

Paying Attention to Separations:  
Reflections on ASSITEJ/USA History  
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Abstract: A reflective analysis of ASSITEJ/USA history reveals recurring themes of attention, identity, and problematic separations between practices and theories based on age constructs.

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At an Arizona State University symposium in February 2003, theatre historian Margaret Knapp identified stages of maturity which mark the field of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) today: defining the discipline; forming a canonical archive; creating a bibliography; and, interpreting, critiquing, and examining this research.<sup>1</sup> The invitation to compile a timeline of ASSITEJ/USA history for its magazine, *TYA Today*, allows me the opportunity to reflect upon this maturity and to interpret the consequences of our collective achievements.<sup>2</sup> While studying published documents from the early Children's Theatre Conference and US Center of ASSITEJ through today,<sup>3</sup> I have been struck by several recurring, and sometimes problematic, themes of attention, identity, and separation that have been voiced by leaders over the past forty years in particular.

From the beginning, we have continually sought national attention, visibility, recognition, legitimacy, and equity—like children seeking parental attention to their desires, needs, and accomplishments—without re-cognizing or seeming satisfied with the documented evidence of national attention already gained at every historic juncture. *Children's Theatre Comes of Age* and “has acquired status,” proclaimed Robert Kase—in 1956.<sup>4</sup> National magazines and metropolitan newspapers spotlighted various companies thereafter, and *Time* chose the Young ACT's production of *The Odyssey* as one of the top ten “best” theatre productions in 1985.<sup>5</sup> Yet ironically, in a field which perpetuates the myth of children's “weak” attention spans, it appears that adults' weak attentions sometimes fail to recall how the ideologies of past generations have shaped our present careers. While focusing on the future generations of tomorrow, we sometimes forget the past generations—the grown-up children of today.

Overall, from my feminist standpoint, self-defined separations have artificially disconnected the intrinsic unions between children and adults, theatre and drama, professionals and amateurs, commercial and non-profit venues, and artistic practices and academic theories over time—all to make TYA visible to the nation and the world at large. Well before such separations were instituted in the last century, women and men had been writing formal plays for children since the eighteenth century, and numerous adaptations of popular children's novels had already played on Broadway and other urbanized centers before and after the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Why didn't these professional successes sustain national attention for the next hundred years? Because adults' conceptions of Childhood changed from one of equity to inequity.

Today, I believe we could bring about world peace, and, still, those in power would consider our efforts "inferior" because we self-identify so closely with and focus our attentions so exclusively on young people. Despite all our mission-ary pronouncements regarding definitions, rationales for existing, standards of excellence, and self-congratulatory awards, the construct of Age still matters most. Regardless of "rippling effects" as a metaphor for ASSITEJ/USA in its 1995 White Paper, Age remains the dominant metaphor by which we organize and practice theatre. In fact, I will apply this metaphor of Age by following the life-span of this Child, the field, as an apt generational motif.

During our organizational childhood with the founding of ASSITEJ International in 1965, we compared ourselves against European companies, felt "inferior," and then "showed off" our "excellence" at the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress in Albany in 1972. In reflecting on these formative years, Honorary President Nat Eek proclaimed, "ATTENTION WAS BEING PAID"—especially to a

controversial production of *Hang on to Your Head* by the Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis.<sup>7</sup> However, as one nine-year-old was said to have reported, this show spoke to “The me I am, not the me you want me to be, not the me I think I am.”<sup>8</sup>

So who are we, and whom do we want to be, especially in contrast to whom others believe us to be? To make small bodies visible and to justify our existence, we have continually separated ourselves from “adult” theatre, even while seeking to connect ourselves with “adult” Art-like children seeking maturity through imitation. Consider these mantras over time: “children’s drama becomes *art*” (1956); “a largely predetermined *art* work” (1977); “the priority is on the creation of a work of *art*”(1990); “emphasis on the development of *art*” (1995).<sup>9</sup> Yet defining which plays and productions constitute Art always lies in the eyes, ears, minds, and hearts of *individual* artists and aesthetic beholders as a matter of *personal* interpretation, taste, preference, and *uncommon* sense-ibility.

