

**Dichotomies of Mind.** W. Lowen with Lawrence Miike. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1982, \$28.50.

*Reviewed by Terence Hines, Pace University*

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The basic thesis of this book is that there are "at least 16 types of people. Each type of personality has definite preferences for processing information" (p. 4). The model presented consists of 16 "capacities," or basic building blocks, each of which "represents a larger cluster of cooperating brain cells that, when working together, carry out information-processing functions." Examples of some "capacities" are "signal," "sign," "harmony," and "logic." As might be expected, with 16 "capacities" and the opportunity for various groupings of these capacities and interactions between capacities and groups thereof, the model quickly becomes quite complex. However, the complexity does little to hide one fundamental point: the model is an absurdity. The 16 capacities have apparently been made up almost totally out of whole cloth by the author, based on nothing other than subjective experience. No empirical evidence whatsoever is presented to argue for the reality of the individual capacities or, in fact, for any aspect of the model. Astonishingly, the author explicitly belittles the use of evidence to support his model: "I offer no validation of the correctness of the model. Correlation studies bore me and I leave those to others" (p. 4).

The author does offer, however, what he presumably considers another type of support for his model. This totally subjective evidence is presented in "Glimpses" scattered throughout the book. A few quotes will give the reader an idea of the level of this book. One of the dichotomies that the author talks about is that of "style." He says "In brief, people seem to process information in two diametrically opposite ways or styles. Either they time share or they batch process. I'm a batch processor; my style is detailed. My wife is a time sharer; her style is contextual" (p. 12). And what is the evidence for this grand dichotomization of all of humanity into batch processors and time sharers? It appears in the "Glimpse" on page 13:

Typically my wife doesn't start cooking until I get home. So while she's busy in the kitchen, I sit in the living room reading. Suddenly, just as I'm in the middle of something interesting, I hear my wife calling from the kitchen, "Walter please bring up a couple of onions from the cellar." Now what happens is that I didn't really listen. I simply filed an "interrupt" signal and kept right on reading until I got to the end of the article (completing the batch job). I would then walk into the kitchen and say to my wife, "What did you want?" to which I get the irritated response, "I forgot, why didn't you answer me when I spoke to you?"

Now consider the case if my wife decides to get the onions herself. As she walks downstairs, her eye may fall on a plant that needs watering. So she detours to get the watering can right then and there, and then I hear her say out loud, "Gee, what did I come down here for? Oh, yes, the onions." Even then she may get sidetracked again. No wonder it took her much longer to get the onions than one might expect (time sharing).

The same level of discussion appears throughout the book. The author has fallen into the trap of accepting subjective experiences as real evidence. As is well known, such experiences can be extremely misleading and can convince individuals that totally fallacious systems are, in fact, correct. It is just such personal validation that leads

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people to accept such invalid pseudo-sciences as astrology, biorhythm theory, and various forms of health and nutrition quackery.

In one of the most ludicrous sections of the book, the author attempts to tie his model to neuroanatomy. In total ignorance of even the most basic facts of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology, the author tells us, in a diagram on page 68, that "feeling" is in the frontal lobes, "sensation" is in the frontal-parietal areas, "thinking" is in the occipital lobes, and "intuition" is in the temporal lobes. Happily, we are spared any of the currently popular nonsense linking the right brain to "art" and the left brain to "science," but I suspect that this is simply because the author has not yet heard of this silly view.

The book is a masterpiece of crackpottery and bears many of the hallmarks of such thought. Noted above was the lack of concern, even contempt, for supporting empirical evidence. In other words, "Don't confuse me with the facts, I know what I believe." The book is also the work of a man fundamentally ignorant of the research literature in the fields in which he is writing. Worse, this ignorance appears to be willful, since even a cursory reading of any introductory psychology text would have disabused the author of some of the ridiculous beliefs he holds. (The case of his astonishingly incorrect view of brain function noted above is one example here.) His ignorance in the area of personality research is even greater than that in brain function. He is blissfully unaware that, historically, attempts to classify people into strictly dichotomous groups have been failures. The dichotomy (or trichotomy, or whatever) turns out to be a continuum. The book is replete with complicated figures and diagrams, full of arrows and symbols. Engineering and computer science jargon abound. All this is apparently designed to give the book the appearance of being scientific and profound. It does not work and the vacuousness of the authors' underlying concepts are plain to see. Contrary to the description on the dust-jacket, the book makes no contributions and offers no insights, profound or otherwise, to any field of study. It is a disgrace to the publisher.