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Uncertainty, Enaction and Theater: Practicing for the Revolution

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Practicing for the Revolution

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how using theater and the creative arts can be a useful tool
in changing ourselves and communities for the better. I will also offer examples
of using Theater of the Oppressed structures in youth community settings, linking these
case examples to concepts of uncertainty, enaction, and transformation. This paper will
also offer examples of challenges in facilitating and participating in this community
based creative arts work. I will then speak to the urgency of using this creative work in
our American systems, arguing that theater and the creative arts can support both young
people and adults in exploring and interrupting stagnant, oppressive patterns of racism,
classism, homophobia, sexism, etc. I will conclude with suggestions on where to go next
with using these creative arts processes, offering current examples of crisis and anxiety.
Keywords: theater of the oppressed, enaction, uncertainty, creative arts, oppression,
transformation.

Introduction

In this paper I will discuss how theater and performance can be used as a vehicle to
identify, explore and transform how we create and sustain relationships with each other
and our environment. I will also examine how this arts-based modality has been used to
address and validate dynamics of uncertainty and transformation. By offering case
examples of populations I have worked with in past projects, I will demonstrate how this
interactive model specifically supports young people in 'practicing for the revolution',
providing creative structures that can help them in examining both internal and external
conflicts, inspiring new ways of thinking and behaving in the world. This revolution is
simply a transformation or change that can occur from both within and without. And
even though uncertainty still exists for these above-mentioned populations, by using
movement and the creative arts, they are able to strengthen their skills of improvisation,
becoming more present to whatever life has in store for them.

I will also present theoretical research related to quantum physics and language with the
intention of showing how theater can be used to understand these concepts of words and
speech on a more embodied and enacted level. The types of theater and arts based
modalities I will be discussing will include, Theater of the Oppressed and creative writing
processes. I will offer both theoretical and practical applications of this creative, life
changing work. In addition to these offerings, I will also highlight potential challenges in
using movement and creative arts structures with young people and adults. I will
conclude by arguing for the urgency and necessity of this type of work in our various

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American systems, especially our educational system, detailing why using the arts with young people is more important now than ever.

Language and Uncertainty

Social-change theater and the creative arts in general have the magical capacity to slow down our narratives just long enough to elicit profound meaning and vital life lessons. A significant part of this 'slowing down' process involves a careful examination of language or script and the ethical meaning of our lived experiences. After working in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-gendered, international, income level, etc. communities for over 16 years, I can attest to the fact that this 'slowing down' and examining of language and narratives can be challenging. I have learned over the years that different groups may be using the same words and language to describe their stories and at the same time have completely different meanings for these words/concepts/experiences. Peat (2002), when speaking about Wittgenstein's theory about language, says:

> What is true about the idea of a game is equally true about "truth," "beauty," "freedom'" "mind," "consciousness," and "God." Trying to define these terms or pin them down only leads us into endless difficulties because it interferes with the essential freedom and creativity of language. If you want to know what a term means, Wittgenstein suggested, then look at what it does. Look at the various ways it is used in language (p. 83).

Peat's above passage reminds me of the power theater and the creative arts have in actively demonstrating, embodying, and exploring, in community, what these words and symbols mean in action. And just because we can't 'pin some of these words down', it doesn't necessarily mean that we should just give up trying to understand what they symbolize. In fact, Peat posits that we should, "…be very careful about what we are saying and pay great attention to the ways language is being used in different situations" (p. 83).   If what Peat is saying is true, theater and the creative arts are intentionally playful ways to analyze, synthesize, and transform words and language that may no longer be serving the purpose we originally intended them to.

Peat (2002) also offers an indigenous perspective, providing an example of how the Blackfoot nation refers to objects. Instead of referring to objects from a typical western perspective, in the form of nouns, a fixed state of existence, the Blackfoot use verb forms to describe these same objects, understanding them from more a fluid, ever-changing existence (p. 87). This indigenous perception of things being in-action supports the quantum physics approach that teaches us that nothing is permanent or in a 'fixed' certain state, but always moving, changing, and transforming. This theory and belief can and has caused much anxiety in both scientists and lay people alike. If nothing is certain, then what's the point of even talking about it? Where is the order? We live in a culture that has been conditioned to seek absolute answers to complicated questions and systemic challenges. As a facilitator of this creative arts and theater work, I have had many young people and adults who have pleaded with me to give them *the* 'definition' or 'answer' to

their own lived experiences stories, and truths.   But what has been most interesting and useful for me, has been to explore these solutions/answers in community, finding pieces of the truth in each others' narratives, conflicts, and successes.

