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by Indra Tjahyadi

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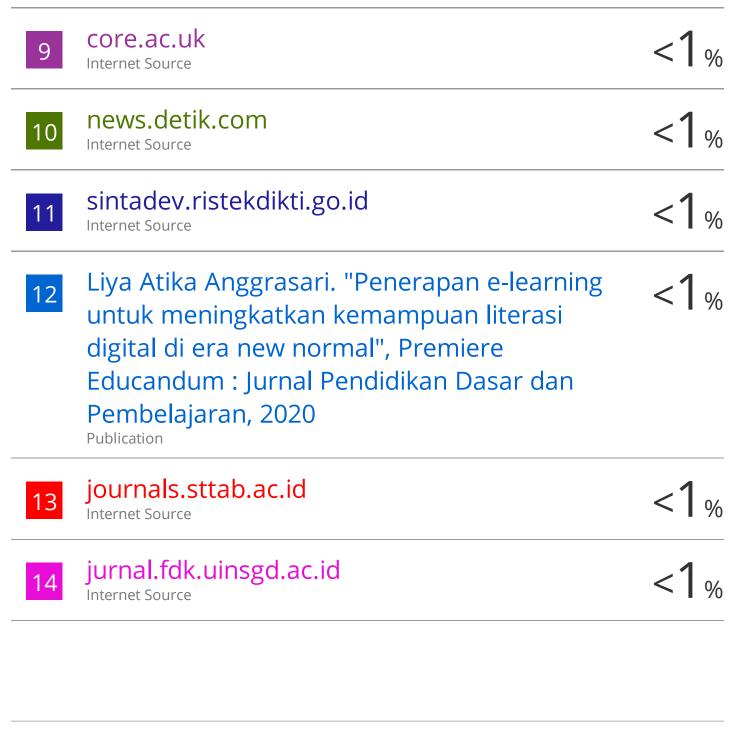
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THE PHENOMENON OF THEATER'S PERFORMANCE IN THE NEW NORMAL ERA

An Edmund Husserl's Phenomenological Approach

Indra Tjahyadi

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Abstract: This paper focuses its discussion on the phenomenon of theater performance in the New Normal Era. The emergence of the New Normal Era influenced the existence of theater performance. It has an impact to the emergence of new phenomena in theater performance. The purpose of this study focuses on the phenomenon of theater performance in the New Normal Era. The approach used in this research is the phenomenology approach developed by Edmund Husserl with relying on descriptive qualitative method. Based on the analysis, this research resulted in three findings. First, the use of social media as a place for show. Second, a changing in understanding of the meaning of theatrical stage performance. Third, the formation of a virtual interaction model between the performer and the audience in theater performance.

Key Words: phenomenon, theater performance, New Normal Era

PREFACE

The New Normal Era is a new era in human life. It is said like that because on this era there are various new rules and behaviors appeared in people's daily life. The obligation to wear face mask, the prohibition not to crowd, habituation to wash your handsfrequently, and having adequate rest making the order of human life which is previously preoccupied with the desire of human for progressivity and building human network, in

addition, physical meeting begins to be prohibited. In this era, physical meeting between humans are something that is not recommended, even prohibited. Physical distancing is the main concept that must be obeyed by humans (https://news.detik.com/).

Historically, the New Normal Era is not a condition and situation that existing without cause. The New Normal Era is a continuation of the Pandemic era that had existed before. Generally, the Pandemic era can be

said as a revolutionary era for human life. The general behavior that has existed before and which habitually in human life experience denial. Humans can no longer physically fulfill their destiny as social being in that era. The behavior of social distancing in society and physical distancing in human individual relationship as issomething that must be obeyed and donefirmly for human life. It can be seen in the emergence of special terms in the Covid-19 Pandemic era, such as Social Distancing, Physical Distancing, Stay at Home, or Work From Home (WFH). These terms have not become a marker of society behavior in previous eras. Therefore, the Covid-19 Pandemic era can be understood as a distinctive era which presenting different behaviorin the society.

The terms that emerge in the Covid-19 Pandemic era not only change people's behavior in that era but also change the human point of view of himself, society, and the environment. The Covid-19 pandemic that is currently affecting the world has formed a new point of view of humanity. By Quoting

Martin Luther King's statement: "We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now", Zizek (2020: 7—15) stated that currently there is a newunique point of viewin human life, namely human identity is no longer limited by race, ethnicity, or religion, because all humans are the same species. There is no longer any superiotitas between ethnic group, race, country, or religion.

