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CONTENTS

MISSING WORDS, POLYDIRECTIONAL ADAPTATION AND META-REFERENCE AS CHOREOGRAPHIC STRATEGY IN SHAKESPEAREAN DANCE ADAPTATIONS

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Introduction: Polydirectional Adaptation and Metareference as Choreographic Strategy in Shakespeare Ballets

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet" (*Romeo and Juliet* 2.2.43-44). Can Juliet's philosophical meditation about language be put into balletic movement? Any choreographer attempting this media change will face quite a challenge. Dance and the written/spoken word seem to be medial antagonists. Yet in drama, especially in Shakespearean drama, they often form a symbiotic relationship and have more in common than meets the eye. As both Brissenden's iconic study on *Shakespeare and the Dance* (1981) and *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Dance* (2019) show, dance serves a variety of functions in the plays, be it as metaphor, as means to propel the action or as festive conclusion to a performance. It is this simultaneously ambiguous and symbiotic relationship of Shakespearean language and movement alongside the gripping plots, timeless characters, and finally, the Bard's role as celebrity in cultural history that have inspired countless choreographers to attempt their kinetic pen[1] to form yet another Shakespeare ballet. Yet, how create a ballet of a work that lives off the ambiguities of Shakespearean language, coined words, puns and numberless intertextual references? How represent soliloquies that express emotions precisely through the artistic use of words, when movement and music is all there is? Symbolist poets thought the exact opposite way and admired dancers of Diaghilev's *Ballet Russes* at the beginning of the twentieth century for being able to signify in a way that language cannot. Stéphane Mallarmé describes the signifying potential of ballet as follows:

> [T]he ballerina *is not a girl dancing*; […] but a metaphor which symbolizes some elemental aspect of earthly form: sword, cup, flower, etc. […], *she does not dance* but rather, with miraculous lunges and abbreviations, writing with her body, she *suggests* things which the written work could *express* only in several paragraphs of dialogue or descriptive prose. Her poem is written without the writer's tools. (Mallarmé 112, emphasis in original)

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[1] The term choreography is "[d]erived from the Greek for dance and writing." As the *Oxford Dictionary of Dance* relates further, it "originally referred to the actual writing down of steps (which today is called dance notation), ever since the late 18th century it has meant the art of composing dance" ("Choreography"). The metaphoric coinage 'kinetic pen' is meant to allude to the simultaneity of narrative and kinetic composition that is connected to the act of choreographing.

John Cranko, director of the Stuttgart Ballet and "reformer of the literature ballet, stylistic innovator, and mentor and inspiration for a number of emerging choreographers" (Bührle 361), made it his goal as a choreographer to "find that thing which movement says and no other art can find" (Cranko qtd. in Bührle 361). Yet, theatre and the ballet stage share more than one might suppose with Cranko's statement in mind. Both rely to some degree on non-verbal communication and in both it is the body, movement quality and the use of space that function as important means of signification. It is this simultaneity of medial similarities and differences that offers the great variety of ways in which dance can enrich textual interpretation, and vice versa. These observations hold equally true for the question of adaptation. Film and ballet adaptations share choices and adaptational techniques, when it comes to questions of casting, setting, costuming, and movement, as in fencing scenes. The most common ground all these processes share are of course the dance scenes in the respective plays. Still, the greatest particularity of ballet is its lack of verbal language, on the one hand, its multimodal co-dependency of dance and music, on the other. In cases where the musical score is a Shakespearean adaptation of its own, such as Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, there are multiple and mutually influencing adaptation processes at work. Linda Hutcheon classifies adaptations as "palimpsestuous works, haunted at all times by their adapted texts" (Hutcheon and O'Flynn 6). In ballet adaptations, it is not only the Shakespearean text that shines through, but also other adaptational processes, such as the musical composition and other Shakespeare ballets in dance history, adding the aspect of dance style and its respective cultural contexts to its signification. The entire theatre apparatus and most centrally every dancer becomes part of this rhizomatic adaptational process and thus demonstrates one of adaptation's many descriptions: Eckart Voigts defines adaptation as "reception in action" (161); reception applies here to the choreographer who creates a kinetic re-writing or 'new writing' of the Shakespearean pretext as well as to each dancer who interprets both the role and the choreographed movements via her/his own 'reading' of the play. With Douglas Lanier's "rhizomatic concept of Shakespeare" in mind, where cultural authority is given to each and every adaptation, each and every Shakespeare ballet adds to the "Shakespearean rhizome", which in itself is "never a stable object but an aggregated field in a perpetual state of becoming, ever being reconfigured as new adaptations intersect with and grow from it" (29–30). Since the medial differences are so essential and the choreography works less through verbal transposition than through kinetic allusion, condensation, expansion, or periphrasis, an intermedial perspective on reading the dance works will reveal much about the adaptations as both processes and performative products. As Regina Schober observes "adaptations are embedded in complex intermedial, cultural and perceptional configurations shaped by dynamic and reciprocal interactions" (91). These intermedial configurations apply to both the interaction of dance and music as well as to the relationship of the dance adaptation and the Shakespearean text. Thus, for this paper, I would like to suggest reading each ballet adaptation as a contribution to what John Bryant calls "the fluid-text" where "a *work* is the sum of its versions" (47). Each Juliet in each theatre production, film or ballet adaptation contributes with each new 'reading' of the role another interpretation of it. Influenced by the medium's unique ways of signification, its characteristic possibilities and constraints, every new production/