Theater of the Oppressed: A Case Example
Before I offer an example of how I've used theater with a group of young people to explore and examine shared language/words, I wanted to offer some historical context to the type of theater I facilitate called, '*Theater of the Oppressed'*. From this point on I will refer to Theater of the Oppressed as TO. Augusto Boal (2002), creator of TO techniques and practices, used this type of libratory theater in Brazil, working with oppressed African/Brazilian farm-workers, homeless youth, and peasants. Boal utilized this type of participatory theater as a way for participants to begin to form an interactive critical pedagogy related to their perspective political, familial, social, educational, standpoints.

This interactive work was used to explore, examine, and transform language and behavior, oppression and liberation. TO was used as a practice for real-life situations, a rehearsing for change and transformation. Freire (1998), a long time colleague of Boal, insisted that critical pedagogy must be inclusive of critical and creative thinking, not just skills. Both Boal and Freire encouraged more of a creative democratic process in behaving and thinking differently. This process includes critically analyzing, deconstructing, and re-constructing words and language. Boal created an entire array of interactive structures and games that supported this re-examining of language and behavior. Both Boal and Freire also believed that historically oppressed groups needed and desired to play a central role redefining their narratives and actively transforming historically oppressive systems. One of these groups, of course, includes young people.

Last year I had the opportunity to work with a group of young people at an East Bay high school. I was contracted to facilitate a 2-week TO intensive with a group of multi-cultural, gendered, income leveled, etc., high school juniors. My intention was to train them in Theater of the Oppressed techniques that would eventually manifest in a public interactive performance for 200 of their peers. Mid-way through our intensive, we used a TO technique called, 'Human Machines'. Human machines is an interactive game that supports the actors in exploring language, words, themes in a creative way. And as Peat described earlier, if we truly want to find the definition of a word, we should observe it in action. As the actors stood lined up, side by side, shoulder to shoulder, I directed them to create the 'Machine of Oppression'. One by one, they came up and repetitively demonstrated a sound and a movement, actively defining their version/experience of oppression: one Latina female student came to the center of the stage, pointing down to the floor, yelling, 'Because I said so bitch!' over and over again, another student, a Caucasion shy male, added to the machine by laying down on the floor underneath where the Latina female was pointing, with his arms and hands raised up towards her saying, 'Please don't hit me, please don't hit me!' Another student, an Korean male played the role of a teacher, with his hands on his hips speaking to an imaginary student saying, 'That's the grade you get, because I said so!' All 11 students offered their embodied version of what oppression looks like in action.

I purposely offered this interactive exercise before facilitating a creative writing exercise related to Oppression. I wanted them to feel it on more of a holistic level than a linear one, experiencing and witnessing each other's truths before writing about their own. The writing exercise prompt was for them to first write the sentence, 'Oppression is like…' in their journal. I then invited them to fill in the blank by using a metaphor from nature, like, 'Oppression is like, being stuck in a powerful waterfall, never able to catch a breath'. I was impressed at how quickly they were able to come up with these metaphors after our interactive session. Each of them shared their metaphors for oppression which included but were not limited to; dreams being shattered, being stuck under a heavy rock, swimming through an ocean of molasses, etc.

After this I instructed them to do a 'free write' from their metaphorical sentence, freely writing down whatever came to mind for them. For several minutes, they vigorously wrote, finding connections to their original thought/metaphor. After they were done with this process, several of the students shared that they were shy about sharing their free-write with the entire group. I suggested that they get into small groups of 3-4 and share whatever they felt comfortable verbalizing with each other. There was an audible sigh of relief. I quickly observed that this option of sharing actually opened most of the students into sharing everything they wrote! Some of them noticed similarities in each other's work, even validating some of the differences. The last task was for them to create one full group and to then, share one to two sentences from their poems to create a group poem about oppression. Half way through this process, several of the students asked if they could create two poems instead of one. The following is one of the poems about oppression that was co-created by the group:

