



# **On the Beauty of Science: A Nobel Laureate Reflects on the Universe, God, and the Nature of Discovery**

*Herbert A. Hauptman*

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## **On the Beauty of Science: A Nobel Laureate Reflects on the Universe, God, and the Nature of Discovery** Herbert A. Hauptman

In this memoir of a long, distinguished career devoted to scientific research, world-renowned mathematician Herbert A. Hauptman recounts both the joys and the disappointments of his lifelong quest to induce nature to "reveal her secrets."

In 1985, Dr. Hauptman received the greatest honor that any scientist can receive, when the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awarded him and his colleague, Jerome Karle, the Nobel Prize in chemistry. Drs. Hauptman and Karle were recognized "for their outstanding achievements in the development of direct methods for the determination of crystal structures." This work has proved to be of the greatest importance because it relates molecular structure to biological activity, thus permitting a better understanding of life processes and making possible the development of many new disease-fighting drugs. Dr. Hauptman vividly describes the difficulties of the mathematical work that led up to his discovery as well as his joy when he finally hit upon a method of unraveling the structure of crystals.

In addition, he provides a personal account of his background, family, his formative studies in high school and college, and the experiences that motivated him to pursue a life devoted to scientific research. A strong advocate of the naturalistic worldview and a critic of supernaturalism in any form, he reflects on the alleged compatibility of science and religion and emphasizes the importance of scientific understanding for contemporary civilization.

Complete with an appendix containing the original monograph (coauthored with Jerome Karle), which became the basis for their Nobel Prize-winning work, this fascinating and moving memoir offers important insights into the nature of scientific research and the value of the scientific outlook on life.

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