Although I use different choreographic pieces from various

[8] I am not arguing that my work has any similarities to those of Decouflé or Forsythe, but that their usage of postmodern philosophical concepts was enlightening for my work.

authors, I function as the super-spectator who combines them all into one unity and connects it to his private life and experience, using the theme of Hamlet for self-reflection.

This explains my entire project in which I deal with this paradox of modernist impulse on self-reflexivity and self-expression, and the postmodernist artistic approach to that urge, so the main achievement is not just the final work but illuminating the process of how that transformation occurred. By incorporating the work of other authors and, with a slightly auto-ironic detachment, by fragmenting the narrative through-line, I sought to problematise and undermine my position as the self-reflective author, at the same time, paradoxically by constructing a coherent artistic work, I re-established myself in that position. The autobiographical elements included in the video were meant to reveal how an artist's life experience can serve as an intertext in constructing or reinterpreting complex dramatic ballet roles such as Hamlet. They outgrew their initial function, evolving into personal ponderings about ontological themes where *Hamlet* serves as a point of departure.

This is the way I imagined *Hamlet Revisited* where my function is, in places, more of an editor-creator than that of a traditional author-creator. In this collage of intertexts I am present as a dancer performing the title role, choreographer of ballet *Hamlet* and the super-spectator and editor of the entire project. Foucault (1969, 112) claims that all discourses that encompass the author function possess this plurality of self[9].

[9] This corresponds to Mikhail Bakhtin's idea that, according to Auslander (2008, 41), "the author's function is that of a ringmaster who deploys various voices without identifying entirely with any of them." Bakhtin in his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984, 51) searches for "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices."

This 'plurality of self' is evident in *Hamlet Revisited* where my 'self' works on three levels; as a dancer/choreographer; as a mature artist/editor and as the author of the exegesis. Juan Carlos Hidalgo (1999, 211-213) calls this phenomenon the split 'I' and claims that it is present in the character of Hamlet, and in the review of Celestino Coronado's experimental film *Hamlet* from 1976 finds this split subjectivity in the director as well as in the spectator who have difficulties in bridging the narrative gaps and finding a coherent self in the work, which is how I imagined *Hamlet Revisited* as well.

This 'plurality of self' is apparent in my work—if the first self is the dancer and choreographer of the ballet *Hamlet*, the second self is the more mature artist who edits all previously mentioned intertexts, including self-references into *Hamlet Revisited* and the third self, according to Foucault would be "the one that speaks to tell the work's meaning, the obstacles encountered, the results obtained, and the remaining problems" (1969:112).

Additionally, postmodern practice can be seen as either "neoconservatively nostalgic/reactionary, or radically disruptive/revolutionary" (Hutcheon 1988, xiii), a contradiction that is also apparent in my project. *Hamlet Revisited* preserves conservative neoclassical choreographic segments and my appearance as a younger artist. This is confronted with the new material which at places radically contrasts with the old material thus establishing a never-ending dialogue between the old and new artistic approaches that is open to multiple interpretations. However, in accordance with Jean–François Lyotard's (1984, xxiv) postmodern 'incredulity towards grand narratives' I depart from Shakespeare's literary original, while using it as a starting point, and explore my artistic concerns, in a more abstract, formal way. In the new choreographic material, there is no story or characters. The connection with Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is the older choreographic material; for

example the soliloquy of Hamlet *To be or not to be* read by Tom Bedlam juxtaposes the text with the movement to check how well it correlates with Shakespeare's original words in accordance with James Calderwood (1983, 22) who mentions Hamlet's words to the players when he urges them to: "... Suit the action to the word,/ the word to the action, ..." (3.2.17-18). The new material leans on the old, as a specific commentary and fantasy which offers numerous possibilities for new interpretations[10]. The more traditional neoclassical approach from which I drew my choreography was in places put in contrast with the formalistic choreography of Ksenija and Pavla, as disembodied distorted shadows.[11] Abstract set movements were repeated in different contexts in order to chart their semiotic characteristics in various circumstances in an attempt to expand the repertoire of techniques which can be used when choreographing a story like *Hamlet,* exploring kinesic, proxemic and chronemic paralinguistic concepts.

