

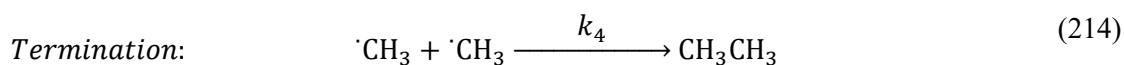
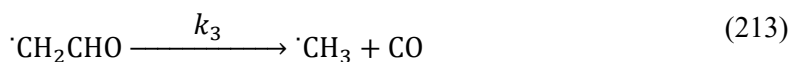
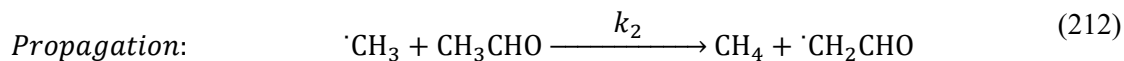
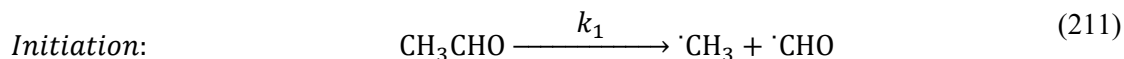
❖ Rice-Herzfeld Mechanism of Organic Molecules Decomposition (Acetaldehyde)

In 1934, Frank O. Rice and Karl F. Herzfeld performed an extensive study on the chain reactions and developed special mechanics to account the observed rate laws. In the honor of researchers, this mechanism is popularly known as Rice-Herzfeld mechanism. The conceptual foundation of this mechanism can easily be understood by taking the example of an organic compound, acetaldehyde.

The pyrolysis of acetaldehyde is a typical case of stationary type chain reactions ($n = 1$) for which the overall reaction can be written as given below.



Furthermore, the elementary steps for the same can be proposed as



The net rate of formation of CH_4 must be equal to the sum of the rate of formation and the rate of disappearance of the same i.e.

$$\frac{d[\text{CH}_4]}{dt} = k_2[\cdot\text{CH}_3][\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}] \quad (215)$$

Now, in order to obtain the overall rate expression, we need to apply the steady-state approximation on the $[\cdot\text{CH}_3]$ and $[\cdot\text{CH}_2\text{CHO}]$ first i.e.

$$\frac{d[\cdot\text{CH}_3]}{dt} = 0 = k_1[\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}] - k_2[\cdot\text{CH}_3][\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}] + k_3[\cdot\text{CH}_2\text{CHO}] - 2k_4[\cdot\text{CH}_3]^2 \quad (216)$$

Similarly,

$$\frac{d[\cdot\text{CH}_2\text{CHO}]}{dt} = 0 = k_2[\cdot\text{CH}_3][\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}] - k_3[\cdot\text{CH}_2\text{CHO}] \quad (217)$$

Taking negative both side of equation (217), we have

$$-k_2[\cdot\text{CH}_3][\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}] + k_3[\cdot\text{CH}_2\text{CHO}] = 0 \quad (218)$$

Using the above result in equation (216), we get

$$k_1[\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}] + 0 - 2k_4[\cdot\text{CH}_3]^2 = 0 \quad (219)$$

$$[\cdot\text{CH}_3] = \left(\frac{k_1}{2k_4}\right)^{1/2} [\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}]^{1/2} \quad (220)$$

After putting the value of $[\cdot\text{CH}_3]$ from equation (220) in equation (215), we have

$$\frac{d[\text{CH}_4]}{dt} = k_2 \left(\frac{k_1}{2k_4}\right)^{1/2} [\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}]^{1/2} [\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}] \quad (221)$$

$$\frac{d[\text{CH}_4]}{dt} = k_2 \left(\frac{k_1}{2k_4}\right)^{1/2} [\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}]^{3/2} \quad (222)$$

Now consider a new constant as

$$k = k_2 \left(\frac{k_1}{2k_4}\right)^{1/2} \quad (223)$$

Using in equation (222), we get

$$\frac{d[\text{CH}_4]}{dt} = k[\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}]^{3/2} \quad (224)$$

The kinetic chain length for the same can be obtained by dividing the rate of formation of the product by rate of initiation step i.e.

$$\text{Kinetic chain length} = \frac{R_p}{R_i} \quad (225)$$

Where R_p and R_i are the rate of propagation and rate of initiation respectively. Now since the rate of propagation is simply equal to the overall rate law i.e. equation (224), the rate of initiation can be given as

$$R_i = k_1[\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}] \quad (226)$$

