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JOHNSON, NANCY DIERS

TWO PERCEPTIONS OF THE PURPOSES, AESTHETIC CONCEPTS, AND BACKGROUND FOR WRITING DANCE CRITICISM ACCORDING TO SELECTED LITERATURE AND WASHINGTON, D.C. DANCE CRITICS

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro ED.D. 1981

TWO PERCEPTIONS OF THE PURPOSES, AESTHETIC CONCEPTS, AND BACKGROUND FOR WRITING DANCE CRITICISM ACCORDING TO SELECTED LITERATURE AND WASHINGTON, D.C. DANCE CRITICS

by

Nancy Diers Johnson

A Dissertation Submitted to
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Approved by

Dr. Gay Chenev

ABSTRACT

JOHNSON, NANCY DIERS. Two Perceptions of the Purposes, Aesthetic Concepts, and Background for Writing Dance Criticism According to Selected Literature and Washington, D.C. Dance Critics. (1981) Directed by: Dr. Gay Cheney. Pp. 117

This investigation described the components of dance criticism, the aesthetic concepts guiding the viewing of theatrical dance performance, and the identification of certain aspects of education, experience, or training needed to write dance criticism. The data base for this study comes from two sources. Half of the materials were derived from a search of literature and the other source was eight dance critics from the Washington, D.C.-Baltimore metropolitan area who wrote dance criticism for local publications. All were locally recognized dance critics. All received payment for their writings.

The selection of materials for the study taken from the literature was based upon the publication date, i.e., between 1960 and 1979. The selections were located in nationally available books or magazines and were written by persons who were nationally recognized for their association with dance.

Ideas obtained from the literary search were used to develop a focused interview schedule. Open-response questions were designed to encourage the respondents to discuss their opinions on the issues under discussion. The primary research tool was an in-depth, semi-structured interview.

A pilot study was conducted with four dance critics to test the effectiveness of the focused interview schedule. Modifications of the original schedule were made on the basis of the responses of the critics

to the questions and their evaluation and suggestions regarding the interview procedures.

The final focused interview schedule was used for a series of private interviews with eight local dance critics over a span of two months. The interviews were audiotaped and the tapes were transcribed to form the data base for the study. A synopsis of the information was made and formed the basis for the conclusions.

Dance criticism was defined as writing about theatrical dance performance through description and analysis of the critic's perception of the dance event in order to share the experience with the reader in hopes of awakening an interest in the art form. The primary aesthetic concepts guiding the viewing of theatrical dance performance were (a) technical proficiency in dancing, (b) expressiveness in either dancing or choreography, and (c) clarity of form in the choreographic structure. Aspects of education, experience, or training needed to write dance criticism included (a) training in dance and choreography, (b) knowledge of dance history, (c) an awareness of all forms of theatrical dance including the ethnic forms, and (d) the ability to perceive and to write about dance.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Adviser

Dr. Gay Cheney

Committee Members

Dr. Lois Andreasen

Dr. Pearl Berlin

Dr. Gail Hennis

Dr. Donald J. Reichard

Date of Acceptance by Committee

September 28, 1980

Date of Final Oral Examination

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During recent years, a mounting interest in the arts has developed in this nation. In Washington, D.C., the opening of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in September of 1971 began a surge of theatrical performance which continues unabated to this day. Springing up like mushrooms throughout the region are new and varied environments for performance. These new places include not only the traditional settings such as churches and public schools, but also revamped stores, abandoned movie theaters, and the unused buildings of an amusement park. The newest official theatre in Washington is the Terrace Theatre in the Kennedy Center. This small, intimate performing space, made possible through a gift to the United States government from the Japanese government, is specially designed as a showplace for small performing groups.

A corresponding development has occurred in the number of performing companies in the area. In dance the growth is tremendous. At the height of the winter season of 1980, it was possible to attend any of a number of dance performances by different companies. At present there are many local dance companies in the metropolitan area, performing all forms of dance: ballet, jazz, tap, modern, social, and ethnic.

All this activity has stimulated a corresponding increase in the number of individuals devoted to the arts other than artists. One area of expansion is the number of people writing (and talking) about performance. Much of the writing is critical in nature. In this area, dance

is not neglected. The number of dance critics has expanded since the early 1960's from one writer working part time for the Washington Post to fourteen involved in various types of criticism. In addition, there are four or five individuals whose works appear occasionally who are interested in becoming established writers of dance criticism.

Local publications such as the Washington Review of the Arts, the Washingtonian, and the Unicorn Times, as well as the major newspapers, The Washington Post, The Washington Star, and the Baltimore Sun, carry articles covering dance performances of local and out-of-town professionals. The increase in dance activities has resulted in the creation of a new publication devoted exclusively to dance in the Washington metropolitan area, the Washington Dance View. Another medium of information, local television, has extended its coverage of the arts through the inclusion of criticism as part of newscasts and other programs of public service.

Availability of the critic's work to the reading and listening public makes criticism a potent force in the development and survival of the arts. Any individual with a casual interest can pick up a newspaper or turn on the television and quickly learn the opinions of a critic and determine, on the basis of the written or spoken word, whether or not to attend a play, dance performance, opera, or evening of musical entertainment.

Criticism is bound by misconceptions. The general public expects a critic to tell them what is good about something in the art world to make sure that if they go to see something, they are going to "get their money's worth." Meanwhile, the creative artist seeks only rave notices.

It is suggested that the Washington area is the second capital of theatrical dance in the nation (second to New York). If this is true, then critical writing becomes increasingly important as a major source of information on dance for the general public. Because publicized criticism provides ready-made attitudes towards a dance company, a performer, or a choreographer, dance criticism becomes a powerful force in the development and survival of dance at the local level. The impact of this influence raises concerns about the intent and purpose of dance criticism and the responsibilities of the dance critic to the art and to the public, as well as the experience and education of the critic.

Readers often compare their responses to a dance performance with the words of a critic. Not infrequently there is a difference of opinion. Stymied by this, the reader wonders what basis of evaluation is used by the critic. What are the standards used to measure a great dance performance? Is the dance critic able to identify the aesthetic concepts guiding his viewing of theatrical dance performance?

The following project was pursued with the intent of ascertaining answers to these expressed concerns. The researcher sought these answers through a literary search of articles on dance criticism and by interviewing a select number of local dance critics of the Washington-Baltimore area.

Statement of the Problem

This study identifies some aspects of dance criticism as described in literature written on dance criticism and aesthetics and in the responses of local dance critics to a focused interview schedule. The subproblems are delineated as follows:

1. What is indicated in the literature on dance criticism as the intent and purpose of dance criticism and the responsibilities of the dance critic?
2. What do local dance critics indicate as their responsibilities as dance critics and the intent and purpose of dance criticism?
3. What aesthetic concepts does the literature on dance criticism indicate as guides to the viewing of theatrical dance performance?
4. What aesthetic concepts do the local dance critics indicate that guide their viewing of theatrical dance performance and their writing of dance criticism?
5. What type of background is indicated in the literature on dance criticism as necessary to prepare an individual for writing dance criticism?
6. What type of background do local dance critics indicate as necessary to prepare an individual for writing dance criticism?

Definition of Terms

For purposes of interpretation, the following meanings are designated for terms used in this report.

Dance critic. An individual who writes or speaks analytically about theatrical dance performance in local news journals, television, and radio in the Washington-Baltimore area.

Theatrical dance. The only dance designed to "provide the observer with an aesthetic experience" (Cohen, 1962, p. 19).

Assumptions

The following assumptions underlie the study, i.e., they represent ideas that are accepted as given and, therefore, are not tested as a part of the research.

1. That the focused interview schedule is an appropriate instrument for obtaining the information needed for the study.
2. That the responses are given with candor.
3. That the researcher has background in the areas of the study adequate to apply the responses of the focused interview schedule to the study.
4. That the literature reviewed provides adequate evidence to answer the research questions.

Scope of the Study

The data generated by the literature search are limited to the time span of 1960 through 1979. Information obtained from critics is based on responses obtained during the interview with the investigator.

Acknowledged Weaknesses of the Study

This study is made with the following acknowledged weaknesses:

1. The interview could not be duplicated and therefore the customary reliability could not be established.
2. The inability to duplicate the interviews is acknowledged to be a weakness in the rigor of the research.
3. The literary sources were selected on the basis of title and were confined to a time span arbitrarily selected by the researcher.

4. The entire body of information, i.e., materials on dance criticism and dance aesthetics, written for newspapers located throughout the United States was not searched out.
5. All of the information on the two areas of interest to the project which might be found in doctoral dissertations with titles not including the words "dance" and "criticism" was not located.

Significance of the Study

It is the intent of the study to increase the current fund of knowledge regarding the processes and procedures involved in writing critically about dance by identifying some aspects of dance criticism as found in the literature written on dance criticism and aesthetics and in the responses of local dance critics to a focused interview schedule. The study provides additional information about and contributes to the resources available on dance criticism. It has potential to stimulate an interest and concern for the state of dance criticism in the Washington-Baltimore area. It will enrich an appreciation and understanding of dance criticism by the students of dance and criticism in institutions of higher learning.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Criticism of Dance in the Literature

The relationship of critical writing to art can be an important one. Art audiences often need guidelines to assist in processing their responses to the arts. It is possible for criticism to make contributions to the arts by offering an objective view of the art product. It can stimulate interest in and support for both the new and old trends; it can serve to bring general understanding and appreciation by the public for the arts. The critic, through his writing, can serve as a bridge between the creator and the consumer.

It can be said about art that it is a way of looking at the world through symbols different from the verbal and numerical systems used in daily expression. This may apply to dance; dance, as an art form, is an expression of the artist's problem-solving approaches to his world. As each new decade of choreographers emerges, bringing new approaches to the use of the body, movement, time, space and energy, there is a need for an interpreter to provide a vehicle of intelligibility.

It is unfortunate that there is very little work in this specific area by doctoral candidates in their dissertations. In the 117 years of the Dissertations Abstracts International, there are only two listings using the words "dance" and "criticism" in their titles. The first is by Ned Hitchcock, titled "Dancing Ground: An Approach to the Criticism of Modern Dance" completed in 1973. The second, "Criticism In the Art of

Dance: An Analysis of John Martin's Reviews in the New York Times 1928-1962" by Diane Hottendorf, is listed in 1976. There are other dissertations that do address themselves to particular dance critics and in which there are some implications about dance criticism and dance aesthetics; however, this is not their major focus.

The search through the Comprehensive Dissertation Index for works related to dance criticism leads one to the major subject areas of anthropology, education, fine arts, music, language and literature (which includes theatre), and philosophy. It is interesting to note the number of dissertations listed under these major headings with the subheadings "dance" and "criticism" (Table 1).

Table 1

The Number of Dissertations Listed In Comprehensive Dissertation Index from 1861-1978 with the Words "Dance" and "Criticism" in the Title

Indexes	1861-1972	'73	'74	'75	'76	'77	'78	Total
Anthropology	8	0	4	2	3	0	0	17
Education	47	4	4	2	11	8	7	83
Fine arts	15	3	3	0	0	4	7	32
Language and literature	8	6	4	3	3	9	3	38
Music	19	2	2	5	3	1	1	34
Philosophy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

A review of eighteen years of Research Quarterly, published by the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance,

discloses a lack of research in dance and dance criticism. The volumes from 1960 through 1978 seldom list any research in dance. Only the volumes for 1960, 1963, 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968 list any research in the field, for a total of nine abstracts in eighteen years. None of these nine abstracts uses the words "dance" and "criticism" in its title, and there are no abstracts of research in dance in the last ten years.

The National Dance Association (and its predecessors) has produced four compilations of dance research, Dance Research in 1958, Compilation of Dance Research 1901-1964, in 1964, Research in Dance I in 1968, and Research in Dance II in 1973. In these volumes there are three listings of research projects that use the words "dance" and "criticism" in their titles. All three are research projects for the master's degree. The first, "Criticism in Dance" by Mary K. Lapman, was done in 1931. In 1958 "Modern Dance Criticism in Dance" by V.J. Blain is listed, and in 1965 "The Function of Dance Criticism" is given as the title of Martha P. Young's thesis.

The Committee on Research in Dance (which changed its name in 1978 to Congress on Research in Dance) has, since its inception in 1969, declared its intention and purpose as the promoting and reporting of research in dance. In the CORD Journal there is a list of dissertations including a few of the titles listed in the Dissertation Abstracts International. Again, none of the titles listed included the words "dance" and "criticism."

The four sources responsible for carrying a listing of dissertation research in dance indicate that from 1861 to 1980 there have been 283

dissertations written on the subject of dance. Of these, only two contained the words "dance" and "criticism" in their titles.

"Dancing Ground: An Approach to the Criticism of Modern Dance" by Hitchcock is a study that develops a critical approach to modern dance by relating three characteristic areas of concern of the modern dancer to the process of mythical thinking. The characteristics, technique, theatricality, and aspiration, are related to the dance and shown to form a unified criticism of modern dance artists both individually and comparatively.

In the dissertation "Criticism in the Art of Dance: An Analysis of John Martin's reviews in the New York Times 1928-1962," Hottendorf studied the writings of Martin to determine his basic assumptions about the function of the dance critic and to determine whether or not he maintained a consistent set of values through the thirty-four years he was a dance critic for the New York Times. It was established that, according to Martin, the business of a dance critic is to report, to educate, to judge, and to crusade. The information gathered by Hottendorf contributed additional insight into the function of criticism and the responsibilities of the dance critic. The dissertation was, however, limited to the study of one dance critic and his viewpoint.

The compilations of dance research gave no indication of any previous study of the subject especially under investigation in this dissertation. On the basis of this review of literature, it seems this particular research project concerned with the intent and purpose of dance criticsm, the aesthetic criteria involved in viewing theatrical

dance performance, and the identification of some of the background needed to become a dance critic is unique.

The Interview

In addition to an analysis of the literature for relevant data, a brief review of the interview technique was undertaken. It was essential to use a method for gathering data from the critics that would allow them to express their knowledge and opinions freely and extensively. There is support for the selection of the scheduled interview as the instrument that provides for this occurrence. J. Stacy Adams defined the interviewing process as "the process of collecting information from respondents by an interviewer with the aid of a questionnaire" (1958, p. 10). "When used with a well-conceived schedule, the interview can obtain a great deal of information, is flexible, and adaptable to individual situations" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 480).

The interview provides the interviewer greater control over the processes of obtaining information and the environment in which the information is gathered than does a predesigned response instrument. Raymond Gordon, in his book Interviewing, Strategy, Techniques and Tactics (1975) cites several advantages of the interview applicable to this situation:

> The interview provides more opportunity to motivate the respondent to supply accurate and complete information immediately . . . provides more opportunity to guide the respondent in his interpretation of the questions . . . allows a greater flexibility in questioning the respondent . . . allows a greater control over the interview situation. (pp. 76-77)

Within this study, it was the intention of the interviewer to reduce the stress level of the experience for the local dance critics and

develop an informal atmosphere in which the focused interview schedule would be administered. Under these conditions, it was hoped the responses would reflect the true opinions of the dance critics. Ebel pointed out that the oral communication process made possible in an interview allows the information-gathering situation to be less threatening and more personal and humane to the respondent, thus allowing a clearer picture of the respondent's knowledge and opinions to emerge (1972, pp. 204-05).

In this study, the questions in the focused interview schedule were intentionally designed to solicit opinions, as it was desirable to learn the respondent's personal thoughts on the various issues involved. Therefore, open-end questions were used. "Open-end questions are those that supply a frame of reference for respondents' answers, but put a minimum of restraint on the answers and their expression" (Kerling, 1973, p. 483).

The literature on the subject of focused interviews supported its choice by the researcher as the appropriate tool for use in this study. In addition it gave many helpful suggestions for the more effective use of the tool.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

A search through dance journals and related publications revealed a number of articles written about dance criticism. These articles contained information on the intent and purpose of dance criticism, the responsibilities and backgrounds of the critics, and the relationship of aesthetics to criticism. These aspects were identified as those about which the local dance critics of the Washington-Baltimore area would be interviewed.