Despite published anthologies of “the best available” plays—from 1921 through today<sup>10</sup>—professional producers still rely on “new and improved” play commissions over “old and antiquated” published titles from just a few years ago, as ongoing play development for the “one and only” premiere drives the ongoing search for “quality” plays specific to local needs. In fact, professional companies constitute only 5% of publishers’ clientele, while remaining producers look to a handful of the largest budget companies for the next “brand-name” title—often determined by the latest, top-selling children’s book or film—whose seasons are usually selected by only one, Euro-American director. These factors combined call into question the actual “diversity” of Art (forms and content) found within the TYA repertoire today.<sup>11</sup>

Regardless of all our self-re/definitions through time, observers, both within and outside

the field, have always identified and named our personality traits for us. During the birth of our modern childhood back in 1903, Alice Minnie Herts feared naming her company “The Children’s Theatre” because “so many persons were even then under the misapprehension that all of our players were children; on the other hand, I feared that to entitle it ‘The Educational Theatre’ would be pretentious, and would, moreover, keep young people from attending.” Given the odious commercial theatre of melodramas and cheap vaudeville which attracted hordes of young attentions at the time, commercial producer Daniel Frohman concurred:

‘I think the “Educational Theatre” an excellent name. It at once differentiates your work from that of the commercial theatre, and if your plays are interesting you cannot keep people away no matter what you call it. If, however, your plays happen at times not to be interesting, as is the case with us all, people will say, ‘Well, this is only educational; it is not supposed to be interesting’ .<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, in spite of these identical public perceptions today, we began to separate actors by Age by banishing professional child actors from commercial stages during the 1870s and forcing all children to attend school by the 1930s—thus, forever equating Childhood with Education.<sup>13</sup> In separating our not-for-profit theatres from “crass” commercial enterprises (including film and later television), we ensured young audience attendance by attaching ourselves to public schools and positioning teachers as our gatekeepers. Naturally, when subsequent child actors expressed their “dramatic instincts” in re-creational theatre settings, we were dismissed as “amateurs” in need of “how-to-produce-theatre” books which proliferated from Herts’ text in 1911 through the 1980s and as recently as 1997.<sup>14</sup> Rather than fault innocent child actors for their “incompetence”(because adult audiences didn’t believe their character

portrayals), we then turned our attentions to universities as the training wheels for generating more qualified acting teachers, directors, and playwrights.

Twenty-four years before non-profit, professional theatres organized themselves into the Theatre Communications Group (TCG) in 1961, we went to school by aligning ourselves with the American Educational Theatre Association of universities in 1937 and surveyed the exponential growth of children's courses and degree programs from 1948 to 1988.<sup>15</sup> Our visionary parents, Sara Spencer, Campton Bell, Jed Davis, and Winifred Ward, set aside private funds for our public educations by endowing the Children's Theatre Foundation in 1958—seven years before the National Endowment for the Arts came into being.<sup>16</sup> It was within this educational context that we decided to differentiate adult and child actors further by forcibly separating theatre from drama—despite Ward's warnings in the 1930s that creative drama should never be detached from its artistic processes by serving as a “cart-horse” for every curricular subject in education.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, in 1964, Sara Spencer went to the constitutional meeting of ASSITEJ in Venice, determined to include child actor companies and creative drama; but she returned realizing that “the first order of business for the children's theatre in America, was to develop a strong professional movement”—albeit, by drawing upon existing educational and amateur resources.<sup>18</sup> Although leaders continually tried to preach the values of creative drama to foreign delegates from 1964 to 1972, ASSITEJ International ultimately rejected educational drama from its classified membership in 1977.<sup>19</sup>

Undeterred, we attempted to conjoin our “disparate halves” by constructing an infamous and largely misinterpreted “continuum,” arbitrarily divided by process and product, and separated actors' ages again with the terms “theatre *for* young audiences” (TYA) and “youth theatre.” [The

idea for a continuum came from Donald Baker's developmentally ageist model from childhood (dramatic play) to adulthood (theatre production)].<sup>20</sup> But lay people, who perceive(d) no such, man-made distinctions, continue(d) to identify us by whom we are: "children's theatre"—implying that *children* hold ownership of theatre, as *both* audiences *and* actors.<sup>21</sup> Determined to change their perceptions, we prescribed a list of staging practices for directors to avoid:

- a. Frenetic movement for movement's sake;
- b. Inappropriate use of exaggerated facial and bodily gesture;
- c. Stereotyped and shallow characters (racist and sexist);
- d. Unmodulated and sarcastic vocal patterns;
- e. Patronizing attitudes toward material and the young audiences;
- f. Perfunctory and irrelevant participation of the audience;
- g. Super-imposed elements unrelated to the theatrical production (mimes, clowns, mascots, birthday observances).<sup>22</sup>

But lay people, even today, still characterize these same qualities as the most "age-appropriate" theatrical "style" for children. As director Carol North laments, "The test of time will see what endures. Short-term, schlock is sturdy stuff. Damn."<sup>23</sup>

Having outgrown our childish sense of humor on cartoons, we gave up comedy altogether and mired ourselves in teenaged angst. Yet "the impulse to teach" clung to us and limited subsequent artistic endeavors as the rage for participation plays in the 1970s gave way to serious social issue plays during the 1980s.<sup>24</sup> Although didactic teaching proved to be incompatible with the dramatization of plays, our predominant patrons, patronizing teachers, continued to insist upon curricular connections, separate from theatrical Art, to justify bringing their students to our

theatres. Held hostage to their educational demands, we complied to ensure optimal child access to live theatre.

