

Transcript

ADN ReView Vol 2 Discussion

Presented by Asian Dramaturgs' Network

Organised by Centre 42

4 October 2021, 8pm GMT+8

[00:00:00]

Lim How Ngean

Hello, everyone. Welcome to this evening's ADN Re/View Critical Responses and Discussion which is a second in our three part online session.

[00:00:20]

Lim How Ngean

Very quickly I'm going to introduce myself. My name is How Ngean, I'm a founding director of the Asian Dramaturgs' Network, ADN together with my co-directors, Charlene Rajendran, who's with us today and Robin Loon from Centre 42.

[00:00:37]

Lim How Ngean

The Asian Dramaturgs' Network or ADN is formed with the intent of mapping and networking the region's dramaturgical experience and knowledge. It is collaboratively conceptualised with Centre 42 and held its inaugural in Singapore in 2016.

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Lim How Ngean

Since then, I'm very happy to report that various gatherings of dramaturgs, performance makers, arts educators from around the Asia Pacific region have taken place in their places from Japan to Australia. We're very happy to also say that Centre 42 is the principal organising partner for ADN. For this evening, thank you for being with us. It's a very special session where we have three very illustrious speakers and a very illustrious moderator who will help us take us through what their thoughts are about ADN Re/View e-zine that we've just put out.

[00:01:45]

Lim How Ngean

I'm just going to quickly give an introduction to the speakers. There is Gee Imaan Semmalar, Janice Poon and Helly Minarti. Gee Iman, if you could just wave to indicate to everyone. Great. Gee is an activist, writer, theatre artist and filmmaker and explores identity, history, citizenship, caste, and political action. Through his art, he co-founded Panmai Theatre group along with Living Smile Vidya and Angel

Glady in 2014. And the debut of the production of Panmai Theatre was "Color of Trans 2.0," which was devised by the founders based on their own lives as trans people, and has toured many cities of North America and India. Gee also directed one of the first films on trans men in South India, called "Kalvettukal" or [Sculptures] in 2012. And in 2016, Gee acted in a road trip experimental film called Naked Wheels, which covered the issues of trans people.

[00:03:00]

Lim How Ngean

That's Gee, and we have Janice Poon, say hi, Janice. Wave. Janice is a senior lecturer for playwriting and dramaturgy, and academic project officer at the School of Drama at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. She is also the artistic director of Hong Kong Dramatists, and a veteran theatre artist and cultural practitioner who engages with playwriting, directing, dramaturgy, curating and theatre-making with a specific focus on contemporary dramatic texts, and dramaturgy in cross disciplinary and cross cultural theatre-making. Her works have been presented in the UK, Europe, the US, Canada, China, Taiwan and Singapore. Her curated project called Dramaturgy and Beyond, dance dramaturgy series was nominated for an outstanding service award at the Hong Kong Dance Award in 2019.

[00:04:03]

Lim How Ngean

And last but not least, we have Helly Minarti, say hi Helly. Who lives in Yogyakarta and is an independent scholar and curator with a focus on performance and rethinking radical strategies to connect practice and theory. Helly's main interest is historiographies of choreography as discursive practice vis-à-vis the eclectic knowledge that infuses the intricate understanding of human body and nature. She has been engaged in various curatorial projects in Indonesia and overseas. And the most recent was Jejak-旅 Tabi Exchange: Wandering Asian Contemporary Performance from 2018 to 2021. Helly earned a PhD in dance studies from University of Roehampton in the UK. I'd just like to flag up also Helly, Gee and Janice are great friends of ADN. And they, in their different capacities, have actually taken part in various events, symposiums or even our dramaturgy lab over the last few years. So we're very happy to have them back here again.

[00:05:14]

Lim How Ngean

Last but not least, our moderator Kok Heng Leun. He is a prominent figure - please say hi Heng Leun - is a prominent figure in the Singapore art scene. And we're very, very happy to have him with us. He's built his artistic career as a theatre director, playwright, dramaturg, and of course educator. He is known for engaging the community on various issues through the arts, championing civic discourse across different segments of society. Heng Leun's contributions to the arts have landed him awards from the Singapore National Arts Council Young Artists Award in 2000, and the Cultural Fellowship in 2014. Heng Leun has also served as a nominated Member of Parliament from 2016 to 2018, to represent the arts sector in Singapore.

[00:06:09]

Lim How Ngean

So without further ado, I'm going to pass this on to Heng Leun, who will be telling you how we are running today's show and how you the audience can also get involved with the discussion. Heng Leun, Take it away.

[00:06:23]

Kok Heng Leun

Thank you, How Ngean, you sound really very soothing.

Lim How Ngean

Thank you.

[00:06:29]

Kok Heng Leun

Hi, good evening, or good afternoon to everyone, wherever you are. Thanks for joining us in this online discussion. The topic of today's online discussion is very much first, centred on the ADN Re/View, which is if you could see the link on the chat box. This is actually a series of three e-zines that the ADN has curated. It offers the snapshots of the work of ADN drawing from presentations and dialogues that occurs at all the various ADN events since 2016. And because all these sessions have been recorded and transcribed, so they have been then selected for a specific focus in each of the three volumes.

[00:07:21]

Kok Heng Leun

And today we are looking at the volume or the second volume, which is tracing - that the focus is on tracing. Well, if you look at it, the whole e-zine is really a kind of assemblage of various, of ideas about the kind of thinking and talking that ADN has made happen. And it's meant to also communicate a sense of what dramaturgs in Asia have been doing and thinking. But I also think very importantly through this e-zine, they ask quite a lot of important questions that would want to chart other possibilities of how dramaturgs can work and what dramaturgy means.

[00:08:14]

Kok Heng Leun

So if you have read it, please send comments to the editorial team. They have put up a lot of effort and the editorial team is with us. There's Charlene, there's Gua Khee. There's Dominic and there's Daniel. I hope I've got all the editorial teams in there. Thanks. And at the same time, I think what we really want to do is to hear your response to today's online discussion. At the same time, we can also take this opportunity to hear some of the developments of some of the dramaturgs who are in practice, especially since you know over the last couple of years, we have gone through quite a great changes in our environment, in our different contexts.

[00:08:51]

Kok Heng Leun

So tonight, what we will do is really to get into this discussion. As mentioned, after my introduction, we will get into a discussion. There are two parts to the discussion. The first part will be asking our speakers to share their thoughts on one or two points that resonated with them when they read the ADN Re/View Volume Two. They will each be given about 20 minutes and then there'll be some discussion, each be given five minutes and after that there'll be discussion going on. And after that we'll have a 10 minutes Q&A session with the audience. You can ask questions through the zoom or you can - that means you can use your video - or you can ask to the chat, but it'll be good to hear your voice in the process. After that, we'll segue into the second discussion, where the speakers will also put up maybe one or two questions or provocations about dramaturgical thinking or dramaturgy, that they have been dealing with in their own current practice. That will take us over 20 minutes and then after that, we'll open the floor to audience participation again. So let's hope that today, the facilitator will be less present. And as you know, in a lot of dramaturgical work, the dramaturg sits there quietly watching and listening and taking notes. And you will be observing and listening and maybe at a certain time, ask questions. And I think a lot of you are very interested in dramaturgical work. Maybe as an audience you can also take this opportunity to practice your dramaturgical thinking and also try to ask questions of our speakers, so that we all learn from each other. Can? Okay without further ado, I'll invite Helly, to start us off with her reflection or things that you want to raise after reading ADN Re/View Vol Two: Tracing. Helly, over to you.