From this review of literature, a focused interview schedule was designed (Appendix A). A pilot study of the focused interview schedule was conducted with four local dance critics to determine the effectiveness of the schedule to elicit in-depth and honest responses. Modifications of the focused interview schedule were made following each of these initial interviews. After completion of the pilot study and revision of the interview schedule, contact with the remaining eight local dance critics was made to establish appointments for the interviews. Each of these critics responded to the same interview schedule (Appendix B). the interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed to facilitate further examination. Meanwhile, the literature was again approached, this time with intent to determine responses to the same qustions asked of the critics. When, in the opinion of the researcher, a question was answered, the quotation was recorded. When this process was completed, the

materials were compiled and recorded according to each question in each of the three parts of the focused interview schedule. A discussion of the materials was made again for each question in each part of the schedule. This was followed by a section dealing with the conclusions and implications of the research project.

Selection of the Literature

The articles selected from literature to provide the basis of comparison with the responses of the dance critics met the following criteria:

1. The articles contained information on dance criticism, dance aesthetics, and the background experiences required of a critic.
2. The articles came from periodicals or books available nationally.
3. The publications containing the articles were published between 1960 and 1979.
4. The authors were nationally recognized for their association with dance.

Generally speaking, the articles were written by persons with some connection to dance either as a critic, educator, or professional dancer. Many of the articles on dance aesthetics were written by philosopher-aestheticians. The professions represented included: 10 dance critics (Barnes, Brinson, Cass, Coton, Denby, Johnston, Jowitt, Leiserach, Moore, and Sorell), 6 authors (Cohen, Haskell, Lorber, Tood, Walker, and Zalk), 6 dance educators (Dimondstein, Ferdun, Friesen, Russell, Smith, and Stodelle), 9 philosopher-aestheticians (Anderson, Beiswanger, Best,

Carter, Jessup, Langer, Levin, Phenix, and Sheets), 2 professional dancers (Code and Louis), and 1 lawyer (Hofmann).

Selection of the Dance Critics

The dance critics selected for interviewing met the following criteria:

1. They were locally recognized as dance critics.
2. Their materials on dance criticism were either published in local journals or aired on local television.
3. They received financial remuneration for their work on dance criticism.

A survey of local publications was made to identify the names of local dance critics. Fourteen names were located using this approach (Appendix C), and telephone contact was made with each. The discussions centered on an explanation of the project in detail and an invitation to participate in the study. Two declined to be involved; of the remaining twelve, four took part in the pilot study. Eight remained to be a part of the project. No attempt was made to ensure that the final sample was representative of any particular aspect of the population, e.g., gender, publication, or qualifications.

Only two of the local dance critics were full-time dance critics. The rest were what are referred to as "stringers," i.e., people who fill in when the workload is more than the full-time critic can handle. The stringers pursue other careers: two were dance educators, one was a biologist, two were professional writers, and one was a U.S. Congressional transcriber.

Prepilot Developments

A focused interview schedule was developed on the basis of information derived from the literary search. The schedule consisted of four sections of questions: critics' responsibilities to their readership, four aesthetic concepts guiding critical writing in dance, critics' aesthetic concepts and preparation for writing dance criticism. There were 23 questions in all (Appendix A).

The questions in the second and third sections were related to an article written by Curtis L. Carter in Dance Scope, 1976, which defined the aesthetic concepts he used in viewing theatrical dance performance and in writing dance criticism. The second section asked the critic to apply the concepts of style, form, expression, and symbolic meaning to choreography, performance, performer, audiovisual spectacle, and viewer. The third section asked the dance critics if there were other aesthetic concepts they used that were not included in Carter's four and if so, how they applied them to choreography, performance, performer, audiovisual spectacle, and viewer.

This focused interview schedule was administered to four local dance critics to test the effectiveness of the questions in eliciting the data desired for the project.

Pilot Study

The pilot study provided the researcher with the opportunity to test and refine the focused interview schedule and the interview process. It was conducted immediately prior to the collection of data for the final study.

Four local dance critics were contacted and agreed to serve as participants in the pilot study. Two critics received copies of the interview schedule several days before their interviews. The purpose of this step was to discover whether or not previous knowledge of the questions affected the responses. The participants said that receiving the form beforehand had not helped them with the interview. The other two subjects were asked if they would like to have received the form before the interview, and they responded in the negative.

The researcher interviewed each critic individually. Each interview was audiotaped. The length of each pilot interview varied from one to two and one-half hours. The first interview lasted the longest.

Immediately following the first interview, the focused interview schedule was redesigned to improve the effectiveness of the questions, bring the intent of the questions into line with the intent of the research project, reduce misunderstanding and attempts by the respondent to interpret meaning, and reduce the time involved in responding to the questions. Changes continued to be made after the second and third interviews. The fourth interview was conducted within one hour without uncertainty or hesitation regarding the meaning of the questions on the part of the respondent.

Each critic was asked to critique the interview schedule and the interview process. As a result, questions were added to the background section of the questionnaire and the aesthetic section was revised. The pilot interview tapes were studied to gain insight into the interviewer's performance. It was concluded that limiting the participation of the interviewer to techniques that stimulated conversation related to the

questions of the schedule proved most successful in eliciting data from the participants.

The final form of the interview schedule consisted of three major areas of interest: purpose of dance criticism, aesthetics as applied to viewing theatrical dance performance and to writing dance criticism, and preparation necessary to become a dance critic. The first and last sections of the schedule remained basically the same as in the initial format. The major change was in the elimination of the second section dealing with the aesthetic concepts of Carter. During the pilot study, the local dance critics indicated a lack of identifiation with these concepts. Responses to the questions related to the aesthetic concepts resulted in confusion and misunderstanding. This section was redesigned to allow the respondent to talk about personal aesthetic concepts without relating them to specific aesthetic concepts found in literature.

Data Collection

Eight local dance critics who write dance criticism for local publications and talk about dance on local television and radio were called, told of the nature of the study, and invited to participate. Each phone call covered the purpose of the research project, the content of the interview, a discussion of the Human Subjects Information Consent form (Appendix D) ensuring anonymity to the subject and releasing the materials for use by the researcher, and a request for information on the participant (Appendix E). At that time, the critics were told that the session would last approximately one hour. Interview arrangements were made and permission was asked to audiotape the interview. Each critic

was given the opportunity to select the location and time of the appointment. Each was asked if he or she wanted a copy of the interview schedule before the interview; all declined. A followup letter was sent to each critic confirming the date, time, and place of the appointment.

The participants were interviewed in May and June 1979. On the given morning, the researcher telephoned each critic to confirm the appointment. Before the focused interview schedule was begun, each participant signed the Human Subjects Information Consent form and completed the Dance Critic Information form (Appendix E).

Appendix F contains a compilation of information taken from the Dance Critic Information form, the purpose of which was to obtain some information on the background of the critics. It was discovered that all but one held a degree from an institution of higher learning. All had studied dance at one time or another and most had studied for a considerable length of time. Seven had studied ballet and six modern dance. An equal number enjoy watching ballet as much as modern dance. The majority indicated a fondness for dance as the motivating factor for writing dance criticism. Most felt a lack of historic perspective in their writing. Five of the eight had participated in either formal or informal study of aesthetics.

The participants were asked each question in the focused interview schedule, and their responses were recorded and transcribed by the researcher at a later date. In recording the materials, the researcher arbitrarily assigned the first eight letters of the alphabet to the taped interview responses and coded them as such throughout the study.

Writing the Report

The data for this study were derived from direct quotations from the transcribed interview tapes and from literary sources. The transcribed interview tapes were carefully analyzed for information related to the questions. The researcher determined the most pertinent individual responses to each question and recorded them. The answers of all the critics to individual questions were compiled.

The content of the selected literature was analyzed, the most relevant information, as determined by the researcher, answering the specific questions was recorded and compiled. The materials from these two data sources were recorded question by question and the results charted to facilitate comprehension of the outcome of the study.

The reliability of the research project was determined in two ways: through the use of the same questions asked of each subject (Adams, 1958, pp. 20-24), and through the use of an intrareliability examination of the original materials gathered from the local dance critics and the literature.

One year later, the researcher selected one of the transcribed interview tapes and reviewed the materials to determine whether the same materials from the transcription would have been selected to answer the questions of the focused interview schedule. The same materials were selected again to answer the questions. The researcher made a random selection from the library materials to determine whether the same materials were selected to answer the questions of the focused interview schedule. Again, almost exclusively, the same materials were selected.

A summary of these materials was made, again question by question, as listed in the three parts of the interview schedule. The relationships between the materials from the two data sources was discussed, conclusions were drawn, and recommendations for future studies were made.

CHAPTER IV

THE DATA

The information for this study was obtained through a review of articles written about dance criticism and aesthetics and through interviews with local dance critics based upon a focused interview schedule. The focused interview schedule was divided into three parts: dance criticism, dance aesthetics, and educational preparation of the dance critic. These are presented in the above order in this chapter.

Dance Criticism

What is dance criticism?

Literature. The materials from literature and responses given by the local dance critics reveal a variety of opinions. Clive Barnes, dance and drama critic of the New York Post, identifies two possible answers to the question depending whether one has a traditional attitude or accepts a minimal approach. In the traditional concept, criticism is considered "advocacy based on clearly expressed opinions, interpretations and analysis supported by reasoning" (1978, p. 56). In the minimal approach, Barnes say description is "carefully weighted, edited and colored" and through it "opinion is meant to seep . . . so that the reader has the illusion of making up his own mind" (p. 46).

Englishman Michael Leiserach defines three classifications of dance criticism in an article in Dancing Times. The first is termed ideal criticism, ideal because the critic interrelates three basic concepts:

the critic's own ideas on the work, the ideas evolving from the production, and the reality of the actual performance. The second classification is romantic-impressionistic.

> Romantic criticism is essentially an attempt to convey the spirit of, or regurgitate in words the experience of the performance - using much imagery and requiring great literary skill. (1963, p. 399)

He comments upon this style, "In lesser (than) purely professional hands the impressionist and romantic styles tend, all too often, to degenerate into a mere diarrhoea of enthusiasm (pp. 399-400). The third kind of criticism classifies "productions and performances by certain well known categories such as "'surrealist', 'expressionist', 'neo-classical', 'total theatre', 'melodramatic'" (p. 400).

Authors of several of the articles define dance criticism as writing about dance. "Criticism is what I call the first level of literacy in writing about the dance because it comes the closest of all writing on dance to theatrical dance performance" (Carter, 1976b, p. 35). George Beiswanger, in an article for Dance Scope, says, "Criticism develops out of the bravos and boos as the effort is made to state what it is that warrants applause or displeasure" (1976, p. 30). Deborah Jowitt, dance critic for Village Voice, clearly believes dance criticism is writing that stays:

> Intimately connected to the work itself - neither leaping over it into romantic fancies or distance theorizing, nor smothering it in irrelevant ideas, nor making it the pretext for a brilliant display of temperament. (1976, p. 207)

Dance criticism is more than just writing about dance. It is seeing and thinking and knowing what is seen; it is perception. Perception is considered an integral part of what dance criticism is all about in much

of the literature. "The knowledge that we get from criticism is always a mixing of the critic's knowledge from past experiences with his immediate perception" (Carter, 1976b, p. 35). Richard Lorber writes that dance criticism is an integration of perception and expression. (1976, p. 10). Jowitt says perception is a vital part of dance criticism: "To me one of the crucial factors is perception. Seeing. Not all the erudition in the world seems able to make up for a deficiency in this area" (1976, p. 207). But seeing is not enough. She points out that it is not possible to learn what to look for in dance, and says, "the process has less to do with good eyesight than it does with recognizing what you've seen" (p. 207). The two concepts of writing and perception are blended by Walter Sorell when he writes that a critic's perception allows him to:

> Conjure up and capsulize the dancer's movements . . . in a sentence that has the verbal power, the rhythmic subtlety, depth and lightness to make us feel the inexpressible, the movement woven wonder of the dance. (1965, p. 9)

The answer to the question, what is dance criticism, must give consideration to the intellectual activity of the reader who is reading dance criticism. Two authors note this. Joan Cass, dance critic in Boston, says dance criticism provokes, within the reader, thoughts" that lead back to the dances themselves" (1970, p. 228). Jowitt thinks dance criticism articulates for those who saw the performance "responses they themselves had" about the performance (1976, p. 205).

Beiswanger points out that dance criticism is history. He says "the dancing presence to be found in the writing of a Gautier or an Edwin Denby is no mean thing" (1976, p. 33). He goes on to say, "criticism

serves to extend a dancer's career beyond the space and time of its kinetic actuality" (p. 33). Carter values the critical method of describing movement because it results in "some valuable data showing what perceptive critics see in . . . dance performance" (1976a, p. 219).

Perhaps the final word on what dance criticism is all about is best provided by Cass in her article "The Critic as Thinker" from Dance Scope, 1965. When the word "criticism" is substituted for "critic" this statement expresses the feelings of a great many persons regarding what dance criticism is.

> In the central experience itself - that of communicating through dance and of seeing and reacting to it - the critic is superfluous . . . neither the dancer nor the audience requires his presence to give or receive fulfillment. (p. 33)

Local Critics. Responses to this question by the dance critics focus on dance criticism as description and analysis of theatrical dance performance. Critic E says, "Dance criticism should give the reader a sense of what took place, how it looked, how it was performed." Critic C lists three components and names descriptions as the first: "One, you report what occurred on stage." Critic B says criticism includes a lot of things such as "capturing in words as accurately as possible what it looked like." Statements by critics D, F, and G blend description and analysis into a single unit; for example, Critic F states that, "dance criticism is writing about dance analytically but also descriptively." In listing components of dance, critic D says, "Thirdly, it is attempting to describe and analyze the work in words." Critic G

declares, "The components of dance criticism are description and analysis," and goes on to say the amount of each varies depending upon the type of theatrical performance being reviewed.

The ability of the critics to write and express themselves through the use of words is as integral a part of criticism as description and analysis. Critic F states, "Dance criticism is how you write about dance." He continues:

> My focus is more on how you write about dance, how you communicate in language, a process of translating from one medium which is dance, an aesthetic medium, to another completely different medium which has its own formal demands and requires a certain form in order to be effective.

Critic B speaks of capturing in words "as accurately as possible . . . what the underlying principles were, what the circumstances were, how it fits into what else is going on." Critic A, in talking about what dance criticism is, feels the ability to write is the least important aspect of dance criticism.

Several of the critics indicate that perception is an important component of dance criticism. Critic A takes a strong stand. "When I go to a concert, I have to first perceive it, perceive what is happening in front of me." Critic D makes reference to the process of seeing: "First, criticism requires an open mind to view the work intellectually." Critic G asks himself, "What am I looking at?," then searches for a statement about the work to share with his readers.

Dance criticism is conceptualizing about dance, according to the local dance critics, and is related to both the artist and the reader. Both Critics B and D speak of criticism as an exchange of meaning between people, i.e., communication. Critic B calls it a dialogue and Critic D

refers to it as an interactive process. Critic B feels that critical writing is giving the reader a sense of the thinking processes of the choreographer. Critic A talks of the need to conceive the intentions of the artists involved in the performance. Critic C says it is providing insight into the happening for the reader.

Critic H indicates that dance criticism is different things under differing circumstances, and these differences depend on the publication. When a critic writes for a newspaper, H says, the critic is more of a reporter. "If you are writing for a newspaper you have a responsibility to be more of a reporter, to let people know what is happening."

What is the purpose of dance criticism?

Literature. Many of the authors speak about the purpose of criticism in relationship to the reader. Jowitt says the purpose of dance criticism is to talk about dance "in an interesting, accurate and unauthoritative way" to the reader. Cass speaks about the role of the critic to the readers, she says that the critic can be a stimulating companion, who enhances enjoyment by imparting useful information, making perceptive comments, analyzing the form of the dance, or illuminating its parallels with other arts (1970, p. 228).

The authors state an interest in stimulating the mental activity of the reader. Jowitt says fine dance writing "stimulates new ways of seeing and thinking about a work" (p. 205). Edwin Denby says, "The intelligent reader learns from a critic not what to think about a piece of art but how to think about it" (1967, p. 234). Carter says he tries to "give a visual rendering of the dance performance that will recreate or generate in the mind of the reader some of its essential qualities"

(1976b, p. 35). Beiswanger states the justification for criticism "is to direct the energy of writing so as to bring an image of the dance into the reader's view" (1976, pp. 32-33).

