THE WOMEN OF MODERN DANCE IN TORONTO 1965-1975

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of women working in modern dance in Toronto between 1965 and 1975. I conducted interviews with four dance artists and one dance writer from this period. Through interviews and historical research I provide a social history of the lives and experiences of the interview subjects within the context of the woman artist in society and the woman dance artist within the arts. I provide historical accounts of post World War II Toronto, modern dance in Toronto from the early twentieth century, the Canada Council for the Arts' support of modern dance and The Women's Liberation Movement. I consider writings and interviews by and about author Margaret Atwood as a point of reference for the Canadian female artist working during this era. I also use Annual Reports from the Canada Council of the Arts and The Report on The Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970) to provide further context.

For my mother
Diana Maud Hammond Boye

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Introduction

In Margaret Atwood's *Negotiating With the Dead: A Writer on Writing,* a series of lectures prepared to be read to aspiring writers at Cambridge University, she talks candidly about her own process of becoming a writer, about her childhood and upbringing, her parents' interests, the pop culture of her youth and adolescence and realizing as she walked across a football field at sixteen that she knew she was going to be a writer. What struck me most about her accounts was her acute awareness of where she as a woman fit into her craft as well as her perceived views and opinions of her immediate community and the community at large. Her journey through universities in Canada and the United States and her eventual return to Canada was distinctly personal but also distinctly political. Following her first successes and in fact into the present she has been treated as an enigma, perhaps because she is brilliant, candid, sharp tongued and a woman, or perhaps because all celebrities are turned into enigmas. What made her tale so distinct to me, a tale that could with alteration to detail and levels of success be the story of many women artists, was the familiarity of its setting in Toronto. This ability to relate through location led me to ask questions I had not asked before, about the experiences of women in my own discipline in my own geographical location. Who were her contemporaries in dance and had they gone through similar experiences?

As quickly as I asked myself this question, its scope increased exponentially. Atwood participates in the writing tradition with its long history, deeply rooted establishment and accessible relationship to the public. My experience as a contemporary dancer had

informed me first hand that all of these attributes are in various stages of lesser development for dance as a whole with modern dance somewhere at the bottom of the pile. The history of dance as it is being written is selective. My own education coupled with an interest in history has given me access to the masters, the innovators and the pioneers of modern and contemporary dance. Almost all of them are American and the stories of figures such as Isadora Duncan, Mary Wigman and Martha Graham are larger than life. As a student, the experience of learning codified techniques often precedes any knowledge of the actual lives of their creators. Encountering the technique of Doris Humphrey and her collaborative work with José Limón has been a prime example of this in my personal training. Perhaps this is an issue in dance that exists because the dancing itself is primary, the history of its evolution secondary. Finally the issue of Canadian identity came to the fore, another issue raised and explored by Atwood. As Canadians, it has become a part of our legacy that we have in the past, hopefully less so in the present, ignored our history, failing to acknowledge its significance.

I soon realized that I knew little, and when I looked found little about the women who were working in dance in Toronto at the same time as Atwood during her formative years. I knew even less about women in other disciplines, save for Joni Mitchell, who I knew had played the folk circuit centered in 1960s Yorkville. My knowledge of Mitchell had come as a result of a teenage obsession with sixties culture. This interest arrived when I was fifteen, in 1990 in Hamilton, Ontario when I was certain that I was going to be a writer for *Rolling Stone*. Posters of Woodstock and other symbols of the famous era

covered my bedroom walls and convinced me that I had most certainly been born at the wrong time.

My obsession with an era was accompanied by an unwavering commitment to biography. Exploring the lives of the famous and not so famous has been a passionately fueled hobby of mine for as long as I can remember. During my academic life as an undergraduate I had yet to discover that this hobby could become useful, so it seemed useless. I had also by that time made the choice to give up *Rolling Stone* for the life of a modern dancer. While a student at the University of Toronto I had taken a recreational modern dance class with York alumna and ex-Dancemaker Edith Varnam, and when I heard the first pound of a live drum coupled with a plié away from the barre, I found what I hadn't known I was looking for. After a lifetime of dancing I had never been told I might be an artist, and when my transfer into the York University Department of Dance gave me this opportunity through being a Fine Arts Faculty student I dove in willingly. My second (and continued) major in English quickly funneled itself into literary and cultural theory. I was attracted to learning theoretical tools that would allow me to dismantle literature, art and society. My most memorable reading however came at the very end of my undergraduate studies. I had a single course left to take in English. I now realize I came full circle with the Women and Poetry course offered in June 1999 at the Glendon Campus. We studied women poets and their lives and contexts; finally I could bury myself in biography and read poems looking for invisible links. Fate had it that somewhere in the final weeks of the course we had to read Denise Levertov's "Anne

Sexton: Light Up the Cave." In the wake of Sexton's 1974 suicide, Levertov vehemently protests the destructive connection made between artists and certain depression, destruction and often suicide. She writes, "the point is that while the creative impulse and the self-destructive impulse can, and often do, coexist, their relationship is distinctly acausal; self-destructiveness is a handicap to the life of art, not the reverse" (Levertov 80).

Three weeks later, I graduated and soon after moved to Vancouver. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I held fast to this manifesto I had found. It put into words for me that though I wanted to pursue a life in the arts, I didn't want to give up other things, the so called traps that had somehow been planted in my mind as such. The notion that it would be detrimental for me to marry, stay in one place, have children, work a practical or menial job at times, or make any substantial amount of money at all, things that I realized I may very well want, scared me. I saw separating my artistic practice and my personal life as destructive, as ending in certain doom and unhappiness.

Five years later, when I returned to Toronto and then in 2004 to York University for my MA in Dance, I found in Atwood and her non-fiction autobiographical writing, a heroine: by her accounts she was leading a very normal and stable life while accomplishing unparalleled success as a Canadian woman writer. Furthermore she had written about it in detail. I wanted to find her parallel in modern dance. So, I began to look.

As good fortune would have it, the summer before I began my graduate studies I was hired as the research assistant at Dance Collection Danse (DCD), Canada's only archive and publisher devoted specifically to Canadian dance history. Around this time, Carol Anderson introduced me to *The Encyclopedia of Theatre Dance in Canada (ECTD)*. At DCD the core duty of my employment was to update the archive's inventory. Beginning in M, where my predecessor had left off, I began to go through each individual fond and loosely piece together a view of Canadian dance history, mainly twentieth century.

Not surprisingly, a large percentage of the fonds at DCD belonged to women and their experiences were of deep interest to me. I quickly began to catch a glimpse of the scene and tradition that I was a part of and felt a certain amount of pride and relief in knowing it. I had an idea, generally, but not specifically, that I was going to set out to write a social history of women dancers working in the sixties and compare them to other female artists such as Atwood. I began to formulate the opinion that as female artists, modern dancers have had a less difficult time than women working in other artistic disciplines. Two ideas were behind my reasoning. First, the primary focus on the body in dance puts women in a seemingly non-threatening intellectual position. Secondly, modern dance was a tradition initiated and predominantly led by women. If modern dancers were leaders and successful as artists, would they not then also be significant players in the women's movement that gained its momentum in the mid-sixties and turned full force in the seventies? Where did they place themselves in it all? Certainly I thought, somewhere near the centre.

During my first year at DCD a choreographic biography of David Earle became the primary publishing project and I was handed the job of organizing, finding and identifying hundreds of images of David Earle and Toronto Dance Theatre (TDT), the company he co-founded with Peter Randazzo and Patricia Beatty in 1968. I was especially affected by these images and was engulfed not only in photographs but also newspaper clippings and posters, all of which had been compiled by author Michele Green. I was sent to find more in the boxes of dance photographers Frank Richards and Andrew Oxenham and to the collection of Kay Macpherson, a leader in the peace and women's movement in Canada, but more importantly in this context, the mother of one of TDT's first dancers, Susan Macpherson.

The stately elegance of Patricia Beatty and the powerful stature of Susan Macpherson passed before me in numerous photographs for days on end. In these photos something resonated within me, their reality was so tangible. The era that they were a part of during the early years of the company in the late sixties only intensified my fascination. I also developed a deep curiosity about another TDT dancer, Kathryn Brown. Unfortunately I was unable to meet her in person as she now lives in Australia, but as a woman of colour I wondered how her experiences compared to my own, how had things changed if at all in the thirty-five years between then and now. Brown was also unique because I had never heard of her. No longer a part of the current Toronto community, her name had evaporated into the air with so many others.

While looking through the collections of Frank Richards and Andrew Oxenham I was also drawn to images of the women who were within my current sphere. I had first met Carol Anderson while working in the Dance office at York University in 2003. Slowly we began to have brief conversations about this and that and she directed me towards the *ETDC* and DCD. She left a copy of the encyclopedia in the office for me to peruse and eventually I found her. In a stunning photograph taken by prolific dance photographer Cylla von Tiedemann, Carol is airborne, her right elbow speared against her piked torso, her left arm afloat behind her with a flagged hand. Her eyes almost black, she looks out into an infinite space with an expression that reveals little but seems to ask many questions. How, I asked myself, had I never seen this photo? I read Michael Crabb's entry about her and another piece of my puzzle fell into place. Patricia Fraser, who was a graduate student at York at the time, and Anderson had been co-artistic directors of Dancemakers in the early 1980s. I flipped to Fraser and found her also airborne in a light summer dress arched backward in a position of impossible ease, looking out into the camera.

When I began to put together an ideal list of women to interview for this work I knew immediately that Beatty, Macpherson, Anderson and Fraser would be at its core. Kathryn Brown remained a point of deep interest but I wanted to ask her a different set of questions. Of course when I began to discuss my topic with people, additional suggestions about to whom I should talk were abundant. Mary-Elizabeth Manley, Pat Miner, Peggy Baker, Pamela Grundy (about herself and Judy Jarvis), Elizabeth Chitty,

Johanna Householder and countless others were all put forward. Had time and space permitted I would have approached them all. One suggestion I did follow up on was Susan Cohen, a writer and the first editor for *Dance in Canada* magazine. Many people told me she would be an invaluable source as an outside commentator who was a part of the burgeoning scene; and so she was. I eventually found a way to define my time line. I would begin in 1965, the year that Beatty returned to Toronto after a decade in New York, and end in 1975, when the Festival of Women in the Arts occurred as part of the International Women's Year as declared by the United Nations. Within this time period a tremendous amount of growth and activity occurred towards the establishment and growth of modern dance in Toronto. By 1975 a second generation of professional artists had begun to emerge and the scene had exploded to include an avant-garde performance space, 15 Dance Lab run by Lawrence and Miriam Adams, which attracted artists from all over the country. It also hosted a large part of the evolution of performance art in Toronto.

In order to put these women into any sort of context I of course had to investigate many things. In Chapter I, I begin with what had been so integral to drawing me in, location. A metropolitan city today, Toronto has undergone drastic change in the last half century, change that has undisputedly impacted the role of culture and dance in its society. Following Toronto's history I provide a chronological path of the development of modern dance from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe and North America and funnel into the women who fostered its early growth in Toronto, and

their connections with the pioneers who had become leaders in New York City by the end of the 1930s. I then give an overview of the evolution and place of arts and culture in Canada and Toronto and the significance of the development of the Canada Council of the Arts to all of the arts and specifically to how it came to provide the support that would allow modern dance to attain professional status in Toronto by the late 1960s.

In the second chapter I necessarily look at the lives of women in Toronto, beginning with a brief overview of the women's movement in Canada in its first and second waves. Toronto was central and integral to them both, but especially the second. With invaluable support from the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women* (RCSW) initiated in 1967 and published in 1970, I was able to gain a broader and more summarized understanding and look at all aspects of the lives of women than I ever anticipated finding when I began my research. The results of the commission are supplemented by the support of writings found in the women's magazine *Chatelaine*, which was taken over by revolutionary editor and writer Doris Anderson in 1957. Progressive in its views and scope of coverage, *Chatelaine* gave women a voice, through letters and interviews that are telling. Valerie Korinek's book, *Roughing It in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*, provides further context through her astute readings of the magazine.

With this background established I outline the era of focus from 1965 to 1975 and provide an overview of the developments of modern dance and its ascent into professionalism. It was my intent, upon setting out, to make an in-depth comparison

between women modern dance artists and women artists in other disciplines. The reality that a comprehensive investigation would take years beyond the time I had available became apparent and so I fall back on the summary provided in *RCSW* on "Women in the Arts." My most in-depth comparison is provided through excerpts of writings and interviews by and with Margaret Atwood. She was after all my point of departure and she has been thoroughly investigated by others.

I end with the results of my interviews with Beatty, Macpherson, Anderson, Fraser and Cohen. At the root of it all I wanted to know about their personal experiences. Why did they choose modern dance; were their artistic pursuits informed by their political agendas; what challenges did they face as artists, as women? The interview process was at times overwhelming but overall deeply rewarding.

I. Post World War II Toronto and Canadian Modern Dance

By the mid 1960s the city of Toronto was going through tremendous change. Political, legislative, religious, architectural, demographic, social and cultural shifts were occurring within the city known for its pious and predictable behavior and it grew in proportions that would, by the third quarter of the twentieth century, put it on the international map for its newly found character and distinction. Following the end of the Second World War, "Toronto the Good" (named so because of its many churches, mainly Protestant) began to disappear. In Fredrick H. Armstrong's *Toronto: The Place of Meeting* he writes of a Victorian Toronto that to the dismay of many had its final days during the end of World War II. Legislation in the late 1940s, for example, allowed cocktail bars to stay open later and sports events to occur on Sundays.

The changes marked by Armstrong illustrate small legislative shifts that established a new balance in Toronto which brought it up to date with other metropolitan cities. It was losing its reputation as staunch and repressive. Toronto's virtually homogeneous demographic, seventy-two percent protestant and seventy-eight percent British (Benn 618), changed dramatically between 1941 and 1946 when population exploded with a major influx of immigration following the war. Not only did Toronto attract and welcome new citizens, it also attracted people from its surrounding rural communities in need of work. High rise buildings began appearing throughout the downtown core and into the suburbs in order to provide homes for the growing population. Older distinguished neighbourhoods became unrecognizable and were demolished. Other signs of expansion

were seen in the installation of the most advanced computerized traffic light system in the world in 1963 at a cost of three million dollars, a new City Hall in 1965, and in 1964 the initial planning for the building of the Toronto Dominion Banking Plaza which would open by the end of the decade, had just begun.

Children born during and immediately after the war were entering their mid to late teens by the early sixties. Reaping the benefits of their parents' work and planning, they were also the generation who became known for their stance on social issues and who lost faith in the very world their parents had worked to construct. The assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and civil rights leader Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights and Peace Movements all marked a changing continent. Youth were forced to ask questions about their society and were no longer willing to accept that everything was as it should be. While these events were directly linked to the United States, Canada did not, could not, go unaffected. Within our own borders The Quiet Revolution in Quebec and Trudeaumania were domestic signs of the times. While social and political issues had the continent reeling with change, Toronto was contending with its own shifting identity. Its population was now extensively varied in race, religion, beliefs and culture. The search for identity was not exclusive or necessarily new to Toronto, though; Canada had long struggled with the challenge of finding an inclusive and definitive identity for its diverse and dispersed people. The absence of this definition resulted in what can safely be called a raging inferiority complex at the heart of Canadian culture. This inferiority complex has done little for the artists of Canada. Unrecorded and often unknown traditions,

confounding in its diversity, a public who looks elsewhere for 'true art' and a lack of governmental support have all been contending factors in this void. In *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* Margaret Atwood addresses this gap at the heart of Canadian education: "The tendency in Canada, at least in high school and university teaching, has been to emphasize the personal and the universal but to skip the national or cultural. This is like trying to teach human anatomy by looking only at the head and the feet" (Atwood, *Survival*, 22). This prevailing attitude of institutions and the general public was often cause for artists to head south to the United States for the opportunity to develop and build sustaining careers. In Nicholas Jennings's *Before the Goldrush: Flashbacks to the Dawn of the Canadian Sound,* he gives many accounts of music artists who found their start in the now famous section of Toronto's Yorkville. Eventually many felt the need to leave Canada to gain access to larger audiences, work with more established musicians, and produce quality recordings. Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Ian and Sylvia (Fricker) Tyson are all examples of Canadian music artists who left the country in search of more.

