Critical Reconsiderations of Dance Media Archives: The Case of the New York Public Library's Jerome Robbins Dance Division

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I. Introduction

This study aims to provide critical reconsiderations of dance media archives, focusing on the case of the New York Public Library's Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Although dance preservation has become one of the most pressing issues of the dance field, not only in Korea but also worldwide, this study's purpose is neither to exert the necessity of dance preservation nor to explore the best methodology to document dance. Instead, examining the discursive nature and its ensuing polemics of dance preservation centered on media, it aims to critically ponder over political underpinnings of dance media archives and their implications on history, knowledge, and dance.

In the recent a few years in the Korean dance field, much spotlight has been

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shed on the need of dance archives, some of which bore fruits in various formats and institutions. For instance, in addition to the government-sponsored performing arts archives, such as Arko Arts Library and Information Center (established in 1979) as part of the Korean National Archive of the Arts and the Performing Arts Museum of Korea at the National Theater of Korea (established in 2010), there also emerged small-scale, private-funded, dance-focused archives such as Yeonnakjae (2006) and the Korean Dance Resource Center (2007). Also, special events such as the international conference "Archiving Dance Heritage: Emerging Issues from the World Dance Archives," sponsored by the Korea Society for Dance Documentation and held in May, 2008, prove the earnest interests in dance archive.

Along with these newly established dance archives and related projects, academic researches and articles poured out on dance archive. For instance, Eun Yong Jung and Hyun Ju Choi (2010) argues that a dance archive should function as a multiplex, compound cultural space and that database should be set up to cover all the materials linked to dance and its related areas.[1] While Jung and Choi discussed rather broadly and theoretically the significance and trends of dance archives, small but invigorating groups of scholars discussed more specific and practical aspects of ongoing projects of emerging dance and performing arts archives in which they actively participated. Si Hyun Yoo, Hye Kyung Kwon, Hyun Joo Kim and Hae Ree Choi (2009) discussed the issue of classification found in their project of systemizing a dancer's personal collection,[2] while Ho Shin Lee (2007) introduced the characteristics and

1) Eun Yong Jung, Hyun Ju Choi(2010), A Study on the Effective Construction of Dance Archives and the Relevant Trend, *Journal of Sports and Leisure Studies* 40(1), pp. 11-20.
2) Si Hyun Yoo, Hye Kyung Kwon, Hyun Joo Kim, Hae Ree Choi(2009), A Study on the Classification System of Dance Materials in the DB Building of a Dancer's Kim Cheon-Heung Private Collection, *the Korean Journal of Dance Documentation* 17, pp. 117-144.
3) Ho Sin Lee(2007), A Study on Oral History Project on Korean Modern and Contemporary Arts, *the Korean Journal of Dance Documentation* 13, pp. 105-31.

issues of the ongoing oral history project at the Arko Arts Library and Information Center.[3] In sum, observing the nascent field of dance archive, Korean dance scholars' attention is generally focused on the necessity and function of dance archive. In other words, most discussions are concentrated on either exerting the necessity of establishing dance archives or exploring methodological strategies to better collect and preserve historical artifacts.

Although welcoming this recent interest in dance archives, I also observe that critical considerations on their discursive implications are less prominent in it. As I discussed in my previous study,[4] dance preservation, although becoming one of the biggest concerns of the dance field, always entails the political issues of what, how, and why dance should be preserved. In the same vein, dance archive is also entangled with the issues of for whom, and for what certain aspects of dance is documented and protected as "heritage." Then, what seems urgent to the emerging field of dance archives in the Korean dance field is a more critical reconsideration of archives itself:

> [A]rchives do not simply arrive or emerge fully formed; nor are they innocent of struggles for power in either their creation or their interpretive application....all archives come into being in and as history as a result of specific political, cultural, and socioeconomic pressures–pressures which leaves traces and which render archives themselves artifacts of history.[5]

Attempting to reconsider dance archives as "artifacts of history," this study particularly analyzes the genealogy and curatorial vision of the New York Public Library (NYPL)'s Jerome Robbins Dance Division (Dance Division).[6] Having started as a part of a music collection of the NYPL in 1935 and

4) Ok Hee Jeong(2010), The Babel of Dance Literacy: Reflections on the Heterogeneity of Dance Notations in Mid-twentieth Century North America, *the Korean Journal of Dance Studies* 31(Fall), pp. 137-152.

5) Antoinette Burton(2005), Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories, *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, p. 6.

6) The Dance Collection was renamed as the Jerome Robbins Dance Division in 1998. In this study, I will refer to the Dance Collection as the current title of the Dance Division.

becoming an independent division in 1944 with a handful of materials, the NYPL's Dance Division quickly expanded its collection. Today, the Dance Division hold invincible prestige in the dance field, as it proudly declares, "the largest and most comprehensive archive in the world devoted to the documentation of dance… part archive, part film production center, and part consulting service to the professional dance community."[7] Considering that the Dance Division's current curator Jan Schmidt presented at the above-mentioned international conference held in Korea in 2007, and that the Dance Division, along with other dance archives in the world, is frequently discussed as the reference example of emerging Korean dance archives, the Korean dance field tends to envision the Dance Division as one of the advanced and exemplary dance archives from which nascent Korean archives should learn.

While respecting the prestige given to it, the reason that I choose to analyze the NYPL's Dance Division is not to "learn from the advanced model" but to relativize and historicize it and further to suggest it as a specific cultural construction. First, I approach the Dance Division as an idiosyncratic and man-made construction, especially when there existed no previous foundation of dance librarianship or guideline for such a thing. While the Korean dance scholars tend to shed light on the Dance Division primarily from the practical and technical aspects of data collecting and managing strategies, I am more intrigued in its cultural and historical aspects in the web of the North American dance field. Second, I approach the Dance Division not as a norm but as a representative model of the traditional concept of a total archive, which aims to preserve all aspects of every form of dance. Especially when more creative or hybrid forms of dance archives emerges today–which I will discuss in my ensuing article on the George Balanchine Foundation Video Archives–this

7) The New York Public Library(2001), *The Collaborative Editing Project to Document Dance: an initiative of the Dance Division The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts*.

comprehensive model of the Dance Division will be discussed an archetype of a particular viewpoint of dance.

Intriguingly, there exists no critical research specifically focusing on the NYPL's Dance Division, not to mention the role of its founding curator Genevieve Oswald, except a few provincial reports and partial interviews with Oswald.[8] Considering its prestigious status within the context of the North American dance field ongoing impact on the way dance is studied worldwide, the insufficient attention to it seems to be the barometer of how neutralized and materialized dance archives have been in the dance academe.

Instead, academic interests in dance archives tend to be found in the collective movements on dance preservation in general, which are symbolized with a few notable publications in the 1990s. First, the first national-level survey on the condition of dance preservation was conducted in the North America in 1990 and published into a report titled *Images of American Dance: Documenting and Preserving a Cultural Heritage* (1990).[9] Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, *Images of American Dance* not only aroused nationwide interest in the issues of dance documentation and preservation in an unprecedented way, but also brought the practice of dance documentation and preservation into the wider public sector. Particularly basing its rationale on increasing pressures on preservation in the field instigated by video technology, it concluded that, "video technology has profoundly changed the way dance is documented,

8) A short description of the development of the NYPL's Dance Division, along with other performing arts collections, is found in *Managing Performing Arts Collections in Academic and Public Libraries*, edited by Carolyn A. Sheehy (Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1994). Also, the only published interview with Genevieve Oswald is found in *Movable Pillars: Organizing Dance, 1956-1978*, by Katja Pylyshenko Kolcio (Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 2010).

9) William Keens, Leslie Hansen Kopp, Mindy N. Levine (1990), *Images of American Dance: Documenting and Preserving a Cultural Heritage*.

