Digital[1] Dance Criticism: Screens as Choreographic Apparatus

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Abstract

Prior to the introduction of websites and social media, professional dance criticism circulated through print publications: newspapers, magazines, and journals. This article examines the current proliferation of screens as platforms for criticism and how they—mobile devices, laptops, televisions, and computers—shift the frameworks that writers and readerships use to engage with dance. I use the concept of a choreographic apparatus to show how digital technologies generate symbiotic relationships between online contexts and contemporary performance. By focusing on three sites—thINKingDANCE, On the Boards TV, and Amara Tabor-Smith's *House/Full of Black Women*—I analyze how these platforms challenge widespread assumptions about the disappearance of dance critics.

Keywords: dance criticism, digital technologies, choreographic apparatus, tactical media, contemporary performance

When *The Atlantic* published "The Death of the American Dance Critic" in 2015, Madison Mainwaring wrote that dance coverage in the mainstream press has been "decimated" over the last 20 years. Mainwaring cited the fact that there are "only two full-time dance critics in the country" as evidence of this crisis.[2] A closer look at the history of dance criticism in the United States reveals that the 21st century has seen a proliferation of awareness and discourses about dance through websites, television shows, social media platforms, and programming events that necessitate a more thoughtful examination of what constitutes criticism today, who 'counts' as a critic, and the venues through which dance criticism is accessed. In the wake of concerns expressed about how digital technologies are eroding the profession of dance criticism, this article takes a critical look at such claims and their contexts.

Setting aside momentarily the oversights in Mainwaring's article—she refers to John Martin as the United States' first dance critic, calls New York the "dance capital" of the United States, and dismisses the role of websites as platforms for dance criticism in the 21st century—the focus of her analysis seems to be two-fold: not only is dance criticism dead, but there is a surge of articles about dancers by those she deems unqualified to be dance writers. Mainwaring's opening paragraphs describe how Misty Copeland has become a "household name," yet "hardly any of the countless stories published about Copeland have been written by dance critics—a dying breed of writers uniquely

capable of offering informed commentary on the singular talents she brings to the stage."[3] In this single sentence, Mainwaring adopts a limiting definition of dance criticism as commentary on individual events or artists and is unable to see the regeneration of dance writing in digital spaces due to her commitment to a "dying breed" of writers.

The significance of Mainwaring's article lies in these foreclosures: it is symptomatic of a putative split between dance criticism in print publications and digital modes of engagement. Screens—not printed pages—are the dominant forms of access and circulation for dance commentary in the 21st century. Mining these distinctions between dance writing on printed pages and screens, as well as dancing on stages and dancing on screens, exposes other hierarchies: dancing on stage is privileged by a dance canon and history textbooks, and dancing on screen is often relegated beyond the purview of dance criticism with such descriptors as "popular dance" or "commercial dance."[4] As digital technologies have amplified access to dance on screens, flows of movement and aesthetics between screens and stages, as well as forms of criticism by well-known critics, bloggers, and fans, become increasingly blurred in the 21st century.[5] Mainwaring's article perpetuates a definition of criticism as an act of reporting on performances, a system of evaluation practiced by "an expert pair of eyes" and focused on a performer's "technical, lyrical, and theatrical abilities."[6] She is not alone in lamenting the loss of these 'experts' or describing dance criticism as an endangered species.

In 2009, Elizabeth Zimmer published "The Crisis in Criticism: The Economy, the Internet and the Death of Dance Writing" in the Bay Area publication *In Dance*. In this essay, Zimmer announces, "The current collapse of print media is disastrous for the arts, especially experimental, low-budget work."[7] Zimmer is a longtime critic, and her views have been echoed and repeated elsewhere. However, given that most analyses of dance criticism have focused anecdotally on isolated decades of dance writing or on the work of a single writer, it is hard to evaluate what has, in fact, collapsed.[8]

In this article, I place these pronouncements of doom and demise alongside three projects that redirect dance discourse, allowing us to see the generative role of dance criticism in the 21st century, and effectively challenging binaries that have been perpetuated by the gatekeepers of the aforementioned dance canon and what former dance critic Ann Daly calls "canon criticism."[9] In other words, this article challenges the hierarchical arrangements between stage and screen, which have propelled the criteria we use to engage with dance. The examples I analyze highlight how screens operate as sites through which practitioners, writers, and audiences are changing the priorities of dance criticism. They also offer ways of rethinking the edges of a screendance community. As the editors of the *International Journal of Screendance*, Harmony Bench and Simon Ellis, stated in the sixth volume, "[O]ur community (however narrowly or broadly that might be defined) needs artists to continually challenge and question the

means by which their work is made, framed, and presented."[10] Attending to the multiple ways screens are redefining approaches to dance criticism highlights the ways digital circulations are also changing the frameworks through which audiences engage with dance. Since these frameworks are imbricated in the cultural, social, and political value systems of certain times and places, I have bracketed this analysis to examine the functions of critics in the United States.[11] Rather than theorize all dance criticism, this article examines a finite geography and time period to address the modicum of analysis that has been brought to dance criticism in the United States and to assess the ways that digital dance criticism redistributes access, authority, and regimes of value.[12]

Theoretical Framework: Dance Criticism as Choreographic Apparatus

The role of the critic is not only to respond to artists' work, but also to set in motion the criteria through which audiences evaluate their performances. In the history of dance criticism in the United States, there are alignments between a critic's set of aesthetic preferences and the work of canonical choreographers—John Martin and Martha Graham, Edwin Denby and George Balanchine, Joan Acocella and Mark Morris—and writers have occupied different roles at different historical junctures. For example, John Martin served as both a microphone and gatekeeper for modern dance, and such positionings have afforded certain outcomes. Between 1965 and 1975, Yvonne Rainer occupied a variety of roles (artist, writer, reviewer, essayist, and event organizer), and her fluctuating positions and movement between these spaces could be described as a form of choreography that made possible the placement and visibility of certain projects.

Defining choreography as an arrangement of movement in space as well as the notation of these arrangements, I use "choreographic" in "choreographic apparatus" to describe ways in which writers constructed concepts and redirected discourse that surrounded artistic projects.[13] In other words, a choreographic understanding of space and time, movement and interaction, plan and documentation provides a lens through which to examine written projects. The word apparatus signals a method for framing and capturing. As André Lepecki writes, an apparatus is "a mechanism that simultaneously distributes and organizes."[14] Lepecki continues:

> …the concept of apparatus is one that foregrounds perception as always tied to modes of power that distribute and assign to things visibility or invisibility, significance or insignificance. According to Deleuze, Foucault's discovery is that 'each apparatus has its regimen of light, the way it falls, softens and spreads, distributing the visible and the invisible, generating or eliminating an object, which cannot exist without it.'[15]

I introduce the idea of criticism functioning as a choreographic apparatus to highlight the influence of critics' work on readerships' values systems and artists' networks of

support. A choreographic apparatus is a malleable system that makes visible these interdependencies, arranging and structuring relations among people, organizations, and publications.