1960s Yorkville is a microcosm of the developments that occurred throughout the decade in society, politics and art in Toronto. In *Gold Rush,* Jennings explains that the block bound by Yonge Street and Avenue Road and Bloor and Webster Avenue (Jennings 21) was first annexed by the city in 1883 and became a popular destination primarily for German and English immigrant entrepreneurs after they had been pushed north by gentrification below Bloor Street. The area became heavily populated with

coffee shops that hosted folk and jazz acts. In the first half of the decade folk purists dominated the scene and attracted musicians from all over Canada. Representative of leftist political thinking, the musicians and the crowds they drew became the centre of Toronto's counterculture. Jennings writes of the energy of these times:

> During the early weeks of 1964, there was clearly something in the air. North America, still in a state of shock over the November assassination of John F. Kennedy, desperately needed a change. It came on February 9 with the televised appearance of an English band on "The Ed Sullivan Show." Time stood still that night as 73 million people across the continent watched The Beatles perform. ... As Bob Dylan was telling everybody, the times were definitely 'a changin' (Jennings 55).

Jennings refers to a feeling of the collective unconscious that was stirring in 1964. It is important to note that by this point the decade was nearly half over. The capital 's' Sixties of counter culture, hippies and flower power had not yet begun and would not take full hold until towards the end of the decade. The actual Summer of Love was one summer in 1967, and Woodstock, perhaps the most well known event of the sixties, occurred late in the summer of 1969. The late sixties set the tone in many ways for the seventies but the capitalization of trends in music, fashion and culture that is happening to this day claims an entire decade for what actually happened in two and a half years. Those coming of age in the seventies rode a momentum, lasting a long time, that began back in 1964 and erupted internationally in the student demonstrations of 1968. The folks who were the youth in the early sixties were now entering their thirties. Just as this famous era was divided in two, so too was the generation who populated it.

In Francois Ricard's book *The Lyric Generation: The Life and Times of the Baby Boomers*, he divides the fifteen year baby boom generation into two groups determined by when during the boom they were born. One half Ricard refers to as the actual lyric generation. They were the ones born during the war entering their twenties in the first half of the sixties when Kennedy was shot and the Beatles appeared on Ed Sullivan; those born in the years following the war actually came of age during the second half of the decade just in time to go to Woodstock. Ricard writes:

> The crucial difference, in the case of the lyric generation, derives from the fact that it was ushering in a vast movement soon to be known as the baby boom. Far from remaining isolated, these children would be followed by a multitude of other children, born all through the fifties and infused like them, though to a lesser degree, with the spirit of the new times (Ricard 24).

He continues to discuss the significance of the sheer numbers of the youth who populated this generation in being able to have the strength to mobilize actual change. By the end of the sixties in Yorkville youth were coming in droves to participate in the alternative neighbourhood that had actually already seen its peak. Fredrick Anderson writes of the time when Yorkville was being dismantled by the authorities:

> As the sixties became the seventies, Toronto's Yorkville was indicative of the attitudes of the authorities towards its population and their beliefs. The centre of counter culture was being 'cleaned up'. The increased cost of living and rapidly changing store fronts pushed the unwanted people and culture out (Anderson 195).

The rapidity of Yorkville's evolution is indicative of the general pace of change in Toronto. As it came of age and the youth became less conservative, fighting the rigidity that the older generation tried to hang onto, arts and culture experienced their own

maturation. The existence and accessibility of national funding and an increased determination for home grown development and professionalism initiated and assisted in the cultivation of Toronto's professional modern dance scene.

Between 1965 and 1975 modern dance achieved a level of professionalism that had occurred within Toronto's ballet world nearly fifteen years earlier with the National Ballet of Canada (NBC). Having had its inaugural performance in November of 1951 at the Eaton Auditorium under the artistic directorship of British import Celia Franca, the NBC was Toronto's only professional ballet company. Other cultural institutions that populated Toronto in the early fifties were the Canadian Opera Company, The Royal Alexandra Theatre, which was being saved from its demise by Ed Mirvish, and Massey Hall. In 1945 the CBC FM radio was established and CBC television had its premier broadcast in 1952. Toronto became the central operating location for the English CBC. The O'Keefe Centre opened in 1960 and in 1964 plans for the St. Lawrence Centre were given the go ahead and the new space opened its doors in 1970. The theatres attracted companies from all over the world and the NBC gained a national and international reputation throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

While the NBC was marking its place nationally and internationally, local independent, unfunded and amateur collectives and individuals were working to establish a place for, and awareness of, modern dance. From the turn of the twentieth century small inroads were made in its development. They are traceable through a handful of dedicated teachers and artists. Between Amy Sternberg, Madeleine Boss Lasserre, Saida Gerrard,

Cynthia Barrett, Nancy Lima Dent and Yone Kveitys the traditions that would become modern dance were brought to Toronto. The tradition of which they were a part begs a brief overview in order to put them into place.

In the 1950s what had come to be called modern dance was really in its late adolescence. Modern dance was a term coined by critic John Martin in a series of lectures he gave at the New School for Social Research in New York in 1931. He referred to a selected group of dancers and choreographers who eschewed commercial entertainment and embraced serious art, who drew audiences of artists and intellectuals and performed for the most part in Broadway or off Broadway houses on Sundays when regular shows were not performing. They were committed to the principle that emotional experience can express itself through movement directly. They were Mary Wigman, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Helen Tamiris. He published these lectures in a volume titled *The Modern Dance* and so the name stuck. These artists were responsible for the continuation of the tradition introduced by their predecessors, Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller and Ruth St. Denis.

By the time of the emergence of Martin's lectures movement practices pioneered by Isadora Duncan's philosophical beliefs and demonstrative rebellion against ballet, Victorian culture, and its raging patriarchy had made a significant leap in what they signified and represented. In Deborah Jowitt's *Time and the Dancing Image,* she refers to the "tremendous and long-range" impact of Duncan, not just on dance and the other arts but on society as a whole. Duncan's fame coincided with and likely grew out of the

female population becoming increasingly involved in leisure physical activity. In *Toronto Dance Teachers: 1825-1925*. Mary Jane Warner writes, "Physical culture gained wide popularity in the late nineteenth century, and even teetered on the verge of becoming a full-fledged fad in the 1890s, when middle and upper-class women first began to enjoy and demand greater freedoms." She continues, "Physical culture proved to be an attractive endeavour for the late nineteenth-century woman in developing her social identity, because it was a source of empowerment" (Warner 45). Duncan, with her dancing and her loose dresses, became an icon of female liberation.

While Fuller, Duncan and St. Denis differed significantly in their contributions and performance personas, their context is similar in that they were all American female dance soloists who attained iconic status, who worked outside of dominant ballet traditions, and who found their greatest success and acceptance in Europe. When St. Denis returned to America she opened the Denishawn Dance School with partner Ted Shawn. What she taught was not labeled as modern dance for another sixteen years. When the phrase was coined it was in reference to Denishawn students Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey and their contemporaries, New Yorker Helen Tamiris and expressionist dance pioneer Mary Wigman, who opened a branch of her school in New York in 1931 under the direction of her student Hanya Holm. Wigman belonged to the European tradition of physical culture and studied with Émile Jaques-Dalcroze and Rudolf von Laban before opening her own school in Dresden, Germany, where she developed expressionist dance.

By the time she opened her school in New York the city was clearly the centre of modern dance activity. Graham and Humphrey both left Denishawn in the late twenties and opened their own schools in New York in 1927 and 1928, respectively. Each developed her own style, approach and eventually codified technique. Humphrey was working during this time in partnership with Denishawn peer Charles Weidman. Both of their studios were downtown in the Greenwich Village area, in close proximity to Union Square where the extreme leftist proletariat culture of the 1930s congregated. Both the Communist Party and the Workers Cultural Federation had their offices in this area. Ellen Graff writes of the proximity of the modern dance leaders and leftist social activism in her book *Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928-1942*:

> The geographic intimacy was convenient for socially conscious dancers, and the collision of the two revolutionary worlds sparked an explosion of choreographic activity. The anitacademy and anitelitist basis of modern dance fit nicely within the mission of proletariat culture, just as the proletarian worker proved an eager student and enthusiastic audience for an emergent art (Graff 7).

Though the traditions of Fuller, Duncan and St. Denis were changing, their successors remained aligned with the anti-establishment. This was not necessarily indicative of the thoughts and beliefs of individuals but a general association with leftist politics certainly prevailed as did a tradition that was driven by women. Graff writes, "Whatever the content of the work they produced, the very fact that women were the primary movers was revolutionary. Many fledging groups - revolutionary and bourgeois – were composed only of women, thus explicitly commenting on both the independence of the

female body and its power" (Graff 22). The most common denominator in the evolving modern dance was the role and position of women within it.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s the reputations and influence of Graham and Humphrey intensified. With increased popularity and success their schools became institutions, paradigms of modern dance training and dance companies. As the philosophies of Graham, Humphrey and Wigman continued to grow and develop they attracted dancers from all over; Canada and Toronto were no exception.

During the first part of the century the knowledge and exposure of Duncan and St. Denis, Wigman, Graham and Humphrey were scattered and inconsistent in Toronto. Access to the new form and style of dance was limited. The physical culture movement that was sweeping Europe in the late nineteenth century was also present in North America. This trend was in large part due to the work of Francois Delsarte, a nineteenth century music teacher who developed a system of physical movements and exercises to help develop students' physical awareness and expression. In *Toronto Dance Teachers* Warner writes of this time:

> Torontonians were beginning to connect the idea of exercise with health in terms of one's overall disposition. Local educators, schooled in expression techniques such as oratory, elocution, Delsarte, harmonic gymnastics and dance, began to advertise themselves and gain popularity as teachers (Warner 45).

One of these teachers was Amy Sternberg, who moved to Toronto with her family in 1890. For over forty years she was a leading dance educator in Toronto. She and her older sister Sarah had studied physical culture in Montreal at Miss Barnjum's gymnasium

during their youth. Although Sternberg's primary focus was on ballet Warner credits her with being "a driving force in transforming dance in Toronto from simply a form of healthy exercise into the realm of art" (Warner 47). Sternberg traveled to New York regularly to train and remain competitive against the likes of the Margaret Eaton School. She studied ballet at the Vestoff Serova School where she was also exposed to European strains of modern dance, likely influenced by Wigman. She took classes at The Denishawn Dance School. Promotional materials for Sternberg's school recitals advertised routines she learned at Denishawn as oriental dances (Warner 61) which she incorporated into her curriculum in the 1920s. The popularity of Sternberg's dance shows, or extravaganzas, as they were called by the teacher, was significant. A review following a fundraiser credited one of her performances with shaking up Toronto's reputation as a conservative and puritanical town. A Sternberg pupil, Jean Tilley, wrote later of her teacher's recitals, "It was to Miss Sternberg's credit and ability that she could produce an annual recital on two consecutive nights and fill Massey Hall's two thousand, seven hundred and sixty-five seats" (Tilley). The exposure and impact made by these programs is difficult to imagine today when studio recitals are attended primarily by family and friends in small school or college auditoriums. High society was patronizing and attending these events and its responses were indicative of standards and acceptable practices. It is also likely that many of these audience members may have been exposed to the Denishawan company itself, which visited Canada a number of times. In Gretchen Boehlke-Muc Votruba's article "Ruth St. Denis' Oriental Dances: Early Canadian

Impressions" she traces St. Denis and the Denishawn company appearances in Canada from 1914-1927. Vaudeville's popularity during these years made it an ideal tour circuit for St. Denis and her company and they were met with positive reviews although, writes Votruba, "critics writing about St. Denis reflected public tastes for splendour over artistry and for the exaggerated strangeness of unfamiliar cultures over cultural accuracy" (Votruba 65). Mary Wigman also performed in Toronto at Massey Hall on February 20, 1931. *Toronto Star* reviewer Augustus Bridle wrote of her, "Such superb conscious egotism has never been danced here. NO dancer has ever been so frankly, completely modern" (Bridle). Though each woman was accepted and well received it is evident from Votruba's comments and Bridle's review that modern dance was still new to Toronto audiences.

In addition to physical culture and limited exposure to new dance practices, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, a physical approach to teaching music, was offered at the Toronto Conservatory by Madeleine Boss Lasserre. The Swiss born Lasserre immigrated to Canada in 1924 after completing her studies with Dalcroze in Geneva. In Selma Odom's article "Music and Movement: The Overlapping Careers of Madeleine Boss Lasserre and Saida Gerrard," she makes the connection between Lasserre and one of her students who would go on to be a significant contributor to modern dance in Toronto, Saida Gerrard.

Born to Russian immigrants, Gerrard was also enrolled at Workmen's Circle Peretz School, a non-religious, arts-oriented Jewish school where she studied character and interpretive dance. When a desire for serious dance training arose she set her goals on

going to New York. Having read about Duncan and Wigman in *Dance Magazine* she knew it was where she could get what was obviously unavailable to her in Toronto.

Until the late 1950s artistic practices in Canada were primarily supported through the culture of patronage by wealthy individuals, ladies groups, community organizations such as the Workmens' Circle and private schools. To make a living as teacher and entrepreneur was possible, as demonstrated by Sternberg, but an existence as a professional dance artist was not. Dance concerts were given by students and amateur companies but performances by professional groups or individuals were given by artists from beyond Canada's borders. The lack of opportunities for extensive training and little exposure to advanced artists limited the experience of a Toronto dance student.

After four years of study in New York at the Wigman School and later with Wigman student Fe Alf, Gerrard returned to Toronto in 1934. With her eyes on a professional career, she found that Toronto offered little, but family commitment following the death of her father forced her to move home. Frustrated but impassioned, Gerrard opened her own studio on Grenville Street but soon relocated to the Hermant building at the corner of Dundas and Victoria Streets to accommodate her growing student numbers. Gerrard brought focused and specific training primarily influenced by her time at the Wigman School. She also performed before thousands of Torontonians with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and received rave reviews. Along with exposing the public to modern dance in its new found formality, she exposed hungry students to a structured alternative to ballet. In 1935, her family situation in order, Gerrard returned to the States

for good, but not without having made a significant impact. One student, Cynthia Barrett, wrote of her limited time with Gerrard during 1934-1935:

> I myself had no teachers with any first hand experience of their own, except when I was around eleven or twelve and Saida Gerrard came to town....Her style? She had studied with Hanya Holm, Charles Weidman...Anyway, she set up a studio that had mirrors and a summer terrace. None of us, her students, had ever before seen a place so fine for dance classes. In Toronto, Gerrard was the foremost exponent of the dance revolution; but in less than two years she was gone, leaving her adult students to congregate together to try to keep everything they had learned alive (Barrett).

When Gerrard returned to New York she re-entered a dance environment alive and active with the support of the federal government through the Federal Dance Project, the last of five initiatives in the arts instituted by the Roosevelt administration with the intent of providing unemployed artists with sustaining employment opportunities. Gerrard's student Barrett was left in a far less supportive situation in Canada. Canadian culture was not a phrase that carried any inherent meaning and the value placed upon art in Canadian society was questionable when little if any support was offered by the government. When she came of age, Barrett also sought out further training in the United States. She studied at the Graham School in New York in 1939 and in 1940 and 1941 attended the Bennington College dance summer schools in Vermont. The Bennington summer schools were a nexus of modern dance in the 1930s, and exposed students to the major teachers and leaders of the time. Bennett did return to Canada though, perhaps inspired to give students what she had not had. In 1941 she opened her own school through the Jewish People's Order and founded the Neo Classical Dance Theatre Group in the mid 1940s.

