# THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHYSICS

## SECOND EDITION

Edited by ROBERT M. BESANÇON

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# OF PHYSICS

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EDITED BY

## Robert M. Besançon
Physical Sciences Administrator
Air Force Materials Laboratory
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

# CONTRIBUTORS

KÊITSIRO AIZU, Hitachi Central Research Laboratory, Tokyo, Japan. *Ferroelectricity.*

DOUGLAS L. ALLEN, U.S. Industrial Chemicals Company, Tuscola, Illinois. *Vapor Pressure and Evaporation.*

CHARLES L. ALLEY, Department of Electrical Engineering, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah. *Modulation.*

ROBERT C. AMME, Department of Physics, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado. *Ionization.*

DAVID L. ANDERSON, Department of Physics, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. *Electron.*

ERNEST R. ANDERSON, U.S. Naval Undersea Center, San Diego, California. *Sonar.*

C. L. ANDREWS, Department of Physics, State University of New York at Albany, New York. *Doppler Effect.*

H. L. ARMSTRONG, Department of Physics, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. *States of Matter.*

G. E. BACON, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, England. *Neutron Diffraction.*

RADU C. BALESCU, Université Libre De Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium. *Statistical Mechanics.*

WILLIAM BAND, Department of Physics, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington. *Mathematical Physics.*

MYRON BANDER, Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California. *Regge Poles and Regge Theory.*

L. E. BARBROW, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C. *Photometry.*

WILLIAM L. BAUN, U.S. Air Force Materials Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. *X-Rays.*

JESSE W. BEAMS, Department of Physics, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia. *Centrifuge.*

CLIFFORD K. BECK, Office of Government Liaison—Regulation, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. *Nuclear Reactors.*

JOSEPH J. BECKER, General Electric Research and Development Center, Schenectady, New York. *Magnetism.*

ALBERT C. BEER, Battelle-Columbus Laboratories, Columbus, Ohio. *Hall Effect and Related Phenomena.*

DAVID A. BELL, Department of Electronic Engineering, University of Hull, Hull, England. *Cybernetics.*

H. E. BENNETT, Michelson Laboratory, Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, California. *Reflection.*

REUBEN BENUMOF, Staten Island Community College of the City University of New York. *Alternating Currents.*

MARK J. BERAN, Towne School of Civil and Mechanical Engineering, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Coherence.*

LEO L. BERANEK, Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Architectural Acoustics.*

ERIK BERGSTRAND, Korsudden, 610 42 Gryt, Sweden, *Velocity of Light.*

ARTHUR I. BERMAN, Institute for Studies in Higher Education, University of Copenhagen and the National Research Council, Copenhagen, Denmark. *Astronautics, Physics of.*

ROBERT M. BESANÇON, U.S. Air Force Materials Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. *Physics. Temperature and Thermometry.*

GEORGE L. BEYER, Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, New York. *Molecular Weight.*

P. J. BILLING (Formerly) Radyne, Ltd., Wokingham, England. *Induction Heating.*

RAYMOND C. BINDER, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University Park, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California. *Fluid Statics.*

JOHN P. BLEWETT, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York. *Accelerators, Linear.*

M. HILDRED BLEWETT, ISR Department, CERN, Geneva, Switzerland. *Accelerators, Particle.*

N. BLOEMBERGEN, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Light.*

WARREN B. BOAST, Department of Electrical Engineering, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. *Potential.*

HENRY V. BOHM, Department of Physics, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. *Fermi Surface* (with N. Tepley).

ROBERT M. BOYNTON, Center for Visual Science, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York. *Vision and the Eye.*

H. J. J. BRADDICK. *Measurements, Principles of.*

J. N. BRADLEY, Department of Chemistry, University of Essex, Colchester, England. *Shock Waves.*

JULIUS J. BRANDSTATTER, Tel-Aviv University, Ramat Aviv, Israel, *Propagation of Electromagnetic Waves.*

JOHN W. BRENEMAN (deceased). *Simple Machines.*

G. E. BRIGGS, Emeritus, University of Cambridge, England. *Osmosis.*

STANLEY J. BRODSKY, Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, Stanford University, Stanford, California. *Quantum Electrodynamics.*

STEPHEN G. BRUSH, Department of History and Institute for Fluid Dynamics and Applied Mathematics, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland. *Irreversibility. Kinetic Theory.*

H. A. BUCHDAHL, Department of Theoretical Physics, Australian National University, Canberra, A.C.T., Australia. *Thermodynamics.*

DONALD A. BURGH. *Microscope.*

DONALD G. BURKHARD, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia. *Microwave Spectroscopy.*

LEONARD M. BUTSCH, JR. *Bionics* (with Cecil W. Gwinn).