In the concept of a choreographic apparatus, that I explore here, the framing function of the word "apparatus" is essential because it highlights how the frames generated by critics have set in motion the value systems deployed by communities of discourse. "Community" is used here to mean social configurations in which enterprises are defined as worthwhile. Value systems are tethered to communities and the mechanisms through which they designate some artists and creative processes as more valuable than others. By extension, dance criticism participates in the injustices of recognition that have constituted some social actors as less than full members of a community and prevents them from participating as peers.[16] What's important about this apparatus is that if we expand the study of criticism from a decade or an individual critic's body of work to a century encompassing many voices, we see how the apparatus is re-choreographed over time.

The concept has been useful to my study of dance criticism because there are few examples of pieces that reveal a critic's methods or evaluative criteria.[17] This is one of many reasons why dance studies' scholars have sometimes presented their work as remedy to critics' and historians' lack of theoretical engagement. For example, Randy Martin noted that the "critic's authority resides in an appeal to a system of classification that values dance in terms of where it places choreographers and dancers in that system,"[18] and Susan Foster introduced her 1986 book, *Reading Dancing*, as a corrective to criticism's shortcomings: "At best, criticism is able to provide a historical perspective or aesthetic judgment."[19] André Lepecki uses critics—Anna Kisselgoff in the "Introduction" and Marcia Siegel in the "Conclusion"—as perspectives to challenge and oppose in his book *Exhausting Dance*. He quotes their writing to emphasize their shortsightedness, then introduces his own theories as remedy and more substantive analysis. If criticism in print publications is lacking substance or relevance, where does this leave today's artists who seek engagement with critics' platforms? More and more frequently I find the answer to be online contexts and social media.

Conversations about criticism today are inflected by the presence of digital technologies, and awareness of the types of participation digital platforms elicit is essential for conversations about discourse and its circulations.[20] In a 2015 interview, communication scholar Zizi Papacharissi stated:

> There are events, and there are stories that are told about events. Most events we are not able to experience directly, so we have always relied on the storytelling oralities and technologies of an era to learn about them. What happens when we become contributors to these narratives, or stories, rather than simple consumers, is that we become involved in the developing

> story about an event; how it is presented, how it is framed, how it is internalized, and how it is potentially historicized.[21]

In the 1920s and 1930s these "stories" about dance performances were recorded by John Martin in his articles, and circulated in newspapers and lectures, the dominant "technologies" available to dance criticism of the era. In the 1960s, Yvonne Rainer contributed her own "stories" as articles that shifted frameworks through which her performances could be seen.

Current digital technologies make it possible to accelerate the speed and expand the scope of writers' communications, as well as to mitigate barriers to broad participation in dance discourse. In the first years of the 21st century, as print publications decreased their page space for dance coverage,[22] websites and theaters introduced alternate platforms for documenting and discussing performances.[23] These technologies also influence the types of performances that are being recorded and circulated. As new media scholar Abigail De Kosnik writes in *Rogue Archives*: "a society's technologies for storing and retrieving its memories influence and inform how and what individuals recollect."[24] In both contemporary performance and 21st century writing, there's an emphasis on discourse and dialogue, spoken and embodied. Events merge performance and theory, calling attention to our systems for organizing ideas, as seen vividly in *Untitled Feminist Show* (2011) by Young Jean Lee with choreographer Faye Driscoll, and the performative lectures by Deborah Hay and Alva Noë called *Reorganizing Ourselves* (2014). These performances share a symbiotic relationship with digital dance criticism. Relevant to this research, Noë emphasizes the role of choreography in reorganizing worldviews, comparing choreography to philosophy:

> Both philosophy and choreography take their start from the fact that we are organized but we are not authors of our organization… They are practices (not activities)—methods of research—aiming at illuminating the ways we find ourselves organized, and so, also, the ways we might organize ourselves… they expose the concealed ways we are organized by the things we do.[25]

Noë seems to be describing a choreographic apparatus, a shifting system that sheds light and exposes criteria we use to engage and analyze our relationships with the world.

When we trace the ways critics have framed and promoted the aesthetics and performances of certain artists, we are using the concept of a choreographic apparatus to notice how canonical choreographers have been nurtured by specific writers and publications. For example, Martin's retirement in 1962 was coterminous with the first evening of Judson Dance Theater, a movement that ushered in its own writers and a different choreographic apparatus. This reframing of artists' projects through the choreographic apparatus makes visible how concepts such as "institution" and "form"

intersect with one another, as well as how the apparatus is mutable and can be redesigned or re-choreographed. Rainer activated a choreographic apparatus by writing about her practices thereby elucidating her priorities, and generating a type of discursive agency that challenged mainstream critics who dismissed her performances and the work of other Judson artists.

Yet artists in the first decades of the 21st century rarely find the kind of discourse in non-academic publications that existed in the last century. In fact many dance critics willingly profess an aversion to the critical theory that permeates academic environments, as seen in Claudia Bauer review of Gerald Casel's work: "Casel's dancers make *Splinters* worth watching, independent of the critical theories at hand."[26] Theory or analysis confuses these critics' definition of dance as athletic display. Critic Allan Ulrich's response is even more revealing. He describes Casel's performance as "hopelessly uncommunicative" because it's "so devoid of sensual allure."[27] Ulrich exposes his anti-academic bias paternalistically observing, "the dancing resembles something cooked up in a graduate dance seminar,"[28] after which he rejects basic tenets of critical and postcolonial theory motivating Casel's work: "In a wild flight of conceptualizing, [Casel] suggests that choreography amounts to colonizing the body of another person. It's a wacky notion, born of one too many late-night college bull sessions."[29] As Rebecca Chaleff, a dance scholar and performer in *Splinters*, pointed out when she read this, "Ulrich employs anti-intellectualism to paint Gerald as a college student even though he is a Professor at UCSC."[30] Ulrich's writing exemplifies the misrepresentations of an artist's work through a critic's lenses, and also makes explicit the vital need for different voices and different approaches to dance criticism.

In the three examples – or sites – that follow, I foreground the affordances that screens bring to dancing and writing, and how these digital intersections of dancing and writing inform definitions of dance, dance criticism, and screendance. The three sites are distinct yet foreground three themes: first, the dialogic capacities of technologies, meaning abilities to see, engage, and respond, that motivate a rethinking of the authoritarian role of a critic. Second, each site exists in spaces between performance and documentation, between what Diana Taylor has theorized as "repertoire," meaning "all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge," and "archive," as in the "supposedly enduring materials."[31] Third, if a function of dance criticism in the 20th century was to document, assess, and "record" events that took place in theaters, these projects foreground other purposes in relation to other types of performance. Against a notion of a critic's words and dancer's performance existing in a "unidirectional relationship," with the critic having the "last word,"[32] these digital platforms expand the roles of criticism, artists' access to self-determination, and flows of discourse.

Studies of dance criticism have primarily focused on artists and critics based in New York City,[33] but the three sites I analyze, thINKingDANCE, On the Boards TV, and Amara Tabor-

Smith's *House/Full of BlackWomen*, bring attention to other cities: Philadelphia, Seattle, and Oakland, respectively. By highlighting the priorities and modes of each platform, I aim to reframe conversations about what dance writing values, and to diminish the power of critics whose writing perpetuates systems of exclusion. As Linda Smith advocates in *Decolonizing Methodologies*, it's important to keep "struggling to make sense of our own world while also attempting to transform what counts as important in the world of the powerful."[34] The concept of the choreographic apparatus provides a way of "making sense" of the influence of critics on artists' careers and readerships' criteria. As the analysis of each site in this article reveals, dance criticism not only documents, contextualizes, and describes, but also organizes, nurtures, and promotes creative work, and in the digital sphere the affordances of online platforms share a symbiotic relationship with contemporary performance.

