

# Book review in July/Aug 2004 issue of



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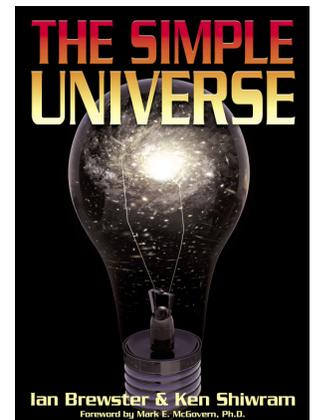
# SIB&F

SCIENCE BOOKS & FILMS: YOUR REVIEW GUIDE TO SCIENCE RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES

**Brewster, Ian, and Ken Shiwram, with a foreword by Mark E. McGovern. *The Simple Universe*. (Illus.) Burlington, Ontario: Apogee Books, 2004, 108pp. \$22.95. ISBN 1-894959-11-6. Glossary. YA, GA**

*The Simple Universe*, by Ian Brewster and Ken Shiwram, offers the nonspecialist a quick introduction to many physicists' quest for a description of the universe that is elegant, beautiful, and comprehensive. Readers who are not immersed in science may not have realized that elegance and beauty are major motivation factors for physicists, because such concepts are usually associated with the arts. However, scientists understand the universe by building models. Sometimes, many different models describe a process. One of the ways of discriminating among them is to choose the model that explains the phenomenon

in the simplest terms and that often appears to be the most beautiful or pleasing description. The authors illustrate this approach by tracing the history of reductionism, a successful method of breaking the workings of nature down into their components. My only point of contention with the book is that it would have been helpful to discuss the parallel pursuit in modern physics of researching complex phenomena and chaos theory. To be fair to the authors, a treatment of that subject would require another book of comparable size to this one. In sum, I recommend *The Simple Universe* for young adult and general-audience readers who are seeking a well-organized, well written, and lavishly illustrated exploration of the forces that govern the universe and the search for a theory to unify them. -*Charles D. Ferguson, II, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Washington, DC*



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