Finally, I offer analyses on two levels. I combine a semiotic structural analysis based on description, interpretation and self-evaluation with an intertextual analysis to complement self-explanatory elements with a more objective stance in the examination of the project. The first level is a structuralist semiotic analysis in which both works, *Hamlet* and *Hamlet Revisited* are subjected to a traditional analysis that contains description. As Stanley Fish (1980, 353) puts it: "description can occur only with-

[10] Lyotard discusses that metanarratives are "being replaced by a proliferation of *petits récits*, 'little stories' or testimonies that draw attention to particulars as opposed to universals—that is, to local events, individual experience, heterodox ideas..." (quoted in Auslander 2008, 133).

[11] This is in accordance with Maya Deren's concept of depersonalisation – "a type of screen performance that subsumes the individual into the choreography of the film" (cited in Brannigan 2011, 101).

in a stipulative understanding of what there is to be described"; explanations of my authorial intentions follow with a short self-evaluation. The second level takes into consideration Adshead-Lansdale's (1999, 7-8) claim that an alternative to envisaging description as being capable of resonating some prior reality is to consider the dance text as an open construction, containing the fluency and enigmatic quality of art and leaves the interpretive position open. Such an intertextual approach is woven like a thread throughout the exegesis to give a more objective stance to examine my project and possible constructions of meaning that can differ from my original intentions, moving from strict relationships between signs to a multiplication of signifiers, combining structural, semiotic and intertextual analyses[12].

3.1 Dance video

The ballet vocabulary is an inexhaustible inspiration that can be combined with other dancing styles which means that in my quest for the transformation of an archival video recording into a post-postmodern dance video I integrated the old neoclassical with the new choreographic material. However, I was not expanding my choreographic vocabulary, because I used digital technology and manipulation to achieve that effect. Deborah Jowitt (2011, 16) says that recent choreographers experiment with computer-generated imagery and techniques juxtaposing live dancers with virtual ones. Choreographers such as Wim Vandekeybus and Lloyd Newson engaged in the possibilities of cinema creating dance films (Jowitt 2011, 15). Therefore, the medium of *Hamlet*

[12] Intertextuality is employed in structuralist, post-structuralist, semiotic, deconstructive, post-colonial, Marxist, feminist and psychoanalytic theories, and has been applied across a range of literary and cultural texts according to the preliminary statement in Allen's Intertextuality (2000, i).

Revisited is a dance video (also referred to as videodance, screen dance and cinedance).

Brannigan (2011) follows the lineage from early modern dance and the first 19th century recordings to the present-day contemporary video dance but does not discuss the use of film or video as a component of stage productions. She makes a clear distinction between a dance film/video as documentary work and dance for camera that is choreographed and edited for the purpose of an artistic dance film. As scholar Dave Allen (1993, 26) states:

> A clear distinction needs to be made here between those programmes which seek to re-present existing dance on the screen in order to make the work more widely available … and other works in which directors, choreographers, and dancers attempt to address themselves to the nature of the medium and create *dance* film video specifically to be screened.

This distinction is especially of interest to my project, which deals with the transformation of an existing archival video into an artistic one. Dance video is a popular artistic field and there are numerous video and dance film festivals. Technology is increasingly entering the works of choreographers, not only in the sense of merely recording the choreography/performance or creating an autonomous work of art, but also in the sense of an analysis of movement, as in the interactive multimedia technology research of Forsythe where he translates choreography into new forms. In our post-digital age, also called the social media age, technology also enables each individual to create recordings using various recording devices at any moment in time.

It may be argued that film, since its emergence that coincided with the modern tendencies in art and the appearance of modern dance, had great impact on ballet and dance art since the

first works of Loïe Fuller, through the fact that many of the first Hollywood actors were accomplished dancers; over the influence of film on the new choreographers' ideas since the beginning of the 20th century and the presence of dance in musicals and other films; over documentary recording of choreographies to the usage of video as a component of stage productions. However, for this discussion, the lineage from Fuller, Maya Deren to postmodernist Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown and other contemporary dance filmmakers such as Decouflé who is famous for his dance films and pop videos, has the main significance for a distinctive field of art called video dance, which led the filmmakers to experiment with various rendering techniques such as slow motion, multiple-exposure, repetition, reverse-motion, and digital postproduction techniques such as image scratching. These all serve to produce new forms of choreographic practice and new modes of cine-choreography. The rendering process surpasses reproduction, taking the choreographic elements to a new state or condition; the film itself becomes dance-like (Brannigan 2011, 127).

Therefore, in the transformation of my archival recording of ballet *Hamlet* into an artistic dance video, it is appropriate to hybridise genres implementing various recording techniques and postproduction editing, as well as complementary postmodern theatrical techniques such as fragmentation, repetition, slow-motion, freeze-frame, simultaneity, avoidance of a singular narrative, etc., utilising the postmodern philosophical and theoretical concepts in order to create this intertextual work.

