

## 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.

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,  
Vanbrugh District Hospital, London*

**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.

BRYAN LASK, *Consultant Psychiatrist,  
The Hospital for Sick Children, London*

**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,  
Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh*

**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?