

## Inaugural Statement

A journal of dramatic theory and criticism can be misleading, for it may suggest to some that behind the publication there is really a field—something singular and cohesive, full of related ideas promulgated by folks who read the same sources and talk to one another in a comely, professional patois. Nothing, it seems to me, could be more simplistic. Nor does the word “pluralistic,” favored by many within the ranks of literary theory and criticism, quite fit the situation in theatre and drama. Pluralism suggests that while a variety of approaches may share little common ground, they do cohabitate with one another and so form a kind of interdisciplinary living arrangement—comparative literature, English, French and the other foreign languages, and maybe philosophy—all within the liberal arts and all within a similar political circumference.

So far as I can tell, dramatic theory and criticism is so broad an array of enterprises that it can scarcely be called a single discipline or even a consortium of disciplines. Those who share an interest in it differ not only in their choices of favorite predicates and methods (whence these predicates come) but also in the fundamental sense of what they are talking about. For, the realm of the dramatic and the theatrical goes far beyond the theatre, extending into religion and ritual, social behavior, clinical techniques, the philosophy of method, the creative process, political science, dance, education, family therapy, narrative and lyric literature, rhetorical studies. . . . The list goes on . . . and on. It is difficult to claim that the post modern criticisms, semiotics, deconstruction, hermeneutics, Neo-Marxism, etc., which undergird current literary theory are apt to be as helpful in disciplining theories of the dramatic. They are important to be sure, but only along with many other approaches. “Dramatic” and “theatrical” are adjectives which are promiscuous in their willingness to attach to just about any noun that comes along. The number keeps right on increasing.

Once upon a time, I thought of using this journal to carve out a specific field narrow enough to be respectable, not to mention manageable. The knife—my own version of Ockham’s razor—was to be definitions of theory and criticism that would limit what was submitted and published. But I find I have moved in an altogether different direction. Submissions and subscriptions permitting, I have decided to underscore the energetic diversities and disparities which the singular term “dramatic theory and criticism” tends to domesticate and render covert. *JDTTC* shall serve as a milieu where scholars and artists who find our title useful can bring to light different sorts of discourse. Naturally, one issue cannot represent all the interests capable of being lumped under the journal’s name. But I hope that this new publication will be sufficiently long-lived to suggest over time the diversity of what our contributors and subscribers are thinking about in the name of dramatic theory and criticism.

John L. Gronbeck-Tedesco, *Editor*