adaptation comments both on the Shakespearean text and the history of the chosen art form. In this way, each Shakespeare ballet speaks back to its textual source and to other dance adaptations and at times even to adaptions in other media/art forms, such as *Romeo and Juliet*-ballets alluding to and influencing earlier filmic and/or musical adaptations.[2] I would like to close this introductory survey of perspectives on (dance) adaptations and their multi-layered and multi-directional processes with Jørgen Bruhn's suggestion, "to study both the source and result of the adaptation as two texts, infinitely changing positions, taking turns being sources for each other in the ongoing work of reception in the adaptational process" (73).

Each dance adaptation studied here forms a medially influenced interpretation of Shakespeare's words and can be read as both a kinetic and a cultural contribution to the rhizomatic web of Shakespearean texts in the widest sense. Shakespeare ballets form a particular addition to the medial variety of adaptations. Studying dance adaptations and their processes of creation with a particular focus on the use of meta-medial strategies of choreography offer further insights into the particular ways ballet can contribute to the wide variety of adaptation strategies of Shakespearean texts. As Robin Wharton contends, "representational conventions of ballet as a performance medium influence the interpretation of the text that emerges on the stage" (13). While on the one hand it is a given that a ballet adaptation makes use of dance conventions to evoke the Shakespearean plot, it is these particularities of dance culture that add medially influenced readings of the plays; especially when it comes to elements of dance that refer to and implicitly comment on its own form and performance culture, so-called meta-references.[3] John Cranko, John Neumeier, Christopher Wheeldon and José Limón have all used meta-choreographic means to offer their readings of the respective plays (*Romeo and Juliet*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Othello*). For instance, Neumeier has Juliet grow to maturity through learning how to dance on point and Limón in his *The Moor's Pavane* (1949) compresses Shakespeare's *Othello* into a courtly dance. This paper studies the use of meta-choreographic elements and the blurring of medial boundaries as means of characterisation and re-interpretation of Shakespeare's plays.

Juliet (Re-)Interpreted, Hermione (Mis-)Understood: Ballet Conventions as Means of Signification

Dance conventions and choreographic solutions can serve as additional means of signification in the adaptation processes from text to ballet. By foregrounding these meta-choreographic elements, they offer unique, kinetic readings of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and thus add medially formed interpretations to the play's rich history of theatrical stagings and filmic adaptations. This is particularly telling when it comes

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[2] Every choreographer adapts not only Shakespeare's play and interprets Prokofiev's music, but also engages in a process of remaking of earlier Shakespeare ballets, which themselves can refer to other forms of Shakespeare adaptations. For a more detailed study on *Romeo and Juliet*-ballets as remakings see Marcsek-Fuchs ("*Romeo and Juliet* Re-danced").

[3] For an extensive study on *Metareference across Media* and the distinction between 'self'- and 'metareference', see Werner Wolf 19; 22-23.

to characterisation and setting the scene. Every stage director already sets standards by her/his choice of casting, setting, and verbal tone when first introducing Shakespeare's thirteen-year-old heroine. While Shakespeare's highly informative and poetic lines are missing, in dance it is through body language, use of ballet conventions, and staging of relationships, all inspired by the musical score, that Juliet's character is developed. John Cranko's and John Neumeier's respective versions of Juliet's first entrance choreographically establish the scene and, with that, prepare for the conflicts to come.