ROBERT L. BYER, W. W. Hansen Laboratories of Physics, Stanford University, Stanford, California. *Kerr Effects.*

E. R. CAIANIELLO, University of Salerno and Laboratorio di Cibernetica del Consiglio Nationale delle Ricerche, Naples, Italy. *Field Theory.*

EARL CALLEN, Department of Physics, American University, Washington, D.C. *Magnetostriction.*

THOMAS R. CARVER, Department of Physics, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. *Optical Pumping.*

E. J. CASEY. *Biophysics.*

NICHOLAS CHAKO, Department of Mathematics, Queens College of the City University of New York, Flushing, New York. *Aberrations.*

B. S. CHANDRASEKHAR, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. *Superconductivity.*

FRANK CHORLTON, Department of Mathematics, University of Aston in Birmingham, England. *Differential Equations in Physics.*

DAN E. CHRISTIE, Department of Mathematics, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine. *Vector Physics.*

KENNETH J. CLOSE, Department of Physics, The Polytechnic of Central London, London, W. I., England. *Vacuum Techniques* (with J. Yarwood).

IRA COCHIN, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Newark College of Engineering, Newark, New Jersey. *Gyroscope.*

E. RICHARD COHEN, Science Center, Rockwell International, Thousand Oaks, California. *Constants Fundamental.*

E. A. B. COLE, School of Mathematics, University of Leeds, Leeds, England. *Semiconductors, Inhomogeneous.*

B. THOMPSON COLEBIRD, Farmville, Virginia. *Planetary Atmospheres* (with Paul Harteck).

W. DALE COMPTON, Scientific Research Staff, Ford Motor Company, Dearborn, Michigan. *Color Centers.*

C. SHARP COOK, Department of Physics, University of Texas at El Paso, Texas. *Fallout.*

JOHN C. CORBIN, JR., U.S. Air Force Aerospace Research Laboratories, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. *Skin Effect.*

H. COTTON, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, England. *Optics, Geometrical.*

HERMAN V. COTTONY, Electromagnetics Division, National Bureau of Standards, Boulder, Colorado. *Antennas.*

F. H. CRAWFORD, Emeritus, Department of Physics, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts. *Heat.*

W. CULSHAW, Palo Alto Research Laboratory, Lockheed Missiles and Space Company, Palo Alto, California. *Zeeman and Stark Effects.*

ROBERT G. CUNNINGHAM, Research Laboratories, Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, New York. *Static Electricity* (with D. J. Montgomery).

L. F. CURTISS, Englewood, Florida. *Neutron.*

ERNST R. CZERLINSKY, Pötterhoek, West Germany. *Magnetometry.*

R. H. DAVIS. *Proton.*

JACK E. DAY, Electros, Inc., Tigard, Oregon. *Oscilloscopes.*

L. WALLACE DEAN III, Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Division of United Aircraft Corp., East Hartford, Connecticut. *Physical Acoustics.*

PETER C. DEBRUNNER, Department of Physics, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois. *Mössbauer Effect* (with Robert L. Ingalls).

JOHN P. DELVAILLE, Center for Space Research, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Cosmic Rays.*

N. G. DESHPANDE, Physics Department, University of Texas at Austin, Texas. *Current Algebra.*

R. E. DE WAMES, North American Rockwell Science Center, Thousand Oaks, California. *Spin Waves* (with T. Wolfram).

DAVID L. DEXTER, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York. *Solid State Theory.*

EDWARD J. DIEBOLD. *Rectifiers.*

G. J. DIENES, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York. *Irradiation, Displaced Atoms.*

A. DINSDALE, British Ceramic Research Association, Stoke-on-Trent, England. *Viscosity.*

ROBERT H. DOREMUS, School of Engineering, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York. *Crystallization.*

