

american prometheus

american prometheus is a term that resonates deeply with anyone interested in the history of science, the atomic age, and the complex life of J. Robert Oppenheimer. This comprehensive article explores the origins and significance of "American Prometheus," diving into the acclaimed biography that immortalized Oppenheimer's legacy, the historical context of the Manhattan Project, and the profound impact on modern culture and science. Readers will discover the intricate narrative woven by authors Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin, as well as the ethical dilemmas and societal changes spurred by the atomic bomb's creation. This article also examines the legacy and critical reception of "American Prometheus," offering insights into its adaptation into film and its enduring relevance. Whether you are a history enthusiast, a student, or simply curious about the story behind the man known as the "father of the atomic bomb," this guide provides a thorough and SEO-optimized exploration of american prometheus.

- Overview of American Prometheus
- J. Robert Oppenheimer: The Man Behind the Myth
- Writing and Publication of American Prometheus
- Historical Context: The Manhattan Project
- Main Themes and Insights
- Critical Reception and Awards
- Impact on Modern Culture and Science
- American Prometheus in Popular Media
- Enduring Legacy

Overview of American Prometheus

"American Prometheus" is a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography that chronicles the life and legacy of J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the most influential scientists of the 20th century. The title alludes to the Greek myth of Prometheus, who brought fire to humanity, paralleling Oppenheimer's pivotal role in harnessing atomic energy. The biography, authored by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin, delves into Oppenheimer's scientific achievements, personal struggles, and the moral complexities surrounding the development of the atomic bomb. Since its publication, "American Prometheus" has become a definitive source for those seeking to understand not only Oppenheimer but also the dawn of the nuclear age and its ramifications for society.

J. Robert Oppenheimer: The Man Behind the Myth

Early Life and Education

J. Robert Oppenheimer was born in 1904 in New York City, into a family that valued education and culture. He demonstrated exceptional intelligence from a young age, excelling in academics and showing an early interest in science, particularly chemistry and physics. Oppenheimer attended Harvard University, where he graduated summa cum laude, and later pursued a doctorate at the University of Göttingen in Germany, studying under leading physicists of the era.

Scientific Contributions and Leadership

Oppenheimer's expertise in quantum mechanics and theoretical physics quickly established his reputation in scientific circles. He became a prominent professor at the University of California, Berkeley, influencing a generation of physicists. His leadership skills and scientific vision led to his appointment as the director of the Los Alamos Laboratory during World War II, where he oversaw the successful development of the first atomic bomb.

Writing and Publication of American Prometheus

The Collaboration of Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin

The biography "American Prometheus" is the product of a remarkable collaboration between historian Martin J. Sherwin and journalist Kai Bird. Sherwin dedicated over two decades to researching Oppenheimer's life, amassing thousands of documents and interviews. Bird joined the project later, contributing his narrative expertise and investigative skills to create a compelling and accessible account. Together, they produced an authoritative and nuanced biography that captures the complexities of Oppenheimer's character and era.

Key Features of the Book

- Extensive archival research and interviews
- In-depth analysis of personal, political, and scientific influences
- Balanced perspective on Oppenheimer's achievements and controversies
- Readable narrative that appeals to scholars and general readers alike

Historical Context: The Manhattan Project

The Race for the Atomic Bomb

The Manhattan Project was a top-secret government initiative launched during World War II to build an atomic bomb before Nazi Germany could achieve the same goal. Oppenheimer's leadership at Los Alamos brought together some of the brightest scientific minds in the world. The successful Trinity test in July 1945 marked a turning point in global history, leading to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and ultimately influencing the outcome of the war.

Oppenheimer's Role and Ethical Dilemmas

As scientific director, Oppenheimer not only managed technical challenges but also grappled with the ethical implications of atomic weapons. The biography details his internal conflicts and postwar advocacy for international control of nuclear energy. Oppenheimer's subsequent opposition to the hydrogen bomb and his political struggles during the Red Scare highlight the broader societal and ethical debates of the era.

Main Themes and Insights

Science, Power, and Responsibility

"American Prometheus" explores the immense power and responsibility that come with scientific discovery. The narrative examines how Oppenheimer and his colleagues struggled with the consequences of their work, raising questions about the moral obligations of scientists in society. The biography encourages readers to consider the intersection of scientific progress, governmental authority, and ethical accountability.

Personal Complexity and Public Perception

Oppenheimer's life demonstrates the complexities of public and private identity. The book delves into his intellectual curiosity, emotional vulnerabilities, and the challenges he faced as a public figure under intense scrutiny. The authors illuminate how Oppenheimer's political associations and philosophical leanings shaped public perception and ultimately led to his downfall during the McCarthy era.

Critical Reception and Awards

Recognition and Influence

Upon its release in 2005, "American Prometheus" was widely praised for its depth of research, balanced perspective, and engaging storytelling. The biography received the Pulitzer Prize for Biography or Autobiography in 2006, among other accolades. Critics lauded the book's ability to humanize Oppenheimer while providing a comprehensive look at the scientific and political forces that shaped his life.

Impact on Academic and Popular Discourse

The book has become a standard reference for historians, educators, and students exploring the atomic age, scientific ethics, and American history. Its influence extends beyond academia, sparking renewed interest in Oppenheimer's legacy and the complex history of nuclear weapons development.

Impact on Modern Culture and Science

Shaping Public Understanding of the Atomic Age

"American Prometheus" has played a crucial role in shaping how the public understands the development of nuclear weapons and the ethical challenges faced by scientists. The biography contextualizes the atomic bomb's creation within broader cultural, political, and philosophical frameworks, inviting reflection on the enduring consequences for humanity.

Lessons for Contemporary Science and Policy

The story of Oppenheimer and the Manhattan Project continues to inform debates about scientific innovation, government oversight, and global security. The biography's detailed portrayal of these issues makes it an essential resource for policymakers and scientists addressing the risks and responsibilities associated with emerging technologies.

American Prometheus in Popular Media

Film Adaptations and Renewed Interest

The influence of "American Prometheus" has extended into popular media, most notably with the adaptation of Oppenheimer's story into film. The biography provided the foundation for major motion pictures, introducing a new generation to the life and legacy of J. Robert Oppenheimer. These adaptations have reignited discussions about the moral and

historical significance of the atomic age.

Enduring Appeal in Literature and Arts

Beyond film, "American Prometheus" has inspired plays, documentaries, and artistic interpretations exploring themes of ambition, innovation, and ethical conflict. Its narrative continues to captivate audiences, reflecting enduring fascination with the individuals who shape history through science.

Enduring Legacy

The legacy of "American Prometheus" endures as both a literary masterpiece and a vital historical document. The biography's exploration of J. Robert Oppenheimer's life and the creation of the atomic bomb remains relevant to discussions about science, ethics, and public policy. By presenting a nuanced portrait of its subject and the era he helped define, "American Prometheus" ensures that the lessons and questions of the atomic age remain in the public consciousness for generations to come.

Q: What is "American Prometheus" about?

A: "American Prometheus" is a comprehensive biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer, detailing his life, scientific achievements, leadership of the Manhattan Project, and the ethical and political complexities surrounding the development of the atomic bomb.

