

The Performative Matrix: *Alladeen* and Disorientation

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I wish to thank Tomasz Kubikowski and Grzegorz Ziolkowski for inviting me to speak today, and I am honoured to be here at the Grotowski Centre.

The concepts of performance I will discuss today are drawn mainly from my book *Perform or Else*. I realize I am speaking to an audience for whom the English term 'performance' may be new, especially in the multiple senses in which I will be using it, and that translating all of these senses into Polish is very challenging. Indeed, the connections I make may seem arbitrary, but given the global role that English has come to play in such areas as business, science and culture, I believe the matrix I will describe today will become more and more evident in the future, for better and for worse.

I will begin by discussing a multimedia theatre piece called *Alladeen*, which toured worldwide from 2003 to 2005, playing in Chicago in April 2003. *Alladeen* is a collaboration between the US performance company The Builder's Association and the British media art company motiroti. The question I will entertain today is this: *what is the relation of large-scale, multimedia theatre, on the one hand, and globalization, on the other?* *Alladeen* is a global performance from the very outset: as a collaboration between a US

performance group and a British media arts group, it is also a performance about globalization. It focuses on the phenomenon of Indian call centres—specifically, groups of workers in India who handle telephone calls for US businesses, often pretending to be Americans and certainly behaving as if they're conversant with American life and popular culture.

Alladeen is very loosely based on the rags-to-riches story of Aladdin, a poor Arab boy who finds an oil lamp, is granted wishes by the genie who lives inside, and then eventually becomes a king. This story is apparently an Orientalist construct, as it first appeared in France in the eighteenth century, and no original Arabic text has been found. The Aladdin narrative, however, plays mostly an allegorical role in the *Alladeen* performance. As the story is mined primarily for the theme of making a wish. In 'Call Span', *Alladeen*'s fictionalized call centre, Indian workers help American callers 'fulfill their wishes' - such as driving to Las Vegas or dealing with a faltering love affair - while also negotiating their own globalized desires - to get rich, to travel, to find a connection with someone else, even if on the other side of the world from India.

The performance is structured into three parts, plus a prologue, and its actions take place in three cities on different continents. The prologue is a short scene on a New York City street. A street defined by a storefront, a bus stop and reflections of passing vehicles - but all of this is achieved not by traditional set and props but by a

large-scale computer projection composed right before our eyes. The prologue opens with an empty stage and the words “New York” projected across a large screen, approximately 8 feet tall and 30 feet wide. The words are replaced by rectilinear shapes that move in from left, right, top and bottom, shapes that quickly compose the interior of a music store, with racks of CDs and listening stations. Electronic music accompanies the entrance of a silhouetted customer, who is soon enclosed by more shapes, which compose the store’s exterior walls and windows and then album posters and the store’s logo and sign: Virgin MegaStore. Reflections of passing cars zip by as the sidewalk takes shape via projections of a mailbox, fire hydrant and hot dog stand, as well as bus stop and ‘walk/don’t walk’ signs.

A young South Asian woman enters stage left,

hangs up to take an incoming call from her old roommate from Hong Kong, to whom she describes her Las Vegas plans in Chinese, interspersed with English terms, such as ‘really good package deal’. As silhouettes of pedestrians pass by or stand awaiting a bus, the young woman again hangs up to take another call, this one from her first friend calling back. She’s soon interrupted, however, as a noisy city bus rolls up, entirely filling the projection screen. After the bus pulls away, the young woman exits stage left, describing her attempt to rent a car: ‘I don’t know where they get these operators from. It’s like they don’t speak English!’

