

The Little Book of Awe & Wonder

^{by} Dr Matthew McFall



Independent Thinking Press

Fertilising Cornucopia (1895) by R: Christiansen

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FOREWORD

HOW TO SPOT A DESERT ISLAND

Looking is one thing. Noticing is something else entirely. Wanting to notice is what starts it off. It is often remarked that the creative ones are the ones who see what everyone else sees but think something different. Who notice new connections. New patterns. But what makes them want to see the world differently to begin with? Why do they not just walk past the wall at the railway station in the middle of England without noticing the tiny desert island growing there?

Curiosity.

Curiosity is a useful word. It has the same root as the word 'curator'. To look after. To take care. Curiosity is what drives people to want to see the world through a different lens. To notice what's there. And then value what they notice. It is what primes the creative pump. When Einstein was a young boy his father gave him a magnetic compass to play with. He was curious. This curiosity led to him noticing that there was 'something behind things, something deeply hidden'. Curiosity leads to fascination, curiosity's bigger brother (although beware obsession, its evil twin). Curiosity isn't about seeing what isn't there. That's fantasy. It's about taking delight in discovering what is there. Curiosity says, 'I wonder what there is? I wonder what? I wonder ...'

Photograph by Ian Gilbert

Wonder.

This is the delight derived from curiosity. Curiosity drives the creative mind. Wonder rewards it. Curiosity motivates us to learn and explore. Wonder is the kickback we get that makes it all worthwhile. S'wonderful.

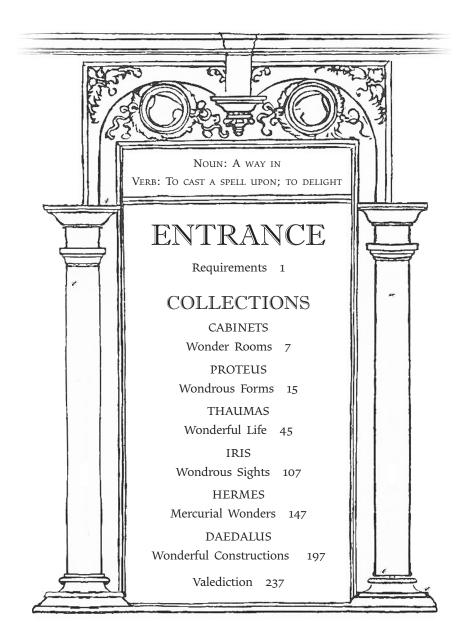
Wonder is what Matthew McFall does. He has a brain like a museum curator's sock drawer at midnight. Everything is endlessly fascinating. Everything is eminently collectable. Everything is a stimulus for wonder. It's this that he brings to his work in education, entrancing the entire school community, young and old, to want to learn. It's the deliberate process of creating a natural state of wonder that turns learning into the self-satisfying act of satiating one's own curiosity.

This book, for example. It's a wonder. If you are curious enough to explore it you will be amazed at the wonder within it. Wasp hairs. Kidney stone crystals. The lost language of Rongorongo. Divided up into six different compartments, this book is a wonder full of wonders. It's a book to dip in and out of, one in which each page is deliberately there to make you stop. And think. And then see the world differently. 'The only true voyage of discovery, the only fountain of Eternal Youth, would be not to visit strange lands but to possess other eyes', as Proust said. This book shows you how every step you take can be a voyage of discovery. How you'll never be able to look at the world again without wondering. How you'll wonder how you got this far and noticed so little.

It will show you how to make sure you never fail to notice a tiny desert island again.

Ian Gilbert, Suffolk

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REQUIREMENTS

Brain v.2013 or earlier.

This book is compatible with all future models.

Optical effects and toys presented here may cause dizziness or nausea if over-explored. Exercise caution.

Your magnifying bookmark will be of great assistance to you.



Anatomy of the head, lateral view (Patrick J. Lynch, 2006)

The Little Book of Awe and Wonder

Everything is from an egg. (Ex ovo omnia).

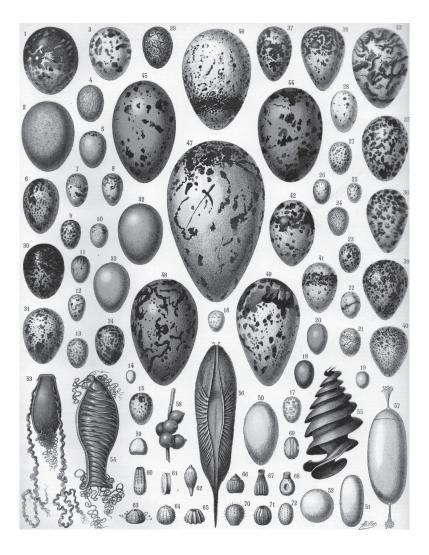
William Harvey (1578-1657), Exercitationes de Generatione Animalium (1651)



Anatomy of a Pregnant Woman (1773) by Jacques Fabien Gautier D'Agoty (1716-1785)