Q: Who wrote "American Prometheus"?

A: The biography was written by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin, who collaborated over several decades to produce an authoritative and nuanced account of Oppenheimer's life.

Q: Why is the book called "American Prometheus"?

A: The title references the Greek myth of Prometheus, drawing parallels between Oppenheimer's role in bringing atomic energy to humanity and Prometheus's act of giving fire to mankind, both of which had profound consequences.

Q: What awards has "American Prometheus" won?

A: "American Prometheus" won the Pulitzer Prize for Biography or Autobiography in 2006 and has received multiple other accolades for its research and narrative excellence.

Q: What are the main themes explored in "American Prometheus"?

A: The biography explores themes such as scientific responsibility, the moral dilemmas of innovation, public perception, power, and the impact of political forces on individual lives.

Q: How did "American Prometheus" impact public understanding of the atomic age?

A: The book provided crucial historical context and personal insights, shaping how readers and the public understand the development and legacy of nuclear weapons and the ethical challenges faced by scientists.

Q: Has "American Prometheus" been adapted into other media?

A: Yes, "American Prometheus" has served as the basis for film adaptations and inspired various works in literature, theater, and documentaries, further popularizing Oppenheimer's story.

Q: What role did Oppenheimer play in the Manhattan Project?

A: J. Robert Oppenheimer served as the scientific director of the Los Alamos Laboratory, overseeing the successful development of the first atomic bomb during World War II.

Q: Why is "American Prometheus" considered an important biography?

A: The book is considered essential reading for its exhaustive research, balanced perspective, and its ability to humanize a complex historical figure while addressing crucial scientific and moral questions.

Q: What lessons can contemporary scientists and policymakers learn from "American Prometheus"?

A: The biography highlights the importance of ethical responsibility, the consequences of technological innovation, and the need for careful oversight and reflection in scientific advancement and public policy.

[American Prometheus](#)

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American Prometheus: Unpacking the Life and Legacy of Robert Oppenheimer

Introduction:

The name "American Prometheus" conjures images of brilliance, ambition, and ultimately, tragic downfall. But who was Robert Oppenheimer, the man behind this evocative moniker? This post delves deep into the life and times of J. Robert Oppenheimer, the enigmatic physicist whose contributions to the Manhattan Project irrevocably altered the course of history. We'll explore his scientific genius, his complex personality, his moral struggles, and the lasting impact of his legacy, providing a comprehensive understanding of the man often referred to as the "father of the atomic bomb." Prepare for a journey into the heart of one of the most fascinating and controversial figures of the 20th century.

H2: The Scientific Prodigy: Oppenheimer's Early Life and Education

Robert Oppenheimer, born in 1904 to a wealthy New York family, displayed an exceptional aptitude for science from a young age. His intellectual curiosity was insatiable, leading him to pursue advanced studies in physics at Harvard, Cambridge, and Göttingen. He quickly established himself as a brilliant theoretical physicist, making significant contributions to quantum mechanics and other fields before even reaching his thirties. This early success laid the groundwork for his future involvement in the most ambitious and ethically challenging scientific project in history.

H3: A Mastermind of Quantum Mechanics

Oppenheimer's grasp of quantum mechanics was unparalleled for his time. He wasn't just a student of the field; he was a pioneer, contributing original research and insights that solidified his reputation as a leading figure in the world of physics. His work on quantum field theory, for instance, profoundly influenced the development of the field. This early mastery of complex theoretical concepts proved crucial in his later leadership of the Manhattan Project.

H2: The Manhattan Project: Birth of the Atomic Age

The shadow of World War II loomed large over Oppenheimer's life. With the looming threat of Nazi Germany developing atomic weapons, the United States launched the Manhattan Project – a top-secret endeavor to develop its own atomic bomb. Oppenheimer, despite his reservations about the weapon's destructive potential, was chosen to lead the Los Alamos Laboratory, the project's central

research hub. This decision placed him at the forefront of one of the most consequential scientific undertakings ever undertaken.

H3: Leadership and Scientific Breakthroughs at Los Alamos

Leading the Los Alamos team was a monumental task. Oppenheimer deftly managed a diverse group of brilliant but often eccentric scientists, fostering a collaborative environment that pushed the boundaries of scientific innovation. He played a key role in solving complex scientific and engineering challenges, coordinating the efforts necessary to bring the atomic bomb to fruition. The success of the project was, in large part, a testament to his leadership abilities.

H2: Trinity and the Moral Dilemma

The successful detonation of the first atomic bomb at Trinity site in New Mexico in July 1945 marked a pivotal moment in history – and in Oppenheimer's life. While the scientific achievement was undeniable, the sheer destructive power of the weapon triggered a profound moral crisis within him. He grappled with the implications of his work, the potential for global devastation, and the weight of responsibility for unleashing such a powerful force upon the world.

H3: The Post-War Years and the McCarthy Era

The post-war period saw Oppenheimer become a vocal advocate for international control of nuclear weapons, fearing the devastating consequences of an arms race. His advocacy, coupled with his past associations with communist sympathizers, put him squarely in the crosshairs of Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist witch hunts. His security clearance was revoked, leading to a controversial hearing that ultimately damaged his reputation and career.

H2: The Legacy of American Prometheus

Despite the controversies surrounding his life, Oppenheimer's legacy remains complex and multifaceted. He was a brilliant scientist who made groundbreaking contributions to physics and played a pivotal role in the development of the atomic bomb. However, his story also serves as a cautionary tale about the ethical responsibilities of scientists and the potentially devastating consequences of scientific advancements. He remains a figure of both admiration and moral debate, a testament to the ambiguities inherent in scientific progress. His story continues to resonate, prompting ongoing conversations about the responsibilities of scientific innovation and the ethical dilemmas faced by those who push the boundaries of human knowledge.

Conclusion:

Robert Oppenheimer, the "American Prometheus," remains a captivating and enigmatic figure. His life is a powerful reminder of the complexities of scientific discovery and the moral responsibility that accompanies it. His story transcends the realms of science and politics, delving into the depths of human ambition, moral conflict, and the enduring power of legacy. Understanding his life and contributions is crucial for comprehending the nuclear age and its enduring impact on the world.

