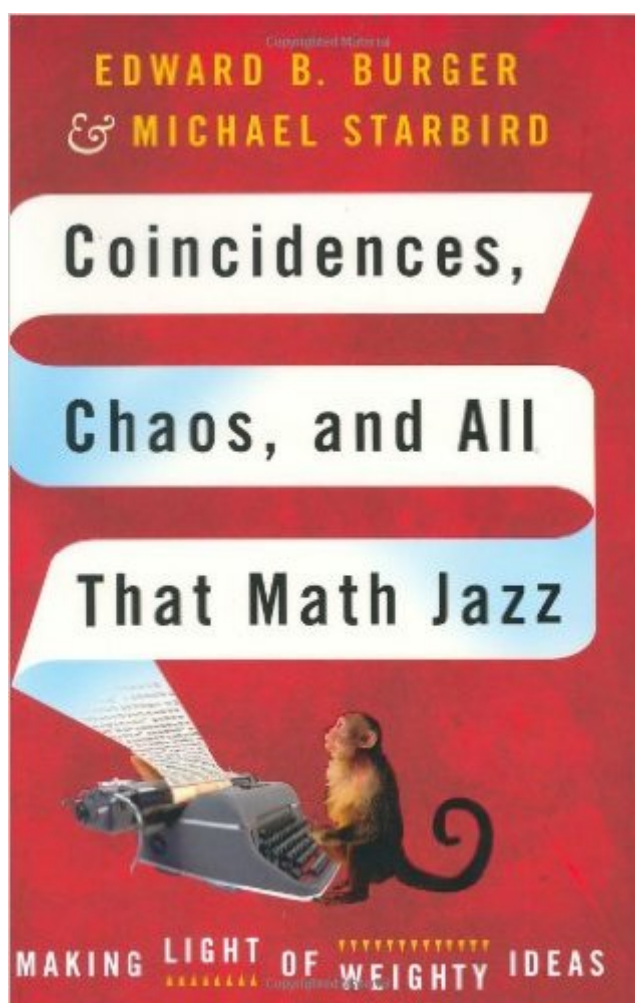


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# Coincidences, Chaos, And All That Math Jazz: Making Light Of Weighty Ideas



## Synopsis

By starting in the familiar world and using a few simple steps of imagination, Edward B. Burger and Michael Starbird sneak up on weighty mathematical ideas. The spirals on a pineapple quickly lead to the famous Fibonacci numbers and the alluring Golden Ratio, and from there to aesthetic forms in nature, art and music. The edge of a twisted strip of paper leads to an image of the shape of the universe. Playing with the notion of probability shows that surprising coincidences such as the amazing parallels between the Lincoln and Kennedy assassinations are sure to happen. These and other foreign and familiar mysteries are all explained with great humour and clarity in this irreverent, entertaining and readable book.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (28 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

This book is full of very lively and engaging explanations of a wide range of mathematics. The book consists of four parts, each of which is subdivided into three chapters. The first part is on "Understanding Uncertainty" and covers topics related to chaos, coincidences, and statistics. The second part, "Embracing Figures", deals with cryptography and patterns and has an especially nice section on 'sizing up numbers' which deals with orders of magnitude and topics which should be a part of anybody's quantitative literacy. "Exploring Aesthetics" is the subject of the third part, which includes discussions of fractals and chaos and a nice introduction to the coffee cups and doughnuts of topology. They also discuss Mobius Bands and Klein Bottles, which lead nicely into the final section, which is entitled "Transcending Reality", and deals with the fourth dimension and various notions of infinity. That is a large number of topics to cover in 288 pages, and doing a little division

will tell you that many topics are treated extremely briefly. And that would probably be many readers' main criticism of the book: while it certainly gives a sampling platter of a large number of ideas throughout mathematics, it does not give you an entire meal of any of them, and before you are even done chewing one bite, the authors bring you the next topic served on a platter. While I certainly understand, and to some extent agree with, this criticism, I think that many readers will prefer their mathematics served this way, and it certainly will open the door for many of them to explore these ideas further.

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