10) Ibid., p. 4.

what is recorded, and how the field thinks about preservation."[10]

Second, another major publication on dance preservation is Catherine J. Johnson and Allegra Fuller Snyder's report *Securing Our Dance Heritage: Issues in the Documentation and Preservation of Dance* (1999), which was sponsored by Dance Heritage Coalition (DHC) and commissioned by the Council on Library and Information Resources.[11] Divided into three chapters of Documentation, Access, Preservation–which further correspond with the initiatives of DHC–Johnson and Snyder discuss the cultural and intellectual values of dance that should be preserved as well as specific strategies in documenting and preserving them. While being comprehensive and pragmatic in their scope, their inquiry has been focused on the recent efforts of DHC on improving the condition of dance preservation in major archives, rather than providing critical insights on them.

While *Images of American Dance and Securing Our Dance Heritage* have been the influential outputs on the discourse of dance preservation in the North American dance field, *Preservation Politics: Dance Revived, Reconstructed, Remade* (2000) is a pointer to the watershed in the dance preservation discourse in Europe. Being the proceedings of the first major European conference on dance preservation held at the University of Surrey Roehampton in 1997,[12] it lacks any coherent point of view while the essays in it were rather preoccupied with terminological distinctions, such as reproduction, restaging, preservation, re-creation, revival, and so on. However, *Preservation Politics* still shows a departure from the two major reports in the North America in that it reveals the growing efforts to recognize the political

11) Catherine J. Johnson and Allegra Fuller Snyder(1999), *Securing Our Dance Heritage: Issues in the Documentation and Preservation of Dance* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources).

12) Stephanie Jordan, ed.(2000), *Preservation Politics: Dance Revived, Reconstructed, Remade* (London: Dance Books).

and polemical nature of dance preservation instead of accepting it as a sacrosanct responsibility. Furthering the critical viewpoint on dance preservation found in *Preservation Politic*, this study aims to go beyond the generalized discussions of dance preservation and more delve into the discursive issues found in dance media archives.

This study bears two guiding historical premises. First, although often suggested as the sacrosanct responsibility for those in the dance field, dance preservation is a discourse. This premise elicits questions of how the discourse of dance preservation has been formulated in a specific sociocultural condition and what aspects of dance were preserved, in what ways, and for what purposes. In so doing, I aim to reveal not only that dance preservation is a discursive construction but also that its particularities are contingent to the sociocultural context. Second, dance archives are neither passive nor neutral repositories of dusty books and historical artifacts, but active agencies creating specific narratives of dance history. This premise allows me to consider a dance media archive in the larger context of its mission of preserving dance heritage and its figuration of dance history and knowledge. Based on these premises, dance archives can be reconsidered as particular cultural constructions with their own "archive stories."

Of various projects and institutions of the Dance Division, I focus on its media archive, the Jerome Robbins Archive of the Recorded Moving Image; more specifically, I analyze its recording project, the Original Documentation Program. Commissioning recordings of live dance performances performed in the current seasons, it recorded about 25 to 30 performances a year, which accumulated well over two thousand dance works in a variety of styles. Imbedding the media archive in the larger curatorial vision of the whole archive, I aim to envision its media archive not as an isolated project as a part of its whole archival directional characteristics. Today, the term "dance media

archive" sounds somewhat redundant, because most dance archives are centered on media documentation. However, not until the end of the 20th century has media not been the majority of a given dance archive's collection. Considering that the Jerome Robbins Archives of the Recorded Moving Images was initiated in 1964 to correspond with the Division's spirit of preserving everything, the media archive should be interrogated in the larger curatorial vision of the whole archive.

Moreover, critical attention is especially needed for media archive, because of media's indexicality. Indiscriminately reproducing "what actually happened," filmic media not only documents choreographic structures for future reconstruction but also captures unique qualities of performances. Yet, no matter how neutral it may seem as a repository of neutral history and knowledge, a media archive is political as it fundamentally relies on people and is contingent to its social dynamics and cultural context. This political nature of dance archives is effectively illustrated with the very name of the media archive, "the Jerome Robbins Archive of the Recorded Moving Image." The media archive was established in 1964 when Jerome Robbins promised to grant 3/4 of 1% of all proceeds of his choreography for Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof* to the Dance Division's filming project. Beginning with six cans of film that Robbins donated, the media archive gradually grew with his continuous support. Commemorating the preciousness of his generosity out of the chronic shortage of funding in dance field, the media archive was officially named the Jerome Robbins Archive of the Recorded Moving Image in 1987. Moreover, the whole Dance Division was further named the Jerome Robbins Dance Division in 1998 when it received another endowment from Robbins on his death. Naming a collection after a donor is an act of acknowledgment and gratitude for the donor's contribution to the archive, and yet it is also a token that the archive is fundamentally social and political

involving people with various intentions and visions.

Focusing on the case of the NYPL Dance Division's media archive, this study examines the characteristics and polemics of dance media archives, and reflects on "what, how, and why" we preserve dance.

II. The Genealogy of Dance Archives in the North America

While the Dance Division's current dominant position within the dance field might misleadingly give the impression of an easy and smooth growth, it was far from the truth. Rather, the early status of the Dance Division was meager, since it was neither the first dance archive, nor was the dance librarianship a developed field in North America. Knowing this, the story of how the NYPL's Dance Division grew into the current dominant archive can be retold as a story of how it managed to collect dance materials and money, to systemize its collection, and to gain the trust and support of the field, especially when dance librarianship was an unstable field among the performing arts collections in the United States. Thus, I will situate the Dance Division within the account of how the mode of preservation transformed from personal collections to public archives and libraries in the mid-20th century North America.

To reflect this point of view, I specifically choose the term "genealogy" of dance archives, over the simple term "history," in the Foucaultian sense. In his essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Michel Foucault expands the concept of genealogy to challenge the pursuit of the origin. According to him, the origin is "the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite

13) Michel Foucault(1984), Genealogy, Nietzsche, History, in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow(New York: Pantheon Books), p. 77.

teleologies."[13] In other words, the origin presupposes the existence of the essence of things and its purest identity and pursues it beyond the world of accidents and events. However, Foucault argues that the origin is neither transcendental nor eternal; it neither evolves in a linear fashion nor entails a predestined goal. Instead, focusing on details and accidents rather than pursuing the pursuit of the origin, genealogy seeks to show the plural and sometimes contradictory vicissitude of history.

What was particularly inspiring in this specific term is revealed in the following words by Foucault:

> Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things… Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of the people. On the contrary… it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents.[14]

This concept of genealogy warns against the indiscriminate acceptance of the origin, which befittingly represents my purpose and methodology of digging out ruptures and discords in the field of dance archives, whose theoretical and historical narratives have been preoccupied with the sacrosanct responsibility of preserving dance.

When the Dance Division was started in 1944, there were only two precedent major dance collections in the United States, including Harvard Theatre Collection (founded in 1901) and the Dance Archives at the Museum of the Modern Art (1940). Followed by San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum (1947) and the Library of Congress's Performing Arts Library at the Kennedy Center (1979), they formed the major dance archives

14) Ibid., p. 81.
15) With the exception of the MOMA dance collection, which was closed in 1956, representatives of these four repositories formed the first Core Administrative Committee of the Dance Heritage Coalition.

in the United States.[15] Considering that public and academic libraries began to collect music or theater since the nineteenth century, many lamented that there were no entries for dance in the library index, not to mention of dance archives, until the second half of the twentieth century.[16] This indicates that the Dance Division started out when the concept of dance archive was still foreign in the United States.

Like other performing arts collections, these dance collections in public libraries began as a mode of preservation transformed from personal collections to public archives and libraries. In other words, private collectors were urged to donate their materials to public libraries for the common good. During the first half of the twentieth century, dance was preserved mostly through the private collections of dance aficionados. With the invention of lithography paralleling the rise and fall of the Romantic Ballet in the nineteenth century, collecting of pictorial souvenirs of ballet became an international phenomenon among balletomanes. Within this tradition of dance memorabilia, private dance collections mostly belonged to dancers or dance aficionados who collected various prints, photographs, manuscripts and books.