During this early adolescent period, with the dissolution of the once-united, fifty-year-old American Theatre Association in 1986, we reorganized our school cliques into presumable networks of special interest groups—further divided by developmental Ages. Theatre educators split high school Thespians apart (literally) and consorted with arts educators in music, visual art, and dance, while teacher educators followed dramatic processes with a new IDEA in 1992.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, TYA producers increasingly left theatre and education alliances (AATE), entrusting youth theatre directors to rehearse child actors without corroboration.

As Spencer envisioned and Orlin Corey foretold, ASSITEJ became “a most useful vehicle for the improvement of Children’s Theatre in America” by shifting our young, egocentric attentions from the US to other countries.<sup>26</sup> After our secondary educations, we left home to attend international seminars and festivals abroad, and increasingly put their theories into practice back at our home theatres. For example, after studying European ideologies in 1969, Moses Goldberg uncovered the paradoxical principles of their successes: “*The more theatre for children is regarded as an art form, the more effective it seems at achieving social, psychological, or pedagogical goals; conversely, the more theatre for children is regarded as a developmental tool, the less effective it seems in fulfilling its educative role*” (his emphasis).<sup>27</sup> He went on to articulate these philosophies and methods further in his classic 1974 text and began to negotiate a TYA contract with Actors’ Equity in 1976—further distinguishing TYA adult actors from those working at other “adult” companies.<sup>28</sup>

In 1968, Davis had documented over 700 institutions producing theatre for, by, and with

young people.<sup>29</sup> After an adolescent generation of baby boomers professed their careers by founding more new companies throughout the 1970s, we formally left our parents in 1981 by incorporating ASSITEJ/USA as an independent, autonomous body. Two years later, we developed a five-year master plan at a national Wingspread conference, chaired by Goldberg, and achieved each of our five career objectives over the subsequent years.<sup>30</sup> First, to “improve artistic quality,” we renewed our attentions on play development and continued our “post-graduate” international studies abroad with cultural exchanges. Second, we “achieve[d] parity with regional theatres in management and compensation” by imitating the business models of TCG and FEDAPT. Third, to “increase income while diversifying funding sources,” we hired development directors, obtained public and private grants, and raised our local ticket prices. Fourth, to “improve communication,” similar to other regional theatres, we increased membership dues to expand public-ation services and to sponsor regional mini-conferences. Finally, to “increase public and peer recognition of artistic achievement,” we staged a World Theatre Festival and Symposium with the Louisiana World Exposition in 1984, which would become a template for subsequent One Theatre World events during the 1990s.

Now that we have reached maturity with our elders’ retirements, each self-constructed separation over time has moved us into the professional arena, “back” where we wanted to be all along, and daily business concerns now employ our attentions full-time. National publications increasingly call attention to our local achievements backstage, and TYA plays and articles are now worthy of the *American Theatre*.<sup>31</sup> Even Broadway has acknowledged TYA deeds by awarding the Children’s Theatre Company of Minneapolis its 2003 Regional Theatre Tony Award for its animated, Tony-nominated production, *A Year With Frog and Toad*, further sealing

public perceptions of our reputations on popularized “kiddie lit.”<sup>32</sup> Is it any wonder then when some critics decry our “spectacular” work as “lily-white, run-of-the-mill, [and] middle class”?<sup>33</sup> While we continue to bridge gaps between socio-economic classes of spectators by including more multicultural representations in every facet of our work and offering reduced, subsidized ticket prices to low-income groups, the stigma of Theatre itself, intended primarily for white, female, college-educated people, hangs on.

Although one might assume a substantial increase of professional theatres since 1968, the number of new and surviving TYA companies has remained somewhat stable at around 100 today—in a country with a youth population of over 41 million, 21% of whom live in poverty.<sup>34</sup> Quantitatively, professional TYA remains a blip on the US map, especially in comparison with respective ratios in other “developed” nations. Qualitatively, the new mission statement of ASSITEJ/USA no longer mentions Art, but instead, assumes its own power of human imagination: “The national service organization promoting the power of professional theatre for young audiences through excellence, collaboration, and innovation across cultural and international boundaries.”<sup>35</sup> Staying connected with international theatres in this new era of globalization allows us to attend to further innovations through ongoing collaborations with our colleagues world-wide. (Personally, I’m quite proud that US colleagues voted last year to keep the awkward name “ASSITEJ,” its French acronym, rather than separate our identity from our “One Theatre World.”)

