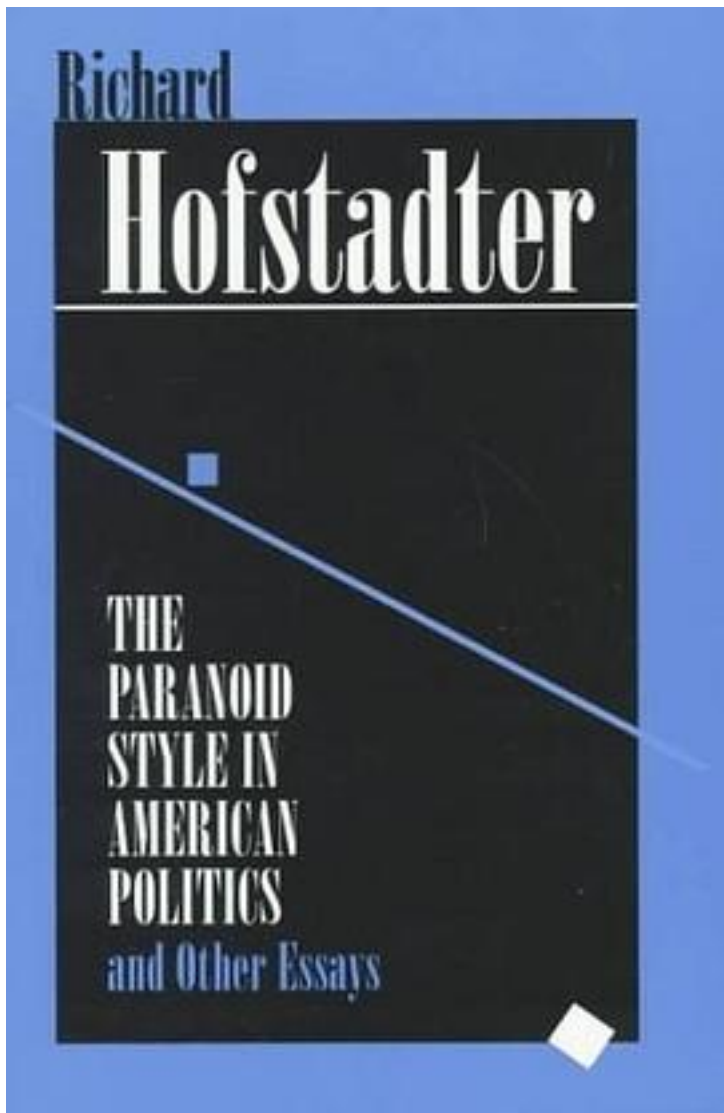


The Paranoid Style in American Politics



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This timely reissue of Richard Hofstadter's classic work on the fringe groups that influence American electoral politics offers an invaluable perspective on contemporary domestic affairs.

In *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, acclaimed historian Richard Hofstadter examines the competing forces in American political discourse and how fringe groups can influence — and derail — the larger agendas of a political party. He investigates the politics of the irrational, shedding light on how the behavior of individuals can seem out of proportion with actual political issues, and how such behavior impacts larger groups. With such other classic essays as “Free Silver and the Mind of 'Coin' Harvey” and “What Happened to the Antitrust Movement?”, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* remains both a seminal text of political history and a vital analysis of the ways in which political groups function in the United States.

作者介绍:

Throughout the ages the "paranoid style" has been used to arouse public indignation and to attack established institutions and/or entrenched traditions that have grown ineffectual. Usually, the darkest and most abhorrent aspects of the accuser's personality are projected onto the hated enemy. Moreover, the true menace is sometimes seen as a malaise that lurks in a nation's midst rather than as something that exists outside its borders. And these chimeras tend to be the shadow projections of the idealistic personality (that is deeply concerned with the moral decay of the society around them) rather than realistic assessments of the true dangers that exist in the objective world. It gives the paranoid the illusion of control since there is little or nothing they can do about world opinion outside his or her borders, although they often imagine this to be so. As a consequence, many foreign policy initiatives are doomed to failure because a distorted picture of the world is being refracted through what amounts to a narrow, insular prism. That is, instead of viewing startling political developments throughout the world as complex historical processes that are unfolding for entirely legitimate reasons they might be seen as betrayals or acts of deliberate defiance. Especially when the vital interests of the observer are threatened. Then too, Americans have often seen any failure as the work of people within our own government who allowed such things to happen. For if some of our own people are to blame for our weakness, then we do not have to deny "the myth of American Omnipotence." This is an ideal time to read Hofstadter's book. It was written in the 1950s and 60s, so you get an excellent feel for postwar America (after the bomb) and the advent of the Cold War. Hofstadter's account of the McCarthy Era and Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign (of 1964) is quite instructive. An astute reader will notice many parallels with today. But he also discusses earlier periods of our history when the paranoid style was in its infancy, and yet was destined to become the genesis of the "liberal-conservative" split that is with us to this day. One fascinating period was the 1890s, the era of Populist William Jennings Bryan and the "Free Silver Movement," which went down in defeat to William McKinley in the presidential election of 1896. Prior to McKinley's victory there was also public outrage over Spain's oppression of Cuba. And although McKinley did not advocate war with Spain, nor did Republican business leaders that had financed his campaign, he was swept into the Spanish-American War by the spirit of the times. Having filled up the continent with Westward expansion and the dream of "Manifest Destiny," many Americans felt a sudden lack of opportunity and purpose. But after Admiral Dewey's sudden victory in Manila Bay Americans began to grapple with their "Duty and Destiny" in an increasingly imperialistic world that they thought was filled with decadent and dangerous foreign powers. There is no way to summarize the exquisite detail in Hofstadter's book. One

must read it and ponder its many lessons. For the sum of its parts are greater than the whole. Good history always makes us realize that there really is nothing new under the sun, and yet, there most certainly IS! Mark Twain said it best when he joked: "History doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes."

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看了个开头就果断下单买回来读了一夜。关于potent of paranoid right-wing zealot agitation的论述让我一下子就跟现实对上了号，然鹅，这书不是1965年写的么！

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