One of the most representative private dance collections in North America was that of George Chaffee, a former ballet dancer who danced with the Fokine Ballet, the Mordkin Ballet, and the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. Chaffee's dance collection was considered to be the largest and finest specialization, even dwarfing museum collections at the time, yet he collected "as an artist interested in object connected with his art," having "neither the interest nor the methods of the collector."[17] Similar to Chaffee's, other private dance collections lacked systematic strategies to collect and organize their

16) The first entry for "dance" in the library index appeared in the 1952-54 edition of *Library Literature*. Carolyn A. Sheehy(1994), p. 2.

17) Ann Barzel(1945), The World's Greatest Ballet Collection: The Story Behind the Credit line 'Courtesy George Chaffee,' *Dance Magazine*, p. 14.

materials. George Chaffee's collection was primarily a private collection, and the only way one could access it was to be "fortunate enough to be invited to view these fabulous treasures." Nevertheless, the fact that his was regularly featured in the *Dance Magazine* in the 1940s and sometimes included in museum exhibitions on dance indicates that these private dance collections slowly gained more public characteristics.

Given this transition, it is not surprising that emerging public dance archives in a professional sense drew much attention in the dance field. In 1932, Swedish former dancer Rolf De Maré established the Archives Internationales de la Danse (the International Archives of the Dance) in Paris, allegedly the international capital for dance-culture. Although materials on theatrical dance could be found in traditional libraries such as the Bibliotheque de l'Opéra, what he imagined was an international nexus of dance. While launching international choreographic competitions–from which choreographic works such as Kurt Jooss' *The Green Table* gained international success–the archive also collected materials for dance preservation including choreographic annotation, biographies, posters, programs, and photographs. It differed from other private collections in that it aimed to systemically organize according to the latest methods and to provide an access to the public, amateurs and professionals alike, via exhibition, lection, and demonstration.[18] Judging from Maré's comment on the enthusiastic American responses to his archive, the American dance field was deeply interested in this public dance archive. Also, when the Museum of Modern Art installed the Dance Archives in 1940, the Archives Internationales de la Danse's American correspondent Paul Magriel was appointed as the librarian, which was described in the *Dance Observer*'s editorial as the act of "[acquiring] an authority long familiar in dance research."

18) Rolf De Maré(1938), About the Archives, *the Dance Observer* 5(2) (Feb.), pp. 20-21.

Preceding the NYPL's Dance Division, the MOMA Dance Archives was a prominent dance archive of a hybrid form combining both a private collection and a public archive. Although it was an official branch of the MOMA, the archive was largely consisted of Lincoln Kirstein's personal dance collection and had existed under the sponsorship of Kirstein between 1940 and 1956.[19] Focused on contemporary theatrical dancing, the archive launched regular dance film showings while providing exhibitions on dance, including the Pavlova Memorial exhibition in 1941 and the Modern American Dance exhibition in 1945. Despite these occasional events and services to the dance field, the MOMA Dance Archives remained somewhere between a private collection and a public archive, due to Kirstein's predominance and its consequent unsystematic organization and limited access to its collection. Considering that an archive is maintained with financial and material donations from numerous donors, the MOMA did not develop a serious relationship with donors except Kirstein. In fact, when the archive was closed and its collection was transmitted to the NYPL's Dance Division, the archive's unsystematic organization was lamented, and this prompted the Dance Division's first curator Genevieve Oswald to invest in developing a thorough catalogue system on dance.

Unlike the MOMA Dance Archives, which started with utmost financial and material sponsorship as Kirstein's, the NYPL's Dance Division began as a part of Music Division with a handful amount of materials and had to be a pioneer in building its funding and inventory. Heavily relying on donations of dancers and dance enthusiasts,[20] the Division had to persuade them to donate their collections to the archive against their reluctance and suspicion of it.

19) Besides the MOMA Dance Archive, the Harvard College Theatre Collection was another major archive holding dance materials, which was also sponsored by Lincoln Kirstein.
20) Genevieve Oswald(1954), Dance: Library, *the New York Times*, Aug. 8.

Reporting on the Dance Division's project to collect materials on Isadora Duncan, John Martin attributed its difficulty to the fact that those who owned materials on Duncan tended to "cling to them with a passionate sense of possessiveness."[21] Although cherishing one's own collections had been natural for any dance aficionado, Martin's reproving tone implies that "precious" materials such as Duncan's should be handed over to public repository for the whole field's good rather than for personal delight. Indeed, Martin praised Irma Duncan, one of Duncan's six adopted daughters, for donating her materials to the Dance Division, and expected that it would make a great break in others' reluctance and that further donation would ensue.

The turning point occurred in 1954 when the personal collection of noted ballerina Cia Fonaroli was donated to the Dance Division upon her death in 1954, becoming one of the first major personal collections that the library holds.[22] As dancers began to voluntarily and eagerly donate their collections to the Dance Division, the Division quickly grew into a centralized and powerful depository and gained cultural prestige within the dance field. A few vignettes reveal how donation to the Dance Division became a given in the dance field and beyond: a heap of dance materials found on the street were handed over to the Division,[23] while a ballet-loving engineer donated 80,000 feet of ballet films that he had taken since the 1930s.[24] This shift was understood as dancers' growing faithfulness to the Division, as they were willing to donate their materials to dance archives rather than hometown

21) John Martin(1958), Dance: Archives, *the New York Times*, March 16.
22) Gertrude Lippincott(1957), The Cia Fonaroli Collection at the New York Public Library, *Dance Observer* 24(8), October. Other major personal collections include those of Ruth Page, Lincoln Kirstein, Lillian Moore, Agnes de Mille, Doris Humphrey, and so on. http://www.nypl.org/locations/tid/55/node/33836. Accessed on April 18, 2010.
23) Anna Kisselgoff(1979), A Letter to a Dance Collection, *the New York Times*, Nov. 11.
24) Jack Anderson(1986), A Ballet Hit of Decades Past Lives Again on Film, *the New York Times*, Aug. 31.
25) Jack Anderson(1965), Toward a Dance Film Library, *Dance Magazine*, Sep. p. 2.

libraries.[25] By 1959, the Division had 11 gift collections, including those of Denishawn, Hanya Holm, Doris-Humphrey and Charles Weidman, Sol Hurok, and the MOMA, and on its 20th anniversary, the Division was estimated to hold "19,000 books and 3,500 librettos; 4,600 prints, original drawings, costume and stage designs; 70, 000 programs; 80,000 photographs; 35,000 newspaper and magazine clippings; 40,600 manuscripts and letters… [in addition to] dance notation scores, microfilms, movie films, and back and current issues of foreign and domestic periodicals."[26] This enormity of materials was possible only when donation to the Division became a matter of course. During the 1960s, many famous dancers and other prominent dance figures, including Alwin Nikolais, Twyla Tharp, Ruth Page, Jean Erdman, and Serge Lifar, handed over their treasures to the Division. As it became even an obligation to donate dance materials to the Dance Division, the Dance Division became the dominant agency in reshaping dance discourse.

If this substantial inventory made the Dance Division one of the most representative and influential dance archives in the world, its persistence against the chronic shortage of funding even further elevated its symbolic prestige within the dance field. Shortly after the collection's establishment, gala performances and other beneficial events were held to save the dance collection from closure four times only during the 1970s alone, for which famous dancers and companies worldwide such as Margot Fonteyn and Alvin Ailey Company volunteered to participate. One dramatic example was its curator Genevieve Oswald's petition to delay the date of closure due to the deficit of funds scheduled on January 1, 1972, and held a benefit performance

26) Reporting on the Dance Division's twentieth anniversary, *the New York Times* and *the Dance Magazine* presented different amounts of behold items, largely due to the fact that the former calculated the whole inventory while the latter calculated the items on display. See Allen Hughes(1964), Dance Archive, *the New York Times*, April 12; Lillian Moore(1964), Buried Treasure, *Dance Magazine*, April.

at City Center on January 24. For this gala, world-renowned dancers and musicians performed without fee and raised a substantial part of the needed $65,000, which was extensively reported in 9 pages on *Dance Magazine*.[27] The eventfulness of these galas became an impetus to urge the dance field to recognize the significance of the archive instead of taking its existence for granted. Dance critics lamented the financial instability of the Dance Division as "a shame, indeed, a national disgrace that the richest country in the world does not support its national art treasures, of which the Library Museum at Lincoln Center is one of the most valuable."[28] As its existence itself became the emblem of the whole dance field's hope, the Dance Division gained not only respect and acknowledgement but also emotional attachment from the dance field.