Nevertheless, horrified upon realizing that we have become our parents, yet another separation has been in progress over the past twenty years between professional artists and university professors.<sup>36</sup> Like artists in any field who seldom consult professors for their

research and development, today's TYA artists lead the field in practice while researchers follow their progress in theory, with few TYA practitioners crossing both boundaries. Brief, descriptive reports of staged readings and performances take precedence over in-depth criticism (so as not to hurt "family" feelings or reputations), and many disparage the academic footnotes of history as "scholarly" and not "reader-friendly."<sup>37</sup> Back in the ivory towers, the archives of children's theatre history and dramatic literature still lie outside the purview of "adult" theatre courses, even as women and multi-ethnic artists are integrated into reconstructed canons of performance and cultural studies. Whether academic attention to artistic achievements will alter this situation remains to be seen, as TYA scholars increasingly connect with cross-disciplinary research organizations and make critical analyses public in respective journals.<sup>38</sup>

Ironically, we now live in a postmodern world which purposely blurs boundaries between ostensible polarities. We produce theatre for "family" audiences (a nineteenth-century tradition), while "adult" companies share their seasons with high school audiences. After imitating non-profit theatre practices, "they" now imitate "us" by hiring education directors and offering programs that reach out to school communities. Will differences between professional companies no longer exist and render TYA obsolete in the future "golden years" of our old age? Like children who perceive no contrived differences between "child" and "adult" companies, will we merge our mutual goals by ending the separated institutions that make us respectively unique?

Even as a virtual duopoly of university training graduates artists with potentially less diverse visions, recent "vision" statements from emerging professionals indicate a rejection of artificial separations between theatre and education and hierarchical business models in favor of more collaborative communities.<sup>39</sup> M.F.A. graduates seek to "challenge our institutional

structures” by valuing large- and small-budget theatres equitably—and demanding higher salaries—even while the vast majority of Equity actors are unemployed and earn below-poverty wages annually. Unlike their workaholic parents, they also want “to raise a family, have a comfortable home, and participate fully in community life.” Nevertheless, like their great-grandparents before them, they still seek “wisdom” from parental mentors through personal interactions rather than by “osmosis.” By refusing to cut their parents’ apron strings, these professionals want to stay connected with access to authority figures while bringing new “voices and talents to the field.” (I have no doubt that future leaders will emerge, as they always have, regardless of their challenge to us “to be more proactive in developing future leaders.” To them, I say, just do it—and call upon us whenever you like. We’re still here—until death do us part.)

Regardless of purported changes over the past decades, some things never change. Fortunately for us, children’s minds and emotions haven’t changed, despite folk-theories that technology has somehow rewired their brains.<sup>40</sup> Our rhetoric still echoes the century-old refrain of “social service” by which we “help” them in all ways possible, even when they don’t need or want mother’s help in making theatre by themselves. Our obsessive self-criticisms (as if we aren’t already “good enough”) keep us doubting and reappraising our ethical responsibilities. What evidence will mark the end of this current mid-life crisis, so we can stop sweating the small stuff?

Passion, idealism, and hope still inflame our creative souls, as we continue to equate “innovation” with “progress” by regenerating old theatrical styles into new eclectic mixtures (e.g., Greek minimalism). We still strive to “change” the world for the better by sustaining the myth of future theatre audiences and the illusion that we are “changing” young people through

theatre—as if children aren't already fully complete human beings in no need of change.<sup>41</sup> There is still no existing evidence to prove that viewing theatre alone changes personal behaviors or attitudes, other than the experiential evidence of our own lives devoted to TYA careers.

Despite so-called “partnerships” with schools, elementary curriculums still exclude theatre as a required subject, and classroom teachers still rely upon separate “teaching artists” to teach theatre for them—forcing TYA and youth theatre companies to function as private K-12 theatre schools around public school schedules. All too often, we still censor ourselves by giving in to teachers' desires to “protect” vulnerable children from taboo words and topics, even while we attempt to empower young people with increasingly confrontational plays which expose adult secrets. As Roger Bedard wonders, what if we gave up our connections with schools?<sup>42</sup> Would such a divorce from this marriage free us to create a “better” life for ourselves with a different Ms-nomer? Our fear of giving parents full custody of our child audiences with less frequent visitation rights to our buildings keeps us feeling secure in our unhappy marriages with schools. How often would children nag their parents to take them to the theatre, instead of going to movies and malls?