[00:10:59]

Helly Minarti

Thank you, Heng Leun, and thank you for ADN team. And congratulations to the editorial team for publishing, producing these, like How Ngean earlier said, a very nicely designed with clearly dramaturgical thinking behind it for us the readers to navigate. So I have two things to respond. The first one is, in my notes, I was somehow drawn to the response of Felipe Cervera towards Janet Pillai's keynote article in that edition, and this really struck me. Because he said, how we speak about dramaturgy is also dramaturgy.

[00:10:59]

Helly Minarti

And he kind of suggests that in terms of addressing our own practices in this, one of the most important is to understand the relational ontologies that may define what dramaturgy is, at any given point. In our practices it's inevitable sometimes that we look at our own history, the historical trajectory of dramaturgy as a practice within our own contexts. But it is perhaps more useful to really locate ourselves, not really being yet seduced to really look at clear references, which is like predictably Euro-American, drawn from Euro-American practices. And the second one is Charlene's notes that dramaturging of life that translate into performance making. It's not separate and it's intertwined. In one of those meetings, I think it was in Yokohama, Peter said that. I was fairly reluctant to identify myself or my practice as a dramaturg until I was engaged in this in 2016. You know, the inaugural meeting and then so even after that, I was listening more, but not really confident or not really convinced that what I do is dramaturging in a sense, but then again, Peter said no, Helly, it's not. You have to really step back and look at your whole practice. It's not only your involvement in certain performances. So it's really this notion of dramaturgy as an approach, but in a broader sense. To me, my arts practice and my life have been

always intertwined. I don't really see it as a separate things anymore, at least in the last five, seven years. So that's the two things that I can offer that I drew from the whole book.

[00:15:35]

Helly Minarti

So to wrap up, I think it's very related, both of these notes. The first one touches upon how we decolonise. The direction of how we decolonise ourselves in our way of connecting our practice with this term.

[00:16:09]

Kok Heng Leun

Thanks, Helly. Helly brought out the two points. Interestingly, as she was talking, I was just thinking, if dramaturgy and life are so interconnected, that we become so embedded, and how we talk about it, it's also a dramaturgy. So it actually then means that as a dramaturg, we must have some very super capacity of being highly reflective, such that we are able to step back to even critique ourselves and look at ourselves, how do we actually do that practice? How do we ensure that we actually have the capability to step back, while at the same time being so much embedded in it to be able to reflect throughout that process? Perhaps this is a question for us to further think about. But that is what Helly made me think about especially when you are dramaturg. So perhaps we should then ask the question next to Gee to actually share his thoughts about this particular Re/View. Gee, over to you.

[00:17:24]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

Thank you, ADN for having me, it's nice to see all the faces after a long time. I'll just start with some of the things that I found was really fun about the ADN Volume Two. We always go for these events, and people promise that they will make a document, a magazine, and it's very rarely that people actually follow through with it, especially after all these years. So a huge, huge congratulations to the editors and the team, including the invisible labor of people who've done the transcriptions and you know, it must not have been an easy task. So thanks a lot for really putting this together. And I found that the Volume is both in terms of design, as How Ngean has commented before the rest of you joined, the design is really good. And it's also fun in the sense that the editorial notes rather than being a somber, you know, very serious tone also has Michael Jackson songs.

[00:18:25]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

And the other thing that is linked to one of the comments by Heng Leun Kok was that this idea of reflexivity, or being critical, particularly the portion where, one of the times that I was a troublemaker and I kind of commented on there not being any queer women on the panel, it has been included in the Volume. And I think that's testimony for the kind of space that ADN is where as I have come to expect, you're not disinvited in future but invited back to make more provocations of the team and to actually include it in the volume is really great as well. And I liked how it was staged or rather scripted, almost like a play including the facial expressions of the people who were on the panel. So I really enjoyed reading that bit.

[00:19:15]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

In terms of responding to the volume thematically, I think, you know, the very fact that it's called tracing or in another sense mapping, I think all of these are devices of colonial strategies of really drawing the map, the borders of a place or a practice. And in that sense what this act of tracing really means, especially in the context of what we call Asia. And I think this theme runs throughout this volume, both in how Peter Eckersall's comments have featured in it, from Chen Kuan-Hsing's provocation of Asia as a method rather than a geography. And I think that this is a really important thing which has been discussed by ADN starting from 2017, when the first discussions, or at least the first public discussions of dramaturgy in Asia, were taking place. And so my responses to take forward some of those conversations would be to really ask, how do we trace Asia? Right? Does Asia exist outside of Europe? Or can Asia exist without Europe? And I would like to quote Qadri Ismail, who's a theorist who's written about this. And he says, and I quote, "The trouble with dead white men is that some are not men, many are not white, and an alarming number, not even dead." Right. So this idea of what Asia is, is constantly being reconstructed not just by dead white men, but by living practices, and a lot of that which we embed our lives and theatre within. And so it does not require one to really stand in the city of Istanbul on the Bosphorus Bridge, looking at the Asian and the European side, to really see how this has been structured. There are literal metaphors of this all across Asia, and of course, metaphorical questions that we can ask about the existence of Asia outside of Europe. And so how do we leave Europe? It's ironic for me to ask this question, because, of course, the Brits have decided the worst way to leave Europe, which is Brexit, which not only leads to petrol and visa problems, but a whole host of other issues, including racist backlash. But how do we really think of Asia as a method rather than a geography that has been defined for us, and I think this is a very important intervention by this volume.

[00:21:51]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

And just to end my comments on this particular aspect, I would like to, quote Edward Said, of course, who has really brought out the critique of Orientalism, in which he says, "just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting, because it's not only about soldiers and cannons, but also about ideas about forms, about images, and imaginings." And so how do we imagine ourselves outside of the constructs that are handed down to us, and the constructs that we create or that we are implicitly embedded within? I think this is one of the main provocations that I took from this volume. And I thank everyone who contributed to it for having enabled me to push my thinking on this. Thank you.

[00:22:44]

Kok Heng Leun

Thank you, Gee. Thank you with your provocation. Two things came in my mind. One was talking about that space. I think so much of what we hear about how the director will need to create a rehearsal space that allows things to happen. But how does a dramaturg work within a space? How do you also create a space such that such criticality and reflexivity can happen? And I think a lot of the time dramaturgs are the last being asked, 'how do you want this space to be like?' A lot of the time it's

usually the director deciding what the space be like. Of course, if the director is a dramaturg, then the director will probably need to think about how to do this. So that's the first question.