In Shakespeare's play, the Nurse first addresses Juliet as "lamb" and "ladybird" (1.3.3),[4] with that introducing both her innocence and their loving relationship. It is then through Lady Capulet's dialogue with the Nurse that we learn more about the heroine's early childhood and the Nurse's close connection to the girl. Through the Nurse's reminiscences, Juliet is characterised as a happy and agile child (1.3.17–49). John Cranko represents Juliet's childlike speed and humour in his ballet adaptation (1958/1962) by having her play pranks on her most dear confidante, and encircle her via vivid movements, which, on the one hand, are inspired and amplified by Prokofiev's rapid musical tempo (referenced as 'vivace') and, on the other, contrasts the Nurse's heaviness. Cranko even picks up on the Nurse's complaint of her being "out of breath" in Act II (2.5.30) and has Juliet lovingly tease her about that. At the same time, all of this adheres closely to ballet conventions throughout by Juliet dancing in point shoes and executing neat footwork with virtuoso ballet steps.

In contrast to this, John Neumeier, who himself had been a dancer in John Cranko's Stuttgart Ballet, created a much more revolutionary entrance for Juliet in his own adaptation (1971). Not only is Juliet dressed in merely a large towel after seemingly having finished her bath, but she is also bare footed, dancing around and teasing her Nurse, who tries to have her put on her slippers; a scene which stresses Juliet's childlike playfulness even more and reminds every parent of a familiar situation. Juliet parodies her mother's and, with that, the court's rigid dance conventions, which is soon sanctioned by Lady Capulet, who has entered the scene unnoticed. Juliet stands in stark contrast to everyone at court. Even her playmates have mastered both the art of dancing on point as well as the codified movements of their society. Juliet, on the other hand, rebels against anything constraining her. Her barefooted and seemingly more natural dancing stands in opposition to her mother's movements and reminds of early twentieth century pioneers of Modern Dance, like Mary Wigman, Martha Graham or Gret Palucca. Thus, Juliet's revolutionary and brave character is underlined by contrasting dance styles. Both Cranko and Neumeier chose an accessory or piece of costume to signify Juliet's coming of age. In Cranko's version, she is given her first gown in preparation for the engagement ball to come. Neumeier decided on an amulet and a dance movement, which Juliet is to own.

Neumeier makes use of self-referential ballet conventions, such as the use of point shoes and codified dance movements, in order to represent Juliet's introduction to society. This choreographic choice adds new layers to both, the ballet conventions and Shakespeare's Juliet. While dancing on point generally transports the idea of weightless

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[4] Further references to Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet*) are taken from The Arden Edition, Third Series, edited by René Weis (2012).

yet powerful artistry and alludes to its rich history, from nineteenth century sylphs to the prowess of an Odette in *Swan Lake*, in Neumeier's scene, it adds the meaning of confinement and cultural codification. This is enhanced by the stiff movements of Lady Capulet's signature dance that she is trying to teach her daughter. Elsewhere, I have proposed the term "moving text" for dance-related allusions in literary works, implying that references to dance or dance conventions will add both kinetic and cultural allusions to the medium at hand (Marcsek-Fuchs, *Dance and British Literature* 5–6).[5] In this case, Juliet's transition from her carefree childhood to arranged marriage is accompanied by a symbolist and at times contradictory array of allusions through dance. Her dancing on point will render her an accomplished and accepted member of her community, will show her as both a vulnerable and strong woman complying to her social standing, all visualised through the kinetic impression her dancing leaves with the viewer. But dancing on point also stands in stark contrast to the freedom Juliet enjoys while jumping barefooted across the stage. Dancing on point is a ballet convention that has been reserved for female dancers and has been perfected throughout dance history since the early nineteenth century. Mastering its art stands for lightness, beauty, and technical virtuosity while at the same time putting quite some strain on the dancer. However, like many of the standards representing feminity in ballet, it has been questioned only since the early twentieth century. For Robin Wharton, "the ballet stage is a social space in which the representation of gender is circumscribed by a rigid and adamantly heterosexist kinaesthetic vocabulary" (12). These kinetic and cultural allusions which are added to the scene via dance conventions not only help transpose Shakespearean content into the ballet adaptation, but also offer medially informed interpretations of the scene in the play. Patriarchal customs of arranged and forced marriage are thus displayed and interpreted as a stiff, constraining convention, which is unquestioned, just like dancing on point is a gendered, hegemonic practice that displays the heroine as an accomplished, yet subdued victim of her society. Thus, Neumeier's choreographic adaptation of the scene 'writes back' both at nineteenth century ballet and Renaissance social culture through meta-referential use of kinetic means.