Site 1: thINKingDANCE: Dialogic capacities of dance criticism

On November 20, 2014, thINKingDANCE (hereafter TD) published Lisa Kraus's article about Steve Paxton's work at Dia:Beacon. Paxton posted his response one the site in December, which was followed by Kraus's reply. This exchange highlights the dialogic affordances of digital platforms, meaning critics' words set in motion conversations and ideas, today as in the 1920s. "Letters to the Editor" have been replaced by "Comments," "Likes," and "Tweets." Articles and manifestos circulate in the digital sphere with speeds that were inconceivable when reviews were assembled in "composing rooms," as they were in the 1920s and 1930s, then printed and published on paper.

Created in 2011 by Kraus and Anna Drozdowski, TD shifts practices of criticism from commentary on individual events to engagement with structures, issues, and voices that serve Philadelphia's artists and readers. The current project description for TD states: "*thINKingDANCE* members have a wealth of experience in the dance field and elsewhere, as dancers, choreographers, university academics, or other professionals. They are deeply knowledgeable, passionate, and are invested in improving both the quantity and quality of discourse in the dance field."[35] TD is both a response to older critical practices and catalyst for engaging new forms of performance with new forms of discourse.

Rather than separate academic scholarship from dance criticism, TD publishes writing by dance scholars. Lynn Matluck Brooks, a frequent contributor to the site, has headed the Dance Program at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania since 1984. On January 1, 2019, Brooks became editor-in-chief of TD. One of her posts, an interview of dance scholar Brenda Dixon Gottschild, interweaves priorities in dance both within and outside of higher education, expanding the very notion of what constitutes dance writing. During the interview, Gottschild reflects on the racial stratification in the American dance landscape, "When I started out, to even say 'Africanist aesthetic' in the

same breath as 'Balanchine' was taboo. People are now reading those chapters from my books; that is a sea change in how dance departments are visioning dance research."[36] By calling attention to exclusionary practices that have historically separated canonical and non-canonical artists, or that made "concert dance" the purview of white artists, TD intervenes in discourses of both disciplinary formation and dance criticism. In the interview, Gottschild calls attention to a shift away from a "modern" or "postmodern" aesthetic and notes the importance of Philadelphia as a city that is conducive to dancers and experimentation. Gottschild says there is "a basic change in the ways dances are constructed, which is definitely not according to a 'modern dance model'—Graham, Wigman, Cunningham, or whoever. There's a basic conceptual and even kinesthetic difference to how dance is perceived now, and Philadelphia is part of that movement."[37] The posting is significant for two reasons: first, it moves Gottschild's scholarship from academic audiences to an online format that is accessed by both academic and non-academic readerships, and second, because it highlights the importance of recognizing geographic centers for dance beyond New York City, namely Philadelphia. TD is both providing a platform for educating dance audiences as well as highlighting the significance of local aesthetics.

In both direct and indirect ways, these three sites displace the dominance of New York critics and New York mastheads in the evaluations of dancers and performances. As another example, TD provides a forum to challenge and reconsider critics' points of view, and has explicitly responded to missteps by mainstream critics. In a December 2015 posting, Jane Goldberg analyzes Joan Acocella's *New Yorker* review of Brian Siebert's book, *What the Eye Hears: A History of Tap Dancing*.[38] Goldberg notes the multiple misrepresentations in Acocella's writing as well as a blatant conflict of interest (Acocella was Siebert's mentor and served as his reference for jobs) that Acocella does not mention in her review. Goldberg's post inspired 25 comments, written by professors, dancers, and audience members, about the importance of ethics, research, and contextualization in criticism. If publications like the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times* were determining forces in the success of certain choreographers during the 20th century, TD presents often unheard and under-represented perspectives that nurture artists and artistic criteria of the 21st century.[39]

A choreographic apparatus that positions contemporary performance, digital technologies, and dance critics in relation to one another makes visible the ways that artistic processes and critical responses share a constitutive interaction. While audience response has always been a part of the choreographic apparatus through such mechanisms as letters to the editor and post-show conversations, social media technologies make this component of the apparatus more visible, and potentially part of the performance itself. An earlier version of TD's mission stated that they sought authors of a variety of critical formats, "including reviews, features, interviews, think pieces and, hopefully, as-yet-undiscovered forms." TD emerged as artists presented

performances that could also be described as "as-yet-undiscovered forms," events that focused more on process than product, more on states of being than steps, and more on theories integrated with practice than displays of physical virtuosity.

Another method for involving audiences in contemporary performances happens when artists dismantle walls like a proscenium divide or choreographers use perambulatory formats rather than auditorium seating. These interventions, often adopted to increase performer-audience intimacy or co-present connections, find a parallel in dance criticism that emphasizes audiences' response and offers ways for readers to comment. Recent shows that have adopted these installation-like formats include David Zambrano's *Soul Project*, made in 2006 and presented in 2012 at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Zambrano, born in Venezuela and now based in Europe, said about his performers after the show: "We are a social-centric society. The whole group is the leader. A dancer takes any center and the audience has to come to them."[40] Because the experience of wandering through performance-installations is personal and volitional, these events make explicit the heterogeneity of audience responses to performance and the impossibilities of one writer capturing, describing, or analyzing its activities.

When *Soul Project* was presented in Philadelphia in 2015, TD writers reconfigured the "unidirectional" flow of criticism by expanding voices in conversations about the performance. In a format called "Write Back Atcha" TD hosts writing events post-performance and gives audiences prompts that elicit descriptions and "letters" to the performance. In the "Write Back Atcha" that followed Zambrano's *Soul Project*, writers posted the following:

> Karl Surkan: "Experiencing David Zambrano's *Soul Project* is a bit like going to church—the kind of church where something rapturous, sweeping, transformative, and spiritual is happening…"[41]
>
> Anonymous: "Dear *Soul Project*, I find you exhausting. Your flailing, thrashing, grinding, grimacing, pumping, primping, and peacocking just makes me want to look away. To escape. To find something softer. I love your music, sure…who doesn't? But I need more from you. Your overwhelming energy, rather than enticing me, ends up pushing me away and I just end up feeling uncared for. I really tried to love you…"[42]

This format dismantles a traditional role of criticism, from an authoritative voice or expert opinion to a gathering of differing perspectives placed side by side. Contemporary performance itself is often an exchange that is indeterminate and variable from site to site, so a format like "Write Back Atcha" reflects this multivalent work by engaging multiple voices and perspectives.

