

Verbatim theatre is essential in story telling assignment

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Verbatim theatre is communal storytelling at its best. What are the benefits of such storytelling as a collective act? To say that Verbatim Theatre is communal storytelling implies that it is the community telling stories. Such storytelling employed as a collective act allows for many benefits including the voicing of previously unheard stories from a variety of perspectives, feeding stories into the wider communities and allowing for action to be taken, and providing a venue for the search of truth.

Good. The communal nature of Verbatim Theatre means that a great variety of perspectives are voiced. In *The Laramie Project* we hear about issues such as homophobia and the “live and let live” culture, hate crimes, identity and justice system from a wide variety of perspectives including, but not limited to: homosexuals, heterosexuals, doctors, judges, family and friends of both the victim and the offenders.

Similarly, *Run Rabbit Run* voices a variety of opinions from within the community from iconic personages such as Rupert Murdoch and Andrew Denton, to football club members and coaches, and old and young supporters of the Rabbitohs and corporate entities from other football clubs. This great variety enables both sides of a story or community to be represented: we learn that “it's not just an institution, it's a way of life” from Norman Nicholas in *Run Rabbit Run* and that “had this been a heterosexual... this wouldn't have even made the news.

Now my son is guilty before he's even had a trial” in *The Laramie Project*. This variety enabling audiences to come to a greater understanding of the events, themes and issues presented, a distinct benefit that comes with the

nature of the collective act of communal storytelling. I have seen this benefit in my study of Laramie as before studying this text, I knew nothing about the event, but the staging of the verbatim play provided me with a fairly sound range of perspectives that would be hard to glean elsewhere.

Verbatim Theatre allows for previously unheard voices to be presented on stage, a strong benefit of communal storytelling as a collective act. A number of voices are collected through recording and transcribing or editing audio into a script and then fed back into the community (usually) through the performing of the theatre. Because Verbatim Theatre concerns itself with events, issues or concerns within a community, it allows for the representing of people whose opinions might not otherwise be heard.

In our class verbatim performances, we were given an opportunity to present our findings and opinions on issues within our school to authoritative figures who might never have known how the school community felt about these issues. Communal storytelling in the form of Verbatim Theatre is entrusted with the task of remaining unbiased and therefore is perceived as a more accurate rendering and representation of truth than what other mediums such as the media might present.

A priest in The Laramie Project asks the Tectonic Theatre Company team members to “stick to what is true” and not to “twist my words” because of their ethical responsibility. This admonishment was included in the script for The Laramie Project but it is implied for all pieces of Verbatim Theatre. A benefit of the collecting of people’s opinions and stories is that communities around the world look to Verbatim Theatre when searching for truth about or

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within a community. As a collective act, communal storytelling offers the opportunity for action to be taken regarding issues and concerns.

In my experience of creating Verbatim Theatre, I have found that it was of great interest and benefit to people with positions of authority as it provided them with the community's opinions on certain issues in a truthful way. For me, this was the head of senior school, but for verbatim theatre on a larger scale, it could be of great significance. One interviewee in The Laramie Project complains that " its been a year since Matthew Shepard died and they haven't passed shit in Wyoming... antidiscrimination laws or hate crime legislation, no one anywhere has passed anything. But Laramie's collective storytelling has presented truths such as that fact to people all around the world, people who are willing to and able to make change and pass legislation regarding hate crimes and discrimination. Thus we can see that the communal storytelling of Verbatim Theatre at its best has many benefits as a collective act: it provides opposing perspectives allowing for the exposure of truth, it informs communities worldwide and people in position's of power about issues and concerns and it represents people whose voices would be otherwise unheard.