Despite a wider repertoire of original plays written exclusively for the stage, we still focus our attentions on children's literature by forcing books to talk and walk. Even as we retain our disdain for commercial theatres (e.g., Disney on Broadway), we still market and brand our aesthetic products as useful commodities to local consumers. Now that we have the attentions of regional theatres and Broadway, will we strive to imitate and reconnect with commercial mass media next? Or will we remain faithful to our script-ural belief that technology will never supplant the “more intimate” human connection with live theatre?—even though youngsters now

share intimate experiences through electronic media, in the privacy of their bedrooms no less!<sup>43</sup> If we took up a television producer's challenge "to find ways to help local stations develop and produce qualifying programs" for the Three-Hour Rule of the Children's Television Act<sup>44</sup>—by broadcasting our productions over local television stations after performance runs, would cable networks repurpose our work or steal our playwrights away from theatre? If we could organize our own TYA cable network, would young viewers select our brand over PBS, Nickelodeon, Disney, or the Cartoon Network? If we staged interactive performances over the Internet so children could access us from anywhere at any time, would they come visit us as often as other websites, or would they retire us to our nursing homes? Would free trade agreements with other ASSITEJ International® companies trigger the outsourcing of our US jobs overseas? It's difficult to predict what the future will bring over the next phases of our life-span.

But what if instead of looking forward, we look backward as centenarians do? What would happen if we reconnected the separations we've wrought over time, especially in regard to Age? If we hired back professional child actors who fled to Hollywood, would adult audiences raised on photorealism believe them any more than those child actors raised at our theatre schools? If we staged more plays written and devised by young people and paid them to direct and design *their* "children's" theatre, would adults' misconceptions of "incompetent" Childhood change for the better? If we gave child critics the power to define "age-appropriateness," so each individual could hang his or her head onto whatever works best, would the aesthetics of their perceptions "improve" theatrical Art? Obviously, we can't go back to the future until Other adults accept children as equitable human beings equally capable of producing and valuing theatre which engages them. For until this happens, we will continually find ourselves having to

defend children's theatre, even as we celebrate the golden and silver anniversaries of our institutions!

Although adults' conceptions of Childhood as an "inferior" stage of life may not change for yet another century, we need to keep believing, trusting, and listening to children throughout the intrinsic process of creating theatre products. As our his- and her-stories indicate, we especially need to stay connected with young people *by casting Age-appropriate actors* whenever possible to make *adult* audiences pay attention to and believe in their professional capabilities. By casting our most talented child actors in child character roles, we can keep children's *bodies* on stage in the *forefront* of adult minds to manifest, not only their physical presence, but also the absence of adults' childhoods. And to ensure the presence of a wider adult audience than teachers alone, we need to stop segregating school matinee audiences from general public performances. If parents won't bring their children to evening and weekend performances, then we ought to encourage as many stay-at-home parents, retired grandparents, extended family members, and season subscribers as possible to attend *every* school performance to guarantee a much wider Age range of spectators sharing the same meaningful experience *together*. A much more Age-integrated audience will then allow *all* generations to pay attention to child-adult separations and thereby re-cognize how these two life stages connect into one whole condition of humanity.

If we can't afford to hire back Hollywood's child actors, then at the very least, we ought to pay our own child actors *full* (not partial) Equity wages as *equal* members of company ensembles—if we truly believe them to be as talented as adults. Likewise, young playwrights should receive the same commissions and royalty rates as adult writers for staged readings and

full-fledged performances. By paying equitable wages to all child artists, including technicians, we may help keep them connected with theatre over Hollywood and avoid “sleepwalking” into the future.

Paying attention to the historical separations I’ve outlined here may improve the condition of our weak attention spans, and thereby allow us to comprehend more fully the consequences of our present mid-life identities; for the act of making connections necessarily involves acts of categorical separations in order to discern and analyze each critical feature of holistic concepts. By heeding the separations that continue to divide the TYA field both within and outside its present frameworks and organizations, we may determine the attentions we need to give to what lies ahead. We aren’t “over the hill” yet—until we stop climbing the breath-taking mountains and pastoral valleys in front of us.