> Oppression to me is like my dream getting lifted above my head and then shattered into pieces. I have no one, no one to go to. Why can't people stop judging? Why can't people stop bringing up the past and just get over the fact that human beings are sometimes weak…and that they fall into situations they are not proud of…It feels like someone is on top, dragging you down to the bottom. And it depends on who you are on the inside. The walls can crush everything, your bones, and your mentality, just everything…and by the time help comes, you are unrecognizable…you no longer exist! (2011)

This above powerful poem and case example of TO illustrate what Peat is speaking to when talking about exploring words and language. If instead of inviting this collaboratively creative process, I instructed my students to just sit down and write their own definition of oppression, only to be read by me, I believe we would have had a much more limited process and outcome. Peat (1989), when referring to Koestler's views on chaos and the birth of the scientific revolution, posits, "It is possible that something new and more flexible can be born out of the break down of fixed patterns in an organization, policy group or individual" (para. 12). If this is true, the work that my students and I did together, besides being an outcome of using a creative modality, may also have been born from the oppression of education, race, gender, age, class, etc. The very tension created by these broken systems, can actually inspire creativity and change, allowing room for

historically silenced populations to speak and be heard, and as Peat eloquently expresses, "…permit the full human potential for creativity within each individual to flower, it would enable people to relate together in a more harmonious way and human needs and values to be acknowledged (para. 13).

TO theater work and creative writing, in my above example, allowed the young actors to more holistically understand both their own individuality and their collective connectedness, co-creating new meaning to old, stagnant words and concepts. Peat refers to individuals as 'non-linear systems' that move through space, holding energy, and even sometimes crashing into each other, but are all expressions of the 'overall system' (para 22). When these non-linear systems reach a state that Peat calls, 'bifurcation', he believes that our different, individual parts suddenly vanish, transforming the 'whole system into some new and totally different mode of behavior'. What Peat is referring to reminds me of my students' ability to understand their individuality but at the same time reaching a bifurcated state where their collective human system integrated its parts, creating something new.

Enaction, Language, and Representation
Theater and the creative arts invite communities into sharing diverse narratives and witnessing each other's stories, practicing for new ways of using language and behaving differently in the world. Since language is used to both signify and symbolize, it has the potential of misrepresenting historically targeted communities and individuals. Many of these same populations have unfortunately internalized these false messages about themselves as Peat described earlier as 'nouns' and fixed states of being, never having the opportunity or safety to explore alternative, libratory representations. Stuart Hall, (2010) in his text, 'REPRESENTATION Cultural Representation of Signifying Practices, speaks more to this concept of representation and language. Hall says:

> Representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the 'real' world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events (p. 17).

If what Peat and Hall are saying is true about how language is both transitory and a link for us to find meaning between the real and the imagined, I would argue that theater and the creative arts are excellent modalities to support this exploration and critical thinking and behaving. They also validate the fluidity of words, meaning, and uncertainty, specifically supporting young people in transforming their anxiety related to chaos and oppressive external forces into creative performance, community service and collective, active participation in their perspective communities. We can't control the world, but we can practice how we respond and relate to it.

Masciotra's et al. (2007) text, '*Enaction; Toward a Zen Mind in Learning and Teaching'*, defines enaction as a way for one to create a place for themselves in an environment through their actions and potential for movement and relating within that context (pp. 25, 26). The authors go on to say that enacted knowledge is not an object but an action,

similar to Peat's description of Blackfoot concepts of objects/things being verbs. Masciotra et al. go on to argue how constructivism and enaction compliment each other. Constructivism, in my perception, speaks to the constant unfolding and reexamination of language, concepts, and socially constructed ideas/theory/rules. The authors, when speaking further about the similarities between constructivism and enaction, posit:

> Another point in common between these two perspectives is their insistence on the active nature of knowledge—understood knowing-in-action—and their concomitant rejection of learning as a passive process that is opposed to the notion of a person as a living, acting being-in-situation. Finally, both perspectives agree on the inseparability of the person, me, and my world…" (p. 27)

The authors' above passage not only validates the ever-changing/transformative nature of quantum theory, but it also supports social change theater work. Augusto Boal (2002) created a type of theater called, Forum Theater. This type of theater structure involves the actors playing out a scene where someone is clearly being targeted and lacking power in a given situation. Boal, in this forum theater structure, instead of calling the audience spectators, refers to them as 'spect-actors', because they would not be acting as passive observers, but rather, active participants in solving the conflicts of power and oppression demonstrated in the scene. Spect-actors are invited to call out 'freeze', stopping the scene, taking the pace of the protagonist, and trying a different solution. In this way, they are able to enact a different way of being with the support and witnessing of other spect-actors in a community/forum setting. The spect-actors will then discuss what choices were more effective, why they did or didn't work, change/transform language to shift oppressive dynamics and behaviors into new, libratory ones. This concept of active participation is both a revolutionary and transformative one, especially for those communities and individuals who have not had the time, space, education or financial means to explore these issues of oppression and power.