GLENN L. DOWNEY, Department of Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Mechanics, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska. *Dynamics.*

G. DRESSELHAUS, Lincoln Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lexington, Massachusetts. *Cyclotron Resonance (Diamagnetic Resonance).*

MILDRED S. DRESSELHAUS, Department of Electrical Engineering and Center for Materials Science and Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Semiconductors.*

H. G. DRICKAMER, School of Chemical Sciences, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois. *Pressure, Very High.*

C. HARRISON DWIGHT, Emeritus, Department of Physics, University of Cincinnati, Cincin-

nati, Ohio. *Absorption Spectra. Optics, Physical.*

ERNST R. G. EGKERT, Emeritus, Heat Transfer Laboratory, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *Heat Transfer.*

D. EDELSON, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Murray Hill, New Jersey. *Polar Molecules.*

JOHN A. EISELE, Space Systems Division, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D.C. *Tensors and Tensor Analysis* (with Robert M. Mason).

LEONARD EISNER, Stamford, Conneticut. *Radiation, Thermal.*

RAYMOND J. EMRICH, Department of Physics, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. *Fluid Dynamics.*

DUANE D. ERWAY, Xerox Corporation, Rochester, New York. *Solar Energy Utilization* (with A. M. Zarem).

HOWARD T. EVANS, JR., U.S. Geological Survey, Washington, D.C. *Crystal Structure Analysis. Crystallography.*

HENRY EYRING, Department of Chemistry, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah. *Physical Chemistry.*

N. FEATHER, Department of Physics, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland. *Vibration.*

A. G. FISCHER, Department of Electrical Engineering, University of Dortmund, 46 Dortmund, West Germany. *Electroluminescence.*

P. J. FOLEY, Faculty of Applied Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada. *Luminance.*

GRANT R. FOWLES, Physics Department, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, *Schrödinger Equation.*

MARTIN M. FREUNDLICH, Department of Electrical Technology, Queensborough Community College of the City University of New York, Bayside, New York. *Electron Microscope.*

HAROLD P. FIRTH, Plasma Physics Laboratory, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. *Magnetic Field.*

T. H. GEBALLE, Department of Applied Physics, Stanford University, Stanford, California. *Calorimetry* (with J. E. Kunzler).

BARRY GEORGE, Applied Electronics Laboratories, Marconi Space and Defense Systems, Ltd., Portsmouth, England. *Electron Optics.*

ANTHONY B. GIORDANO, School of Graduate Studies, Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, Brooklyn, New York. *Microwave Transmission.*

JOSHUA N. GOLDBERG, Physics Department, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York. *Gravitation.*

PAUL GOLDHAMMER, Department of Physics, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas. *Nuclear Structure.*

R. H. GOOD, JR., Department of Physics, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania. *Photon.*

JOHN B. GOODENOUGH, Lincoln Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lexington, Massachusetts. *Diamagnetism.*

CHARLES D. GOODMAN, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. *Critical Mass. Isospin.*

CLARK GOODMAN, Department of Physics, University of Houston, Houston, Texas. *Cross Section and Stopping Power.*

JOSEPH W. GOODMAN, Department of Electrical Engineering, Stanford University, Stanford, California. *Fourier Analysis.*

DONALD C. GREGG, Department of Chemistry, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont. *Chemistry.*

S. J. GREGG, Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex, England. *Adsorption and Absorption.*

B. CLARK GROSECLOSE, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, Livermore, California. *Positron* (with William W. Walker).

E. A. GUGGENHEIM (deceased). *Boltzmann's Distribution Law.*

VINCENT P. GUINN, Department of Chemistry, University of California, Irvine, California. *Neutron Activation Analysis.*

CECIL W. GWINN, U.S. Air Force Avionics Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. *Bionics* (with L. M. B. tsch).

WALTER J. HAMER, Washington, D.C. *Electrochemistry.*

A. O. HANSON, Department of Physics, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois. *Compton Effect.*

AKIRA HARASIMA, Tokyo Woman's Christian College, Tokyo, Japan. *Surface Tension.*

FORREST K. HARRIS, Electricity Division, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C. *Electrical Measurements.*

ROLAND H. HARRISON, U.S. Bureau of Mines, Bartlesville Energy Research Center, Bartlesville, Oklahoma. *Gases: Thermodynamic Properties.*

R. W. HART, Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins University, Silver Spring, Maryland. *Light Scattering.*

PAUL HARTECK, Department of Chemistry, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York. *Planetary Atmospheres* (with B. Thompson Coleberd).

