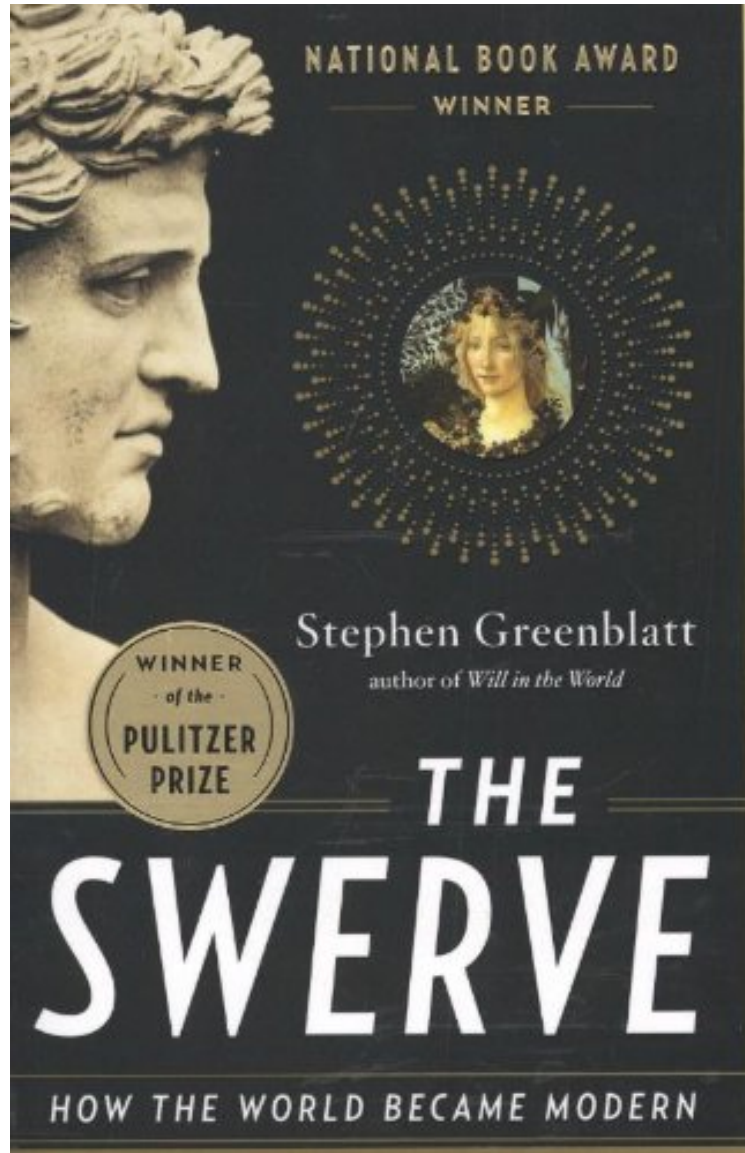


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The Swerve: How the World Became Modern

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Stephen Greenblatt Ph.D. : The Swerve: How the World Became Modern before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Swerve: How the World Became Modern:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. History, Knowledge, Plus FunBy ledis gazicI loved the way the book began with a sense of mystery, which kept me captivated and made me want to read on. It was a great way to get one's attention into what later became a serious historical narrative and/or the author's personal perspective. Although, as a Social Studies major and long time history teacher, I was familiar with most of the matter and topics he covered, I

found Greenblatt's presentation to be fun and quite spellbinding. Of course, all cannot be taken at face value as this is a historical novel. Nevertheless, I liked the way the subject matter was presented. At the same time, I agree with some critics that there are far better and more accurate historical accounts of the poem, naturalism, and that time period, I found Greenblatt's book highly enjoyable to read, but do plan to read more on the subject from other authors. In the meantime, I think this is a fun book and I have already shared it with friends. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Thought from the heart By Customer A fascinating look at the evolution of thought, books, libraries from classical Greece and Rome, from Epicurius and Lucretius to an unknown 15th Century Florentine scribe, scholar, book collector who rescued ideas now basic to modern western thought. Brilliant, moving, important. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Swerve: How the World Became Modern By Meryl a Freedman This is a fascinating look at the influence of classical cultural documents on the early renaissance. It focuses on the scholarly research of Poggio Braccolini, whose love of classical literature led him to a discovery of one of the most important poems of the ancient era, On the Nature Of Things by Lucretius. He and others of his time faced profound internal struggles between the values of classical humanism they were reading in these texts and their Catholicism. They were influenced by the approaches of Epicurus and Lucretius, men of the ancient world, they had discovered, who accepted atheism and who had a world view that was remarkable as a precursor to a modern scientific ethos. These men, including Poggio, who rose from the ranks to become the Pope's secretary were often in the Papal inner circle, where such philosophies were extremely dangerous. Swerve is an insider's expose of the political and social intrigues of the Papal environment, which makes present day corruption seem sanitized and tame. In addition, it ties the intrigues of the early renaissance Papacy to how these ideas of the ancients survived suppression to influence the emergence of the modern world because of the scholasticism and reverence of these men. The Swerve: How the World Became Modern

Winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Non-Fiction Winner of the 2011 National Book Award for Non-Fiction One of the world's most celebrated scholars, Stephen Greenblatt has crafted both an innovative work of history and a thrilling story of discovery, in which one manuscript, plucked from a thousand years of neglect, changed the course of human thought and made possible the world as we know it. Nearly six hundred years ago, a short, genial, cannily alert man in his late thirties took a very old manuscript off a library shelf, saw with excitement what he had discovered, and ordered that it be copied. That book was the last surviving manuscript of an ancient Roman philosophical epic, On the Nature of Things, by Lucretius a beautiful poem of the most dangerous ideas: that the universe functioned without the aid of gods, that religious fear was damaging to human life, and that matter was made up of very small particles in eternal motion, colliding and swerving in new directions. The copying and translation of this ancient book—the greatest discovery of the greatest book-hunter of his age—fueled the Renaissance, inspiring artists such as Botticelli and thinkers such as Giordano Bruno; shaped the thought of Galileo and Freud, Darwin and Einstein; and had a revolutionary influence on writers such as Montaigne and Shakespeare and even Thomas Jefferson. 16 pages of color illustrations

The ideas in The Swerve are tucked, cannily, inside a quest narrative. . . . The details that Mr. Greenblatt supplies throughout The Swerve are tangy and exact. . . . There is abundant evidence here of what is Mr. Greenblatt's great and rare gift as a writer: an ability, to borrow a phrase from The Swerve, to feel fully 'the concentrated force of the buried past.' - New York Times In this gloriously learned page-turner, both biography and intellectual history, Harvard Shakespearean scholar Greenblatt turns his attention to the front end of the Renaissance as the origin of Western culture's foundation: the free questioning of truth. - starred review, Publishers Weekly More wonderfully illuminating Renaissance history from a master scholar and historian. - starred review, Kirkus s In The Swerve, the literary historian Stephen Greenblatt investigates why [Lucretius'] book nearly dies, how it was saved and what its rescue means to us. - Sarah Bakewell, New York Times Book Reivew In this outstandingly constructed assessment of the birth of philosophical modernity, renowned Shakespeare scholar Greenblatt deftly transports reader to the dawn of the Renaissance... Readers from across the humanities will find this enthralling account irresistible. - starred review, Library Journal Every tale of the preservation of intellectual history should be as rich and satisfying as Stephen Greenblatt's history of the reclamation and acclamation of Lucretius's De rerum natura from obscurity. - John McFarland, Shelf Awareness It's fascinating to watch Greenblatt trace the dissemination of these ideas through 15th-century Europe and beyond, thanks in good part to Bracciolini's recovery of Lucretius' poem. - Salon.com But Swerve is an intense, emotional telling of a true story, one with much at stake for all of us. And the further you read, the more astonishing it becomes. It's a chapter in how we became what we are, how we arrived at the worldview of the present. No one can tell the whole story, but Greenblatt seizes on a crucial pivot, a moment of recovery, of transmission, as amazing as anything in fiction. - Philadelphia Inquirer [The Swerve] is thrilling, suspenseful tale that left this reader inspired and full of questions about the ongoing project known as human civilization. - Boston Globe Can a poem change the world? Harvard professor and bestselling Shakespeare biographer Greenblatt ably shows in this mesmerizing intellectual history that it can. A richly entertaining read about a radical ancient Roman text that shook Renaissance Europe and inspired shockingly modern ideas (like the atom) that still reverberate today. - Newsweek A fascinating, intelligent look at what may well be the most historically resonant book-hunt of all time. -

Booklist Pleasure may or may not be the true end of life, but for book lovers, few experiences can match the intellectual-aesthetic enjoyment delivered by a well-wrought book. In the world of serious nonfiction, Stephen Greenblatt is a pleasure maker without peer. - Newsday

The Swerve is one of those brilliant works of non-fiction that's so jam-packed with ideas and stories it literally boggles the mind. - Maureen Corrigan, NPR/Fresh Air

About the Author Stephen Greenblatt (Ph.D. Yale) is Cogan University Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University. Also General Editor of The Norton Anthology of English Literature, he is the author of eleven books, including *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (winner of the 2011 National Book Award and the 2012 Pulitzer Prize); *Shakespeare's Freedom*; *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*; *Hamlet in Purgatory*; *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*; *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture*; and *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. He has edited seven collections of criticism, including *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, and is a founding coeditor of the journal *Representations*. His honors include the MLAs James Russell Lowell Prize, for both *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* and *The Swerve*, the Sapegno Prize, the Distinguished Humanist Award from the Mellon Foundation, the Wilbur Cross Medal from the Yale University Graduate School, the William Shakespeare Award for Classical Theatre, the Erasmus Institute Prize, two Guggenheim Fellowships, and the Distinguished Teaching Award from the University of California, Berkeley. He was president of the Modern Language Association of America and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters.