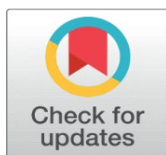
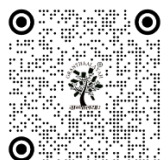


GLOBAL TEXT AND LOCAL PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF “ALICE IN ASSAM” AS ASSAMESE EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE

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ABSTRACT

This article studies “Alice in Assam” as an example of Assamese experimental theatre that brings a global literary text into a local performance world. The play is based on Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass, but it does not present a simple adaptation. It sends two Alices from different universes to Assam and makes them meet local figures, folk memories, historical symbols, animal characters, political satire and contemporary cultural questions. Using qualitative performance analysis, the paper reads the script, English version, production brochure, AANK website material and the recorded video uploaded on YouTube. The discussion focuses on intertextuality, cultural localisation, multiverse dramaturgy, non-linear structure, stylized acting, language, scenography and satire. The study argues that the play transforms Alice from a child figure of wonder into a travelling witness who enters Assam as an outsider and slowly reveals local anxieties about identity, history, environment, politics and cultural change. The global source gives the play a familiar entry point, while the Assamese performance field produces a new meaning. The paper concludes that “Alice in Assam” is not a copy of Carroll's text. It is a local re-performance that uses a global text to create a critical, playful and experimental theatre of Assam.

Item	Details
Title	“Alice in Assam”
Hashtags	#alternate_reality; #multiverse
Presented by	AANK_A Creative Line
Based on	Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll
Design and direction	Dr. Mrinal Jyoti Goswami
Script, light-stage design and scenography	Dr. Mrinal Jyoti Goswami
Language	English and gibberish / multilingual performance field
Presentation style	Stylized
Duration	1 hour 24 minutes without intermission
First performance	27 July 2022
Venue	Sri Sri Madhavadeva International Auditorium, Guwahati, Assam
Recorded source	YouTube video uploaded by Mrinal Jyoti Goswami on 12 August 2023
Main source materials for this paper	Script, English version, production details, brochure, AANK website and recorded video

Keywords: Alice In Assam, Assamese Experimental Theatre, Global Text, Local Performance, Multiverse, Intertextuality, Adaptation, Cultural Localisation, Stylized Theatre

1. INTRODUCTION

Global stories often travel beyond their first language, place and time. When such stories enter a new theatre culture, they do not remain the same. They are translated into local bodies, voices, images, memories and social questions. "Alice in Assam" is an important case of this process. The play takes the well-known Alice figure from Lewis Carroll and places her inside a theatrical Assam. It does not try to reproduce Wonderland. It asks what may happen when Alice arrives in Assam through the idea of the multiverse.

The production was presented by AANK_A Creative Line and designed and directed by Dr. Mrinal Jyoti Goswami. The AANK page records that the play is based on *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll, and that its style is stylized (AANK_A Creative Line, n.d.-a; Carroll, 1865/2008, 1871/2008). The same page describes the basic premise: two Alices from two different universes suddenly arrive in Assam because of a cosmic phenomenon (AANK_A Creative Line, n.d.-a). The production details also show that the first performance took place on 27 July 2022 at Sri Sri Madhavadeva International Auditorium, Guwahati, and that the duration is 1 hour 24 minutes (AANK_A Creative Line, n.d.-a).

The play belongs to a larger practice of experimental theatre in Assam. Its structure does not depend on a single linear plot. It moves through episodes, portals, changing spaces, folk characters, political figures, animals, flowers, sound, movement and satire. The two Alices, one from Earth 17 and another from Earth 56, become visitors inside this changing world (Goswami, 2023). Through their movement, the audience sees Assam as a place of wonder, memory and contradiction.

This article uses the topic Global Text and Local Performance to understand the play. Global text refers here to the Carroll source and the internationally familiar image of Alice. Local performance refers to the way the play re-creates that image through Assamese theatrical signs. These signs include Burha Dangaria, talking trees, Lachit Borphukan, Kaziranga, Panei, Rangmon, Rangdhali, Niponeshwari, Kankhowa, Bihu, folk fear, political satire and comments on cultural change (Goswami, 2023).

The main argument is simple. "Alice in Assam" is not a dependent copy of Carroll. It is a local re-performance. It uses Alice as a moving lens through which Assam can be seen afresh. The play is playful, but it is not only for play. It uses fantasy to speak about history, identity, environment, politics and the market value of culture. In this way, the global child figure becomes a critical visitor in Assamese experimental theatre.

The article has three aims. First, it studies how the global Alice text is transformed in the Assamese stage world. Second, it analyses the multiverse device as a dramaturgical method. Third, it examines how local cultural signs and social satire make the play part of contemporary Assamese experimental performance.

1.1. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The study uses six connected ideas: intertextuality, adaptation, cultural translation, performance analysis, postdramatic form and scenography. These ideas are not kept as a separate theoretical frame only. They are used directly in the reading of the play. Intertextuality explains the relation between Carroll and the Assamese materials. Adaptation explains the change from text to performance. Cultural translation explains the movement from a global literary sign into Assamese memory. Performance analysis and scenography help read body, space, costume, sound, props, light and stage composition.

Intertextuality helps us understand how a text speaks with other texts. Julia Kristeva writes that a text is a "mosaic of quotations" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 66). This idea is useful because "Alice in Assam" does not use Carroll alone. It places Carroll's Alice beside Assamese folk figures, historical memory, ecological symbols, children's games, folktales and modern political satire. The play therefore becomes a meeting point of many cultural texts.

Adaptation is also important. Linda Hutcheon describes adaptation as "repetition, but repetition without replication" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 7). This statement is central to the present study. "Alice in Assam" repeats the Alice figure, Wonderland memory and the experience of a strange world. But it does not repeat Carroll's plot. It relocates the Alice device inside Assamese performance and uses it for local questioning.

The concept of cultural translation is useful because the play does not simply transfer a Western text into Assamese theatre. It changes the text through local signs. Bhabha's idea of the "third space" helps explain this process, where cultural meaning is produced through negotiation rather than simple copying (Bhabha, 1994). In "Alice in Assam", the

stage becomes such a space: Carroll's Alice meets Burha Dangoriya, Lachit Borphukan, Panai, Kankhuwa, Bihu, Burhi Air Xadhu and Kumpu.

Performance analysis gives the method for reading the production. Pavis (2003) argues that performance must be read through visible and audible signs such as gesture, body, space, object, costume, sound, rhythm and audience relation. This approach is necessary here because the meaning of "Alice in Assam" does not lie only in dialogue. It is created through movement, portals, light changes, animal bodies, masks, sound patterns and comic bodily behaviour.

The play's episodic and non-linear arrangement may also be read with postdramatic theatre. Lehmann (2006) argues that postdramatic theatre often gives more importance to image, rhythm, body and stage situation than to a closed dramatic plot. In the same way, "Alice in Assam" moves through fragments rather than a single realistic story. Its scenography also needs attention. McKinney and Butterworth (2009) define scenography as the orchestration of the performance environment. This helps connect the tree, holes, lights, costumes, folk props and bodies with the play's larger meaning.

The source text itself contains a question of identity. In Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Alice asks, "Who in the world am I?" (Carroll, 1865/2008, ch. 2). "Alice in Assam" makes this question local and performative. The Alices do not only ask who they are; they also ask what Assam becomes when seen through another universe.

2. METHOD

This article follows a qualitative performance analysis method. The purpose is not to measure the play through numerical data. The purpose is to understand how the performance produces meaning through text, character, stage space, body, language, satire and cultural signs.

The primary materials are the final script of "Alice in Assam", the Assamese script with English translation and notes on cultural characters, the production details document, the production brochure, selected performance photographs, the AANK_A Creative Line website page and the YouTube video uploaded on 12 August 2023 (AANK_A Creative Line, 2022, n.d.-a; Goswami, 2023, 2026). The cultural notes attached to the script are treated as authorial production notes because they explain the local characters used in the performance.

The analysis is organised around five questions. First, how does the play use the global Alice source? Second, how does it localise that source within Assamese cultural experience? Third, what is the function of the multiverse idea? Fourth, how do folk memory, history, politics and environment appear on stage? Fifth, how do language, scenography and non-linear structure make the work experimental?

Close reading and close viewing are used. The script is read for characters, situations, references and dialogue. The brochure and website are read for production context. The video and photographs are read for bodies, gestures, colour, props and stage composition. This method follows Pavis's (2003) view that performance meaning emerges through a network of signs. It also follows Taylor's (2003) distinction between archive and repertoire: the script, photographs and video act as documents, while movement, voice and gesture preserve traces of embodied performance.

The study has one limitation. A recorded video cannot fully reproduce the live atmosphere of the auditorium. The live audience's physical response, the scale of the stage and the shared energy of the event cannot be fully recovered from a video. However, the video remains useful because it preserves many performance signs and allows repeated viewing for research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. THE GLOBAL TEXT AS A STARTING POINT

The global text in this study is the Alice tradition created by Lewis Carroll. Alice is not only a character in a children's book. She has become a travelling cultural sign. She can move into different cultures because her story already deals with strangeness, rule-change, language play and unstable identity. In Kristeva's terms, the play receives Alice as an earlier text and places it among new textual relations (Kristeva, 1980).

"Alice in Assam" uses this possibility. The play does not begin with a realistic Assamese domestic story. It begins with two Alices in different zones, playing in their own ways. One dances under a tree; another plays with a puppet. Their

costumes are similar, but their ears are different. This visual difference immediately tells the audience that the play is dealing with similarity and difference at the same time (Goswami, 2023).

The Carroll source gives the play a familiar door. Viewers who know Alice can recognise Wonderland references such as Mad Hatter, Tweedledee, Tweedledum and Humpty Dumpty. But these references do not take the stage back to England. Instead, they act as memory signs carried by the two Alices. The two characters remember Wonderland, but their present adventure takes place in Assam.

This shift is the main adaptation strategy. The play uses the comfort of a known global text and then disturbs it. The audience may expect a Wonderland story, but the stage gives them Assam through Wonderland-like surprise. This is adaptation in Hutcheon's sense: the earlier work is repeated, but it is not replicated (Hutcheon, 2013).

Carroll's Alice often enters spaces where rules change. In "Alice in Assam", that rule-changing quality is transferred to the multiverse. Because the Alices come from different Earths, the play can make Assam appear both familiar and unfamiliar. The result is a localised form of the Alice question: what happens when the known world is viewed as strange?

3.2. LOCAL PERFORMANCE AND ASSAMESE CULTURAL TRANSLATION

The most important creative action of the play is localisation. Alice does not simply arrive in a geographical Assam. She enters a layered Assamese performance world. This world includes folk belief, historical memory, ecological imagination, children's play, folktale, political satire and popular cultural speech. In terms of cultural translation, meaning is produced between the global Alice text and the local Assamese signs (Bhabha, 1994).

The director's note is important here. It says that Alice had stayed deep in the director's heart from childhood and that the idea later developed into bringing Alices from different universes to Assam (AANK_A Creative Line, 2022). This statement shows that the production is not an accidental borrowing. It grows from a long personal and cultural encounter with Carroll's text.

Localisation begins through names and images. The play uses Assam, Axom and Asam as possible forms across universes. This is a simple but meaningful device. It suggests that place itself can exist in more than one version. The spelling difference becomes a theatrical clue to cultural and historical multiplicity.

The appearance of Burha Dangoriya is an important local sign. The script notes describe him as an elder or ancestral presence connected with wisdom, observation and moral awareness (Goswami, 2023). In the performance, he sits near the tree and keeps grinding betelnut. He does not control the plot directly. Instead, he acts as a silent witness. This makes him a theatrical sign of cultural memory. In Pavis's terms, the character is not only a role but also a visual and aural sign: white costume, still body, khundana sound and repeated stage position together produce meaning (Pavis, 2003).

The talking and moving trees also produce a localised strange world. They are not the same as Carroll's Wonderland creatures. Their speech and movement create a folk-fantasy environment inside Assam. The Alices are surprised because the trees run, speak and say that leaves of trees eat humans (Goswami, 2023). The stage turns the familiar natural world into a playful and dangerous space.

Local performance therefore changes the source material at the level of sign, body and situation. The audience does not only hear about Assam. It sees Assam becoming strange, comic and critical through stage images. Figure 1 shows this process: tree-like figures, costume, light and the two Alices turn local memory into a performed world rather than a descriptive background.

Figure 1



Figure 1 Tree-like figures in the Assamese performance landscape. Photo credit: AANK A Creative Line.

3.3. MULTIVERSE AS DRAMATURGICAL METHOD

The multiverse is not used only as a modern scientific decoration. It is the dramaturgical engine of the play. The emergency announcement says that Earth no. 96 has been hit by the Proskatix meteorite and that people may be displaced to other Earths (Goswami, 2023). This event gives theatrical permission for the Alices to move across spaces, languages and social situations. It also creates what Turner (1982) calls a threshold condition: the characters are between worlds and therefore able to see ordinary reality differently.

The second scene shows the physical result of this displacement. One Alice feels that the gravity is lower than in her universe, while the other feels pressed down by stronger gravity. The command 'Blance Gravity' becomes both a comic device and a bodily stage action (Goswami, 2023). Read through performance analysis, this moment shows that the multiverse is not explained only by speech; it is performed through imbalance, falling, rising and bodily adjustment (Pavis, 2003).

The multiverse device allows comparison without heavy explanation. Each Alice comes from a different Earth. Therefore, when they meet Assam's figures, they can compare this universe with their own. This makes satire possible. A historical figure may be known differently in another universe. A political leader may be admired in one world and mocked in another. A cultural practice may be sacred in one world and commercial in another.

This comparison is not only comic. It asks the audience to think about the present. If another version of the same place exists, then the present version is not fixed. It can be questioned. The play uses fantasy to loosen the authority of everyday reality.

The Alices are also useful because they are outsiders and insiders at once. They know Wonderland, but they do not know Assam. They are children or child-like visitors, but they also bring knowledge from other universes. Their confusion allows them to ask direct questions. Their innocence makes satire sharper.

The multiverse therefore gives the play freedom. It frees the structure from realism. It allows sudden movement from one space to another. It explains holes, storms, portals, shifting identities and comic misunderstanding. This supports Lehmann's (2006) idea that contemporary theatre can work through scene, image and rhythm rather than through a closed plot line.

3.4. FOLK MEMORY, HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY SATIRE

"Alice in Assam" uses local materials in a playful manner, but the play is not politically empty. The encounter with Lachit Borphukan is a strong example. Lachit Borphukan is remembered in Assamese history and cultural memory as the Ahom general associated with the Battle of Saraighat in 1671 (Gait, 1906). The script notes also identify him as a symbol of courage, discipline, patriotism and responsibility (Goswami, 2023). By placing Lachit on stage beside a contemporary leader, the play turns history into a critical mirror.

The scene then places Lachit beside a contemporary political leader who speaks with dog-like sounds such as 'Bhau... Bhau...' (Goswami, 2023). The contrast is clear. The stage moves from historical discipline to noisy public performance. This is not only parody. It is an intertextual collision between a heroic memory and a comic present. Kristeva's idea of intertextuality helps here because the meaning comes from the meeting of different cultural texts on one stage (Kristeva, 1980).

This is one of the key methods of the play. It brings a respected historical symbol into contact with a comic present. The result is not a simple patriotic scene. It asks how history is remembered, repeated, misused or forgotten in public life. The Alices become witnesses to this conflict.

The Kaziranga sequence adds another layer of local meaning. Panai, also written as Panei in the script, is a rhinoceros mother searching for her son Rangmon. The script notes connect Panai with the cultural and ecological significance of the rhinoceros in Assam, especially in relation to Kaziranga, and with meanings of strength, motherhood, protection and attachment to land (Goswami, 2023). Rangdhali the deer and Niponeshwari the peacock extends this ecological stage world through gentleness, alertness, beauty, rhythm and seasonal celebration. Figure 2 shows how these figures share the stage with Alice under the large tree image.

The Bihu discussion is also important. One Alice says that Bihu has become modern in her universe. Another says that in her universe Bihu means marketing and business (Goswami, 2023). Panai responds sadly and decides to teach them an older form of Bihu. In theoretical terms, this is not a simple nostalgic scene. It is cultural translation under pressure. The local practice is shown as living culture, but it is also shown as vulnerable to market language and public display (Bhabha, 1994).

The play does not reject modernity directly. It stages the problem. Culture changes, but some changes can turn culture into market performance. Through the playful voices of Alice and Panei, the play asks what is lost when a living cultural practice becomes only an event, image or product.

Figure 2



Figure 2 The Alices with a Local Stage Figure Under the Tree Set-Piece. Photo Credit: AANK A Creative Line.

Kankhuwa is another example of folk memory turned into social satire. The script notes describe Kankhuwa as a mythical fear figure from Assamese folklore and medieval Assamese literature, associated with danger, disappearance and threat to children (Goswami, 2023). In the play, this fear figure charges Alice, suspects smuggling, drugs and terrorism, and wants her long ears. The old folk fear is therefore translated into a modern fear of policing, suspicion and public violence. Figure 3 visually supports this reading through comic costume, bodily exaggeration and staged confrontation.