III. The Dance Division's Curatorial Vision and Its Historical Implications

The rapid growth in both materials and prestige is generally attributed to the achievement of Genevieve Oswald, who served as the first dance curator, between 1947 and 1987.[29] Passionately and systemically collecting dance materials and fundraising for the archive, Oswald is regarded as the unique founder of the field of dance librarianship. Oswald's curatorial vision raises questions regarding not only the nature of dance archives in general but also its underlying premises of dance history and knowledge. Thus, this chapter

27) Olga Maynard(1972), Souvenir of a Gala Performance, *Dance Magazine*, April, pp. 55-65.
28) Ibid., p. 65.
29) Oswald received Capezio award in 1956 for her contribution to the dance field. In the same year, the Rockefeller Foundation granted $37,356 for cataloguing and indexing of dance materials in the NYPL. See *Dance Observer*, 1956, April.

examines her curatorial vision as the discursive context of dance preservation, and then how its media archive, the Jerome Robbins Archive of the Recorded Moving Images, corresponds to and operates on it. Particularly, the historical implications of its recording project, the Original Documentation Program, will be the main subject of inquiry.

Oswald declared the Dance Division's goal as "to retrieve the past, record the present, and prepare for the future."[30] While this may sound broad enough to represent general characteristics of any archive, the way she pursued and actualized the goal elicits questions of the historical view of the curatorial policy of the NYPL and its contingent methodology of collecting money and materials. In that sense, Oswald's curatorial visions could be described in the following three characteristics, which rationalized the inclusion of a media archive as its part.

First, the most idiosyncratic characteristic of Oswald's curatorial vision was that her focus was on the present rather than on the past in terms of collecting materials. In other words, amongst the three goals that she suggested above, Oswald's primary focus leaned more toward recording the present than retrieving the past. On the practical level, preserving the present was easier and more controllable than retrieving the past; preserving the present can be a planned and predictable procedure, while retrieving the past cannot help but depend on either donors' whim or sheer luck. On the conceptual level, however, Oswald also firmly believed that documenting the present was one of the most urgent responsibilities of dance archives. Envisioning the present as the eventual past that would be much sought-after by those in the future, Oswald aimed to preserve the contemporary dance "to have future dance enthusiast or student fully understand the [current] season."[31] For this goal,

30) Jack Anderson(1965), p. 41.
31) Genevieve Oswald(1954), Dance: Library, *the New York Times*, Aug. 8.

Oswald urged dance companies, dancers, and dance critics to create tangible records and donate them to the archive. *The New York Times* reporter Allen Hughes recollected that Oswald called him one day and said, "You must clip all your reviews and Sunday articles and paste them in scrapbooks and will them to the Dance Collection. Start right now, and don't forget. We need that material."[32)]

Emphasis on the present became the main impetus for the establishment of its media archive. While urging people in the dance field to make records of the present, she herself also actively created records of dances. Arguing that "to preserve a score in Labanotation for every major work performed during the year would be his [dance librarian's] first aim,"[33)] she commissioned to make notation records of dance works including Balanchine's *Symphony in C* and Kurt Jooss' *The Green Table*. This is the context under which she launched the project of filming dance performances of current seasons. Along with Labanotation, film was the latest media apparatus that was not only useful but also representative of the analyzing needs of the modern era. Producing historical materials out of current dance phenomena became the primary purpose of the film projects. It was highly regarded that the Division became an "activist rather than storage tank… [a]ctually creating an invaluable archive for the future by filming, on [its] own initiative."[34)]

The second characteristic of Oswald's vision was that she understood that a dance archive was inevitably multi-format, which created a hospitable atmosphere for the media archive. The Dance Division is a research library,

32) Genevieve Oswald, quoted from Allen Hughes(1964).
33) Genevieve Oswald(1954), Dance: Library, *the New York Times*, Aug. 8.
34) Anna Kisselgoff(1979), A Letter to a Dance Collection, *the New York Times*, Nov. 11.
35) Anna Kisselgoff(1971), Deficit-Ridden Dance Collection Pins Hopes on a Gala, *the New York Times*, Dec. 6, p. 54; Information on the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, http://www.nypl.org/locations/lpa/jerome-robbins-dance-division. Accessed on April 1, 2010.

yet books made up less than 10% at its inception, and even lowered from 7% in the 1970s to 3% today.[35] The rest of the collection comprises various materials including photos, prints, souvenir programs, clippings, letters, and librettos. In a sense, the relatively low percentage of written materials in its inventory could be attributed to the slow rise of print materials in the dance field since the 1950s, which could be further attributed to the difficulty of describing the ephemeral quality of dance. However, it also reveals a more fundamental belief in the multi-format media in understanding and preserving dance. Oswald saw the multi-format quality as the unique characteristics of dance archive when she proudly said that, "The dance collection cannot keep real living dancers on its shelves. But short of that, we have practically everything else–including a trunk that belonged to Isadora Duncan which we don't know what to do with."[36] The hospitable mode for multi-format materials resulted in the investment in film archive and oral history projects much earlier than those were acknowledged in academe as a valid form of knowledge. Among various formats, Oswald emphasized the centrality of the visual as she praised that "the iconographic materials, in particular, have been greatly enriched for it has been found that a contemporary picture of a ballet or an individual dancer tells more about the actual nature of the dance than hundreds of explanatory words."[37] Amongst iconographic and photographic media, film was particularly highlighted as the medium to preserve the unique quality of dance. Oswald believed that only film, not notation scores, photos, review clippings and books, could preserve the *how*–the flow of movement as it is performed.

Third, Oswald strived to develop systematic strategies of managing the

36) Ric and Sigrid Estrada(1969), The New York Public Library Dance Collection Gets a Computerized Catalogue, A Monumental and Pioneering Achievement, and We Learn About Bytes, Nibbles, And The Conk of The Dura, *Dance Magazine*, March, p. 50.
37) Lillian Moore(1954), Library of Treasures, *Dance Magazine*, June, p. 26.

collected materials. The goal of collecting everything on every dance in every format inevitably led to the constant growth of the collection, problematizing the control of the enormous collection of materials. Since quick retrieval of a requested material became more and more difficult, the Dance Division from early on strived to develop a cataloguing system. As soon as it published 10-volume book catalogues in 1964 that took 10 years to complete, it was also granted $72,000 from the Ford Foundation to create an automated catalogue. Also, those creating this catalogue encountered confusion not only in proper nouns (e.g., the name of the sixteenth-century dancing master known as Beaujoyeux or Belgiojoso) but also general terms and concepts of dance (e.g., "Yemenite dancing," "Jewish dancing," or "Israeli dancing").[38] To solve these, the Dance Division invented a list of 8,000 subject headings by the late 1960s, which preceded the system of the Library of the Congress. The initiative for this cataloging and subject heading was the jumbled remnants of the MOMA's dance collection, which was discontinued when the Dance Division first formed. Witnessing that the unsystematic collection of the MOMA dance collection would deter the operation of a dance library, Oswald believed that systematic management of dance material via a reliable catalogue would be a "treasury of dance data and erudition." Oswald's comment reveals that standardization and classification of dance is a useful tool to control the enormity of data as well as a conceptual framework that shapes dance knowledge. As a result, the Dance Division had developed subject terms for in-house purposes that were more specific than those of the Library of Congress Subject Heading (LCSH). For example, NYPL provides more than 50 headings to dance notation systems, whereas the LCSH identifies only three.[39] Considering that access to the materials was

38) Jack Anderson(1965), p. 41.
39) Catherine J. Johnson et al.(1999), p. 20.

acknowledged as the most pressing need by many in the field, these early efforts prepared the bedrock of dance preservation.