Hermione (Mis-)Understood

While John Neumeier's use of ballet conventions adds clarity to the dance version of Juliet's coming-of-age scene, Christopher Wheeldon's use of them enhances the ambiguity of the relationship between Hermione and Polixenes in the beginning of his

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[5] "[D]ance enriches the literary text by kinetic as well as cultural implications, by medial qualities, which at times remain unmentioned but are nevertheless present on the level of connotation. Both parameters, the kinetic and the (other) cultural implications, are complementary and contribute to this experience of the 'moving text' on the side of the recipient" (Marcsek-Fuchs, *Dance and British Literature* 5–6). Here an example: When Beatrice uses the term "Scotch jig" for the wooing process of lovers (Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing* 2.1.71) and with that metaphorically describes the vivid quality of emotions involved, the reader/listener will associate both, movement qualities and cultural implications with this vehicle. The multimodal metaphoric effect will be reached by the vehicle's kinetic quality.

ballet *The Winter's Tale* (2014).[6] Shakespeare's late romance is, as Nicholas Hytner pointed out in a dialogue with Wheeldon, a problematic play to stage. Hytner thought "it might work for dance [… and added that] some of the problems may sort themselves out if there's no one actually talking!" (qtd. in Winship). However, it is difficult to adapt a play so full of epic and ambiguous elements, in which prehistories are narrated and gestures are misleading, when the most central means of clarification is missing, namely Shakespeare's complex and poetic language. A good case in point is the moment in which King Leontes' fatal jealousy ignites in the play. Although Leontes and his wife Hermione are portrayed as having a loving relationship at the beginning, he seems to question her love from the start, especially when it is not due to his but her urging that Polixenes, Leontes' closest friend and Bohemian King, agrees to stay longer at Sicilia's court (1.2.8–88). Although his jealousy is clearly unjustified in Shakespeare's version, unlike in its source,[7] the play leaves room enough to give the sting of jealousy its verbal and visual shape: Hermione calls Polixenes, the king's own closest ally, her "friend" and "[g]ives [him] her hand", as the stage direction suggests (1.2.108).[8] Both are ambiguous signs: as explained in the annotation, "friend" actually "could mean sexual lover" (Fn. 108), and offering a hand can range from polite gesture to a promise of marriage. This ambiguity is intensified by the fact that Hermione, who already has a young son, Mamillius, with her husband, is at this point nine months pregnant, the exact amount of time Polixenes has spent at Sicilia's court as its guest (1.2.1). Christopher Wheeldon solves the problem of rendering all the expository information, such as the life-long friendship between Leontes and Polixenes, narrated by Camillo (1.2.21–31), by creating a 'prologue', which meshes ritualistic dance with pantomime. While this overture, which he deliberately entitles with a term akin to drama, cleverly helps to clarify relationships and prehistories, the following *pas de trois*, in which Hermione is lifted and danced with by both her partners, Leontes and Polixenes, adds ambiguity to the scene through the conventions of dance. Partnering in ballet often serves the function to express emotion, while at the same time exhibiting kinetic virtuosity. *Pas de deux* are centre pieces in all story ballets, establishing passion of love or the pain of parting, as in many of the *Romeo and Juliet* ballets. For Nancy Isenberg, *pas de deux* are there "to express the heightened emotion of intimate relations" (1821). They can also serve to visualise a battle of the sexes, as in Cranko's *The Taming of the Shrew*, where the couple wrestles with each other to gain the upper hand, which is difficult both to portray and to physically perform, since in conventional ballet there is a clear gender divide and hierarchy: the gentleman is the one lifting the lady, keeping her on balance and helping her shine with multiple turns. Even if he seems to be in the background, he is the one who makes it possible for her to fly through the air, or so it seems, since the lady must exert quite some force and perform technical brilliance herself, in order to help her

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[6] An article on Wheeldon's *The Winter's Tale*, which studies the ballet as an adaptation that fuses several processes of medial interpretation into a multidirectional web of signification, is forthcoming in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 157 in Spring 2021: Marcsek-Fuchs ("Von Shakespeare zum Ballett, und zurück," 157).