1. European Honey	25. Tit	50. Grebe
Buzzard	26. Tree Warbler	51. Pond Turtle
2. Falcon	27. Waxwing	52. Land Tortoise
3. Eurasian Sparrow-Hawk	28. Oriole	53. Dogfish
4. Blackbird	29. Jacana	54. Dogfish
5. Thrush	30. Grouse	55. Shark
6. Rook	31. Grouse	56. Chimaera
7. Corn Bunting	32. Pheasant	57. Lamprey
8. Grosbeak	33. Partridge	58. Cuttlefish
9. Sparrow	34. Quail	59. Tiger Moth
10. Chaffinch	35. Avocet	60. Geometer Moth
11. Pipit	36. Spotted Redshank	61. Geometer Moth
12. Reed Bunting	37. Dotterel	62. Clouded Yellow
13. Cuckoo	38. Plover	Butterfly
14. Hummingird	39. Lapwing	63. Figure of Eight
15. Crossbill	40. Green Sandpiper	Moth
16. Wren	41. Tern	64. Wall Butterfly
17. Nuthatch	42. Common Tern	65. Skipper Butterfly
18. Nightingale	43. Tern	66. Noctuid Moth
19. Goldcrest	44. Seagull	67. Buff Moth
20. Accentor	45. Loon	68. Ennemos Moth
21. Rock Bunting	46. Guillemot	69. Atlas Moth
22. Reed Warbler	47. Great Auk	70. Admiral Butterfly
23. Sedge Warbler	48. Puffin	71. Bryophila Moth
24. Warbler	49. Puffin	72. Catarhoe Moth

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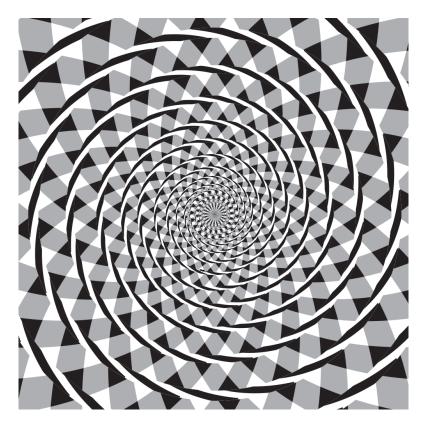


Oeufs from Nouveau Larousse Illustré, Vol. 6 by Adolphe Millot (1857-1921)

THE FRASER SPIRAL

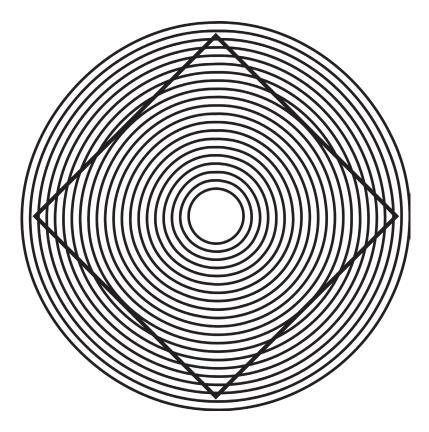
This was first described by the British psychologist James Fraser in 1908.

Although this appears to be a spiral of twisted cord, you are looking at unconnected concentric circles. Trace them with your finger.



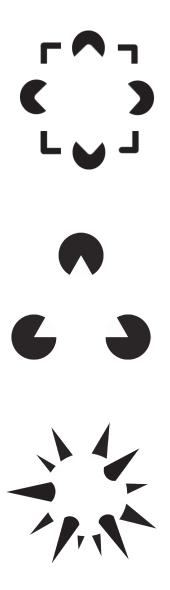
A Fraser spiral illusion (Mysid, 2007)

Iris - Wondrous Sights



The sides of this square are straight.

The Ehrenstein illusion



Gestalt illusions

STEREOSCOPE

To see this satellite view in 3D, relax and cross your eyes slightly so that a third white dot appears between the two white dots. Shift your gaze to the photograph beneath the dot. With practice, a new 3D picture will appear.



Satellite image of Lake Palanskoye, Kamchatka (NASA, 2012)

e view.
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looking at the autostereogram in landscape
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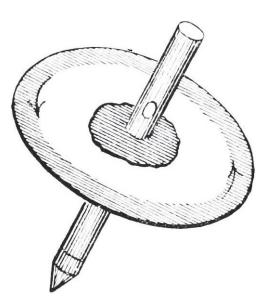
Relax your eyes again as you did for the last autostereogram.

When you unlock the third dimension you will know the answer to this riddle. This time there are no white dots to guide you.

A riddle of riddles, it dances and skips, It is read in the eyes, though it cheats on the lips; If it meet with its match it is easily caught; But when money will buy it, it's not worth a groat. The Little Book of Awe and Wonder

In 1838, Gustav Fechner described an optical illusion which remains exciting and mysterious.

He designed a number of black and white spinning tops which, when spun, produce unexpected patterns with illusions of depth, light, and colour.



(Popular Science Monthly, 1890-1891)



Gustav Fechner (1801-1887)

Author of The Little Book of Life after Death (1836)

German physician, physicist, psychologist, chemist, philosopher, riddler, and humorist.

Interests: the senses, pleasure, colour, vision, and enigmas.

A CONSUMMATE CORNUCOPIA OF THE AWE-INSPIRING, THE JAW-DROPPING, THE VERY WEIRD AND THE MOST WONDERFUL

"A feast of learning, wit and lateral thinking."

Dr Allan Chapman, Wadham College, Oxford

"... weaves wonder into every page. Like a Victorian cabinet of curiosities, it offers a stimulating mix of the puzzling, the bizarre and the thought-provoking."

Professor Mike Sharples, Institute of Educational Technology, The Open University

"Poetry, philosophy, language, history, art and science in one little book – brought together so effortlessly – your mind will be buzzing and wanting more!"

Dr Lizzie Burns, Science-Based Artist

"The Little Book of Awe and Wonder will pique your curiosity, encourage your humility and arouse your awe at the extraordinary collection of verbal and pictorial observations within its covers ... a literally awesome birthday present."

Professor Andrew Briggs, University of Oxford

"Matthew McFall's love, enthusiasm and vast knowledge of all things wondrous he generously shares in this lovely collection; just dipping in one discovers joys and then, as is the nature of wonders, curiosity is rewarded by an uplifting feeling of astonishment."

Peter Clifford, Actor and Magician

AN INDUBITABLE PHANTASMAGORIA THAT WILL DELIGHT THE HEAD, HAND AND HEART

