

❖ Evaluation of Average Position, Average Momentum and Determination of Uncertainty in Position and Momentum and Hence Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle

The third postulate of quantum mechanics states that when the wave-function of a particular quantum mechanical state is multiplied by the operator of an observable quantity, we get a real value multiplied by the wave function itself. However, the value obtained this way can be constant or variable. Mathematically, the constant value of the observable quantity can be reported directly, and the function is called an eigenfunction of the operator under consideration. If the value of the physical property obtained after multiplying the wave function by the corresponding operator is variable i.e. non-eigen, the value can be reported only after averaging it over the whole configurational space.

$$\langle a \rangle = \frac{\oint \psi^* \hat{O} \psi d\tau}{\oint \psi^* \psi d\tau} \quad (456)$$

Since the wave function ψ is normalized, the denominator becomes unity; therefore, equation (456) is reduced to the following

$$\langle a \rangle = \oint \psi^* \hat{O} \psi d\tau \quad (457)$$

Since the operation by the Hamiltonian over the symbolic form has already given the absolute expressions for different quantum mechanical states, now we can operate other operators to evaluate their average values. In this section, we will determine the average values of position, position-squared, momentum and momentum-squared; which in turn will be used to prove the Heisenberg's uncertainty finally.

➤ Evaluation of Average Position

The quantum mechanical operator for the position of a particle in one-dimensional is \hat{x} ; while the general form of wave function is

$$\psi_n = \sqrt{\frac{2}{a}} \text{Sin} \frac{n\pi x}{a} \quad (458)$$

Using this in equation (457), we get

$$\langle x \rangle = \oint \psi^* x \psi d\tau \quad (459)$$

or

$$\langle x \rangle = \oint x \psi^2 dx \quad (460)$$

$$\langle x \rangle = \int_0^a x \cdot \frac{2}{a} \sin^2\left(\frac{n\pi x}{a}\right) dx = \frac{2}{a} \int_0^a x \sin^2\left(\frac{n\pi x}{a}\right) dx \quad (461)$$

$$= \frac{2}{a} \int_0^a x \left[\frac{1 - \cos\left(\frac{2n\pi x}{a}\right)}{2} \right] dx \quad (462)$$

$$= \frac{1}{a} \int_0^a \left(x - x \cos\frac{2n\pi x}{a} \right) dx \quad (463)$$

$$= \frac{1}{a} \left[\int_0^a x dx - \int_0^a x \cos\left(\frac{2n\pi x}{a}\right) dx \right] \quad (464)$$

$$= \frac{1}{a} \left[\frac{a^2}{2} - 0 \right] = \frac{a}{2} \quad (465)$$

➤ **Evaluation of Average Position-Squared**

The quantum mechanical operator for the position-squared of a particle in one-dimensional is \hat{x}^2 ; Using this in equation (457), we get

$$\langle x^2 \rangle = \int \psi^* x^2 \psi dx \quad (466)$$

$$\langle x^2 \rangle = \int_0^a x^2 \cdot \frac{2}{a} \sin^2\left(\frac{n\pi x}{a}\right) dx = \frac{2}{a} \int_0^a x^2 \sin^2\left(\frac{n\pi x}{a}\right) dx \quad (467)$$

$$= \frac{2}{a} \int_0^a x^2 \left[\frac{1 - \cos\left(\frac{2n\pi x}{a}\right)}{2} \right] dx \quad (468)$$

$$= \frac{2}{a} \left[\frac{a^3}{6} - \frac{a^3}{4n^2\pi^2} \right] = \frac{1}{a} \left[\frac{a^3}{3} - \frac{a^3}{2n^2\pi^2} \right] \quad (469)$$

$$= \frac{a^2}{3} - \frac{a^2}{2n^2\pi^2} \quad (470)$$

➤ **Evaluation of Average Momentum**

The quantum mechanical operator for the position-squared of a particle in one-dimensional is \hat{p}_x ; Using this in equation (457), we get

$$\langle \hat{p}_x \rangle = \oint \psi^* \frac{h}{2\pi i} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \psi dx \quad (471)$$

$$\langle \hat{p}_x \rangle = \int_0^a \left[\sqrt{\frac{2}{a}} \text{Sin} \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) \right] \frac{h}{2\pi i} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left[\sqrt{\frac{2}{a}} \text{Sin} \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) \right] dx \quad (472)$$