Alladeen’s opening prologue thus confronts us with signature traits of contemporary globalization: a British music store on a New York City street, wireless phone technology,



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carrying a cup of coffee as she walks quickly while talking on a mobile phone headset. The entire scene’s dialogue consists of a series of fast-paced, one-sided phone conversations. Played by Tanya Selvaratnam, the young woman stops centre stage and describes to a close friend her night out singing karaoke in a Chinatown bar – ‘I’m a genie in a bottle, baby’ – and the two plan to sing karaoke on an upcoming trip to Las Vegas, where the friend has booked a room at the Aladdin Hotel. The young woman then hangs up to call a car rental service, but immediately has difficulty communicating with Monica, the rental agent. Exasperated, she says, ‘Don’t you speak English? You know, I can’t understand a word you’re saying. Where are you from?’ She quickly

multilingual talk of karaoke, Chinatown, London and Las Vegas, as well as the disorienting experience of international call centres. The last act of *Alladeen* also takes place in the West, a London nightclub, and it also emphasizes the effects of globalization. In a final scene, Rizwan Mirza plays a call centre worker whose success takes him to London. There, from a karaoke bar, he makes a late night call to his boss in India, who answers in the morning there. Not only do we see the mixing of leisure and labour activities, we also sense the temporal jolt of the globalized, 24/7 workday.

Sandwiched between the New York and London scenes, the main action of *Alladeen* is set in Bangalore, India. Act 1 takes place in a training

session of a call centre where Indian characters sit studying American culture and practicing American English under the watchful eyes and listening ears of an American trainer and an Indian manager. Projected behind them is video of an actual training session, which the Builders and motiroti shot on location in a Bangalore call centre. Throughout this act, the words and gestures of the video-taped workers and on-stage actors sync-up and feedback with each other, creating uncanny effects for the audience. For instance, in one scene, Jasmine Simhalan plays a call centre trainee practicing the names of US cities, which she reads off a list: 'Santa Fe, New Mexico. Albany, New York. Raleigh, North Carolina.' Simultaneously, the audience sees and hears on screen an actual male trainee reading the same list. At one point, the trainers - on-stage and on-screen - reiterate the pronunciation of 'Bismarck, North Dakota', emphasizing where the stress falls in 'Bismarck', with a quick twist of the torso. With comic effect, the on-stage trainee obliges by also twisting her torso when again saying 'Bismarck'.

This scene captures one of the defining themes

acting and recorded training, as well as the content of that training, namely, the learning of American English by Indian call-centre workers. Because its main focus deals with Indian call centres increasingly used by US firms, *Alladeen* engages a number practices associated with economic globalization, in particular, 'outsourcing' or the hiring of an external firm to perform tasks formally done by internal employees. However, because one can outsource locally within one's own country, it is more precise to say that *Alladeen* engages both outsourcing and 'off-shoring', the practice of moving jobs to other countries in order to reduce labour costs.

Now although *Alladeen* expressly addresses outsourcing - its own promotional materials stresses this - I want to focus on a related practice of economic globalization, one that explicitly involves cultural globalization. That practice is 'glocalization'. Not globalization but glocalization. Glocalization is a term often used to describe how goods and services are sold globally through highly localized and culturally-sensitive marketing strategies. A common example is McDonald's replacement of Ronald



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of *Alladeen*: the disorienting and uncanny play of proximity and distance, presence and absence, familiarity and strangeness, self and other. While the prologue concentrates on the intimate planning of a romantic vacation undertaken on a busy Manhattan street, Act 1 juxtaposes both live

McDonald in France with the French comics hero Asterix - and more relevant here - McDonald's marketing in India of a vegetarian 'Maharaja Mac' in place of its all-beef Big Mac. Glocalization, then, is a strategy for localizing globalization.

In *Alladeen*, however, we face a contorted version of glocalization. Through the Bangalore call centre, we have US companies marketing their services to US customers - only, those services are delivered by Indian workers. And because they are providing services rather than manufacturing goods, these workers must perform 'as Americans'. The optimal goal is for Indians to assist American callers without the Americans noticing any significant cultural difference. That's why the workers are trained in American English: to iron out both their native accents and the colloquialisms of school-learned British English.

Obviously, there is more to glocalization than pronunciation. Just as important to successful glocalization are shared cultural references that create a sense of commonality. In this same scene, another character, Saritri, gives a presentation about the popular American TV show, *Friends*, focusing on the personalities of each character. Her cross-cultural descriptions of Joey, Rachel, Monica, Phoebe and Chandler got laughs from my American theatre audience: as the *Friends* characters were translated on stage into an Indian frame of cultural reference, they became defamiliarized.

