

Chapter 5: Hilary Cartwright

Introduction

Hilary Cartwright was born in Leamington Spa in the United Kingdom in 1943. She attended Elmhurst Ballet School and the Royal Ballet School before joining the Royal Ballet in 1962. After a serious back injury several years into her career, she transitioned into teaching—a process described in her autobiography *Dancing for a Living* (1974). In her thirties, Cartwright taught ballet internationally, as well as holding leadership positions in dance companies and ballet schools; between 1978 and 1983 she moved between London, Winnipeg, The Hague, Geneva, Rio de Janeiro, Montreal, and New York. While searching for movement practices and healing work that would help care for her back and educate dancers holistically, Cartwright discovered the movement practice of Juliu Horvath, leading to their extended collaboration. In 1984, Cartwright co-founded the White Cloud Studio with Horvath in New York City. She managed the studio and staff for twelve years, training new teachers and developing movement methods in synergy with Horvath's innovations in movement equipment, today known as the GYROTONIC® expansion system.¹ In parallel, Cartwright continued to work as a ballet teacher, choreographer, and to set ballets as part of the Frederick Ashton Foundation. For the last twenty-five years, Cartwright has additionally focused on refining her Yoga Narada® practice, offered initially in New York City as well as through international workshops and retreats.² In her words: “Yoga is a coming together of body, mind and spirit. Yoga Narada provides a way to achieve flexibility in the body, while maintaining coordinated control, passing smoothly from one shape to another.”³ Cartwright currently offers

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- 1 For the purpose of readability, subsequent references to the methods of the GYROTONIC EXPANSION SYSTEM®, GYROTONIC®, and GYROKINESIS® in this chapter use ordinary capitalization and are made without the registered trademark symbol.
 - 2 With Cartwright's permission, for the purpose of readability, subsequent references to Yoga Narada® are made without the registered trademark symbol.
 - 3 See the subpage of Hilary Cartwright' website, <https://www.hilarycartwright.com/yoganarada>, last accessed September 24, 2025.

lessons in presence and through Zoom. She resides in Alpatró, Vall de Gallinera, in the province of Alicante, Spain.

*Figure 1: A candid shot of Hilary Cartwright
lunching with friends in Aspen, Colorado, USA.*



Photograph Tom Mossbrucker.

Cartwright's status as a founding member of the Gyrotonic community meant that I encountered her name and reputation years before we met in person.⁴ Joining Cartwright's annual spring workshops in Bern for the first time in 2017, I was captivated by her radiant teaching practice and the way her yoga energized my body.⁵ My notebook entries documenting my first encounter with Cartwright begin graphically with a pencil sketch of "Hilary" standing benevolently, like an icon of Our Lady of Grace: the Virgin Mary with her arms outstretched. A subtle pencil dot at Cartwright's center marks my first impression of her breathing—designating what

4 I have practiced the Gyrotonic method since 2004 and received my teaching certification in 2014.

5 She was invited to offer this by Annemarie Parekh, the founder of akarStudios in Bern, beginning in the mid-nineties.

Cartwright calls “breathing from the dan tien.”⁶ My knowledge of this embodied practice and philosophy have deepened in the subsequent years: through live workshops, Zoom lessons, and since 2020 under Cartwright’s mentorship in her teacher-training practice. Collaborating on her body-biography, this project built further intimacy between us, as we both engaged in life review and I learned more about the history of Cartwright’s teaching practice.

Figure 2: Hilary Cartwright demonstrating during a teacher-training lesson on Zoom, November 16, 2020.



Screenshot by E. Waterhouse.

Writing Cartwright’s Body-Biography

This body-biography adds to Cartwright’s growing collection of autobiographical projects: in writing, photography, poetry, and dance. At the age of thirty-one, Cartwright published a 124-page autobiography, *Dancing for a Living: Ballet and Contemporary Dance* (1974), as part of an educational career series of books for young people introducing various professions. The materials for this publication had been developed in the form of articles for the British magazine *Dancing Times* under the title “Things They Forget to Tell You.”⁷ We revisited these stories in our interviews, giving Cartwright room to reflect on her perspective on these times from her position today.

6 This is explained further in our life story dialogues. See footnote 49.

7 Cartwright, *Dancing for a Living*, 104–5.

Cartwright also added finishing her autobiography to her bucket list during the COVID-19 pandemic. Supporting her intention, I provided our interview recordings and transcripts as accounts that might be useful for her own writing. Her own selection, editing, and narrating of these materials would of course be different from mine. It was my expectation that Cartwright's body-biography, created together with me, would not only add new information about her life to this body of written work, but would also reveal my influence on her reflection. Cartwright was also invited to make two, exceptionally beautiful, photographic life review projects while making this book, and to perform a solo in which she chose to look back at her movement practices (see Figure 4).⁸ Delighted for all these interweaving efforts to document and honor Cartwright's contribution to dance history, my interviewing directed her towards narratives of the body, which I explained might potentially differ from a chronicle of life events—public career successes and failures—more typical of the dancer memoir genre.⁹

How would an autobiography authored from Cartwright's standpoint today present her life stories from the past? Would she repeat or rehearse prior narratives? Were there new aspects or topics that had been excluded? Cartwright's voice in *Dancing for a Living* is largely consistent with her voice here: discerning, equanimous, poetic, and analytic. She does not sensationalize the work of a ballet dancer. Rather, her life review takes the form of honing advice for aspiring dancers, framing constructive lessons from the difficulties of her past. In other words, Cartwright aims to show realities behind the myths, to help young students make meaningful life decisions and resiliently persevere through career difficulties. The power of her voice also establishes her place as an observer with an uncharacteristic autobiography—not only a ballerina, but a ballerina who becomes a teacher. To this end, Cartwright intuitively dissects her own education and labor within dance organizations, illustrating challenges of gaining access, recovering from injury, and competing within hierarchical working structures. She encourages young dancers to develop a healthy sense of self-esteem and a support system, broadening their perspectives outside the world of ballet.

To my surprise, Cartwright retold her life stories about her first experiences as a ballet dancer in a similar fashion during our interviews, which may indicate how her prior autobiographical writing has enabled her to achieve coherence; to these memories, she added new stories about “middle age” and “aging.” Her narratives cohere around the themes of continuous self-growth, learning, and resilience in the face of difficulty. Already in *Dancing for a Living*, Cartwright describes the importance

8 See Puente, *A Singing Body* and Franceschi, *Ageless Dancers*. Cartwright's solo is described in the section “Choreography: ‘I was asked if I would work with the dancers.’”

9 Here I draw on the writing of historian Christina Thurner on serial autobiographies. See Thurner, *Erinnerungen tanzen*, 194–217.

of nurturing her identity through hobbies and art forms outside of dance, and the pleasure of her career circling back to the Royal Ballet by becoming a teacher and *répétiteuse*. Within our discussions, I observed her give equal treatment to her ballet-self and her identity as a practitioner and teacher of Yoga Narada: two “selves” that also interact within these interlinked communities. In contrast to her earlier writing, however, Cartwright has since developed a transnational position and perspective beyond her Royal Ballet network (through her work in the Ashton Foundation, the Gyrotonic community, and her own Yoga Narada network). By working outside dance institutions, she now has more distance to critically reflect on her own social mobility. Additionally, by describing the two hip-replacement surgeries she underwent later in life, she narrates how her aging process has ushered in further acceptance of herself and her body’s imperfections. At the start of our interview, she distinguishes self and body, while showing them to be related: “I feel my body has served me very well. We’ve had our ups and downs considerably, but I feel that over time I’ve been able to let my body really serve me in a way I didn’t anticipate that it could at different junctures in my life.”

Each of my protagonists spoke of gender conventions in their stories: discussing how they perceived normative roles and how gendered realities impacted their self-fashioning and job opportunities. Certainly, my position as a woman interviewing Cartwright, a female elder with leadership status, motivated me to also raise questions about her experience negotiating power and authority, as well as her observations of and encounters with sexism, at the notoriously complicated intersection of dance and femininity.¹⁰ More generally, oral history scholars working with gender theories research the conventional roles, self-narratives, and self-representations that shape the telling of women’s life stories, inquiring into how women construct or escape narrative coherence and manage discontinuities.¹¹ As we have already seen with Christine Kono and Marcus Schulkind’s narratives, oral autobiographical storytelling is typically interlaced with self-evaluation and justification: time leaps that rethink the past from one’s position today. These may highlight distinctions between norms and actions, such as personal beliefs versus perceived societal conventions, or changes in society’s values over time.¹² They can reveal themselves not only in words, but also in a narrator’s body language, as

10 Close studies of dance, autobiography, and gender are made in Christina Thurner and Karen Eliot’s writing. See Thurner, *Erinnerungen tanzen*, 223–41; Eliot, *Dancing Lives*.

11 Daniel James’ thoughtful reading of gender in oral history interviews and *testimonio* literature influences my thinking here. See in particular James, *Doña María’s Story*, 213–43.

12 Much literature supports this, indicative works include: Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 106–29; Boyd and Roque Ramírez, *Bodies of Evidence*; Gluck and Patai, *Women’s Words*; Portelli, “A Dialogical Relationship.”

when, during her interview, Cartwright uses contrasting gestures to distinguish yin/female and yang/male energies.

In contrast to men's stories, women's stories often emphasize community and support roles—reporting social dialogue and highlighting relationships.¹³ In the case of Cartwright, her body-biography does all these, while also presenting highly reflective decisions that demonstrate strong authority and ambition—as well as an eloquent and rhetorically self-aware voice. As she explains, however, rather than an easy life, Cartwright's agency to create narrative authority has “met resistance in a lot of places.” Her story has been “repudiated completely” by the Gyrotonic community, and also marginalized by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet—histories foregrounding male leadership and genius myths of creativity.¹⁴ Instead, the practice of Gyrotonic has been marketed by manufacturing the biography of its inventor, Juliu Horvath; the Royal Winnipeg Ballet highlights the charismatic personality of Arnold Spohr, director from 1958–1988, in its public history.¹⁵ Wishing to learn more about Cartwright's involvement in these contexts, I listened carefully. I also influenced her storytelling by means of my follow-up questions about sexism and authorship. I wondered: How do ambitious women such as Cartwright tell their tales without rehearsing the narratives of male geniuses that become popular on the “cultural circuit”?¹⁶ Would she distinguish between her personal and professional self in her relationship to Horvath? Would she have been encouraged to become a choreographer and not a teacher if she had been a man with her talents? My conversations with Cartwright embellish upon these questions, tacitly posed as I listened to her narrative, first live in person and then again multiple times while transcribing and editing.

This body-biography was developed from two recordings of interview dialogues, held during Cartwright's fall and spring Yoga Narada workshops in 2022 and 2023 in Bern.¹⁷ The opportunity to perform “participant observation” of her workshops in parallel to the interviews was beneficial, allowing me to study her movement practice and her biographical-narratives simultaneously. Cartwright

13 See Gluck and Patai, *Women's Words*.

14 Citation from our interview on April 20, 2023.

15 On Gyrotonic, see the blog published on December 4, 2020, on the corporate website “History of the GYROTONIC® Equipment with Creator Juliu Horvath” <https://www.gyrotonic.com/history-of-the-gyrotonic-equipment/>, last accessed September 24, 2025. See also Horvath's biography published on the corporate website, <https://www.gyrotonic.com/about/juliu-horvath/>, last accessed September 24, 2025. On Spohr, see Crabb, *An Instinct for Success*.

16 Summerfield, “Oral History as an Autobiographical Practice,” 4–7.

17 The interviews took place on October 13, 2022, at Drehpunkt studios, and April 20, 2023, at akarStudios, both in Bern. For references to the audio recording, transcripts, and metadata, see Cartwright, “Body-Biography Interview with Hilary Cartwright”; Waterhouse, “Metadata Body-Biography Interview Hilary Cartwright.”

was accommodating to my use of a camera to capture the paraverbal aspects of conversation in the second interview. After some opening questions, she found her flow through chronological narration. This order has been preserved in the text that follows. The recordings were transcribed word-for-word. Condensations were reviewed by Cartwright, who thoughtfully collaborated upon editing the manuscript.

One notable gap in the interview that I encouraged her to elaborate upon in post-production was discussion of her choreographic work. While Cartwright had not foregrounded her identity as a choreographer, she had made pieces throughout her career. Cartwright submitted the subsection “Choreography” to me via email, and I gladly inserted it, bridging the first and second interview. We also collaborated, and I sought secondary sources, to add further dates to Cartwright’s narrative, which had flowed through time often without marking precise moments. For example, the approximate dates of her injury, travels, and the years when she had worked at the White Cloud Studio were added in the editing phase.

The quality of Cartwright’s paraverbal communication energized her storytelling: her enunciation, the timbre of her voice, her shifts in pitch—from “head voice” to her base range—her swells in volume, her changes in pace, her rhythm and intonation. Cartwright’s voice reflects her training in reciting poetry and performing stage plays as a child. When she speaks with her clear English elocution it gives her voice a recognizable accent, reminding me of the sonorous melody of my childhood singing idol: Julie Andrews. Moreover, Cartwright’s voice traces her body state. Her breath control—honed through yogic breathing—enables her feelings to bubble up communicatively in her voice. I have made a deliberate effort to bring these qualities into this publication.

Hilary’s name, after the Latin *hilaris*, is associated with cheer and humor. In our teacher-training lessons, she has emphasized that maintaining a sense of humor is an important part of teaching. Humor also abounded in our discussions of her biography. In fact, after dutiful transcription, there was so much laughter in the transcript that an early reader bravely suggested that we consider cutting some for the publication: While laughter is infectious and social when *live*, in print it felt like a terribly out-of-tune laugh track. This was precisely the opposite of Cartwright’s intention: to connect empathetically. Reaching a compromise, we preserved only some of the original laughter. I kept instances when the reason for laughing was important. Cartwright, like Kono, used laughter to layer semantic meaning. Kono’s irony typically showed her distance from and distaste of classical ballet body-representations and storytelling. Cartwright’s irony is lighter and more diplomatic, as if to mark progress rather than criticize the past—as if to add, “Can you believe that was how things really were, way back then?”

It would be interesting to know to what extent Cartwright’s speaking voice has changed from her youth: When she was a more shallow-breathing ballet dancer,

could she narrate with such vocal power? In our dialogues, Cartwright inflected her pitch up for playful variety, creating motion within her story. To accentuate difficult phases in her stories, she dipped down into her deep tones and sometimes raised her volume—becoming louder—or alternatively shortened her words to highlight dry indignancy. To articulate positive memories of beauty and pleasure, she slowed her tempo—slower than any of my other interview partners—to emphasize certain words as if immersing herself again in the past. Here her pronunciation of single vowels and diphthongs rings beautifully, elongating her tones as though she were savoring a special memory. At the end of the interview, her tone becomes more dream-like and softer, as she recollects her experience of New York during the COVID-19 pandemic, remembering the quiet and reflective space she discovered. Further indications of vocal performance in the interview hopefully bring the reader sensually into Cartwright's vocal world.

Recognizing that Cartwright's gestures often drew upon her dance and yoga practices, I have added more movement analysis to the second half of the interview—in which I had a camera recording to reference. Seminal breakouts of her physicality are inserted into the text as movement-analytic descriptions. I describe aspects such as her sitting postures, facial expression, and spinal carriage. I especially attended to her repertoire of gestures in different planes of motion—for example, differentiating male/yang qualities (strong, bound, frontal, impact phrasing) and female/yin (to her side, lighter, or in cycles undulating her spine and breath, connecting her inner sensations to gestures outward in space). Like Kono and Lechner, she also modeled the hip joint with her hands, in motions that are illustrative rather than danced.

In the footnotes, I create dialogic space between Cartwright's memories and other historians' writings, such as her memory of working with Lubov Tchernicheva on *The Prelude* solo and her remarks on Arnold Spohr. This begins the triangulation of body-biography within a constellation of sources, from which dance historians may elaborate further.

Figure 3: Liz Waterhouse (left) and Hilary Cartwright (right) during an interview at akarStudios in Bern on April 20, 2023.



Screenshot by E. Waterhouse.

Practicing Yoga Narada® with Cartwright

Cartwright is an empathetic person manifesting the grace, beauty, confidence, carriage, and class that I associate with heroines from the past: such as the self-assured elegance of dance stars Cyd Charisse and Ginger Rogers partnering Fred Astaire. In his recent introduction of Cartwright to the audience of the 2023 Dance Teacher Awards in New York City, Cartwright's student Amos Machanic similarly acknowledged: "When I think of Hilary I think of grace, I think of beauty, I think of elegance, but most of all I think of generosity."¹⁸ As Machanic emphasizes, it is Cartwright's warm-heartedness and overflowing care that elevate her as an elite teacher. Cartwright teaches respectfully and fairly, generously helping her students to grow as persons *and* as dancers. She is horrified by authoritarian teaching, including shaming and forcing bodies physically without proper knowledge of anatomy or respect for young artists as human beings. In her life review with

18 Rodrigues, "A Recap of the 2023 Dance Teacher Awards." Amos Machanic was a dancer in the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (1996–2011) and is currently a teacher of Horton Technique and Yoga Narada.

me, Cartwright is critical of these problems.¹⁹ Equally, however, she highlights the extraordinary opportunity for emotional and aesthetic expression that dancing provides.

When I first met “Hilary” I was dazzled by her radiant, fairy godmother form of beauty—the charisma of her smile, her lithe ballerina silhouette, and the virtuosic movements of her supple body. Since that time I have developed tremendous respect for Cartwright’s bodily wisdom and communicative competence. To Machanic’s introduction, I would add that when I think of “Hilary,” I also think of her refined embodied knowledge—kinesthetic, coordinative, conversational, analytic, creative, and sensual—that in combination have enabled her to become an inventor of movement methodology and a master teacher with high standing in the professional dance community of New York City and beyond. This skill relays knowledge of *her* body with knowledge of *others’* bodies. This expertise is well evident in the classroom and will be brought out in the discussion that follows.

In her interactions with her students of Yoga Narada—from young dancers to septuagenarians with sundry professions—Cartwright demonstrates her knowledge of how to assist movers to find their *individual* way to achieve a *common* technical goal. Problems in technique may (especially as people age) incorporate a long history of habits and injuries. Her assistance during lessons with my own scoliosis and its complications has demonstrated the patience that she possesses to investigate issues step-by-step, over months and years as bodies continue to change. Eight years into our relationship, we are still exploring how I can find more freedom in my movement, given my lifestyle of pervasive academic sitting. Movement problems and pains that show up in a dance or Yoga Narada lesson—as she explains in our dialogues—entwine body, mind, and emotions. Moreover, bodies are singular and dynamic, requiring each person to be addressed individually. To do this, Cartwright relies on intuition that assembles many interweaving layers or “data” of experience. Movement education for Cartwright is not superficial—in the sense of bodily-appearances and physical-mechanics—but truly influences the whole person and their agency through movement development. As a teacher, she understands her role is to empower others—to offer them keys, for *them* to open new doors.

I fear sounding too idolatrous, opaque, or esoteric. In contrast to Cartwright, it is very challenging for me to maintain the same equanimity, or, as she has noted once very tactfully, not to fall behind in my tempo because my mind is busy working on something else (such as this book). I also find Cartwright’s approach to repetition inspiring. Cartwright finds a world of variation within Yoga Narada—a microcosm of endless discovery and novelty. In her lessons, sensitivity

19 Testimonies of authoritarian teaching practice fill Robin Lakes’ insightful study. See Lakes, “The Messages behind the Methods.”

and organization, intuition and systems, feeling and movement analysis are not opposed; they are codependents. The exercises of Yoga Narada are highly structured, honed from forty-odd years of practice. Cartwright improvises each class singularly and intuitively, following her logics of interacting with her students and organizing coherent lines of self-discovery. She maintains a stranger-friendly community. Creating a convivial and inclusive classroom, Cartwright introduces herself to all newcomers. She arranges the yoga mats in space so that she can see each person in the class—to connect and help them, as well as to motivate via eye contact. Moreover, she usually makes her students laugh before beginning—using some trivial small talk on the weather or her morning. After class, she stays in the room to address questions. She senses and listens to her students' body-stories and inquiries, and may give hands-on corrections, as well as verbal ones. My project of body-biography therefore fit well into her own practice.

The material of Yoga Narada, as a movement philosophy and a variable container of exercises, will be described in the dialogue that follows. Cartwright depicts her research as a practice connected to others' discoveries: merging dance, yoga, physical therapy, and energy work, through her own experiential path. She says Yoga Narada will never be finished. In her teaching manual, she reminds her instructors: "Yoga is a never-ending journey when you remain open to the energies around you: when you listen: when you look and when you remain faithful to the roots. It can take many different forms and none is better or worse than another when these edicts are observed. Staying honest to yourself, eschewing ambition and never imposing *your* way on others is to me the humble approach of a Yogi."²⁰

Life Stories

"I Feel Very Fortunate to Have the Body That I Have."

I invite Cartwright to introduce the reader to her individual body. In her response, she differentiates herself from her material body. Human bodies, for Cartwright, are more than the sum of their physical parts and mechanics: They are sacred, living, and energetically interconnected beings.

Liz Waterhouse: You have a wonderful, particular body Hilary. How would you describe your body?

20 Cartwright, "Hilary Cartwright's Yoga for Dancers: Now Known as YOGA NARADA. Teachers Manual," unpublished manuscript shared with the author in 2020, 1.

Hilary Cartwright (laughs): Oh my goodness. It's a very interesting question, actually! I don't know that I would ever know really *quite* how to describe my body. I guess I would say, I feel my body has served me very well. We've had our ups and downs considerably, but I feel that over time I've been able to let my body really serve me in a way I didn't anticipate that it could at different junctures in my life. It's taken a lot of thought, a lot of effort in a way, a lot of research—inward research, almost more than outward—but some outward research of course. But I feel very fortunate to have the body that I have. It will do a lot of what I want it to do. As I age, of course, things are very different, but it still allows me to feel very alive from inside out. That's the best way I can describe my body!

I know it—my body—also from other people's point of view. They go, "Well, it's extraordinary that you can do what you do, now." Because of first, how old I am, and also having had two hip replacements, back problems, various things through my career. But I believe that really for anybody with the right approach—as well as the right help and guidance—you can find a way to make things work for you.

Liz Waterhouse: Can you please tell me more about this inward and outward research?

Hilary Cartwright: What I meant by that was having to go inside myself to feel what was it that I needed to do to correct the things that went wrong—the things that weren't working as they should do. I had to *listen*. I had to really listen to my body. Whereas before, I think as a younger dancer particularly, I had *told* it what I wanted it to do from outside, in a way.

When I say that I looked outside, what I mean by that was that I did research: I studied the structure of the body. I went and did courses where we did anatomy work, including *in situ* with a cadaver which was fascinating. A lot of things that one knew, but then when you saw it, that gave a different dimension. So really studying the anatomy, but at the same time realizing it's not just flesh and bone and muscle. It's not even the brain behind it. It's the engine behind it—that serves it—that goes through the nervous system, through the fascia, through the intangible elements really, of the body.

I had for many years done energy work—and I still do energy work. It was something that I could sense through my hands with other people. I'd never applied it to myself, which was a little bit of what I had to recognize: I could give out, but being able to take it in was harder. I feel that's how—when I say the inside and the outside—it meant going inside and facing certain things within myself: my impatience, my impetuosity, my *angry* things. I wanted everything to happen *now*, you know? I had to really pull back, to learn, "No, that's not going to happen. That's not the way it is." And finding a patience and a trust. Also, I am extremely fortunate with the people who helped me enormously during this journey

of discovery of what I could do—some wonderful healers, energy people, people with extremely practical knowledge on physical therapy, craniosacral therapy—all of those things help to give me a sense of how I should work with this body and accept it.

Liz Waterhouse: What is your history with healing work and the healing arts?

Hilary Cartwright: I feel that that work motivates and supports what I do as a teacher, as a dancer, as a dance teacher, as a yoga teacher.

When I was dancing and had my first major back injury, I had gone to somebody that everybody in the Royal Ballet had gone to—a wonderful woman called Anna Legallois—and she was a healer. She had wonderful energy. I found I responded to that immediately. Anna said that she felt it was work that I should do. She felt that I had that kind of ability. Another person who I knew, also a healer, said the same thing. I said, “Well, I don’t know, how would I do that?” They said, “You’ll just know.” Neither of them gave me any kind of, “Oh, well, you do this, and you do that, and you do the other.” They said, “You will know.” The only thing that we will teach you—both said this—was “how to cleanse other people’s energy out of you after you finished,” which is really important. What I’ve always done is, after I’ve worked with somebody, I will run my hands under the cold water. It must be running water. If that’s not available, then any natural stone, or wood. I have gone scrubbed a tree with my hands (laughs) if there’s no sort of water around. That just takes any kind of exchange of energy that you’ve done with somebody, it takes it out of you, and it doesn’t sit in your own body.

I then went off and started working with dancers. They would have injuries and problems, and so my hands would go. It was like having a guide who told me where my hands should go. They would go instinctively and be able to unravel problems—or situations. As time went on, I learned to trust it more, to know that there was always that guide. I never felt it was me: It was a transmission through me. I became the vessel for carrying that. That’s what I always felt, as I went into teaching: that it’s not about me telling someone what to do. Rather, it’s: What is the essence of what you’re trying to give? What is it that you’re trying to say, that you’re trying to help somebody achieve? To me, it’s actually very sacred. I always felt the healing work was. I thought it was a gift that I had to honor and respect.

Teaching was something I *never* thought I would do because I thought I was *way* too impatient. But discovered that I actually had *infinite* patience with other people, because I recognized very often in them my own shortcomings and knew what they were dealing with. It takes understanding. I felt that the work that I did with my energy work also really inhabited my teaching and my teaching skills. There’s always that moment of preparation before you go in. It’s like going on stage. There has to be that moment gathering yourself together to go and be able to present. There are

many teachers I've seen who are performers—for me, it's not about performing. It's about how can I best communicate with the dancers that I have in front of me? Who are they? Am I going to be able to give them something that can take them somewhere at some point?

Liz Waterhouse: Was this energy work Reiki?²¹

Hilary Cartwright: I didn't study Reiki, no. Some people had also suggested to me I should do craniosacral work because it's similar, the way I use my hands. I was very drawn to doing that. But at the same time, I felt like if I went into some kind of *structured* healing work that I might lose myself. I might lose my gift, or whatever it was. I thought, "Well, is that ego talking?" Or is that because it's so spontaneous? Because I can trust it, and I have done different manipulations with people and then spoken about what I felt and saw.

Somebody who's been a big influence with me in the latter years is Marika Molnar, who is the physical therapist of New York City Ballet. She became a great friend. She is a generous woman with an enormous knowledge and an absolute passion for learning. I felt that if I was working with some of the dancers she worked with, I needed to say to her, "Look, this is what I'm feeling. Are you okay with me doing this?" She was wonderful about it, because I was not a trained physical therapist. I'm not a doctor. I'm not any of those things. But I just knew how to open spaces—to make spaces through joints and rearrange things. Also energetically, sometimes somebody is just caught up inside. The emotions play so much on it that if you can relax, release that emotion, it releases the muscle. It *lets* the body *breathe*, and then it can (inhales) start to sort itself out. People say, "Oh, thank you." And I say, "No, thank you," because you've given me a gift as well in that I can see there's been a response and things have shifted.²²

I feel that has been a very interesting part of my work. I pick up and I sense where somebody is at and what's going on, even if they haven't told me. Sometimes people will say they've got something troubling them. I'll say, "Well, you know, it's very strange, but I'm picking up this." And they go, "Oh, yeah, well, I didn't think to say that." And I'll go (laughs), "Actually, it's kind of fundamental to what's going

21 *Reiki* is the Japanese term for "universal life energy" associated with healing practices shaped by Mikao Usui (1865–1926). See VanderVaart et al., "A Systematic Review of the Therapeutic Effects of Reiki," 1157.

22 Here, midsentence, Cartwright transforms her rhetoric into a highly poetic mode of speech—to describe this energy. She begins to alliterate, bouncing off the words "re-lax" and "re-lease." After creating this momentum, she then slows down to elongate her vowels. She decelerates her speech and introduces a transformative pause, inhaling before resolving on the exhale that the problem "sorts itself out." This is the type of poesis of speech—from and within the body—that Cartwright brings to her work and the coaching of dancers.

on in the other thing that you think is the big problem.” All of that has taught me about myself: Don’t obsess with where you think the problem is, because it’s probably somewhere else—very often up in your head!

All of that has come into how I teach. For me, what’s important is to walk in the room and to feel: Where are these people at? How are they feeling today? What have they got on their agenda? How can the structure of what I give them help support them for today? Because each day is different.

The Royal Ballet in the 1960s: “We Had to Be Representative of Royalty”

Opening the topic of Cartwright’s past as a dancer with the Royal Ballet in the 1960s, Cartwright reflects on the societal expectations at that time, negotiating modern society while representing royalty.

Liz Waterhouse: I’d like to open a new topic, which is, I’d love to hear about your early work as a ballet dancer. Recently, I looked again at your memoir, *Dancing for a Living*, which was published in 1974 when you were thirty. I have a quote from the beginning that I would love to read:

Frequently it is only the glamour of a dancer’s life which is revealed, while the drudgery, sweat, tears and boredom are either politely swept beneath the carpet, or dramatized to the point of absurdity. I would like to lift rather more than the corner of this particular carpet, without exaggerating its murky aspect in any way, to try to let you see what is really involved in becoming a dancer.²³

It’s wonderful! And throughout the book you are—very sensitively and honestly, it seems to me—looking and drawing out this spectrum of, as you say, pleasure and pain. I’m curious now, in retrospect, if you would reflect on that period of your life in the same way? The pleasure and pain of, say, the disciplined ballet body? Do you still see that period of your life in this way, or has your view changed?

Hilary Cartwright: Yes, I feel and I also talk about this sometimes with other contemporaries of mine. We laugh about the time we had, and how it was—some of it is the same for young dancers now. But I think back then—we’re talking about the early sixties, like ’62, ’63—when I joined the Royal Ballet and I was eighteen or nineteen. It was an amazing thing to be able to join the company. But our working conditions were not the most brilliant, especially when we were out on tour in the provinces in England. It was really very hard.

23 Cartwright, *Dancing for a Living*, 14.

The first tour I ever did was in the winter. It was one of the harshest winters that they'd had for a long time. I have trouble keeping warm at the best of times. We would be rehearsing in a studio, where we had fur gloves on, holding the barre, all wrapped up to stay warm. You could see your own breath in front of you, while trying desperately to get some part of your anatomy warm in order to be able to go into a rehearsal and later to go on stage. It was really, really hard.

Again, a lot of those sorts of difficult conditions: working in very cold weather, working on very hard stages. We also worked on raked stages, on a slant, and the slant can vary. We would be in a different theatre each week. Each day we would do class on the stage. You would either choose whether you were going to face up- or downhill or stand sideways, which meant one leg was shorter than the other as you worked. (Laughs.) You were constantly finding where to put your weight and where was center. Also, we encountered different floors: Some of them were wood floors, just planks, and some of them were not a Marley floor, which you have nowadays, but would be a sort of linoleum almost. The stage could also go up and down with ridges, which you had to encounter if you were bourrée-ing across the stage (laughs). Those sorts of conditions, that was the sort of the murky—the hard work. Then you've got to come out and look like none of that existed.

We were doing eight performances a week. We'd do six evenings, two matinees. The first tour I did was a sixteen-week tour like that. Which was a little bit too long. At first when I was with the company, we had a company train, which sounds nice but—it was *freezing* cold. The train would come out on Sunday and there we were, climbing into a *freezing* cold train, which never really got warm as it took us to the next city that we were going to. Later, they dropped the train, and we just made our own way up and down the country. Some people drove, sometimes you took a train. That's just to give a little bit of background of how it was. Plus, you were finding your own accommodation. It wasn't provided for you (laughs). There would be a big box where we rehearsed at Barons Court. As a dancer, you could go through this box of letters from each city of people offering bed and breakfast or a small hotel or a private house, and you would write to them, to see if they would accept you as a lodger. Some places as you got used to touring, you knew, and you would write to them ahead of time. But there were other places where you never found a good place to sleep. I mean, many's the pub I've slept in—over the top of a pub—because that was all that that you could find (laughs)!