Between Gerrard's permanent relocation to the U.S. and Barrett's establishment of the Neo Classical Theatre in the mid 1940s, the Second World War was coming to an end and Toronto's reception of millions of immigrants in the decades to follow directly impacted the course of the arts and modern dance. The United Jewish People's Order was an organization founded in 1945 as a pro-socialist fraternity and cultural organization aimed at assisting Russian and European Jews to make the transition to life in Canada. They provided a venue for Barrett's company which came under the direction of Nancy Lima Dent in 1949 (she changed the name of the company to the New Dance Theatre). Lima Dent studied with Russian ballet master Boris Volkoff and German born Elizabeth Lesse who taught free style interpretive dancing at the Volkoff School. She traveled to Buffalo, New York to take classes. In the web exhibit, "Nancy Lima Dent: A Woman of Her Time," Amy Bowring addresses Lima Dent's financial difficulties during her tenure as director of The New Dance Group:

> Nancy never received any compensation for all of her work as a director and choreographer. She was paid a stipend for teaching but had to work many unpleasant day jobs as she struggled to maintain her status as an artist. The UJPO's patronage supplied the company with rehearsal space and occasionally money for costumes and sets, but paying a director to lead the dance group never seemed a priority (Bowring, Lima Dent website, path 1).

This do-it-yourself, volunteer status of the dance artist and teacher was the only situation offered to dancers. Yone Kvietys came to Canada during the post war immigration boom, arriving in Toronto with her parents from Lithuania, via Germany, in 1948. She had studied modern dance in Lithuania at the Nasvytis Modern Dance School

and at the Laban Concert and Theater Dance School in Hamburg. She founded her second dance company in Toronto in 1956 following a stint in Montreal with choreographer Ruth Sorel and directing her first company, the Montreal Modern Dance Group. For a decade, Kvietys taught at various locations in Toronto, including the University of Toronto, and The Young Men's – Young Women's Hebrew Association (YM-YWHS) and choreographed for a series aired on the newly established CBC TV. While Kvietys worked tirelessly for modern dance alongside Barrett and Lima Dent the ballet world in Toronto had fully matured.

Throughout the forties ballet began to establish itself as a professional performing art through the Canadian Ballet Festival. In her article "Sacrifice in the Studio: A History of Working Conditions, Contracts, and Unions for Dance in Canada, 1900-1980," Amy Bowring outlines the influx of dancers and teachers during post World War II immigration and the eventual culmination of ballet practitioners in the establishment of the Canadian Ballet Festival in 1948. Individuals working in isolation or in competition with one another established the need for a collective happening. In the end it created a stable ballet culture. Bowring writes:

> This national event consisted of six week-long festivals held in various Canadian cities between 1948 and 1954. A handful of performing groups, such as the Winnipeg Ballet, the Volkoff Canadian Ballet, and the Ruth Sorel Modern Dance Group, along with troupes of senior students assembled from the nation's dance schools, came together annually to showcase their work. While the groups varied in ability, they demonstrated that the dance field in Canada was growing and contributing to the cultural development of the nation (Bowring, "Sacrifice", 144).

The National Ballet of Canada developed in 1951 as a result of a group of Torontonians who participated in these festivals. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB) was the only other professional ballet company in Canada at the time. Founded in 1940 by Gweneth Lloyd, the RWB did not gain financial stability until 1949 when it was incorporated. In 1951 the NBC and RWB were alone in being able to provide their dancers with a professional wage. Of important note here is that the RWB and NBC did achieve professional status without the support of government funding. With familiarity and popular interest on its side, ballet was able to generate patrons and a significant enough audience to support its companies, an occurrence that would not have been possible in the modern dance scene.

The emergence of the Canada Council in 1957 was therefore an invaluable turning point for Canadian culture. Resources for Canadian artists had significantly diminished after the war. Throughout its duration, artists were paid to make wartime art and propaganda. Although the Massey Commission is what eventually resulted in the formation of the Canada Council, it was preceded by appeals made by artists and arts organizations following World War II, which urged the Canadian government to recognize artists as equally crucial to Canada in peace as they were in war. During the war many artists were employed through the National Film Board, the CBC and the War Information Board's Department of Cultural Affairs, Canada's admittedly tame version of efforts in war propaganda. Artists were also employed to teach art and "provide men and women in the services with 'an absorbing and interesting free-time activity,' [they

also] helped establish art clubs, mount art exhibitions, and hold art competitions" (Tippett, *Culture,* 158). In 1944 the Artists' Brief to the Reconstruction Committee was composed by amalgamating the needs and concerns of sixteen cultural organizations including the Canadian Group of Painters and the Canadian Authors Association. This report, which was highly commended for its effective directness, despite being compiled by the "starry eyed folk of Canada, the dreamers of dreams, a reputedly unbusinesslike tribe" (an observer, Tippett, *Culture,* 172), eventually led to the formation of the Canadian Arts Council. Although temporary and ultimately unsuccessful, it did take important initiatives in giving Canadian artists visibility at home and abroad.

The Massey Commission, a result of these efforts and appeals, was held by the federal government of Canada and intended to inquire into the activities

> of all government agencies relating to radio, film, television, the encouragement of the arts and sciences, research, the preservation of our national records, a national library, museums, exhibitions; relations in these fields with international organizations, and activities generally which are designed to enrich our national life, and to increase our own consciousness of our national heritage and knowledge to Canada and abroad" (Tippett, *Culture*, 184).

In 1957, its first year, the Canada Council provided financial grant assistance to nine orchestras, three professional theatre companies, three dance companies and two periodicals. The National Ballet Guild of Canada was one of three national organizations to receive the maximum award of $50 000; Stratford Shakespearean Festival and the Vancouver Festival Society were the other two. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Les Grands Ballets Canadian were the second and third dance companies to receive funding.

Modern dance was not granted government funding until eight years after the establishment of the Canada Council. The first time the term modern dance was used was in a grant awarded to NBC dancer Lillian Jarvis to study in New York in 1965. In 1967 Le Groupe de la Place Royale, founded by Jeanne Renaud, received $3500. Until this point in time teachers, students and dance enthusiasts had made do with little or no financial support for their work. The women mentioned thus far were clearly not the only players in Toronto, but their experiences of poverty and the lack of validation that comes with the absence of support are representative of the Toronto scene. In 1960 Lima Dent, Kvietys and teacher / dancer Bianca Rogge came together as the Modern Dance Associates and produced a single evening festival with the same desires as those who organized the ballet festivals. The festival ran annually until 1963.

On February 26, 1960 the *Toronto Daily Star* ran a feature about the new festival on the cover of the "Women" section entitled, "Man, It's Modern – The Real Stuff" (Bowring, Lima Dent website, path 2). The placement of this on the cover of the "Women" section raises questions about the role of modern dance in Toronto's art scene and attitudes towards both dance and female artists. In step with the physical culture movement of the early twentieth century and with the prevalence of women in New York City in the 1930s, modern dance remained an art form predominantly populated by and associated with predominantly women.

The *Toronto Daily Star's* "Women" section and the "Women's Globe and Mail" both ran weekly and featured stories and information presumably of interest to women. Why

was a landmark festival bringing together Toronto's modern dance activity featured here instead of in the arts section? This raises further questions about the relationship of dance to the other art forms and how the specific role of women in dance made their experience different from women engaged in theatre, writing, music and visual arts. Although a full comparison is too large to address here, an overview of the lives of women in Toronto from the sixties through to the mid seventies and of women who were working in the arts at this time will help to develop a sense of the experience of women who were working in dance. As the Canada Council offered support and Canadian dance artists began to make the choice to return home after extended stints in training and dance careers in the United States, modern dance in Canada was propelled into a new era of productivity and success. At the same time, the Women's Liberation Movement was slowly coming to the forefront as baby boomers entered adulthood. How were the female leaders in modern dance aligned with this movement and did their involvement in modern dance make them different from women within the rest of society? In order to approach these questions, inquiry must begin with a look at what the lives of women in the rapidly changing city of Toronto were like.

II. The Women's Movement, Women in the Arts and Professional Modern Dance in Toronto

Trying to piece together a picture of the lives of women and then adding the context of the female artist is a many layered affair. While Toronto was going through its own considerable changes the way women's lives were lived, viewed, legislated, and discussed, shifted dramatically throughout the sixties and seventies across Canada and North America. As post World War II changed Toronto forever, so too did the twentieth century change the lives of women in Canada. The suffrage movement that defined first wave feminism; the varied groups, ages and beliefs that led to the manifestation of the Women's Liberation Movement in the mid 1960s; a Canadian women's magazine with feminist content that preceded the publication of the book that is said to be responsible for the second wave of feminism; and the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) that looked closely at and aimed to change discriminative legislation of women in Canada, among other things, are all elemental to understanding what life was like in all areas for women in Toronto between 1965 and 1975.

As just outlined, the twentieth century also saw the emergence, growth and slow institutionalization of modern dance, which was led and predominantly populated by women. While the first wave of feminism was the backdrop to the pioneering of modern dance in Europe and America, second wave feminism resulted in, and coincided with, very specific occurrences and changes in Canada including the RCSW and continued support from the Canada Council. Because Toronto was fast becoming the Canadian

centre of culture and the arts by the end of the 1960s it is a unique microcosm in which to examine the parallel paths that developments in women's rights, cultural support and modern dance were on in Canada. Finally, a comparison of the experiences of women in modern dance to that of women in the other artistic disciplines is helpful in working towards understanding what is and isn't unique about the women in modern dance in the context of the woman artist. Although a full comparison will not be made here, a general look at specific challenges faced by other women artists is a beginning. To start, though, an examination of the ways in which women's lives were the same will help in understanding their differences.

The first wave of feminism in Canada was in large part defined by the women's suffrage movement, though it was not exclusive to this struggle. Temperance, prohibition, maternal health, child welfare, prison reform and immigration were also issues of pressing importance. Although the vote was achieved and awarded federally in 1917 (to the wives of service men, a strategic government move) and in 1918 to the rest of Canada, the provinces were staggered in their timing of awarding women with the right to vote. The Prairie Provinces led the way in 1916, with Ontario and British Columbia to follow in 1917 and Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland in 1918, 1919, 1922 and 1925 respectively. While contribution to the war effort and strong advocacy gave women from British Columbia across to Toronto earlier rights, Quebec was over two decades behind due to the dominance of strict Catholic values within the Duplessis government. Women were not allowed to vote there until

1940. Although first wave feminism fought for equality, it also embodied discriminatory behavior. Class and race were relevant to the suffragists in determining who had the right to equality, male or female. Status and non-status Indians, Chinese and Japanese citizens slowly gained their enfranchisement from 1947-1969.

Throughout the twentieth century, Toronto was central to the fight for women's rights. Many powerful and central organizations were founded in Toronto including The Canadian Women's Suffrage Association (CWSA). The city's conservative climate was ideal for a struggle that often tried to find its footing in the promotion of the middle class woman, leaving the lower class and immigrants on the periphery. A divided focus caused first-wave feminism to lose its momentum by the end of the 1940s, but middle class women would again play a central role in its revival in the 1960s.

In her book *Ten Thousand Roses*: *The Making of a Feminist Revolution*, author Judy Rebick refers to the radical feminists, Marxists, anarchists, black consciousness militants, Quebec nationalists, union activists, left wing NDPers and 'plain old kick-ass shit disturbers' who populated second wave feminism. Between the 1940s and the early to late 1960s numerous factors accounted for the diversity of issues that brought women together. Women born during the depression era and into the right to vote era were also the women who were summoned into the workforce during World War II and their world was one of staggering contradiction. As young married women and mothers they were given the opportunity to work outside of the home with support from the government that acknowledged the challenges of working and raising a family. Flexible work hours and

national day-care were provisions that allowed them to experience the possibility of a life that included more than home-making. As quickly as they were called upon for assistance they were sent back to their homes with essentially an order to forget their new found independence and capabilities. Women were bombarded with advertising, popular culture and general representations of the perfect suburban housewife and mother. This was wicked propaganda for women to contend with, as though the end of the war had brought about amnesia that they could be more. After over a decade of few if any representations that reflected women's feelings of boredom, depression and frustration, Canada served them with a unique and invaluable gift: the changing content of one of the country's oldest women's magazines, *Chatelaine.*

In a 1995 interview with Valerie J. Korinek, author of *Roughing It in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*, famed Canadian journalist and *Chatelaine* contributor June Callwood reflects on the magazine, "It could sit on your coffee table and no one would think you had something subversive on it, because everybody had *Chatelaine* and men thought it was harmless – all about Easter hats. It was far from that. It was like lighting a brush fire. It was wonderful" (Korinek 3). During the late forties and fifties the magazine provided its readers with fiction about women who were asking similar questions about discontentment in their lives, but it was in 1957 when Doris Anderson took over as director/editor of the magazine that feminist content became more overt. *Chatelaine* evolved into a critical outlet for women to read and talk about their lives in an honest way. It turns out of course that many of them felt the same.

According to Korinek the predominant subject matter in the fifties of family, cultural and professional issues transferred drastically in the sixties to focus on women's political issues, current affairs, women's issues, feminism and mothering. These topics were introduced through Anderson's editorials. By 1963 when Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* was being published, Anderson famously decided to reject an offer to publish segments of the book, reasoning that Canadian women had already had access to what its pages contained. Friedan had acutely identified "the strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century… [A woman] was afraid to ask even herself the silent question – 'Is this all?'" (Friedan in Rebick 5) and is credited with being the catalyst to second-wave feminism; in Canada *Chatelaine* played this role.

While Anderson's *Chatelaine* fulfilled a particular role for women within their homes as a magazine, other issues led to gatherings of women in the public sphere. In the early 1960s Voices of Women (VOW) was formed in response to a call for women to resist nuclear armament within the Cold War; they were five thousand strong in months. Middle aged women, many of them wives and mothers who were reading and relating to Anderson and Friedan, formed VOW and other middle class organizations like the Canadian Federation of University Women and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) which represented middle class mothers and career women. Meanwhile their children who had been born during the war were forming other groups of activism and resistance. These children, the baby boomers, were becoming the counter

culture that would populate Yorkville fighting for civil rights, freedom of speech and peace. Their war was not the Cold War with Russia but the Vietnam War. The young women participating in these movements soon found their own cause for protest outside of their individual causes. Rebick writes, "When they got tired of walking three steps behind their men, they too revolted. They called their movement "women's liberation" (Rebick 8).

While *Chatelaine* provided a forum for Canadian women to speak openly about their lives and feelings, its goal was to inform and agitate. It was someone else's job to mobilize and organize action. In Canada, royal commissions serve to investigate, conduct research and report the findings of pertinent topics via an advisory panel of appointed commissioners. In 1967 the president of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), Laura Sabia, led a call for a royal commission on the status of women in Canada. On February 16, 1967 a privy council was approved and The Royal Commission on the Status of Women was established, chaired by journalist and broadcaster Florence Bird. Through its findings recommendations were to be made about what steps might be taken by the federal government to "ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society" (RCSW iv).

Rebick's *Ten Thousand Roses* follows the Women's Liberation Movement in Canada through her own chronicling of its history as well as through interviews with women from across Canada who were participants in one way or another. Kay Sigurjonsson was a staff member with the Federation of Women Teachers of Ontario and recalls the

derogatory reaction from the government and journalists, most of whom were men. Failing to take it seriously these writers made abundant jokes questioning "What's wrong with the status of women?" Hostility towards this attitude was expressed by women, especially when the commission began to travel across the country. Over 178 days, 37 public hearings were held. In addition to the hearings, 468 briefs and 1000 letters were received from individuals and organizations in response to the brochure "What do you have to say about the status of women in Canada?" distributed by the Commission in supermarkets, libraries and through the mass media. Extra effort was made in the case of the hearings to make them accessible, and for those who could not attend a telephone hot-line was set up. Sigurjonsson recollects the testimonials heard from some 900 women, "the stories coming out from ordinary women, (were) terrible stories. I don't know how these women had the courage to show up. These were things that nobody talked about – discrimination, unfair pay, the difficulties of bringing up children" (Rebick 27).

