



# The Colours of Infinity: The Beauty, The Power and the Sense of Fractals

*Nigel Lesmoir-Gordon, Arthur C. Clarke*

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Benoit Mandelbrot discovered what is now called the M-Set in the early seventies and coined the term 'fractal' to describe the geometry behind it. The power and the beauty of fractals were only capable of being seen with the advent of computers, which become psychedelic windows on the infinite when using simple fractal equations.

In 1992 Nigel Lesmoir-Gordon made the TV documentary, *The Colors of Infinity* about the Mandelbrot Set and fractals, which has since been seen right round the world. Nigel's enthusiasm brought together a dream team of contributors for the film who all now contribute to the book tracking how fractals have developed since the film was made. Sir Arthur C Clarke presented the film and in the book gives a lucidly simple account of the mathematics of the M-Set. Benoit Mandelbrot, the Belgian mathematician explains how it began. Professor Michael Barnsley, the computer graphics researcher who developed fractal image compression technology, explains the applications of the breakthroughs. Professor Ian Stewart, author of *Does God Play Dice?* adds his insights into the beautifully simple equation that gives birth to fractals.

Two of the most interesting applications of fractal geometry, reflected by the two new contributors to the book, are to the Internet and to the Stock Market. Dr Gary Flake, Chief Technology Officer at Overture, the leading provider of commercial search on the Internet and just taken over by Yahoo for 1.6 billion dollars, discusses the profoundly fractal nature of the Web in his article: *The Self-ish Web*. Robert Prechter Jr is President of Elliott Wave International, Inc. and founder of the Socionomics Institute. His latest title is *Socionomics: The Science of History and Social Prediction* (2003). He writes about how fractals can help us understand the oscillations of stock markets.

In the back of the book is a DVD of the original documentary with soundtrack by David Gilmour of Pink Floyd PLUS a 30-minute fractal animation to the music of members of Quintessence.

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