This conversational relationship between authors and readers highlights multidirectional flows and disrupts the notion of a critic as sole authority. As the mainstream press competes with websites and blogs for readers' attention, newspaper critics gravitate towards slick, assessment-based styles designed to capture readers with short attention spans. This tone is evident in the dance criticism of Sarah Kaufman in *The Washington Post*. Kaufman covered *Voices of Strength*, a program presented at The Kennedy Center in October of 2012, wherein female artists broke down walls between performers and audiences. Performers addressed the audience directly and literally sat in the house seats as Nadia Beugré, an Ivory Coast-based dancer and choreographer, did at the beginning of her solo, "Quartiers Libres." Similarly, in "Correspondences" by Haitian Kettly Noel and South African Nelisiwe Xaba, the dancers spoke with, walked through, and interacted with people seated in the theater. Their creations were hybrids of voices, movements, and architectural designs. In *The Washington Post*, Kaufman responded by writing, "In both pieces, the emotional tension was only fitfully maintained, and they cried out for a director's discerning eye."[43] Kaufman uses her review to exert her influence as an evaluator, and judges the artists' work according to the tenets of modern dance.[44] As contemporary artists present work that defies this rubric, advocating for moments that are challenging and creating durational performances, a new choreographic apparatus emerges that brings together websites, audiences, and frameworks for engaging with their performances. Contemporary performance is congruent with a digital sphere that engages with ideas, philosophies, and aesthetics from a broad range of critics, theorists, and practitioners.

In other words, previous critical models were coincident with the rise of forms like modern dance, while the digital sphere is coincident with the rise of contemporary performance aesthetics. Maurice Berger writes in his 1998 introduction to *The Crisis in Criticism*, "If earlier in this century, critics—journalistic, specialized, or academic—have frequently played a vital, even public, role in influencing the shape, texture and direction of American culture, their value and relevance is growing increasingly tenuous in many sectors of mainstream American cultural life."[45] When online platforms call attention to the irrelevance of critics' methods or foreground how theory and history inform a performance, they merge these varied journalistic, expert, and academic roles of critics and offer different frameworks for readers to engage with dance. While TD presents a format that expands approaches to criticism—as well as voices and aesthetics promoted by writers—it still centers writing as the material of criticism. In the following sections I call attention to recordings and images as forms of criticism made possible by digital technologies and that reconfigure dance criticism in the 21st century.

Site 2: On the Boards TV (OtB TV)—In-between archive and repertoire

OtB TV, created by the Seattle-based presenting organization On the Boards, invests in theatrical productions by contemporary artists by offering a distinct design: it brings

full-length performances to a wide public by filming with high-definition cameras, editing collaboratively with the artists, and delivering performances online. Proceeds from the site's subscriptions are split between On the Boards and the artists. As of 2017, over 92 higher education institutions in the United States, Europe, and Australia have purchased content for their campuses, and the site has reached audiences in over 152 countries.[46] OtB TV describes successes of the project in terms of pedagogical value, audience engagement, and archival purposes.[47] I add to this list of outcomes the proposition that OtB TV reconfigures dance criticism by supplanting criticism's role in description and documentation,[48] and by introducing a format that merges presentation and circulation. It is different from Vimeo or YouTube because it is a curated platform for contemporary performance. Additionally, OtB TV makes evident the imbrications of performance with new modes of discourse because it highlights the importance of creating access to work by contemporary artists when there is a dearth of professional critics available to write about their projects.

OtB TV focuses on contemporary performance, and these performances shape both the form and contents of the site. Contemporary artists featured on OtB TV investigate the slippages between images and impressions, between what is felt and what is remembered. When artists edit their performances for online circulation through OtB TV, they consider a viewer's kinesthetic response as important as the event's documentation. For example, Zoe Scofield, one of the Seattle artists who has performed at On the Boards and created a film of her performance *A Crack in Everything*, said that the use of close-up became an important tool for giving viewers contact or closeness with the experience of the performance. She distinguished close-up in dance as different from theater because it involves a full-body but close range shot, different from theater's close-up on a facial expression or hand gesture. She said a question that was present in the process was creating a film that was not about showing "This is what happened," but rather giving the viewer a kinesthetic impression described as, "This is what I felt."[49] This is a fundamental difference between OtB TV and archival footage of a dance performance. It also shifts the role of criticism from describing in words what a performance looked like to communicating through film, edited in collaboration with the artists. In this way OtB TV occupies a liminal place between embodied experience and circulating document.

Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire* examines the characteristics of sensory experiences—"this is what I felt"—as embodied practices or repertoire, and contrasts these experiences with archival materials that can be stored and circulated—articles, books, videotapes, and DVDs, for instance. Taylor posits the need for methodologies that account for interrelationships of these practices and materials. In her article "Save As… Knowledge and Transmission in the Age of Digital Technologies," Taylor states:

> The shift from the archive to the digital has moved us away from the institutional, the confined, the long-term of Foucault's disciplinary society to

> the controlled society outlined by Deleuze: free floating, short term, rapidly shifting… the politics of the archive are not the politics of the digital. What counts as embodied knowledge has also morphed.[50]

Taylor exposes the ways that digital technologies disrupt hegemonic discourses: if archival memory was the purview of the dominant—"Those who controlled writing… gained an inordinate amount of power"[51]—digital circulations challenge both access to discourse and the authority of writers. With OtB TV, artists work with a professional film company to design and edit the recording of their live event, thereby replacing the critic who described or documented, and by extension controlled, the circulation of their performance.

Taylor's theorization of the digital, as existing in relationship to both the repertoire and the archive, is useful for situating OtB TV in between documentation and performance. OtB TV is a platform for discourse and discussion, as evidenced by the numerous higher education institutions that use its films. I see OtB TV as an approach that expands the boundaries of both dance criticism and screendance, as part of a new choreographic apparatus. It creates, to use Douglas Rosenberg's definition, "an entirely new hybrid form, a dismantling of tradition that rejects and challenges the mainstream."[52] By giving access to full-length performances, recorded in a theater and edited by the artists, OtB TV dismantles traditional modes of documentation and generates access to contemporary artists. Further, OtB TV calls attention to the ways in which screens usher in a different approach to dance criticism at a time when contemporary artists seek platforms that support their processes.

One example of the ways critics in print publications have dismissed work of contemporary artists comes from *New York Times* critic Alastair Macaulay, who is known for dictating what choreographers *should* do. In a review of Tere O'Connor's performance in 2012, Macaulay writes: "How do the movements add up as theatrical experience? Here's where Mr. O'Connor's choreography is least sure… how does one sequence connect to another? How do the very appealing ideas cohere in memory?"[53]

For Macaulay, O'Connor's work falls short of being a "theatrical experience" because it lacks necessary connections between sequences and a unifying coherence, attributes that Macaulay admires in choreographers like Mark Morris (included in this review as "a great choreographer").[54] There's no mention of the fact that O'Connor is not interested in pursuing or displaying such characteristics, thus the yardstick by which Macaulay evaluates O'Connor is irrelevant to his own artistic investigation. A description of O'Connor's film on OtB TV, *Bleed*, more accurately captures O'Connor's aesthetic project, noting his "lifelong obsession with the vast possibilities of human movement to create a brand-new choreographic language."[55] His works are playful, meticulous, and unexpected, and as a platform dedicated to contemporary performance, OtB TV engages with criteria and rubrics that acknowledge O'Connor's intentions, and that are

different from those espoused by critics in the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*. In other words, access to more voices enables a dance criticism that is reflective of artists' priorities. Similar to the framing of artists' work in Philadelphia on TD, OtB TV reworks the choreographic apparatus to call attention to frameworks that align with artists' methods in the 21st century.

