

A discussion of behaviour therapy versus dynamic psychotherapy is opened by Eysenck in characteristic style, and other pieces are by Strupp, and by Fishman, who sums up a moderate position. In the last two topics, ECT and psychosurgery, Breggin attacks both in highly polemical fashion, drawing largely on old quotations, and each subject is defended, but the subjects are done better in recent English reviews.

A number of pieces are rehashes of the authors' earlier writings. None of them is particularly distinguished. The concept of debate does not really come off.

ANDREW C. SMITH, *Consultant Psychiatrist,
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Starving to Death in a Sea of Objects: The Anorexia Nervosa Syndrome. By JOHN A. SOURS. New York: Jason Aronson. 1980. Pp 443. \$25.00.

There are many books on anorexia nervosa and yet another requires justification. How does John Sours' book achieve this? A hint to the answer lies in the title which reflects not only his psychoanalytic orientation but also his literary inclinations. Indeed, this book contains both a full-length novel and a comprehensive overview of the syndrome. Sours' hope is that the technique of fictional non-fiction will maintain anonymity yet be powerful enough to create realism. Whatever the true literary quality of the novel, I found it both gripping and instructive. One can certainly learn as much about illness in this way as by wading through a stuffy and jargon-laden textbook. What of the rest? There are six clinical chapters which describe the syndrome, its history, the phenomenological aspects, anorectic families, developmental patterns and, of course, treatment. In general, the author provides a most helpful overview, with perhaps one weakness. Both the psychoanalytic and family approaches to the understanding and treatment of anorexia nervosa are described in detail, but whilst the family approach is criticised in depth the psychoanalytic model is uncritically accepted. This is a shame, for the credibility of that model is once again called into question.

Nonetheless, overall this is a book well worth reading. Certainly it should be on the library shelves, and if the reader is wondering which of the many to buy, then this is as good as any and better than most. Perhaps, however, it should be paired with Minuchin's *Psychosomatic Families*, both good in their own right, but neither fully complete on its own.

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Psychological Factors in Cardiovascular Disorders. By ANDREW STEPTOE. London: Academic Press. 1981. Pp 286. £18.20.

Emotional influences on the cardiovascular system have attracted the attention of clinicians for several centuries and there is a large and venerable literature on the subject. Recent years have witnessed an enormous growth in the amount of relevant research and the potential research worker is now confronted with a vast array of published work, much of it of dubious quality. We should be grateful, therefore, to Dr Andrew Steptoe, a psychologist, for this thorough review of the field.

The strengths of his book accurately reflect the current state of knowledge. The most useful chapters are those discussing short-term cardiovascular reactions to psychological stimulation, which are well reviewed in relation to neuroendocrine changes. Research into the role of psychological factors in established cardiovascular disease has provided less convincing results. The author has reviewed the contribution of personality, acute life-crises and socio-demographic factors in a number of conditions, particularly hypertension, stroke, ischaemic heart disease and sudden cardiac death. The well known but poorly understood concept of Type A behaviour has been given an entire chapter to itself. The approach is critical and the author's conclusions are justifiably cautious, a desirable attribute in a subject where enthusiasm often flourishes at the expense of evidence. The final chapter is devoted to the psychological aspects of prevention and management. Here the meagre contribution which psychology has made to current clinical practice is fully exposed. However some findings are encouraging and there is clearly a need for further evaluation of the benefits of psychological treatments in hypertension and cardiac rehabilitation.

This is a book which will provide considerable information to anyone embarking on a research project in this area but the behavioural sciences have not yet made a sufficient impact on medical practice for it to be recommended to clinicians.

GEOFFREY LLOYD, *Consultant Psychiatrist,
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The Case for a Personal Psychotherapy. By PETER LOMAS. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1981. Pp 152. £9.50.

This is the sort of book that makes a reviewer feel churlish if he criticises it adversely. It is a well written plea for a modest, thoughtful and humanly decent psychotherapy, written by what might be called a liberal Freudian, and who could object to that?