More times than not these dynamics of power and privilege are exhibited and executed in action. The embodied nature of this creative modality and interactive process allows individuals and groups to get closest to those lived experiences, creating a space to more holistically rehearse new ways of being, behaving and knowing. And if Peat's proposal of us being 'non-linear' beings is true, this theatrical modality supports this theory, creating a more improvisational way of addressing these complicated, paradoxical issues of historical and present day oppression. If these issues do not occur in a linear way, then trying to analyze and transform them in a strictly linear fashion would be highly ineffective and a significant waste of our resources and energy.

In my case example, my students beautifully represent the potential of this enacted constructivism in action. They were individually able to define who they were as individuals and at the same time, find meaningful connections to each other's definitions and stories, creating not only poetry, but a co-constructed performance that they also shared with 200 of their peers. Many of my student/actors shared with me that before the theater project they viewed themselves as, shy, stupid, troublemaker, 'not creative', but by the end of our process had come to understand themselves differently, as leaders,

smart, sensitive, peacemakers, scholars. I deeply believe that their original false perceptions of themselves came from somewhere outside of themselves, from a parent, teacher, sibling, TV show/movie, news broadcast, etc. The arts are a powerful way for young people and other communities to revisit these handed-down versions of themselves with the intention of letting go of labels that no longer serve them and creating new ones that better connect to their nature and human potential.

Challenges in Facilitating and Participating in Theater and Creative Arts Community Processes

Thus far I've offered some profound benefits of using the creative arts in a community setting, but there are also challenges, and as Peat mentioned earlier, 'collisions' that should and do occur in this dynamic process. The following is a recent example of an energetic collision while using TO in a collaborative, community environment in Oakland, CA. I was facilitating/jokering a Forum Theater scene with a group of teenage actors and community members. The scene had to do with militarism and two friends pressuring a third friend to play a war-video game that glamorized violence and bloodshed. When the third friend refused because he expressed that he didn't like violence, the other two berated and harassed him, calling him weak and names like, 'bitch' and 'little pussy'. The scene ends when the third friend finally gives in from the pressure and makes the decision to just play with his harassing peers. The scene had complex levels of sexism, militarism, peer pressure, woven throughout. The audience/spect-actors were invited to come up and take the place of the oppressed friend, trying something new that would interrupt and address some of these complex, oppressive dynamics. Some of the audience/spect-actors choices included someone who pretended to vomit all over the 'harassing friends', someone who, when called 'little pussy' told the oppressive friends, "You can't handle the pussy, because the pussy is powerful!" and started screaming at the top of his lungs, "pussy power!" over and over. Each time a spect-actor tried a choice, as the facilitator/joker, I would engage the audience in a forum-style, asking them if it was an effective choice, what did they observe?, what strategies were used?, etc. A community dialogue was created and inspired by the courageous choices of spect-actors. There was one shy female Latina teenager in the audience that I could tell wanted to come up but was a bit overwhelmed by the attention. Towards the end of the evening I invited her to come up but to bring a friend with her for support and ally-ship. This did the trick. She came up with her friend to try reasoning with these oppressive characters in the scene. As her and her friend were trying their choice, I stepped out of the room for literally 30 seconds to speak with the executive director about logistics and time for the evenings events. I suddenly heard screaming coming from the theater space. I quickly ran out and found my young actors out of the chairs screaming at the two shy girls who had volunteered to try something new. The look on these girls faces was one of shock. I immediately froze the scene and gently asked my actors to not push so hard, allowing the girls to try their choice. In forum theater the actors are trained to improvise to the spect-actors choices in a way that doesn't make it too easy and at the same time, doesn't run them over. Sometimes it takes years to master this skill---we only had about a month to rehearse, train, and perform! The two girls tried again but the actors did not give in. They agreed that sometimes these situations are more challenging than they seem and politely took their seats back in the audience.

