

A Statement of Policy By the New Editor

Michael Kirby

In addition to the stated and official policy of a review, there is always the “unofficial” policy that reflects attitudes, values and other personal factors. Thus when the editor changes, policy always changes. Since there will be a new editor of TDR, I have been asked* to explain what the new policy will be.

A person is not the best judge of his own taste and subjective biases, so I will not attempt to analyze my “unofficial” policy. Those of you who are familiar with my writing may know more about that than I do. For anyone who would like to ponder these intangibles, I’ll mention that I am the author of *Happenings*, *The Art of Time: Essays on the Avant-Garde*, and a new book, *Futurist Performance*, that will be published this year; I’ve been a contributing editor of TDR since 1967, but my first pieces in TDR appeared in the “Happenings” issue (T30) that I edited in 1965.

I mention these things as an introduction to myself, not as an indication that my own personal interests will give the “new” TDR a limited scope. On the contrary, I hope to present a diversity of views. This is one area in which my contributing editors will help, because they will not be merely names on the masthead but will be actively working for TDR. These contributing editors will be: E. T. Kirby, editor of *Total Theatre*; Brooks McNamara, a contributing editor of TDR since 1965 and the author of *The American Playhouse in the 18th Century*; and Richard Schechner, director of the Performance Group, author of *Public Domain* and a former editor of TDR. I expect TDR will, to some extent, mirror their “unofficial” policy, too.

In my official policy I intend, of course, to focus upon the latest developments in theatre. I am interested in documentation rather than opinion, analysis rather than criticism, theory rather than polemic. (This denegation of polemic is not intended to indicate a lack of interest in

* This is the last issue put out by Mrs. Erika Munk and her staff. Mr. Kirby assumed the new editorship on May 24 of this year and was asked by Mrs. Munk to submit this policy statement, which he did in March.

political theatre: TDR will certainly continue to publish material on any important performances that have political dimensions. Like many of the significant presentations of the last few years, these will probably be radical.)

I would like to give more attention to theatrical history than TDR has done in the past. Historical importance is determined by the present; as the present changes—and theatre has changed tremendously in just the last decade—new aspects of the past take on importance. Thus there seem to be many aspects of the history of theatre that should be studied. These studies and translations of significant documents will, in their turn, help us to place contemporary work in a broader perspective.

Especially since I plan to do an issue on actor training and rehearsal techniques, it might be correct to say that the “new” TDR will give more attention to practical work in the theatre. I and most of the contributing editors are involved, whenever possible, in some aspect of actual performance—directing, scenography, playwriting—and TDR will reflect these concerns.

It has been a long time since TDR was exclusively a drama review. Articles have been published on dance and cinema, for example. I would like to broaden the scope even more, including material on music, opera, kinetic sculpture and any type of presentation that is relevant to drama and performance. Similarly, I will seek contributions from disciplines such as psychology, sociology and anthropology. There is no reason to place limits on our attempts at understanding.

Perhaps the articles that interest me most, however, will be those that challenge orthodox concepts, theories and “facts.” Among the exciting things about TDR have been its willingness to question and its eagerness for discovery. There are many things that the “new” TDR will not change.