[00:23:35]

Kok Heng Leun

Secondly, it was interesting on Chen Kuan-Hsing, who talks about this idea of Asia as a method. I was also thinking about the word Asia in Chinese, the ideogram Chinese "亚洲". That "亚" is a very strange word because it actually means second to things. It means second to many things. So when you are the runner up you're called "亚军". So 亚洲 which means Asia, apparently, in that context already puts us second to many things. And it's a mindset. And as you say, can we reimagine, can we reclaim, can we recontextualise this? The way we understand who we are? And then going back to Helly's conversation with Peter, and it's also a question of, if you don't talk about it, you probably will never appear and you will never exist. That we become invisible. Asia becomes invisible also, in that sense. With that maybe we should well turn our attention to Janice and hear her sharing. Janice, over to you.

[00:24:53]

Janice Poon

Thank you, Heng Leun. Thank you for having me here. And like the other two speakers, I congratulate the editorial team and all the friends that have contributed to this second volume of the ADN Re/View. And I have to tell you that the 2020 remix of Heal The World has become my theme song recently. Ever since I revisited the Re/View, I just can't let go of the song in my mind. To share my resonations on the Re/View, I would like to share two points.

[00:23:59]

Janice Poon

One is from the editorial notes that our young Daniel has mentioned, which gives me a lot of hope. He mentioned about how much the word Dramaturgy was Googled or searched in recent years and, and it seems that dramaturgical thinking is synonymous with possessing a critical lens, which results in the betterment of the world through a deep examination of its structures and relations via an aesthetic frame. I have to tell you, this is very important. This is a very important observation that gives us or gives me hope, and optimism to continue in making theatre, making art, especially with reference to the recent situation from where I'm from. And like one of the most frequently asked questions from my students and my friends is: Does theatre have a future when the world is in such a mess? Full of unreasoning and full of chaos. And also in view of the huge number of people leaving my city, do we or do I still have a place in theatre making when I leave my home city, my hometown. But thanks Daniel, your observation is not bounded by geographical locations and territories, as Gee has pointed out in terms of the struggle of geography. And it gives us some motivation to continue making theatre and making arts for the betterment of the world. And this is one resonance that I would like to share.

[00:27:22]

Janice Poon

And the second one is from the keynote speech of Janet Pillai. I hope I have pronounced your name correct. Janet mentioned about context and I found it especially relevant and important in the role of

dramaturgs in Asia in recent years, especially in view of the pandemic. And it all happened in in the recent two years. Especially during the pandemic a lot of things have changed. And in terms of the context, especially. When you talk about technology, or when you talk about Zoom, say for example, now we are having a conference on Zoom, that before the pandemic we seldom thought about using Zoom as frequently as such in the last year. We do online teaching on Zoom or other video conferencing devices, we make theatre on Zoom. And now, we are talking about doing business and you know, other kinds of numerous forms of connections through these kinds of video conferencing platform. And there are a lot of other devices or platforms that are invented or recreated for the purpose of making theatre online. And so these kinds of contexts, when when we talk about video conferencing tools or platforms in the digital world, we have a very new notion and new perception of what it means by public and what it means by private, what it means by the spoken and the unspoken, and the embodiment of verbal and nonverbal, etc. So I think Janet's keynote speech for me, at this point in time, has new meaning in terms of the context of what we have all experienced in the past year. And I think I will share until now and then we can continue our discussion. Thank you.

[00:29:35]

Kok Heng Leun

Thank you, Janice. When I hear you talk about that part when your students ask "does theatre have a future?" And I also in the same Re/View you mentioned about how you have asked yourself, how do you dramaturg your students in the process, then I'm also reminded that education is part of the dramaturgical process. And at the same time in the putting up of production from the actual creative work to negotiating with state actors in how the work are being staged, and if indeed one of the one of the article in the review where we see how, for example, Alfian was managing all these things within the creative world, but at the same time, also negotiating with the state actors. I'm afraid this is where the dramaturgy is already, not just about the work itself. But how it gets done, how the company will do it, how the organisation will do it, and how the society actually respond to it. And I think in a way this kind of dramaturgical process, is it a way whereby we learn to be critical, and then that maybe would provide us a lot of hope. Can I ask if our three friends have any questions to ask of each other? And then from there, maybe I will go to the Q&A. Any questions that you want to ask of each other?

[00:31:22]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

Yes, to respond to -- Sorry, Helly, please go ahead.

[00:31:26]

Helly Minarti

No, no, no, you first.

[00:31:28]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

Okay, just to respond to what Janice said. Because it's still fresh in my memory about how since times are changing, and the way people relate to art and to each other is changing, how technology will play a huge role in how we actually get our performances across. I think that's a very important question.

And I for one think I would definitely miss how the audience coughs and clears their throat right before the curtains go up. And you can hear only that in the audience. Everything else is silent. And of course we all have romantic notions about how performances should be done and viewed. And so I was just wondering about your thoughts about how technology will change some of the ways in which we perform and how that performance is received?

[00:32:26]

Janice Poon

Thank you. Well during the pandemic, I have directed an online theatre performance with my students. Originally, it should be staged in the theatre. But of course, the school has closed and theatre closed and my students were losing hope as you can imagine and we don't know what to do. But honestly as a teacher at that time, I don't think we can stop there. I have to motivate and encourage them to move on, you know, and so I directed the online theatre with them. And so we rehearsed in front of the camera, like us. And we did a one week performance of Pornography by Simon Stevens. So I staged one scene per night. And so it's like a Netflix series that you can watch in the course of a week's time. During the pandemic, we all watched Netflix, right. And I think with that experience, it informs me a lot about digital performance. We all talk about other technology now, and of course our government and basically the whole world is exploring this kind of mediated theatre performance nowadays. And for me, I still remember that when I first started directing that performance, there are a lot of friends. When I did like a global discussion, I invited theatre makers and teachers in universities to participate in a global discussion and we talked about performing online and I still remember many of them were strongly against it and feel like it that is not theatre. And some of the teachers even mentioned that they are afraid to allow the students or let the students perform in digital medium, because they are afraid that it will give them a wrong perception of what acting is.

[00:34:29]

Janice Poon

So these are some of the views that I received almost a year ago. But I think things are changing and the exploration of this digital medium is changing, as well. And for me, if we are doing online theatre or using any digital platform, we have to take it as the theatre stage. We have to consider the specificity of these kinds of medium and platforms and how we stage it, how we perform it, in front of this little black hole. On our computer and our laptop. Of course, there are lots of technical difficulties that we have to solve. I think the specificity and the dramaturgy of digital platform is one thing that we really have to concern. It is not about it is not only live streaming, it's not only that you perform in a theatre, and then we do a live streaming, I think it's totally different things.

