## BOOK REVIEWS

## Reciprocity

The Human Agenda. By Roderic Gorney. Pp. 698. (Simon and Schuster: New York, 1972.) \$12.95.

It has been said that the only philosophically tenable position for a pessimist in a time of crisis is optimism . . . an "as if" fiction, that if a sufficient number of us will do what we ought, we may yet save the human enterprise. Pessimism is a condition that mostly affects those who were idealists in their youth; accidie not infrequently turns it into cynicism. Being human is, perhaps, the most difficult of all accomplishments, largely because what it means is so little understood. Theories of the nature of human nature are as numerous as the proverbial leaves in Vallombrosa, and as impermanent. In this massive book, by a young psychiatrist, the leading contemporary theories concerning the nature of human nature, those of Ardrey, Lorenz, Freud, Fromm, Marx, Darwin, and others, are subjected to a careful critical examination in the light of evidence drawn from many different sources. The conclusion at which Dr Gorney arrives is not new, but it is drawn so convincingly I do not see how it can be seriously challenged. As he reads the evidence it is clear to the author that cooperation. not competition, is the central law of life, and that man's development of his value systems constitutes an adaptive response to the requirements of this law.

Cooperation is, of course, a characteristic of all living organisms, even though the German embryologist Roux, many years ago attempted to show that competition was the rule even among cells. His view seems to have been more congenial to the intellectual climate of his day than that of the French polymath Espinas who, in his remarkable book Des Sociétes Animales, published in 1878, presented the case for cooperation, "habitual reciprocity", as the much neglected principle in the evolution and maintenance of animal societies. Competition, ever since Hobbes's Leviathan (1651), has had a far greater appeal than the idea of cooperation, and for obvious reasons. Mutual Aid (1902), Kropotkin's reply to Huxley's muscular Darwinism, has not been as widely read as the works of Robert Ardrey and Konrad Lorenz, even though it is at least as readable and a great deal sounder than the writings of these authors on the innate depravity of man. Dr Gorney discusses the works of all these writers, and he does so most effectively, bringing a wide and varied range of knowledge to bear on the analysis of their ideas.

Resumed in a few words, what is the human agenda? It is to learn to live as if to live and love were one, to develop those three chords of mental health: the ability to love, to work, and to play . . . to die young—late.

In a short review it is impossible to do justice to this stimulating work. Suffice it to say, then, that it is in the best tradition of American humanistic thought.

ASHLEY MONTAGU

## Man Midwife

Hunter's Lectures on Anatomy. Pp. 320. (Elsevier: Amsterdam, London and New York, 1972.) Dfl. 35; \$10.25.

THIS book has a curious history. Two manuscript notebooks containing fortyeight lectures entitled Hunter's Lectures of Anatomy came up for auction together with other old medical books in Adelaide, South Australia, in 1959. They were bought by Miss Nell Dowd, a lady of discernment, who, having established that they were the lecture notes of Dr William Hunter (1718-1787), set about tracing their recent his-She found that the previous owner had visited Manchester in 1905 where she had been given a box of old medical books, all of which had previously belonged to Dr Charles White These books remained (1728-1813).untouched until they came up for auction more than 50 years later. Miss Dowd then found that White had attended Hunter's lectures in 1748. Thus, with scholarly exactitude she established beyond doubt that Hunter's lecture notes had been transcribed by Charles White. Unfortunately she did not pursue her research any further. Nor did she edit the text, reproduced here in its original copperplate script. Although she may not have felt competent to undertake such a task herself it would not have been too difficult to enlist the cooperation of a medical historian, as both master and pupil deserve a biographical outline at least.

After attending the Edinburgh lectures of Alexander Munro primus, William Hunter came to London where he assisted Smellie while studying surgery at St George's Hospital. After rounding off his postgraduate training during a winter in Paris followed by a tour of Holland, Hunter began teaching surgical anatomy in 1746 from his Covent Garden residence. Two years later his students included his younger brother John and Charles White. On his return to Manchester. White gained a reputation in obstetrics, eventually being given the quaint title of "Man midwife extraordinary". He pioneered aseptic midwifery in order to control the high mortality from childbed fever, and his observations entitled "Treatise on Management of Pregnant and Lying-in Women (1773)" preceded Semmelweis's work in Vienna by 75 years.

In his lecture notes Hunter gave an outline of systematic anatomy, or rather surgical anatomy, as anatomical details are enlivened with interesting clinical or historical asides. When discussing the anatomical relation of the uterus, Hunter points out "how Calamitus a Circumstance it is for a Woman with Child, to have a Stone in the Bladder as from the Situation of the Stone, the Child's Head must press against it". And when describing the anatomy of the spleen he mentions the case of the guardsman wounded at the battle of Dettingen who "laid all night in the Wet and the Spleen protruding thro' the Wound was mortified and mostly cut away not wthstanding wch the man is now living" (1752).

One of the most controversial issues in this notebook concerns the discovery of the lymphatic system. The brief but accurate description contained in this notebook of 1752 (without any reference to Munro) would substantiate Hunter's claim which was later supported by