Liz Waterhouse: Another aspect that you spoke about in your book, which reminded me of my own ballet education, was the cycles of exams and auditions. You also spoke about the respect you had for maintaining your appearance: both your costumes and your private clothes. Could you share more about that?

Hilary Cartwright: Yes, we had a very strict code when we went on European tours or abroad—because we were the Royal Ballet and we had to be representative of royalty, basically, because that was our sponsor. We were the Royal Ballet.

We had many receptions in embassies, consulates, and so on when we went on tour. So, before we went on tour, there would always be a list put up: Ladies, one full evening dress, two cocktail dresses required. Gentlemen, an evening suit, or a lounge suit, depending also what category you were in. The principal dancers, you know, even more so. Even on my first tour, I remember being told: “Yes, you have to have one good dress” (laughs). That was a carry on down from when the company was first formed—when they first were flying to America and they had to wear gloves and hats. I was the next generation down. I didn’t have to do that. Thankfully, it was in the sixties when, you know, it was Carnaby Street and what were called pantsuits. We were allowed to actually wear pants—trousers—which up till then you would not. On those freezing cold journeys that we did, at least you had something warm around your legs! Which previously you’re not been able to do. (Laughs.) You had to wear a dress or a skirt.

I remember talking with Monica Mason, who was a contemporary of mine and then became director of the Royal Ballet, since retired. I was talking with her when she was still director. We were sitting up at Covent Garden in her office and she said, “You know, I do remember the days when we used to come in the stage door and you had to be—if you were seen coming in the stage door or leaving—you had to be well dressed. You had to be representative of the company. You had to be elegant.” She said, “I do miss that a little bit. When I see them coming in sweatpants and sweatshirts. I know, that’s fine, you know, and it’s how it is now, but . . .” she said.

There was one particular young ballerina who I’d helped bring to the opera house from America—beautiful young dancer—Alexandra Ansanelli, who had been with New York City Ballet. I had introduced her to Monica, and she had wanted to dance classically, and she did. Alexandra was like from another period. She always was so *beautifully* dressed. Monica said, “Oh, I just love watching when she comes into the stage door.”

You know, it’s just things have changed. While you have to go with it, I do miss that a little bit too. I do. We used to sort of groan about, “Okay, now we’ve got to dress up and stuff,” but actually—it was fun! It was nice to do that. It gave you a sense of pride in the work that you do, a sense of respect also that you were presenting something. Ballet, dance, it’s *beautiful*. It’s a beautiful art form, an art form of beauty—also of passion, of depth, of showing many different emotions. But there is something about it for me, always has been, that is beautiful. I believe that if you carry that in your everyday life, it has to come over at some point. I know many people could think very differently about it and I understand, but it’s just how I feel. I mean, I’m of that period.

Career Changing Injury: "I Couldn't Really Feel What Was Happening Down in my Foot."

As in the body-biographies of Marcus Schulkind and Christine Kono, injury marks the turning points of Cartwright's body-biography in profound ways. Cartwright tells it as a story of resilience, reflecting on the impact of her back injury upon her understanding of her body. Interspersed throughout this section are anecdotes about the different styles of dance that she has encountered—underscoring how her teaching has responded to these influences. Important moments of embodied narration surface within these memories.

Liz Waterhouse: Would you be open to talking about your injury? And the impact it had on you? I believe that your injury was in 1965, to give context to our readers.

Hilary Cartwright: Yes, absolutely. Because my injury really is what has given me so much about why I teach and the reason for it.

As I say, this was around 1965/1966 when I was dancing, and conditions weren't great. It can happen to any dancer. I had had one slip and fall, but then I had a fairly major one. As a dancer, I was a jumper; so many of the roles I did, I was jumping. I took off one time on one of the stages—it was slick, my foot went—I was already up in the air and half turned round. I landed on my back, slid along the floor (drops hands on her thighs audibly) and got up and finished, and fine. Of course, I was on tour at the time, so we didn't really have anyone with us—a doctor or therapist—that could immediately treat you or take care of it. Also, as I said, we were working on these raked stages. It really wasn't noticed that actually I was now lopsided. What I'd done was knocked the vertebrae in my lower back a little bit off to one side and the disc slipped. So now the vertebrae were beginning to fall on one side towards each other. Trapped the nerves.

The first thing I really knew about it was, yes, my back was hurting, but also my right leg. I couldn't *feel* what was happening down my right leg. When we got back to London, I had work done on it and it was treated. They did the best they could. But as time went on, it got increasingly worse. I began to feel like when I was on pointe, I couldn't really feel what was happening down in my foot. By now I was doing principal roles. It became more and more apparent to me that this was becoming a big problem. At that time, they decided that a cortisone shot into my spine would be maybe the best thing. Again, it was not realized that if you shoot cortisone into the spine . . . And also, they didn't at that time really measure it out. As they were doing the injection, I said, "I'm performing tonight. Is that okay?" "Oh, yes, yes, yes. That would be fine."

So (laughs) as we went through the performance and I'm feeling more and more paralyzed—that I can't bend forwards even. I managed to make it through the performance, but then was *painfully ill* all night long, throwing up because it was just

too much for my body. For me sadly, it meant that the next night, I was doing one of my *favorite* roles, which was in *Les Sylphides*, and I did the Prelude. But I couldn't go on. I had to cancel because I couldn't move. I was so sad. It was at Covent Garden, and I couldn't do that. It was by now I was beginning to know that this probably was going to bring the end of my career.

Just to explain: The reason why the Prelude was so special to me was because we used to have Serge Grigoriev and Lubov Tchernicheva coaching us. He was ballet master for Diaghilev, and she was a dancer in Ballets Russes and later a ballet mistress. They were in their nineties when they would come and coach us in the Fokine ballets, and they were absolutely incredible. I had been coached by Tchernicheva in that piece. It was very, very special to me that I was doing something that she had danced. We were told that she had been part of the original creation.²⁴ She was a *beautiful*, wonderful, wonderful woman. I mean, she would sit there and just the way she used her *arms* and her *body* and her *eyes*, and I would be like, "Oh, my God, I wish I could look like that." I felt really stiff and awkward in comparison to what I was seeing (laughs).

Cartwright is conjuring an important aesthetic memory here. Through closer examination of her vocal performance, we can understand how Cartwright's storytelling alights upon her kinesthetic memory of the role she is describing.

The Prelude solo is a hallmark for the floating, ethereal quality of a Romantic ballerina. Cartwright's rhythm as she conjures this memory is marked by triads. Remembering Tchernicheva, Cartwright evocatively elongates and rolls a series of three syllable words: beautiful, wonderful, wonderful. Then, slowing her reminiscence and speaking with a gentler tempo, she pays reverence by musing on another triad: Tchernicheva's arms, body, and eyes. Interestingly, musical threes, though very different in pitch and rhythm from Cartwright's

24 Dance historian Lynn Garafola also remarks on Tchernicheva's "striking beauty with lovely hand and arm movements" and confirms her dancing *Les Sylphides*. In *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, Garafola lists the soloists of the Paris premier of *Les Sylphides* (1909) as Anna Pavlova, Tamara Karsavina, Alexandra Baldina, and Vaslav Nijinsky—not Tchernicheva. In *The International Encyclopedia of Dance*, Tchernicheva is reported to have joined the Ballets Russes in 1911, after this premier of *Les Sylphides*. As a student at the Maryinsky, Tchernicheva may have seen *Chopiniana* in 1907 and 1908. When presented with this discrepancy, Cartwright was surprised—remembering Tchernicheva as a humble woman, who Cartwright suspected would not exaggerate her biography. Perhaps younger dancers like Cartwright had assumed she was an original dancer, because of her closeness to the source and her persuasive performance while teaching the role? As often discussed regarding the interpretation of oral history, Cartwright's narrative is certainly a meaningful story, relevant for understanding her phenomenological experience of dance. It should not be disregarded because of factual discrepancies with other historical sources but rather enter into dialogue between historical evidence and testimony. Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 400; Garafola, "Tchernicheva, Lubov."

speech, also play a prominent place in the final line of Chopin's melody in the music of the Prelude.²⁵

Through listening closely to Cartwright's voice, I realize that the floating ethereal quality of the sylph is a quality that Cartwright brings into her teaching of Yoga Narada, in which many aspects of ballet aesthetics and yoga forms are fused. In Yoga Narada, Cartwright insists that the ease and flow in the upper body is produced through very grounded legs—something that she learned also through her ballet practice. It is also significant that this positive memory is juxtaposed with a story of loss, as Cartwright goes on to describe the vulnerability of a ballet dancer's body to injury. In contrast to what she felt before, she is thrown into a disembodied sensation of numbness caused by her back injury. By musing poetic and then developing dramatic contrast, this anecdote gives insight into the seminal bodily experiences that shape Cartwright's body-biography.

Hilary Cartwright: So anyway, it did actually bring my career to an end. Because especially, as I said, a lot of the roles I did were jumping roles, and my back by now was so painful, and I couldn't feel what my leg was doing. I thought, "I can't go out on stage like this." I said I was going to stop, and I did. I had no idea what I was going to do. Absolutely no idea.

At that time Sir Frederick Ashton was the director of the company. I had worked with him quite a lot. I went to tell him, and he said (imitating Ashton's soft voice), "Well, my dear, you know, you could come and coach the dancers." I was like, "What! I can't do that!" This is something that's still in me. I want to be doing those roles. I did not want to be a bitter ballet mistress (laughs) who always felt bad about the fact that she'd not been able to complete the roles herself. I said, "No, thank you." I said, "No, I need to go and find another life." So that's what I did. I left. I had no idea what I would do professionally. I basically had no other skills. I couldn't type. I thought, "Well, maybe I'd better learn how to type." I never did learn how to type properly. But I thought, "Well, I better go and do that now, see what I can do."

It was an interesting period. There was nothing like social security or anything to give you any support. I just had to set about finding what I could do.

Liz Waterhouse: And you advocated for yourself. In your book you describe that you sought compensation.²⁶

Hilary Cartwright: Yes! I did actually. I was so angry about the sort of social security aspect at that time. They said, "Oh, you're still perfectly fine physically." I said, "No, I'm not. Not for the job that I was trained for. I cannot do it. In fact, there are a lot of other jobs I can't do because my back is not healed yet."

25 Chopin's *Prelude in A Major, Op. 28 No. 7*.

26 Cartwright, *Dancing for a Living*, 101.

I remember one of the doctors laughing at me, because I could lift my leg up. He said (scoffing), “Oh, you’re fine. You can do anything.” I said (indignant and resolute in tone), “You don’t understand. You simply don’t understand that no, I can’t.” Nobody had even taken an X-ray of my back at this point (laughs). They didn’t even look to see what was going on. They just went, “Well, I don’t know. We don’t know what it is.” As you can see, I did agitate for it. It took over two and a half years, but I finally got them to change the wording of the National Health Insurance claim—for when a dancer had to stop because of an injury—that allowed them to be compensated for a period of time. Until such time as either the injury could be taken care of, or they could find a different form of work.

That was something that made me feel for a while in my life that I wanted to become a lawyer. Because I was very concerned with people’s rights and what was just and so forth. But the more I looked at that, actually, the more I realized that the law had a lot of stuff that, to me, wasn’t justice, that I didn’t agree with (laughs). I thought, “No, that’s not the life for me.” But it started me looking at different things of what else could I do?

I always had loved cooking. Chance had it that a friend of mine was a Cordon Bleu cook, and she became pregnant, and she said, “Well, I can’t bear the smell of things at the moment. Would you go and take over some of my clients?” Yes! I would go and be a private chef. It was a very interesting time and very fun. I learnt a lot of stuff working with different people. With my inadequate typing (laughs), I also applied for a job where I was translating for a French wine importer.

Liz Waterhouse: Did you learn French through ballet?

Hilary Cartwright: No, through my school, and also then through my sister.

My older sister—her artist name was Suzanne France—was also a dancer, but not in ballet. She eventually ended up on Broadway, but first she was in Paris. She was a Bluebell Girl, which a lot of people today probably won’t have the faintest idea what that is! They just tore down the Lido in Paris. There were the two big nightclubs in Paris. There was the Moulin Rouge in the Latin Quarter, and then there was the Lido on the Champs-Élysées. The Lido was the classier one than the Moulin Rouge. The Bluebell Girls were called that because the woman who organized it was English. She brought English girls in because they were a lot taller than the French girls. It was this thing that the Bluebells were very tall. They were all ballet trained, *beautifully* trained and elegant. They had to be at least five foot ten. That was the minimum height. Then, of course, it was increased with the large chignons they had on the top of their heads and the jewelry.

They had wonderful choreography. Even when I was fourteen, fifteen, I would go to Paris, stay with my sister, and I would be snuck into the back end of the Lido because I, of course, was direly underage! I would go and watch the show, which

was fabulous. Aside from the dances, there were, of course, the *mannequins*, who were nude: beautiful, elegant women, who walked very tastefully wearing pasties and these elaborate chignons. It was a very classy nightclub. So that's how I learned French, aside from being in school (laughs).

Liz Waterhouse: As a dancer, as a young person, were you fluid between dance styles?

Hilary Cartwright: Not really. I mean, we didn't have much. In the school at Elmhurst, we had had sort of contemporary. Nothing like really what people do now. When I was in the [Royal Ballet] Company, we had what was sort of considered contemporary.²⁷ Ballet Rambert had become a contemporary company, and Norman Morrice was the director at the time. He was also a choreographer. They started to interchange between the companies to bring new choreography. One of my greatest things was that I worked with Sir Kenneth MacMillan, and his choreography has a very contemporary feel to it. Of course it's ballet, but it's very different. Some of the roles that I did working with Kenneth meant so much to me. And that, I guess, gave me my first feeling about contemporary work.

Liz Waterhouse: You just made an important gesture. Can you please describe what you mean?

Cartwright is sitting on the wooden floor of the studio, her legs folded underneath her in a kneeling position. She separates her knees so as not to strain them, a resting position common in martial arts as well as yoga. Accompanying her narrative with this gesture, Cartwright moves her hands downwards from her center to the floor, opening the fingers as she does so. It's a powerful motion—reminding me of a tree whose roots grow deep into the soil, giving it strength to grow tall.

Hilary Cartwright (laughs): Yes, it's that grounding. It's that earthiness. It just comes from the gut. His work was wonderful for me. I love doing Kenneth's work.

27 My naïve question reflects my own uncertainty about the visibility and access to modern dance at the time of Cartwright's training and work as a young professional ballet dancer. Cartwright's testimony gives perspective on her personal experience of different styles of dance training in the UK in the fifties and sixties, and living in London in the seventies. The dominant historical narrative that modern dance in London became visible in the mid-1960s, with Ballet Rambert and the London Contemporary Dance Theatre and School, is reiterated here. We should keep in mind, however, as dance historian Alexandra Carter writes, that no dance style "neatly starts or finishes." Carter, "Destabilizing the Discipline," 115.

His musicality, his phrasing, and the fact that he always chose very dramatic pieces most of the time.²⁸

Liz Waterhouse: Do you remember your first contact with contemporary dance that took you?

Hilary Cartwright: *Really* contemporary dance? I'm trying to think . . .

Liz Waterhouse: Or modern dance? I assumed you had some Graham training. Is that true?

Hilary Cartwright: No, I didn't. I didn't at all.

Liz Waterhouse: Ah, interesting. There are many similarities between Graham technique and your Yoga Narada.

Hilary Cartwright: Of course! Because Graham drew a great deal from yoga, there's some of those movements within it that are within the Graham work. When I work with Graham dancers, it's very easy to work with them, in a way.

So after the injury I did all this different work: acting, modeling, cooking, working for the wine importer and writing for *The Dancing Times*. At one time, I thought I could *maybe* go back to dancing. I started studying ballet with a unique woman, long since passed on, named Audrey de Vos. She was extraordinary. She helped to bring me back to a real understanding of anatomy. We got quite a long way, but once we got back into jumping again—which I knew was what I wanted to be doing—it was like I knew I'd never have the freedom to go out on stage and not be thinking about how I was going to do something. I was like, "I can't do that." So, I stopped and realized: Nope. Move on. Go on into something else.

