

# CHOICE

CURRENT REVIEWS FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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March 2003 Vol. 40 No. 07

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Biology - Zoology

*The following review appeared in the March 2003 issue of CHOICE:*

40-4018 QP385 2002-17275 CIP  
McManus, Chris. **Right hand, left hand: the origins of asymmetry in brains, bodies, atoms and cultures.** Harvard, 2002. 412p bibl index afp ISBN 0-674-00953-3, \$27.95

McManus (University College London) examines the effect that being either right-handed or left-handed has on our lives, our culture, and our language. He explores what it is like being left-handed in a right-handed world, analyzes cerebral specialization and its links to social problems, and tries to correct some of the erroneous thinking and general misconceptions that surround left-handedness. In each chapter, McManus skillfully merges cultural history and scientific discovery to explain the concepts of symmetry, asymmetry, cerebral specialization, hemisphere dominance, and right/left symbolism. Bilateral symmetry has been observed in nature for centuries, but it was not until the mid-19th century that examination of human hearts and internal organs revealed asymmetry in vertebrates. Further scientific study into cerebral asymmetry showed that the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body and vice versa. In humans, this hemisphere dominance controls right hand/left hand dominance, right/left footedness, ear dominance, eye dominance, right/left chewing, and even the way humans clasp hands. Cultural research studies of right/left symbolism have recognized similarities that span centuries, generations, and cultures. McManus presents an informative, humorous blend of scientific, technical information with cultural, linguistic information. Notes; references; figures and tables. ^BSumming Up: Highly recommended. General readers; lower-division undergraduates through faculty. -- C. S. McCoy, *University of South Florida*