Besides, the point of view of the unity of human value, the world point of view that emerged during the Covid-19 Pandemic is the awareness that caring for oneself equal with caring to society. According to Zizek (2020: 52), the Covid-19 pandemic has made people aware that human social life is contingent and meaningless. Social interactionwhich is done by human fact presenting unexpected possibilities that can put humans in doingworthless. Therefore, humans must rediscover the meaning of their lives by returning to human selfhood as a personal and independent person, able to be separated from the tiring and useless interaction of society.

In Indonesia, the Covid-19 Pandemic era begins in March 2020. This era is begunby the speech of Jokowi, the President of Indonesia, on March 15, 2020, which instructed Indonesian people to start working from home, social distancing and physical distancing (Kompas .Com). Thus, since then the life of Indonesian people has changed.

The New Normal era in Indonesia is begun in May 2020. In the Covid-19 Pandemic era various social interaction, physical contact and life that take place outside the house must be eliminated as much as possible. Thisis changing perspective of Indonesian society which interprets social care by doing social interaction as a whole, namely physically and spiritually, into caring for oneself is an important part of social care. Saving the life of Indonesian people must be started from saving one's own life as individual. Thus, mutual cooperation is no longer a physical activity, but rather than a spiritual activity for the Indonesian people. This is a radical worldview change in the Indonesian who believes in

togetherness as something that includes both physical and spiritual.

This paper aims to show the phenomena of theater performance in the New Normal era. Definitively, theater can be understood as a work of art which is the quality of communication, situation, and action that describe human life that is shown directly on the stage by a theater group to the audience. In the theater performance, the story of human life and life is presented on the stage and watched by the audience (Harymawan, 2-3: 1993).

In this paper, those effort are done by pointing the analysis on the phenomenological developed by Edmund Husserl. This is based on the understanding of the relevance between the topics discussed in this paper and the understanding of the phenomenological approach. Generally, phenomenology is a research method or method of thinking that aims to reveal or explain the reality behind the symptom or phenomena that is captured by the human senses in everyday life.

Phenomenology was first developed by Edmund Husserl, a great German philosopher who was born in the Czech Republic who lived in 1859-1938 (Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013). According to Husserl (Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013) phenomenology is a field of study that seeks to describe the experience of human life containing in consciousness. Life is dynamic experience phenomenon. This is because the experience of human life always develops in consciousness. The development occurs because of the world influence outside human as a conscious subject that experiencing the world. Therefore, between humans, as a conscious subject, and the world outside humans (the external world) are always related.

However, before reaching human consciousness, human life experience is still events which are felt by the five human senses. Those events in Husserl's phenomenology are called phenomena. Definitively, phenomena can be understood as something that appears without a cover and reveals itself to human. Therefore, the phenomenon is the totality behind what it appears in human (Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013).

According to Husserl (in Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013) science has "polluted" human consciousness. it has the effect of not revealing the essence of reality containing in human life experience because pure meaning never exists. Science has determined the meaning of reality based on the standard set by it. Thus, there is no discovery in science, but the justification for what has been established by the norm of science.

Husserl (in Asih, Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013) states that this is something wrong, because human experience must come from a given object (natural object) and it is not a given datum (natural datum according to science). In order to avoid this mistake, the effort to understand the the phenomena return must intentionality of human consciousness to a given object. Husserl (in Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013) calls it as a return to object. It is necessary

because the object is not something in external human. Object is inside and bound to human. Hence, effort to reveal the essence or pure meaning or point of phenomena must be done by carrying out the subject-object dialectic. Dialectic is necessary so that the blending of object that appear in consciousness mingles with object that exist naturally, because only with this action or practice the essence of phenomena can be described and the true human knowledge can be developed.

An understanding of the concepts in Husserl's phenomenology approach must be hadby a researcher who wants to use this approach as a research approach. In general, there are eight concepts in Husserl's phenomenological approach. First, the concept of phenomena in Husserl's paradigm of phenonemology is understood as a description of object, event, in perception. Phenomenon is reality that shows itself to human, or something that appears consciousness. Phenomenon is a visible reality, without a cover or curtain between humans and reality

(in Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013).

The second concept Husserl's phenomenological approach is consciousness, namely the active giving of meaning. Consciousness is the ability own by a person to objectify himself/herself. In person consciousness treats himself/herself as a subject to become an object for himself/herself, becomes objective himself/herself. Through awareness, a person experiences openness and relational continuity with others, so it creates a situation and condition that places him / herself from others without a firm separation (in Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008: Prasetyono, 2013).

Consciousness, referring to Husserl in Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, Prasetyono, 2013), intentionality. Intentionality is the structure of essential human consciousness. Intentionality refers to the belief that all actions (actus) of consciousness have a quality. The act consciousness is called an intentional action and its object is called an intentional object. The intention is understood as

orientation of the mind to an object. So, intentionality is related to consciousness, internal experience of consciousness of something. This is the third concept in Husserl's phenomenology.

The fourth concept Husserl's phenomenological paradigm is constitution, namely a process in the form of the appearance phenomena into consciousness. Constitutionis seen from the subject's point of view, giving meaning to the world and universe that is experienced. This process is an activity consciousness, so that reality can be seen clearly. In this process the real world constituted is consciousness so that the appearance of phenomena can happen. Thus, the constitution can be understood as a kind of construction process in human consciousness in Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013).

The world is the fifth concept in Husserl's phenomenology. In this concept, there is a link between the phenomena that are anticipated in our awareness of integrity. The world is understood as

a medium for humans to express themselves as consciousness. The world is the result of human perception of something (in Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013).

Sixth, epoche concept. According to Husserl (in Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013) epoche is a concept related to an effort or action to reduce or delay assessment (bracketing). In the epoche, understanding, judgment, and knowledge of everyday reality mustput aside first, and phenomenon is emerged, then revising freshly, as they are, in an open meaning, from the vantage point of the pure ego or the transcendental ego. Action or effort aims to raise knowledge above every possible doubt. Epoche is a new way of seeing thing.

Reduction is the seventh Husserl's concept in phenomenological paradigm. Reduction is the act of delaying belief of the world that is observed or experienced. This action aims to bring human consciousness back to transcendental consciousness. This action is done after epoche. Reduction done in is two

steps,namely: first, phenomenological reduction, which is the act of choosing experience or everything that appears to us in order toget phenomenon in its pure form; and delaying meaning by reexploring phenomenon in our consciousness. reduction-Second, phenomenological-transcendental which is a step to return to the pure ego.On this human step. consciousness tries to be directed to return to the source of meaning and existence of the world that is experienced. On this step, a person leaves all the theories, presuppositions, and prejudices that have (in Asih, Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013).

The eighth concept Husserl's phenomenological paradigm is Intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity is concerned with the history of phenomenon. This concept refers to the human ability to interpret phenomenon that come from consciousness which is always related to the consciousness of others. Thus, in the Intersubjectivity, everything that someone understands about another is based on the

knowledge and past experience of someone else. This means that the meaning of a phenomenon that is done by a person cannot be separated from the existence of the consciousness of others who have an influence on him/her. Thus, there is no subjective meaning. Meaning is always formed from the externalization of internal consciousness and internalization of external consciousness (in Asih, 2005; Hasbiansyah, 2008; Prasetyono, 2013).

METHOD

The method used in this research is a qualitative-descriptive method. The approach used to answer the problems in this study is the phenomenological approach of Edmud Husserl. The first step in this research is to do bracketing. According to Husserl (in Asih, 2005) the first step that must be taken by someone who wants to do research on a phenomenon is by doing bracketing, namely identifying and keeping assumption temporarily, belief, and knowledge that they already have about the phenomenon which is analyzed in order to be able

to concentrate in every aspect of phenomenon, considering the essence of phenomenon, analyzing and also describing phenomenon. At this step, researcher is open, honest, and neutral toward the phenomenon of Indonesian literature and the condition of Covid-19 Pandemic that affects Indonesia. it needs to be done so that researcher can identify the Indonesian literary phenomenon in the Covid-19 Pandemic era.

The second step that isdone by the researcher in this study through an intuiting and analytical way. On this step, the researcher does contemplation, analysis, and description of the data and research finding. The purpose of this step is not only the researcher can combine with analyzed data but also it is able to select and classify phenomenon data to obtain a complete and indepth understanding of phenomenon. Moreover researcher can find the essence and pattern of Indonesian literary phenomenon in the Covid-19 Pandemic era, so that the essential structure of the Indonesian literary Covid-19 phenomenon in the Pandemic era can be arranged.

DISCUSSION

The Phenomenon of Theater's Performance in the New Normal Era

The New Normal Era can be understood as an era of a new order in human life that emerging after the Covid-19 Pandemic Era. Indonesia, the beginning of the New Normal Era is marked by the presence of an official release from Indonesian government through the mass media in May, 2020. In its official release, Indonesian government (Kompas.com) stated that the New Normal Era is the era of Indonesian human life which is marked by daily behavior patterns that have been developed during the Covid-19 Pandemic Era. between the New Normal Era and Covid-19 Pandemic difference.

In the Covid-19 Pandemic Era, every individual is forced to do physical containtment, social distancing, and activity at home. In this era, various activities outsideof home or in public spaces are prohibited as much as possible. Thus, in this era, the house becomes

the main human activity space. It can be seen in the slogan #dirumahaja, whichis socialized massively by Indonesian government to the society.