I thought about teaching. I was approached, actually, by the woman who ran what was then called the "movement group" of English National Opera. They didn't want an opera ballet. They wanted people who would look right with the singers. The English National Opera was wonderful—not only in that they translated the major operas into English—but they also believed in making the staging much more

28 In her 1974 memoir, Cartwright writes "Whereas ballet is based on an aspiration towards weightlessness and elevation, modern dance develops from a much more earthy quality, and is far more *terre à terre*. The transition from one to the other can therefore be very difficult. This is probably why some modern dance teachers are still wary of accepting, or advising students to train also in the classical style. But there is no reason why the use of one technique should not assist the other, as long as you are aware of this difficulty. It only remains then to discover which style best suits both your temperament and physique." Cartwright, *Dancing for a Living*, 108–9.

realistic. Not something that was just up there—the singers standing and singing out beautiful arias and so forth—but much more interaction. I'd written a series of articles in *The Dancing Times* in England about how it was—the practicality of being a dancer.²⁹ The person who was running the movement group read them and she called me up. She said, "Would you come and teach this movement group?" I said, "Oh, I'm not a teacher. I'm not going to be able to teach." She said, "Oh, this will be a group of some dancers, but there will also be some actors, but they have to move."

I thought about it, and I thought, "Hmm, it's kind of interesting." By now, it was nearly two years since I'd stopped dancing. I felt, you know, it's really a shame because I had been given so much by so many different people while I was dancing. It's a shame if I don't give that back—so maybe I should think about it. I went and talked to two people who I really respected as teachers. One was my teacher in the company, Erling Sunde, and another one was Anna Northcote, whose artist name was Anna Severskaya. She had a very special way of teaching. I said, "You know, I would like to teach, and may I study with you?" Both of them said, a little bit like the same as when I asked about doing energy work and healing work, they both said, "Well, you can watch, but I'm not going to tell you anything. You've got to figure it out yourself." So I went, "Okay, fine." So, I would sit and watch.

Then I began to see the structure within the class exercises. I'd always just taken it for granted as a dancer. You know, someone comes, they teach the class. You either like it, or you don't. It either works for you, or it doesn't. I hadn't thought about the structure. I hadn't thought about anything. Then as I watched, I began to see and feel what is a class. A ballet class has a central hub, and then everything else feeds into that hub, and that hub feeds out into it. So I was like, "What is the hub?" And for me, the hub was the adagio.³⁰ Adagio had always been the hardest thing for me to do. It was that thing of being still, of being centered. I wanted that everything would lead towards that adagio and then go from the adagio into the subsequent small and big jumps—the petit allegro into the grand allegro.

Now that's how I've always built my classes ever since. I would create the adagio and then the structure of my barre work would lead up to that. From there it would go on through whatever the turning combination or the petit allegro, the grand allegro would be, following on from that adagio. Then the actual structure of the barre work was about how do you warm the body up? How do you get the feet moving and

29 Cartwright, 105.

30 The adagio section of the ballet class, named for the tempo marking of the music, is a sequence of slow movements, performed in the center of the space, or also at the barre. The dancer typically coordinates the arms fluidly while raising the legs into long extensions or lines. These smooth and graceful transitions between positions are very challenging to sustain and balance while appearing effortless. The ballet repertoire typically foregrounds women performing adagio movements: balancing on pointe, supported by a male partner in the pas de deux.

the body, and you're moving from the center. So all of that then I worked on, and gradually built over time.

I was very fortunate with this group that I had at the English National Opera, because some of them had never taken a ballet class. They'd done movement in their acting. They would go, "Well, what's that? What's a tendu? What's a rond de jambe? Why am I doing it?" And I go, "Ahhh. Oh, God, I never thought about why I'm doing it." It made me go, okay, I have to think. Why am I doing it? Is there a point to it? Does it have some reference to what's coming later? And yes, of course. Then I worked out the logic of it and so that helped me build how I was going to structure a class. They were actually very important to me. This was like the early seventies by the time I started doing that. Then I started teaching open classes in London. The Royal Ballet heard I was teaching, and they asked me if I'd come back and teach and be a *répétiteur* [rehearsal assistant] with the company. By then I could do it, even though many of my contemporaries were still there. I was *really* young to be doing it. I was only in my early thirties (laughs). I was very aware of that because I also had people way above me that now, suddenly I was giving them class, you know?

One of the most generous people ever was Margot Fonteyn, who was still dancing. She was so wonderful to me. I will never forget her generosity. At one point, we went to Greece. We were working on tour in the Amphitheatre [The Odeon] of Herodes Atticus, and she came as the guest artist; it was really towards the end of her career. Of course, our performance started at like nine o'clock at night. It was in the summer, and we had to wait for the heat to go down. She said, (imitating Fonteyn with soft, quiet voice) "Darling, you know, I just can't wait that long in the day before I start. Can we do a barre and a class together in the morning?" And I went, "Yes, of course, Margot, you know anything. Of course." And I thought, "God, just me and Margot and the pianist. Help!" (Laughs.) I was still very young.

I went to a couple of the principals who I knew would probably like to move a little earlier in the day, too. I said, "Do you want to come and take class with Margot?" After that, I had like two or three other people and Margot and the pianist and me in a small room with a big circular fan going overhead. Because we didn't finish until after midnight, we started around eleven in the morning. Margot was amazing. She did everything. One day I said, "Margot, do you want to do big jumps?" She said, (changes to a softer, feminine voice) "All my jumps are the same size, just a little slower now." I was like, "Oh, my gosh, this woman, her honesty, her humility!" (Laughs.) That was a pretty amazing experience working with her.

Prior to that, she had one day suggested to me that perhaps it was better to do grand battement after adagio at the barre, rather than before. I went, "Oh, my God, of course, that makes absolute sense." You have the strength in the adagio, now you have the strength and the freedom in grand battement, because you'll already done grand rond de jambe, rond de jambe en l'air, that kind of thing. This made sense to me, and I incorporated it into my teaching.

Liz Waterhouse: Interesting. Most of my ballet classes had that progression. What was your progression of the barre exercises?

Hilary Cartwright: At the barre you do the pliés, tendus, the jetés, the rond de jambe à terre, rond de jambe en l'air, your frappés, into an adagio at the barre and then grand battement, or battement cloche, or something.

Liz Waterhouse: Yes. That's the structure that I inherited too—in the company class model of an hour and fifteen minutes in The Forsythe Company. It's always a question where fondu comes!

Hilary Cartwright: Yes, I've also had many discussions about this!

Liz Waterhouse: To draw out further comparison between our generations: I joked during my time in The Forsythe Company that adagio was just getting faster and faster. It was barely even adagio.

Hilary Cartwright: The thing about adagio for me is, it's that moment of grounding. That moment of being able to be still, but to speak through your stillness. Also, with contemporary choreographers—you may be still for a moment, but you're not dead. You're still. It's going, going, going (she reaches with her hand forward and elevates her spine). You know, there's that suspended-yet-sustained quality. Where does it come from? How do you make that happen? Also, the *smoothness* of the movement of being able to *glide* into a movement.

I feel it has got lost in some ways, that feeling of what adagio is. From the feeling of adagio, you should move into the grand allegro (increasing her voice in volume, tempo, intensity). Now it's flying! It's taking that stillness and letting it fly and move and cover space. Because that is something I also find, oddly, a little bit with some classical dancers nowadays. That they don't cover space. They don't fill space. They can travel, move and do a lot of stuff, but it's that thing of being able to encompass the entire space and take it with them dynamically, you know?

Recently I saw something in Valencia at a gala and I was like, gosh, I haven't been able to see performance for such a long time. It's going to be wonderful! And the disappointment of seeing some very fine dancers—technically excellent, lovely—but there was no life! They didn't touch me. They didn't move me. They were doing it. I could go, “Yes. Good, good. Tick that one off. Yep, yep.” But there wasn't that *energy*. The dynamism. That thing that gets you on the edge of your seat. “Wow, is he going to come down?” Or the *phrasing* of a turn. It was just disappointing, shall we say (laughs). It's bringing that *life* from the adagio into the big movement, you know?

Thinking about, *Les Sylphides*, the Prelude girl. Yes, she's much more the lyric, adagio sort of thing. But then the mazurka—in that mazurka, she flies! The whole

thing is just flying through all the time, but having to come from a central point, and finding life in the music as well. Some of the ballets that come back now, they come back and because dancers moved a great deal in that period—it was not maybe as pristine and clean as we expect now, or as thin and long, as seems to be the current vogue—but my God, they could move! Sometimes you watch old videos, sort of black and white photography that's been done and you go, "Wow, that person could move." They could turn. They could move like this and change direction. Now you don't always feel that. There are people that can—and it's so exciting when you see it—but it's somehow, something I don't feel is being encouraged or taught either in the rehearsal room or by some of the directors and I'm sorry—I don't mean to criticize, and I probably shouldn't say—but I feel it. I see it and I'm like, "Where's the guts? Where's the excitement?" You want the audience to be thrilled, not just by tricks! That's a circus artist and they're wonderful, but that's a circus. This is an art form, and we can't forget it. And it's being forgotten. I'm seeing it slide away.

Expanding Internationally: "It Was a Lot of Moving!"

I encouraged Cartwright to elaborate more on the period following the publication of her autobiography Dancing for a Living (1974). In discussion of her mid-thirties and early forties, her narratives sprang back and forth in time and place, highlighting her experiences working with notable choreographers. Condensing these stories, this section traces Cartwright's social mobility as she rises in status. We learn how transnational networks facilitated the movement of dancers and the circulation of the international ballet repertoire across the globe. Cartwright compares institutional experiences, distinguishing between companies rooted in more authoritarian and hierarchal systems of ballet, and those open to new forms of labor and authority.

Hilary Cartwright: Going back to when I was working with Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT) and working with Jiří Kylián. My God! That man made some of the most beautiful choreography. *That* for me, that was contemporary work and just wonderful. Jiří was a wonderful man to work with—is a wonderful man, I should say—poor man is still alive! (Laughs.) I had never really trained in contemporary work, but the more that I was discovering about where you're rooted from, in ballet, the more I could understand what it was and appreciate it.

When I was then directing the Springplank, the junior company of Nederlands Dans Theater, I also brought in Christopher Bruce because I knew his work and I loved it. I thought it would be great for the kids. I brought in Robert North as well. Robert is originally American, but he directed the Ballet in Gothenburg and directed the Scottish Ballet for many years and is in Germany now and still creating. He worked with Graham and with the London Contemporary Dance [Theatre], so his work is very grounded. But, oh my gosh, Robert could move wonderfully! And we

were good friends. So, I brought them both over for my young dancers and then also had two of the dancers from within NDT: Nils Christie and Jimmy [Jim] Vincent. It was their first time to choreograph anything (laughs), so I would kind of help them with that a little bit. For that year that I was with them, I felt very fortunate—with the people that I brought in and with my dancers. They grew a lot through the experiences with these people.

Liz Waterhouse: It was only one year?

Hilary Cartwright: Only one year, yes. (Laughs.) It was difficult because, going back to when I was then teaching with the Royal Ballet. I was there for seven years, teaching and coaching. I took a sabbatical at one point. I asked to go and see other companies in other countries. I felt like I was getting stale, and the company was getting stale. I felt like I needed to see what else was going on. Therefore, I took a sabbatical, and I went to Canada, I went to the United States. The sabbatical was a small stipend, so I needed to supplement it. I taught also while I was in Canada with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB), and through that they asked if I would come back and direct, co-direct the company.³¹

At that time, their current director, Arnold Spohr, who had been there many years, had said he wanted to retire, and so he wanted to set up for somebody to come in. There were three of us: one of whom really worked with the school, David Moroni; Salvatore Aiello, who had been a dancer in the company; and me. We really took care of the company. We directed the company. We had big ideas of what we wanted to do. After that, I went and spoke to the direction at the Royal Ballet and I said, “Look, I’ve been offered this, and I feel it’s a huge opportunity at this point in time.” They said, “It’s an incredibly good opportunity and it’s one you wouldn’t get here for probably another twenty years.” The Royal Ballet is a slow-moving piece of machinery. You don’t quite know how long things will take before they change (laughs). So, I thought, “Okay, that’s fine.” I totally respect and understand that. But I have an energy. I’m a very forward kind of moving and looking person. I thought, “I’m going to take this opportunity.”

I picked up and I moved. I went to Canada and directed there for a year. Unfortunately, the past director, Arnold Spohr, decided that Sal and I had done such an amazing job. We took the company to New York to City Centre. We changed the whole structure of how we were touring. They’d been doing a lot of one-night stands. We said, “This is not viable, we can do this a little bit, but we have got to

31 Cartwright was a guest teacher with the RWB in 1976 and a company teacher in 1977. Her consistent testimony about Spohr’s intent, that her position was “effectively to be that of associate director” is repeated in Michael Crabb’s detailed discussion: Crabb, *An Instinct for Success*, 184.

start getting a more solid kind of structure for the dancers. It's impossible to expect them to perform at the level you want on one-night stands travelling on a bus across acres of Canada and the States." (Laughs ironically.) Spohr felt that the company was looking really good and doing really well. We brought in productions that were really invigorating for the company. He said, "I want to come back as director." In response, I was like, "That's not the terms. I gave up everything and moved here."

While we had been in New York and having a good success in New York, he had gone to the board and had spoken with them. He said he wanted to come back. With such a long history with them and so forth, they agreed.

Liz Waterhouse: What did you do? How was that legally, with your contract?

Hilary Cartwright: Yes, we had a contract. Well, it was a one-year contract, but it was obviously going to be renewed.

The chairman of the board at that time had a difficult time dealing with Sal and myself, because we had a different energy. We said, "We have a five-year plan. We have a three-year and a two-year plan of how we envisage the company to grow and come back to the level that it had had before." Because the level of the company had dropped down. It was no longer going to Europe or to anywhere. We said, "This is how we see it developing." This kind of took them aback. They were very comfortable with how it was, and they were into comfort, and we were not. We were pushing the comfort zone very much, and so we didn't get on *too well* with them. I guess probably that was—I was being too pushy, too forceful—not enough experience to know how to play the game a little bit.

Anyway, I went to Arnold, and I said, "Well, if you're coming back, no, I'm not stepping down. I'm not." I didn't like the way he directed. It was, for me, very abusive for the dancers. I said, "So I guess one of us has to go and it's not going to be you, is it?" He said, "No." I said (with dignified, curt, resistance), "Fine. I shall leave." I obviously stayed until the end of the year. We finished in Mexico, in Guadalajara, and that was it.³²

By this time, I had now married another dancer within the company, so we both were leaving. In fact, a lot of the dancers left at the same time, because they didn't want to go back to what they had before, in the company, now they knew what they could have. It was a huge exodus from the company. We had no idea where we were

32 This period of history of the RWB is given extensive treatment in Michael Crabb's biography of Arnold Spohr. This book includes prior testimony from Cartwright, though Cartwright today could not remember these interviews. Her testimony is consistent: then and now. The institutional complications of the company's financial difficulties, Spohr's history of conflict with the board, and his power as an authoritarian leader are contextualized in Crabb's writing. See Crabb, 184–98.

going, or what we were going to do. We had bought a house by this time. We had to sell the house and pack up everything. I had friends living in New York [City], and we came to stay with them. We thought, "Well, we'll look for work." My husband was American. He said, "Well, I haven't worked in America. So, let's go to America."³³

While we were there was the very first year that Nederlands Dans Theater came to City Center in New York, and we went to see them. I was just stunned by it. One of my friends from when I had been in school was their ballet mistress at that time, Deirdre O'Donohoe. Deirdre said to me, "They're looking for a new director for the Springplank."³⁴ It's very different. Would you be interested?" I said, "Absolutely, I would *love* to do that." She said, "Well, we haven't had much success so far. They've looked at several people, had them come and give class, and it's just not working."

Following my friend's advice, I went to City Center to have a meeting. Jiří Kilián said, "I'm terribly sorry. We had an awful experience so far trying to find someone. I have to ask you if you would mind teaching the company a class so I can have some idea of how you are. I know your background and your record, but would you consider?" I said, "Of course." So, I taught a class. It was the *last* day of their season, and they're on *tour*. I'm like, oh my God, this is the last thing they want is to have a brand-new teacher. I started off by apologizing to them and saying, (laughs) "I'm terribly sorry," but I said, "I will be considerate. I know it's your last day. We'll have a nice—you know—a good, easy class. But you know, here we go."

On the strength of that—bless his heart—Jiří decided that I would do (laughs). I said, "Well, you know, I have a husband. Is there chance you'll got a place for him in the company?" He said, "Unfortunately, I'm completely full." He said, "Let's talk to Rudi [van Dantzig] at Het Nationale [Dutch National Ballet] to see if he needs any male dancers." So, on a wing and a prayer, we go over to Holland. My husband, Ron [Ronald Tice] came. He went to audition. Rudi loved him, but he said, "I've actually got somebody else on hold from Canadian National Ballet." He said, "I'm just waiting for him to decide." So unfortunately, the gentleman decided that he did want to go to Het Nationale. Now we're like, oh my gosh! Where else can we find him work? He could meantime take class with the company.

At that point, Patricia Neary called. I had known her from where she used to come and stage Balanchine ballets with the Royal [Ballet]. She said, "Oh, I heard you're there." She was directing in Zurich. She said, "I need men. Do you have any

33 Cartwright's first husband is ballet dancer, choreographer, and teacher Ronald Tice.

34 The company De Springplank [Springboard] was founded in 1977 and is today called Nederlands Dans Theater 2 (NDT 2). It is the junior company of Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT 1), intended for young dancers to gain experience before transitioning to the parent company or other professional dance ensembles. Cartwright was the second director of NDT 2 after Simon Mottram. Schaik, "Netherlands Dance Theater."

men?" I said, "Yes, my husband." So dispatched Ron off to Zurich. We were now having to commute between Zurich and Den Haag.

Liz Waterhouse: Which is a ways away.

Hilary Cartwright: Yes, it is. Added to which, we had a young kitten that we had acquired in New York who came with us!

It was difficult, and it wasn't great for us or for the marriage. Ron finally was like, "I can't, you know, we can't do this." He said, "Oscar Araiz is coming to Geneva to take over the direction there." We both knew Oscar well from our time in Winnipeg. He said, "I've gone with a couple of friends and auditioned there. Oscar asked where you were, and would you consider coming as a ballet mistress? But he knew that this was going to be a step down, but it would put us together. I would be an assistant with Oscar."³⁵

Well, I told Jiří. Jiří's like, "You're going to regret this." (Laughs.) I said, "I'm really sorry. I really have loved this, and I would have loved to have stayed—I would have given anything to stay—but I feel I have to give this a chance with my marriage."

We auditioned somebody to come into the Springplank to take over from me. And I went to Geneva. At that time also, there was a new *Intendant* [Director] at the theater, and he had come from the Paris Opera.³⁶ He had big plans for Geneva, which had a conservatory that he wanted to be like the Paris Opera. He said, "Well, if you come to Geneva, I would like you to take charge of the conservatory and remodel it. Because it's very old fashioned." I had a double job. I was assisting Oscar. And my second job was to take over the conservatory—remodel and restructure it.

I set up a syllabus from the age of five up to fifteen, sixteen, and then had to present that to the old guard that had been teaching there (laughs). It was difficult because I wanted to be respectful. I had one young teacher who worked and danced in the company, one sort of middle aged, and then I did have one who was old-Russian-style trained. This was where, when I'd gone to see classes, I saw the little kids being forced into a first position. Their little bodies just couldn't do it. It was just frightening to see. Here I am talking about anatomy and correct placement. I said, "Okay, we're going to do away with all the categories of level one, two, three, four. We're going to call them something different." I just renamed them, so that none of the children realized that they were being shuffled around and put into a different

35 Argentinean dancer and choreographer Oscar Araiz (b. 1940) took direction of the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Geneva in 1980, staying for eight years. His works had become visible in North America through the Royal Winnipeg Ballet by the time Cartwright joined in 1977. See Crabb, *An Instinct for Success*, 186; Moyano, "Araiz, Oscar."

36 Hugues Gall, director of the Grand Théâtre de Genève from 1980 to 1995. *Le Monde* and AFP, "Hugues Gall, ancien directeur de l'Opéra de Paris, est mort."

structure. I wanted to actually work with the young ones, because what's up there now is going to be very hard to undo, you know. They will eventually go on. Most of them were never going to be dancers anyway. They were sent there because that's what mother wanted them to do, to learn a little ballet and a little deportment still.

Liz Waterhouse: Mostly girls?

Hilary Cartwright: Mostly, yes. There were a few boys. For the younger ones coming up. I told them, "We're going to work a little differently, and we're going to find rhythm and movement. We're going to have fun, and we're going to learn how to do things." Actually, the seven- and eight-year-olds I loved! They got so excited about discovering new things that they could do. They were absolutely sweet. The classes were small, so I could really work with them. So anyway, I built that structure.

Then meanwhile, I would be teaching company class in the morning. We had a very hodgepodge group of people: Oscar brought people from Brazil, Argentina, France. Some of the people, knowing that it was now going to become a contemporary company, had left because they wanted to be in a classical company. It was a little bit like the Tower of Babel, because there were so many languages and people trying to understand each other. About six of the dancers who had been with me in Winnipeg and who knew Oscar—because Oscar had choreographed there—came too. So now we had a lot of old friends coming to the company. But English became the language that we did rehearsals in. I don't know why, exactly. I think it was somehow that anybody who came from Argentina or Brazil, they were more likely to have a little English than they were to have French, but they were now learning French. So anyway, you sort of spoke in several different languages because you needed to be able to communicate with everybody.

I would teach in the morning and then do some rehearsals. The company had the traditional European format of stopping at two in the afternoon and returning for rehearsal around six in the evening. Worst possible structure ever—awful, awful, awful! Because you had to do a warmup again in the evening—otherwise you can't just shoot straight into rehearsal. I would then teach at the conservatoire from usually about 4:00 p.m. till 6:00 p.m. Then I would go across the road and work again from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Laughs.) It was quite a lot that I was doing.

At the end of that year, my husband decided that actually he wanted to do more classical work. He was younger than me, obviously, and he was more at the beginning of his career. He also wanted to dance in America, where he was from. It was right when [Mikhail] Baryshnikov was taking over American Ballet Theatre (1980).³⁷ We had flown over at Christmas and Misha [Baryshnikov] liked him, wanted to take him into the company. Misha, when he took over the company, he actually

37 Greskovic, "Baryshnikov, Mikhail."

got rid of the American Ballet School, which I found the most extraordinary thing to do. Usually, a school helps support a company financially. It also gives a specific and consistent style to the company as students graduate out of the school. Patricia Wilde had been directing the school. And because Misha dropped the school, he also could not take me in even as a ballet mistress. Interestingly, one of my old friends from the Royal [Ballet], Georgina Parkinson, was now ballet mistress for Misha. So, now I was going to move with no work this time. We decided we would try. We would see how it would go.

Liz Waterhouse: So have I understood correctly. One year in Canada, followed by one year in The Hague, followed by one year in Geneva?

Hilary Cartwright: I was about eighteen months in Canada, because I took over Royal Winnipeg halfway through the season.

Liz Waterhouse: That's a lot of moving.

Hilary Cartwright: Yes, it was a lot of moving!

So back to America, we come. I started teaching open classes in New York. It was never my favorite thing to do. I taught at the dance studio Steps [Steps on Broadway]. It was uptown by Columbus Circle. Melissa Hayden was the director there.³⁸ It was actually sort of a fun time, but you were also dealing with teaching around three pillars in a room. So, I was teaching there and seeing what other things there were around. There was not much.

I applied also to the Joffrey Ballet. [Robert] Joffrey was very interested, because he was bringing in choreographers from outside of America. He'd brought in [John] Cranko, he brought in [Sir Frederick] Ashton, he brought in Jiří [Kylán], in fact. Therefore, with my background, it was going to be a good fit, because I knew so many of the ballets that were coming into the repertoire. He agreed that he would like for me to come and be a teacher in the company, but there was a huge hierarchy in that company. What I did not even realize was because of my background and what I had already done—being from the Royal Ballet, both as a dancer and repetiteur, directing the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and NDT 2—I was intimidating to others. He said, “Are you all right coming in as a company teacher and ballet mistress?” I said, “Yes, I’m

38 This private dance studio, still in operation today, was opened in 1979. In 1984 it moved to its current location at 2121 Broadway. Co-founder Carol Paumgarten envisioned the studio as a place for “everyone” to train: students, professionals, and dancers of all ages. Cartwright discusses her view of the challenges this created. Vadukul, “Carol Paumgarten, ‘Den Mother’ to a Dance Scene, Dies at 76”; Shadle, “Carol Paumgarten, Founder of Steps on Broadway, Passes Away.”

fine." It's fine. But it wasn't so fine for the main ballet master, and one of the ballet mistresses.

Liz Waterhouse: Why?

Hilary Cartwright: It was not so fine because they were scared. While I was the last person in, I had a lot more experience than *any* of them have had (sighs). This was a big threat. I didn't even see it that way! It was a very difficult time for me. I was just like, "I'm happy to be here. It's nice, you know? How lovely and how are you?" But I had to eventually go to the ballet master and go, "Look, I don't want your job. I'm not interested in your job. I'm perfectly happy doing the job I do. But you have to let me do *my* job." Because he would come into *my* rehearsals and say, "If I come into the room, then it's my rehearsal." I said, "Even if you don't know the ballet?" "Yes," he said. "It's my rehearsal. When I come in, it's my rehearsal." And I'm like, "Boy. Okay."

Liz Waterhouse (interrupts): May I ask one more question? Were any of your challenges entering positions, did they have to do with you being a woman at all?

Hilary Cartwright: Yes. Royal Winnipeg [Ballet], *definitely*. Chairman of the board *not happy*. And a young woman who was prepared to be feisty to boot. *Not welcome*. Thank you very much. (Laughs.) Happy to see you go. Yes, I met resistance in a lot of places.

Holland, no, I didn't. That was wonderful. But then at Joffrey, boy that was frustrating. I'd been in Geneva then for the year and that was fine. The working relationship was good. I thought, "Well, people work together. Isn't that the job? Isn't that what you do? You work together?" Well, no, apparently not. At Joffrey, this whole structure was very old-school. It also had a lot of what I had disliked about the director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Arnold Spohr. He once had said to me, that how he saw his job was to *break* down a dancer when they came in, and then he would *build* them back up and he would make that dancer.³⁹ I'm like (drops hands with exasperation), "That's not the way I work." I look at what material is there. I don't put myself in their position. I look at them and my idea is that you build the dancer with the material that they are. You develop, you bring that out of them, but you don't destroy them. I'd seen that, what he had done to so many of them. They were like shaking, you know, to go out on stage. The year that Sal [Salvatore Aiello]

39 The authoritarian behavior reported by Cartwright is also confirmed in Spohr's biography. To take two examples: The commonplace occurrence of young dancers bursting into tears is described in the opening pages, in a preface by former dancer Evelyn Hart, and author Michael Crabb's opening memory is of Spohr yelling. See Crabb, *An Instinct for Success*, 7–8, 13–14.

and I were there, we'd been able to build confidence back, make them feel like they were worth something.

Now suddenly, I'm back in a situation of seeing, "Oh my God, this is what you do?" The way they were spoken to—it just appalled me. I spent a lot of time trying to look after dancers that I saw being literally diminished, beaten down. I would go and find them and go, "No, you're going to stand on your own two feet. You're going to be fine. You're going to be okay." You know?

Liz Waterhouse: Was this also more towards women than men, or was it both?

Hilary Cartwright: Towards both. It was not good. There were lots of examples I had of seeing that. So anyway, I did that. I started in with Joffrey. But Joffrey was in severe financial difficulties. (Laughs.) I remember, Joffrey calling me in and saying (imitating him, in a high voice), "Well, dear," he said, "You were the newest person in. I think in the next six months I could probably offer you six weeks' work. How's that?" I went, "Not good." He said, "Well, you know, maybe when things get better, you could come back." I said, "Sure, fine. If things get better." Meanwhile, I'll see what else I can do.

I spoke to my friend Georgina Parkinson in ABT [American Ballet Theatre], and she mentioned that the director there in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Delal Achcar, was searching for good teachers. She also thought that [Sir] Peter Wright was staging *Giselle* there. I'd already staged it for Peter with Het Nationale when I was with the Royal Ballet. She said, "Let me talk to Delal." She was wonderful about it. The next thing was, I flew out to Rio. With a little phrasebook because I had never studied Portuguese. (Laughs.) I went and the first contract was for six months. I *loved* this company. I love Brazil. I love Brazilian culture—the *passion* and all the *emotion*. I was like, "Oh, Yes! This is what I want!"

Then, as usual, in Brazil, money problems started and nobody was getting paid, and after a while I was like, "I can't stay if I'm not going to get paid, you know? Doesn't quite work like this." The Brazilian dancers, they were used to it. They were so sweet, they used to share whatever they had with each other. It's really appalling. Hasn't changed much, I have to say, to this day. I was like, "I'm afraid, Delal, I have to go back and I'm afraid you do have to send me the money." I had to eventually get an international lawyer to get the remains of my payment.

Came back to New York. During this time, my husband and I had been apart too much, and we both realized it just wasn't going to work. He had also met somebody else. It was very sad at the time, but we agreed, and we're still very good friends. That's another whole side of how you deal with things—because he's not only one of my best friends, but his next wife is also. This is life, you know? Life and things happen, and you go on.

I came back to New York, and that was a fairly bleak period of having no work. I went back to Mr. Joffrey and I said, "Well, you know, now the company is back on its feet." And he went, (speaks in a soft high voice) "Hm, well, I don't think it's going to work." I went, "It's Scott, isn't it? It was the ballet master?" (Laughs.) Joffrey could never deal with confrontation. He just kind of, "Hm-mm." I went, "It's fine, Mr. Joffrey, thank you very much and pleasure to have known you." I walked out and I knew it: The ballet master couldn't stand the thought of my coming back. He just couldn't take it. So now, there was now no job, no husband, nowhere . . .

Liz Waterhouse (interrupts): Lots of experience!

Hilary Cartwright (laughs): What am I going to do? The studio Steps was under new direction. I did go back to teaching open classes, but I found it soul destroying because there was no consistency. People were in and out of class. Then you also have this—in New York particularly—this group of people who want to go on and on dancing forever. I'm sorry to say, but they take up space. Some of them were very respectful, of course. They love to take class, and I understand. But please don't come into a professional ballet class and use the space for the professionals, because it's not fair for the others.

Anyway, eventually one of the people who'd been coming to class mentioned that they needed a teacher at the New Jersey Ballet. She put me in touch with the director and so I started commuting back and forth to New Jersey—being a ballet mistress, coaching, teaching the company. I stayed there for maybe two years, which by now was a long time for me. But gradually, again a little bit—because of my background, because of my history—I clashed with the director even though it was another female. It was also a threat because she knew I could do a very good job. So again, (laughs) I was like, "Okay, it's time to go." We actually got on very well, but it was because I was questioning how she kept the company small, and it really could have gone into a bigger situation. But again, it was comfortable to keep it like that. It was what she knew. I also choreographed there. I never think of myself as being a choreographer because I have way too much respect for the craft. But I know I can make a nice piece, you know? So, I did that for New Jersey Ballet, and I enjoyed doing that.

Choreography: "I Was Asked If I Would Work With the Dancers"

This section highlights Cartwright's experiences making dances. In our interviews, I observed that Cartwright had understated her choreographic work, out of respect for the sizable contributions of the choreographers with whom she had worked. Yet Cartwright had choreographed frequently for professional dancers and students. This writing offers insight into

the thematic concerns, approaches, and values that Cartwright espoused in her choreographic projects.

Figure 4: Hilary Cartwright performing in the installation Movement as Flowing of Time by artist Carlos Bunga, at the Bombas Gens Centre of Art in Valencia, Spain. Performance on Friday July 7, 2023.



Screenshot by E. Waterhouse from a documentary video © Bombas Gens Centre d'Art.

Liz Waterhouse: Can you please tell me more about your diverse experiences choreographing?

Hilary Cartwright: I think the first thing I choreographed was for Springplank [NDT2] in the Netherlands. Jiří [Kilian] asked me to choreograph, which was very generous of him. It then started me actually enjoying doing that. I went on to choreograph more, three years later.

One of my most enjoyable memories of choreographing was for a film in Canada, in Montreal. It was the one-hundredth year celebration of Anna Pavlova (1981), and we were making a tribute to her. I was asked if I would work with the dancers—to choreograph something in it or restage some of the things that had been lost of Pavlova's own choreographed pieces. I was given a lot of fairly rare film footage to work with. I mounted pieces of old film footage where she was dancing on a tiny floor

space, so the one stationary camera could record her. In my choreography I could let the dancers move more on a bigger floor surface, looking more as she would have done in real life. In some of the other footage, I could see how she moved when she had more freedom and space.

