

happy while avoiding war. Finally, whether our other allies lose confidence in our keeping to our half of mutual-security agreements could depend upon whether we let China have only Taiwan's U.N. seat or let China have Taiwan; certainly Taiwan will be mentioned during the President's sojourn.

President Nixon will have to be wary while in the Flower Kingdom, bringing Kissinger and more to the man born the day after Christmas. Mao's government signed a joint declaration of the five principles of peaceful coexistence with India in 1954, and then violated a few of them eight years later to carve out a bit more turf from India's borders. One understands the desire

to use the threat of a Sino-American alliance to offset somewhat Russia's increasing strength, yet such an alliance has its problems, one of which is that much of the Sino-Soviet hostility originally arose from the reluctance of the Russians to commit themselves to armed intervention against the American paper tiger on behalf of foreign communist governments such as China.

Trager and Henderson have produced an informative book. Although the material probably wouldn't surprise the President, it could be an eye-opener for those with great expectations for his journey to Peking.

Douglas W. Cooper

History's Entrails

The Basic Symbols of the American Political Tradition

by Willmoore Kendall and George W. Carey
Louisiana State University Press, \$6.00

THIS IS AN important book by the late Willmoore Kendall and his former student, George W. Carey, currently professor of government at Georgetown University. The authors set forth their thesis concerning the American political tradition in this fashion: "We have come to have two traditions: one which holds to a rather extreme view of equality; the other, an older one, which holds that our supreme symbol is to rule (by) the deliberate sense of the community. This accounts for the fact that we are somewhat schizophrenic today about our tradition. Beyond this is a graver matter; the two traditions are not compatible with one another, and the manifestations of this are quite apparent in our contemporary world."

In effect, twentieth-century American liberalism is the contemporary expression of that tradition which doggedly pursues equality. It commenced by wrenching the equality symbol from the Declaration of Independence and perverting that symbol into an instrument for constructing the egalitarian New Jerusalem. This tradition is secular in its philosophical foundations. It has no conception of "sin," "evil" and "tragedy," nor does it concede the imperfectibility of the human condition; rather, it argues that human nature is wholly malleable, and that the perfected good life is attainable through institutional and environmental manipulation. Driven on with this mind's eye view of the perfected egalitarian utopia, the liberal tradition becomes restive, anxious and on occasion fanatical when society seems impervious and indifferent to its hortatory, and when its Tower of Babel begins to reveal cracks and imperfections.

When confronted with the failure to attain instant the worldly City of Man, instead of reappraising the soundness of their secularism and their view

of the nature of man, the exponents of the liberal tradition double their efforts and attribute their continued failures to the ignorance of the populace ("more education is needed"), to the sinister machinations of reactionaries and recalcitrants ("greater political organization and effort is needed"), and to the general failure of society to appreciate the clarity of insight and vision of egalitarian utopianism. As always, "knowledge puffeth up."

In contrast, the conservative tradition in the American experience, which is the older of the two traditions, draws its nourishment from strikingly different roots. As opposed to the secularism of the liberal tradition, it is undeniably religious in temper. Unlike the liberal secularist, it is impressed (indeed, awed) with the wonder of creation and the mystery of being. To paraphrase, the conservative understands St. Augustine's insight, "I am, therefore God is." (The secularist has to be satisfied with Descartes's, "I think, therefore I am.") Along with such modern Augustinians as Reinhold Niebuhr, the conservative appreciates the relevance of such concepts as "original sin," "evil" and "the tragic sense of life." With Augustine, he understands that "pride" is the irradicable canker contributing to the imperfectibility of the human condition in this earthly sojourn. The conservative loves and reveres man as the creature and child of God, but he has no illusions about the erection of a worldly utopia, for basic human nature precludes it — Man is not God.

Moreover, by inoculating against utopianism, this religious temper produces a continuing political mood of moderation, restraint, conciliation, civility, and thereby contributes immeasurably to the deliberative process, and the pursuit of consensus, which are, according to Kendall and Carey, the foundation materials of the American

political tradition. Where, in its zeal to create now the Worldly Paradise, the secular egalitarian tradition sometimes sees its querulousness and impatience erupt into an unseemly fanaticism, the conservative tradition, by rejecting the reconstruction of society from wholly new cloth, holds steady on course with confidence in the viability of organic growth through "the deliberate sense of the community," which community is composed of a "virtuous people." Contrary to popular myth, as a result of these distinctions, the conservative is congenial (including a generous dash of humor), warm, humane and human, while the secular egalitarian is more often aloof, cold, harsh and abstract.

Kendall and Carey contend that the two traditions are incompatible. Furthermore, they contend that the balance has been tipped in favor of the egalitarian one and that the older, conservative tradition has been "derailed." As they see it, the "derailment" commenced with the erroneous insistence that the egalitarian premise is the basic one in the Declaration of Independence. Among other things, this distortion has produced a series of "strong" Presidents who envision themselves as Great Leaders and the messiahs of leveling. Kendall and Carey offer no easy solution to correct the derailment (probably because there is none), but they do perform an invaluable service in documenting its occurrence, and they painfully remind us of the older and greater tradition from which we have been diverted.

Unfortunately, this book will not receive the currency in academic political science that it deserves. Two fundamental reasons account for this neglect. First, both writers are known as prominent conservative scholars, and academic political science is overwhelmingly liberal-left in its political orientation. As Seymour Lipset's recent study for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education reveals, only nine per cent of the American college and university political science professors will accept the label "conservative" to describe their political leanings — even with the addition of the modifier "moderately" conservative. The liberal academy was never known for its generous and tolerant treatment of Willmoore Kendall, and its potential for ignoring this final important work is considerable.

A second reason for probable neglect by contemporary political science is that this book is in the great tradition of normative, traditional political theory. This approach is contrary to the behavioral hegemony currently astride academic political science. The behavioralists contend they are concerned only with the "is" of politics, only with "science," "facts," "quantification" "method" and "value-free" work. In contrast, in keeping with the great tradition of the study of politics, Kendall and Carey are concerned with the "ought-to-be," that is, with values, ethics, morality, the qualitative and in general with the problems of articulating and achieving the political "good" life.

As this book is highly innovative methodologically, it is particularly lamentable that the behavioralists, in their preoccupation with "method," should ignore it. Kendall and Carey have fused the approaches of two distinguished political theorists. They have combined the "text analysis" method of Leo Strauss with the "symbols" approach of Eric Voegelin. Strauss has taught that careful text analysis of significant political works will reap rewards in terms of theoretical understanding, while Voegelin has emphasized that the study of political "symbols" can reveal much about a society's underlying theoretical foundations. In employing both methods, Kendall and Carey analyzed the following key documents of the American political tra-

dition: the Mayflower Compact, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, the Massachusetts Body of Liberties, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, The Federalist, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. From this examination, they are able to detect the "derailment" of that sound, viable and durable tradition, rooted in the order of being, which Publius knew so well.

This book is political theory at its best, for the authors, with a keen appreciation of concretes and realities, have through the process of distillation discerned a broad theoretical overview of the essence of the American political tradition.

John P. East

The Play's the Thing, Maybe

The American Theatre, 1969-1970

Scribners, \$9.95 cloth, \$4.95 paper

BOURGEOIS culture we're told, has been touted; the anti-bourgeois, masquerading as the *avant-garde*, is on the verge of triumph. A tradition of the new, Harold Rosenberg's neat oxymoron, encourages art to be unfettered, breaking down all genres. We live in a time witnessing a break-up not only of genres but of rational cosmology as well. "The new sensibilities," writes Daniel Bell ("The Cultural Contradiction of Capitalism," in Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell, eds., *Capitalism Today* 1971) ... and, the new styles of behavior associated with them, are created by small coterie which are devoted to exploring the new; and because the new has value in and of itself, and meets with so little resistance, the new sensibility and its behavior styles diffuse rapidly, transforming the thinking and actions of larger masses of people."