The play also brings in characters from Burhi Aair Xadhu, Lakshminath Bezbaroa's well-known collection of Assamese folktales. Figures such as the fox, monkey, horse trader, old man and old woman belong to a narrative world where animals and rural human figures reveal cleverness, greed, deception, negotiation and survival (Bezbaroa, 1911; Goswami, 2023). The play uses these characters to comment on alliance, betrayal, bargaining and opportunism. Here, folklore is not preserved as a museum object; it is re-performed as social critique.

Kumpu adds a further literary layer. The character comes from Jyotiprasad Agarwala's poem Kumpur Xopun, included in Jyotiprasad Rachanavali (Agarwala, 2003). The script notes connect Kumpu with childhood fear, anxiety and

dream-like uncertainty (Goswami, 2023). This use of Kumpu strengthens the play's child-centred logic. Alice, Kumpu and the children are not only innocent figures; they become sensitive observers of fear.

Figure 3



Figure 3 Folk-Costumed Performers in a Comic Local Sequence. Photo Credit: AANK a Creative Line.

3.5. LANGUAGE, GIBBERISH AND EXPERIMENTAL STYLE

The language of the play is described as English and gibberish on the AANK website, while the production material also presents it as multilingual (AANK_A Creative Line, n.d.-a; AANK_A Creative Line, 2022). This mixed language field is central to the experimental quality of the performance. The play does not depend on pure literary dialogue. It uses sound, broken speech, body and comic rhythm.

Gibberish is meaningful in this play because the characters' travel across universes. Language can fail, change or become strange. When Alice asks Pandura to change the language, the play turns linguistic confusion into stage action (Goswami, 2023). This supports Pavis's argument that sound, tone and bodily situation are part of performance meaning, not secondary details (Pavis, 2003).

This helps the audience understand displacement. When people enter a new world, they do not only move physically. Their words also shift. The play uses this instability for comedy, but it also shows the difficulty of translation. Alice has to translate herself into Assam, and Assam has to translate itself before Alice.

The use of English is also significant. It keeps the global Alice memory visible. At the same time, Assamese names, cultural references and folk expressions localise the language field. The result is not a smooth bilingual text. It is a performance language made from crossings, mistakes, comic sounds and cultural switching.

This kind of language supports experimental theatre because it reduces the authority of a single standard speech. Viewers have to read meaning through situation, sound, gesture and rhythm. This is close to Lehmann's (2006) account of postdramatic performance, where words may work beside images and sounds rather than rule over them.

The repeated comic sounds of the leader, the emergency announcement, the command to balance gravity, and the folk speech of local characters all create a theatre of sound. The play makes language unstable, but it does not make it empty. Its mixed speech creates a multilingual performance space where global English, Assamese cultural memory and invented sound meet.

3.6. SCENOGRAPHY, MOVEMENT AND NON-LINEAR STRUCTURE

The production is described as stylized, and this is visible in the way the scenes are arranged (AANK_A Creative Line, n.d.-a). The structure is not linear. It moves from one event to another through mood, image, sound and movement. This can be read through Lehmann's (2006) postdramatic frame because the production gives strong importance to visual situations and episodic rhythm.

The first scene already establishes a visual principle. Two Alices appear in separate zones, each doing a different action. Light moves between them. One performs dance; the other plays with puppets. The stage therefore creates parallel realities before the plot fully explains the multiverse (Goswami, 2023). The visual design prepares the audience for the idea of multiple worlds.

Portals or holes are very important stage devices. The Alices enter and disappear through holes. This gives the play a physical way to show movement between spaces. The device is simple, but it is theatrically effective. It turns the stage floor into a multiverse map. Spaces do not need realistic construction; they appear through action, light and sound.

Movement also produces meaning. The Alices struggle with gravity, run from trees, search for each other, meet local characters and escape danger. Their bodies show confusion before their speech explains it. This is important because the play's world is unstable. The performers' bodies make that instability visible. Figure 4 may be read through Pavis's (2003) performance signs: body, costume, prop, light and spatial position work together.

Figure 4



Figure 4 A Performer Framed Against the Tree Backdrop. Photo Credit: AANK A Creative Line.

The scenic imagination is minimal but suggestive. Trees, holes, sounds, masks, costumes and light create the changing field. A full realistic Assam is not built. Instead, the stage gives signs of Assam. McKinney and Butterworth (2009) describe scenography as the orchestration of the performance environment; this idea helps explain how the tree backdrop, small props, darkness and coloured light create a world with limited material. Figure 5 shows this economy of stage design.