3.2 From psychoanalysis to schizoanalysis

Before creating *Hamlet Revisited* I became better acquainted with Freud's theories as discussed in *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1976) by Ernest Jones. For Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, the

Oedipus complex, named after Sophocles' play *Oedipus the King,* can be applied to Hamlet's character. The Oedipus complex relates to the young child's fascination with the parent of the opposite sex and jealousy of the parent of the same sex. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) Freud wrote analyses of both *Oedipus the King* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Freud explored the inaccessible mental processes which he considered as the working of the unconscious. For him, the unconscious content is forced out of the consciousness by repression. Hamlet is unable to take revenge on Claudius who murdered his father and has taken his father's place with his mother. Claudius is the man who had shown Hamlet his repressed yearnings—he took his father's place instead of Hamlet himself. Revenge is replaced by self-reproach, by conscious anxieties which reveal to Hamlet that he himself is no better than the perpetrator whom he should punish. Freud translated into consciousness what had to remain unconscious in the mind of the hero. Furthermore, Freud (1900, 86) connects the subconscious and the theme of parent-child relationships to Shakespeare's real life, claiming that *Hamlet* was written right after the death of Shakespeare's father and connects the name of Shakespeare's son Hamnet who died in childhood to the character of Hamlet. (This is especially interesting for my *Hamlet Revisited* where I not only explore the parent-child relationship, but also connect it with my private life for artistic purposes).

Finally, if it may be argued that Freud's Oedipal reading of *Hamlet* provides a viewpoint on the relationship with his mother, father and uncle, then Carl Jung's concept of archetypes encompasses a greater variety of characters; while Freud explored the individual unconscious, Jung (1968) investigated the collective unconscious. I included his concepts of archetypes to emphasise that the traditional artistic approach which tries to retell and interpret a story

requires a deep understanding of characters and motivations. Besides the roles of the mother, father and child, all the main characters can also be linked to the idea of archetypes. The character of Hamlet searches for his *self*. It is an archetype that can be explained as a combination of the unconscious and conscious of a person. This occurs through a process in which various aspects of personality are integrated which is noticeable in Hamlet's ontological speeches. If it were a classical tragedy, Hamlet would probably be classified as the archetype of the *hero* who would revenge his father and defend his throne. However, Shakespeare's Hamlet is much more complex than that and as a character he feels vulnerable in relation to other characters, so he feigns madness—choosing to put on a metaphorical mask that corresponds to the archetype of *persona,* a word derived from Latin that literally means mask.

Ophelia's character corresponds to Jung's archetype of the innocent *maiden*. There are some other important archetypes, like the *trickster* connected to Claudius, *shadow* (the dark side of mind present in the deeds of Claudius, and others, but also in the appearance of the Ghost), *the wise old man* (Polonius presents himself as a *wise old man*). The archetype of *anima* that represents the subconscious idea of female in man (corresponding to *animus* in women) is arguably the part of Hamlet's subconscious that finds the characters of Gertrude and Ophelia and their behaviour inadequate for the archetypal models in his mind: "...—Frailty, thy name is woman—" (1.2.146), and can be linked to gender ambiguities in *Hamlet*. So, it may be argued that the main characters in *Hamlet*, although depicted in detail as having their own idiosyncrasies both in Shakespeare, and in my balletic version, can usefully be seen as archetypes. Freud's and Jung's Modernist thought and the concept of psychoanalysis were therefore useful for depicting the characters and their drives in the analysis of my *Hamlet*. Howev-

er, in *Hamlet Revisited* I also use their psychoanalytical concepts as tools for interrogating the parent-child relationship relevant to *Hamlet*, combining it with postmodern lines of thought such as the schizoanalysis of Deleuze and Guattari (1983). Their concept of schizoanalysis rejects Freud's psychoanalysis, the traditional transcendent structure of mother—father—child that is repressive and they reject the concept of that family triangle to avoid the repression and restraint of the psychoanalytic interpretative framework. For them (1983, 81) "It is not the purpose of schizoanalysis to resolve Oedipus, it does not intend to resolve it better than Oedipal psychoanalysis does. Its aim is to de-oedipalize the unconscious in order to reach the real problems."