The New Normal Era is an era of continuation of the Covid-19 Pandemic Era. In this era, physical and social distancing are still applied to society. But, in this era, activity in public spaces are allowed, but they still followed the protocol for daily life based on health. In the New Normal Era, people are allowed to work, but still wearing face mask, and continued to do social and physical distancing. This things not only have an impact on the social and economic conditions of the society but also affecting the paradigm and behavior of society at the cultural level.

Art as part of culture is also affected by the new order that is emergent in the New Normal Era. Art activities based on the paradigm of social distancing, physical distancing and application of health protocol as the basis for activity becomes phenomenon that has emerged in the art world. Theater, as part of the arts, is also affected due

to a change in the paradigm of art which causes new activities to emerge in art.

In the New Normal Era, theater is no longer understood as a performing art that has to be performed in performance buildings. On this era, the use of online-based social media becomes the venue for a theater performance. This can be shown in the following theater performance poster:



Picture 1 Poster of Theater Performance using YouTube as social media for staging. (Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CBg-MLIBrVq/)

Poster 1 is a poster of a theater performance entitled *Orang Kasar* by Anton Chekov which will be performedbyLingkarSemarang Theater Group, on June 28, 2020.

On this theater performance, Semarang Lingkar Theater Group does not use physical space as the venue for its theater performance, but artificial space based on social media as the venue for the show. It can be seen in thewritten of *Live Streaming Youtube*which shows on the poster of the theater performance.

YouTube is a popular online social media name in Indonesia. The online social media that aims to share video has been release since 2005. In Indonesia, YouTube is one of the online social media that is in great demand by online media users. (Merdeka.com). This can be seen in no less than 100 million Indonesians who access social media to share these online-based videos every day (Inet.detik.com).

The chosen of YouTube online social media as the stage where the show is performed not only doing by Lingkar Semarang Theater Group but also Abnon Theater Group from Jakarta. It is shown in the following picture:



Picture 2 Poster of Theater Performance using YouTube as social media for staging. (Source:

https://www.instagram.com/p/CBh0 mothqKz/)

Abnon Theater Group is a theater group from Jakarta. This group is led by Maudy Koesnadi. This group is formed because of the desire of the alumni who won the Jakarta "Abang None" Competition to explore and preserve theater performance art based on Betawi culture (Djarumfoundation.org).

Theater performance using online-based social media is also performed by Wawan Sofwan. In his theater performance entitled Terol, Wawan Sorfwan chooses YouTube online social media as a stage for theater performance. It is shown in the following poster:



Figure 3 Poster of Theater Performance using YouTube as social media for staging. (Source:

https://www.instagram.com/p/CAVb VDghv5M/)

Wawan Sofwan is an Indonesian playwright who was born in Ciamis. Dramawan was born in 1965. He studied at UPI Bandung. Besides, He had performed many theater performances. In the New Normal Era, Wawan Sofwan prefers online social media like Youtube as a place to expresshis theater performance (Wikipedia.org).

The tendency to determine online social media as the stage during the New Normal Era is the impact of theater performance activity during the Covid-19

Pandemic Era. During the Covid-19

Pandemic Era theater performance is doing on various online social media. It is shown in the following picture:



Picture 3 Poster of Theater
Performance usingInstagram as
social media for staging.(Source:
https://www.instagram.com/p/B_M4
QZ9JgvT/)

The impossibility accessing physical places during the Covid-19 Pandemic, making theater artists choose virtual space as an alternative for performing venue. On this era, online social media, which is an artificial space of everyday life only used as a medium for daily digital communication, it transformed into a space for artistic expression. The impossibility of accessing public spacesphysically giving an ideato Indonesian theater artists to make social media as a venue for theater performance. It is also seen in the following theater performance poster:



Picture 4 Poster of Theater Performance usingInstagram as social media for staging. (Source:

https://www.instagram.com/p/B_AM yGFDsMb/)

In definitive term, theater can be understood as a work of art which is a quality of communication, situation, and action describing human life as it is shown directly on the stage by a theater group, based on the drama script that chosen to the audience. In a theater performance, the story of human life is presented on the stage and watched by the audience (Harymawan, 2-3: 1993).

Based on the above statement, it can be understood that a theater performance is a communication practice. It means that in a theater performance there are messages that the show maker wants to convey to the audience. The messages are articulated through the actions taken, the situation built, and the dialogues conveyed by the actors

directly during the show to the audience on a stage. Thus, a theater performance cannot be understood as a theater performance if it does not involve actors, audiences, and the stage where the theater performance takes place.