One day after this public performance, the director of the immigration non-profit group who had transported several young people to participate in our event, including the above two shy girls, wrote a scathing email to me and the director of the youth program I was consulting with. He accused our actors of being too harsh on these two girls. He was horrified by the fact that we invited his group to our performance but didn't offer these girls a chance to really try out their strategy. He then accused our 'white actor' (who is actually a person of color) of being racist towards his young people, perpetuating issues of oppression instead of liberation/empowerment. After first reading the email I felt horrible. I felt as if I 'broke' something or someone that could never be fixed again. I felt guilty that I had left the stage for literally about 30 seconds, and in that time frame, two girls were unintentionally insulted and belittled. I felt protective of my theater students who worked so hard to deliver an amazing interactive performance with skills they had just learned. After letting some of what was written settle, I realized, that in fact, this was one of those moments of collision that Peat referred to earlier, a place where in practicing for the revolution, some folks got unintentionally hurt. I was also reminded that in these sacred spaces of community exploration and dialogue, it is vital that we stay as conscious and present as we can. All of us were/are collectively responsible—I shouldn't have left the stage/space, the executive director should have been keeping time so I didn't have to worry about it during the middle of the performance, my students shouldn't have pushed as hard as they did, this director of the immigration group should not have assumed our student was white, the girls who came up showed resiliency and courage in both trying and failing. This was all a collectively constructed and collaborated moment in time.

A few days later we met with the director of the immigrant rights group and suggested that we have a 'do over' workshop/performance providing more opportunity for his young people to feel both seen and heard, and our young people to continue to hone their skills as TO actors. He apologized for his false assumption about our young person being white and admitted that he was just triggered and not thinking clearly while writing his email. He was also feeling protective of his kids as we were. Nothing permanently 'broke' but rather, we were/are able to co-create a space for deepened understanding, empathy, and compassion. Our energetic collision provided us with an opportunity to know and understand each other better, not staying stuck in our projections and assumptions. We allowed ourselves to be affected by each other. Masciotra et al. (2007) speaks to this societal 'give and take', positing:

> The person as a whole organizes herself by organizing the world, and, in return, the world thus organized transforms the structure of the person. By participating in societal activity, the individual mind comes to be structured as it becomes merged in the collective intelligence of a group. Because action possibilities tend to be collective and therefore shared…possibilities for action are not just mine but are, as possibilities, available to others as well, who understand the intentions of my actions (p. 47).

The above passage eloquently illustrates how we are profoundly affected by one another with infinite possibilities of action and understanding. Even though our original intention was not to offend 2 shy teenagers trying out their solution in a public setting, the impact of what transpired affected all of us. And instead of beating ourselves up about an unintentional collision, we made the conscious choice of continuing to practice for the revolution by creating new space/spielraum, and time to play, explore, and transform in. In doing so, we validated many things, our resiliency, respect, empathy for each other; all humanizing a situation that could have just as easily been ignored, discounted, and/or invalidated. As non-linear systems, we need and deserve to address these complexities in creative ways that continue to honor the diversity we embody, both as individuals and communities. Social-change theater and the creative arts, although sometimes messy, as demonstrated above, can also be a powerful tool in helping us practice this honoring.

The Urgency for Creative Processes in Our Existing American Oppressive Systems
America has a unique history of colonization, immigration, and oppression. And just as society influences and affects the individual and visa versa, our individual and collective historical choices have affected and greatly influenced our current societal, political, and individual systems. In speaking about systemic oppression, Patricia Hill Collins (2009) writes about the importance of specifying what we mean by this. Collins breaks systemic oppression down into four different components which she calls, 'Domains of Power': *The Structural Domain* of power has to do with organizations like banks, insurance companies, police departments, the real estate industry, universities, hospitals, etc. and how these various systems are organized to perpetuate oppressive practices. Collins offers the example of racism as being one of these practices but reminds the reader that any oppressive dynamic can/does apply. Collins describes the *Disciplinary Domain of Power* as a place where people/systems use rules, regulations of everyday life to uphold and support oppressive behavior, usually organizations that rely on surveillance. The *Cultural Domain of Power*, as Collins describes, has to do with media, entertainment, movies, the news. These are venues that use their systems to perpetuate stereotypes about race, class, gender, etc. The *Individual Domain of Power* relates to the one-to-one interactions that perpetuate issues of oppression, power, and privilege (pp. 53-54).