In 1970 the findings of the RCSW were published in an affordable single volume that was intended to be available to all women. It also included some of the results of the forty research projects that were conducted in order to provide background to the inquiry. Overall and very generally speaking the Commission found what women all over Canada already knew. Their identity was threatened when opportunity was not given for it to flourish and also was expected to reflect either their husband's or society's (RCSW 3). Young women needed to be taught to develop themselves, their passions and their talents and to look to marriage and motherhood as a part of life, not life in and of itself (RCSW

4). Success and understanding and seeking self fulfillment at a young age resulted in a decreased likelihood to accept prescribed ideas of womanhood (RCSW 16). Media representations did nothing to represent much but youth and beauty, omitting intelligence, talent, originality and individuality from the identity of women (RCSW 15). Women weren't given ample opportunity to display their potential, perpetuating the myth that it doesn't exist (RCSW 20). As many women belonged to volunteer committees as they did to the paid work force, somewhere between two and three million in each (RCSW 45). The work of volunteer committees and associations was not valued and rarely received more than a pat on the back (RCSW 50); women voiced the need and desire for volunteer experience to count when applying for paid employment. Of course, women were poorer than men and suffered the impact of poverty the most; especially in the context of raising and maintaining a family, their needs came last (RCSW 310). The commission wrote on poverty, "it is to be without sufficient money, but it is also to have little hope for better things. It is a feeling that one is unable to control one's destiny, that one is powerless in a society that respects power" (RCSW 311). Women were at an obvious disadvantage in many respects, but one area that displayed hope, progress and success was within the arts.

According to Commission findings Canadian women were faring very well in the arts in comparison to women in other occupations. The introduction to "Women in the Arts" begins with wisely questioning how to effectively assess the status of women in the arts, noting that, "artistic achievement is measured as much in public recognition and personal

satisfaction as in money" (RCSW 151). It goes on to cite findings of relatively little prejudice towards women working in writing, theater, visual and the performing arts in terms of pay where union agreements exist and that public value is determined by demand. The Canada Council is praised for its work in supporting all artists from the time of its inception in 1957 and its equal treatment of men and women in terms of grant assessment. Following this positive introduction, exceptions and challenges for women specific to their disciplines are listed.

First come women painters who were in fact discriminated against financially due to doubtful collectors with little faith in women painters working to fulfill and realize their "early promise" (RCSW 151). In her important book *By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women*, Maria Tippett speaks to the relatively new inclusion of women painters in the male dominated world in the 1940s through to the mid-1960s, and that it was owed primarily to access to grant money and scholarships to progressive art schools. In essence, women had gained the occasion to develop their skills where it had not previously existed. Women painters were coming from a long tradition of volunteer art groups and auxiliary committees that limited their interactions with the viewing public. Though they had made headway via their own efforts and accomplishments, and their technical skill was somewhat appreciated they still suffered from discrimination based on the assumption that they would not persist and develop as artists. Whether buyers credited a faulty social system or the women themselves is not

mentioned; but the fact remained that the assumed life pattern of women was not compatible with life as a painter.

As musicians women were limited most by job opportunity. In general, the number of spots left open to women in the major Canadian symphonies was limited to a fifth or a quarter (RCSW 152) and leadership roles were almost non-existent. As one woman said during a brief, "the number of Canadian women who have held positions as concert masters and principals can be counted on the fingers of one hand" (RCSW 152). In the Toronto Symphony of one hundred positions, seventeen were held by women. Women working in the theatre were also limited in the chance to work by the number of roles available for female parts, which reflected the roles women had the chance to fill in the real world. Doctors, politicians, diplomats, lawyers and business men were very predominantly written as male parts.

In the role of administrators women were found to be doing well in visual art and dance. Art historian Jean Sutherland Boggs was appointed as the first female curator of the National Art Gallery in 1966 and held the post for a decade. She was also curator of the "Picasso and Man" exhibit at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1964. The founders of Canada's prominent ballet companies, the National Ballet of Canada, Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, were all founded by women: Celia Franca, Gweneth Lloyd with Betty Farrally and Ludmilla Chiriaeff respectively, to be specific. Though these women served as positive examples of progress, most similar positions were held by men along with those that demanded dealing with the business community

as part of their daily work. Theatre managers, orchestra and gallery administrators – were also most often men. In Ann Saddlemyer's *The Women of Canadian Theatre, 1930-1970: The Naming of Names*, she traces the history of this era of Canadian theatre and names, literally, the forty or more theatre (she includes two dance) companies that were founded by women in days of 'do-it-yourself' community theatre when no other option was available. She suggests that, "ironically, the very success of community theatre and the awareness that theatre is important in our lives sent the women back into the kitchen" (Saddlemyer 128). She continues that the Canada Council and its financial support created professionalism that required business management; as the commission found, most of these posts were held by men who provided "comfort in [their] male financial image." She also claims that male artistic directors were prone to hiring male directors and playwrights (Saddlemyer 128).

Women were also acknowledged and labeled as instigators and outstanding supporters of the arts throughout Canada's history. "From pioneer times, when cultural pursuits were regarded as essentially feminine, women have been indefatigable in building the volunteer community support without which art cannot exist. Many art galleries and orchestras could not have survived..." (RCSW 153).

Performing artists or interpreters are much the same as administrators in that examples of success display possibility and potential. "Women as interpreters of the arts have been remarkably successful. There are singers of international reputation; in ballet, Canada has produced outstanding women dancers; Canadian actresses have won

recognition at home and abroad" (RCSW 152). By 1970 there were of course success stories in all of the artistic disciplines of women who had received acclaim nationally, in the United States and in some cases internationally, who were still in the ascent of their careers. Singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell, musician/composer Ann Southam, artist/filmmaker Joyce Wieland, actress Jackie Burroughs, author Margaret Atwood and ballerina Veronica Tennant all had direct and significant connections with Toronto in the sixties and early seventies, though some connections definitely lasted longer than others. All of these women have become Canadian icons and do not represent the status quo. As a group they are unique because of the era during which they came of age and because they have all had enduring and sustaining success as professional women artists.

Although ballet is given significant focus and is recognized for its progress in the work of individual women as well as the establishment of the country's three major companies, modern dance is not acknowledged anywhere in the report. At the time of publication in 1970 modern dance was just beginning to make its mark. The Canada Council was in fact funding Rachel Browne's Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers ($6000) for the first time, as well as Le Groupe de la Place Royale ($7500) and Toronto Dance Theatre ($15 000). The Council's annual report in that year stated that, "although contemporary dance is a typically North American form of expression it has taken root slowly in Canada, and then, it is interesting to note, only in the cities that also have a major ballet company." (Canada Council, 1970/71, 27). Three years earlier when the RCSW was formed the situation was significantly different. Toronto Dance Theatre was

not yet in existence and Rachel Browne's Contemporary Dancers were working with funds generated through other fundraising means. Between 1967 and 1970 significant developments were made that would permanently alter the state of modern dance in Canada. Toronto Dance Theatre, which was receiving the majority of funding by 1970, was founded during this time, and one of its founders, Patricia Beatty, can in many ways be credited with the establishment of professionalism of modern dance in Toronto and Canada.

By the mid sixties the second generation of do-it-yourself modern dance leaders in Toronto was coming to a close. 1963 saw the third and final Modern Dance Festival. Nancy Lima Dent, director of New Dance Theatre was injured in 1965 and began a three year hiatus from dancing. In 1966, Yone Kvietys, who had been teaching at the University of Toronto, among other places in Southern Ontario since the mid 1950s, left Toronto for Calgary exhausted from nearly two decades of struggling without funding in the dance world. Although resistant to continue on in dance she was responsible for bringing modern dance to the University of Calgary. In 1965, the year before Kvietys left for Calgary, a watershed moment for the next phase of modern dance in Canada occurred when the first modern dance artist's grant from the Canada Council was awarded to Lillian Jarvis.

Jarvis, who began dancing with the National Ballet of Canada in 1951, had already traveled to New York to study with various ballet masters and also at the Graham school in 1963. When she returned in 1965 with the support of the Canada Council she

reconnected with Canadian dancer Patricia Beatty, who had had a summer job at the National Ballet School (NBS) as an errand runner. Beatty had been in the United States for a decade training first at Bennington College and later at the Graham School. With a penchant to bring her expertise to Canada she accepted an invitation from Jarvis to return in 1965 to demonstrate the Graham technique at the NBS.

Beatty returned to Toronto and Canada at a time when the Canada Council was cautiously beginning to acknowledge modern dance and when the women's movement was in its ascent. What was on her mind, though, had little to do with issues raised by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women but rather, inadvertently, had more to do with the reality that her art form was not even acknowledged in its report. Her primary battle was that of giving modern dance a respected and supported place in Canadian performing arts, and she had clear ideas about what she would need to do to accomplish this. Although she was an example of the type of woman that women everywhere were struggling for the right to be, she was participating in the movement through her own passions. She entered the center of counter culture in Toronto when she founded a studio at 22 Cumberland in Yorkville, but she was not a hippie by self definition. She was a dancer, an artist and about to become a pioneer.

Again, Beatty's return to Toronto was impeccably timed. In 1966 the Canada Council gave its first grant to a modern dance organization and awarded Le Groupe de la Place Royale $3500 in its first year. Its director, Jeanne Renaud, had long been involved in dance in Montreal and was dedicated to progressive and experimental ideas and had

strong affiliations with the revolutionary group of artists of the 1940s, the Automatistes. In the year her group received its first support the Council wrote that they "continue to keep a weather eye open for the development of modern dance in Canada and our grant to the Groupe de la Place Royale is designed for this end" (Canada Council, 1967/68, 32).

In 1965 a major allotment of funds being contributed to dance outside of the three major ballet companies was being made to folk dance ensemble Les Feux-Follets under the directorship of Michel Cartier. They were being funded $65 000 to prepare for the Commonwealth Arts Festival and their funding would continue to rise in support of their performances at Expo '67 in Montreal. 1967 was also Canada's Centennial and nationalism and Canadian identity were hot ticket topics. In 1967 dance also became a separate section within the Council; it had previously been lumped in with theatre and opera. By 1968 the Council was showing interest and concern for the need to establish Canada's own modern dance scene beyond that of Le Groupe. They wrote in their 1968-69 report,

> Modern dance is "with it" in North America today and we would not want to be without it. We have therefore made a grant to Le Groupe in Montreal, and have given modest help to the Toronto Dance Theatre. Modern dance must change with the hour and so we have tried to respond quickly in both cases, knowing that form of expression which reflects the trend of the time in which we live, will quickly change again (Canada Council, 1968/69, 28).

Toronto Dance Theatre was co-founded by Beatty, Torontonian David Earle and New Yorker Peter Randazzo, who had all studied at the Graham school, when they found themselves in Toronto at the same time working towards similar ends. Earle and

Randazzo were looking to form a company. Beatty offered up what she had begun, a studio and in 1967 the New Dance Group of Canada. The three joined forces, recognizing the opportunity to do more for the greater good by working together rather than in competition. Nadine Saxton and Kate Cornell write of Beatty's gesture in their book, *Toronto Dance Theatre 1968-1998: Stages in a Journey*, "This act of offering her solvent company and a thriving school to Earle and Randazzo exemplified Beatty's deep convictions about the importance of bringing the Martha Graham technique to Canada" (Saxton and Cornell 23).

While Beatty devoted her time to transmitting Graham alongside Earle and Randazzo via TDT, another independent dancer, Judith Anne (Judy) Jarvis, was teaching the Expressionist movement practices of Mary Wigman. Born in Ottawa, Ontario, Jarvis studied with Toronto Modern Dance Festival co-founder Bianca Rogge at her Studio Dance Theatre while attending the University of Toronto. Rogge was a graduate of Mary Wigman's School in Berlin, Germany and was Jarvis's first introduction to Expressionist dance. Jarvis was inspired to learn more and traveled to Germany to study with Wigman from 1965 to 1967. When she returned to Canada she took a job at Queen's University in Kingston in the Physical Education Department and started a Modern Dance Club where she taught and choreographed. In 1970 she accepted a job at the University of Waterloo, where efforts were being made to establish a Dance Department. She remained there for seven years. During this time Jarvis taught workshops across the country and continued to develop as a creator and performer. In the early seventies she had a studio in Toronto

where she taught and created works on shifting groups of dancers. She received Canada Council Bursaries in 1967 and 1972. Although Jarvis did not ever establish a stable and ongoing company her influence through teaching and creation was widespread. Among the students that she taught in the early seventies were Dancemakers co-founder Andrea Smith, Carol Anderson and Mary-Elizabeth Manley who has been a member of York's Department of Dance faculty since its early years.

The emergence of university programs provided modern dance with another opportunity for growth. As mentioned, the University of Waterloo dance program was founded through the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation. York University's Department of Dance was established within the Faculty of Fine Arts in 1970 by former National Ballet principal dancer and choreographer Grant Strate. A visionary in many respects, Strate pinpointed the need for scholarship in dance in order to "ensure [it] a healthy future and elevate [it] to the status already enjoyed by music, drama and visual art" (Strate 128). The students who showed up for the first auditions had little idea of what they were walking into. Most were coming with little or no exposure to modern dance because the opportunities to see it were so few, especially if living outside of the downtown Toronto core. What the York program enabled them to do was obtain a university degree and study to be dancers. Universities in the seventies were also sites of political activism, progressive thinking and as always, of youth culture. York had a strong focus upon creativity and developing thinking dancers as Strate's motivations suggest. It would in fact create the second half of the first professional generation of

modern/contemporary dance in Toronto when it produced its first graduating class in 1974.

By 1970 when York's Department was established modern dance had made its mark and the Council made note, "Contemporary dance may have taken root slowly in Canada, as we noted in the last annual report, but these tours are now producing a vigorous growth" (Canada Council, 1971/72, 26). Modern dance's professional growth had been so swift that by the time the RCSW made its report, modern dance had changed completely. Most of its leaders were in fact women who would have been included as proud examples in its pages.

The simultaneous rise of Women's Liberation and modern dance raises questions about how women in modern dance associated themselves with the women's movement. Not only their leadership and self determination in a newly established performing art, but their appearance as empowered and free women make them iconic representations of the ideal liberated woman. This of course is a homogenized perspective. They differ in age, background, upbringing, personality and individuality. However, their participation in a tradition that embodies the liberated and revolutionary woman through the individual reputations of its pioneers places them on a similar bottom line. But how did they view themselves? Were they reading Doris Anderson's *Chatelaine* and thinking that they would challenge the status of women through dance? Were they aware of the issues raised in its pages or by the RCSW? Between 1965, when Beatty returned to Toronto, and 1975, when the United Nations declared it International Women's Year and Toronto

hosted the Festival of Women in the Arts, how did these women align themselves with the movement if they did at all? To help answer this question I conducted interviews with Trish Beatty, Susan Macpherson, Susan Cohen, Carol Anderson and Patricia Fraser, who were working in Toronto during this time.

III. The Interviews

> Time after time, I've had interviewers talk to me about my writing for a while, then ask me, "As a woman, what do you think about [for instance] the woman's movement?" as if I could think two sets of thoughts about the same things, one set as a writer or person, the other as a woman. But no one comes apart that easily; categories like Woman, White, Canadian, and Writer are often treated as separate categories; but in any individual woman writer, they are inseparable (Atwood, "Paradoxes and Dilemmas: The Woman as Writer," 262).

