



The System of the World (The Baroque Cycle, Vol. 3)

By Neal Stephenson

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The System of the World (The Baroque Cycle, Vol. 3) By Neal Stephenson

England, 1714. London has long been home to a secret war between the brilliant, enigmatic Master of the Mint and closet alchemist, Isaac Newton, and his archnemesis, the insidious counterfeiter Jack the Coiner. Hostilities are suddenly moving to a new and more volatile level as Half-Cocked Jack hatches a daring plan, aiming for the total corruption of Britain's newborn monetary system.

Enter Daniel Waterhouse: Aging Puritan and Natural Philosopher, Daniel has been on a long and harrowing quest to help mend the rift between adversarial geniuses. As Daniel combs city and country for clues to the identity of the blackguard who is attempting to blow up Natural Philosophers, political factions jockey for position while awaiting the impending death of the ailing queen, and the "holy grail" of alchemy, the key to life eternal, tantalizes and continues to elude Isaac Newton.

As Newton, Waterhouse, and Shaftoe each circle closer to the object of Daniel's quest, everything that was will be changed forever ...

This P.S. edition features an extra 16 pages of insights into the book, including author interviews, recommended reading, and more.

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The System of the World (The Baroque Cycle, Vol. 3) By Neal Stephenson Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #118567 in Books
- Brand: William Morrow Paperbacks
- Published on: 2005-09-06
- Released on: 2005-09-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x 1.48" w x 5.31" l, 1.67 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 928 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The colossal and impressive third volume (after *Quicksilver* and *The Confusion*) of Stephenson's magisterial exploration of the origins of the modern world in the scientific revolution of the baroque era begins in 1714. Daniel Waterhouse has returned to England, hoping to mediate the feud between Sir Isaac Newton and Leibniz, both of whom claim to have discovered the calculus and neither of whom is showing much scientific rationality in the dispute. This brawl takes place against the background of the imminent death of Queen Anne, which threatens a succession crisis as Jacobite (Stuart, Catholic) sympathizers confront supporters of the Hanoverian succession. Aside from the potential effect of the outcome on the intellectual climate of England, these political maneuverings are notable for the role played by trilogy heroine Eliza de la Zour, who is now wielding her influence over Caroline of Ansbach, consort of the Hanoverian heir. Eliza has risen from the streets to the nobility without losing any of her creativity or her talents as a schemer; nor has outlaw Jack Shaftoe lost any of his wiliness. What he may have lost is discretion, since he oversteps the boundaries of both law and good sense far enough to narrowly escape the hangman. In the end, reluctant hero Waterhouse prevails against the machinations of everybody else, and scientific (if not sweet) reason wins by a nose. The symbol of that victory is the inventor Thomas Newcomen standing (rather like a cock crowing) atop the boiler of one of his first steam engines. This final volume in the cycle is another magnificent portrayal of an era, well worth the long slog it requires of Stephenson's many devoted readers. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

The conclusion to *The Baroque Cycle* is a veritable doorstop, but a doorstop perhaps worth its weight in 18th-century gold coins—especially to those who need a reminder about the dangerous misuses of science and “progress.” Critics can’t heap enough praise on Stephenson’s eloquent narration, true-to-life characters, and impeccable plotting (“generated via Waterhouse’s Logic Mills,” says the *San Francisco Chronicle*). Stephenson exquisitely unearths Baroque history, too, from mints to gardens to Jacobites. While compelling, you’ll best appreciate this epic history-romance-science fiction story “once you have a solid liberal arts education under your belt” (*Chronicle*). Stephenson mostly gets away with his philosophical pedantry because he’s so smart and inventive. If you have the courage to delve in, you won’t be disappointed. And if you can’t bring yourself to start with *Quicksilver*, *System* includes a preface relating “the story thus far” that reviewers found helpful enough.

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From [Booklist](#)

Stephenson, enjoying cult status for his 1999 novel *Cryptonomicon* as well as the first two installments in a trilogy he calls the Baroque Cycle (*Quicksilver* [BKL S 1 03] and *The Confusion* [BKL F 15 04]), brings the long-winded but compulsively readable series to its conclusion. All three volumes have been lengthy but also effective as the author delves deeply into European history in the late-seventeenth and early-nineteenth centuries, eras of great intellectual and political ferment. Daniel Waterhouse, who was introduced in the first volume, has come back to England from the American colonies to mediate a dispute between two scientists, Isaac Newton and Gottfried von Leibniz. Around this continuing struggle, which has a side story encompassing Newton's desire to find a time-bomb-armed criminal gang, led by his archenemy, a counterfeiter called the king of the vagabonds, swirls a larger arena of contention: the probably sooner rather than later death of Queen Anne and whether the Whigs or the Tories will dominate the court in the reign that

follows. Obviously--given the book's length--details are profuse, but each detail speedily draws readers into the narrative rather than impeding it. The language, to correlate with the times in which the novel is set, is done in a stately but not overwrought style. Expect considerable demand. *Brad Hooper*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ronald Finch:

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them family members or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity honestly, that is look different you can read the book. It is really fun for you personally. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent all day every day to reading a e-book. The book *The System of the World (The Baroque Cycle, Vol. 3)* it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore simply to read this book through your smart phone. The price is not very costly but this book offers high quality.

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