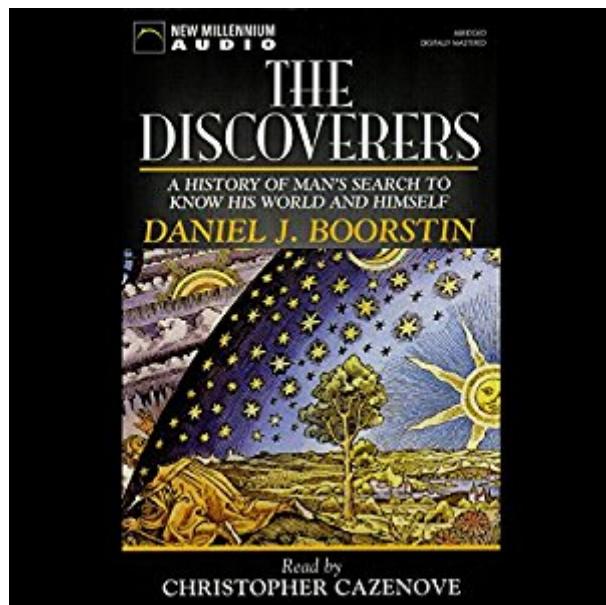


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The Discoverers: A History Of Man's Search To Know His World And Himself



Synopsis

An original history of man's greatest adventure: his search to discover the world around him. In the compendious history, Boorstin not only traces man's insatiable need to know, but also the obstacles to discovery and the illusion that knowledge can also put in our way. Covering time, the earth and the seas, nature and society, he gathers and analyzes stories of the man's profound quest to understand his world and the cosmos. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a truly excellent book I highly recommend. Its main target audience should be anyone interested in the history of mankind, but in particular - the history of shifting paradigms and notions of the world. Boorstin doesn't concentrate on listing geographic or scientific discoveries, but instead gives an in-depth description of how our understanding of time, space, history, science or society has varied in time and space. These are notions we usually take for granted, but Boorstin convincingly proves that our understanding of the world might have turned out a different way, and in fact in many cultures did. In particular Boorstin is concerned with what he called "illusion of knowledge" stemming mostly from satisfaction with belief such as astrology or religion. In this aspect "The Discoverers" is highly critical of the Church's role in hampering or reversing progress, which as I noticed gave the book a few one-starred reviews from more religious readers. Other than that I was immensely impressed with the author's knowledge and command of facts. It was truly an eye-opener for a person who knows history superficially to read for example that the Mongols were more tolerant and open than more civilized countries of the era. Even if you think you know it all,

Boorstin will surprise you with something new or a new angle of seeing history. There are two flaws I must point out. One is lack of illustrations, especially of devices and maps that could complement or replace some written descriptions. I hope an illustrated or multimedia edition is on its way. The second is its quality. For a book of over 700 pages paperback is not really an option and the 1985 copy I read is horribly dog-eared with plastic covers peeling off. In my opinion the book is well-worth spending twelve bucks for a paperback, but personally I just ordered the hardcover edition for myself.

Really entertaining world history, broken down into nicely digestible chunks with an astonishing variety of information covered. Boorstin's writing is very accessible and I would recommend this to both the history newbie and the scholar.

We bought this as a gift for a family member at my husband's urging. He's an English professor and I was afraid it might be a bit dense but it is now on my reading list. I'm enjoying it immensely. It is endlessly fascinating and written in a style that flows from the page. It has given me insight into some really basic things, such as time, mankind's history of keeping track of time. That subject alone covers science, culture, the influence of the environment and religion. I've just started reading it and know it isn't a book I'm going to just glide through but I will certainly finish it. As my husband said, it is a liberal arts education in one book.

Truly enjoyed the information and how he organizes the topics in time. Unique and important view of history. Can get too detailed at times but I found when he hits on a subject I was more interested in, the detail was not too much! Recommend to anyone who enjoys history and how we got from A to B to C etc.

I agree with other reviewers here who say that this book should be used in classes, instead of the boring, stiff and uninformative bricks we are given in school. Boorstin, an erudite man if there is one, has a unique skill to deliver complex stories in a most readable and interesting way, and probably the secret lies in that he gives us the human dimension. His book is centered on the persons who made all these discoveries, not on the discoveries themselves, and that makes it all the more appealing. I had read his book "The Creators" (another must-read focused on art) and I think the same element is present. In "The Discoverers", Boorstin takes us by the hand and guides us through the history of Man's search for knowledge. And it is a romp. The cast of characters is as

varied as humanity itself, from crazy madmen to admirable heroes of knowledge. Among the ones I remember best: Galileo was a great guy, I would have loved to meet him; Newton not, he was not a nice guy (and I couldn't understand any of his thoughts anyway); Paracelsus was a total whacko; Columbus was admirable in his obstination; Linnaeus was great too; but the guy who discovered metabolism was the craziest of them all. Just imagine a guy weighing his body before and after meals, and then weighing... ugh, his excrements to measure the difference. Thank God somebody did it, but it sounds awful. Read this book and you will learn a lot more than in three years of school.

I have given multiple copies of this book as gifts - to both adults and teens. Boorstein is one of the great minds of our era so anything he publishes has been well researched and vetted by his staff. You can't go wrong looking behind the curtain of historical events and the influences that brought them about. I wonder if any other mind can fill the place that Boorstein left behind.

Daniel Boorstin is one of my favorite historians. I read his books in the 90s, and although I was well versed in world history, his clear writing style, and unique talent for making the connections between seemingly far flung events, personalities, and creations opened up a new way of thinking about our world and ways we interact with it.

great

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