[00:35:34]

Helly Minarti

I was wondering because Gee, you mentioned about this Asia thing and it's been a conundrum. And it's been a can of worms that's always there. It's the elephant in the room. To me, one of the moments that I mark was 2014. I think just when I came out from a study and I start returning to the arts practice, and all these Asian mega centres and all this Asian-laden programmes came out. So I was wondering what do you take as a filmmaker. Whatever your practice is or the combination of it. How do you

imagine Asia outside Europe, you know, the 'Erbe/Erebu', the root of the 'Asa/Asu' and the 'Erbe/Erebu', being Europe so it's because it is already like, in Chinese, in Mandarin it's there and you know, the root of it is also the mirror of it, and the 'Asa/Asu' is the mirror of 'Erbe/Erebu',. So, knowing that, how do you break that?

[00:37:06]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

I really don't think I have the answer to breaking it because it's still something that I'm struggling with. And to be honest, I think all of us will struggle with forever, because does Asia exist as a self-referential entity? Or this question that a lot of us will get asked if you are living far away from home: Where are you from? Where is home? These are very tough questions to ask. And so for me to think of Asia as a method, and not a place, I think is useful because it detaches a viewpoint, a standpoint, to whose East is Southeast Asia? Where is your standpoint? Where do you look at it from, you know, all the ways in which we have named places like, America is just America, but South America, South America, right? And which is why I make the effort to say North America because it's constantly of who's standing where and looking at things. And so for us to stand within Asia as a method and not a place is to reimagine and to kind of throw out everything that has been learned by us by our education systems by what we have been told. And it really requires a fresh perspective and a fresh methodology of thinking about our work and where we stand within those things. So it's a struggle, and I'm afraid I don't have the answers, but it's something that I think all of us will have to grapple with or are already grappling with, as we speak.

[00:38:38]

Helly Minarti

I think that reading the second edition, I realised that the categories and dimensional categorisation is still there. And I think that's really limiting. And not because I did this Jejak-Tabi with How Ngean. But to me, moving myself from Jakarta to Yogyakarta, with the intention of decentering myself as self-dramaturging sabotage. It really worked. It's been a learning curve for me to really move my way up, from centre. Because I think, for example, like last month, I still watch like five or six performances, the first one after after the lockdown. So there there are some strategies we can apply, or my colleagues apply that I could see that it could not take place in Jakarta because of all the various reasons. But there is a need. I try to remind myself not to lump, not even my island context. I start thinking in islands and archipelago now as the strategies of going out from this limiting construct, I would say.

[00:40:36]

Kok Heng Leun

Janice, you want to say something?

[00:40:37]

Janice Poon

Yeah, I was about to ask Helly the similar question, but she has answered it quite well. And I just wonder if this moving away from the centre of your current situation is part of the decolonising process that you're in, in your trajectory? You know, discovering your artistic practice?

[00:41:01]

Helly Minarti

Yeah. Because I think, Jakarta, 2013 onwards, it stopped being conducive as a creating place, it's more a showing place. Not quite a market, such things like market, forming a market or otherwise. Because it's very hard without infrastructure for artists to create performances in Jakarta. So it's very expensive. It's very difficult to navigate yourself within the city going from one point to another. So that's why I think you do this mapping. Okay. Maybe if you have something to show, then maybe you can show it in Jakarta, but not really conceived there, not really created there.

Janice Poon

Thank you.

[00:42:08]

Kok Heng Leun

I think perhaps, we should throw out to the floor out and then let the audience ask. But I think there are quite some important points already being put up. Ideas of what do we mean by the Asia method, and then this idea of decentering. But decentering from where? And in fact, you know, afterwards, I really want Gee to share with us his experience now in the UK, which is the previous centre. And as someone who is looking into queer dramaturgy, and now being in there, what do you see. Now the artists have been decentred, and yet you're in this decentered area and you're looking at it. What are the complexities here? Perhaps afterwards, Gee, you can share with us. And let's see if there's any questions from audience who would want to ask, you could just raise your hand. Can I have the gallery so I can see everyone? Yeah. Anybody want to ask a question to our three speakers?

[00:43:23]

Chong Gua Khee

Maybe while people are thinking, I think there's a question directed to Janice asking if those documentation of the piece in which you're staging scenes every night like a Netflix series.

[00:43:45]

Janice Poon

Do you mean the discussion or the performance?

[00:43:47]

Kok Heng Leun

I think she asked about the discussion if I'm not wrong.

[00:43:54]

Janice Poon

I haven't recorded that discussion. Sorry about that. I haven't recorded it but there is a like a brief transcription that will be published very soon. So if I got the journal then maybe I can send you an electronic copy of that brief transcription. It's like a reportage of the discussion.

[00:44:23]

Kok Heng Leun

Okay. Thanks. Janice. Marion. I saw your hand also.

[00:44:28]

Marion D'Cruz

I just want to make a comment that actually I'm quite nervous and brokenhearted, about the way arts makers have embraced technology in so many different forms for online performances. Of course, they have had to, but I really worry whether this then is going to be the way forward, that you know that we will, because we've done it now for two years, that we will feel the need, or the urgency, or, you know, even the effectiveness to embrace more and more and more technology, even in onstage live performances. So it kind of worries me, because I watched quite a bit over the last one and a half years. And in all these online shows, and I must say that most of it was pretty well, not unsuccessful, but less successful for me. And there were very few actually, that I felt "Oh, okay, fine. This works." So, yeah, it's just it's a bit scary for me. And I'm very old fashioned. So and as I say that it's such a contradiction, because I myself in a project that I'm working on now, and using technology, so, you know, it's kind of all a mess. And I just wanted to say that it's how do other theatre, you know, arts-makers feel about this sort of journey - it's like a ball that's rolling down a hill. And it's just there's no stopping this ball that's rolling down the hill towards technology, and AR and what-not, and what else? Thank you.

[00:46:35]

Kok Heng Leun

Thanks, Marion, anyone want to respond from the speaker first.

[00:46:40]

Janice Poon

I would like to respond to Marion. And honestly, speaking, I'm very old fashioned as well. And I love going to theatre and watched live performance. I will say maybe I'm not sure. Because it just happens that I teach now. If I'm not with my students, I might not take the courage to do or try our digital performance with them last year. And if I'm not with my students, I might not try to play video games now. It's not part of my life. But thinking as an educator, what I'm trying to do is to pass on knowledge and, and the future is theirs. And I'm just kind of like a facilitator, if not the dramaturg, trying to work with them, so that they can find out their own artistry. Whether it's in the physical theatre, or whether it's on an online digital platform, and the artistry belongs to them to their generation. And I will be hands off on them. And I actually am quite excited to see what will be come up with, for them to use all these new inventions. I'm not saying that that is the only future. What I mean is that they need their own artistry, they need their own dramaturgy of future theatre. Yeah, that would be my response.