## Notes

1. Margaret M. Knapp, ““What is Cinderella Hiding?”: An Outsider’s View,” *Youth Theatre Journal* 17 (2003): 130-133.
2. Jeanne Klein, “ASSITEJ/USA Timeline,” *TYA Today* (in process for Spring 2005).
3. In addition to searching all available newsletters and journals, I consulted F. Scott Regan, “The History of the International Children’s Theatre Association from its Founding to 1975,” diss., Minnesota, 1975.
4. C. Robert Kase, *Children’s Theatre Comes of Age for School, College, and Community Theatres* (New York: Samuel French, 1956) 4.
5. For example, *Players Magazine*, a publication of the National Collegiate Players, runs a special issue on children’s theatre in May 1964, and Norman B. Potts highlights the Children’s Theatre Company in 1972 (48.1: 17-23) and the Everyman Players in 1973 (48.5-6: 230-235). The Mark Taper Improvisational Theatre Project receives coverage by Sylvie Drake in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1972 [reprinted in the *Children’s Theatre Review* 22.2 (1973): 14-16], and again in *American Theatre* in June, 1985. *People* magazine spotlights the Rainbow Theatre Company in Las Vegas in its April 13, 1981 issue. That same year, *Scriptwriter News* includes a special report on markets for children’s scripts with a list of professional and university companies with budgets over \$25,000 (August 17). Frank Gagliano reports on “Children’s Theatre Today” in the *Dramatist Guild Quarterly* in 1974 [reprinted in the *Children’s Theatre Review* 23.2 (1974): 6-12]. See *Time* January 6, 1986; and, Kathie Vitz, “*The Odyssey*,” *Youth Theatre Journal* 1.1 (1986): 25-26.
6. For example, see Wendy Lement, “Susanna Rowson (1762-1824): Early American Dramatist, Actress, and Educator,” diss., New York U, 2000; Jonathan Levy, *The Gymnasium of the Imagination: A Collection of Children’s Plays in English, 1780-1860* (New York: Greenwood, 1992); and, Laura Gardner Salazar, “The Emergence of Children’s Theatre and Drama, 1900 to 1910,” diss., U of Michigan, 1984.
7. Nat Eek, “The Formative Years,” *TYA Today* 9.3 (Nov. 1995): 16.
8. John Clark Donahue in an interview with Norman B. Potts, “Children’s Theatre: Flowering in Minneapolis,” *Players Magazine* 48.1 (1972): 23.
9. For 1956, see Ann Viola, “Drama with and for Children: An Interpretation of Terms,” *Educational Theatre Journal* 8 (May 1956): 139-142 [reprinted in *Children’s Theatre and Creative Dramatics*, ed. Geraldine Brain Siks and Hazel Brain Dunnington (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1961) 8-12]. This CTC committee, chaired by Viola, included Isabel Burger, Kenneth Graham, Mouzon Law, Dorothy Schwartz, Sara Spencer, and Winifred Ward. For 1977, see Jed H. Davis and Tom Behm, “Terminology of Drama/Theatre With and For Children: A Redefinition,” *Children’s Theatre Review* 27.1 (1978): 10-11. This CTAA children’s theatre

committee, chaired by Davis, included Gayle Cornelison, Mary Jane Evans, Margaret Faulkes, Moses Goldberg, Kenneth Graham, Jeanne Hall, Claire Jones, Judith Kase, Marsha Evans McGee, Margaret McKerrow, Kenneth McLeod, and Raymond Picozzi. The definition for creative drama was developed by Ann Shaw, Frank Harland, and Anne Thurman for the 1972 ASSITEJ Congress in Albany. The 1990 AATE definition committee included Roger Bedard, Tom Behm, Kathleen Collins, Scot Copeland, Gayle Cornelison, Moses Goldberg, Victor Podagrosi, Larry Pressgrove, Pamela Sterling, and James Still at DuBose Conference Center, Monteagle, TN, March 25, 1990. For 1995, see Suzan Zeder, "White Paper Update," *TYA Today* 9.3 (Nov. 1995): 28-30, created at planning retreat of ASSITEJ/USA Board of Directors in October 1994, and approved by the membership at its annual meeting in Seattle, May 1995.

10. Montrose Moses, ed., *A Treasury of Plays for Children* (New York: Little, Brown, 1921); Coleman A. Jennings, ed., *Theatre for Young Audiences: 20 Great Plays for Children* (New York: St. Martin's P, 1998); and, Lowell Swortzell, ed., *Theatre for Young Audiences: Around the World in 21 Plays* (New York: Applause, 1997). Compare these play titles with current seasons in the ASSITEJ/USA *Marquee*.

11. "Publisher's Notes," *TYA Today* 11.1 (1997): 7; Davida Bloom, "Selecting the Season: How Do They Do It?" *Stage of the Art* 8.3 (1996): 12-14; and, Joseph Robinette, "Publishers Discuss Needs for Children's Theatre Scripts," *Children's Theatre Review* 29.1 (1980): 15-16.

12. She chose *both* terms! See Alice Minnie Herts, *The Children's Educational Theatre* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1911) 79-80. Ironically, these names have not affected numerous companies across the country.

13. See Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1985) 85-96; and, Roger L. Bedard, "Is it a 'Skip' or a 'Dance'?: Elbridge T. Gerry's Campaign Against Child Actors," *Youth Theatre Journal* 11 (1997): 15-24.

14. Herts, *The Children's Educational Theatre*; Jed H. Davis and Mary Jane Evans, *Theatre, Children and Youth* (New Orleans, LA: Anchorage, 1982/1987); Helene S. Rosenberg and Christine Prendergast, *Theatre for Young People: A Sense of Occasion* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983); and, David Wood, *Theatre for Children: A Guide to Writing, Adapting, Directing, and Acting* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997). See also Manon van de Water, "Constance D'Arcy Mackay: A Historiographical Perspective," *Youth Theatre Journal* 9 (1995): 79-91.