[7] One of Shakespeare's sources was Robert Greene's novella *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time* (1588). For further information on Shakespeare's pretexts, see Pitcher 8–10.

[8] Shakespeare (*The Winter's Tale*): the quoted stage direction follows line 108.

partner execute the lifts.[9] Even in twenty-first century societies, in which gender equality is the goal, theatre audiences expect and enjoy traditional partner work in ballets, and rarely explicitly question the kinetically-established gender hierarchies. Thus, one needs extra thought to question the *pas de trois* in Wheeldon's early scenes, in which it is not one but two men lifting the pregnant Hermione through the air and, more pointedly, handing her from one to another. So, while the choreography and harmonious music imply friendship, the technically required and visually shown close body contact with Polixenes thwarts this distance between Hermione and her husband's best friend, thus implying a more romantic connection. In contrast to this, Christopher Wheeldon (the choreographer), Joby Talbot (the composer) and Bob Crowley (the set designer) created a scene later in the ballet which offers clarity about Leontes's insane jealousy as caused solely by his own imagination: he observes Hermione taking a walk with Polixenes in a hall filled with marble statues that stand with the back to the audience. To show that Leontes' jealousy is unjustified, the *pas de deux* in the well-lit stage indicates innocent friendship. Then the stage switches to darkness; only Leontes stands in a spotlight, turning the statues one by one and revealing increasingly outspoken erotic art. In these dimly lit moments, the couple forms shadows of erotic scenes in the dark. This interplay of light and dark helps distinguish reality from imagination. Choreographic finesse and precision help give clarity to the question of guilt: Hermione was innocent, and Leontes' jealousy is a result of his imagination, hubris, and patriarchal discrimination. By contrast, the earlier *pas de trois* in the opening of the ballet has the exact opposite effect: the conventions of partnering help blur the lines between friendship and love. Thus, gaps left by the play are filled by dance standards. While, on the one hand, this effect is a result of the adaptation process from play to ballet, on the other, it helps one think about Leontes's jealousy and Hermione's resulting conviction in the play as the effect of shallow, unquestioned patriarchal morals and gender politics. Partnering conventions in ballet are 'performative', in Judith Butler's sense, and stereotypically stabilised through re-performance: by hegemonically instrumentalising this convention in choreography, its gender-specific signification remains ignored and women's subordinate representation reiterated; similar to Renaissance gender politics and the resulting legal consequences of men's jealousy for women.

The Ball-Scene: The Missing Media Change

While the examples so far have been based on gaps left by verbal and dramaturgical ambiguities or were founded on medial discrepancies in the adaptation process, the next one is inspired by a literal and medial gap left in the play text of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: the dancing at Lord Capulet's ball. All the explicit information we get about the ball are either revealed through 'word scenery', as in Capulet's question "which of you all / Will now deny to dance?" (1.5.18–19), characters referring to their own dancing, or through stage directions, such as "*Music plays and they dance*" (1.5.25).

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[9] For a discussion on traditional gender hierarchies, femininity and masculinity in ballet, see Isenberg, 1824–1826.

There is little other information about the style of dancing or the accompanying music. As Emily Winerock points out,

> [t]he precise footwork and exact dance figures performed in the original sixteenth-century performances of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* may never be recovered. Yet, surviving dance instruction manuals and choreographic notes from the period, spectators' descriptions of dance practices in England, France, and Italy, comparisons with similar dance scenes in contemporary plays, and references to dance elsewhere in the text of *Romeo and Juliet* itself enable some reasonable hypotheses regarding what dances might have been done in the original productions and how those dances were "read" or understood by audience members. (n.p.)