HARRY P. HARTKEMEIER, Los Altos, California. *Ballistics.*

RYUKITI R. HASIGUTI, Department of Metallurgy and Materials Science, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan. *Lattice Defects.*

SHERWOOD K. HAYNES, Physics Department, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. *Auger Effect.*

RAYMOND W. HAYWARD, Center for Radiation Research, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C. *Parity.*

JOHN HEADING, Department of Applied Mathematics, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, Wales, U.K. *Matrices.*

LAWRENCE J. HEIDT, Emmanuel College, Boston, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Photochemistry.*

WILMOT N. HESS, Environmental Research Laboratories, National Oceanic and Atmo-

spheric Administration, Boulder, Colorado. *Radiation Belts.*

M. HETÉNYI. *Photoelasticity.*

ANTONY HEWISH, Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England. *Pulsars.*

JOHN F. HOGERTON, S. M. Stoller Corporation, New York. *Atomic Energy.*

M. G. HOLLAND, Raytheon Research Division, Waltham, Massachusetts. *Phonons.*

CHARLES A. HOLT, Department of Electrical Engineering, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia. *Induced Electromotive Force.*

ROBERT E. HOPKINS, Tropel, Inc., Fairport, New York. *Lens.*

ROLF HOSEMANN, Fritz-Haber-Institut der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, West Berlin, Germany. *Diffraction by Matter and Diffraction Gratings. Paracrystal* (translation by Walter J. Trapp).

W. V. HOUSTON (deceased). *Atomic Physics.*

KAREL HUJER, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Tennessee. *History of Physics.*

MCALLISTER H. HULL, JR., The Graduate School, State University of New York at Buffalo, New York. *Calculus of Physics.*

CURTIS J. HUMPHREYS, Department of Physics, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. *Molecular Spectroscopy.*

FREDERICK V. HUNT (deceased). *Cavitation.*

T. S. HUTCHISON. *Ultrasonics.*

ROBERT L. INGALLS, Department of Physics, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. *Mössbauer Effect* (with Peter Debrunner).

WILLIAM W. JACOBI. *Batteries.*

MAX JAMMER, Department of Physics, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel. *Statics.*

J. V. JELLEY, Nuclear Physics Division, Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell, England. *Čerenkov Radiation.*

R. J. JOENK, I. B. M. Journal of Research and Development, Armonk, New York. *Ferromagnetism.*

RUSSELL H. JOHNSEN, Department of Chemistry, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida. *Elements, Chemical.*

FRANCIS S. JOHNSON, Center for Advanced Studies, University of Texas at Dallas, Texas. *Space Physics.*

J. B. JOHNSON (deceased). *Thermionics.*

JESS J. JOSEPHS, Department of Physics, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. *Musical Sound.*

DEANE B. JUDD (deceased). *Color.*

P. K. KABIR, Department of Physics, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia. *Weak Interactions.*

WILLIAM M. KAULA, Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics, University of California, Los Angeles, California. *Geodesy.*

ROBERT W. KENNEY, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Bremsstrahlung and Photon Beams.*

DONALD W. KERST, Physics Department, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. *Betatron.*

WILLIAM F. KIEFFER, College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio. *Mole Concept.*

ALLEN L. KING, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. *Refrigeration.*

GERALD W. KING, Department of Chemistry, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. *Molecules and Molecular Structure.*

RUDOLPH KINGSLAKE, Institute of Optics, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York. *Refraction.*

R. H. KINGSTON, Lincoln Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lexington, Massachusetts. *Laser.*

HENRY J. KOSTKOWSKI, Optical Radiation Section, Heat Division, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C. *Pyrometry.*

HOWARD E. KREMERS, Kerr-McGee Chemical Corporation, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. *Rare Earths.*

REINOUT P. KROON, Towne School of Civil and Mechanical Engineering, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Dimensions.*

H. G. KUHN, Department of Astrophysics, Oxford University, Oxford, England. *Atomic Spectra.*

KAILASH KUMAR, Research School of Physical Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra, A. C. T., Australia. *Many-Body Problem.*

J. E. KUNZLER, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Murray Hill, New Jersey, *Calorimetry* (with T. H. Geballe).

