



Gardner's Whys & Wherefores

Martin Gardner

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Martin Gardner's legacy in mathematics and science is well established, and never is he so at home than when picking apart paranormal claims and pseudoscience. Yet like Isaac Asimov, Gardner's interests encompass a wide range of views and arguments. His wit and encyclopedic knowledge have made him a sought-after contributor to *Discover*, *Nature*, *Psychology Today*, and *The New York Review of Books*.

A delightful collection of his best essays, *Gardner's Whys & Wherefores* includes articles on the puzzles in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and on the fantasies of Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Lord Dunsany, Gilbert Chesterton, and H.G. Wells. Gardner expresses strong opinions about the "anthropic principle," computer games capable of discovering scientific laws, the philosophy of W.V. Quine, Marvin Minsky's view of the workings of the mind, the idiosyncrasies of social theorist Allan Bloom, the reality of unknown digits that "sleep" in pi, and whether physicists are really on the verge of discovering Everything.

A delightful bit of publishing history is a hilarious selection from *The New York Review of Books* in which Gardner, writing under a pseudonym, blasts his own book, *The Ways of a Philosophical Scrivener*. Exciting, provocative, and enduring, *Gardner's Whys & Wherefores* is a distinct pleasure.

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