

## From the Editor

In 1981, Pamela Ritch edited the first annual research-only issue of what was then called the *Children's Theatre Review (CTR)*. First published as a quarterly newsletter beginning in 1944, *CTR* grew out of the Children's Theatre Committee of the American Educational Theatre Association organized by Winifred Ward in 1937. Over the many years and several different organizations, *CTR* grew from a chatty newsletter on onionskin and typed by patient volunteers and editors to a quarterly, juried publication professionally printed and with formalized belief statements inside the front cover. In the early 1980s, publishing an entire and expanded issue of *CTR* devoted to research was a bold move. It was so bold, that the Executive Council of the parent organization (then the Children's Theatre Association of America) felt the need to craft and formally approve a policy statement delimiting and defining research:

Research in children's drama shall be defined as the development of new or the validation of existing historical, theoretical, descriptive or experimental knowledge in creative drama or children's theatre by means of scholarly and/or scientific investigation. This type of research may be based upon, but shall be considered distinct from, creative research governed by aesthetic principles whose primary intent is artistic. CTAA endorses and encourages an ongoing program in research in an effort to further develop theory, and validate and strengthen existing practices within the field. CTAA, further, takes the position that research that leads to validation and strengthening of programs and ensuing evaluation of those programs provides a vital link in establishing a basis for advocacy of children's drama at all levels. (CTAA Executive Committee, April 1980)

Not to date myself too much, but in April 1980 I was 11, and most of my master's degree students—and even a few doctoral students—were not yet born. Pamela Ritch writes in that first journal's introduction, "This first annual and special Research Issue of *CTR* represents a commitment by many people to defining, refining, encouraging, and recognizing that research in children's drama is a valid and important activity in which individuals and CTAA should invest time, energy, and funds" (4). In the mid-1980s and as research (broadly defined) became more vital to the field, *Children's Theatre Review* was renamed *Youth Theatre Journal* to reflect more accurately the publication's scholarly mission and focus. In 1995, then-editor Roger Bedard reduced the journal to once per year but greatly expanded *YTJ*'s page length and scope to the format with which we are now familiar.

In 2009, I find the struggles early editors faced positioning research and philosophical theory as central to the continued growth and practices of the field almost inconceivable. They were, however, successful: of the 65 years of this publication's history, almost 30 have been devoted to publishing research meeting the "highest possible publication standards" (Tolch 2). *Youth Theatre Journal* has been a vital factor in the development of child drama's core field theories. *YTJ* provides a space for philosophical conversation, theoretical exploration, and the dissemination of best practices, while serving to construct

ethical and scholarly standards of excellence. Paging through older journals reminds me, too, that *YTJ* serves as a snapshot of the state of the field, marking favored research protocols and theoretical lenses—how we have grown and how we remain the same. Volume 1.4 in 1987, for example, contains advertisements for master's degree programs in child drama at Eastern Michigan University, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Utah, and Arizona State University.

Building on our tradition of excellence, I welcome you to the first volume of *Youth Theatre Journal* published with Taylor & Francis, founded in London in 1798. Bringing over 200 years of experience in publishing to the table, Taylor & Francis will allow us to streamline the submissions process, to market our journal aggressively, and to simultaneously publish both print and electronic versions. Taylor & Francis will help provide stylistic consistency across editorships and help us to maximize the visibility of both our research and our field. For example, article abstracts will be available through Google searches, and individuals will be able to quickly order downloads directly from Taylor & Francis's Informaworld database—a database service to which over 7,500 research libraries across the world subscribe. AATE members will automatically receive an electronic subscription to the journal in addition to the print version, along with other discounts on Taylor & Francis/Routledge journals and books. I'm quite excited by our move and hope that you will find that the quality of our journal continues to grow over the next 30 years.

To inaugurate our move to a stronger publishing platform, I welcome guest editor Dr. Manon van de Water with a collection of papers growing from the first assembly of ITYARN, the International Theatre for Young Audiences Research Network. ITYARN, a collaboration between several universities and ASSITEJ International, bridges research and practice, highlighting the fluid nature of both. In this first congress, held in Adelaide, Australia, papers focused on aesthetics and reception processes in TYA and theories and cultural constructions in TYA. Approximately 100 people attend the first ITYARN conference, with more than 40 people placed on a waiting list. These large numbers speak to the field's continued growth and the strength of scholarly interest in theatre for young audiences—as well as to the recognition that research in children's drama continues to be a valid and important activity in which many people invest time, energy, and funds. As always, I welcome you to address comments to me at [swoodson@asu.edu](mailto:swoodson@asu.edu) and reserve the right to publish your letters in future issues, space permitting.

### Works Cited

- Ritch, Pamela. "Comment." *Children's Theatre Review* 30.2 (1981): 4.  
Tolch, C. John. "Policy." *Children's Theatre Review* 33.4 (1984): 2.

Stephani Etheridge Woodson