

the discipline of physics; the book even includes the footnotes from their articles in which they thanked their old mentor. Monk, a professor of philosophy, excels in discussing Oppenheimer's science and in explaining why he succeeded and why he more than once narrowly missed a tremendous breakthrough.

But *Robert Oppenheimer* suffers when it looks beyond science. Monk, like other biographers, places tremendous importance on Oppenheimer's inability to acknowledge his Jewish heritage. He quotes I. I. Rabi, who famously said that Oppenheimer "never got to be an integrated personality" and "lived a charade" because he spurned his Jewishness and separated himself from the cohesion of the Jewish community. But it seems unconvincing—indeed unfair—to suggest that Oppenheimer, who suffered from depression since his youth, could have overcome crippling and complex mental health problems simply by embracing Judaism.

The book's final chapter noticeably lacks the dogged thoughtfulness of the previous ones. Here Monk piles on lengthy block quotes from almost everything Oppenheimer said or wrote during the last years of his life, with no real payoff for the reader. He even dissects at length the origins of the title of a talk Oppenheimer gave called "The Added Cubit." In addition, Monk misidentifies the well-known chemist George Kistiakowsky as a physicist.

Robert Oppenheimer should appeal greatly to those interested in the physics of the pre- and postwar eras. But as a definitive biography, this book supplements rather than supplants *American Prometheus*. Even after reading Monk's book, it remains an open question whether understanding Oppenheimer's science is essential to understanding him as a person. In emphasizing Oppenheimer the scientist, Monk has obscured Oppenheimer the man. For example, Monk says precious little about Oppenheimer's adult relationships. His children make just a token appearance, and his wife, Kitty, and lover, Jean Tatlock, merit little discussion. Most surprisingly, Ruth Tolman is barely mentioned and never identified as another of Oppenheimer's lovers and as his emotional confidant. In a book this big about someone so opaque, surely there was room for more of the man.

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