FAQs:

1. What was Oppenheimer's role in the Manhattan Project beyond scientific leadership? He also played a crucial diplomatic role, navigating the complex political landscape and managing relationships between the various scientific teams and military personnel involved.
2. Why is Oppenheimer often compared to Prometheus? The comparison highlights the parallels between Oppenheimer's creation of the atomic bomb – a powerful force with potentially devastating consequences – and Prometheus's gift of fire to humanity. Both acts brought significant advancements but also unleashed unforeseen consequences.
3. What were the long-term effects of the revocation of Oppenheimer's security clearance? It severely curtailed his involvement in government projects, significantly limiting his ability to contribute further to the field of nuclear physics and policy discussions.
4. Did Oppenheimer ever regret his role in creating the atomic bomb? While he never explicitly stated outright regret, his profound moral struggles after the Trinity test and his subsequent advocacy for nuclear disarmament strongly suggest a deep unease with the weapon's creation and potential for destruction.
5. What are some good resources for learning more about Robert Oppenheimer? Excellent biographies include "American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer" by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin (which inspired the recent film) and "Robert Oppenheimer: The Story of a Genius" by Peter Goodchild. Documentaries and the recent film also offer insightful perspectives.

american prometheus: American Prometheus Kai Bird, Martin J. Sherwin, 2007-12-18 THE INSPIRATION FOR THE MAJOR MOTION PICTURE OPPENHEIMER • A riveting account of one of history's most essential and paradoxical figures."—Christopher Nolan #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • PULITZER PRIZE WINNER • The definitive biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the iconic figures of the twentieth century, a brilliant physicist who led the effort to build the atomic bomb for his country in a time of war, and who later found himself confronting the moral consequences of scientific progress. In this magisterial, acclaimed biography twenty-five years in the making, Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin capture Oppenheimer's life and times, from his early career to his central role in the Cold War. This is biography and history at its finest, riveting and deeply informative. "A masterful account of Oppenheimer's rise and fall, set in the context of the turbulent decades of America's own transformation. It is a tour de force." —Los Angeles Times Book Review "A work of voluminous scholarship and lucid insight, unifying its multifaceted portrait with a keen grasp of Oppenheimer's essential nature.... It succeeds in deeply fathoming his most damaging, self-contradictory behavior." —The New York Times

american prometheus: American Prometheus Kai Bird, Martin J. Sherwin, 2005-04-05 THE INSPIRATION FOR THE MAJOR MOTION PICTURE OPPENHEIMER • A riveting account of one of history's most essential and paradoxical figures."—Christopher Nolan #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • PULITZER PRIZE WINNER • The definitive biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the iconic figures of the twentieth century, a brilliant physicist who led the effort to build the atomic bomb for his country in a time of war, and who later found himself confronting the moral consequences of scientific progress. In this magisterial, acclaimed biography twenty-five years in the making, Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin capture Oppenheimer's life and times, from his early career to his central role in the Cold War. This is biography and history at its finest, riveting and deeply informative. "A masterful account of Oppenheimer's rise and fall, set in the context of the turbulent decades of America's own transformation. It is a tour de force." —Los Angeles Times Book Review "A work of voluminous scholarship and lucid insight, unifying its multifaceted portrait with a keen

grasp of Oppenheimer's essential nature.... It succeeds in deeply fathoming his most damaging, self-contradictory behavior." —The New York Times

american prometheus: A World Destroyed Martin J. Sherwin, 2003 Sikkerhed og våbenmagt ; Manhattan-projektet; Diplomati, 1940'erne; Churchill, Roosevelt, Niels Bohr; Efterkrigstiden; Truman, Sovjetunionen, Den Kolde Krig; Potsdam-konferencen 1945.

american prometheus: Robert Oppenheimer Ray Monk, 2014-03-11 An unforgettable story of discovery and unimaginable destruction and a major biography of one of America's most brilliant—and most divisive—scientists, Robert Oppenheimer: A Life Inside the Center vividly illuminates the man who would go down in history as "the father of the atomic bomb." "Impressive. . . . An extraordinary story."—The New York Times Book Review "Judicious, comprehensive and reliable. . . . By far the most thorough survey yet written of Oppenheimer's physics.—Washington Post Oppenheimer's talent and drive secured him a place in the pantheon of great physicists and carried him to the laboratories where the secrets of the universe revealed themselves. But they also led him to contribute to the development of the deadliest weapon on earth, a discovery he soon came to fear. His attempts to resist the escalation of the Cold War arms race—coupled with political leanings at odds with post-war America—led many to question his loyalties, and brought down upon him the full force of McCarthyite anti-communism. Digging deeply into Oppenheimer's past to solve the enigma of his motivations and his complex personality, Ray Monk uncovers the extraordinary, charming, tortured man—and the remarkable mind—who fundamentally reshaped the world.

american prometheus: Trinity Louisa Hall, 2018-10-16 From the acclaimed author of *Speak* comes a kaleidoscopic novel about Robert Oppenheimer—father of the atomic bomb—as told by seven fictional characters. J. Robert Oppenheimer was a brilliant scientist, a champion of liberal causes, and a complex and often contradictory character. He loyally protected his Communist friends, only to later betray them under questioning. He repeatedly lied about love affairs. And he defended the use of the atomic bomb he helped create, before ultimately lobbying against nuclear proliferation. Through narratives that cross time and space, a set of characters bears witness to the life of Oppenheimer, from a secret service agent who tailed him in San Francisco, to the young lover of a colleague in Los Alamos, to a woman fleeing McCarthyism who knew him on St. John. As these men and women fall into the orbit of a brilliant but mercurial mind at work, all consider his complicated legacy while also uncovering deep and often unsettling truths about their own lives. In this stunning, elliptical novel, Louisa Hall has crafted a breathtaking and explosive story about the ability of the human mind to believe what it wants, about public and private tragedy, and about power and guilt. Blending science with literature and fiction with biography, *Trinity* asks searing questions about what it means to truly know someone, and about the secrets we keep from the world and from ourselves.

american prometheus: Killer Looks Zara Stone, 2021-10-26 *Killer Looks* is the definitive story about the long-forgotten practice of providing free nose jobs, face-lifts, breast implants, and other physical alterations to prisoners, the idea being that by remodeling the face you remake the man. From the 1920s up to the mid-1990s, half a million prison inmates across America, Canada, and the U.K. willingly went under the knife, their tab picked up by the government. In the beginning, this was a haphazard affair -- applied inconsistently and unfairly to inmates, but entering the 1960s, a movement to scientifically quantify the long-term effect of such programs took hold. And, strange as it may sound, the criminologists were right: recidivism rates plummeted. In 1967, a three-year cosmetic surgery program set on Rikers Island saw recidivism rates drop 36% for surgically altered offenders. The program, funded by a \$240,000 grant from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, was led by Dr. Michael Lewin, who ran a similar program at Sing-Sing prison in 1953. *Killer Looks* draws on the intersectionality of socioeconomic success, racial bias, the prison industry complex and the fallacy of attractiveness to get to the heart of how appearance and societal approval creates self-worth, and uncovers deeper truths of beauty bias, inherited racism, effective recidivism programs, and inequality. ,

american prometheus: The Color of Truth Kai Bird, 2017-01-10 From the Pulitzer

Prize-winning coauthor of *American Prometheus*—this biography of the Bundy Brothers inspired the Academy Award-winning film *Oppenheimer*. In this definitive biography of McGeorge Bundy and William Bundy, two of the best and the brightest who advised presidents about peace and war during the most dangerous years of the Cold War, Kai Bird pens a portrait of the fiercely patriotic, brilliant, and brazenly self-confident men who directed a steady escalation of a war they did not believe could be won. Drawing on seven years of research, nearly one hundred interviews, and scores of still-classified top secret documents in a masterful reevaluation of America's actions throughout the Cold War and Vietnam, *The Color of Truth* tells the tale of the anti-communist liberals who, despite their grave doubts about sending Americans to fight in Southeast Asia, became key architects of America's war in Vietnam. Like the bestselling *The Wise Men*, this dual biography is both an inside account of the making of US foreign policy in an era of nuclear weapons and a stunning group portrait of the heirs of the Wise Men—including Robert McNamara, George Ball, and Robert Kennedy—and the presidents they served.