Another aspect of dance criticism is indicated by Sorell, who speaks of the critic as a one-way interpreter explaining the work of the artist to his readership (1965, p. 3). He goes on to say:

> Since he can see and has a vision to see into the inmost within and far beyond the narrow strip of the horizon, he can quicken our sensual response to the sensuous brilliance of the dancers. (1965, pp. 8-9).

Educator N. Smith expresses somewhat the same idea:

> The dance critic helps us by leading his 'dilated eye' to the experience in the theatre. His basic gift to his readers is the eye of another beholder, an experienced beholder. (1965, p. 64)

In another article, Denby points out a purpose of dance criticism as education because it serves to teach the reader how to perceive the difference between good and bad dancing and between good and bad choreographic craftsmanship. The critic, through his writing, can indicate the technical inventions of the performance and illustrate the gifts making the dancer and the choreographer remarkable (1967, p. 236).

To provide descriptions of the theatrical dance performance for posterity is another reason for writing dance criticism. Jowitt refers to this when she says, "Vivid and precise and accurate descriptions of dancing become all the more important when you consider that today's dance criticism is tomorrow's dance history" (1976, p. 209). In the words of another dance critic, Sorell, "shall we not ask ourselves what validity any criticism has and to what end the writing of the review is pursued if not for the mere purpose of recording events" (1965, p. 4)?

There are cultural implications in writing dance criticism. Denby touches this issue when he says that the critic, in discussing dance, should suggest how it relates to the daily experiences of the culture and its customs (1968, p. 341). In the article entitled "Of Criticism and Dance," Edrie Ferdun says the function of criticism "is to help make art work in a culture that has sacrificed its homogeneity and wholesomeness of operation for specialization and diversification" (1967, p. 51).

The reporting function is another theme found in the published articles. "One important member of the audience for dance is the critic. He is important for only one reason: to report to the public on what he saw" (Todd, 1962, p. 5). Ernestine Stodelle, in an article from CORD News, iterates the point "He is a reporter!" (1970, p. 33). Arthur Todd identifies the function of criticism as consumer service: The critic writes for the public and not for the dancer or choreographer. Todd comments that Martin indicates the information to be given the public includes whether or not the performance is worth going to see and for what reasons (1962, p. 6). He continues:

> In a sense, a critic is sort of a thermometer that provides a fever chart of a performance. He sits in judgement, as it were, as a kind of artistic conscience who observes, assimilates, edits and reports what he sees. (p. 6)

Nadel and Nadel, in their book The Dance Experience, talk about the purpose of writing newspaper criticism by describing the newspaper critic: "A newspaper critic is generally a reporter who is describing an event for the public that does not necessarily have a deep-rooted interest in the event" (1970, p. 195). They continue, "The critic is often a

person in the community who wishes to promote the field through his own columns" (p. 195).

Sorell alleges the role of selling art "in a world in which art has become a property, a commodity and even an investment, a world in which the artist has to sell himself" has been inadvertently imposed upon the critic by both the artist and the public (1965, p. 4). The role of selling dance as part of the purpose of dance criticism is looked upon favorably by Cass. She advises the reader who finds a trustworthy critic and to use him as a "quick market guide when time and money do not permit you to attend all available dance events" (1970, p. 228).

Local Critics. The dance critics talk about the purpose of dance criticism in relationship both to their readers and to themselves. In speaking about their readers, Critic E says, "I try to give people an understanding of what is happening in the dance." Critic C wants to provide the reader with a feeling for what occurs in the performance.

Most of the critics' responses to this question were from a personal point of view. Critic F says he writes to remember what he experiences at the moment and to understand why he likes or dislikes the performance. Critic D expresses a need to understand his own experience and says writing about it does this for him. He also feels dance is a rich metaphor for life: "The more of dance I see and try to understand, appreciate and judge, the more I feel open to life with all of its changes and new things coming along." Critic F seeks to understand what the elements in the performance are that evoke his emotional response to the occurrence.

Other dance critics write dance criticism because of a need to write or explore the challenge of writing about dance and use the process of writing as a creative activity. Critic A says, "I write because I have to write. I do it because it is something that I have to do. It is a creative thing." Critic C enjoys the challenge of translating the act of dance into words. She continues, "If you feel that you have a talent . . . it becomes your art form." Critic G responded that he writes for the love of dance: "I love dance; writing is secondary to loving dance. I love to tell people about dance."

To share their perceptions is regarded as a reason for writing dance criticism. "I get very excited looking at dance concerts and have certain feelings and ideas about it and I want to express these things," says Critic F. "When I began to attend dance concerts, I found I saw things other people were not seeing," he continues, "and I wanted to tell people about what I saw."

Critic H mentions two purposes for dance criticism not mentioned by the other critics: "My intention in writing dance criticism is to make a record." He also uses criticism to improve the state of the art. "Sometimes you write for the performer. I have a bit of a teacher in me . . . you include comments you hope will be read by that person."

What are the responsibilities of a dance critic?

Literature. Several of the articles in the literature mention description and understanding as responsibilities of the critic. Denby, in his article on dance criticism in Dance Encyclopedia, writes that the dance journalist's business is to give a lively portrait of the dancing

and to illuminate "what imaginative spell it aims for, what method it proceeds by and what is achieved" (1967, p. 233).

Todd notes that the responsibilities of a newspaper critic entail designing headlines and lead sentences to capture the interest of the reader. He must struggle against the apathy of his editor whose only concern is with the newsworthiness of the article. Through it all, the critic writes a critique of sensitivity and understanding (1962, p. 7).

Stodelle feels the critic, by writing a sensitive, perceptive critique, fulfills his responsibilities both to the dance and to his readers.

> Having succeeded beyond its wildest expectations in cultivating dance and audiences throughout the country and abroad, American dance--in both its balletic and modern dance forms--is now in pressing need of spokesmen who are capable of grasping the significance of the art from both sides; the creative act of the artist and the responsive act of the public. The critic as such becomes a liaison man establishing balances--and therefore, an exchange of meaning--betwen the giver and the receiver. (1970, p. 31)

Ferdun believes the critic's responsibilities include directing the reader's perceptual abilities "so that a work's potential meaning will be found more readily" (1967, p. 51). Carroll Russell takes the position that the critic's responsibilities include assisting the reader to understand what is taking place in the performance (1967, p. 82).

Denby says the critic provides information regarding the heritage and current innovations of dance to promote appreciation and awareness of the historic and cultural implications of dance.

Several authors mention the selling aspect of criticism. Ferdun, in her list of a major responsibiliites of the critic, includes promotion

and audience development. She feels the critic's writings should excite the public to attend the dance performance (1967, p. 51). Murray Louis, the only professional dancer who has written about dance criticism during the last twenty years, says, "The function of the critic is to fill (performance) houses" (1976, p. 83). Cass wants the critic to inform the public when a dance concert is not worthy of their time or money. In her words, the layman "seeks the guidance of a critic to help him apportion his time and his money" (1965, p. 35).

To advise and guide through writing dance criticism suggests that the responsibilities of the dance critic include evaluation and judgment. Ferdun recommends that the critic identify his standards of judgment and make his purpose of judging clear to his readers (1967, p. 51).

Barnes points out the difficulty of this task, but he recognizes that the reading public expects it. Barnes feels that a regular reader should be able to learn the critic's standards through his writings. For this to occur, the critic must be consistent and "when he changes his view . . . we can expect him not only to tell us but to tell us why" (1966, p. 12).

Judgment involving the establishment of standards brings the issue of objectivity and subjectivity in criticism to the foreground. Some authors advocate total objectivity by the critic; others accept a subjective involvement. According to Cohen, "The modern critic prides himself on his objectivity" (1965, p. 745). Cohen feels the critic should not become too friendly with either dancers or choreographers "for fear the relationship may influence his writings" (1965, p. 745). A.V. Coton talks about the relationship of the critic and the artist:

> It is, I am sure, unnecessary to mention that our greatest asset is our acceptance of the idea that there should always be a state of 'cold war' between artists and critics; for private friendships can undermine the very qualities which makes our criticism a worthwhile activity for each one of us. (Walker & Haddakin, 1975, p. 165)

Todd states, "The critic observes what is performed . . . yet he never becomes personally involved" (1962, p. 6). Russell says the critic's task is to keep his own prejudice out of the critique (1967, p. 82).

Barnes does not want the writings of a dance critic to be free from prejudice.

> Free of prejudice, no! Critics are fallible human beings offering their thoughts about the adventures of the soul and spirit. Opinionated, yes. All we can ask is that their opinions are informed and their prejudices open. (1978, p. 46)

In defense of the right of the critic to be human, Sorell writes:

> I would rather see him totally involved, emotionally and intellectually, in what he is criticizing. Above all, he must be human before he is a critic. I want him to be armed with all his foibles and prejudices as much as with his deep and honest concerns with the art itself. (1964, p. 11)

Not only is there a list of things the critic does, but also a list of things he doesn't do. Katherine S. Walker enumerates some of them, saying:

> He never sticks to his preconceptions, he never shows too much tenderness for the performer, nor phrases his writings too harshly, and most certainly he never enjoys a performance in the same manner as the ordinary audience member does. (1972, pp. 112-133)

Todd lists things a critic never assumes:

> That he is a dictator. Neither should he act as though he is an artistic director, a choreographer, a composer, a set or costume

> designer or a dancer, as some mistakenly do. If he does, he obviously is in the wrong field. (1962, p. 6)

Local Critics. A number of dance critics emphasize a need to be honest or fair in their writings. "I feel I have a responsibility to the choreographers and dancers to be an honest observer," says Critic A. Critic B says, "My responsibility to my readership is to be honest." Critic D mentions his responsibility to be fair in estimating an artist's work. Critic E speaks of being absolutely honest when writing criticism. Critic G believes his fairness to the art form includes reporting to his readers whether or not the dance works, i.e., is appealing to the audience attending the performance.

Fairness and honesty involve objective and subjective aspects of criticism. Critic A says about being truly objective, "I try, but I don't think it is possible." In talking about honesty, Critic E says the critic filters through all of his prejudices and biases "which you don't think you have but you do." Critic F thinks it is only honest to admit there are subjective elements in criticism "and that is part of it." He continues:

> The only thing a critic should acknowledge is the fact that you are writing about one person's feelings and opinions and, though you may have had some experience which others of the audience have not, that it is subjective. You just have to be straightforward about it.

In continuing his comments on subjectivity in criticism, Critic F indicates a personal preference.

> There is an element of subjectivity, but that makes it good. I like subjective criticism if it's from a good and sensitive viewer. It let me in on one person's way of seeing.

Fairness, honesty, objectivity, subjectivity--all are part of evaluation. The local dance critics indicate an awareness of this relationship. Both Critic A and Critic C believe their responsibilities include explaining why they say what they say. Critic A says, "When I say something I always try to back it up with evidence in movement description or something." Critic C recognizes this responsibility towards the art form and the reading public: "If you critique an artist you have the burden to that person to explain why." Critic C continues, "I do feel a responsibility towards the dancing public to say when there is something I feel is lacking . . . (but) you must support what you say."

In discussing evaluation, Critic A considers value judgment a minimal part of a review. He feels it is important but not the most important aspect: "When I write I try to present an impression of the work as it happens and also some kind of interesting comment other than a value judgment." Critic F does not believe criticism should be used to pass "holy judgment on whether the performance is good or not." Another dimension is added to this issue by Critic H when he says the critic must determine his own standards of judgment.

Critic A believes criticism should assist in improving the art form. He states his first responsibility is to the art and is fulfilled by "weeding out the weak. This is done in order for the art to grow. If you want your art to survive you have to be discriminating." Critic B doubts the ability of the critic to influence a choreographer or a dancer. He feels that determination is made by the dancers or the choreographers themselves. He continutes, "If a choreographer finds a

person's comments useful, they'll start reading that person. But it is not something you go out seeking."

A new shade of meaning is added to description and understanding when the local dance critics discuss their responsibilities to the reading public. Three critics, A, C, and D, speak of describing the performance in terminology that conveys an understanding of the performance so the reader can determine for himself whether or not he wishes to attend the concert.

Additional responsibilities acknowledged by the local dance critics include a duty to dance history. Both Critics A and D mention it. Critic D says:

> One of the responsibilities which I feel most keenly is the historic. Dance is so ephemeral. It's important to make a record, as real and as honest as possible of a response to a work, as good a description and analysis and as keen a judgment of it as I can possibly write.

Two critics discuss their involvement in selling dance to the public. Critic F speaks of writing to convey the excitement and enthusiasm he feels, and to generate a desire within the reader to see the performance. Critic G's attitude is more pragmatic. He informs his readers of ticket sales and prices, and who is performing what, where and when.

Additional responsibilities touched upon by the local dance critics include nurturing audience education and augmenting audience attendance (A, F), giving the reader an impression of the qualities of the dance through language use and phrasing of the writing (F), and including in the critique a sense of the culture as reflected through the work (A).

What is the important concern of dance criticism--description, analysis, or evaluation?

Literature. Generally, it is considered the task of criticism to determine whether or not a work of art deserves the attention it is or is not receiving. The fulfillment of this task requires analysis and judgment. The critic seeks to educate the lay person to a greater understanding and appreciation of the work. This is achieved through describing aspects of the work that make it unique and worthy of attention. It is neither the purpose nor the responsibility of the critic to force his way of looking upon his readers. Rather, he attempts to help them understand what it is he sees so they can enrich their own processes of perception.

In literature about dance criticism, the authors indicate a preference for the presentation of a portrait of the performance that conveys the flavor of the event. In the opinion of Beiswanger, dance criticism is an endeavor "to translate a kinetic into a verbal actuality, making description rather than interpretation, analysis rather than evaluation, the focal enterprise" (1976, p. 32). In discussing the use of description in dance criticism, Carter points out it is the focus on movement that distinguishes dance from the other arts. He believes movement and ideas are so interrelated that the critic "must be able to perceive and describe the movement in order to discuss well the ideas" (1976b, p. 36). Denby says part of the procedure is seeing what is happening and then describing clearly what is seen (1965, p. 150). Smith, in an article in Focus on Dance III, writes:

> No critic expects his descriptive powers to effect a complete re-creation of the dance performance. No amount of writing, however skillful, can dance a dance for us. (1965, p. 64)

Beiswanger reinforces Smith's regard for dance description. He reminds the reader that dance "when cast into words, comes after the fact and provides but remains and reminders" (1973, p. 13).

The next step in the procedure, after description, varies with the author. Some advocate analysis; some others, evaluation; and several, judgment. A few say little else is needed after description.

> Let a review set forth a sense of the actual happening that makes the dance worth talking about, and a judgement as to the dance's basic worth need not be spelled out. (Beiswanger, 1976, p. 33)

Cass lists analysis as the step following description. After the critic participates in the visual experience, he gives the reader "an analysis of the dance, an analysis of his reaction to it" (1965, p. 33).

Evaluation is considered by Bertram Jessup:

> Whatever in criticism contributes to sharpening the image, that is, to perceiving and understanding the work of art is thus aesthetically necessary and justified only as it eventuates in or supports evaluation. (1970, p. 198)

For Philip H. Phenix, evaluation of a dance is based "on the intrinsic factors, except as the latter have been assimilated into the aesthetic form itself" (1970, p. 10). In talking about evaluation, "the most controversial of all the critic's functions," Cass says it is also the most important aspect of practical criticism (1965, p. 35). She feels that if the critic avoids placing the dance performance on a value scale,

he demonstrates "a disregard for the layman and an over-solicitousness for the artist" (1965, p. 35).

Few authors take a position on the place of judgment; and when they do, their views are tempered. Brinson believes that "true criticism implies more than condemnation or praise; it requires reasons and, above all, a constructive judgment" (1963, p. 643). Beiswanger feels that judgment is taken care of by description: "What a critic shows a dance to be by setting forth an image of its presence becomes the substance of the critic's judgment of the dance" (1976, p. 33).

The role of taste in criticism is seldom mentioned in the literature; but when it is, recognition is given to its influence on judgment. "Taste . . . is the final referent and sanction of judgement" says Jessup (1970, p. 201). It is also realized to be highly personal. When a critic renders his judgment, according to Peter Brinson, he bases some of it on academic knowledge:

> But most will be based on that indefinable sense called taste which is part inborn, part developed through seeing much ballet. This taste will be personal and personally expressed. (1963, p. 647)

Cass thinks taste affects the opinions of critics and is one explanation for the variations in attitude towards the acceptance of dance works. She believes the critic never reaches the position of perfect judgment based on fully developed taste. Because of this, "he can never render absolute dictate and his opinions will often differ from other critics opinions" (Cass, 1965, p. 34).

