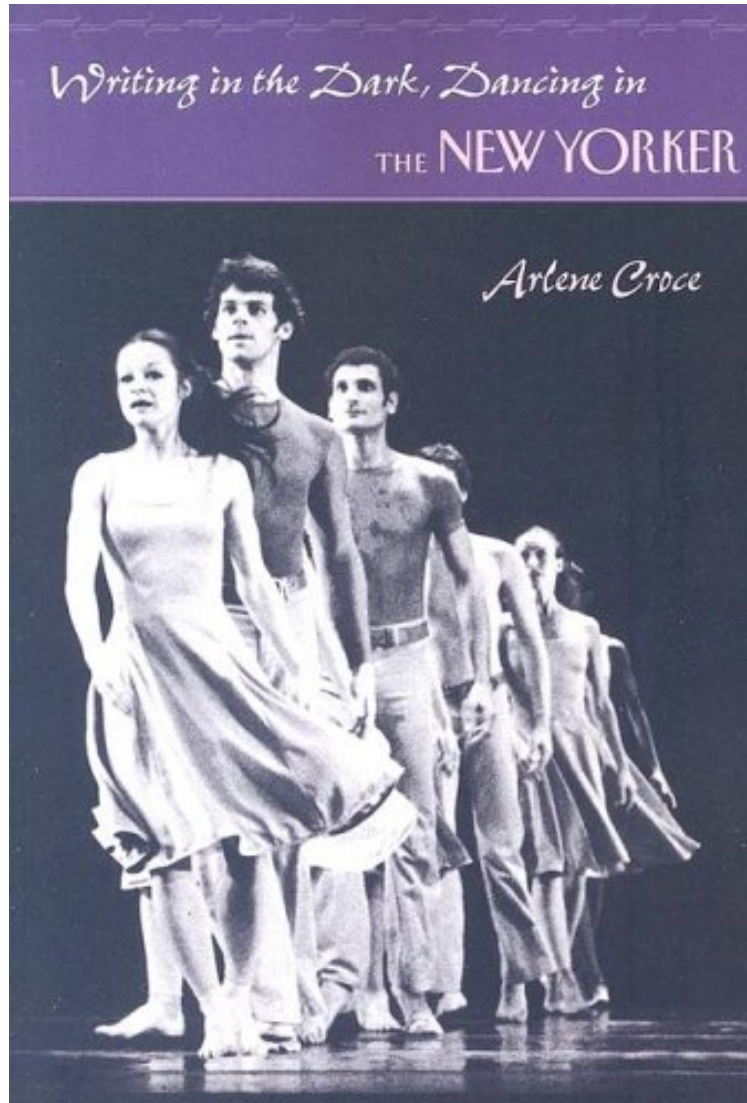


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Writing in the Dark, Dancing in The New Yorker

Arlene Croce

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Arlene Croce : Writing in the Dark, Dancing in The New Yorker before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Writing in the Dark, Dancing in The New Yorker:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy pat solikLove the Book, writing is fabulous.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. a chronicle of a crucial period in American danceBy MARINA HARSSCroce's writing is a model of criticism--lucid, muscular, sometimes provocative, and deeply engaged. Did she get things wrong at times? Yes. Was she opinionated? Extremely. But what a writer. Utter clarity; no bull; no jargon.7 of 42 people found the following review helpful. Arlene Croce and Bill T. JonesBy ErstwhileSince Arlene Croce

criticized Bill T. Jones's 'Still/Here' without seeing it, I'll criticize her book without reading it. I did read her original attack in the New Yorker. Croce's attack on Jones was rightly received by the dance world with repugnance and disbelief. I'm not surprised to read that she has no background in dance; she is also a shoddy human being. Buying this book puts money in the pocket of a monstrous person and her publisher. Avoid it -- and her -- like the plague.

The best of America's best writer on dance

From Publishers Weekly This retrospective is a treasure trove for dance lovers: over 25 years of New Yorker columns from the dean of New York City dance critics. Croce began at the New Yorker in 1973: "I knew the hour was late: Balanchine was sixty-nine, Graham had left the stage" and a number of stellar careers were on the wane. This collection, much of which appeared in Croce's earlier works (*Afterimage*; *Going to the Dance*; *Sight Lines*), goes on to provide an insightful, discerning account of recent dance history. Croce was present for all of the high points: Baryshnikov's 1974 defection, Suzanne Farrell's return to the Balanchine fold from European exile the same year, Paul Taylor's emergence as a choreographic heavyweight, and the ever-evolving, occasionally explosive interweave between ballet and modern synthesis, among others. Croce pursues more scholarly offbeat interests at times: "Kyli n an and His Antecedents," on the Czech master, for one, and possibly her most controversial column, "Discussing the Undiscussable." This 1995 attack on what Croce calls "victim art" (in which she criticized a work she had not seen) caused a major brouhaha with choreographer Bill T. Jones and the wider art world. Croce's introduction provides some welcome personal notes: she herself never studied or performed dance or music at all, but she understands and explains her role as critic and witness (including, incidentally, how she makes notes in a darkened theater). Croce is one of dance's best writers, and any balletophile or modern dance lover who hasn't already acquired her earlier collections will want this richly rewarding volume in their personal library. (Nov.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal For more than 20 years, Croce's dance essays in *The New Yorker* captured the essence of the most elusive of the performing arts. Although most of these pieces were previously collected in three compilations that are now out of print (*Afterimages*, *Going to the Dance*, and *Sight Lines*), they, and others, are now gathered together for the first time. Here, Croce analyzes and describes individual dancers, choreographers, dance companies, performances, and trends with a turn of phrase as elegant as a brilliantly executed pas de deux. Always thoughtful and often thought-provoking in her reflections, Croce's essays exult in the sublime and excoriate the ridiculous. One essay in particular, "Discussing the Undiscussable," in which Croce coins the phrase "victim art," ignited a controversy that became one of the famous battles of the "culture wars" of the Nineties. Drama critic Kenneth Tynan once said that "a good drama critic is one who perceives what is happening in the theatre of his time. A great drama critic also perceives what is not happening." Croce is a great dance critic. An essential selection for all dance and performing arts collections. -D

Carolyn M. Mulac, Chicago P.L. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist Croce has been writing about dance for the New Yorker for the last three decades, and she has not only absorbed and responded to a grand spectrum of styles and artistic intentions with an eye to conveying the immediacy of the viewing experience, she has also attempted to discern each choreographer's place in history. Her keenly observant and strongly fashioned reviews avoid both journalistic gloss and academic abstraction. Whether she's declaring Twyla Tharp's *Push Comes to Shove* a "real work of art" in 1976; or vividly articulating the "clear and precise, yet bluntly delivered" androgynous power of Mark Morris in 1984; or declaring, in her most controversial essay, her scorn for "victim art" in a 1994 discussion of a dance she did not see, Bill T. Jones' *Still/Here*, Croce is specific, clear, and impassioned. She has helped anchor the work of Balanchine, Graham, Taylor, and many more and embraced the new and the risky as long as it meets certain timeless criteria. This substantial collection will stand as an essential guide to the dance of a demanding and exciting era. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved