

As a dance artist, my passion for devising and creative processes is what drives my life purpose, however, more specifically as a maker/choreographer, I feel the need to find creative purpose as I am no longer satisfied with just 'exploring possible movement responses to tasks' (Farrer, 2014, p. 96). I noticed recently that my artistic discontent relates to the lack of depth and truthful artistic intention in my work. In this discussion, I aim to reflect on my artistic practice in an attempt to search for a deeper artistic purpose and creative contribution to art, and life.

As mentioned in AOL1, I have always had a very close artistic relationship with language, through the use of creative writing and literature as a way to find intent for movement. Alongside this, as an attempt to give meaning to my performance work, I turn to what gives humans meaning in life - feeling, emotional connections and experiences - and then heighten these leaving the audience with a resonating imprint (Batzoglou 2017, cited in Bryon (Ed), 2017, p. 158).

Whilst researching language in performance I found that my focus as a creator seems to be attempting to communicate with audiences, just as Albright (2010) states that 'language can be a barrier [...] but people [...] for centuries have utilised dance to tell stories' (p. 2), allowing me to discover that at the very heart of what I do is storytelling.

In contrast, however, the idea that 'dance [is] more than sharing stories' (Moncada, 2016, abstract) allows me to notice my need for development within this specific subject. In an attempt to do so, I revert to Albright and find a new perspective to her words, bringing awareness to my being, as a foreigner, dealing with stories, language and place through movement. This shifted my awareness to identity and voice, which I feel I have been lacking within my communicative storytelling.

In an attempt to dig deeper into this, I reflect on how much confidence I have always lacked related to voice experimentation. I always believed that it was connected to the lack of voice or actor training, however, this assumption recently changed due to a discussion on voice and visibility:

'You (Thomaidis) talk about the voice [...] from the standpoint of gender and queer studies [...] Although my research has centred around queer bodies, voice is perhaps the only one aspect of these bodies I have thus far failed to investigate. This probably stems from a personal anxiety of hearing my own voice; a fear of speaking [...] on stage. This anxiety originates from the possibility of being judged or laughed at for having the queer voice that I have [...] I was taken, though, by how much voice is indeed connected to identity [and] how experts and technology can place or identify a certain vocal pattern by its accent, dialect or ticks. [This] draws an interesting discussion on the broader, political implications of such concepts as nationality [and] ethnicity [in which] we find the figure of the foreigner, the Other' (Messias 2017, cited in Bryon (Ed), 2017, p. 237).

I truly identify with these feelings of fear, anxiety and shame, deeply connected to my sexuality and nationality and am finally able to recognise that such emotional matters are the true reason for apprehensiveness regarding physical voice work. This discovery has positively allowed me to confront hidden emotions, reflecting deeper on identity, and questioning beyond the physical voice enabling me with a new insight - a different voice, the one within.

With this in mind, I revert to the key ideas present in my work: feeling, story and communication; and question its interconnections with my most recent finding - the inner voice - and how that can support the search for purpose in my dance practice.

Mills (2017) mentions that 'dance is a sustained method of communication [...] that brings new speaking beings into shared spaces' (p. 2). Despite the political perspective that Mills refers to, I feel a great connection to some of her specific words such as 'speaking beings' and 'shared spaces', which allows me to reflect on the devising collaborative processes that I have been part of for the last six years with theatre director Mary Steadman as part of her PhD research in Hauntology in Theatre. This process led to a great awakening of my fascination for dramaturgies of the eerie and spiritual realms in performance practice. During improvisations I often found myself

releasing self-directed impulses and arriving at places of other-oriented consciousness through meditative states (Hanselaer, 2022, p. 69).

This allowed me to notice a greater interest in another form of voice - a spiritual voice - which I envision to develop in my own practice.

In an attempt for a deeper search within the spiritual voice and its relation to artistic practices, I turn to Cameron (2020) who explains this voice as a divine creative force that expresses itself through the artist, to form the creative alliance between the artist and the Great Creator (p. 2). She also explains that the term 'great creator' can be replaced with any divine creative energy such as 'Goddess, Mind, Universe, Source, and Higher Power' (p. xviii).

This ideology allows me to recognise that attempting to find my purpose as an artist is now becoming clearer through aligning my creative practice with my spiritual beliefs, which interestingly also gives purpose to my life. Therefore, being aware that 'art is a spiritual transaction' (Cameron, 2020, p. 228) allows me to also notice that until now, my practice has only been using the body for storytelling, rather than 'interconnect[ing] mind, body and spirit' (Binder, 2016, p. 285) to strengthen my sense of creative mission.

In conclusion, being aware of 'the communicative power of dance' (Mills, 2017, p. 7) led me to notice the lack of voice within my work, and in consequence, to identify different forms of voice. I understood that my voice, whether in a physical, spiritual or political form, or to represent community or identity, will always be in constant development, infinitely allowing me to deepen my artistic purposes.

Most importantly, I noticed a strong desire to investigate the inner-intuitive voice in my improvisation and devising processes, and to test the body as a 'vehicle for accessing and communicating spiritual insights' (Gómez-Rincón, 2023, p. 132) and 'create true communion in the mystic' (Hanselaer, 2022, p. 74), allowing my body to work as a conduit that enables the greater intuition to have a voice and storytell through me.

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