Local Dance Critics. Critic A states he places movement description and analysis first in importance. In his opinion, these provide the

evidence for judgment. He says he prefers to "let the value judgment speak for itself through my movement description and analysis." Critic B feels that all four elements are a part of critical writing and are included depending upon the type of publication and the amount of space available to the critic. Critic C believes description of the movement is a part of a critique and, depending upon the space and how the performance impressed the reviewer, analysis, evaluation, and judgment are added. Description and analysis are enough as far as Critic D is concerned. He favors the activity of analysis and, when describing a work, tries to convey the tone of it and his response to it. Critic E says, "Description is captured in a sentence or two and an analysis is given." Critic F's response to the questions focuses on analysis. He provides two points as to the value of it:

> Analysis is interesting and valuable if it's not boring to read, which it often is, and if you have space to do it, which most critics don't.

Critic G enjoys giving an analysis, but feels judgmental activities are wrong. The space limitations of newspaper writing are mentioned by critic H: The lack of space hinders the critic and keeps him from fulfilling all of the aspects of critical writing he may feel are necessary. He says that ideally, description is first, then analysis and judgment are added if they don't emerge from the description. He also points out that if the critic is proficient in descriptive writing, an analysis is provided just through the choice of words. He goes on to say:

> So when you are really limited in space and can only do a description, if you are careful, you can get in all three, description, analysis and evaluation.

Is writing dance criticism an art?

Literature. There are two attitudes found in the literature towards considering criticism as an art. Cass does not feel that the the critic is a poet. She states, "Criticism is not an art form" (1965, p. 36). She places criticism alongside philosophy, sociology, psychology and ". . . other intellectual disciplines that make their valid contribution toward the magnetic, frustrating business of trying to understand man" (1963). Once the critic has performed the task of describing the dance work and begins to deal with other aspects of criticism, i.e., analysis, evaluation, judgment, poetic language does not add to clarity of thought and may be distracting (p. 33). She says, "It seems to me that his usefulness will hinge on the extent to which he adds poetic impression to dance experiences" (p. 33). She makes her point again in this statement: "The last word on or of criticism will not be pronounced until the last work of art has been produced, since criticism is not a primary function, but a response" (p. 33).

Most authors are in support of the critic as an artist or criticism as an art. Stodelle says, "If we peel off a good dance critic's topmost skin, we're almost certain to find a creative artist beneath" (1970, p. 31). According to Sorell, the best critic is one who evokes images, and that is why "only the 'poet' in the critic can really do full justice to a dance piece" (1965, p. 8). He continues:

> Because only the immediacy and remoteness of the poetic image can picture the visual image of the rhythmic sweep of human bodies in space and time, can make us relive and remember the elusive quality of the dance. (p. 4)

Sorell also believes that a critic, to successfully put into words the vision of the dance, "must be endowed with the sensitivity and sensibility of an artist" (p. 3). Beiswanger, in talking about criticism and the critic, indicates that for the lay public to read criticism on a steady basis, the criticism must be well written, "and this makes the critic a writer and his craft a branch of letters" (1973, p. 13).

Stodelle also supports the contention that criticism is an art. She says, "Criticism is an art of impartial perception" (1970, p. 3). And Carter indicates that the perceptual skills of the critic merge with the art of writing to produce criticism. The critic's "training and practice in observing and writing on dance directs these skills towards criticism that is also a form of art" (1976b, p. 38). In her article "Toward an Art of Dance Criticism," Stodell quotes H.L. Mencken, whom she calls a critic par excellence, as saying, "'The best criticism (is) by men who have had within them not only the reflective and analytical faculty of critics, but also the gusto of artists'" (1970, p. 34). Again in support of criticism as an art, Russell says the critic, through his intuitive perception, kinetic empathy, and literary craftsmanship creates a written entity which "serves dance and is itself a creative art" (1967, p. 82).

Denby no longer produces criticism, but his writings continue to serve as inspiration to many current dance critics who praise his approach to writing and his perception of the dance. In his book Looking at the Dance, in a chapter titled "The Critic," he talks about the need of the critic to have unusual literary gifts. He recognizes that the state of criticism is not all that it could be, but points

out there is an occasional phrase or sentence that suggests the ideal possibility toward which the critic should strive:

> The fact that dance criticism isn't perfect doesn't invalidate its good moments. Granted it is brilliant far less often than the dance it commemorates; still the fact that it is after all occasionally brilliant is what makes it as a form of intellectual activity in a modest way worth while. (p. 342)

Local Critics. Critic A considers dance criticism an art "when it is done well as Edwin Denby does it." But he recognizes an attitude toward criticism often taken by dancers and choreographers: "A lot of people say dance criticism is parasitic, that it rides on the back of another art." Critic C believes that criticism is an art, but qualifies that statement by saying, "It has not reached that point except with the writing of Arlene Croce." Critic E accepts dance criticism as an art form, as did critics A and C, but says it depends upon who is doing the writing: "There are some really great writers in dance, but very few." Critic B agrees with Critic C that "there are a few great works of criticism I think are art, but that applies to very few. I would say some of Edwin Denby's essays are really works of art." Critic C's answer to the question is simple and direct: "Criticism is an art. I think putting words together is an art just like choreography." Critic C expands upon Critic G's statement: "You have to become a person of letters to be a critic and have it be an art form."

Critic D looks upon his writing of criticism as his particular art, stating:

> I don't consider it as fully a creative art as the art of choreography, the art of musical composition, or painting, but I look at it as a bit more of an artistic act than reporting. That is because it involves a lot of the same capacities, sensitivity and responsiveness . . . (criticism) requires an

> investment of emotion that must be structured in some way, but I don't look upon it as being as high an art nor as creative an art as what I'm writing about. If I did I would be putting myself in competition with the artist and that's not the point.

Criticism is not a primary art for Critic B either. He believes that "writing is an art, but writing criticism, in the narrow day-to-day sense, is not an art." He says:

> A work of art is something that creates its own universe and criticism often does not do this. It refers back to what it's talking about. In that sense it is reportage, perhaps analytical reportage, but still not independent of what it started with.

Critical writing that captures the attention and interest of the reading public is important to Critic F. He does not believe criticism is an art form.

> I do feel that it should be palatable, graceful and it should have some of the same appeal an art form has. I don't think you can write about something beautiful in such an unlovely way that nobody wants to read it.

Critic D talks about writing criticism as a craft. "It requires craft to structure a piece that is both clear and beautiful." Critic H also considers criticism a craft, not an art form. He feels critics serve the art form of dance:

> When a critic gets carried away and feels that he is better than the art form and puts writing ahead of the dance and thinks people are reading his article instead of seeing the art form . . . the writer is not fulfilling the purposes of dance criticism which includes being responsible to dance as an art form.

Several of the local dance critics recognize the role of the dance in their writing. Critic B says, "The majority of criticism is

dependent upon the work or works it describes." Critic D finds dancing inspires him to write:

> Dance that inspires me the most leads to an act of writing that's far more creative than if I don't feel so inspired by what I've seen. Critics can be inspired or uninspired by what they see, and some times even bad things can inspire you to a kind of writing that comes with ease.

Dance is a source of inspiration to critic C, but he voices a concern:

> There needs to be a development in dance that provides you with materials worth writing about. You can't write a good criticism if you only have a vacuous or silly dance to look at. You can't create a piece from nothing.

Dance Aesthetics

The intent of part 2 is to probe for the aesthetic criteria used in viewing theatrical dance performance.

Can you identify the asethetic concepts guiding your viewing of theatrical dance performance?

Literature. Aesthetics as a branch of philosophy examines beliefs about art. The subject is extensive, but simplistically, it deals with works of art and the experience of art. It is concerned with the processes of perception, analysis, evaluation, and judgment. Aestheticians attempt to identify criteria for these processes.

Criticism is writing about art and can be concerned with perception, analysis, evaluation, and judgment of works of art. The criteria of aesthetics can be used as instruments of criticism; thus it is possible to assume a critic has an aesthetic upon which he bases his critical writing.

Support for this assumption is found in Joanna Friesen's article "Perceiving Dance" in which she asserts that the task of aesthetics is to "examine critical statements made about works of art" (1975, p. 97). This statement is iterated in the writings of Monroe C. Beardsley. He calls aesthetics the philosophy of criticism or metacriticism and says, "Aesthetics consists of those principles that are required for clarifying and confirming critical statements" (1966, p. 307-08). George Dickie, in an historic overview in his book Aesthetics, reinforces Beardsley's writings on this matter:

> This new development is called "the philosophy of criticism," or "metacriticism" and it is conceived of as a philosophical activity which analyzes and clarifies the basic concepts which art critics use when they describe, interpret or evaluate particular works of art. (1971, p. 44)

A slightly different slant on the development of aesthetic constructs is taken by Carter. He places the process of aesthetic concept development with the critic, but also relates it to the activities of the artist:

> The aesthetic concepts emerge out of the creative process as the artist observes and develops the skills to make significant images. So too the aesthetic concepts that apply to criticism emerge in the process of doing criticism, and in analyzing the writings of critics. (1976b, p. 37)

Stodelle takes somewhat the same position in her discussion of the word "critic."

> The word itself, . . . describes an action that is bound up with the critic's task; to search out aesthetic values, to probe deeply into the artistic intention . . . and then, on the basis of fresh findings and firm feelings the critic builds an argument to support his opinion. (1970, p. 34)

To probe, to search, to reflect upon the dance performance: this is how aesthetic ideas emerge. Carter put it this way:

> Such concepts, together with the patterns and qualities of movement in which they are disclosed, form the basis for the statements that a critic makes concerning a particular performance. (1976b, p. 37)

Consideration of taste is given recognition by two writers on aesthetics and criticism in dance. Beiswanger writes,

> A critic's first move in the direction of a theory of criticism springs from the critics' likes and dislikes as they are brought to the surface by particular dances and dance works. (1976, p. 30).

He voices a concern that these personal reactions become principles of taste not founded upon a tested standard of aesthetic theory. His concern is reflected in the following quote:

> On the one hand, likes and dislikes must be voiced if the critic is to have a voice . . . Stanley Kaufmann is correct, "I am a writer" is the only reply to those who challenge the individual's right to the critic's seat. Critics must write what they write, . . . if they are to transform private valuings into public performings and thus accomplish criticism's function within art's going-on.
>
> By the same token, however, critical judgments cannot be sustained by an appeal to private taste . . . to set up what is radically personal as a judgmental model is to fall into a special kind of stupidity . . . . (1976, pp. 30-1)

Denby explains the problem of dance aesthetics and its subject matter: "Dancing that can fascinate as an art does - is so elusive" (1968, p. 337). Dance exists only as it happens, and this makes it difficult to discuss. Denby points out the lack of specific terminology to describe dance: "Unlike criticism of other arts, that of dancing cannot casually refer the student to a rich variety of well-known great effects and it cannot quote passages as illustrations" (p. 337).

The lack of a special vocabulary to describe and discuss dance may have contributed to the shortage of books dealing with dance philosophically. In the entire library history of dance, there are few books totally devoted to the aesthetics of dance.

In 1974, David Best published Expression in Movement and the Arts, a Philosophical Enquiry, in which Best discusses aesthetic criteria of expressive movement. His definition of criteria for aesthetic judgment is "reasons which provide a logical connection . . . between behaviour statements and mental experience statements" (1974, p. 89-90). Furthermore, he feels the criteria of aesthetics must be publicly observable (p. 90). He expands on this by saying feeling is not a criterion because it is an inner, unobservable event; thus, "There could be no way of telling whether it was correct or not, since there would be no standard to which to refer" (p. 117). Best cites the need for aesthetic concepts because they provide reasons for explaining one's response to the movement experience (p. 118).

Best's need for an aesthetic theory of dance is shared by Carter:

> Dance aesthetics provides the conceptual framework for experimental and philosophical inquiry into dance as a form of art, examines the relation of dance to other forms of art, analyzes appreciative and critical response to dance. (1976, p. 219)

What is the basis for aesthetic concepts in dance? Carter finds them in the form, structure, and symbolic character of the dance (1976a, p. 218). He states that the general concepts of aesthetics, i.e., form, expression, and symbolic significance, applicable to other art forms can be used in the discussion of dance (p. 218). Geraldine Dimondstein points out that each art form has its own distinguishing characteristics, its

own unique image, and its own particular media materials, but they all exist in the world of space-time-force and use these elements in unique fashion. Her article "Space-Time-Force: An Aesthetic Construct" discusses the role of each of these elements in the various art forms (1970, pp. 15-20). She concludes:

> In sum, then, the aesthetic elements of space-time-force function in the service of perception . . . (and) the aesthetic value of the space-time-force construct is in the individual's ability to define and control the form with which he is involved in such a way that he heightens its emotional impact. (p. 20)

Friesen discusses the elements of time-space-energy (force) as they are found in dance. She places emphasis on the dance as the object of study for aesthetic concepts and says:

> The qualities with which the dancer-choreographer works to create the final product will be variations, manipulations, and integrations of all three of these elements--space, time, and energy. (1975, p. 98)

She fully discusses the implications of each element and recognizes that it is difficult to observe them separately in dance. She feels that a critical review must realize the role of these elements of time-space-energy in dance to increase the aesthetic experience.

Aesthetic quality of movement is strongly affected by the ability of the dancer to perform the movement of the dance. Friesen indicates that poor choreography often can be improved when performed by good technicians, and that the reverse is true also. David Levin speaks of the kind of movement necessary for the art of dance. He talks about a kind of movement that is "ontologically distinct" and calls this type "that which can reveal itself" (1973, p. 38). Dance movement as differing from ordinary movement is discussed by Susanne Langer. She identifies the

difference as virtual power in an article by the same name: "The primary illusion of dance is a virtual realm of power--not actually, physically exerted power, but appearances of influences and agency created by virtual gesture" (1953, p. 175). Langer also speaks of the "dynamic image" in dance. In her book Problems of Art, she talks about dance as an appearance that springs from what the dancers do, yet is something in addition (p. 5):

> What dancers create is a dance; and a dance is an apparition of active powers, a dynamic image. Everything a dancer actually does serves to create what we really see; but what we really see is a virtual entity. The physical realities are given: place, gravity, body, muscular strength, muscular control, and secondary assets such as light, sound, or things (usuable objects, so-called 'properties'). All these are actual. But in the dance, they disappear. The more perfect the dance, the less we see its actualities. What we see, hear, and feel are the virtual realities, the moving forces of the dance, . . . here we have, then, . . . the dynamic image, which is the dance. (1957, pp. 5-6)

Phenix follows along this same line of thinking when talking about the elements of the dance that compare special aesthetic aspects: "The dancer, like his counterparts in other arts, achieves aesthetic effect through inducing a powerful illusion" (1970, p. 11). Friesen discusses the need for the dancer and the dance to be of a whole for the aesthetic experience to take place:

> The ability to project a certain feeling quality, the ability to show clear shapes and patterns with the body, the ability to move with fluidity or with staccato precision. The dancer must also remain one with the dance to preserve the unity and the continuity of the aesthetic image. (1975, p. 101)

Wilfried Hofmann proposes a set of three principles to be used as a foundation for aesthetics in dance (1973, p. 16-27). He says there are at least three processes at work in the pursuit of discovering the

aesthetic elements in dance. One he identifies as proportion; the more closely the proportions of the dancer's body match those of the ideal measurements of the mature, healthy human, the more likely the viewer will think the movement is beautiful (p. 19). The second point is the ability of the viewer to discover shapes in movement and within movement patterns. This principle is to be found in man's pleasure in hunting and discovering; to discover basic geometric forms in the dance increases the viewer's delight (p. 20). The last is man's need for stimulus (p. 21). Hofmann ties these aesthetic principles to the innate aspects of man: "In short, man is a sensitive, compulsive, analyst of form dynamics, who uses himself as measure" (p. 21).

