



Chaos: Making a New Science

By James Gleick

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The million-copy bestseller by National Book Award nominee and Pulitzer Prize finalist James Gleick—the author of *Time Travel: A History*—that reveals the science behind chaos theory

A work of popular science in the tradition of Stephen Hawking and Carl Sagan, this 20th-anniversary edition of James Gleick's groundbreaking bestseller *Chaos* introduces a whole new readership to chaos theory, one of the most significant waves of scientific knowledge in our time. From Edward Lorenz's discovery of the Butterfly Effect, to Mitchell Feigenbaum's calculation of a universal constant, to Benoit Mandelbrot's concept of fractals, which created a new geometry of nature, Gleick's engaging narrative focuses on the key figures whose genius converged to chart an innovative direction for science. In *Chaos*, Gleick makes the story of chaos theory not only fascinating but also accessible to beginners, and opens our eyes to a surprising new view of the universe.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Few writers distinguish themselves by their ability to write about complicated, even obscure topics clearly and engagingly. James Gleick, a former science writer for the *New York Times*, resides in this exclusive category. In *Chaos*, he takes on the job of depicting the first years of the study of chaos--the seemingly random patterns that characterize many natural phenomena.

This is not a purely technical book. Instead, it focuses as much on the scientists studying chaos as on the chaos itself. In the pages of Gleick's book, the reader meets dozens of extraordinary and eccentric people. For instance, Mitchell Feigenbaum, who constructed and regulated his life by a 26-hour clock and watched his waking hours come in and out of phase with those of his coworkers at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

As for chaos itself, Gleick does an outstanding job of explaining the thought processes and investigative techniques that researchers bring to bear on chaos problems. Rather than attempt to explain Julia sets, Lorenz attractors, and the Mandelbrot Set with gigantically complicated equations, *Chaos* relies on sketches, photographs, and Gleick's wonderful descriptive prose.

From Publishers Weekly

Gleick here adventurously attempts to describe the revolutionary science of "chaos," a challengingly abstract new look at nature in terms of nonlinear dynamics. "A ground-breaking book about what seems to be the future of physics," praised PW. Illustrated. 100,000 first printing; author tour.

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From Library Journal

Chaos-theory, touted as the third revolution in 20th-century science after relativity and quantum mechanics, uses traditional mathematics to understand complex natural systems with too many variables to study. Philosophically, it counters the Second Law of Thermodynamics by demonstrating the "spontaneous emergence of self-organization." In this new science apparent disorder is meaningful; the structure of chaos can be mapped by plotting graphically the calculations of nonlinear mathematics using "fractal" geometry, a brainchild of Benoit Mandelbrot in which symmetrical patterns repeat across different scales. With jocular descriptions of eccentric characters such as the "Dynamical Systems collective," (a.k.a. Chaos Cabal) of the University of California Santa Cruz, *Chaos* offers an absorbing look at trailblazers on a new scientific frontier. Laurie Tynan, Montgomery Cty.

Norristown P.L., Pa.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Isidro Wells:

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