C. G. KUPER, Department of Physics, Technion—Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel. *Polaron.*

BEHRAM KURŞUNOĞLU, Center for Theoretical Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida. *Quantum Theory.*

ROBERT T. LAGEMANN, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. *Wave Motion.*

RONALD A. LAING, Boston University School of Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts, *Paramagnetism.*

H. E. LANDSBERG, Institute of Fluid Dynamics and Applied Mathematics, University of Maryland. *Geophysics.*

C. T. LANE, Department of Physics, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. *Superfluidity.*

D. F. LAWDEN, University of Aston in Birmingham, England. *Mathematical Principles of Quantum Mechanics.*

REUBEN LEE, Baltimore, Maryland. *Transformer.*

R. J. W. LEFÈVRE, Emeritus, School of Chemistry, Macquarie University, North Ryde, N. S. W., Australia. *Dipole Moments.*

JOSEPH LEVINE, Experimental Meteorology Laboratory, National Oceanic and Atmo-

spheric Administration, Miami, Florida. *Cloud Physics.*

BERNARD R. LINDEN (deceased). *Photomultiplier.*

ROBERT LINDSAY, Department of Physics, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut. *Resonance.*

ELLIS R. LIPPINCOTT. *Spectroscopy.* (with Linda S. Whatley).

RAPHAEL M. LITTAUER, Laboratory of Nuclear Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. *Pulse Generation.*

F. B. LLEWELLYN (deceased). *Circuitry.*

A. L. LOEB, Department of Visual and Environmental Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle.*

JOSEPH J. LOFERSKI, Division of Engineering, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. *Photovoltaic Effect.*

EDWARD J. LOFGREN, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Cyclotron.*

ROBERT A. LUFBURROW, Department of Physics, St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York. *Carnot Cycles and Carnot Engines.*

H. R. LUKENS, Intercom Radiation Technology, San Diego, California. *Radioactive Tracers.*

PAUL S. LYKOUDIS, Department of Nuclear Engineering, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. *Magneto-Fluid-Mechanics.*

DAVID N. LYON, Department of Chemical Engineering, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Liquefaction of Gases.*

JOSEPH E. MACHUREK, United States Atomic Energy Commission, Washington, D.C. *Nucleonics.*

J. D. MACKENZIE, School of Engineering and Applied Science, University of California, Los Angeles, California. *Vitreous State.*

ALFRED U. MAC RAE, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Murray Hill, New Jersey. *Electron Diffraction.*

FRED C. MAIENSCHEIN, Neutron Physics Division, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. *Nuclear Radiation Shielding.*

STEPHEN P. MARAN, Laboratory of Solar Physics, NASA-Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland. *Radio Astronomy.*

JOHN W. MARTIN, Department of Metallurgy, University of Oxford, Oxford, England. *Metallurgy.*

L. L. MARTON, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. *Photoelectricity.*

ROBERT M. MASON, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D.C. *Tensors and Tensor Analysis* (with John A. Eisele).

P. T. MATTHEWS, Department of Physics, Imperial College, London, England. *Strong Interactions.*

R. D. MATTUCK, Physics Laboratory I, H. C. Ørsted Institute, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. *Feynman Diagrams.*

JOSEPH E. MAYER, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, California. *Liquid State.*

C. B. A. MCCUSKER, Falkiner Nuclear Department, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia. *Quarks.*

RAYMOND H. MCFEE, McDonnell Douglas Astronautics Co., Huntington Beach, California. *Infrared Radiation.*

J. W. MCGRATH, Graduate School and Research, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio. *Chemical Physics.*

DONALD P. MCINTYRE, Dames & Moore, Consultants in Applied Earth Sciences, Toronto, Canada. *Meteorology.*

A. E. E. MCKENZIE (deceased). *Optical Instruments* (with Nigel C. McKenzie).

NIGEL C. MCKENZIE, Research Institute for Fundamental Physics, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan. *Optical Instruments* (with A. E. E. McKenzie).

GEORGE TERRENCE MEADEN, Artech International, Trowbridge, England. *Conductivity, Electrical.*

HOWARD C. MELL. *Radiation, Ionizing, Basic Interactions* (with Paul W. Todd).

