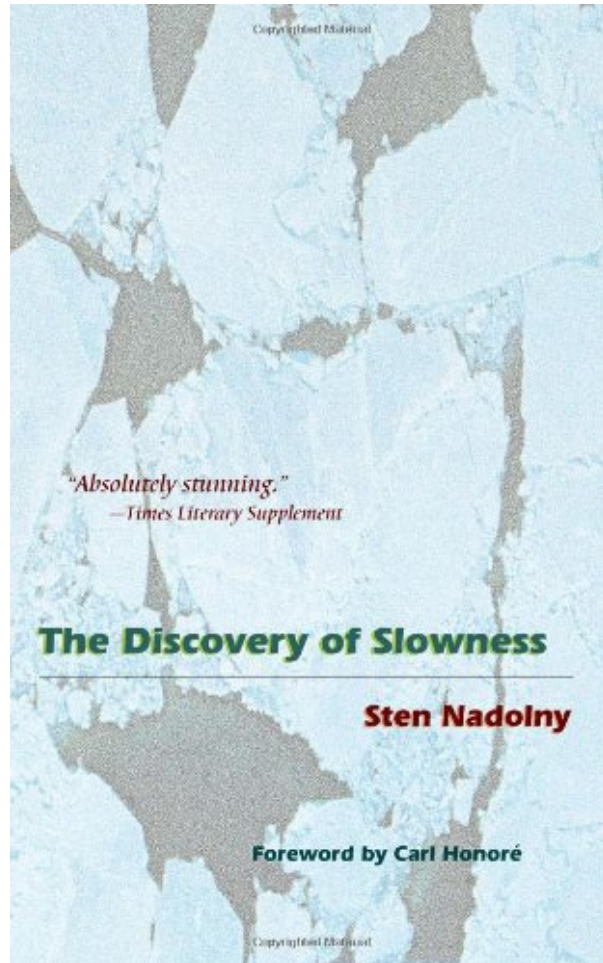
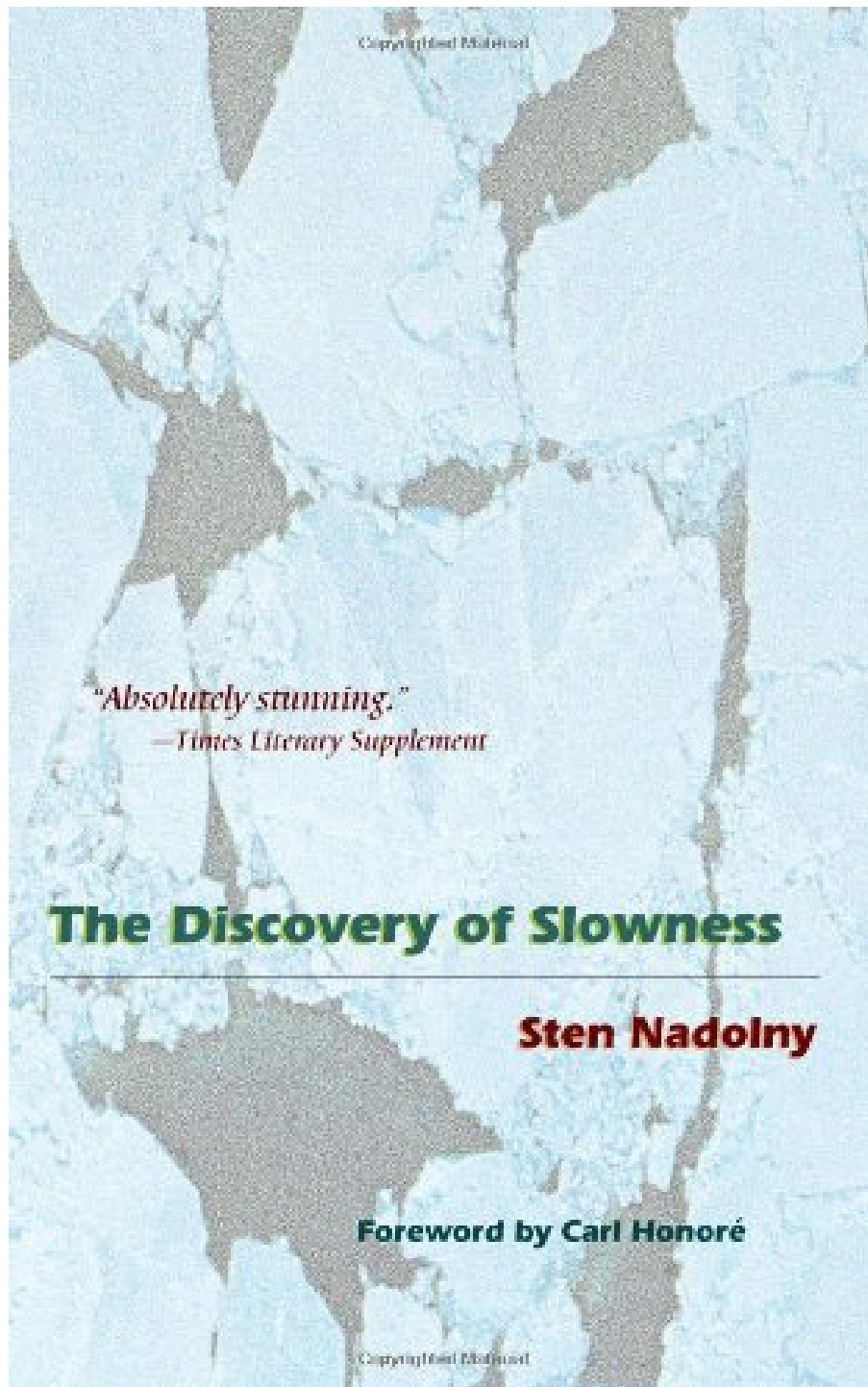