Just as the RCSW asked how one effectively evaluates the success of an artist, Atwood asks how you separate the woman from the art. At the centre of each of these questions lies the mystery of creativity and inspiration. Though creativity can become heavily commodified, its existence in the individual is a more complicated issue. When artists achieve success, be it critical or financial, they also gain a reputation that is something other than what they are: they become icons, enigmas, personalities. With each of these manifestations come generalizations and associations that are imposed upon the subject by the personal experience of the onlooker and by the innate desire for people to categorize in order to familiarize. Thus the need to ask Margaret Atwood about being a writer, then about being a woman, her two most defining attributes (as a public figure). These identifiers are called upon to be representational but one will naturally take priority over the other. Atwood is not an artist because she is a woman, she is a woman who happens to be an artist or an artist who happens to be a woman. In her article "Paradoxes and Dilemmas," written for the 1976 collection of essays *Women and the Canadian Mosaic,* she begins with discussing her aversion to writing the article and continues to

address the fact that some of her "reservations have to do with the questionable value of writers, male or female, becoming directly involved in political movements of any sort: their involvement may be good for the movement , but it has yet to be demonstrated that it's good for the writer" (Atwood, "Paradoxes", 257). How then, time and time again, do artists become associated with movements to which they claim no specific loyalty or direct participation?

In my introduction the women I interviewed are introduced by the definitive markers of their careers as dance artists. Patricia Beatty is a Canadian modern dance pioneer who co-founded TDT and who recently was made a member of the Order of Canada. Susan Macpherson was one of TDT's earliest dancers and is an acclaimed Canadian dance artist. She is currently the Artistic Associate at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre. Carol Anderson and Patricia Fraser were early graduates of York University's dance program and performers in Dancemakers' inaugural year. The pair were co-artistic directors of the company in the early eighties and Anderson, its sole artistic director in the years to follow. Anderson is now a prolific Canadian dance writer and a renowned teacher while Fraser is the director of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre. Susan Cohen was a participant in the early modern dance scene, not as a dancer but as a writer, observer and the first editor of *Dance in Canada Magazine*. She has gone on to work for arts councils and is now a sought after consultant. These identifiers are markers of success and tell us more about what these women accomplished than who they are. From

their listed successes it is easy to assume that they are strong willed, dedicated and talented.

During my interview process I realized that the sixteen year age range between my subjects was significant. While Beatty was a depression era baby, Macpherson and Cohen were part of the initial post war baby boom and members of the generation that initiated second wave feminism. Whether they were directly linked to it or not they were raised and came of age in an era that had specific expectations of women as housewives and mothers. By the time Anderson and Fraser were entering their twenties a path towards a career in modern dance was established. They had examples of professionalism in their own city and were able to receive quality professional training at both TDT and York. Attitudes towards women had also opened up significantly.

In essence what follows is an attempt to give a comparative picture of these women that is similar to Atwood's description of herself in *Negotiating with the Dead.* Their early dance lives, very similar in a lot of ways, are traced through to their moments of personal transformation and realization about their attraction to modern dance. Their parents' expectations and responses are also examined along with the examples their parents provided in their individual homes. As Atwood states in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, the categories of gender, race, discipline and citizenship are not easily separated. So it was in the interviews I conducted.

I initially interviewed these women because of their involvement in modern dance. Their responses reflect that dance was indeed their main determining passion. Through

their cumulative reflections they conjured up memories that are telling both in the absence of their direct personal involvement or association with the women's movement and in their devotion to their dancing lives. Though their associations with Women's Liberation may not be direct they do in many ways exemplify the ideals set forward by the movement for women to be self determining and empowered by their own passions.

Similar Beginnings

Patricia Beatty was born on May 13, 1936, and grew up in the upper class neighbourhood of Forest Hill in Toronto. She was the youngest of four children and attended the distinguished private girls school, Havergal College. She began dancing at the age of eight with Jean Macpherson, who had danced with the Paris Opera, George Balanchine and Mikhail Fokine. A year later she began ballet lessons with Gladys Forrester, who in 1950 allied with RWB co-founder Gweneth Lloyd at her Yonge Street studio where Beatty stayed until 1955, when she went to study at Bennington College. After graduation from Bennington in 1959 she continued her training at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance in New York.

Susan Macpherson was born on November 21, 1944. She attended public high school at North Toronto Collegiate. She began studying ballet with Mildred Wickson, a graduate of the Margaret Eaton School, who studied and performed with Boris Volkoff in the 1930s and in the late 1940s was a founding member of the Canadian Dance Teachers Association. Macpherson trained with Wickson throughout her teens and also attended

the summer schools run by the NBC, where she was instructed by Betty Oliphant and Celia Franca. When Macpherson began attending the University of Toronto in 1962 she took two credit courses in modern dance with Yone Kvietys and was quickly invited to join her Contemporary Dance Company. During her time at university she traveled frequently to New York to take classes at the Martha Graham School. In 1965 after completing her Bachelor's degree she went to study at the Graham School full time on scholarship.

Susan Cohen was born in Toronto on December 10, 1948. She attended high school at Vaughan Road Collegiate. She began studying ballet at a young age with Oliphant in her Sherbourne Street kitchen studio. Other students training with Betty Oliphant at the time included Miriam Adams and Veronica Tennant. She attended the National Ballet Guild summer schools (the NBS was founded in 1959). While in high school she won a contest for a review of the NBC she wrote for the *Toronto Telegraph.* She continued to write reviews for the *Toronto Star* and was a broadcaster for the CBC. She was the first editor of *Dance in Canada Magazine* in 1974, the same year she began a three year teaching stint at York University. In 1975 she co-directed, with Miriam Adams, the dance program for the Festival of Women in the Arts as part of the United Nations International Year of Women celebrations.

Carol Anderson was born on January 17, 1951 in Regina, Saskatchewan, where she began studying ballet at a neighbourhood studio. Her family relocated to Ottawa and then to west island Montreal. She continued to study in both places. In Montreal Lassie

McPhee was her ballet teacher and Patricia Cannon, a Dartmouth College graduate who taught Laban based work, formally introduced Anderson to modern dance when she was fifteen. In her late teens her family moved to the Toronto suburb of Etobicoke, where she continued to dance with "a horrible teacher." The following year, 1968, she went to Queen's University in Kingston, where she joined Judy Jarvis' modern dance club. After taking a stop out year in 1970, she continued her studies at York University in the newly established dance program. After graduating in 1973 she went to London to study at the London Contemporary Dance School.

Patricia Fraser was born on November 12, 1952 in North Toronto. She attended Emery Collegiate High School in North York. She trained in Scottish Highland dance from the age of seven with Mary Pritchard in Etobicoke and competed successfully in Ontario, Quebec, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey throughout her teens and into her early twenties. She was introduced to modern dance at an audition for York University's Dance Department; she was accepted and graduated from the program in 1974.

There are many overlapping details in the early dance biographies of these women. They were all born and raised north of Bloor Street in Toronto, with the exception of Anderson who moved to Etobicoke with her family during her late adolescence. All began dancing at an early age and, except for Fraser, trained primarily in ballet. In the later stages of their training they all made the transfer to training in modern dance except for Cohen, who was actively reviewing dance by the time she attended the University of

Toronto. All of these women are white, from two parent homes of various financial circumstances and all have a post-secondary education.

Naturally, the similarities diminish as the details of their lives become more specific with age and maturity. At the very point where their lives intersect to become part of the same larger narrative, so too do they become significantly different. Each woman's introduction and entry into modern dance is personal and unique. In *Negotiating with the Dead*, Margaret Atwood recounts the moment that told her she knew she wanted to become a writer:

> It wasn't a likely thing for me to have done, nor was it something I chose, as you might choose to be a dentist. It simply happened, suddenly in 1956, while I was crossing a football field on the way home from school. I wrote a poem in my head and then I wrote it down, and after that writing was the only thing I wanted to do. I didn't know that this poem of mine wasn't at all good, and if I had known, I probably wouldn't have cared. It wasn't the result but the experience that had hooked me: it was the electricity (Atwood, *Negotiating*, 14).

Atwood's "football field" moment is a mythic story of a great crossing she begins as one person and comes out as another. It was an unexpected transformation, a calling – thus the "I didn't go to it, it came to me" proclamation. Perhaps not all artists can so succinctly depict the moment that their artistic pursuit and necessary obsession began; but every artist has a moment, requires a moment, during which something in them alters just enough that they know they are hooked into whatever it is that gave them *that* feeling, the electricity.

This discussion began with the question of how women become icons for movements or causes to which they have no personal association. This notion of being chosen as

opposed to choosing plays an important role here. If a person becomes attracted to an artistic practice because of a feeling they experienced and want to continue to experience, then the notion of contemplation surrounding political or cultural motive is eliminated. Motive may come later or even immediately when "the feeling" has been recognized as, or refined into, a useful tool that conjures an audience's response to an artistic act, and a sense of power or influence becomes associated with the results of 'the feeling.' The initial attraction isn't associative, it is experiential. Immediately following this moment affiliations and aesthetic choices may be made, but they are not the primary reason for pursuit. When I asked the question, "so why modern dance?" two things came up: the experience of a feeling and the pursuit of a feeling.

Dance is based in movement. In the dancer a passion for movement is usually primary, but any kind of movement does not necessarily warrant or move a person to pursue a lifetime of dedicated practice and involvement. The early days of modern dance, for example, are rooted in rebellion and opposition to ballet's restrictions and confining ideologies about women's behavior, but opposition, to be different, was not necessarily the primary goal. Mary Wigman speaks of this time in an essay written in 1927:

> We find ourselves in a process of change as far as the dance is concerned: abandonment of the classical ballet in favour of an expression representing our time. On the one hand, it would indicate a deterioration of the classical ballet and the traditional corps de ballet at the opera houses. On the other hand, the advance of a few personalities in the dance field to whom the ballet denied the expression of their creative ideas because of its set vocabulary and style (Wigman in Jowitt, 33-34).

The dual path of the obsolescence of ballet and the need to express one's self through

movement comes to the fore in the individual football field crossings of the subjects.

Field Crossings

> I knew I didn't belong in classical dance. My body had more appetite than the positions ballet would allow. I was an athlete and wanted a feeling of physical power and real freedom. Ballet wasn't serious enough for me (Beatty in Saxton and Cornell 4).
>
> Bennington taught me to think, to explore, to question. I knew I needed it, I knew it. I didn't want to be a dumb dancing girl (Beatty, interview).
>
> I made my own choices when I was quite young that that wasn't my route. When I found the Graham aesthetic and went to the Graham school I found a way of moving that had built into it the potential to express one's own identity, whatever gender one is (Macpherson, interview).
>
> It made sense to me, it just made sense to me. I had this epiphany in Ottawa. I don't remember anything about this woman, except there was some connection to freedom of movement in what she did and it was a real revelation moment for me (Anderson, interview).
>
> I had never worked in parallel. I didn't know what it was, but I could tell from the beginning of the class that I had to do this. I didn't know what it was, or what I was getting into. It was just amazing (Fraser, interview).

In Beatty's case she knew that she longed for something greater than what was available to her. Her physique did not fit the ballet mold and her family assumed that her passion for dancing would find its place in teaching, but Beatty's addiction was to the movement itself and its relationship to music. Her entry point into modern dance came through her later teacher Gweneth Lloyd, who was the only one in Beatty's personal sphere who knew about modern dance. She encouraged her to go to Bennington in the United States to pursue her hunger, and that is how she came to find her niche.

Like Beatty, Macpherson had made a decision during her adolescence that ballet was not fulfilling enough for her to pursue it seriously. In an interview with TDT's current rehearsal director, Rosemary James, Macpherson states, "I never really had the ambition to be a ballet dancer. I thought that was a little bit frivolous -- dare I say. I didn't really want to be a sylph, a swan queen or a snowflake. It was wonderful to do the movement but I didn't want to spend my life being a Nutcracker snowflake" (James 2). Her aversion to the ballet is not attributed to a limited movement vocabulary, but to its content. She also said of comparing modern dance and ballet, "it's apples and oranges. You can't compare Graham and Fonteyn; they're absolutely extraordinary artists with a very strong will of their own. I don't want to belittle ballet; I think it's often off the mark" (Macpherson, interview). However, in the above statement she refers to the Graham technique having built into it the opportunity to express one's own identity; the technique allowed for the person who she perceived herself to be to show in her dancing. Macpherson's first exposure to modern dance through her classes and company experiences with Yone Kvietys at University of Toronto was based on primarily European, Wigman based techniques. As part of Kvietys classes she would talk about other pioneers and show their pictures and Graham was of course one of them. It was these talks that inspired a number of students to go to New York to seek out Graham. In Toronto they were able to receive basic Graham training from teacher Nadia Pavlychenko.

Anderson's recollection of her first experience with modern dance is vague in its details, but the timing of the moment is clear. During the brief time that her family spent in Ottawa she had this "revelation" in a class with a teacher whose name she doesn't remember, but that had to do with the freedom of the movement they were doing. Another family move led Anderson to Montreal and Patricia Cannon, who was teaching modern movement practices in addition to salsa and merengue. At this time Cannon's use of literature and movement together deeply impacted Anderson. Her attraction towards freedom in movement now began to encompass the notion of the thinking dancer, which remains prevalent in her current practice.

By the time Anderson reached Cannon it was 1966, eleven years after Beatty had gone to Bennington and a year following Macpherson's departure for scholarship studies at the Graham School. In Montreal, Le Groupe had received $3000 from the Canada Council, which viewed this decision as experimental. When Fraser encountered her first modern dance class at York University during an audition in 1970, she recalls in addition to knowing almost immediately that she had to learn more about the technique that was so foreign to her, that it was also foreign to most of the people there:

> I mean for goodness sakes, what the hell was modern dance? What was I doing? I didn't know what it was, nobody knew what it was. There were a few practicing it already, but not much. At the audition they told me it was a good idea to learn about modern dance, get some info about this art form and go to Toronto Dance Theatre and take some classes before starting in the fall" (Fraser, interview).

From Inspiration to Dedication

It is one thing to be a young woman inspired in class by something new. It is another to change your life direction to pursue it seriously. Each woman I interviewed had to find her own way in the context of her own life. Though each newly chosen path may not have been rebellious it was certainly unusual in comparison to the path of the status quo.

In 1970, York's Dance Department's inaugural year, the RCSW reported that women worked primarily in the service sector and in white collar jobs, with more women in clerical positions than any other. Recreational and technical occupations stood in second and third position in their numbers of employed women. Traditional female jobs, or "occupational segregation by sex" (RCSW 59), listed female occupations to include: secretary, stenographer, typist, telephone operator, housekeeper, domestic, waitress, and hairdresser; while female professions included elementary school teacher, nurse, dietician and home economist. The jobs of librarian and social worker were also included but with a note that more and more men were entering these professions.

Fraser had initially intended to go through University to become a teacher, as did Anderson when she went to Queen's in 1967. Fraser's mother worked as a payroll clerk throughout Fraser's childhood and though this was considered a traditional female job, Fraser reflects on her mother's attitude towards work not being quite as traditional:

> Yes, she was very unusual, she worked from the time I was a little tot. My grandparents lived with us for a bit, and then they used to come after school and be with us when my mother was at work. She stayed home for a very short time, and then she went to work. People would sit and chat and drink coffee and she couldn't bear it. She worked as a payroll clerk in various situations, paymaster in a hospital and various other jobs. It wasn't

> career ambition, she just really had no interest in coffee mornings. She would be up until two in the morning doing other jobs. She was amazing. I really should tell her she was amazing. Easter Sunday there would be no dress on Saturday night, and Easter morning there was a dress hanging on my door. She never had any sleep (Fraser, interview).

Although Fraser's mother's lifestyle was unorthodox in that she went to work from the time her children were small during the fifties, when married women and mothers were being strongly encouraged through advertising and public attitudes to stay home, she made a decision for herself and her independence. Of course, this did not mean that she was excused from the fulltime duties of a housewife, but for her midnight housekeeping was obviously worth the opportunity to have a life outside of the home.

Unlike Fraser's mother, Anderson's was at home but did work as a piano teacher:

> She didn't have a job per se. She was the mother of five children, but she always worked, she always had students come into the house. She would teach from 2:30 to 6:00 five days a week, sometimes Saturday morning. What she felt like doing varied depending on where we were living. My dad never made very much money. It made a significant difference to her to have her own (Anderson, interview).