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use botanical terms to explain two different ways of thinking. One is *rhizome*, referring to a horizontal stem that sends out roots and shoots from multiple nodes and it is not possible to locate its source root, which I had in mind while creating *Hamlet Revisited* as a collage of different intertextual texts. This thinking contrasts with the traditional *arborescent* tree-like thinking that develops from root to trunk to branch to leaf. However, in my work I tried to explore both ways of thinking, horizontal and vertical, so I used the traditional transcendent structure, mother—father—child, to search for the causes of present outcomes in childhood, in other words, in one's roots. Therefore, through a series of photographs I tried to refer to some of the main themes in *Hamlet*—love towards the mother, inability to take over the place of the father (to step in his shoes), an unsuccessful love relationship, expression through art, as well as a weapon in my hands with all the connotations it carries.

Throughout the work I have used slight doses of irony and a touch of humour (especially in this frame with my childhood pictures) to avoid too much pathos and nostalgia. The undermining

of autobiographical veracity is in accordance with the postmodern questioning of grand narratives. Hence, what seems to be the autobiographical part of the work is in fact something else. It is my effort to illuminate the process in the artist's head when dealing with narrative works, when selfidentification with the main character is almost inevitable, especially if you are also playing the role.

3.3 Body

In the video material I played with images of the anatomy of the dancer to show what is under the surface of the body as a deconstructed instrument, juxtaposing it with images of literary texts, music and dance notation sheets that are not used literally, but as signs of the process in which dance is created. The human body is at the same time an instrument and the performer whose dance is defined by music and choreographic structures, but also by his/her body predispositions and artistic talent.

While André Levinson (quoted in Copeland and Cohen 1983, 110) saw dancers as machines for manufacturing beauty, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 2) conceive of human beings as desiring-machines:

> There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing-machines, desiring-machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species life: the self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever.

Auslander (2008, 87) further explains this concept:

> A desiring-machine is connected to a body without organs, ..., a term borrowed from avant-garde playwright and theatre conceptualist Antonin Artaud (1896-1948). This concept denies the idea that the person is to be found inside the body, composed

> of autonomous, self-sustaining, and organised internal forms. Instead, it suggests the notion that the person/body is interconnected, exterior, open, multiple, fragmented, provisional, and interpenetrated by other entities.

Correspondingly, Litza Bixler referring to Laurence Louppe's discussion, drawing on Barthes and Foucault, describes the "mutable body in which meaning is culturally produced and not inherent within the biological form" (Louppe cited in Bixler 1999, 242). Furthermore, Barthes, following Freud and Jacques Lacan, has comprehended the body as a sign for the structure of the unconscious; he has also, following the Russian formalist and structuralist traditions, addressed the body as "a locus of mindful human articulations" (Foster 1986, 237).

Therefore, I wanted to present a dancer's body on one hand as a theatrical sign, instrument, machine, etc. and on the other, as a human being with all its idiosyncrasies, physicality, but also mind, emotions and talent. In *Hamlet* I represented male and female dancing according to traditions and conventions of classical/romantic ballet; in *Hamlet Revisited* I was more aware of gender ambiguities, and this is why I depicted Pavla's body as an 'instrument'. This does not mean that I wished to deprive her of female qualities, or of the male gaze of desire, as discussed by Ann Daly (2006, 117) who mentions that even today's contemporary choreographers are not being subversive or transformative in ballet's representation of Woman. Anna Kisselgoff, from the NY Times, argues that "it does matter whether the arabesque ...belongs to a man or a woman" (quoted in Daly 2006, 117). As Daly points out—for Kisselgoff, "the sacred authority of tradition is never to be desecrated..." (ibid.). Whether or not choreographers will "conceive a new language of desire" as Daly concludes drawing on Laura Mul-

vey (ibid.), my intention was different. I wanted to point out that today's professional dancer's body, male or female, is not just a body trained in a particular dance technique; today's eclectic repertoire demands a new type of body that Foster calls the 'hired body'—it is a body trained to make a living in dancing. It is additionally shaped by activities such as sports, aerobics and various exercise programmes. The criteria for evaluating its training share physical education's specialised and scientific orientation. This hired body should achieve a specific heart rate, a general level of strength and flexibility and a muscular tonus (Foster in Desmond 2006, 255). The language of biology and kinesiology is used to appraise the strength, flexibility and endurance of the body's muscle groups. A dance screening process which monitors the above is recommended by physiotherapist Mike Chisolm (2003, 9-10) for today's professional dancer. Dancing bodies, professionally trained and cared for, can be perceived as a tool as well as text source in creating contemporary choreographies which is why I made a reference to it at the beginning of my dance video. Furthermore, what is of utmost importance for my work is the notion following the hired body—the video dancing body. It is often constructed from the edited tapes of dance movement—its motion can be slowed, smeared or replicated and according to Foster (2006, 255) offers a 'permanent' record of the dance which can be viewed and reviewed indefinitely and can serve as an 'unproblematic simulacrum'[13] of live dance.