So far, then, *Alladeen* has - sometimes comically, sometimes critically - staged the uncanny cultural experience of glocalization, in this case a strange mix of East and West that both grants wishes and disorients the wishers, that both reinforces the feeling of belonging and disrupts any settled notion of place or home. But I want to consider *Alladeen* in a way that reaches beyond its own effective staging of the experience of glocalization. I want to suggest that *Alladeen* also - and unwittingly - points us to emerging forces of global power and knowledge that can be called 'the performative matrix'.

The term 'performative matrix' was coined in the early 1990s by Critical Art Ensemble, a collective of artists, activists and theorists that is also known by the initials CAE. In *The Electronic Disturbance*, their 1994 manifesto, CAE argued that in the 1960s groups such as The Living

Theater had succeeded in breaking down the barrier between theatre and life, effectively creating what CAE termed a 'performative matrix' that included both the stage and street, both art and life, both aesthetics and politics. The performative matrix, in short, is an expansive site or situation of action, one that displaces performance outside the institution of theatre. In many ways, their first notion of performative matrix corresponds to the field of cultural performance, that broad spectrum of activities described by Richard Schechner as including theatre, performance art, ritual and practices of everyday life.

However, Critical Art Ensemble also argued that this expanded performance space had lost its radical potential. Picking up the flag of the historical avant garde, they threw down a series of polemical gauntlets. Taking aim at activists, they proclaimed: *the streets are dead capital*. And turning to solo performance artists, they said: *the personal is not political*. CAE made these provocations as a way to further expand and radicalize the performative matrix. Theorizing a second notion of the performative matrix, they extended it beyond art and life and into the virtual space of electronic networks.

I will now articulate a third notion of the performative matrix, one that builds on these first two while also gathering together a number of concepts from my own research. Following a suggestion by Ricardo Dominguez, a former member of CAE and co-founder of the hacktivist group Electronic Disturbance Theatre, I believe my research 'opens up the performative matrix'. How so? Today I will argue that my research opens up the performative matrix in two distinct, yet interconnected ways.

First, my research has not been limited to the field of cultural performance but extends to other areas of performance production and research: organizational, technological, governmental and financial. In short, I analyse many different *paradigms of performance*, not just cultural performance. For instance, in the US - and increasingly around the world - workers and

managers, and indeed entire departments and organizations, are said to 'perform'. These performances are routinely measured through formal 'performance reviews' and assessed through 'performance evaluations'. Throughout most of the 1990s, the entire US government was evaluated annually through a programme called the National Performance Review, and such evaluations continue under the Bush administration. More broadly, a distinct form of organizational theory and practice has arisen around performance since the Second World War; called 'performance management', it has displaced the scientific management associated with Frederick Taylor. This is the paradigm I call 'organizational performance', and its discourses and practices obviously differ greatly from those found in cultural performance. More importantly, unlike cultural performance, whose dominant value - at least in the US - is the social efficacy of performances, that is, their potential to effect social change or critique, organizational performances are guided by the value of efficiency, by their capacity to maximize outputs and minimize inputs.

Another performance paradigm I study is *technological performance*, the performance crafted by engineers, computer scientists and other applied scientists and technicians. Here we find performances enacted not by artists or workers, not by humans at all, really, but by technologies. Plastics and alloys perform, as do sports cars and stereos, as well as communication networks and municipal infrastructures. Highly detailed 'performance specs' or technical specifications can be found on nearly all consumer products and on much more advanced 'high performance' products and systems. For instance, around the world, there is a network of 'high-performance computer centres', which not only provide highly competitive access to high-performance supercomputers but also conduct benchmarking or performance tests on other advanced computer systems. Unlike cultural or organizational performance, technological

performance is not evaluated by social efficacy or organizational efficiency but by technical *effectiveness*, by the ability to meet highly specified criteria such as speed, endurance and reliability - but there are literally thousands and thousands of other possible criteria.