The stage or film director will now have the pleasure of deciding which style, either period or modern, is to signify, underline, or contrast the famous first encounter of the 'star-crossed lovers' in their sonnet-like dialogue. It is by this change of medium (from text to movement), as well as the overlap of verbal and non-verbal signification in this scene, that the situation is given its multimodal context of romantic suspense. Shakespeare's scene, the ballet's pretext, is already multimodal in design. A stage director, on the one hand, needs to expand the stage direction into an actual ball scene, at the same time orchestrating movement with speech. The hierarchical society is represented by the movement of the dance and the privacy of the lovers by the spoken sonnet (Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* 1.5.92-109). The choreographer, on the other hand, needs to create a scene where this medial overlap is represented by dance only and where the choreography, together with the music, is to show the contrast between the public dancing of the guests and the private talking of the lovers. There are two adaptational processes that the choreographer needs to master: 1) the staging of the stage direction "they dance" and 2) the choreographing of an entire ball scene, a multimodal theatre convention, through movement only.[10] When it comes to filmic adaptations, one is reminded of the broad variety of solutions, ranging from Franko Zeffirelli's period style, Baz Luhrmann's queer costume party, or Bernstein/Robbins' *Mambo* in *West Side Story*. More importantly, when Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is staged or adapted for the screen, a director can make conscious use of this medium change from predominantly verbal dialogue to the inclusion of a ball scene, and benefit from the medial and scenic contrast. Yet, when it comes to ballet, the choreographer is left with a dance-within-the-dance. In choreography, it is this medium change and, thus, medial contrast that are missing, and the choreographer is left with the choreographic means only to highlight this central moment. Julie Sanders calls the 'Dance of the Knights' in Prokofiev's music and its respective ballets the "most memorable of all the aural *leitmotifs*, which first sounds when the male guests 'perform' at the Capulet ball in i.ii of the ballet" (Sanders, *Shakespeare and Music* 68). John Cranko employs a

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[10] The adaptation process can be read as taking differing paths, depending on the entry point of the research project and the concept of 'text' in mind: if the pretext is seen in Shakespeare's dramatic text, then the adaptation process involves a medium change from written language to danced performance. If the performance texts and traditions are seen as the source of the ballet adaptation, then the staging of the ball scene involves a change of art form, which then reduces the outcome by eliminating the spoken words. This paper takes the first path as its starting point and includes aspects of performance conventions as secondary source material.

combination of lavish movements with simplicity of style, and of a luxurious opening scene with the stasis of the first image to which the curtain opens. He has the scene commence with a stepping dance with the men holding cushions, a scenario that could be said to connote the Renaissance tradition of the *Cushion Dance*, a courtly tradition common since the 1570s, which *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* describes as "[a]n old dance in which a participant chose a partner by dropping a cushion before him or her, who then knelt on it and bestowed a kiss on the cushion-bearer" ("cushion dance"). John Cranko's 'Dance of the Knights' has three parts, analogous to Prokofiev's music: the slow steps are first presented by the gentlemen, then the ladies encircle their partners, and finally, the couples repeat the first movement together with a slight variation, ending with the gentlemen dropping the cushion, kneeling in front of their ladies who then reach their hands to their partner. Unlike the above description of the *Cushion Dance*, it is the bearer of the cushion, the gentleman who kneels, and the lady who points to her partner's shoulder, thus, inverting the gender hierarchy typical for Renaissance culture. Since the closing image shows Lord Capulet kneeling in front of Lady Capulet centre stage and in analogy to the other couples, the ladies are given more power through their superior standing position. In Leonid Lavrovsky's version (1940), which was the original that influenced Cranko and many of his followers, such as Kenneth MacMillan, Lord Capulet throws the pillow, she subsequently kneels, he joins her and kisses his wife passionately. Here, this gesture is reserved for the hosts only. With that, Lavrovsky renders a quite different interpretation of the couple's relationship to each other and to the rest of society. Yet, in both versions, the dance is performed synchronously by all couples and in public at the ball, thus presenting it as a superficial convention of a longstanding dance tradition. Nancy Isenberg highlights the role of group dances in that they are "to establish social contexts" (1821). Cranko's Lady Capulet is shown in these dances as a strong lady, who at the same time perfectly performs her role as Lord Capulet's wife. Her seemingly dispassionate movements show her as fulfilling conventional roles and customs, which later stands in great contrast to her emotional scenes following Tybalt's and Juliet's death. Just as the cushion dance helps visualise Lady Capulet's gender role as predefined in aristocratic Renaissance society full of norms and rules (just as her dance is made up of preconditioned steps and poses), so does the choice of choreography and style at the ball help characterise Juliet and her relationship to both her parents and Romeo for the rest of the play. The 'Dance of the Knights' and her parents' convention-driven postures represent the stiff and superficial society Juliet rebels against by choosing her own husband, marrying secretly, and dying for her love by her own hand. This subversive passion is visualised in all three *pas de deux*, in which the ballet conventions of partnering, coupled with the especially powerful lifts and loving embraces, aide this contrasting function. So, while Cranko's choreography and reading of Lord and Lady Capulet's relationship reinterpret the original function of the *Cushion Dance*, as an implicit *intra*medial reference the dance helps foreshadow Romeo's first encounter with Juliet.