If what Collins proposes is true, and I believe that it is, that our various American systems have been infiltrated and negatively influenced by oppressive energies, policies, and destructive behavior, social change theater and the creative arts can be a profound way for historically targeted individuals and groups to find ways of interrupting and navigating within these age-old oppressive systems/structures/individuals. I would also argue that because of the devastating impact that oppression has historically caused and is currently perpetuating, there is an urgency for these targeted communities to receive immediate support and ally-ship related to navigating and changing these oppressive systems. I have also experienced social change theater used as a powerful tool for historically privileged communities to explore their own issues of internalized superiority and supremacy, taking these destructive belief systems out of the shadows of isolation and into the light, with the intention of transformation, ally-ship and liberation.

Collins urges educators to not view these domains of power as an end, but rather to ally with their students, identifying and disrupting oppressive policies and behaviors that tend to contract instead of expand, punish instead of support. It is only through this collective effort that these systems can be truly transformed. Because of the oppressive nature of these rigged systems, there needs to be persistent dialogue, intentional movement, and playful community interaction, to identify and transform all that needs change and revolution. Social-change theater and the creative arts, with their infinite capacity to offer options/alternative choices/new voices can compassionately and effectively support this complex movement.

Conclusion: Moving Forward
When I think about the power of integrating social justice theater and arts based practices into our educational systems, I see this integration as benefiting both youth and adults. Mary Drinkwater, (2007) in her article, *'Radical Education Policy: Critical Democratic Pedagogy and the Re-Infusion of the Arts in Secondary Schools'* speaks to the power of using the arts as way to benefit all involved. She says:

> Kathleen Gould Lundy (2007)…describes the powerful teaching tool provided by the dramatic arts, particularly for youth at risk. Not only can drama be used to teach, but it can also be used to warn, lead, and heal. Lundy spoke of the important voices of youth who joined together to produce a documentary which touched on topics such as homophobia, equity, race and different learning styles. In addition to presenting tough curricular topics to their peers, seeing the passion and hearing the voices of adolescent learners can often teach teachers, parents, and administrators about some of the real life challenges that youth often experience in their lives (para. 6).

As violence continues to escalate, schools are being shut down due to lack of funding, and our mental health services are being cut off from communities and individuals that need it the most, the above quote by Drinkwater, about positive potential of theater and the arts to connect youth and adults, seems more relevant now than ever. These creative modalities, especially when funded and supported, can play an important role in linking our young people to their peers, caregivers, and perspective communities. Using and implementing the arts can also help to support and channel the anxiety that comes from uncertainty into collective creation, meaningful dialogue, and social action/transformation.

As I read the news and witness yet another shooting massacre in America, I am reminded that not even the arts could have stopped this recent gunman from murdering 28 people. In a span of 2 minutes, he managed to shoot and kill 20 innocent children and 7 adults, including himself (he murdered his mother before he went on his shooting spree at the school). It is both discouraging and depressing to read that instead of creating more preventative processes, including mental health services, youth counseling, peer advocacy programs, restorative justice/peace curriculum, etc., this small Connecticut town is instead moving towards a more disciplinary/surveillance type of approach, asking for armed guards in all of their schools so that their students are 'safer'. Collins urges us

not to continue to perpetuate these oppressive systems but to transform them into something more libratory. The answer to the gun issue is once again, adding more guns? I do believe as Drinkwater does, that theater and the arts can be a powerful way of 'keeping a pulse' on what our young folks are dealing with and going through. And even though the arts couldn't stop the bloodshed once it had begun, they can be utilized as a preventative tool, helping to 'warn, lead, and heal' before the permanent damage is done. The arts can also act as a unifying force in a time of grieving and loss, offering communities a creative forum to express their frustration, vent their pain, and address alternative modes of action and change.

An exploration of words and language can take place; What is the definition of safety? What is mental illness? Why is it necessary for someone to own semi-automatic and military style weaponry in suburban areas in America? How do we honor our amendments and at the same time address the rampant violence and unnecessary bloodshed of innocent human beings presently taking place in America? Of course, there are no simple answers to these pressing questions, but creating a theatrical forum and community dialogue may inspire new ways of looking at old, stagnant problems and traditions that no longer serve us. It provides an opportunity to collectively and intentionally practice for change from both within and without.

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