In the context of these curatorial visions, Oswald articulated the Dance Division's agenda as to "offer *complete documentation* (scores, libretti, programs, reviews, and pictorial materials) on all the *great milestones* of the dance, from the Ballet Comique de la Reine right down to the masterpieces of this century" (emphasis added).[40] While the unlimited pursuit of materials may seem all welcoming, this agenda also implies that art dance, especially those of great milestones and masterpieces, are its major concern. This delimitation naturally forms a hierarchy in its treatment of the collection. The Division's scheme involves constructing and preserving the canon of dance history, which is implied in her mentioning of the Ballet Comique de la Reine, the supposed first ballet work in dance history. Indeed, she first mentioned this goal in 1964, and repeated it in 1969, while adding that it would be completed "some day, soon (maybe by the end of 1969)."[41] The fact that she believed that offering complete documentations of great milestones was indeed possible indicates that her historical perception was quite canonical. This historical as well as practical view influenced Oswald's curatorial vision, as her emphasis on the present indeed related to constructing the canon of major works in American dance history. In doing so, Oswald envisioned a continuous historicity of dance. Indeed, Oswald was obsessed with the idea of complete, continuing history of dance to the extent that "[S]he is haunted by the fear that a choreographer or serious researcher will be hampered in his work by some lack or deficiency in the Dance Collection."[42] This view presupposes that the presence of the material or its lack in the archive directly determines the

40) Lillian Moore(1964), p. 47.
41) Ric and Sigrid Estrada(1969), p. 50.
42) Lillian Moore(1964), p. 47.

historiography of dance.

The emphasis on great milestones is also reflected in the Division's media archive. Oswald said that "[producing and preserving] Labanotation for every major work performed during the year would be the first aim,"[43] indicating that the Division's preservation necessarily produces priorities and hierarchies among dance works. Similarly, when the Dance Division launched the Original Documentation Program in 1964 to film a few selected works in the current seasons, inclusion in this project became the barometer to measure the work's significance in the American dance field. Considering that Martha Graham was among the first few whose works were selected for the filming project, it is apparent that the media archive responded to this hierarchical view of dance.

The initiation and operation of the Original Documentation Program particularly draw attention. Quantitatively, this project to record the current season dance works comprises only a small part of the holdings of the Jerome Robbins Archive of the Recorded Moving Images. According to the NYPL's 2004-5 report, while the entire archive includes over 18,000 films and videotapes, the Original Documentation Program has recorded about 1,700 dance works by 180 companies.[44] Although the resulting records cannot represent the enormous width and varieties of the whole media archive, its significance lies in the fact that the particular aspects of dance phenomenon the Dance Division pursues to preserve reveal distinctive implications in terms of history and knowledge.

A few elements influence the scope of the subjects; first, the majority of its filming subjects are theatrical dance performances of European traditions

43) Genevieve Oswald(1954).

44) The New York Public Library(2004-5), *Report to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2004-05, Dance Documentation Needs Analysis*, p. 3.

performed live in the proscenium stage, whereas only a small amount of non-theatrical, social, and other cultural dance forms became its subject. This inequality corresponds to the situation that great gaps in historical, geographic, cultural, and artistic aspects exist in the current record of dance in the United States, as discussed in *Images of American Dance*.[45] Ballet and modern dance have been documented and preserved far more than other dance forms have, thus creating a hierarchy of dance documentation. While this general tendency inevitably influences the Original Documentation Program, even the Division's conscious effort to compensate for this gap is also deterred by the lack of funding, complicated technical elements, and other procedural restrictions.

Second, as the project demands a substantial amount of funding, the funding sources also dictate what dance should be recorded. Jan Schmidt acknowledges that, where the grant comes from foremost regulates and restricts the choice of the subjects. For instance, the NEA grant should be spent on dance in the greater United States, and the New York Council for the Arts grant has to be given to dance companies of New York State. The Division does not create the shooting list for which the grant is endowed, but the other way around. Also, technical difficulties and regulations on getting permission also deter the shooting of non-theatrical dance forms. At one time, the Division shot a Russian wedding dance party. The crowds moving freely at this gathering presented a challenge to videographers regarding where to put the camera to get the whole picture without recording too many people at the same time. Also, getting permission from all of the participants in this social event presented further challenges for the Division. Considering that the Division is a public archive that should satisfy more strict conditions of

45) William Keens et al.(1990), p. 20.

shooting than individual dancers' private recording, the gap between records of theatrical and non-theatrical dance forms seems inevitable.

Consequently, the recordings of non-theatrical, non-Euro-American dances were rare. I find that, even when non-theatrical, non-Euro-American dances were recorded, their *raison d'être* was different from the usual shooting of ballet and modern dance, as they are grounded in what James Clifford calls "salvage paradigm," or "a desire to rescue 'authenticity' out of destructive historical change."[46] Although the film project fundamentally operates on the premise of the disappearance of a given work, this premise looms much larger over the cases of non-European dance forms. This attitude is well shown in the interview of the current curator Schmidt when she said, "Films of dances which would otherwise disappear are being commissioned by the collection. Last year the Apache, Navajo, and Hopi Indians were recorded, and just recently, the Khmer Ballet Company of Cambodia."[47] This is another way to illustrate that ethnographic interest rather than artistic value governs the shooting of those other cultural dances.

Then, what kind of historical implications does the Original Documentation Program perpetuate? Regarding the resulting records of the Original Documentation Program, dance scholar Allegra Fuller Snyder extolled it as "a filmed dance literature," and defines its rationale as providing the "'experienced' history of dance."[48] Snyder clarified that this record should carry "all the true intent and feeling of the choreographer" as well as to deliver

46) James Clifford(1987), Of Other Peoples: Beyond the 'Salvage' Paradigm, *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, edited by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay), pp. 121-130.
47) Karen Cooper(1972), The Dance Film Collection Lives!, *Filmmakers Newsletter*, April.
48) Snyder's use of the term "documentary" in this article differs from the general meaning of the term indicating a television or radio program, or an independent work of film, which shows real events or provides information about a particular subject.
49) Allegra Fuller Snyder(1965), Three kinds of Dance Film: A Welcome Clarification, *Dance Magazine*, pp. 35-37.

"[what] the viewer's brain and eye and emotions do in a live performance."[49] In other words, filmed dance literature should reproduce the experience of watching dance performance as closely and ideally as possible. She argues that watching a dance as is performed on stage became possible via film, reshaping the historical sensibility of dance, even with its automatic editing element and single perspective. Likewise, the assumption underlying the Original Documentation Program is that media records enable dance history by providing dance literature. Oswald also clarified that, "The purpose of this vast program of collecting is to pierce the myth of illiteracy that has surrounded the dance and to provide a continuing history for this elusive art."[50] Her words imply that dance history became tangible with these media records. The possibility of watching the dance work becomes a means to reverse the ephemerality of dance and thus to enable dance history in a truer sense. This assumption recalls the distinction between historiography and history. Whereas historiography refers to the writing of history, history is the actual past that the writing claims to convey. Thus, filmed dance literature implies that dance history becomes tangible and available without necessarily being conveyed through historiography. In sum, the Original Documentation Program, within the curatorial vision of the NYPL's Dance Division, perpetuates the notion that one can encounter dance history itself via mechanical possibilities of media.