Pavlova would also dance in her garden near Hampstead Heath, in London, to entertain guests, and I used some of the sequences she danced in this footage when I restaged *Christmas*, a ballet that had been lost. It was one of her favorite times of the year, and even on long sea voyages to South America, she would make sure to have a Christmas tree on board! This and the fact that she always liked to be the center of attention—in a very charming way—was what I used to recreate an idea of what she might have done.

For this Pavlova project, we rehearsed in New York and filmed in Montreal. I was restaging pieces, working with the dancers, coaching, and then finally, also went back with the director Pierre Moran to do some of the editing. I sat in, so that the editing was clean with the music and so forth. It was a beautiful piece in the end. It's called *Pavlova*. The narration was by actress and dancer Leslie Caron—because she could do both the French and the English—because it was for French TV. We had some incredible dancers in the piece. It was a lovely piece and very interesting project to work on.

Over a decade later I co-choreographed a tribute to Pavlova for Ballet Bellevue in Washington, with my ex-husband Ron [Ronald Tice] who was then Director. We collaborated using projections and recordings, together with live dancers recalling her favorite pieces to dance. It created a lot of interest, but sadly was not taken up by other similarly small companies, who could use their schools' students to recall Pavlova's early days at the Maryinsky Ballet School.

I also choreographed many pieces for students, when I was later a teacher for American Ballet Theatre's Summer Program. My pieces were usually ten to twelve minutes long, requiring two casts, so that everyone was used. I nearly always made little story ballets for them, so they could act as well as dance—something I felt was very important to incorporate into their training.

The most recent project I've done was this year, for an art gallery in Valencia, Spain, and was very different from anything I had done before.⁴⁰ I was introduced to the artist Carlos Bunga by my friend Moraima Gaetmank, who was curating

40 Performance *Movement as Flowing of Time* with dancer Hilary Cartwright on July 7, 2023. This live performance by Cartwright was commissioned for artist Carlos Bunga (b. 1976, Portugal), as part of the site-specific piece *Inhabiting Color*, in the exhibition "Performing Nature" at the Bombas Gens Center of Art in Valencia, Spain in 2023. I did not have the opportunity to witness this performance live but followed with interest Cartwright's accounts of participation and online video documentation. See the trailer by Pedro Ruiz, *Let's Dance!: Carlos Bunga/Hilary Cartwright*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxozkFDxSbE>, last accessed November 16, 2025.

a performance of dance on and around his work. He particularly wanted me to move on the central piece, which was an incredible project created directly onto the floor/canvas of the gallery. It was a huge piece covering the entire space under a vaulted ceiling. The painted surface was textured both with other pieces of material, heavy brush strokes, and the use of his own feet to create the movement he wanted. The piece really spoke to me. The exhibition was part of what he called “nomad.” Having been a traveler all my working life, I could identify with it a lot. Memories, uncertainties, nothing fixed, it brought up a lot of images. I agreed to do the two performances which would be shown consecutively on the same day.

After visiting the gallery once, and talking via phone with Carlos several times, I never touched it again until the day of the performance. I spent many hours in my head thinking about what it represented and what it meant to me. That was basically the extent of my rehearsal. On the morning of performance day, I met with Moraima who made some very gentle and perceptive suggestions as I moved around experimenting with what had been in my mind. Never before had I performed something with so little physical preparation. It was all in my head. We had agreed to do it in silence, not to distract from either the piece or my movements, which I drew from Yoga Narada and my strongest memories of ballets I had loved to perform. It was about twenty minutes long, and really pure improvisation both times, based on a blueprint that lay somewhere in my head. Nerve wracking, but immensely rewarding.

Yoga Narada: “An Organic System That Grows and Develops”

I was eager to record Cartwright’s perspective on the history of Yoga Narada and Gyrotonic—practices developed through her collaboration with Juliu Horvath in New York City during the 1980s and 90s. This section invites us to imagine the generative context and community of movement innovators that surrounded Cartwright and Horvath at the time. Within this hotbed of exchange and experimentation—at the international crossroads and dance metropolis of New York City—Cartwright and Horvath brought together Eastern and Western medical knowledge with the embodied experiences of training in diverse stage dance styles, all while navigating the intersecting pressures of capital, real estate, technology, copyright, health, beauty, and fitness.

Hilary Cartwright: During those two years that I was working for the New Jersey Ballet, my back was really beginning to play up, and I really needed to take care of it. I tried different types of yoga and things. By chance, one of the dancers from New Jersey Ballet had said to me, “Oh, you might be interested in this yoga, from a dancer.” I tried a class, and I thought: “Okay, this is very, very different. This is different. And this, this could work for me.”

This teacher, as you know, was Juliu Horvath.⁴¹ It was quite a revelation to me, to find someone teaching yoga who understood a dancer's body: how a dancer warms up and prepares their body for movement and transitions. This was very different from any of the yoga that I had looked at, or different kinds of movement that I thought I could maybe move into. Even looking at things like tai chi, peripherally—which I love, I think it's beautiful—but it didn't fit or suit me, at the time. It was too slow. I always said that maybe I would do it by the time I was ninety!

Before the first class that I took with Juliu, I tried to explain, "I have a back injury, I don't know how much I can do." He was like, "Oh, don't worry. Don't worry. You'll be fine!" I went through the class much as a dancer does, kind of like watching, looking, mimicking, because that's the best way we do it in the beginning. It felt comfortably familiar and offered things that I felt that I should be addressing, of breathing and finding ways to move that were not going to be damaging anymore. I walked out of there—I felt like I was walking on air. I went: Okay, *this* is it! This is what I need to do."

I started going back on a regular basis. The place doesn't exist anymore. It was at Columbus Circle, where there is now a *huge* shopping center. It was one of these old dance studios. It was a familiar environment, being in a dance studio. The classes were in the evening, so I'd come running back from New Jersey, and go straight into the class, which seemed to not have any determined end to it. I thought it was going to be like an hour-and-a-half class, the usual sort of thing (laughs). Then, gradually I realized that these classes—they just really went on as long as Juliu felt there was something to do, or to be said. The class was very open ended in that way but structured at the same time. I just loved it. There was a smallish group of people that were there—a very sort of mixed bag of people—some people who had been in dance, and some who wanted to be.

41 Juliu Horvath (b. 1942) was born in Timișoara, Romania. After playing sports, he began dancing at the age of nineteen and became a principal dancer with the Romanian National Ballet Company. While on tour in 1970 he defected, later receiving political asylum in the US and settling in New York City. He worked as a dancer in the New York City Opera, toured with diverse ballet stars, and was a principal dancer with the Houston Ballet. After a rupture of his Achilles tendon while dancing in the Houston Ballet, he moved in 1977 to St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands. There he researched his own healing and movement modalities. After six years, he returned to New York, teaching what he had developed during this retreat, as "Yoga for Dancers." It is at this point, soon after his return to New York, that Cartwright met Horvath. Their collaboration is reflected upon from Cartwright's perspective in our interviews presented here. Horvath's narratives on the development of Gyrotonic and Gyrokinesis are made public on his websites, see <https://www.gyrotonic.com/>, last accessed November 16, 2024. Adams, "Reflections on the GYROKINESIS® Method," 291; Campbell and Miles, "Analyzing the Gyrotonic® Arch and Curl," 148.

Gradually, Juliu sort of approached me and said, “Oh, you know, you’re really interested in this?” I said, “Yes, I really feel like this is going to help me a great deal, as I’m going on forty, into how my body is going to feel as I progress, and in teaching.” He said, “Well, you know, I also do acupuncture. Maybe I can help with that?”

He invited me to come and see a session he was doing of acupuncture, on someone who was agreeable to me being there—they were a dancer. So, we gradually got to know each other more and more. At one point, I was like, “You know, you really need a studio of your own, because this is wonderful work. You leave it open ended, which is very nice, but I think it could help a lot more people if they knew that you had your own space, and you’d feel comfortable with that.” He agreed that was what was needed. Meanwhile, we also got together as a couple, which I hadn’t really in any way, or shape, or form anticipated. But we did. Basically, he sort of said, “Well, shall I join you, in your apartment?” Because he’d been staying with friends, he’d come back from the Virgin Islands. So almost by chance, in a funny kind of way, we ended up living together. But then, that gave us a lot more communication, a lot more back and forth. His ideas of what he was trying to do, finding out his background, which had been very interesting, and the injuries he’d had, and how that brought him to where he was now.

Eventually we did find a studio space. It was down in the fur district, on 29th Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. I financed the whole thing with my salary from the New Jersey Ballet and other outside work. Juliu didn’t have money at the time. And we called it the “White Cloud Studio.”

Liz Waterhouse: What was the origin of the name?

Hilary Cartwright: Both of us came up with the name together. I had an old book, which I still have with me today, *The Way of the White Clouds*.⁴² Juliu would say that the white cloud drifts through the sky. It goes where the wind takes it, open and free, finding its way. We agreed that this was a perfect name for the studio.

The studio began to attract a lot more dancers: New York City Ballet dancers, some from ABT [American Ballet Theatre], some from the Graham and the contemporary world, as well. So, he would be teaching down there, and I was running the administrative side, having not done anything quite like that in America before, learning a lot as I went along. He began thinking about ways to get across the message he was trying to get over in the class, and maybe using some equipment. At first, he wanted to find something that would help the dancers with turning—it was just sort of simplistic sort of things and ideas. But gradually, *that* led to a whole lot more. This is a story I’ve related, that’s been sort of documented, except I don’t think now it’s referred to, or used, or referenced by anyone in the Gyrotonic community.

42 Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds*.

We literally made the first machine out of salvaged products off the street: two revolving chairs which provided the turning handles, a wooden door which became the base of the seat, some old carpeting we found in ABC Carpeting's remnants department, and some nuts and bolts. That was how the very first piece of equipment got built.

From that, gradually, Juliu backed off teaching. More and more, his thoughts were going to how he could construct and make this machinery. He wanted a tool that really relayed the kind of organic movement that he had been teaching in his class. I was always there in class, and he'd suddenly get up, walk out, and say, "Well, you take over." So, I'd take over (laughs). I knew the rhythm of the class and the structure of it, and I'd start going. Then finally, it was just me left teaching. He'd stepped out of it altogether. He continued working with some of the special dancers from the New York City Ballet, in a small group in the morning before their ballet class. I would continue to teach the open class to anyone that was coming.

As I started watching people, I realized why he thought he needed to build some equipment to give them some idea of what they should be doing, or how it should be feeling. I thought, "Well, I need to maybe make some changes here, in how people can approach this work."

Liz Waterhouse: Can you compare what you were teaching then, to now? Would I, for example, recognize what you were teaching?

Cartwright's gestures become richer in their dynamic interplay in her response to this question. Sitting on the floor cross-legged, supported by a blue meditation cushion, her dynamic palette and range of movement increases. Rhetorically emphasizing the wide circumference of movements of Yoga Narada, she symmetrically lowers her hands widely to the side and then gathers the space in front of her torso—bringing her hands together, as if gathering something imaginary in the air. Her fingers enliven. After resting her hands on her legs, she then slowly stretches her hands and fingers into full extension—down and forward in front of her pelvis—as she describes the “yang” quality of Juliu (a gesture that is bound, direct, and intensive). Her palms are facing one another, a fist-length apart. In contrast, she places the gesture of “yin” to her right side, transferring her parallel hands beside her (a gesture that is softer and more indirect). The flow between these different methods, she dances with carving curvilinear motions of her two hands, motions more rhythmically in concert—almost like little fishes swimming closely around one another.

Then with two weighted and accented motions, she throws both arms resiliently downwards to emphasize “his” way. In contrast, “her” way is from the inside: flowing, circular, emergent. She articulates this to me through two different gestures. Describing feeling inside, she closes the fingers of her right hand in front of her center, as if holding something delicate, and lifts her arm with her spine before letting the gesture emerge forward and out, to me. This is a simple undulation. I know it from Cartwright's teaching as a foundational premise within

Yoga Narada. Secondly, describing her way of moving forwards, Cartwright glides her hands down forward and out into extension, without any accents or bound hyperflexion of the fingers.

This movement articulation blends into her oral narrative to help explain meaning on multiple semantic levels simultaneously. Changes in presence and movement merge her practice of Yoga Narada with oral life story narrative. This emphasized to me narrative approaches with different gender, movement, rhythm, and energy forms. Also, it describes Cartwright's philosophy of movement pedagogy: not forced, but soulful and holistic, and energetically structured. This example demonstrates how deeply Yoga Narada, Cartwright's movement practice, relates to her ethics and values: She uses her own movement practice to tell her autobiography, and vice versa—her movement practice also records her body knowledge.

Yes, some of it you would. Some of it you would find a lot more athletic. I mean, what we do now in Yoga Narada covers a wide circumference of movement, and action, and stretching, and strengthening. But really, the easiest way to say it is Juliu's approach was more *yang*, more male, and mine was more *yin*, more female. And we could flow back and forth between the two. But that was more his instinct, was the more yang approach, which is where actually his Gyrokinesis has gone on.⁴³ The rhythm of that is completely different from the rhythm that I teach in. Plus, as he left me more and more alone, I started exploring more and more from the inside of myself: "How does this feel? Why am I forcing myself to go into something?" Because if I am, then I know other people are. I needed to find a way—what it was for me, and why I had started doing this, was in order to protect my body and to give it a way forwards that was going to be supported. When Juliu would occasionally come to teach a class, or give a master class, I found that I actually would hurt myself. Because it's that old dancer's instinct: You want to please, you want to be seen to be doing what you're supposed to be doing. But it was not appropriate for my body to do that.

I remember it was twice I kind of threw my back out doing stuff taking class. One time particularly, he was incredibly understanding, and I realized this other side of him, that could be very gentle, very soft, very caring. He really did help me to get back into myself again. Going to see either a doctor or a physical therapist, they would go, "You know, you probably need to have an operation. We need to fuse your spine." I was like, "No, no, no! Not doing that. Not doing that at all." So, with some of the help he gave me, I was able to keep that going. It gave me motivation to develop something that meant people would *not* get injured in the process, that could always be counteracted, and where there were different ways to get into specific movements.

43 See the corporate website for the Gyrokinesis method, <https://www.gyrotonic.com/about/gyrokinesis-method/>, last accessed September 24, 2025.

Really kind of cutting a long story short, as Juliu went on developing—building the machines, designing them—we started then putting the movement from the class onto the machines (see Fig. 5). So, everything in a way that's on the machines, you can take off the machine and you're back on the floor again. While we were doing that, I was progressing with the class. I could more and more see where and what needed to happen. I found my own rhythm with it, as I say. I would talk to Juliu about it and describe what I was doing. He'd listen and he'd go, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's fine. That's okay." Then, more and more, he got into just working on the machines—building and developing them. He's an absolutely inherent creator and inventor. This is really his kind of *soul* that comes through on that (gestures).⁴⁴ I had a lot of respect for the work, but I felt like it needed to also be protective of other people. So, I started sort of going a little bit my own way. We still worked in the studio together. But also, I think he saw the machines as not only a way of doing what he'd originally intended, but also a way of being financially stable—of finding a really good business, and so on. This is where we started to come apart a bit. Because for *me*, it was not about making a business. It was about health. It was about support and nurturing.

In the process too, because he'd been spending so much time in the workshop building the machines—really killing himself doing that—he had a lot of back problems. He said, "I can't sit on the floor anymore. Surely there must be a lot of people who can't do that? So, I'm going to build something." He built these little stools. They were like little mushrooms to sit on! (Laughs.) He said, "I have this idea for a class!" Because, of course, once his brain started, he was off. I have to say that the first class he did like that—on the little stools—I hated every minute of it. I was uncomfortable. I was just like, "This is so different from what I want to do." Gradually as that mushroom grew, it got higher and higher, he started developing different ways of how he wanted to move with it. Still in a very organic way. A lot of it I can appreciate. There are a lot of similarities still, with what he had done before, which I have already gone into. Because any kind of movement system like this, they all have the same roots. It's not like you can invent the wheel again. It all, eventually, comes from stuff you've seen, done and know. My feeling is you always pay respect to your roots. The roots come from *way*, way back and a *long* time ago. They can be rediscovered and reborn, but it's not just your invention. It is not. It is an organic system that grows and develops—and can be offered.