[13] Jean Baudrillard's (1983, 81) concept *simulacrum* is an image or representation of reality that has three main phases or orders—the first phase emerging in Baroque with artifice over realism, the second being the modern age of mass production with its realism and the third postmodern phase, where *simulacrum* has lost all relation to reality, producing its own reality. In postmodernity the *simulacrum* has replaced the real, so that we live in a world of *simulacra* (Auslander 2008, 57).

Additionally, at the end of this video clip, I repeated the image of me as Hamlet holding a skull in an attempt to make a parallel with her body's anatomy, i.e. her skull that can be connected to Hamlet's themes of death.

The balletic interpretation of Hamlet's character is definitely inspired by the old ballet classics. Such a romanticised version of Hamlet is suitable for ballet expression; in *Hamlet* I represented male and female dancing according to traditions and conventions of classical/romantic ballet inscribing gender difference as an aesthetic virtue; male dancing is athletic and more powerful and supportive, while female dancing is a display of delicacy and fragility. Daly (2006, 112) claims that:

> Dance classicism is an ideology devoted to tradition, chivalry, and to hierarchy of all kinds—gender, performer's rank, the distinction between types of roles, spectators' placement, stage organization, the canon. Romanticism's emphasis on personal expression also relies on the theatricalised dichotomy of feminine and masculine temperaments.

In *Hamlet Revisited* I selected Benjamin who is not a typical classical ballet dancer in accordance with the postmodern inclusive concept of different bodies.[14]

The unisex outfit of him and Ksenija diminishes gender binaries and utilises ambiguities present in *Hamlet*. It sounds innovative, but

[14] Contemporary postmodernists push this to the extreme: DV8 Physical Theatre in Lloyd Newson's film *The Cost of Living* (2004) includes a double-amputee person; Candoco Dance Company is inclusive of both disabled and non-disabled dancers; similarly, everyday behaviour has moved from, for instance pedestrian movement to the extremes in *Jérôme Bel*'s performance Jérôme Bel [1995] where one of the performers urinates on the stage. My intentions were far more moderate in application of concepts of inclusion or usage of ordinary movement.

since we know that in Shakespeare's time all the performers were male and that later on Sarah Bernhardt played the role of Hamlet[15], as well as Bronislava Nijinska in her ballet production of 1934, it is evident that such an approach had its different predecessors throughout history. Feminist critiques[16] have dealt with female characters in *Hamlet,* but also with their experience of the character of Hamlet. Jean Betts (1994, ii) in the writer's note to her play-script *Ophelia Thinks Harder* says: "I remembered studying Hamlet at school, and like most other girls in my class, identifying with him and finding Ophelia alien; while at the same time being aware that even so, too often in my life I was judged not on how I measured up to Hamlet, but on how I compared to Ophelia." Obviously, there is an element of gender ambiguity in Hamlet himself, which is evident throughout the text. For example, King Claudius addresses Hamlet's mourning: "... tis unmanly grief" (1.2.94), implying that Hamlet acts like a woman or a child. Hamlet himself in 2.2.581-583 misogynistically calls himself a whore, a drab and a scullion and thus compares his behaviour to female behaviour. Furthermore, at 3.1.144-146 he says: "I have heard of your painting well enough. God/hath given you one face and you make yourselves another ...". It can be observed that for him women can be perceived as artificial and fake. According to Robin Wharton (2005, 13) Vladimir Malakhov in his version of *Hamlet* (1990) uses the Shakespearean source to reveal and destabilise ballet's conventions governing the construction of gender identity—his physical appearance, the feminine perfection of his line in the usually female pose together with

[15] As well as many other actresses: Charlotte Charke (18th c.), Asta Nielsen (1920), Frances de la Tour (1979), Ruth Mitchell (1992), Angela Winkler (2000), Abke Haring (2014), Maxine Peake (2015).

