



**UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
OPEN UNIVERSITY**

DOCTOR OF COMMUNICATION

Yrmeliza V. Rodriguez

**Transcendence of Theater as Communication: Lived
Experiences of Practitioners in e-Theater
during the Pandemic**

Thesis Adviser:

**Benamina Paula G. Flor, Ph.D.
Faculty of Information and Communication Studies**

12 August 2023

Permission of the classification of this academic work access is subject to the provisions of applicable laws, the provisions of the UP IPR policy and any contractual obligations:

Invention (I)	☐ Yes or ☒ No
Publication (P)	☒ Yes or ☐ No
Confidential (C)	☐ Yes or ☒ No
Free (F)	☐ Yes or ☒ No

Student's signature:

Dissertation adviser signature:

University Permission Page

Transcendence of Theater as Communications: Lived Experiences of Practitioners in e-Theater during the Pandemic

“I hereby grant the University of the Philippines a non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty-free license to reproduce, publish and publicly distribute copies of this Academic Work in whatever form subject to the provisions of applicable laws, the provisions of the UP IPR policy and any contractual obligations, as well as more specific permission marking on the Title Page.”

“I specifically allow the University to:

- a. Upload a copy of the work in the theses database of the college/school/institute/department and in any other databases available on the public internet*
- b. Publish the work in the college/school/institute/department journal, both in print and electronic or digital format and online; and*
- c. Give open access to the work, thus allowing “fair use” of the work in accordance with the provision of the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 8293), especially for teaching, scholarly and research purposes.*

Yrmeliza V. Rodriguez August 12,2023
Signature over Student Name and Date

Acceptance Page:

This paper prepared by **YRMELIZA V. RODRIGUEZ** with the title: **“TRANSCENDENCE OF THEATER AS COMMUNICATION: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PRACTITIONERS IN e-THEATER DURING THE PANDEMIC”** is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Course.

BENJAMINA PAULA G. FLOR, PhD.
Chair, Dissertation Committee

(Date)

ALEXANDER G. FLOR, PhD.
Member, Dissertation Committee

(Date)

GRACE J. ALFONSO, PhD.
Member, Dissertation Committee

(Date)

DIEGO SILANG S. MARANAN, PhD.
Dean
Faculty of Information and Communication Studies

12 August 2023
(Date)

Biographical Sketch

She is rushing.

She is panicking.

She is nervous.

That is she during the dissertation writing.

She is empowered.

She believed in herself.

She knew she could make it.

That is she after the Final Defense.

She is excited.

She is in cloud 9.

She is accomplished.

That is she during the Graduation.

She is a native of San Pablo City, Laguna but now resides in Iguig, Cagayan. She is now teaching in Cagayan State University - Carig Campus in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences under the BA Communication Program. She finished AB Mass Communication in San Pablo Colleges while Master in Public Affairs major in Education Management at University of the Philippines - Los Baños. Her husband, Jan Justin C. Rodriguez is also her classmate in the DComm program. They have two beautiful and smart daughters, Praise Ava and Ylein Jestiny.

She is now ready to travel and spend more quality time with her family.

That is she after the DComm journey...

Acknowledgement

The curtain call will start with the main character: my buddy, my constant inspiration, sometimes my biggest frenemy, but most of the time, my trusted advisor: my husband, Jan Justin C. Rodriguez. His remarkable lines will be: "Couple goals ang pagsasablay sa December." Yes, we made it!

Next to the lead role is the two energetic, playful, inquisitive, and pretty little girls: Praise Ava and Ylein Jestiny, who take in their supporting roles wholeheartedly in the whole duration of my studies in UPOU. Their lines: 'Mommy, kailan kayo ni Daddy matatapos sa aral ninyo?' Words that hide their longing for more quality time with us. These characters strengthened my UPOU story together with my ultimate supporter: my mom who put on a climax in my story when she died as I was crafting my dissertation proposal. Her lines: 'Aba, ay nagdodoktor pa ang aking anak.' Proud words from a mother who planned to attend my graduation this December 2023 but was reunited with my dad in September 2022. My brothers who have been very proud of their only sister also came in as supporting actors, "Ay di ka pa бага napapagod sa pagaaral mo?"

Other supporting roles who made an impact are Dr. John Ponsaran who became our friend, our advisor too, our scheduler (reminding us of the timeline), and our brother whose line: 'Ma'am tayo po ay kakain ng chicharabao sa graduation.' Our DComm friends like Fr. Rojohn, Ma'am Lenis, Ma'am Christine, Ma'am Miko, and Ma'am Rhoda who became our inspirations to push our limits to finish our dissertation. Their lines "Ilaban po natin! Kaya po 'yan. Magkikita na po tayo sa graduation!"

Of course, the story would always include high-calibre characters like Doc Benjie whom I always admire for her wit, her wisdom, and her motherly affection. I always look forward to her lines: 'Syempre, may tula tayong hinanda diyan.' Who would forget Doc Sandy whose every word sparked my interest in the two courses I took under him. His line 'Communication is the exchange of information that exceeds us into our own realities' have captured all of us in class. Of course, Doc Gigi Alfonso who supported my study with all her heart, "I am excited about your study.' I would never forget Doc Jean who have been very supportive even in my scholarship application as well as Chancellor Dr. Melinda dP. Bandalaria who made time to endorse me for the scholarship. Doc Felix Librero who alarmed me of deadlines but inspired me to manage time. Doc Melinda F. Lumanta who boost my confidence in Comm 399. Who would imagine a foreign actor would take part in my study? Doc Davide was a constant, approachable professor who willingly extends his support in my scholarship. All of the faculty members in FICS had big roles in the different ACTS of my story in UPOU.

Prof. Glecy C. Atienza never hesitated to be part of my study despite of her busy schedule. The 'Glecy Atienza' who could be a cameo role but a cameo who have put essence in my study. She inspired me to explore theater and to love it even if I am a newbie in the field. "Ang pananaliksik sa teatro ay isang likhang-danas sa lipunan." Of course, my classmate in my MPAf days who have been a friend even if we are not in constant communication, Ms. Christina Joy Mendoza-Cardenas. Teena have shared meaningful insights in my study. "Kaya namang gawin ang pagtatanghal sa gitna ng pandemya kailangan lamang na magexplore." These two remarkable theater persons have shaped, and made my study significant and worth reading.

But the loudest applause and the standing ovation would always be given to our God the Father who sustained me in my DComm journey.

Now, I could say my lines, “Salamat po sa inyong lahat. Saludo po sa inyong mga naibahagi sa bawat yugto (ACT) ng aking pagaaral.”

The curtain now closes but would open again for another big performance as I carry the UPOU legacy.

Dedication

For my husband and my daughters, who played their roles well both in the backstage and front stage of my entire DComm journey.

For my mom and dad, who have always been my inspiration to perform well in what I do. You have performed your roles in the seeing (resting) place where you are now.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
University Permission Page	ii
Acceptance Page	iii
Biographical Sketch	iv
Acknowledgment	v
Dedication	vi
Table of Contents	ix
List of Figures	xi
List of Tables	xii
ABSTRACT	xiii
 CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	 1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	5
Objectives of the Study	5
Significance of the Study	6
Scope and limitation of the Study	7
Operational definition of terminologies	7
 CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	 9
Early Performances at Home	9
Features of Theater: What it possesses from the start	10
The Taxonomy of Theater Spaces: What Spaces Mean	13
Theater's Structure and Aesthetics	15
Theater and Communication: What Relationship they Possess	19
Theater as Communication: What Holds them Together	21
The Environmental Perspective of Theater	27
What Constitutes a Performance	28
Theater in its New Medium: How it Transmediates	29
Digital Theater: The Shift to an Online Platform	31
Digital Theater and Dramaturgy	33
Digital Theater and Interaction: The Uniting Relationship	35
Theater and Feedback: The Unbreakable Connection	38
Diversifying Audience Around the World	39
Theater and Education in the Pandemic	39
e-Theater Productions during the Pandemic	42

Innovations in e-Theater Productions during the Pandemic	43
Challenges in e-theater productions	44
Digital Theater and Opportunities	47
CHAPTER III: FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY	50
Phenomenological tradition	50
Communicative Ecology	51
CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY	55
Epistemological Grounds of the Study	55
Ontological Grounds of the Study	56
Research Design	57
Locale of the Study	58
Participants of the Study	58
Sampling Procedure	62
Research Instrument	62
Description of the two e-theater productions	63
Data Gathering Procedure	68
Data Analysis and Interpretations	69
Ethical Considerations	70
Researcher's Positionality Statement	71
CHAPTER V: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	75
ACT 1: Views on the Performance Space	75
ACT 2: Theatrical Perspectives	78
ACT 3: Theater Resurgence	85
ACT 4: Anticipations for the Theater	89
ACT 5: Theater Metamorphism	91
ACT 6: Communication in the e-theater	96
ACT 7: Pandemic-responsive Theater	98
ACT 8: e-theater Productions of Stage@Home and PHSA	103
ACT 9: Observed Elements of Theater in the New Seeing Place	140
ACT 10: Realizations on e-theater	143
The Essence of the Phenomenon	163
Making Sense of the Lived Experiences	233
Theoretical Perspective	248
Diagram of the Lived Experience	252
CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION	257
Summary	257
Conclusions	259
Recommendations	261
REFERENCES	264
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Letter for Prof. Glecy C. Atineza	274
Appendix B: Letter for Ms. Christina Joy Mendoza-Cardena	275

List of Tables

Table 1 Profile of the Actors (Participants)	61
Table 2 Summary of Themes and sub-themes	254

List of Figures

Figure 1 Poster of the first online showcase of the PHSA	64
Figure 2 Poster of the second online showcase of the PHSA	65
Figure 3 Stage@Home as introduced in the ALYANSA's FB Page	66
Figure 4 Theater must go on	84
Figure 5 The first call of ALYANSA for Stage@Home productions	97
Figure 6 The 14th Tanghal National Theater Festival poster	105
Figure 7 The ALYANSA's announcement on its FB Page	106
Figure 8 Talkback after a performance	122
Figure 9 Casts of the second online showcase of PHSA	125
Figure 10 Series of Workshop for the first online theater showcase	127
Figure 11 Another Online Workshop on Sound Design	128
Figure 12 Stage and Character Make up Workshop	129
Figure 13 Students experimented on the available materials at home	132
Figure 14 Behind-the-scenes for the first online theater showcase of PHSA	133
Figure 15 Varied strategies employed	134
Figure 16 Promotional posters for their first online theater	135
Figure 17 Teaser posters for the second online theater showcase	136
Figure 18 Using of available lighting at home	138
Figure 19 Critiquing before the actual online theater showcase	140
Figure 20 Por Vida Covid A! Para sa Buhay! Poster	145
Figure 21 The Beginning of Stage@Home	150
Figure 22 Papel as a theme for the Stage@Home performance	151
Figure 23 Mukha as the second theme	152
Figure 24 Mukha captured the different faces of Filipinos	153

Figure 25 Papel de Sardinas, initial e-theater production by Stage@Home 162

Figure 26 Diagram of the Lived Experience 252

Abstract

Transcendence of Theater as Communication: Lived Experiences of Practitioners in e-Theater during the Pandemic

With the sudden shift of theater to digital, there were minimum studies conducted on this in the Philippine setting. Thus, this study focused on unraveling the lived experiences of theater practitioners during the pandemic to answer how theater as communication is accomplished in its new seeing place in the virtual space. The study explored how theater practitioners experience theater as communication in e-theater, basically on their adaption, the challenges encountered, and the unique strategies utilized under the communicative ecology.

The research utilized the transcendental phenomenology research method to explore the lived experiences of the participants. In-depth interview was used as the primary data-gathering tool together with the analysis of qualitative digital materials.

The results revealed ten overarching themes: Views on the Performance Space, Theatrical Perspectives, Theater Resurgence, Anticipations for the Theater, Theater Metamorphism, Communication in the e-theater, Pandemic-responsive Theater, e-theater Productions of Stage@Home and Phillippine High School for the Arts, Observed Elements of Theater in the New Seeing Place, and Realizations on e-theater.

This metamorphosis offers a glimpse into the essence of the e-theater experience, where the participants' lived encounters underscore how theater's evolution transcends its traditional theatrical confines, embracing the expansive landscapes of the digital world.

Keywords: e-theater; new seeing place; e-theater productions; transcendental communication

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION:

The Curtain Unfolds

Background of the Study

The theater is communication. Its diverse features give way to interaction. Interaction of performers with fellow performers, of performers with audiences, of the production team with audiences, of performers to themselves, of audiences to fellow audiences, and of the audience to themselves. The theater is a place for human contacts and authentic human experience, not just a performance of stories and narratives (myProject.ng (2022)). This human encounter of experiences, narratives, and emotions, creates communication in theater and makes theater in itself communication for expression, exploration, clarification, recreation, and identification.

Bhattacharyya and Das Gupta (2013) studied interpreting theater as a communication medium. They found that communication in theater serves the following purposes: instruction, persuasion, information, education, amusement, and development. They clarified that by the very nature of theater as communal, it offers a platform where dialogue can readily take place without the arising of conflicts that would typically come about in a directly actual setting. The emphasis of the study is on how communication could also have educational and organizational functions in a theater, like bringing people together and providing contexts for group reflection and action; encouraging participation and the expression of common concerns and analysis; overcoming people's anxieties and justifications and fostering self-assurance; promoting discussion and a critical understanding of the issues, contradictions, and structures that underlie everyday reality; articulating the options and action plans; and motivating people's emotions. These reflect how theater is

observed and analyzed on its functionality as communication and not on how communication is accomplished in the technical, nature, scope, and elements of theater. The use of ICT is not covered as to how theater could be accomplished given the applications of new technologies.

Meanwhile, according to the library.cmu.edu, the term "environmental theater" is sometimes used to refer to eco-drama or theater; however, one must be aware that this term has also been used to refer to site-specific or open-space performances as well as "theater as environment" without any consideration for ecological or sustainable practice. Thus, eco-drama or theater as environment may mean the space for performance. Given this, there is still the physicality of theater. Transcending to a digital environment brings unexplored areas to study. Likewise, during the pandemic, the use of digital platforms for performance as a new environment offers both possibilities and challenges.

With the pandemic, theater productions are at a loss in the beginning. According to Armando Sta.Ana, Acting Director of Barasoain Kalinangan Foundation, Inc., *"Sinira ng pandemic ang aming pagtatanghal.. ang aming tahanan."* This is the drastic effect of the pandemic on theater. Thus, theatrical performance was tested. But performers found ways. Theater companies found alternatives to still make theater performances possible. The Educational Theater Association in America provided recommendations for school theater programs during the pandemic. It suggested three options: virtual performance models that rely on video conferencing applications, outdoor performances where social distancing would be easier, and in-person onstage performances simultaneously streamed live to an online audience. For most schools and theater productions, the first option was utilized during the first wave of the pandemic. The second option was also utilized when the number of

COVID-19 cases decreased. For theater practitioners and performers, the use of video recording was first employed. Others, explore different ways of finding other venues to perform. Others use different video applications, while some perform in the convenience of their own homes. Some streamed their theater performances for free.

Theatrical performances did not take a backseat during the pandemic. Modifications are incorporated and explored to bridge the physicality of theater to the digital space. Even in 2013, the relevance of new media technology to the theater has been explored. New media integration in theater opens exciting new possibilities for theatre artists, but more deeply that it challenges us to reassess some of our most basic assumptions about the nature of theatre viewing experience, (Kumar, et.al. 2013). But even before the pandemic, theatrical coexistence is already being explored. The elements of theatrical coexistence have become a focus for theater academics and practitioners. According to Chatzichristodoulou (2014), there are many different concepts that are offered by artists and academics who develop work in the field and have a long history, with cyber performance, digital performance, digital practices, cyber theater, virtual theater, or networked performance. But these are just a few examples.

The studies on theater primarily were in Western settings. Nevertheless, there was unavailable literature on the lived experiences of theater practitioners in e-theater productions focusing on how theater as communication was accomplished. Likewise, even theater in this pandemic was less captured in the local setting. The effect of the pandemic on theater in the Philippines was observed but there was limited, written research about it. The digital divide also affected how theater continued during the pandemic. In the Philippines, the most important factors to

consider are cost and the availability of infrastructure or internet connection points (Ibrahim, 2022). With this dilemma, performances online became *experimental*, and maximization of available resources was made. But how was theater as communication accomplished in the new seeing place?

I have a little background on theater. I was not a theater person. But with the little knowledge that I have on it drove me to explore the possibilities of theater's evolution. I must say that the eagerness to study it further emerged during the pandemic when theater had laid its back temporarily on the backstage. With the pandemic, various innovations were tested and challenged to continue theater. Thus, with this blossomed my curiosity of how theater as communication could still be accomplished given that theater must be physical: physical in setting, in interaction, in execution. How then would theater be accomplished in its new seeing place if the 'physical nature' of theater was set aside?

Thus, this study explored how theater as communication was accomplished during the pandemic, especially for first-timers in e-theater productions. The uncovering of their experiences provided a clearer picture of how physical theater transcended to its new seeing place. With this transition, this study uncovered how the participants viewed theater as communication and how they were able to accomplish theater as communication in the new seeing place. Their own narratives unfolded their experiences and their perspectives on e-theater as a new seeing place. Their own experiences offered more proficient and concrete descriptions and narrations of how theater practitioners managed to communicate, managed to maintain relationships, and managed to use technology online. Their experiences also served as an embarkation point for exploring the other unexplored areas in a theater during the pandemic, especially in the Philippine setting.

Statement of the Problem

The physical theater had features that were observed through the years. With the onset of the pandemic, e-theater productions offered other requirements from planning to actual theater performances. But, the exploration of how e-theater as a new seeing place communicated to the practitioners, how the practitioners communicated to fellow practitioners, how the practitioners communicated to their audiences, and how the practitioners communicated this new seeing place to a theater production was still unexplored.

Thus, the main research question focused on:

How is theater as communication accomplished in a new seeing place?

Hence, this research problem challenged the preconceived notions and default assumptions of the practitioners about e-theater. These notions and assumptions varied as to how each practitioner experienced the new seeing place in terms of their understanding, utilization, strategies used, challenges encountered, and means of interaction with fellow practitioners and audiences as well as how the practitioners communicated the new seeing place during the pandemic.

Objectives of the Study

This study explored how theater as communication was accomplished by theater practitioners in a new seeing place. Specifically, it attempted to:

1. Explore how the participants experience, see, define and understand theater as communication in e-theater productions;
2. Reveal how the participants understand and adapt to the new seeing place in their e-theater productions (discursive layer of communicative ecology);

3. Unfold how the participants utilized unique strategies of digital technologies in the new seeing place (technology and media layer of communicative ecology); and
4. Uncover the challenges encountered by the participants in the new seeing place in terms of connection and interaction with fellow practitioners as well as their audiences (people layer of communicative ecology).

Significance of the Study

The theater is in constant transformation. From rituals to societal concerns, theater performances had evolved through the years. The theater has been used for educational purposes. Theater for development is also another feature of theater performance and production that signifies how theater could be used for other worthwhile causes. Community theater and participatory theater are also new faces of theater that cater to the needs of the community and to the relevant roles of the members of the community.

This study would be relevant as a starting literature on e-theater in the Philippine setting. This would also explain how theater as communication is accomplished in the new seeing place. With this, it could assist in future e-theater productions focusing on how theater was communication and how communication was theater.

Since the possibility of e-theater productions was already explored in pieces of literature, the model of communicative ecology of theater practitioners in e-theater productions would assist in making e-theater productions suitable for digital platforms.

Theater practitioners would also benefit from the study of the new strategies to be employed for future e-theater productions. Schools offering performing arts would also be able to calibrate their curricula to take advantage of new performance and digital technology opportunities. This would contribute to the academic discourse on theater studies, performing arts, anthropology, sociology, and even psychology. Above all, the theater would advocate support from both lovers and not, advocates, and non-advocates of theater in raising awareness of the unique struggles faced by theater practitioners in maintaining the essence of theater.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study focused only on the lived experiences of two theater practitioners who used the digital platforms for their theatrical productions during the pandemic. The performances included those that were performed and produced from 2020 to 2022. These performances ranged from live performances via any applications (Zoom, Google meet, OBS, FB Live, and others), pre-recorded and streamed live, and pre-recorded and uploaded via FB page, website, and other online platforms. The theater practitioners were those who belonged to any professional theater production, school-based production, or freelance.

Operational Definition of Key Terms

Theater practitioners – refer to performers and producers, professionals or freelancers of any theater productions, and theater teachers for school-based productions.

e-theater productions - refer to online or digital theater productions of Stage@Home and Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA) which

could be a live theater performance using any applications (Zoom, Google meet, OBS, FB Live, and others), could also be pre-recorded or streamed live, and maybe pre-recorded and uploaded via FB page, website, and other online platforms.

New seeing place - refers to the digital platform where theater transcends and staged the e-theater productions; e-theater.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

The Back Story

This included the literature and studies that summarized the corpus of knowledge about theater, its evolution, its challenges, and its potential for digital performance.

Early Performances at Home

Performance is a phenomenon that appears in front of our eyes at the time of its creation. It is not fixed and cannot be recreated similarly because each instance has uniqueness (Georgiou, n.d.). Way back in the precolonial period, the home is the center of performances. One's backyard and front yard could be one's space for storytelling and bugtungan (riddles). Fernandez (1989) recounted in her essay, *Panitikan: An Essay on Philippine Literature* that after a dinner, parents and kids would converse by fire about riddles as a playful game and educational exercise. Likewise, the interior of the babaylan's house is embellished with bamboo slats and stripped palm leaves with Tagbanua calligraphy and patterns. (www.theater.philippineculture.ph). However, through time, these performances changed in form and location. In addition to formal academic training in perspective drawing, chiaroscuro, and the use of color, Gavino (2014) noted that "scene design for Philippine theater also developed through increased exposure to foreign productions and an informal apprenticeship with a foreign director."

With these came the question of what is still originally ours, and which is not. Tiatco (2015) explored Nicanor G. Tiongson's seminal essay "What is Philippine Drama?" where Tiongson stated that the evolution of European and American drama

shapes the evolution of drama and theater in the Philippines. He added that Tiongson identified three characteristics in evaluating the Philippine-ness of the Philippine drama: reflecting Philippine culture, answering the needs of the Filipino people, and working for the good of the many.

Features of Theater: What it possesses from the start

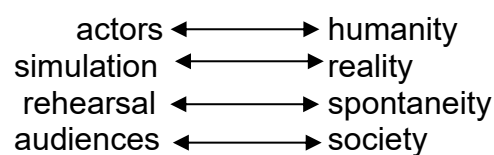
The name "theater" is derived from the Greek word "theatron," which means "seeing place." According to Barranger (1995), theater is more than only the design of the stage and the structures. As a result, it also entails using space to simulate human experience so that a viewer may understand what makes that space unique —seeing place. Hence, it is where one learns about themselves. With this, comes different features of theater. Barranger (ibid.) mentioned six special features of theater that made it different from other art forms. These are immediacy, aliveness, doubleness, fictions, spaces, and audiences.

Immediacy is complementary to the description of physical theater as a limited art form. One performance is unique from the other. It is 'live.' Barranger (1995) explained that for a theater to happen, the exchange between the performers and the audience must be present at the time of the performance. This makes theater a limited art form. Once a performance is concluded, it is gone forever. This signifies what Barranger (ibid.) expressed that theater is different from other art forms like television, film, and videos that are canned products. It may be recorded but theater's immediacy is said to be lost when transferred to a different medium. But in e-theater productions, its being 'live' is mediated. Its being alive required the performers and the audience in a special place. Its being live is being separated by

digital frames as a stage. Thus, 'direct communication' must be present between the audience and the performers, but with e-theater productions, how is this possible?

The doubleness is the mirror of real-life events in theater performance and production. It reflects back on how the real world is depicted on a theater stage. Therefore, in theater, an actor is not only an actor but also a fictional being in the context of the theater performance. Likewise, a stage is not a seeing place but a place for fictional characters in theater productions. In e-theater productions, the doubleness is shown on a screen as 'new' to the audience and even to the theater performers and practitioners. Will the theater performance be more than double in a digital space where everything is digital? Barranger (1995) emphasized that theater is life's double but is more than a reflection of life. Thus, it becomes a selective reflection where the scenes, stories, characters, and other theater production elements are organized eloquently.

Theater being a 'live' performance, creates aliveness as the audience and the performers transact in the performance. In its live performance, the transaction and connection built between the performers with the audience, and vice versa, as well as the connections built between the performers and the production team, the director with the performers, and the performers with themselves, create aliveness. 'Theater is thus "alive" in its immediate communion with its audiences' (Barranger, 1995). She enumerated four essential features of theater in aliveness that parallel theater and life:



Any activity on stage is always a representation; it is always a 'fiction' that is necessary to express what the actual cannot express (Valença, 2020). Given that it

is fiction, the audience still connects to the performance, to the performers, and to the fellow audience. The audiences are drawn into the thoughts and feelings of the characters before us on an intellectual and emotional level (Barranger, 1995). Theater's fictions draw the audience to the character's portrayal and stories unfolded on stage.

In a physical theater, although it creates the feeling of doubleness, it also captures the illusion that the performers are illusionary figures whom they portray. The audiences are also taken in a world new to them thus theater suspends their beliefs when the performance starts. This creates a feeling of illusion that the performers share with the audience. Thus, it is said that the play is a 'living reality' (Barranger, 1995).

Theater space is another special feature of theater. The theater could not happen without a special place for performance. In a theater of any kind, when the audience enters, it creates a certain response from the audience. Llewellyn-Jones (2002) explained that the use of that location becomes a component of the overall theatrical experience where a number of factors influence an audience when they enter a space for the first time, and there are a number of questions that need to be answered. The audience in a physical theater creates connections with the performers. They signal how a theater performance hits them. They applaud, smirk, and cry as the curtain opens and closes. Their immediate reactions add to the distinct feature of theater: no performance is the same. Theater space is more than performances unfolding in a special place. Barranger (1995) emphasized that in the presence of others, it is where we discover more about ourselves and understand the what, how, and why of being human.

The Taxonomy of Theater Spaces: What Spaces Mean

A space could be conceptualized as a stage space, scenic place, theatrical space, theatre space, or dramatic space (Pesti, 2021). The audience and the actors, the two most crucial components of every theatrical performance, are connected by a space in the theater, whether vacant or full (<https://www.geneseo.edu/~blood/Aud1.html>). Every performance depends on the interaction between these two groups because when they envision a fictional universe, they create the excitement and enjoyment of theatrical occurrences. Therefore, every performance requires a specific amount of space in the theater.

The "taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre" was the phrase Mc Auley created. It divides the theater's space into five distinct sections. The words "theatre space," "audience space," "practitioner's space," "performance space," and "rehearsal space" are all used to describe the first region, which is referred to as "Social Reality." Theater space encompasses the structure, its interaction with other structures, its history, and the access it allows or denies. Both the audience and the performers' areas are included in the theater space.

According to Mc Auley, the auditorium, hallways, and bars are the most crucial parts of the audience environment because they are where viewers interact with the event socially. The practitioners occupy the dressing rooms and other backstage areas. The concept of performance space then brings the two spaces—practitioner's space and audience space—back together. According to Mc Auley's taxonomy, performance space only refers to the social reality of the theater. It speaks of the audience and spectators converging in one area to take in a show. The rehearsal space, the last room in this region, frequently differ from the performance room (ibid.).

'The Physical/Fictional Relationship' is the name of the second primary area. This section seeks to classify the intricate physical/fictional interaction that Ubersfeld's strategy (scenic setting) already alluded to. Physical reality, the stage, and the imaginary universe being produced constantly coexist in the theater (ibid.). The stage area consists of the stage and the unique features of various theaters, including width-depth, the degree of separation from or integration with the audience, exits, and the divide of on-offstage. When the action occurs on various stages inside the performance space, the staging space can be single or multiple. The stage area is utilized as the second presentational space for various shows. McAuley describes the picturesque area as Ubersfeld's nature is too constricting and goes beyond simple scenery:

The mere physical presence of players on a stage with no scenery transforms it into a presentational environment in many shows, despite the absence or minimal use of scenery. The idea must be understood to include the person's actual physical occupation, which the performers occupy the stage space, along with the set (if there is one), its furniture and props, the lighting, the number, kind, and location of the exits, and the physical signaling of the offstage locations. (ibid.)

Fictional Space is the last concept in the Physical/Fictional Relationship. The location or locations shown in the play's performance are called "Fictional Space." This idea is so essential to McAuley that she introduces a third section.

Location and Fiction, the third category under the taxonomy, is distinguished by a division between onstage and offstage. The performer can convey the fictional setting onstage through gestures or dialogue. Alternatively, the presentational space, which might be solitary or numerous, creates the onstage fictional environment (ibid.). The offstage physical location is the second category. Presentational Space, Stage

Space, and Audience Space are the four subcategories that McAuley offers for this category, all of which are connected to the physical reality of the theater. The areas not physically connected to the performance are referred to as unlocalized performance space; this can be a gesture or a look (ibid.). The reality, as it relates to the onstage, includes the Localized off concerning Performance Space. A door, window, or hole could provide a peek or connection to a far-off fictitious location. Audience Off is a subdivision of the category Localized off with Performance Space. In some plays and productions, the audience area is linked to off-stage made-up locations. (ibid.).

The following two categories are included for coherence's sake; they do not define performance space. Textual Space, the fourth area, contains both didascalia and discourse. However, the nature of the "Textual Space" might be characterized as interdependent with all the other sectors. The final section, dubbed "Thematic Space," has a globalizing influence and combines text and performance. (ibid.)

Theater's Structure and Aesthetics: The Meaning Behind the Beauty

A space of anticipation and a tendency "towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs" are where the performance body operates (Lefebvre, 2001). Likewise, when talking about performance space there comes varied definitions. Rebelo (2003) explained that a performance space entails complex study in the fields of gesture, one-to-many communication systems, individuated presence, idiosyncratic action, and instrumentality in the context of non-linear digital media structures.' Meanwhile, a performing space implies an intricate interplay of communicative modalities, which are several channels that permit communication between people or between people and computer systems (Bongers, 2002). Additionally, there are social and physical aspects to comfort in a theater. The

type of seating or standing area, the quantity of space allocated to each audience member, and the simplicity of access all contribute to physical comfort. Physical comfort also includes everyone in the audience being able to view and hear a performance in ways their culture has taught them are ideal for the best theatrical experience. It also entails maintaining a specific standard of safety. Contrarily, social comfort refers to each audience member's capacity to experience a sense of belonging throughout a theatrical performance (<https://www.britannica.com>).

The clever and skillful arrangement of the bizarre setting's visual elements conveys the dramatic action's subject, tone, and style and defines the setting's time and place. It is crucial to consider how the designs for Philippine theater reflect our standards of beauty, our appreciation of spectacle, our expectations of an odd performance, and our resourcefulness. Additionally, theater should be viewed as a highly involved relationship between performers and audiences rather than a highly privileged artistic communication by a select few artists (Gavino, 2014). Whether the audience's seating arrangement within the home represents the proper social order within the culture is one of the aspects typically considered when it comes to social comfort. Depending on the emphasis placed on these distinctions within a culture, theatre audiences have been segmented by class, caste, gender, and occupation, as well as by combinations of these and many other characteristics. The audience is kept within the social groups they feel most comfortable in, even though it is sometimes maintained that such architectural structure implies the division of individuals who get to be somehow less acceptable. Social comfort is also influenced by the location of the theater, town, or city because the expected audience must feel comfortable in the area. The amount of ornamentation in the theater can also affect

the audience's social comfort by giving them the impression that the art being exhibited is either above or below their social status (<https://www.britannica.com>).

The main goal of theater design is to improve the viewing experience for the audience. Different architectural features will be valued differently in other civilizations and occasionally even in various subcultures within the same society. However, they may still be broken down into two broad categories: those that serve the aesthetics judged suitable for the theatre art in a particular culture and those that enhance the audience's experience of that art (<https://www.britannica.com>).

A Czech stage designer, Josef Svoboda (1920–2002) created several important stage design approaches that designers have since adopted and applied. His comprehension primarily informed Svoboda's work of the kinetic stage and scenography. The term "kinetic stage" alludes to his viewpoint that the set should evolve and adapt as the performance goes on rather than function independently of the actors. He referred to the scenography as his art, giving the impression that he constructed an entire physical, not just paper, creation meant for the back of the stage. His studies with these notions gave rise to other important stage design innovations, including the polyekran, diapolyekran, and laterna magika. "polyekran," which translates to "multiscreen," refers to Svoboda's method of employing several screens at various heights and angles. Although real people and objects were projected, the intention was to persuade viewers that they were instead viewing a collage or projection instead of the actual object of forecasts. Diapolyekran, a subsequent refinement of this method, used entire walls of tiny, square screens to create a composite image. The wall of screens might be used to display a collage, a single, cohesive image, or cubist artwork. The most well-known of his inventions, Laterna Magika, combined actors and screens so that the actors and the action were

a part of the movie. Instead of serving as decoration or a means of conveying visuals separately from the action, the projections employed in this form worked in tandem with the motion to create a brand-new performance style⁸ that saw the introduction of these advancements to the world at the Brussels World's Fair. They immediately attracted the interest of the larger theatrical community. At the time of the World's Fair, Svoboda served as the National Theatre of Prague's principal designer, and a demonstration of the theater's work to a global audience earned him three medals. What was seen as ingenious in 1958 was quickly adopted and adapted by numerous practitioners in many countries, and the effect of these means of design can still be witnessed in contemporary theatre, per performance, and on Broadway, as well as at rock concerts and sporting events. This incorporation of screens and projections into onstage action has infiltrated the theatre world to the extent that it has become one of the conventional tools of theatre worldwide (Wilson, 2015).

What the actors need to achieve the artistic standards deemed appropriate before a performance begins to what they need to support the necessary amount of spectacle during the performance, whether it be a stage that is empty or a stage with enormous movable sets and a spectacular array of props, are all elements that serve the aesthetics of the art of theatre (<https://www.britannica.com>).

Wilson (2015) enumerated seven primary functions and objectives of stage lighting namely: provide visibility, reveal shapes and forms, provide a focus onstage and create visual compositions, assist in creating mood and reinforcing style, help establish time and place, establish a rhythm of visual movement, and reinforce a central visual image, establish visual information, or both. Aside from these, he also expounded that the design concept is closely related to the idea of a central image or metaphor. Stage design must not only be consistent with the play; it should have

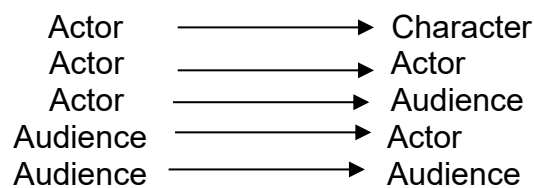
integrity. The design elements—lines, shapes, and colors—should add to a complete visual universe for the play. Often, therefore, the designer tries to develop a central image or metaphor (Wilson, 2015). Above all, the actor must combine the physical elements with the inner acting process, the effort on sincerity and credibility. They must unite inner and exterior realms into a single, unbreakable whole. Whatever the beginning point, it's crucial to remember that the outcome must synthesize these two elements. The external physical qualities and vocal traits merge with the internal sensations and emotions (ibid.) On the one hand, modifiability gives artists the freedom to create their scenic elements. However, this variability increases the skill and dedication of the performers, audience members, and organizers to make the performance approachable. Digital platforms, on the other hand, can be used for their archivability because they can collect a variety of elements in a single location, which, nevertheless, may correspond to an overcrowded offer (Brilli, 2022). With this comes the proper blocking required from the actors and the scenes. Blocking is deciding when and where performers move and position themselves on the stage. Other directors let the actors and actresses find their movements, vocal interpretations, and relationships. Some directors do a bit of both. He added that directors must adjust their notions of blocking and visual composition to different types of stages: the arena stage, the thrust stage, and the proscenium stage. Each stage calls for different approaches to the performers' movements and the audience's sight lines (ibid.).

Theater and Communication: What Relationship they Possess

Karmakar (2013) expressed that theater is a dramatic art of communication. Performances may vary from being funny to being dramatic, from being political to being spiritual, and from being socially relevant to being environmentally conscious.

There are still other existing relationships that emerge in a theater. One is how theater creates a human connection. Theriault (2009) pointed out that to Peter Brook, one of the most influential international theatre practitioners of the 20th and 21st centuries, the human connection is the essence of good theatre. Brook (1968) clarified that the work of an actor is never, but always, for an audience. Therefore, communication or any form of the gesture may only imply sharing of experience if a connection or contact is established between the actor and the audience and the actor himself. Brook (ibid.) further explained that the onlooker is a partner who must be forgotten and yet constantly kept in mind. Hence, there is the development of different wordless languages to convert events and experiences into characters and expressions to be communicated to them.

Karmakar (2013) enumerated five ways of communication in theater:



According to Raj and Singh (2021), the fundamental fact that theater has the component of communication is established since performances involve both performers and the audience. Theater transforms into an experiential process of human contact with the performer serving as a communicator and the audience serving as a communicatee. Thus, the theater offers fresh perspectives for understanding communication from the viewpoint of theater rather than simply serving as a vehicle of communication. However, Raj and Singh (ibid.) clarified that from the point of reference that theater is a medium, both the audience and the performers could be both parties at the receiving end process. This makes

communication in theater direct, where the performers and audience are present the moment the theater starts.

Theater as Communication: What Holds them Together

The theater has its way to communicate with its production team and a way to communicate with its audience. According to Verma and Raj (2018), theater can serve as a medium for communication or it can be a means of it. The kind of communication that exists depends on the theater productions and execution. But theater communicates as communication communicates theater.

Theater as Communicative Discourse. Elam (1977) described that the performance's conventions apply to every aspect of it, and language is no different from any other component system in this regard. Elizabeth Burns makes a distinction between "authenticating conventions," which appear to operate only between "characters," and "rhetorical conventions," which operate between performers and audience to increase the mimetic, illusory power of the performance. Elam (ibid.) further explained that rhetorical conventions include not only verbal devices like the prologue or apostrophe but also masques, plays within plays, and other similar techniques.

For language and rhetoric, a different perspective manifested. Elam (ibid.) elaborated that language is not the exclusive source of rhetoric in the theater. Thus, the entire performance is considered to be rhetorical in ways that it may affect as well as encourage the audience. Elam (ibid.) explained that language no longer has any unique rights; instead, it must share them with other languages, whether they be allies or competitors, like gestures. In this way, a gesture is considered a rhetorical

method of action. But when this action points to a semiotic purpose or reason, then it becomes a gesture.

In this sense, every gesture performed on stage is considered to be a separate language with its own syntactic and, in a way, lexical norms. The strictness of the restrictions imposed on it, which in turn depend on performer-audience conventions, will determine how accurate and adaptable a language is (Elam, *ibid.*).

Zheltukhina, et al. (2016) states that dialogue has a certain structure that makes it a distinct discourse form, this is where an interactional and interactive discourse takes place. It is a kind of speaking that is used by the participants in a communication process. However, its core goes beyond a character's vocal means of expression.

In the play, dialogue is more than the conversation of the characters. Summons (n.d.) explained that although it appears to be a discussion, it actually operates in a very "engineered", deliberate, multidimensional, structural fashion. He clarified the following points:

- To start, it can be employed as a tool for exposition to narrate information. The dialogue utilized for this purpose must, of course, flow naturally from the character and the position the character is in at the proper period in the play. If not, it sounds awkward and disorienting.
- Character is revealed in dialogue. The words a character uses reveal a lot about their social/cultural background, level of education, and emotional/psychological state. A dramatist must make crucial aesthetic choices regarding a character's speech in order to express them through dialogue. Is a character's speech important to their dialect, for instance?

What kind of vocabulary will the character use, too? Will the persona employ slang?

- Provocation toward action is a common component of dialogue. It is a component of the characters' action and reaction flow. When one character speaks, the other responds, propelling the drama in that direction. As a result, dialogue should be related to the play's spine, or the character's position and function within the plays are larger structure and theme. In other words, whatever a character says at any time in the play should not be unrelated to the overall theme of the piece. If any of the conversations in the play isn't working, it can be because the dialogue has lost its link to the character or the dramatic direction of the play.
- Generally speaking, dialogue should illustrate a character's emotions rather than simply state them. Through the characters' discourse, we should be able to understand something about the circumstances they are facing. Dialogue between people indicates the nature of their relationships and what they expect from others. As a result, motivation and character goals are present in dialogue. Finding out a character's motive and goal provides the actor with the knowledge needed to play the part.
- Depending on the play's style, dialogue may include poetry and metaphor. The poetic element of dialogue frequently mirrors the ideas of the drama and, as a result, provides the dialogue with a lot of depth and impact. Because it connects to a larger whole, even very realistic dialogue can have poetic aspects in its thematic context.

Theater as Communication Strategy. Theater educative function is utilized as a teaching strategy in schools. This involves the inclusion of drama in school

activities. Cojocariua & Butnarub (2013) elaborated that dramatic methods offer an engaging and effective educational alternative. With this, it could allow the learners to experience real-life events without posing dangers to them. The different dramatic tactics could also benefit in addressing the individual skills of learners as well as making compatible drama scenarios aligned to the learners' intelligence. Given the social lives of the learners, they could portray roles of brother, sister, or classmate and others. Cojocariua & Butnarub (2013) explained that these roles can all be performed at once, in conjunction with one another, independently, or in opposition to one another. Their findings revealed that the introduction of a discipline in the drama they called Small Artists in the World of Drama and the use of drama techniques allowed the improvement of intercommunication, interknowledge, and sympathetic relationships inside the group of students involved in the drama. They concluded that 'school drama may become an efficient pedagogic tool in building the students' communicative skills.'

Soler (2020) emphasized how theater may offer situations that don't just involve acting, but also with students participating in plays that let them utilize the language in context. Theater as a communication strategy in teaching a foreign language is used as a complementing aid and not a replacement for other approaches. Soler (ibid) explained how theater could be a way to learn a foreign language since it can combine verbal (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, listening, fluency) and non-verbal (body language) elements (cultural aspects, group work abilities, and self-confidence). Additionally, it has been demonstrated in the study that theater may boost student motivation, improve the quality of instruction, and effectively engage adult learners while boosting their self-esteem. Their use of

theater also resulted in the pupils' improved pronunciation and intonation, fluency, improvisation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures, and increased self-esteem.

As for non-formal education, the theater is used a communication intervention strategy to empower people. Obasi et.al (2021) assessed the effectiveness of theater for development to empower the victims of the conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria. Empowerment revolves around the knowledge and behavioral needs of the farmers. Thus, the activities involved in theater for development are related to painting, weaving, fashion, and design. Obasi et.al (ibid.) concluded that using theatre for development as a communication intervention method was successful in improving participants' attitudes toward the three arts and crafts under consideration.

Theater as Advocacy. Lehmann recalled the "distinctive medial characteristics of theater." He emphasized that it is a space for memory and remembrance that vitally involves co-presence, embodied engagement, and communal experience, and the theater also serves as a location of communal reception.' However, for Rayner (2002), whether the community gathers in a circle to enclose itself, protect its mysteries, and exclude others, whether it pays exorbitant prices to sit passively in seats that all face the same direction, scatters throughout an old garage, or peers into an old theater, theatrical space, in all its variations, from the ritual circle of the Greek orchestra through the proscenium arch to the site-specific performance piece, provides rich images and valuable metaphors for both consciousness and community. But with the communion of the audience in a theater, a shared experience is built, creating oneness in expression and realization. Thus, theater practitioners and enthusiasts who uphold theater, continuously adhere to keep theater alive and improving.

Theater as Space for Interaction. How did theater, which had its beginnings in shows by Sophocles and Shakespeare that drew audiences from all social classes, become so elitist to the point where modern working-class people decided it wasn't for people like them? This is tragic since a diverse communal viewing experience enriches, enhances, and is necessary for the theater (Johnson, 2014). Even with the unfamiliarity of theater for others, theater is well-recognized as an immediate art form. It is a live performance. A live performance is an interaction between the audience and the performers. A live actor-audience contact, with all of its stimulation and surprise, is an important strategic element in the theater (Gatt, 2020).

Theatre is regarded as a form of performing arts where creativity grows through audience participation and communication (Tudu & Hansda, 2022). Beyond this, theater functions for the communities, building bonds and connections. Theatre is about communities—the communities of the artists who make it, the audiences who watch it, and the bond that forms between performers and audiences during a performance (Gatt, 2020). But in theater, one could find one's freedom of expression. Artaud believed we could only find freedom in the theater from the recognizable ways we go about our daily lives. Here, theater functions more than the performances people are used to seeing and perceiving.

Theater is a process that develops through debate, improvisation, and workshops. It provides participants with an opportunity to think critically and creatively (Gatt, 2020). Theater takes a shift from just being a linear process of performance. This theatre moves away from the fixed linear hierarchies of scriptwriter, director, actor, and audience, even if the director is vital since, in making theatre, s/he is a reference point for the co-generation and co-creation of ideas and material (ibid.) There is participation and involvement of all the people working in the

theater. This theater incorporates each person's contributions and participation to transform, educate, and develop personally and collectively. The possibility of participant advancement increases with the level of involvement (ibid.). Hence, there is the creation of relationships through the interactions formed in the theater. Creating theater is a challenging process that alters relationships as everyone gains new insights into themselves and one another (ibid.). Peter Brook further explained 'We overlook the fact that a theatrical experience can have two climaxes. There are two possible outcomes: either the peak of celebration, in which our participation erupts in stamping and yelling, hurrahs, and the roar of hands, or the climax of silence, which is another way to acknowledge and appreciate a shared experience.'

The Environmental Perspective of Theater: How Autopoietic Feedback Loops function

Theater goes beyond the traditional focus of interest from compelling to the inner connections of performers to their characters. The ecological perspective of theater also goes beyond the term ecological which refers solely to the environment. Lavery (2016) explained that from an ecological perspective, it might be: the inherent relationality of theatre, the fact that it always involves actors and audiences, and so triggers what Erika Fischer-Lichte, after the biologists Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana, terms "autopoietic feedback loops". He also expressed that the physical presence and fragility of the performer whose body cannot help but show its mortality, its necessary entanglement in both "nature" and "culture". This could manifest the interwoven relationship between nature and culture. Moreover, the term 'networked quality' of the stage signifies that the human being is always part of a larger group of objects, technologies, and processes. Thus, Lavery (2016) explained

how much theater is as a theatrical medium, where it plays to be 'more than human,' leading beyond itself to a 'nature' that it is both dependent on and unable to either forget or master, in spite of its best efforts to the contrary. This further explains how theater could address even its weaknesses which according to Lavery (ibid.) is to create a piece of theater that draws attention to its own inability to act and to represent.

The autopoietic feedback loop is the relationship between the performer and the audience during a performance a term coined by Erika Fischer-Lichte. She explained that a spectator must engage with a performative venue, the performer(s), the content, and the spatial design of the piece when they attend a performance event. As a result of the interaction between audience members and performers, Fischer-Lichte (2008) discussed that there is an emotional response, and there is a continuous feedback loop connecting the experience to the audience members' personal, historical, and cultural context: a factor crucial for how humans generate meaning and make decisions. She added that the brain, mind, and body system create a somatic marker while engaging during the performance; this is when a physiological response is connected to an emotional occurrence, which subsequently aids in the revision of the subjective conceptual framework. Thus, the performer and the audience will generate a feedback loop given the other elements of theater involved in the production.

What Constitutes a Performance

Since Plato and Aristotle have connected contagiousness and infectious emotions to the theater, Antonin Artaud stated that theatre or performance should be like the disease that infects performers' and viewers' bodies and takes possession of them with affective energy in the 20th century. However, audiences and actors must

be in the same space for these infections. This physical intimacy has been replaced during the corona pandemic by theater, which is mainly performed and streamed online. We contend that the type of viral theater we are currently experiencing is the result of the interaction of three factors: first, the disruption experienced by both performers and audience members; second, the willingness and expectations of audience members to participate in the performance; and third, the use of communication tools like Zoom. By forcing us to consider questions of complicity, the pandemic's framework enhances and modifies what viral theater can be and what kind of impact it can have. It also oscillates between more Platonic notions of dangerous contagion and the Aristotelian ideal of cathartic emotions when plays or performers ask for our moral support (Liedke & Pietrzak-Franger, 2021).