Again, a clear decision to work in order to attain some aspect of independence, be it financial or otherwise, was present in Anderson's home. Artistic appreciation and expertise were also present, although Anderson recalls that her mom was always "very self effacing," not recognizing anything special about the fact that she could name any piece of music on the CBC or elsewhere. Two of Anderson's sisters are music teachers today. Her father was an amateur musician and jazz aficionado. Both Mr. and Mrs. Anderson attended New Music concerts regularly as well. When I made the assumption that they weren't very conservative, Anderson quickly answered "Oh, but they were."

They attended church regularly, went to couples clubs and lived a suburban life. "My mom was less conservative; she was interested in sort of spiritual explorations. I remember her bringing home a swami or a guru or someone who had been visiting the church in the late sixties or early seventies, and there was this little man in his orange coat sitting in our living room which was very conservative, structured and suburban." Anderson's mother also came from an upbringing in which artistic training was highly valued in the education of a young woman. Originally from Ontario, Anderson's maternal grandparents eventually moved to Moosejaw, brought there by her grandfather's work as a doctor for the Canadian National Railway. Her grandmother became very involved in her dedication to bringing culture to her small community. She also placed a high priority on having her daughters well trained in elocution and the arts. Through this family lineage we see from grandmother to mother to daughter a patron of the arts, a music teacher and a professional dance artist.

Susan Macpherson's mother was also a great supporter of the arts though not involved in them as a profession. DCD houses a significant collection of her programs from the 1940s onward. Born in England, she trained as a physiotherapist before moving to Canada to work in Montreal and Fredericton, New Brunswick. She moved to Toronto after marrying a political scientist who taught at the University of Toronto throughout Susan's childhood. Kay Macpherson stopped working as a physiotherapist when Susan was quite young to sit on administrative boards for physiotherapy and the Board of Education. By the mid 1960s she was heavily involved as a volunteer in the fight for

women's rights and peace. She became a national icon for her work in the sixties through to the time of her death in 1999. Her husband's work in many ways allowed for her to dedicate her time to volunteer causes of which he was also a firm supporter. Susan's recollections of her household growing up were that she and her siblings were never expected to just agree with their parents' leftist politics, but in the end to her they seemed to make good sense.

As diverse as these households and families were, the parental responses towards their daughters wanting to pursue a life in contemporary dance are remarkably similar. No overt rejections were reported, but various degrees of parental concern and expectation, voiced or not, were present. Patricia Fraser, the youngest in this study, when asked about how her parents responded to her decision to pursue dance instead of teaching, said, "I never had any pressure. I could do or be anything, it was expected that I would do or be something. I would follow my nose and I don't think that they ever had any qualms, really. They may have had their secret fears but I never knew about them." In regard to expectations placed upon her and her sisters as to what type of women they should be in relation to occupation and self sufficiency, she continued:

> All expectations were implicit, not explicit, never do this or that, never ever. I think there was an incredible belief that we would do whatever we would do. There was never any "you should be a doctor or a teacher." I think they thought we were smart and talented and that whatever would happen would happen. I thought I could do whatever I wanted to do (Fraser, interview).

Reflecting on her own expectations for herself, she replied, "I never thought anything held me back, it didn't even enter my mind that I would just be married and a housewife.

It did not even cross my mind. I wasn't rebelling against anything, it just wasn't even an issue and I don't remember any pressure on any of my friends in that regard either" (Fraser, interview). Beatty's parents' reaction to her ambitions weren't severe but they are indicative of a different way of thinking.

> They didn't encourage me but they didn't discourage me. There wasn't any interference but there wasn't really support either. I was the last in my family so it didn't matter as much, the other kids had jobs. My mother knew that I was a little different and I think she secretly liked it. (Beatty, interview).

Her father also had his own concerns related to image and reputation. When Beatty returned from New York after a decade away and looked to her family for both emotional and financial support in her endeavors to open a studio and begin the New Dance Group, she recollects:

> Once my father knew I wasn't going to make a fool of myself he backed me up but he checked me out first. He wasn't "oh my daughter's so wonderful" do whatever you want. In fact, I'm from a WASP family so it was the opposite. He asked, "Do you really need to draw this kind of attention to yourself?" But then he found out that it was going to be worth it (Beatty, interview).

Expectations in relation to gender were also different in Beatty's home than in Fraser's, but similarly they were implicit. Overt objections to what she did because she was a girl were never made, "Oh no, but I could read the writing on the wall. It was all unspoken but I could feel it. I knew what the rules of being a WASP were and I was breaking them, but there was a lot of love in my family (Beatty, interview).

In Beatty's situation an aspect of her family's reaction was specifically in relation to her drawing attention to herself through becoming a public figure as a

performer. Her family was representative of the Toronto that disappeared after World War II and had a reputation to uphold. In the end her family and their social circle became key supporters in Beatty's fundraising initiatives. Her oldest brother sat on TDT's board of directors for twenty-five years.

Fraser's and Anderson's parents had a hands off approach; they allowed their daughters to make their own decisions but gently suggested that they have a financial back-up plan. Anderson's parents encouraged her to attend community college. Fraser did take three years towards a French major but stopped when the demands of dance had to take priority. Anderson was one of five children and needed to be able to care for herself. Fraser did not come from a home with an excess of money either. When it came down to it though there was little direction or expectation expressed. Anderson recalls of her otherwise conservative parents, "In that way maybe they were unusual. I sometimes regret it but they really let us have our own heads, choose our own paths. It wasn't you know, 'you're going to be an accountant or a dentist' or anything yucky like that. They let us make our own decisions about what we would do with our lives" (Anderson, interview).

In Susan Macpherson's circumstance parental concerns weren't to do with reputation or money. She felt a personal desire to fulfill a certain level of her education. Though the benefits of a university degree weren't necessarily apparent she thought that it might come to be useful at some point in time. In Rosemary James' article on

Macpherson, she recounts that the dancer also felt a need to fulfill a part of her father's wishes for her before continuing on with her own dreams:

> She felt a desire to complete her university education in three years and received a Bachelor of Arts degree because as she says, "I just wanted to do that for my father's sake frankly because he was a professor at the University of Toronto in Political Science. I just thought I owed it to him to get a degree. He wasn't really sure if I knew what I was doing when I said I wanted to go to New York." Her voice mimics her father's words, "I would be happy to pay for Graduate school if you would like to continue." Convincing her parents and with their support Ms. Macpherson left Toronto for New York in 1965, to train as a scholarship student at the Martha Graham School of Dance (James 3).

Complex and diverse parental expectations are further demonstrated in Susan Cohen's childhood household. To begin, Cohen was initially sent to ballet classes to help rectify problems that arose during childhood polio. She was enrolled with the best teachers due to her parents' wishes, which were well informed. Her father was renowned theatre critic Nathan Cohen, and he was very much in the know about who was who in Toronto's performing arts scene. It was her father who, when she was eighteen or so, suggested that she go and see Merce Cunningham and Toronto Dance Theatre. When she came home stating an unexplained dislike for what she had seen at the TDT show her father strongly encouraged her to go again and come home to report what it was that she didn't like. Much to her surprise she enjoyed her second exposure. This interaction between Cohen and her father suggests a very forward thinking and interactive household in relation to the arts. This level of discussion about the arts undoubtedly informed the writing that won her the contest with the *Toronto Telegram* and that led to the *Toronto*

Star asking her to fill in for her father when he fell seriously ill in the late sixties and following his death in 1970. Cohen recalls the duality in her household:

> I grew up in a reasonably middle class family and even my father, despite the fact that he was very supportive of many women, in the home [my mother] was not working and some of that was about her choice but some of it was also about the relationship between them. In our family some women worked as teachers, and that was a woman's occupation. Dance was a woman's occupation, but nonetheless it was outside of the norm (Cohen, interview).

What about dance was outside of the norm? "In dance you could see that women could devote themselves to something. They could change how and what you think. They could struggle against things." What Cohen addresses here is a return to the idea that women in dance were breaking boundaries through their pursuit of something. By identifying a passion, working towards it, communicating through it and fighting for it they stepped outside of the norm, the norm reported in the RCSW. That being said, each woman's pursuit is different and individual steps are not all fearless or certain. It is the decision to continue when the outcome is not obvious that makes the journey and the woman bold. Beatty remarked in our interview, "The wonderful thing is that when you're really being creative that goes out the window -- the perceptions and the board meetings. None of that is there because you are into something bigger (Beatty, interview).

In the year that Anderson's family moved to Toronto she remembers seeing TDT perform, though she did not go downtown to take classes with them, "I was just too much of a suburban child," she claimed. Fraser also makes reference to the jaunt downtown from the outskirts of the city. Following her audition at York and advice that she should

find TDT and learn more about the foreign art form she would be studying in the fall she went for it.

> I was a very biddable kid. Tell me to do something and I'd do it. I bought my ten class card and started taking classes. It was interesting, a real eye opener! ... There was something very bohemian about them, which was interesting, it was another world. I was a little girl from the suburbs and I went down town, it was a big deal. In those days we went to the Nortown Cinema at Bathurst and Eglinton. It was the most northern movie theatre so we'd go there. It was as far south as I ever went outside of family excursions (Fraser, interview).

Fraser's immersion into the unknown extended beyond her solo trips downtown. Once in class, she was to learn not only a new technique but a tradition. During her first class she was screamed at by teacher and company dancer Norrey Drummond for fixing her tights in the transition between floor work and coming to standing. "How dare you?" she yelled. Fraser went undiscouraged and now she "knew the rules of the game."

By this time the company had left Beatty's studio on Cumberland Avenue in Yorkville and moved to Lombard St. near Richmond and Jarvis. "It was a terrible studio with no washroom; you had to go to the restaurant downstairs to go to the bathroom." Of the actual company she said, "They were just a bit weird, in a good way, a different life. Peggy [Baker] was there at the time. She wore feather earrings and beautiful pig tails and braids. She was special, you could tell. And they were such good dancers, it was very inspiring" (Fraser, interview).

Dancing Women or Women Dancing

Susan Macpherson was one of the inspiring dancers. She had returned to Toronto in 1969 after a phone call from David Earle, whom she met in Yone Kvietys' classes. They performed in her company together and met again in New York at the Graham School. When he invited her to join the newly formed Toronto Dance Theatre as a dancer in addition to offering her work teaching at the school and making costumes for the company for $40 a week, she said yes. She was able to sustain herself and when she couldn't her parents were there to support her as was unemployment insurance.

In Graham Jackson's article "Pieces of Heart" he gives a vivid description of TDT in 1970:

> People who fancied themselves insiders referred to them as a special breed, demigods almost, physically stunning, sexually ambivalent, impossibly creative. And I saw them with my own eyes, flowing into the Yorkville Public Library where I worked summers to pay for the following school year's bedsit: long-haired boys and girls who looked to me like creatures from another planet, muscular, limber, scantily clad.... (Jackson 23.)

This depiction talks about TDT as almost a gang or commune, look-alike, think-alike. When I asked Macpherson if this seemingly alternative group was a forward looking community for women, or if she felt like she was part of a community of women she responded:

> I don't think in those days there was an awareness of the women's movement related particularly to our experience. The suffragettes had happened, but in my mind, in my memory at any rate, I did not feel like there was a community of women. I didn't feel like I was part of a community of women in dance. I felt like I was part of the dance community.

She continues,

> Some other women may have felt like that, I wouldn't be surprised. I think from the beginning Trish had collaborations with other female artists like Iko Suzuki and Ann Southam. I think she would have been more aware of concepts that related to women's spirituality. I can't say that I was part of that kind of community at all. I felt like I was part of the dance community. It was new and very exciting and energized. We were all doing a tremendous amount of work and we were thrilled (Macpherson, interview).

Of the women in the company at the time she remarks, "In the early days TDT was taking a great deal of aesthetic from Graham, who was such a powerful figure. I think that the perception of the females in TDT was that we were very powerful individuals. For the most part, we were," she laughs. None of us were going to be corps de ballet, we all had minds of our own and characters and forces and power of our own." Despite this perception of the women of TDT Macpherson did not feel that she was "part of a circle of women's energy" (Macpherson interview).

Macpherson's sense of community came from the common goals she shared with her fellow dancers. They were in it to dance and to bring dance to a place it had never been before in the city. Though she refers to Beatty as perhaps being the most aware of working from or within a context of feminine energy, Beatty herself says that at this time her own primary concern was the dance too; the other came later, much later.

After Beatty gained support from her father and family she set up her studio and formed the New Dance Group but her work had really just begun. When she first returned to Toronto she admits that there were a handful of things happening, "Lima Dent was doing something brave, but there was no technical sophistication. They were creatively

brave, but never really affected audiences" (Beatty, interview). She knew that in order to make an impact the dancers needed to demonstrate some degree of technical mastery – they needed to be able to compare in caliber to ballet dancers. "Technique is not what people notice, but it is what carries what people notice." In addition to her work as a demonstrator at NBS, Beatty taught around the city. She taught modern dance at the Hebrew Y (YM-YWHA) at Finch and Bathurst. "We couldn't call it modern dance, no one would come, so we called it modern jazz. I taught simple Graham, then a combination to jazz music (laughs)". She also taught at the YWHA at Bloor and Spadina. The response from the women in her classes was very positive. "They loved it! They could feel it. I got their souls involved.... They didn't like any of their other body work after that" (Beatty, interview). Beatty's willingness to alter the name of her classes to attract students and her recognition that dancers needed strong technique demonstrates her acute understanding of what she was walking into when she returned to Toronto. Of her time in the United States she says that she was coming from an ideal world, "both Bennington and New York, it was the fifties and sixties, America was still a very positive place. It was the zenith."

Beatty's first years back in Toronto were filled with teaching, gaining her parents' support, fundraising, opening a studio because she knew she would have to offer classes in order to sustain a company, starting the New Dance Group and giving their first performance in 1967. The following year when Earle and Randazzo came to Toronto the

three presented a show together in December 1968 under the name of Toronto Dance Theatre. The following year TDT was officially formed.

When I asked if she felt the newly forming modern dance community was progressive for women she answered:

> No, but it had its potential to be empowering because we were doing what we wanted to do, and if you were really going to be good at it you were gonna get powerful. You had to be courageous. You were out on stage and all kinds of stuff. It was the sixties, come on you know. But we were formal too. We were always too intense. But look at what's happened to the world, it's gotten pretty intense....

She continues to comment upon the political consciousness of the company:

> A lot of ours weren't particularly aware politically. I was, Annie [Southam] was, a few of us, but they just wanted to dance. Of course they'd all be left if they thought about it, any artist would be. They didn't even know or use the word progressive. They were just part of something that they knew was big and wonderful. I mean we tried to drag them into political rallies and we'd talk to them and they'd go, "Oh, hey, hey!" But then they'd go back to class. They couldn't see the connection. They had to hold onto what they were doing so much. They didn't come from a political place and a thinking place, they came from a moving place. It's only now that dancers are going to York to think about things and write about things. We were movers -- look out (Beatty, interview).

Within years Toronto Dance Theatre became Canada's most supported modern dance company, overshadowing both Le Groupe de la Place Royale and Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers in the support they received from the Canada Council. But they were not the only ones in southern Ontario who were trying to make a go of things at an advanced level. Judy Jarvis had returned from her studies with Mary Wigman in Germany in 1967 and was teaching at Queen's University in Kingston in the physical education department while running her modern dance club. When Anderson began

school there, with the goal, she supposed, to become a teacher she knew that Jarvis was there, although this had by no means been her reason for choosing Queen's. In the year before she went to university she went to see Beatty's New Dance Group in Toronto and recalls:

> seeing Amelia Itcush crawling around on the floor and thinking "what is that?" You couldn't tell if she was a woman, man, snake or human being. It was extraordinary. I remember seeing Trish, the work was about MacBeth, so I guess she was Lady MacBeth and she was very potent. She was amazing on stage. I had never seen anything like it and it gripped me (Anderson, interview).

Months later when she became immersed in Jarvis' classes it was the beginning of the end of her training as a school teacher. She left Queen's two years later "because [she] did want to be dancing more than what she was doing at Queen's." Deciding to take a stop out year, a popular thing to do in the midst of "do your own thing time," she moved back in with her parents in Toronto and continued to work with Jarvis and the company she was trying to start up from her downtown (Toronto) studio. A typical day for Anderson included traveling from Etobicoke up to York, taking two classes (which were open to non-registered students who showed a need for training), traveling back to Etobicoke, and then downtown to take class at five and then rehearse. This went on from September to January, but Jarvis' inability to financially support her dancers (they had been paid in Crispy Crunch bars and crashed in residences on whatever campus they happened to be performing at) eventually led to the small company dispersing. After a fire in her studio Jarvis went to New York. Although Anderson didn't work with Jarvis after this, she was inspired by her teaching, especially of improvisation. She claims, "I

would have been an English teacher if she wasn't at Queen's when I was there, that's for sure" (Anderson, interview).

In all of these situations we see women, as Cohen identified, struggling for something they believed in: Beatty for the establishment of modern dance in Toronto and Canada; Jarvis for a choreographic voice and creative outlet; and Anderson for a place as a dance student and performer. She remarks:

> I think anyone who looked at the dance situation had to look at gender issues but it wasn't necessarily in the context of the dance[s]. Women were just beginning to choreograph. In the NBC we had seen the women being the founders of the art forms. Dance is very different than most of the other art forms. What was happening in dance, even in ballet gave you this sense that women could do things. They could have professions, they could have a life, they could explore things. They could be marginalized and not paid, but there was a sense that they could have a future. Much more so than in other art forms (Cohen, interview).

Beatty says of the work she was creating upon her return to Toronto not being about or consciously informed by gender, "No, not at first. It was bigger than that, it was archetypal. I had just come from New York and Martha in those days. I didn't even know about it, I was innocent." But again, according to Cohen it was the movement itself, not the content of individual dance works that presented women differently. The obvious contrast of women in ballet and the "hyper idealization of the feminine" to the weightiness of the way women in modern dance were moving forced implicit if not explicit considerations of gender. She recalls that in the summer of 1971 when she was sent by the Canada Council to attend the Connecticut College Dance Seminar, seeing a group of women from the west coast doing reverse partnering for the first time. Her

contrast between the ballet and modern worlds extends farther than what was happening on the stage though.

In the ballet there were still ladies guilds playing a very important role in the operation and fundraising end of things, and as important as they were to the sustainability of the larger ballet companies they still "set certain things in the minds of people." In modern dance women were "struggling in a different kind of way. [Theirs was] a personal struggle to create a company and a vocabulary" (Cohen, interview). She also reflected that a lot of the choreographers in the ballet world tended to be male as part of an established hierarchy. In the example of TDT the directors were two men and one woman but an imbalance of power was not necessarily felt. Macpherson reflects, "Because there were two guys and Trish, I didn't feel like it was just a man running the company. It felt like the seven of us at the beginning were equals." This is not to say that there weren't problems and tensions between the founders, and for Beatty with the New Dance Group. Beatty recalls, "Here I was leading things, that's an uncomfortable position if you're a woman, but David and Donald (Himes) had humour. The main thing was that we shared something so big. It wasn't easy between David, Peter and me, but we got through it because it was so much bigger than anything else we knew. It was emotional chaos. There's no model."

Beatty's attitude towards being in a role of leadership is matter of fact. By the time New Dance Group and TDT started she was in her early thirties, a grown woman who had been born during the depression era and who came of age in the fifties. Her situation

in the studio reflected the world outside, where people were not accustomed to women in roles of leadership, but in the end, she was working with people with larger concerns than whether their boss was male or female. There were tensions and personality conflicts, especially between Trish and Peter. Donald Himes recalls "the violent energy between [them] when they disagreed: "they would never listen to each other. David was always the big pacifier between these two forces" (Saxton and Cornell 38). Another indicator of Beatty's default way of thinking is apparent in the description of what positions each of the directors took when the company was first established. Randazzo became president, Earle vice-president and "Beatty (in accordance with the 'mores' of the time: "I was a girl") became secretary-treasurer" (Saxton and Cornell 26).

A New Generation

When Anderson and Fraser were just entering their twenties and reached York in the early seventies they were members of a new generation of youth, women and dancers. Presuppositions like "I'm a girl so I'm the secretary" were on their way out. Reflecting on this demographic that she was a part of, Anderson comments on her predecessors and the world that she entered:

> You know what I think about my generation of women? There was the generation before us -- the bra burners and consciousness raisers. And then there was us, who moved into this flow of expectations about freedom which didn't ever really materialize. A lot of women of my generation actually did work very hard on advancing the role of women, but for a lot of us I think it was really difficult to actually create a good career because it was so transitional (Anderson, interview).

When I asked about whether or not gender politics were on her mind during her time at Queen's and on into her years at York, Anderson answers that it was. She recalls reading Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* and Simone de Beauvoir: "It was certainly a part of my consciousness." But she also refers again to the time that she was coming of age, "it was do your own thing time, sexual liberation time." The eldest members of her generation, the consciousness raisers, had fought to have the veil of prescribed living and expectation lifted, but as Anderson states above, new expectations arose about what might evolve out of this new liberation, results of which would not been seen for years to come. Her own decisions to pursue modern dance more seriously when she left Queen's and went to York were not about politics. She recognized that she was entering a field that was filled with legacies of women and refers to the Wigman – Jarvis connection, but ultimately it was curiosity about craft, "dancing, the thoughtfulness of it at the time was really quite enticing. I saw a connection between my love of reading and writing and dancing." Although political reasoning was not an impetus for her dancing life she said that notions of feminine energy and power were "definitely ideas that were at play." She continues, "I say that because those are things that I try to encourage in students I come across now. That sense of responsibility for your own training and having aspirations and busting a gut to realize them" (Anderson, interview).

The air of "do your own thing" time was further addressed by Fraser. Like Toronto Dance Theatre, the development of the York Dance Department brought about a new environment for community. Susan Macpherson's feelings of being a member of a dance

community but not necessarily of a community of women were the same for Fraser. Birth control, abortion, labour rights and child care were the prevalent issues of the Women's Liberation at this time. Of these topics and their place in the consciousness of her and her peers Fraser reflects:

> I don't think we ever had discussions about these things, I think we lived it. Freedom of choice, rights as women -- we lived it on a daily basis without daily discussion. I never thought I could not do anything a man could do. I was never led to believe that I should be different by anybody that I can recall, and I never thought I was inferior. I think being in dance school we were probably lucky, because it was run mostly by women, we ran everything. I wanted to be a lawyer at one point, and had I gone into that world perhaps I would have found a very different environment. I kind of just lived women's rights. We didn't need to talk about women's rights (Fraser, interview).

Both Macpherson and Anderson also referred to the adversity faced by women in other professional fields or environments. Macpherson used the university environment as an example of where things might be different for women and concluded that she still thinks that women don't have the power that men have. In reference to expectations not materializing Anderson also claimed simply that there is still a long way to go. She then mentioned an acquaintance, a woman who was a law professor at Queen's who faced the challenges of transition "because she chose to pursue an academic career at a conservative university that had a lot guys with a lot of power. Even though she was trying to knock on the ceiling it was very difficult for her being of my generation" (Anderson, interview). She also used the example of her boyfriend at the time who was a law student and the complexity of his office environment; "there were a lot of rabid feminists...he wasn't bad but he had to watch his p's and q's because if he said the wrong

thing they'd be coming down on him." On the other hand, they also talked about the value of wearing a mini skirt in the courtroom if they wanted the outcome to be in their favour.

The point of these examples is not to enter a debate but to highlight the absence of these scenarios in the dance environments of these women. In all of their accounts their art was primary, their primary passion but also their primary struggle. Although they may not have faced the same gender discrimination as women in other professions they were not without hardships. Fraser encapsulates this: "Dance was a metaphor for freedom; it was not freedom itself. Dance training and the dance life is rigorous and hard. The rewards are more intrinsic than extrinsic. The rewards are not material or monetary. There's some regard you can expect, but fame is not really even a part of it" (Fraser, interview).

Out of the Studio

If art was primary, then what came next for the women I interviewed in their self identification? Atwood's definitions of white, woman, writer, Canadian may be difficult, if not impossible to separate, but these identifiers can be rearranged and prioritized like Scrabble pieces, to correspond with any given context.

The most basic definition of woman refers to physiological difference, one that carries with it the potential for childbearing. For some women arranging their identifiers in this context may not matter very much after putting woman first, but for others

profession may come next and for others still it may take the lead. Dancer, woman, Canadian (to be followed by race, sexual orientation, religion of any order) is also a very real arrangement. The primary role of the body in dance indeed makes the question of having children more complex than it already is. The very questions that began this research were very closely linked to notions of art and marriage and motherhood not mixing. Prior to the mid-sixties a lot of this did have to do with expectations of women's roles and their dedication to husband, children and home, but it also had to do with practicality. Time, space and solitude are all allies to creativity, as Virginia Woolf argued in *A Room of One's Own.* When women were gaining rights to make broader decisions for themselves, the fact that having children can be disruptive to the ascent towards a successful dance career did not disappear, though the extremity of social expectations may have lessened somewhat, the demands of being a dancer had not and were not changing. In "Paradoxes and Dilemmas" Atwood paints a brilliant picture of the difference between pre and post Women's Liberation writers:

> I've heard stories of writers so consumed by guilt over what they had been taught to feel was their abnormality that they did their writing at night, secretly, so no one would accuse them of failing as housewives, as "women." These writers accomplished what they did by themselves, often at great personal expense. In order to write at all, they had to defy other women's as well as men's ideas of what was proper, and it's not finally all that comforting to have a phalanx of women – some younger and relatively unscathed, others from their own generation, the bunch that was collecting china, changing diapers and sneering at any female with intellectual pretensions twenty or even ten years ago – come breezing up now to tell them they were right all along. It's like being judged after you've been hanged: the satisfaction, if any, is grim (Atwood, Paradoxes, 258).

While writers disappeared at night when the world was sleeping, dancers often just disappeared from the stage for good after marriage and babies. In the Canada Council's 1967-68 Annual Report reference is made to women, especially in the ballet, disappearing after marriage, "Our grant to the National Ballet School can be compared to the assistance we give to the National Theatre School, and of course, its purpose is to provide new dancers when the ranks of the corps de ballet are thinned by marriage and other selfish considerations" (Canada Council, 1967-68, 32). 'Selfish considerations,' it is certainly safe to assume, include pregnancy especially when coupled with marriage. The use of the term selfish is interesting in itself; so overt in its tone that it is questionable whether or not it is actually intended to be as derogatory as it sounds. The fact that the high turnover of corps dancers made a significant enough impact on the expenses of ballet companies is testament to the frequency and regularity with which women chose either dancing or marriage and children. According to Susan Macpherson the situation was not very different in modern dance:

> Childbearing in those days was something I wasn't ready for, but that I might consider down the line, but I certainly wasn't ready to have children in my twenties. Even if I had wanted to, it didn't seem possible to be a dancer and have a child, and I suspect that for a lot of women that was the case. They would put off having children until they had done the dancing they wanted to do. We certainly didn't have enough money to raise a child and I suspect that I was not alone. Not a lot of my colleagues had children in those days and if they did they dropped out of dance, not many got married either, and if they did, they dropped out of dance too. We were too much in the mode of independent women à la Graham. Why tie yourself down to some other person's agenda? (Macpherson, interview).

Both Beatty and Fraser were married and then divorced. Beatty says of marriage, "I was married to modern dance, and I was married for awhile but it didn't work very well." Fraser married when she was twenty-two during the summer following her graduation from York. She performed in Dancemakers' first show in Mirvish Village and then moved to London with her husband. They divorced in the early eighties and she has since remarried. She doesn't remember marriage being a topic of discussion:

> I don't remember ever discussing it. Peggy was married. We were normal. I think it's way bigger a deal now than it ever was and I think it's a terrible thing. I just never thought twice about what I was doing being married, not being married. It's such a big deal now and it's just silly, marriage is great, I've done it twice. You don't believe in marriage then don't be married. I think people fret over the silliest things. Get on with it, do whatever you want. I never thought that I should not do something or do something. I don't remember my parents saying "get married, find a nice boy" - nothing, never ever, ever, ever (Fraser, interview).

Macpherson, who chose not to marry, didn't ever receive pressure from her parents to do otherwise:

> Definitely I have to speak from own experience, I don't think marriage was a necessity. Although my parent's marriage was a very solid kind of example. I think my mother would have said half joking that she wouldn't want her daughter to put up with all the limitations that marriage would put on you (that's not very well put). I mean the sense that I got from my mother was that she would be quite happy if her daughters just had their own lives and strengths and wouldn't rely on getting married. I thought it wasn't necessary, and it was mimicking an institution. I would have a partnership, but marriage wasn't the ultimate (Macpherson, interview).

Carol Anderson, whose parents made a point of not imposing their own beliefs about matrimony and children onto their own kids, also remembers there not being very many babies around in the early days of Dancemakers, but she does not mention the correlation between dancers and few babies, "Well, you know people didn't do it (have babies) very

much. The only person I knew who had a baby was Trish Armstrong and I'm not sure that she was really planning that. There were a lot of free-spirited women around at that time.... It was a time of people making other kinds of choices in their lives." In reference to her own financial status she claims, "as long as I had money for new socks and cigarettes I was OK" (Anderson, interview). She continued to say that concerns about money and people settling down later came much later. When it came to marriage she mentions some peers who lived with boyfriends (including herself) but didn't marry. After she named some who did marry, her thoughts were ultimately disrupted by a chuckle to herself and the exclamation that "there was sort of a lot of messing around, I have to say as I look back." This messing around, sexual liberation, casual sex in reference to the mid to late seventies highlights the tone of Fraser's recollections:

> There was no expectation that we would be anything but functioning human beings in the work force and fulfill ourselves in some wonderful way. It was also a very positive time. We didn't know the water was polluted, we didn't know that the air was polluted, we didn't know any of that stuff, we didn't know. We were naïve, but in some ways it was a good naiveté. It let us dream about what ever it was we were going to do. It was a very optimistic time (Fraser, interview).

This bubble of naïveté and ultimately optimism was engrossed in a political environment that shaped people's lives whether they knew it or not. Beatty exclaimed, "It was a thrilling time. Canada wanted its own art form, it wanted its own expression, the real thing, and the Trudeau government was willing to pay for it because he was a brilliant man and he knew. It was around, Margaret Atwood, everybody, it was

happening. I felt, we felt, there was a way. We didn't know, but we were on it" (Beatty, interview).

The End of an Era

When Dancemakers evolved out of York's first graduating class in 1974 (Anderson graduated in 1973, as she had two years at Queen's already) TDT and Judy Jarvis were the only other modern dancers around working at a professional level. The Collective called Fifteen Dancers had been going since 1972, founded by Lawrence and Miriam Adams, two ex-National Ballet Dancers, but they were not modern dancers. They did not come from the lineage of Martha Graham, Mary Wigman or Bennington; they were fed up ballet dancers with their own ideas about art and creation. As Anderson wrote in the York Dance Review's Fall 1973 issue, Fifteen Dancers were, "a chameleon group, who changed from carpenters to choreographers to ticket sellers.... [their ideal] was to take people out of the closed world of the dance studio and give them the opportunity to experience a greater involvement with a more open environment" (Anderson 11). Dancemakers, on the other hand, filled the spot of offering an alternative to the formal style of Toronto Dance Theatre, though its dancers had all come from intensive traditional training at York.

"I think of people working in opposition to things," Susan Cohen said of the early seventies. She places Miriam Adams for example in opposition to the ballet. People also had varying opinions about different movement vocabularies. She believes there were three significant things happening then. The first she named is the work that Judy Jarvis

was doing, and the difficulty many had in understanding and placing her work. She also referred to the interesting fact that she was not affiliated in any way with York, she was truly independent. Next she addressed the emergence of the intelligent dancer and the dancer in context, who was being refined at York. Finally, she marked the creation of Fifteen Dance Lab in 1974, a transformed garage that the Adams turned into a theatre space as an offshoot of the disbanded Fifteen Dance Collective. Of Fifteen Cohen says it was "just the notion of empowering people - that garage with its forty stolen theatre seats. And this notion of giving people the opportunity for independence and allowing them to take hold of their own imaginations; giving people the opportunity to take the opportunity if they wanted it" (Cohen, interview).