15. See Lin Wright and Rosemarie Willenbrink, "Child Drama 1982: A Survey of College and University Programs in the United States," *Children's Theatre Review* 32.1 (1983): 3-18, which includes a bibliography of earlier CTC/CTAA curriculum surveys. See also Tim Slaughter, "1987/88 Survey of Child Drama Programs in Colleges and Universities in the United States," *Youth Theatre Journal* 4.1 (1989): 8-11.

16. See Jed H. Davis, "The Four Stories of CTF," and Orlin Corey, "Epilogue" *Children's Theatre Review* 31.1 (Jan. 1982): 12-15; and, Jed H. Davis, "Second Edition: The Children's

Theatre Foundation Story,” *Youth Theatre Journal* 4.4 (1990): 7-9.

17. See Jed Davis’ recollections in a 1974 letter to Jan A. Guffin, in “Winifred Ward: A Critical Biography,” diss., Duke U, 1976, 76-77.

18. Quoted in Katherine Krzys, “Sara Spencer: Publisher, Advocate, Visionary,” *Spotlight on the Child: Studies in the History of American Children’s Theatre*, ed. Roger Bedard and C. John Tolch (New York: Greenwood, 1989) 152. I consider Sara Spencer to be the actual founder of the US Center of ASSITEJ, as she preferred to work behind the scenes and believed that men (i.e., CTC Directors Jed Davis and then Nat Eek) “could more strongly represent the U.S.” than herself. See Krzys, 151; and, Regan’s quote from Janice Hewitt’s thesis, 49.

19. *Information Bulletin—ASSITEJ*, 1977: 1, ed. Theatre Institute, Prague, for the Czechoslovak National Centre of ASSITEJ.

20. See Davis and Behm, “Terminology,” and Donald Baker, “Defining Drama: From Child’s Play to Production,” *Theatre Quarterly* 5.7 (1975): 61-71.

21. Interestingly, the field of “children’s literature” never faces this conundrum because everyone knows that the term automatically refers to adults writing *for* children. Note that artists and educators in visual art and music seldom discriminate age differences with separate definitive terms.

22. National Model of Standards for Children’s Theatre, Children’s Theatre Association of America, 1977.

23. Quoted in Roger L. Bedard, “TYA: Questions of Identity,” *TYA Today* 15.1 (2001): 13.

24. Jonathan Levy, “A Theatre of the Imagination,” (1977) *A Theatre of the Imagination: Reflections on Children and the Theatre* (Rowayton, CT: New Plays, 1987) 7-8; Catherine Dezseran, “Form and Content in Plays for Youth Dealing with Serious Subject Matter,” *Youth Theatre Journal* 2.2 (1987): 3-11; and, Max Bush, “Serious Plays: A Playwright Responds,” 12-13.

25. High school theatre teachers are represented by *both* the Educational Theatre Association (Thespians) and the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE). While AATE, a member of the Arts Education Partnership, purports to serve as “*the* national voice of theatre in education,” this disingenuous slogan not only further damages relationships between these two organizations but it also precludes a unified coalition of advocacy to public and private granting agencies. IDEA is the acronym for the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association.

26. Orlin Corey, “Damned Determined,” *Theatre for Children—Kid Stuff, or Theatre?* (New Orleans, LA: Anchorage, 1974) 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2000, 23.

27. In "A Survey and Evaluation of Contemporary Principles and Practices at Selected European Children's Theatres," diss., Minnesota, 1969, 12.

28. Moses Goldberg, *Children's Theatre: A Philosophy and a Method* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974); and, "Aesthetic Development: A Position Paper," *Children's Theatre Review* 34.1 (1985): 3-6, written in 1980 and studied by delegates for the 1983 Wingspread conference. For current information on three-year TYA Actors' Equity contracts, see Roger Armbrust, "Equity Yeas TYA Pact," *Back Stage - The Performing Arts Weekly* 43:47 (22-28 Nov., 2002): 1, 38.

29. Jed H. Davis, *A Directory of Children's Theatres in the United States* (Wash., D.C.: AETA, 1968).

30. Kent Stephens and Moses Goldberg, "Theatre for Young Audiences: A Discussion Paper," prepared by ASSITEJ/USA at the request of the NEA Theatre Program, Dec. 1984. This conference, co-sponsored by the Johnson Foundation, in Racine, WI, included representatives from ASSITEJ/Canada, ASSITEJ/Mexico, UNESCO, TCG, FEDAPT, CTAA, UNIMA, and IATA.