[00:48:41]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

Yeah, just to add to that, I think technology has been used in performance / shotmaking for many decades now. It's just that the displacement of the physical bodies, on stage by technology, I think that is what is worrying for some people but I think like Janice said, these periods of transition are obviously difficult for people who are used to the old ways of experiencing and performing but I think we might not have a choice in some time to really pick and choose and I think technology could open up certain things which we can't even imagine now. Like, I could probably imagine hologram theatre happening in my living room where, you know, the performances not on the screen, but actually the actors are holograms in front of me. So who knows what technology will show for us in the future? And I guess rather than, you know, bemoan the loss of the traditional theatre that we are so used to and hold dearly, maybe we should also be a little open to new ways of the next generations showing us how new forms can take root from impossible situations. At least I'm trying to be hopeful. I know it's a very dystopian future we're looking at but we don't have anything else.

[00:50:07]

Marion D'Cruz

So what would be the dramaturgy for the technology of theatre, present and future? There has to be a kind of a specific kind of dramaturgy for that? Thank you.

[00:50:27]

Lim How Ngean

To quickly jump in. Yes, if I can. Just to address Marion's question about dramaturgy of technology. Already, I think in the last two years because of the proliferation of technology in performance, there is already a huge interest at the moment with digital dramaturgy. They are actually calling it digital dramaturgy. Simply by definition, I think also to differentiate it from technology where we are still looking at hardware. So apparently, the digital - the word digital really does imply the idea of screens, or rather what appears in screens, what appears in audio recorded through machinery, whether it's visual or audio. And that's why there is a bit of a debate with the word digital rather than technology and it has become, unfortunately a hot topic. I think the bigger question for me is, which was flagged up by Nien, this Singaporean dramaturg, who has her own personal issues with looking at what happens when this digital dramaturgy becomes just a passing phase. Because we are in the pandemic now. And more so when most funding bodies of any Arts Council is really pouring money into it. What happens when theatres open up again, will that then be left behind. And I'm linking that to what Janice is saying about the new generation and their artistry, which then gives us an opportunity to actually share with the new generation, actually what I would say the novel convention of live theatre again. That's it. Thank you.

[00:52:31]

Kok Heng Leun

Thank you How Ngean. That was something that I was also going to talk about where at the moment, technology becomes nearly a platform for us to present the work. But it hasn't gone due to an affective possibility. Or then slowly from affective into a kind of aesthetic possibility. And maybe this digital

dramaturgy is something that we need to look at. I had two experiences with doing digital work. One was when I had to also work with students. And if we are not going to do that work, the students are going to be extremely depressed, like Janice. But I had that. It was fortuous that I could do it hybrid. Most of the students really hated to perform to the screen. But because I was doing a hybrid where there were live audience, so it became a process whereby I work with the students to mediate the two mediums as a performer, and try to dramaturg your own performance according to this two mediums. It was really an exercise in the end, rather than I would say, a successful production. But I also do think that we are now at this period of experimenting, and each one is really a process for us to learn.

[00:53:49]

Kok Heng Leun

And the other piece that I was talking about was we were then adapting one of our participatory piece into an online piece. Whereby how do we talk about it? How do we actually allow participation in the different way that can happen online, rather than being passive spectators when you're watching Netflix or whatever. So I think there are various things that we all could try. But again, I think that would call for another big discussion in terms of dramaturgy's future, and I think both Shawn as well as Daniel had some points there, which I think that if you can read it on the chat that will be really very good. So that you know that will help us to think further into this issue.

[00:54:39]

Kok Heng Leun

But let us move on to the next part of today's discussion. It has been very rich. In fact, we have already talked about some of the challenges that we have in our own practices. But perhaps we can take this opportunity to let our speaker then share their own journey, some of the provocations or some of the questions they have currently in their own practices. Maybe this time we'll do the reverse way. I'll start with Janice, then, Gee, you will be the second again. And then Helly, shall we? Okay? Janice.

[00:55:15]

Janice Poon

Sure, sure. I will share two provocations. One is, well see my life is all about teaching my students now. So the first provocation is how to transfer academic and professional knowledge into artistic or creative practice. This provocation mainly stems from my responsibility at school now leading both the MFA and BFA major programmes in dramaturgy, and also my artistic practice in collaboration with multidisciplinary artists. And this provocation was informed by my current students with an age range from their early 20s, to early 60s. And they came from hugely diversified academic and professional background, which I loved. And for me, the discipline or the study of dramaturgy needs that broad spectrum of knowledge and professional background. And I was inspired by our conversations. Not only on their practice as theatre artists, but also on their non-arts professions. And I keep thinking how these systems of knowledge can be transferred into their own dramaturgical, and artistic practices. And just like what I mentioned, it's about their own artistry and their trajectory, in search of their artistic practice. And be it like, after they graduate, if they want to be a dramaturg, or if they are an artist in their own rights. And I think that is something that relates to my current practice a lot. And as a teacher, I

also thought about how can I teach without teaching? That is echoing my question, how can I still be my student's dramaturg in the process of working with them in future years.

[00:57:49]

Janice Poon

And the second provocation is about artistic collaboration. And actually, I've mentioned part of it in the last sharing like whether we are emerging our well-established artists, with process our critical lens, on how we understand the world and our creative process. And in view of the fast changing society, locally, in my city or internationally, how do we develop new perspective of human condition, not only in the new normal, that in the future, when there might be a paradigm shifts? There might be no new rules established internationally? And how do we draw the map? Or how do we construct a new system of knowledge, and even methodologies in our artistic practices? I think not only in digital dramaturgy, but say for example the theatricality of performance writing instead of playwriting. The embodiment of the verbal and non-verbal in contemporary theatre. And as I mentioned, the notion of being public and private. Like us here, I'm in my office. I feel like I'm in a private space, but we are in a public conference on this digital platform. And when I watch a movie, at home, as it is supposed to be private, but there are so many live streaming and movies on screen, you allow audience to speak, type your comment, and especially those in in the mainland. And when I saw those messages popping up, and I feel like I'm in a public space but I'm in my own room. And so this new notions of theatre-making and artistic practices are some of the provocations that I would like to share here. Thank you.

[01:00:13]

Kok Heng Leun

Thank you, Janice. Shall we go to Gee for your sharing? Thank you.

[01:00:16]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

So two things that I wanted to talk about. One is that, which relates to archival practice, because I'm very much into archival research at this point. So I just wanted to connect it with some of the things that I also read in Volume Two, where Takao also talks about queer archives. And if he were to broadly think of theatre as an archive of feelings of bodies interacting, of actions and histories, then how do we inform our performance making practices which are necessarily archived? Right, especially in terms of the some of the work that I've done before, the body has been an archive, in a lot of my work. And another thing that I noticed about this volume is that not all but it's mostly the women practitioners and the queer artists who have spoken about the body and placing it front and centre in this volume. And I think that's true of a lot of the discussions that we have had as part of ADN as well. And so when does the body become central to the performance? And who foregrounds it when talking about the performance itself? I think that's an important question. And when we look at archives, one sense in which to understand it in the queer sense is to look at the body as an archive. So I've constantly had to narrative is the ways in which my body has gone through various journeys, evidence, through scars, evidence through the various things that my bodies have undergone in performance as a journey and as an archive of feelings.

