

Book Reviews

Towards Understanding Relationships. By ROBERT A. HINDE. London: Academic Press. 1979. Pp 367. £15.80, £7.80 (paperback).

These days when I hear the word 'relationship' I reach for my ear plugs. Invariably it seems to be uttered most frequently by those therapists who have the most difficulty making any with each other let alone with their patients. On the fringe it is used to describe anything from a marriage lasting longer than a year (in Californian newspeak otherwise known as 'mutual interdependence fixation') to a passing conversation on a Green Line coach. It is something of a relief, therefore, to read a book by an eminent scientist which stands back from the concept so as to take a critical look at what exactly it is all about.

Is it possible, Robert Hinde asks, to have an integrated science of human relationships? There are those, and some psychoanalysts are prominent among them, who argue that Freud and the post-Freudian movement have produced the foundations of just such a science. It is certain, however, that Hinde would disagree. His book represents a somewhat courageous attempt to arrive at a firm descriptive base which he clearly believes is the first requirement if a true science of relationships is to be developed. At first sight, the author is well qualified to shoulder the task. Director of the MRC Unit on the Development and Integration of Behaviour at Cambridge and an ethologist and biologist of international repute, Hinde not surprisingly is not at all deterred and sets about synthesizing a vast and disparate volume of information and research findings with energy and skill.

It is no criticism of the book that it fails in its central task. After all, a science of interpersonal relationships which would underpin personality and relationships on the one hand and relationships and social environment on the other, is a somewhat ambitious prize, given the current state of knowledge. Hinde takes his reader on a journey through the affective, cognitive and dynamic aspects of relationships, the content and diversity of interpersonal interactions (including a detailed account of the problems of measurement) learning paradigms, dissonance and the developmental aspects of relationships. He succeeds in answering yes, it is possible to have an integrated science of human relationships but reveals that to date it appears beyond reach. All in all, the book merits close examination not least for the fact that it indicates that it is possible to engage in a detailed, in-

formed analysis of the dynamics of human relationships without subscribing to a psychoanalytical model of understanding.

ANTHONY W. CLARE, *Senior Lecturer,*
Institute of Psychiatry, London

Divergent Views in Psychiatry. Edited by M. DONGIER and E. D. WITTKOWER. Hagerstown, Maryland: Harper and Row. Pp 336. \$20.00.

This book, mainly by Canadian and American authors, offers pairs of essays on controversial topics. The essays present opposing views, and in footnotes the authors are also able to comment on some of their antagonists' remarks while the argument is in full flight. Not all the debates are fruitful however: people are talking to different audiences, and do not always attend to one another's drift.

The subject of diagnosis is opened by an essay from Kendell, well-written but not particularly new for English readers, while his opponent, after emphasizing the unreliability of psychiatric diagnosis and tending to ignore recent advances, hints that this unreliability is an essential part of what he maintains is the social control function of psychiatry. He quotes the Rosenhan experiment and frequently mentions the importance of involuntary hospitalization.

The second debate is psychotherapy: medical or non-medical, with two verbose and unilluminating pieces on whether the therapists should be physicians or can reasonably be psychologists. Third is a discussion between initiates and for initiates on "Is Psychoanalysis a Psychotherapy?" (or on the other hand a theory allowing exploration of the mind but not essentially therapeutic). J. D. Sutherland leads for the positive answer, but so arcane and artificial is the question that the editors report that after a long search they had to undertake the advocacy of the negative themselves.

Fourth is psychoanalysis of schizophrenia, an account of her psychoanalytic method, and a case history, by Pankow being followed by eight pages from P. R. A. May reviewing the scientific evidence for the effectiveness of the main methods of treatment. The piece is good, but not as good as many others on the subject. There is no real debate because the protagonists are in different worlds.