I want to suggest that my own opening up of the performance matrix proceeds in two distinct but interrelated ways. First, along an axis of different paradigms. While Critical Art Ensemble sought to expand the performative matrix from art and life to cyberspace, their conception of it remained primarily a cultural one. And although their interest in activist organization and communication technology pointed *implicitly* toward the two other performance paradigms I have just discussed, these were still cast from the perspective of artists and activists. By contrast, I have *explicitly* tried to theorize organizational and technological performance *in their own terms*, rather than immediately subjecting them to critical inquiry or creative experimentation. Second, my opening up of the performative matrix also occurs along an onto-historical or Foucauldean axis. It is here that I theorize the historical and ontological relation of the different performance paradigms. I have tried to encapsulate this dimension in the following slogan: *performance will be to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries what discipline was to the eighteenth and nineteenth: an onto-historical formation of power and knowledge*. In short, I believe performance must be understood as an emergent formation of postmodern power and post-disciplinary knowledge, which I have elsewhere called the performance stratum but am today theorizing in relation to the performative matrix.

While Foucault located the rise of discipline in Western Europe, I believe that the performative matrix emerged and took hold in the United States just after World War 2. According to Foucault, discipline produced unified subjects through a series of institutions such as school, factory and prison, each with its own discrete archive of statements and practices. By contrast,

performative power blurs the borders of social institutions by connecting and sharing their digital archives. Financial information, criminal records and school transcripts once stored in separate file cabinets are now being uploaded to silicon databases and electronically networked. Bodies that once passed neatly through a linear sequence of power mechanisms are now learning to switch rapidly between conflicting evaluative grids; the resulting subjects tend to be fractured, multiple and/or hybrid. In the US workplace, for instance, we have witnessed the rise of multitasking; in schools, children are routinely diagnosed with attention-deficit disorders; and in everyday life, people have begun 'culture-surfing', moving through different styles and traditions almost as quickly and easily as changing channels on the television. From a wider historical perspective: while discipline functioned as the power matrix of the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution, liberal capitalism and European colonialism, performance operates as the matrix of the post-Enlightenment, the information revolution, neoliberal capitalism and postcolonialism.

But let me stress that performative power and knowledge is really a thing of the future; the disciplinary formation wasn't built in a day, nor has the performative matrix fully emerged. The performative matrix corresponds in many ways to the 'Empire' envisioned by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri: a decentred network of juridical discourses and biopolitical practices, of normative performatives and performances, governed by leading industrial nations such as the G8, international organizations such as the UN, IMF and WTO and a host of multi- and transnational corporations.

Normative globalization - which I distinguish from resistant globalization or 'anti-globalization' - normative globalization operates by optimizing different performative values: social efficacy, organizational efficiency, technological effectiveness, governmental accountability, financial profitability etc. One example of such performativity is the Global

Reporting Initiative or GRI. Based in the Netherlands, GRI is part of the United Nations' Environment Programme. The Global Reporting Initiative pursues sustainable development by encouraging governments, corporations and other organizations to prepare 'sustainability performance reports'. Such reports document three types of performance: economic performance (financial data), environmental performance (compliance to environmental policies) and social performance (respect of labour laws and human rights).

In a very real sense, such performance optimization across different paradigms forms the operational power behind recent forms of globalization. Now in theorizing performative power and knowledge, I draw on the work of others. For instance, Judith Butler's theory of 'punitive performatives' stresses the transgressive potential of embodied activities such as drag performance, but she also analyses the highly normative role that discursive performatives play in constituting and enforcing the heterosexist gendering of bodies. In some sense, I am trying to 'scale up' Butler's work on the relation of discursive performatives and embodied performances, using it to theorize how performativity operates in institutions and larger social formations. Though Butler's work is often read within the contexts of queer theory and the work of Austin and Derrida, I have found it useful to situate her writings in relation to two other theorists whose critical work on performance was long ignored by cultural performance scholars.

I refer here to Lyotard and Marcuse. Lyotard's performance theory lies at the core of his classic text, *The Postmodern Condition*. Famously, Lyotard argued that unlike in modernity, where knowledge and social bonds were legitimated by such grand narratives as Progress and Liberation, postmodern legitimation occurs through *performativity*, defined as system optimization, which he argues has come to dominate all language games with the demand, -be operational - or disappear'. I read the demand

as a version of the performance stratum's governing order word: perform - or else. Lyotard also uses the term 'performative principle', which I hear as an echo of Herbert Marcuse's concept of 'performance principle'. Synthesizing Marx and Freud, Marcuse in 1955 defined the performance principle as the reality principle that governs advanced industrial societies. The performance principle is a repressive reality principle, and Marcuse saw the alienating performances found in factory work spreading throughout all of society, to offices, homes and into popular culture. Long before Critical Art Ensemble, long before Lyotard and Butler, Marcuse realized how pervasive and important performance was to postindustrial societies. It is not much of an exaggeration, then, to see Marcuse as a true visionary of the performative matrix.