[01:01:52]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

Then there is the state and colonial archives where of course a lot of the mapping and the tracing of the colonial state has happened and people have been written about in a certain way. And then there are community archives also, which I worked with, in the 2018 performance at the Kochi Biennale where letters written from queer people to others, newspaper cuttings from 80s, which we kind of cut and made collages of. These became community archives. So how do we access these archives? What determines our preoccupation with the body? And how do we narrativise or perform it? I think that's a very important question that I need that I think all of us need to kind of think about.

[01:02:34]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

And the temporality of a performance, like when I go into, say for example, the Asian Africa studies archive at the British Library. And when I look through those yellowing pages of handwritten letters written by dead white men to other dead white men in the British colonial service, the time in which it was written, the time that I'm holding in my hands, the, the way in which I'm accessing it through my own positionality, and the time in which I'm reading it, and then how I reinterpret, and stage it for someone else, and how that reader or the audience then reinterprets it, to understand it, I think there are multiple levels at which time is folded and understandings and interpretations are folded into each other in all our performance practices. And the second point was really connected to our conversation, I think a very important conversation on technology or digital dramaturgy, as How Ngean has alerted us to which is a hot topic, unknown to I think most of the people here is dramaturgy as not just a relationship that is human-centric, but also includes objects not in the traditional sense of having a gun, you know, on the stage, which has to be used in the last scene to shoot someone. Not in that traditional sense, but how objects relate to each other, how we relate to technology, and how performance is really changing, or has always been a relationship also between objects to each other, objects with other objects, objects to humans. And so can we really think about dramaturgy, in a way that is not centered around the human, like less anthropocentric ways of thinking about dramaturgy. I think that's another provocation that I would like to throw to all of you, especially during such times. Thank you.

[01:04:27]

Kok Heng Leun

Thank you Gee. And now to Helly.

[01:04:37]

Helly Minarti

Yeah, I think even before the notion of dramaturgy became something the last 5, 6 years, within my practice is the notion of choreography, which we haven't really unpacked. So I think my question is more like a question and not so much a provocation. In this situation what is choreography? I think two weeks ago, Professor Uchino Tadashi, we should have shared like in a different platform about this zoom theatre as a kind of new genre or a new term. But we already have dance film as a genre for a

long time, but it's, it's never really been so institutionalised. You heard like, 10, 15 years ago, there was one or two or five dance film festivals. I think it comes and goes as a practice and as a art form.

[01:05:57]

Helly Minarti

But when this pandemic happened. I think what the choreographers do is simply doing this dance film again. Awkwardly, because it's with a different awareness. So I think it's also a bit messier. Because the screen is smaller. It's live-streaming. It's an updated medium. It's not like dance film as it was known. So what is choreography in this new, updated medium? And what is the body? What is the act of embodiment in this two-dimensional screen? I think it is becoming much more problematic because within the Asian context we haven't really unpacked the notion, the histories of choreography as a practice, as a form. So it's a double and then you know, when the dramaturgy came onboard, so it's been always my problem, you know? Because we know that dramaturgy has been always there. You name it or not, you name it as such or not, dramaturgy has been always in the process of choreography. But then again, if you haven't really looked closely into the specific experience of choreography making within your own contexts, then how do you deal with this layering in terms of like artistic practice? I think I will stop there.

[01:08:25]

Kok Heng Leun

Thank you, Helly. Can I invite speakers to ask each other on the provocations or the questions that each has. So we have areas on pedagogy, we have areas on technology in future, we also have this tension between while new dramaturgy are evolving, we are still trying to make sense of our present dramaturgy. And this tension as history comes, notice tensions of time, how do we manage that? And as dramaturgs we historicise things also in the process, right. So that we make sense of what is happening in the present in order to talk about the future. How do we put all these things together?

[01:09:13]

Helly Minarti

I think my problem is very connected to you, Gee. Because it's archiving, maybe not really parallel, but maybe not clearly connected in a very direct way. But I think archiving has been a problem as well in dance. How can you read choreography? How can you start reading choreography if there is no archive? And if there're more archives in NYPL, about Indonesian dance choreography in early days, then here. So it's also one of my headaches. Where do we start? Of course you start with the embodied archive, meaning that you get to know the practitioner - the artists who are still alive and maybe not really not active anymore, but at least they're still there. It's not the question, but it's acknowledgement. I noticed it's also my problem to deal with in my daily practice.

[01:10:38]

Kok Heng Leun

And, of course, the temporality of actual performances. You know, no archive is precise and perfect, and what is what is absent in the archive? How can it be noted, notated such that in a way that opens discussion, and I think that has always been one of the challenges of live performances. And then what

is interesting, because when you're talking about choreography just now, for every productions that we see even on a Zoom, there is other choreography that's happening there. The camera, how the camera moves, that's another choreography, those are never notated. And the way the camera moves are part of an engagement with an audience because it's taken certain perspective, and how do we actually also put that and create a kind of assemblage of archival means.

[01:11:36]

Helly Minarti

Even the young Indonesian choreographer Densiel Lebang, when she was given a commission when she finally won one of these commissions of making this dance on screen. She made quite a remark saying that what she learned from this process, as she said, she realised that the camera is another body. So it's not even only an eye, but it's already like another body.

[01:12:16]

Kok Heng Leun

And if the camera is managed - is controlled by another, handled by another person. That's another body behind the camera.

[01:12:25]

Janice Poon

I would like to respond to the temporality of performance. Yes. I'm not sure if any of you in the audience any speakers had this experience after the lockdown situation that we have experienced in the last year, when the theatre reopens and then you sit in the theatre space, and then you watch a performance. I still remember the first time when I watched the very first performance I watched in the theatre after the lockdown situation, I found the performance very, very long . It's longer than I expected. But when I looked at the watch is actually about an hour. And the feeling like the physical body's feeling and the uneasiness that I have to sit on the seat for an hour compared with the lockdown situation where I'm locked down in my home or my flat, which is, of course very, very, much smaller than a theatre space. The tiny environment that we are living in. But during the watching experience or the sharing experience with the performer and as an audience, when you're at home, even though you're locked down in that tiny space, you can stop. You can leave the screen and nobody stops you and then you can have a cocoa, have some drink and even eat. But then when I have to be so concentrated in the theatre space to share the live performance on stage. But all of a sudden, I feel oh, this is so so long, the time becomes became so long. And it also requires me and takes me more attention and focus on what's happening on stage. And I remember that experience very, very vividly. I'm not sure if any of you have that experience, of course, like when time moves on. And of course, now I went to theatre, I might not have that, that strong feeling of the difference in time and space that I've thought, or I felt when I had my first theatre experience after the lockdown situation.

[01:15:19]

Kok Heng Leun

Can I check with you? Was it a full house audience? Or it was a reduced audience.

[01:15:25]

Janice Poon

It is a reduced audience. It's in a grand theatre, it's a dance performance. And by reduced audience there are around 75% audience in the house. Yeah.

