

# Cosi is more than an entertaining comedy essay

[Art & Culture](#), [Comedy](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Through the play *Cosi* the audience witnesses the lives of mentally ill people unfold before them.

Louis Nowra has used black comedy within *Cosi* to allow the audience to abandon their pre-conceptions of 'mad' people and to see the characters not for their illness but for their personality. Because of this the audience is able to relate to each character and their situation and realise the underlying sadness of the patients lives. We are confronted by their pasts as we come to realise the causes for their illnesses; like with Roy as we learn of his childhood, abandoned by his mother and growing up in orphanages. *Cosi* also reveals the sadness within the lives of those who society considers 'sain' as the audience is treated to the life of the protagonist Lewis Riley and the struggles and dependence he faces. The truth of Roy's life is one of the most shocking revelations to the audience as he often puts on a outgoing happy facade.

With his vibrantly outgoing personality Roy becomes one of the central figures of the play. He influences Lewis into directing the Italian opera 'Cosi Fan Tutte' and captivates Lewis with tales of music and performance from his childhood. This illusion that Roy casts over Lewis, and the audience alike, is seen for what it truly is as we learn that the stories were all lies and what Roy never knew his mother. 'I had a dream, Jerry.' This quote from Roy reveals Roy's sadness as audience has an epiphany that Roy's tales of music and performance, along with his desire to performer 'Cosi Fan Tutte', are his way of trying to escape the sadness of his life spent unloved within orphanages and the asylum. We witness similar sadness in the life of one of

the other patients, Ruth. The audience first sees Ruth as being obsessive compulsive with a need for control over her life.

Ruth's behaviour is very methodical and she finds trouble grasping the concept of illusion as it isn't something that she is able to control. During the scene in Cosi where the power goes out Ruth tells the story of her abusive ex-love who would lock her in the cupboard for extended periods of time. This story reveals Ruth's sadness and the cause for her disorder as the aroma of not being in control of her life and being helpless against her ex-lover has scared her into having an obsession for control in her life. From this point within the play the audience feels sympathy for Ruth as they understand her sadness. Along with the patients of the asylum we also come to realize the sadness with the life of the protagonist Lewis Riley.

We first encounter Lewis as a university drop-out who takes the directing job at the asylum. Lewis ' lacks direction...in life and only takes the job' for the money. During the scene where Lewis' friend Nick comes to help direct is where the audience truly comes to realise the sadness with Lewis' life as the audience realises that Lewis' beliefs and values are not genuine and derive from his dependence on his girlfriend Lucy and Nick. We see his political views, views on love and fidelity and what's important in life are just mimicking Nick and Lucy's, which shows the sadness of Lewis' lack of self and dependence on others.

Lewis does redeem himself by the end of the play by finding happiness that he lacked before and finding his identity. Cosi is more than a comedy. It draws the audience in as they become immersed in the lives of the cast. The

revelation of the sadness felt by the characters helps to deepen our connection as we relate to them and see them as imperfect humans like ourselves.