Even though McAuley (2007) recognizes the varied activities that can fall under the umbrella term "performance," from the most organized, complex, and elaborate to the most simple expressive practice, she identifies a common denominator: the presence of an artist/performer and a viewing audience. But with the recent shift to digital, performance seemed to struggle. Even on what theater would be called was confusion. Like many other theatrical hybrids venturing into the digital world these days, it's not clear what to call it. It's not technically live theater, but its soul is theatrical. (Millman, 2020).

Theater in its New Medium: How it Transmediates

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial influence on the performing arts, replicating its impacts throughout other creative sectors. Due to physical distancing restrictions and closure of the physical venues, reducing not only public performances but also rehearsals, several performing arts organisations attempted

to adapt by offering new (or newly extended) digital services. In particular, this resulted in the free online streaming of previously recorded performances of many companies – especially orchestral performances and plays – lists of which were collated by journalists as well as bespoke crowdsourcing projects’ (wikipedia.org).

Lunden (2020) wrote in his article, What Will The Future Of Theater Look Like? 'Our Artists Are Going To Lead Us,' that The Public Theater in New York has produced some online content. Oscar Eustis, the artistic director of The Public Theater, said that just because things are tough, doesn't mean we get off the hook; doesn't mean we don't have to try to accomplish our purpose. Thus, they have serialized radio plays. They have done Zoom plays. They are continuously communicating and making the art form viable. Eustis even emphasized in the article that they are not insisting the audience come and get into the small, crowded spaces but they will go to the audience and give them the chance to celebrate and enjoy and feel the solidarity of being an audience again.

Theater Going Back at Home. Most people carried out all their daily activities at home during the first massive wave of the COVID-19 epidemic due to prolonged restrictions on people's freedom of movement. This implied the necessity to explore the spatial characteristics of the home and how its residents perceive them in terms of people's welfare (Fornara, et.al., 2022). This leads to more activities at home to combat the uncertainty of the pandemic. Finding constructive activities to do as a family that will foster a sense of togetherness, trust, cohesion, and happiness is crucial, as is having excellent, healthy communication. (Gayatri & Irawaty, 2021).

Digital Theater: The Shift to an Online Platform

According to Chatzichristodoulou (2012), "The art of theatre, defined as cyber theatre, cyber drama, or cyber performance, is a genre that uses the internet as a performance space, namely a cyber stage." But to distinguish cyber performance from traditional theatre, Papagiannouli (2011) explained the idea of corporeality. 'A cyber stage is an online setting where communication occurs in a space and a non-space with actors and viewers present and absent simultaneously as part of a synchronous and mediated experience' (ibid.). But others have different perspectives. According to Delikonstantinidou (2021), digital theater is digital-born theater that makes use of the inherent traits and features of digital media rather than using digital technology as a tool for the production and distribution of traditional theatrical works.

The convergence of theatre and new media does not approach internet technologies as a distribution or "transmission" medium; instead, the internet is the site for the performance, & a creative medium. It is not about making a stage performance accessible to an online audience but about discovering new ways of making and presenting theatre and new artist-audience relationships in these new theatrical contexts (Kumar, 2013). Moreover, some expounded on the mediatized form. Auslander (1999) argued with Phelan for holding live events in high regard as "real" events while mediatized events are seen as "secondary" and "artificial reproductions of the real." His arguments against "the reductive binary opposition of the live and the mediatized" examined how live theater and performance have become more mediatized and the idea that there may not be any "clear-cut ontological distinctions between live forms and mediatized ones." He further claimed that "the relationship between live and mediatized form and the meaning of liveness

be understood as historical and contingent rather than determined by immutable factors."

But before going beyond the digital world, the recognition and understanding of computer technologies must be acknowledged. When computer technologies are viewed and contextualized as crucial media of social, cultural, and creative transformation, their "newness" becomes most apparent. In this way, they can inspire a sincere reevaluation of models and a paradigmatic rethinking of creative and communicational processes. (Dixon, 2007). Mellor (2018) clarified that the type and size of a theater are an excellent digital starting point for developing a digital sound strategy and using the available resources. However, there would be challenges that may arise. Digital technology, despite its advantages, poses issues for theater as well as other fields of endeavor that are not only practical and artistic but also political and ethical (Delikonstantinidou, 2021). Therefore, 'its production depicts the assimilation of various resources to the cultural dominant rather than a conversation among distinct media' (Dixon, 2007).

Masura (2020) noted the four prerequisites for digital theater to meet the criteria of both being digital and theater: 1. Although the audience may contribute to the construction of the event, the messages flow predominantly from performers to the audience; this is referred to as a limited interactivity of message. 2. There are two types of little interactivity of message: The use of spoken language or text that tells a narrative or story, which means that digital theater works involve verbal communication; 3. a co-present audience and actor, i.e., performers and audience(s) share public space (not necessarily physically, of course) at the location of the leading creative event without sacrificing liveness; and 4. the use of digital

technology during the performance's development process (rather than just as an archive tool).

So, in the end, a significant portion of the subject of innovation is not 'simply' technological; it also requires experimenting with new ideas, adopting novel perspectives, and opening up working procedures (Van Dijk, 2018). Rayner (1999) provides a way in the postscript to her essay and claimed that it was unlikely that the immaterial natural can be understood without reference to the temporal and spatial. This is why, according to her, "There is a way of knowing that is other than spatial and temporal and that, like the ontological foundation of performance, has been there all along."

Auslander (1999) clarified that "we now experience such work as a fusion, not a con-fusion, of realms, and that we see a fusion taking place within a digital environment that incorporates the live elements as part of its raw material." He realized the digital, incorporating live, is the dominant aesthetic force."

Digital Theater and Dramaturgy

Dramaturgy in the digital space is questioned on what it is like and what it constitutes. As a result, it is a dramaturgy of the machine interactions that have been enhanced...which, in reality, possesses only adaptability, the pace of which relies on how it is encoded (Linders, 2018).

The Philippine Educational Theatre Association (PETA) released plays as pay-per-view events in the Philippines. For a short period, you can watch a variety of plays. Every year, even the popular Virgin Labfest and Cinemalaya events put on by the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) must be converted into a digital format (<https://www.brittany.com.ph/blogs/lights-action-reopening-of-broadway/>).

Other regional theater organizations, such as Ballet Manila, Dulaang UP, Tanghalang Ateneo, Teatro Tomasino, and so on, have YouTube channels where they broadcast videos of their archived live theater performances. Theatre persisted in the face of obstacles. Whatever your opinions on the pandemic, the show must go on. <https://www.brittany.com.ph/blogs/lights-action-reopening-of-broadway/>

A new theatrical genre that communicated two notions has been named "mixed-reality performance," according to Benford & Giannachi (2012). One is the development of rich, sophisticated experiences that blend the real and virtual worlds. The other is the fusion of interactive digital media with live performances by actors or participants. These mixed-reality performances were directed to the identification of three trajectories by Benford & Giannachi (ibid.). First is the canonical trajectory is the plan for the experience that may be found in scripts, set designs, media and code designs, stage management instructions, and other things that the artists produce beforehand. The second trajectory is the participant trajectory, which is described as the real journey a specific person takes via a specific performance occurrence (ibid.). 'Interweaving the many participant paths like creating encounters, establishing moments of isolation, and regulating tempo' (ibid.) was the key to its successful implementation.

The historical trajectory, often known as "how an experience may be documented and subsequently retold," is the third trajectory. Along with this comes how the performance is to be choreographed. Gowri (2020), 'choreography that is directed organically adapts to the screen. For instance, if multiple screens are displayed in a window, actors' placements and body language must match those of co-actors.' Gowri believed that actors frequently stumble in the dark since they could not always see their co-stars. So, this called for rigorous scene-by-scene

choreography. With digital platforms, dramaturgy has transformed also. 'We shall be able to develop new types of dramaturgy because of something that will occur in this hybrid of the real and the virtual. This opens up a tremendously broad field that continues to astound us... We shouldn't think of analog and digital actors as opposing one another because they can cooperate to advance a dramaturgy toward its climax while having different personalities '(Linders, 2018).

Digital Theater and Interaction: The Uniting Relationship

Under the shadow of COVID-19, the city's future is under question: the rise of video platforms like Zoom seems to make the necessity of "being there" no longer necessary. This idea has been refuted by others who highlight the human yearning for togetherness (Tregear, 2020). Digital tools that different artists and companies have used will still be around after the coronavirus has passed, serving as ongoing components of artistic practice and being used to perform, display those performances, and extend and transform the relationship between performers and audiences by bringing them closer together than ever. Performers and performance ensembles will be easier to find online, and there will be more long-distance and local collaboration. Both with increased social media interaction and providing much more archival and other video content, most likely for free (Cartledge, 2021).

According to Auslander, "live performance is always already inscribed with traces of the possibility of technical mediation (i.e., mediatization) that defines it as live" (199). This is contrary to what Phelan would have us believe. Put another way, "live" can only be understood through mediation and vice versa. In other words, "mediatization is now explicitly and implicitly joined to live experience." Phelan (1993), however, insists that 'live and visible bodies must be present for a performance to take place. Their presence must be fleeting since live performances

could never last for numerous days, weeks, or months. According to Phelan, presence is characterized by a brief time-limited close space (and closed space) between live bodies (performers and audience). Because of the effects of seeing oneself and others on video while physically disconnected, spending much time in the virtual world near or backstage could impact overall well-being (O'Brien, 2021), additionally, spending much time in the backstage area and away from socially defined roles might cause feelings of social detachment (Pucino, 2022).

The audience wants a wider variety of outstanding experiences, especially after spending more time online. Eddy Zee, head of performing arts at Tai Kwun (Hong Kong's Centre for Heritage and Arts), asserted in a news article for The Theatre News, "It can't just be about performances anymore. " Instead, performers must consider how viewers can now interact with them throughout a show. The pandemic brought something beneficial in this aspect. When things return to normal, plenty of fresh initiatives can be launched due to exposure to digital technologies (Cartledge, 2021). Liodaki & Velegrakis (2022) expounded that "the audience's attention and focus on the piece are strongly related to the question of time in these theatrical experiments." But the audience demands more. They expect a real performance. Auslander (2008) asserted that "digital media can create a feedback loop between actors and the audience."

Dixon (ibid.) explained, 'This sense of in-between-ness—a liminal space operating between the screen images and live performers—is frequently the fundamental kernel, what one might even call the "metatext" of digital theatrics.' He expounded that 'The combination of live performance and digital imagery can create a specific, hybrid form and experience similar to what Alain Virmaux has described Artaud's film scenarios: "something which is neither theatre nor film, but partakes of

the evanescent reality of dreams." according to Liodaki & Velegrakis (2022), who stated that "from the artists' point of view, what was missing was the cool-down process after a performance, the applause, and the chats with the audience." Liodaki & Velegrakis (ibid.) stressed that "this encounter should not be understood solely as a social process but as a process that takes place physically as well."

The presence of, not the presence in, creates the virtual theater. Perhaps this is what the introduction of telepresencing into our daily lives will do to "theatre": hone an already present sense of the virtual; bring those intangible characteristics of the place to bear on the experience of going to the theater in fresh, fruitful, and thrilling ways (Paul, 2023).

Theater as/in Film in the Digital Platform. In the new digital platform, there is a question if the new theater performances are still theater or film productions. Dixon (2007) clarified in his book that it had been argued by Margaret Morse, Elizabeth Grosz, and Sarah Rubidge that the concept of the "space in between" is essential to the artistic forms and spectator experiences of (respectively) immersive artworks, video installations, and architecture. He highlighted that what is fundamental is not the physical object or environment but the space it occupies and the dynamic spaces configured and experienced by visitors and spectators. When applied to e-theater productions, stage areas become transitory, ever-changing, and, in the words of Elizabeth Grosz, "always in the process of being but never realized... the area between things."

Liodaki & Velegrakis (2022) clarified that the camera or the microphone are essential tools used to record and transmit the sound and image of the performers, which fundamentally alters the theatrical experience. According to Gorman, Syrja, and Kanninen (2019), different sensory modalities must compensate for the absence

of direct skin and hand contact when acting in a digital environment. Due to the vibrotactile properties of the speech, "the touch of the other body can be felt even without concrete, immediate contact" (Syrja & Kanninen, *ibid.*).

Theater and Feedback: The Unbreakable Connection

An automated feedback loop exists throughout the performance (Fischer-Lichte, 2008). Thus, production and reception co-occur, and a dynamic feedback loop is established "during the interaction between actors and spectators" (*ibid.*) while the self-described automation system "ensures that performance remains unpredictable and spontaneous to some extent" (*ibid.*). However, in the digital space, the automated feedback loop was questioned. Some claimed that feedback is hard to measure and maintain. Goebbels believed that a performance's effectiveness depended more on what was left out of it than what was. He notes that the idea of theatricality has evolved from a period of overdetermined and even "histrionic" gestures to an aesthetic characterized by minimalism, voids, and an invitation for the audience to find their meaning in their experiences in the theatre (Goebbels, 2015). Although for Fischer-Lichte (2008), the focus of this process is no longer the artistic creation that resulted from the creators' acts but rather an event that develops and comes to a close as a result of the actions of everyone involved.

During the pandemic, with the maximization of the digital platforms, varied strategies were developed to assess interaction and maintain feedback. One of these is the talk back. Miller (2017, Los Angeles Times) explained that talkback is an opportunity to discuss the play with the actors, the director, and occasionally the playwright. He added that for theaters, the talkback can strengthen the relationship between the venue and its patrons, expand knowledge of the work, and increase the audience's sense of participation instead of passive viewing. But whether it is

physical or digital, theater would always have the experience of the other. Pefanis (2015) proposed that "the theatrical scene is the ultimate heterotopia where you can meet the Other and let them transform you."

Diversifying Audience Around the World: How the Audience Responds

Jacobson (2020) in her article cited The U.K. Arts Council's report "From Live-to-Digital" about the potential of streamed performance to increase access to theatre that stated, 'Streaming does appear to attract younger, less wealthy and more ethnically diverse members of the population.' Further, in the privacy of one's home, rules are removed from theater in line with audience etiquette. Jacobson (2020) even pointed-out the actress, Gillian Anderson who asked audience members 'to stay off their phones while watching the National Theatre's streamed version of a stage play that she starred (A Streetcar Named Desire).' Anderson also tried to enforce public theatre behaviors in private. Further, Jacobson (ibid.) stated that 'live-tweeting alongside performances is already a well-established practice that expected audience behaviours to be renegotiated for online viewing.' These are proofs of adjustments and strategies incorporated for theater in the new normal.

Theater and Education in the Pandemic

With the spread of the epidemic and the succession of lockdowns, best practices, and recommendations regarding the potential of digital for the performing arts also started to take hold (Aebischer & Nicholas, 2020). Vickers (2020) emphasized that teachers were given creative options for embodied learning experiences in online contexts when it came to "digitized theater training and rehearsals" and that these options included the use of cognitive presence. The term "cognitive presence" was first used by Garrison & Anderson (2003) to describe how

well learners can create and reinforce meaning through extended contemplation and discussion in a critical community of inquiry.

According to Hepplewhite (2022), "the necessity for online learning structures in 2020/2021 was disappointing for students' expectations while presenting challenges to lecturers seeking to replace the benefits of experiential learning." The recognition model may be helpful, as suggested by Hepplewhite (ibid.). "The application of recognition here distinguishes a sense of distinctive otherness that can more productively, drawing from an empathetic attunement to build a mutual sensibility," he writes. But if one recognizes the needs of the students, acceptance of the digital environment might be easier. Additionally, using technology for teaching involves more than just using basic devices and software; it also entails using it in a way that puts the needs of the students first and encourages interaction online (Davis, 2009). The combination of synchronous and asynchronous collaborative work as well as communication between the virtual classroom and the home marks the advent of interactive technology (Carroll et al., 2000). Therefore, technology could still foster interaction in the virtual space.

'In 2015, Thailand had an average Internet speed of 7.4 Mbps, Sri Lanka 7.4, and Malaysia 4.3. With a modest average Internet speed of 2.8 Mbps, the Philippines ranked 104th out of 160 nations. In contrast, developed countries like South Korea (23.6 Mbps) and Singapore (12.9 Mbps) were rated 1 and 12, respectively (Salac & Kim, 2016). But other issues affect this. Results from a study by Fabito et al. (2021) revealed that, in addition to a shortage of desktop or laptop computers, an online learning environment also has issues with internet access. Aside from these difficulties, 'the contradiction between modifiability and archivability,

two traits common to digital settings, was the leading cause of organizational restrictions' (Phillips & Milner, 2017) that affects also the shift to digital settings.

School-based stage productions and e-Theater Productions: How They Adopt and Produce.

Another challenge brought about by the pandemic is the conduct of theater classes. Majority of the schools experimented to allow the students to 'feel' the theater experience.

In Shenandoah University in Virginia, USA specifically in Shenandoah Conservatory Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting, the students rehearsed via Zoom. Students started experimenting on passing props across camera. They also found new ways of playing with the camera, the lighting, the background, the costumes and makeup. They figured-out how to make eye contact with each other across the camera, playing with where they needed to look to make the conversations appear natural. They found ways to blend TV acting and stage acting together. They also focused on storytelling with voice alone. They conducted a one-time Zoom for family, friends, and colleagues. There was a live audience. The actors could not see or hear them until the end, but knowing that there was an audience was enough for the actors. The students believe that circumstances are changing that is why they need to change given the circumstances.

At the University of Illinois Chicago, UIC's School of Theatre & Music, Jessica Fisch, an adjunct lecturer, shared in the UIC online news site that 'Zoom was "a blessing and a curse" because while it enabled them to connect and work with the students remotely, it also brought up many challenging sound issues. For example, Zoom prevents two people from talking simultaneously and actors

are frequently cut off. In addition, issues involving unstable internet connections and students not having access to reliable personal computers also came up.'

e-Theater Productions during the Pandemic: How the Philippines Performs

According to JC Gotinga (2020) in his article *Will the coronavirus kill Philippine theater?* 'at least 33 other major theatrical productions lined up for 2020 were either cut short or canceled because of the pandemic. Those productions would have mounted a total of 533 performances this year. The Philippine Legitimate Stage Artist Group (Philstage) estimated its 17-member companies lost more than P269 million from these canceled shows. Counting other canceled productions of Metro Manila-based theatrical companies outside Philstage, the total loss in theater revenues this year exceeds P439 million.' According to Philstage, canceled theater projects have displaced at least 1,689 freelance performers, production crew, and creatives.

Sorilla (2020) of the Philippine Tatler discussed in his article, *The State Of The Philippine Art Scene During The Covid-19 Pandemic*, that "For the performing arts, Margie Moran-Floirendo, chairperson of the Cultural Centre of the Philippines (CCP), shares that the pandemic situation fast-tracked the implementation of the institution's pending transition plan to an online platform." "We began working with Virgin Labfest [VLF] to launch live virtual performances on CCP and VLF's Facebook profiles on June 10. Because of our collaboration with Vimeo, viewers can now see all of our shows along with behind-the-scenes material, talkbacks, etc., claims Floirendo. Additionally, CCP hosted an online concert and posted old videos of its resident businesses' previous performances.

The rise of alternate forms of theater like streamed versions of pre-recorded theatrical productions like *Huling El Bimbo* showed the forced transition of theater

productions to digital. Yu (2020) in his article in the Philippine Daily Inquirer discussed that the case of “El Bimbo” proved that, with the proper publicity and the “right” material, there can be a future for streaming theater in the Philippines.’ He further explained that ‘the El Bimbo was no global pioneer for this. London’s National Theatre and New York’s Lincoln Center have been in the business of streaming theater for years, recording their shows as if they were shooting films and releasing them in cinemas or through broadcasters like PBS (Public Broadcasting Service). In fact, when the pandemic struck and London theater shuttered, the National Theatre was one of the first to launch these online shows-for-a-cause initiatives.’

Innovations in e-Theater Productions during the Pandemic: What are NEW

During the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the theater was pushed back to take a backseat. Practitioners were left with two choices: to wait for the pandemic end and wait for the opening of theater productions or to explore the possibilities for theater productions despite the pandemic. These made theater accessible for those who do not have access to it before the pandemic. Biggs (n.d.) described how theater is managed during the pandemic wherein theaters brought performances to the public to generate more revenue, such through outdoor performances, streaming services, Zoom productions, and getting a play's recording in the mail.

According to Manan (2021), Three keywords—innovation, form, and embeddedness—could be related to the performances in the post-pandemic. She noted that "it was less about open-ended contemplation of how the performing arts can retain vitality amidst the prohibitive circumstances, and more about sharing examples of performances that exemplify the act of moving ahead despite the

barriers." She added that innovation in presentation, form as a deeper reflection of the experience, and embeddedness is the contextualization of the performances within national spheres.

Performances evolved to include innovative planning and execution. While multi-layered digital choreography occurred in theater performances during the pandemic, Kaufman and Sternberg (2006) noted that "Studies in the performance arts tradition are characteristically historical-anthropological and attempt to capture or describe the creative shifts or adaptations that transform a traditional performance into a multilayered modern choreography."

Challenges in e-theater productions: What, Why, and Where is the Problem

Lavender (2017) emphasized that global access to the internet bandwidth is the challenging aspect of internet theater. Internet connectivity is one challenge to reach the audience without interruption. Hence, it is also a contributory factor in encouraging engagement from the audience.

Theater having 'liveness' as one of its basic features, its transcending into digital, into online, into the internet is questioned. One of the key issues surrounding the larger liveness debate is whether "theater" can exist entirely online. Dixon (2007) explained that theater and performance "may still occur in live and virtual environments," according to theory since virtual theater "affects a transubstantiation wherein the elements of the "now" are "transformed, through the contemporaneous consecration of the new Eucharist, the linking of human and machine" (the same thing only different). However, there are still those who attest to how real the theater production is. According to Dixon (ibid.), although I can dismiss the idea of performance as being "in the now," present, and live, I tremble at the lack of physical presence in virtual performance. . . . The seclusion of the viewer and the actor, which

can characterize the theater, will be broken down through interaction in virtual settings. . . . The problem is analogous to the age-old sci-fi conundrum, "Am I a simulation or am I real?" becoming the other after having observed the other. Thus, the question of where is theater arises. For Barranger (1995) for the theater to occur, a special place for the audience and the actor must be present.

Dixon (2007) clarified that history coexists with the theater's ritual roots rather than beginning with a cut. Technology and theater have always interacted. However, Liodaki & Velegrakis (2022) explained that the present forms of this nexus, while distinct, experience and question the coexistence of practitioners and the audience.

Rayner (1999) observes that "just deploying technology in a live performance does not make a significant phenomenological or ontological shift in the gathering and copresence of actors and audience. Critical theory is fumbling toward a new place as telepresence affects concepts of space. Since telepresence hasn't yet developed its own metaphors, Rayner (ibid.) claims that it has appropriated metaphors from theater and three-dimensional spatial thought. Designers of the internet therefore attempt to make metaphor and imagination the same, and what is more "a substantial object." Dixon (ibid.) further emphasized that as a result, "insofar as theatre is a paradigm of representation," cyberspace strives to transcend the heres, nows, and parameters of representation that fundamentally constitute theater. Cyberspace's nemesis is theater. Theater, which has historically been site-specific (a space for seeing), is thus especially vulnerable to a form of eradication under the weight of digitization, regardless of its spatial layout, especially during the pandemic. However, such destruction creates a place for the legitimacy of "denatured" space and time which arise during the onset of the pandemic. Thus, according to Dixon

(ibid.), one sort of presence is dematerialized but another is instituted by the digital creation of time and space.

For Liodaki & Velegrakis (2022) in their study *Theater minus Physical Coexistence*, Their theatrical experimentations focused on three analytical categories: space, time, and other space and time. For space, it revealed that there is no theatrical space but something diverse. Thus, this led to the problem of developing feedback loops between the performers and the audience. Thus, their interview revealed “The actors were there, but the other 50% of the show, the audience, was missing. A show is co-creation.’ As to time, the broadcast may be interrupted and delayed due to technical issues. Likewise, in live streaming, what the audience sees is a black screen, and will be unable to feel the darkness. But the challenge lies in the audiences’ attention and concentration for the theatrical performance. As to the other space and time (before and after of the performance, framing of the performance, and the different time and space of the montage process), there is the missing ‘cool down process’ where there will be applause and interaction with the audience that the performers could immediately see. Hence there is the question of experiencing the other in theater and letting that other transform you during and after the performance. According to Lavender (2017), this ecology of performance necessitates a constant flux of subject, object, and subject connections and positions, as well as a diversity of mediums. Due of its overt and experiential dimensions, internet theater is dramaturgically challenging. But during the pandemic, theater productions are forces, pushed, and motivated to transcend to a different medium, to a different stage. Lavender pointed out that internet theater (ibid.) may function through distinct layerings of location and time (owing to the effects of latency, the mapping of time zones, and occasionally the interface between live and pre-

recorded content) and that these layerings get harder to separate, which is a result of hybridization. Nevertheless, Sermon et al. (2022) explained that while there is initially excitement in using the new platform to break the fourth wall of the Zoom frames to exchange props, the format is much more similar to live television than theater and the framed boxes are artificial distancers that bind the performers rather than free them.

Digital Theater and Opportunities: What Awaits the Hybrid Forms

Artists are responding to "the pandemic's potential to remake expectations around the duration of the performative encounter and the relationships that can be created through it" in addition to the appetite for continued digital engagement, which is partly motivated by a desire to avoid the health risks associated with in-person (Thomasson, 2022). International collaboration opens up new opportunities for progress and new opportunities for theater-makers. It seeks novel forms of self-expression and creates fresh discoveries. Thanks to the partnership, the theater process becomes even more essential in the quest for invention. Additionally, it is helpful to audiences and experts, igniting conversation outside of pre-existing frameworks (Burjanadze, 2018).

According to Sermon et al. (2022), who wrote that "their creativity is stimulated by their superimposed co-presence within imaginative virtual set designs, and most significantly because the boxed-in head-and-shoulders paradigm of platforms such as Zoom/Skype/Teams/FaceTime is replaced by full-body interactions with no spatial boundaries or visual separations between performers." 'People could watch Broadway musicals from the front row thanks to smartphone programs like BroadwayHD, Met Opera On Demand, and National Theatre At Home, streaming platform apps that display Broadway and West-End plays. Even Netflix

decided to make musical movies like "Mamma Mia," "Dreamgirls," and "Prom" Their app debuts' As a result, a new breed of "video-call"-based stories or narratives, including long-distance interactions, was born (<https://www.brittany.com.ph>) Sermon et al. (2022) stated that "since on screen, their self is also the other, they can reflect on the interactions and performances occurring in front of them while seeing themselves as being directly responsible for it.

The Future of e-theater Productions. Cyberformance is a buzz word in 2008.. According to Jamieson (2008) the issue for the cyberformance artist will be to strike a balance between maintaining the performer-audience divide and simultaneously responding to and collaborating with this new species of audience. Our audience is extremely different from that of the conventional theatre because to the contemporary interactive drive of information technology, but it is still an audience, and cyberformance is still (or is now) a form of theatre. This is already observed in the various theatrical productions during the pandemic. The relationship and roles of audience and performers change from being performers vs audience to being co-creators. Newton (2014) coined the term MPC or the metacommunicative performative competence where it implies that both performer and audience go beyond meaning-sharing to re-define their roles as participant co-constructors and, in so doing, arouse one another's senses to achieve the performative state of co-experience in the here and now. This meta-theorizing of the performer-audience relationship is becoming evident in digital theater productions. Linders (2018) noted that the theater of the future being tested is not "man versus machine," but rather analog performance blended with inventively implemented digital technology that enables instant engagement. This instant engagement re-creates a new platform for

interaction for the performers and the audience. Hence, Mellor (2018) identified various substantial development theater in its cross-over to digital theater namely:

- the innovative use of new technology in both online and offline creative practice
- the online creation, distribution, and sharing of experiences with audiences using new technology;
- the collection, exchange, and analysis of data to enhance decision-making, allowing businesses to customize their offerings for customers and boost earnings.

Vickers (2020) predicts that throughout this historic shift to online digitized pedagogy, theater educators will provide well-designed and assisted courses online that offer both scholarly and practical pedagogical approaches. As a result, the curriculum needs to be adjusted to the new digital environment.

Chapter III

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY:

How the Story was Structured

To explore the actual lived experiences of theater practitioners in e-theater during the pandemic, the study was grounded on the Phenomenological Tradition. It was also placed under the Communicative Ecology Theory to investigate how the participants' lived experiences related to the theory's three layers—technical & media layer, communication layer, and discursive layer.

Phenomenological tradition: Unveiling the Essence in the Lived Experiences

This study was grounded in the Phenomenological tradition. Apuke (2018) emphasized that this tradition is more of the interpretation of one's own subjective experiences. Thus, in this study, the personal narratives of the participants significantly contributed to the exploration of how each of them defined and described their lived experiences of the new seeing place for their performances in line with the main research question, how theater as communication accomplished in the new seeing place.

‘A phenomenological theory of communication attempts to explain this kind of experience, but in doing so it confronts an essential paradox. Genuine communication (often called dialogue in this tradition) requires that we experience others as others, that is, as conscious beings in their own right, in and for themselves, but we can never actually experience another person's unique consciousness’ (Unit V, 2007). The mutual involvement of the researcher to the participants surfaced the experience of self and the other. Through the dialogues, the researcher explored the genuineness of the experience of the participants who

were all first-timers in e-theater productions. Phenomenology deals with communication by experiencing the self and the other through communication. The other in this study was theater. Theater communicated to the participants. This was achieved through the dialogue being referred to as their lived experiences. The dialogue of the self and the other was explored in this study.

In theater, dialogue does not rely mainly on the spoken words of the performers but also constituted the dialogue between performers with fellow performers, of performers with audiences, of the production team with audiences, of performers to themselves, of audiences to fellow audiences, and of the audience to themselves. This dialogue was the lived experiences of the participants in the e-theater productions. This was how theater communicated to the participants in their e-theater productions. Hence, this dialogue reflected how theater as communication was accomplished in the new seeing place.

Communicative Ecology: Exploring the Communication Layer in the e-theater Lived Experiences

This study was aligned with the communicative ecology theory. Taachi (2015) described communicative ecologies as the intricate webs of media, information, and communication that make up a society. Hence, it offered a way of thinking about how 'information and communication flow between people and through infrastructures, including not just electronic media channels but also roads and buses, as well as any other communication processes and practices that are significant in a particular context (Taachi, 2015). Thus, it was believed that it does not assume a hierarchy or order of ways of communicating. The communicative ecology model also enabled researchers to take a holistic approach to comprehend the dynamic

interrelationships and connections between 'social dimensions, discourse, and communications technology in both physical and digital environments (en,Wikipedia.org). This study, how theater, as communication was accomplished in the new seeing place, unraveled the connections, and communication processes were experienced using e-theater.

Taachi (2006) explained that researchers could analyze how new media or technology may or may not be incorporated into current communication patterns using the communicative ecology model. Given these conditions, the use of e-theater in the productions of theater performances during the pandemic explained what contributions the new seeing place had in the e-theater productions of the participants.

Foth and Hearn (2007) recommended segmenting research interests into three layers: the discursive layer, the people layer, and the technology and media layer. The technology and media layer described the channels of communication between the various people and groups and included all communication devices, distribution systems (whether digital or analog), and the technical systems that enabled them (either software or mechanical) (Foth & Hearn, 2007).

In line with the technology and media layer, this was how the new seeing place was used in various e-theater productions during the pandemic. There was the utilization of Zoom and Google Meet. The use of FB groups and FB pages. The use of OBS encapsulated the continuity of movement and transition of events given the separate locations of the production team and the cast. The exploration of varied web applications and editing software to humanize the effect of theater in a new seeing place. The creation of a household stage streamed live using the internet. These were all part of the e-theater productions of the participants.

Moreover, the discursive layer as explained by Foth & Hearn (2007) focused on the informational substance of the communication, in particular the narratives, perceptions, assumptions, and symbols that constituted it. This was how the e-theater productions communicated through different stories that consisted of the theater practitioners' acquired belief and understanding of the e-theater productions. Symbols came into how stage designs, costumes, make-up, musical, and sound effects were utilized in the e-theater productions and whether this captured how theater as communication was accomplished given the restrictions brought about by the new seeing place.

Further, the people layer described the various individuals and groups involved, their social connections, and the institutions and structures that embraced those connections together (Foth & Hearn, 2007). The people layer comprised how the practitioners of the e-theater productions still maintained their relationship and managed to get involved in the e-theater production. This also focused on how theater as communication was accomplished in the new seeing place where its two relevant elements, the performers and the audience, were digitally separated and digitally connected by digital frames (zoom meetings or google meet) and digital comments (FB live and recorded videos).

In an article by ear.findingavoice.org, it enumerated some reasons why there was a need to study local communicative ecologies:

- Without understanding the context in which an information and communication technology was situated and how it was being utilized, it would be impossible to comprehend the impacts of that technology.

- Any ICT endeavor would function most effectively if it could complement rather than replaced pre-existing communication channels.
- A certain project could better serve local information and communication needs and practices by understanding local communicative ecologies and integrating them.
- By observing how communication methods evolve, one can evaluate the success of the endeavor.

Having these reasons, the new experiences in e-theater of the practitioners opened new insights, understanding, and opportunities for better understanding as well as exploration of the new seeing place. It was also a good way to start locally before exploring the e-productions of others. In the Philippine context, with the existing digital divide, unfolding how theater, as communication was accomplished in the new seeing place, provided understanding for local theater productions in search of strategies in the communicative ecologies that existed and were needed to exist in the e-theater productions.

Chapter IV

METHODOLOGY:

How the Story was Developed

This chapter describes the methodical techniques I utilized to carry out the study, gather and analyze the data, and adhere to research ethics.

Epistemological Grounds of the Study

For this study, based on the lived experiences of the participants, how theater as communication in the new seeing place during the pandemic, would be generated and validated was based on the following:

1. The exploration of the theater practitioner's experience leads to knowledge of uncovering the premise: how theater as communication is accomplished in the new seeing place during the pandemic. The personal stories and interpretations of theater practitioners' experiences with e-theater are regarded as reliable sources of information regarding the phenomena. Their subjective experiences served as legitimate knowledge in this study.
2. The study observed phenomenological reduction or epoché, where I suspended my preconceived assumptions on e-theater to address the theater practitioners' experiences from new angles. This permitted me to interact directly with the real-life experiences of theatrical professionals in e-theater during the pandemic.
3. The study also underscored the value of participants' points of view considering their viewpoints and connotations regarding the phenomenon under study. With this encompassed the nature of e-theater, the different features of the digital technology in e-theater, the challenges it possessed, and the transition of theater to e-theater.

4. The study also highlighted my engagement with the collected data to explore and reveal the meanings of the personal points of view of the theater practitioners as well as the consistency of recurring elements in the experiences. These were allowed to emerge naturally to capture the essence of the experiences of the participants. Likewise, my positionality is observed to ensure that I would be able to suspend my biases based on my pre-conceived knowledge and experience on e-theater.

Ontological Grounds of the Study

For this study, based on the lived experiences of the participants, the nature of reality on how theater as communication in the new seeing place during the pandemic would emerge was based on the following:

1. The lived experiences of theater practitioners were the main subject of this study, which emphasized the value of individual viewpoints in forming knowledge of theater's transcendence into its new seeing place. However, the recognition that their lived experiences were their subjective realities and that this subjectivity was considered to be the distinctive personal points of view and interpretations of the participants which were formed as influenced by their values, surroundings, and others. Thus, there would be multiple realities formed due to the multiplicity of personal points of view of the participants.

2. The personal narratives and points of view of the theater practitioners were affected by the pandemic as the special setting of the study that had profoundly influenced the transcendence of theater to e-theater leading to new perspectives of realizing the phenomenon. As a result, this study acknowledged that the participants' lived experiences were multifaceted and included both technological and interpersonal components. However, given that the study explored the lived

experiences of theater practitioners during the pandemic, this study also recognized that their narratives and personal points of view were also affected by their own physical and emotional encounters with the new seeing place.

3. The connection between the theater practitioners and the phenomenon under study produced meaning and understanding. The experiences of theater practitioners with e-theater revealed fresh features of communication and meaning-making that exceeded the conservative theatrical settings. Having this, the study also recognized the potential of shared experiences and collective sense-making among theater practitioners who engaged in e-theater during the pandemic.

4. Lastly, this study honored the possibility that the lived experiences of the theater practitioners in e-theater during the pandemic could lead to new viewpoints on how theater as communication was accomplished in the new seeing place.

Research Design:

The Genre

The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation. 'In the human sphere, this normally translates into gathering 'deep' information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions, and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s)' (Lester, 1999).

A transcendental phenomenology was utilized for this study. This separated my pre-conceived idea of theater as communication from the target participants' perspectives. Thus, the rich experiences of the participants about theater and their lived experiences in e-theater productions during the pandemic offered a better understanding of how they were able to accomplish communication in theater given a new seeing place. In addition, Creswell & Poth (ibid.) pointed out that Moustakas

focused on one of Husserl's concepts, epoche, or bracketing, in which investigators set aside their experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination. Hence, transcendental meant "in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34).

Research Methods

Locale of the Study:

The Setting

The two participants in this study were from Laguna and Manila, where the study was carried out—these were the locations where the e-theater productions were supervised. However, for the first online theater showcase of PHSA, the sites were dispersed in different areas of the country since the students were all at home. Thus, the theater performance was staged in their homes. In addition, Dr. Glecý's Stage@Home videos mainly came from Manila and nearby cities and communities. As for the second online theater showcase of PHSA, it was staged and prerecorded in the school.

Participants of the Study:

The Actors

The participants for this study were theater practitioners who possessed the following qualifications:

- must have a rich experience in theater arts;
- produced or performed an e-theater during the pandemic (from 2020 to 2022) via the new seeing place;

- part of any e-theater productions which could be live performances via any applications (Zoom, Google meet, FB Live, and others) or live streaming applications (OBS, StreamYard, and others) pre-recorded and streamed live, and pre-recorded and uploaded via FB page, website, and other online platforms; and
- part of any theater production, freelancer, or school-based production.

Actor's Profile:

ACTOR 1 (Participant 1): Glec Cruz Atienza is a Full Professor in the Department



of Filipino and Philippine Literature at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. She handles Philippine theater, creative writing, and literature. She is a theater scholar, director, playwright, essayist, and performance artist. Her capacity to combine her research discoveries with creative expression was demonstrated by the numerous critically praised theatrical works she has produced and directed outside

of her academic work. She was one of the founders of renowned theatrical events including the PETA-MTTL "Dula Daluyan," PETA Aesthetics Research Conference, and the PETA Women's theatrical Program. She is a senior artist of the Philippines Educational Theater Association (PETA). Prof. Glec has won numerous awards for her playwriting, creative nonfiction, and academic research. She has won prizes from prominent organizations including the Gloria Villaraza Guzman Creative Writing Grant, the U.P. Creative Writing Center Local Fellow for the Essay, the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature, and the Cultural Center of the Philippines

Writing Grant for Literature. She is a Fellow for the Essay at the local Creative Writing Center. She is the founding chair of the ALYANSA, Inc., (Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang Pangkultura sa Kamaynilaan at Karatig-Pook) a network of local theaters dedicated to promoting the use of theater and the arts for neighborhood improvement. ALYANSA used its Facebook page for its e-theater productions.

Prof. Atienza actively works in research and advocacy work centered on arts-based remedies for many social concerns, therefore her scholarly contributions go beyond the walls of academia. She exhibited a strong sense of social responsibility and empathy for underrepresented people via her dedication to using theater and communication as vehicles for social change. One of these advocacies is to continue theater despite the pandemic. This gave way to the varied e-theater productions produced and shown on ALYANSA's FB page. Despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic and the new digital medium, Prof. Glec's rich theatrical expertise was incorporated into her narratives for the three years running (2020–2022) e-theater.

ACTOR 2 (PARTICIPANT 2): Christina Joy Mendoza-Cardenas or Teena is a graduate of Theater Arts from the University of the Philippine-Diliman where she



developed a deep understanding, appreciation, and passion for theatre. She is a regular faculty member of the Philippine High School for the Arts for 11 years. She handles varied courses in theater arts in the Art Education curriculum. Theater arts included acting, directing, ensemble building, theater theories, technical theater, stage and production management, theater and performance skills, musical theater, and machinating performances

(<http://www.phsa.edu.ph>). Throughout her academic and professional journey, Teena has demonstrated a strong passion for the performing arts, and education.

As a participant in this phenomenological study, her valuable insights and lived experiences as both an artist and an educator provided rich and meaningful contributions to the exploration of e-theater during the pandemic. Her unique perspectives played a crucial role in shedding light on the experiences of practitioners in the academe on e-theater. The two online theater showcases produced under her class were the subjects of her narratives on the e-theater experience of PHSA. Her dedication to the field of Theater Arts and her commitment to nurturing young talents continue to leave a lasting impact on the artistic community and the future of performing arts education.

Here is a summary of profile of the participants:

Table 1.

Profile of the Actors (Participants)

Name of the Participants	Affiliations	Years of Theater Experience	e-theater Production during the pandemic	Online Applications/ Strategies/Sites used for e-theater productions
Prof. Glecy C. Atienza	Full Professor - University of the Philippines-Diliman	47 years theater experience	12 e-theater productions produced (Stage@Home from May 8 to May 27, 2020) Followed by 4 festivals featuring the Stage@Home productions for the past three years	FB Page, Group Chats
Ms. Christine Joy Mendoza-Cardenas	Teacher, Philippine High School for the Arts	11 years as Theater Arts Teacher Freelance Theater Performer	Produced two online theater showcases: 1.Mga Kuwentong Bata (2021) live and streamed live in the FB page 2. pre-recorded and streamed live in the FB page	OBS, FB page, Zoom, Google Classroom, Group chats

Sampling Procedure:

The Casting Selection

Criterion sampling was used for this study. Patton (1990) defined it as 'a type of purposeful sampling that picks all cases that meet some criterion.' Having targeted the lived experiences of theater practitioners on e-theater productions, the participants were selected based on the predefined inclusion criteria.

Moser A. and Korstjens I. (2018) emphasized that the researchers look for volunteers that have had a similar experience yet differ in personality traits and personal experiences. For this study, the participants were selected based on the pre-determined criteria to meet the research objectives. Both participants were academics and have rich experience in the theater arts. Their substantial experiences in theater and their new encounters in e-theater productions allowed me to explore and unfold how they were able to accomplish theater as communication in the new seeing place.

Research Instrument:

Performance Evaluation Tool

I used an open-ended questionnaire to ensure that in-depth answers were gathered. The main question for this study was: Describe your e-theater productions during the pandemic. From this main question, I asked follow-questions to explore how they were able to produce theater performances online and how they were able to define and experience theater as communication in the new seeing place.

Qualitative digital materials were utilized to confirm how communication in theater was accomplished in the new seeing place. Likewise, these materials also revealed how the e-theater productions were produced in the new seeing place.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) clarified that this information could be presented in the form of images, artifacts, videos, website pages, emails, text messages, social media posts, or any kind of sound. As to this study, these materials could be the pre-recorded videos, the uploaded videos, or the live performances via FB live that highlighted each e-theater production during the pandemic.

Moreover, I was also the research instrument. Janesick (2001) explained that researchers devise strategies for starting discussions about creativity, thus, the researcher created connections with the participants by targeting meaningful conversations in the data collection. This way, I was able to surface the relevant experiences of the participants regarding how theater as communication was accomplished in the e-theater productions during the pandemic.

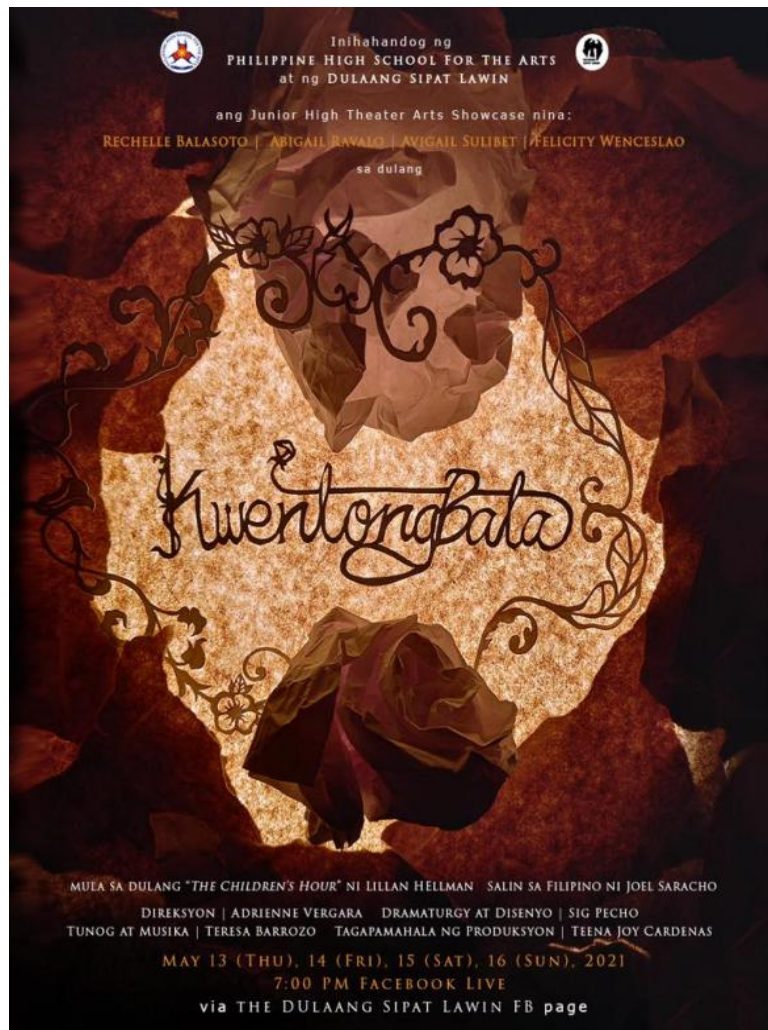
Description of the two e-theater productions:

The Play Script

PHSA's Online Theater Showcase. Dulaang Sipat Lawin or DSL is a resident theater group of the Philippine High School for the Arts. Part of its year-end showcase is to produce a theater showcase. During the pandemic, it produced two online theater showcases. The students were first exposed to the new digital platform as the new stage for performance. The first online theater showcase, entitled " Kuwentong Bata," was conceptualized in 2021. The students in the theater department collaborated with their mentors and directors to craft a detailed plan for their first online theater showcase.

Figure 1.

Poster of the first online showcase of the PHSA



Kuwentong Bata, a period play, based on *The Children's Hour* by Lillian Hellman, took the audience on a journey through an intense drama that explored the perils of discrimination as well as the damaging effects of lies and gossip. Being its initial e-theater production, the students, Ms. Teena, and the production team fought varied technical and digital difficulties. Hence, the students were required to have similar backgrounds, period costumes and make-up, lighting appropriateness for the setting, and a strong internet connection. This was a two-hour and 30-minute play with two 10-min intervals. This was shown for four consecutive days (May 13 to May

16, 2021). To reach a wider audience, PHSA live-streamed "Mga Kuwentong Bata" on their official Facebook page. To ensure a unified theater experience, the DSL used OBS (Open Broadcaster Software). Through comments and reactions, the audience communicated with the actors and with fellow audience that fostered a sense of community and a common love of the arts even in the virtual world.

Figure 2.

Poster of the second online showcase of the PHSA that is an adaptation of 'It Is So!'