[01:15:42]

Helly Minarti

But are you implying that your body has been conditioned to allow lockdown? And conditioned meaning that the way you carry life daily life and also the way you watch, you have a new habit of watching performance only online and outside and this is like the first time? Or something else?

[01:16:04]

Janice Poon

It's both ways. What you mentioned is true, but on the other hand, ironically, when I'm in the lockdown situation, if I'm watching a performance online, or you know, through these digital platforms, I can pause, I can leave. I can have a drink. And that interrupts the temporal experience of me with the performance in the digital platform. But in a theatre space, of course, we know that we were sitting down, there isn't anything that we can do, or I cannot leave my seat. And so the whole sense of time and space changes after the lockdown situation. So it's both ways.

[01:16:56]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

Also, the rules of etiquette or what is allowed in a theatre space. I think the most traditional theatre spaces, I've always thought of this endeavour as something akin to sacred, where you are allowed to do certain things, not allowed to do certain things. And so we are all bound by those etiquette, and maybe the technological interventions, or the directions in which it's going is making it more profane. And maybe that's one of our anxieties about this kind of intervention. So there are a lot of things happening there. And I also agree with your comment about the camera. And it relates to the thing that I was trying to articulate about non-human interventions, in terms of dramaturgy. And so even if a camera person is operating the camera, the camera as an object is showing us a particular view, is intervening in the dramaturgical process in certain ways. And, you know, the output is very different from if we were to just think of the camera as a device that is controlled by a human. And so I think we need to start thinking at least if we are being forced to think of objects in a different way. And the other comment about the silences in the archives, and I think in Volume Two, there was a particular place in which the reader was invited to fill in the silence. And I had a knee jerk reaction against that, because I think there is a particular power to letting the silence remain as a silence. And to actually listen to what that silence is telling me. For example, if I'm looking for a particular thing, and I trace it within the archive to 14 kilometres of archives they have on the subcontinent in Britain, if I trace it, and then finally the file tells me it's a D, the letter D, and that means it's destroyed. It says something about why that particular thing has been destroyed, or it gives me a certain idea about the circumstances of the

archiving process and why this particular record is not there. So the silence is telling us something very important. I would urge you not to fill the silence but to sit with it.

[01:19:10]

Kok Heng Leun

I think I want to go back to Daniel who put this comment on, I think we might need to explore what exactly we mean by technology, and how this seems to threaten a certain idea of theatre or performance art. I think it's not just about threatening, but it actually changes also how performing arts can be perceived. And what is that watching experience that we're talking about. And I think on the internet sometimes silences are not allowed, because it's just too loud that silence, right? And people would then be distracted to do other things. But in a communal experience, when the silence is being placed there, you somehow have to embrace it and embody in some way to your reluctance. But then it was a kind of experience that you had to go through. And how do we actually manage that in future performances if we are also doing it through technology? And I think these are actually some of the big questions that we can actually continue to explore in future on the dramaturgy of digital and performance. Perhaps we should open the floor to audience for questions. Ah, there are seven new messages? Let me see.

[01:20:31]

Janice Poon

I saw in the chat. It mentioned the work 14 that Shawn was dramaturg for? I think Charlene was one of the commentators of this performance. Am I correct? Because I watched part of it. And I found it fascinating. Or if Charlene would like to share your experience being one of the commentators in that work?

[01:20:59]

Charlene Rajendran

Yeah, you're right. But I'm gonna ask Shawn, if he's able to speak, because he was dramaturg. So he was much more heavily involved, and has a better sense of it. Shawn, are you traveling? Or are you able to speak to us Shawn? Are you there? Okay. Over to you, Shawn.

[01:21:26]

Shawn Chua

So what was the question about? Just to speak about the experience?

[01:21:30]

Charlene Rajendran

14, about 14.

[01:21:33]

Shawn Chua

I guess, I guess there were a number of interesting, I guess it was very ambitious. And the question of why there's a dramaturg, within the production itself, was an interesting question, right, because there

wasn't just one dramaturg. There were five, one for each of the satellite countries that were involved. So and then with HORSE Theatre, being the the kind of artists and the project. So even on a kind of structural level, like the relationship of a dramaturg, or the expectation of dramaturg was something that we fully resolved, either. To be honest, I think we're still kind of exploring or in the process of discovering what that actually means. The other part of the challenge was to think about, actually, I remember one of the most interesting conversations that emerged about that was the question of, how do we make it not become a film? Right? How can we not make it become another dance film? How do we resist the language of the cuts? Right, which which we are so familiar when we watch a film, and the cuts that maybe disturb the integrity of a life experience, right. And so I think I remember that, that emerged as a conversation. So as much as part of the promise of the project is to think about how the digital platform might transform the live, I think the other question was, how does the live performance force us to unlearn certain kinds of relationships that we have with film right, or with the visual media?

[01:23:18]

Shawn Chua

And I think, another interesting question. I mean, there are many interesting questions. But the interesting question that emerged was just the nature of the dance: is a dance primarily a visual form or an oral form when it is packaged as a kind of film media. I mean, that that became an interesting question, too, that we had to practically negotiate when we talked about how then the role of the commentator kind of accompanies that work. So this must be very disorienting for those of you who haven't actually watched 14. And it's not an easy production to kind of summarise, but yeah.

[01:24:06]

Kok Heng Leun

We can have another 5 minutes or 10 minutes for our Q&A. Anybody who have any questions for our speakers?

[01:24:19]

Charlene Rajendran

I think this idea about historicising what is being done, and historicising what has been done in relation to the issues of archiving as well as understanding practice, right? And the genealogies of practice, whether we like it or not inform what we do. And then the genealogies of context, and the genealogies of notions of art. And I guess after listening to this discussion, I certainly am prodded to think about the genealogies of technology. I mean, technology is not new. So not just what is technology, but what we think of as technology, and how that interface either loosens us up, or stiffens us. I speak from experience, certain things really make me just, I just stiffen up. And if there's a facilitator and there's someone to kind of ease it, which literally, Shawn did for me in this recent work where I was a commentator, and I was initially stiffen up and then kind of easing up. But there's also I think, danger of then taking it for granted, which is where I hear the the concerns about how it becomes then normative. Takes on a kind of dominance and hegemony and overwhelms without us realising it. And my concerns or questions are how then to be provocateur with the non-human with the material, when we haven't really learned how to listen to it, I guess. And therefore, it's not really a question or comment. But

responses to what you're saying to us. Really, what are some of the things we need to perhaps start doing a little bit more consciously, in order to take it on.

[01:26:31]

Kok Heng Leun

Any response from the speakers to Charlene's questions or comments?

