



Physicists on Wall Street and Other Essays on Science and Society

Jeremy Bernstein

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Over the years, Jeremy Bernstein has been in contact with many of the world's most renowned physicists and other scientists, many of whom were involved in politics, literature, and language. In this diverse collection of essays, he reflects on their work, their personal relationships, their motives, and their contributions. Even for those people he writes about that he did not know personally, he provides important insights into their lives and work, and questions their character, their decisions, and the lives they led.

In the first three essays, Professor Bernstein looks at economic theory and how some physicists who developed interesting economic models based on derivatives and hedge funds almost led the country into bankruptcy. In later essays, he discusses a suspect visit to Poland by the great Heisenberg during the Nazi era, a visit that there is almost nothing written about.

Included also are essays on ancient languages and a nuclear weapons program in South Africa that was supposedly dismantled. In one particularly humorous essay, he describes how an ill-conceived manned spaceship to be powered by an atomic bomb was being developed by some of the country's most powerful intellects. The project never got off the ground.

Dipping into these pages is like rummaging around in the mind of a genius who has a potpourri of interests and an abundance of fascinating experiences. Bernstein has not only rubbed elbows with some of the finest minds in world, he has worked and played with them. He has sometimes mourned with them and laughed at them. His sharp wit and even sharper analysis make for a fascinating read.

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