Covid-19 During the Pandemic Era, physical and social distancing make Indonesian theater artist no longer able to access existing physical performance buildings. The slogan or jargon #dirumahaja that is officially announced by the government cause Indonesian theater artists to choose online social media as the only media for performance or artistic expression that is possible and accessible. This thing makes the meaning of the stage concept in the dramaturgy of theater performance changing.

The concept of the stage, which is previously understood as a place for physical artist expression has changed to not to be physical. The concept of the stage in a theater performance experiences a radicalization of meaning. Online social media which has virtual function also as a place for a theater

performance no longer interpreting as virtual. An online social media performance stage is interpreted as having a physical character as a theater in general. This is because the aterbased on online media performance still has an empirical character.

In general, social media can be understood as an online social communication media application that is used by users for interaction and communication. In social media, it is possible for users to interact non-physically with other users by using an application information technology in the network. The purpose of online social media is to expand human social interaction using online information technology, and transforming human activity into online virtual spaces based.

In the New Normal Era, understanding and cognitionare integrated into the meaning of the theater stage concept. The existence of online social media that can accommodate human interaction and communication is used as a basis for changing the meaning of the theater performance stage. Therefore, on thisera, the concept of the stage is no

longer interpreted as closed only in conventional-physical spaces, such as a performance building. However, virtual spaces are also understood and interpreted in the same physical way as a theater. This is because theater performance activitybased on online social media can also be perceived empirically by the audience. This empirical perception makes the virtual theater stage having the same quality as a physical or non-virtual theater performance stage;

Another phenomenon in theatrical performance that emerging during the New Normal Era is the emergence of new form interaction between the audience and the theater performancewhich is staged. The interaction is virtual interaction. Virtual interaction is interaction between users that occur on online social media. This interaction is characterized by visual appearance and symbolic impression management between users of online social media. This interaction is built through an intentional relationship between the physical self as the subject in the real world and the

symbolic self which becomes the object in the virtual world.

In theatrical performance in the New Normal Era, it can be seen in the action of audience feedback through comment column on social media. Between the audiences and actors of the theater performance, interaction isdone by giving various feedbacks on the performance they have watched. Giving comment is a practice of building social interaction and communication. This is due to the use of language as the main medium of delivery of message. Thus, comment on online social media is a symbol of the interaction that occurs between the audiences and actors in a theater performance.

CONCLUSION

Physical distancing, social distancing, and the slogan #dirumahaja that becoming the the symbol during Covid-19 Pandemic Era have influenced the existence of theater performance in Indonesia during the New Normal Era. Based on the analysis, this study obtains in three findings. First, the use of social media as a place of performance. Second, a changing in

understanding of the meaning of the theater performance stage. *Third*, the formation of a virtual interaction model between actors and audiences in a theater performance.

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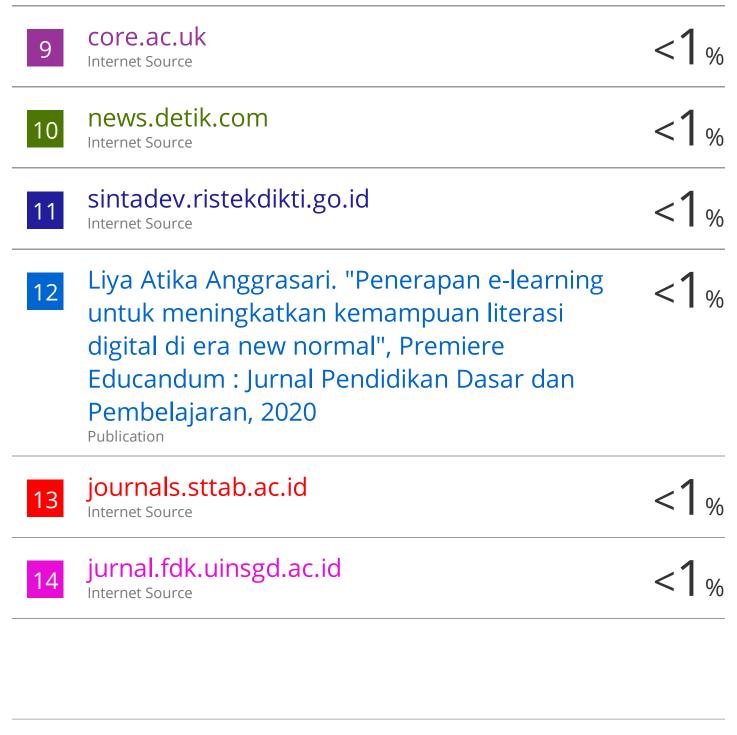
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