$$= \frac{h}{2\pi i} \left[\frac{2}{a} \right] \int_0^a \text{Sin} \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) \left(\frac{n\pi}{a} \right) \text{Cos} \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) dx \quad (473)$$

$$= \frac{h}{2\pi i} \left[\frac{2}{a} \right] \left(\frac{n\pi}{a} \right) \int_0^a \text{Sin} \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) \text{Cos} \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) dx \quad (474)$$

$$\langle \hat{p}_x \rangle = 0 \quad (475)$$

➤ **Evaluation of Average Momentum-Squared**

The quantum mechanical operator for the position-squared of particle in one-dimensional is \hat{p}_x^2 ; Using this in equation (457), we get

$$\langle \hat{p}_x^2 \rangle = \oint \psi^* \left(-\frac{h^2}{4\pi^2} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} \right) \psi dx \quad (476)$$

$$\langle \hat{p}_x^2 \rangle = \int_0^a \left[\sqrt{\frac{2}{a}} \text{Sin} \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) \right] \left(-\frac{h^2}{4\pi^2} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} \right) \left[\sqrt{\frac{2}{a}} \text{Sin} \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) \right] dx \quad (477)$$

$$= -\frac{h^2}{4\pi^2} \left(\frac{2}{a} \right) \int_0^a \text{Sin} \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) \left[(-) \left(\frac{n\pi}{a} \right)^2 \text{Sin} \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) \right] dx \quad (478)$$

$$= \frac{h^2}{4\pi^2} \left(\frac{2}{a} \right) \left(\frac{n\pi}{a} \right)^2 \int_0^a \text{Sin}^2 \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) dx \quad (479)$$

$$= \frac{n^2 h^2}{2a^3} \int_0^a \text{Sin}^2 \left(\frac{n\pi x}{a} \right) dx \quad (480)$$

$$= \frac{n^2 h^2}{2a^3} \int_0^a \left[\frac{1 - \text{Cos} \left(\frac{2n\pi x}{a} \right)}{2} \right] dx \quad (481)$$

$$= \frac{n^2 h^2}{2a^3} \left[x - \frac{\sin\left(\frac{2n\pi x}{a}\right)}{\frac{2n\pi}{a}} \right]_0^a \quad (482)$$

or

$$= \frac{n^2 h^2}{2a^3} \left(\frac{a}{2}\right) \quad (483)$$

or

$$\langle \hat{p}_x^2 \rangle = \frac{n^2 h^2}{4a^2} \quad (484)$$

➤ **The Heisenberg's Uncertainty**

In order to prove the Heisenberg's uncertainty principle for the quantum mechanical system of a particle in one-dimensional box, we first need to find the uncertainties in position and momentum. Once both uncertainties are known, we can simply multiply both to yield final result.

1. Uncertainty in position: The uncertainty in position is simply the difference between the square root of the uncertainty in the position-squared. Mathematically, we can say that

$$\Delta x = (\langle x^2 \rangle - \langle x \rangle^2)^{1/2} \quad (485)$$

After putting the values of average position and position-squared from equation (465) and (470) in equation (485), we get

$$\Delta x = \left[\left(\frac{a^2}{3} - \frac{a^2}{2n^2\pi^2} \right) - \left(\frac{a}{2} \right)^2 \right]^{1/2} \quad (486)$$

or

$$\Delta x = \left[\left(\frac{a^2}{12} - \frac{a^2}{2n^2\pi^2} \right) \right]^{1/2} \quad (487)$$

or

$$\Delta x = a \left(\frac{1}{12} - \frac{1}{2n^2\pi^2} \right)^{1/2} \quad (488)$$

2. Uncertainty in momentum: The uncertainty in momentum is simply the square root of the difference between the uncertainty in momentum and uncertainty in the momentum-squared. Mathematically, we can say that

$$\Delta p_x = (\langle p_x^2 \rangle - \langle p_x \rangle^2)^{1/2} \quad (489)$$

After putting the values of average position and position-squared from equation (475) and (484) in equation (489), we get

$$\Delta p_x = \left[\left(\frac{n^2 h^2}{4a^2} \right) - (0)^2 \right]^{1/2} \quad (490)$$

or

$$\Delta p_x = \frac{nh}{2a} \quad (491)$$

Now multiplying equation (488) and (491), we get

$$\Delta x \cdot \Delta p_x = \left[a \left(\frac{1}{12} - \frac{1}{2n^2 \pi^2} \right) \right]^{1/2} \left(\frac{nh}{2a} \right) \quad (492)$$

or

$$= \frac{nh}{2} \left(\frac{1}{12} - \frac{1}{2n^2 \pi^2} \right)^{1/2} \quad (493)$$