Of particular interest is that, while promoting its novelty, this perspective rendered the conventional historiography as mythological and elitist. First, compared to rational and empirical concepts of dance history via film, dance historiography was perceived negatively as mythology rather than fact, as art rather than science, or a discourse rather than a representation. A year before he began to financially support the film collection, Jerome Robbins published

50) Genevieve Oswald, quoted in Allen Hugh(1964).

an article in *the New York Times* in which he argued for the needs of preserving dance via film against the traditional mode of dance teaching. Referring to the dance field as "Land of Legend," Robbins criticized the phenomena that dance history was filled with exaggerated fame and distorted memory. He said, "Our native dance culture is flourishing. Then it all immediately enters the marvelous Land of Legend of the dance…. Myths are told by those old enough to remember…. Thus we hand down our history, teaching, from memory, to his successors what he had played and how he had interpreted."[51] Critical of the primordial way of transmitting dance, Robbins says that film records preserve the action of dance, thus eliminating unnecessary aura and legends. He made an interesting proposition: although both of them are incomparably magnificent dancers, it is more difficult for Nureyev than for Nijinsky to have a legend created, because there exist film records on Nureyev, whereas no film record exists on Nijinsky.[52] Interpreting this condition as "Tougher for him [Nureyev], but better for us," Robbins seemed to believe that film would keep us from building an air castle, thus helping us to be more neutral, rational, and analytical to dance phenomena. Helen Tamiris also laments that, "Dance history is not very far removed from mythology. Our large areas of ignorance have not only slowed our growth but even decreased our stature in the general framework of the arts."[53]

Moreover, according to this view, the traditional way that dance is viewed was also regarded as elitist. Adding to Robbins's view, Snyder argues that a dance student cannot study the very performances of important works "unless

51) Jerome Robbins(1963), Recording the Dance, *the New York Times*, Nov. 24.

52) "Possible Nijinsky footage" has been pursued as much as Pavlova footage had. Yet, unlike Pavlova footage, Nijinsky footage has not been found. A few film fragments on Nijinsky did appear on YouTube.com; it turns out that French artist Christian Comte made an animation of photographs of Nijinsky dancing. See Joan Acocella's explanation. http://www.newyorker.com/talk/2009/06/29/090629ta_talk_acocella.

53) Quoted in Snyder(1965), pp. 36.

he is present at the time that history is made, and very few of us can be that lucky."[54] This view presupposes dance history as a series of important works that are completed when they are performed in the theatre, while dance literature is mere accumulated spectatorship of dance works. Since such spectatorship is limited and time-bound, the majority of those in the dance field remained excluded from the making of dance history. This indicates that the media archive at the NYPL's Dance Division was seen idealistic and democratic in its conception of dance history and knowledge.

IV. Discussions on Dance Preservation Politics

The NYPL's Dance Division's Original Documentation Program projected the proposition that mechanical possibilities of filmic media rendered dance history more democratic, which automatically rendered the conventional historiography as mythological and elitist. Given this promising projection toward filmic media, one may inquire whether it indeed democratized the way dance is remembered. My assertion is that filmic media, especially videotape, did not democratized but strengthened the centrality of the NYPL. This can be best illustrated with the changes of the NYPL after the wide dissemination of videotapes in the 1990s. As dance scholar Catherine J. Johnson acknowledged, the videotape has become "a central tool for the documentation of dance during the past 15 years and serves as a form of currency in the dance world."[55] Yet, although videotape was extolled as a democratic and innovative mode of recording dance, the result was far from the democratization of dance preservation. Ironically, it accelerated the centralization of the NYPL's position

54) Allegra Fuller Snyder(1965), p. 36.
55) Catherine J. Johnson et al.(1999), p. 33.

in dance archives and solidified the NYPL's authority even more. There are two reasons for this.

First, video as a notoriously unstable medium[56] calls for necessary care and brings enormous cost to the entire field. Deteriorating videotapes containing invaluable dance footage always stood as the symbol of the predicament of this instability. Moreover, the facts that technology continues to change and evolve and that preservation formats immigrate from one to another also burden the field in finding a stable and long-lasting format. Consequently, the general consensus achieved in the various projects was for centralization of the materials into sizable dance repositories. This lead to the signification of the role of sizable dance archives, including the NYPL. The sheer demand to provide a proper environment for dance materials necessitated the centralization of delicate materials to the sizable repositories. Sponsoring dance preservation projects in variable sizes, the NIPAD report concluded that the most urgent goals of the dance field were "collaboration or cooperation with an established repository of dance research… [and] the development of specific guidelines outlining standard practices for archival documentation and preservation."[57] Also, the enhanced expectation for access necessitates cooperation among archives. The report concluded that the transmission of delicate materials from smaller archives to larger archives with proper physical environment is needed to protect those materials.

Second, video's easy access caused the quantitative burst and consequent abundance of materials, enhancing the archives' regulatory role in managing the flood of the materials. Considering that the initial goal of the NYPL's Dance Division was to collect everything based on the premise that "all dance

56) Ibid., p. 33.

57) Mary E. Edsall(2001), Providing Access to America's Dance Heritage, *Frames of Reference: A Resource Guide from the National Initiative to Preserve America's Dance*, edited by Janis M. Deputy (Washington, DC: Dance/USA), p. 27.

documentation is vital and important and must be saved," the restraints on space, time, and money in comparison to rapidly growing materials rendered the practice of collecting everything a "luxury."[58] What culminates in this abundance is videotape, and the archive's curatorial guide is focused on selecting the "authority record" of a dance work. As current curator Jan Schmidt acknowledges, while the Division used to accept everything that dance companies donated, now it encourages companies to really look at their materials and "give something that is representative of your self and your company rather than everything that exists."[59] The underlying notion here is the recognition of the historical significance of authority record that is challenged by the abundance of materials. Schmidt advises companies to think about "what it is they want to represent them for the rest of history rather than having so much that nobody can find the one dance performance that is really good." The irony is that, while video enables easy recording of a dance, its easiness also diminishes the historical aura of a dance.

Consequently, as video's easy access and fragility provoked an explosive increase and centralization of materials, the responsibility and prestige of large dance archives, including the NYPL, became more empowered than ever. As donations to the Dance Division rapidly increased, the Division's fundamental attitude toward dance preservation shifted from persuading dancers to donate their materials to gatekeeping the flood of donated materials. As an enormous amount of materials came in, the Division set a policy that donation of material should be accompanied by its processing funds as well. This would be a realistic decision by which to handle the flood of the materials, yet it also functions as a gatekeeper to materials of lesser known or financially unstable dancers. Consequently, this created an imbalance in materials collected. For

58) Catherine J. Johnson et al.(1999), p. 29.
59) Interview with Jan Schmidt, Nov. 18, 2008.

example, in 1999, upon the death of legendary dancer Rudolf Nureyev, the Rudolf Nureyev Foundation was formed and decided to donate his materials to the Dance Division. From the Rudolf Nureyev Foundation the Division received film, video, and audiotape materials as well as $107,000 for the cataloguing and processing of the archives. Although the Nureyev Foundation could afford the cost of processing his materials, many others could not do so, thus causing their donations to shrink and delay, furthering the disproportion between materials. As Schmidt acknowledges, the Division took everything of Nureyev's based on the dancer's fame, which potentially furthers the polarization of what composes the canon of dance history and what does not.

Furthermore, regulating the flood of materials, the Division further exerted power as the token of prestige in the dance field. In other words, being housed in the Division became the indicator of the given artists' importance. In case of the Nureyev collection, despite that Nureyev defected from the Soviet Union in the 1961 and danced mostly in Europe since then, The Nureyev Foundation selected not a European archive but the Dance Division as the repository of this famous dancer's base. The Foundation explains that the Dance Division is "the world's preeminent archive of dance-related material, and is therefore a perfect home for these treasures."[60] This means that Nureyev's materials were donated to the Dance Division because the archive's fame would match Nureyev's significance. As this case shows, it seems natural that other dancers and choreographers would prefer to have the Division house their materials.

