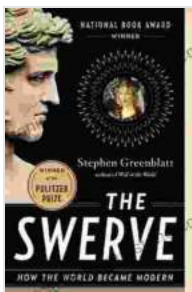


The Swerve: How the World Became Modern

In the year 1417, a young Italian scholar named Poggio Bracciolini was browsing through the ruins of an abandoned monastery in Constance, Germany, when he stumbled upon a manuscript that would change the course of Western thought. The manuscript was a copy of the ancient Roman poet Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*, a poem that had been lost for centuries. Bracciolini's discovery of Lucretius's poem was a major event in the Renaissance, and it had a profound impact on the development of humanism and the scientific revolution.



The Swerve: How the World Became Modern

by Stephen Greenblatt

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 6079 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
X-Ray : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 377 pages



De Rerum Natura is a philosophical poem that argues that the universe is made up of atoms and void, and that there is no such thing as a supernatural being. This was a radical idea at the time, and it contradicted the teachings of the Church. However, Lucretius's poem was also a work of

great beauty and eloquence, and it quickly gained a following among scholars and intellectuals.

One of the most important people who was influenced by Lucretius's poem was the Italian philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli believed that human beings are essentially selfish and ambitious, and that the best way to achieve success is to use deception and violence. Machiavelli's ideas were controversial, but they were also influential, and they helped to shape the political landscape of Europe in the centuries that followed.

Another important figure who was influenced by Lucretius's poem was the English philosopher Francis Bacon. Bacon believed that the best way to understand the world is through observation and experimentation. He developed a method of scientific inquiry that is still used today. Bacon's method of scientific inquiry helped to lay the foundation for the scientific revolution.

The *Swerve* is a fascinating book that tells the story of how Lucretius's poem was rediscovered and how it influenced the development of Western thought. Greenblatt's book is a must-read for anyone who is interested in the history of ideas.

The Rediscovery of Lucretius's Poem

Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* was written in the first century BC, but it was lost during the Middle Ages. In the fourteenth century, a few fragments of the poem were rediscovered, but it was not until Poggio Bracciolini's discovery of the complete manuscript in 1417 that the poem became widely available again.

Bracciolini's discovery of Lucretius's poem was a major event in the Renaissance. The poem was a source of inspiration for humanists and intellectuals, and it helped to shape the development of Western thought.

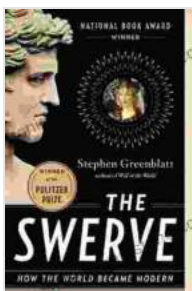
The Impact of Lucretius's Poem

Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* had a profound impact on the development of Western thought. The poem's arguments against the existence of a supernatural being and its emphasis on the importance of observation and experimentation helped to lay the foundation for the scientific revolution.

The poem also influenced the development of political thought.

Machiavelli's belief in the selfishness and ambition of human beings was influenced by Lucretius's poem. Machiavelli's ideas were controversial, but they were also influential, and they helped to shape the political landscape of Europe in the centuries that followed.

The Swerve is a fascinating book that tells the story of how Lucretius's poem was rediscovered and how it influenced the development of Western thought. Greenblatt's book is a must-read for anyone who is interested in the history of ideas.



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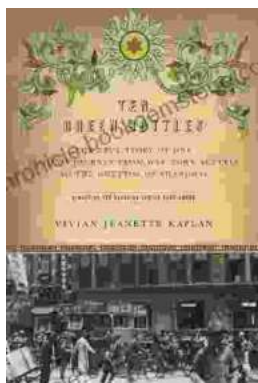
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