american prometheus: *Red Pill, Blue Pill* David Neiwert, 2020-09-10 A revealing trip down the rabbit hole of conspiracy theories -their appeal, who believes them, how they spread -with an eye to helping people deal with the alt-right conspiracists in their own lives. Conspiracy theories are killing us. Once confined to the fringes of society, this worldview now has adherents numbering in the millions -extending right into the White House. This disturbing look at this alt-right threat to our democratic institutions offers guidance for counteracting the personal toll this destructive mindset can have on relationships and families. Author David Neiwert -an investigative journalist who has studied the radical right for decades -examines the growing appeal of conspiracy theories and the kind of personalities that are attracted to such paranoid, sociopathic messages. He explains how alt-right leaders are able to get such firm holds on the imaginations of their followers and chronicles the destruction caused by the movement's most virulent believers. Colloquially, this recruitment to alt-right ideologies is called getting red-pilled -a metaphor for when believers of conspiracy theories become convinced that their alternate universe is real. Uniquely, and optimistically, Neiwert provides a blue pill toolkit for those who are dealing with conspiracy theorists in their own lives, including strategies drawn from people who counsel former far-right extremists who have renounced their former beliefs.

american prometheus: *Oppenheimer* Charles Thorpe, 2008-09-15 At a time when the Manhattan Project was synonymous with large-scale science, physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-67) represented the new sociocultural power of the American intellectual. Catapulted to fame as director of the Los Alamos atomic weapons laboratory, Oppenheimer occupied a key position in the compact between science and the state that developed out of World War II. By tracing the making—and unmaking—of Oppenheimer's wartime and postwar scientific identity, Charles Thorpe illustrates the struggles over the role of the scientist in relation to nuclear weapons, the state, and culture. A stylish intellectual biography, *Oppenheimer* maps out changes in the roles of scientists and intellectuals in twentieth-century America, ultimately revealing transformations in Oppenheimer's persona that coincided with changing attitudes toward science in society. "This is an outstandingly well-researched book, a pleasure to read and distinguished by the high quality of its observations and judgments. It will be of special interest to scholars of modern history, but non-specialist readers will enjoy the clarity that Thorpe brings to common misunderstandings about his subject."—Graham Farmelo, *Times Higher Education Supplement* "A fascinating new perspective. . . . Thorpe's book provides the best perspective yet for understanding Oppenheimer's Los Alamos years, which were critical, after all, not only to his life but, for better or worse, the history of mankind."—Catherine Westfall, *Nature*

american prometheus: *109 East Palace* Jennet Conant, 2007-11-01 From the bestselling author of *Tuxedo Park*, the extraordinary story of the thousands of people who were sequestered in a military facility in the desert for twenty-seven intense months under J. Robert Oppenheimer where the world's best scientists raced to invent the atomic bomb and win World War II. In 1943, J. Robert Oppenheimer, the brilliant, charismatic head of the Manhattan Project, recruited scientists to live as

virtual prisoners of the U.S. government at Los Alamos, a barren mesa thirty-five miles outside Santa Fe, New Mexico. Thousands of men, women, and children spent the war years sequestered in this top-secret military facility. They lied to friends and family about where they were going and what they were doing, and then disappeared into the desert. Through the eyes of a young Santa Fe widow who was one of Oppenheimer's first recruits, we see how, for all his flaws, he developed into an inspiring leader and motivated all those involved in the Los Alamos project to make a supreme effort and achieve the unthinkable.

american prometheus: The Meanings of J. Robert Oppenheimer Lindsey Michael Banco, 2016-05-15 He called the first atomic bomb "technically sweet," yet as he watched its brilliant light explode over the New Mexico desert in 1945 in advance of the black horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he also thought of the line from the Hindu epic The Bhagavad Gita: "I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." Physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the scientific director of the Manhattan Project, the single most recognizable face of the atomic bomb, and a man whose name has become almost synonymous with Cold War American nuclear science, was and still is a conflicted, controversial figure who has come to represent an equally ambivalent technology. The Meanings of J. Robert Oppenheimer examines how he has been represented over the past seven decades in biographies, histories, fiction, comics, photographs, film, television, documentaries, theater, and museums. Lindsey Michael Banco gathers an unprecedented group of cultural texts and seeks to understand the multiple meanings Oppenheimer has held in American popular culture since 1945. He traces the ways these representations of Oppenheimer have influenced public understanding of the atomic bomb, technology, physics, the figure of the scientist, the role of science in war, and even what it means to pursue knowledge of the world around us. Questioning and unpacking both how and why Oppenheimer is depicted as he is across time and genre, this book is broad in scope, profound in detail, and offers unique insights into the rise of nuclear culture and how we think about the relationship between history, imagination, science, and nuclear weapons today.

american prometheus: In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer Richard Polenberg, 2002 At the end of World War II, J. Robert Oppenheimer was one of America's preeminent physicists. For his work as director of the Manhattan Project, he was awarded the Medal for Merit, the highest honor the U.S. government can bestow on a civilian. Yet, in 1953, Oppenheimer was denied security clearance amidst allegations that he was more probably than not an agent of the Soviet Union. Determined to clear his name, he insisted on a hearing before the Atomic Energy Commission's Personnel Security Board. In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer contains an edited and annotated transcript of the 1954 hearing, as well as the various reports resulting from it. Drawing on recently declassified FBI files, Richard Polenberg's introductory and concluding essays situate the hearing in the Cold War period, and his thoughtful analysis helps explain why the hearing was held, why it turned out as it did, and what that result meant, both for Oppenheimer and for the United States. Among the forty witnesses who testified were many who had played vitally important roles in the making of U.S. nuclear policy: Enrico Fermi, Hans Bethe, Edward Teller, Vannevar Bush, George F. Kennan, and Oppenheimer himself. The hearing provides valuable insights into the development of the atomic bomb and the postwar debate among scientists over the hydrogen bomb, the conflict between the foreign policy and military establishments over national defense, and the controversy over the proper standards to apply in assessing an individual's loyalty. It reveals as well the fears and anxieties that plagued America during the Cold War era.

american prometheus: The Good Spy Kai Bird, 2014-05-20 The Good Spy is Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Kai Bird's compelling portrait of the remarkable life and death of one of the most important operatives in CIA history - a man who, had he lived, might have helped heal the rift between Arabs and the West. On April 18, 1983, a bomb exploded outside the American Embassy in Beirut, killing 63 people. The attack was a geopolitical turning point. It marked the beginning of Hezbollah as a political force, but even more important, it eliminated America's most influential and effective intelligence officer in the Middle East - CIA operative Robert Ames. What set Ames apart from his peers was his extraordinary ability to form deep, meaningful connections with key Arab

intelligence figures. Some operatives relied on threats and subterfuge, but Ames worked by building friendships and emphasizing shared values – never more notably than with Yasir Arafat’s charismatic intelligence chief and heir apparent Ali Hassan Salameh (aka “The Red Prince”). Ames’ deepening relationship with Salameh held the potential for a lasting peace. Within a few years, though, both men were killed by assassins, and America’s relations with the Arab world began heading down a path that culminated in 9/11, the War on Terror, and the current fog of mistrust. Bird, who as a child lived in the Beirut Embassy and knew Ames as a neighbor when he was twelve years old, spent years researching *The Good Spy*. Not only does the book draw on hours of interviews with Ames’ widow, and quotes from hundreds of Ames’ private letters, it’s woven from interviews with scores of current and former American, Israeli, and Palestinian intelligence officers as well as other players in the Middle East “Great Game.” What emerges is a masterpiece-level narrative of the making of a CIA officer, a uniquely insightful history of twentieth-century conflict in the Middle East, and an absorbing hour-by-hour account of the Beirut Embassy bombing. Even more impressive, Bird draws on his reporter’s skills to deliver a full dossier on the bombers and expose the shocking truth of where the attack’s mastermind resides today.