Many artists outside of New York are featured on OtB TV, in particular artists from Europe, Canada, and Central America, and the site includes performances filmed in Portland (at the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art), in Austin (at Fusebox Festival), and New York (at PS 122). Techniques used in filming these events aspire to situate online audiences within the theater audiences. For example, watching Crystal Pite's *Dark Matters* on OtB TV, I first notice that heads of audience members are included in the frame so that I feel as if I am sitting in the auditorium with these spectators. The rustling of programs, bursts of laughter, and applause coming from the theatre's audience are clearly audible in the recording. Such details enhance the feeling of live performance as autopoietic feedback loop, a self-producing exchange that is occurring between distinct watchers and performers, rather than an event that can be captured or translated by a single critic's writing.

If OtB TV provides some of the vital elements of dance criticism, such as growing potential audiences for dance and deepening discourse that surrounds artistic work,[56] the platform also gives tremendous power to the curator or director who selects which performances are recorded. In other words, if we recognize that, historically, critics wielded authority in terms of documenting performances and promoting certain artists, is the role of a critic now being replaced by that of digital curator? How does digital technology and a platform like OtB TV turn its creator—Lane Czaplinski—into a force determining the trajectory of dance history? Further, if there is an element of indeterminacy in the performances, or as choreographer Jan Fabre says his performances change as much as 30% between shows and "the performance is finished when I do the last performance, the last show,"[57] how does one film become representative of a piece that is in continual process? The PBS television series *Alive From Off Center* grappled with similar questions between 1985 and 1996, and dance documentation as a genre continually investigates how one recording can stand in for multiple performances of a piece. Analyzing OtB TV as a form of dance criticism, the website distinguishes itself by providing access to multiple approaches to contemporary performance. Similar to a magazine that focuses on one genre of dance, like *Pointe* magazine for ballet, OtB TV offers access to more than 40 artists, giving viewers opportunities to engage with similarities and differences between their creations, rather than foregrounding one artist or one performance as representative of all contemporary work.

OtB TV encourages audiences to adopt the practices of Internet archive users, who are different from traditional collector cultures, as Henry Jenkins explains in *Spreadable Media*:

> While traditional collector cultures have been governed by preservationist impulses, these new retro subcultures are often more generative, more imaginative, and more playful in the ways that they recontextualize and reimagine the residual.[58]

"Traditional collector cultures" suggest Taylor's notion of archival practices that store and preserve "enduring" material and require special access. As Abigail De Kosnik writes in *Rogue Archives*, "users of an Internet archive may 'activate' whichever of the materials they wish, constructing their own personal canons based on the materials that they use…The definitions of 'canon' and 'archive' so firmly established in the era of print have changed dramatically in a digital regime."[59] Such a reorganization of objects, archival material, and critical frameworks is the working of a choreographic apparatus, shifting audience perspectives and acknowledging interdependent ecologies of performance and writing, repertoire and archive, a dance canon and dance criticism. While OtB TV presents a collaboration between film companies and artists' performances, a different approach is introduced by artist Amara Tabor-Smith. By controlling the documentation and circulation of images of her work, Tabor-Smith calls attention to systems of exclusion that have made her work invisible to canon critics and draws on the affordances of social media to distribute her ideas and photographs of Conjure Art.

Site 3: Amara Tabor-Smith: Dance criticism as tactical media

An essential aspect of Tabor-Smith's *House/ Full of BlackWomen* (November 2015-December 2020) is its location: Oakland, California is a national hub for human trafficking, specifically minors, and specifically exploited children.[60] Tabor-Smith creates a series of processions to call attention to the environments in which children are exploited. The lived and communal focus of the work is vital to its presentation and circulation. In other words, the processions are created by, for, and with a community, and held without announcement or invitations for critics to attend. As a result, Tabor-Smith dismantles a power relationship where critics are invited to write about artists' work, as if they have the tools necessary to engage the creation. Instead of having one critic's writing stand in for a performance that is multi-modal and motivates multiple responses, Tabor-Smith handles the documentation and circulation of images of her work.

Using the concept of a choreographic apparatus, I situate Tabor-Smith's circulation of images as a kind of dance criticism that introduces different perspectives and platforms to highlight artists' projects. Tabor-Smith's control of the *House/Full*'s circulation

generates a form of tactical media since the traces of the event are crucial to its dissemination. As Tabor-Smith says, "The whole point of this ritual work is to leave a trace, to leave a stain, to leave an echo. I'm less interested in talking about the issues, per se, than I am in changing the vibrations."[61] Photography by Robbie Sweeny becomes a form of criticism for *House/Full* that bypassed words or language, and that bypassed critics who "name," "capture," or, in the case of Ulrich's and Macaulay's reviews, dismissed an artist's investigation. Sweeny's photos were selected and posted on Facebook by Tabor-Smith, and offered access to an event that was visual, kinetic, and kinesthetic. Instead of relinquishing control to a critic, the artist decided what circulated from/about/for the ritual. This act of self-determination makes visible the theories of Patricia Hill Collins who writes, "When Black women define themselves, they clearly reject the taken-for-granted assumptions that those in positions granting them the authority to describe and analyze reality are entitled to do so. Regardless of the actual content of Black women's self-definitions, the act of insisting on Black female self-definition validates Black women's power as human subjects."[62] By selecting photographs to post on social media, Tabor-Smith curates and defines. Collins continues:

> Black women's insistence on self-definition, self-valuation, and the necessity for a Black female-centered analysis is significant for two reasons. First, defining and valuing one's consciousness of one's own self-defined standpoint in the face of images that foster a self-definition as the objectified "other" is an important way of resisting the dehumanization essential to systems of domination. The status of being the "other" implies being "other than" or different from the assumed norm of white male behavior. In this model, powerful white males define themselves as subjects, the true actors, and classify people of color and women in terms of their position vis-a-vis this white male hub. Since Black women have been denied the authority to challenge these definitions, this model consists of images that define Black women as a negative other, the virtual antithesis of positive white male images.[63]

Dance criticism in the United States has been—and is—written predominantly by white critics, and my analysis of Tabor-Smith's work foregrounds the significance of who is given authority to represent another person's performances. It's important to note that Tabor-Smith's acts of self-definition and self-valuation emerged before *House/Full*.

In 2015 Amara Tabor-Smith named and defined her creative practice "conjure art."[64] By identifying what she valued, she implicitly pointed out what has been made invisible by modern dance aesthetics:

> The work of the conjure artist explores traditional spiritual myths, images and/or practices from a contemporary or experimental art perspective.

> Conjure artists believe in the forces of nature such as ancestor spirits, gods and/or deities found in indigenous cultures and recognize these energies as the guiding forces in their art practice.[65]

This definition, with its emphasis on collective creations, traditions, and "ancestor spirits," exposes and resists the "individual innovation" and "autonomy" that modern dancers (and critics) prioritized. Brenda Dixon Gottschild, for instance, speaks of combating racism by acknowledging historical precedents and cultural sources, and especially acknowledging work by artists of color. In contrast, Roger Copeland's essay "The Death of the Choreographer" bemoans the attention given to "collectively created" works at the expense of "dances whose 'authorship' can be attributed to unique Western individuals."[66] Copeland continues, "[T]he growing emphasis on traditional and popular cultures evolves into a zero-sum game that is played at the *expense* of individual Western choreographic 'authors.'"[67] In contrast to Copeland's assessment that indigenous cultures and epistemologies do not belong with great "individual" artists, Tabor-Smith highlights the value of interdependence and interconnection. Her artistic works, which draw from her spiritual practice as a priest in the Yoruba/Lukumi tradition known as *Ifa*, disrupt a teleological ordering of dance history as the purview of individual, white artists' perpetual innovation or inventing.

