

Philosophical Reflections on *JDTC* and John G-T

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In my brief time at the University of Kansas, I was always happy when John Gronbeck-Tedesco was in his Murphy Hall office. I often felt resentful that his job as associate dean had robbed the department of our most catholic (and, perhaps, most Catholic) intellectual. John and my conversations were about religion and philosophy as much as they were about performance. We shared an interest in the Franciscan order, historiography, and the Frankfurt School. It came as no surprise to me when I learned that John had studied psychoanalysis and theology as well as theatre history and theory. His fearlessness in thinking about big questions had tipped me off. Certainly, John's training made him one of the most rigorous and patient interlocutors I have encountered. Combined with his intellectual openness, it also makes him one hell of an editor.

John's reluctance to mark his issues with an editorial comment and his refusal to pin down a methodological, ideological, geopolitical, or disciplinary affiliation aside, the *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* is very much his journal. Looking back over its twenty-year history only solidifies this feeling. Early volumes theorize the very enterprise of theatre itself, daring to ask universal questions about theatre making. And, although the scholars that followed in later issues were certainly more likely to talk about race, class, gender, and sexuality, particularizing their claims, many of *JDTC*'s authors refused to abandon posing big questions. I would argue that these inquires were not reaching for any type of naïve transcendence, a maneuver I could not support in good conscience. Instead, I believe that these essays represent a different tactic. Taking my cue from the Fall 2001 "Praxis" forum on theatre and philosophy, particularly Jon Erickson's, Sally Banes's and Noel Carroll's essays, I would argue that *JDTC* is a journal that treads in theatrical philosophy, not just theory, despite the *Journal's* title—a trend I hope will continue in some register with Iris Smith Fischer as editor. This commitment is rare, and I see it as *JDTC*'s major contribution to the field.