As a consequence, the growing authority of the NYPL as the central repository further rationalized, institutionalized, and regulated the act of dance documentation. This is well shown with the concept of "authority record" that gained significance in the changing dynamic of dance preservation. As

60) Jennifer Dunning(1999), Public Library Receives Nureyev Film Collection, *the New York Times*, Oct. 27.

discussed earlier, the changing concept of dance archives from item-level to event-level cataloguing was anchored to the existence of the authority record of a dance. Also, the abundance of materials differentiates the significance of each material, promoting the need of the authority version of it. Given that, it is not surprising that the process of making quality videotape documentation has been one of the main concerns of those in the dance field. As seen in the NYPL's Original Documentation Program, dance recording normally involves shooting during performance using two cameras. This is a practical decision; they shoot during a performance because it is not common that dance companies have full-draft, full-dancing dress rehearsals. Shooting during live performance inevitably endows restrictions on camera position, so the NYPL tries to use two cameras. One is a wide shot, recording all entrances and exits, and the other is what is called "close-up" or a "full-body" shot, what is generally referred to as a large-medium shot that does not cut off the dancer's body. With these two resulting footages, the Dance Division made an edited version of a performance for which a choreographer and a videographer collaborate.[61]

Further experiments and interrogations were conducted in the late 1990s regarding the NYPL's generalized use of two cameras in shooting dance performance. The San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum's *Report on the Findings of the Learning Applications to Document Dance Project* (LADD, 1997) experimented on the practical and technical issues of filming dance and advocated for the efficiency of the use of two cameras in recording dance, with a fixed camera shooting the entire vision of a dance work and a moving camera capturing parts of it. According to the LADD, "[t]he two-camera shoot offers the option of capturing performance details as

61) Interview with Jan Schmidt, Nov. 18, 2008.
62) http://www.danceheritage.org/publications/LADD1.html. Accessed on Feb. 1, 2011.

well as context without sacrificing an exhaustive documentary approach to the range of action taking place on the stage."[62] As the NIPAD "identified the use of more than one camera as critical to quality documentation and mandated a multiple camera approach a condition of the grant," the two-camera shoot became the standard method of recording dance.

Given the general approval of the efficiency of the two-camera shoot, the next issue was how to edit the resulting footage into the most representative version, the "authority record" of a dance performance. The NYPL's Division itself experimented with editing the two resulting footages into a single representative record and published its findings in *the Collaborative Editing Project* in 2001. To deal with practical, technical, and aesthetic issues emerging from the shooting/editing experiment, the project chose six choreographer/videographer teams whose dance works are diverse in their aesthetics, genre, company size, and technical condition, from ballet to baroque dance to experimental dance installation.[63] In doing so, the project aimed to develop and stabilize the "dance community's ability to produce high-quality records of dance."[64] Yet, concluding that there is "no single 'correct' way to approach the collaborative editing of a dance," the project acknowledges that making a dance record is a decision-making process rather than a readymade formula.

Thus, the purpose of filming became significant in making the "authority recording." Of the various terms indicating several different types of records,

63) The six works chosen are: Neil Greenberg's *Not About AIDS Dance*, performance by Dance by Neil Greenberg; Lar Lubovitch's *Othello*, performed by American Ballet Theatre; Geoffrey Holder's *Prodigal Prince*, performed by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; New York Baroque Dance Company in *With Sword Drawn He Dances*, reconstructed by Catherine Turocy; Badenya '98 including dances by Maimouna Keita Dance Company, Kotchegna Dance Company, and Les Ballets Bagata; and, Eiko and Koma's *Breath*, presented as a month-long "living" installation.

64) The New York Public Library(2001), *The Collaborative Editing Project to Document Dance*, p. 2.

the purposes of filming dance are generally divided into choreographic/archival and creative/evocative records. Archival records document choreography, whereas evocative records capture the experience of viewing a performance.[65] A strictly controlled recording that fully serves the goal of restaging characterizes the former, while a moving and zooming-in recording characterizes the latter. The dichotomy of archival and evocative purposes of filming dance resonates with the dispute of Labanotation vs. film. As I had discussed in "The Babel of Dance Literacy: Reflections on the Heterogeneity of Dance Notations in Mid-twentieth Century North America,"[66] Labanotation is considered effective in preserving the objective knowledge of choreographic structure whereas film is used to convey the immediate experience of watching a performance. In other words, Labanotation is archival, whereas film is evocative in its nature. Thus, it is interesting that the filmed dance literature is again divided into these two categories of choreographic and evocative purposes. This proves that people foster different understandings and expectations of the technological possibilities of dance film.[67]

Of particular interest is that, when the multi-use of a single source necessarily requires prioritization among differing functions, the prioritization has been fluid and co-existent depending on the needs of subjects. In case of *the Collaborative Editing Project*, the Division and participating teams of six

65) Ibid., p. 7.

66) Ok Hee Jeong(2010), "The Babel of Dance Literacy: Reflections on the Heterogeneity of Dance Notations in Mid-twentieth Century North America", *the Korean Journal of Dance Studies* 31 (Fall), pp. 137-152.

67) Given the multiple purposes of filming, it is also acknowledged that a videotape is made for many reasons and functions in many ways, including promotional, historical, creative, and educational goals. Indeed, the two-camera shoot is a realistic compromise between the archival (the context shot produced by the fixed camera) and evocative (the detail shot produced by the moving, close-up shot) goals. Considering that Snyder considered this practice unprofessional as early as in the 1960s, it seems that now it is acknowledged as more realistic to make a dance record functioning in multiple ways.

choreographer/videographers approached filming dance with differing priorities. Many dancers, including the participants, preferred more evocative records to strictly archival records. It is true that some dancers and dance companies actively investigated improving the archival filming for their referential purposes. For instance, the Paul Taylor Dance Company exerted a project to codify the individual dancer's entrance, exit, and positioning among the whole group of dancers on stage in an effort to combine the strengths of both notation and film. Despite these exceptions, archival records practically connote a mechanical reproduction of a dance that cannot properly represent the "liveness" of dance performance. Among the participants, choreographer Neil Greenberg aimed to reproduce some of the experience of "what it might be like in the audience watching the dance," while Lar Lubovitch argued that purely archival tape is boring for most people to watch. Their words imply that these choreographers wanted to represent the essence of their works via records rather than reproduce the exact structures of the works. Yet, choreographers' preference for more evocative records was regulated by and compromised with the Dance Division's overarching mandate of creating archival records. The Dance Division emphasized the full choreographic record, which particularly includes entrances and exits of dancers, which are necessary for possible future reconstructions.

The differing preferences between the Division and choreographers seem intriguing since these preferences have shifted over time. For the Division, the original emphasis was on evocative function. At the beginning of the film collection, Genevieve Oswald pushed forward the film collection at the first place to evoke a dance performance. She recollected that she watched with Doris Humphrey a film of Katherine Litz interpreting Humphrey's role in *With My Red Fires*. When Oswald commented that Litz looked like Humphrey in

68) Jack Anderson(1965), p. 41.

the role, Humphrey disagreed with her, which urged Oswald to realize that film could preserve how Humphrey actually moved.[68] While Litz might reconstruct the choreographic structure as a dance performance in time and space, it cannot explain why Humphrey did not consider Litz's dancing to be authentic enough. Instead, filmic records were expected to evoke the indescribable, embodied, and somewhat mystical kinesthetic quality that escapes the analytical web.

Jerome Robbins also emphasized film's potential in preserving the performative quality of dance upon his sponsoring the film collection. Robbins believed in the need of preserving the "most authentic" performance of a given dance work. For this, he rationalized the use of film that, "To catch everything at its height–and to record it as it was meant by the choreographer and as it was originally interpreted by the dancer–is imperative."[69] His intention was not to preserve the blueprint of a work but to catch the very experience of watching/performing it. In other words, filming aims to grasp the embodied knowledge of a dance experience specific to time and space. Interestingly, recognizing the subtle qualitative variations among actualizations of a given dance work, he presupposes the hierarchy among them; at the top resides the premiere of the work, which was followed by many versions of it. If notation seeks to write down the most authentic yet unrealized idea of a dance work, Robbins's notion of film seems to capture the best realization of that idea. For this goal, Robbins was not entirely happy with film, because of the "flatness of film, the lack of dimension, the lack of energy of the dancer. It saps something out of the dance. But right now, this is the best we have."[70] This indicates that film was expected to preserve the performative dimension of dance that is

69) Jerome Robbins(1963).

