

grossly over-cite studies to support this rather modest and uncontroversial claim.

Once this hurdle has been overcome, one moves on to the discourse proper. All the chapters are similar in style, starting with a useful introduction to the rationale of the study designs to be discussed and some mention of their limitations and pitfalls. There then follows a thorough enumeration of the studies, with a brief description of each, followed by a general summary.

The introductory aspects of each chapter are variable in quality, being particularly good as related to family, twin and adoption studies, but poorer as pertains to models of transmission and marker studies. For the latter types of study this is a major deficit when trying to make sense of findings which, as a rule, are conflicting. An irritating feature of the introductions is the presence of equations which are not derived mathematically or explained in English. Although mathematical derivation is probably beyond the scope of this book, the failure to explain the equations in common sense terms is liable to reduce the reader to the role of spectator.

The substance of each chapter gives a review of individual studies pertinent to the title of that chapter. The result is that an immense amount of information is presented, but with a relative paucity of integration and generalisation, ensuring that the text is enlightening, if somewhat dry. However, although the style may be off-putting, both the raw data and the essences thereof are present, albeit in separate parts.

In short, the main asset of this book is a detailed breakdown of an immense number of publications covering the full range of genetic investigations into mood disorders. It also has useful introductory discussions of the methods of family, twin and adoption studies but is poorer in other aspects, particularly studies of linkage and association. Summation of the data is a relatively minor feature of the book, and therefore it is not particularly recommended to the general reader. Psychiatric libraries, however, would be providing themselves with a worthwhile source book.

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**Current Concepts of Suicide.** Edited by DAVID LESTER.  
Philadelphia: The Charles Press. 1990. 236 pp.

This volume is intended to provide a summing up of where we stand in the field of suicide research. Suicide is an area where there is an obvious interface between many different academic disciplines, and this volume contains contributions from psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists, each writing from the point of view of their discipline.

Contained in the book, therefore, are many different approaches to the study of suicide. Two chapters look-

ing at the biology of suicide are extremely well written and easy to understand. The putative role of serotonin is placed in perspective with a plea for increased precision in the methodology of behavioural measurements. One chapter focuses on the work of Durkheim, who has had a tremendous influence on the study of suicide from the point of view of sociology. This is brought up to date with a useful account of the current debates in the world of sociology concerning Durkheim's theories. There are chapters reviewing the role of the media in suicide and also public health issues connected with suicide. One point made in the latter contribution is the lack of awareness in this country about the impact that stricter emission controls on car exhausts have had in reducing deaths from suicide due to carbon monoxide poisoning. Additionally, there is an intriguing account by an anthropologist of the concept of 'revenge suicide', whereby women in some cultures are able to assert some control over the society in which they live by the act of suicide. Another useful review is a critical analysis of using the ecological approach in studying suicide.

This book offers psychiatrists the chance of reading about some of the developments in other academic fields that relate to suicide. A common failing of some American-edited volumes is avoided in that the authors of the different chapters come not only from the United States but also Canada and Europe. There is only an odd chapter or two that is poorly written with comments on research of dubious value. The diverse topics covered and overall quality of this volume result in a stimulating book from which I was able to learn a great deal.

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**Emotions and the Dual Brain.** Edited by G. GAINOTTI  
and C. CALTAGORONE. Heidelberg: Springer GmbH.  
1989. 270 pp. DM98.00.

Charles Darwin's claim that emotional expressions are part of man's biological inheritance seems only recently to have been rediscovered. This rediscovery has been fuelled by interest in the right cerebral hemisphere, which many believe to be as dominant for emotional behaviour as is the left hemisphere for linguistic functions. This collection of essays was based on a conference in honour of an Italian physiologist, Giuseppe Moruzzi. Much of the writing reflects the neurological bias of the research presented, such as chapters by Doty on the anatomical substrates of emotion and connections between the two hemispheres, whereas chapters by Gainotti and Etcoff look at different emotional disturbances resulting from brain lesions in humans. Latter chapters take on a more cognitive approach with a chapter by Tucker from Oregon which looks at possible brain abnormalities underlying affective disorder.