

anthology, Saldaña's book presents a series of issue-based plays of great interest in themselves, but overall the collection inspires more questions than answers, which is not necessarily a bad thing after all.

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BERNARDO P. GALLEGOS, eds.**

***Performance Theories in Education: Power, Pedagogy and the
Politics of Identity.***

Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005. 274 pp.

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I was most pleased to see this book appear. As an interdisciplinary scholar in the fields of drama/theatre education, applied theatre, and curriculum studies, I have been convinced that performance theory has much of value to offer education. Performance theory sees many aspects of culture and society as performances that are constructed for multiple purposes and audiences. In *The Future of Ritual* (Routledge 1993), field founder Richard Schechner describes the “broad spectrum” approach of performance studies and considers that “The four great spheres of performance—entertainment, education, healing and ritual—are in play with each other” (20-21). Performance Studies, established over the past twenty years or so, is a hybrid field coming out of anthropology, sociology, theatre, and cultural/communication studies, and is interested in how performance functions as *social efficacy*, *economic efficiency*, and *technological effectiveness* across many sectors of society (see Jon McKenzie's *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*. New York: Routledge, 2001).

Education has paid little attention to performance studies to date. Even sub-fields of education, such as my own area of drama/theatre education, have shown scant interest in performance theory. This American book, edited by one professor of communication studies and theatre (Alexander) and two professors of education (Anderson and Gallegos) is the first of what I hope will be a major consideration of performance theory applied to education. The editors and contributors focus their attention on the critical aspects of performance theory that analyze power relations and questions of the politics of identity in pedagogy through performative lenses. A couple of key essays in the collection effectively attend to these issues in an educational context.

Elyse Lamm Pineau's "Teaching is performance," originally published in 1994, is reprinted as the lead essay. Pineau was probably one of the first education scholars to draw on performance theory in her examination of teaching as a form of performance. In an interdisciplinary dialogue between pedagogy and performance theory, Pineau discusses performance theorist Dwight Conquergood's four qualities of performance and applies them to education: poetics, play, process, and power (see Conquergood's "Poetics, Play, Process, and Power: The Performative Turn in Anthropology." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 1, 1989, 82-95). These qualities help Pineau highlight performative aspects of teaching practice that she delineates as aesthetic, innovative, subversive, processual, and critical. Certainly, anyone interested in performative pedagogical methods could only benefit from keeping Conquergood's and Pineau's organizing principles in mind.

Co-editor Alexander's contribution, "Critically Analyzing Pedagogical Interactions as Performance," reflects on his own teaching practices, both successes and failures, in a performance theory framework that helps him see more clearly the power relations and identity formations at play in his classroom. He concludes,

The classroom is a space of social and political negotiation, a tensive site with competing intentions. These competing intentions are not about the perceived benefits of education (i.e. jobs, employment, self-elevation, self-actualization, and so forth). These intentions focus on the performative processes of education and the struggle of teachers and students to either gain or retain the authority of their own understandings as imbued by, with, and through differing cultural insights and experiences. (58-59)

The metaphor of "education as spectacle" Alexander defines (quoting communication theorist F.E. Manning) as "the principle symbolic context in which [...] societies enact and communicate their guiding beliefs, values, concerns and self-understandings" (58-59). Performance theory used in this way offers teachers and students a new way to interact with and respond to the spectacle of both culture and education.

While there are contributions of value to this cross-

disciplinary dialogue, I ultimately find the book falls short in delivering what it sets out to do; that is, it fails to effectively apply performance theory to pedagogical issues. Instead, the after-image left behind by the collection is that all contributors appear well-grounded in critical pedagogy, but less than well-read in performance theory. On a purely quantitative level, a review of the references given following each contribution clearly indicates that these writers have not actually read very much performance theory. While a few key theorists pop-up in reference lists, such as Judith Butler, Erving Goffman, and Victor Turner, field founders such as Schechner, Conquergood, and Marvin Carlson, as well as important younger scholars such as Jon McKenzie, Jill Dolan, and Philip Auslander, are either missing or under-represented. It is telling that in the Author Index critical pedagogues Peter McLaren (who wrote the Foreword), D.E. Foley, Henry Giroux, and James C. Scott (along with Michel Foucault) receive the most citations throughout the text. This indicates that, while critical pedagogy shares some valuable common ground with performance theory in their shared interests in power relations and identity formation, theorists in education can only benefit from reading and incorporating more performance theory than is evident in this text.