Othello Condensed into a Stately Dance: Limón's *The Moor's Pavane*

While the previous example focussed on monomedial choreographic strategies to mark multimedial contrasts in *Romeo and Juliet*, this one looks at the dramaturgical foregrounding of a courtly dance as the central structuring and contextualising element in a choreographic adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*.

José Limón's *The Moor's Pavane* (1949) is subtitled "Variations on the Theme of *Othello*", which clearly indicates both the piece's acknowledgement of its source and its conscious departure, marking it more as an appropriation than adaptation in Julie Sander's terms (*Adaptation and Appropriation* 35). The piece reduces Shakespeare's utterly complex plot to 20 minutes and four characters only. As Susan Jones indicates, it "universalizes the idea of the play *Othello* since the characters are unnamed and instead given figurative titles": Othello is simply called 'The Moor', Iago 'the Moor's Friend', Emilia 'The Friend's Wife', and Desdemona 'The Moor's Wife' (295). Consequently, the main title signals Othello's centrality in the dance piece, as well as the Pavane's both literal and metaphoric means to signify. The entire work is framed and structured through this *quartet*. This is the dance with which it begins and to which the characters return after their expressive solos or duets. Limón juxtaposes elements of modern dance and stylised versions of the Renaissance Pavane in both movement and spatial arrangement as he switches from showing the mental state of his characters back to the social decorum that they keep up through joining the circling round of the court dance.

Elsewhere, I introduced the concept of the "moving text" to indicate a mixture of kinetic and cultural allusions that are triggered through a reference to dance in literary texts (Marcsek-Fuchs, *Dance and British Literature* 5). Here, I would like to widen the *inter*medial perspective to be applied to *intra*medial references as well. For Limón's Shakespearean appropriation, this would mean that the incorporation of the stately dance *Pavane* into an otherwise modern dance piece helps activate kinetic and cultural associations in the viewer and, thus, add perspectives for the interpretation of both the dance performance and Shakespeare's *Othello*.

So, how can the *Pavane* contribute to our readings of both Limón's and Shakespeare's work?[11] *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance* defines the *Pavane* as a "formal court dance" in duple time, popular in Italy, France, and Spain during the 16th and 17th centuries" and characterises its movements as "sedate and dignified" ("Pavane"). Thus, the dance adds cultural and kinetic allusions to the work's settings, social contexts, and the relationship of the specific four characters to which Shakespeare's complex plot is reduced. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "the pavane opened ceremonial balls and was used as a display of elegant dress" ("Pavane"), with the ladies exhibiting the trains of their gowns during the dance. These references to movement quality, pace, spacing, and codified movements in a quartet render Limón's character constellation the illusion of elegance and structured power, at the same time allowing this to be read as superficial and conventionalised harmony. The dancers then intermittently break out of

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[11] I will be focussing on the *Pavane* as a dance, although Purcell's music used for this dance piece and arranged by Simon Sadoff adds further means of characterising Othello's tragedy. Some pieces used is the Pavane are taken from Purcell's *Pavane and Chaconne*.

the ordered and harmonious quartet for solos or duets performed with expressive modern dance movements, which represent Iago's intrigues, Othello's growing jealousy and Desdemona's martyrdom. Iago's kindling of Othello's jealousy, in the play through such simple questions, as "Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my lady, / Know of your love?" (3.3.93–94)[12] are represented here by expressive modern dance movements conducted in silence; a strong contrast to the *Pavane*, which is performed with harmonious synchronicity of the dancers and to the melodious music by Purcell. Susan Jones describes the interplay of courtly and modern dance as follows: "Limón uses the *pavane*, showing how the equilibrium of power relations, tightly held in play by the symmetrical forms of the courtly dance, implodes as individual emotional desires and anxieties destabilize the harmony of the quartet form"; with this also "signal[ling] the deconstruction of the formalized patterns of conventional modes of movement" (290). Thus, this juxtaposition of dance styles and of sound and silences does not only help visualise the contrast between inner turmoil and upkeep of social appearances, but it also shows the coexistence of individual tragedy and social hypocrisy. The harmonious movements of the *Pavane* help make Limón's modern dance style appear even more revolutionary and expressive. By interpreting Limón's *The Moor's Pavane*, Othello's tragic role is highlighted through the contrast of styles and through the metaphoric power of the *Pavane* representing the hypocritical, even racist morals of society, represented through a seemingly harmonious courtly dance. Iago can be interpreted as the master utilising the codified patterns of decorum and gender stereotypes to reach his aims. The brilliance of his mind, intrigues and conversations are mirrored in the complexity and virtuosity of his executed steps.