american prometheus: The Ruin of J. Robert Oppenheimer Priscilla J. McMillan, 2018
Draws from previously classified documents, unpublished manuscripts, private correspondence, and other sources to chronicle the events that surrounded the revocation of scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer's security clearance in 1954, discussing the roles of physicist Edward Teller, Republican businessman Lewis Strauss, congressional assistant William Borden, and President Eisenhower.

american prometheus: Gambling with Armageddon Martin J. Sherwin, 2020-10-13
From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *American Prometheus* comes the first effort to set the Cuban Missile Crisis, with its potential for nuclear holocaust, in a wider historical narrative of the Cold War—how such a crisis arose, and why at the very last possible moment it didn't happen. In this groundbreaking look at the Cuban Missile Crisis, Martin Sherwin not only gives us a riveting sometimes hour-by-hour explanation of the crisis itself, but also explores the origins, scope, and consequences of the evolving place of nuclear weapons in the post-World War II world. Mining new sources and materials, and going far beyond the scope of earlier works on this critical face-off between the United States and the Soviet Union—triggered when Khrushchev began installing missiles in Cuba at Castro's behest—Sherwin shows how this volatile event was an integral part of the wider Cold War and was a consequence of nuclear arms. *Gambling with Armageddon* looks in particular at the original debate in the Truman Administration about using the Atomic Bomb; the way in which President Eisenhower relied on the threat of massive retaliation to project U.S. power in the early Cold War era; and how President Kennedy, though unprepared to deal with the Bay of Pigs debacle, came of age during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Here too is a clarifying picture of what was going on in Khrushchev's Soviet Union. Martin Sherwin has spent his career in the study of nuclear weapons and how they have shaped our world. *Gambling with Armageddon* is an outstanding capstone to his work thus far.

american prometheus: Prometheus Carol Dougherty, 2006-01-30
Offering a comparative approach, including visual material and film, this much-needed book provides an essential introduction to the Promethean myth and locates the nature of this compelling tale's continuing relevance through history, from its origins in ancient Greece, to its appearance in Romantic age works and twentieth-century films.

american prometheus: The Prometheus Deception/The Sigma Protocol Robert Ludlum, 2006-09-05
Prometheus Deception Robert Ludlum is the acknowledged master of suspense and international intrigue. For over thirty years, in over twenty international bestsellers, he has set a standard that has never been equaled. Now, with *Prometheus Deception*, he proves that he is at the very pinnacle of his craft. Nicholas Bryson spent years as a deep cover operative for the American secret intelligence group, the Directorate. After critical undercover mission went horribly wrong, Bryson was retired to a new identity. Years later, his closely held cover is cracked and

Bryson learns that the Directorate was not what it claimed - that he was a pawn in a complex scheme against his own country's interests. Now, it has become increasingly clear that the shadowy Directorate is headed for some dangerous endgame - but no one knows precisely who they are and what they are planning. With Bryson their only possible asset, the director of the CIA recruits Bryson to find, reinfiltrate, and stop the Directorate. But after years on the sidelines, Bryson's field skills are rusty, his contacts unreliable, and his instincts suspect. With everything he thought he knew about his own life in question, Bryson is all alone in a wilderness of mirrors - unsure what is and isn't true and who, if anyone, he can trust - with the future of millions in the balance. Sigma Protocol Ben Hartman is vacationing in Zurich, Switzerland when he chances upon his old friend Jimmy Cavanaugh—a madman who's armed and programmed to assassinate. In a matter of minutes, six innocent bystanders are dead. So is Cavanaugh. But when his body vanishes, and his weapon mysteriously appears in Hartman's luggage, Hartman is plunged into an unfathomable nightmare... Meanwhile, Anna Navarro, field agent for the Department of Justice, has been asked to investigate the sudden, random deaths of eleven men throughout the world. The only thing that connects them? A secret file, over a half-century old, that's linked to the CIA—and is marked with the same puzzling codename: Sigma. As Anna follows the connecting thread—and Hartman finds himself on the run—she ends up in the shadows of a relentless killer who is one step ahead of her...victim by victim. Now, she and Hartman together must uncover the diabolical secrets long held behind Sigma. It will threaten everything they think they know about themselves—and confirm their very worst fears...

american prometheus: Oppenheimer Is Watching Me Jeff Porter, 2007-09 When he discovers that his father worked on missiles for a defense contractor, Jeff Porter is inspired to revisit America's atomic past and our fallen heroes, in particular J. Robert Oppenheimer, the father of the atomic bomb. The result, *Oppenheimer Is Watching Me*, takes readers back to the cold war, when men in lab coats toyed with the properties of matter and fears of national security troubled our sleep. With an eye for strange symmetries, Porter traces how one panicky moment shaped the lives of a generation.

american prometheus: The Outlier Kai Bird, 2021-06-15 "Important . . . [a] landmark presidential biography . . . Bird is able to build a persuasive case that the Carter presidency deserves this new look."—The New York Times Book Review An essential re-evaluation of the complex triumphs and tragedies of Jimmy Carter's presidential legacy—from the expert biographer and Pulitzer Prize-winning co-author of *American Prometheus* Four decades after Ronald Reagan's landslide win in 1980, Jimmy Carter's one-term presidency is often labeled a failure; indeed, many Americans view Carter as the only ex-president to have used the White House as a stepping-stone to greater achievements. But in retrospect the Carter political odyssey is a rich and human story, marked by both formidable accomplishments and painful political adversity. In this deeply researched, brilliantly written account, Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Kai Bird deftly unfolds the Carter saga as a tragic tipping point in American history. As president, Carter was not merely an outsider; he was an outlier. He was the only president in a century to grow up in the heart of the Deep South, and his born-again Christianity made him the most openly religious president in memory. This outlier brought to the White House a rare mix of humility, candor, and unnerving self-confidence that neither Washington nor America was ready to embrace. Decades before today's public reckoning with the vast gulf between America's ethos and its actions, Carter looked out on a nation torn by race and demoralized by Watergate and Vietnam and prescribed a radical self-examination from which voters recoiled. The cost of his unshakable belief in doing the right thing would be losing his re-election bid—and witnessing the ascendance of Reagan. In these remarkable pages, Bird traces the arc of Carter's administration, from his aggressive domestic agenda to his controversial foreign policy record, taking readers inside the Oval Office and through Carter's battles with both a political establishment and a Washington press corps that proved as adversarial as any foreign power. Bird shows how issues still hotly debated today—from national health care to growing inequality and racism to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—burned at the heart of Carter's America, and consumed a president who found a moral duty in solving them. Drawing on

interviews with Carter and members of his administration and recently declassified documents, Bird delivers a profound, clear-eyed evaluation of a leader whose legacy has been deeply misunderstood. The Outlier is the definitive account of an enigmatic presidency—both as it really happened and as it is remembered in the American consciousness.