For me, it's always: You are offering a key, for someone to be able to open the door. I'm not going to open the door for them, but I'll give them the key to open the door. It's up to them how much they want to open the door. It doesn't matter if they only open it a little bit: That's enough for them. Other people want to fling the door open.

44 On the word "soul," Cartwright makes the undulating gesture of circular breathing from Yoga Narada described previously.

You go, “Be careful!” It’s a bit like Pandora’s box. I think anyway, life is a continual growth. You’re always growing, you’re always discovering, there’s always something new. It’s the same with how I feel about Yoga Narada. It’s never finished. It will never be finished because it will keep growing. That’s how I feel about my Yoga Narada teachers: For me, each one of them is very special. They have something that they bring to it of their own spirit, their own personality, their own interpretation. I feel they’re like little elements that go out in the world! I’m very, very careful about who I choose. Some people, I have to say, “You know, I don’t think it’s really quite time.” Or “It’s lovely that you would like to, but I’m not ready to say yes to that yet.” It’s not that what I have to say is the ultimate word at all. But I want to know that they have the essence of it and that they’re carrying the essence of it forward, communicating it in their way. The relationship I have with all my teachers is very close. There’s always a back and forth, even if I haven’t seen them for a long time, there’s always that reconnecting back in. I value them for that: for their integrity, and their honesty. Wherever they want to take it, that’s important to me.

Juliu and I really came to differ more and more and more on our principles of how we wanted to offer the information. Because by now, he had developed what he then wanted to call Gyrokinesis.⁴⁵ For him, because his mind goes to—and loves going to—different places, he felt he had to make a format. That to me is like instant death, because the moment you have a rigid format, it’s just not alive! I mean, I can see how it does a lot of things for a lot of people, and that’s wonderful. We’re all different in how we receive information or give out information. But I think you find that element of rhythm, that flow that fits with yours, and that didn’t fit mine at all. It was everything I was learning about myself—about my *push*, my aggressivity, if you like—that I wanted to change: that it was not necessary to have that attack, that *proving-yourself* all the time.⁴⁶ It was going to take me down the wrong path. So, it was time to diverge, which we did both personally and then, eventually, professionally.

I would have wished that we could have had a good understanding of why this was happening. This was a natural transition in life, for both of us. That I would always care—and do always care about him—but there also has to be mutual respect. If there isn’t, I have to move away. So, that era came to an end. I continued teaching both the Gyrotonic and what I had originally done. It had started from him but had progressed *so differently*.

45 See footnote 43.

46 During this narration, Cartwright’s physical effort adds to her storytelling. Embodying “push” and “aggressivity,” she drops her right fist in a controlled impact. Suggesting “change,” she turns her right hand upward, cupping her fingers lightly together, like a rose bud. For “attack” she opens fingers with tension and uses impact phrasing. On “proving yourself” she repeats the downward punch, with tension in her facial expression.

Quite a lot of people who take class with me now, they love the rhythm of it. They find it teaches them a great deal. You know, what I teach is not recognized and is repudiated, completely, by the Gyrotonic “headquarters,” by which I mean Juliu and the inner circle of people who run his business. I am not recognized as the co-founder of the first White Cloud Yoga studio. Nor I am allowed to train teachers officially. My workshops and retreats do not count as continuing education. In fact, I lost one of my teachers because she wanted to become a master trainer in Gyrotonic. She was told if she did, she had to stop teaching Yoga Narada. She taught for me for like ten years. Her life choice was that she wanted to become a master trainer. She felt like that was going to give her more financial stability. I wish her well and I have said, “I hope it does bring you what you wanted.” But I have never, ever in any of my teaching, looked at how much money I can make from it. A lot of the times I made nothing. I would take people and just allow them to come for free, because I knew they couldn’t afford it. Because I thought it was more important to give the information, and the energy, and what I believed in. I would make my money somewhere else, enough to live on. I don’t care about having a fortune or anything. It’s not been in my sphere to work like that. I have been very fortunate, very blessed to have been able to do the work that I do—and continue teaching in ballet companies, and so on, and being able to bring some of this work there, too. Being able to stage ballets. So, I’ve been able to survive.

Gradually as time went on, with more work coming in through my yoga, I separated from doing the ballet so much. I would go out and guest teach—also because I was staging [Sir Frederick] Ashton ballets. I am still a member of the Ashton Foundation, and do still stage his ballets, but it’s sort of a little bit less now since the pandemic.⁴⁷ There are many more people who do the staging. So, it just depends. If I’m in a convenient place for them, then fine, I can go and do it.

Liz Waterhouse: Has your work in ballet helped financially?

Hilary Cartwright: Weirdly enough, yes! Which is a very reverse round way of how things normally happen!

Liz Waterhouse: But your motivation was not financial?

Hilary Cartwright: No. I also believe very much in having diversity in my life, in so far as I don’t want to be doing just one thing all the time. I like for my brain to be stimulated in different ways, and to be able to draw on different elements around me. They’re interconnected. I’m not saying that I would go off and run a computer. I recognize my boundaries! But there are other things that I can do and that I was

47 The COVID-19 pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

willing to do, to be able to survive. I did not want to jeopardize or diminish what I believe is something very valuable.

This all took place over a decade: We were together for about nine or ten years, and then I continued to run the studio. By the end, I knew the financial, administration, and everything, but it was beginning to become too much. It was interrupting my work, and I said, “We have to find somebody else to come in and manage the studio.” Because we had two studios at one point, in two different parts of New York. So gradually, we introduced people into running the studio and let other people take that over. I was able to finally step out of that.

Liz Waterhouse: Do you remember the locations of the studios and their dates of operation?

Hilary Cartwright: About five years after the first, we opened a second studio on 72nd St. and Broadway. So, around 1989. We closed that shortly after the stock market fell in 1994. People were not coming to class as regularly. The studio was just not making enough money. A few years later, I think in '97 or '98, Juliu moved the first studio on West 29th to West 61st St. Then, two to three years after he opened it, he decided to dissolve that studio as well, because it wasn't running financially as well as it should have been.

Liz Waterhouse: Why was that?

Hilary Cartwright: I think just not good management in the end—not knowing how to handle the funds. Plus, also, a change in how much interest there was. It wasn't the novelty anymore. There was always Pilates studios that everybody knew. Pilates was more simplistic—didn't take so much kind of processing to do.

Liz Waterhouse: Did you invest and profit equally?

Hilary Cartwright: I financed the whole thing initially. Juliu had no money. So, I financed the studios with my salary from the New Jersey ballet and other outside work.

Figure 5: Hilary Cartwright in Studio Kinétique, Paris, in 2018. Behind her are two Gyrotonic towers.



Photograph by Moraima Gaetmank.

When Juliu closed the main studio, that was quite a shock for all the teachers he'd employed there. They had like two weeks' notice that the studio was closing and were scrambling to see where they were going to work or what was happening to the equipment. I bought two pieces of the equipment. A group of us then got together with our bits of equipment that we'd managed to buy from Juliu and set up in a new studio.⁴⁸ Our clients kind of re-found us, because all the files and records with contact data had disappeared. I lost contact with all my clients, but through word of mouth, people started to find out. I had to start from scratch again, almost. It was not well handled, shall we say. (Laughs.) Anyway—that being said—we pulled together.

Then, I felt the freedom to be able to go with my own flow, my own developments, my own times. When I could go away on my own, reflect on how movement was, what I was observing in my students, and then translating that back into what I knew already and what I wanted to try and discover. Very often, in all of that discovery, realizing it was something somebody else had discovered years and years ago—you know centuries ago. But still, it was good to find it. Not always to be *told* something, but to find it from the inside out.

48 The studio Yogamoves, now known as Fluid Fitness, owned by Lisa DelSignore.

Flow, fluidity, and continuity amplify and connect Cartwright's gestures as she senses and expounds on the freedom she felt at this moment in her life story. Her prior gestures of speaking—casually circulating her right hand—intensify as she closes her eyes, appearing to concentrate internally on her motion before enlarging her gesture and rocking her spine more expansively. Remembering the importance of self-reflection, she appears like a visionary: Cartwright slows her flow by bringing her fingers to her forehead and closing her eyes. She holds this alertness before flossing her arm downwards and extending her fingers forward and out—still with closed eyes—and then repeating that gesture more fluidly. These rhythmical motions all flow in counterpoint to her spoken narrative, helping to drive it forward without any breaks in oral or kinesthetic time.

Cartwright's inward contemplation leads into a memory of her students. She shifts her gaze on a diagonal, squinting and seeming to remember something near, modeling interaction with her hands, before returning her eye contact to me. To conclude, she describes her teaching as knowledge translation, culminating with a motion of both arms—inward to outward—a motion within Yoga Narada called "swimming." This movement sequence fades without a dramatic ending. Cartwright continues speaking while caring for the sole of her right foot—by rubbing it—a gesture that has come and gone throughout the interview. Without adding drama, this presumably unconscious episode of bodily memory—on discovery, body, others—filters poignantly into the narrative, marking this turning point and its positive inflection. Cartwright describes how her experience of movement deepened and she found new self-fulfillment.

So, that's really how Yoga Narada came about. For a long time, it was still known by the studio name of "White Cloud Yoga." Then I was told I could not use that name any longer, because I was not to associate myself with the whole Gyrotonic empire, people said, "Well, it's like yoga for dancers." And I said, "Yeah, it is. But I have many different people. They're not all dancers, and they don't need to be. Everybody has that spirit within them." It's really something more than that. Then, one of my teachers, Jim Phillips, said to me one day, "I was thinking about what to call it. Because I don't know that I could say 'yoga for dancers,' or 'Hilary Cartwright's yoga movement,' You know? I came across this this wonderful traveling monk, called Narada. He believed that through *movement*, through *music*, through *dance*, you could achieve enlightenment as much as sitting on a cushion, looking at a brick wall."

I said, "Oh, my God, that's my man! That's the way that I feel." Narada is always depicted with a lute hanging across him—strung around him. I said, "Would you mind if I took that, and we made that the name?"

He said, "No, no, I think that's lovely." So, it became Yoga Narada. I explained to people, "This is what I feel—Narada's philosophy is how I feel. So therefore this is how I would like for it to be known." I didn't really want *my* name attached to it. It felt really good, and I've been very happy with that name ever since.

Jim Phillips is still teaching workshops for me, and this summer [2025] I will co-teach a retreat with my adopted son, Ryan Carroll, in Den Haag.

Liz Waterhouse: I have one element of Yoga Narada that I thought to bring into our discussion: *dan tien*. Because that's something essential to the practice that I learned through you. Could you talk about that feeling, or motivation?

Hilary Cartwright: The *dan tien*, it's actually a Chinese word. In the English written translation, it's spelled in various ways.⁴⁹ It refers—through classical Chinese teaching and working with the elements and the meridians in the body (she brings both hands to her *dan tien*)—it refers to that central energy point. Which is in the pelvis, like between the belly button and the top of the pubic bone. It's also when you look, and this is centuries back, you look at the Leonardo da Vinci man: when he's standing with his arms spread and the legs spread. Da Vinci said, there is equal distance in any human being from that point to the foot and that point to the hand to his center point. It's an equal distance. That's your center point. That's the axis. So the *dan tien* really is the center of the body, and I talk about the *breath* from the *dan tien*.

Another big influence was the writings of Mantak Chia. He calls it “the inner smile,” and it comes up through all the different chakras.⁵⁰ That feeling of that smile that comes from *deep* inside. It's not just a smile on the face, it comes right from down in the pelvis, right from your gut.

Speaking about the dan tien as “center,” Cartwright makes her right hand into a tight fist, suggesting a quality of strength and gathering. Then, modeling breathing from the dan tien with a gesture, she articulately spirals her fingers into a cupping hand, down in front of her energetic center. With her fingers pointed down, she smoothly pulls her right hand in a straight line up towards her head and then evolves this gesture by splaying her fingers—generously giving and extending her arm in front of her chest, before the hand floats down, completing the cycle. She performs this fluidly without breaking the flow of her speech.

*Citing the influence of Mantak Chia, she adds an “inner smile” to this motion. Demonstrating, she clarifies in both speech and gesture that this quality of presence comes from inner listening. She closes her eyes, now repeating the cycling with both arms. As if dancing a *révère* (the final movements of a ballet class in which one uses the arms to thank and bow*

49 The Western transliteration of the Chinese term 丹田 is variously given as *dāntián*, *dantian*, *dantien*, *dan tian*, and *dan tien*. See Bowman, “Feel the Difference.” In reviewing this manuscript, Cartwright clarified that in the writings she had seen with Chinese references, the spelling had fluctuated between *dan tien* and *tan dien*. For this publication she chose *dan tien*.

50 See Chia, *The Inner Smile*.

to the teacher and musical accompanist), she gracefully opens both arms and her focus, with a transformed, gracious presence, a smile in her eyes and upon her lips. These experiences of breath, center, and flow give key insights into Cartwright's biography of embodied knowledge.

So, yes, the dan tien is central to everything that I talk about. It's hard to access for some people. I found it really difficult in the beginning. I realized I was a shallow breather, even though I was a dancer, even though I did a lot of jumping. I did it all from the upper part of my lung. I wasn't actually getting that full capacity of drawing it in. Yes, the air is in the actual lung, but the energetic force comes from the dan tien. You pull the force and that opens the lungs. As you go progressively up through those chakras, it releases, opens—fills, fills, fills. Then, when you exhale. It's like a gentle subsidence going down.

In the various breathing elements which I use in the Yoga Narada, I always say it's like starting the engine of a car. It has to *purr*, first of all. It gets going. Now, once it gets going—okay—now we can kind of chug along a little bit. Then you get a little bit more stimulating with those sort of breaths (demonstrates).⁵¹ But they're coming—and this is the thing that I still see, like even today when I was teaching. I thought, "How much do I go into this—with them?" I will say it a little bit each time, but it's a very individual journey of being able to find the subtlety inside, that subtlety of that little sniff. I often say, "It's like a little anemone in the sea. It just goes . . ." (demonstrates).⁵² It just makes itself go along that way. It's a gentle little engine, you know? It's not a great big traction engine.

We need that little pulse deep down inside, to know that we can start the motor from there. Like the sipping breath at the beginning of class is just *pulling* energy up through the nervous system. Then, as you exhale, it's taking out the staleness. Now again, it's like pulling from a *pool* of water. You pull that energy, cleansing the spine. (Sighs vocally) Ahhhh. And letting it out. It's like yawning—you know—when (yawns) you're letting out all that stale air, which automatically lets you bring fresh air into your lungs. It's interesting, when you observe people who have some kind of oxygen deficiency, they can be talking and then start to yawn. Which can seem incredibly rude, but actually is a vital necessity for them, to clear out and be able to start getting oxygen back into their body.

We misunderstand so many of the natural, instinctive things that happen in our body, and try and suppress them—which doesn't allow the body actually to function

51 Cartwright demonstrates forms of lightly accented breaths: first the "double inhale" through the nose, and then the "double exhale" through the mouth.

52 Cartwright simulates the slurping sound of a sea anemone gliding through water, illustrating the motion by showing the ocean floor with one hand, and then the pulsing sea creature with the other. The creature moves with a very light accent, floating up and then descending in the water towards the seafloor. This is a metaphor that Cartwright often uses in her training.

as the piece of machinery it really is—the piece of equipment that we have, working on the inside. We see everything on the outside, but there's so much more going on the inside. Which—if it isn't lubricated, and cleansed, and so forth—it can't support you externally. Some people take that to an extreme. I'm not a big advocate of like, people who will do a purge, or they'll do a long fast, or something. I mean, sometimes you get sick and that automatically makes you fast. Now, you can start. "Okay. I'm going to be very careful what I put back into the body now, to get restored."

I think it was from living with Juliu for so long, because he was such an extreme person. He'd go from one extreme to the other so much. I thought that I used to be somebody that went to extremes, but that made me very conscious of how it certainly wasn't good for me. Really, just moderation—finding a balance—was going to be more productive in the long run than one extreme, another extreme. I feel that it puts the body under stress to do that. But I really believe in finding balance—finding moderation in everything you do. That's not to say you can't have fun, you know? Because that's the other extreme to me, is having absolutely nothing. I'm sorry, I don't believe in that.