The emergence of Fifteen Dance Lab in a way marks the end of an era. Modern dance was no longer just modern, it had a post-modern outlet, and it was a forum for individuals and performance art. Dancemakers may not have been as traditional as TDT but they were also not ready to let go of the conventions of a dance based company. Performance art was not their focus, though having a variety of choreographers was. According to Jennifer Fisher in her article "From Post-Ballet to Post-Modern: The 1972 Debut of Toronto's Ground-Breaking 15 Dance Collective", after Fifteen [Dance Collective] the culture of the independent dance artist, a term coined by the Adams, became more prevalent and Toronto's dance scene grew in many directions. The inaugural modern dance decade was over.

1975 was a year flagged by the United Nations as International Women's Year. Things had come a long way since Doris Anderson's appeals and challenging editorials in *Chatelaine*, but they had definitely not become less complicated. Issues, class, race and political stance separated the women's movement; the unified fight for equality had raised the awareness of other inequalities and out of one movement grew many more. Nevertheless gender inequality was being recognized and dealt with at the political and legislative level, thus International Women's Year.

As part of this special year, a Festival of Women in the Arts was to be presented in Toronto, and Susan Cohen along with Miriam Adams was assigned as producer of the dance program. The event is a fitting ending to this tale. It is an opportunity to see what became of the implicit issues of women in dance and the other arts becoming an explicit much publicized event.

In the January 1975 issue of *Chatelaine* Dr. Katie Cooke acknowledges the moment in "International Women's Year, What It Means to All of Us." A quotation from it gives a good idea of where things stood for women:

> Individual women in Canada can get down to business in 1975, too. Not everyone is a militant activist, not everyone enjoys working groups. First, though, every woman has to start thinking of herself as a worthwhile citizen. Many women have a negative self-image: "I'm just a housewife..." For all our sakes, take pride in what you're doing, and in the importance of your contribution. If you're not satisfied with your present role, adopt another one as soon as possible.... When you go to meetings, don't let every man who aspires to, hog the spotlight. Stop trading with stores that demand your husband's signature, regardless of your qualifications to obtain a credit card.... Every woman in Canada has a stake in making International Women's Year a working reality, instead of a dry, sleep inducing state occasion. Let's get on with it!" (Cooke 20).

Compare this to Susan Cohen's editorial in *Dance in Canada* magazine's Fall 1975 issue, its own nod to International Women's Year:

> Simone de Beauvoir's oft quoted remark that "it is in culture that women have best succeeded in asserting themselves" is especially true in dance and particularly true in Canadian Dance in 1975, International Women's Year. As Selma Odom, a professor of dance history at York University puts it in her article, "it is almost giddying" to find the number of their accomplishments today in the field. The Canadian women who have made contributions to dance are many. As teachers, organizers and performers, they have genuinely shaped the dance culture that we know....What marks this decade off from the preceding is the growing number of women involved in the creative side – as choreographers, designers and composers in dance (Cohen, Editorial, *DIC*).

Dr. Cooke's call to action versus Cohen's celebration of action is a telling tale again, of the nature of women's lives in the field of modern dance. Cohen points to the creators who emerged in the seventies and all of the profiles in the issue are focused on women who were working in the contemporary dance field: Trish Beatty, composer Ann Southam and Vancouver choreographer Anna Wyman. The women who had their choreography showcased on the Festival's main stage at the St. Lawrence Centre from June 5 to 7 and 12 to 14 were Anna Blewchamp, Judy Jarvis, Ann Ditchburn, Terrill Maguire and Miriam Adams. Karen Kain opened the festivities with a performance. Of the choreographers listed, only Ditchburn was from the ballet world. Other venues included St. Paul's Centre, Harbourfront and Fifteen Dance Lab. Site specific work and workshops were also taking place.

In the newspapers Festival of Women in the Arts was well publicized and had regular press especially by John Fraser from the *Globe and Mail*. His approach was consistently tongue in cheek. This preview ran on Saturday, May 24, 1975:

> As a man fully acquainted with the grief and glory of Women's Liberation and as a male dance critic I humbly look forward to the cornucopia of events about to be poured all over me by the women in dance around here who are using June to celebrate International Women's Year.
>
> Three prominent members of the small army that is setting out to present everything (36 choreographers, 65 performers, 33 events – so far) came visiting this week to outline the Dance Calendar which is a constituent part of the Festival of Women in the Arts which also includes music, theatre and art. They were: Susan Cohen, a dance writer and teacher (and daughter of the late dance and theatre critic of the Toronto Star, Nathan Cohen – may I be struck dumb for pointing it out); Anna Blewchamp, teacher and conspicuously rising choreographer; and Miriam Adams, choreographer and video artist (wife of dancer Lawrence Adams and a former member of the National Ballet – may I be struck doubly dumb for pointing it out) (Fraser, *Globe*, 31).

Susan Cohen recalls the visit that accompanied the interview with Fraser:

> I came dressed in a new dress. It was me and Anna and Miriam, and John asked us to take a picture, he was a little uncomfortable about the topic. He had these big iron bars that were part of a fence and he wanted us to take a picture in front of them looking out. I remember refusing because that was an image I didn't want of women, so it was fine and we took another one. But in the article he wrote afterwards he said that when he left to make tea we started talking about clothes (Cohen, interview).

To be exact the caption below the alternative photo read, "Cohen, Blewchamp and Adams: out of the reporter's earshot, the conversation changed to clothes" (Fraser, Globe and Mail). "That to me was really illustrative of the challenges we were facing" (Cohen, interview). Though Fraser's reviews do have a biting tone his approach was often facetious. His familiarity with the scene indicates full engagement and support of the festival and the artists involved in it.

Cohen continues that the festival was an initiative to bring the role of women in the arts to the public but that a lot of people denigrated the whole feeling of it and said that it was ghettoizing women. "The whole notion of affirmative action of various kinds that we have all benefited from at different points was a big topic. [They asked], why address it to women? In fact, the fact that they said that already told you something" (Cohen, interview).

Regardless of the conflicting views upon the festival, from the inside Cohen believes it was a positive experience; it gave women artists exposure to one another that they may not have had otherwise. She recalls being surprised herself that there were women composers in Canada, "which is foolish, but it tells you how much larger the canvas was; even if the work was done, it kind of disappeared.... In music there were some interesting women but no one performed their own music." Women in theatre had representation through artists like Jackie Burroughs, Barbara Chilcott and Martha Henry, who Cohen said, "were some very powerful women performers." Susan Macpherson's recollections of women working in other art forms, though she says they are second-hand, were that "the women working in visual arts were always second class citizens. "Maybe you can have a little show in the back".... I suspect that in music, classical at any rate, that it was pretty male centric as well."

Although the women in dance had greater visibility than women in the other art forms, the art form of dance itself was marginalized; that was its struggle. Though

women in dance, especially in modern dance, were fulfilling roles in all positions, the positions were few. It is the marginalized of the marginalized, and so it had been said time and again. The fact that modern dance was a woman's art form makes its struggle one that belongs as much to women as it does to the art form. Whether it is identified in this way or not by those experiencing it is perhaps not the issue. In Toronto between 1965 and 1975 the coincidence of Women's Liberation, council support and the emergence of a professional modern dance scene is significant. The women interviewed provide a full spectrum of the New Woman. Trish Beatty, Susan Macpherson, Susan Cohen, Carol Anderson, Pat Fraser and countless others, intentionally or not, were examples of a new way of life that they may have just lived, but that thousands of women in very close proximity were fighting to have.

Parting Thoughts

When the time arrived for me to write this conclusion, I returned to my departure point, Margaret Atwood, about whom in the two years since I began this project, I have thought and read extensively. I even made a dance about her. It is a solo, created for Meredith Thompson, called *Peggy's Paddle*, about Atwood's transformation and self realization during her football field crossing. She demystifies herself as a writer by mysteriously averting our attention away from her personal life and onto the world of which she is a product. She is acutely aware of the relevance of her context. In the introduction to a collection of her journalistic writing, *Moving Targets: Writing With Intent 1982-2004*, she begins with a little dance around the realities of aging. She does not focus so much on the usual misfortunes of gravity and memory loss, but on the benefits of being an aging celebrity artist. Her concern for what anyone has to say about her or her work is diminished. What is there to lose now? She points out, "the kind of thing that might have got you called a mean, dangerous, radical red-toothed bitch when you were thirty may now be treated as the scatterbrained utterance of a cute old biddy" (Atwood, *Moving,* 2). She makes reference to Brownies and Girl Guides, a very distinct aspect of many young Canadian girls' lives, my own included. She jokes that they ruin you through making you eternally selfless; she blames them for making her having to write so many speeches, reviews, odes and obituaries - enough to warrant a full volume. She often could not say no.

She continues to reflect upon how times have changed since the early sixties when she began reviewing, and since the early eighties when *Moving Targets* begins. She briefly refers to Women's Liberation. "...it was 1982, the women's movement had run through its exciting but exhausting 1970s period and was taking a breather." She continues, "Canadian cultural nationalism appeared to have achieved its many goals, *post-modernism* and *deconstructionism* were the critical catchphrases of the day..." (Atwood, *Moving*, 2). She discusses her dislike of reviewing and of writing advocacy although she feels "compelled to do a certain amount of it anyway" (Atwood, *Moving*, 3). She ends with an explanation of the title, *Moving Targets*, the word 'moving' given a double meaning: emotionally moving and motion moving. She writes of the subjects she has reviewed, eulogized and commended, "...they're like the mechanical ducks in the amusement park, visible to the naked eye but often hard to hit. They're embedded in time, they flow along with it, they're changed by it, and anything said about them – like anything said about the shape of an amoeba – can only be approximate" (Atwood, *Targets*, 5). Her opinions about the shortcomings of trying to define a person for eternity or categorize a person are clear – it cannot be done. A person can only be captured in the moment because people are forever changing. Perhaps this is why she has spent such a good deal of time writing about herself. She knows herself best through all of her certain changes.

Everyone has their own preoccupations, concerns and beliefs. Art is about being moved by something to do something, say something, write something or dance

something. It is not always or even often autobiographical, but it is always of the artist. Through their art, artistry and participation in an art life, artists symbolize things beyond and outside of their work. I have said many times throughout this project that this was done to Atwood; it is what I have done to Beatty, Macpherson, Cohen, Anderson and Fraser. The gift that Atwood has given is that she continues to engage in a dialogue about the woman the world chose for her to be. She has left a trail. As a woman artist or an artist woman this is a responsibility of our time, not just of a single generation. Women, all of them, need to be given their place in history. What better way than from the women who lived it themselves, even if they are doing a bit of their own myth making.

In the end, this is what I wanted to do with the women I interviewed. I wanted to engage in a dialogue that asked questions about what I thought was the obvious. As Susan Macpherson pointed out, when I imagined a community of women in modern dance living lives outside of the boundaries of the status quo I was imposing something onto Toronto's early modern dance scene that was not there – or rather, that was not necessarily recognized as being there. Now I have pointed out that it was –implicitly if not explicitly - and it is important. Dance needs to be recognized as a site of valuable investigation into women's experiences by others outside of the discipline. I also learned something more about the individuality of these women.

When I asked Carol Anderson towards the end of our second interview if she perceived herself as different from other women because of her involvement in dance she

answered, "Yeah, I did. I'm sure I would have found myself completely unbearable." She laughed and then continued:

> I really thought, and I do now again for different reasons, that dance was a spiritual path. The perseverance over time does cause an effect on a person – just living the life of a dancer and meeting its challenges. There is a real hardness to being a working dancer that has a very profound affect on a person. That is not to be denied (Anderson, interview).

Patricia Beatty also acknowledged these challenges and their toll on the individual:

> I was always cut down but then I learned when I was going too far. It has nothing to do with male or female. There is an insistence on hierarchy because that is the way that the world is structured. I often had to go through the cracks to get things done, and it's still true. In other words, you can't work from your ego. You have to work from your generosity, your soul and your intelligence - get it done the way mothers do. But it costs a bit. We don't want it to continue much longer (Beatty, interview).

In these quotes and at so many other points throughout my interview transcripts I am reminded of Pat Fraser's words, that dance is a metaphor for freedom, not freedom itself. This idea has stayed with me since the day of our interview. It seemed to perfectly encapsulate the dilemma that I found myself in when I was confronted with the fact that most of my subjects had a secondary relationship to Women's Liberation, basically that they lived through it with various degrees of consciousness. Why had I been so certain that they would have had a more direct involvement? Why did I see them as poster girls for an era which I could not remember but only imagine?

They looked like freedom. They looked like power – of the physical and spiritual sort. They looked like independence. What I know now about the Royal Commission and the Canada Council's gradual support of modern dance I did not know during my first days

at Dance Collection Danse when I was sorting through piles of photos. I only knew that I gained something from looking at those images. The proximity of their experiences to my own was invaluable. In them I recognized the freedom and the power that I know from my own life as a dancer. In them I also saw perseverance, success and longevity. They harkened back to a time for which I had a vicarious nostalgia, something I have come to understand a little more. Things appeared simple. As Susan Cohen said, things worked in opposition to one another. I could place myself somewhere in one of those images of Woodstock, the March on Washington, Mariposa Folk Festival, a pro-choice rally, a TDT performance. It is easier to place ourselves in a time passed by than in the undefined present.

The decade between 1965 and 1975 in Toronto was defined by a new demographic, the search for a national culture, and Women's Liberation. The place of Toronto's early professional modern dance within these contexts is inescapable; it is the environment in which it grew up. But these contexts do not define it or the dancing life. The challenges, the rigour, the joy of a career in dance existed long before and will persist for as long as the dance does. Even infinite money and capacity audiences will never eliminate the harshness of the dancing life. It is the persistence within this life that makes its participants extraordinary, in addition to their necessary talents. Talent does not carry you the full way.

The role of women in modern dance, though, is defining. It is after all women who defined it. It is a twentieth century child. It was born out of restlessness, defiance, hope

and desire. It became disciplined and rigid in the name of continuity, but it is still, at its best, what it was in the beginning. In the 1930s in New York, its backdrop was socialism and worker's rights; in the 1960s and 1970s in Toronto its backdrop was free love and Women's Liberation. As Patricia Beatty said, any artist would be politically left if they thought about it. Although there are many examples that contradict this, it is true that modern dance has its home on the left end of the political spectrum. All of its participants may not be left but their engagement in modern dance, just as engagement in any art form, speaks to a love of humanity and freedom and expression.

This study is of course only a beginning. Although an era and its struggles are not definitive of the art that came out of it, examining how artists maneuvered within certain times is invaluable. In the case of women they're still pretty new within the art scene, especially one that welcomes them. Of course women have always made art of all kinds but it is not that long ago that we were given respect and validity; and so it is too soon to forget. For every book that I found on women artists in Canada I needed ten more. When I narrowed my search down to Toronto ten seemed closer to a total number of available resources (perhaps a slight exaggeration). I think work needs to be done that compares the challenges that women face in each of the artistic disciplines in different cities and provinces. There is so much to be gained from this context, if not least of all, many, many social histories of Canada's female art makers that must be documented. Pigeon-holing has nothing to do with it; celebration, recognition and education are the reasons for pursuit. Race, religion and class need to be included; as has been determined they are

inseparable in the individual, but also revealing of a society. Race in Toronto, especially in the seventies and eighties when the black population began to increase here, is of special personal interest to me.

In the meantime, while I work towards these goals, I have this experience with Patricia Beatty, Susan Macpherson, Susan Cohen, Carol Anderson and Patricia Fraser to remind me of the value, gratification and indisputable importance of writing down our history. That way the words of its makers will be there for the next person who wonders something big.

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