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**Howard I. Kushner (2017). *On the other hand: Left hand, right brain, mental disorder, and history*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.**

This book is about left-handedness and it covers both its history and the contemporary research. While few people would maintain that the condition is entirely of environmental origin, very little is known about its biological basis. There is even little agreement on how left-handedness should be defined. One thing that does come through loud and clear is the discrimination that left-handed people have faced. In Western countries, it was common until recently to force left-handed children to write, eat, sew etc. with their right hand and the practice was brutally enforced. Forcing children to sit on their left hand or tying it up was common. It has often had negative consequences for the children involved. For example, stammering is common among children who have been forced to use their right hand and the author points out that the stammer of King George VI, which was portrayed in the film, "The King's Speech", occurred when it happened to him. The practice has not entirely disappeared in the West, particularly among recent immigrants, and it is still common in China, India, Africa and the Islamic world. It is surprising how widespread it is. Most cultures associate "right" with good, sacred, and normal and "left" with evil, profane and deviant. These views have often been reinforced by religion and, for much of the 20th century, by science. Left-handedness has been associated with a variety of mental disorders, including schizophrenia, mental retardation, ADHD, and autism. It has also been associated with femininity, criminals, "primitives" and homosexuality. The author shows that, in spite of all the effort that has gone into establishing these links, there is no evidence to support any of them. They are simply attempts to associate one kind of stigma with another. Indeed, the negative consequences of the discrimination that left-handers have faced are far more serious than any problems that it is thought to involve. The book will be of special interest to left-handed people, particularly those who have suffered negative consequences as a result, and to members of other stigmatized groups. For the rest of us, it is an interesting case-study in the seemingly limitless capacity of human beings to discriminate against those who are different from themselves.

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