CARL H. MELTZER, RCA Corporation, Electronic Components and Devices, Harrison, New Jersey. *Electron Tubes.*

MAEL A. MELVIN, Department of Physics, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Antiparticles.*

DIETRICH MEYERHOFER, R C A Laboratories, Princeton, New Jersey. *Tunneling.*

JOHN L. MILES, Arthur D. Little, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Cryogenics.*

WOLFGANG E. MOECKEL, Physical Science Division, NASA-Lewis Research Center, Cleveland, Ohio. *Electric Propulsion.*

ORREN C. MOHLER, Department of Astronomy, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. *Solar Physics.*

DONALD J. MONTGOMERY, College of Engineering, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. *Static Electricity* (with R. G. Cunningham).

KARL Z. MORGAN, School of Nuclear Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia. *Health Physics.*

E. W. MÜLLER, Department of Physics, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania. *Field Emission.*

ALBERT A. MULLIN, *Feedback.*

RAYMOND R. MYERS, Department of Chemistry, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio. *Rheology.*

NORMAN H. NACHTRIEB, Department of Chemistry, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. *Diffusion in Liquids.*

GÉRARD NADEAU, Départment de Physique, Université Laval, Québec, Canada. *Elasticity.*

JACOB NEUBERGER, Department of Physics, Queens College of the City University of New York, Flushing, New York. *Expansion, Thermal.*

LAWRENCE E. NIELSEN, Monsanto Company, St. Louis, Missouri. *Polymer Physics.*

CARL OBERMAN, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. *Plasmas.*

JACK OLIVER, Department of Geological Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. *Seismology.*

HARRY F. OLSON, RCA Laboratories, Princeton, New Jersey. *Noise, Acoustical.*

JOHN M. OLSON, Biology Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York. *Photosynthesis.*

STEPHEN J. O'NEIL, Naval Weapons Engineering Support Activity, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. *Servomechanisms.*

RALPH T. OVERMAN. *Radioactivity.*

THORNTON PAGE, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D.C. *Astrophysics.*

WILLIAM E. PARKINS, Research and Technology, Atomics International Division, Rockwell International, Canoga Park, California. *Energy Levels. Work, Power, and Energy.*

RICHARD H. PARVIN, *Astrodynamics. Inertial Guidance.*

MARTIN PETER, Department of Solid State Physics, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland. *Atomic Clocks.*

ROBERT W. PETERS, Institute of Speech and Hearing Sciences, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina. *Hearing.*

NORMAN E. PHILLIPS, Department of Chemistry and Inorganic Materials Research Division of the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Heat Capacity.*

JULIAN M. PIKE, National Center for Atmospheric Research, Boulder, Colorado. *Coriolis Effect.*

J. J. PINAJIAN, Isotopes Development Center, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. *Isotopes* (with A. F. Rupp).

MARTIN A. POMERANTZ, Bartol Research Foundation of the Franklin Institute, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. *International Geophysical Year and International Years of the Quiet Sun.*

ALLEN Y. POPE, Sandia Laboratories, Albuquerque, New Mexico. *Aerodynamics.*

ALAN M. PORTIS, Department of Physics, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Faraday Effect.*

G. M. POUND, Materials Science Department, Stanford University, Stanford, California. *Condensation.*

R. D. PRESENT, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee. *Gas Laws. Intermolecular Forces.*

WALTER J. PRICE, Air Force Office of Scientific Research, Washington, D.C. *Nuclear Instruments.*

A. F. PUCHSTEIN (Retired), Jeffrey Mining Machinery Company, Columbus, Ohio. *Motors, Electric.*

ERNEST RABINOWICZ, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Friction.*

STANLEY RAIMES, Department of Mathematics, Imperial College, University of London, London, England. *Wave Mechanics.*

R. RAJARAMAN, University of Delhi, Delhi, India. *Mass and Inertia.*

N. RASHEVSKY (deceased). *Mathematical Biophysics.*

LAWRENCE L. RAUCH, Computer, Information and Control Engineering, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. *Telemetry.*