Carter discusses aesthetic concepts in a 1976 Dance Scope (pp. 35-39), which has a section devoted to issues in contemporary criticism. He begins by labeling himself an aesthetician. He says he is an analytical person who likes to interpret, examine, and relate what he experiences, feels, and enjoys to understand the processes involved. As a result of his training in aesthetics and his personal tendency towards analysis, he sets forth four general aesthetic concepts he uses to talk about dance in his critical writing: style, which "helps to delineate the "language"" of one choreographer from another and to identify and describe particular dances" (p. 37); form, which "suggests structures or patterns and designates the systems that the artists use to order experiences" (p. 37); expression, which "points the critic to the dynamic felt qualities: feelings, mood, atmosphere that characterized the expressive qualities of the dance" (p. 37); and symbolic meaning, which "designates the representation character that we find in some works" (p. 37).

Todd lists the guides or signposts he employs when looking at theatrical dance: "They are, in order of their importance to me: communicative values, composition, rhythm, line and form" (1962, p. 6). He correlates the qualities of a good painting or photograph with those of a dance. He believes in looking for the same elements in all three:

> One looks for such things as: construction, craftsmanship, balance, rhythm, movement or action, boldness, sensitivity, originality, emotional value, spiritual value, psychological value, the proper expression of the theme or idea, the interpretation of the ideal, the penetration of the subject, and again, the most important from my point of view, communicative value. (p. 7)

The elements of dance aesthetics are discussed also by Friesen in the article "Perceiving Dance" (1975, pp. 97-108). In it, she repeats the points made by the previous authors, adding a personal view to enrich understanding. She talks of the role of perception and the qualities of time, space, and energy. She elaborates on each of these three elements as they are used by the choreographer and dancer through variation, manipulation, and integration. Technical proficiency by the choreographer and dancer contributes to the aesthetic experience of the dance. She gives recognition to the illusion created in the mind and speaks of the viewer attending to the body of the dancer symbolically within the dance: "Thus, for the percipient, the dancer with one's human body must become the dance, the art object for aesthetic consideration, symbolically" (p. 102). The dancer does this by executing the movement of the dance with "the energy level, quality and rhythm which most accurately translates the choreographer's ideas into movement" (p. 101). For the fulfillment of the aesthetic experience, the dancer must remain one with

the dance and be perceived by the viewer as a body creating an illusion and not as a technician performing the movement (p. 101).

Local critics. The local critics give their aesthetic criteria, although they claim a reluctance to do so. Critic A doesn't go to a performance "with a list of ten aesthetic concepts" but with knowledge, a love for dance, and an open mind. His knowledge is of the past activities of companies and choreographers. He knows what the choreographer has done in the past; and when he goes to another performance, he asks himself, "Where are you now? You used to do so and so, such and such; what are you doing now?" He identifies common denominators such as form, function, and expression:

> How does the choreographer define the work? Does he put form over function? Does the form determine the function of the dance or does function determine the form? Under these terms there is a whole list of aesthetic concepts. Depending upon the approach used by the choreographer in the work I look for these aspects of aesthetics which are appropriate . . . I look for formal structures, rhythmic diversity.

He clarifies this process by saying, "Yet I don't actually look for these things . . . I apply them when I need to apply them."

Critic B feels that the basic principles of aesthetics come from an individual's training and social, ethnic, cultural environment. He speaks of the Western European tradition of discussing art:

> Our terms in discussing a discrete work of art, one which has its limitations whether they are spatial, temporal, are in whether it makes a commentary on life as we live it. A great piece of art, the aesthetic judgment for determining something is a great piece of art, is based on whether it speaks to the view of life, enriches his life, or brings meaning to his life.

Critic F expects art to provide fresh insight into life:

> I look for a piece to tell me something, to tell me something fresh, something new. To have a piece widen the world for me somehow. One of the aesthetic concepts important to me is that what I give my time to teaches me to see better, to see the world better, or to see something new about movement or new about the body. I want art to open my mind up, or open me up experimentally.

Critic D states his standard simply: "Basically what I look for is for a piece to have some sort of coherence of its own." It does not matter what form the work takes, just that "in terms of that work it establishes some sort of coherence." Critic E agrees with Critic D: "To me, it's the whole picture . . . you see how things blend, the set, costumes, lights, everything comes together in a creative whole. These things make up my aesthetic." Critic F also bases his aesthetic on coherence.

> Integration is very important. I see a lot of things which have a lot of good ideas floating around, but there is no coherence. I'm not talking about coherence in that it's got to have one formal look; it's just all the elements of the work have to contribute to the idea of the work.

Technical perfection is a part of Critic G's asesthetic concept. In modern dance, he looks for a newness in general of the use of the body:

> Or maybe it's been used that way before and I've not noticed, or it can be the manipulation of qualities or energies in ways which are new and refreshing. It's art when it's new, it's art when it's revived, it's art when its historic, it's art.

In defining his aesthetic standard, Critic H talks about taste:

> There is a difference between taste and aesthetics. I can tell that I like something that's trash, and I can tell when it's good and I don't like it. So I can differentiate between taste and aesthetics. I can tell by looking at something that it is competently done and if you pinned me down I could tell you it is good because of this or that, but I don't know if I am telling the truth. More likely I am verbalizing feelings. I am

> currently functioning on a gut/intellectual feeling. It is almost an instant reaction without consciously going through a check list of does it do this, does it do that, etc.

In speaking of what they look for in performance, several critics mention choreographic intent. Critic H says, "What I do look for is whether or not the choreographer had an intent . . . . When looking for the elements making a performance good, one starts with choreography." When Critic E watches modern dance, he attempts to keep his mind free from expectations; but when he can't make sense out of what he is watching "I try to think what is the choreography saying?" Critic C expects the movement of the dance to convey the intent of the dance: "The intent must be conveyed through the choreography . . . ." The viewer must be able to see the intent." Critic B tries to discover the intention of the choreographer and "then see how she has gone about expressing that intention, structuring the work." Critic A also indicates that his aesthetic concepts come from the choreography.

Additional aesthetic criteria mentioned by local dance critics include role interpretation by a a great ballerina and craftsmanship. Critic H wants well-constructed choreography that has an "inevitability" to the structure: "You are not consciously aware now there is going to be a grand finale or now this or that will happen, but when it's all over you realize you have been led along."

How do you apply these to the writing of dance criticism?

Literature. Beiswanger sees the relationship of aesthetic criteria to critical writing as the result of the critic's attempt to reason why a dance is good or bad. In the process of making statements, the critic

searches for reasons: "To enunciate reasons is to frame a theory and reach towards an aesthetic" (1976, p. 30). The aesthetic criteria guiding the critical writings of Carter evolve from the viewing of the dance or from reflecting upon it. The thoughts merge "with the patterns and qualities of movement in which they are disclosed, form(ing) the basis for the statements that a critic makes concerning a particular performance" (1976b, p. 37). The application of aesthetics to criticism according to Jessup is to assist the reader in his perception, understanding, and appreciation for the art form. This is brought about through the evaluative writings of the critic (1970, pp. 197-207).

Another slant on the relationship of aesthetics to criticism is provided by Smith in her article "The Critical Function." She suggests that the writings of a dance critic are based upon his perceptive capabilities, which are built upon a broad base of viewing, often including the seeing of the same work performed many times by different companies. The accumulation of this experience leads to the development of aesthetic criteria revealed by what and how the critic writes. This sharing provides the reader with a springboard from which he can evaluate his own response and develop his own aesthetic criteria (1965, pp. 61-64).

In "Of Criticism and Dance" published in Dance Magazine, Ferdun presents her views on the writer's responsibilities to the reader. This is best summarized in a quote from the article: "He must shed light on dance for the audience and shed light on the audience for the dancers" (1967, p. 51). He achieves this by writing and speaking in ways that "excite the public to become an audience and then helps them to relive, savor and continue to find meaning in the experience" (p. 51). His

function is to make art meaningful in a society of specialization and diversification. He brings order to the procesees and development in dance and provides his audience with the significance and worth of dance works. This is accomplished by revealing the purposes and standards of judgment (p. 51).

Writing in 1968, Denby points out that "Dance esthetics . . . is in a pioneering state" (p. 337). This has certain advantages, but also certain disadvantages:

> This lack of precision, of data, and of method is not without advantages. It saves everyone a lot of pedantry and academicism, and it invites the lively critic to invent most of the language and logic of his subject. Its disadvantages, however, are that it makes the standards of quality vague, the range of achieved effects uncertain, and the classification of their component parts clumsy. (p. 337)

To compensate for this lack, the dance critic must turn to his own common-sense aesthetic. On his own through experience and developed taste, the critic makes order out of the complexity of the performance. He seeks relationships among the many aspects involved and from the memory, a dance image of the event, he draws comprehensive statements for his readers (1968, pp. 338-39).

Local critics. The aesthetic criteria of the local critics is revealed by what and how they write. All of them apply their aesthetic concepts in analysis. Critic A uses his aesthetic base in "the process of analyzing what I perceived." As to the application of these principles to his writing, he says:

> This process immediately gives me ways of presenting the written materials. Sometimes the concepts of aesthetics become key signs to writing my review; at other times they are camouflaged, but they are always there. Aesthetics is always there.

Critic B begins his review of theatrical dance performance with a description of its surface followed by a detailed analysis. After the formal analysis, "You say, what does it mean; what it means to me or what I imagine it means to the people around me." Critic C finds his criteria in the work and looks for the fulfillment of the intent of the choreography. When he writes, "I go back to these things and say whether the dance was successful or not." Critic D also gives an overall picture of the work. In writing about the experience, he seeks to convey to his readers his response to the dance: "In the activity of responding to a dance and writing dance criticism, there isn't a big separation between the response and my aesthetic sense or aesthetic judgment." This experience is important to Critic D: "It's very important to me that I stay with a work in an emotional, imaginative way all through because it's that experience which becomes the basis for writing criticism." Critic E does his critical work on television. He mentions the limitations of time as it effects his work: "One has so little time on television you must choose your words very carefully." He gives his viewers "the illusive image of the dance and tries to share with the listening audience something of the worth of the dance."

The analysis of his own experience is what Critic F shares with his readers:

> What I write is to explain why I had an aesthetic experience or why I didn't have that experience or just stopped short of it. What I write will depend upon what was there, what experience I did have and what I felt were the primary or most identifiable elements or most unusual elements contributing to my feelings.

Personal experience influences Critic G's writing also.

> When I start to write, I ask myself, "What is the quality?" I try to tell the reader what was going on and comment upon the audience's reaction . . . I just want to be one in the audience and tell the readers what my responses were to it.

Critic G believes a critic should not deal with evaluation:

> You have to look at what is done. If the performance didn't have crisp technique and should have, you can comment upon that. If the dancers lack in projection or quality of movement you can talk about that. But you can't place a value judgment by saying, "This isn't good because . . . ." The critic must look at the dance from where it is now.

According to Critic H, "It is not possible to have a laundry list of points to touch upon with each performance when writing about it later." As Critic E talked about the limitations of time on television, Critic H speaks on the issue of space in the publication printing the critique:

> A great deal of what you write depends upon how much space you have in the publication you are writing for. If you only have four inches of space for your criticism, it becomes difficult. But you do it through description, analysis and evaluation.

What tells you that you have just seen a great dance performance?

Local critics. In responding to this question, Critic A says, "You just know it. It is an emotional feeling." Critic B thinks some works immediately convey their greatness, while with others, "You say, 'This is excellent. What is this all about?' and suddenly at a later time it dawns upon you it is a great work . . . It is something inherent in the work. Some works start from a very strong impulse they manage to project immediately and others develop cumulatively."

Critic C cites coherence as the indicator:

> It is when you have a choreographer who is using music the movement fits so beautifully that all the parts are more than the whole and they convey some sort of emotion or illusion to

> the viewer . . . it works. All the parts fit. The piece flows, it keeps your interest. And it provides insight, more than the dance or the dancers. How the material is manipulated is the creativity separating greatness from the lesser.

Critic D measures the greatness of a work by its quality of freshness and interest after repeated viewings and his ability to respond emotionally to it:

> It's my feelings, it's almost a visceral thing. If it's an old work, that's easy, it's pretty much shared by lots of people sitting in the audience. You know you've seen a great interpretation and it's moved you deeply. Everything seems to have fallen into place. Maybe you are seeing new meaning in it, and it's all right there, everything is exploding all at once.
>
> With a new work there is a kind of visceral and kinetic excitement that gets generated which is just undeniable. But there you are on different ground. You might feel that way and write that way and discover your other colleagues and other members of the audience felt very differently. But that's all you've got to go on. I think it's your responsibility to be honest of the fact, for you any way, this seems to be a very exciting work.
>
> I think it sometimes is very hard to judge a great work upon first viewing. I've been mistaken into thinking works that are very exciting are necessarily great. I think the sign of greatness is how a work stands up to repeated viewings. Does it continue to stay fresh and exciting, rich and full of meaning? Developing the ability to see the excitment of the movement in a work and it's capacity for renewed and constantly fresh excitement is difficult. I'm not always sure I have that ability.

Critic E also believes it is the emotional response that identifies a great work:

> It's a gut reaction. It just hits you there. It's incredible how a great work of art hits, then you begin to try to understand why it's great, but first of all, it's an emotional response. Sometimes it's very hard to explain what makes one thing great and another not. Every young artist is looking for what makes one work great and another not, but it's hard to explain.

Critic F supports the subjective response to the dance as the criterion identifying greatness:

> It is really a subjective thing. It is finally an emotional thing. It may be something to do with the satisfaction you have seeing something achieve its own form. There is a certain inherent aesthetic feeling people have which tells you something has satisfactorily achieved its form.
>
> I believe in the playful element of art, and if this person has taken the world and played with it in a way which seems fresh and has played with the elements of her world in such a way that they have combined formally in ways which are new, refreshing, and interesting, this adds to the greatness of the work. But beyond that, it's something that grabs me. At times I am more receptive than others and this affects the way a performance will influence my satisfaction with it.

Critic C ties greatness into a physical experience: "It's the goose bumps, it's the breathing of the person next to you, it's the audience response."

Critic H mentions emotional-intellectual responses and the coherence of the work as criteria for greatness in dance:

> I don't know the best answer to that. I know I've seen them. But I don't know if it's an intellectual satisfaction or an emotional satisfaction, or both or different. It can depend upon the type of performance or work. One kind can produce an intellectual response while another type produces an emotional reaction. The first thing is an emotional feeling at the end that tells you you have just seen a great performance, even if it's the fifteenth performance of "Sleeping Beauty."
>
> If it's a first performance of a new piece of choreography and it is a great performance, you know because it looks right, there is an inevitability to it. When it's over you realize everything fit. And it can be really weird; it need not have a normal structure; everything looks just as it should. If someone has originality and does something quite different, if it has its own internal logic and everything works out and there is nothing extraneous to get in the way of your viewing pleasure. If it uses its elements well, the music was correctly used, not necessarily as Balanchine does, but it makes a bow to the fact it was choreographed on a piece of music and used the piece in a logical way, these elements contribute to greatness.

What is important to you in a great dance performance?

Local critics. Several critics say that the important elements in a great performance include choreography, performance, and intellectual experience of the critic. Critics B, F, and H look at the performing abilities of the dancer. In response to this question, Critic B says, "Performance. A really great dancer creates around (him) a moment of silence that commands the attention which a performer of lesser rank does not do." Critic F talks about the relationship between performance and choreography:

> I think the one thing that has to be good is the performance, because a wonderful performer can carry off very mediocre choreography, and you can have good choreography but ultimately the performance has to be good. Or it has to be what the dance needs, which does not necessarily mean a skillful performance, but it has to be charismatic in some way.

Critic H also mentions charisma, but in relationship to the performance of ballet roles. Interpretation of a role carries weight with Critic H:

> A critic should have seen enough so as to know how people perform the role and to look for aspects of the role and how it is performed. That is part of the sum and substance of what you look for when you say, "He is a good performer, he is a promising Albrecht."

While technical proficiency in performance by the dancers is less important to Critic H, Critic G thinks it is a consideration but not as important as illusion: "It is not only the technical perfection, it is the ethereal quality which is beyond description; it's the essence of beauty, purity, the grace, the romance."

Critic A's answer is "choreography." Critic E expands: "If the choreography is good, then everything else is good, or it should be to

make it a good thing." Critic G mentions choreography along with other elements of importance. When Critic H looks at the choreography in a great performance, he wants to see confidence, craftsmanship and intent: "(These) make up my list of aesthetic concepts which contribute to the making of a great work."