american prometheus: American Prometheus Kai Bird, 2024-01-20 Japanese edition of [American Prometheus] by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin. The first full-scale biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer, 'father of the atomic bomb', the brilliant, charismatic physicist who led the effort to capture the awesome fire of the sun for his country in time of war. This book sets forth Oppenheimer's life and times in revealing and unprecedented detail. Vol 2 of 3.

american prometheus: Tuxedo Park Jennet Conant, 2013-10-15 A New York Times bestseller! The untold story of the eccentric Wall Street tycoon and the circle of scientific geniuses who helped build the atomic bomb and defeat the Nazis—changing the course of history. Legendary financier, philanthropist, and society figure Alfred Lee Loomis gathered the most visionary scientific minds of the twentieth century—Albert Einstein, Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, Enrico Fermi, and others—at his state-of-the-art laboratory in Tuxedo Park, New York, in the late 1930s. He established a top-secret defense laboratory at MIT and personally bankrolled pioneering research into new, high-powered radar detection systems that helped defeat the German Air Force and U-boats. With Ernest Lawrence, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist, he pushed Franklin Delano Roosevelt to fund research in nuclear fission, which led to the development of the atomic bomb. Jennet Conant, the granddaughter of James Bryant Conant, one of the leading scientific advisers of World War II, enjoyed unprecedented access to Loomis' papers, as well as to people intimately involved in his life and work. She pierces through Loomis' obsessive secrecy and illuminates his role in assuring the Allied victory.

american prometheus: Atom and Void J. Robert Oppenheimer, 2014-07-14 J. Robert Oppenheimer was one of the outstanding physicists of his generation. He was also an immensely gifted writer and speaker, who thought deeply about the way that scientific discoveries have changed the way people live and think. Displaying his subtlety of thought and expression as do few other documents, this book of his lectures discusses the moral and cultural implications of developments in modern physics. Originally published in 1989. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905.

american prometheus: The Stardust Revolution Jacob Berkowitz, 2022-02-15 In 1957, as Americans obsessed over the launch of the Soviet Sputnik satellite, another less noticed space-based scientific revolution was taking off. That year, astrophysicists solved a centuries-old quest for the origins of the elements, from carbon to uranium. The answer they found wasn't on Earth, but in the stars. Their research showed that we are literally stardust. The year also marked the first conference that considered the origin of life on Earth in an astrophysical context. It was the marriage of two of the seemingly strangest bedfellows—astronomy and biology—and a turning point that award-winning science author Jacob Berkowitz calls the Stardust Revolution. In this captivating story of an exciting, deeply personal, new scientific revolution, Berkowitz weaves together the latest research results to reveal a dramatically different view of the twinkling night sky—not as an alien frontier, but as our cosmic birthplace. Reporting from the frontlines of discovery, Berkowitz uniquely captures how stardust scientists are probing the universe's physical structure, but rather its biological nature. Evolutionary theory is entering the space age. From the amazing discovery of cosmic clouds of life's chemical building blocks to the dramatic quest for an alien Earth, Berkowitz expertly chronicles the most profound scientific search of our era: to know not just if we are alone, but how we are connected. Like opening a long-hidden box of old family letters and diaries, The Stardust Revolution offers us a new view of where we've come from and brings to light our journey

from stardust to thinking beings.

american prometheus: *Summary of American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* GP SUMMARY, 2023-08-05 DISCLAIMER This book does not in any capacity mean to replace the original book but to serve as a vast summary of the original book. Summary of American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin IN THIS SUMMARIZED BOOK, YOU WILL GET: Chapter astute outline of the main contents. Fast & simple understanding of the content analysis. Exceptionally summarized content that you may skip in the original book The biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer, written by Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin, is a captivating account of his life and times during America's transformation. It offers voluminous scholarship and insight, capturing Oppenheimer's essential nature and self-contradictory behavior.

american prometheus: *Restricted Data* Alex Wellerstein, 2021-04-09 Nuclear weapons, since their conception, have been the subject of secrecy. In the months after the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the American scientific establishment, the American government, and the American public all wrestled with what was called the problem of secrecy, wondering not only whether secrecy was appropriate and effective as a means of controlling this new technology but also whether it was compatible with the country's core values. Out of a messy context of propaganda, confusion, spy scares, and the grave counsel of competing groups of scientists, what historian Alex Wellerstein calls a new regime of secrecy was put into place. It was unlike any other previous or since. Nuclear secrets were given their own unique legal designation in American law (restricted data), one that operates differently than all other forms of national security classification and exists to this day. Drawing on massive amounts of declassified files, including records released by the government for the first time at the author's request, *Restricted Data* is a narrative account of nuclear secrecy and the tensions and uncertainty that built as the Cold War continued. In the US, both science and democracy are pitted against nuclear secrecy, and this makes its history uniquely compelling and timely--

american prometheus: *Anthem* Ayn Rand, 2021-07-07 About this Edition This 2021-2022 Digital Student Edition of Ayn Rand's *Anthem* was created for teachers and students receiving free novels from the Ayn Rand Institute, and includes a historic Q&A with Ayn Rand that cannot be found in any other edition of *Anthem*. In this Q&A from 1979, Rand responds to questions about *Anthem* sent to her by a high school classroom. About *Anthem* *Anthem* is Ayn Rand's "hymn to man's ego." It is the story of one man's rebellion against a totalitarian, collectivist society. Equality 7-2521 is a young man who yearns to understand "the Science of Things." But he lives in a bleak, dystopian future where independent thought is a crime and where science and technology have regressed to primitive levels. All expressions of individualism have been suppressed in the world of *Anthem*; personal possessions are nonexistent, individual preferences are condemned as sinful and romantic love is forbidden. Obedience to the collective is so deeply ingrained that the very word "I" has been erased from the language. In pursuit of his quest for knowledge, Equality 7-2521 struggles to answer the questions that burn within him — questions that ultimately lead him to uncover the mystery behind his society's downfall and to find the key to a future of freedom and progress. *Anthem* anticipates the theme of Rand's first best seller, *The Fountainhead*, which she stated as "individualism versus collectivism, not in politics, but in man's soul."

american prometheus: *American Prometheus* Tom Gage, 2017-04-28 *American Prometheus: Carnegie's Captain*, Bill Jones presents a compelling historical memoir of the illustrious life of rebellious steel genius and inventor, Captain Bill Jones. Hero of the Civil War and Johnstown Flood, Captain Bill Jones built and supervised the Edgar Thomson Steel Works, which in its first five years advanced to the rank of the world's most productive and profitable steel mill. His hands-on, all over style solved Carnegie's production problems on the spot, enlisted baseball teams from the Works' departments to defuse ethnic strife, promoted the eight-hour work day, and patented inventions, including the Jones Hot Metal mixer, which revolutionized the steelmaking industry, all while turning down Carnegie's offers of partnership. A deft blend of historical narrative and family

memoir, this absorbing account of Jones' dynamic life as a founding key figure in post-Civil War America's Second Industrial Revolution and as a philanthropist in his own right, is told by none other than his great-grandson. Tom Gage moves beyond the role of biographer and storyteller to delve into research that traces Jones' relationship to the steel magnate and explores the mysteries posed by family lore.