Granted, the theatre does not reach large masses of people, surely not like the movies, that cultural form (aside from books) with which I'm most concerned. But more than film, more so, in fact, than any other art form, the modern theatre reflects the new sensibility, and, created by just such small coterie as Dr. Bell mentions, explores the new and meets with surprisingly little resistance by theatre devotees. Where once people were shocked even to rage, as happened at early performances of Ibsen (*A Doll's House*, *Enemy of the People*, and others), now in the West at least, those who frequent the theatre are tolerant of anything. It is those who do not go to the theatre — the anti-culture police, blue-nose judges, among others — who today threaten the theatre in America, and their threat is a rear-guard action and but delays, rather than impedes, the advance of just about any manifesta-

tion of theatrical whim imaginable (I think of the reception *Hair* received in Boston: closed by judicial order, with police connivance, because of some nudity and flag-disrespect" business, but eventually reopened with complete victory for the producers and defeat of the censors).

On any given night in America, more people see a prime-time TV show than attend all the theatrical performances performed across the land in an entire year. Statistics are unreliable here, but I'd guess that we could say in two entire years and not be far off the mark. Theatrical performances are expensive, usually at least twice as expensive as movies; one usually must plan in advance to go, march off to buy tickets, and then appear precisely on time. It's a bother that few Americans are willing to undergo, although hundreds of thousands endure much more inconvenience to attend Woodstock or Altamont; even the young, who think thrice and usually negatively about shelling out for a theatre ticket, will pay through the nose, and plan far in advance, to see the Rolling Stones, or Tina Turner, or name it.

Just what separates the sensibilities of the traditional theatre-goer from those of people who now appreciate the new theatre and, in addition, from those who lap after rock but shun the theatre, is hard to determine. Perhaps as a monstrous generalization one could say that the traditionalist demands linearity, the play's the thing," beginning, middle, climax, denouement; the new theatre-goer demands at least some thought and a *soupc  n* of content but will contentedly tolerate an absence of linearity, whereas the young who shun theatre but patronize rock concerts demand sensation galore and happily

settle for little if any content. Well, like all gross generalizations, this one may best uttered softly and then abandoned quickly.

These remarks are occasioned by the appearance recently of *The American Theatre 1969-1970*, a well-designed anthology containing some excellent, frank essays and a wealth of fine photographs and cartoons (Hirschfeld and others). The book doesn't answer all my questions about why today's theatre is as it is, or why I rarely see plays. Nor does it ease all my doubts about modern drama, although I found it more palatable than would have been the case two years ago, when on emerging from *Dionysus in 69*, I mumbled something about the play being subversive of the American value system" and was, I suppose justifiably, hooted at by my companions, both New Yorkers far more sophisticated and understanding of what had of late been happening on stage than I, a hick down from Boston for a weekend in the big city.

I can't evaluate *The American Theatre* or talk about trends in theatre with the same ease as I could about a book concerning today's film—that by way of advance warning. But I've the feeling that most who read this will be, like me, irregular theatre-goers at best, and many will have given up on the delights on the stage after their high school English teacher dragged them to their last local junior college production of *Lear*. Maybe they don't do that anymore in this country, but if they do, then I'm probably not wrong in thinking that for most Americans, theatre is still something one is taken to, at a tender age, and then abandoned like spinach.

Theatre is so changed, even in the heartland where I grew up, that our recollections of it from years ago scarcely square with today's reality. We did *Time Out for Ginger* when I was a budding and quite untalented thespian in school in the late fifties; we trooped eagerly off to see the Yale Players doing *Moliere* in the early sixties; we thought it was the end-all when, on escaping from grad-school for a weekend in New York, my roommate and I went to Genet's *The Blacks*; now they do *Fortune and Men's Eyes* at one of the colleges at which I teach, and that's the most conventional offering of the season. So I suppose *American Theatre 1969-1970* has a lot to offer me, and maybe you.

Is it the themes or the forms that most unsettle us? Is the reason that those of us who feel uneasy about and confused by today's theatre that we are not amused by cannibalism on state? Or is it the nudity? Surely not the nudity—the players are almost invariably nice to look at. Or the frequent seeming meaninglessness of the play: