

Chris McManus' *Left Hand Right hand* will be of interest to lefties who may have slightly resented the historic association of right-handers as being correct and dextrous (Latin dexter: right-hand side) and left-handers as sinister and gauche (Latin sinister: left-hand side with the heraldic bend sinister indicating illegitimacy). Chris McManus could hardly be more appropriately named (Latin manus: hand) and, as a university professor and one of the world's leading authorities the extraordinary and fascinating intricacies of our fundamental asymmetry. Wherever you look in nature there is asymmetry with an inclination to handedness and, like the law and life, it is almost impossible to be even-handed. *Right Hand Left Hand* is a wonderful read, reaching from the fundamental depths of atomic structure (sub-atomic particles called neutrinos are left-handed) and the stuff we are all made of (the DNA double helix has a right-handed twist, although one of its co-discoverers Jim Watson is left-handed) through anatomy (our hearts generally are on our left side) up to Zulus, who reputedly cured any left-handed child's tendency by so scalding the hand so that the child is bound to use the right hand. Whatever your inherited or chosen handedness, there is a surprise and a good story here for the general reader. You will be able to keep family and friends entertained for hours retelling the details, although they might appreciate it more if you just handed round copies of the book since it is over 400 pages long. Accompanied by illustrations, notes, further reading and an excellent index, this is one of the best popular science books of the year.--*Douglas Palmer*