Now Lyotard and Marcuse's theories of performativity can help us articulate two different models of normative globalization or, if you like, two different structurings of the performative matrix. Lyotard's stress on diverse language games and his suspicion of metalanguage corresponds to the globalization that reigned throughout the 1990s: a multilateral network of nations, corporations and NGOs that works cooperatively in pursuing its political, economic and cultural policies. This is also what Hardt and Negri call 'Empire'. Marcuse's theory of performance, by contrast, stresses a one-dimensional and highly conformist organizational power, a power we can see in the unilateral globalization pursued by the current Bush administration. Hardt and Negri call this, significantly, an 'imperialist backlash against Empire'. These two models are not the only ones possible, of course. Indeed, taken together, they can be combined to suggest a third, even more complex, model of globalization. I have in mind here a performative matrix that fluctuates between two modes of global performativity: the Lyotardean and the Marcusean, the multi- and the unilateral. At times, this performative matrix may operate through alliances and agreements, affirming diversity and multilateralism; at times

these same alliances and agreements fall by the wayside as conformity and unilateralism reigns.

Such different modes of performativity are highly relevant to a *fourth* type of globalization, the 'anti-globalization' movement, with its many different constituencies and goals. Relevant here is what Marcuse called a 'revolution in values', in which aesthetic values come to the fore and are themselves transformed. In terms of the performance paradigms, such a revolution of values is precisely what cultural efficacy entails, at least as theorized by Schechner: rather than remaining isolated forms of entertainment, theatre and other cultural performances can potentially feedback into all of society, producing revolutionary effects there. Further, the extension and transformation of aesthetic values outside artistic and cultural institutions and into all of life and into cyberspace, as well - this is also what Critical Art Ensemble sought in first theorizing 'the performative matrix'. And to make yet another connection: it is what Hardt and Negri mean when they argue that the multitude's revolutionary force lies in its creativity.

In terms of the general theory of performance: by focusing on diverse performance paradigms and the larger performative matrix in which they operate, I try to theorize both the resistant *and* the normative aspects of global performativity. For if artists, activists and researchers are truly interested in the social efficacy of cultural performance, then understanding other types of performance and - more importantly, the matrix of power and knowledge which links them together - such understanding seems crucial for both engaging different performative values and transforming the social function of cultural production.

To return to *Alladeen*: does this cultural performance reinscribe the normative forces of globalization, or is it transgressive, transforming and unsettling them? Or might it be both? We can recast *Alladeen*'s staging of glocalization in terms of the performative matrix. Glocalization can be understood as a specific ensemble of

paradigmatic performances. For starters, with Indian-based US call centres, we have the embedding of organizational and cultural performances: within the context of an outsourcing and off-shoring American business organization, we have Indian employees working, *performing*, their job, a job that requires them to role-play or culturally perform as Americans. The more efficacious, the more 'localized' and seamless their cultural performance, the more efficient and competent their organizational performance.

And to add yet another performative value: the more efficient their organizational performance, the more profitable the global economic performance of the business itself. Thus, efficacious localization of cultural performance here adds up to profitable global economic performance. What this reveals is how crucial cultural research, knowledge and education - the very stuff of the arts and humanities, of anthropology, cultural studies and performance studies - how crucial these have become to contemporary processes of globalization.

We can see how these different performances come together in Act 2 of *Alladeen*, which is set in

the work space of the Bangalore call centre. On stage, the projection screen has been raised to reveal a platform holding five work stations, with characters working on flat-screen computer monitors. Downstage left and right stand what appear to be phone booths with frosted glass. The particular scene I will analyse here features a phone service called 'On the Road', which provides assistance to car rental customers. Here, Heaven Phillips stands in the booth stage left and plays an excited traveller calling from Los Angeles to get directions to Las Vegas. 'I've just won a gazillion smackeroonies in the lottery,' she exclaims, 'and I'm going to bet the whole wad.' Her jittery voice and slang expressions confuse Tanya, the worker who takes the call.

