

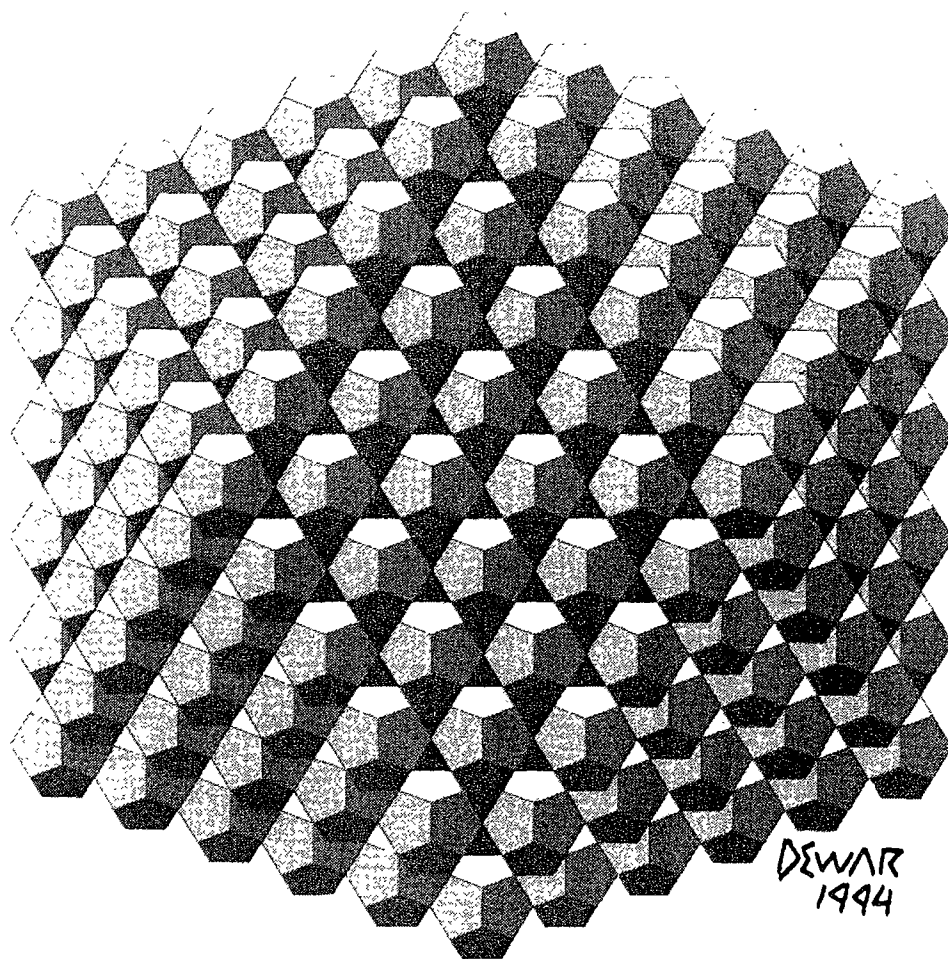
# Symmetry: Culture and Science

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IN THE NAME OF ASYMMETRY: A NEW PHILOSOPHICAL AND ESTHETIC  
CONCEPT ALTERS THE SYMMETRICAL WORLD OF ANTIQUITY

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For what reason should symmetry, of all things, represent the objective of movement, change, or development? Indeed: for what reason should the goal not be the creation of asymmetry?

Within the context of elaboration on these questions, the author develops a philosophical and esthetic concept which fundamentally differs from traditional and still predominant intellectual views on symmetry as inherited from antiquity.

The following hypotheses form the crux of this concept:

1. Phenomena of symmetry and asymmetry exist both in the world of nature as well as in the world created or influenced by man -- i.e., in man's artificial world, including the world of his and her own social creations. These phenomena interlink in these worlds by virtue of a general scheme of order.
2. In this general scheme of order, symmetry and asymmetry encompass essential aspects of identity and dissimilarity, as well as of the sustenance and further development of realities.

3. Within this scheme of order, two realities existing in a state of mutual symmetry act to constitute a field of tension, and in such a state represent neither absolute identity nor a condition of persistence in absolute tranquillity.
4. In this general scheme of order, symmetry phenomena allow realities to assume a situation of movement with respect to one another -- insofar as the tension existing between these realities is sufficiently strong, and to the extent that such realities seek to achieve mutual adjustment. Or, symmetry phenomena may even be capable of causing such realities to achieve a union -- a process ultimately resulting in asymmetry: but a form of asymmetry possessing a new and different quality.
5. In this scheme of order, phenomena of symmetry as well as asymmetry exist within an environment of respectively prevailing reality and, in turn, its relationship to its own surroundings: i.e., to other realities on various levels, under conditions of simultaneity. This situation results not only in superimposition of the action of symmetries and/or of asymmetries and their mutual influences, but also -- and primarily -- in the existence of manifold symmetry relationships which demonstrate the attempt toward mutual adjustment and, accordingly, toward change in the direction of asymmetry.
6. In this scheme of order, phenomena of symmetry represent the initiating -- or at least stimulating -- factor for movement, and consequently act as the originators of development. Phenomena of asymmetry, on the other hand, represent the effect, the result, or the objective of such development.

7. By virtue of the fact that this scheme of order encompasses the movement, change, and development of phenomena of symmetry to phenomena of asymmetry in natural as well as artificial worlds, it represents not only a general scheme of order, but also one of general development. Insofar, it may therefore be considered a universal scheme of order.

The author derives these hypotheses with consideration taken of historical development processes in philosophy regarding aspects of symmetry. The author further takes into account opposition to considerations of "symmetry as universal law" which have existed long before the present era.

The author confirms the validity of these hypotheses using the example of the esthetic effects of works of fine art, especially their visual perception. This takes place within the context of presentation of a small number of the author's own sculptures and pictures, a selection from several thousand created until now.

English: David Bean