Figure 5



Figure 5 Stylized character image and minimal scenography. Photo credit: AANK A Creative Line.

The non-linear structure also helps the play avoid a single moral. The audience moves from cosmic disaster to folk fear, from history to politics, from Kaziranga to Bihu, from flowers to bees and butterflies, from Burhi Aair Xadhu to Kumpu. The scenes are connected by the Alices' journey, but each scene opens a different question. The structure is episodic, but it is not random. Its unity comes from travel, comparison and cultural encounter.

3.7. ALICE AS WITNESS, CHILD FIGURE AND CRITICAL VISITOR

The two Alices are the centre of the play's seeing. They are not powerful heroes. They are visitors who ask questions, misunderstand things and run away from danger. This makes them useful witnesses. Their outsider position allows the

local world to appear strange. In Turner's terms, they stand at a threshold between worlds, and this threshold position gives them critical sight (Turner, 1982).

In Carroll, Alice often faces unstable rules and strange logic. In "Alice in Assam", the same child-like curiosity becomes a method of social observation. The Alices ask simple questions in serious situations. Their questions expose contradictions in politics, culture, history and fear. This is the strongest point of the adaptation: Carroll's wondering child becomes a critical visitor in Assam (Carroll, 1865/2008; Hutcheon, 2013).

The child figure is important because it can speak without the burden of official seriousness. When Alice speaks to a leader or a folk figure, the tone becomes comic. But beneath the comedy, the play presents serious issues: political speech, history, cultural business, environmental loss and public fear.

The two Alices also create doubleness. They are similar but not the same. One belongs to Earth 17 and the other to Earth 56. This doubleness allows the play to compare different possibilities. It also suggests that identity is not singular. Alice can be many. Assam can also be many. The director's choice to use two Alices makes the idea of plurality visible on stage.

The Alices do not finally solve Assam's problems. That is not their function. Their function is to disturb ordinary seeing. Through them, familiar cultural signs become strange again. A festival, a historical figure, a political speech, a forest, a folk monster and a cultural market are all viewed from a new angle.

This makes "Alice in Assam" an experimental local performance. It uses the global Alice figure not to escape Assam, but to return to Assam with sharper sight. Figure 6 shows this idea in performance form: bodies, costumes and spatial layering create a non-linear stage image where fantasy becomes a serious tool of social reflection.

Figure 6



Figure 6. Ensemble Movement in The Non-Linear Staging. Photo Credit: AANK A Creative Line.

4. CONCLUSION

This article has studied "Alice in Assam" as an Assamese experimental theatre work that transforms a global literary text into a local performance event. The play begins from Lewis Carroll's Alice tradition, but it does not remain inside that tradition. It places two Alices from different universes in Assam and lets them move through folk memory, history, politics, environment and cultural performance.

The analysis shows that the play's adaptation is creative and critical. It uses Carroll's Alice as an entry point, but the performance becomes Assamese through its cultural characters, folk references, political satire, language play, scenic signs and embodied action. This confirms Hutcheon's point that adaptation is not replication (Hutcheon, 2013). It also confirms that cultural translation can produce a new performance space rather than a simple copy of the source (Bhabha, 1994).

The multiverse structure gives the production freedom. It allows the play to compare different versions of reality and to question the present without being limited by realism. This makes the play playful as well as serious. It can laugh, but it can also criticise.

The article also finds that language and style are central to the work. English, gibberish, Assamese references, sound, movement and comic distortion create a mixed performance language. The play's meaning is therefore not only textual. It is also visual, sonic and bodily, as performance analysis requires us to notice (Pavis, 2003).

"Alice in Assam" therefore may be understood as a local re-performance of a global text. It is not a simple adaptation, and it is not only children's fantasy. It is a contemporary Assamese experimental work that uses fantasy to think about cultural memory, public life and change. The play shows that a global figure can become meaningful in a local theatre only when the local stage transforms her.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The primary performance material analysed in this study is the recorded video "Alice in Assam" uploaded on YouTube by Mrinal Jyoti Goswami on 12 August 2023. Production details are available on the AANK_A Creative Line website and in the production brochure. The Assamese script with English translation and notes on cultural characters, the final script, and the photographs supplied by AANK A Creative Line are used as research materials for close reading and performance analysis.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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