Tanya sits alone near centre stage, wearing a headphone and using a computer to access information regarding the woman's location, her specific problem and the best solution. Tanya puts the caller on hold to find out what 'smackeroonies' means, first asking her coworkers and then using her computer to find the definition. Back on the line, the caller says that she's feeling confused, even 'a little lost in space'. Hearing this American colloquialism for



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being disoriented or confused, Tanya connects the caller's phrase to the old American TV show *Lost in Space*, and then she expresses a personal affection for June Cartwright, one of this show's characters. This connection to a American pop culture reference fills the lag-time of the computer system - or rather, it provides time for Tanya to call up information and provide directions to Las Vegas. Just as important, however, Tanya's reference to the TV show creates an ephemeral bond between her and the caller. The character's cultural performance consists of 'passing' as an American long enough to create personal bond and supply the appropriate information.

Obviously, also crucial here - and throughout *Alladeen* - is yet another paradigmatic performance: technological performance. In contemporary globalization, communication and information technologies are to performativity what the file cabinet and panopticon were to discipline: the dominant modes of archiving knowledge and controlling bodies. With Tanya, we see communication and information technologies embodied in the central interface of *Alladeen*'s global call centre: the interface of headphone and computer, an interface composed, precisely, with the body of the Indian worker. Tanya listens and speaks through the headphone, while her fingers enter data on a keyboard and her eyes retrieve it through the computer screen.

Now *Alladeen*'s own spectacular interface - the multimedia set that its audience must learn to navigate - displays these different performances both on stage and on the large projection screen. The workstations of the call centre are the bread and butter of the centre's economic performance, while above on the screen one can see how the other performances are embedded in this econo-organizational performance. During the first part of the scene, the screen is filled with windows of different computer programs. Stage left on the screen is a map of the geographic location of the caller standing in the booth below, with other information about the caller displayed

below the map. Stage right, on the top of the screen, we see a live video image of Tanya wearing her headphone. Both below this window and to the immediate right, we see Tanya's cultural glocalization: Tanya 'plays' Phoebe from *Friends*, and we see Phoebe's picture highlighted below. These three windows index Tanya's US cultural database, her personal reservoir of American pop-culture references that form the basis of her cultural performance, her performance as an American. In addition, two other windows in the centre of the screen reference the technological performance of the workstation, its computer system. One displays the search results for the meaning of 'smackeroonies', while the second window display shows the map that Tanya eventually uses to give the caller the directions to Vegas. These windows supplement Tanya's cultural knowledge on the fly: she can call up information as she needs it from her computerized, artificial memory.

Again, what we can see here is how the glocalization achieved by Indian call centres depends on localized entwinings of cultural, organizational and technological performances within a larger, global economic performance. Not surprisingly, such glocalized performances can confuse and disorient both customer and worker. Each becomes 'lost in space' while navigating a complex network in which the location of the other - and of the self - is uncertain and shifting. Combining this experience of being 'lost in space' with Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, one might say that the practice of glocalization produces 'disorientalism'. While Said defined Orientalism as the romanticization and misrecognition of the 'East' by Westerners, 'disorientalism' refers to a generalized sense of spatial and temporal disorientation, a confusion caused by the networking of discrete locations into multiple and at times conflicting systems, many of which are global in their reach. In some sense, disorientalism means that every place and every moment is also potentially elsewhere and

elsewhen. Now and then, there and here, disorientalism.

Yet remaining mindful of the criticality of Said's concept of Orientalism, I must stress that such 'disorientalism' produces different effects on different people, differences that still divide East from West and South from North. Significantly, in this context, Ricardo Dominquez suggests a counter-movement to glocalization, one that he tags '(lo)balization', putting the local before the global without romanticizing it.