The students, guided by their dedicated mentors and directors, rehearsed tirelessly to deliver powerful and emotionally charged performances in 2022 when they presented their second online theater showcase, this time titled "Yun na nga!"

Kung “Yun na nga!” This was an adaptation from ‘It Is So!’ (If You Think So!), a one-act drama by Italian writer Luigi Pirandello, translated into English by Arthur Livingston. This drama was renowned for its investigation of the complexities of human perception and the subjectivity of reality. The play run for 1hour and 38 minutes. Unlike the first showcase, this production was filmed on the physical stage of the Philippine High School for the Arts. This was broadcast live via the PHSA's Facebook page on May 21-23, 2022, so that theater lovers and supporters from all over the world would witness the performance.

Stage@Home e-theater productions. During the pandemic, Prof. Glecy envisioned a platform that would redefine the boundaries of theater and bring the magic of live performances to the digital world. With a vision to create a bridge between traditional theater and the virtual stage, she founded Stage@Home.

Figure 3.

e-Poster of the Stage@Home as introduced in the ALYANSA’s FB Page



Stage@Home's central tenet was to embrace the potential of e-theater while preserving the authenticity of live theater. Despite physical limitations, Prof. Glecy thought the performing arts could still flourish and have a significant impact on audiences all around the world. The theater was continued by ALYANSA (Alyansa

ng mga Manggagawang Pangkultura sa Kamaynilaan at Karatig-pook at Guro ng Sining ng Bayan, Inc.). They created the phrase "Stage@Home" and invited theater professionals in local communities and schools to share their experiences during the pandemic on its Facebook page.

Papel (literally meaning paper or figuratively meaning one's role) was the starting concept for the first e-theater productions on May 8, 2020. The call for e-theater production was posted on the FB page. A 15 to 30 seconds video on a topic given by ALYANSA like "Ano ang papel mo sa buhay sa panahon ng quarantine?" should be sent. The scene must capture the simple and live experience inside the homes of ordinary individuals during the pandemic. ALYANSA suggested that the plot addressed one's place in life in a humorous, dramatic, critical manner with heart-tickling and heart-pinching elements. In light of this, the titles of the e-theater plays included Papel de Kain, Papel de Sardinas, Papel de Anime, Papel ni Judith, and Papel de Gulay. Additionally, they would utilize the hashtags #stageathome and #alyansa and suggested using a tubaw (scarf) in their e-theater productions. The videos sent were varied.

'Mukha' (face) on the premise, "Ano ang mukha mo sa pagharap ng bagong normal?" was the next concept featured in the e-theater of Stage@Home. Videos produced were Mukha ng Maskara, Mukhang Patay-Sindi, Mukhang Makapal, Mukhang Buking, and Mukhang 2nd Wave. On October 11, 18, and 25, 2020, Por Vida Covid A! Para sa Buhay! was organized to showcase the varied Stage@Home performances from different individuals and theater groups in Manila. All e-theater productions were shown on ALYANSA's FB Page. From here emerged varied online theater presentations organized by ALYANSA partnered with other theater groups in Manila and Luzon.

Data Gathering Procedure:

The Rehearsal

For this phenomenological study, I selected an in-depth interview via Zoom as the primary method of data collection. This study utilized two sessions: a pre-interview to obtain informed consent and scheduling, and a single interview using standardized interview protocol, through an unstructured in-depth interview. I explored and understood each participant's experience in producing an e-theater production during the pandemic.

Moser A, & Korstjens I. (2018) pointed out that the goal of the qualitative research interview is to explain the significance of major themes in the participants' lives. This assisted me in understanding the meaning of the lived experiences of the participants as first-timers in e-theater productions. With these experiences, I was able to explore how theater as communication was accomplished in e-theater productions.

I also explained the process of the online interview. The participants were asked to send their informed consent to ensure that their agreement on the settings and on the conduct of the online in-depth interview is acceptable. This reflected that the participants agreed on the duration, confidentiality, and the process of the interview. Likewise, this confirmed if the purpose of the study was well-communicated to the participants. Mack, et.al (2005) explained that informed consent is a strategy to ensure that individuals understand what it means to engage in a certain research project so they may decide if they wish to participate in it in a conscious, intentional manner. Thus, informed consent also maintained respect for the participants during the conduct of the data gathering.

Data Analysis and Interpretations:

The Technical Rehearsal

I observed the following procedures to capture the relevant experiences of the participants in e-theater:

1. Before the analysis, I provided a copy of the interview transcripts to the participants to verify the accuracy of the content of the collected data.
2. Then, I analyzed the verified interview transcripts. From here, the 'significant statements', quotes, or sentences were highlighted. These were to be considered significant statements if they provided an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon under study. Creswell & Poth (2018) named this step horizontalization.
3. The data was analyzed by looking into 'significant statements' connected to the phenomenon studied.
4. Next, I derived meanings and developed them into themes. Following this analysis, the researcher developed a *textural description* of the experiences of participants to identify how they described their experiences.
5. Then, I looked into how the participants described their experiences given a specific context. In this study, I explored how the participants described and experienced theater in communication and how they have accomplished this given varied settings of e-theater productions from their different locations, e-theater set-ups, and orientation. This was the *structural description* of their experiences, to produce a combination of descriptions in order to convey an overall essence of the phenomenon.
6. Accordingly, the two descriptions were combined to express the overall essence of the lived experiences of the participants. This consisted of their common experiences that indicated how theater as communication was accomplished in the new seeing place.

7. Consequently, I employed member checking whereby participants reviewed the researcher's descriptions and interpretations. In this way, I confirmed the consistency, accuracy, and honesty of the data collected.

8. Peer debriefing sessions were held in relation to the methods utilized for data collection and interview transcripts, the coding procedure, and data and analytical methods. Insights from the participants' perspectives that the researcher missed as well as topics that required additional description were also be explored.

Ethical Considerations:

The Playwright's Work Ethics

To ensure trustworthiness, I observed the following triangulation strategies as emphasized by Bloomberg, et.al. (2019):

- Conduct member checks to ensure that the participants are appropriately reflected.
- Participate in peer debriefing by obtaining additional expert opinions to analyze and assess the study procedure, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
- Be reflective during the research process by creating thorough descriptions and notes that record initial hypotheses, interpretations, and any possible biases.

How the Story was captured and understood:

The Playwright's Frame of Mind (Researcher's Positionality Statement)

*Hold your judgment
for they are yours
Hold your principles
tie them first and do not let go.
Hold your knowledge
yours is a different experience
from someone else's.
Theirs must unfold
Only THEIRS not yours.*

I am not an authority on theater. For the past four years, I have only taught Speech and Drama and Introduction to Theater Arts to our BA Communication students. For three years, I also taught theater arts to students pursuing a bachelor's degree in education. In comparison to the experiences of my participants, the seven years of exposure to theatrical ideas, concepts, and practice are insufficient. As a result, it was straightforward to observe my study's full conduct while suspending my personal biases.

Researcher's Background

In 2020, my Introduction to Theater Arts class produced an e-theater production. Our experience from our first e-theater was a total discovery of what should be, what could be, and what should not be. Our experience was similar to the PHSA's first online theater showcase, only that our students did not use OBS and were not as immersed in theater as the PHSA's students. As our initial e-theater, we explored different strategies to attain realistic storytelling and expression in theater. In 2021, another batch of students in Introduction to Theater Arts produced two e-theater productions. These were live performances just like the first e-theater experience we had in 2020. However, this time, my students used the OBS to

observe the smooth scene transitions. Then, in 2022, another batch of students taking the same course produced three e-theater productions. These were also live performances where OBS was also utilized for the smooth transition of both video and audio layering. All of the e-theater productions were streamed live on the FB Page of the BA Communication program. This year, 2023, three theater productions were staged to a live audience observing the health protocols in the post-pandemic.

Why my participants? I looked into people who have extensive theater expertise and who engaged in e-theater during the pandemic before selecting the participants. As a seasoned theater professional, Prof. Glecly C. Atienza has extensive knowledge of various theater developments, perspectives, practices, and trends in the Philippines. Her dedication to theater during the pandemic inspired her to create e-theater productions that drew on her extensive theatrical experience. Her experience thus provided insight into the early development of theater at home, its evolution into bigger locations, and its crossover into virtual space.

Ms. Christina Joy Mendoza-Cardenas's experience with e-theater was based on the Theater Arts Curriculum at the Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA). Her extensive theatrical expertise, along with the high standards of PHSA and the enthusiasm and talent of their students, generated value in the exploration of the possibility of e-theater by an academic institution.

The two lived experiences of Prof. Glecly and Ms. Teena may have similar threads but were largely different in how they viewed theater as communication, how they unraveled their experiences, and how they explored all the possibilities of accomplishing theater as communication in its new seeing place.

Where the researcher positioned herself

During the duration of this study, I took a position backstage and erased my prior knowledge of e-theater. As I immersed myself in the stories of my participants, I also placed myself in the front row as an audience.

Interpretive Epistemology. I concentrated on conducting in-depth interviews to record the many subjective interpretations of the participants' encounters with e-theater. The interpretive technique also helped me explore how the participants perceive and provide meaning to their surroundings from various viewpoints. Both my participants staged varied e-theater productions during the pandemic but the uniqueness of their experiences flourished in their narratives within the social and cultural context of theater in its new seeing place.

My passion for the performing arts, combined with my background in virtual theater spaces, has motivated me to explore the lived experiences of theater practitioners transitioning to e-theater during the pandemic. Although being familiar with the topic provided insights, it also raised the possibility of confirmation bias, which occurred during the data gathering, analysis, and interpreting of evidence that supported my preexisting opinions about the possible advantages of e-theater. However, being mindful of my responsibility as a researcher, I was able to reduce my biases and ensure the validity and rigor of this work.

I kept a reflective diary to record my thoughts, feelings, and reflections during the research process. I was able to spot any situations when my positionality would have affected the collection, processing, and interpretation of data.

Drawing on the phenomenological principles, I acknowledged the value of bracketing my biases and prejudices during data analysis. I placed a conscious

decision to approach each participant's narrative and interview with an open mind, letting their experiences direct the research without inserting my ideas.

I applied active listening techniques and tried to understand the perspectives of my participants via interviews and other interactions. I encouraged open and honest conversation by fostering a supportive and judgment-free environment that allowed my participants to openly discuss their lived experiences.

To ensure the trustworthiness of this research, I employed triangulation by utilizing multiple data sources and perspectives. I also participated in peer debriefing, sharing my study methodology and conclusions with peers who provided insightful criticism and pointed out any potential biases.

I vowed to adhere to ethical research procedures, be sensitive to the variety of experiences of theater practitioners in e-theater during the pandemic, and be open and honest about my positionality over the course of this phenomenological study. My objective was to honor the diverse viewpoints and voices of the participants while presenting a genuine and thorough investigation of the transcendence of theater in the new seeing place.

Chapter V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

How the story was staged

There were ten themes derived with 38 sub-themes. The following were the themes that emerged, namely Views on the Performance Space, Theatrical Perspectives, Theater Resurgence, Anticipation for the Theater, Theater Metamorphism, Communication in the e-theater , Pandemic-response Theater, e-theater productions of Stage@Home and PHSA, Observed Elements of Theater in the New Seeing Place, and Realizations on e-theater.

There is a story that needs to be told...

Two stories of how e-theater productions started on their hold.

One is based on a school's curriculum;

while the other is from one's advocacy.

With one's perspective of performance space

this will lead the story to how both continually experience theater
from f2f to digital boxes;

from homes to the theater spaces;

from what transpired as needed and as a school requirement.

How is theater as communication accomplished?

Through interaction of performers to themselves,
to fellow performers,

to the audience, and the script,

as well as to the digital space?

What needs to be known started with the knowledge of the space,

but how would it end? Wait until this chapter ends.

ACT 1: Views on the Performance Space. Performances always require space.

The central concept of performance space is relative to someone who has performed for more than 20 years and someone who chose it as a teaching career and an advocate of it. Hence, there is no exact definition of performance space. Every theater practitioner and performer has their way of explaining a performance space based on their orientation, understanding, and experience.

Scene 1: Space as Self-perception.

How we perceive the things around us is based on our own experiences, just like how a space could be synonymous for some and relatively different from one another. Space is a place where one enjoys privacy, where one invokes emotions, and where one understands and defines experiences. But for Prof. Glecy Atienza, space offers what is visible beyond one's eye.

“At kapag pinaguusapan ang space, hindi ka lang tumatalakay ng spaces as in saan siya nangyayari pero tumatalakay ka din ng space kung mula saan mo tinitingnan ang pangyayari...Kapag sinabi mong ‘a way of seeing,’ Ibig sabihin hindi yung nakikita mo lang, pero mula saan mo siya nakikita.”

(And when we talk about space, you're not just discussing spaces as to where it happens, but you're also talking about space in terms of where you are observing the event from. When you say 'a way of seeing,' it means not just what you see, but also where you are seeing it from.)

She was exposed to different theater spaces, from the spaces in PETA to the community theaters. These influenced her on her perspective of performance space.

Meanwhile, based on the experiences of Ms. Teena, space is still the space she is used to. The space where her students most of the time rehearsed and became someone else, someone required of the character, but be *someone* in the future in the performing arts.

“Ang performance space kasi sa akin ay kung ano yung nakagisnan ko. Ito yung madalas na pinagtatanghalaan, pinagpapraktisan, at pinaghubugan ng mga future artists natin.”

(In my case, the performance space is what I am accustomed to. It is the place where performances are often held, rehearsed, and where our future artists hone their skills.)

These were how both Prof. Glecý and Ms.Teena viewed performance space based on their own theatrical experiences. One viewed it from beyond what the space constituted while the other viewed it as a training ground of future artists.

Scene 2: **Space as a Communication and Experience.**

Prof. Glecý emphasized the crucial role of comprehending the spatial attributes of one's dwellings in enhancing one's comprehension of spatial orientation in general. In this regard, she highlighted the significance of considering both the domestic space and the spatial requirements of performance space.

*“Pero ito na nga ang discourse for space location kung bakit ito ay mahalaga nating alamin at kaugnay nito ay mahalaga ding alamin natin kung ganito ang turing natin sa tahanan o sa bahay, **ano ang turing natin sa espasyo ng teatro bilang communication space.**”*

(But this is indeed the discourse for space location, why it is important for us to understand, and relate to this, it is also important for us to know how we treat our homes or houses, what we consider the space of the theater as a communication space.)

This statement were based on her experience of the relevance of understanding first the space location before delving into performances. Thus, she expressed that one needed to understand that the theater space for performance, like in religious rituals performed at home, was instrumental in shifting the concept of space to the required communication. Consequently, from the shift of spaces, one could say, ‘This is our space, our theater space.’

Prof. Glecý often highlights the experiences shared in space, whether in a paid theater or communal space. But what entails in the space is the experience shared from watching a performance and the experience felt from the performance.

Prof. Glecý emphasized,

“So, for the longest time, if you refer to Augusto Boal’s discussion in Theater for the Oppressed, ang tinerace niya dito kung paano dati-rati sa rituals na nangyayari sa tahanan natin historically ay unti-unti siyang lumayo sa tahanan natin kasi from space where we try to fill our own experiences halimbawa yung mga domestic drama di ba yung mga tulaan...”

(So, for the longest time, in Augusto Boal’s discussion on where the Theater for the Oppressed is located, he traced how it used to be closely connected to the rituals that happened in our homes historically. Gradually, it moved away from our homes, becoming a space where we tried to represent our own experiences, like domestic dramas or poetry, for example.)

Likewise, Ms. Teena revealed that performance space captured experiences from their theater showcase that often was staged to a live audience in a ‘physical’ theater. The experiences already invoked the usual elements of theater consisting of live interaction with the director, the production team, the audience, the composition of the set design, musicality, and technical aspects. From these experiences developed, the communication used and required skills to enable the sharing and feeling of the experiences in the production and the performance.

ACT 2: Theatrical Perspectives.

Being alive prides on the ‘liveness’ of being
where interaction is worth re-experiencing
where life is worth surviving.
Theater is living the life, of recollecting what happened,
of forecasting what will happen.
But life is life in theater for the aliveness of it, breathes the life it bears.

Scene 1: Theater as ‘buhay(!) na buhay(!).’

From the rich experience of Prof. Glecy, she possessed a unique perspective on the essence of theater, which she described as being 'buhay(!) na buhay(!)' or

genuinely alive. To her, the theater was not simply a performance but an experience capable of touching the deepest parts of the heart and soul.

*“So, kung ako, titingnan ko siya sa ganap point of view, yun ung target. Ngayon, **yung buhay na buhay, buhay na buhay sa bahay yung concept.**”*

(So, from my perspective, I will look at it from the liveness point of view, that's the target. Now, the aliveness of life is the same aliveness inside the home, that is the concept now.)

These concepts were brought to the homes during the pandemic in the e-theater productions of Stage@Home. Buhay (Life) in theater is buhay! (alive) where they managed to convert the homes into stage. This transformation of home as the theater for performance also allowed for the household members to take part in producing an e-theater.

Scene 2: Theater as Advocacy.

Prof. Glecy Atienza's enduring passion for theater has guided her life since she learned theater. Her unwavering dedication to this art form has driven her to pursue it as a lifelong career, allowing her to hone her craft and become a prominent figure in the theatrical community. Thus, she embraced the craft as her advocacy,

“Kasi ang starting point talaga meron kasing advocacy. Ngayon yung advocacy na yun sa akin, sa aking experience, nanggaling siya doon sa engagement ko sa theater for contestation and theater for a purpose, so nag-manifest ito from my work as a theater person.”

(Because the starting point really has an advocacy. Now, that advocacy, in my case, based on my experience, it originated from my engagement with theater for contestation and theater for a purpose. So, it manifested from my work as a theater person.)

Prof. Glecý described how composing plays about domestic issues like early pregnancy and single parenting was a part of her advocacy. She even created a play about workers that touched on domestic problems. She also included local topics like drug use and basketball ending in her performances. Internal refugees, telenovelas about the life of a teacher, overseas Filipino workers, retirees, migrants in the National Capital Region, problems with settling down, Philippine heroes' wealth, and even questions about how children adapted in their community during a flood were all topics that were covered. Prof. Glecý's other area of interest was toilet advocacy. Examples of local water pollution included the *Palaka sa Tubig* and *Basura sa Tubig*, were covered as her subjects. According to her, all these ideas have to do with fostering well-being within communities and societies.

Being an academic, Ms. Teena may have to fulfill this need for her pupils, but theater performances must be as realistic as possible, even in a virtual space.

“Sa part namin, requirement ito kaya need na magpalabas pero despite sa sitwasyon dahil nga sa pandemic, we want everything to be realistic as if we are performing on stage, the same stage we are used to.”

(On our part, this is a requirement, so we need to have a performance, but despite the situation because of the pandemic, we want everything to be realistic, as if we are performing on stage, the same stage we are used to.)

This may seem like an academic requirement, but beyond this was the call for an artist to perform, a call for duty. This blended with the call to produce quality online theater showcase as the Philippine High School for the Arts - Dulaang Sipat Lawin called it. Their annual online theater showcase that started in 2020 as a ‘live’ performance, where the entire production team was in separate locations, was primarily a school requirement and thus must be fulfilled. Despite the spatial

differences, Ms. Teena's desire and the call to create a 'realistic' theater showcase was made possible due to her desire to make theater still alive during the pandemic.

Scene 3: Theater as Sense of Peace.

Prof. Glecy profoundly expressed her fondness of home as a space for performance where performers and audiences would just be themselves, enjoying their sense of peace. This came from her experience in Stage@Home where she encountered the sense of peace in the space location found at home.

“It is a space where you can find peace, kumbaga yung a place of peace mo, kung saan ka makakahanap ng sense of peace...kasi ito rin ang space na nenenegotiate natin paglumalabas tayo.”

(It is a space where you can find peace, it's like your place of peace, where you can find a sense of peace...because this is also the same space we negotiate with when we go out.)

The expression, ‘at home, na at home ka ah,’ as emphasized by Prof. Glecy, was one way of expressing our sense of comfort at home that was commonly uttered when we were comfortable with the people around us. Even the expression of ‘naka-tsinelas nga lang ako eh,’ as Prof. Glecy narrated, was associated with how we could be comfortable in places we were accustomed to. Also, the familiarization with the space made one feel at ease with one’s physical movement. She also explained that the orientation of the home where one could be oneself added to this sense of peace.

Moreover, Prof. Glecy expounded on the concept aligned with the pandemic. People became more aware of the relevance of home as the source of peace during the lockdown because the home was seen as a temporary comfort space long

before they were exposed to what was outside their homes. She even pointed out that people were accustomed to going out of their houses to go to work and find comfort outside their 'temporary comfort zones.' This perspective of having theater at home as a sense of peace transcended to finding comfort outside one's home. Hence, the performances transformed as well, even their stage locations. However, a sense of peace returned to the homes throughout the pandemic.

Scene 4: Theater as Social Affinities.

Prof. Glecý was used to singing and acting at home. This was her recollection of her childhood where she developed her love for theater. Her family members were her first audience. From this, she linked the concept of social relations and the early forms of performances.

*"...yung mga palabas nila sa bahay, nagchachant lang yung mga tao, **wala kang ticket dun pero ang ticket mo dun or way to get in is by way of your relationship, yung affinities**, so kung kilala mo si ganito, bahagi ka ng pamilya, o kaya inimbata ka ng isang member ng family and you are allowed access or allowed that special opportunity to listen and be part of their ritual, ano yun, **yun yung social relations**."*

(...in their home performances, people just chant, and you don't need a ticket to get in. Your ticket or way to get in is through your relationship, your affinities. So, if you know someone, you are part of the family, or if you were invited by a family member, you are allowed access or given that special opportunity to listen and be part of their ritual. That is what we call social relations.)

She even recounted that in the *pabasa* during the Lenten Season was performed at home where relatives and friends could join. This also was performed in the plaza or barangay hall as a communal practice where everyone could join and observe the tradition.

Scene 5: Theater as a Shared Community Experience.

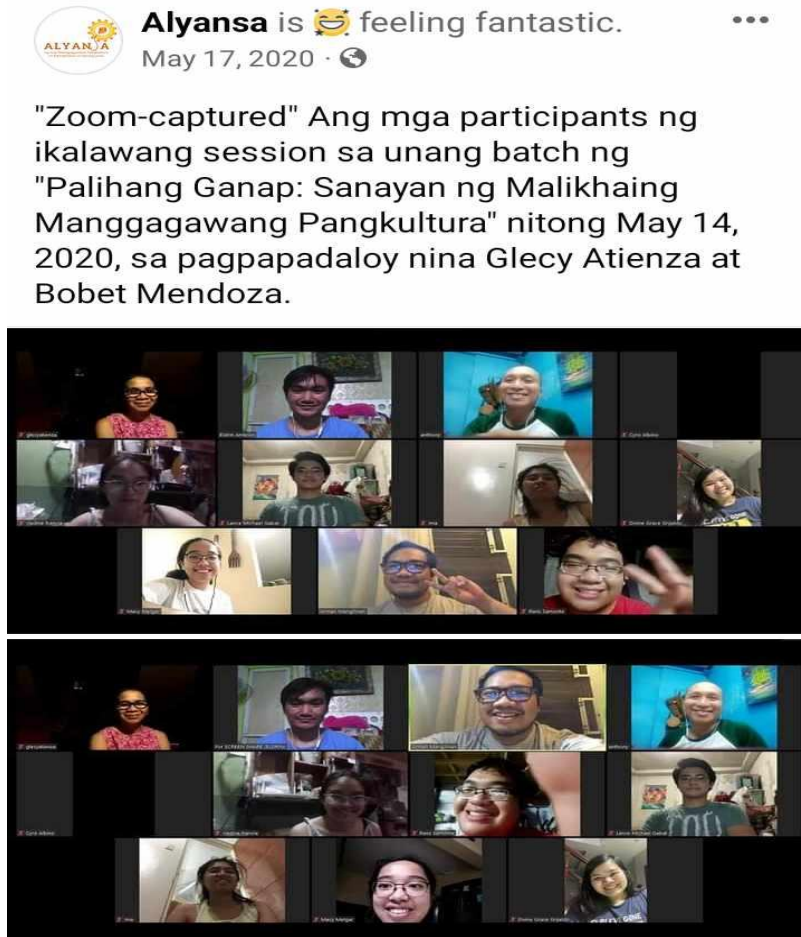
Being immersed also in community theater, Prof. Glecy often carried her principle of allowing the community to experience theater from writing scripts, acting, and managing a theater. This community could be educators, young artists, mothers, or anyone who have the same interests as the other members of the group. With the ALYANSA, she created numerous community experiences with fellow theater enthusiasts, artists, and educators. This was also experienced during the pandemic where ALYANSA pioneered Stage@Home. This manifested her mindset:

*“Kasi hindi lang naman yung actual ang binubuo mo, **BINUBUO MO YUNG BUONG EXPERIENCE NG COMMUNITY** and that is the **most significant impact of a performance** kasi yun naman ang point ng **theater as communication** , ginagawa mong isang buong experience, **isang GANAP yung experience**, ‘yung palitan ng karanasan hindi lang yung pinapalabas **pero yung experience nung mga nanonood at yung buong community after.**”*

(Because you are not just creating the actual performance, you are building the entire experience of the community, and that is the most significant impact of a performance because that's the essence of theater as communication. You turn it into a complete experience, a meaningful event where there's an exchange of experiences, not just what is shown during the performance but also the experience of the audience and the whole community afterwards.)

Figure 4.

Theater must go on: Initiative of ALYANSA continued during the pandemic



Prof. Glecy elaborated that performers allot their time before and after the performance. A theater person must be early in preparation for the play, even during the actual performance, so they may fully immerse themselves in their roles throughout and in the space itself. But the essential part, as explained by Prof. Glecy, is when everyone gets together for coffee and shares their experiences and feelings after the performance. This way, theater gains experience through the community of performers, the production team, and even the audience.

Hence, Prof. Glecy never separates theater from building wellness in the community,

*“Lahat ng ito ay may kinalaman sa **konsepto ng pagbubuild ng isang maayos na pamayanan yung concept ng wellness sa community at sa iyong bayan..... that is the whole point ng isang panonood ng isang pagtatanghal , YOU COME TOGETHER TO SHARE AN EXPERIENCE, you talk about it afterwards.**”*

(All of this is related to the concept of building a well-functioning community, the concept of wellness in the community and in your town... that is the whole point of watching a performance, YOU COME TOGETHER TO SHARE AN EXPERIENCE, you talk about it afterwards.)

For Ms.Teena, audiences became one in their reactions,

*“Sa mga pagtatanghal namin, nabubuo mo yung experience na **nagiging iisa, nagiging iisa ang mga nanonod. Sa simpleng ngiti, halakhak at palakpak, may isang experience ka ng nabubuo doon eh.**”*

(In our performances, we create an experience that unites the audience. Through simple smiles, laughter, and applause, a collective experience is formed.)

As the audience gathered in an auditorium, the theater experience would be felt as a unified experience. The various theater showcases of Ms. Teena in PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin were proof of how their audiences often became one in their applause, excitement, and expectations.

ACT 3: Theater Resurgence.

What started in the homes becomes away from home.
What started as a family affair becomes family no more
from free entry to controlled entry
from small spaces to established structures.
Where theater is, it is in the city where you can pass only
when you have the money?

Scene 1: Shift of Theater from Home to Away from Home.

Prof. Glecy's immense exposure to theater revealed how our history affected and contributed the theater of today. She argued that what society and history have taught us about the practicality of life and ways of living is that creativity and creation happen outside our houses. She claimed that the Spaniards built cabecera (the chief city of a province), which also created an encomienda.

*“So meron kang kondisyon sa ‘new’ na ito na sa totoo lang ay meron ka na dati na hindi mo masyadong pinapansin **kasi iba yung na-introduce dati kasi ang lifestyle na naintroduce sa atin is the way to survive is to go out of the house.**”*

(So you have a condition with this 'new' thing that, in truth, you already had before, but you didn't pay much attention to it because in the past, a different lifestyle was introduced to us, which was the idea that the way to survive is to go out of the house.)

She mentioned how various traditions and rituals were borrowed from different colonists. This also transformed how one used computer technology to communicate and advance oneself. From this point on, progress is connected to one's home's exterior spaces. She also added that people find more advancement outside.

*“So instrumental yung shifting ng space doon sa pagtatapat ng espasyo ng communication na ‘to bilang isang inaangkin na espasyo kaya yung concept natin ng pag nagteteatro tayo, kailangan pagka-teatro **ang concept natin ay away from the home.**”*

(So the shifting of space becomes instrumental in aligning this space of communication as a claimed space. That's why our concept of theater, when we do theater, needs to be away from home.)

Performances were conducted outside. According to Prof. Glecy, 'secure space' was established at home when events like chantings were performed without

needing tickets—only social relations. However, what was appreciated as performances at home became away from home with the arrival of the Spaniards and the diverse technology presented.

*“These are new technologies of communications, so all of a sudden what we used to know as advance like the poetic joust ng mga laro became “obsolete”, naisasantabi na siya and **all of a sudden when we want to watch a performance, you need to go outside the home.**”*

(These are new technologies of communication, so all of a sudden what we used to consider as advanced, like the poetic joust in games, became "obsolete."They were set aside. And all of a sudden, when we want to watch a performance, we need to go outside the home.)

Prof. Glecy even asserted that Filipinos were skilled poets because oral poetry was the most sophisticated form of communication in ancient times. She continued that people chant because it is the most sophisticated communication, using music to convey messages or turn words into a more sophisticated form of exchange. The Duplo and other verbal joust/games were played at funeral wakes (Hernandez, 1989). These were earlier forms of communication. However, these forms of exchange altered as new technology was made available. From Duplo at funeral wakes and bugtungan around a fire after a meal, it transcended to different locations – away from home.

Scene 2: From Social Affinities to Paid Performances.

The shift of location followed the shift in admission. Social relations no longer hold significance. Paying for performance was the new admission pass. With this shift came a change in performances.

“Ganun din sa history ng theater, yung concept ng control, yung taking good, yung structures ang nagdetermine ng locations na ‘to and when that happened nagbago din ang mga klase ng mga palabas.”

(The same goes for the history of theater. The concept of control, taking good, and the structures determined these locations, and when that happened, the types of performances also changed.)

Prof. Glecy explained that as soon as you leave your house, the stories associated with the performances also changed, such as when the tales of kings and queens were first introduced. Based on her own experience of witnessing how theater spaces were becoming advanced through time, she underlined that the new space location offered different dynamics as one traveled farther from space.

“...makikita mo yung paglayo nung space na yun ay nagbibigay din ng isang uri ng dynamics...nagbago ang mga palabas.”

(..you can see that the distancing of that space also creates a certain kind of dynamics...the performances changed.)

In her essay, *Tanghalan sa/ng Tahanan*, Prof. Glecy described how komedya, zarzuela, and opera replaced verbal jousts. A new poetic narrative style and operatic singing were taught to singers. Although these traditional forms were "pambahay," or produced for houses and folk forms, they have not entirely disappeared but have been put aside. The audience's enthusiasm for new performance formats sparked similar changes in the dynamics between the performers and the production team.

ACT 4: Anticipations for the Theater.

I look for something bigger, fancier, newer.
I look for innovation. I do not settle for mediocrity.
I want transformation.
I aspire for more than the usual curtain calls and blockings.
Should there be more lights, and outlandish effects, and make up
and sceneries beyond the ordinary?

Scene 1: Leveled-up Expectations.

These were the words Prof. Glecyr used to describe her idea of seeking a transformed level of performance:

*“Kaya dito rin na-build yung isang concept of expectation na kapag nanood ka sa sentro, ang papanoorin mo ay isang bagay na hindi katulad nung sayo but **rather something that is higher level, a transformed level.**”*

(That is why it also built a concept of expectation that when you watch at the city, what you will see is something not similar to what you have, but rather something that is at a higher level, a transformed level than you.)

Prof. Glecyr used the preference of people to watch in the city as an example. Those who were not wearing costumes would not be watched. She added that ‘we would not watch someone who resembles us.’ She exclaimed, *“Diyosme naman! Nagpunta pa ako dito tapos ang makikita ko ay kamukha ko rin!”*

People believed things were more advanced, lavish, and attractive when they traveled far away from the city. This revealed why they desired a higher level. This is the idea of “MAS” or “more.” This elevated idea is related to or associated with the idea of a new place.

“So kung ang tingin natin dati sa tahanan lumabas sa sentro....Kapag sinabi kasing tanghalan, may veneration, hindi tayo nanonood ng ka-level , di ba vene-venerate or nilalagyan siya ng special location enough for people to see but actually yung concept ng seeing place na venerated or ano siya, place in a

special position, simply means that it is worthy enough to be given such a location."

(So, if we used to associate leaving home and going to the city... When we say "tanghalan" (theater), there is veneration, we are not just watching something on the same level, right? It is venerated or given a special location enough for people to see. The concept of a "seeing place" being venerated or placed in a special position simply means that it is considered worthy enough to be given such a location.)

Prof. Glecy even recounted an experience where people viewed themselves higher when they were seen or featured on TV. She gave an example that when people were interviewed for a TV program while soaked in a flood, they still looked fine. Like how someone gets famous when they appear on TV (*Uy, sikat ka, nasa TV ka!*). Because, as Prof. Glecy argued, television or movies are meant to be a more technologically advanced kind of communication or a more **"tele-technologized"** medium for communication. It has advanced. The same justification applied to viewing TV or movies. To meet this expectation, one must put on makeup. If not a glamourized version of oneself, then something alien must be expected. Thus, to comprehend what happens in these people's thoughts, one must accept that watching television makes someone technologically advanced. 'They are **technologized,**' as expressed by Prof. Glecy. When a person is technologically advanced, it elevates them above their actual circumstances.

"Because, the level of that space simply means that it is worthy, you are worthy of that space. Ngayon, yung concept rin na yun means you have something in you which sets you apart from the rest, whatever that is."

(Because the level of that space simply means that it is worthy, and you are worthy of that space. Now, that concept also means you have something in you which sets you apart from the rest, whatever that is.)

Prof. Glecý expounded on the idea that you are special when placed at the center of performance. You felt a notch above your true self, just like when someone was allowed to perform at the Cultural Center of the Philippines or when someone was allowed to perform at the most prominent theater. This leads to the expression, “Uy! Sikat! (Wow! You’re famous!). The level of that space means *it is worthy; you are worthy of that space*.

Prof. Glecý even used the analogy of the Santa Cruzan (Flores de Mayo or Mayflower Festival). The chosen queen (Reyna) for the Santa Cruzan came from a wealthy family; one needed not to be pretty but at least rich or well-known in the community. She explained that this kind of situation sets one person apart; there is something in the person that others do not have. If not so pretty, they would make the person pretty, or at least the gown would be expensive. She said this also referred to the stratification or clustering of people according to a person's rank in society. As a result, even though the selected queen, or Reyna, may not be beautiful, she would be coupled with a handsome man. This drew attention to a particular positioning. Giving someone a specific spot denoted something remarkable about them, much like designating a separate area for a performance. The change in space location for performances revealed that there must be something special to be shown and something special to be seen by an audience. In addition, the payment for the performance also created an expectation of something grand or valuable.

ACT 5: Theater Metamorphism.

Bring theater at home this time,
 where the best seat is one’s choice
 and one’s choice is convenience and safety.
This is what the pandemic challenges
 but theater finds solace even in the virtual space as stage.
Theater evolved again from away from home to the safety of one’s home

Limited resources came in handy
from scripts to set design and actor performances
Theatrical experiences shine even from the digital boxes
in limited *real* time.

Scene 1: Onset of the Virtual Space.

Prof. Glecy recalled that the new virtual performance space was developed in the 1960s. She described that technology for military surveillance was unveiled at an event in Osaka called Expo 70. This introduction made the gadget well-known and widely available, now known as the computer. She described how, in the past, computers had only been used for espionage but that all of a sudden, they were being used for more everyday purposes. Then Motorola Wireless was introduced. She emphasized that the Cold War and the invention of the computer introduced new technologies in the 1960s. She stressed this point to emphasize that the advent of new technology was why we now have the virtual environment. Even the idea of globalization, or the dismantling of national barriers, was introduced by this. Since new technologies offered new lifestyles, she accented that when popularizing technology, one should be cognizant of who is in charge and what unique lifestyles it entails. These recollections explained the new seeing place offered to theater that Prof. Glecy explored and experience:

“Nung pumasok yung pandemic, we were introduced to a new space and that is the virtual space....so when you speak of new seeing places you also have new ways of living or new lifestyles.”

(At the time the pandemic began, we were introduced to a new space, and that is the virtual space. So when you talk about new seeing places, you also have new ways of living or new lifestyles.)

Prof. Glecy explained further that the technology's ability to popularize or provide access to information leads individuals to assume they are in charge. Thus,

one could utilize their devices to travel to another country. However, she emphasized that this raised the query, "Who owns this technology?" These affected how her experience of the e-theater brought her to the idea of who owns the technology. In the theater, when one person was short on cash, they were denied entry. She added that one could only access what one was allowed to access. But during the pandemic, a new platform was introduced, the virtual environment, which could be accessed using the available gadgets and resources at home.

Scene 2: The Prerequisite for Flexibility.

During the pandemic, all possible alternatives were explored. For Prof. Glecy, since the majority of the people stayed at home, and the home was the only place available, she ventured to utilize the space at home.

“Puwede pa rin, puwede pa rin tayong magisip ng paraan, yun lang kailangan nating linawin ‘para saan ito?’ yung para saan, ano yung target nito.”

(We can still think of ways, we can still think of solutions, we just need to clarify "for what purpose?" What is the purpose, what is the target?)

Based on the experiences at home, Dr. Glecy stated that our homes served as our storage areas. She explained that only on Sundays did one realize that it was more of a place for survival than to go outside and create a self-sustaining way of life. The lockdown gave people the impression that they were being imprisoned, but in reality, it exposed the flaws of the pre-pandemic lifestyle, where people relied heavily on their jobs and were not self-sufficient. This idea thus inspired individuals to engage in backyard gardening, charitable deeds, and acts of kindness. Why,

therefore, was this not done earlier? These were the thoughts of Dr. Glecy as she explored the possible ways of continuing theater during the pandemic.

Significant changes in the way of life occurred. It hindered people from communicating. Zoom was employed, much like the existence of the digital realm. Everyone was paranoid at first, but since it was the only way into the world, adapting was important. The same was valid with communication equipment. Cell phones signified class placement before becoming indispensable. Prof. Glecy observed that these items indicated that the fundamental space in a theater was, in fact, at home because what one may need for primary production was at home, like essential lights, props, and costumes.

Prof. Glecy concluded, *"Why can't it be at home?"* She emphasized that theater may be done at home. Teena herself said, *"Pwede naman pala! Kaya naman pala."* (It is possible. We can do it at home!). These transformed homes into the primary performance area, the new stage in the digital platform.

Scene 3: Sustenance to Theater.

Ms. Teena, having received all the support from PHSA, from recruiting personnel to giving costumes and a router for student performers, significantly contributed to the production of their two online theater showcases. The pandemic was unexpected. However, a strategy for this kind of circumstance must be addressed. Thus, Ms. Teena clarified,

"Syempre dapat maging self-sustaining din ang organization na mag-create kasi at least prepared na ang mga tao so meron ng ganitong pamamaraan ng ganitong klaseng proyekto uisng the advance technology. Nakatulong din siya to open avenues for performance."

(Of course, the organization that creates this should also be self-sustaining because, at least, the people are prepared, and there is already a method for this kind of project using advanced technology. It has also helped to open avenues for performance.)

She added that when considering the new digital space, it impacted theater artists' earnings. As a result, their school's e-theater productions were ready, but maintaining the technology must always be considered. Theater productions and organizations must be prepared even after the pandemic. Another critical factor to consider involves safeguarding the technology for future use.

Scene 4: Integrating Virtual Performance into the Educational Framework

Vickers (2020) anticipated that theater educators would offer well-designed and supported online courses that gave scholarly and practical pedagogical approaches during the historic move to digitalized online pedagogy. The curriculum must be modified to reflect the new digital environment.

Ms. Teena's exposure to e-theater productions provided a variety of insights,

*“SA PHSA, yung digital or online performance is siguro output na siya kung sa pagdagdag sa curriculum, probably ay **courses like digital media**... kailangang may back-up na rin ng courses na nagsusupport at magiging pamamaraan na rin ng itinuturo sa creativity ng mga bata kasi hindi lang naman siya entailed sa theater even lahat ng performing arts would be able to understand yung set up.”*

(In PHSA, digital or online performance is probably considered as an output when it comes to expanding the curriculum, maybe in courses like digital media. There should also be backup courses that support and serve as a means to teach creativity to students because it is not just limited to theater; all performing arts should be able to understand the setup.)

She recalled that the PHSA had talked about adjusting the course to fit the pandemic, given the constraints on the performing arts. They became more aware of what they must learn and plan to add courses aligned to e-theater to the existing curriculum. Although PHSA students are exposed to modern technology used in school, other considerations must be reasoned like the use of digital technologies for a live theater production, the management of feedback from the audience, the costume and props for theater, and the internet connectivity of all cast. Other adjustments and challenges arise in the two online theater showcases they produced.

ACT 6: Communication in the e-theater.

When the pandemic strikes, the curtain folded down.
No laughs, no smile, no claps, no cries.
But there is a call for rolling up the curtain
communication becomes certain:
Interaction is ready for a show
even from a distant virtual window.

Scene 1: Tailored Virtual Communication.

As a result, Prof. Glecý believes that communication depends on the circumstances,

*“Yung concept ng **communication will necessitate an adjustment** depending on where its coming from and where it is leading to.”*

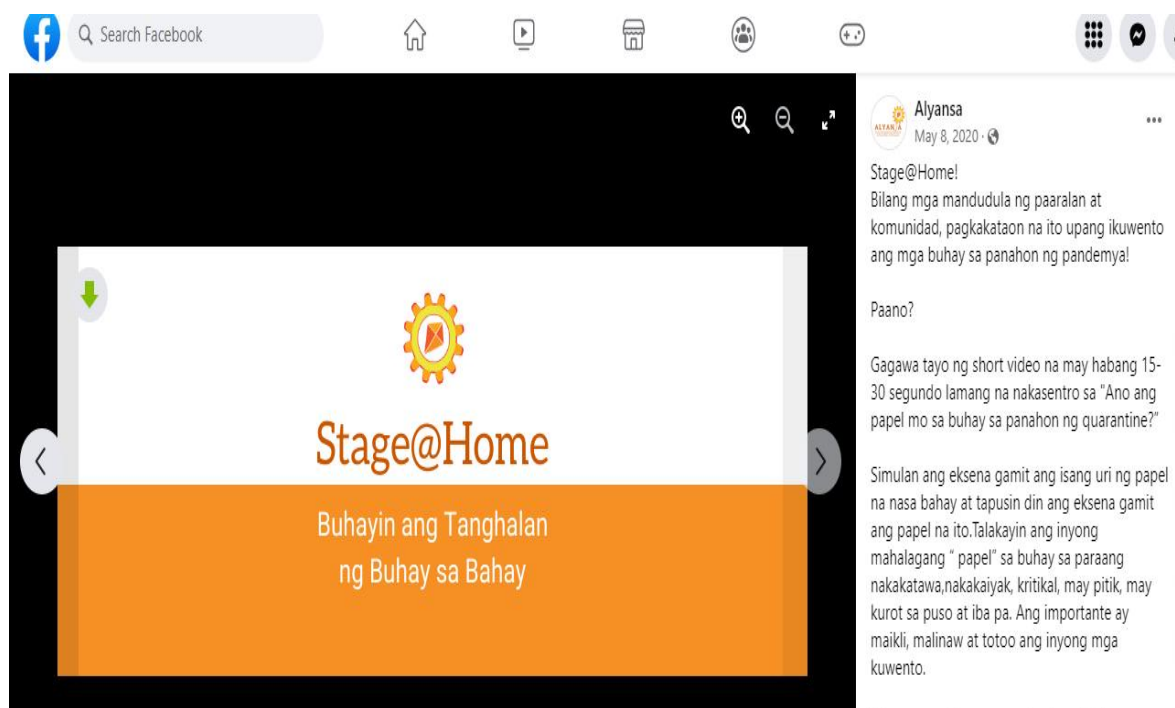
(The concept of communication will require an adjustment depending on its source and its intended destination.)

She clarified that communication takes place at home. She then described her research where Stage@Home came about. She indicated that a typical study followed a standard procedure and that when we do, we also originate whenever we produce. She coined the phrase **"ORIGIN-8,"** which means "We take root, but we

also take routes." From here she also emphasized the value of collaboration thus, from ORIGIN-8 also transpired the Stage@Home where collaborations emerged from theater artists, theater groups, students, and teachers. Hence, this signaled the new route that the theater must undertake: the virtual space.

Figure 5.

The first call of ALYANSA for Stage@Home productions that emphasized the thematic feature of each production to be created at one's home



Scene 2: Viewer-centric Communication.

For Ms. Teena, their experience in their online theater showcases revealed that there would always be diverse audience online. These audiences must be recognized, thus, they always involved the audience's satisfaction and reaction to their plays.

"Sa nagawa naming online theater showcase, I can say pa rin na it is two-way communication kahit naman sinasabi nila na pandemya

*kasi, ang **pagconvey ng message is for the audience pa din eh** , kaya nga **kahit di pa din nila nakikita yung nanonood priority pa din is to convey the message** at narerecognize namin yung mga nakukuha naming mga comments kasi yun yung goal.”*

(In our online theater showcase, despite the pandemic, I can still say that it is still a two-way communication. The conveyance of the message is still for the audience, that is why even though they cannot see the audience yet, the priority is still to convey the message. We really recognize the comments we receive because that is the goal.)

Ms. Teena reaffirmed that they are constantly attentive to the comments left in the comment box, as evidenced by their first online showcase, which was a live performance and live streamed via the PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin Productions Facebook page. To ensure that their targeted audience will stick around for the entire online theater showcase, they also keep an eye on the number of viewers, particularly during a break (for the following Act). In the same way, Teena examined all audience responses in addition to the comments to gauge how they reacted to a particular scene or line of dialogue.

ACT 7: Pandemic-responsive Theater.

Virtual curtains opened up,
challenging performances even with time differences.
Digital technologies welcome the world
but the performing arts world
was uncertain of what's there to unfold.

Scene 1: Home as a must-have Resource.

With the pandemic restrictions, the possibility of still managing performances at home transpired. As Prof. Glecy initially emphasized, it is from our homes that domestic dramas and verbal jousts started, and it is still in one's homes that performances find their place.

“Sa theater, tinuro nito sa atin na ang basic space pala natin sa totoo lang ay sa tahanan. At ang tahanan natin ay puwede nating gamitin sa ating communication.”

(In theater, it taught us that our basic space, in reality, is our home. And we can use our home for communication.)

Prof. Glecy expounded on the wonders of one's home. No need for an extravagant place as long as you have your house, you can start a performance. The homes repackaged pandemic stories to capture what the audience's needed during those times - companion. Hence, Prof. Glecy accented in her essay, Tahanghalan sa/ng Tahanan that the homes are considered as 'lunan ng mga dramang buhay.' She also highlighted that 'samantalang kinikilala ang tahanan bilang espasyong ligtas, hindi maikakailang nagaganap rin sa tahanan ang maraming karanasang hitik sa tunggalian at pagkilos.' This proved how homes could be one's witness in all the phases of life and how it could be a transformed place for performance during the pandemic that featured a new set of performances – the e-theater productions.

Scene 2: Enhanced Creativity.

For the Junior High school students of Ms.Teena, their creativity was tested,

“MAS NAGING CREATIVE kumbaga ginawan pa rin nila ng paraan na maging isang performance na hindi lang I-aatack nila yung role , nandun pa din yung process of an actor in terms of preparation, in terms of working with your co-actors, siguro mas naging MAS MALIKHAIN kahit na may ganung situation.”

