

Managing Editor Is to Editor . . .

Joy D. Richmond

I'll never forget the first issue I did for the *Journal*. I spent hours combing manuscripts and proofs for lost commas and periods, wayward dashes and ellipses—making sure that endnotes followed the style guide, that page numbers, titles, and names on the Table of Contents matched articles, that we had the correct volume and issue number assigned, that . . . well . . . everything was *perfect*. I proudly dropped off the final proofs at the printer and waited in anticipation for the “blueline.” As soon as I got the call, I charged back to their office and picked up the not-so-blue mockup of an issue with gritty pages and faded black ink. I scurried back home, settled into a comfy chair, and started to read.

The horror crept upon me slowly as I realized that punctuation mark after punctuation mark was gone. Commas, periods, brackets, question marks, exclamation points, semicolons, colons, quotation marks, dashes, parentheses, hyphens, ellipses—all had simply vanished. It was one of those moments where you can't quite get your mind around something strange—where you expect Rod Serling's voice to come out of nowhere and announce, “Joy Richmond has just crossed over into the Twilight Zone!”

It turned out that the mysterious disappearance of the punctuation was due to a bizarre font issue. But more to the point, the anecdote demonstrates that, in publishing, no matter how hard you try, things can go very wrong very quickly! Thus, you can't let your guard down until the issue has been printed, bound, and mailed.

For those who aren't familiar with the managing editor's role in journal publishing, perhaps the following theatre analogy will help: managing editor is to editor as stage manager is to director. Just as the stage manager ensures the director's concept of a play maintains its integrity throughout the run of a show, the managing editor makes sure that the editor's guidelines and decisions are implemented for each run (issue) of the journal.

The managing editor is charged with staying on top of the production of each issue, with catching the points where things go wrong. An exacting position, it demands attention to detail like few other positions. It calls for immersion in not just the written word, but the minutiae of the printing of the word—how the symbols that make up the word appear on the page. However, in the five years that I've worked as a managing editor, I have also learned that you can't dwell on the

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missed comma splice or double period; they are inevitable. No matter how much time you put into copyediting a manuscript or how many pairs of eyes look at the proofs, something will always be missed. Certainly, you strive for perfection, but, in the end, you feel thankful when you haven't missed one of those embarrassing typos that turns an intended word into something completely inappropriate.

The position of managing editor entails much more than this detail work. Again like the stage manager, a managing editor also works with the people who are an integral part of the process. Some of my most rewarding experiences have been working with authors and reviewers as a manuscript is ushered through the review process, revisions, re-review, acceptance, and, finally, publication. As liaison for the blind review process, I have also witnessed some amazingly lively exchanges among authors, reviewers, and the editor.

My experiences as the Managing Editor for *JDTC* have had a marked impact on my academic and professional training. I am grateful to John Gronbeck-Tedesco for having given me the opportunity to work on the *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*.