Critics D, G, and H talk about the intellectual experience of the critic. Critic G says, "It's the creation from nothing that makes an impact in my mind and the audience's." Critic D comments:

> I think the first thing we all try to do is relate any experience, including an aesthetic experience, to others we've already had. Really great creative works pull the rug right out from under you. They thrust you into new territories where you simply have not been before imaginatively or emotionally.

Another important factor to Critic H is "what each viewer brings from his own personal experience to the dancing."

Among the other elements the critics mention are coherence, theme and conflict, and an emotional reaction to the dancers. Critic C values coherence as important in a great dance performance:

> When the choreography, the dancing, and the theatrical effects, i.e., music, costume, lighting, set design, etc., all contribute to a greater whole than each can do separately, that is what is important to me in a great performance.

Critic D identifies theme and conflict: "That the work has a theme; when there is a conflict between characters which suggests the work has a dramatic component." Critic H believes a contributing factor is the gut reaction of the viewer to the dancers.

> It's a spirit . . . some people say it's a sexual reaction, or a physical one or something like that, but I can't tell you why I like one dancer and not another. It's not even type, that I like all the petite body types. I know I would be more inclined to think someone I like gave a great performance than someone I

> didn't like. Then it becomes a chicken-and-egg thing, that I like someone because they gave a great performance, or they gave a great performance because I like them. It is probably some of both, but if you try to codify it that would destroy it.

What contributes to making a great dance performance?

Local critics. The local dance critics' responses to this question are summarized best by Critic H:

> It can be anything, it can be everything. It can be a performer, or a performance, an interpretation of a role, the delicate unfolding of a movement style. It can be choreography, the rich delight of theme and variation developed through choreographic skill. It can be the blend of music and dance until individually they are forgotten as each flows perfectly into the other. All these and more can make a moment great. It can be a portion of an evening, a moment of perfection, or the wholeness of the experience.

Critic E echoes this concept: "There are so many things; who knows what it is?" Critic D states, "When all the elements of a work come together to carry out the reason or purpose of the dance and they make something new and fresh, something never before, that's great performance." Critic F implies the same thing when he speaks of memorability of the performance:

> It is also important whether it is memorable, whether it has the staying power. This is not something you can identify, but something remains with you and you remember later.

Critic G is uncertain what makes a great performance:

> It could be choreography, it could be performance, it could be clarity of line, it could be musicality. I don't know, but I know it happens. . . . It's how you feel.

Critic C speaks of performance and choreographic intent; Critic A emphasizes performance; and Critic B says, "The dancing is the prime

thing." The charisma of the dancer contributes to a great performance for Critic F:

> The performer either has it or doesn't and if he doesn't have it, there is not much hope. Everything else can be very good, but you still won't have a great performance.

He goes on to temper this a bit, speaking of the communication that must occur between performer and audience for a great performance:

> I'll modify that a bit and say that there must be some sort of communication between what goes on on stage and the audience. It is a performer and a viewer and what happens alive between these two that makes a really memorable performance.

Critic E also seems to be referring to charisma when he says, "It's a spirit, a burning inner quality that comes out, it's usually something very personal. It's very hard to tell what makes a great dance performance."

Preparation for Writing Dance Criticism

The nine questions of part 3 provide some insight into the suggested preparatory experiences needed to write dance criticism, as found in the literature and as indicated by the local critics.

What type of educational preparation is needed to write dance criticism?

Literature. The general educational needs essential for a dance critic are identified in literature as understanding and knowledge of the art with supporting accomplishments. Denby says the dance critic should have:

> A fund of knowledge about his subject. In theory he needs to know the techniques and the historical achievements of dancing, the various ways people have looked at it and written about it, and finally he needs a working hypothesis of what makes a dance

> hang together and communicate its images so they are remembered. (1968, p. 336)

He adds, "Experience as a dancer and choreographer is an invaluable help to him" (p. 336). Later in the same article he writes:

> A dance critic's education includes dance experience, musical and pictorial experience, a sense of what art in general is about and what people are really like. (pp. 341-342)

Cass speaks about education:

> (The critic) is the dance specialist in our compartmentalized society. By virtue of devoting endless hours of observation and sometimes study in concert halls and studios, he has gained a body of knowledge about the major technical systems of ballet, modern dance, and ethnic dance. He has learned about the historical variations in choreographic approaches and has spoken to artists about their work. Hopefully, he has an interesting mind, honed by a broad orientation in the humanities. (1970, p. 228)

Barnes feels there are some things that cannot be gained through education, but rather must be inherent in the individual:

> Also, and most importantly, there is this question of critical acumen. The ability to criticize, which is an analytic gift, is in some respects like that more glorious synthetic gift, creativity, unlearnable. You have it or you don't. You can sharpen upon on writing skills and critical technique, but nothing can replace the basic ability. (1978, pp. 45-46)

Local critics. The prime concern of the local critics is knowledge of the field. Critic C says, "Know the field you are writing about." Critic E agrees: "You just have to know your subject, you have to be fanatic." Critics D and H feel the critic must know about dance technique. As Critic D says, "The more you know about dance technique the better because you are better able to judge the quality of performance."

Critic H does not think the critic has to be a dancer, but "it would be good to have a knowledge of dance technique."

Critic B believes that a critic should have a thorough dance education; Critic A specifies he should be a dancer and a choreographer:

> Now that doesn't mean just studying dance, that is a mover; but a dancer is one who studies dancing and who really dances, understands what dance is all about. It is not just technique, but one who understands performance, the elements of performance. I also believe a critic must be a choreographer.

And Critic F agrees that the critic should be either a dancer or someone who is involved in an art form.

Critics C, E, and H speak of training the eye for dance criticism. Critic C says, "Develop an eye for seeing dance". Critic E believes that "you have to see everything, and over and over again." "The most important thing is to have seen as much as possible," says Critic H.

Several critics feel that knowledge of the other arts makes a contribution to the eucation of a critic. Critic A feels that "a critic should know about the other arts." Critic F wants the critic to have some practical experience in the arts, preferably participation in the creative process, to "have been actively creative in some art."

The ability to write was identified as important to Critics A, E, and G. Critic A puts it this way:

> About writing skills, a dance critic must be a writer in order to make communication happen. To make a communique with artistic dimension, to have the vocabulary, to structure that vocabulary, in a way which is logical and orderly is an art form. And you must also be able to write fast. That is the most important aspect of writing for a newspaper.

Critic E wants the critic to have studied writing:

> All kinds of writing. I don't think they should study writing criticism. Writing is a skill; I'm not sure it can be taught, but you can learn something of it.

Critic G emphasizes journalistic skills: "I feel you have to be a good clear writer . . . you must have journalistic skills. You must know the language of journalism."

In answering this question, several of the critics indicated a need for formal study. Critics A and D mention aesthetics: "A critic has to have some study of aesthetics, some aesthetic foundation, some framework because that gives you an analytical approach to your work," according to Critic A. Critic D lists area of study and includes aesthetics: "You should be trained in aesthetics, philosophy, literature, music, poetry, dance technique, mathematics, and science." Critic B suggests a thorough education in the humanities. A good liberal arts education is important for good dance criticism in the opinion of Critic F.

Additional points of consideration in the preparation for writing dance criticism include an awareness of the role of dance in culture. Critic F feels this awareness is necessary "to see how dance fits into the culture as a whole and have a sense of cultural history." Critic G says, "You have to be a clear thinker."

Is it important to have a degree from an institution of higher learning?

Literature. Two authors speak on the role of higher education in the preparation for writing dance criticism; both are in favor of it. The Englishman, Brinson, advocates a college education because in the college environment, the future critic will have the opportunity to discuss and debate his opinions with people of like interest.

> The critic is a considerable specialist, needing as much training as a dancer. But unlike dancers critics have nowhere to learn, above all nowhere where their opinions can be subject to debate and counter criticism. This is where the universities could make a contribution because I am not one who believes that critics derive their best schooling from the cut and thrust of many evenings spent watching ballet with other young people in the galleries of theatres. (1963, p. 647)

Aesthetician Carter feels there is an urgent need for colleges and universities to reconstruct their curriculum to include high-quality academic programs for students who want to "study and develop the intellectual aspects of dance through aesthetics, philosophy and theory of dance" (1976, p. 229). The future dance critics, according to Brinson, "will have passed through a university department of music, fine art, literature or theatre arts" (1976, p. 647).

Local critics. The reply of five of the eight local dance critics is no. Critic A expands upon his reply: "But it is important to have a liberal arts background. That does not mean you have to go to college to get it." Critic D suggests a college degree is helpful, while Critic E states that he doesn't have a degree. Critic F points out that most critics do have degrees. Only Critic G says that the critic must have a degree, "You have to be knowledgeable in the arts."

What major in college provides the best educational preparation for critical writing?

Literature. Carter suggests the use of the multidisciplinary approach: "The developing methodologies of aesthetics, philosophy and theory of dance should explore the usefulness of multidisciplinary approaches with theater, music, anthropology, philosophy, and other

disciplines" (1976a, p. 220). Brinson cites departments of music, fine arts, literature, or theatre arts as departments in which to study in preparation for a career in dance criticism (1963, p. 647). Smith recommends, "Ideally, any critic should have a rich background in many disciplines" (1967, p. 82).

Local critics. A liberal arts education is preferred by Critics A, B, and E. Critics C and H feel any major is acceptable. Critics B and D suggest dance history as a major in college. Only Critic A talks about a core of dancing. Other major fields of study in college suggested by the critics include: aesthetics (B), philosophy (D), art history (D), literature (D), and journalism (G).

How important is it that the dance critic be knowledgeable in the historic development of dance?

Literature. Stodelle considers knowledge of dance history valuable because it provides a perspective on the art (1970, p. 33), and Brinson believes critical writers must read critical works of the past to understand the tradition of critical writing in dance history (1963, p. 647).

Local critics. The responses of the dance critics to this question brought forth four points to consider: that dance history provides a perspective and understanding for dance; that it provides a basis for comparison; that it lends credibility to the writing of the critic; and that the importance of history is questionable.

Critic C states:

> It depends . . . if it is for a daily and you are doing a review, the basic things you want to say are what, where, when and did it work. It is not as important in a review for a daily because of lack of space.

Critic A finds that dance history gives him an understanding of the different concepts used by choreographers in their work. Critics B and F say that it gives them a perspective on the tradition of dance and allows them to make comparisons. Critic D feels that "the more you know about dance history, the more it aids your ability to make well-informed analyses and judgements." It provides the basis for understanding for Critic E: "It is the whole foundation. You have to know where everything comes from." Critics F and H think it gives credibility to their writings.

Should a dance critic have dance training to write criticism?

Literature. Most of the authors seem to feel it is not necessary to have dance training to write criticism. Barnes may have said it best: "Myself, I rigorously trained by going not to class but to performance--performance after performance after performance" (1978, p. 44).

Jowitt considers the experience of moving useful:

> Quite a few critics have found that experiencing movement can help you to "see" it more easily. This doesn't mean studying dance necessarily, but in some way feeling qualities like lightness or quickness, by moving in flat planes perhaps or making spiral paths. (1976, p. 207)

Sorell agrees:

> It seems to be a moot question--though often raised--whether the critic should have had some dance training, or will fare better when he once was a dancer or choreographer. It is obvious that the experience of how the body moves and how it feels to move is of great help in sensing a movement quality. (1965, p. 7)

But adds: "Since a vicarious knowledge of technique can be acquired, the non-dancing critic is in no way inferior to the dancer-turned-critic" (1965, p. 7).

Only one writer takes a strong stand for technical training. Leiserach writes, "It may . . . be impossible to disseminate a deeper and truer appreciation of classical ballet to the general public without having the confidence born of technical knowledge" (1963, p. 400).

Local critics. The majority of the local critics indicate a need for dance training for the critic. Critic A speaks of the communicative value of understanding the kinetic experience of dance:

> Kinetic terms are what make it an art form. It is not just a visual art; it is a kinetic art. If you don't have your body sensitized to be able to identify what is happening in front of you in kinetic terms, you are missing a whole layer of communication.

Critic B feels that technical training is a good way to learn the technical vocabulary, but he voices a concern that the writer remember "to write from what it looks like and not the way it feels when you are doing it." Critic D agrees with Critic A and also thinks it would be a good idea for the critic to study choreography. Critic E could not imagine reviewing dance without knowing how it feels. Critic F recommends that the critic have an understanding of the art form through some practical experience in the art as either a dancer or a choreographer. Critic H feels it would be helpful: "If one knew dance technique, one could perceive the patterns more quickly because you would know what steps follow one another."

Critics C and G were not so sure technical knoweldge is needed. "I don't think so. The kinetic sense you feel is in the mind's eye . . . the critic's point of view is determined by his personality and his frame of reference," says Critic C. Critic G says, "A critic could be a

wonderful critic and not have had technique." He favors the study of choreography.

Is there a particular art form more important than others in writing dance criticism?

Literature. Author Todd believes that the dance critic:

> Must also be aware of major trends in the fields of music, painting, design, sculpture, theatre, and literature. All of these sister arts play an integral part in dance. (1962, p. 6)

Leiserach suggests that painting and classical sculpture are important but he also says, "Some detailed knowledge of all the arts since the fifteenth century appears to be necessary" (1963, p. 400). Walter Sorell finds that the critic needs knowledge in all the theatre arts:

> Since ballet as much as modern dance can only be viewed in conjunction with their close relation to music, within the frame of the stage decor and the costumes. Lighting, the use of projections, all this can easily change the quality of the moving body. (1965, p. 6)

Local critics. Music is the most important art form to study in writing criticism, according to the local critics. As Critic H says,

> Music . . . just because almost all choreography uses music. Some of the things that don't, say Twyla Tharp's "Fugue" doesn't use music as a background but uses music as its structure.

Critics E and F give recognition to the importance of music, but add that knowledge in all the arts is invaluable. Critics C and F mention sculpture. The theatre arts are suggested by Critics E and F. Critic A cites architecture: "It is the closest to dance in its design in space, in time, in quality. It is three dimensional." Critic B lists film: "I

think especially since World War II film has influenced choreographers a great deal."

How long should an individual observe theatrical dance performance before beginning to write critically about it?

Literature. Authors Todd and Jessup recommend the viewing of dance over an extended time period. Todd says, "It . . . is the only factor that can provide a sense of perception as well as a set of standards and values for comparison" (1962, p. 6). Jessup points out, "There are no substitutes for experience and exposure as prerequisites for the making of aesthetic judgements" (1970, p. 197). He continues:

> It is not enough for the critic to state simply whether or not a certain thing pleased him, for such a statement cannot be tested or verified. His immediate response to a work of art is always based on prior experience. Therefore, as one's experience as a viewer grows, his response to pieces will change and become more mature and discerning. (1970, p. 197)

Local critics. Each critic has a different opinion on the element of time and the value of seeing a great deal of dance before starting to write about it. Critic H says:

> When I started out I said five years, and I wish that I had. Clive Barnes said ten, and I'm not sure if that's enough. It also makes a difference where you are reviewing dance. It doesn't really matter if you went every night for a whole year because you have to see different companies and be able to compare. So I would say, however long it takes to see each company for three different seasons, whether that would take three or six years, to give you some kind of perspective.

Critic F says, "If you're worried about that, you would never start." And Critic E says, "A lifetime."

Critic D feels that it depends upon for whom you are writing, the type of publication and the audience reading the critical writing.

Critic B believes it is important to see a variety of things, "which can take three, four, five years to get a sense of what is only being performed now." "The more performances you see the better you are," says Critic A. However, Critic A suggests it is possible to understand "what is is all about after seeing one performance." Critic G agrees with this thought: "Yes, you should be exposed to dance, but that doesn't mean that the first time out that you could not write a good review." Critic C's opinion is "not long."

How knowledgeable should a dance critic be about various forms of theatrical dance?