Another inspiration to revisit the final scene of Shakespeare's *Othello* is Limón's choice of ending. Instead of closing his dance piece with dramatic justice, *The Moor's Pavane* ends in a powerful tableau, showing Othello's maddening grief and revealing Desdemona's dead body by all three dance characters, Iago, Emilia, and Othello. As Susan Jones puts it,

> Limón thus emphasizes the ultimate breakup of the social form as the implication of responsibility for the crime falls on both the Moor and the two onlookers. Instead of the relatively formal political harmony provided by the play's closure, Limón's version associates personal tragedy with social/political breakdown from which there is no recovery. (296)

Instead of merely functioning as a means of transposing word to movement, the interplay of courtly *Pavane* and Modern Dance, the juxtaposition of movement and stillness as well as of music and silence represent the contrasts in Shakespeare's *Othello*. The power of Limón's final tableaux intensifies the catastrophe of Shakespeare's tragic hero and visually stresses the role all three (Iago, Emilia and Othello) played in bringing it forth.

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[12] References from Shakespeare (*Othello*) are taken from The Arden Edition, edited by E. A. J. Honigmann.

Concluding Remarks: Speaking Movements and Polyvalent Signification through Ballet Conventions

Like the director, the choreographer will choose means offered by the theatre apparatus carefully to represent and reinterpret intricacies of the Shakespearean texts. Meta-choreographic strategies help make use of all that the ballet vocabulary has to offer to transpose complexities of the texts into movement. It is these kinetic strategies and artistic conventions particular to dance in general and to ballet in particular that offer polyvalent and multi-layered means of signification in a word-less but multimodal artform. Be it the meaningful and metaphorical employment of point shoes, the choreographic clashing of dance styles, as well as the intramedial reference to or structuring use of particular (court) dances, these signifying processes help enrich the Shakespeare adaptations by their own medial and cultural specificities. Choreographers, dancers, and the entire theatre apparatus connected to the Shakespeare ballet offer their own, multi-layered, multi-modal and above all kinetic web of interpretations, open for polyvalent readings by the audience.

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Zusammenfassung

Was passiert, wenn ein Shakespeare Text in Tanz übertragen wird? Wie sollen all die metaphorischen, philosophischen und emotionalen Inhalte sowie Ambiguitäten transportiert werden, wenn gerade das wichtigste fehlt: Shakespeares malerische und komplexe Sprache? Tanz im Allgemeinen und Ballett im Speziellen kann über die (teils starren) Konventionen, über die non-verbale Ausdruckskraft des tanzenden Körpers und der Bewegung vieles ausdrücken, wofür die Sprache viele Zeilen benötigt; so zumindest der Dichter des Symbolismus Stéphane Mallarmé, und in seiner Nachfolge der Choreograph John Cranko. Dieser Aufsatz zeigt, dass es gerade die medialen, selbstreferentiellen choreographischen Strategien sind, die einer Ballettadaption eines Shakespeare-Werkes ihre vertiefende, durch Multimodalität unterstützte, polyvalente Aussagekraft verleihen. Nach einer kurzen Erörterung der Besonderheiten von Tanzadaptionen einerseits und der Gemeinsamkeiten mit Theaterinszenierungen/ Filmadaptionen andererseits, beleuchtet der Artikel, wie das metaphorische Potential des Spitzentanzes, die bedeutungsgenerierende Kraft der Tanzstile sowie deren intramediale Referenzen, und die bedeutungslenkende Energie von Ballettkonventionen, wie etwa des Partnertanzes, zu Charakterisierung der Figuren und zur Darstellung der jeweiligen persönlichen und gesellschaftlichen Konflikte beitragen können. Als choreographische Beispiele hierzu dienen John Crankos und John Neumeiers *Romeo und Julia* ebenso wie Christopher Wheeldons *The Winter's Tale* und José Limóns *The Moor's Pavane*.