

<<J. Robert Oppenheimerj.奥本海默>>

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内容概要

JRobert Oppenheimer, the man who led the Manhattan Project that built the atomic bomb and ended World War II, forged the alliance between science and government that made the American Century possible. David C. Cassidy's much anticipated, richly detailed, magisterial biography is not merely the life story of a brilliant physicist, it tells the hidden story of the political and social forces shaping the world in our time: the rise of American science.

In 1941, before Germany failed to build an atomic weapon, and the United States succeeded, Life published Henry R. Luce's essay "The American Century." It proclaimed that America was not at war simply to defeat the Axis powers. The United States must "exert upon the world the full impact of our influence, for such purpose as we see fit and by such means as we see fit." Cassidy reveals such confidence, and the success of the Manhattan Project itself, were essentially by-products of the rise of American science driven by burgeoning industrial prosperity and a kind of national devotion to the pursuit of knowledge. While Cassidy illuminates Oppenheimer's genius for inspiring his students and colleagues to attack and ultimately solve the hardest scientific problems of the age, he also takes the reader to the 1954 Atomic Energy Commission Security review that disgraced Oppenheimer, stripped him of his security clearance for alleged "red ties", and captured headlines across the nation. Documents that have only recently come to light regarding those ties are thoroughly and conclusively examined.

Oppenheimer, the eldest son of an aristocratic Jewish family living on the Upper West Side of New York City, attended the secular, progressive, and elite Ethical Culture School. Cassidy, building his narrative on previously untapped primary documents, shows the importance and character of Oppenheimer's early education. The liberal values he absorbed there ran counter to the culture he found at Harvard, whose president sought to foster a future managerial elite, the rulers of the new American society. These formative contrasts in values explain Oppenheimer's many seeming contradictions. Why did the scientist who correctly theorized black holes turn his back on cutting edge research. How did a gentle liberal humanist become responsible for the creation of the first real weapon of mass destruction.) How could a brilliant mind like his virtually found "scientific militarism" and then let it destroy him? Cassidy opens up a life story that is emblematic of the transformation of America over the last three generations. It offers, as the best history can, an insight into the future technological and moral progress of a nation.

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作者简介

Dr. David C. Cassidy, is a Professor in the Natural Science Program at Hofstra University, and has been Chair of the Section for History and Philosophy of Science of the New York Academy of Sciences. He served for seven years as Associate Editor of The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein and has been an editorial consultant for the collected works of Heisenberg, Bohr, and Pauli. His book, *Uncertainty: The Life and Science of Werner Heisenberg* has been widely acclaimed and translated into five foreign languages. He has been awarded the American Institute of Physics Science Writing Award and the Pfizer Award of the History of Science Society. He is also the author of *Einstein and Our World* and wrote the introduction to *Scientists at War: The Farm Hall Transcripts* edited by JBernstein. He lives on Long Island in New York.

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