[16] For example—Lisa Jardine (1991), Janet Adelman (1992), Alison Findlay (1994), Kay Stanton (1994), Akiko Kusunoki (1995), Sharon Ouditt (1996), Debra Bergoffen (1998), Susan Lamb (2002).

a sex-neutral costume, provide emphasis to Hamlet's androgynous appearance (Wharton 2005, 16). Benjamin and Ksenija's appearance deals with gender ambiguities in a more subtle way, unlike some choreographers who, like Mark Morris, intervene dramatically to defamiliarise the representational conventions regulating gender issues by partnering men with men and women with women or by dressing men in tutus and pointe shoes to dance female roles (Burt cited in Wharton 2005, 10). This is another paradox of postmodernism where some of the authors such as Morris tried to change attitudes towards traditional gender roles with men and women sharing the same characteristics (Kisselgoff 1985, para. 5), while critics such as Wharton (2005, 8) suggest that on stage as in life, the body must be made to represent itself in every aspect, including gender.

3.4 The concept of mirror

In Shakespeare's original, the play within the play scene serves as a mirror of reality that provokes Claudius's response and here, we perceive it on another level—in the actual mirror.

Philip Armstrong (2003, 218) explains this concept of *imitation* according to which the purpose of playing is as explained by Hamlet's words: "... to hold as twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." (3.2.21-24). Armstrong continues that many contemporary references repeat the ambivalence between the mirror as a passive reproduction of the image, and its more active role in constituting the beholder. Hamlet himself, for example will be described as "The glass of fashion and the mould of form / Th'observ'd of all observers, ..." (3.1.155-156). When Hamlet confronts his mother, he claims he will "... set you up a glass/ Where you may see the inmost part of you." (3.4.18-19); actually, he is not showing her a mirror, but portraits of her two husbands, so

she can realise how she was before and what she is now. Nevertheless, according to psychoanalyst Lacan (1988, 169), what was the father becomes the super-ego that in Hamlet's words reappears "... In my mind's eye, Horatio." (1.2.185).

Richard Rorty in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1980) discusses the eye of the mind as the cognitive model appearing in the Renaissance and deriving from Greek philosophy. Lacan in *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience* (1977a) discusses the concept of the mirror stage that he perceives as an early stage in cognitive development of a child. However, it is also important for performance studies as discussed by Matthew Causey in *The Screen Test of the Double* (1999), where he uses the concept of split subjectivity, the subject's awareness of itself looking at itself, to analyse postmodern performances. This is very interesting since *Hamlet* can be perceived as performance of identity. In words of Hidalgo (1999, 213) the individual I is a mere signifier - the grammatical eye susceptible of adhering to different signifieds. Identity is never definite, but always slippery and therefore provisional.

Lacan (1977a, 2) defines identification as the "transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image." But identification needs differentiation between projection and introjection. Introjection engages predominantly with the symbolic register according to Lacan (1988, 125). So, the stage mirror is not only important on the level of Hamlet's mousetrap but is also significant to define someone's ego. Lacan (1977b, 31) uses the play *Hamlet* to discuss the relationship between the ego and its ideal image in the mirror:

> The playwright situates the basis of aggressivity in this paroxysm of absorption in the imaginary register, formally expressed as a mirror relationship, a mirrored reaction. The one you fight is the one you admire the most. The ego ideal is also, ... the one you have to kill.

Armstrong (2003, 221) claims that "the moment of identification threatens always to replace the ego with its own image or representation". In the view of James Calderwood (1983, 25), Hamlet defines himself not by what he is, but what he is not. He acts on Spinoza's principle that "All determination is by negation." Hamlet separates himself by words and actions mostly from Claudius, but also from Old Hamlet, Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes and Gertrude (ibid.). According to Armstrong (2003, 225), Hamlet, in eventually fighting his ego ideal, effects his own death.

However, this can be perceived as a traditional approach and traditional analysis. In the postmodern contemporary addition to my original choreography, as previously explained, my co-workers watch the performance from a theatre box and are filmed on the video, as are their artistic responses to the original choreography. Here, in a semiotic sense we have three aspects of the concept of the mirror—theatre as a metaphorical mirror, a real mirror as a set element and the video that can serve as a time-transcending mirror (one can see himself/herself how he/she looks in the moment and how he/she looked in the past). Furthermore, some of the new abstract choreographic material that uses the mirror as a prop is not firmly connected with the plot, so it corresponds with the postmodern and poststructuralist theatre concept which stimulates the audience to find their own meaning and inspiration while appreciating that abstract choreography.[17]

As images in the mirror disappear, we see Pavla behind a glass theatre door in which the panorama of Zagreb is reflected. (Zagreb