THE DISCOVERY OF SLOWNESS BY STEN NADOLNY



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Through the author's acute reading of history and his marvelous storytelling prowess, the reader follows John Franklin's development from awkward schoolboy and ridiculed teenager to expedition leader, governor of Tasmania, and icon of adventure. Slow and deliberate from boyhood, Franklin appeared destined to be a misfit. But he escaped from the ever-expanding world of industry and Empire to the sea's silent landscape, where the universe seemed more manageable. At age fourteen he joined the navy. After surviving the harrowing battles of Copenhagen and Trafalgar, he embarked on several voyages of discovery into the Canadian North, and served as governor of Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania). Everyone with whom he came into contact sensed that Franklin was a rare man, one who was "out of his time" and who moved to a different, grander beat. That beat eventually led Franklin to sail once more—on his final, fateful voyage—into the Arctic in search of the Northwest Passage.

The Discovery of Slowness is a riveting account of a remarkable and varied life. And it is also a profound and thought-provoking meditation on time. The result is an unforgettable and deeply moving reading experience that justifies the novel's reputation as one of the classics of contemporary world literature.

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Sten Nadolny (b. 1942) was an historian and filmmaker, before writing four novels and two collections of essays. He lives in Berlin and has been awarded four prizes: Ingeborg Bachmann (1981), Hans-Fallada (1985), Premio Vallombrosa (1986), Ernst Hoferichter (1995). *The Discovery of Slowness* (1983) has been translated into all major languages.

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Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Shifting down gears.

By Daniel Levi-Gomez

The book is a pointer to a better mode of living, slowly, with intensity. I am in the stage of my life where I am shifting to lower gears to get more traction.

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

A conventional narrative in many ways, yet oddly interesting ...

By Michael Neff

A conventional narrative in many ways, yet oddly interesting due to the "twist" about the character's "slowness." Otherwise, similar to a "Horatio Hornblower" novel. But this is interesting in its contrast of slow, deep character to swift, surface character.

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

Read It More Than Once

By Jill Ireland

My encounter with this book was a bit magical. I arrived at a B&B in Vail and one of Mr. Nadolny's other books was on a table in the common area. I asked about it, and the proprietress said Mr. Nadolny had left that morning and had given her the book. I read it, loved it, and sought out his other works.

My favorite review of this book describes it as "a utopia of character." Truly it is. Yes, it's a nice little biography of an interesting life, but it is so much more. Sir John Franklin realized that each individual has his or her own "speed" in perception and action. Throughout his life, he observed himself and others objectively and developed his own "systems" for the most beneficial application of his own uniquely slow processing of impression and responses. He compensated with rigorous planning, precision, and observation - and by appreciating and effectively leading those who were faster.

Why is this interesting? I believe it is so because in our own times, everything moves way too fast for most of us...and those of us who might be naturally slow in the manner of Franklin suffer most from it. If Franklin were a boy today, he would likely be put on Ritalin, or diagnosed with "Sensory Integration Disorder" or some such thing, possibly placed in a "special" class at school...and his uniqueness would be deemed pathological and buried.

Franklin's qualities, and his persistent but self-accepting struggle with them, made him the best of leaders and a deeply moral man. Rereading this book, I am led to realize that my own "true inner speed" is perhaps as slow as Franklin's, and that much unhappiness comes from not operating at that speed. This is painful - we can complain about our over-stimulated, over-informed, over-hurried times, but that is futile unless one decides to retreat completely to our own Walden.

Franklin found two things paralyzing: self-pity, and what he called "disapproval," meaning disgust with circumstances he could not change. So he resolved to avoid these and concentrated on his "systems." It worked...perhaps some of us can do the same. And if we are parents, we must make sure we understand and respect our children's "inner speed."

In sum, read this book - and do so more than once to absorb the nuances.

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