In her project description for *House/Full* Tabor-Smith states:

> *House/Full of Black Women* is a site-specific ritual performance project that addresses issues of displacement, well being, and sex trafficking of Black women and girls in Oakland. Set in various public sites throughout Oakland over a two-year period, this community engaged project is performed as a series of "Episodes" that are driven by the core question, "How can we, as Black women and girls find space to breathe, and be well within a stable home?"[68]

In our conversation in 2017, Tabor-Smith emphasized that "well being" must be at the center of her description because "it's important that the well being of Black women is affirmed… What often happens is we are encouraged (or we make the choice willingly) to make work that focuses on the struggle and our oppression. When we do that we are reinforcing the struggle. We are affirming and thereby normalizing the issue."[69] Through this description, three themes emerge: the first is the irrelevance of a critic who serves as an evaluator or judge for this type of work. The intent of *House/Full* is tactical: Tabor-Smith is interested in the "ways people's perceptions can be shifted."[70]

As Rita Raley theorizes in *Tactical Media*, "These projects are not oriented toward the grand, sweeping revolutionary event; rather they engage in a micropolitics of disruption, intervention, and education."[71] Tabor-Smith's work operates within the realm of tactical media and calls for someone who recognizes the importance of sensorial engagement, vibration, dissent and resistance, more than shape, effort, or line,

which continue to be indicators of value for prominent dance critics (see criticism cited in this article by Ulrich and Macaulay). In Raley's words, "disturbance" is the critical element in tactical media. Raley continues, "Tactical media signifies the intervention and disruption of a dominant semiotic regime, the temporary creation of a situation in which signs, messages, and narratives are set into play and critical thinking becomes possible."[72]

A type of writing that "describes" or "captures"–words commonly used by critics to define their approaches–is part of a system that prioritizes efficiency and operationalism.[73] These are not Tabor-Smith's priorities, but they motivate many critics' writing, especially those who define their role as that of a "distant observer." In a speech to the Dance Critics Association in 1989, Sally Banes said, "Ethnographers are moving toward a dialogic construction of cultural texts, but as critics we remain—and I would argue *should* remain—distant observers. Who wants to coauthor their review with the choreographer?"[74] As current performances makes clear, an artist's knowledge and insights are not always visible to a "distant observer," yet Banes's definition of criticism as "description, evaluation, interpretation, and contextual explanation" continues to propel much of today's dance writing.[75] In order to investigate this value of "distance" proposed by Banes, it is important to differentiate between objectivity, neutrality, impartiality, and distance, and to notice how such concepts intersect with dance criticism.

Canon criticism extends a genre defined by Matthew Arnold, who viewed criticism as a "disinterested endeavor" and emphasized an "impartial distance" from which a critic could offer evaluation of an artist's aesthetic.[76] These critics sought out the "universal" and "transcendent" qualities of dance, drawing a border between performance and context. As Randy Martin writes in *Critical Moves*: "Criticism is an authority that can police the boundary between the aesthetic and the political economy of art, often coded as the divide between art and life."[77] This act of critical policing depends on distance. Sima Belmar examines this assumed dependence when she writes, "The dance critic is granted authority predicated on distance (mostly by lay people who value journalistic objectivity and merciless judgment)."[78] John Rockwell, former editor of Arts & Leisure at the *New York Times*, affirms this view: "[T]he very nature of the perception of artwork places one at a distance from the creator, or indeed anybody else watching the artwork. To pretend otherwise is kind of futile."[79] This framing of a critic's role as evaluator or distant observer implies an ability to judge and discern objectively, hence the anxiety about distance as a form of impartiality.

When critics like John Martin published in the *New York Times*, they were embedded within institutions that prioritized unbiased commentary and avoided conflicts of interest. A closer examination of critics' relationships with artists—such as John Martin and Martha Graham—reveals that they were not only in conversation about artistic processes but also critics' writing influenced the choices and directions of artists'

practices. Nevertheless dance critics adopted a tone that prioritized distance and objectivity, reporting on performances as if they were neutral observers. They did this to promote their own authority, as well as the "universality" of dance performances, and the value of dance as an art form that could be analyzed with an almost scientific rigor.[80]

In the early 1990s, and simultaneous with the growing popularity of cultural studies in academic settings, artists like Jawole Willa Jo Zollar began to question writers' "objectivity." Zollar's "Listen, Our History is Shouting at us: A choreographer confronts racism in dance" is an essay that includes an 8-point checklist for critics with some of the key points being:

- I will confront the issue of linguistic racism and be willing to examine my writing from that point of view;
- As a world citizen, I will recognize that I embrace many aesthetics and though I may intensely identify with one, I will not hold that aesthetic in a superior position;
- I will not confuse the ways in which American culture has been influenced by nonwhite cultures with an assumption that those cultures have had equal access to the stage;
- I will be willing to examine language patterns and ideas that generalize a group while, at the same time, figuring out what truth there may be in the generalities that are made about a particular culture.[81]

Online platforms encourage a greater sense of polyvocality in criticism by making visible reader responses through comments that are easily posted and accessible. They also offer opportunities to add different or opposing perspectives, and then circulate these ideas through social media platforms. Such interactions refuse the ability of the critic to speak for everyone or to go unanswered.[82]

For Amara Tabor-Smith, photographic images are relevant to her project, even though photography may not be the solution to the ways critics have misrepresented and overlooked aspects of artists' work. As dance scholar Tria Blu Wakpa has said, "Images can also be interpreted in ways that reify dominant representations of Black people—what's more important is engagement with and accountability to artists of color and indigenous artists. Another thing is that the meaning of the visual realm is fluid, so Amara's photos can still be 'misunderstood' by critics or used to reify stereotypes of Black women and girls."[83] Indeed, photographs do not surpass or supplant a written form of criticism, rather they shed light on modes of engagement—images instead of words—that have been overlooked in earlier approaches. As RoseLee Goldberg says, "I think photographs have an extraordinary capacity to bring us closer to the work, to give us an experience of the work, and to allow us to build a reference bank of images and ideas."[84]

This "capacity to bring us closer" connects with Tabor-Smith's priorities for the project as well as with her choice to circulate Sweeny's photography:

> We wanted to create ritual and the impact of ritual necessitates that people who happen upon it have a different experience. There's a way they are "caught." There's a moment when their curiosity takes over or they get destabilized. When they go, 'Oh what's this?' That questioning is an opening in and of itself. Even if it's momentary, it's enough for us to seep in.[85]

House/Full operates through moments of destabilization, and Sweeny's images, which are characterized by poetry, mystery, and evocations, use similar tactics. There is a constitutive relationship between the modes of engagement in Tabor-Smith's project and those used in its criticism, meaning the traces that emanate from these events.

