

tific innovation won't develop efficiently until such a system is built.

References

1. W. Tan, "A robust community-based credit system to enhance peer review in scientific research," 19 June 2023, <https://osf.io/preprints/metaarxiv/y9qh6>.
2. W. Tan, "OePRESS: An Open ePrint and Rigorous Evaluation System for STEM," 13 September 2024, <https://osf.io/preprints/osf/jvkmz>.

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Defending Oppenheimer

In their letter in the July 2024 issue of *PHYSICS TODAY* (page 11), Bárbara Cruvinel Santiago and Lindsay Rand criticize Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer* for glorifying the Trinity test while mostly ignoring the dangers of its widespread fallout. To be fair to the film's creators, the

movie is more of an account of J. Robert Oppenheimer's life and the challenges he endured; it is not a documentary.

An alternate view: The Manhattan Project was now eight decades ago. If watching the movie prompts younger viewers to go learn about it, the context surrounding it, and its legacy of worldwide nuclear deployments and environmental issues—consequences with which Santiago and Rand are concerned—the movie will have done a tremendous public service. Personally, I enjoyed it immensely.

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I do not concur with the substance of a recently published letter by Bárbara Cruvinel Santiago and Lindsay Rand titled "Beyond the cinematic feat: Consequences *Oppenheimer* ignored" (*PHYSICS TODAY*, July 2024, page 11). The film was half the extraordinary "Barbenheimer" phenomenon, which encouraged audiences to return to physical theaters, and it won the Academy Award for Best Picture. I think most physicists would agree that the film was remarkably successful in engaging broad audiences with the origins of nuclear weapons and with the consequences of their use.

As have many other critics of *Oppenheimer*, the letter writers point out the film's limited treatment of the devastation and death that occurred as a result of the Manhattan Project. In the *Los Angeles Times*, Justin Chang provides a more nuanced discussion, writing "I get those complaints. I also think they betray an inherent disrespect for the audience's intelligence and curiosity, as well as a fundamental misunderstanding of how movies operate."¹ That commentary is the first listed in the body of work for which Chang won the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for criticism.

Reference

1. J. Chang, "'Oppenheimer' doesn't show us Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That's an act of rigor, not erasure," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 August 2023.

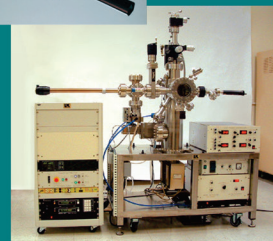
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