

Energy and the Unexpected

Keith J. Laidler

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Only in the early 19th century did scientists recognize that energy is a distinct physical quality. Since then however, it has played a pivotal role in the advancement and the understanding of science and in technology. From the steam engine to the equation e=mc2 and beyond, the concept of energy offers an essential key to our understanding of the Universe. In this entertaining and highly readable book, Professor Laidler explains the concept of energy and its characteristics as they were discovered over the past two centuries. He describes how energy transformations as interpreted by the second law of thermodynamics are not absolute but can only be understood in terms of chance and probability. After looking at energy on a small scale and then at the scale of the Universe itself, he shows how these topics are linked with chaos theory according to which the unexpected is inevitable.



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