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Editor's Introduction to the Inaugural Issue of PTO Journal

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Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Journal
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Editor's Introduction to the Inaugural Issue of *PTO Journal*

Jennifer L. Freitag¹

This brief note from the editor provides an introduction to the journal, the philosophy that has driven its development, what makes it similar to and different from other professional journals, and the individuals and organizations responsible for its inception.

Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed, Inc. is an international organization dedicated to challenging oppressive systems and promoting critical thinking and social justice through popular education and liberatory theatre. Following the legacies of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, PTO is all about sharing, developing, promoting, and documenting the theory and practice (or praxis) of revolutionary pedagogy and theatre work happening around the world. In the spirit of PTO's vision to create global access to these methods and serve as a resource for oppressed peoples and their allies, I am thrilled to welcome you to the inaugural issue of the *Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Journal*.

If you are reading this, it is quite possible you are already familiar with PTO and have attended an annual conference or regional gathering. If so, I hope this journal serves as an additional site for continued

¹ Jennifer L. Freitag (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University) is an educator, activist, scholar, and performance artist committed to the principles and praxis of Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed. She has been an active member of PTO for over 12 years and became editor of *PTO Journal* in 2015. Jenn has worked extensively with and for nonprofit and community organizations and has over a decade of experience in gender violence response and prevention. Jenn's personal research interests include gender and sexuality studies, performance and humor, and communication. She also tours the performance, [*I Want My Jacket Back*](#), in which she uses a hybrid of interactive lecture and stand-up musical comedy to facilitate dialogue about gender violence with audiences across the country. Jenn may be contacted at jennifer.freitag@gmail.com.

dialogue, critical engagement, and reflection about PTO—as well as a place to contribute your own ideas, methods, and reflections. If you are less familiar with PTO, my hope is that the pieces featured here will serve as an engaging introduction to critical pedagogy and revolutionary theatre through the lenses of practitioners, educators, and artists. I encourage you to visit the [PTO website](#) to learn more about the organization and the community of folks who are a part of the global PTO network. Whether you have been a part of this community for decades or you are just discovering it now, I hope you find this journal to be an engaging and accessible place to explore PTO through art, theory, research, and community-based work.

As you peruse the pages (and video, through the [PTO Journal Vimeo](#)) of this journal, you will notice that all published work is open access. Work can be easily linked and shared within and beyond the PTO community. Also, because *PTO Journal* is a peer-reviewed publication, the work we feature has been thoroughly vetted by members of the PTO community on our editorial board, and authors/artists have undergone several rounds of revisions based on feedback from our editorial team. Like other professional journals, we hope this process strengthens the quality of any work published, supports authors/artists in their professional development, and reflects as highly as possible on the Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed organization.

In addition, we aim for *PTO Journal* to be an inviting place for those new to publishing. As a pedagogical endeavor, our editorial team is committed to assisting activists, artists, and agents of change in the process of making their work publishable in a humanizing way reflective of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. This means we are willing to offer support even before work is submitted for review. It also means we are open to new approaches, unconventional submissions, and feedback about any aspect of the journal.

The first issue of *PTO Journal* features a variety of pieces from various perspectives, styles, and formats: a collection of personal narratives from long-established PTO members, an essay on online education and critical dialogue, a poem on marginalization in education, an exploration of the value of

liberatory drama in an urban elementary school classroom, a video of a live performance and discussion of its development from a university professor and his students, a collection of photos of murals and graffiti in a Palestinian refugee camp, and a piece that documents and reflects on a recent session on systems thinking presented at a recent PTO conference. We encourage you to view this work, share it with others, and contact the individual artists, educators, and authors in the spirit of critical dialogue.

This journal would not be possible without the vision and groundwork laid by Long Tran, Mariana K. Leal Ferreira, Richard Piatt, Mark Weinberg, Kyle Rudick, and the PTO board over the last few years. I wish to thank our team of associate editors and editorial review board members for their contributions, time, energy, and patience through the development of *PTO Journal* over the last year. We are indebted to the folks at Berkeley Electronic Press (who provide the platform and support for our site) and University of Northern Iowa Scholarworks (who host our site) for their assistance in making this project possible. On a personal note, I wish to acknowledge Kyle Rudick for his steadfast commitment in developing the journal website and providing outstanding editorial support in this collaborative labor of radical love.