(They became more creative, as they found ways to make it a performance where they not only attacked the role, but also kept the process of an actor intact in terms of preparation and working with co-actors. Perhaps they became even more imaginative despite such a situation.)

She described the challenges initially, but her pupils kept looking at various web tools to ensure the initial online showcase would be realistic. Although the actors had to create comparable backdrops to make the sets and actors appear in one place because the students were in their houses. The students initially used coffee to color the paper for their backdrop, but they eventually learned that manila paper works better to achieve the same color effect on a screen. To ensure the consistency of various scenes for the _ characters, who are all in different areas throughout the Philippines, the students also explored the use of the OBS. The students, Ms. Teena, and the artistic team they hired explored the limits of the virtual world while pushing their creative abilities to produce an authentic online theater showcase. Ms. Teena is thankful that the pandemic happened since it allowed e-theater productions to be recognized as a form of practice and art.

Scene 3: Possibility of Online Theater.

The homes opened the digital windows for performances like in Google Meet and Zoom platforms. Some used other online applications like StreamYard to capture the backstage and the consistency of screen locations. In Zoom and Google Meet, the screens/windows depended on the observer or digital onlooker/audience. Thus, Ms. Teena expressed,

*“Mas na-challenge din sila dun sa thought na, “**kaya pala, KAYA NAMAN PALANG UMARTE PA DIN.**”*

(They were also challenged by the thought that, “It is possible, we can still perform.”)

The students can rehearse online with other actors while studying their characters and lines. Ms. Teena and her students allotted time for script reading to immerse them in their characters. They used the Google classroom to discuss their

plans for the online theater showcase. These were followed by Zoom and Google meetings.

However, Prof. Glecy needs various skills for their Stage@Home productions.

“Kailangan marunong gumawa ng kuwento, marunong gumanap, magset design, mag-anggulo ng camera, teknikal, editing at ibapa. Maaaring mag-isa o sa tulong ng mga kasama sa bahay.”

(One needs to know how to create a story, act, do set design, frame the camera, know the technical aspects & editing, and more. It can be done alone or with the help of household members.)

Beginning with a 15 to 30-second recorded production, Stage@Home featured a one-person act. The actor is the writer, editor, and even the cameraman. All the performances were staged at home that tested creativity, passion, and perseverance. The e-theater productions featured a topic for the week to achieve creative and active participation from theater artists, groups, students, and teachers to submit their recorded performances. For the first e-theater, their topic revolved around 'papel' (could be a paper or the role of the person during the pandemic). From this, audiences demanded a realistic representation of life. They disliked abstractions. They demanded real portrayal of people since Stage@Home acted as their companions during the pandemic.

Scene 4: Tries that Surprised.

For Ms. Teena, their first online theater showcase, Mga Kuwentong Bata, garnered many remarks from people who were shocked that the cast members were in different places.

“:So may mga hit and miss din kami na na-realize, na-discover para mas mapadali later on if magkaroon uli ng ganun, pero yun nga sabi nga nila, ng mga naka-experience makapanood ng production na natuwa sila at na-amaze sila na hindi pala sila magkakasama.”

(So, we also had some hit and miss moments that we realized and discovered to make things easier in the future, if we will have similar situations again. But as others have said, those who experienced watching the production were delighted and amazed that they were not physically together.)

This was due to the created effect of the online theater showcase that showed consistent set design, eye-level contact of actors, a continuous exchange of lines despite of the physical and digital distance, and minimum technical difficulty. They also had trouble using the OBS because it was their first time. The pupils eventually grew accustomed to utilizing OBS for editing. When the link was disrupted, the entire OBS for the live stream was obstructed, so they ordered routers for students with bad internet connections. These hits and misses eventually led to the success of their first online showcase.

For Prof. Glecý, the exploration of how the home could be the performance space, how smartphones could be the flexible handheld cameras, and how the available materials at home could be the props, the lighting, and the set design, amazed her how one e-theater production could be followed with more productions of Stage@Home.

Scene 5: Maximizing Online Technologies.

Prof. Glecý believes, based on her experience in Stage@Home, that e-theater should be viewed positively and that producing stories and performing do not strictly require technical knowledge.

“I-maximize natin ang virtual mode kasi marunong naman ang mga taong gumamit ng camera, yung camera phone, tapos marunong naman silang magkuwento, marunong naman silang umarte, eh di YUN NA ang pinaka valuable technology mo sa panahong ito.”

(Let us maximize the virtual mode because people know how to use cameras, camera phones, and they know how to tell stories, and they also know how to act. So, THAT becomes your most valuable technology in this time.)

It was not the mastery of technology that was at stake. It was one's skill of storytelling that must be showcased. Since every person has their story, everyone is a storyteller. The stories just needed to be captured in cameras. The camera phones available were maximized for their use. But the challenge was choosing an appealing story to capture the diverse virtual audience. These were the considerations that Prof. Glecy explained. For her, the pandemic is there, and since everyone has a camera phone anyone can produce a 20-second or 3-minute video at home.

ACT 8: e-theater Productions of Stage@Home and PHSA.

Virtual curtains are unstoppable which
welcomed both excitement and pressure.
Each one to two seconds delay online is permissible
connection is still achievable.
Although spatially connected to a new seeing place,
temporally different from spaces around the v-world.
The message of the play lingers
even from a virtual space of a beginner.

Scene 1: Reasons for e-theater productions.

1.1. The need to communicate the performance

Prof. Glecy emphasized the need to communicate during the pandemic. Being a theater advocate and researcher, she would always explore how theater would still be possible despite the restraints brought by the pandemic.

“Merong identified need and that is to communicate tapos may ilang pagkakataon na nagcreate kasi commissioned ito pero laging collaborative ang process. Dito pumapasok yung concept na collaborative na **bukas sa research, at may attitude na ‘subukan natin.’** So dito pumapasok yung isang inexperiment namin na ang tawag nga namin ay **Stage@Home.**”

(There is an identified need, and that is to communicate. Then, there are several opportunities to recreate because it is commissioned, but the process is always collaborative. This is where the concept of being collaborative, open to research, and having an attitude of "let's try it" comes in. This is where one of our experiments enters, which we call Stage@Home.)

She explained that Stage@Home was a product of research. Together with teachers, fellow artists of Guro sa Sining ng Bayann Inc and Alyansa ng mga Mangagawang Pangkultura sa Kamaynilaan at Karatig-Pook (ALYANSA), Stage@Home launched a Facebook Page in April 2020 to face the fear of losing theater during the time of being confined at home during the pandemic. Local issues were the central theme of each recorded narrative. A series of festivals came in after its introduction in 2020, lasting three years. As Prof.. Glecy always expressed, the inspiration is **Why not at home?** For her, there is theater if there is interaction between the performers and the audience. Next, she explained further that Stage@Home (Tahanan ng Dula) created the 'lockdown interaction' of the participants where one could not determine who would be the audience and the actors. Third, she pointed out that what was relevant was the exchange of experiences and the oneness of experiencing, which she called "**PINTIG AS ONE.**" She called it *Pintig as One* because a person would no longer identify their background during the lockdown because what was important was '**to feel as one.**' Similarly, the feeling of oneness transpired during the pandemic.

Figure 6.

The 14th Tanghal National Theater Festival poster for October 2020 featuring the spotlight on Stage@Home performances



However, the new digital stage has given rise to various assertions about who should assume control and who is actually in charge. Prof. Glecy stated:

“Do we regard theater as how it was regarded as a new space for control, kamukha nung ginagawa dati, or is it a new opportunity which has been offered to us and it is up to us how we try to reconcile and how we try to bring it back to us.”

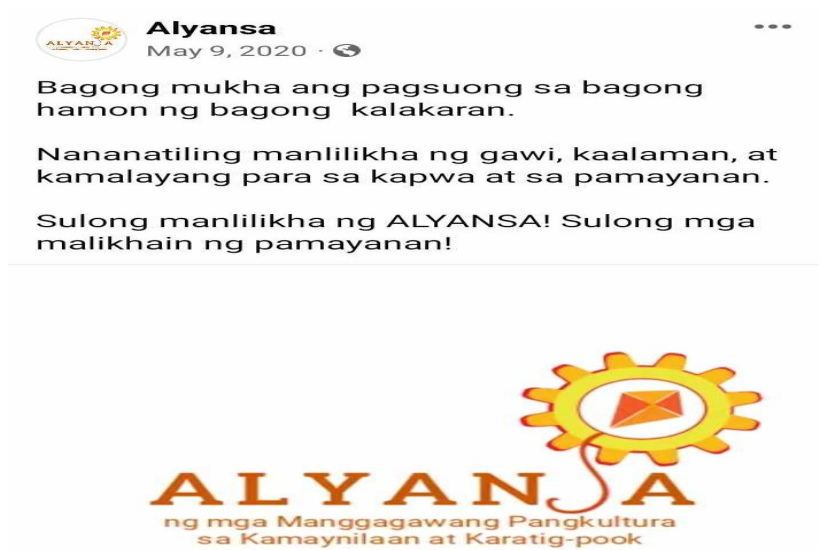
(Do we regard theater as how it was regarded as a new space for control like what was done before or is it a new opportunity which has been offered to us and it is up to us how we try to reconcile and how we try to bring it back to us.)

She outlined how the virtual world provided a new platform for performance and a new mode of communication. This led to a desire to reclaim what had been

taken from people. She believed that Stage@Home was the best way to recover what was taken since it was close to people's homes, where it was most accessible—and because she thought THEATER WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN. She focused on making theater relevant to the community rather than on the restrictions placed by having access through tickets. Although, she clarified that there was nothing wrong with it. But the emphasis was on how to make theater beneficial to facilitate dialogue or improve the quality of life in the community.

Figure 7.

The ALYANSA's announcement on its FB Page about its new pursuit to sustain theater activities amidst the pandemic



1.2. Home as the Choice for Performance

Even though different stories develop at home, one must carefully select those that will have the most significant impact on the audience for a limited performance time. Prof. Glecy expressed it this way,

“At hahanap ka ng lugar saan siya nangyayari eh di ba sa loob ng bahay, Nandiyang na lahat ng puwedeng maging kuwento , sa sala, kahit saan, kahit sa loob ng banyo, maaaring maraming mangyari

diyan kahit sa kusina, etcetera. “YOU DON’T HAVE TO GO OUT PARA MAKAHANAP KA NG LUGAR”, so ang production design mo ay ang bahay mo din.”

(And you will find a place where it can happen, isn't it inside the house? Everything that can become a story is there - in the living room, anywhere, even inside the bathroom, many things can happen even in the kitchen, etcetera. "YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO OUT TO FIND A PLACE," so your production design is also your own home.)

This was in line with what she referred to as GANAP. It was the same viewpoint she provided in "Ikaw na ang Ganap! (Everything all in One). Therefore, the production design was also one's responsibility when the stage was at home. This was where the other function of one's home was revealed. This was also where stage dramas and domestic dramas were reconciled.

“Yung concept pa rin ng GANAP kasi pag tiningnan mo, dun sa question mo na, anong ginawang production design, it's all there. Ang idea kasi, since nasa bahay ka, and we realized the POWER OF THE HOME, eh di yun ang gamitin natin.”

(The concept of "GANAP" (aliveness of performance) is still there because when you look at the question of what production design was used, it's all there. The idea is, since you are at home, and we realized the POWER OF THE HOME, then let's utilize that.)

From Prof. Glecy experience in Stage@Home, all the needed materials for a stage production were available at home. They would not be as sophisticated as those found in big theaters, but the essential and basic materials for a simple, one-act stage production were all found at home. What one must do is to be creative to maximize what is available.

1.3. To Comply as a School requirement.

When a theater production is a school requirement, it must be produced to comply with the school's conditions and get a grade. For Ms. Teena, the pandemic

should always be an unprecedented challenge for their theater showcase. This time she called it an online theater showcase.

“Online theater showcase, kasi nung nag-pandemic wala kaming choice kundi kailangan naming gamitin ang technology kasi kailangang magkaroon ng output ang mga bata.”

(The online theater showcase, because when the pandemic hit us, we had no choice but to use the technology because the students needed to have an output for their class.)

With the assistance of her pupils and the hired creative team, they came up with ideas for actions to take online. They prepared two online theatrical showcases since they had to construct an online performance. The students performed live in their homes for its first online theater showcase. This was streamed live via the PHSA’s Dulaang Sipat Lawin FB Page. The second online theater showcase was pre-recorded on the PHSA's stage and was streamed live on their FB page. The academic requirement liberated the students and the teacher’s artistic talent to direct theater in the virtual environment, which became its new seeing place.

Scene 2: e-theater productions Constraints.

2.1. All-in-One Role

Prof. Glecy speaks based on her experience in Stage@Home, where she said that one needs to be a writer, a performer, a set designer, a camera guy, a technical person, and an editor. One individual could carry out all these tasks but could also be delegated to family members.

“Sa Stage@Home kasi IKAW NA ANG GANAP! - EVERYTHING ALL IN ONE: Artista, Aktor, maka-komunidad, everything. Ikaw lang ..ikaw ang magseset up ng stage mo, ikaw ang magiilaw, everything.”

(In Stage@Home, YOU ARE THE PERFORMANCE! - EVERYTHING ALL IN ONE: Artist, Actor, Community participant, everything. It's just you...you will set up your stage, you will handle the lighting, everything.)

The sudden shift to online also shifted the roles of performers, from being performers to being lighting directors, wardrobe directors, set designers, and other theatrical roles. All functions must fit into one individual. These was the effect of the pandemic to theater. However, for a theater person like Prof. Glecy, this opened opportunities to learn other skills to ensure that theater would remain alive despite the challenges brought by the pandemic.

2.2.Lighting Challenges

A new difficulty arises with the increased possibility of performing at home. Prof. Glecy was fine with directing, acting, writing scripts, or setting up her smartphone at home, but she needed help applying the proper lighting to her scenes.

“Ang hirap ako ay yung considerations ng ilaw. Kasi di ba hindi naman puwedeng umarte-arte ka diyan na wala kang ilaw, so iilawan mo ang sarili mo.”

(The challenging part for me is the lighting considerations. Because, you can't act without proper lighting, so you have to light yourself.)

The quick fix is to ask a family member for assistance. However, as Prof. Glecy did, one could request help with lighting techniques via Zoom from a fellow theater enthusiast. Another phone, a flashlight, or a desk lamp might be used to get the proper lighting effect for the script's specified scenes. Ms. Teena's students go through the same process. All home lighting equipment was tested to ensure they could use lighting effects in the actual performance during their first online showcase.

2.3. Camera (un) captivity

In the new seeing place, where a camera is placed in front of the performer, motions are reduced, unlike in theater, where the projection on stage is more prominent and broader. Only movements that the camera can capture should be made.

“Ililimit mo yung sarili mo dun sa kaya lang maabot ng camera mo, hahanap ka ng spot kung saan puwede kang magperform pero napakahirap nito.”

(You will limit yourself to what your camera can reach, you will find a spot where you can perform, but this is very challenging.)

Even Ms. Teena had camera issues with their cast for the initial online theater showcase. They were more diligent in their search for the ideal camera locations in each scene for each performer because their hour-long e-theater production required it. During the live performance, a student used two cameras—one from a laptop and the other from a smartphone.

“May limitation pa rin na di kayang makunan ng camera, isa pa ay yung laptop kaya hindi rin siguro yung ano, siguro kung ano mas may oras, pwede pang paglaruan, hanapan ng area na aangkop dun sa material.”

(There are still limitations that the camera cannot capture, and one of those is the laptop's capabilities, so maybe it's not ideal. Perhaps, with more time and effort, you can find an area that fits the material better and allows for more flexibility.)

Further, having limitations on what the camera could only capture, the performers felt strange on their stages at home: a different stage from what they were used to.

“Tapos yung preparation mo na dapat pang-stage eh **NALIITAN SILA NG SPACE** kasi ito lang yung space mo sa camera, yun lang yung gagalawan nila.”

(Then in our preparation, which was for the stage was changed. The space was limited because this was the only space within the camera frame, the only space they could use for performance.)

The approach for the second online showcase was recorded but live-streamed on their FB Page. The primary distinction was that the stage in PHSA was used for shooting the performance. Although it was staged and *filmed*, the lock-in shoot solely involved recording because there was no audience.

*“Sa second production naman, madaming takes din yun kasi ginagamit pa din **namin yung techniques ng theater to perform ang NAGING IBA LANG AY THEY ARE PERFORMING ON CAMERA** kaya mas maliit lang yung movement ganun din sa expression kasi iba yung camera sa stage.”*

(In the second production, there were also many takes because we still used theater techniques to perform, the only difference is that they are performing on camera, so the movements and expressions became more constrained since the camera is different from the stage.)

For Ms.Teena’s students, even if their second online theater showcase would be live-streamed, they managed to remind themselves that they were not acting for a camera. This enabled the performers to work naturally as if performing live for an audience.

*“Yung tipong hindi lang laptop ang kailangan, **naglagay pa sila ng ilang phones nila...**Tapos yung iba sa kanila, para makita rin yung ibang angle, gumamit din ng ibang gadget kasi sa angle ng camera, may mga eksena kasi doon na dapat magmukha silang naguusap, may mga side shots, so pinaglaruan din yun.”*

(It is like they did not only need a laptop; they even set-up several of their phones. Then some of them used other gadgets to capture different angles because in some scenes, they needed to appear as if they were having a conversation, with side shots involved, so they experimented with that.)

Prof. Glecy even claimed that even if the performance was being recorded at home on a digital platform, the approach differed because of the shift in perspective.

“Kasi ang perspective ay ‘yung camera,’ yun yung very important, so it is very different from the usual performance sa theater na nakikita ka ng lahat, DITO, ITO LANG.”

(The perspective is ‘the camera,’ that is very important. So, it is very different from the usual performance in the theater where everyone can see you. Here, it is just this.)

With no live audience in a live stage, the perspective became the camera. Thus, for Stage@Home, this became their perspective of expressing and observing aliveness in each performance where the audience was just watching from their own cameras.

2.4.Length of Material/Performance

The duration of each performance is essential in Prof. Glecy's Stage@Home experience.

“So, since virtual, hindi naman ma-aafford ng mga tao yung sobrang haba ang panonood so tatlong minuto hanggang limang minuto lang. Ang challenge talaga dito ay una, specific yung issues tapos tatlo o hanggang limang minuto kasi hindi mo kakayanin yung mahaba.”

(So, since it's virtual, people can't afford to watch for too long, so it is limited to three to five minutes. The challenge here is that, first, the issues need to be specific, and second, it has to be within three to five minutes because longer than that would be difficult to handle.)

But a different strategy was utilized by PHSA. They run a two-hour online theater showcase for their first e-theater. Given the length of performance, they incorporated breaks (two ten-minute intervals) as a breather for the audience and the actors. Hence, Ms.Teena needed to boost the number of viewers throughout each interval of their online theater showcase since, the numerous online websites caused

online diversions. The audience of an e-theater production would only gain interest if it run briefly.

“Once na nagkaroon ng intermission o nagkaroon ng interval, biglang uunti , so ayun, parang ‘ay umunti na,’ ay ganung effect din kapag social media ang gagamitin talagang nagkakaroon ng attention span , so yun ang challenge, tapos, kapag magpeperform, MAGHAHANAP KA TALAGA NG MATERIAL na alam mong MAGKAKARON NG INTEREST YUNG MGA TAO.”

(Once there is an intermission or interval, the audience suddenly decreases, so it's like "oh, the audience decreased." The same effect happens when using social media; attention spans become shorter. So that is the challenge. And when performing, you really have to find a material that you know will pique people's interest.)

Prof. Glecý believed that keeping the audience interested involved more than just picking an appealing story.

“Ang isang challenge kasi dito ay how do you tell your story para hindi pare-pareho.”

(One challenge here is how do you tell your story in a way that it's not the same as others.)

She even added that,

“Yung material mo dapat KUMIKILITI, PUMIPITIK, LUMALAGUTOK, HUMAHAMPAS SA LOOB NG MAIKLING PANAHOON. So ano yun? Kailangan na MATALAS,...ano yung nakakakiliti, ano yung pumipitik, yung isang tsuk ganun na, lumalagutok, humahampas kasi ‘it sticks to your mind right away.’ So kailangang matalas ang pagpili ng material, tapos kailangan MAIKLI pero BUO. Tapos dapat totoo at nakabatay sa masusing pagaaral. At dapat tuloy-tuloy at laging fresh.”

(Your material should be PROVOCATIVE, SPARKLING, EXPLOSIVE, and STRIKING IN A SHORT PERIOD. So what is that? It needs to be SHARP...what's provocative, what sparks, a sudden burst, striking because 'it sticks to your mind right away.' So the selection of

material needs to be sharp, then it should be SHORT but COMPLETE. It should be based on thorough research, and it should be continuous and always fresh.)

Prof. Glecý's experience in theater proved that the story is just one factor to interest your audience. The treatment of telling the story is another factor to be considered since the only stage used in the Stage@Home is one's space location at home.

2.5. Internet (Dis)Connectivity

In e-theater, a reliable internet connection was essential. For their first online theater showcase, Ms. Teena and her students needed a strong internet connection, otherwise, the whole showcase would be affected.

“Kasi kailangang maayos talaga yung internet connection, sa Kwentong Bata, ang daming struggles kasi gumamit din kami ng OBS.”

(Because a stable internet connection is really needed. In Kwentong Bata, there were many struggles because we also used OBS.)

The OBS would be modified whenever the internet connection was disrupted. For the e-theater, a reliable internet connection was essential. The production team and actors were connected via the internet to recreate theater for the audience. However, connectivity problems affected PHSA students as well. Routers were given to them to guarantee they could present a real-time theater. Although there were a few minor technical issues during the live performance, the play was successfully introduced in its new seeing place. This shift implied that an e-theater might be possible.

2.6.Editing Difficulty

The first online theater showcase was a trial because there were already technologies for online performance that the students still needed to explore. Numerous modifications and explorations were made to enable an uninterrupted and smooth transition from the physical to the new seeing place.

“Pinakamahirap talaga yung editing, kasi ipapasok namin sa OBS, although nung may OBS ang laking ginhawa din niya basta maayos lang yung internet connection ng mga bata.”

(The most challenging part was really the editing because we had to input it into OBS. Although, with the OBS, it was a huge relief as long as the internet connection of the students was stable.)

The liveness of theater made it happen on stage, without interruption, unless called for in the script or the scene. No editing was needed. The story would unfold and end on stage. But for the two online theater showcases of PHSA, both needed to be edited. Using the OBS for live streaming enabled the smooth transition of scenes, control, and audio. It also allowed video encoding, where raw video data were compressed to reduce its size for more straightforward sharing online. With the PHSA's first online theater showcase, the transition of one set from one to another, despite the separate locations of all casts, transformed their virtual stage into one consistent background. In addition, the second online theater was shot onstage by PHSA. The scenes were edited to capture the right angle. This was time-consuming but was managed by the team to produce realistic e-theater productions.

2.7. Background Continuity & Similarity

In a theater, the set design must be consistent from one character to another in a scene; one of the difficulties in PHSA's initial online theater showcase was

sustaining the set design from the different places in the Philippines where the performers are located.

*“Tapos kinailangan din nga na **pare-parehas ng background.**”*

(Then we also needed everyone to have the same background.)

The idea of using many windows as screens were used, even if they differed from PHSA's screens in their initial online theater showcase. The OBS was also employed for live streaming to improve the combination of audio and visual sources for their live theater performance. Additionally, it enabled the stage design, which used manila paper (large brown paper) as the substrate, to be seamlessly integrated into the actor's roles.

2.8.Co-actor non-presence

Since these issues might be resolved by technology alone, the technological hurdles were acknowledged and handled. However, when faced with the human component difficulty, the performers for PHSA's debut online theatrical showcase were troubled.

*“Tapos gabi gabi nagrerehearse, syempre parang naaawa din ang mga parents sa mga anak nila kasi parang nafu-frustrate kasi walang ka-co-actor, kasi parang may kausap sila na parang wala naman so I think yun din ang **sobrang naging challenge as performers, aside from the technology aspect.**”*

(And then every night, they rehearsed. Of course, the parents also felt sorry for their children because they seemed frustrated, having no co-actors, as if they were talking to someone who was not there. So, I think that was also the biggest challenge as performers, aside from the technology aspect.)

They want the mode of communication to be something other than the camera; however, the communication is only through a camera in e-theater productions. Hence, they made sure that the performance was realistic. They used

online technology to their advantage. The leading edge for them is that the students were trained in theater and that with the perseverance of the students, the creative team, the production team, and the faculty members, the techniques used entailed truth and realism that created the impression that **they were there as one** even if they were situated in different locations.

2.9. Shooting problems

The lock-in shots for PHSA's second online theater showcase had likewise proved difficult. The number of takes per scene had been impacted by capturing the distinct characters and emotions required for a specific situation.

*“So sobrang nakakapagod kasi may limitation ka na lang ng oras tapos ishoshoot mo pa so yun yung PINAK-CRUCIAL kasi kailangan siyang I-shoot so **dapat pagshinoot mo siya dapat talaga kuhang-kuha nila talaga yung liveness ng palabas or else, waley, hindi magiging effective yun...**”*

(It is really exhausting because you have a limited time, and then you still need to shoot, and that is the most crucial part because it needs to be shot in a way that they can really capture the live performance. Otherwise, it will not be effective and aliveness will not be observed.)

The limited time to shoot for the PHSA's second online showcase added to the difficulty. This e-theater production was pre-recorded and live-streamed on its Facebook page.

Scene 3: Locating Onstage and Offstage Presence.

For Stage@Home, the process may take the same forms as the backstage and onstage of a physical theater, but there are slight differences in how it is managed.

*“Sa Stage@Home, ang backstage at ang onstage mo, **meron kang concept ng frontliners, yun yung onstage mo. Yung frontliners mo sila yung aktuwal na gumagawa at tsaka sila yung nagcoconceptualize. Pero yung gumagawa at yung nagcoconceptualize, kung minsan magkaiba. ... pero hindi naman puwede na ako lahat, eh di may time talaga na kailangan ko siyang***

*ituro, so nagshare ako, nagconduct ako ng workshop sa mga kasama namin, so yun yung aming **backstage work: how do you conceptualize, how do you encourage people to do the productions on their own.***

(In Stage@Home, your backstage and onstage have a concept of frontliners. The frontliners are the ones who actually perform and conceptualize. But sometimes, the ones performing and the ones conceptualizing are different people... but I cannot do everything, so there are times when I need to teach them. So I shared, I conducted workshops with our team, and that's our backstage work: how do you conceptualize, how do you encourage people to do the productions on their own.)

In addition to pre-production and production activities, Prof. Glecý explained that the backstage might also take the shape of post-production.

*“So yung, **backstage mo as in hindi katulad nung backstage natin. IT PERTAINS TO ‘ANO YUNG NANGYAYARI BAGO MO MAKITA YUNG PALABAS,** the whole preparation at nangyayari siya via ZOOM, and telephone calls..... Yung front of stage mo, yung onstage mo, yung nakikita mo, pero meron ka pang **POST PROD which is the most important** . Yung pagkatapos ninyong manood ng sabay-sabay, **naguusap-usap kayo , ano ang tingin ninyo sa palabas, ano ano yung nangyari.**”*

(So your backstage, it is not like our usual backstage. IT PERTAINS TO 'WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE YOU SEE THE PERFORMANCE,' the whole preparation, and it happens via ZOOM and telephone calls... Your front of stage, your onstage, what you see, but you still have POST PROD, which is the most important. After you all watch together, you talk, what do you think of the performance, what happened.)

Ms. Teena also has a different perspective,

*“**Itong front ng camera, yan yung STAGE, so yung hindi nakikita, yung hindi naaabot ng camera, yun ang backstage.**”*

(This area in front of the camera, that is the STAGE, so the part that is not seen, the part that is not reached by the camera, that's the backstage.)

It is similar to the standard backstage. However, it is in the performer's home, room, or kitchen this time. The only thing on display at the front will be what the camera can see, which is the new front stage.

Scene 4: e-theater productions Strategies.

4.1. Constructing Material from the Freshest Experience and Fitting to Year Level/

According to Prof. Glec's observations, she was urged to create Stage@Home performances about relatable experiences during the lockdown. She knew that the stories she wanted to share must be relatable and understood. Together with her team, they crafted tales that may significantly impact the audiences' lives and awareness.

*“Saan ang magandang lugar, anong kuwento mo, pero ang **FIRST NA GINAWA NAMIN IS DEVELOPING YOUR MATERIAL**, ano yung kuwento kasi kung walang kuwenta yung kuwento mo, eh di wala kang pagtatanghal. So ang first thing na ginawa **ANO YUNG URGENT CONCERNS ng mga tao sa panahon na yun....so nagcocollect kami ng key words na nageembody ng pinaka-salient issue of the day , so ayun quarantine pass, at COVID mismo, kasi nung time na yun hindi naiintindihan ng mga tao kung ano yun COVID....Pagkatapos yung ayuda, so makikita mo na, key words, key concepts, yun ang starting point mo. Tapos lagi kaming nagdudwell doon sa anong experience mo sa bahay.”***

*(Where is a good place? What is your story? But the **FIRST THING WE DID IS DEVELOPING YOUR MATERIAL**, what is the story because if your story is not meaningful, then you have no performance. So the first thing we did is **IDENTIFYING THE URGENT CONCERNS** of the people at that time... so we collected key words that embody the most salient issues of the day, such as "quarantine pass" and "COVID" itself, because at that time, people didn't understand what COVID was... Then the "ayuda" (assistance/aid), you can see the key words, key concepts, those are your starting points. Then we always dwelled on what your experience is at home.)*

Thus, for Stage@Home, they ensured they would capture the freshest experience to bring out interaction and connection with their audience, given the

limited resources and facilities for an e-theater production. They disapproved of the rehashed plays and storylines. This goes against equanimity, particularly during a pandemic when everyone desired a balanced and rational response. As a result, they insisted on making ends meet by presenting stories worth the audiences' time.

For Ms. Teens, learning the materials requires time, concentration, and attention.

*“Nagbasa talaga sila, para din may makita din silang idea kung saan sila makakapagperform ng maayos, at tsaka nandun din yung range na pang-Grade 10 na ‘to at ready na sila to perform for a different character , so ganun yung naging proseso, **hindi kami yung nagbigay ng material, kami yung nagbasa, inaanalyze namin pero yung last year (2022), kinakailangan lang namin magkaroon ng shift.**”*

(They really read, so they can also have an idea of where they can perform well, and also, there is the range for Grade 10 students, and they are ready to perform for a different character. So that was the process, we didn't give them the material, we read, we analyzed it, but last year (2022), we just needed to make a shift.)

For the PHSA's online theater showcase, the class Ms. Teena handled, Elementary Directing, was used to analyze various materials. The subject required extensive reading. They read plays in a style appropriate for pupils in Grade 10. Based on the acting range of the students, the script was chosen for their online showcase. They selected a lighter, more appropriate story for the group. They used Google Meet and Zoom to acquaint the students with the material chosen for their reading sessions.

4.2. Strategizing Feedback

The Stage at Home and PHSA's online theatrical showcases featured active feedback. Ms. Teena was in charge of the Dulaang Sipat Lawin's Facebook page.

She was able to capture the comments during the first online theater showcase. They were real-time comments. Emojis also served as feedback in every scene in the showcase. The performers could not read the comments since they were acting 'live' for an hour. The second online theater showcase performance was recorded but streamed live on their Facebook page. The performers and the production team could view the comments and emojis during the showing. These feedback mechanisms were employed to help the team identify areas for improvement.

*"In line with the interaction, may possibility pa naman kahit na yung videos na lang na nasa FB page namin yung mapapanood pero **mas online na yung sagot kasi** doon nila napanood sa page di ba, tapos kung may magcomment, **doon din namin masasagot.**"*

(In line with the interaction, there is still a possibility that they can watch the videos on our Facebook page, but the responses will be more online because that's where they watched it on the page, and if there are comments, that's where we'll respond as well.)

For Prof. Glecy, they have their own way of monitoring and analyzing the feedback from their audience.

"So hindi naiwan sa panonood yung discourse kaya after that meron kang TALK BACK. Sa amin, tamang ano ito, di ba may tinatawag na Watch Party sa panahon na 'to. After that, nagiiapon-apon kami para pagusapan, ano ang tingin ninyo ? Or habang nanonood kami, nagfefeedback yan. Di ba meron namang chat room na nagfefeedback na o ganito, so nagtatawanan kayo sabay-sabay."

(So the discourse does not end with just watching; that is why after that, we have a TALK BACK. For us, it is like, there is something called a Watch Party during this time. After that, we gather to discuss, "What do you think?" Or while we're watching, there is feedback. In the chat room, it is already possible to give feedback, so you all laugh together at the same time.)

For Prof. Glecy, their e-theater productions were all recorded but they always looked into the comments. They also used the 'talk back' conducted after the

performance. They even scheduled a ‘watch party’ so every team member could watch their e-theater performances simultaneously.

Figure 8.

Talkback after a performance enabled performers to share insights about each e-theater productions. Comments from the online audience were also addressed.



4.3. Use of OBS, Router via Live Stream Performance in FB Live

Ms. Teena’s students became more exploratory in the available online applications.

“Actually matagal na yung OBS pala so ginagamit na yun sa live streaming before so parang nung time lang na yun namin na-discover na mas madali siyang gamtin for editing kasi hindi siya kaya sa mga Zoom so parang kapag sa Zoom, nadedelay ‘ata and at the same time, nawawala so yun yung first online production namin.”

(Actually, OBS has been around for a while, and it was already used for live streaming before. It is just that during that time, we discovered that it is easier to use for editing because it is not suitable for Zoom. When using Zoom, there’s a delay and sometimes, it gets lost, so that was our first online production where we used the OBS.)

But aside from the use of the OBS, a stable internet connection was considered to be another pressing difficulty for the initial online theater showcase of PHSA. Ms. Teena explained,

“Pero syempre kailangan na yung mga students ay maayos ung internet so may mga time din na bumili kami ng mga router para once na mawala sila sa connection , masisira yung buong palabas.”

(But of course, the students need to have a stable internet connection, so there were times when we bought routers so that if they lose connection, the whole performance won't be affected.)

The main issue with the initial online theater showcase was the need for a better internet connection. Students with poor internet connections were provided routers because the showcase had a budget, ensuring that the OBS would operate correctly and the performance would succeed.

4.4.Lock-in Shoot as a Strategy

The creative team opted to hold lock-in shoots for the second online theater showcase. A new online theatrical showcase is something they would want to offer. The performers are gathered here on a single stage. The cast tried script reading before the scheduled lock-in shoot. They memorized their lines, so blocking and prop preparation would be their main worries when they arrived in Makiling (where the school is located). First, they were instructed to converse with one another. Ms. Teena named it "naglaro muna sila" (they play first) so they could practice improvisational activities. They had lessons for the first 30 minutes to get to know one another. They performed the blocking the following day throughout the evening. The blockings were scheduled for two days. This time they have to work with their director, co-actor, and characters. This seemed challenging since they needed to move and characterize themselves according to their roles. They still had to deal

with time restraints. The ensemble appeared to be adjusting to the stage, each performer, and the feeling of being shot simultaneously. The 'liveness' of the performance is the problem here. Although the production crew watched prior online theater productions, they faced a challenge during the lock-in shoot: the camera's presence.

*“...ayaw namin yung sa camera na ito lang yun, gusto namin na ‘they are still there’ sa situation ng play **that’s why gusto naming ma-achieve yung realism** at paggamit ng technique na ‘kung saan kayo nakatingin, dapat parehas kayo ng angle sa tamang oras, para sabay din yung reaksiyon, sabay yung hearing.”*

(...we do not want it to be like they are just in front of the camera, we want them to still be 'there' in the situation of the play. That is why we want to achieve realism and use a technique where 'wherever you are looking, you should all have the same angle at the right time, so that your reactions and hearing are also synchronized.)

Costume complexity was an additional factor. Other students donned the double costumes, which caused others to feel suffocated. The electric fans cannot be opened because the camera might record the sound. They persevered despite these difficulties because they found the first online theater showcase challenging due to the delayed co-actor's presence during the delivery of the lines. The high expense of production was another addition to the difficulties.

*“Binigyan lang kami ng 1week ng aming head of the institution kasi gusto rin ng co-director ko na **maglock-in shoot na kami kasi ang hirap ng naging struggle din namin for online set up na nasa bahay lang sila**, ang hirap din ng naging proseso, although na-surpass naman pero ngayon, nung last year (2022), iniba na namin.”*

(Our head of the institution gave us only one week because my co-director and I also wanted to do a lock-in shoot. It was challenging for us to do the online setup where they were just at home, and the process was difficult. Although we were able to surpass it, last year (2022), we changed it.)

Figure 9.

Some of the Casts of the second online showcase of PHSA in their costumes



The quick fix for PHSA's second online theatrical showcase was lock-in shoots. In 2022, they were able to complete their pre-recorded e-theater productions. This demonstrated how enthusiasm and innovation could improve the likelihood of managing theater amid the pandemic.

4.5. Hiring of Professionals in e-Theater Productions

Due to the budget availability, the PHSA employed experts like film directors for their second online theater showcase.

“Kasi kumuha rin kami ng director on film kasi siya yung nakakaalam ng right angles to shoot kasi ang idea ay every angle, hindi siya puwedeng in toto mo lang siyang ishoshoot eh, gumamit kami ng tatlong cameras kasi medyo thrust stage siya kaya, may isa dito, sa gitna, at sa right angle.”

(We also hired a film director because he knows the right angles to shoot. The idea is to capture every angle, so you cannot just shoot it in totality. We used three cameras because it's a thrust stage, so one camera here, one in the middle, and one at the right angle.)

Therefore, Ms. Teena thought,

*“Kumukuha kami ng **ARTISTIC TEAM** para makatulong din sa pagproseso at pagbuo ng production. So dalawa yung directors namin from the past two years of pandemic ng online showcase ay pareho silang alumni ng PHSA.”*

(We hire an ARTISTIC TEAM to help with the process and production. So we have two directors from the past two years of the online showcase, and both of them are alumni of PHSA.)

Even so, she continued, they engaged a creative team to assist the students with the students’ at-home set designs, costumes, and props for the first online theater showcase.

*“Sa design elements, Kumukuha kami ng Artistic Team kasi di na rin kaya ng mga bata yun. Kumukuha kami ng designers, **may budget naman kasi kami**. Parang yearly may nilalaan kaming budget for production, sa set, sa costumes, tsaka sa props, tapos kapag hindi namin nauubos, puwedeng I-allocate yun for honorarium artistic.”*

(In the design elements, we get an Artistic Team because the kids can't handle that. We hire designers, and we have a budget for it. We allocate a budget for production yearly, for set, costumes, and props. If we don't use it all, we can allocate it for the honorarium of the artistic team.)

The online theater showcases of the PHSA may all come as requirements but were all funded by the school. However, Ms. Teena, her students, and the production team were still challenged by the new seeing place.

Figure 10.

Aside from consulting practitioners in the field, a series of Workshop was conducted online for the first online theater showcase.



Figure 11.

Another online workshop was conducted in preparation for the online theater showcase.

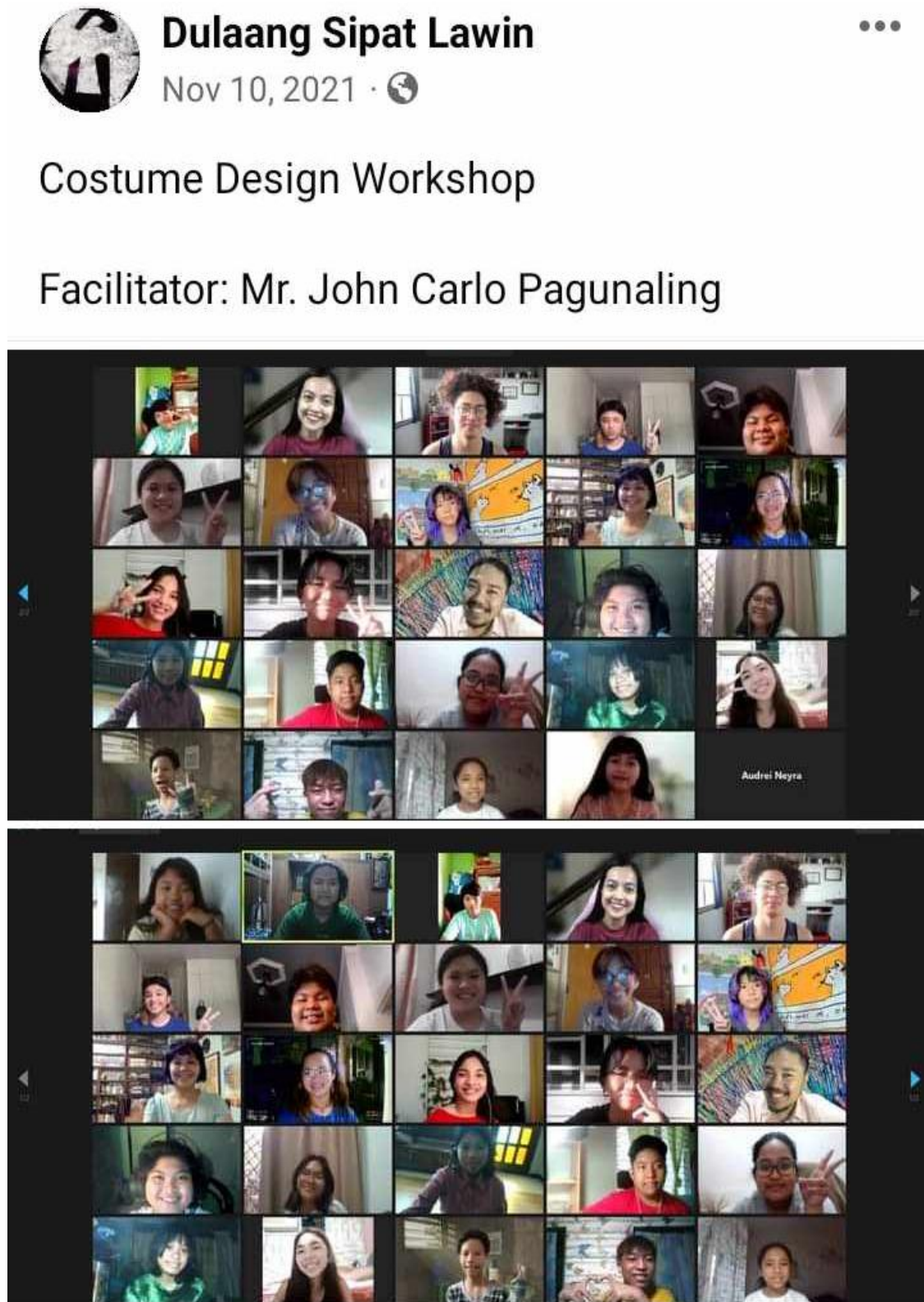


Figure 12.

Stage and Character Make up Workshop was also facilitated for the whole cast of the first online theater showcase.



4.6. Utilization of Gadgets

Given their financial resources, Ms. Teena could buy their students' devices and supplies necessary.

."Umorder pa kami ng earphones na wireless kasi yun yung way para marinig."

(We even ordered wireless earphones because that's the way for them to hear properly.)

The requirement for wireless earphones indicated that in addition to the cameras on the students' laptops and smartphones, a microphone was also used to facilitate e-theater productions. Since numerous screens or windows were visible on

PHSA's initial online theater showcase, the actors and the production team would benefit from greater audio reception if they had wireless earphones.

4.7. Clocktime Strategy

They devised a plan to make the performers appear on a single stage for the first PHSA online theater showcase.

*“Ang naging techniqiue na lang namin ay yung **CLOCK TIME PARA MAGKAPAREHAS SILA NG TINGINAN** like ‘look at your 3 ‘o clock so nasaan ba yung 3 ‘o clock mo, 9 ‘o clock mo, ganyan.”*

*(The technique we used is the **CLOCK TIME** so they have the same reference point, like 'look at your 3 o'clock, so where is your 3 o'clock, 9 o'clock, and so on.)*

Digital blockings were carried out in this manner. Blockings were easier to choreograph in a traditional theater, but in the new seeing place, blockings required more attention and practice.

4.8. Preparation Aspect

In addition to a strong internet connection, having a suitable space is crucial for a successful online performance. It is important to create an appropriate setting for the online theater showcase of PHSA and for Stage@Home.

Ms. Teena shared her students' preparation techniques for their initial online theater showcase,

*“Yung preparation nila as actors **na hindi sila nasa stage** kasi syempre yung stage is the performance area, ito naghahanap sila ng space na aside na maayos yung internet connection at malapit sila sa WIFI nila, **kailangan talaga nila iprepare yung space nila to perform at the same kailangan pa nilang magprepare as an actor so PARANG LAHAT SILA yun eh, sila rin ang nag-set eh.”***

(Their preparation as actors is different because they are not on stage. Here, they have to find a space with a stable internet connection and be close to their Wi-Fi. They really need to prepare their

performance space, and at the same time, they also need to prepare as actors. It is like they are doing everything themselves, they are the ones setting up.)

The students underwent a laborious preparation to create an online theater showcase as a school requirement, but it was necessary to maintain the standards of a traditional theater production.

“Matagal din kaming nagpractice. Parang my isang buwan din yun. Pero yung mga preparations, sabihin nating mga two months din yun , kasi yung one month lahat na yun sa shooting eh, pagshosshoot, pageedit.”

(We practiced for a long time. It was like around a month. But the preparations, let's say it took us about two months because one month was dedicated to shooting, shooting, and editing.)

When preparing for the performance, students had to practice reading their scripts while utilizing Zoom or Google Classroom. Along with this, memorizing lines was a must. Costumes and props were also purchased to ensure proper preparation for the performance.

“Pinaka-praktikal ay magonline shopping kaya tinantiya na lang yung sizes ng mga bata. Kapag may nakita namang may damit na silang ganun pero yung iba kasi, since period yung play ay naghanap ng malapit doon sa character and at the same time yung period ng play. Kaya naglaan talaga kami ng online shopping for the production even with the props pero yung iba, sila na tapos irereimburse na lang ng school.”

(The most practical thing to do is online shopping, so we just estimated the sizes of the kids. If we found clothes that they already had, we used those. But for some characters and considering the period of the play, we had to look for specific clothing online. That's why we allocated budget for online shopping for the production, even for props, and the school reimbursed some of the expenses made by the kids themselves.

However, the students just used the resources that they had at home. The clothes and props must all appear to be from the same time period as the play, as the first internet theater showcase was a period piece. Online shopping was the most feasible option for Ms. Teena and her team.

Figure 13.

Students also experimented on the available materials at home for the stage



Figure 14.

Behind-the-scenes for the first online theater showcase of PHSA where students' creativity and commitment was put to the test.

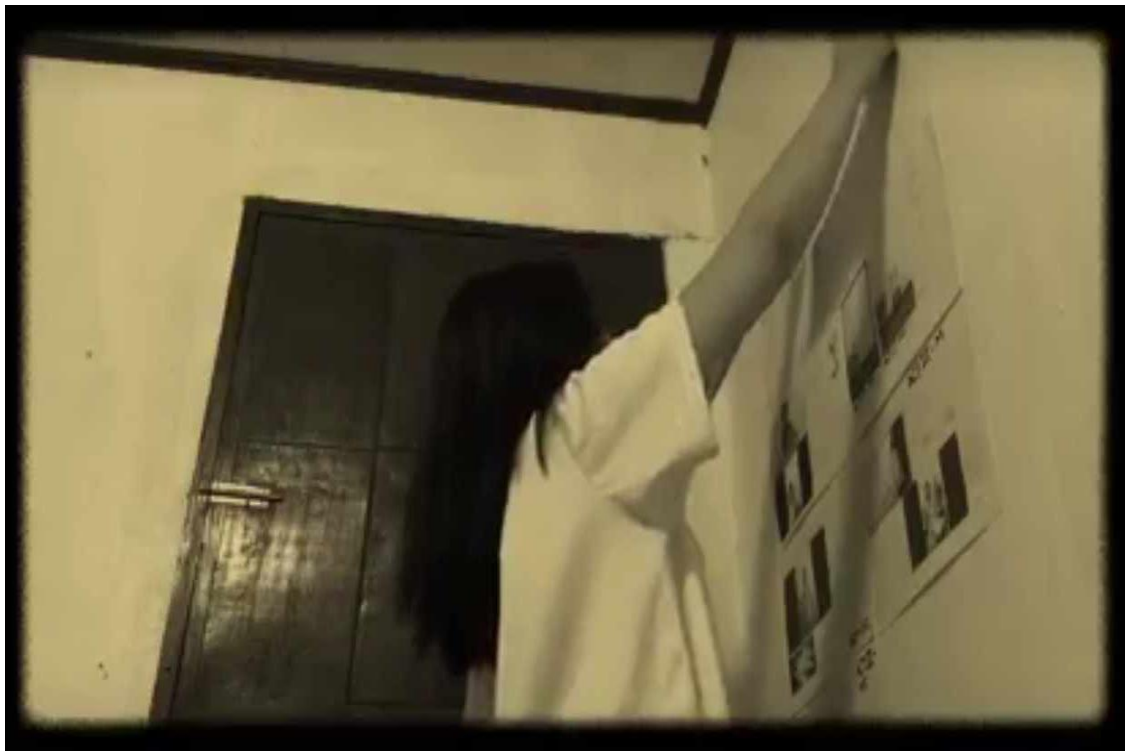


Figure 15.

Varied strategies were employed to ensure that backgrounds were consistent, lighting was appropriate, and stage design was visually fitting



4.9. Use of Social Media to Market the Play

Ms.Teena recalled that attracting an online audience and keeping them interested in the one-hour play raised two challenges. She cannot predict the attendance for the online theater showcase and the length of the play. In contrast to a theater, one could see how many people would see the play. She claimed that although there would be viewers, the production team still needed to advertise the play.

“Kailangan din sa promotion sa socmed talagang makakahanap ka ng magkaroon ng interest sa mga audiences mo kasi ang dami ng kalaban sa atensiyon online.”

(You also need social media promotion to really find someone who will gain interest in your audience because there are already so many distractions.)

Many people use social media; therefore, if the right marketing approach is used, there will be a large audience for the performance. They considered the length of their play and mentioned TikTok as one competition because it included 10-second or 1-minute videos. She went on to say that they chose to limit their play to a maximum of one hour because using a device to watch would cause additional distractions. Only those engaged in and passionate about theater might continue to watch, but these audiences are rare. Hence, marketing the play in social media was their strategy for reaching many audiences.

Figure 16.

Promotional posters used by the PHSA for their first online theater showcase, Kwentong Bata.

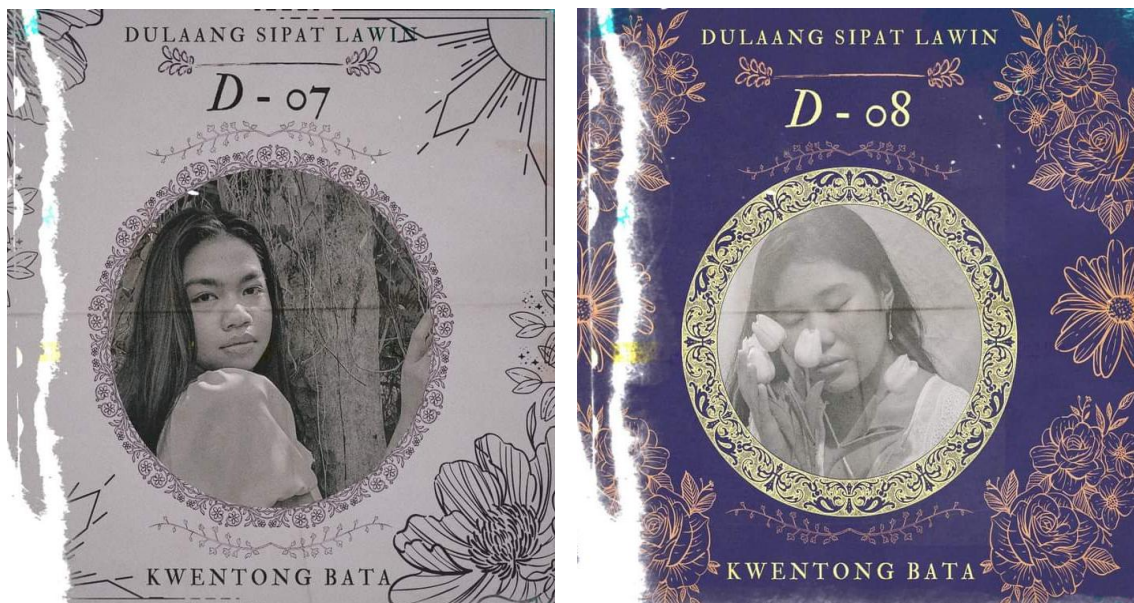
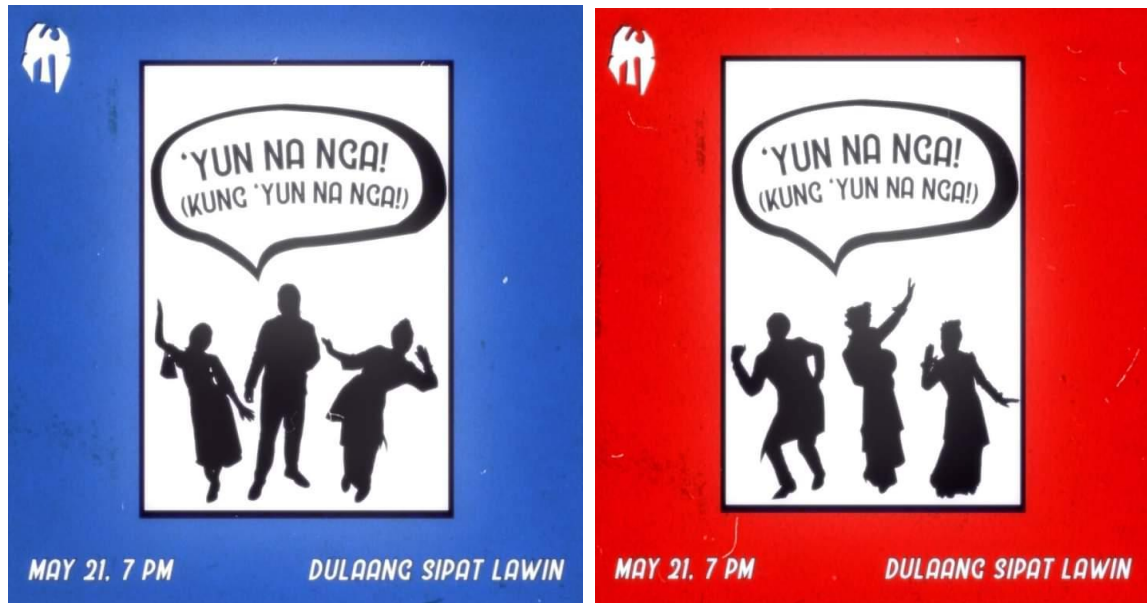


Figure 17.

Teaser posters for the second online theater showcase, 'Yun na Nga! (Kung 'Yun na Nga!)



4.10. Recording of the Performance and the Audiences' Presence

Ms. Teena revealed that they had counted the number of people who had viewed their online theater showcase.

“Kailangan din naming MA-RECORD yung mga nanonood, since ang Dulaang Sipat Lawin is under PHSA, paano din makakadagdag ito ng PROMOTION sa school bilang Arts school na nageentail siya ng iba’t ibang artists.”

(We also need to RECORD those who are watching, since Dulaang Sipat Lawin is under PHSA, how can this also add to the PROMOTION of the school as an Arts school that entails various artists.)

This monitoring technique was used to promote the school to the country's inspiring artists and measure the performance's impact. Hence, witnessing a play in

a pandemic, its possibility and its risky move, marked as a marketing strategy of PHSA.

4.11. Do-it-Yourself Lighting

According to Prof. Glecy's description, adding the proper lighting to her videos was the main challenge for her e-theater productions on Stage@Home. Ms. Teena's students experienced the same challenge.

"May mga practice din kami ng hinahanapan ng tamang ilaw, pinaglaruan din nila yung mga lamps nila, hindi kami gumamit ng flourescents, yung iba gumamit ng flashlights, merong lamps na kulay yellow para umakma din sa kulay ng area nila, tapos ang ginawa sa OBS na yun ginawang medyo sepia kasi may period yung play so parang 'DO YOURSELF LIGHTING.'"

(We also have practices where we look for the right lighting, they also played with their lamps, we didn't use fluorescents, some used flashlights, there are yellow lamps to match the color of their area, then what was done in OBS was made a bit sepia because the play has a period so it's like 'DO IT YOURSELF LIGHTING.'")

For their first online theater showcase, the students used every lighting tool they could find at home to create the lighting effect. To set the right mood for the performance, lights from lamps, flashlights, Christmas lights, and even cellphones were employed.

Figure 18.

One of the casts of Kwentong Bata used the available lighting at home during rehearsals and actual performances.



4.12. Assessment of Performance

Ms. Teena needed to learn how to respond to online comments for their online theater showcases. She assigned students to assist her in doing this task.

“Ako yung nagchecheck ng nagrereact, kasi ako yung nasa PM tsaka ako din yung nagchecheck ng aming social media page kasi doon namin ni-live stream sa Dulaang Sipat-Lawin, so may ina-assign ako na mga students na kapag may reaction, sagutin nyo din kapag hindi maganda, sasagutin ang in a very nice way pero yun nilalagyan talaga namin na puwedeng magreact , so naka-antabay lang kami with their comments.”

(I am the one checking who reacts, because I am the one on PM and I am also the one checking our social media page because that is where we live-streamed in Dulaang Sipat-Lawin, so I assign students that if there is a reaction, respond as well if it is not good, just respond in a very nice way but we really provide a way for them to react, so we are just standing by with their comments.)

She added that with the comments, they could assess their performance. But she always guided her students in handling online criticisms.

*“Hindi nalalaman ng actor kung may nagcocomment kasi nung una hindi nila alam kasi naka-live stream pero nung second online showcase namin, nakikita nila, kasi recorded na yun eh so pinanood na rin nila yun sa Facebook, **so natatawa lang sila, tapos INA-ASSESS din namin kung ano yng mga naging reactions kasi minsan kasi ‘personal din nilang perspective’** kasi siyempre kapag mga studyante, may iba’t-iba silang pananaw, naiintindihan namin kasi mga bata, pero hindi naman sila naapektuhan.”*

(The actors do not know if there are comments because the first online theater showcase was live but during our second online showcase, they saw it, because that was already recorded so they also watched it on Facebook, so they just laughed. Then we also ASSESS what were the reactions because sometimes it is their 'personal perspective,' since they' are students, they have different viewpoints, we understand because they are young, but they are not affected by comments.)

Prof. Glecy found comments to be a valuable resource for improving their e-theater productions. Based on feedback, they learned that offering fresh and relevant topics was vital to keeping their audience engaged. They frequently discussed the chatbox comments and suggestions at the watch party because they provided opportunities for advancement.

Figure 19.

Critiquing was conducted before the actual online theater showcase.



ACT 9: Observed Elements of Theater in the New Seeing Place.

Am I still theater?
or am I a different stage?
Do I still know myself?
How come the new seeing place transformed me
into something unknown to me?

Scene 1: Mediated Aliveness.

Among the qualities of theater are immediacy and aliveness. For Prof. Glecy, having offered the new seeing place, the aliveness that transpired has also transformed.

“Siguro sabihin natin na nagiba ng anyo ang immediacy, ang aliveness, syempre kapag kinumpare mo siya sa dati, SYEMPRE IBA TALAGA yun. Kasi wala kayong direct interaction eh, di ba? At dito tulad nung kinukuwento ko kanina, yung watch party, yun ang nagcompensate for that immediacy and for that alive experience. Totoong may limitations, totoong nagiba, pero nagtransform din kung paano mo ngayon pinagkasya yung concept ng interaction na yun sa isang interaction na katulad ng watch party....Kumbaga, wala talagang makakatapat diyan.”

(Perhaps we can say that the immediacy, the aliveness has changed its form, of course when you compare it to before, OF COURSE IT IS REALLY DIFFERENT. Because there is no direct interaction, right? And here, like what I was telling earlier, the watch party, that is what compensated for that immediacy and for that alive experience. It is true that there are limitations, it is true that it changed, but it also transformed how you now fit the concept of that interaction into an interaction like a watch party... In other words, nothing can really compare to that.)

She clarified that there was a change since the platform has changed. But she highlighted that what mattered was how aliveness managed to still be achieved. She expounded that it would not be the same as face-to-face, but it compensated for the absence of face-to-face.

Additionally, Ms. Teena expressed her thoughts on how aliveness in e-theater productions had taken a different form.

“But hindi siya theater wala ka kasi doon sa theater venue, iba kasi yung nasa loob ka ng theater and you experience the elements of theater, yung lighitng, yung sound effects, yung production design, kasi doon sa online parang CAMERA na yung nagwowork, and parang MEDYO FILM pero tingin ko, hindi naman masasabing nawala. Maeexperience mo lang siya in a different aspect.

For me, kasi naririnig mo pa rin naman yung cue ng music, pero HINDI MO SIYA MA-EXPERIENCE watching it LIVE, di ba? Kasi iba yung nandun ka sa mismong venue ng theater. Ito yung experience mo ngayon, ano lang, sineen mo lang siya in front of a gadget sakín yung ‘liveness’, hindi meant doon sa loob ng theater, yung ‘liveness’ ngayon ay ibang pamamaraan.”

(But it is not theater because you are not in the theater venue, it is different when you are inside a theater and you experience the

elements of theater, the lighting, the sound effects, the production design, because online it is like the CAMERA that is working, and it feels a bit like a FILM but I think, it cannot be said that it is gone. You just experience it in a different aspect.

For me, because you still hear the cue of the music, but YOU DO NOT EXPERIENCE IT watching it LIVE, right? Because it is different when you are in the actual theater venue, you can see the whole setup. This is your experience now, you just watch it in front of a gadget, for me, the 'liveness' is not meant for inside the theater, the 'liveness' now is in a different way.)

Stage@Home and the PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin both experienced a distinct kind of liveliness in the new seeing place with their e-theater productions. In order to blend in with the digital world, even liveness has evolved.

Scene 2: Differentiated Immediacy.

Ms. Teena had an altered sense of immediacy in the two online theater showcases of PHSA.

*“Tapos yung sa immediacy, kapag kasi di ba, naglivestream ka sa Facebook, doon mo lang malalaman kung ilan yung nanonood kasi parang ang naging goal din namin ay **maraming manoond**, di ba? So pag nakita namin yung dami ng audience na nanonood, doon din namin **ina-assess kung nakakuha din kami ng mga taong interested dun sa play that also entails of promoting the performance in the social media aspect.**”*

(About the immediacy, because when you live stream on Facebook, that is when you find out how many are watching because it became our goal to have a lot of viewers, right? So when we see the number of the audience who are watching, that is also where we assess if we have gained people interested in the play which also entails promoting the performance in the social media aspect.)

For Ms. Teena, immediate feedback is present when there is an audience in the new seeing place. This presence would entail how the audience regarded the online theater showcase.

ACT 10: Realizations on e-theater.

The unfamiliarity is strange

But what can I do to change the transformed me
into the fancy me or the homey me?

Do I owe me? But do I know me?

Theater is still me.

Transformed but please, do not deformed.

This is where my story will prosper

It will not end for it has just started of what I will be

Unpredictable, but reachable

Unfamiliar for some, but open for exploration

Unending progress, yes, I am certain,

Other curtain calls will happen

either virtual or live,

I communicate you and me, us, and we, they and all.

Therefore, Theater I am.

and so Theater I will be.

I AM THEATER.

Scene 1: Unfamiliarity of Theater.

Prof. Glecyr shared her valuable insight about theater during the pandemic,

*“Yun kasing lockdown, i-nancover niya ang mga problema na ayaw nating kilalanin and among these problems, **we realized that ang theater has been taken away from us** kaya kahit yung form ng pag-recognize natin ng theater has always been alien **because we haven’t really accepted the fact that “theater has been and will always be part of our home.”***

(The lockdown, it uncovered the problems that we do not want to recognize and among these problems, we realized that theater has been taken away from us. That is why even the form of recognizing theater has always been alien because we have not really accepted the fact that ‘theater has been and will always be part of our home.)

She stated that viewing a theater as a component of one's home would result in a different perspective.

*“So pag ganun kasi ang balangkas kaisipan mo, magbabago yan, kaya hindi na tayo mangangarap ng malalaking productions na pagkamahal-mahal but rather **when we look for productions or theater as a venue for communicating because we want to target the wellness of our community, and that should change the whole***

mindset of theater . So yun yung point, so I think yun yung biggest lesson ng theater during the pandemic.”

(So when that is your frame of mind, it will change, so we will no longer dream of costly large-scale productions but rather when we look for productions or theater as a venue for communicating because we want to target the wellness of our community, and that should change the whole mindset of theater. So that is the point, so I think that is the biggest lesson of theater during the pandemic.)

The public's lack of understanding of what theater actually is was made clear by the shift in the theater's spatial position. People will always associate theater with large productions and famous performers. The pandemic, however, caused theater to transcend to another location while remaining unknown to others.

Scene 2: Inclusion of Theater in one's Home.

Prof. Glecy made a note of this.

*“Puwede naman kayong magusap na magkapit bahay eh di ba? Puwede siyang manood mula sa kaniyang bintana o kaya ay puwede kayong magkuwentuhan from that distance. HINDI NAMAN BAWAL ‘YUN...Bibigyan mo lang siya ng chance na mapanood kayo, hiindi ninyo naman kailangan ng special na lugar. Diyan na kayo, makikita kayo, elevated. O, kaya **puwede naman kayong magpalabas sa garahe o kaya ay sa may pintuan ninyo...**But what was most interesting was “Oo nga no, bakit nga ba hindi natin na-mamaximize ang bahay bilang set.”*

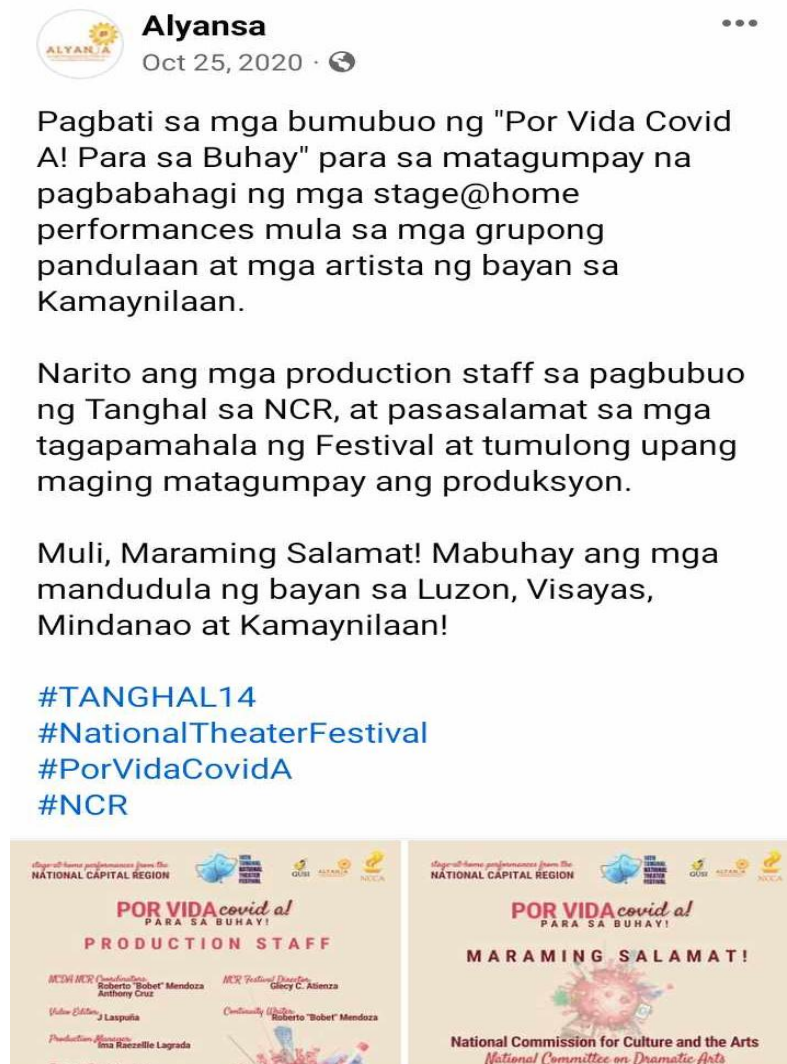
(You can just talk to your neighbor, right? They can watch from their window or you can converse from that distance. THAT is NOT PROHIBITED... So, it is possible. You just give them a chance to watch you, you do not need a special place. You are already there in your home, you will be seen, just elevate your yourself. Or, you can perform in your garage or at your door... But what was most interesting was 'Yes indeed, why not we maximize our home as a set.)

Prof. Glecy's disclosure highlighted the potential for performances to take place within the confines of one's own home or any space where one feels at ease conducting a presentation. This realization brings to light the idea that one's home

has evolved beyond being a mere place of homage, transforming into a new realm of entertainment and relaxation during the pandemic.

Figure 20.

Por Vida Covid A! Para sa Buhay!, another initiative of ALYANSA that showcased varied Stage@Home performances



Scene 3: Limitations turned Opportunities .

Prof. Glecy welcomed opportunities in the new seeing place,

“We also realized that the limitation also had its opportunities o natutuo din tayo because of that and one of them is puwede tayong maging blended.”

(We also realized that the limitation also had its opportunities, or we also learned because of that and, one of them is we can become blended.)

With the technological offerings like a blended strategy for theater (recorded e-theater productions or live stream for both the PHSA and the Stage@Home), what transpired was the overpowering desires of Prof. Glecy and Ms. Teena to explore and present new theater productions.

Scene 4: Dimensions of e-space.

The new seeing place opened up for the world. An e-theater production could capture the world for an audience with appropriate publicity. This is the experience of Ms. Teena. Their online theater showcases were seen by her student's relatives abroad.

*“Natutuwa din naman sila kasi at least nakapanood yung mga batchmates nila , mga kamag-anak nila. **I think yun din ang naging MAGANDA sa online, yung mga kamaganak nilang nasa abroad, nakapanood, so yun naman ang naging POWER ng socmed, ng online.** Anyone can be able to watch so merong naging ganun na **FREEDOM, or free to access.** So ayun, free siya na panoodan kaya ayun yun yung mga nakatulong kasi nakapanood ang mga kamaganak nila, mga nanay nila, nasa abroad.”*

(They also feel happy because at least their batchmates, their relatives were able to watch. I think that is also the BEAUTY of online, their relatives abroad, were able to watch. In that aspect, that is the POWER of social media, of online. Anyone can be able to watch so there was that kind of FREEDOM, or free to access. So, since it was free to watch, it helped because their relatives, their mothers abroad, were able to watch.)

Meanwhile, for Prof. Glecy, the time difference is no longer a problem. With her experience in Stage@Home, audiences from all parts of the world could be together and still interact.

“Ang watch party space ay isa yang innovation nung panahon ng virtual space na inapproximate niya ‘yung sabay

sabay na panonood ng mga tao. Sa akin, sa experience ko, it worked kasi parang nararamdaman mo habang nanonood ka hindi ka lang magiisa, sabay-sabay kayo, sabay sabay ng oras, sabay-sabay na pagkakataon, tapos dahil may chat room, namamaximize ninyo ung chatroom para mag-exchange and after that pwede pa kayong magusap.”

(The watch party space is an innovation during the time of the virtual space that approximated the simultaneous viewing of people. For me, based on my experience, it worked because while watching, you feel that you are not alone, you are all together, at the same time, same moment, and because there is a chat room, you maximize the chat room for exchanges and after that, you can still talk.)

She also added that the watch party served another purpose of just watching together.

“So parang pagkatapos nito, maguusap usap yung mga tao uli, tawanan ganun, so parang nandun pa din kayo so hindi nawawala ung concept ng “BUHAY NA BUHAY”. kasi ang objective nyo pa rin talaga is to maintain the ultimate objective and what is that? The concept of a community , yung GANAP, yun pa rin yun eh.”

(So after this, people will talk again, laugh and such, so it is like you are still there so the concept of 'ALIVE AND KICKING' does not disappear. Because your ultimate objective is still really to maintain the ultimate objective and what is that? The concept of a community, the EVENT, that is still it.)

The watch party and the chatroom were used by Stage@Home to manage the presence of an audience, even if the performances were filmed and only streamed live on its FB Page. This practice fostered a communal engagement in a digital space.

Scene 5: Communication as Guide.

Prof. Glecy frequently brought up the urge to communicate and the need to share an experience when asked why still continue theater during the pandemic.

“Tapos yung isang lesson dito tiningnan natin ang pagiging organic, tinitingnan natin kung sinong audience natin, anong

purpose natin, seize the moment, anong meron na puwede mong magamit ngayon kasi may pangangailangan kang magcommunicate o may pangangailangan kang magreach-out. “

(Then another lesson here is we looked at being organic, we looked at who our audience is, what our purpose is, seize the moment, what you have that you can use now because you have a need to communicate or a need to reach out.)

Further, Prof. Glecy expounded that theater as communication should be viewed in a different perspective.

“You cannot just treat theater as a platform for communication without the end goal, kasi yung communication for what, para maiklaro natin ang sagot sa tanong na, kung babalik pa ba, so depende talaga sa target pero sa akin it will never be like theater before or it will never be like the virtual theater platform kasi marami na uling opportunities na nagbukas , so gamitin natin.”

(You cannot just treat theater as a platform for communication without the end goal because the communication is for what purpose, to clarify the answer to the question of whether it will come back or not, so it really depends on the target. But for me, it will never be like theater before or it will never be like the virtual theater platform because many opportunities have opened up, so let's use them.)

Prof. Glecy was very strategic in her approach to utilizing the new communication platform that has emerged during the pandemic. She apprehended the importance of continuing theater in these challenging times and was determined to make the most of the new opportunities available to her. By staying focused on her objectives, she was able to navigate this new seeing place with confidence and purpose.

Scene 6: From Experience to Fresher Experience.

In the Stage@Home, their e-theater productions offered newness in what seemed to be an ordinary life experience but relatable to many.

“So, dito pinanghawakan namin yung pananaw sa dula, na kailangang transformative, o pagbabanyuhay sa mga kagyat na

pangangailangan ng pamayanan,...mahalaga ang pagaaral at pagsusuri ng mga nagaganap sa lipunan - ang ugnayan ng maliliit na pangyayari sa bahay sa malalawak na usapin sa daigdig.”

(So, here we held onto the perspective in the play, that it needs to be transformative, or flourishing in response to the immediate needs of the community...studying and analyzing what is happening in society is important - the connection of small events at home to broad issues in the world.)

Therefore, within all of Stage@Home's e-theater productions, they consistently introduced novel themes or topics that signified relevance. These subjects were derived from the ongoing events of the pandemic, enabling a profound connection with their audience. This approach extended to the festivals they joined, as their e-theater productions drew from recently acquired insights and perspectives of the pandemic. Prof. Glecy and her team held the firm intention of steering clear of 'rehashed' productions, aiming instead to provide their audience with fresh, immersive experiences that encapsulated novel and relatable encounters.

Figure 21.

The beginning of Stage@Home on May 2020 highlighting the themes for each performance

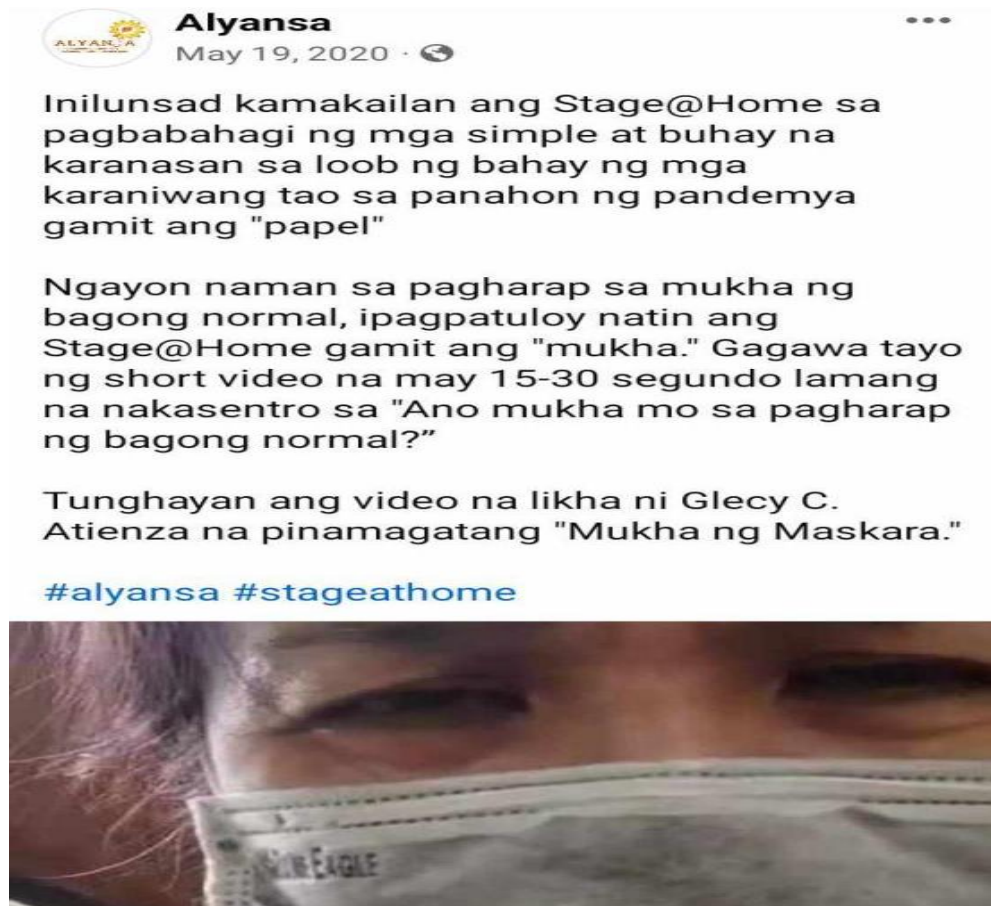


Figure 22.

Papel was another theme for the Stage@Home performance posted in the ALYANSA FB Page



Figure 23.

Mukha as the second theme for the Stage@Home performances



Figure 24.

Mukha captured the different faces of Filipinos during the pandemic



Scene 7: Less is More

Derived from Prof. Glecy's theatrical background, it has consistently been evident that a substantial audience is drawn to watch a play. Nevertheless, amidst the pandemic, she perceived a shift wherein she expressed,

“BAKIT NGA BA NASANAY TAYO NA DAPAT LAGING MARAMI ANG AUDIENCE MO? Hindi ba puwede na ang audience mo ay isang tao, dalawang tao, tatlo, na nasa loob rin ng bahay mo, bakit? Kasi ang basic premise ‘for as long as there exists a relationship of an actor and an audience THEN YOU HAVE THEATER.’ So, bakit nga ba lagi tayong naghahanap ng marami?”

(WHY DID WE GET USED TO ALWAYS HAVING A LARGE AUDIENCE? Is it not possible that your audience is one person, two people, three, who are also inside your house, why? Because the basic premise is 'for as long as there exists a relationship of an actor and an audience THEN YOU HAVE THEATER.' So, why are we always looking for a lot?)

You only need to ask your neighbor's permission to use them as your audience, Prof. Glecy explained. Leave your window open so they may observe.

Scene 8: Differentiation or Interrelation to Film.

When a performance was filmed, people wondered how different theater would be from the film. Even Prof. Glecy and Teena were concerned about these. With Teena, the setup was live for their initial online theater showcase. The students were situated in the comforts of their homes, with the stage designs all assembled in their homes. With the aid of the OBS, the students appeared to be acting on a single stage in a single location. The PHSA braced the challenge of capturing the theater experience on a 'natural, physical' stage for the second online theater showcase. They collaborated with film directors to help them record the performance.

*“Tulad ng sa Kuwentong Pambata, ayaw kasi namin nung una na ito lang yung camera para maging pamamaraan ng communication. We tried it to be **MORE REALISTIC**, nandun sila pero di talaga silla magkakasama....Pero dun sa second production namin, ginawa na namin siya on stage, kasi kailangan na rin naming bumalik pero with safety protocols pa din para ma-achieve at **bumalik sa routine of doing productions kasi posible namang gawan na ng paraan.**”*

*(Like in the Children's Story, we do not want at first for the camera to be the only means of communication. We tried it to be **MORE REALISTIC**, they were there but not really together... But in our second production, we did it on stage, because we needed to return but with safety protocols still in place to achieve and return to the routine of doing productions because it is possible to find a way.)*

But for Prof. Glecy, it was a different point of view,

“Yung nagiging question na nun ay pelikula ba ‘to o dula? Tapos meron pa silang discussion na paano ba yung acting para sa ganito na para sa akin in one of my conversations doon, para sa akin kasi it doesn’t matter kasi ang alam natin kapag ang pelikula at ang video ay IISA.”

The question then becomes, is this a film or a play? Then they have a discussion on how is the acting for this, which for me in one of my conversations there, it doesn't matter because what we know is that film and video are ONE.

She further clarified,

“The technology is the same because we are using camera nagbabago lang dito yung PURPOSEisang karanasan na hinuhuli mo sa video kasi nga HINDI KA PUWEDENG MAG-LIVE pero ang objective mo pa rin ay kung papaano mo I-bring out yung “LIVE QUALITY” na hindi edited pero dahil sa limitations ng lockdown, wala kang choice kundi gamitin yung camera so kaya ang ginawa namin HINDI NAMIN INEEDIT.

Kaya ung editing namin, it’s really PARA TAHIIN YUNG MGA KUWENTO AT MAINTINDIHAN YUNG BUONG CONCEPT na yun. MAGKAIBA YUN. So dito papasok yung concept ng PRINSIPYO. Bakit natin ginagawa ito? Remember, kami hindi kami kumawala sa idea na ang OBJECTIVE pa rin ay DALHIN YUNG BUHAY NA BUHAY SA MGA TAO.”

(The technology is the same because we are using a camera, what changes here is the PURPOSE... it is an experience that you capture in video because you CAN'T GO LIVE but your objective is still how to bring out the 'LIVE QUALITY' that is not edited but because of the limitations of the lockdown, you have no choice but to use the camera so what we did was WE DIDN'T EDIT. We are not forcing them to look like a film, NO.

So our editing, it is really TO SEW THE STORIES TOGETHER AND UNDERSTAND THE WHOLE CONCEPT. THOSE ARE DIFFERENT. So here enters the concept of PRINCIPLE. Why are we doing this? Remember, we did not stray from the idea that the OBJECTIVE is still TO BRING LIFE TO THE PEOPLE.)

Prof. Glecy often re-emphasized her theater gaze, buhay(!) na buhay, because she wanted the theater to be alive despite the restrictions posed by the pandemic.

*“Sa pelikula inedit mo yan no to come up with a narrative . So nabuo, iba-ibang angle. **Sa Stage@Home kasi, isa lang yan.** Kumbaga kung ano yung nakikita mo, halimbawa ngayon, magpapalabas ako para makita mo, that’s it. **Hindi ko siya iedit na para magkaroon ng ibang angle, kasi hindi naman talaga yun ang objective. ANG OBJECTIVE IS ‘TO BRING FORTH A FRESH EXPERIENCE’ or a ‘LIVE EXPERIENCE.’**”*

(In film, you edit that to come up with a narrative. So it is completed, different angles. But in Stage@Home, it is just one. In other words, what you see, for example now, I will perform so you can see, that is it. I will not edit it to have a different angle, because that is really not the objective. THE OBJECTIVE IS 'TO BRING FORTH A FRESH EXPERIENCE' or a 'LIVE EXPERIENCE'.)

She also explained the distinction between a video and a film based on how they created their e-theater productions via videos for the Stage@Home.

*“So ayun sasabihin, pareho ba yung pelikula at video (Stage@Home), of course hindi, IT **SHOULD NOT BE. Kasi magkaiba kumbaga yung particularities kung paano siya nangyayari , nagiiba na yun** , kaya yun ang magiging target,...kaya very raw vidoe lang yun, hindi talaga yung pelikula quality , so technically, meron talagang siyang difference. ...**Pero puwede mong sabihing halos pareho, but, yung ‘eventual process’ ng dissemination and distribution and how you handle the feedback and yung concept ng pagiging “buhay” nito , nagbibigay ito ng konting kaibahan.**”*

(So there, you would ask, are film and video (Stage@Home) the same, of course not, IT SHOULD NOT BE. Because the particularities of how it happens are different, that changes, so that becomes the target... so it is very raw video, not really film quality, so technically, it really has a difference. ...But you can say that they are almost the same, but, the 'eventual process' of dissemination and distribution and how you handle the feedback and the concept of its "liveness", these give a slight difference.)

Prof. Glecy definitively highlighted the distinction between their e-theater productions and films. Despite being pre-recorded, their purpose and treatment

stand apart. Stage@Home's e-theater creations, while potentially adopting some aspects of video production, remain rooted in the essence of theater.

Scene 9: Confinement or Breakthrough.

Prof. Glecy's mindset revolved around how the virtual performance served its purpose.

*“Siguro sa pagdiscuss natin diyan kailangan mong I-realize na itatali mo yung sarili mo sa limitations ng teatro, kumbaga you are defining a virtual theater experience using the tools inherent to alive performance. **It has its merits, but it also has its limitations, bakit? Because you fail to realize that the virtual platform is different from a live performance and you fail to realize that the presence of a virtual performance is out of a particular necessity during the lockdown.**”*

(Maybe in discussing that, you need to realize that you are tying yourself to the limitations of the theater, as if you are defining a virtual theater experience using the tools inherent to a live performance. It has its merits, but it also has its limitations, why? Because you fail to realize that the virtual platform is different from a live performance and you fail to realize that the presence of a virtual performance is out of a particular necessity during the lockdown.

This illustrated the fundamental distinctions between a virtual performance and a live performance. For live performance, the audience do contribute as they interact with the members of the audience and with the casts.

With the transition to online, Prof. Glecy emphasized that there is no point in comparing two platforms where one would be less than the other.

*“Talo yung virtual palagi, kasi pagsinabi mong virtual performance, eh hindi talaga siya live, **pero kailangan mong intindihin na yung virtual performance ay isang transformation, isang paraan ng pagangkop sa kalagayan na hindi puwede ang LIVE and the most possible way to adapt is through sa virtual platform....** Ang point ko lang ay ‘you cannot measure one from the other.’ You have to recognize that both platforms are distinct in themselves, so it would be unfair for the two to be measured by way of*

another. You have to measure a phenomena by their own qualities, and limitations..”

(The virtual always loses, because when you say virtual performance, it is really not live, but you need to understand that the virtual performance is a transformation, a way of adapting to a situation where LIVE is not possible and the most possible way to adapt is through the virtual platform... My point is 'you cannot measure one from the other.' You have to recognize that both platforms are distinct in themselves, so it would be unfair for the two to be measured by way of another. You have to measure phenomena by their own qualities, and limitations.)

She even explained how the new seeing place allowed her to manage performances despite the challenges it presented.

“Kasi ang virtual laging tinitingnan na mahina, that’s the reality, but looking back, it was “ A SIGN OF RESILIENCY” kasi di ba, halimbawa sa experience namin, sariwa pa rin naman eh , sinikap pa rin namang buhay eh, sinikap pa rin naman na interactive, sinikap pa rin naman na totoo ang mga palabas , sinikap pa rin namang malikha ito despite the limitations. Isn’t that the same quality that we look out for live performances? Umaangkop siya, di ba, malawak ang participation? Meron kang buhay na karanasan na napapanood, so paghinanap mo yung ‘live’ quality na yun, saan mo yun hahanapin sa virtual? In the first place, kung sa akin yun, ‘bakit mo hahanpin eh alam mo na ngang wala?’ So ang hanapin mo ay kung paano siya nilikha?”

(Because virtual is always seen as weak, that is the reality, but looking back, it was 'A SIGN OF RESILIENCY' because, for example in our experience, it was still fresh, still strived to be alive, still strived to be interactive, still strived to make the shows real, still strived to create this despite the limitations. Isn't that the same quality that we look out for in live performances? It adapts, right, the participation is broad? You have a live experience that you can watch, so if you are looking for that 'live' quality, where will you find it in virtual? In the first place, for me, 'why would you look for it when you know it is not there?' So what you should look for is how it was created?)

She also explained that when we talk of e-theater productions, they would always be second-rates compared to live performances. But for her, the e-theater productions were the most workable option during the pandemic. She highlighted

that it was not just about the play. There must be equality in both the e-theater productions and the live performances.

*“So, kumbaga, ang point natin, what is your interest , what is your target, ano ang GANAP mo, hindi lamang yung palabas . It is your target to **measure that opportunity for equality** na tinatarget mo lagi whenever you have a performance, yung concept ng realization ng equality, yun pa rin yung target.”*

(So, in other words, our point is, what is your interest, what is your target, what is your EVENT, not just the show. It is your target to measure that opportunity for equality that you always target whenever you have a performance, the concept of realization of equality, that's still the target.)

Ms.Teena was optimistic about the future of e-theater productions. She thought that was where the performance would go, but there would be considerations to remember.

“Siguro puwedeng palitan ng online theater showcase and physical theater kasi puwede namang gamitin kasi na-open din yung creativity na pwede ngang gamitin, na puwede siyang i-live stream, siguro hybrid performance pero siyempre pagaaralan din nila ang dramaturgy, kung effective ba siyang ilagay kasi puwede naman eh, ako naniniwala ako na may devices or material na puwede like puwedeng i-deconstruct yung material , we can experiment kasi open yung possibility kailangan lang sigurong pagaralan, i-research, at kailagan din siguro na may baon at humanap ng dramaturgical material na magsusupport at magsusupplement doon sa ganung aspeto ng online showcase.”

(Perhaps the online theater showcase and physical theater can be interchanged because they can be used as it also opened the creativity that it can indeed be used, that it can be live-streamed, perhaps a hybrid performance but of course they would also study the dramaturgy, if it is effective to place it because it is possible, I believe that there are devices or material that can be used like deconstructing the material, we can experiment because the possibility is open, it just probably needs to be studied, researched, and also probably need to have something prepared and find dramaturgical material that will support and supplement that aspect of the online showcase.)

She even collaborated with a US theater company. Local artists were invited around the world. What Ms. Teena featured was about the extra-judicial killing. All were conducted online. Hence, she was open to opportunities for e-theater productions. This bridged what seemed to be undoable before.

Scene 10: Unpredictable Audience Presence

Ms. Teena understood that there was hope that someone would view their online showcase. Given the diverse audience online, she was unsure who would be reached by their online performance. But one tactic they used was an online promotion on their Facebook page to ensure a live audience.

“Siguro sa akin hindi mo na malalaman kung sinong manonood, pero ipeprepare mo yung sarili mo na MERONG MANONOOD, kasi nilagay mo na siya sa screen, so yung mga nasa production, THEY WOULD HAVE TO PROMOTE IT para mapanood siya kasi ang gamit mo na dito ay social media na.”

(Maybe for me, you will not know who is going to watch, but you will prepare yourself that THERE WILL BE SOMEONE WATCHING, because you have already put it on screen, so those in the production, THEY WOULD HAVE TO PROMOTE IT so it can be watched because what you're using here is social media already.)

Given the expansive reach of the new virtual platform, Ms. Teena envisioned a broader audience for the e-theater productions. While pinpointing specific viewers may prove challenging, certain factors such as their affinity for theater and orientation could be anticipated among the audience. The vast online realm of e-theater guaranteed a presence of viewers, underscoring the importance of strategic marketing to bolster promotion and effectively cater to the desired audience.

Scene 11: Humanizing Topics: People need People.

Prof. Glecy recalled that comments on the FB page indicated that the audience did not want abstract issues in one of their featured performance for Stage@Home that featured canned products to demonstrate the various inventive ways the canned goods will be served. The audience wanted to see individuals in the performances, especially during the lockdown when everything appeared unclear. They want to sense the presence of people who have relevant stories so that they will be inspired.

For Prof. Glecy, the story counts the most, how it is delivered and told by people to people.

“Yung nananatili yung GANAP- ang mga taong magsasakatuparan ng pagsasalaysay ng mga buhay na buhay-ang pinakamahalagang puwersa sa paghubog ng kamalayang maka-komunidad.

So, ang focus mo talaga ay TAO, kasi ang hinahanap ng tao sa panahon na ‘to ay TAO ...kailangan palang ipakita mo ay tao hindi puwedeng hindi tao kasi halimbawa yung mga sardinas, ang naging comment nun parang masyado siyang abstract, so ok, dapat pala tao...

So, in the end, lumalabas, parang TAO pa rina ng importante, hindi puwede ang ABSTRACTIONS. Kasi in the absence of interaction with people, naghahanap ka ng interaction with people through the virtual mode kahit na ganun kaikli so yun ang hinahanap nil. So ito un experience namin.”

(The performance remains - the people who will carry out the narration of the aliveness of life - the most important force in shaping community consciousness.

So, your real focus is PEOPLE, because what people are looking for in these times is PEOPLE... what you need to show is people, it cannot be not about people because for example the sardines, the comment there was that it was too abstract, so okay, it should be people.

So, in the end, it turns out, PEOPLE are still the most important, ABSTRACTIONS are not acceptable. Because in the absence of interaction with people, you're looking for interaction with people through the virtual mode even though it's that short so that's what they're looking for. So this is our experience.)

Amid the pandemic's unpredictability, there was a collective yearning for performances centered around humanity—narratives not necessarily mirroring the exact individual experiences, but stories of genuine individuals navigating life's intricacies. This revealed the significance of e-theater productions to transcend mere digital expertise; it underscored that beyond technical prowess, the dominant concern was the *audience's immersive encounter with e-theater that would* illuminate its profound impact.

Figure 25.

Papel de Sardinas, the initial e-theater production by Stage@Home, received criticism for being "abstract and unrelatable," suggesting that the plot needed to have more realistic and human elements.



THE ESSENCE OF THE PHENOMENON

ACT 1: Views on the Performance Space

Scene 1: Space as Self-perception.

For Prof. Glecya Atienza, space is not space itself. It goes beyond the place where one performs and where audiences and the theater production team gather. Space is more than what the eyes see. It is more than what the heart feels. It is more than what the mind perceives. Thus, it depends on how one person perceives it, depending too on the exposure and experience of a person to the theater. However, she also asserted that space could mean the space itself, but she emphasized that the space reveals more than what it shows and what it hides. 'Time and space are the main criteria in theatre' (Karmakar, 2013). This emphasis on how space contributed to the performance. But in the new seeing place, both space and time were affected by digital technologies.

The varied perceptions of performance space have personal origins for different theater practitioners and scholars. In the theory of theatrical practice, the idea of space is crucial since it can be used to describe various performance elements. Kutscher expressed the desire to show that theater originates from instincts that transcend culture and time rather than from dramatic forms linked to ritual acts and claimed that "theater communicates above all through space and movement.' This statement captured how theater could be based on how one sees, perceives, and accepts it.

Nonetheless, Carlson (2014) stated that theatre had been an effective creative form worldwide from before history was written down to the present. This multifaceted art has incorporated all other creative forms, including dance, literature, music, painting, sculpture, street theater, and puppetry. Theater can and has been

created by incorporating many facets of human activity and culture. All these required spaces.

Phelan (1993), however, insists that live and visible bodies must be present for a performance to take place. Since live performances could never last for numerous days, weeks, or months, their presence must be fleeting. According to Phelan, presence is characterized by a brief time-limited close space (and closed space) between live bodies (performers and audience). This explained that the presence of 'live' performers was required for a space to be complete.