Liz Waterhouse: Hilarity!

Hilary Cartwright: Hilarity! There, you see. Yeah.

Liz Waterhouse: I remember in the training with you that was an important thing, to bring out the humor. I always see it in your dialogue with people.

Hilary Cartwright: Yeah. It's like not going (sternly), "No, no, no, no!" But it's, you know, (laughs) "I'm sorry, but that's . . ." So, you are never laughing *at* someone you're always laughing *with* someone. And that builds a community. For me, that's what's important.

Vitality, Hip-Replacements, and Aging: "Now, I Am Listening More to My Body."

Liz Waterhouse: I would like to introduce the topic of aging. One aspect of your life story is your two hip replacements. It's a miracle to me that you move so well, after these surgeries. I'd love to hear more about that process.

Hilary Cartwright: Yes, that was a big turning point in my life too. Because here I was. I was practicing yoga for health, maintenance, good training, and all the rest of it, and suddenly began to realize there was something seriously wrong, first with my left hip. I thought that I'd just pulled a tendon or something in my hip, but it got progressively worse. I was teaching a lot of ballet, at the time (places left hand on her left hip). I just found it was excruciating to try and pick my leg up or

show anything with a *développé*. I went to different chiropractors, and healers, and different things.

First, I wasn't willing to admit that, possibly, I was going to have to have a hip replacement. I'd seen a lot of other people go through it and I thought, "No, all the work I'm doing, there's no way I could" But finally, I had to have an X-ray, and even on the X-ray, you could see that I no longer had a rounded acetabulum [end of the leg bone]. It was, it was like a pointy mushroom, which meant that it was not fitting into the socket very well. There was absolutely no coating around it—no cartilage—added to which there were bone spurs where the nerves, particularly from the SI joint [sacroiliac joint], came through. Occasionally, depending how I was moving, those bone spurs would catch the nerve, and it was the most paralyzing sort of pain that I've ever known. I mean, I literally couldn't move for a minute. It got worse and worse. Actually, doing the movements I was doing felt good. It was walking that became the worst thing when I was upright.

I really went in denial about it needing to be done. I thought, "How can I, someone teaching all of this, have to say my body's failed me? I have not been able to maintain it the way I said I should." So, there was ego to be overcome—and pride. There was also recognizing that something needed to be done. I tried every alternative method that I could. I was very beautifully supported by an acupuncturist and by my treasured chiropractor. Finally, I was like, "Okay, I cannot tolerate this pain anymore. I can't cross the road without worrying that I'm going to get run over, because I cannot run if I haven't made it. I'm not able to go up and down stairs properly."

I went to see Doctor [Douglas] Paget, who was a surgeon several dancer friends of mine had gone to, at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York. He loved going to the theater and seeing dancers, and he was the most compassionate person. So, I went, "Okay, that's it. I'm going to do it." In making the decision, first, this was facing age and facing also the fact that in having this, not only was I going to have to admit, "Look, I'm vulnerable, too, and prone to stuff as much as anybody." I may not be able to come back and teach. That was my biggest fear. I thought, "Okay, you have other skills. You can do other things." So, I really looked at my life again, and thought, "Okay, you can reinvent yourself if you have to."

Liz Waterhouse: How old were you?

Hilary Cartwright: I was just coming up for sixty at that point. I had always been a very active teacher, both in ballet and, obviously, in the yoga. I thought, "I don't *know* another way to teach, but maybe I'm going to have to learn that." Which, going fast forward, I gradually have over the years. But it took a while to realize: I don't have to demonstrate everything, you know? It's not necessary: indication. Remembering my past teachers, everything was done through indication. Actually, it's better for the

student because they don't pick up your bad habits, and, they have to think harder. They have to use their brain and not just mimic.

So, I had the operation. It was life-changing in that suddenly I could be relaxed again. I could be happy. Friends came to visit me. I said, "Well, I have to walk. I'm going out for a walk, come with me!" One guy said to me, "My God, she went bounding off across the park!" I was like, "Well, it's good! You know, we're going uphill, downhill. It's good for me!" It's a little scary. The first day, you kind of come to and they go, "Okay. Now, swing your legs out and we're getting out of bed." I go, "Hang on a second. I'm not sure what's happening here. (Laughs.) I have no idea what's going on in my hip."

Liz Waterhouse: Do you remember what it felt like?

Cartwright takes on a different repertoire of gestures than those used previously in the interview to remember and explain this body transformation.

She begins with what appears to be inward listening, shifting her eye focus away from me. She places her right hand, her dominant hand, on the operated hip, opening her left palm upwards—as if to sense and also to keep the flow of her narrative inquiry. While returning to me for narrative contact with her eyes, she appears to be thinking and dialoging with her hip—or recreating this process. Going in and out of the present, she closes her eyes when recounting the numbness. Using her hands, she illustrates the surgery: She jostles her fists to describe separating the bones, and then illustrates the insertion of the prosthesis. She shows repeatedly where on her body this happened, through the posterior insertion, and the intervening muscles. She animates what she learned about her inner anatomy, modeling the bones with her hands. Playfully, she brings her hands together and wiggles her fingers to describe the bone hairs, which allow a merging of prosthetic and bone. Holding her fists together, she defines the stability of foreign and human matter by moving the structure up and down repeatedly; the opposite to the motion of popping out, which she shows suddenly. To conclude, perhaps cathartically, she opens her legs into a straddle to stretch.

Hilary Cartwright: Well, there was a sort of numbness. A bit of me had been separated and something else put in. So, I now have this foreign object there. I was like "You and I have got to come to terms! We needed to figure each other out, as to how we're going to deal with each other."

I'd been told all the things I would not be able to do after I'd had it. At this time, it was not so prevalent to have the anterior insertion operation, this was a posterior insertion which is just *behind* the hip bone. But I learned a lot about it, and I learned a lot about bones: How bones breathe, and how they have little hairs inside. So that when the prosthesis goes into your femur—why you have to be careful in the beginning is because the little hairs inside the bone are growing into the holes in the prosthesis, to hang on so that everybody's united, and in harmony together, and

will work together. If you don't let that growth happen, then it can pop out very easily because it's not properly anchored yet. Plus, all the ligaments and tendons have to grow back, and the muscles have to strengthen. Walking is the best thing for it, but it does also need some specific exercises to reengage the glute [gluteus muscles], the hamstring, the sartorius muscle. All those things need to kind of get back into gear.

I was also going back, at that time, to teach at ABT [American Ballet Theatre] summer school. I think it was just about six weeks after I'd had the operation. I was a little nervous about how that was going to be, and what I was going to be able to do with young students. Plus, they'd asked me to choreograph a piece, which I used to do every summer for them. My physical therapist, Marika [Molnar], insisted that I had at least one elbow crutch. Especially when I was on the subway, just to keep people away from my hip. But it actually was really good therapy for me: I was careful. I found I could start working again, and it felt good. All the things that I'd been told I wouldn't be able to do—like turning-in and using the hips and stuff—I very gently explored. It gave me a great awareness of the pelvic basin, of where I was holding, what I needed to do. Not pushing it—not pushing beyond what I thought I was capable of doing, but gradually finding my body was so happy not to be in pain. And amazingly, I was able to go back to being able to show how the students should prepare going into a split—so that their hips and pelvis were in the right place, square to the front, where their leg would be.

I had to go back for a checkup, obviously, with Doctor Paget. (Laughs.) I was talking about some of the things I was doing, and he was like, "It's amazing! It's amazing!"

Liz Waterhouse: This is the hip series on the Gyrotonic machine that I learned from you?

Hilary Cartwright: That's right! Before everything had broken apart with Gyrotonic, I did in fact then develop a program for teachers to learn, and which I taught to them in many places, on working with people with hip replacements. I wrote a whole treatise on it. Then, I would talk about, "You have to know whether your client has a posterior or an anterior insertion." Different rules apply for it.

I consider it a little bit of a fallacy that having the anterior is a quicker process of healing than the posterior. Any surgery you have is a shock to the body, and the body has to be respected for the shock that it's had, and you need to come back gently. You cannot just rush back in. I saw people do that going, "Oh, I had an anterior. I'm fine, you know?" Then, complications would occur a couple of months later. You have to respect the body.

Aside from two hip replacements, I also had two major abdominal surgeries later in life. When I was a young dancer, around twenty years old, I had my appendix

out.⁵³ Later, the scar from that had attached itself to my small intestine, eventually blocking it. The first surgery—which scraped the scar tissue away—left a huge vertical scar I had to heal from. That was another time I wasn't sure how it would be coming back. Then after the first hip replacement I had a second incident when the small intestine (where the scar had been scraped off) lost some of its elasticity. As you eat, it expands and then it contracts back. This is naturally how the intestine works. Well, like a piece of old elastic in a pair of knickers [panties] (laughs) gradually over time, it would get twisted and turned. Couldn't eat—just felt really, really uncomfortable.

It went on for quite a long time until it actually did tie itself in a knot. It was very dramatic. I had to go into hospital in the middle of the night. First they thought it was diverticulitis. Then, fortunately, the house doctor on duty that night said, "I want to do another X-ray, I don't think that's what it is." Which was correct. They said, "Okay, you're going into surgery as soon as we get the surgeon here, because otherwise you could die." That was fairly shocking. They took out about three feet [90 cm] of small intestine—you have so much small intestine tucked in there—and then they reattached whatever ends were left together. They also took out something called the ileocecal valve, which is the valve between the large and the small intestine. I had to really relearn how to deal with digestion and with food, because I couldn't take anything that was too fibrous in the beginning. That took about a year of figuring out what I could eat and not eat. Then, that over time has gotten much better, and it's not such a problem, now. Then, came the second hip after that.

Thus, I had several "stop-and-look-at-yourself moments." My tendency to overdo—pull back, pull back—constant reminders. I thought, "Am I so stubborn and thick headed that I have to have these very big question marks put in front of me? Apparently, not able to see the smaller asterisks along the way?" No, I have a big thing put there to go, "Uh-ah. No, stop."

So anyway, after that abdominal surgery, then I had the second hip, which was a real surprise. This was 2010, so I was sixty-seven/sixty-eight years old. Came out of nowhere. They still don't know how it happened because I suddenly started feeling acute pain. I thought, "No, don't tell me the second hip needs to go. As far as I knew, there was nothing that wrong with it. But it turned out that somehow it had cracked. The head of the femur had cracked. I have no recollection—no fall—nothing that I could think of. Anyway, that had to happen quickly. Same wonderful doctor. Same posterior operation. However, the sweet man thought he was doing me a great favor, because he said, "Oh, my gosh! You know, I learned so much from you, about how much rotation you could get back in rehabilitation." So, he put a different prosthesis in from the one on the other side. I was perfectly happy with the one on the left

53 Cartwright, *Dancing for a Living*, 55.

side. He said, "You'll have more turnout." I'm like, "I'm sixty-eight! I don't need more turnout at this point in my life! This is bizarre!"

Something didn't get stitched back right. Marika and I—we worked, and worked, on it. She finally said, "There's something that's not reattached." Because it's like your brain is telling your muscle to do something and there's no message getting down there. I was still able to go back to teaching amazingly. I would do a tendu front: left leg stayed nicely turned-out, right leg would start turned-out and then slowly turn parallel (gestures.) I go (speaking to her leg), "Who are you?!" (Both laugh.) I could start the movement; it could not complete it.

What you can see when I sit, this [right] leg is much higher up than this one [left]. So something is going on back there. We don't know quite who or what is not cooperating, but he's not. Unfortunately, what it does—it tends to make both the piriformis [muscle] and the glute medius [gluteus medius muscle] try and do everything instead. Whoever is out of the picture, they try and take over. Therefore, I need to have either acupuncture or massage on that—on a good maintenance level—to keep those muscles relaxed, because otherwise it just gets so tight. But I feel well. That is small compared to not being able to walk, or worse: not being able to do anything.

That's one of the things—all these surgeries—for reflecting upon: "I have been so fortunate. I've been taught my lesson, but I have been given benefits afterwards." It's also helped me as, talking of aging, which you asked me about. I never feel the need to hide my age or say, "Oh, well, I'm getting older." Well, yeah, I'm now eighty, you know? I'm constantly sort of surprised at having got to that point. I don't feel that inside. I've spoken with a lot of other people who are also aging or becoming older. When you enjoy life, you keep that spirit still of the youth that you were. It's not that I want to try and look young, or be young. The reason I move is not because I'm trying to show that I can move. It's because I *enjoy* it! I *like* it! I want to be able to enjoy it and say to people, "Don't just look at me and say, 'Oh, but I could never do that.'" It doesn't *matter* what I do. Or what you do. If you enjoy stuff, you do it. You know? That's how it is.

Now, I am listening more to my body. I'm listening. This is the way I do it. As I still have been coaching and working with dancers. I can show them from my upper body. I remember the wonderful coaches that I talked about, in the early part of my life. Oh my God, what I got from them—just from seeing that intention. It's something you can't teach someone, but they can gain from it. They can feel it, and they can get the intention. Then, they take it, and then it's theirs. It is truly theirs, then. This is the beautiful thing to see in anybody, is that they are fulfilling their purpose—their full aura, if you like. So, I'm gradually learning. Then, having a partner who is the same age now (laughs). Constantly reminding him, with a similar mentality, that: "Just because you used to do it five years ago, doesn't mean that you can still hop

up and down off a tractor, and jump up and down, and scramble up through the undergrowth!"

Liz Waterhouse: I find it so inspiring that you moved to a new country, from the US to Spain, just a few years ago. This is wonderful too, that you keep on going for new adventures.

Hilary Cartwright: It's funny because we didn't even think of it really as being an adventure. Where we were wasn't right. We needed to do something else. We'd gone through COVID; it still wasn't over. There were still things to be seen, things to be done, places to go. That's why we just picked up and said, "Okay, let's go!"

We're very fortunate to have found such a beautiful house in such a beautiful little village. It was just the epitome of everything we could hope for at this point in time. Trying to remain a little realistic about the fact that probably this wasn't the place that we would end up with, eventually, because it is remote. Even though we're in a little village, we are a long way away from the normal sort of services or things that people think are necessary. We had to think ahead a little bit and ask, "Well, what does happen when we can no longer drive?" I mean, I will be very conscious of the day I feel like I should not be driving anymore.

Liz Waterhouse: Do you miss New York City?

Hilary Cartwright: I lived there for over thirty years and loved it. I felt, "This is my home." I am a New Yorker. But over the years, I was aware that I did not want to grow old—really old—in New York. It is not an old person's city. It's for young people—a lot of rush and energy. For a long time, it was fine because I would go away for like four or five weeks at a time and then come back. So, it was balanced enough, but then COVID came. The city was so completely different during COVID. It was quiet. I loved the year that I spent in New York during COVID, actually. It was very sobering, but reflective, and a time to gather myself.

I was very fortunate: I lived half a block away from Central Park. Central Park, they call it the lungs of the city, and it really was. It was the most nurturing thing. So, every day I went into Central Park. Also, I started writing poetry again. It brought out all the other things in my life that I want to do, that I keep saying, "I'll do that when I'm older." I'm going to run out of time soon to do all the things that I wanted to do when I was older! So, it was a preparation for knowing that I could leave the city. Then joining my partner Raynel [Chavez] in Santa Fe [New Mexico]—which is another beautiful place—that shifted everything so much. Having shed basically thirty years behind me (laughs), to move again after another year. It was like, "Okay, fine. Here we go." Gradually, letting go some of the debris along the way. It was very lightening and life-affirming.

So, I talk often to my friends in New York. Many left, some have stayed. I get a little thought every now and then, “Oh, I’d like to go back and visit! Just for a short time.” It might be a terrible shock going back and finding that noise, that clamor.

Liz Waterhouse: Do you miss your contact with dancing, or dancers there?

Hilary Cartwright: Yes, and that’s shifting. It’s probably time, you know? There are many other beautiful generations of ex-dancers coming up, who have a lot to offer, and can work with *this* generation—which is very different from most of the people I knew and worked with. What I love is I still have links with certain young ones in companies. That’s like having little jewels. Knowing that those little jewels are there, and they have the same ethics, the same feeling about our art—the same respect, the same passion for it.

Liz Waterhouse: Yes, other dancers carry on your values and your teaching, developing these principles with the next generation. Thank you, Hilary, for these extended conversations.