Multiply and divide the above equation by $2n\pi$

$$\Delta x \cdot \Delta p_x = \frac{nh}{2} \cdot \frac{2n\pi}{2n\pi} \left(\frac{1}{12} - \frac{1}{2n^2 \pi^2} \right)^{1/2} \quad (493)$$

or

$$= \frac{nh}{2} \cdot \frac{1}{2n\pi} \left(\frac{4n^2 \pi^2}{12} - \frac{4n^2 \pi^2}{2n^2 \pi^2} \right)^{1/2} \quad (494)$$

or

$$\Delta x \cdot \Delta p_x = \frac{h}{4\pi} \left(\frac{n^2 \pi^2}{3} - 2 \right)^{1/2} \quad (495)$$

Since $n^2 \pi^2 / 3$ is always greater than 2, we can conclude that

$$\Delta x \cdot \Delta p_x > \frac{h}{4\pi} \quad (496)$$

Which is the famous Heisenberg's uncertainty principle.

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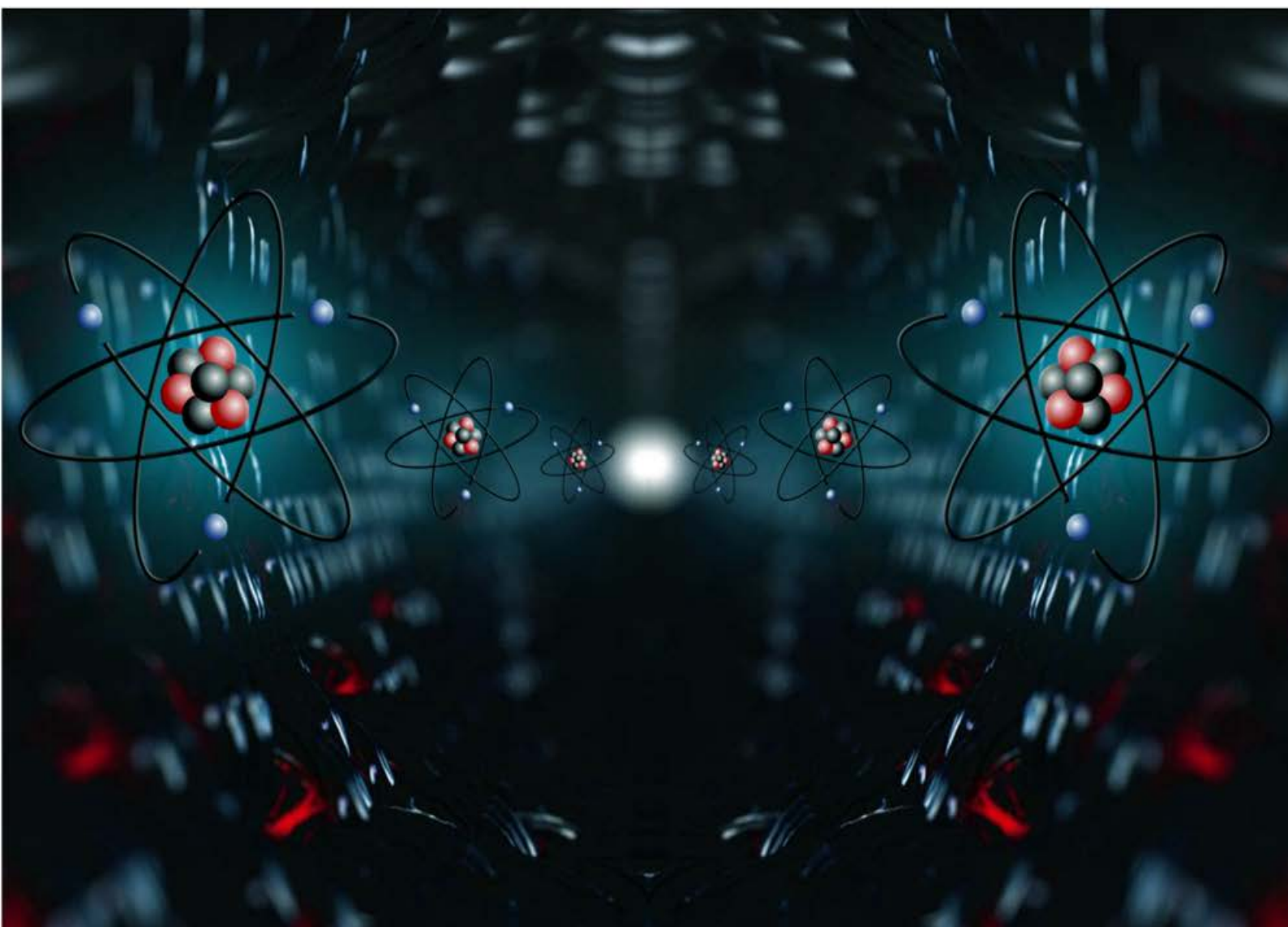
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Volume I

