



STEPHEN GREENBLATT
THE SWERVE: HOW THE
WORLD BECAME
MODERN (2011).
W.W.NOTON & COMPANY. NEW
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An extraordinary detective story of the discovery of Lucretius (c. 50 BCE) *The Nature of Things* by Poggio Bracciolini, Papal Secretary and the greatest book hunter of the Renaissance. Professor Greenblatt has written the Book of the Century and has restored Epicurean and Lucretius moral philosophy to the contemporary world. A necessary history of the misinterpretation of Epicurean philosophy by his earlier followers and restoration of the philosophers claim that "life's ultimate goal is pleasure." Pleasures of the Mind and Pleasures of the Body are the ruling principles of this moral philosophy where the latter, unfortunately, was permitted to dominate the principle of Pleasure and discredit Epicurean philosophy. --jwp

Thomas Jefferson wrote to a correspondent concerning his philosophy of life, "I am an Epicurean."

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It was a beautiful poem of the most dangerous ideas: that the universe functions without the aid of gods, that religious fear is damaging to human life, that pleasure and virtue are not opposites but intertwined, and that matter is made up of very small material particles in eternal motion, randomly colliding and swerving in new directions.

Its return to circulation changed the course of history. The poem's vision would shape the thought of Galileo and Freud, Darwin and Einstein, and-in the hands of Thomas Jefferson-leave its trace on the Declaration of Independence.

From the gardens of the ancient philosophers to the dark chambers of monastic scriptoria during the Middle Ages to the cynical, competitive court of a corrupt and dangerous pope, renowned scholar Stephen Greenblatt brings Poggio's search and discovery to life in a way that revolutionizes our understanding of the world we live in today.