ing baseball data, one of the few collections of numbers which has handedness as a variable. "In effect, the data showed us that for any given age, the percentage of left-handers who will die run around 2 percent higher than the rate for right-handers." Further, "The oldest left-hander made it to age 91 and the oldest right-hander made it to age 109, an 18 year difference!"

To explain such a discrepancy, Coren invokes his used-piano analogy: a used piano may look fine but should the one key you press not move, the implication is that it is likely that some others won't either. Left-handedness is analogous to the faulty key with the other keys representing such things as decreased longevity and propensity to have certain diseases. Indeed, diabetes, Crohn's disease, myasthenia gravis, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, depression and alcoholism have a much higher incidence among left-handers.

To explain the above consequences of left-handedness, Coren postulates that difficult pregnancies and/or difficult births cause some malfunctions, one of which is left-handedness. The simple explanation that left-handedness is a recessive trait doesn't appear correct because if both parents are left-handed then the offspring is still twice as likely to be right-handed as left-handed. He held the simple genetic explanation for years and "Abandoning the idea that left-or right-handedness was a genetically variable trait was personally quite painful."

His pain represents an opportunity for others because the data is far from conclusive. And unlike I. Q. studies, left-handedness carries little incendiary baggage. Much more data-gathering and theorizing needs to be done before the constancy, causes and consequences of left-handedness can be settled. While Coren views left-handedness as a sign of pathology, we right-handed squash players might hold to a more historical, Judeo-Christian interpretation: diabolical.

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Luna: Myth & Mystery by Kathleen Cain. Boulder, Colorado: Johnson Books, 1991, 202 pp. $15.95 (paper). ISBN 1-55566-070-3. (Johnson Printing,1880 South 57th Court, Boulder CO 80301.)

The moon appears larger or smaller depending on how we view it. Glimpse it near the horizon with trees or buildings intervening, and it looms large. View it high in the sky against a backdrop of stars and planets, and it seems small. Does the moon really change size? As unsuspecting photographers discover to

their dismay, the extraordinarily large moon is an optical illusion created when the eye and mind process the mix of lunar disk and intervening trees or buildings. Without the earthly distractions, the eye and mind shrink the moon to a more modest diameter — the skimpy diameter recorded on the developed film of disappointed photographers.

When Kathleen Cain looks at the role of the moon in human culture, she fills her field of vision with an array of intervening presumptions — personal presumptions that lead her to assign an extraordinarily large cultural role to the moon. Sympathetic to New Age and related criticisms of contemporary society, she finds in traditional lunar beliefs the hope for a regenerated cultural and spiritual order. Modern scientific society supposedly has lost crucial mystical, ecological, and female insights that our more enlightened ancestors embraced successfully in lunar myth, lore, and religion. Cain's response to the presumed problem is to "allure, enchant, and guide" by providing her readers with a truly massive compendium of past and present lunar beliefs from around the world.

The guidance takes the form, on the one hand, of didactic asides on the merits of New Age, environmental, and women's perspectives. On the other hand, it manifests itself in an overreaching thesis about the centrality of the moon in culture. Cain reports arguments not only for the pervasiveness of lunar myth in diverse societies but also for its priority: lunar worship purportedly came before solar worship in human history. Furthermore, drawing on recent writings about "the Great Mother goddess," she associates this antecedent lunar worship with distinctively female principles. While stressing that remnants of "Mother-moon" worship persist to this day (for example, in Christians' veneration of the Virgin Mary), she laments that it has been masked by myths and religions dominated by male and solar imagery. She advocates a rediscovery and re-emphasis of the lunar essence.

In caveats throughout the book, Cain calls not for the elimination of scientific outlooks but for the restoration of a balance between, on the one hand, "intuition, compassion, and feeling" and, on the other hand, "rationality, judgment, and logic of science." Indeed, she frequently invokes scientific studies in a seeming effort to legitimate legends or lore covering the moon's influence on everything from weather to the human mind. Similarly, she is quick to note parallels between scientific and mythic accounts of such events as the creation of the moon. She also carefully argues that NASA's Apollo missions do not in any way distract from the mystery of the moon.

Cain forthrightly acknowledges that the book is not a "scholarly work." In fact, it is a personal, rather eclectic montage of an incredible number of lunar myths, legends, and folk beliefs. Like a medieval encyclopedist, Cain seems intent on including every available piece of information, even if it means mingling disparate findings and juxtaposing dissimilar sources. Supplemented by illustrations, sidebars, and appendices, the main text unfolds in eight chapters with titles such as "Inhabitants of the Moon" and "Full Moon!" The chapters are packed — at times overpacked — with tidings and tidbits. In the latter cat-

egory fall a lunar interpretation of the nursery rhyme "Jack and Jill" and an explication of the ribald practice of "mooning." All in all, Cain has fashioned an overly earnest yet genial compendium of moonlore.

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Cross Currents by Robert O. Becker. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1990, 336 pp. $19.95 (available from The Sourcebook Project, P. O. Box 107, Glen Arm MD 21057).

Subtitled "The Perils of Electropollution," this book calls for public action to protect ourselves against man-made electromagnetic fields (EMF). We must, according to its author, "act wisely and quickly," because the military and the electric-power industry will otherwise give "little, if any, consideration ... to the potential impact of [EMF] on the health and safety of the public." Furthermore, there is a "conspiracy" by the military to deny the existence of "nonthermal" effects of EMF on living creatures. By "nonthermal" effects of electromagnetic fields Becker means phenomena that occur because of EMF interference with the body's natural electrical and magnetic systems. Our Defense Department carefully allocates scientific research funds only to those projects that will "not challenge the thermal effects standard."

"Thermal" effects relate to the deposition of electromagnetic energy directly, as heat, into bodily tissues. In the U.S.A., government standards have required that such radiation be restricted to energy fluxes less than 10 milliwatts per square centimeter. (In recognition of the fact that that value may be rather high, the standard may in the future be lowered to 1 milliwatt per square centimeter.) In Russia, the standard is already 0.1 milliwatt per square centimeter. There is no mystery about the thermal effects. I allow myself a minor disagreement with Becker in this respect. I believe he is simply wrong when he asserts that (p. 233) "we really do not know exactly how microwaves produce their heating effect, even in the ubiquitous microwave ovens." But thermal effects are not the main objective of the book, as far as I can tell. Becker's emphasis on thermal effects is a distraction. It weakens his insights into the role of nonthermal phenomena.

As a radio astronomer interested in medical applications of radio astronomy and in body electricity in life systems, I found myself fascinated by the author's discussion of nonthermal effects. He finds nonthermal effects all over