[17] Brannigan (2011, 37) explains how already early dance films were fascinated with mirrors such as Dudley Murphy's 1929 film *Black and Tan* with music of Duke Ellington, where the tap dancers performed on a mirrored floor simulating the effect of a hall of mirrors and a kaleidoscopic in-camera effect is used to achieve the disoriented gaze of a character in the movie, similarly to what I did with the circling images around Pavla's head.

is the birth city of both Pavla and myself and in a way our artistic 'kingdom'. Just like Hamlet, we both went abroad for studies and returned home to claim our position in the theatre, so the ambience of Zagreb represents everything that supports but also questions our artistic attempts.) Pavla opens the door and points her finger accusingly, alluding to the Ghost from the original story.

The scene is blended into her abstract choreography with mirrors. For the first time, we see her complete choreography *Innocent* and hear the original music to which it was created (Flesh Quartet). Her idiosyncratic choreography is performed harmoniously following elegant lines of movement and developing phrases. The camera as well as computer manipulations play with the fragmentation of the picture and mirror effects. So, instead of just documenting the choreography, it gives additional dimensions and qualities for the spectator to appreciate. She can represent both Hamlet and Ophelia exploring the subconscious and searching for their identities in the mirror, just like Narcissus who sought his reflection in water. Several clips of water and Pavla's reflections in the water have been inserted—accordingly, the mirror can represent the water in which Ophelia shall eventually drown.

In another clip, Pavla is sitting in the audience with four images circling around her head. In each of the four images she performs her abstract movements in different locations in the theatre—in front of a large theatre window, in the Foyer, on the top of the theatre staircase and on a red sofa in front of a large Foyer mirror. The red sofa can suggest carnal lust; the Foyer court dances; the mirror Hamlet's contemplations and reflections and the staircase can refer to the scales of Elsinore's corridors, but also to the labyrinths in Hamlet's mind. The shadow in front of the window can refer to the Ghost, but all understandings are open to the spectators. Pavla is dancing parts that can be linked to both Gertrude and Ophelia;

however, my intention was not to depict characters as in the traditional version, but to deal with themes such as love, grief, jealousy and remorse. As mentioned by Wharton (2005, 20) "Shakespeare functions ...as a kind of flexible cultural discourse—of power, desire, intrigue, etc.—rather than a set group of stable, printed texts."

All these complex allusions to sexuality, the subconscious, the search for identity, etc. are features intended to provoke powerful but different, individual responses, and are as always open for the spectator's perception.[18]

3.5 Hamlet Revisited as supplementation/surrogation

According to Wharton (2005, 7), after Joseph Roach, ballet can serve as a surrogation for dramatic performances, meaning that ballet can replace the play to a certain extent. As Roach said it is a process through which "culture reproduces and re-creates itself" (quoted in Wharton 2005, 11).

Dramatisations of Shakespeare in ballet often depend upon the audience's prior knowledge of Shakespeare to provide narrative coherence. Wharton (2005, 20) says that:

> textual interpretation results from a staged confrontation between the inherited kinesthetic vocabulary of the surrogate and the cultural meaning associated with its authoritative 'source' text. Rather than exploring themes or problems that are necessarily already present in and a preoccupation of the source, these ballets instead seem at least equally invested in probing and critiquing the medium of ballet performance itself.

[18] This is in accordance with Deren's vertical film form concept accounted for the different film structure in non-narrative films which she calls 'poetic film'; rather than progressing horizontally with the logic of the narrative, vertical film sequences explore the quality of moments, ideas, images and movements (cited in Brannigan 2011, 101).

Wharton says that turning to Shakespeare allows a choreographer to take advantage of an audience's presumed familiarity with the plot in order to introduce a previously unavailable level of narrative complexity.

I would argue that I created *Hamlet Revisited* as an intertextual, open-ended, writerly work that is close to Marvin Carlson's use of the Derridean concept of 'supplementation' that sets forth the idea that a supplementary text can always change the meaning of the original text and every further supplement can be supplemented. In his text *Theatrical Performance: Illustration, Translation, Fulfillment, or Supplement?* (1985) Carlson discusses various approaches to a theatrical performance, metaphorically described as illustration of the text where plenitude is in the written text; fulfilment of the text where plenitude is in the performance and in a way fulfils the literary text; translation of the text where equivalent plenitude is on both sides and supplement of the text where the concept of supplement avoids the problems associated with privileging either performance or written text[19]. This is exactly what I did—I supplemented the archival recording of my choreography *Hamlet* with the new video material creating *Hamlet Revisited,* transforming the existing work according to postmodern concepts into an eclectic transmodern dance video. As Carlson (1985, 11) states "not all that this play has to say has been said, … other different but