31. TCG's *American Theatre* magazine first acknowledged TYA in its June 1985 issue. TYA plays include Laurence Yep's adaptation of his novel *Dragonwings* (Sept. 1992), *The Wrestling Season* by Laurie Brooks (Nov. 2000), and *Holes* by Louis Sachar (Apr. 2002). See also Alexis Greene, "The Children's Hour," 8.3 (June 1991): 19-23; Russell Scott Smith, "The Trumpet of the Swan," (April 2000): 16-21, 53-55; and, Ben Cameron, TCG Executive Director, "Keynote Speech," *TYA Today* 14.3 (2000): 4-11. For other recent examples, see Simi Horwitz and B.L. Rice, "Theatre for Young Audiences: More Adult Than Ever," *Back Stage* 44.18 (2-8 May 2003): 28.33; Sylviane Gold, "Children's Theatre: Beyond Fuzzy Animal Suits, All the Way to Art," *New York Times* 23 Feb. 2003, late ed.: 14; and, Alisa Solomon, "Voice Choices: Kiddie Corner: Children's Theater Doesn't Have to Translate into Child's Play to Provide Intelligent Fun," *The Village Voice* 49.5 (4-10 Feb. 2004): 77.

32. Stephanie Lash, "And the Tony Goes to...The Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis Artists and Administrators Tell Us What it All Means," *TYA Today* 17.2 (2003): 4-7."

33. See Jack Zipes, "Political Children's Theater in the Age of Globalization," *Theater* 33.2 (2003): 3-25.

34. Compare Gayle Cornelison, ed., *A Directory of Children's Theatre in the United States* (Wash., D.C.: CTAA, 1980), and his estimate of 150 professional companies, with the current 2003-2004 ASSITEJ/USA *Marquee* of 109 organizational members, which includes youth theatres, universities, and sponsoring performing arts centers. In *Professional Theatre for Young Audiences*, Vol. I-III (Tempe, AZ: Arizona State U), editor Lin Wright listed 46 to 59 companies between 1984 and 1988 with minimum budgets of \$50,000. US youth population figures for ages 5 to 14 are taken from US Census Bureau estimates for 2003.

35. Steve Bianchi, e-mail to the author, 15 June 2004.
36. Laura Gardner Salazar, "Developing New Roles of Cooperation Between Professional Youth Theatres and College and University Youth Theatre Programs," *Theatre for Young Audiences: Principles and Strategies of the Future*, comp. Jeanne Klein (Lawrence: Kansas University Theatre, 1988) 21-34.
37. For example, see Wolfgang Schneider, "'Rosy Cheeks' and 'Shining Eyes' as Criteria in Children's Theatre Criticism," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 19 (1995): 71-76; and, Jeff Church's letter to the editor about the "tone" of past reporting in *TYA Today* 9.1 (1994): 3. Although this paper would be far more appropriate in ASSITEJ/USA's own magazine, *TYA Today* does not accept lengthy papers; although they do reprint *Youth Theatre Journal* articles [e.g., see 18.1 (2004): 12-17]—another indication of the artificial separation between "artists" and "scholars." Needless to say, providing documentation allows readers to check sources for accuracy, credibility, and further information while ensuring that subsequent searchers don't have to re-search sources all over again from scratch.
38. For example, see Jeanne Klein, Gayle Austin, and Suzan Zeder, "A Feminist Dialogue on Theatre for Young Audiences Through Suzan Zeder's Plays," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 11.2 (1997): 115-139; Manon van de Water, "*Mister Twister* or *Goodbye America!*: The Interdependence of Meanings and Material Conditions," *Essays in Theatre/Études Théâtrales* 16.1 (Nov. 1997): 85-93; Susan Rae Applebaum, "*A Little Princess* Onstage in 1903: Its Historical Significance," *Theatre History Studies* 18 (1998): 71-87; and, Stephani Etheridge Woodson, "Mapping the Cultural Geography of Childhood or, Performing Monstrous Children," *Journal of American Culture* 22.4 (1999): 31-43.
39. See "The Future of Theatre for Young Audiences: A Vision," *TYA Today* 17.2 (2003): 30.
40. For example, Christakis, et al. find that early television viewing at ages 1 and 3 is related to (but does not cause) attentional problems at age 7 for 10% of the children in their database—roughly the same proportion as those diagnosed with ADHD in the US. See "Early Television Exposure and Subsequent Attentional Problems in Children," *Pediatrics* 113.4 (2004): 708-714.
41. For example, see Peter C. Brosius, "How Do You Make Social Change?: Can Theater + Young People = Social Change? The Answer Must Be Yes," *Theater* 31.3 (2001): 74-75.
42. "Negotiating Marginalization: TYA and the School," *Youth Theatre Journal* 17 (2003): 90-101; reprinted in *TYA Today* 18.1 (2004): 12-17—an aforementioned example of duplication by separate organizations with presumably limited financial resources.
43. For an overview, see Victoria J. Rideout, et al., *Kids and Media at the New Millennium* (Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, 1999).

44. Donna Mitroff, "On the Horns of a Dilemma," in a special issue of the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* on the learning effects of the Children's Television Act, 24.3 (2004): 361.