After using the values of R_p and R_i from equation (224, 226) in equation (225), we get the expression for kinetic chain length as

$$\text{Kinetic chain length} = \frac{k[\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}]^{3/2}}{k_1[\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}]} \quad (227)$$

or

$$\text{Kinetic chain length} = \frac{k}{k_1} [\text{CH}_3\text{CHO}]^{1/2} \quad (228)$$

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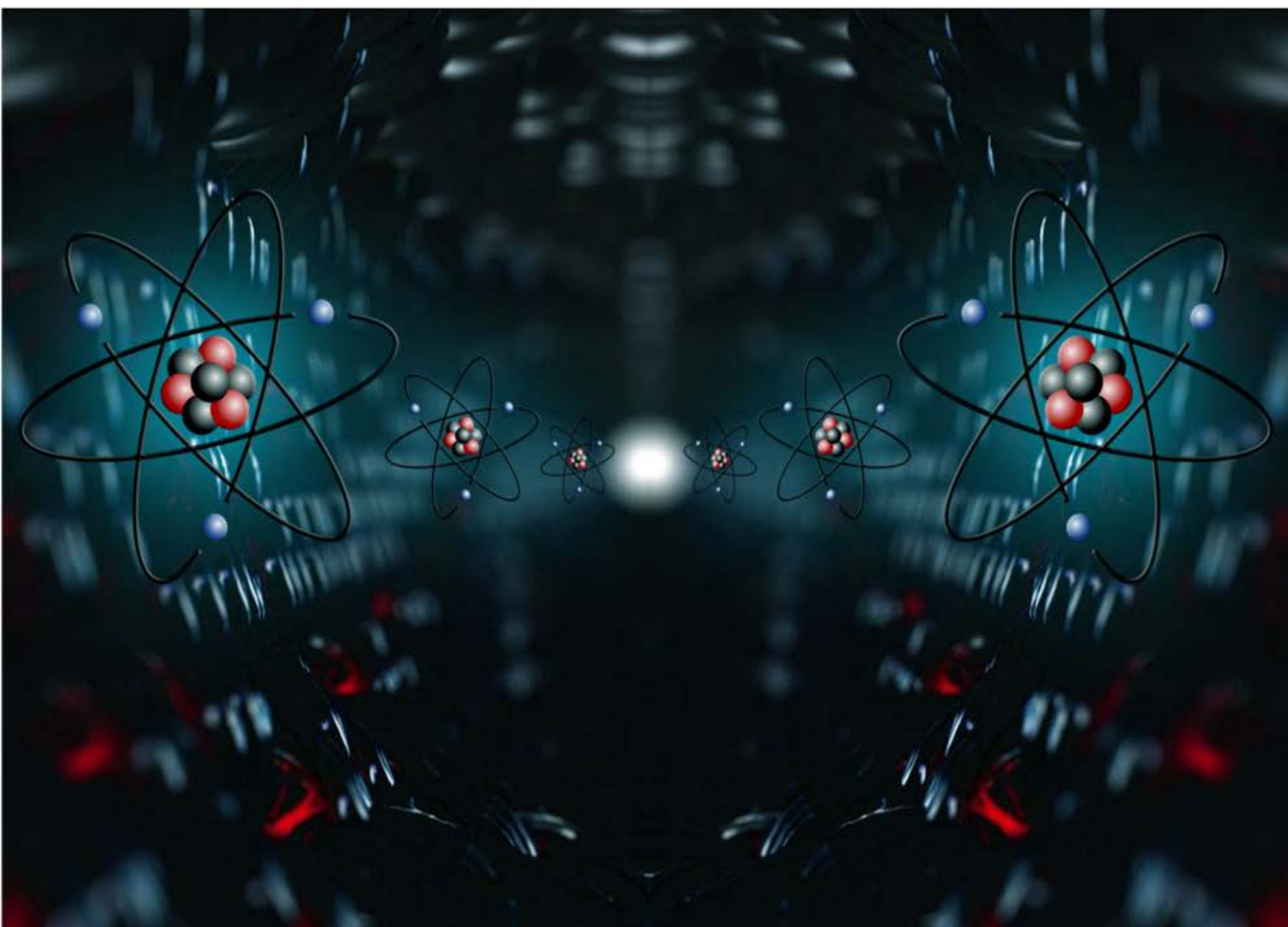
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Volume I

MANDEEP DALAL



First Edition

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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 Ist Order and IInd Order.....	119
❖ Rate Law for Consecutive & Parallel Reactions of Ist 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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