Conclusion

As important as dance criticism has been to dance as an art form, serving as documentation, validation, and promotion, there are few scholarly analyses of dance criticism that account for its constitutive properties, for the changing functions of critics and formats of platforms, as well as its relation to digital technologies. The three sites analyzed here illustrate how digital circulations are methods of re-distributing the voices and modalities engaged in criticism. Within this digital sphere there are shifts away from criticism as evaluation and assessment and towards more dialogic and inclusive forms of discourse. Questions remain: historically and currently there are relatively few women of color writing dance criticism. What does this do to the perspectives and priorities of artists like Tabor-Smith? How is this work valued and documented, outside of her circulation of images? For dancers, scholars, and audience members, I find the digital sphere is essential to countering the dismissals and hierarchies that privilege certain forms of assessment that have become embedded in canonical definitions of dance, especially those events which occur on proscenium stages, choreographed by predominantly white, male artists, and feature codified techniques that perpetuate systems of racism, ableism, sexism, and classism. The images and articles that circulate through websites offer counterpoint to these exclusions, and assert artists' agency in the representations of their work. Just as print journalism was constitutive with earlier genres of dance—modern and postmodern dance, specifically—digital technologies share symbiotic relationships with contemporary performances. A choreographic apparatus clarifies these interconnections among artists, audiences, and critics, and the digital sphere, specifically online platforms and social media, is generating frameworks for us to consider more capacious definitions of criticism.

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Biography

Kate Mattingly is an Assistant Professor in the School of Dance at the University of Utah. Her research focuses on dance criticism and the transfer of experiences that are felt, embodied, and kinesthetic into formats that are written, spoken, and recorded. Her articles have been published in the *New York Times*, the *Village Voice*, *Dance Research Journal*, *Dance* magazine, *Pointe* magazine, *The Washington Post*, and many other journals and publications. She received her undergraduate degree in Architecture: History and Theory from Princeton University in 1993 and graduated with high honors. Her Master's of Fine Arts degree is from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts where she worked closely with Professor Deborah Jowitt and performed choreographic works by William Forsythe and Amanda Miller. Her doctoral degree from the University of California, Berkeley is in Performance Studies with a Designated Emphasis in New Media.

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Notes

[1] I am intentionally using "digital" and not "online" here because digital encompasses a greater number of formats and processes that intersect with certain modes of communication and behaviors, including online platforms. "Digital" additionally signals formats for storing and transmitting material that differ from print modalities.

[2] Madison Mainwaring, "Death of American Dance Critic."

[3] Ibid.

[4] When Oxford University Press published its *Handbook to Dance and the Popular Screen* in 2014, the book was marketed as "a powerful corrective to the lack of accessible scholarship on dance in the popular screen." In dance history textbooks often used in higher education, such as *No Fixed Points* by Nancy Reynolds and Malcolm McCormick, concert dance artists occupy most of the chapters while dance on screen is given one chapter or minimal mention. See also Sherill Dodds, *Dancing on the Canon*. Dodds emphasizes how a dance's circulation influences its validation, and vice versa: a canonical history in dance is verified and perpetuated by excluding forms that are "popular."

[5] This blurring is exemplified by press departments that previously used well-established critics for pull-quotes in brochure marketing and now use websites and bloggers as sources for material. Shows like "So You Think You Can Dance" and "Dancing with the Stars" turn audiences into "critics" who select the "best" performers. My analysis departs slightly from important arguments put forward by Harmony Bench in "Digital Research in Dance Studies" by emphasizing the ways that dance criticism has been treated as a document of dancing, and why this is problematic, instead of seeing "[t]he absence of documentation" as the "greater barrier to the legitimacy of dance as an academic field of study." Continuing this approach, I find dance critics have superseded other forms of accounting for dance and would place more emphasis on their role than on "anthropologists and creative practitioners themselves" as determining forces in dance scholarship. I think the archives listed—"the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library, Jacob's Pillow, the Smithsonian, and the Library of Congress"—perpetuate an investment in canonical dance that is different from online platforms I analyze in this article.

[6] Mainwaring.

[7] Elizabeth Zimmer, "The Crisis in Criticism."

[8] Scholars who have written about dance criticism include Lynne Conner, who explores constitutive relationships between performances and writing from 1850 to 1934, noting how dance as an art form was established at a time when both choreographers and critics searched for recognition, in *Spreading the Gospel of the Modern Dance: Newspaper Dance Criticism*; Gay Morris, who analyzes relationships between criticism and artists' approaches in the mid-20th century in *A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years, 1945-1960*; Diane Theodores, who selects four American writers—Arlene Croce, Nancy Goldner, Marcia Siegel, and Deborah Jowitt—to establish a "New York School" of dance criticism in her book *First We Take Manhattan*; Ann Daly, who created a collection of her writing, called *Critical Gestures*, and Sally Banes who describes the role of the critic by collecting her own essays and reviews in *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism*. In this article I show how digital platforms reconfigure definitions of criticism as well as the "appropriate" role for a dance critic described by these scholars.

[9] Daly defines canon criticism as "an approach that centers around the ideology and practice of connoisseurship." See *Critical Gestures*, xxxiii. Today, canon criticism is most visible in the writing of Alistair Macaulay (*New York Times*), Sarah Kaufman (*Washington Post*), and Allan Ulrich (*San Francisco Chronicle*) who see their roles as guardians or gatekeepers for a distinct definition of "dance" that is predicated on systemic exclusions and biases such as sexism, racism, ableism, and classism. In this article I argue that digital dance criticism acknowledges both the subjectivity of such "connoisseurship" and the positionality of dance critics. As analyzed in this article, all

three critics emphasize evaluation and judgment over a disclosing of their own subjective preferences or a performance's context. For example, Ulrich comments on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater choreographer Jamar Roberts, "His first work for the company, 'Members Don't Get Weary,' received its West Coast premiere Tuesday, and it seemed more than slightly promising."

[10] Harmony Bench and Simon Ellis, "Editorial: Field Perceptions," 8.

[11] Research by Ananya Chatterjea examines how criticism perpetuates inequities that intersect with location and politics in *Butting Out*. Chatterjea writes, "Though they are both important figures in the international circuit of touring companies, and though the reception of their performance obviously differs in different locations, I am framing much of my argument about the work of Chandralekha and Zollar in the dominant terms of the field as I see it from here, in the United States. This is because their work—as is the work of most artists, certainly those of color—tends to be categorized in terms of descriptors generated from and in terms of Euro-American culture and it is against and in relation to these formulations that I make my argument." Chatterjea, 11-12.

[12] In her writing on theatre criticism, Diana Damian Martin states: "Performance itself offers a site in which the sensible can be re-distributed, that is, in which certain conflicts, ideas and sensibilities can be challenged and the terms of the conflict re-ordered. Criticism holds a responsibility towards the articulation of this re-distribution; in its relationship to a wider cultural and political context, criticism holds the ability to engage in a process of re-distribution of the sensible that operates discursively and aesthetically." In "Criticism as a Political Event," 223.

[13] For examples, see Yvonne Rainer in *TDR*, "Parts of Some Sextets," in particular the excerpt of this article that became known as Rainer's "No Manifesto."

[14] André Lepecki, "Choreography as Apparatus of Capture," 120.

[15] Quoted in Lepecki, 120.

