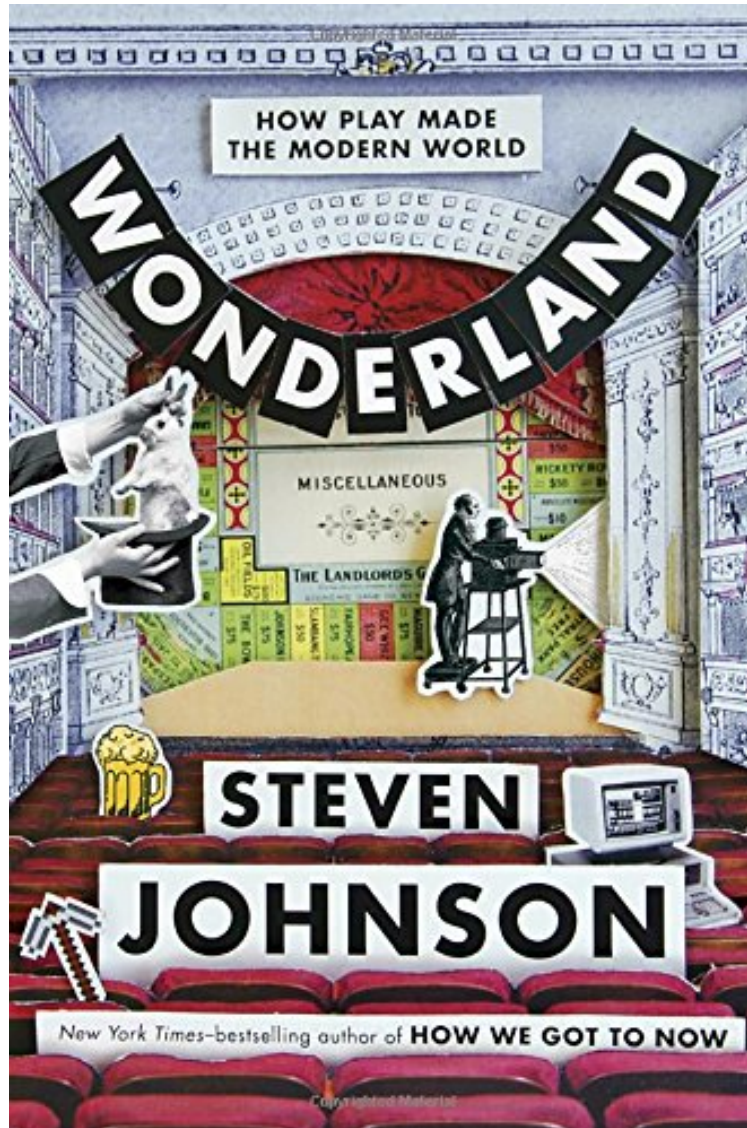


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Wonderland: How Play Made the Modern World

Steven Johnson

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#167335 in Books Steven Johnson 2016-11-15 2016-11-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x 1.13 x 6.38l, 1.58 #File Name: 0399184481336 pages Wonderland How Play Made the Modern World | File size: 53.Mb

Steven Johnson : Wonderland: How Play Made the Modern World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wonderland: How Play Made the Modern World:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A good read with an oversold thesis that isn't quite up to par for a fine writer By sien Wonderland : How Play Made the Modern World (2016) by Steven Johnson is an interesting read about the impact of how luxuries and amusements have had on history. Johnson wrote a superb book called How we got to now that had a limited number of key inventions that he says lead to the modern world. Wonderland is similarly

constructed. The book looks at shopping, music, taste, illusion, games and public space. The chapter on shopping looks at how the development of shopping fed growth. When looking at music the fact that humans like music and the importance of automatic players is described. Taste concentrates on the importance of the spice trade. Illusion looks at spiritual shows and finally Disney. Games looks at Chess and early computer games. Public space describes pubs and other public spaces. Johnson is a fine writer and a lot of the information in the book is fascinating. His descriptions of the mechanical works of Iranian engineers is amazing. However, the book is undermined in that the main thesis running through it is oversold. The book is worth reading for a well written and interesting diversion though. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Be prepared to think about PLAY in new ways By Mary-Anne J. Boyce This book puts a whole new spin on the concept of "play"- taking it well beyond childhood or leisure games. As in Johnson's other books, this book guides the reader on wonderful journeys through history - social, political, technological - and you end up in some surprising locations. This book got me thinking about "play" in many different ways - and the outcomes that "play" had for our present and may have for our future. This is my third book by Mr. Johnson-- all are well written, researched, and worth reading. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well-written and enjoyable, but not a book about play By Douglas C. Maynard This is the first book I've read by Steven Johnson, and I enjoyed the way he traced the development of major technological and cultural innovations back to roots which were less utilitarian and more aesthetic or even hedonistic. But with the possible exception of the chapter on games, most of the book is not about the role of play in shaping society, so much as the impact of the human appetite for novel, surprising, and pleasurable sensory experiences (e.g., the visual displays of upscale shopping venues or phantasmagoria, the tactile pleasures of cotton, the taste of nutmeg).

A house of wonders itself. . . . Wonderland inspires grins and well-what-d'ya-knows The New York Times Book Review From the New York Times bestselling author of *How We Got to Now* and *Where Good Ideas Come From*, a look at the world-changing innovations we made while keeping ourselves entertained. This lushly illustrated history of popular entertainment takes a long-zoom approach, contending that the pursuit of novelty and wonder is a powerful driver of world-shaping technological change. Steven Johnson argues that, throughout history, the cutting edge of innovation lies wherever people are working the hardest to keep themselves and others amused. Johnson's storytelling is just as delightful as the inventions he describes, full of surprising stops along the journey from simple concepts to complex modern systems. He introduces us to the colorful innovators of leisure: the explorers, proprietors, showmen, and artists who changed the trajectory of history with their luxurious wares, exotic meals, taverns, gambling tables, and magic shows. In *Wonderland*, Johnson compellingly argues that observers of technological and social trends should be looking for clues in novel amusements. You'll find the future wherever people are having the most fun.

A house of wonders itself. . . . Wonderland inspires grins and well-what-d'ya-knows The New York Times Book A rare gem. . . . Our illogical, enduring fascination with play remains one of life's great mysteries. That is precisely what makes the subject so fascinating, and *Wonderland* such a compelling read. The Washington Post The parade of humanity Johnson presents in this lively (and generously illustrated) work leads us to the reassuring conclusion that history is often made not by nerds in lab coats, but by ingenious humans hankering for more intriguing ways to pass the time. O, The Oprah Magazine Johnson's writing derives its appeal from his ability to illuminate complex ideas in unpretentious language. . . . Johnson's prose is nimble, his knowledge impressive. . . . *Wonderland* is original and fun, as well it should be, given the subject. The San Francisco Chronicle *Wonderland* brims with. . . tidbits, memorable moments, and bits of information that light up the mind. . . . [Johnson] surprises and delights as he traces the path of how various objects of fun and fancy mechanized dolls, follies, and music boxes drove advances." The Boston Globe Mr. Johnson's narrative is crammed with elegantly told vignettes from the history of ideas. . . . The book is full of excellent facts. The Wall Street Journal Johnson. . . . provides a compelling counterintuitive argument that the Industrial Revolution, democracy, and the computer age were all driven by diversions and appetites that historians too often ignore. Kirkus (starred review) In an entertaining and accessible style, he takes tangents that arrive at sometimes startling conclusions, like a magician practicing misdirection Johnson connects the dots in a way that sheds new light on everyday concepts. Publishers Weekly (starred review) Johnson is a master storyteller, weaving disparate elements together into a rich and seamless tapestry of technology and human history. Booklist (starred review) An engaging survey full of unexpected connections that readers of a historical or sociological bent will find particularly riveting. Library Journal About the Author Steven Johnson is the bestselling author of ten books, including *How We Got to Now*, *Where Good Ideas Come From*, *The Invention of Air*, *The Ghost Map*, and *Everything Bad Is Good for You*. The founder of a variety of influential websites, he is the host and co-creator of the PBS and BBC series *How We Got to Now*. Johnson lives in Marin County, California, and Brooklyn, New York, with his wife and three sons.