However, for Rayner (2002), whether the community gathers in a circle to enclose itself, protect its mysteries, and exclude others, whether it pays exorbitant prices to sit passively in seats that all face the same direction, scatters throughout an old garage, or peers into an old theater, theatrical space, in all its variations, from the ritual circle of the Greek orchestra through the proscenium arch to the site-specific performance piece, provides rich images and valuable metaphors for both consciousness and community. Nonetheless, in the theatre, every form once born is mortal; every form must be preconceived, and its new conception will bear the marks of all the influences that surround it. In this sense, the theatre is relativity (Brook, 1968). The function of theater spaces may vary depending on the particular circumstances in which they were employed. Nonetheless, they were intended to serve a specific purpose, whether that may be for amusement, instruction, or cultural edification. The perception of theater spaces may also differ from person to person, but ultimately, their existence was crucial for the continuation of performing arts and the preservation of cultural legacy.

The diverse meaning of space had an impact on its origins and its relevance. From where it originated, space functioned as something that was secured, safe,

and free. For a performance space, the most convenient started from where individuals shared their first word, their first walk, their first dance, and even their first laugh. All these constituted the origin of performing in one's home. But the performance was not as objective-specific, audience-centered, and technical-focused as compared to the performances of today. Performances were innate as shared expressions at home. One could say, "Dance ka nga kay mama" (Please, dance for mama) as a request for performance or the pre-colonial performances where the sharing of one's discovery was even narrated on the walls of the caves, the request of dance, storytelling, games, song, and the rituals for bountiful harvests and good weather were all performed in a space that was just within the boundaries of one's home and one's community. Space contributed to the fulfillment of the performance. This revealed that space became alive with how one perceived it based on how a person experienced that space as interaction, exploration, expression, emotion, exaggeration, and others. All these added to how space was to be perceived. The perceptions of space would change, would be developed, would look back on the past, would look into the present, and would look farther into the future. This was how a space transcended in its form, in its purpose, and in its relevance. The transcendental feature of space communicated that one's space could be improved, could be disapproved by some, could be moved, and could be shared. These were how space transformed itself from being at home, to staying at home, being away from home, and coming back at home. Thus, this transcendence of space was a manifestation of how the spaces connects people, interacts with them, and creates experiences. Space transcended its aliveness as it is moved, changed, and improved.

Scene 2: Space as a Communication and Experience.

The relationship between spatial location and communication space was an intriguing topic, as noted by Prof. Glecy. She underlined that communication could be influenced by its origin and destination. She illustrated this point by giving an instance of an individual who relocated due to a change in marital status. Additionally, she emphasized that any change in spatial position would result in adaptive or *transformative* communication.

McAuley (2000) created the phrase 'taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre.' Thus, the theater's space was divided into five distinct sections: the first included the audience, theatre, performance, rehearsal, and practitioner spaces. This first section was called 'social reality.' The other sections included the physical/fictional relationship, location and fiction, textual space, and thematic space. It was considered that the audience and the actors, the two most crucial components of every theatrical performance, were connected by a space in the theater, whether vacant or full. Thus, Reul (2006) expounded that every performance depends on the interaction between these two groups because when they envision a fictional universe, they create the excitement and enjoyment of theatrical occurrences. Therefore, every performance required a specific amount of space in the theater where interaction happened.

From Augusto Boal's discussion on Theater of the Oppressed, Prof. Glecy emphasized where one could trace historically how rituals, which happened at home, slowly departed from home. This space was where one filled their experiences like in a domestic drama. This led to the understanding that realizing how one interpreted and treated one's home as relevant. The space location also unfolded various experiences. These experiences could be relatable and unrelatable.

The fact that "theatre is the same size as life, neither larger nor smaller"—unlike the magnified picture on the big screen or the reduced picture on a television or computer—allows us to understand the processes of the self (Pestana et al., 2020). Although its themes and issues may be more expansive, the shape is life-size, and that is how we experience it (Finnbogadóttir, 1999). The semblance of theater and life signified that the understanding of oneself was better clarified and felt in a theater. In addition, the theater space also communicated life; the struggles, the dreams, and even the frustrations were mirrored in the space. This created an experience as the audience and the actors met as one in the theater space.

Gatt (2020) explained that through theater-making, participants could express their uncertainties, feelings, thoughts, opinions, dreams, hopes, frustrations, pain, rage, happiness, and others due to its space. In his book *Empty Space*, Peter Brook even mentioned Artaud, who believed that people could only find freedom in the theater from the recognizable ways they go about their daily lives. Hence, space meant differently even to performance researchers who conceptualized it as a 'space as stage space, scenic place, theatrical space, theatre space, and dramatic space' (Pesti, 2021). However, an experience was created, communicated, and shared in whatever space it was called.

In one's personal space, the communion of self to one's thoughts, one's aspirations, and one's disappointments created an interaction of self to self. This happened since one's personal space is where one is oneself. Space added to the value of communication that transpired from it. With this, came out experiences. Hence, space revealed the type of communication that occurred. Within this scope, what was communicated could develop experiences from the interaction that happened. Just like in theater, the space where the actors and audience interact

created experiences. From this, more enhanced communication strategies could emerge to expand the experience from the performance space. This added meaningful communicative experience in the performance space.

This revealed as well how space as communication ignited experience and how this experience could create more interaction, and more communication, leading to more creation of experiences. These all happened in a space where individuals interacted. Thus, space indeed transcends its physical features as location. The space location was a living space where communication was generated in creating and sharing meaningful experiences.

ACT 2: Theatrical Perspectives.

Scene 1: Theater as 'buhay(!) na buhay(!).'

According to Barranger (1995), theater is a way to see men and women in action and discover what they do and why they do it. In this perspective, people were regarded as the subject and means of theater's expression since it was thought to be one of the most direct ways to experience another's conception of life, which was what it meant to be human.

If Nicanor Tiongson has his guide for analyzing *appeal* or '*dating*' for regional dramas, Prof. Glecya Atienza has her way of describing dramas as 'buhay na buhay.' She explained that buhay (life) was to be pronounced: "buhay!" (alive). Even in her essay *Buhay(!) Ang Patuloy na Pagsisinop ng Konsepto ng Dulang Filipino*, where she explained that buháy (alive) could refer to one's energy that made us move, which was the energy that enabled us to organize and interact with others. She also expressed that life is moving, alive, and living, which is one consideration in performance. Likewise, buháy (alive) is associated with 'pagganap' or performance,

with the development of drama and stories and the movement of set design. The same movement of aliveness may also be captured and revealed on the effect of drama and performance on people and places at a given time. All these comprised the aliveness of theater.

The pandemic did not kill nor stop theater. The theater was given life at home. The home constituted these performances' life in the theater that captured the interaction. This harmonized with the early versions that happened at home, like bugtungan, Duplo, karagatan, talindaw, and other tudyuang verbal were all performed at home or within the surroundings of one's home. Fernandez (1989) clarified that after dinner, parents and kids would converse by fire about riddles as a playful game and educational exercise. As a result, Prof. Glecy also explained in her essay Buhay (!) that tulang pasalaysay (narrative poems), like Darangen ng mga Maranaw, was told from the perspective of someone sitting in their homes. Moreover, the epic Labaw Donggon at Hinilawod in Panay-Bukidnon was told from the perspective of a binukot standing next to their duyan (cradle). These were domestic plays that exhibited character movement, narrative action, and storyteller movement. All of which Prof. Glecy referred to as "buhay"! na buhay.

This way, the home communicated a different relationship and treatment to the theater. From then on, the theater became more than just a set; it became a live space where interactions sparked actors' ability to perform. These even inspired the audiences to react in ways they preferred or remain silent to express themselves. Brook explained two climaxes in a theatrical experience that were often disregarded: 'the peak of celebration, in which our participation erupts in stamping and yelling, hurrahs, and the roar of hands, or the climax of silence' (Brook, 1968). Together, they made up a shared experience that theater conveyed to the audience, the

audience conveyed to the theater, the audience conveyed to the actors, and the audience conveyed to the audience members. All these communicated the buhay(!) or aliveness of theater.

Theater as buhay (!) na buhay(!) also constituted that theater was made up of human entities and non-human elements. However, the non-human elements like props, stage design, costumes, lights, sound, smell, make up, and others evoked a *'transmitted aliveness.'* Transmitted aliveness in the sense that there was the transformation from being inanimate forms into breathing rudiments of theater. These added to the spectacle of performance as they projected form, and radiated aliveness to the totality of the theater space and the overall experience of theater.

This revealed how theater as buhay(!) na buhay(!) articulated aliveness and transcended from being just a physical set. It uncovered that all the elements in theater, from the title and lines in the script, the opening of the curtain, the brightness of light, the darkness of set design, the props, the paleness of a lipstick of an actor, the aroma of hot pandesal and kesong puti, the silence of the actors, the closing of the curtain, among others, breathed aliveness. This was how the theater transcended its four wall for performance.

Scene 2: Theater as Advocacy.

Other theater scholars and activists, including Rosario Cruz-Lucero, Pacita C. Gavino, Jerry C. Respeto, and others, have written essays and research to examine Philippine theater (including its politics and poetics, set designs, semiotics, activist theater, traditional theater, and others). These were investigated as a part of their quest to learn, analyze, and inform the public on what is known, unknown, and must be known about the Philippine theater. One's advocacy of capturing Philippine

theater included these actions. Some prioritized teaching the youth the virtues of Philippine theater and how they could contribute to its preservation and remembrance. Just like the students of PHSA, they were trained to be future artists for others.

To address the needs of society, one's country, and the world, schools worldwide were challenged to use numerous technological breakthroughs even before the pandemic. According to Domingo and Gargante (2016), "the modern age of information, digitalization, and development of new technologies creates a new and constantly changing reality to which education is called to respond favorably." But during the pandemic, even the leading performing arts school in the country, like the PHSA, faced difficulties in continuing to stage plays. According to Chatzichristodoulou (2012), "The art of theatre, defined as cyber theatre, cyber drama, or cyber performance, is a genre that uses the internet as a performance space, namely a cyber stage." Ms. Teena and her class produced two online showcases using the virtual space, both of which used the virtual space not just to meet a school requirement but also because they were all taught to make high-quality plays despite any limitations present. This was how the PHSA lived with its legacy that, despite the pandemic, only what was best must be produced and shared with its audience.

From all the transformation of theater, from its beginnings to its evolution, it remained a living unit. From the backstage of a theater, some advocates were unshaken when reconstruction kept pressing it. The advocates stood as stage managers, performers, directors, props handlers, and spectators. Thus, within the theater, some advocates would continue the craft to maintain its identity and produce more advocates of it.

Therefore, the creation of e-theater productions unveiled that theater advocates acted on their endeavors to ensure that theater would continue despite the struggles faced in handling the digital technologies. This also disclosed that theater transcended a movement of continuous efforts, interaction, and explorations to maintain the exuberant nature of theater.

Scene 3: Theater as Sense of Peace.

Audiences were comfortable in the space locations considered theater spaces before, just like in the early performances at home or nearby places in the community. Thus, even by just wearing ordinary clothes, one could watch performances. The member of an audience would no longer worry about what to wear since the people around them were the same people they often interacted with. The shift of theater spaces from home to the vast spaces in the cities also created another level of anticipation from the audience. Likewise, a dramatic shift affected the theater and its elements during the pandemic.

Most people carried out all their daily activities at home during the first massive wave of the COVID-19 epidemic due to prolonged restrictions on people's freedom of movement. Fornara et al. (2022) interpreted this as the necessity to explore the spatial characteristics of the home and how its residents perceive them regarding people's welfare. Meanwhile, finding constructive activities to do as a family that will foster a sense of togetherness, trust, cohesion, and happiness is crucial, as is having excellent, healthy communication (Gayatri, M., & Irawaty, D. K., 2021). These attributed to the re-emergence of home as a sense of peace where everyone could rediscover familial activities during the pandemic. Hence, the

transcendence of home as a space for varied activities, including performance, re-emerged.

Aside from the sense of peace that manifested with using home as a theater, artists also found peace in what they do. In order to personalize and embody the performer's craft, the theatrical environment, therefore, gave comfort, ease, and connection. As it settled into its niche, theater exuded tranquility. This was how theater transcended from just a source of entertainment. Theater transcended a space for relaxation and stillness. As a result, the theater itself created a tranquil environment where actors may interact with one another and with the audience. This calmness increased the value of the theater by making it more than just a venue for creative performances. It also made it a dwelling space where people who value each other's presence may connect in a relaxed environment.

Scene 4: Theater as Social Affinities.

Historically, access to shows or events was often contingent upon one's social connections rather than a formal ticketing process. In modern times, the use of tickets has become the norm, serving as a reliable means of ensuring efficient and secure theater management.

According to Prof. Glecy, the idea of the ticket served as a mechanism to distinguish between those who have paid and those who have not, as well as between those who have control and those who do not. According to her, the ticket had a power chip. This occurred as performances moved from smaller residences to more significant buildings in the pueblos (towns). Although historically, the concept of performance indeed originated at home, she explained that the shifting of theater space was instrumental to the shifting of communication space alignment or space

arrangement. Performances were moved to a controllable place in the *sentro o pueblo* (town) due to the movement of who was in control of the performance. People in positions of power assembled structures; as a result, admission to the performance venue required payment first. Social affinities were not the ticket anymore.

Brook described this economic perspective as the deadly theater where earnings were part of the theater. This entailed expenses for the production, from actors to marketing a play, but as the ticket prices also went up, not only was the space location departed from homes, but most of the theater audiences were separated as well. Johnson (2014) asked, 'How did theater, which had its beginnings in shows by Sophocles and Shakespeare that drew audiences from all social classes, become so elitist to the point where modern working-class people decided it wasn't for people like them?' Although there would be division on this aspect, theater's audience often valued comfort as part of their theatrical experience.

According to Britannica.com, audience comfort was considered when optimizing a theater experience. There were the social and physical aspects that made up this comfort. 'The type of seating or standing area, the quantity of space allocated to each audience member, and the simplicity of access all contribute to physical comfort' (Britannica.com). This included the audience's ability to hear and see the performance clearly and be safe. Meanwhile, social comfort 'refers to each audience member's capacity to experience a sense of belonging throughout a theatrical performance' (Britannica.com). The culture of a place also influenced social comfort. Thus, one's comfort also depended on where an audience found their sense of peace. 'The audience is kept within the social groups they feel most comfortable in, even though it is sometimes maintained that such architectural

structure implies the division of individuals who get to be somehow less acceptable' (Britannica. com). The theater's location also influenced social comfort because the expected audience must felt comfortable in the area. This was what transcended during the pandemic. The homes became the comfort space for virtual audiences in the new seeing place.

Typically, the term "building social affinity" referred to forging relationships and a sense of belonging among groups or individuals who shared similar interests. The e-theater also embarked on social affinities. A social media platform like Facebook offered a number of tools and features that could help with fostering social affinity. A family member, relative, friend, neighbor, or acquaintance could be invited for a performance. The social aspect of Facebook allowed for the immediate audience reach for a performance while perusing FB pages. Users could create and join Facebook groups that are dedicated to particular hobbies, interests, causes, or communities. Members of the group could interact with one another, participate in discussions, and share pertinent information. Users could create and take part in events that are relevant to their interests on Facebook. Events, whether they be public or private, could help unite people who have similar interests like theater. Individuals could subscribe to the Facebook pages of businesses, organizations, or public personalities who have similar interest like them in order to receive updates and content about those pages in their news feeds. Moreover, reviews and suggestions could also be provided by users for pages, sites, and locations they have visited, which might assist individuals with similar interests in finding new facilities or services. Facebook Live as used by the PHSA and the Stage@Home allowed for the engagement of their viewers in real-time and fostered a feeling of community around their circle. In addition, advertisers could use Facebook's targeted

advertising features to connect with particular audiences who have expressed interest in certain services, topics, or goods, fostering social affinity around the theater as a focus. The nature of Facebook provided opportunities for a wider range of social affinities as theater ventured to its new seeing place in its FB Live.

Theater constructed connections and interactions that unified each theater experience to its actors and audiences. Although the payment for performance emerged from this transcendence, this still resurfaced in how theater has managed to still build social affinities within its circle of enthusiasts and advocates. During the pandemic, the use of live streaming applications demonstrated how social affinities enabled each e-theater production a 'must-watch' due to the popularity of a post shared by family members. The transcendence of theater does come with a price, but, the social affinities were still maintained making theater a space for maintaining acquaintances and relationships.

Scene 5: Theater as a Shared Community Experience.

Theater created experiences. The interaction on stage among the performers and the performers to the audience move to a shared experience. Brook (1968) clarified that the work of an actor is never, but always, for an audience. Therefore, communication or any gesture may only imply experience sharing if a connection or contact was established between the actor and the audience, the actor to co-actor, and the actor to himself. Brook (ibid.) further explained that the onlooker is a partner who must be forgotten yet constantly kept in mind.

Theatre was about communities—the communities of the artists who make it, the audiences who watch it, and the bond that forms between performers and audiences during a performance (Gatt, 2020). The experience shared during the

performance, even after it, commune actors and production team, audience and fellow audience, and actors and audience.

The audiences are drawn into the thoughts and feelings of the characters before us on an intellectual and emotional level (Barranger, 1995). This is what happens in theater. There were shared connections. The term "autopoietic feedback loop" was coined by Erika Fischer-Lichte to describe the interaction between a performer and an audience during a performance. In the theater, there is interaction. The connection between the audience and the performers could be attributed to Fischer-Lichte's (2008) discussion of the emotional response and continuous feedback loop linking the experience to the audience members' personal, historical, and cultural context—a factor crucial for how people generate meaning and make decisions. In the theater, the experience was shared in these different contexts; whether in silence or a standing ovation, a communal experience was always present.

The unique and communal aspects of going to a live performance in a theater comprised its shared community experience. It entailed gathering a crowd to see and participate in a live performance, whether it was a play, musical, dance show, or any other type of theatrical art. Theater demanded that audiences physically gathered in a specified area, such as a theater venue, to observe the performance. The audience members developed a sense of shared presence and connection as a result of this physical meeting. In live theater, the performance happened in actual time while the audience witnessed the plot develop in parallel. The audience's responses, feelings, and reactions were included in the performance as a whole, resulting in a dynamic and interactive environment.

A sense of belonging and shared connection was heightened when an audience shared in laughter, tears, excitement, or suspense. The theater offered a venue for conveying stories that could connect with people from various backgrounds and occupations. The audience could relate to the characters and concepts that were presented on stage because of the shared narratives. The audience could understand many cultures, history, and societal challenges by witnessing these varied perspectives together, building a greater understanding and appreciation of one another backgrounds. Seeing a play together with loved ones, acquaintances, or even strangers could forge bonds and shared memories. Post-performance conversations and thoughts on the performance could build social ties in the community. Overall, theater was more than just entertainment when it was experienced by a community. It strengthened social bonds, encouraged compassion and understanding, and built a sense of solidarity among viewers and the larger community. Hence, in this aspect, it revealed that theater transcended companionship. This companionship was exhibited in a community that shared commonness in experience, in interest, and in goals. In theater, this commonness was built on the interest for theater. With this, companionship was developed inside the theater space. Emotions became companions of each audience member to express delight, disappointment, fulfillment, and others emotions. Applause came in as one as a unified expression for a good performance. These community interactions projected the shared connection of theater to its actors and its audience.

ACT 3: Theater Resurgence.

Scene 1: Shift of Theater from Home to Away from Home.

The shift in space locations impacted their sizes, their set designs, the costumes, the lighting, among others, and the audiences' expectations, just like the comfort taken away from performances at home. Exploring the outside and the bigger spaces for performance gained more attention, appreciation, and acceptance. Tiatco (2015) explored Nicanor G. Tiongson's seminal essay "What is Philippine Drama?" where Tiongson stated that the evolution of European and American drama shapes the evolution of drama and theater in the Philippines. This implied the transcendence of space locations from home to far away from home also emerged.

Theater performances have historically moved from private, domestic settings (performed at home) to public venues outside of the home (performed away from home). This change took place when theater developed as an art form and a social practice. The theater was still predominantly an experience that took place away from home today. Plays, musicals, dance performances, and other live entertainment were all presented in theaters and other performance spaces that were specifically designed for this purpose.

For the audience, these settings offer specialized structures and tools that fostered immersive experiences. Although, theater had mostly moved away from being a home-based activity, there were certain intimate or experimental performances that still took place in unconventional settings: blending home and away-from-home settings. During the pandemic, the e-theater became experimental as it emerged itself to the numerous digital applications available. Also, digital technologies has made it possible to access theatrical experiences from home once more but in a different strategic new format.

What transcended was a comeback of theater to where it started. The differences came in the approach (digital tools available), audience reach (wide audience reach), and interaction (less face-to-face). However, the transition manifested that what had transcended theater was a rerouting, a modifying of trajectories that facilitated the modified ways of interaction in e-theater, the digitized channels for interaction and performance, the online modification strategies for staging a play, and the humanizing encounters in the new seeing place. These transitions and innovations were captured at home, where theater made its reemergence in securing and reassuring its spot during the pandemic.

Scene 2: From Social Affinities to Paid Performances.

These changes affected how theatre could mean many different things. In most of the world, the theater was only found in fragments and served various unclear social functions. 'Some theaters pursue money, others glory, others emotion, yet others politics, and still others enjoyment' (Brook, 1968). Likewise, the paid performances also required comfort for the audiences. Meaning the payment should compensate for comfort in the newly built theater spaces. 'The amount of ornamentation in the theater can also affect the audience's social comfort by giving them the impression that the art being exhibited is either above or below their social status' (Britannica.com). In addition to formal academic training in perspective drawing, chiaroscuro, and the use of color, Gavino (1996) noted that "scene design for Philippine theater also developed through increased exposure to foreign productions and an informal apprenticeship with a foreign director." These brought development and changes in the theater. Foreign influence has contributed to the

concept of tickets before entry into the theater. But whatever a theater serves, it was learning as it aged.

The payment first before entry was also a shift brought by the shift in space location. These distinctly defined the social classes in terms of who would sit in the front row and who would sit in the back row. Spaces communicated the class positioning of people in a theater. This social stratification further added to the unfamiliarity of theater to the public: the 'can afford' were immersed in theater, enhancing their theatrical knowledge while the 'cannots' departed from the theater, leaving them more unfamiliar with theater. Hence, the change in theater location added extravagance to the typical storytelling at home. It also added expectations from the audience leaving an impression that, a performance was good as its price.

In this aspect, the moving away of theater from the homes transcended itself to a more extravagant location that suggested the type of audience it would cater to. The location would communicate what kind of interaction would surface as well as what kind of individuals would be allowed access, thus, the location would also dictate the kind of experience that would emerge inside it. This signified that a shift from one's location, from allowing free access to payment first before entry, conjures power, status, authority, and social division. This then, communicated that in theater, what transcended was not just a shift in location but a shift in connections, relationships, encounters, performances, and experiences.

ACT 4: Anticipations for the Theater.

Scene 1: Leveled-up Expectations.

History influenced how people must travel to the city for a play or other entertainment. Audiences developed the sensation of longing for performers who do

not resemble them, were dressed differently from them, and were wearing costumes. Their minds were tricked into believing something that, in reality, did not happen to them in the performances they watched. However, they still searched for a connection (ugnayan).

The theater's appearance also affected the leveled-up value given to performances. Here, the main goal of theater design was to improve the viewing experience for the audience. 'Different architectural features will be valued differently in other civilizations and occasionally even in various subcultures within the same society. However, they may still be broken down into two broad categories: those that serve the aesthetics judged suitable for the theatre art in a particular culture and those that enhance the audience's experience of that art' (Britannica.com). Hence, the actors should achieve the artistic standards the character requires to be portrayed. This added to the spectacle of the performance. In addition to these were the props and other aesthetic elements. These could intensify the audience's interest in watching since the actors were different from them or at a higher level than them.

The leveled-up experience in theater also posed a challenge. The production team may have difficulties when adjusting to a new environment, but it also promoted innovation and creativity. Working with the space's existing features might inspire original staging ideas and creative decisions. In addition, non-traditional settings frequently have the capacity to hold bigger or more diverse audiences, making theater more widely available. Overall, the elevated theater experience in a distinct location provided for a new angle on performance and storytelling, pushing past the limitations of conventional theater and giving viewers a more dynamic and memorable theatrical experience.

The leveled-up characteristics of the theater were the response to the changing landscape of performance: the leveling up of entertainment to satisfy one's desire for enjoyment. These were also a response to what society dictated. It was not a shift because it was a need, but it was a shift because it was demanded, it was directed, and it was instructed by the colonizers. There was an introduction of something new: *creating expectations and desires to move up*. This was the same transcendence for e-theater. It was not a requirement, but it was directed and demanded because of the pandemic. e-theater was *not the easiest transition but the most practical one*. It was even challenging but it continued to *allow the theater to fit, to adjust, to appreciate, and to accept the new seeing place*. The leveled-up transition of theater to e-theater was not a leveled-up transition because of the digital technologies, rather it was a practical and accessible way to continue theater during the most challenging time.

ACT 5: Theater Metamorphism.

Scene 1: Onset of the Virtual Space.

In his essay, *Will the coronavirus kill Philippine Theater*, Gotinga (2020) claimed that at least 33 more significant theatre shows scheduled for 2020 were either canceled or had their runs cut short due to the pandemic. The theater grappled with this dilemma when the pandemic started. As a result of space and resource constraints, theater advocates and schools that offered theater urged themselves to the maximum to continue.

Others referred to the e-theater productions as cyberperformance. While maintaining some conventional theatrical approaches, cyberperformance was a novel kind of theater that developed its possibilities concurrently with technological means. Cyber performance differs significantly from traditional theatre, primarily in

corporeality (Papagiannouli, 2011). Here, the basic idea was to use online technology to create a virtual stage that linked performers and audiences. Papagiannouli (2011) expounded that a cyber stage is an online setting where communication occurs in a space and a non-space, with actors and viewers present and absent simultaneously as part of a synchronous and mediated experience.

G-meet and meetings provided a brand-new stage for performances. Although what happened was based on the idea that the pandemic should be staged at home, the best use of new web technologies encapsulated that live performances were still possible and counted as "live" even with delayed reception and reactions.

According to Delikonstantinidou (2021), digital theater is digital-born theater that uses the inherent traits and features of digital media rather than digital technology as a tool for the production and distribution of traditional theatrical works. Therefore, it was still theater but an enhanced, digitized theater using digital technologies.

Masura (2020) noted the four prerequisites for digital theater to meet the criteria of both being digital and theater: 1. Although the audience may contribute to the construction of the event, the messages flow predominantly from performers to the audience; this is referred to as a limited interactivity of message. 2. There are two types of little interactivity of message: The use of spoken language or text that tells a narrative or story, which means that digital theater works involve verbal communication; 3. A co-present audience and actor, i.e., performers and audience(s) share public space (not necessarily physically, of course) at the location of the leading creative event without sacrificing liveness; and 4. the use of digital technology during the performance's development process (rather than just as an archive tool). The actor and the audience were both mentioned. Their roles in the

digital theater significantly impacted how a story was communicated by the actors (in the performance) and the audience (in the reactions with themselves and fellow audience). Although digital technology created a virtual link or connection between the actors and the audience, there may be limited interactivity due to the digital platform; still, interaction exists. This transcended during the pandemic as e-theater productions boomed from live to recorded or recorded yet streamed live via an FB page, Zoom, or Google Meet. Whatever was available, it started the virtual space for theater – its new seeing place.

Scene 2: The Prerequisite for Flexibility.

The Public Theater's artistic director, Oscar Eustis, stated that because things are difficult, it doesn't absolve us of responsibility or remove the need to make an effort to achieve our goals. Serialized radio dramas came out as a result. Zoom plays have been performed. Constant communication was maintained and preserved the art form. Even more, Eustis stressed in the piece that they would go to the audience and allow them to celebrate, enjoy, and experience the solidarity of once again being an audience rather than forcing them to enter the cramped, confined rooms. Likewise, many theater advocates, producers, artists, and students struggled during the first months of the pandemic. But with, the challenges brought inspiration and passion for exploring the virtual space.

Prof. Glecy outlined the significance of performing at home once again in her essay, *Tanghalan sa/ng Tahanan*: “Ang pagbabalik sa tahanan bilang tanghalan ng mga dramatikong salaysay ay mas maganda pagkat tulak ng pagbubunyag ng totoong buhay na karansan - supil man o kalagayan o ligaw ng interes sa kapangyarihan. Nakatuon din ito sa mas maunlad na buhay pagkat tulak ng paglilimi ng interes (para kaninp at para saan) at mas may pakinabang pagka nakatuon sa

paghikayat ng pakikisangkot ng manonood, kung makikita man ito sa antas ng pagkatuto, pag-angkop sa kalagayan o **sa pagiging bahagi ng tugon sa isang kagyat ng pangangailangan.**' (Returning to the family home as a setting for dramatic stories is more beautiful because it is motivated by the revealing of real-life events, whether they involve denial, external factors, or the swaying of political agendas. The emphasis on encouraging audience participation, whether it be at the level of learning, adapting to circumstances, or taking part in a response to an urgent need, makes it more beneficial and geared towards a more progressive life. It pushes for a reevaluation of interests (for whom and for what) and is more beneficial when focused on encouraging audience involvement.)

As many theatrical performances during the pandemic were moved to online platforms, this introduced flexibility and accessibility for audiences to experience theater from the comfort of their homes. They also have the option to pause, rewind, or replay specific portions of the performance at their favorite viewing time. Online theater became a more inexpensive choice for both theater groups and audiences because the costs connected with conventional live performances were decreased. The homes served as both the performance space and the viewing area for the audience. This effectively illustrated how theater artists must be able to adapt and react to challenging circumstances. As a result, there was a need for a space as well as a need to relive and re-experience theater encounters, which led to the need to adjust to the new seeing place.

Scene 3: Sustenance to Theater.

The shift in theater location called for the necessity of continuing e-theater productions. The preparedness of an organization must be taken into account.

‘The contradiction between modifiability and archivability, two traits common to digital settings, was the leading cause of organizational restrictions’(Phillips & Milner, 2017). Although modifiability aroused curiosity and intensified the creativity of theater producers, artists, performers, and students, ‘digital platforms, on the other hand, can be used for their archivability because they can collect a variety of elements in a single location, which, nevertheless, may correspond to an overcrowded offer’ (Brilli, S. et al., 2022). The transcendence of the seeing place to virtual required acceptance, comprehension, evaluation, and respect to address sustainability, even during the pandemic, and knowledge of the virtual realm.

Embracing the digital technology for theater was a call for understanding its limits and its power to fully grasp what the new seeing place had in store for theater. Technical knowledge was required. Appreciation was an additional attribute to capture the value of the transition from physical theater to e-theater. Practice was a proof of the possibility of continuing theater in its new seeing place. Thus, it called for sustenance to ensure that knowledge, and practice were executed while preserving the value of theater from its original space to its transition to a new seeing place. There was modification needed to be sustained to transcend to the new seeing place explored for theater.

Additionally, ‘using technology for teaching involves more than just using basic devices and software; it also entails using it in a way that puts the needs of the students first and encourages interaction online’ (Davis, 2009, p. 150). Human-centered interaction was essential, given the available virtual space. The knowledge of the technology was inadequate. The center of the exchange was still human interaction despite the online platforms and applications used. ‘The combination of synchronous and asynchronous collaborative work and communication between the

virtual classroom and the home marks the advent of interactive technology' (Carroll et al., 2001). Therefore, technology could still foster interaction in the virtual space.

Scene 4: Integrating Virtual Performance into the Educational Framework.

Being the pioneer school in the arts in the country, the PHSA considered the need to be ready, adapt, and foresee the future of performing arts. The pandemic was just one way of redirecting the concentration of theater practitioners, advocates, and supporters that there was a bigger digital world that would offer a new venue for Philippine theater.

Theater schools acted with resiliency by staying constant in their dedication to offering an enriching theatrical experience despite the difficulties created by the physical distance. They developed dynamic and pandemic-responsive curricula that were specifically designed for teaching theatrical skills in a virtual environment to manage unusual circumstances. Theater teaching was redesigned, repackaged, and reconstructed in order to thrive on the digital stage. Regardless of the subject matter — script reading, acting, directing, or any other facet of theater — teachers expertly modified the educational process to overcome the limitations of physical distance. Theater educators embraced technology and made use of interactive internet tools to bring back the magic of the theater to their students' homes. Students were able to continue perfecting their craft in this transition, which also provided new opportunities for collaboration and artistic expression.

Theater schools made sure that the show went on by embracing the difficulties and utilizing the possibilities of technology, empowering students to continue their artistic journeys and cultivating a thriving theater community, even in the face of difficulty.

ACT 6: Communication in the e-theater.

Scene 1: Tailored Virtual Communication.

According to Karmakar (2013), theater is a dramatic form of communication. The performances could range from humorous to tragic, political to spiritual, and socially relevant to environmentally conscientious. Other relationships that already existed could still be seen in a theater. One was the way theater fostered interpersonal connections. Theriault (2009) mentioned that to Peter Brook, one of the most significant worldwide theater artists of the 20th and 21st centuries, the human connection is the essence of good theater.

In building human connections, one needed to evolve and innovate. Consequently, a person ventured beyond their comfort zones. New information was learned during the process, and there was a propensity to work together. The e-theater productions during the pandemic were new. People learned a lesson about being organic as a result of this. Since there was a need to communicate and reach out, the audiences, the purpose, and the resources that could be employed were all considered. This was a collaborative process that addressed the recognized need for communication.

A theatre is a form of performing arts where creativity grows through audience participation and communication (Tudu & Hansda, 2022). This captured the interactive and communicative features of theater. In Stage@Home, the suggestions from the audience for ‘fresh experience as topics’ for the e-theater productions implied the need for ‘human connection. During the pandemic, the audience desired to watch people they could relate with; thus, stories covering vaccination, safety protocols, and dole-out were common topics. These inspired people and gave awareness about the pandemic. The new seeing place communicated inspiration,

understanding, and direction for what seemed uncertain during the pandemic. Likewise, the two theater showcases of the PHSA, both staged to raise awareness about the arts and culture, inspired other schools to manage theater productions despite the physical, technological, space, and economic restrictions. The e-theater productions from Stage@Home and the PHSA encapsulated how theater could interact with its audience and communicate its aliveness despite the virtual mileage.

What seemed to be a lifeless interaction in e-theater became an exploration of interactive, and engaging participation. Actors communicated their characters with anticipation that they were performing for a distant audience. Therefore, all possible interventions were employed (from maintaining online interaction to managing a total theater experience) to maximize online technology. In this way, communication in the theater was also changed in forms and strategies to create interaction in the new seeing place. While this was going on, viewers discovered how to reply in ways that were both familiar and effective when used online (such as via FB Live). They became more expressive in sending emojis and virtual claps for an e-theater production. These were specifically designed, communication-responsive e-theater actions to make up for the virtual lack of physical engagement.

Scene 2: Viewer-centric Communication.

Brook (1968) clarified that the work of an actor is never, but always, for an audience. Therefore, a connection or point of touch must be made between the actor, the audience, and the performer before a dialogue or gesture could suggest the sharing of experience. The onlooker is a companion who needs to be forgotten yet is continually kept in mind (Brook, *ibid.*). As a result, various wordless languages have been created to translate events and experiences into characters and expressions that could be communicated to them.

According to Raj and Singh (2021), the fundamental fact that theater has a communication component is established since performances involve both performers and the audience. With the performer acting as a communicator and the audience acting as a communicatee, theater became an experiential process of human engagement. As a result, rather than only acting as a means of communication, the theater provided new insights for interpreting communication from the standpoint of theater.

The theater existed, they say, due to its audience. Karmakar (2012) states, "The actor or performer and the audience are the primary and distinctive elements in the theater." The actors interacted with the audience through dialogue, gestures, facial expressions, and characterization. With all these, audiences could be moved and put into the actors' world. The actors could capture their audience, for they considered that the performance was not meant for the play but for the audience who watched it. The audiences would have expectations from the actors and the entire production. Each element of theater, from actors, script/text, design aspect, audience, director, and theater space, all communicated with one another.

With the new seeing space, an interaction developed, whether human to human or non-human. 'A performing space implies an intricate interplay of communicative modalities, which are several channels that permit communication between people or between people and computer systems' (Bongers, 2002).

Additionally, as the audience was a constant participant in fresh performances, their roles in the theater were essential because they could decide whether a play was entertaining, deserving of a standing ovation, or needing of additional rehearsal. The audience wanted a wider variety of outstanding experiences, especially after spending more time online.

Eddy Zee, head of performing arts at Tai Kwun (Hong Kong's Centre for Heritage and Arts), asserted in a news article for The Theatre News, "It can't just be about performances anymore." Instead, performers must consider how audiences could now interact with them throughout a show. It may be simpler for audiences to become disengaged or lose interest during a performance when they were not physically present and were distracted by the online environment. This called for reevaluation of the way audiences interacted with theatrical performances as a result of the switch to online media. Audiences' attention and interest became crucial factors in sustaining their viewing involvement. Thus, it was no longer a performance to satisfy a performance. It was *more of a performance to articulate what was needed in the new seeing place*: the need to create, sustain, and facilitate interaction between actors and audience who were all dispersed online.

ACT 7: Pandemic-responsive Theater.

Scene 1: Home as a must-have Resource.

Karmakar (2013) enumerated five ways of communication in theater: an actor communicates to their character; an actor communicates to his co-actor/s; an actor communicates to the audience; the audience, in turn, communicates to the actor; and the audience speaks to the fellow audience. An actor needed to communicate with the necessary character in the play. This would give depth to the 'character' required in the script. Likewise, the actors' connection to fellow actors must be established to ensure that aside from the dialogue, body language, and nonverbal cues would add chemistry to their characters. Of course, actors must address the audience: what he or she feels, think, dream, and speak. In return, the audience responded to the actors even with a smile, a smirk, applause, or a standing ovation. Moreover, audiences do communicate with one another. In a scene, a glance at

each other would convey a meaning, or giving the same reactions to a scene would also stretch another meaning. This allowed the audience and the actors to create a shared experience during the performance. These reflected that they all communicate with one another. This scenario transcended during the pandemic when performances were staged at home.

The return to home for performances revolutionized theater in how it was produced, viewed, and experienced by actors, creators, and audiences. This revolutionary transition brought theater back to its roots, where simplicity of stage design emerged, yet engaging narratives surfaced. It was a multifaceted transition that included aspects of comfort and safety, creativity and originality, interactivity and (dis)connections, and exploration and intimidation. Home became the ultimate resource to sustain theater during the trying times of the pandemic.

Scene 2: Enhanced Creativity.

Creating theater is a challenging process that alters relationships as everyone gains new insights into themselves and one another (Gatt, 2020). This produced a new challenge to the students and teachers of PHSA with the virtual space as their stage, testing their knowledge, passion, and creativity for e-theater productions. According to Gatt (ibid.), 'Theater is a process that develops through debate, improvisation, and workshops. It provides participants with an opportunity to think critically and creatively.' For the two online theater showcases of the PHSA, creativity was challenged. Every participant was called to maximize their participation. Gatt (ibid.) further explained that 'this theater incorporates each person's contributions and participation to transform, educate, and develop personally and collectively.' Therefore, each participant's advancement depended on

their involvement, and with PHSA, the students and the production team's creativity was put to a maximum test.

Scene 3: Possibility of Online Theater.

Although the necessary abilities were complex, communicating with and motivating others to perform was more important. According to Gatt (2020), 'theatre moves away from the fixed linear hierarchies of scriptwriter, director, actor, and audience, even if the director is vital since, in making theatre, s/he is a reference point for the co-generation and co-creation of ideas and material.' This theater manifested during the pandemic. One person could be the entire production team. This signalled that challenges in e-theater productions could be addressed. 'With the spread of the epidemic and the succession of lockdowns, best practices, and recommendations regarding the potential of digital for the performing arts also started to take hold' (Aebischer & Nicholas, 2020). Professional performers, theater students and teachers, theater advocates, and artists all started to maximize the new seeing place.

During the pandemic, the Philippine Educational Theatre Association (PETA) released plays as pay-per-view events in the Philippines. Hence, a variety of plays could be viewed. 'Every year, even the popular Virgin Labfest and Cinemalaya events put on by the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) must be converted into a digital format' (<https://www.brittany.com.ph/blogs/lights-action-reopening-of-broadway/>).

Even YouTube channels were used to broadcast archived live theater performances like Dulaang Up, Tanghalang Ateneo, and Ballet Manila. The theater had seen its new place in the virtual space. Digital technologies offered space for performances, space for artistic expressions, and space for interaction. The use of

computers was maximized with the different smartphone applications. Dixon (2007) accented that 'when computer technologies are viewed and contextualized as crucial media of social, cultural, and creative transformation, their "newness" becomes most apparent.' Hence, this could inspire the reevaluation and rethinking of how these technologies have socially, culturally, and creatively transformed theater in the new seeing place because the possibilities were many.

Scene 4: Tries that Surprised.

These innovative expressions for e-theater productions stunned first-time virtual space users with the possibility of continuing theater even with the technological, spatial, and temporal restrictions. Tregear (2020) highlighted that 'under the shadow of COVID-19, the rise of video platforms like Zoom seems to make the necessity of "being there" no longer necessary.' Virtual presence and interaction surfaced via chatbox, private messages, and watch parties. This allowed for more explorations in e-theater productions, making every exploration memorable, with trial and error, but making each production worthy of being watched by their audiences.

Biggs (n.d.) described how theater was managed during the pandemic, wherein theaters brought performances to the public to generate more revenue through outdoor performances, streaming services, Zoom productions, and getting a play's recording in the mail.

Linders (2018) expounded, 'As a result, it is a dramaturgy of the machine interactions that have been enhanced...which, in reality, possesses only adaptability, the pace of which relies on how it is encoded.' Therefore, it was not the new seeing place - the digital platforms that changed the dramaturgy in a theater. It was still the people in a theater. 'We shouldn't think of analog and digital actors as opposing one

another because they can cooperate to advance a dramaturgy toward its climax while having different personalities' (Linders, *ibid.*). Different forms of dramaturgy were expected to transpire in the hybrid space that opened its door for theater during the pandemic. However, what should remain was the essence of theater - making it human even with the embodiment of virtual traits in e-theater productions.

Scene 5: Maximizing Online Technologies.

Over a year after the emergence of the pandemic, numerous productions offered digital watching options to fill the void left by the absence of live Broadway performances. 'People could watch Broadway musicals from the front row thanks to smartphone programs like BroadwayHD, Met Opera On Demand, and National Theatre At Home, streaming platform apps that display Broadway and West-End plays. Even Netflix decided to make musical movies like "Mamma Mia," "Dreamgirls," and "Prom," their app debuts' (<https://www.brittany.com.ph>). Moreover, the diverse audience could rent productions online, watch live streams and archived e-theater productions, and create accounts on various digital theater websites. Platforms like Zoom were utilized to maintain the impression of 'live, in-the-moment performances.' 'As a result, a new breed of "video-call"-based stories or narratives, including long-distance interactions, was born' (<https://www.brittany.com.ph>). Furthermore, with the maximization of digital technologies, Kaufman and Sternberg (2006) noted that "Studies in the performance arts tradition are characteristically historical-anthropological and attempt to capture or describe the creative shifts or adaptations that transform a traditional performance into a multilayered modern choreography." Hence, Biggs (n.d.) described how theater was managed during the pandemic, wherein theaters brought performances to the public to generate more

revenue through outdoor performances, streaming services, Zoom productions, and getting a play's recording in the mail.

ACT 8: e-theater Productions of Stage@Home and PHSA.

Scene 1: Reasons for e-theater theater productions.

1.1. The need to communicate the performance

Thomasson (2022) revealed that 'Artists are responding to "the pandemic's potential to remake expectations around the duration of the performative encounter and the relationships that can be created through it" in addition to the appetite for continued digital engagement, which is partly motivated by a desire to avoid the health risks associated with in-person events.' Therefore, the e-theater productions reaffirmed that there was a call for actors to communicate their craft since the majority of the world fell as one and needed companions even via digital performances.

In addition, Goebbels (2015) believed that a performance's effectiveness depended more on what was left out than what was. He noted that the idea of theatricality has evolved from a period of over-determined and even "histrionic" gestures to an aesthetic characterized by minimalism, voids, and an invitation for the audience to find their meaning in their experiences in the theatre. Different virtual experiences were developed and shared through the e-theater productions of Stage@Home, which included pandemic stories and PHSA's historical and musical plays. The audience's first e-theater experience communicated both possibilities of theater and companionship during the pandemic, but more than these experiences were the chance to still build personal digital connections.

1.2. Home as the Choice for Performance.

The choice was made to use the available technologies and materials at home to transform one's house into a new performance space.

Staying at home to be safe during the pandemic replaced the idea of leaving the house for personal growth. The homes were converted into the front and backstage areas with this constraint. One's own home challenged artists, theater instructors, and students to use more imagination when selecting the ideal place for a stage design at home, composing stories that fit the new virtual space, capturing the continuity of scenes, and keeping the audience's interest and attention. These all took place at home, which served as the new setting for artistic and creative development for theater productions. e-theater productions were handled and carried out despite the difficulties discovered during the exploration stage of using one's resources and technology at home.

During the pandemic, people's experiences in their homes also reflected the idea of GANAP. Thus, Stage@Home created episodic e-theater productions recorded in one's homes. Although a budget for props and even a router was supplied for PHSA's online theater showcase, the resources at home nevertheless kept overall online productions alive, buhay(!), may GANAP. For Stage@Home and PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin, all e-theater productions took on the form of GANAP, where every available space in the house was used if necessary, and each cast accurately portrayed what it was like to be a one-person show that operated from home.

1.3. To Comply as a School requirement.

Although some embraced the opportunity to explore, the pandemic disappointed most students. According to Hepplewhite (2022), "the necessity for

online learning structures in 2020/2021 was disappointing for students' expectations while presenting challenges to lecturers seeking to replace the benefits of experiential learning." However, for a subject like theater, where skill development is crucial, hands-on activities must supplement theoretical discussions. In addition, PHSA worked with its alumni and industry professionals in theater and film. The students and teachers started exploring digital technologies than just being compliant with a class requirement. The recognition model may be helpful, as suggested by Hepplewhite (ibid.). "The application of recognition here distinguishes a sense of distinctive otherness that can more productively, drawing from an empathetic attunement to build a mutual sensibility," he wrote. The PHSA's students recognized that each was responsible for the success of their online theater showcase, building trust and a sense of sensibility in oneself and others. Collaborative learning also manifested with fellow learners. This promoted human connections despite needing more personal connections in the digital space.

Scene 2: e-theater productions Constraints.

2.1. All-in-One Role

Due to pandemic restrictions, the pandemic called for role flexibility to 'fit in' to the virtual space's requirements. Since this was the call for the pandemic, one has no choice but to explore how to use the OBS, the home lighting materials, the stage designing for a scene, the features of a live streaming application, and the camera angles for consistent eye line connection with co-actor.

This challenged the majority of the performers online. In the typical theater, directors look for the most suitable setting for each performance since the theater space defines so much of the emotional and sensory impact on the viewer (Llewellyn-Jones, 2022). Thus, the choice of location required the interaction of the

audience and the performers, whether the audience would be participants or observers. The director also chose the atmosphere of the space to 'consider the psychological and emotional atmosphere of the setting to determine if it should feel open or closed, welcoming or unfriendly' (Llewellyn-Jones, 2022). However, with the virtual space, these directorial tasks must be rolled into one for anyone who produces e-theater. The rule of the trade was tough in taking all roles as one. How could a psychological and emotional atmosphere be established when the virtual space lacked intimacy and a real connection? Some have referred to the e-theater production as a theater in quarantine or theater in isolation; these may not necessarily demand mastery but rather a readjustment to infuse "liveness" in the theater. As a result, one person's job, whether an actor or a director, expanded to include various duties to enhance, if not fully complete, the total theatrical experience in the new seeing place. Adjustments were necessary, but learning it for months required technological patience and know-how.