[19] It may be postulated that works by traditional choreographers, from Jean-Georges Noverre to Macmillan and Cranko, can be considered as attempted 'translations' of literary text according to Walter Benjamin's idea of the *Task of the translator* (1968). The translation of an artistic literary work is not simply information, but "… something that a translator can reproduce only if he is also a poet" (1968, 70). This is applicable to the relationship between text and performance; a director or choreographer requires an advanced artistic sensibility to 'translate' Shakespeare's works into the medium of dance.

equally rich experiences with it are always possible." My function was as much that of an editor as of the traditional author and the plurality of texts I used resulted in the plurality of self in my role as the creator of *Hamlet Revisited*. On the other hand, Shakespeare's role as the author of the literary source text was ambiguous and ambivalent—his literary model served as foundation for my works; while my original choreography tried to retell Shakespeare's story, the new choreographic material almost rejects its importance using it just as a starting point. However, their blend as the final work of art demands the spectator's previous knowledge about Shakespeare as the author, his work, and its plot to be able to appreciate it in its entirety; otherwise, their experience would only be partial. Pavis (2006, 327) concludes that there are different theories for different periods and claims that even poststructuralist theory after Barthes, Derrida, Foucault and other postmodern theoreticians such as Lacan is somewhat dated: now is a time for restoration of the text. Wharton (2005, 10) states that "the spectator often brings more to the performance than a rudimentary knowledge of the plot, citation of the text does more than simply impart narrative continuity to the action on stage." So, at the end I am returning to Shakespeare, though not literally. Hence, to be able to follow and understand my new work, arguably we have to presume that the author is very much alive. Where? Well, to paraphrase the Bard himself: "In our mind's eye, Horatio."

4 CONCLUSION

This research project was conceived as a case study of my specific work (dance video as the creative practice component) and I hope that it contributed to the general knowledge in the field by elucidating the transformation of *Hamlet* to *Hamlet Revisited* presenting the neoclassical choreographic approach and the recent

postmodern approach that crosses over into a transmodern dance video of an eclectic blend of styles in accordance with the paradigm of digimodernism. It included some of the most significant concepts and techniques used in solving problems of revisiting an archival recording of a ballet work and transforming it into a new dance video that can serve as prescription and scaffolding, or at least as a basis for other choreographers in re-thinking their past works of art; while many of these are used in current dance field in creating new choreographies or dance videos, the specific quality of this research is that it proves how old materials can be re-used and re-interpreted in the creation of a new artistic work.

I answer the topic question by explaining how I transformed *Hamlet* to *Hamlet Revisited* offering an option how to do it, not excluding other possibilities. The research focuses on the concept of intertextuality as a tool for analytic purposes, but also on a manner of creating an open-ended complex work of art such as *Hamlet Revisited* that might be of interest to choreographers as well as theoreticians who wish to reconsider existing choreographic creations. That way, the intertextual approach proves to be valid at least on two levels: the first is the possibility of a more objective analysis in combination with a semiotic structuralist approach and the second one is the creation of a new work where the author can function as the editor, aware and conscious of the interplay of disparate texts and their sources which co-act in the mind during the creative process.

Finally, I am aware that in this dance video there are things that I have not addressed or verbalised. Correspondingly, the dancer-choreographer Alexandre Munz[20] (2015, para. 2) argues against

[20] Alexandre Munz is the choreographer of the Video-Dance trilogy, *Lumière, Lola* and *Hydra*, in collaboration with director Florence Freitag, filmmaker Johannes Plank and composer Fabian Russ (2015).

a "deep-rooted bias privileging the power of the word over the power of corporeality" and against a "disavowal of the body as a thinking being able to express the inexplicable and the invisible, which is, in fact, precisely the realm of dance" (2015, para. 3).

Further research can explore:

- the ways of transforming prominent and established versions of ballet performances into a new work
- how to establish a different cooperation between authors from the one presented in *Hamlet Revisited*
- how to modify one's own choreographic vocabulary and test the relationship of the old and the new vocabulary and syntax
- the possibility of revisiting *Hamlet Revisited* after a certain time period and adding new ideas to this unrestricted work of art
- possible relationships between works from different cultures through comparison and juxtaposition.

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