MANDEEP DALAL



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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1	11
Quantum Mechanics – I	11
❖ Postulates of Quantum Mechanics	11
❖ Derivation of Schrodinger Wave Equation.....	16
❖ Max-Born Interpretation of Wave Functions	21
❖ The Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle.....	24
❖ Quantum Mechanical Operators and Their Commutation Relations.....	29
❖ Hermitian Operators – Elementary Ideas, Quantum Mechanical Operator for Linear Momentum, Angular Momentum and Energy as Hermitian Operator	52
❖ The Average Value of the Square of Hermitian Operators	62
❖ Commuting Operators and Uncertainty Principle (x & p ; E & t).....	63
❖ Schrodinger Wave Equation for a Particle in One Dimensional Box.....	65
❖ Evaluation of Average Position, Average Momentum and Determination of Uncertainty in Position and Momentum and Hence Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle.....	70
❖ Pictorial Representation of the Wave Equation of a Particle in One Dimensional Box and Its Influence on the Kinetic Energy of the Particle in Each Successive Quantum Level	75
❖ Lowest Energy of the Particle	80
❖ Problems	82
❖ Bibliography	83
CHAPTER 2	84
Thermodynamics – I	84
❖ Brief Resume of First and Second Law of Thermodynamics.....	84
❖ Entropy Changes in Reversible and Irreversible Processes.....	87
❖ Variation of Entropy with Temperature, Pressure and Volume	92
❖ Entropy Concept as a Measure of Unavailable Energy and Criteria for the Spontaneity of Reaction	94
❖ Free Energy, Enthalpy Functions and Their Significance, Criteria for Spontaneity of a Process ...	98
❖ Partial Molar Quantities (Free Energy, Volume, Heat Concept).....	104
❖ Gibb's-Duhem Equation.....	108
❖ Problems	111
❖ Bibliography	112

CHAPTER 3	113
Chemical Dynamics – I	113
❖ Effect of Temperature on Reaction Rates.....	113
❖ Rate Law for Opposing Reactions of 1st Order and 2nd Order.....	119
❖ Rate Law for Consecutive & Parallel Reactions of 1st Order Reactions	127
❖ Collision Theory of Reaction Rates and Its Limitations	135
❖ Steric Factor.....	141
❖ Activated Complex Theory	143
❖ Ionic Reactions: Single and Double Sphere Models	147
❖ Influence of Solvent and Ionic Strength.....	152
❖ The Comparison of Collision and Activated Complex Theory	157
❖ Problems.....	158
❖ Bibliography	159
CHAPTER 4	160
Electrochemistry – I: Ion-Ion Interactions	160
❖ The Debye-Huckel Theory of Ion-Ion Interactions.....	160
❖ Potential and Excess Charge Density as a Function of Distance from the Central Ion.....	168
❖ Debye-Huckel Reciprocal Length	173
❖ Ionic Cloud and Its Contribution to the Total Potential	176
❖ Debye-Huckel Limiting Law of Activity Coefficients and Its Limitations.....	178
❖ Ion-Size Effect on Potential.....	185
❖ Ion-Size Parameter and the Theoretical Mean - Activity Coefficient in the Case of Ionic Clouds with Finite-Sized Ions.....	187
❖ Debye-Huckel-Onsager Treatment for Aqueous Solutions and Its Limitations.....	190
❖ Debye-Huckel-Onsager Theory for Non-Aqueous Solutions.....	195
❖ The Solvent Effect on the Mobility at Infinite Dilution	196
❖ Equivalent Conductivity (Λ) vs Concentration $C^{1/2}$ as a Function of the Solvent	198
❖ Effect of Ion Association Upon Conductivity (Debye-Huckel-Bjerrum Equation)	200
❖ Problems.....	209
❖ Bibliography	210
CHAPTER 5	211
Quantum Mechanics – II	211
❖ Schrodinger Wave Equation for a Particle in a Three Dimensional Box	211