2.2. Lighting Challenges

Even if the production was staged at home, lighting appropriateness was a relevant consideration. Wilson (201) identified the primary functions and objectives of stage lighting: 1. provide visibility, 2. reveal shapes and forms, 3. provide a focus onstage and create visual compositions, 4. assist in creating mood and reinforcing style, 5. help establish time and place, 6. establish a rhythm of visual movement, and 7. reinforce a central visual image, establish visual information, or both. PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin's initial online theater showcase and Stages @ Home's episodic e-theater productions employed standard lighting at home. This made a performer's look, gestures, and facial expressions visible. Additionally, a projection of the stage's set design was made visible. Lighting made it possible to concentrate on

the personality of the actors and even emphasized the scene's mood. The lighting made the scenario realistic and surreal by enhancing the performers' and the audience's moods. Additionally, it could change the scene's ambiance. The vibrant hues of the stage lights may convey a season or a time of celebration, peace, or anything else that was required by the script. Lighting also enhanced the transition of emotions, time, and movement. However, with the limited resources at home and the small space in one's house, how could lighting function its basic tasks?

The lighting was imperfect but materialized what was needed to set the time and the mood of a historical play for PHSA's first online showcase while creating a homey atmosphere for the freshest stories of Stage@Home. Although no sophisticated stage lights were available, they could illuminate the scenes and the audience's need to see, feel, and relive theater during the pandemic. The basic lighting added to the realness of the theater experience. The rawness of the production allowed for a more relatable experience to emerge in e-theater.

2.3. Camera (un) captivity

Liodaki & Velegrakis (2022) clarified that the camera or the microphone were essential tools used to record and transmit the sound and image of the performers, which fundamentally altered the theatrical experience. Thus, some actors who also performed for e-theater productions perceived that they seemed to be acting for cinema.

The awareness that actors were performing for a camera could add to the changing atmosphere of the theater just when one acted on a stage in front of an audience. But the acting was only partially made for a camera but was only mediated for a camera. Wilson (2015) articulated that 'the actor must combine the physical elements with the inner acting process, the effort on sincerity and credibility.' The

space could be smaller to act ‘big’ for a camera in e-theater productions. However, to combine what was internal and external in nature, the physical components of acting must be adjusted to reflect the inner thoughts of the actors. ‘The external physical qualities and vocal traits merge with the internal sensations and emotions’ (ibid.). This would suffice what was limited in the new seeing place but would maintain the essence of performing in theater despite the new virtual space used. Despite the smallness and simplicity of the set design what transcended was the originality and appropriateness of the scenery to the ‘feel’ of capturing an original experience that was just staged in the home.

2.4.Length of Material/Performance

In a live, physical theater, occupying the audience for one or two hours was feasible. However, the material's duration did more than engross and lose the audience, related to and separated from the play and experienced the performance and separated from it. Therefore, as Peter Brook explained in his book *Empty Stage*, ‘it takes a high art to employ two hours of public time because it is both a short period and an eternity.’ The time spent by an audience was arduous given that there were numerous internet distractions and that eye strain would also be experienced. However, with its challenging demands, this art was sustained primarily by casual labor, just like setting up an e-theater production. Laborious hours were nothing but hours of difficult discovery for the love of the craft. Hence, for an audience who was a theater lover, a knowledgeable person, and an advocate, time was felt every minute, even after the theater closed. Liodaki & Velegrakis (2022) expounded that "the audience's attention and focus on the piece are strongly related to the question of time in these theatrical experiments." Hence, time was fast in the new seeing place. Distractions were enormous, therefore, e-theater productions should keep

pace to the fastest of the new seeing place. Thus, stories must be engaging, and a different storytelling must be employed.

2.5. Internet (Dis)Connectivity

Results from a study by Fabito et al. (2021) revealed that, in addition to a shortage of desktop or laptop computers, an online learning environment also has issues with internet access. In 2015, Thailand had an average Internet speed of 7.4 Mbps, Sri Lanka 7.4, and Malaysia 4.3. With a modest average Internet speed of 2.8 Mbps, the Philippines ranked 104th out of 160 nations. In contrast, developed countries like South Korea (23.6 Mbps) and Singapore (12.9 Mbps) were rated 1 and 12, respectively (Salac & Kim, 2016). These figures revealed the existing internet connectivity of the country when e-theater productions were produced. Hence, a live performance would suffer significantly if the internet connection was unreliable. This was a crucial factor in the first online theater showcase of PHSA.

However, this advancement in theater needed to be improved by the digital divide. This included the PHSA students' poor internet connection, while for others, the insufficient load to complete the entire hour-long show made the audience's desire to watch less compelling. There were instances for some e-theater productions that the slow bandwidth available closed specific windows in Zoom. Given these challenges, the determination of theater students and teachers to experiment with hybrid forms of theater was evident in these technological hiccups. 'Like many other theatrical hybrids venturing into the digital world, it's not clear what to call it. It's not technically live theater, but its soul is theatrical' (Millman, 2020). e-theater sustained the soul of theater, however, the digital divide still functioned as a metal-fist that allowed access only to those who have the means. e-theater may have the feature of inclusiveness due to the wide reach of the digital space, however,

this was still a selected inclusiveness in our country. Not every Filipino could access, or would want to access due to priorities (food before pleasure).

2.6. Editing Difficulty

In e-theater productions, there was often a choice between real-time and post-production editing. Real-time editing required quick decision-making and seamless transitions, as everything happened live, which was applied in their first e-theater production. On the other hand, post-production editing allowed for more precise adjustments but could be time-consuming and would not capture the same spontaneity as real-time editing. This was applied in the second e-theater production, but the PHSA assured that they tried to make it as realistic as possible, just like in a physical theater.

Using various camera angles to capture the scene from different perspectives added to the editing difficulty. Editors must switch between cameras in real-time or select the best angles in post-production. Likewise, adding visual effects, graphics, and animations to a pre-recorded e-theater production could improve the recorded video; however, editing skills and tools were needed to include these components with live or pre-recorded footage effectively. Aside from these, audio editing is as crucial as video editing. Therefore, it could be technically challenging to maintain a consistent and balanced sound quality, especially when several audio sources are involved. Moreover, internet access is frequently required for live streaming in e-theater productions. Slow internet connections could cause latency and interfere with the editing process, making it difficult for editors to edit in real time. The coordination of handling large video files also added to the burden of the editor to ensure smooth transitions and technical problem-free e-theater productions. Furthermore, during e-theater productions, technical issues like video freezing or audio dropouts could

happen. To reduce interruptions, editors must be equipped to troubleshoot problems and quickly find solutions. Also, preserving the vitality of a live performance while enhancing it through editing techniques was one of the unique problems of e-theater editing. Finding the appropriate balance was crucial since *excessive editing might result in the loss of the authenticity of the theatrical performance*. The creative side of the editors would also be significant to provide the audience with an engaging e-theater production while maintaining their engagement as they were immersed in the virtual theater experience. But above all these, meeting the deadlines would still be an additional difficulty.

2.7. Background Continuity & Similarity

A Czech stage designer, Josef Svoboda created several important stage design approaches that designers have since adopted and applied. The term "kinetic stage" alludes to his viewpoint that the set should evolve and adapt as the performance goes on rather than function independently of the actors. He referred to the scenography as his art, giving the impression that he constructed an entire physical, not just paper, creation meant for the back of the stage. Among the stage design innovations were the polyekran, diapolyekran, and laterna magika. "polyekran," which translated to "multiscreen," referred to Svoboda's method of employing several screens at various heights and angles. These multiple screens were also evident in the e-theater of the first online-showcase of the PHSA. It created continuity.

‘Stage design must not only be consistent with the play; it should have integrity. The design elements—lines, shapes, and colors—should add to a complete visual universe for the play’ (Wilson, 2015). This was where spatial and material considerations came into play in shaping the set design of e-theaters. The confined

space must accommodate the props, lighting, backdrop, and all elements that the camera captured. If these elements do not align, the essence of e-theater could devolve into a sort of 'trying-hard' theatrical endeavor.

2.8.Co-actor non-presence

Thus, one way of making the performance real, as if the cast were in one place, was through blockings. This was different from the theater blockings done face-to-face. Eye contact with the screen at eye level was necessary for digital blocking. This would ensure that each actor would maintain eye contact as if they were looking directly at each other. The identical props must be on hand, especially when needed in the same scene. According to Gowri (2020), 'choreography that is directed organically adapts to the screen. For instance, if multiple screens are displayed in a window, actors' placements and body language must match those of co-actors.' Gowri believed that actors frequently stumble in the dark since they cannot always see their co-stars. So, this called for rigorous scene-by-scene choreography. This was still blocking, this time, digital blocking.

The connection of actors to fellow actors built rapport on stage and in making realistic character representations. However, in the new seeing place, this connection caused disconnection with fellow actors creating emptiness in one's acting and line delivery. Acting in isolation had come out as a product of spatial differences. The term "cognitive presence" was first used by Garrison & Anderson (2003) to describe how well learners could create and reinforce meaning through extended contemplation and discussion in a critical community of inquiry. This was subsequently examined through the context of digitized theater. Vickers (2020) emphasized that teachers were given creative options for embodied learning

experiences in online contexts when it came to "digitized theater training and rehearsals" and that these options included the use of cognitive presence. According to Gorman, Syrja, and Kanninen (2019), different sensory modalities must compensate for the absence of direct skin and hand contact when acting in a digital environment. According to Ronald Barthes, "the grain of the voice" created an emotional connection between the vocalizer's body and the listeners and transcended meaning. People were said to 'empathize aurally/kinesthetically,' which was accomplished by listening to the voice inside one's body. Here, the grain was the body in the voice. Due to the vibrotactile properties of the speech, "the touch of the other body could be felt even without concrete, immediate contact" (Syrja & Kanninen, *ibid.*). As a result, this gave concrete form to the idea of cognitive presence, showing that a voice in the body could perceive the movements, gestures, and emotions of co-actors despite the physical distance between them in an e-theater production.

.2.9. Shooting problems

Although the actors were not performing live to an audience, the liveness of the act was captured in the pre-recorded performance, which Lavender (2017) called "privilege presentness (liveness) over presence (being there)." This was thought to have become a part of a cultural milieu in live broadcasts. These dynamics for an e-theater production allowed for a theatrical experience that *required a reasonable amount of dramaturgical planning to be consistent on how each ACT would appear to be live in the camera*. "Mediation by the camera is already part of the commodification of experience in the present" (*ibid.*). Thus, the internet mediated theater to its new seeing place and its audience. Like the PHSA's second online

theater presentation, they produced another milestone in their craft and established an intermedial interaction between them and their audiences.

Scene 3: Locating Onstage and Offstage Presence.

The dramaturgical theory of Erving Goffman examined social interactions and how people expressed themselves differently depending on the situation. He compared this notion to a theatrical performance where actors took on different roles based on the circumstances. There were front stage and backstage components to the actor's actions.

Using Goffman's dramaturgy to the transcendence of theater to its new seeing place, the area where the act was presented to the audience was called the front stage. This virtual setting was where the actors and visual theatrical elements came together in the e-theater productions during the pandemic. This covered virtual platforms, live broadcasts, previously recorded performances, and other online platforms to deliver the performance to the audience. In this scene, the actors performed their prepared parts and portrayed their roles to the audience just as they would on an actual stage. On the other hand, the space where actors rehearsed and planned their roles before entering the front stage was referred to as the backstage. The pandemic's behind-the-scenes digital setting was the backstage of e-theater productions. It included using video conferencing for rehearsals, communicating online with the cast and crew, sharing scripts and notes remotely, and managing the technical components of the virtual performance. An unflawed front-stage performance depended on the backstage activity. Stage@Home and PHSA 's Dulaang Sipat Lawin considered, observed, and enforced these.

The dramaturgy of Goffman strongly emphasized how people change their conduct depending on the situation and the part they were playing. e-theater actors

required similar adaptations during the pandemic. They could modify their performing styles to fit camera angles, adapt to a small stage, and communicate with other actors via screens. This adaptability was essential for upholding the performance's caliber and capturing the audience's attention in the virtual space. The way the audience viewed the performance was critical in Goffman's theory. The audience's experience viewing e-theater productions was influenced by how they interacted with the new seeing place and how well the actors could connect with them through screens. The actors must be conscious of how the distant audience interpreted their actions and attempted to forge a connection despite the digital distance.

Goffman's dramaturgical theory, in general, shed light on how e-theater productions during the pandemic involved the front stage performance shown to the virtual audience and the necessary backstage adjustments and preparations to produce an overall theatrical experience online. Just like actors did on actual stage, they managed the difficulties of the virtual space while kept the essence of their characters. However, with e-theater productions, the effects of seeing oneself and others on video while physically disconnected and of spending much time in the virtual world near or backstage could impact overall well-being (O'Brien, 2021). Additionally, spending much time in the backstage area and away from socially defined roles might cause feelings of social detachment (Pucino, 2022).

Scene 4: e-theater productions Strategies.

4.1. Constructing Material from the Freshest Experience and Fitting to Year Level/

New experiences must be promoted to target the online behaviors of tech-savvy consumers exposed to a diverse digital culture. Additionally, it would increase

engagement as the most novel experience as topics like the pandemic or contemporary societal problems could spark social commentary. Since the events were pertinent to them or some audience members may have already experienced them, the novel experiences could arouse strong emotions in the audience. Additionally, it rendered the storyline more variety. These could encourage audience engagement, connection, and excitement, allowing them to become socially, culturally, and emotionally immersed in the e-theater productions.

4.2. Strategizing Feedback

Miller (2017, Los Angeles Times) explained that talkback is an opportunity to discuss the play with the actors, the director, and occasionally the playwright. He added that for theaters, the talkback could strengthen the relationship between the venue and its patrons, expand knowledge of the work, and increase the audience's sense of participation instead of passive viewing. They held talkbacks for Stage@Home at the festivals they attended, where various pandemic-themed theatrical pieces were shown. This opened discussions with the playwrights and directors to expound on the richness of the stories. This made it possible for the audience to better comprehend the various e-theater productions. Members of the audience could ask questions to the cast and directors, allowing for feedback to still be possible in the new seeing place. An automated feedback loop exists throughout the performance (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 38). Thus, production and reception co-occur, and a dynamic feedback loop is established "during the interaction between actors and spectators" (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 38), while the self-described automation system "ensures that performance remains unpredictable and spontaneous to some extent" (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 38). In other words, performance was a phenomenon that appeared in front of our eyes at the time of its

creation. It was not fixed and cannot be recreated similarly because each instance has uniqueness (Georgiou, n.d.).

The actual clapping and standing ovations were absent, according to Liodaki & Velegrakis (2022), who stated that "from the artists' point of view, what was missing was the cool-down process after a performance, the applause, and the chats with the audience." Physical coexistence was nonexistent. The feedback loop was, therefore, absent. Liodaki & Velegrakis (ibid.) stressed that "this encounter should not be understood solely as a social process but as a process that takes place physically as well." Pefanis (2015) proposed that "the theatrical scene is the ultimate heterotopia where you can meet the Other and let them transform you." The loss of automatic feedback loop was evident in e-theater productions, but with the adjustments came other ways to create digital feedback loops.

With online rehearsal tools, video conferencing, and virtual collaboration platforms, theater teams could collaborate virtually without regard to their physical location. These tools made it easier for producers, directors, performers, designers, and other team members to communicate effectively and exchange comments. Digitally accessible scripts also permitted directors and players to annotate and incorporate changes during rehearsing sessions. This real-time feedback loop ensured the continuous evolution of the script. The production team may also evaluate interest and adjust their strategy using the audience's feedback from online marketing campaigns and social media interactions. Live streaming performances created a feedback loop with the audience, like in the PHSA's e-theater productions. Hence, even in a virtual situation, real-time comments, reactions, and participation assisted actors to comprehend the impact of their performance and establish a connection with the audience. Following the virtual performance, e-theater

performances could assess the response generally and pinpoint areas for improvement by collecting audience feedback through surveys and analytics. E-theater productions received feedback despite physical coexistence being very different from digital feedback loops. The digital feedback loops made up for what was necessary and practical to 'keep the show going' during the pandemic.

4.3. Use of OBS, Router via Live Stream Performance in FB Live

Lavander (2017) accented that global access to the internet bandwidth is the challenging aspect of internet theater. Internet connectivity was one challenge to maintain the smoothness of the entire e-theater production as well as to reach the audience without interruption. If there was support, the challenge could be addressed (just like the experience of PHSA's Dulaang Sapat Lawin) but if unrecognized, other options for producing e-theater surfaced like Stage@Home. This revealed how problems on connectivity could still managed connectivity: making all ends met just to produce theater in the pandemic. This underscored a commitment and fervor for theater that even sluggish internet connections could be endured, as alternative methods of e-theater production, whether recorded or live, persisted.

4.4.Lock-in Shoot as a Strategy

The lock-in shoots changed the actors' and the theater team's co-presence, according to Sermon et al. (2022), who wrote that "their creativity is stimulated by their superimposed co-presence within imaginative virtual set designs, and most significantly because the boxed-in head-and-shoulders paradigm of platforms such as Zoom/Skype/Teams/FaceTime is replaced by full-body interactions with no spatial boundaries or visual separations between performers." Features of Zoom, Google

Meet, and FB Live were constantly being modified to manage interaction. But for others who still felt 'isolation acting', the most feasible was the lock-in shoot. Although some may argue that when the theater was filmed, the elements of video production was captured, a theater practitioner must be in constant reminder of the essence of theater. The recorded e-theater for others who were knowledgeable on the technicalities of video and film production may cite some components like the editing, the effects, and the camera angles utilized, however, during the pandemic, this was one of the most convenient move to do.

4.5. Hiring of Professionals in e-Theater Productions

If the director "cut" the play as it was being filmed, the consistency of facial expressions, body language, and line delivery must match what was captured. The performers thought this was an issue because they were used to performing live in front of an audience. The show must go on, however.

The transition from conventional live theater to online formats could be difficult on the technical and artistic fronts. Filmmakers were adept at visual storytelling and enriched the plot and efficiently captured the essence of live performances by using camera angles, lighting, and editing techniques. They may better adjust to digital media and provide spectators with a unified, eye-catching experience. The storytelling, cinematography, and directorial abilities of experienced film directors were enormous assets. Their participation could improve the online theatrical showcase's production value, increasing its audience appeal and effect. Moreover, a professional film director who participated in the showcase could draw in more people curious about the director's work. This could add to the number of audiences wanting to witness the collaboration with the PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin.

With the trend of today's digital arts and media, the involvement of specialists from the film business was an advantage. Working with experts could encourage innovation in theater productions. This would enable teachers and students to experiment with various storytelling methods and explore new ones. It would allow the PHSA's students to remain relevant and contemporary in the constantly changing artistic world. The student's abilities would also be promoted as to their exposure and collaboration with a film director and other professionals in the field. Likewise, working with experts could be a valuable learning opportunity for students. They could acquire valuable insights from the director's tactics and approaches, gaining knowledge of the film business and deepening their comprehension of contemporary theatrical production. Future partnerships would also be a possible outcome with the experts.

4.6. Utilization of Gadgets

The new seeing place demanded the use of technology, which meant that equipment was required to be used and updated to meet the requirements of the new virtual space.

According to Sermon et al. (2022), "switching between the views of looking at you' and 'you looking at me' through the convergence of remote spaces into a third space—space 1 is yours, space 2 is the other person's, and the third space is the screen where both of you appear together and can dynamically interact in real-time" required a variety of spaces. With these varieties of spaces, an effective and dependable earphone to perform as an audio link for upcoming scenes, for actor identification on the pin, and directions from the director was required.

4.7. Clocktime Strategy

Actors could interact with one another and act with ease in a theater. They could readily interact and perceive the character in themselves and other on-stage characters. Interaction was still possible in the new seeing place, but it could be challenging to know where to look, where to pass a prop, and where to position oneself when other performers were in the same scene but were displayed in distinct windows on the screen.

Wilson (2015) defined ‘ blocking as deciding when and where performers move and position themselves on the stage. Other directors allowed the actors and actresses found their movements, vocal interpretations, and relationships. Some directors did a bit of both. ’ Additionally, blocking would vary depending on the theatrical stage. Blockings were difficult in the new place due to the smaller, more constrained, and isolated environment. The clock-time technique required that co-actors, who were digitally separated, be in "co-presence" with one another. Responding, reacting, and maintaining eye contact with other actors on screen, also allowed for the continuity of situations.

4.8. Preparation Aspect

Learning how to navigate the virtual environment was one aspect of the preparation. To better understand the advantages and drawbacks of the new seeing place, Sermon et al. (2022) stated that "since on screen, their self is also the other, they can reflect on the interactions and performances occurring in front of them while seeing themselves as being directly responsible for it." Innovation, form, and embeddedness were the keywords Manan (2021) used to describe the performances in the post-pandemic era. She said, "It was more about sharing

examples of performances that exemplify the act of moving ahead despite the barriers rather than open-ended contemplation of how the performing arts can retain vitality amidst the prohibitive circumstances." She explained that innovation then dealt with the presentation, where the form was a deeper reflection of the experience, and embeddedness contextualized the performances within national spheres. Both the e-theater productions of PHSA and Stage@Home entailed innovations as they explored the rightful material for their audience and appropriate digital treatment for their scripts. Moreover, the pre-planning and talkbacks added to the form while considering the new virtual space aligned to their audience interests emerged in embeddedness.

4.9. Use of Social Media to Market the Play

Stage At Home's and PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin's e-theater productions were both shown on Facebook Live. Facebook alone could be able to draw viewers to the online theater, but effective social media marketing was essential. Facebook hosted a variety of 'live' events, including live selling, game streaming, watchparties, and more. To reach the target audience of the e-theater, planned, coordinated, innovative, and consistent social media marketing techniques was necessary. This could create an impact on e-theater if the target audience were confined in the new seeing place.

4.10. Recording of the Performance and the Audiences' Presence

Standing ovations and applause were typical reactions in a theater. However, for an e-theater production, audience response and the number of viewers were observed, albeit in a different setting.

A recording would enable retakes and post-production editing to remedy technical concerns during a live performance, such as audio or lighting issues. The production team would be able to review and objectively assess the performance. They could also pinpoint their areas for development, gain knowledge from their effort, and make the required changes for future e-theater productions. In addition, the output of the e-theater in a hybrid setting was recorded to reach diverse audiences: some audience members watched the show live in person while others watched it online. This was necessary to provide both groups with a consistent viewing experience.

The recordings might serve as advertising for the production company, the theater, the actors, and even schools like the PHSA. It could spark interest and draw viewers to upcoming programs. It could also entice the attention of aspiring theater students who would want to enroll in PHSA. Meanwhile, theatrical and performing arts education could benefit from using recorded e-theater productions as teaching resources. Acting, directing, set design, and other facets of the play could all be studied and examined by students.

e-theater productions could be recorded so that the content would still be available outside of the actual place of the live performance. The audience reach would significantly increase by allowing viewers in many locations and time zones to watch the production online. Online recordings could also reach many viewers, including disabled people who might encounter difficulties attending live events. Recorded productions could be made more accessible by adding subtitles, audio descriptions, or sign language interpretation. Moreover, recording e-theater productions would enrich the repository of information on theatrical works and aesthetic accomplishments. Future generations of artists and academics could use

these archives as a source of information. It would maintain the artistic integrity and originality of the production for a long time by allowing future generations to experience and enjoy the work.

4.11. Do-it-yourself Lighting

Wilson (2015) enumerated seven primary functions and objectives of stage lighting namely: provide visibility, reveal shapes and forms, provide a focus onstage and create visual compositions, assist in creating mood and reinforcing style, help establish time and place, establish a rhythm of visual movement, and reinforce a central visual image, establish visual information, or both. However, with the pandemic, only do-it-yourself lighting was accomplished for the e-theater productions of Stage@Home and the first online theater showcase of PHSA. All options must be considered to ensure that the appropriate lighting for e-theater productions was achieved. Natural light sources like windows could illuminate the space. Repositioning the performance area added to the desired lighting effect. Regular household lamps with adjustable brightness could create specific lighting effects. Moreover, to achieve the desired mood and ambiance for e-theater production, different lamp positions, angles, and colored bulbs could enhance the storytelling and create a captivating atmosphere. DIY lighting was the best option to adapt to the home space and solve budget constraints while still achieved an effective and engaging lighting design for an e-theater production.

4.12. Assessment of Performance

Though many claimed that the new seeing space made it difficult to establish feedback loops, Auslander (2008) asserted that "there are digital media that can

create a feedback loop between actors and the audience." This was accomplished in the e-theater productions of Stage@Home and the PHSA. Lehmann recalled the "distinctive medial characteristics of theater." He emphasized that it was a space for memory and remembrance that vitally involved co-presence, embodied engagement, and communal experience, and the theater also served as a location of communal reception.' As a result, the performance evaluation fostered a sense of teamwork among all of the participants, from the actors and production team to the audience. The live-streaming and live e-theater production feedback reflected digital co-presence as everyone engaged with the digital essence of theater.

ACT 9: Observed Elements of Theater in the New Seeing Place.

Scene 1: Mediated Aliveness.

According to Auslander (2008), presence and liveliness could be felt through digital media, even at a distance. He said various types of liveliness, such as group and online liveness, were developing in digital environments. Accordingly, "the commitment and attention of the audience were related to the perception of a spectacle as a live event" (Loodaki & Velegrakis, 2022).

Masura (2020) noted that one of the four prerequisites for digital theater to meet the criteria of both being digital and theater was a co-present audience and actor, i.e., performers and audience(s) shared public space (not necessarily physically, of course) at the location of the leading creative event without sacrificing liveness. This transpired throughout the e-theater productions. Liveness was different from what actors and spectators were used to seeing live. However, Stage@Home and PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin's digital audience was drawn in by distinct aliveness. It was discriminating to compare live and digital forms equally. Auslander (1999) argued with Phelan for holding live events in high regard as "real"

events while mediatized events were seen as "secondary" and "artificial reproductions of the real." His arguments against "the reductive binary opposition of the live and the mediatized" examined how live theater and performance have become more mediatized and the idea that there may not be any "clear-cut ontological distinctions between live forms and mediatized ones." He further claimed that "the relationship between live and mediatized form and the meaning of liveness be understood as historical and contingent rather than determined by immutable factors."

Although, it would be typical for the live performance to be recorded or live-streamed. But the debate on aliveness seemed irrational, for live was live and virtual was virtual. Hence, Auslander (1999) clarified that "we now experience such work as a fusion, not a con-fusion, of realms, and that we see a fusion taking place within a digital environment that incorporates the live elements as part of its raw material." He realized the digital, incorporating live, was the dominant aesthetic force." Thus, 'its production depicted the assimilation of various resources to the cultural dominant rather than a conversation among distinct media' (Dixon, 2007). Competition was different from what was present—however, it was a mixing of resources. Today's digital world has provided a new place for theater because it was more about combining the resources available in a live theater to conform to the prevailing cultural norms of the digital environment.

Scene 2: Differentiated Immediacy.

Immediacy in traditional theater referred to the live, in-person interaction between actors and audience. The actors' on-stage presence facilitated this closeness, the real-time delivery of lines and actions, and the audience's ability to

see the performance in the exact physical location. In e-theater productions, the term "immediacy" had a slightly different connotation.

e-theater could be accomplished live and in real-time, even though it may be displayed online. Through video conferencing applications or live-streaming websites, actors could communicate with the audience and co-actors in real-time. Actors used webcams to appear on stage rather than in person visually. The audience, in return, could see and hear the actors in real time that created an instant interaction between them. Interactive components that let the audience participated in the performance might be done through live discussion, commenting in the comment box, and talk-backs. Although, immediacy referred also to the immediacy for a play to be staged. This resulted to how reactions were different from one play to another or from the same play performed in different schedules. This was the uniqueness of theater that transcended in the new seeing space.

ACT 10: Realizations on e-theater.

Scene 1: Unfamiliarity of Theater.

Peter Brook (1968) explained that theater production's severe difficulties must be acknowledged: it is, or would be arguable, the most complex media to master if it were actually practiced; it is ruthless and leaves no room for waste or error. Theater production's severe difficulties must be acknowledged: it is, or would be arguable, the most complex media to master if practiced; it is ruthless and leaves no room for waste or error. This scene occurred 45 years ago. However, theater was still a complicated art form that only a select few could appreciate and comprehend. Nevertheless, theater should be viewed as a highly involved relationship between

performers and audiences rather than a highly privileged artistic communication by a select few artists (Gavino, 2014).

‘Theater constitutes one of the most complex forms of communication, tying together numerous elements in what Bourdieu has termed "simultaneous semiologies"... Adding media screens or digital projections introduced yet another coded sign system to the stage space, further stimulating and complicating the spectator's decoding activity’ (Dixon, 2007). These made theater seemed even more unfamiliar, especially in its new seeing place.

Scene 2: Inclusion of Theater in one’s Home.

During the pandemic, Stage@Home used the homes as a significant stage. The stage could be created in a variety of residential settings. One's neighbor could be considered a member of the audience.

Mellor (2018) clarified that the type and size of a theater are an excellent digital starting point for developing a digital sound strategy and using the available resources. During the pandemic, what was available and what was just part of everyone’s space was the home. This was a good starting point for theater, adding the urgency to communicate with the people experiencing the pandemic. The available space, the urgency to communicate a purpose, and featuring the freshest experience demanded by the virtual audience of Stage@Home were all contributory factors for its consistent e-theater productions. The home was the number one available resource, with all the gadgets and materials inside it, the internet connection, and the advocacy of pushing for theater allowed for theater. Thus, the home communicated that the theater could be viable and available because it communicated its function and even prompted Dr. Glecy with her infinite advocacy.

Scene 3: Limitations turned Opportunities.

All of us have been introduced to a live theater. The audience watched the performance as it was performed live on stage. Before the pandemic, this was theater. But multiple strategies were created. It was feasible to oversee the live performance but recorded e-theater productions were also an option. The limitations of the new seeing place gave birth to other forms of *liveness*.

Innovation was a byproduct of the shift to the new seeing space. The resistance existed wherever there was innovation. However, throughout the pandemic, resistance was set aside for theater practitioners and advocates who coveted to explore areas of Philippine theater that still needed exploration. Thus, the change in the physicality of the seeing place also transformed people's mindsets. 'So, in the end, a significant portion of the subject of innovation is not 'simply' technological; it also requires experimenting with new ideas, adopting novel perspectives, and opening up working procedures' (Van Dijk, 2018).

Scene 4: Dimensions of e-space.

Comfortability and convenience were the new tickets for access as well reliable bandwidth, to ensure connectivity and continuity of an e-theater production. Rayner (1999) provided a way in the postscript to her essay and claimed that it was unlikely that the immaterial natural could be understood without reference to the temporal and spatial. This was why, according to her, "There is a way of knowing that is other than spatial and temporal and that, like the ontological foundation of performance, has been there all along." In her explanation, she emphasized that although theater may incorporate technology, it still maintained a focus on dimensionality and the assumption of being present. This meant that anything that

entered the language of theater essentially became part of the theater, regardless of any changes in boundaries or physical dimensions.

Scene 5: Communication as Guide.

A new theatrical genre that communicated two notions had been named "mixed-reality performance," according to Benford & Giannachi (2012). One was the development of rich, sophisticated experiences that blended the real and virtual worlds. The other was the fusion of interactive digital media with live performance by actors or participants. With the prevailing use of online technologies, the e-theater productions of Stage@Home and PHSA also inhabited the features of a mixed-reality performance. The real world was still the performance of the actors but transmitted in the digital world through Zoom, FB Live, StreamYard, and Google Meet. This transcended the integration of diverse forms of interface into a single e-theater experience. This was not primarily virtual reality but the combination of the real and the digital. This was communicated in the e-theater productions of both Stage@Home and PHSA. These mixed-reality performances directed to the identification of three trajectories by Benford & Giannachi (ibid.). First was the canonical trajectory that referred to the plan for the experience that may be found in scripts, set designs, media and code designs, stage management instructions, and other things that the artists produced beforehand. This trajectory was exhibited on how the e-theater productions of Stage@Home and PHSA managed to communicate the transition of the performance in the creation of a coherent experience despite the new seeing place as aligned to the beginning, transitioning, and ending of the theater performance. From the choice of the story for the script, the set designs appropriate for the scenes, the over-all digital stage management

instructions from self and to others, and the assignment of media and code designs for each scene (especially for the first online theater showcase of the PHSA), all these were captured on the first trajectory of a mixed-reality performance.

The second trajectory was the participant trajectory, which was described as the real journey a specific person took via a specific performance occurrence (ibid.). Every participant in the e-theater production has his or her own trajectory. This worked together with the canonical trajectory to ensure the creation of a single e-theater experience. Thus, from the pre-planned canonical trajectories, the participants would have individual choices that would suit his or her role in the performance. In the case of the online theater showcase of PHSA, the multiple participants became critical. 'Interweaving the many participant paths like creating encounters, establishing moments of isolation, and regulating tempo' (ibid.) was the key to its successful implementation.

The historical trajectory, often known as "how an experience may be documented and subsequently retold," was the third trajectory. This was suggested to be part of the beginning of any mixed-reality performance to document every experience. This trajectory concerned the retelling of the process, and of the entire experience of both the canonical and participant trajectories. Likewise, this would also evaluate the performance of its strengths and weaknesses as to the retelling of the experience. For PHSA, every thing was documented even the number of reacts during the e-theater performance as well as the number of audiences. This attributed as part of the marketing of the school. For Stage@Home, it all started with research. Although, the first e-theater productions involved single participant, the other two trajectories were all present. From the pre-planning of canonical trajectories, and to

the historic trajectory, the e-theater productions of Stage@Home were all documented and even evaluated during their talkbacks and watch parties.

With the identification of the need to communicate theater during the pandemic, the e-theater productions produced by Stage@Home and PHSA marked how mixed-reality performance, how a hybrid form of theatrical performance, how online theater, and digital performance, whatever was it was fit to be called, the urgency of theater's response to what its audience needed at the moment when there seemed to be no way but managed to explore the possibilities in order to still create and manage interaction in theater.

Scene 6: From Experience to Fresher Experience.

There was a virtual space, but it also had a broad audience with various interests and tastes in e-theater productions.

In assessing the Philippine-ness of the Philippine drama, Tiatco (ibid.) listed Tiongson's three characteristics: reflecting Philippine culture, answering the needs of the Filipino people, and working for the good of the many. These have been reflected in the e-theater productions of Stage@Home. As a result, Prof. Glecyr and her team devised relatable stories to inspire their audience during the uncertain times of the pandemic. Their e-theater productions included common subjects, including immunization, health protocols, ayuda (dole out), pandemic restrictions, and Judith (bill due dates). She ensured that every story tickled (kumikiliti) the minds and emotions of their audience; hence, the freshest yet relevant stories were shown. The communion of the topics to the audience and vice versa contributed to the acceptance of Stage@Home to its audience despite its new seeing place. Fresh did not mean novel, but fresh referred to something relatable and acceptable.

Scene 7: Less is More.

An audience's presence was what makes a theater. For interactions to flourish and for shared experiences to be created in theater, there must be an audience.

The pandemic taught us that you could create theater even with just one audience member. Numbers were merely numbers, and they should not determine performances. Even though McAuley (2007) recognized the varied activities that could fall under the umbrella term "performance," from the most organized, complex, and elaborate to the most simple expressive practice, she identified a common denominator: the presence of an artist/performer and a viewing audience.

In theater, the sharing of experience was essential. This experience could constitute the play and be the experience while one watched the play with the fellow audience. If there were few members of the audience, still the purpose of theater was reached: to communicate an experience and let it be felt even by a few.

Scene 8: Differentiation or Interrelation to Film.

Dixon (2007) clarified in his book that it had been argued by Margaret Morse, Elizabeth Grosz, and Sarah Rubidge that the concept of the "space in between" was essential to the artistic forms and spectator experiences of (respectively) immersive artworks, video installations, and architecture. He highlighted that what was fundamental was not the physical object or environment but the space it occupied and the dynamic spaces configured and experienced by visitors and spectators. When applied to e-theater productions, stage areas became transitory, ever-changing, and, in the words of Elizabeth Grosz, "always in the process of being but never realized... the area between things."

According to Karmakar (2013), "Cinema is not a live show; theater is." Communication happened directly in the theater, but it occurred visually in movies. However for Prof. Glecy, videos document motion pictures. Films were videos. These were her observations since, for her, theater's survival during the pandemic was what counted. It was no longer about performing live, but managing a live performance into a recording with its composition and expression of being 'live.'

Although there was initial excitement in using the new platform to break the fourth wall of the Zoom frames to exchange props, Sermon et al. (2022) explained that the format was much more similar to live television than theater, and the framed boxes were artificial distancers that binded the performers instead of freeing them. However, even with these windows in Zoom or in Google Meet, the binding of performers was not actually freezing nor boxing them in frames. It was more of freeing the notion of not doing theater during the pandemic. The frames looked like some kind of walls of the actors, limiting their movements, which quite true but, it was breaking the borders of not be able to perform theater. Dixon (ibid.) explained, 'This sense of in-between-ness—a liminal space operating between the screen images and live performers—is frequently the fundamental kernel, what one might even call the "metatext" of digital theatrics.' He expounded that 'The combination of live performance and digital imagery could create a specific, hybrid form and experience similar to what Alain Virmaux had described Artaud's film scenarios: "something which is neither theatre nor film, but partakes of the evanescent reality of dreams."

The digital frames/windows of Zoom and Google Meet even StreamYard may have created an impression of 'coldness' and 'isolation.' But throughout the pandemic, with the exploration of e-theater in its new seeing place, the public

recognized the potential of e-theater. It revealed that actors were physically separated but digitally connected, and the audiences were also at a distance, but *they managed to co-create interaction and experience in theater*. During the pandemic, the fundamental principle of a theater of convening the audience and the actors in one physical stage or auditorium was modified, not to replace the fundamental principle of theater but to fill what was missing during the pandemic. It was a move of not allowing the theater to be placed in the confinement of just being a memory. The modification enabled theater to leap at the numerous digital opportunities.

Scene 9: Confinement or Breakthrough.

The comparison between live and online performance was not a subject of debate. It was not even good to compare both. These two were complementary. Competition was not the word to define their qualities. Still, assistance for each was necessary when there was no other option but to go online, tape, or live performance, with all the available resources at home. This was what compensated for what was needed during the pandemic.

But as Masura (2020) identified one of the prerequisites of a digital theater to be both digital and theater: although the audience contributed to the construction of the event, the messages flowed predominantly from performers to the audience; this was referred to as a limited interactivity of message. The messages started from the performers would eventually be captured by the audience even it was from an e-theater production.

Thus, e-theater productions were recorded, live-streamed, or even live because the theater practitioners, advocates, and schools' choices worked for them.

It was important that there were more options available for the theater to remain viable.

In essence, the focus of this process was no longer the artistic creation that resulted from the creators' acts but rather an event that developed and came to a close as a result of the actions of everyone involved (Fischer-Lichte, 2008). It was no longer about who created the performance, but more of how the performance was transformed into a situation where everyone gathered, watched, and experienced theater - even in the digital space available. This situation had been an event shared by both the audience and the creators of the e-theater productions where both the creation of a performance and evolution of interaction indeed metamorphosed in different forms to address the need for the theater during the pandemic.

The digital space allowed for more creative productions to take place. Kumar, et. al. (2013) explained that the convergence of theatre and new media does not approach internet technologies as a distribution or "transmission" medium; instead, the internet was the site for the performance, & a creative medium. Hence, it not only constituted a new place for performance as accessible to many but allowed for collaboration, a different digital work environment for theater practitioners, strategic, appealing, and creative e-theater productions, and a blooming new digital relationship between audience and actors and vice versa. Likewise, Burjanadze (2018) expressed that 'international collaboration opens up new opportunities for progress and new opportunities for theater-makers... Additionally, it is helpful to audiences and experts, igniting conversation outside of preexisting frameworks.' Consequently, it is anticipated that the relationship directed to the theater experiencing innovative forms of self-expression and production.

Scene 10: Unpredictable Audience Presence.

A live performance was an interaction between the audience and the performers. A live actor-audience contact, with all of its stimulation and surprise, is an important strategic element in theater (Gatt, 2020). The audience was essential to a performance. But for an e-theater production where the audience was mediated, an audience could be anybody or anyone. This was both challenging and satisfying. Challenging since the vast virtual space and the audience were enormous. Their identification was episodic. Hence, it was also gratifying because the audience could be anybody, and once they were captured, it added up awareness about the theater's beauty and relevance. It was also satisfying since theater enthusiasts supported the shift in theater.

Cartledge (2021) expressed that 'Digital tools that different artists and companies have used will still be around after the coronavirus has passed, serving as ongoing components of artistic practice and being used to perform, display those performances, and extend and transform the relationship between performers and audiences by bringing them closer together than ever.' This relationship *opened doors for collaboration both local and international*. Social media interaction, and other digital connections transpired. Moreover, the audience could be anybody and anyone who had fondness in theater, who wanted to explore theater, who wanted to witness e-theater productions, or who had just seen the link in the feeds.

Scene 11: Humanizing Topics: People need People.

During the pandemic, e-theater productions highlighted the importance of truthfulness in storytelling. Realistic expressions and authentic stories were crucial in conveying the gravity of the situation. It was necessary to accurately portray the

experiences of individuals during this time, which required a commitment to honesty in storytelling. By doing so, the e-theater productions provided a window into the real-life struggles and triumphs of people affected by the pandemic. 'The presence of, not the presence in, creates the virtual theater. Perhaps this was what the introduction of telepresencing into our daily lives did to "theatre": honed an already present sense of the virtual; brought those intangible characteristics of the place to bear on the experience of going to the theater in fresh, fruitful, and thrilling ways (Rae, 2023).

Making Sense of the Lived Experiences:

The overall lived experiences of Prof. Glecy and Ms. Teena on how theater as communication accomplished during the pandemic led me to this GRAND ACT (THEME): **Communication as Metamorphic Dismantling of Materials and Digital Borders for e-theater Productions** where what constituted communication in Prof. Glecy's Stage@Home was communication as transformative where house where transformed into theater for a purpose while for Ms. Teena's online theater showcases what manifested was communication as a creative conduit of narratives and expressions. All these added to how theater as communication evolved to being a metamorphic dismantling of digital borders for e-theater productions.

Metamorphic was the profound change from the homes to the homes (virtually); it was also transformative. It was dismantling because it had lessened, if not removed, the new seeing place's digital platform restrictions. It dismantled the idea that theater died during the pandemic. It meant that communication built and rebuilt connections and interactions and played a role in 'reshaping theater' in e-theater productions. It re-shaped the theater landscape that led to the idea that theater metamorphosed into hybrid forms. Likewise, communication still functioned in its fundamental role of allowing interaction, fulfilling understanding, relaying digital reactions as feedback, communing with families and groups, creating experiences, and managing a digital stage even from different time zones and gadgets used despite the challenges that emerged along the exploration.

Communication as Metamorphic Dismantling of Digital Borders for e-theater Productions assisted me in exploring further the essence of the phenomenon. When theater as communication metamorphosed in its new setting, it made it possible to overcome the difficulties of the digital world. These clearly demonstrated how theater

as communication had evolved to a level, a form, a necessity, and a cry for theater during the epidemic.

Theorizing the Lived Experiences:

What transpired from the lived experiences of the participants in this study was **e-theater as a transcendental communication**. According to the Collins Dictionary, transcendental referred to going beyond the boundaries of conventional or customary experience.

e-theater as a transcendental communication demonstrated how theater evolved from its original theatrical landscape to a diversified digital space. To align e-theater as a transcendental communication, the researcher developed equivalents for the special features of theater identified by Baranger (1995) as Immediacy, Aliveness, Doubleness, Fictions, Space, and Audience. These equivalents would describe the characteristics of e-theater as they were contextualized in Stage@Home's and the PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin's e-theater productions.

A. **Immediacy**. *It may be delayed but not slowed*. It may not be immediate like that of a face-to-face theater production, but its remoteness had increased the audience's eagerness to watch further. The researcher called it **Real-time Theatrics**. This phrase highlighted the idea that, like in conventional live theater, the audience experienced the play as it happened in real-time. Real-Time Theatrics underscored the interactive and instantaneous nature of digital performance.

e-theater had the benefit of being available to audiences all around the world. This accessibility would be able to give the audience 'a sense of immediacy.' It would also reduce the perception of intermediary action between the actors and the audience, even though digital technology was employed to present the performance.

To achieve this, an experience that felt as immediate and genuine as feasible must be created. This was showcased in the e-theater productions of Stage@Home in the selection of the freshest experience as topics. Likewise, the realistic presentations of PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin also captured this sense of immediacy to watch realistic performances during the pandemic.

While e-theater could provide some immediacy, it was only able to partially simulate the sense of being physically there in a traditional theater. But its ability to create layering of space remunerated to this partial simulation . Layering spaces in an e-theater performance entailed giving the virtual world a sense of depth and dimension to imitate various settings or scenes. Because of the increased visual and spatial complexity, the performance was more engaging for the audience. Thus, it created fresh opportunities for creative expression and audience participation, offering an innovative theatrical experience in a new seeing place during the pandemic.

Immediacy in Time and Space: Where Time and Space Are Settled

Temporality and Materiality. For the longest time, we have been accustomed to our homes as a space for shelter, and the outside was where we could progress more; the digital world had offered our homes as the space from which we could deal with our progression during the pandemic. The home that was just there, built for shelter, stood more than its essential purpose. It allowed us to explore further that the structure of one's home evinced its other functionality aside from security, its resources aside from being a necessity, and its hidden creativity aside from its perceptible plainness. Time in itself revealed what the home had in store. The pandemic broke our basic notion of the physical nature and setting of our homes and the physical features of theater as the only performance space.

Temporality was the quality of time and how it affected how we experienced, comprehend, and perceive the environment. It dealt with how things developed over time and how our perceptions of the past, present, and future affected how we interacted with the world around us. How time was embodied and represented in the material world through materials and things was where the relationship between temporality and materiality was found. A particular era's technology and cultural setting were frequently reflected in the materials used and construction methods used. This was related to period plays since the materials used in the set design should be authentic to the period. Art pieces that were ephemeral or transient could be produced by artists. These works' transience gave the experience a time component. similar to the set designs made for home-staged e-theater productions. They were fleeting, but they went beyond a narrative that generated interaction and experience from the actors and the audience. Materials also have the power to bring back previous emotions and recollections. These would enhance the impact of the e-theater experience when the audience could recollect emotions from previous experience that was connected to the play. Thus, materials' tactile characteristics have the power to bring back fond memories of earlier theater experiences.

Understanding how time affected materials and how materials affected how we perceived time and history was the essence of the relationship between temporality and materiality. The experiences we have in the e-theater productions were multi-layered, and materials could be bearers of temporal narratives that offered insights into the past, present, and future. All these were immediacy characteristics that emerged in the real-time theatrics of e-theater.

Temporality and Spatiality. When we talked of performance, space was always a necessary call. The audience, performers, and production team must

gather to witness an act unfolding right before them. For the longest time, the central idea of performance evolved on the structure of theater, how big it was, how many seats it would hold, and how many performers and props it could accommodate on stage, among others. The space and the time have immersed me in the thought that a performance could exist in an ample space with a large audience. No curtain time, but there was a curtain call. Curtain time depended on availability and accessibility. Curtain call was available for diverse time zones. Watch at home or on the go; indeed, one could still GO for a scene even if digital frames were seen.

Our passage through space was inevitably temporal. We travelled from one place to another while navigated physical settings over time. Temporal factors affected our movement, orientation, and the sequence in which we experienced various environments. As a result, the direction of the theater, its preparation time, its performance length, and its connection with audiences were all impacted by the change in spatial location. Over time, the memories of the experiences we have in particular places became ingrained. The spatial context might bring up memories of earlier encounters, giving a time dimension to how we experienced and used locations. The e-theater performances reflected this memory as well. The story had an impact on the audience who related to it and remembered feelings and memories from the e-theater.