[16] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking Recognition." Examples in the writing of critics are numerous. For instance, John Martin misrepresented the work of artists of color such as Katherine Dunham, Talley Beatty, and Archie Savage. As Joanna Dee Das writes, "Martin expressed 'distress' that Talley Beatty and Archie Savage, two male dancers in Dunham's company, had a 'tendency to introduce the technique of the academic ballet.'" Das, *Katherine Dunham*, 70.

[17] One example that resonates with this study is Miguel Gutierrez's "The Perfect Dance Critic."

[18] Randy Martin, *Critical Moves*, 83.

[19] Susan Foster explains that her *Reading Dancing* was written to "get to the workings of dance," a task that critics have failed to do. Foster, xvi.

[20] This speaks to a broader conversation about roles of print and digital platforms summarized here: "In 2005, according to the Newspaper Association of America, US newspapers generated $47.4 billion in print revenue. That number has dropped every year since, and, in many, precipitously. By 2014, US print revenue had declined to $16.4 billion, marking a 66 percent drop over nine years. In that same time period, digital revenue for US newspapers increased only from $2 billion to $3.5 billion." From: http://www.cjr.org/analysis/local_news_newspaper_print_business_model.php

[21] In Henry Jenkins, "Affective Publics and Social Media."

[22] *Village Voice*, *San Francisco Examiner*, and *Time Out* are examples.

[23] Brenda Dixon Gottschild cites pre-performance discussions as sites of discourse: "I've been invited to hold pre-performance conversations with Liz Santoro, Gus Solomons and Valda Setterfield, and Jaamil Kosoko and [Honji] Wang/[Sébastien] Ramirez at Tanz im August this summer in Berlin." In Lynn Matluck Brooks, "Arrows at Racism."

[24] Abigail De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, 28.

[25] Alva Noë, "Reorganizing Ourselves," 17-18.

[26] Claudia Bauer, "GERALDCASELDANCE."

[27] Allan Ulrich, "Casel's *Splinters* fractures at ODC."

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Rebecca Chaleff, personal communication, June 2018.

[31] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20, 19.

[32] See Wendy Perron, "Beware the ego of critics."

[33] Collections by Arlene Croce (*Writing in the Dark, Dancing in the New Yorker*), Deborah Jowitt (*The Dance in Mind*), and Marcia Siegel (*At the Vanishing Point*). Scholarship by Lynne Conner (*Spreading the Gospel of Modern Dance*), Gay Morris (*A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years*), and Diane Theodores (*First We Take Manhattan*).

[34] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

[35] "Our history and what we do…"

[36] Brenda Dixon Gottschild quoted in Lynn Matluck Brooks, "Arrows at Racism."

[37] Ibid.

[38] Jane Goldberg, "Credit Where Credit is Due."

[39] For a recent example of a point of view not often heard, read "I don't need to see Jessica Lang Dance," review by Kat J. Sullivan and comments.

[40] David Zambrano, spoken during post-performance discussion at YBCA, April 28, 2012.

[41] "Letter to the Whirl."

[42] Ibid.

[43] Sarah Kaufman, "Voices of Strength."

[44] Doris Humphrey's *Art of Making Dances* presents statements that align with Kaufman's priorities: "All dances are too long" (159), "Monotony is fatal; look for contrasts" (159), "Perhaps the only thing everyone agrees on is that there should be music with dance" (164), "Communication in terms of nonintellectualized movement seems to me the desirable goal" (165), "Critics have some influence on public opinion but the average theatergoer cannot be coerced into going to see something which does not reach him[sic], no matter how the connoisseur may rave" (172), and "One other kind of theme to try to avoid is the too-complex scenario" (39). Humphrey was one of the "Big Four" artists of modern dance, a genre that prioritized simplicity, efficiency, drama, and idealism.

[45] Maurice Berger, *The Crisis of Criticism*, 4.

[46] Data from "About" at *OntheBoards.tv*.

[47] Ibid.

[48] On the role of dance criticism as documentation, see, for example, Julie Van Camp, "Dance Criticism."

[49] Zoe Scofield, personal conversation, November 3, 2012.

[50] Diana Taylor, "Save As…"

[51] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 18.

[52] Douglas Rosenberg, *Screendance*, 12.

[53] Alastair Macaulay, "Seeking Answers."

[54] Ibid.

[55] "Tere O'Connor: *Bleed*, *poem* & *Secret Mary*."

[56] Dance critics play an essential role in circulating ideas about artists and performances and growing audiences for dance. In 2016 the decrease in audiences for dance was attributed to dance critics being cut from publications. See Pia Catton, "Dance Audiences are Down."

[57] Jan Fabre in conversation with Lane Czaplinski. "On the Boards Journal." See 4:00-4:45.

[58] Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green, *Spreadable Media*, 101.

[59] De Kosnik, 66-71.

[60] Trafficking involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to exploit a person for labor or commercial sex, and there have been steadily increasing cases of youth sex trafficking in California: from 352 documented cases in 2012 to 1,052 cases in 2016. Statistics come from National Human Trafficking Hotline quoted in Lisa Hornak, "When Love Never Fails."

[61] Amara Tabor-Smith, phone conversation with the author, November 2017.

[62] Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within," S17.

[63] Idem, S18.

[64] Tabor-Smith, "The Practice of Conjure Art."

[65] Ibid. I use this example because it is one of the few labels for dance that is not about being in the present or current time but rather speaks to aesthetic priorities the way "Impressionism" or "Surrealism" does in art history. I think the scarcity of terms and confusion about categories for dance-artists is evidence of a lack of sustained, substantive writing about dance compared to other disciplines.

[66] Roger Copeland, "The Death of the Choreographer," 40.

[67] Idem, 55. Original emphasis.

[68] Tabor-Smith, "Creative Capital."

[69] Tabor-Smith, phone conversation with the author, November 2017.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Rita Raley, *Tactical Media*, 4.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Sally Banes, *Writing Dancing*.

[75] Banes's *Writing Dancing* continues to be used as a textbook for criticism courses.

[76] The full quote is: "Criticism is a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." Matthew Arnold, *The Function of Criticism*, 77.

[77] Randy Martin, 79.

[78] Sima Belmar, "Out of Order."

[79] John Rockwell quoted in Deborah Jowitt, "Getting it."

[80] For an analysis of how dance critics shored up support for the art form by applying formalist and New Critical methods of writing, see Mattingly, "Set in Motion: Dance Criticism and the Choreographic Apparatus."

[81] Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, "Listen, Our History is Shouting at Us," keynote address at the Dance Critics Association Conference in Los Angeles, 1990. Reprinted in *Looking Out*.

[82] Scholars Jacqueline Shea Murphy (*The People Have Never Stopped Dancing*), Thomas DeFrantz (*Dancing Many Drums*), and Ananya Chatterjea (*Butting Out*) have brought important attention to the ways in which writing by critics and historians has excluded and misrepresented Indigenous peoples and artists of color. Another excellent example is provided by scholar Joanna Dee Das (*Katherine Dunham*) when she examines how John Martin's writing perpetuated and circulated racist assumptions about Katherine Dunham's work.

[83] Tria Blu Wakpa, personal communication, June 2018.

[84] "On Record: RoseLee Goldberg and Roxana Marcoci in Conversation."

[85] Amara Tabor-Smith, personal communication, November 2017.

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