american prometheus: Dark Sun Richard Rhodes, 2012-09-18 Here, for the first time, in a brilliant, panoramic portrait by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, is the definitive, often shocking story of the politics and the science behind the development of the hydrogen bomb and the birth of the Cold War. Based on secret files in the United States and the former Soviet Union, this monumental work of history discloses how and why the United States decided to create the bomb that would dominate world politics for more than forty years.

american prometheus: Earth Abides George R. Stewart, 1993-12

american prometheus: Fallout Lesley M.M. Blume, 2020-08-04 A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK OF 2020 New York Times bestselling author Lesley M.M. Blume reveals how one courageous American reporter uncovered one of the deadliest cover-ups of the 20th century—the true effects of the atom bomb—potentially saving millions of lives. Just days after the United States decimated Hiroshima and Nagasaki with nuclear bombs, the Japanese surrendered unconditionally. But even before the surrender, the US government and military had begun a secret propaganda and information suppression campaign to hide the devastating nature of these experimental weapons. The cover-up intensified as Occupation forces closed the atomic cities to Allied reporters, preventing leaks about the horrific long-term effects of radiation which would kill thousands during the months after the blast. For nearly a year the cover-up worked—until New Yorker journalist John Hersey got into Hiroshima and managed to report the truth to the world. As Hersey and his editors prepared his article for publication, they kept the story secret—even from most of their New Yorker colleagues. When the magazine published “Hiroshima” in August 1946, it became an instant global sensation, and inspired pervasive horror about the hellish new threat that America had unleashed. Since 1945, no nuclear weapons have ever been deployed in war partly because Hersey alerted the world to their true, devastating impact. This knowledge has remained among the greatest deterrents to using them since the end of World War II. Released on the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, *Fallout* is an engrossing detective story, as well as an important piece of hidden history that shows how one heroic scoop saved—and can still save—the world.

american prometheus: The Prometheus Bomb Neil J. Sullivan, 2016-12 During World War II, the lives of millions of Americans lay precariously in the hands of a few brilliant scientists who raced to develop the first weapon of mass destruction. Elected officials gave the scientists free rein in the Manhattan Project without understanding the complexities and dangers involved in splitting the atom. The Manhattan Project was the first example of a new type of choice for congressmen, presidents, and other government officials: life and death on a national scale. From that moment, our government began fashioning public policy for issues of scientific development, discoveries, and inventions that could secure or threaten our existence and our future. But those same men and women had no training in such fields, did not understand the ramifications of the research, and relied on incomplete information to form potentially life-changing decisions. Through the story of the Manhattan Project, Neil J. Sullivan asks by what criteria the people in charge at the time made such critical decisions. He also ponders how similar judgments are reached today with similar incomprehension from those at the top as our society dives down the potential rabbit hole of bioengineering, nanotechnology, and scientific developments yet to come.

american prometheus: The Oppenheimer Alternative Arc Manor, 2023-07-11 On the 75th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb, Hugo and Nebula-winning author Robert J. Sawyer takes us back in time to revisit history...with a twist. While J. Robert Oppenheimer and his Manhattan Project team struggle to develop the A-bomb, Edward Teller wants something even more devastating: a bomb based on nuclear fusion—the mechanism that powers the sun. Teller's research leads to a terrifying discovery: by the year 2030, the sun will eject its outermost layer, destroying

the entire inner solar system—including Earth. As the war ends with the use of fission bombs against Japan, Oppenheimer's team, plus Albert Einstein and Wernher von Braun, stay together—the greatest scientific geniuses from the last century racing against time to save our future. Meticulously researched and replete with real-life characters and events, *The Oppenheimer Alternative* is a breathtaking adventure through both real and alternate history

american prometheus: The Pope of Physics Gino Segrè, Bettina Hoerlin, 2016-10-18 Enrico Fermi is unquestionably among the greats of the world's physicists, the most famous Italian scientist since Galileo. Called the Pope by his peers, he was regarded as infallible in his instincts and research. His discoveries changed our world; they led to weapons of mass destruction and conversely to life-saving medical interventions. This unassuming man struggled with issues relevant today, such as the threat of nuclear annihilation and the relationship of science to politics. Fleeing Fascism and anti-Semitism, Fermi became a leading figure in America's most secret project: building the atomic bomb. The last physicist who mastered all branches of the discipline, Fermi was a rare mixture of theorist and experimentalist. His rich legacy encompasses key advances in fields as diverse as cosmic rays, nuclear technology, and early computers. In their revealing book, *The Pope of Physics*, Gino Segrè and Bettina Hoerlin bring this scientific visionary to life. An examination of the human dramas that touched Fermi's life as well as a thrilling history of scientific innovation in the twentieth century, this is the comprehensive biography that Fermi deserves.

american prometheus: The Intellectual Origins of Modernity David Ohana, 2019-03-21 *The Intellectual Origins of Modernity* explores the long and winding road of modernity from Rousseau to Foucault and its roots, which are not to be found in a desire for enlightenment or in the idea of progress but in the Promethean passion of Western humankind. Modernity is the Promethean passion, the passion of humans to be their own master, to use their insight to make a world different from the one that they found, and to liberate themselves from their immemorial chains. This passion created the political ideologies of the nineteenth century and made its imprint on the totalitarian regimes that arose in their wake in the twentieth. Underlying the Promethean passion there was modernity—humankind's project of self-creation—and enlightenment, the existence of a constant tension between the actual and the desirable, between reality and the ideal. Beneath the weariness, the exhaustion and the skepticism of post-modernist criticism is a refusal to take Promethean horizons into account. This book attests the importance of reason, which remains a powerful critical weapon of humankind against the idols that have come out of modernity: totalitarianism, fundamentalism, the golem of technology, genetic engineering and a boundless will to power. Without it, the new Prometheus is liable to return the fire to the gods.