Moreover, the beginning and conclusion of occurrences inside locations were determined by temporality. Spaces could have set time restrictions, such as opening and closing times, that affected when we could enter and use them. The curtain rose and fell for e-theater, but due to its real-time component, performances could still be accessed. Even if the performance was over, viewers could still watch it because of real-time theatrics' immediacy features. Furthermore, the way that spaces developed

and changed across time was a reflection of temporality. Spaces' purpose, appearance, and meaning could change as a result of changes in society's values, technology, and culture. This trend was noticeable during the pandemic. Therefore, the amount of time we spent in an area had an impact on how we perceived it. Here, time affected how intensely we interacted with a space's attributes, aesthetics, and purposes. The audience's enthusiasm to attend performances increased in e-theater when a play was tailored to the new viewing environment. Temporal flexibility was a result of this, and some venues were created to be flexible in their use and adaptable throughout time. In its new seeing place, e-theater evolved in this way. Time was adaptable to the new theater space. In the real-time theatrics, time and space both contributed to how e-theater could be immediately experienced by actors and audiences who were distant in the physical theater but were joined together in one theater space on a specific given time.

Spatiality and Materiality. There was a close relationship between materiality and spatiality. The perception and experience of a room could be significantly impacted by the material choices made. The aesthetic features of the material could determine how a room feels. While smooth, reflective surfaces could give off a sophisticated, futuristic image, rough textures might convey a homey, rustic sense. These came along in the spaces at home used in e-theater productions. The aesthetics of the material in the set design contributed to the overall arrangement of the materials adding value to how actors would navigate and interact with the space. Interaction could be encouraged by a material's tactile properties. Soft materials, gritty stone walls, or slick glass surfaces could arouse various feelings and tempt touch. Although these features were unclearly seen on the new seeing place, the materials' representation signified the tactile properties. Also, the way light

interacted with space depended on the qualities of the materials. This added to the effect of the space on the audience's point of view while watching an e-theater. Likewise, materials affected a space's acoustic environment by affecting how sound was absorbed, reflected, or transmitted therein. Some materials have the ability to stir up feelings while some could provide contextual, historical, or cultural meaning.

Meanwhile, for PHSA, the challenge of the pandemic even challenged the students to do MORE that led to the creation of two different online showcases. They were dedicated to excellence, the practice/legacy that they carry and still carried during the test of the pandemic. For temporality and spatiality, they made the new space (at home) realistic by allowing time to travel to their own created spaces in their homes (stage design/production design). Temporality and materiality materialized through the students' self-discovery of what "available" resources at home could be used, like coffee for coloring. The space and material complemented each other even if the pandemic posed another curtain for performance; the simplicity of the spaces at home materialized what was needed for an e-theater production.

Therefore, how we perceived and engaged with our physical world was strongly influenced by the relationship between materiality and spatiality. Our sensory perceptions, emotional reactions, and the ambience of a place could all be significantly impacted by the materials used in the construction of the set design of an e-theater. This added to the real-time theatrics of e-theater where the materiality adjusted itself to the new seeing place of theater to create immediate interactions between actors to the materials (stage design), to fellow actors, and to audiences.

B. **Aliveness**. The actors offered humanness on stage making theater alive. The interaction of actors and audience added to this aliveness. Thus, theater was

considered a living form. How it mirrored life also captured aliveness. The performers, the script, the message, were all alive in the e-theater productions. However, their degree of aliveness might not be felt and seen as those displayed of a live performance. Thus, I called this **digital attachment-digital detachment**.

Theater's aliveness was alive but there could be moments of attachments and detachments. Blended strategies for e-theater productions were explored and tried to manage aliveness. The question lay on how liveness was liveliness. Surprisingly, what the world thought of as a limited seeing place opened various opportunities for exploration. According to Auslander (1999), the cultural economy is rapidly replacing live performance with omnipresent media, of which digital is simply one type. As a result, "the live itself incorporates the mediatized, both technologically and epistemologically." In time, e-theater productions would achieve its own form of aliveness with minimal detachments and a more maintained attachment. But for now, the aliveness managed and created in e-theater was digital attachment-digital detachment.

Aliveness in the Curtain Call: What Digital Curtain Call Immersed

The curtain call never ended as long as the video was there; whether the live had ended (FB live), the curtain call would never end. Thus, the engagement was also progressive. This was what I called **progressive curtain call**, where the curtain call was constantly happening when a particular 'urge' to watch manifested from an audience. Thus, there was no 'usual' curtain call but a continuous one because everyone was meant to be recognized in e-theater productions. One might be digitally-detached on a specific time, but other members of the audience might be digitally-attached on a given performance time.

C. **Doubleness.** 'Theater is life's double, but it is also something more than a reflection of life' (Barranger, 1995). The e-theater productions were similar to the physical theater in its doubleness. However, the idea that what was happening inside the digital frames was '**doubler**' than the **doubleness of theater** left us with the idea that the e-theater productions' doubleness was **digiformity** (digital + biformity (doubleness of form)).

This was due to the doubleness created by the digital frames, which would lead us to real-time theatrics. The e-theater productions mirrored life in the narratives and fiction presented where digiformity was reflected. Live performers and virtual characters or objects could interact through augmented technology. As a result, actors might interact with digital counterparts or take on the roles of both physical and virtual components in the performance, which could create doubleness. Interactive components that permitted the audience to affect the performance or plot could be included in the e-theater. As a result of the audience's decisions or involvement, the storyline could change, leading to doubleness in the narrative. This prompted the concept of theater offering a stage of realness and an illusion of the world, creating doubleness of life, creating digiformity of e-theater. DIGIFORMITIVE (digital + biformity + narrative) or BIDIGIFORMITIVE (digital + biformity+narrative). This appeared to be 'double-double.' Since biformity meant double, doubleness created doubleness because aside from the doubleness developed in the actors and in the story, another doubleness transcended in the new stage used which was the virtual space.

Shakespeare and others have identified that doubleness was in a theatrical experience providing a sense of life reflected on stage. Thus, the audience experienced the actor both as actor - the living presence of another human being -

as a fictional character. The theater was already the doubleness of life and had transcended in its doubleness in the new seeing place where e-theater took a center stage.

D. **Fictions.** The overall impression of theater as a reflection of the reality of life also dealt with fictions like 'the performance of stories about events and people' (Barranger, 1995). As to e-theater productions, theater's fictions were already established. However, when it came to Ma'am Glecy's experience with Stage@Home, the performances at home, while not presented live to a physical audience and recorded instead, still encapsulated the essence of theater. The distinctive characteristics of a one-shot performance, absence of editing, and the recording of the actual act for submission to Stage@Home rendered it a unique form of 'new theater performance,' perfectly suited to the evolving concept of the new seeing place. However, this technique was similar to shoot-edit, where there was a storyboard and sequence to be followed but no editing was required, thus, no editing was done in the strict sense of the word. Still, re-filming was conducted to ensure that continuity was achieved.

Barranger (1995) explained that *'The rapid cutting from scene to scene throughout the film, the contrasts of faces and pictures, the realistic battle scenes with horses falling, and the rearranging of the old text into useful parts define film as a medium.'* For the Stage@Home, one scene, one story, one shot, one shoot, NO EDIT. This was how transformative and adaptive theater performers have been to ensure that they continuously performed even in the comforts of their homes, where their homes also adapted to the pandemic's restrictions which allowed for **digital contrivances**. By focusing on the use of digital technology to produce and show fictional components within the performance, digital contrivances highlighted how e-

theater improved its storytelling and immersive qualities. It also described things created and replicated digitally and added to the production's made-up universe. These digital fabrications included computer-generated characters, virtual sets, special effects, and other digital components that enhanced the story and produced an original and exciting e-theater experience.

Dramaturgized Fiction: What Dramaturgy Commences

A **mixed-reality dramaturgy** enlarged the theatrical setting by adding a virtual layer for a possible space. This happened in both the Stage@Home and the Online Theater Showcase of the PHSA. The virtual layer was the stage where the performers were used for their performances. Likewise, interactive interfaces were viewed on smartphones, and digital platforms like FB Live, FB Room, StreamYard, Google Meet, and Zoom which allowed interaction. Augmented reality allowed texts on the lower third graphics available in StreamYard. This gave supplemental information for the virtual audience to catch up on what was being shown.

Transmedial storytelling, in which the theatrical reality continued in (other) media after and before the performance, was what commenced in e-theater productions.

According to Anicoche, 'The virtual stage does not have to be an alternative to live viewing. Instead, it could be utilized as an *extension of storytelling*.' **Exploring different digital platforms meant to experience 'theater' not as a borne opportunity for theater lovers like the participant but an opportunity to rethink theatre.** Even if the situation would go back to normal (of having the physical theater), the future of theater via the Internet and its possibilities should not be ignored. However, it should be anticipated as just what the participants experienced in their first-ever e-theater production undertaking.

They said theater was without a theater or a space for theater. During the pandemic, there was not even a temporary displacement for theater but a potential relocation. Given this, it was a challenge to tell stories. 'That is also a product of our time, and since time is the vehicle through which narrative develops, it makes telling any form of story incredibly challenging' (Millman, 2020). Indeed, time was crucial in storytelling. Time was uncontrollable in the virtual space, for the audience could easily be distracted. How, then, could theater as communication be accomplished? Storytelling must be fast yet meaningful. Indeed, topics must be fresh, and stories must capture the freshest experience, engaging and time-sensitive. The theater was not misplaced nor displaced; it was just relocated to a convenient space during the pandemic. However, it was never misplaced since it managed to survive and conserve its theater presence, if not in totality but at least in its chosen and most applicable modality.

E. **Space** - Given that the three essential components of theater were the actors, space, and audience, the pandemic affected these. One was the space. The usual gathering in one theater space needed to be improved. But theater space was not the physical structure. Although the structure, the stage, and the performance space made up a space, in the pandemic, the space became digital. It restricted the actions, the performance, and even the story. But for Ma'am Glecy Atienza, the pandemic pushed her to be creative, thus, giving birth to the concept of Stage@Home, where the space was at home. It brought us all back to the early beginnings of theater, where space was domesticated. Thus, even if it meant a simple production, theater performances were possible at home. Ma'am Glecy emphasized that the whole experience of Stage@Home and the purpose for conducting one made theater alive.

This revealed that simplicity in theater productions was not being outdated. During the pandemic, the simplicity equated to relativity.

Barranger (1995) pointed-out that 'the utilization of space to simulate the human experience for an audience to witness makes that space unique—a seeing place.' Further, Barranger (2015) added that when we are with other people, "it is the place where we perceive the how, the what, and the why of our humanness." Although the existing company was connected via Zoom, Google, and other online platforms, the company was still there. Thus, the space was **digi-space**.

Where are the Essential Spaces: Where the Front and Back stages are placed

The front stage and backstage were in other forms but of the same purpose. The front stage was where the performers acted and faced the audience on the physical stage. The backstage was where the performers be themselves and got ready. In e-theater productions, the front stage was when the performers faced their audiences from the digital platforms, the stage at home, or the stage where limited performers were present (absence of audience). This was wherever the play was performed. The backstage happened behind the *digital curtains* of the e-theater productions, which could be before, during, and after the performance. For a digital platform, this occurred when the video was turned off because the performer's part had ended or would continue to the next scene or act.

F. **Audience** - Barranger (1995) identified three expectations of the theater's audience:

1. **Audiences expect plays to be related to life experiences.** It was not really a direct experience. But more of an expectation that there would be 'an authentic' representation of life as we have experienced, exposed, known, or imagined it. This was the same fundamental concept of Stage@Home postulates: to bring life

experiences (pandemic experience) to the homes of the people as performed at the homes of performers.

2. **Most of us go to the theater expecting the familiar.** Audiences were believed to enjoy the usual plots, characters, situations, plot twists, and endings. During the pandemic, the audiences looked for 'familiar experiences' reflecting their own. Thus, the plots of plays evolved around the pandemic. This showcased the familiarity of experience as performed online.

3. **The collective response is an audience expectation that needs to be pinned down.** Barranger (2015) said, "An audience, by definition, is a sharing with others—of laughter and tears, hopes and joy." The applause was not heard, but the clapping emojis signified applause. It was heard, but the meaning it created, resounded in their reactions. Thus, the comments and the emojis as reactions were also collective responses of the audience. These took new forms as the space for seeing also adapted to the call for performance adjustment. The audiences co-existed in different time zones, in other places. Thus, audience attribute was what I coined as **mediated co-existence**.

The Audiences' Engagement: How Engagement in e-theater Productions Happens

The engagement reflected in e-theater productions would, in some ways, be **individual**. It was no longer a communal affair; it **became a single viewer/participant affair** on his or her device or desktop. This was how we could perceive engagement in e-theater productions. However, when collected, this individual engagement became communal. The individual experience became collective. The engagement could be in separate frames, locations, or time zones;

still, the overall experience that materialized constituted the whole experience of the audience, whether the e-theater experience was immediate (comments and reactions were immediately posted as the play was showing) or was what I called **‘mediated prompts.’** These prompts only responded when the performance was watched, even after its scheduled showing.

Audience could be choosy
Audience’s focus could be gloomy
when a performance is lengthy
But if the story cuts to the heart of the many
then it is bull’s eye to aplenty.
Fresh stories, relatable as they should be
could encourage empathy for as long as stories restores
creativity and adaptability.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE:

How the Story was Captured in a Theory

This research explored the intricate components that comprised theater as communication through the lens of the Communicative Ecology Theory.

- The initial layer focused on technological aspects and media employed in communication, including devices and software.
- The second layer centered on the substance of communication, encompassing the conveyed narratives and concepts including symbols.
- Lastly, the third layer examined the societal bonds connecting individuals and groups involved in communication.

Stage@Home and The Three Layers of Communicative Ecology

The people and groups engaged in creating e-theater are called the People Layer. The performers, directors, producers, writers, and other artists working together to develop and present the e-theater production were included in Stage@Home's "people" layer. The audience members who watched the performance on the FB Page were also included. Stage@Home's people layer was crucial because it symbolized the interpersonal component of communication. The actors and performers brought the story to life, and even in a virtual environment, their interactions with the audience significantly impacted how the experience was perceived. Additionally, the audience's comments and reactions in this virtual theater environment influenced subsequent performances and helped the production to prosper for three years.

The language, stories, and shared meanings that came from the e-theater production were all included in the discursive layer. In Stage@Home, the actors'

script, dialogues, topics, and emotions comprised the discursive layer. The audience's online conversations, reviews, and social media interactions in response to the performance were also included. In addition, the discursive layer dramatically influenced the understanding and reception of e-theater production. The audience members engaged in conversations and comments about the virtual performance, fostering community and shared experiences. As the story developed and connected with the audience's emotions and viewpoints, this layer assisted to co-create meaning.

Meanwhile, the digital platforms and media technologies utilized in the development of e-theater were included in the Technology & Media Layer. The technology and media layer of Stage@Home had various tools that helped create a virtual theater experience, including video streaming services, video conferencing programs (watch parties and talkbacks via Zoom and Google Meet), augmented reality (through the use of smartphones and headsets with cameras and sensors), and interactive user interfaces (mobile applications and touch screen interfaces). Thus, Stage@Home's existence and distribution depended on the technology and media layer. It turned conventional theater into a virtual, all-encompassing experience that the audience accessed from any location with an internet connection. This layer made it easier to incorporate multimedia components, visual effects, and interactive features, which improved the overall production of the e-theater.

PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin Online Theater Showcase and The Three Layers of Communicative Ecology

The people layer of the online theater showcases included the students, faculty members, directors, and other artists involved in the production process. The

students took part in e-theater productions to demonstrate their abilities in acting, directing, stage design, and other theater arts disciplines. Faculty members and directors mentored and guided students, who also supervised the production's quality and aesthetic integrity. Likewise, the audience also had a significant impact on the people layer. The audience became essential to communication as online theater showcases were offered to a digital public. They participated in the performances, provided criticism, and shared their own stories, all of which contributed to the overall effectiveness and influence of the online theatrical showcases.

Meanwhile, the vocabulary, stories, and meanings developed through the e-theater productions were part of the discursive layer. Through the students' performances, the scripts, dialogues, and concepts of the theater productions were brought to life in this layer. The tales and stories examined in the showcases reflected the students' artistic expression, cultural perspectives, and societal issues. Hence, the discursive layer went beyond the actual performances, too. The online theater showcase's discussions, reviews, and social media engagements helped to create a virtual community of theater lovers. This layer made it possible for everyone to comprehend and value the artistic endeavors that the Philippine High School for the Arts had on display.

As for the technology and media layer, the online theater showcases were presented via digital tools and platforms. Platforms for streaming videos, online collaboration tools, software for recording and editing videos, and virtual set designs were all part of this layer. These innovations allowed virtual performances to transcend physical constraints and reach a larger audience. The Philippine High School for the Arts could creatively adapt to the digital world and could continue to

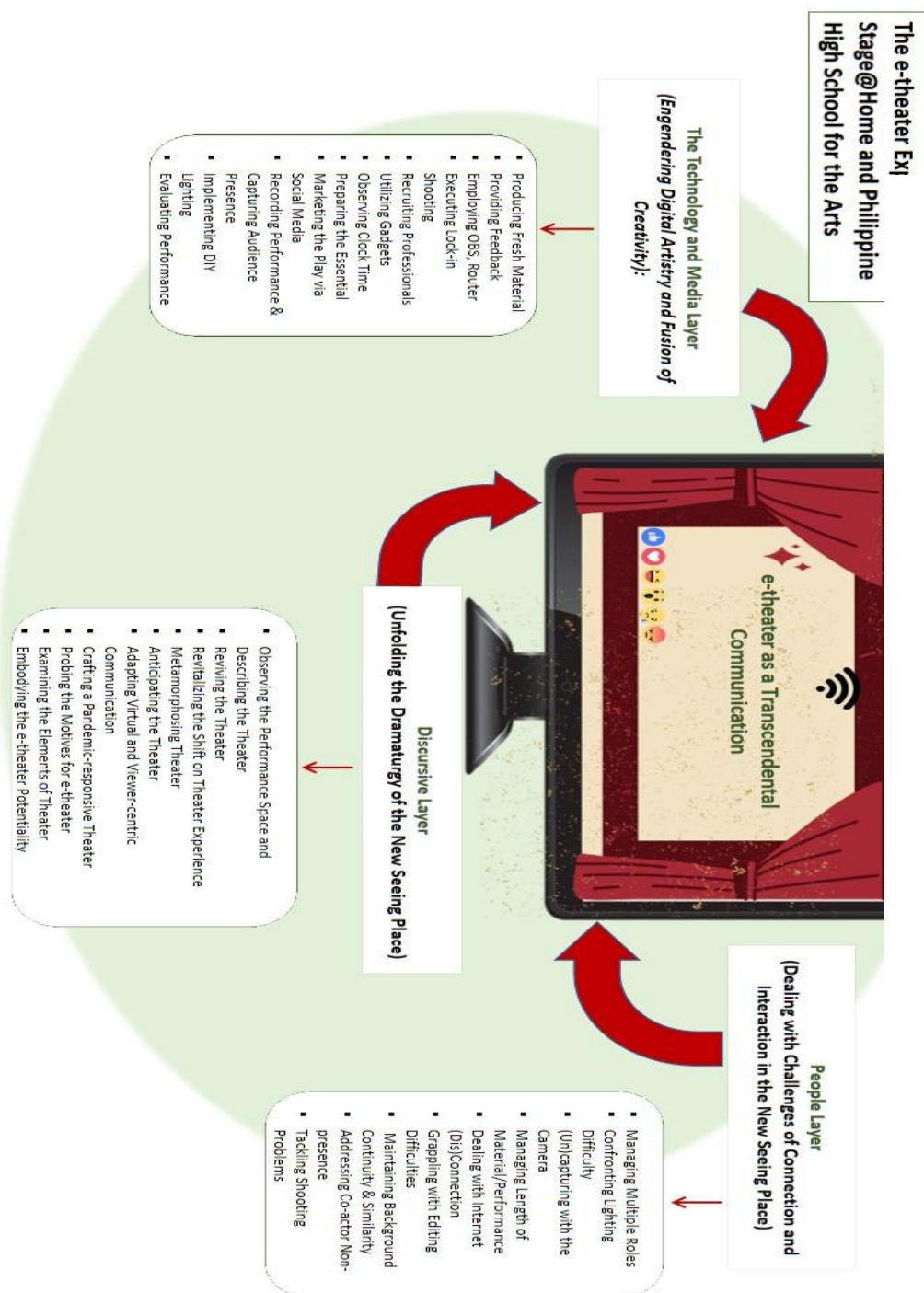
showcase the students' abilities and artistic pursuits even in difficult times by utilizing the technology and media layer. The layer made incorporating multimedia components, visual effects, and interactive features easier, improving the overall experience of e-theater.

Therefore, the online theater showcases of the Philippine High School for the Arts demonstrated how the three communicative ecological layers —people, discourse, and technology & media —were intertwined. Together, they created a dynamic and transforming virtual theater experience that captivated both performers and viewers while upholding the fundamentals of theater in digital technology.

These lived experiences of Dr. Glecyr for the Stage @ Home and Ms. Teena for the PHSA revealed the metamorphic dismantling of digital borders for e-theater productions under the lens of Communicative ecology. People continued to engage interactively, collaboratively creating meaning around narratives and e-theater, while also witnessing the emergence of digital artistic expressions. e-theater productions could effectively engage audiences, encourage meaningful connections, and provide a dynamic and transforming e-theater experience by comprehending and utilizing the three layers of Communicative ecology (people, discursive, and technology & media).

Figure 26.

Diagram of the Lived Experiences



The diagram, *The Lived Experiences of Stage@Home and Philippine High School for the Arts in e-Theater*, depicted the various facets of the shift from conventional to digital theater, that concentrated on the experiences of Stage@Home and the Philippine High School for the Arts. The Discursive Layer, the

People Layer, and the Technology and Media Layer were highlighted in this paradigm as three interrelated levels.

Discursive Layer (Unfolding the Dramaturgy of the New Seeing Place): In this layer, theatrical components and experiences were transformed for use in digital contexts. It covered a range of processes, including observing and characterizing the virtual performance area, reviving and changing the theater experience, and adjusting to virtual and viewer-centric communication. It also covered topics like analyzing the motivations for e-theater, looking into its possibilities, and developing pandemic-responsive theater strategies.

The Human Interactions and Challenges in the New Seeing Place were the focus of the **People Layer (Dealing with the Challenges of Connection and Interaction in the New Seeing Place)**. It discussed managing various roles, overcoming lighting hurdles, using cameras to record performances, resolving connectivity problems with the internet, and overcoming editing difficulties. In addition, it entailed resolving a variety of unforeseen technical and shooting issues while preserving coherence in terms of background and co-actor presence.

Technology and Media Layer (Engendering Digital Artistry and Fusion of Creativity): This layer encompassed the production of e-theater from fresh experiences as topics, providing feedback, utilizing tools like OBS (Open Broadcaster Software) and routers, executing lock-in shooting (controlled environment shooting), recruiting professionals, utilizing gadgets for production, and evaluating performance. It also covered marketing the play through social media, recording performances, and integrating DIY lighting techniques.

The diagram captured the elaborate interplay of between creative expression, technological tools, and human adaptation in the context of e-theater. This

illustrated how the transcendence of the digital platforms constituted both the artistic and the technical dimensions of theater as well as the navigation of challenges ascending from the virtual space. Through the lived experiences of Stage@Home and the Philippine High School for the Art, this diagram showcased the intricacies and innovations that emerged when the traditional theater embraced and transcended the digital platform.

Table 2.

Summary of Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Grand Theme
1. Views on the Performance Space	1. Space as self-perception	Communication as Metamorphic Dismantling of Materials and Digital Borders for e-theater Productions
2.Theatrical Perspectives	2. Space as Communication and Experience	
	1. Theater as ‘buhay(!) na buhay’(!)	
	2. Theater as Advocacy	
	3. Theater as Sense of Peace	
	4. Theater as Social Affinities	
3. Theater Resurgence	5. Theater as Shared Community Experience	
	1. Shift of Theater from Home to Away from Home	
	2. From Social Affinities to Paid Performance	
4. Anticipations for the Theater	1. Leveled-up Expectations	
5. Theater Metamorphism	1. Onset of the Virtual Space	
	2. Prerequisite for Flexibility	
	3. Sustenance to Theater	
	4. Integrating Virtual Performance into the Educational Framework	
6.Communication in the e-theater Productions	1. Tailored Virtual Communication	
6. Pandemic-responsive Theater	2. Viewer-centric Communication	
	1. Home as a must-hve Resource	

8.e-theater Productions of Stage@Home and PHSA

2. Enhanced Creativity
3. Possibility of Online Theater
4. Tries that Surprised
5. Maximizing Online Technologies
1. Reasons for e-theater theater productions
 - 1.1.The need to communicate the performance
 - 1.2.Home as the choice for performance
 - 1.3. To comply as a School requirement

- 2.e-theater productions Constraints
 - 2.1All-in-One Role
 - 2.2.Lighting challenges
 - 2.3.Camera (un) captivity
 - 2.4.Length of Material/Performance
 - 2.5.Internet (Dis) Connectivity
 - 2.6.Editing Difficulty
 - 2.7.Background Continuity & Similarity
 - 2.8.Co-actor presence
 - 2.9. Shooting Problems

3. Locating Onstage and Offstage Presence

4. e-theater productions Strategies
 - 4.1. Constructing Material from the Freshest Experience & Fitting to Year Level
 - 4.2. Strategizing Feedback
 - 4.3. Use of OBS, Router via Live Stream Performance in FB Live
 - 4.4. Lock-in Shoot
 - 4.5. Hiring of Professionals in e-theater Productions
 - 4.6. Utilization of Gadgets
 - 4.7. Clocktime Strategy
 - 4.8. Preparation Aspect

	4.9. Use of Social Media to Market the Play
	4.10. Recording of Performance and the Audiences' Presence
	4.11. Do-it-Yourself Lighting
	4.12. Assessment of Performance
9. Observed Elements of Theater in the New Seeing Place	1. Mediated Aliveness
	2. Differentiated Immediacy
10. Realizations on e-theater productions	1. Unfamiliarity of Theater
	2. Inclusion of Theater in one's Home
	3. Limitations turned Opportunities
	4. Dimensions of e-space
	5. Communication as Guide
	6. From Experience to Fresher Experience
	7. Less is More
	8. Differentiation or Interrelation to Film
	9. Confinement or Breakthrough
	10. Unpredictable Audience Presence
	11. Humanizing Topics: People need People

Chapter VIII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS: The Curtain Call

Summary

The pandemic revealed how theater could still be possible even without the physical stage and warmth of the audience in a theater. e-theater was considered the most reliable and resilient way of continuing theater during the pandemic.

For an organization like ALYANSA, which was handled by Prof. Glecya C. Atienza, the concept of Stage@Home originated from research to strengthen the concept of starting, giving birth to something through collaboration. The e-theater productions in Stage@Home were all recorded at home. Cameras of smartphones were considered the perspective since it would bridge the performance to its primary target - the online audience. The stage was one's home. The stage design, the props, the lighting, the costume, and the makeup were all found in one's house. These brought back how theater started at one's house. This revealed that the home could be maximized for the theater to communicate its purpose to its audience. The consideration of the freshest experience made the e-theater productions of Stage@Home relatable to its audience. It was only the stage that was different and even the approach, from live to recorded, but the purpose for theater was the same.

As for Ms. Teena and the PHSA's Dulaang Sipat Lawin Online Theater Showcase, what started out as an academic requirement, unleashed wonders in the students' minds and skills. The students were able to explore the available online technology. With the assistance of theater professionals, the PHSA has produced two different online theater showcases. For their first online theater showcase, they managed to stage a 'live' theater production using the OBS as its live streaming

application via its FB Page. The one-hour e-theater production broke borders as all the performers and technical team were only digitally connected but physically separated by the pandemic. The period play managed to showcase consistent stage design of the same background, same period costumes, and makeup. This was a breakthrough for high school theater students who were first-timers in e-theater productions. Moreover, they managed to produce another e-theater production that was shot on PHSA's stage but was recorded but streamed live via its FB page. This step was pushed as the students and the teachers felt the need to be on one stage for the performance, even if the play was to be recorded. The absence of co-actors pushed them to record the performance but ensured that the transition from one character to another was captured in the camera. This was challenging but was another innovative act to ensure that theater would communicate its purpose to its audiences.

Both the e-theater productions of Stage@Home and PHSA utilized different approaches and strategies. Both encountered challenges but managed to stage a series of productions. Theater as communication was accomplished from the interaction of actors to fellow actors (breaking the distant online communication), actors to production team (allowing for more innovative strategies to come out), actors to the audience (through different online feedback mechanisms), and actors to themselves (were able to commune with oneself since no other actor was physically available). Online strategies were learned and communicated in the accomplished e-theater productions. Challenges were faced even with the separation in space locations. Theater as communication was accomplished in the pre-production (the backstage as what Ma'am Glecyr referred to), production (where both backstage and front stage were present), and post-production (still the backstage during talk-backs).

Theater as communication was accomplished too in the application of digital technology (technological and media layer), in the interaction of actors to audiences (people layer), and in the exploration of co-creation of meaning from the stories, the set, and other theatrical elements on the new seeing place (discursive layer).

Conclusions

The storytelling holds forth for its purpose
to uphold creativity and understanding of e-theater.
The performance challenged norms and embarked dialogues
impacted individualized and group(ed) connections.
Creative expression and execution
lingered in the new seeing place of expression.

The e-theater as communication was *transformative* in Stage@Home. It has revolutionized stage productions in the comforts of homes. It has allowed for a more focused, simple, direct, and shorter theater experience, with *more pronounced digital storytelling*.

The e-theater as communication in the online theater showcase of PHSA was *interactive and collaborative*. The digital working atmosphere allowed for an *immersive experience* that captured the digital aliveness of theater. The interactive feature of communication entitled each member of the production to act on their roles, making it a *learning theater* for all. Overall, the use of e-theater as communication has transformed the theater experience and created new possibilities for teamwork and innovation.

The enactment of theater in its new seeing place gave birth to digital exploration. This transformed perspectives on theater. It pummeled the notion of coldness and isolation in the digital realm through the creative strategies employed

in e-theater. Feedback mechanisms were revolutionized. Digital interactions were mirrored as alternative ways to manage and maintain the connection between the actor and the audience. Varied online applications were utilized that transformed theater in *its transition from being live to still alive in real-time*. This allowed for the accomplishment of theater in its new seeing place aligned to interaction with the audience.

The communication and understanding of performances were impacted by the participation in online discussions concerning the distinctive terminology, aesthetics, and symbols that have developed in the digital sphere. e-theater has developed into a dynamic and engaging artistic form due to creative and adaptive digital storytelling, adaptable performance approaches, and insights into digital interaction. It had created a collaborative and responsible digital environment that pushed the limits of theatrical expression in the digital age through open discussion. This was another way of how theater as communication was achieved in its new seeing place as aligned to how it brought participation despite the digital division created by the new seeing place.

A dynamic and enriching atmosphere for modern theatrical experiences was created by the acceptance of technology as a potent artistic instrument, audience-centric involvement, and responsible practices. This acceptance also allowed for the accomplishment of theater as communication in its new seeing place as aligned to how technology must be properly utilized to foster interaction, communication, and participation.

Cultural and societal repercussions have been made possible by e-theater creation. It demonstrated how the transition to virtual performances affected artistic expression, theater accessibility, and the larger cultural environment. The

employment of digital technology in e-theater was also shown to have an impact on the overall aesthetics, artistic expression, and experience in the constantly changing world of theatrical production. Additionally, it showed how e-theater productions questioned conventional notions of theater as well as how communication was viewed and interpreted in the context of theater's evolving landscape. This digital transition also granted the accomplishment of theater as communication in its evolving theatrical landscape.

The "seeing place" function of e-theater extended beyond actual places, increasing the accessibility and diversity of theatrical experiences. Additionally, it had *rethought audience participation*. Although digital media opened up new possibilities, the participants similarly construed that to fully achieve the promise of e-theater, continual adaptation, resolving technological challenges, and protecting creative integrity were required. This rethinking on audience and actors participation also permitted for the accomplishment of theater as communication in its seeing place as aligned to how audiences, how actors, and how all the participants of e-theater understood, challenged, explored, and accepted the new seeing place.

Recommendations

For this study, the following recommendations are to be observed:

1. The recognition that theater remains unfamiliar to a majority of individuals should be acknowledged by those involved in theater, in order to cater to the audience's desire to better understand theatrical art, particularly as theater productions explore new performance venues. This principle is equally relevant when considering how the general public might embrace and grasp the concept of hybrid theater.

2. Filipino theater practitioners must accept the possibility of theater online in the coming years to adapt to the changing theatrical landscapes. However, before acceptance, appreciation of the new technologies for performance must be formed, like in making a festival for both the physical or original theater forms and hybrid forms. This way, competition would be lessened as to what is best and what is not, rather 'what would be and what is it like' for theater.
3. A study on audiences and e-theater productions would substantially contribute to the relationship between the performers and the audience and vice versa.
4. A study on semiotics about the usage of emoticons in live performances online would strengthen the meaning encompassing the emoticons as reactions.
5. Interaction as a focus of a study would likewise add to the meaning and the kind of interaction that exist in e-theater productions.
6. Exploring how e-theater productions could be alive without the feeling of isolation and coldness could be another area of research.
7. Studying how computers, online applications, and gadgets could work as another theater design and technical element without scraping theater's humanness could also be another area of research.
8. Exploring how theater at home could be maximized even in the post-pandemic and without the pandemic would open doors for theater advocates and producers to teach future theater practitioners about taking back theater in one's homes.
9. Making e-theater productions part of the High school curriculum in PHSA and the Junior and Senior High schools that offered Performance media as their strand could ignite creative minds from young learners of theater. This would also be a ready-response for any endemic that might arise. For State Universities and Colleges that

offered theater as a course or as a cognate, including digital theater would enable a more comprehensive understanding of theater and its vast opportunities.

10. Theater in its other forms could be another course offered by the National Commission on Culture and the Arts on its e-turo dula. This would highlight how theater could be sustained and enhanced in a digital platform.

11. Theater professionals would benefit from exploring the realm of online communities that promote meaningful interactions. These platforms, which may appear as online forums, social networks, or workshops, might be useful in encouraging the development of collaborative spaces in the digital sphere. By connecting with other practitioners through these channels, one can foster a strong feeling of community and encourage innovative discussions that can considerably advance one's abilities and knowledge. They could grow their knowledge in this way while also developing deep relationships with people who have similar interests and aspirations.

REFERENCES

A. Printed Book/E-book

1. Printed book with one author

Barranger, M. (1995). *Theatre: A Way of Seeing*. 4th ed. Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Brook, P. (1968). *The Empty Space*. Scribner.

Fernandez, D. (1989). *Panitikan: An essay on Philippine literature*. Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Fischer-Lichte, E. (2008). *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Kershaw, B. (2007). *Theater Ecology: Environments and Performance Events*. Cambridge University Press.

Masura, N. (2020). *Digital Theatre: The Making and Meaning of Live Mediated Performance, US & UK 1990-2020*. Palgrave Macmillan.

McAuley, G. (2000). *Space in performance: making meaning in the theatre*. University of Michigan Press.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. SAGE Publications Inc.

Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*. Oxford University Press, Inc.

2. Printed book with two authors

Bloomberg, L. D., and Volpe, M. (2019). *Completing Your Qualitative Dissertation: A Road Map From Beginning to End*. 4th ed. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J.D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th ed. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. & Poth, C. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 4th ed. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. (2008). *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetic*. London: Routledge.

Kaufman, J & Sternberg, R. (2006). *The International Handbook of Creativity*. Cambridge University Press.

3. Chapter in an Edited Book

Gavino, P. C. (2014). A history of scene design of Philippine theater (1846-1969). Chua, J.(Ed.), Cruz-Lucero, R. (Ed.), *A Reader in Philippine Theater: History and Criticism*, (pp.3-24). The University of the Philippines Press.

Schoeneborn, D. & Vasquez, C. (2017). *Communication as constitutive of organization. International encyclopedia of organizational communication*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

4. E-book with one author

McAuley, G. (2003). *Performance Studies*. Semiotics Encyclopedia Online. Victoria University.
<http://www.semioticon.com/seo/P/performance.html>.

Reul, P. (2006). *The Relationship between Performance Space and Production of Shakespeare's Roman Plays*. Munich, GRIN Verlag.
<https://www.grin.com/document/73638>.

5. E-book with three or more authors

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K., Guest, G., and Namey, E. (2005).

Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide. Family

Health International. USAID.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/215666086_Qualitative_Research
_Methods_A_Data_Collector%27s_Field_Guide](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/215666086_Qualitative_Research_Methods_A_Data_Collector%27s_Field_Guide).

6. Chapter in a Printed or Online Book, All Contents Written by the Same Author (s)

Naqshbandi, M. & Singh, S. (2015). *Selected theories in social science*

research. Chapter 4: Theories in Innovation. UM Press.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301677580_Theories_in_I
nnovation/citations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301677580_Theories_in_I_nnovation/citations)

Taachi, J. (2015). *Ethnographic action research: Media, information*

and communicative ecologies for development initiatives. SAGE.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323401449_Ethnographic_action
research_Media_information_and_communicative_ecologies_for_developm
ent_initiatives](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323401449_Ethnographic_action_research_Media_information_and_communicative_ecologies_for_developm_ent_initiatives)

B. Serials

1. Journal Article with Multiple Authors

Kumar, C.M., Chaturvedi, R., and Merhotra, S. (2013). ART OF THEATRE ON

NEW MEDIA PLATFORM & AUDIENCE VIEWING EXPERIENCE.

*Article-7 Global Media Journal-Indian Edition/ISSN 2249-5835 Winter
Issue/December 2013/Vol. 4/No. 2.*

2. Online Journal Article

Apuke, O. (2018). ANOTHER LOOK AT MAPPING THE TERRITORY: SEVEN

TRADITIONS IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION THEORY.

International Journal of International Relations, Media and Mass

Communication Studies Vol.4, No.2 pp.20-27, May 2018. Retrieved:

April 10, 2022, [https://www.eajournals.org/wp-](https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Another-Look-at-Mapping-the-Territory-Seven-Traditions-in-the-Field-of-Communication-Theory.pdf)

[content/uploads/Another-Look-at- Mapping-the-Territory-Seven-](https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Another-Look-at-Mapping-the-Territory-Seven-Traditions-in-the-Field-of-Communication-Theory.pdf)

[Traditions-in-the-Field-of-Communication-Theory.pdf](https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Another-Look-at-Mapping-the-Territory-Seven-Traditions-in-the-Field-of-Communication-Theory.pdf).

Bhattacharyya, K. (2013.) Interpreting Theatre as a Communication

Medium. *Article-13 Global Media Journal-Indian Edition/ISSN 2249-*

5835. www.caluniv.ac.in Winter Issue/December 2013/Vol. 4/No. 2

Craig, R. T. (1999) Communication Theory as a Field, *Communication Theory*,

Volume 9, Issue 2, 1 May 1999, Pages 119–

161, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.1999.tb00355.x>.

Cojocariua, V. & Butnarub, T. (2013). Drama techniques as communication

techniques involved in building multiple intelligences at lower-

elementary students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 128

(2014) 152 – 157.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042814022265>.

Gatt, S. (2020). Theatre - A Space for Human Connection. *Taboo: The*

Journal of Culture and Education, 19 (2).

<https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/taboo/vol19/iss2/5>.

Delikonstantinidou, A. (2021). "Nadja Masura, Digital Theatre: The Making

and Meaning of Live Mediated Performance, US & UK 1990–

2020", *European journal of American studies* [Online], Book reviews,

Online since 17 April 2021, connection on 05 July 2023.

<http://journals.openedition.org/ejas/16877>;DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.16877>.

Foth, M., and Hearn, G. (2007). Networked individualism of urban residents: Discovering the communicative ecology in inner-city apartment buildings. *Information, Communication & Society*. Vol. 10, No. 5 , pp. 749–772.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13691180701658095>.

Lavender, A. (2017). The Internet, Theatre, and Time: Transmediating the Theatron. *Contemporary Theater Review*. Vol. 27, No.3, 340-352, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320847141>

Lavery, C. (2016). Introduction: performance and ecology – what can theatre do?, *Green Letters*, Vol. 20, No.3, 229-236, DOI: 10.1080/14688417.2016.1206695.

Liodaki, D. & Velegrakis, G. (2022). Theater minus physical coexistence - a glimpse into theatrical experimentations in Greece during the pandemic. *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media* 2022, Vol. 18, No. 1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794713.2022.2040290>.

Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *The European journal of general practice*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>.

- Obasi, N., Okpara, C., Okpara, F., Itiav, V., and Gever, V. (2021). Effect of theatre for development as a communication intervention strategy on behavioural intentions towards painting, weaving, and fashion and design among victims of conflict in Nigeria. *African Security Review*, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 139-151, DOI: [10.1080/10246029.2020.1857805](https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2020.1857805).
- Pesti, M. (2021). Space as an Active Agent . On Performative Space in Estonian Contemporary Performing Arts. Methis. *Studia humaniora Estonica* 2021, no. 27/28. <https://ojs.utlib.ee>.
- Raj, V. and Singh, D. (2021). Theater Communication: Revisiting Bharatmuni's Nat yasastra. *Theater Street Journal*. Vol.5, No.1, 27. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351274044 Theatre Communication Revisiting Bharatmuni%27s Nat yasastra](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351274044_Theatre_Communication_Revisiting_Bharatmuni%27s_Nat_yasastra).
- Sermon, P., Dixon, S., S., Taylor, Packer, R., & Gill, S. (2022). A Telepresence Stage: or how to create theatre in a pandemic – project report. *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp.48- 68, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14794713.2021.2015562>.
- Soler, B. (2020). Theatre as a Communicative Strategy for Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Primary Education Undergraduates: A Pedagogical Experience. *IKASTORRATZA. e-Revista de Didáctica*. Vol. 25, pp. 133-150. DOI: https://10.37261/25_alea/5.
- Valença, E. (2020). Fiction and Reality in the Theater, based on the Ideas of Vilém Flusser. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença*. Vol. 10, No.3.

<https://www.scielo.br/j/rbep/a/3rhf6QP5QW53wWtrG9ytgGG/?lang=en&format=pdf>.

Janesick VJ. (2001). Intuition and creativity: a pas de deux for qualitative researchers. *Qualitative Inquiry*. Vol.7, No. 5, pp.531–540.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/107780040100700501>.

3. Magazine Article (Online)

Biggs, K. (n.d.). COVID-19 Pandemic Increases Accessibility to Theatre Performances. *Ideas Magazine*. Vol. 3.
<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1067&context=ideas>

4. Newspaper Article (Online)

Ibrahim, M. (2022, February 8). The pandemic and the widening digital divide. *Manila Bulletin*. <https://mb.com.ph/2022/02/08/the-pandemic-and-the-widening-digital-divide/>

C. Image

1. Digital Image or Photograph

Dulaang Sipat Lawin Online Theater Showcases. Dulaang Sipat Lawin.
<https://www.facebook.com/DulaangSipatLawin>
Stage@Home Productions. ALYANSA.
<https://www.facebook.com/AlyansaOfficial>

E. Website

1. Website

Lester, S. (1999). *An Introduction to Phenomenological Research*. ResearchGate.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/255647619_Anintroduction_to_phenomenological_research.

Llewellyn-Jones, L. (2002). *Understanding Theatre Space*. The Open University.

<https://www.open.ac.uk/arts/research/greekplays/publications/essays/llewellyn-jones-understanding-theatre-space>.

Manan, A. (2021) . *Performance Making during a Pandemic: Of Innovation, Form and Embeddedness*. Arts Equator.

<https://culture360.asaf.org/magazine/performance-making-during-pandemic-innovation-form-and-embeddedness/>

Summon, J. (n.d.). *Writing for Theater: Dialogue*. Word Press.

<https://writingfortheatre.wordpress.com/writing-for-theatre/dialogue/>

2. General Web Article without an Author

Unit V. Introduction: Phenomenological Tradition. (2007).

https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/14377_VIntroduction.pdf

Interpreting theatre as a communication medium. (2022).

<https://www.myproject.ng/theatre-and-performing-arts/interpreting-theatre-as-a-communication-medium/index.html>

Drama:Theater and Ecology: Overview. (2017)

<https://guides.library.cmu.edu/theatreecology>

F. Thesis/Dissertation

1. Thesis or Dissertation Published Online but not from a Database

Georgiou, M. (n.d.). *Digital Theatre and Cyber Theatre in Drama Education at School: A study of 2 performance projects at a High-school in*

Eberswalde, Germany (Master Thesis, Linnaeus University, Sweden).

<http://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:1579280/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

Letter for Prof. Glecly C. Atienza

January 23, 2023

Glecly Cruz Atienza, Ph.D.
Full Professor
Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature
College of Arts and Letters, UP Diliman

Dear Dr. Glecly Atienza:

Masining na araw!

I am Yrmeliza V. Rodriguez, a student of Doctor of Communication at the University of the Philippines – Open University. I am currently in the data gathering of my doctoral dissertation entitled *Transcendence of Theater as Communication: Lived Experiences of Practitioners in e-theater during the pandemic*. The study will focus on the main research question: *How is theater as communication accomplished in a new seeing place?*

Hence, this research problem will challenge the preconceived notions and default assumptions of the practitioners about e-theater as to how each practitioner experienced the new seeing place in terms of their understanding, utilization, strategies used, and means of interaction with fellow practitioners and audiences. This study will also uncover how the practitioners communicate the new seeing place to different theater productions during the pandemic.

With this, I would want to express my sincerest interest and gratitude to ask you to be one of my participants. Being one of your former students in e-Turo Dula, I have been exposed to your passion and to your expertise in research for theater production. Your breadth of theatrical expertise will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the body of writing already written about theater in the Philippines.

The interview will require about just an hour of your time, depending on the type of answer you will share with me, and depending also on your availability. Thus, may I know when will be your available time for an interview via Zoom?

Thank you so much in anticipation of your positive response to this invitation. Please accomplish the attached consent form if you wish to participate.

With respect and anticipation,

Yrmeliza V. Rodriguez
DComm student researcher

APPENDIX B

Letter for Ms. Christina Joy Mendoza-Cardenas

January 23, 2023

Christina Joy Mendoza-Cardenas
Faculty Member
Arts Education
Philippine High School for the Arts

Dear Ms. Christina Joy Mendoza-Cardenas:

Masining na araw!

I am Yrmeliza V. Rodriguez, a student of Doctor of Communication at the University of the Philippines – Open University. I am currently in the data gathering of my doctoral dissertation entitled *Transcendence of Theater as Communication: Lived Experiences of Practitioners in e-theater during the pandemic*. The study will focus on the main research question: *How is theater as communication accomplished in a new seeing place?*

Hence, this research problem will challenge the preconceived notions and default assumptions of the practitioners about e-theater as to how each practitioner experienced the new seeing place in terms of their understanding, utilization, strategies used, and means of interaction with fellow practitioners and audiences. This study will also uncover how the practitioners communicate the new seeing place to different theater productions during the pandemic.

With this, I would want to express my sincerest interest and gratitude to ask you to be one of my participants. With your theater expertise and background, I am certain that you will provide substantial ideas for my dissertation topic. Your breadth of theatrical expertise will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the body of writing already written about theater in the Philippines.

The interview will require about just an hour of your time, depending on the type of answer you will share with me, and depending also on your availability. Thus, may I know when will be your available time for an interview via Zoom?

Thank you so much in anticipation of your positive response to this invitation. Please accomplish the attached consent form if you wish to participate.

With respect and anticipation,

Yrmeliza V. Rodriguez
DComm student researcher