

# The Collapse of Chaos

***The Collapse of Chaos: Discovering Simplicity in a Complex World*** (1994) is a book about complexity theory and the nature of scientific explanation written by biologist Jack Cohen and mathematician Ian Stewart.

In this book Cohen and Stewart give their ideas on chaos theory, particularly on how the simple leads to the complex, and conversely, how the complex leads to the simple, and argue for a need for contextual explanation in science as a complement to reduction. This book dovetails with other books written by the Cohen-Stewart team, particularly *Figments of Reality*.

As with other Cohen-Stewart books, topics are illustrated with humorous science fiction snippets dealing with a fictional alien intelligence, the Zarathustrians, whom Cohen and Stewart use as metaphors of the human mind itself.

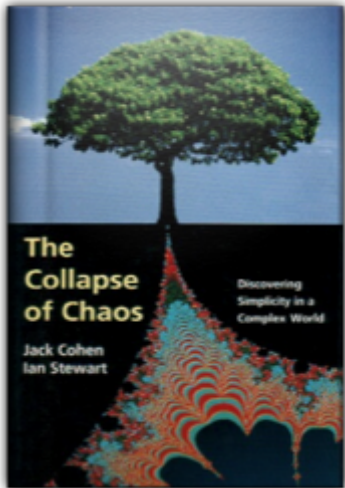
## Reception

*Next Generation* commented, "Although the book assumes you have zero knowledge of science (and thus is a little patronizing in the early chapters), it presents the concepts of Complexity Theory as well as anything we've seen."<sup>[1]</sup>

## Additional reviews

- Casti, John L. (21 July 1994). "Why is anything ever simple?" (<https://www.nature.com/articles/370189a0.pdf?origin=ppub>) (PDF). *Nature*. **370** (6486): 189. Bibcode:1994Natur.370..189C (<https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/1994Natur.370..189C>). doi:10.1038/370189a0 (<https://doi.org/10.1038%2F370189a0>).
- Regis, Ed (12 June 1994). "The World Made Easy" (<https://www.nytimes.com/1994/06/12/books/the-world-made-easy.html>). *The New York Times*.
- THE COLLAPSE OF CHAOS by Jack Cohen , Ian Stewart | Kirkus Reviews* (<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/jack-cohen/the-collapse-of-chaos/>).

## The Collapse of Chaos



Softcover edition

Author	Jack Cohen and Ian Stewart
Country	United Kingdom
Language	English
Subject	scientific explanation, complexity theory
Publisher	Penguin Books
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- "Nonfiction Book Review: The Collapse of Chaos: 2discovering Simplicity in a Complex World by Jack Cohen, Author, Ian Stewart, With Viking Books \$23.95 (512p) ISBN 978-0-670-84983-3" (<https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-670-84983-3>). *PublishersWeekly.com*. Retrieved 6 November 2019.
- Tait, Stephanie (2010). "A review of "The Collapse of Chaos: Discovering Simplicity in a Complex World," by Jack Cohen and Ian Stewart, 1995" (<https://doi.org/10.29173%2Fcmlpct8955>). *Complicity*. **7** (2). doi:10.29173/cmlpct8955 (<https://doi.org/10.29173%2Fcmlpct8955>).

**OCLC**247326335 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/247326335>)

## References

1. "Essential Reading". *Next Generation*. No. 23. *Imagine Media*. November 1996. p. 59.
- Jack Cohen and Ian Stewart: *The Collapse of Chaos: discovering simplicity in a complex world*, Penguin Books, 1994, ISBN 978-0-14-029125-4

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