

Why Beauty Is Truth



A History of Symmetry

Ian Stewart

Author of *Nature's Numbers* and *Does God Play Dice?*

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A History of Symmetry

IAN STEWART

An eminent mathematician and writer explores an idea both simple and complex, both multidisciplinary and unifying—the story of symmetry

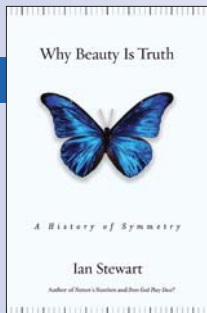
Hidden in the heart of the theory of relativity, quantum mechanics, string theory, and modern cosmology lies one idea: symmetry. Symmetry has been a key concept for artists, architects, and musicians for centuries, but as a mathematical principle it remained, until very recently, an arcane pursuit. In the twentieth century, however, symmetry emerged as central to the most fundamental ideas in physics and cosmology. In *Why Beauty Is Truth*, world-famous mathematician Ian Stewart tells the compelling stories of the eccentric and occasionally tragic mathematical geniuses as he describes how symmetry grew into one of the most important ideas of modern science.

“A brilliant interweaving of politics, history, and intrigue.... [*Why Beauty is Truth*] brings us to the heart of why mathematicians pursue mathematics.” —*Nature*

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IAN STEWART

IAN STEWART is professor of mathematics at the University of Warwick and is well known for

his writing and broadcasting about mathematics for nonspecialists. He has written over 140 research papers on such subjects as symmetry in dynamics, pattern formation, chaos, and mathematical biology, as well as numerous popular books, including *Letters to a Young Mathematician*, *Does God Play Dice? What Shape Is a Snowflake?*, *Nature's Numbers*, *The Annotated Flatland*, and *Flatterland*. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 2001. He lives in Coventry, England.

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