And, in closing, this brings me back to the question I posed above: *what is the relation of large-scale, multimedia theatre on the one hand, and globalization on the other?* Can theatrical events such as *Alladeen* offer modes of critical analysis and creative resistance to major processes of globalization, that is, to economic exploitation, political hegemony and cultural imperialism – and if so, how? Or, alternatively, do such large-scale, multimedia performances effectively *embody normative globalization*? I have been suggesting that while *Alladeen* explicitly focuses on outsourcing, it also reveals how largely normative tactics of glocalization can be understood in terms of specific types of performance: cultural, organizational, technological and economic. Such understanding can in turn be used to create forms of resistant glocalization, local gestures that potentially produce global effects. Such resistant glocalizations may partake of the revolution in values described by Marcuse: they are creative in a way that breaks out of the aesthetic or cultural realm and cuts transversely across technological, organizational and economic realms.

But of course, as anyone who studies cross-cultural theatre will be thinking, there's also the glocalization of the *Alladeen* performance itself. Marianne Weems told me in an interview that beyond the conceptual development of the *Alladeen* production, her collaborative work with British-Asian artists Keith Khan and Ali Zaidi gave her group access to three things: alternative funding streams, diverse technical expertise and an exchange of different performance skills.

Looked at another way, we can understand the collaborative process as mixing at least three different paradigmatic performances: the economic performance of financial funding, the technological performance of media and machines and the cultural performance of acting, dancing, singing, dramaturgy etc. And to square the circle: the collaboration of the Builders and motiroti is itself an organizational performance.

Moreover, I'd like to focus on attempts by the Builders and motiroti to glocalize the production in some of the different places it has been performed, places that include Singapore, Australia, Columbia, Canada, France, Great Britain, Germany and – as I mentioned – the United States. It has not been performed in India, although Marianne Weems told me she has tried to find a venue there but has thus far been unsuccessful. The glocalization of the performance most often occurs by connecting with local communities. In Glasgow and Bogota, for instance, The Builder's Association and motiroti conducted workshops with local artists, as well as walk-throughs of the set and demonstrations of the media technology. In New York, they joined anthropologist Arjun Appadurai to discuss the politics and aesthetics of large-scale, cross-cultural performances, in a public dialogue hosted by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

In all these cases, the artists sought to contextualize their global production within local *cultural* communities. In Seattle, however, they sought to connect with a very different group: the hometown corporation of Microsoft. *Alladeen* was to have been mounted in a special performance for its employees. However, when Microsoft discovered that the performance dealt with outsourcing, it pulled out of the arrangement, for the corporation had just started outsourcing some of its positions.

In early 2004 I saw *Alladeen* at Dartmouth College. There the artists worked with both artistic and business communities. They conducted workshops and class visits with media and theatre students, and in addition creative

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director Keith Khan participated in a panel at the Tuck School of Business. Titled 'Inside Outsourcing', this panel tried to explore the cultural, economic and policy issues surrounding outsourcing and off-shoring. Besides Keith Khan, the panel also included Jack Freker, president of Convergys Corporation, a leading US customer service company; Paul Gaffney, executive vice president of Staples Inc., a chain of large office supply stores that uses call centres; and Sonal Shah of the Center for American Progress, a non-profit research institute that promotes progressive economic policies.

The panel was, I suspect, a big success for the business people, who dominated the event with discussions of policy and economic issues. Cultural matters, however, were barely touched upon, as Khan tried to intervene critically at a few points but was, I thought, at a loss for words. Immediately afterwards, I spoke with him, and he seemed a bit overwhelmed. I do not mean to be critical of him: Keith Khan was the only artist on a panel of business people, sitting before an

audience mostly of graduate business students, in a space housed in a School of Business. If you are an artist or cultural researcher, you might ask yourself how well you would have performed under similar circumstances. Indeed, it may be easier for us to fly around the world than it is to walk across a campus or a city and collaborate with researchers in other performance paradigms, where we would most likely experience another version of disorientation.

As I do not presume to stand outside such questions, I will end by asking: does cultural performance research, research that now stretches around the world, research that has taken me, a US performance scholar, to Singapore and Tokyo, London and Berlin, Aberystwyth and Zagreb, to speak about performance, including a US/UK theatre piece dealing with the performance of Indian workers - does such a complex network of performance research embody normative or resistant globalization? Perhaps, in a range of complex ways, it does precisely both.