70) Quoted from "An Archival Salute to Jerome Robbins," Janice Berman, *Newsday*, June 3, 1987.

embodied only in specific temporal and spatial conditions.

Compared to Oswald and Robbins' prioritizing of the evocative function of filming dance, general choreographers of their contemporaries were more alert to film's choreographic or archival ability. Although commentators such as John Martin emphasized the limitedness of film in preserving choreography, especially comparing it against Labanotation, film nevertheless captured choreography enough to make choreographers wary of plagiarism. Many choreographers at that time were somewhat hesitant to donate the filmic records of their dance to the Dance Division, largely due to their fear that other choreographers would plagiarize their choreography.[71] This fear, along with the union constraints, leads to the regulation that dance works should be viewed only within the library.

This shift in regulation and priority shows that the Dance Division and choreographers inverted their priorities regarding the primary function of dance film according to their own needs and perspectives. First, choreographers could become more concerned with film's evocative function because their concern for plagiarism was relieved over time due to the enhance awareness of copyright as well as to their trust on the library's protection. The Dance Division ensured the donators' restriction on the use and availability of the donated materials. Meanwhile, the Dance Division's mandate moved from preserving the performative quality to preserving the choreographic structure of dance, reflecting the need of its clients as well as responding to the condition of preservation in the field. "Most of the people who use the collection are dancers and choreographers who are re-staging a piece and want to see how it was originally produced."[72] In the case that notational scores are not produced for every dance work in its collection, securing the basic

71) Jack Anderson(1965), p. 42.
72) Karen Cooper(1972).

information needed for restaging the work became its utmost responsibility. In sum, although the Dance Division tried to set the norm of authority record and regulate its criteria to be as rigorous and disciplined as possible, the differing conceptions of what, how, and why dance should be preserved amongst choreographers and the Dance Division reassures that the possibility of documenting and preserving dance in a full, coherent, and true status is in doubt.

V. Conclusion

This study provides critical reconsiderations of dance media archives, focusing on the case of the New York Public Library's Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Aiming to critically ponder over political and historical implications of dance preservation, I analyzed the curatorial vision of the Dance Division within the genealogy of the North American dance archives, and examined its media archive in terms of historical and epistemological underpinnings.

As an archetype of a total archive, the Dance Division projected its media archive as a more democratic way to remember dance, which naturally rendered the traditional person-to-person mode of dance transmission as partial and elitist. However, I found that media did not democratize the dance preservation practice, as it was expected; in contrary, media's fragility and abundance strengthened the centrality and authority of the Dance Division. Also, although the Dance Division highly institutionalized, regulated, and rationalized dance documentation process in the concept of "authority record," it was far from being stable and objective, but rather arbitrary and fluid. This shows that dance media archives are specific cultural constructions with its provenance, histories, and effect on its users, which challenges the claims to

objectivity that are generally associated with the traditional archives such as the NYPL's Dance Division. In the end, as much as history is not merely a project of fact-retrieval, a dance archive is not merely a repository of dusted books or enormous database of video files.

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Abstract

춤 미디어 아카이브에 대한 비판적 고찰: 미국 뉴욕공립도서관의 제롬 로빈스 무용분과를 중심으로

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최근 한국 춤계에서는 전문적이고 다양한 춤 아카이브가 속속 등장하면서 춤 아카이브에 대한 논의들이 활발하다. 그러나 이들 대부분은 아카이브 건립의 당위 및 필요성을 주장하거나 효과적으로 자료를 모으고 유지하는 방법론 등 실제적 영역에 치우친 연구경향을 보인다. 이에 대해 본 연구는 춤 아카이브를 일종의 사회문화적 구성체로 인식하고 이를 계보학적이고 비판적인 차원에서 접근함으로써 춤 아카이브에 대한 보다 균형 잡힌 시각을 더하고자 한다.

주 연구대상으로는 미국 뉴욕공립도서관의 제롬 로빈스 춤 분과를 선택했으며, 특히 미디어 자료관의 일환으로 진행된 공연 녹화 프로그램을 분석했다. 세계최대의 무용자료관으로써 알려진 이 아카이브을 연구대상으로 선택한 이유는 한국의 신생 춤 아카이브가 당연히 보고 배워야 할 준거로 단순치환하기 보다는 모든 춤의 모든 것을 기록하고자 했던 통합적 아카이브의 한 유형이자 미국 내 춤 보존담론의 맥락 속에서 형성된 독특한 결과물로 조명하고자 했다.

우선 미국 내 춤 아카이브의 계보를 살펴본 결과 뉴욕공립도서관의 춤 분과는 춤 보존이 개인의 취미활동에서 공공의 의무로 바뀌는 담론적 변화에 따라 급속히 성장했으며, 특히 춤계의 재정적 불안으로 인해 그 문화적, 상징적 위상이 강화된 측면이 있다. 한편 춤 분과의 초기 40년 동안 활발히 활동했던 초대 큐레이터 제네비에브 오스왈드의 운영방침을 살펴보면 극장예술무용의 고전을 중심으로 한 역사관을 바탕으로 과거보다 현재의 기록을 강조하고 무용자료의 다양성을 인식했음을 알 수 있는데, 이로 인해 미디어 아카이브가 춤 분과에 일찍이 자리 잡을 수 있었을 뿐 아니라 나아가 춤 아카이브의 핵심으로 등장하게 된다. 특히 한 시즌 중 소수의 공연만을 기록하는 공연 녹화 프로그램은 “기록할 만한 가치가 있는” 작품임을 증명하는 권력적 징표로써 서양극장무용-비서양, 비극장무용의 간극을 심화시켰다.

미디어아카이브에 대한 관심과 기대가 여느 때보다도 높은 오늘날, 뉴욕공립도서관의 춤 분과가 진행한 공연 녹화 프로그램은 미디어 아카이브에 대한 두 가지 아이러니한 상황을 드러낸다. 우선 미디어, 특히 디지털 미디

어의 보급은 춤이 다음 세대로 전승되는 방식을 민주화할 것이라는 기대를 불러일으켰으나, 결과적으론 뉴욕공립도서관의 춤 분과와 같은 주요 아카이브의 권위가 더욱 강화된 결과를 낳았다. 60년대 이후 춤 기록의 폭발적 증가를 가져온 비디오테이프로 인해 춤 기록에 대한 인식과 기대가 높아진 반면, 비디오테이프의 물리적 부식을 대비하고 급증하는 자료를 처리하기 위해 주요 아카이브의 통제자적 역할이 더욱 강조되게 된 것이다. 한편 미디어의 인덱스성(indexicality)으로 인해 하나의 춤 작품에 대해 무수한 방식의 기록이 가능해지자 춤 분과는 "기준 기록(authority record)"을 만들것을 제시하고 그 구체적 요소들을 최대한 섬세하게 표준화하고 통제하고자 노력했으나, 그 기준이라는 것이 실은 주체와 맥락에 따라 유동적이고 자의적으로 재해석 가능하다는 것을 알 수 있었다. 이는 춤 보존이 실증주의적 접근만으론 제대로 파악할 수 없는 담론의 영역임을 드러낸다. 결국 뉴욕공립도서관의 춤 분과의 역사인식을 종합하자면 미디어 아카이브가 민주적이고 이상적으로 춤을 보존할 수 있다는 명제를 내세우며 보다 전통적인 춤 전승 방식, 즉 사람과 사람간의 체화된 의사소통을 통한 춤 전승을 전통적인 엘리트적이고 불완전하다고 상정했다. 그러나 미디어 아카이브 역시 엘리트적이고 불완전하다는 비난에서 완전히 자유로울 수 없다는 점에서 미디어 아카이브에 대한 지나친 낙관론을 경계해야할 것이다.

주제어: the New York Public Library's Jerome Robbins Dance Division(미국 뉴욕공립도서관 제롬 로빈스 춤 분과), Original Documentation Program(공연 녹화 프로그램), Dance Preservation(춤 보존), Media(미디어), Genevieve Oswald(제네비에브 오스왈드)