Literature. Leiserach takes a practical approach to this question: "Knowledge of traditional styles is necessary in today's world of theatrical dance because of the various visiting companies" (1963, p. 400). Cass is a bit more abstract in her comments:

> Dance is not a universal language for all cultures and all times. While it may be based on universal human gesture, these gestures have been used and developed into separate styles and languages which require familiarity and study to appreciate.
>
> By study I do not mean taking a technique class, but investigating the culture that produced the style, or analysing such factors as rhythm, elevation, line and myth. One function of the critic is surely to study these factors and appraise his readers of their relevance. (1965, p. 43)

Local critics. With the exception of Critic H, all the local critics feel it is important for the critic to know as much as possible about all forms of dance. Critic A says, "The more you know, the more layers of knowledge you have to bring to your writing." Critic B points out, "Newspaper critics are called upon to review every sort of dance, and therefore the more you know the better off you are." Critic C looks

at the issue in a practical way: "I think you should know other forms because it is the basis for a lot of dancing." Critic D is a bit uncertain in his response: "I can only be vague, as knowledgeable as possible, which would be from the experience of watching dance." Critic E states, "You should have, at least, a smattering of knowledge of every form of dance." "If you love dance, you should see as much as possible," is how Critic F answers the question. Critic G's sense of responsibility influences his response: "You should go above and beyond in the field in which you are lacking in knowledge. It's wrong to write about a form which you don't know about."

Critic H realizes it may not be possible to know everything there is to know about all the theatrical forms of dance and recommends the critic specialize in areas of personal interest:

> You should be as knowledgeable as possible, but what I am trying to say is that I think you would absolutely go mad if you tried to be an expert in absolutely everything. You can't do it. You should realize that in the beginning and take what suits your talents and inclinations and specialize in that.

Is there one aspect of training, education, and experience more important than all others in preparing to write criticism?

Literature. None of the authors in the review of literature address this issue.

Local critics. Critic A believes all is lost if the critic doesn't perceive and can't write. "If you can't perceive what is before you, you can't write; so it is important that the dance critic be able to both perceive and to write." Critic B refers to seeing in his answer. Critic C agrees with Critics A and B. He finds it essential that the critic see a lot of dance, have an interest in writing, and develop an eye for seeing.

Critic D finds it a question of balance between education, experience, and the sensitive, responsive qualities of the individual. Critic E talks about "seeing, writing, knowing what you see, knowing your subject, and then knowing how to write about it." Critic G votes for an analytical mind:

> The ability to put things into perspective, to be able to sort it out. To be able to gather in all the spectacle before you and then from the historical point of view sort it out, from the musical, from all the art forms, and somehow mush them about in the head and then being able to come up with a statement, a clear thinking paragraph which can relate what you saw, how the audience responded, some judgment value if they feel it is important, to be able to sort it out with an analytical mind is important.

Critics F and H say the critic must be able to write. Critic F feels there are just too many elements to say what is the most important. Critic H also says there is nothing more important:

> Everything you are is important. And everything that you are contributes to the way you write . . . . It makes no matter what you know about music, art, dance, everything else; if you can't write then you can't communicate and then you're not a critic. You're not doing your job correctly.

The data gathered in this chapter should be interpreted with care. The responses given to each question in each of the three parts of the focused interview schedule from literature and the local dance critics contain only the essential elements from the materials applicable to each question and do not deal with all of the ramifications involved.

A synopsis of the responses to each question of the focused interview schedule and a discussion of some of the materials uncovered through

this research project, which involves the gathering of data from both the written word and the spoken word, are found in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Summary

The investigation describes the components of dance criticism and the aesthetic concepts guiding the viewing of theatrical dance performance and identifies certain aspects of education, experience, or training needed to write dance criticism. The data base for this study came from two sources. Generally speaking, half of the materials were gathered through a search of literature and the rest by interviews with local dance critics.

These included eight dance critics of the Washington, D.C.-Baltimore metropolitan area, who wrote dance criticism for local publications. All were locally recognized dance critics who received payment for their critical writing.

The selection of materials for the study taken from literature was based upon the publication dates, 1960 to 1979. The materials were located in nationally available serials or books and were written by persons who were nationally recognized for their association with dance.

The data obtained from the literary search was used to develop a focused interview schedule. Open-response questions were designed to encourage the respondente to discuss his opinions on the issues under discussion. The primary research tool was an in-depth, semistructured interview.

A pilot study was conducted with four local dance critics to test the effectiveness of the focused interview schedule. Modifications of the original schedule were made on the basis of the responses of the critics to the questions and their evaluations and suggestions regarding the interview procedures.

The final focused interview schedule was used for a series of private interviews with eight local dance critics over a span of two months. These interviews were audiotaped, and the tapes were transcribed and formed a part of the data base.

Replies to each question in the three parts of the focused interview schedule were stated from the materials gathered in the literature review and from the answers of the local dance critics. The first section of the research project was designed to obtain information regarding what dance criticism is, why it is written, what the responsibilities of a dance critic are, what the important concerns of dance criticism are, and whether or not writing dance criticism is an art.

In the search through literature, dance criticism was considered to be writing about dance to convey the perceptual activity of the critic about theatrical dance performance. It was also considered as writing about dance to provoke some mental activity within the reader regarding the dance event. Dance criticism was also identified with history because it is a record of the dance event.

The authors said the purpose of writing dance criticism was to stimulate the seeing and thinking processes of the reader and to evoke the image of the dance in the mind of the reader. The intent of writing criticism was seen as assisting the reader in understanding theatrical

dance performance. Some authors thought the purpose of dance criticism was to preserve a record of the dance event for posterity. Others said there was a purpose for dance criticism within the framework of the culture. A few authors thought dance criticism had the purpose of serving as a market guide for the reader.

Responsibilities identified from literature included: (a) describing and understanding the work, (b) stimulating the reader's perceptual abilities, (c) pointing out the historic and cultural implications of work, (d) evaluating and judging, (e) being objective or subjective in relationships with the artist and the work, and (f) selling the art form.

The important concerns of dance criticism include (a) description, (b) analysis, (c) evaluation, and (d) judgment. The majority of the authors cited considered dance criticism an art form. They felt only a poet had the skills and talent to translate the dance performance into verbal images worthy of the movement experience. Only one author, Cass, took a firm stand against this opinion.

The local critics believed dance criticism was describing and analyzing the theatrical dance performance. Some mentioned dance criticism as writing about dance; others indicated it was looking and thinking, i.e., perception. Several spoke about sharing their thinking processes with the reader. A few mentioned critical writing as education or reporting.

The local critics indicated that the purpose of dance criticism was to provide the reader with a sense of what happened at the dance event, to express the feeling of the occurrence, and to share their perceptions of the performance with the reader.

Critics indicated that they write in order to understand the event and to explore for themselves their own thoughts and feelings about it. Some wrote because of a need to write or to explore the challenge of writing about dance. One critic said his purpose in writing dance criticism was to share his love of dance with others. Another critic said his intention was to make a record of the event and sometimes to teach.

Local critics ranked their responsibilities as follows: (a) describing and understanding the art, (b) educating, (c) evaluating fairly and honestly, (d) realizing the historic implications of the event, (e) contributing to the improvement of the art, and (f) selling the art. The local critics, in discussing the concerns of dance criticism, indicated their preference for analysis and description. Only a few mentioned evaluation and judgment.

A majority of the critics indicated that the writing of dance criticism was an art. They qualified their opinions, however, by saying that most existing dance criticism was not an art, and its becoming an art depended upon who was doing the writing. A few critics did not consider the writing of dance criticism an art.

The next part of this study was directed towards understanding the place of aesthetics in the process of writing dance criticism. The first two questions were directly related; the concerns covered the identification of aesthetic concepts and the application of aesthetic concepts to critical writing. The last three questions emphasized performance or the theatrical experience of dance. These questions were to provide the local critics with additional opportunity to expand their criteria of

aesthetics and to give additional insight into their aesthetic base for writing dance criticism.

The articles found through the literature search indicated that concepts of aesthetics serve as guides to thinking and writing about theatrical dance performance. The authors cited the following aesthetic criteria (a) communicative value, (b) composition, (c) dynamic image, (d) expression, (e) form, (f) illusion, (g) line, (h) movement, (i) proportion, (j) rhythm, (k) shape, (l) space-time-force (energy, dynamics) elements, (m) structure, (n) style, (o) symbolic meaning, (p) technical proficiency, and (q) virtual power of the work. Literature indicated that aesthetic concepts in dance criticism are used to bring about greater appreciation, perception, and understanding of the art form.

The local critics indicated that the concepts of aesthetics that served to guide their viewing included (a) choreographic intent, (b) coherence, (c) craftsmanship in choreography, (d) expression, (e) form, (f) function, (g) insight into life, (h) role interpretation, (i) technical proficiency, and (j) use of the body. They said they use their concepts in describing and analyzing the performance for their readers, to provide a point of view for their writing, and to share their understandings and experiences of the performance with their readers.

The local critics said they measure the greatness of a dance performance by (a) their emotional response to the event, (b) the coherence of the work, (c) their intellectual response to the work, or (d) finding something new within the experience of viewing the work. Most of them measured the greatness of a theatrical dance performance by the quality of the choreography and the technical proficiency of the dance

performance. Additional criteria cited were (a) charisma, (b) coherence, (c) conflict, (d) emotional response to the dancers, (e) illusion, (f) intellectual experience, and (g) memorableness of the event. They were hesitant to analyze a theatrical dance performance to identify that which made it great. The concept of greatness was summed by some of the critics with the statements that it resided within anything or everything in the dance experience. Again, as in the responses to the previous question, technical capability of the dancers, coherence of the work, and charisma in performance were cited as important elements along with the emotional response of the critic and the memorability of the event.

The last part of the study was concerned with the background experiences needed to write dance criticism. It was interesting to note that it was possible to find material in the literature search to answer each of the questions except the last. Extensive materials did not exist, but at least one source was located for each question.

The nine questions making up this part dealt with (a) educational preparation of the critic, (b) the need for a degree from an institution of higher learning, (c) the best major in college, (d) the need to be knowledgeable in history of dance, (e) the critic's need to have dance training, (f) the study of what art form contributes most to the writing of dance criticism, (g) the length of time one should look at dance before writing criticism, (h) the need to be knowledgeable in various forms of theatrical dance, and (i) the one aspect of training, education, and experience most important to the writing of dance criticism.

The articles found through the literary search indicated that educational preparation for writing dance criticisms should include (a) knowledge of the field, (b) knowledge of choreographic approaches, (c) a working hypothesis about dance, (d) the ability to be critical, and (e) experience as a dancer, a choreographer, or both. Only a few authors supported the concept of a college education for critics. Eight disciplines of study were suggested (a) aesthetics, (b) anthropology, (c) dance theory, (d) fine arts, (e) literature, (f) music, (g) philosophy, and (h) theatre. The authors felt that knowledge in the historic development of dance was invaluable to the writing of dance criticism. One author believed that dance training added something to the ability of the dance critic to write. Several felt that movement experiences were useful and one felt that it was not necessary at all. The arts most important to the writing of dance criticism included design, literature, and the theatre arts. The authors felt that the ability of the critic to discern aspects of performance improved with time and the number of viewings. Knowledge of the various forms of theatrical dance found expression in two points of view: One author thought a dance critic should know about the various forms because of the need of the critic to understand what he was seeing; the other author believed it was important to be familiar with the ethnic forms of theatrical dance because of the crucial need to write about them.

The dance critics cited knowledge of the field and dance training as important educational experiences. They also believed knowledge of the other arts, writing skills, and the ability to "see" dance were valuable. In addition, (a) aesthetic study, (b) choreographic experience, (c)

knowledge of dance and its culture, (d) a liberal arts and humanities education, and (e) the ability to think analytically were listed. The majority of the local critics did not think it was necessary to have a degree from an institution of higher learning to write dance criticism. Degrees in college recommended by the dance critics included (a) aesthetics, (b) art history, (c) dance, (d) journalism, (e) liberal arts, (f) literature, (g) philosophy, and (h) the study of any discipline. The critics considered knowledge of the historic development of dance invaluable to writing dance criticism. The majority of the local critics said technical study of dance was important or useful. Several thought it was not necessary in order to write dance criticism, and a few suggested that the critic study choreography. The art forms important to writing included those mentioned by the authors plus architecture, film, and all arts. Most of the critics agreed with the authors regarding the importance of time in discerning various aspects of performance, but several felt time was an unimportant factor in determining the capability of an individual to write dance criticism. The majority of the local critics felt it was necessary to know as much as possible about all forms of dance. A suggestion was made that a critic specialize in one or two forms of theatrical dance. The question regarding the most important aspect of training was answered only by the local critics. They identified the most important element need to write dance criticism as the ability to write and to perceive or see dance.

Discussion

It is possible to draw some generalizations based on certain relationships between the data gathered from the literature and that gathered

from the interviews with local dance critics. In general, there is agreement to be found regarding the question, What is dance criticism? Both data sources consider dance criticism writing in a descriptive or analytical manner for the purpose of informing the reader or reporting on the performance. There is less agreement on the question, Why write dance criticism? The local critics responded in a personal way, emphasizing their need to write, their desire to identify and understand their experience, and their love for dance. The authors wrote about the need to convey the cultural implications of the dance event, to report upon the occasion, and to sell the dance event.

There were five points held in common between the data sources regarding the responsibilities of the critic. These included (a) writing descriptively about the dance event to improve the understanding of the art form by the reader, (b) to point out cultural and historic implications of the work, (c) to sell the art to the reader, (d) to make comments contributory to the improvement of the art, and (e) to maintain a personal relationship with the artist. To the question, What is the important concern of dance criticism--description, analysis, or evaluation?, the authors and the local critics felt description and analysis were most important. When asked if writing dance criticism is an art, both sources answered in the affirmative.

Little agreement seems to exist in the responses to the question on aesthetic concepts. There were only three points held in common between the two data sources: technical proficiency in dancing, expressiveness in either dancing or choreography, and clarity of form in the choreographic structure. When the various aesthetic criteria were viewed,

there seemed to be a general trend toward locating the aesthetic criteria in craft of choreography for both the authors and the local dance critics. The last comparison between literary sources and the interview responses of the critics was to the application of aesthetic concepts to the writing of dance criticism. Both sources indicated the application of these concepts was for the purpose of sharing the perception of the critic and to increase the understanding of the event by the reader. The dance critics also applied their aesthetic concepts in the processes of writing the description and analysis of the dance performance. The last three questions on dance aesthetics related to the identification of factors which identify a dance work as great were confined to the interview responses of the local critics. The two aesthetic concepts that reappear in the responses were coherence and emotional response. The critics considered coherence of prime importance. Also they valued their emotional response as a gauge of greatness. It can be said the responses of the local critics to the last three questions placed the aesthetic guidelines on the technical aspects of dancing, the choreography craft of the artist, or the cohesive totality of the theatrical dance performance. Some of the dance critics stated a preference for allowing the choreographic work to establish its own aesthetic criteria by which it should be discussed. The dance critics tried to respond to each theatrical experience freshly with no preconceived opinions as to what the work was, thus leaving themselves open to the influences of the moment.

In consideration of the background recommended, issues for writing dance criticism, of training, education or experience vital to the development of critical writing skills were identified. Although the

literary search contributed somewhat to the understanding of this part of the research project, the responses of the local dance critics provided the greatest amount of information. Their recommendations in relating to their own personal backgrounds are compared below.

In regard to the educational background of the critic, the local critics generally believe that a degree from an institution of higher learning was not necessary, but it was important to be trained in dance and choreography. The information on the background of the local critics taken from the Dance Critics Information form indicated that all but one of the local critics have degrees from institutions of higher learning (Appendix F). The undergraduate majors suggested by the critics as appropriate for the educational preparation of a dance critic were as varied as their own college backgrounds.

All of the local dance critics believed an understanding of the historic development of dance was valuable in writing dance criticism. Their responses to the issues on the Dance Critics Information form indicated they wished they had a greater knowledge of the historic development of dance. They identified this as a lack in their preparation for writing dance criticism.

All of the dance critics considered dance training important to writing dance criticism, and the information form indicated they all had studied dance technique at some time in their careers; one of them majored in dance in college. Some considered that studio training in dance was sufficient to meet the needs of the dance writer.

The dance critics indicated in their answers to questions on aesthetics that most of the criteria they used to guide their viewing of

theatrical dance came from choreographic principles, yet none of them cited choreography as an important art form to study.

The thoughts of the critics on the importance of watching dance pointed out their awareness that the amount of time spent viewing dance is related to the ability of the dance critic to perceive and to become knowledgeable in style and form. They also thought it possible for a person to see one performance and write a critique that fulfilled the criteria of dance criticism.

In relation to the importance of various forms of theatrical dance, the critics indicated they were often required but ill prepared to write about ethnic forms of dance. Holding such conditions in mind, they recommended that it was best to know as much as possible about all forms of theatrical dance.