[01:26:39]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

Not specifically a response, but to also echo what Charlene just said, and to say that the pandemic has strangely made people suddenly hyper aware about technology. I mean, we've been surrounded by technology for a long, long time now. And I was going by train the other day, and there was a scrolling writing that said, "Please take care of your belongings, there is cameras on this train for your own safety." So how it is couched as 'for your own safety'? I mean, we are surrounded by this stuff, and it's happened a long time back. And so I think what the pandemic really offers us is the possibility of being aware, for the first time that we are, in fact, surrounded by technology that we are, in fact, building relationships mediated by technology that we are performing, you know, through technological devices. And so I think we must use this as a positive, you know, opportunity for us to think more deeply about objects and technology and digital medium, rather than, you know, have a knee jerk reaction and wait for the good old times when we can do away with all of this and just be bare bodies, you know, performing for each other. I think that's a myth that has not existed for a very, very long time. So yeah, I think it's an opportunity for us to think through these things.

[01:28:05]

Kok Heng Leun

The idea of play, spontaneity, the idea which How Ngean talked about as a dramaturg, you wing things, you playfully put things together - of course, winging it not just just trying to make something up, but winging because of some deep knowledge that you may have on the thing becomes important. Yet at the same time, if we are so embedded in that process of change, I again pose the question: how do we not be too hurried to notate such change or even judge such change? I think that's where how a dramaturg has to constantly be in that flux of change, yet be able to appreciate the impact of it, but not judging it and not even like make conclusive statement about it. How do we actually keep that kind of objectivity yet having to be subjectively, playfully, appreciating it?

[01:29:10]

Helly Minarti

I'm more interested in resisting by exploring other spaces because I don't want to lose this three dimensional thing and I don't want to get used to this new normal. To me there is no new normal. My body is my body and it's complex. It's there and it's a material thing and much more. So, I think I'm more interested in exploring new spaces. Our idea of stage or staging, or like - last month I saw this one way of doing it - when the way they built the stage to accommodate this social distancing and everything. So they created a very different stage than before to accommodate that. And then also the discussion still took place not inside, but outside. This is a very local context, but I challenge that

because we're in Asia. Most of us live in a warm climate and only small parts of us have to experience winter. So, I think I'm more more interested in exploring these possibilities rather than technology. Instead getting used to whatever jargon we're using, but how we hacked and subverted instead of getting used to it, and then accepting it as the new normal. But it's just me, which is also a question in a way.

[01:31:55]

Marion D'Cruz

Yeah, I'm with Helly. Maybe it's a dancer thing. You know? Maybe it's a body thing. Yeah. I'm with Helly, we shall resist and subvert.

[01:32:08]

Kok Heng Leun

I have to say that when Janice was describing that when you watch a digital performance, you can stop halfway you can go for a drink. Yet I was thinking that in the previous ritualistic performances in the earlier time, people come and go. People take a drink, take a pause. Where theatre is not so sanctified and so scary, whereby you have to wear proper in order to be there. And maybe there's a return to that. And that's part of that resistance. And I think the idea of the dramaturg is not to find one only way to handle or to deal with our current situation. Hope cannot be reliant on only one option. And if the only option is technology, then I feel it's very hopeless. But I think the hope is really reliant on many possibilities, whether it's resistance, hacking, subverting accepting, but we are really looking at all the various possibilities and not be- and I'm just reminding myself in Singapore - because we've been constantly being told that okay, the way to go is technological, digital, but then we also have to tell ourselves no, that's not the only way. There are are still many other ways. And probably this dramaturgy of possibilities is something that we need to actually be constantly thinking about. And maybe with that, I should ask our three speakers to have a concluding statement or concluding question - that's ironic, right - for us to take for tonight, and then we'll hand the time back to Centre 42. Janice do you have a concluding question or even Helly, or even Gee?

[01:34:03]

Janice Poon

Well, thank you so much. I don't say I can sleep tonight with all these questions and provocations and, yeah, really thankful. And I totally agree, Heng Leun. Technology is not the only answer. It's just one of the explorations that like in our future generations that we can explore the possibility. And I believe that there are so many possibilities that we haven't really invested in, in terms of space and time and the medium that we use for making theatre. And so if we really have to conclude that might be one of the things that I would like to focus on in the future, whether in our own practice, or when we pass on knowledge or whatever, and that is the exploration of new medium, and the new dramaturgy for our future generation.

[01:35:05]

Kok Heng Leun

Helly?

[01:35:09]

Helly Minarti

I just want to repeat like, you know, subvert, hack, resist.

[01:35:18]

Kok Heng Leun

And Gee.

[01:35:20]

Gee Imaan Semmalar

Yeah, just to say thanks for having me. And to also say that if dramaturgy is the act of provoking, of unsettling, of redrawing the familiar to make it strange, and it's an anxiety inducing process, then I think this panel has been very successful at doing all of those things. And thanks a lot for coming and being part of the conversation. Thank you.

[01:35:41]

Kok Heng Leun

Thank you, Gee and How Ngean wants to say something.

[01:35:44]

Lim How Ngean

I just want to quickly say that it's amazing how the conversation has really progressed a lot in what we discussed in ADN symposiums and previous meetings that have been sort of been reconsolidated in the e-zine. But just listening to the ideas that are coming out, the buzzwords for me like mess, complications, you know, I mean, that was for me one of the catalysts to want to actually start ADN. I think a few of us recognise, especially my immediate co-directors, Charlene and Robin, we recognise that dramaturgy today is complicated. It is intersections of so many kinds of disciplines, that there must be a way to look at performance that is just beyond say, a script, or a performance text even. And how do you weave it all together? That becomes a personal thing with different dramaturgs. But more importantly, it is because of this mess, this complication, that allows us dramaturgs to play actually, right. Going back to what I said about winging it, it's more than that. It is about playing from very informed, and experienced platform. But this intervention, subversion is definitely part of the dramaturg's agenda, right? So with the rise or with the advent of digital dramaturgy, I think there will be many of our dramaturg friends who are looking at various ways also, to disrupt, to interrupt, to intervene, and of course, to intersect with live performances when we inevitably will open up. The theatres will open up for sure. So that's the next step. How do we intersect? How do we overlap the digital with the corporeal, the virtual with the real bodies? I think on that note, Heng Leun, we should say good night and thank you again, please. Let me thank Heng Leun, Gee, Helly and Janice for being a part of this amazing discussion. I am in Australia. It's past midnight is actually 12:22. I thought I'd be very sleepy, but I'm not. I'm actually yeah, like Janice, a bit buzzed and not sure what to do now because I can't go into the bedroom. My mind is abuzz. Thank you so much. I think at the moment, I'm going to quickly hand back to Yanling from Centre 42 to help us do a wrap up if there's any.

[01:38:48]

Ma Yanling

Thank you. I just want to say thanks on behalf of the Centre 42 team who's the host for tonight's session to thank all the speakers here today, as well as the editorial team for the hard work behind the evening. Thank you for leaving us so much. Really great nuggets and food for thought for the rest of the night. I think the editorial team has a lot to digest as they continue to dramaturg the remainder of the series. I guess with that, do look out for the third installation, the third volume of the event series, hoping to release it end of November. And then there will be a third, or maybe more panels that will come from there, as you continue to deepen the discussion on dramaturgy.