

# Performed Imaginaries: Exploring the World of Richard Schechner

Richard Schechner is a renowned figure in the field of performance studies, a discipline that examines various forms of performances and their impact on individuals and societies. As a scholar, director, performer, and writer, Schechner has made significant contributions to this field. One of his notable works is the concept of "performed imaginaries." In this article, we delve deep into the fascinating world of Richard Schechner, exploring the origins and implications of his concept.

## Understanding Performed Imaginaries

At its core, the notion of performed imaginaries refers to the process of creating and inhabiting alternative realities through various forms of performance. According to Schechner, these performances have the power to transform both individuals and societies, enabling them to explore new possibilities and challenge existing norms.

The concept of performed imaginaries encompasses a diverse range of performance practices, including traditional theater, ritualistic performances, and even everyday acts of self-expression. Schechner argues that these performances serve as a means to construct and negotiate our sense of identity, cultural practices, and social relationships.

### Performed Imaginaries

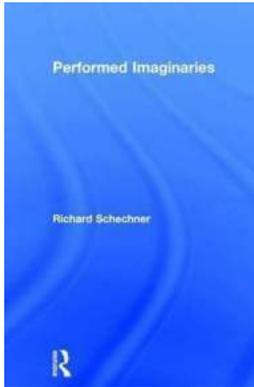
by Richard Schechner (1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 4472 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled



Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting: Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 196 pages



One of the key aspects of performed imaginaries is the blurring of boundaries between reality and fiction. Schechner believes that performances have the ability to create temporary "as-if" worlds, where the participants can explore different roles and perspectives. This process allows for personal growth, empathy building, and the potential for social change.

## **The Origins of Performed Imaginaries**

Schechner's ideas about performed imaginaries are deeply rooted in his own experiences as a theater director and anthropologist. Throughout his career, he has worked extensively with various theater companies and cultural communities around the world, studying their performances and rituals.

His exposure to diverse performance practices, including those of non-Western cultures, greatly influenced his understanding of the transformative potential of performances. Schechner started realizing that performances are not limited to staged artistic productions but rather permeate every aspect of human life.

His anthropological studies also revealed the societal implications of performances. He observed how rituals and performances shape cultural values,

social norms, and power dynamics. This realization further fueled his interest in exploring the role of performances in shaping societies.

## **Implications and Applications**

Schechner's concept of performed imaginaries has wide-ranging implications in various fields, including theater studies, anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Scholars and practitioners have drawn upon his ideas to understand the transformative power of performances and to explore the complex relationship between individuals and society.

In the realm of theater, Schechner's concept has paved the way for experimental and immersive forms of performances. Artists and directors have been inspired to create performances that challenge conventional storytelling and invite active audience participation. These new forms of theater aim to create immersive and transformative experiences for the viewers.

In anthropology, performed imaginaries have become a crucial lens through which researchers analyze cultural practices and rituals. Understanding how performances construct and embody social realities has shed light on numerous societal issues and cultural dynamics.

Moreover, the concept of performed imaginaries has been applied in various therapeutic and educational settings. Drama therapy, for example, utilizes performances to facilitate self-exploration, emotional healing, and personal growth. Similarly, educational programs have embraced performative approaches to encourage active learning and critical thinking among students.

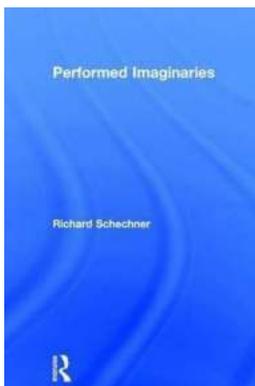
## **The Legacy of Richard Schechner**

Richard Schechner's contribution to the field of performance studies is immense. His multifaceted career as a scholar, director, performer, and writer has enriched our understanding of performances and their transformative potential. Through his concept of performed imaginaries, he has paved the way for new forms of artistic expression, scholarly research, and social change.

As we continue to explore the world of performances and their impact on our lives, Schechner's work will undoubtedly remain a source of inspiration. From traditional theater to everyday acts of self-expression, performed imaginaries offer us a glimpse into alternative worlds, inviting us to question, imagine, and transform.

#### References:

1. Schechner, Richard. "What is Performance Studies Anyway?" *TDR: The Drama Review*, vol. 56, no.4, 2012, pp. 13-14.
2. Thomaidis, Konstantina. "Richard Schechner's Performance Practice as Research and the Critique of Performance Studies." *The Theatre Times*, 2018.



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In this collection of essays, performance studies scholar and artist Richard Schechner brings his unique perspective to bear upon some of the key themes of society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Schechner connects the avantgarde and terror, the counter-cultural movement of the 1960s/70s and the Occupy movement; self-wounding art, popular culture, and ritual; the Ramlila cycle play of India and the way imagination structures reality; the corporate world and conservative artists. Schechner asks artists to redeploy Nehru's Third World as a movement not of nations but of like-minded culture workers who must propose counter-performances to war, violence, and the globalized corporate empire.

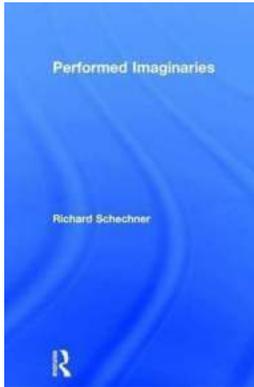
With characteristic brio, Schechner urges us to play for keeps. "Playing deeply is a way of finding and embodying new knowledge", he writes.

Performed Imaginaries ranges through some of the key moves within Schechner's oeuvre, and challenges today's experimental artists, activists, and scholars to generate a new, third world of performance.



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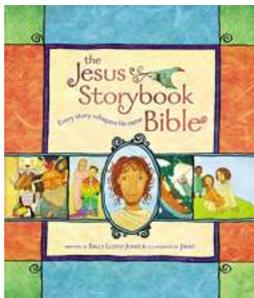
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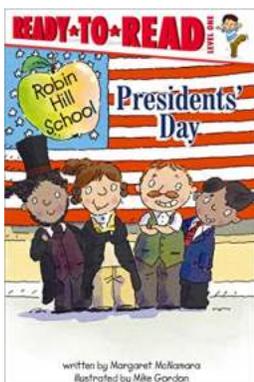
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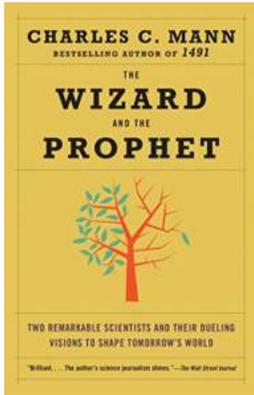
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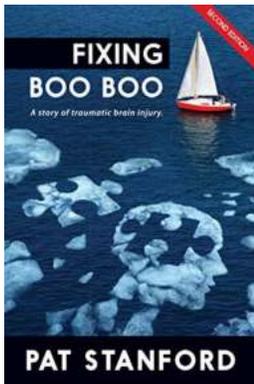
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