It was interesting to observe the contrast between the local dance critics' responses to two questions that were similar in intent. The Dance Critics Information form asked the critics to identify the one aspect of their training, education, or experience that contributed to their ability to write dance criticism. In their answers, they listed such things as (a) love for dance, (b) seeing theatrical dance performance, (c) a Ph.D. in criticism, (d) exposure to dance, and (e) reading about dance, but in responding to the interview question, "Is there one aspect of training, education, and experience more important than all others in preparing to write criticism?" their responses focused on the ability to write and the ability to perceive dance. It seems that the local dance critics do not consider their own ability to perceive and to write as important as other things, yet identify it as important for others.

It was hoped when this project was undertaken that an aesthetic base for the writing of dance criticism would be discovered. This proved not to be the case. Reasons for this may exist in the diversity of dance forms currently found in theatrical dance or in the backgrounds of the local dance critics. It is a fact that only five out of the eight local dance critics had an educational experience in aesthetics and three out of the five identified that experience as a course in art aesthetics. It is possible to say that the majority of dance critics have not studied, within the framework of an educational institution, dance aesthetics. It may be explained by the educational background of the dance critics; only one out of the eight had an undergraduate education in dance. The rest studied a wide variety of undergraduate majors: biology, psychology, English literature, philosophy, languages, and American studies.

Another factor that may have influenced the findings of this study is the distinction to be found between the recommendations of the authors of the literary sources and the local critics. The authors who spoke of the aesthetic base for their critical writings put forth their ideas through the written word. Writing always provides the author with the opportunity to consider the implication of the statement and to rework the information in support of the concept. The local critics were required to speak extemporaneously on the subject. If given an opportunity to reconsider their replies, they may have changed their responses.

Still another reason for the differences between the literary statements and the responses of the local critics to the questions of the focused interview schedule may be found in the distinction between the ideal and the reality of writing dance criticism on an everyday basis.

Most practicing dance critics writing for local newspapers have very little time betwen the end of the evening's performance and the newspaper's deadline in which to write their articles. With limited time, sacrifices are made in areas that, ideally, the critic would like to attend to but cannot under the circumstances. Another influence is the element of space. Frequently newspapers critics are told by their editors that they have four inches of space to fill. Little can be written in such a space besides the facts about the event. No true analysis or evaluation is possible, for these require explanation and explanation requires both time and space.

In reference to the procedures used to obtain data in this research project, it was concluded that, irrespective of the many warnings against the use of an interview by an amateur researcher, it was one of the best methods by which such an individual could obtain information because the researcher has control over the situation and could probe extensively for answers where necessary. Another advantage of such a tool was the immediate feedback given to the researcher about the instrument. If the questions or interview procedures were not functioning effectively, this was known immediately.

The two sources of information used in this research project served the intent of the project well. The local dance critics were generous with their time and responses to the focused interview schedule and exhibited a lively interest in the results of the project. Their answers demonstrated a greater ease in dealing with questions related to the procedures of writing criticism than in the discussion of the aesthetic elements guiding the viewing of theatrical dance. It was concluded that

the responses of the local dance critics to the questions of the focused interview schedule adequately provided the necessary materials to answer the questions posed by this undertaking.

The literary sources were adequate though not as plentiful as was hoped. As can be noted by a review of the titles listed in the bibliography, there were many more articles written on the subject of dance criticism than there were on dance aesthetics. Even so, there were enough materials found through the literature search to answer adequately the questions posed by the research problem.

In reviewing the material of this project, it is the opinion of the researcher that if each question is dealt with separately in each of the three sections of the focused interview schedule, a distinct difference exists between the literature and the dance critics' responses. But if generalities are sought regarding the major areas of concern there is a certain amount of overlapping in the answers. The primary difference in the materials exists in the number of authors represented by the literature in contrast to that of the local dance critics. It is possible that if material had been taken from an equal number of authors and critics, information would not have been so weighted on the side of the authors. However, for the stated intents and purposes of this study, the sought-for information and answers were forthcoming in sufficient amounts to characterize and compare authors and critics.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the intent of this research project to delve into some aspects of dance criticism and dance aesthetics as they are used by dance critics in writing about theatrical dance performance.

Conclusions

The following conclusions regarding dance criticism were drawn from the sample of data gathered from the literature and through interviews with local dance critics and seem justified within the limtiations of this study.

1. The intent and purpose of dance criticism and the responsibilities of the dance critic as indicated in literature are to stimulate the seeing and thinking processes of the reader, assist the reader in understanding the theatrical dance performance, preserve a record of the dance event, and serve as a market guide for the reader.
2. The intent and purpose of dance criticism and the responsibilities of the dance critic as indicated by the local dance critics are to describe and analyze the theatrical dance performance, share the critic's thinking processes with the reader, provide the reader with a sense of the dance event, evaluate the event fairly and honestly, realize the historic implications of the dance event, contribute to the improvement of the art, and market the dance performance.

3. The aesthetic concepts indicated by literature on dance criticism as guidelines for viewing theatrical dance are used to bring about greater appreciation, perception, and understanding of the art form. These concepts are (a) communicative value, (b) composition, (c) dynamic image, (d) expression, (e) form, (f) illusion, (g) line, (h) movement, (i) proportion, (j) rhythm, (k) shape, (l) space-time-force (energy, dynamics) elements, (m) structure, (n) style, (o) symbolic meaning, (p) technical proficiency, and (q) virtual power of the work.
4. The aesthetic concepts indicated by the local dance critics as guidelines for viewing theatrical dance are used to describe and analyze the performance for their readers, to provide a point of view for their writings, and to share their understanding and experience of the event with the reader. These concepts are (a) choreographic intent, (b) coherence, (c) craftsmanship in choreography, (d) expression, (e) form, (f) function, (g) insight into life, (h) role interpretation, (i) technical proficiency, and (j) use of the body.
5. The type of background recommended in literature as needed to write dance criticism included (a) a knowledge of the subject matter, (b) experience as a dancer and choreographer, (c) college education, (d) knowledge of the major trends in the other art fields, (e) spending of a certain amount of time observing the art before writing about it, and (f) knowledge of all the forms of theatrical dance. The type of background recommended by the local dance critics as needed to write dance

criticism included (a) training in dance and choreography, (b) knowledge of dance history, (c) awareness of all forms of theatrical dance including the ethnic forms, and (d) ability to perceive and to write.

Implications

This project is considered to be only a beginning of the study of dance criticism and the role of aesthetics in viewing and writing about theatrical dance performance. Even so, there are certain implications to be drawn from such a study.

There is a need to clarify what dance criticism is, the reasons for writing it and the responsibilities of the dance critics, to reduce some of the misconceptions regarding the intent and purpose of critical writing and to ensure that those who are beginning to participate in criticism thoroughly understand the role of the activity. Clarification could lead to the establishment of programs of study in the processes of critical writing for dance in institutions of higher learning.

There are benefits to be derived from the identification of the aesthetic concepts guiding the viewing of theatrical dance performance by dance critics. It is possible that if these elements were clearly identified, an improvement would be realized in the understanding of the art by the reading public. Open and frequent discussions of the criteria on which a critic bases his writings regarding the theatrical dance could lead the reader to an understanding of what it was the public was seeing or perceiving within a dance event. The identification of the aesthetic principles guiding the critical processes of theatrical dance by critics could lead to an improvement of the creative processes by

young choreographers and a greater understanding of the requirements of performance by beginning professional dancers. A known and accepted base for discussion about dance as an art form could lead to an improvement in the critical writing about it.

To search out those aspects of education, training, or experience that contribute to the development of an ability to write dance criticism could lead to the development of better prepared dance critics. Young persons interested in pursuing a career as a dance critic would have guidelines to assist in the development of their personal skills. Institutions of higher learning might follow the guidelines when establishing programs of study in dance criticism.

Organizations interested in the development and improvement of dance criticism could derive benefit from the data of a study such as this in the establishment of guidelines and standards for criticism.

Recommendations

Currently there is a great deal of activity in writing about dance. There is a tremendous boom in books about dance, and more people are writing critically about dance than ever before. Dance criticism and the role of aesthetics in writing dance criticism have been seriously neglected by advanced students in dance research as supported by the review of literature. It is with this in mind that the following recommendations are made that:

1. A replication of this study be conducted with nationally recognized dance critics.

2. A longitudinal study of the writings of local dance critics be undertaken to identify the aesthetic criteria functioning in their critical writings.
3. A longitudinal study of the critical writing of nationally recognized dance critics be conducted to identify the aesthetic criteria functioning in their writings.
4. Studies be undertaken leading to the identification of aesthetic concepts functioning in the various forms of theatrical dance, i.e., ballet, modern and ethnic.
5. Institutions of higher learning establish programs of study in dance criticism and dance aesthetics.

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APPENDIX A: ORIGINAL FOCUSED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (PILOT STUDY)

Part 1. Critic's responsibilities to his readership.

1. What do you consider to be your responsibilities to your readership?
2. What do you consider to be your responsibilities to the art form?
3. How important is it to provide the reader with a description of the performance?
4. Is it necessary to make an analysis of the performance?
5. Is it necessary to evaluate the performance?

Part 2. Aesthetic concepts guiding critical writing.

1. Four aesthetic concepts guiding critical writing in dance are: (1) style, (2) form, (3) expression, and (4) symbolic meaning.
   a. What do these terms mean to you?
   b. What components of dance constitute each of these terms in your considered opinion?
2. How do you feel these terms apply to:
   a. Choreography?
   b. Performance?
   c. Performer?
   d. Audio-visual spectacle?
   e. Viewer?

3. Do you feel that these four terms identify your personal aesthetic concepts when viewing and writing about dance?

Part 3. Critic's aesthetic concepts.

1. Are there are other aesthetic concepts that you use which are not included in these four aesthetic concepts?
2. What are they?
3. How do they apply to:
   a. Choreography?
   b. Performance?
   c. Performer?
   d. Audio-visual spectacle?
   e. Viewer?

Part 4. Preparation for writing dance criticism.

1. What type of educational prepartion do you feel is needed to write dance criticism?
2. Is it important to have a degree from an institution of higher learning?
3. What major in college provides the best educational preparation for critical writing?
4. How important is it that the dance critic be knowledgeable in the historic development of dance?
5. What role does dance history take in critical writing?
6. Should a dance critic have dance training to write criticism? Why?
7. Is it important for the dance critic to be knowledgeable in other art forms?

8. Is there a particular art form more important than the others in writing dance criticism?
9. How long should an individual watch dance before beginning to write about it?
10. How knowledgeable should a dance critic be about the various forms of theatrical dance?
11. Is there one aspect of training, education and experience which is more important than all the others in preparing an individual for writing criticism?

APPENDIX B: REVISED FOCUSED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Part 1. Dance Criticism.

1. What is dance criticism?
2. What is the purpose of dance criticism?
3. What are the responsibilities of a dance critic?
4. What is the important concern of dance criticism, description, analysis or evaluation?
5. Is writing dance criticism an art?

Part 2. Aesthetic Concepts.

1. Can you identify the aesthetic concepts guiding your viewing of theatrical dance performance?
2. How do you apply these to the writing of dance criticism?
3. What tells you that you have just seen a great dance performance?
4. What is important to you in a great dance performance?
5. What contributes to making a great dance performance?

Part 3. Background for Writing Dance Criticism.

1. What type of educational preparation do you feel is needed to write dance criticism?
2. Is it important to have a degree from an institution of higher learning?
3. What major in college provides the best educational preparation for critical writing?

4. How important is it that the dance critic be knowledgeable in the historic development of dance?
5. Should a dance critic have dance training to write criticism?
6. Is there a particular art form more important than others in writing dance criticism?
7. How long should an individual observe theatrical dance performance before beginning to write critically about it?
8. How knowledgeable should a dance critic be about various forms of theatrical dance?
9. Is there one aspect of training, education and experience more important than all others in preparing to write criticism?

APPENDIX C: LOCAL DANCE CRITICS

This is the list of local dance critics from which the participants of the study were drawn.

Chrystelle Bond - Baltimore Sun

Ginna Browne - Columbian Flyer

Zelda Cameron - Baltimore Sun

Noel Gillespie - After Dark

George Jackson - Washington Post

Carolyn Kellerman - Columbian Flyer

Alan M. Kriegsman - Washington Post

Sali Ann Kriegsman - Washington Post

Jean Beatty Lewis - Radio Station WGMS

Jan Murray - Critic's Place, Baltimore T.V., channel 53

Jean Nordhaus - Washington Review of the Arts

Florence Pennella - Unicorn Times, Washington Star

Alexandra Tomalonis - Washington Post

Anne Marie Welsh - Washington Star

APPENDIX D: HUMAN SUBJECTS INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I understand that the purpose of this study is to learn more about dance criticism.

I confirm that my participation as a subject is entirely voluntary. No coercion of any kind has been used to obtain my cooperation.

I understand that I may withdraw my consent and terminate my participation at any time during the investigation.

I have been informed of the procedures that will be used in the study and understand what will be required of me as a subject.

I understand that all of my responses, written or oral, will remain completely anonymous.

I release all of my responses, written or oral, to Nancy Diers Johnson for use in her study.

I wish to give my cooperation as a subject.

_____

_____
date

APPENDIX E: DANCE CRITIC INFORMATION FORM

Do you have a degree from an institution of higher learning?

Yes ___ No ___

What was your major in undergraduate school? _____

Have you ever studied dance technique?

Yes ___ No ___

What type of dance technique did you study? _____

How long a time period did you study? _____

What is your favorite form of theatrical dance to review?

Ballet ___ Modern ___ Ethnic ___ Others _____

What education/experience/preparation contributed to your capability to write dance criticism?

_____

What do you feel you lack in preparation for writing dance criticism?

_____

Have you ever participated in either formal or informal study of aesthetics?

Yes ___ No ___

What kind of educational experience was it?

APPENDIX F: COMPILATION OF INFORMATION TAKEN FROM THE DANCE CRITICS INFORMATION FORMS

1. Do you have a degree from an institution of higher learning?

A.	Yes	E.	No
B.	Yes	F.	Yes
C.	Yes	G.	Yes
D.	Yes	H.	Yes

2. What was your major in undergraduate school?

A.	Dance	E.	
B.	Biology	F.	Philosophy
C.	Psychology	G.	Languages
D.	English Literature	H.	American Studies

3. Have you ever studied dance technique?

A.	Yes	E.	Yes
B.	Yes	F.	Yes
C.	Yes	G.	Yes
D.	Yes	H.	Yes

4. What type of dance technique did you study?

A. Modern, ballet and jazz

B. Ballet

C. Ballet, modern jazz, East European folk

D. Modern, ballet

E. Ballet, modern, all types

F. Duncan, ballet, modern

G. Ballet, modern

H. Modern

5. For how long a time period did you study dancing?

A. 32 years

B. 10 years

C. 10 years

D. 18 years

E. Since the age of three

F. 20 years

G. 32 years

H. 1 semester in college

6. What is your favorite form of theatrical dance to review?

Ballet 6

Modern 6

Ethnic 1

Others 1

7. What education/experience/preparation contributed to your capability to write dance criticism?

A. Love of dance.

B. Seeing, reading, talking about taking courses in dance.

C. Seeing dance performances with George Gelles.

D. Ph.D. in Criticism, aesthetics, art criticism.

E. Exposure to ballet.

F. Life, being a poet, writer.

G. Love of dance, seeing dance.

H. Reading criticism and seeing dance performances (ballet).

8. What do you feel you lack in preparation for writing dance criticism?

A. I would like to know more about the other arts.

B. Time, knowledge about ethnic forms of dance.

C. European travel to learn about the history of theatrical dance there.

D. Not seeing the early development of modern dance in the United States. Not seeing the modern dance performances that made history during the 30s and 40s.

E. Ease of writing.

F. I wish I had seen more dance in order to develop a broader base for comparison.

G. Journalistic skills in writing.

H. Not having seen enough, feeling a lack of knowledge in dance technique and music.

9. Have you ever participated in either formal or informal study of aesthetics?

A. Yes	E. No
B. Yes	F. No
C. Yes	G. No
D. Yes	H. Yes

10. What kind of educational experience was it?

A. Graduate work in art aesthetics.

B. Courses in art aesthetics at the University of Chicago

C. One course in graduate school

D. Graduate work in art aesthetics

E.

F.

G.

H. Graduate course in college.