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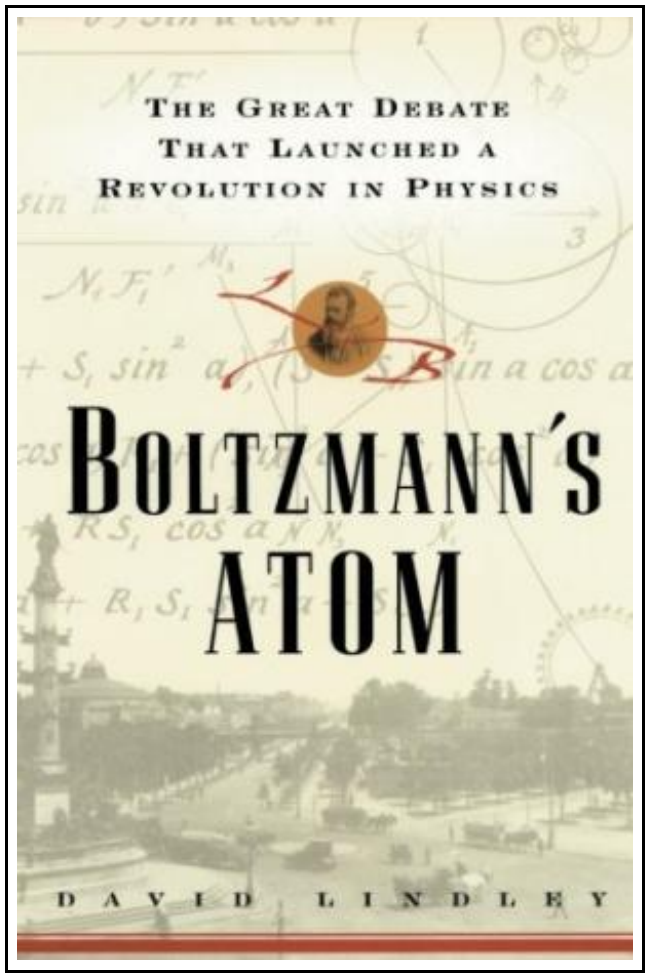

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BOLTZMANNS ATOM: THE GREAT DEBATE THAT LAUNCHED A REVOLUTION IN PHYSICS (PAPERBACK)

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Free Press, United States, 2016. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 213 x 140 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. In 1900 many eminent scientists did not believe atoms existed, yet within just a few years the atomic century launched into history with an astonishing string of breakthroughs in physics that began with Albert Einstein and continues to this day. Before this explosive growth into the modern age took place, an all-but-forgotten genius strove for forty years to win acceptance for the atomic theory of matter and an altogether new way of doing physics. Ludwig Boltz-mann battled with philosophers, the scientific establishment, and his own potent demons. His victory led the way to the greatest scientific achievements of the twentieth century. Now acclaimed science writer David Lindley portrays the dramatic story of Boltzmann and his embrace of the atom, while providing a window on the civilized world that gave birth to our scientific era. Boltzmann emerges as an endearingly quixotic character, passionately inspired by Beethoven, who muddled through the practical matters of life in a European gilded age. Boltzmann s story reaches from fin de siecle Vienna, across Germany and Britain, to America. As the Habsburg Empire was crumbling, Germany s intellectual might was growing; Edinburgh in Scotland was one of the most intellectually fertile places on earth; and, in America, brilliant independent minds were beginning to draw on the best ideas of the bureaucratized old world. Boltzmann s nemesis in the field of theoretical physics at home in Austria was Ernst Mach, noted today in the term Mach I, the speed of sound. Mach believed physics should address only that which could be directly observed. How could we know that frisky atoms jiggling about corresponded to heat if we couldn t see them? Why should we bother with theories that...

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