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**Science - Reuters**

# 'Left-Right' History Wins Aventis Science Book Prize

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LONDON (Reuters) - A book explaining the mysteries of left and right-handedness has won this year's 10,000 pound (\$16,740) Aventis Science Book Prize, a spokeswoman said on Wednesday.

Chris McManus's "Right Hand, Left Hand: The Origins of Asymmetry in Brains, Bodies, Atoms and Cultures" was awarded the scientific equivalent of the prestigious Booker Prize at the Science Museum by novelist Margaret Drabble, who chaired the panel.



McManus draws on a diverse range of sources -- from Rembrandt's paintings and Leonardo da Vinci's drawings -- to explain the vast repertoire of "left-right" symbolism that permeates society. "There have been a lot of books about this subject, but I found them a bit boring," McManus, professor of psychology and medical education at University College London, told Reuters.

"I was more interested in the cultural symbolism of explaining, for example, of why we drive on the left. That helped to lighten the load of the science and I think that is what the judges liked about the book."

Favorite to win the prize was Steven Pinker's "Blank Slate." Pinker has now made the shortlist three times without winning the prize.

Past winners of the prize include Stephen Hawking.

McManus's book was published by Harvard University Press.

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