❖ The Concept of Degeneracy Among Energy Levels for a Particle in Three Dimensional Box	215
❖ Schrodinger Wave Equation for a Linear Harmonic Oscillator & Its Solution by Polynomial Method	217
❖ Zero Point Energy of a Particle Possessing Harmonic Motion and Its Consequence	229
❖ Schrodinger Wave Equation for Three Dimensional Rigid Rotator.....	231
❖ Energy of Rigid Rotator	241
❖ Space Quantization.....	243
❖ Schrodinger Wave Equation for Hydrogen Atom: Separation of Variable in Polar Spherical Coordinates and Its Solution	247
❖ Principal, Azimuthal and Magnetic Quantum Numbers and the Magnitude of Their Values.....	268
❖ Probability Distribution Function.....	276
❖ Radial Distribution Function	278
❖ Shape of Atomic Orbitals (<i>s</i> , <i>p</i> & <i>d</i>).....	281
❖ Problems.....	287
❖ Bibliography	288
CHAPTER 6	289
Thermodynamics – II.....	289
❖ Clausius-Clapeyron Equation.....	289
❖ Law of Mass Action and Its Thermodynamic Derivation	293
❖ Third Law of Thermodynamics (Nernst Heat Theorem, Determination of Absolute Entropy, Unattainability of Absolute Zero) And Its Limitation.....	296
❖ Phase Diagram for Two Completely Miscible Components Systems	304
❖ Eutectic Systems (Calculation of Eutectic Point).....	311
❖ Systems Forming Solid Compounds A_xB_y with Congruent and Incongruent Melting Points	321
❖ Phase Diagram and Thermodynamic Treatment of Solid Solutions.....	332
❖ Problems.....	342
❖ Bibliography	343
CHAPTER 7	344
Chemical Dynamics – II	344
❖ Chain Reactions: Hydrogen-Bromine Reaction, Pyrolysis of Acetaldehyde, Decomposition of Ethane.....	344
❖ Photochemical Reactions (Hydrogen-Bromine & Hydrogen-Chlorine Reactions).....	352
❖ General Treatment of Chain Reactions (Ortho-Para Hydrogen Conversion and Hydrogen-Bromine Reactions).....	358

❖ Apparent Activation Energy of Chain Reactions	362
❖ Chain Length	364
❖ Rice-Herzfeld Mechanism of Organic Molecules Decomposition (Acetaldehyde)	366
❖ Branching Chain Reactions and Explosions (H_2-O_2 Reaction)	368
❖ Kinetics of (One Intermediate) Enzymatic Reaction: Michaelis-Menten Treatment	371
❖ Evaluation of Michaelis's Constant for Enzyme-Substrate Binding by Lineweaver-Burk Plot and Eadie-Hofstee Methods	375
❖ Competitive and Non-Competitive Inhibition	378
❖ Problems	388
❖ Bibliography	389
CHAPTER 8	390
Electrochemistry – II: Ion Transport in Solutions	390
❖ Ionic Movement Under the Influence of an Electric Field	390
❖ Mobility of Ions	393
❖ Ionic Drift Velocity and Its Relation with Current Density	394
❖ Einstein Relation Between the Absolute Mobility and Diffusion Coefficient	398
❖ The Stokes-Einstein Relation	401
❖ The Nernst-Einstein Equation	403
❖ Walden's Rule	404
❖ The Rate-Process Approach to Ionic Migration	406
❖ The Rate-Process Equation for Equivalent Conductivity	410
❖ Total Driving Force for Ionic Transport: Nernst-Planck Flux Equation	412
❖ Ionic Drift and Diffusion Potential	416
❖ The Onsager Phenomenological Equations	418
❖ The Basic Equation for the Diffusion	419
❖ Planck-Henderson Equation for the Diffusion Potential	422
❖ Problems	425
❖ Bibliography	426
INDEX	427



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