american prometheus: Almighty Dan Zak, 2016-07-12 **A Washington Post Notable Nonfiction Book of 2016** ON A TRANQUIL SUMMER NIGHT in July 2012, a trio of peace activists infiltrated the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Nicknamed the "Fort Knox of Uranium," Y-12 was supposedly one of the most secure sites in the world, a bastion of warhead parts and hundreds of tons of highly enriched uranium—enough to power thousands of nuclear bombs. The three activists—a house painter, a Vietnam War veteran, and an 82-year-old Catholic nun—penetrated the complex's exterior with alarming ease; their strongest tools were two pairs of bolt cutters and three hammers. Once inside, these pacifists hung protest banners, spray-painted biblical messages, and streaked the walls with human blood. Then they waited to be arrested. WITH THE BREAK-IN and their symbolic actions, the activists hoped to draw attention to a costly military-industrial complex that stockpiles deadly nukes. But they also triggered a political and legal firestorm of urgent and troubling questions. What if they had been terrorists? Why do the United States and Russia continue to possess enough nuclear weaponry to destroy the world several times over? IN ALMIGHTY, WASHINGTON POST REPORTER Dan Zak answers these questions by reexamining America's love-hate relationship to the bomb, from the race to achieve atomic power before the Nazis did to the solemn 70th anniversary of Hiroshima. At a time of concern about proliferation in such nations as Iran and North Korea, the U.S. arsenal is plagued by its own security problems. This life-or-death quandary is unraveled in Zak's eye-opening account, with a cast that

includes the biophysicist who first educated the public on atomic energy, the prophet who predicted the creation of Oak Ridge, the generations of activists propelled into resistance by their faith, and the Washington bureaucrats and diplomats who are trying to keep the world safe. Part historical adventure, part courtroom drama, part moral thriller, *Almighty* reshapes the accepted narratives surrounding nuclear weapons and shows that our greatest modern-day threat remains a power we discovered long ago.

american prometheus: *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate* Kai Bird, 2010-04-20 *From the Pulitzer Prize-winning coauthor of *American Prometheus*—the inspiration for the Academy Award-winning film *Oppenheimer** Now with a new introduction, Kai Bird's fascinating memoir of his early years spent in Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon provides an original and illuminating perspective into the Arab-Israeli conflict. In 1956, four-year-old Kai Bird, son of a charming American diplomat, moved to Jerusalem with his family. Kai could hear church bells and the Muslim call to prayer and watch as donkeys and camels competed with cars for space on the narrow streets. Each day on his way to school, Kai was driven through Mandelbaum Gate, where armed soldiers guarded the line separating Israeli-controlled West Jerusalem from Arab-controlled East. Bird would spend much of his life crossing such lines—as a child in Jerusalem, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, and later, as a young man in Lebanon. In *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate*, a narrative that “rips along like a spy novel” (*The New York Times Book Review*), Bird's retelling of “events such as Suez in 1956, the Six Day War of 1967, and Black September in 1970 are as clear and fresh as yesterday” (*The Spectator*, UK). Bird vividly portrays emblematic figures like George Antonius, author of *The Arab Awakening*; Jordan's King Hussein; the Palestinian hijacker Leila Khaled; Salem bin Laden; Saudi King Faisal; President Nasser of Egypt; and Hillel Kook, the forgotten rescuer of more than 100,000 Jews during World War II. Bird, his parents sympathetic to Palestinian self-determination and his wife the daughter of two Holocaust survivors, has written a “kaleidoscopic and captivating” (*Publishers Weekly*) personal history of a troubled region and an indispensable addition to the literature on the modern Middle East.

american prometheus: *The Chairman* Kai Bird, 2017-01-10 Against the backgrounds of World War II, the Cold War, the construction of Pax Americana, the Cuban missile crisis, the Kennedy assassination, and Vietnam, Bird shows us McCloy's astonishing rise from self-described “chore boy” to “chairman of the Establishment.” His powerful circle shaped the postwar globe. But McCloy stood out among them as a towering figure of achievement: as a Wall Street lawyer who earned the confidence of captains of industry and presidents; as Henry Stimson's right-hand man at the War Department; as president of the World Bank and chairman of the Chase financial empire; and as presidential adviser. Bird captures every facet of this self-made man. We see McCloy's commercial acumen as the most in-demand lawyer of Wall Street; his dictatorial will as high commissioner of occupied Germany; and his stoic loyalty as adviser to Presidents FDR, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, Ford, and Reagan. Bird brilliantly explores how McCloy came to epitomize the American Establishment and the values of a generation that led the United States through bitter war and unparalleled prosperity.

american prometheus: For Us, The Living Robert A. Heinlein, 2004-01-06 From Grandmaster Robert A. Heinlein comes a long-lost first novel, written in 1939 and never before published, introducing ideas and themes that would shape his career and define the genre that is synonymous with his name. July 12, 1939: Perry Nelson is driving along the palisades when suddenly another vehicle swerves into his lane, a tire blows out, and his car careens off the road and over a bluff. The last thing he sees before his head connects with the boulders below is a girl in a green bathing suit, prancing along the shore.... When he wakes, the girl in green is a woman dressed in furs and the sun-drenched shore has transformed into snowcapped mountains. The woman, Diana, rescues Perry from the bitter cold and takes him inside her home to rest and recuperate. Later they debate the cause of the accident, for Diana is unfamiliar with the concept of a tire blowout and Perry cannot comprehend snowfall in mid-July. Then Diana shares with him a vital piece of information: The date is now January 7. The year...2086. When his shock subsides, Perry begins an exhaustive study of

global evolution over the past 150 years. He learns, among other things, that a United Europe was formed and led by Edward, Duke of Windsor; former New York City mayor LaGuardia served two terms as president of the United States; the military draft was completely reconceived; banks became publicly owned and operated; and in the year 2003, two helicopters destroyed the island of Manhattan in a galvanizing act of war. This education in the ways of the modern world emboldens Perry to assimilate to life in the twenty-first century. But education brings with it inescapable truths—the economic and legal systems, the government, and even the dynamic between men and women remain alien to Perry, the customs of the new day continually testing his mental and emotional resolve. Yet it is precisely his knowledge of a bygone era that will serve Perry best, as the man from 1939 seems destined to lead his newfound peers even further into the future than they could have imagined. A classic example of the future history that Robert Heinlein popularized during his career, *For Us, The Living* marks both the beginning and the end of an extraordinary arc of political, social, and literary crusading that comprises his legacy. Heinlein could not have known in 1939 how the world would change over the course of one and a half centuries, but we have our own true world history to compare with his brilliant imaginings, rendering *For Us, The Living* not merely a novel, but a time capsule view into our past, our present, and perhaps our future. The novel is presented here with an introduction by acclaimed science fiction writer Spider Robinson and an afterword by Professor Robert James of the Heinlein Society.

american prometheus: Our Political Nature Avi Tuschman, 2013-09-03 The first book to tell the natural history of political orientations. *Our Political Nature* is the first book to reveal the hidden roots of our most deeply held moral values. It shows how political orientations across space and time arise from three clusters of measurable personality traits. These clusters entail opposing attitudes toward tribalism, inequality, and differing perceptions of human nature. Together, these traits are by far the most powerful cause of left-right voting, even leading people to regularly vote against their economic interests. As this book explains, our political personalities also influence our likely choice of a mate, and shape society's larger reproductive patterns. Most importantly of all, it tells the evolutionary stories of these crucial personality traits, which stem from epic biological conflicts. Based on dozens of exciting new insights from primatology, genetics, neuroscience, and anthropology, this groundbreaking work brings core concepts to life through current news stories and personalities. For instance, readers will meet Glenn Beck and Hugo Chavez and come to understand the underlying evolutionary forces they represent. By blending serious research with relevant contemporary examples, *Our Political Nature* casts important light onto the ideological clashes that so dangerously divide and imperil our world today.

american prometheus: Hiroshima's Shadow Kai Bird, Lawrence Lifschultz, 1998 Writings on the denial of history and the Smithsonian controversy--Cover.

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