

relativity to undergraduates—and perhaps also to himself—will find Ohanian's book suggestive, and many of the details interesting and original.

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Wolfgang Rindler is Professor of Physics and Mathematics at The University of Texas at Dallas and is himself the author of two texts on relativity. He coined the terms "event horizon" and "particle horizon" and gave those entities their earliest systematic treatment.

Structure and Evolutionary History of the Solar System

H. Alfvén, G. Arrhenius

276 pp. D. Reidel, Dordrecht, Holland, 1975. \$32.00 clothbound, \$24.00 paperback

The book is based on, and is in fact almost identical to, four papers published in "Astrophysics and Space Science." The authors give their own views of the structure and formation of the solar system and make no attempt at reviewing, or even mentioning, rival theories. Consequently, this is a very useful book if one is interested in the theories of Hannes Alfvén and Gustaf Arrhenius, but it is of little use for general information regarding the subject. Of course, both Alfvén and Arrhenius are major contributors to the field, and their personal views are therefore of considerable interest.

Alfvén and Arrhenius believe that the Sun, with a magnetic field many times stronger than its present field, accreted matter from an interstellar cloud. During its infall this matter becomes ionized. The authors recognize three distinct ionization regions, roughly where the nonvolatiles, the compounds of carbon, oxygen and nitrogen and hydrogen and helium become ionized. When ionization occurs, the material is influenced by the magnetic field, which prevents further infall and gives the material angular momentum. Thus three rings—or bands—are formed, each of different composition. (Unfortunately, these compositional bands do not correspond to those found in our planetary system; the ordering is different.)

The authors then discuss the formation of planets within such rings and describe the idea of "jet streaming," a form of gravitational focusing where collisions between the particles in a band produce a tighter and tighter ring or stream, which eventually accumulates into one body. Alfvén and Arrhenius also believe that the satellite systems formed by a similar process, except now of course with the appropriate planet as a parent body.

The book is certainly valuable to all astronomers actively working in the field

of planetary cosmogony or who are contemplating entering it. It has little value if all that is required is a "potted" version of the current stage of knowledge. The volume should certainly be available in all scientific libraries.

IWAN P. WILLIAMS
Queen Mary College
University of London
England

Solid State Physics

N. W. Ashcroft, N. D. Mermin

826 pp. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1976. \$19.95

For several years members of the solid-state community have been aware of the fact that two well-known Cornell physicists, Neil Ashcroft and David Mermin, were writing a textbook on solid-state physics. Rumor had it that this book would take a new look at this well-trodden field and that it would be of great help to those who taught introductory courses in the solid state for physicists or for engineers, and had mixed luck in choosing a suitable text or texts. No doubt the book lives up to its expectations as far as a refreshingly new attitude is concerned.

Whether it will prove to be a boon for the students and for those like myself who taught the subject for a few decades, only practice will show, but the prognostications are very good indeed.

In contrast with many other texts the book is well organized from a pedagogical point of view. As the authors point out in their preface, the book does not have a "linear" arrangement of topics. Right from the first three chapters ("Drude Theory of Metals," "Sommerfeld Theory of Metals," "Failure of the Free Electron Model"), it is clear that the sequence of chapters is so chosen as to give the students an early grasp of the elementary concepts of solids on the basis of which they can then find their way to other more advanced topics. In fact, there is a most enlightening, detailed table showing not only the necessary prerequisites for each chapter, but also how to use the book for a one-semester or for a two-semester course. This feature will undoubtedly appeal to many readers and users.

The strength of the book is in the stress it puts on the basic concepts of the theory of solids and of the various phenomena. This is achieved by giving first a carefully structured intuitive picture or argument, which is then followed by a quantitative formulation. In this connection it may be worth pointing out that the book has



Proposed Fermi surface for bcc tungsten. The structure at the center is an electron pocket, surrounded by hole pockets in zone faces and at corners. From the book, after A. V. Gold.