



Out of the Crystal Maze: Chapters from The History of Solid State Physics

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This landmark work chronicles the origin and evolution of solid state physics, which grew to maturity between 1920 and 1960. The book examines the early roots of the field in industrial, scientific and artistic efforts and traces them through the 1950s, when many physicists around the world recognized themselves as members of a distinct subfield of physics research centered on solids. The book opens with an account of scientific and social developments that preceded the discovery of quantum mechanics, including the invention of new experimental means for studying solids and the establishment of the first industrial laboratories. The authors set the stage for the modern era by detailing the formulation of the quantum field theory of solids. The core of the book examines six major themes: the band theory of solids; the phenomenology of imperfect crystals; the puzzle of the plastic properties of solids, solved by the discovery of dislocations; magnetism; semiconductor physics; and collective phenomena, the context in which old puzzles such as superconductivity and superfluidity were finally solved. All readers interested in the history of science will find this absorbing volume an essential resource for understanding the emergence of contemporary physics.

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