HUBERT REEVES. *Solar Energy Sources.*

F. REINES, School of Physical Sciences, University of California, Irvine, California. *Neutrino.*

J. A. REYNOLDS, Culham Laboratory, United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Culham, England. *Fusion.*

JAMES A. RICHARDS, JR., Agricultural and Technical College, State University of New York, Delhi, New York. *Brownian Motion. Fermi-Dirac Statistics and Fermions.*

WOLFGANG RINDLER, Department of Physics and Mathematics, University of Texas at Dallas, Texas. *Relativity.*

B. L. ROBERTSON, Emeritus, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Electric Power Generation.*

JACQUES E. ROMAIN, Centre de Recherches Routières, Sterrebeek, Belgium. *Time.*

MILTON A. ROTHMAN, Department of Physics, Trenton State College, Trenton, New Jersey. *Conservation Laws and Symmetry.*

ARTHUR G. ROUSE (deceased). *Rotation—Circular Motion.*

A. F. RUPP, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. *Isotopes* (with J. J. Pinajian).

ROGERS D. RUSK, Emeritus, Physics Department, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts. *Nuclear Radiation.*

GEORGE E. RYSCHKEWITSCH, Department of Chemistry, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. *Bond Chemical.*

R. T. SANDERSON, Department of Chemistry, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona. *Periodic Law and Periodic Table.*

W. L. W. SARGENT, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California. *Cosmology.*

LEONARD I. SCHIFF (deceased). *Matrix Mechanics.*

H. M. SCHLICKE, Allen-Bradley Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. *Capacitance.*

GLENN T. SEABORG, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Transuranium Elements.*

ARTHUR H. SEIDMAN, Pratt Institute School of Engineering, Brooklyn, New York. *Diode (Semiconductor).*

J. M. H. LEVELT SENGERS, Institute for Basic Standards, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C. *Compressibility, Gas.*

R. S. SHANKLAND, Department of Physics, Case

Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. *Michelson-Morley Experiment*.

A. G. SHARKEY, JR., Pittsburgh Energy Research Center, U.S. Bureau of Mines, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. *Mass Spectroscopy*.

EDGAR A. G. SHAW, Division of Physics, National Research Council of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. *Electroacoustics*.

WILLIAM F. SHEEHAN, Department of Chemistry, University of Santa Clara, Santa Clara, California. *Chemical Kinetics*.

E. S. SHIRE, University of Cambridge and King's College, Cambridge, England. *Electricity*.

HOWARD A. SHUGART, Department of Physics, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Atomic and Molecular Beams*.

WILLIAM A. SHURCLIFF, Cambridge Electron Accelerator, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Polarized Light*.

R. P. SHUTT, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York. *Spark and Bubble Chambers*.

MIRIAM SIDRAN, Department of Physics, Baruch College, City University of New York, New York. *Photography*.

LESTER S. SKAGGS, Department of Radiology, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. *Medical Physics*.

MERRILL I. SKOLNIK, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D.C. *Radar*.

LAWRENCE SLIFKIN, Department of Physics, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. *Diffusion in Solids*.

J. SMIDT, Laboratorium voor Technische Natuurkunde, Technische Hogeschool Delft, Delft, the Netherlands. *Relaxation*.

HOWARD M. SMITH, Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, New York. *Holography*.

JAMES T. SMITH, International Business Machines Corp., Boulder, Colorado. *Magnetic Resonance*.

M. G. SMITH, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Sir John Cass School of Science and Technology, City of London Polytechnic, London, England. *Laplace Transforms*.

CHARLES P. SMYTH, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. *Dielectric Theory*.

S. L. SOO, Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, *Equilibrium*.

WALTER W. SOROKA, Emeritus, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Acoustics*.

J. W. T. SPINKS, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada. *Radiation Chemistry* (with R. J. Woods).

M. T. SPRACKLING, Department of Physics, Queen Elizabeth College (University of London, England. *Mechanical Properties of Solids*.

H. EUGENE STANLEY, Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Critical Phenomena*.

ROBERT L. STEARNS, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie,

New York. *Bose-Einstein Statistics and Bosons*.

WILLIAM E. STEPHENS, Department of Physics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Electron Spin*.

REGINALD J. STEPHENSON (deceased). *Mechanics*.

ERNEST J. STERNGLASS, Department of Radiology, School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. *Secondary Emission*.

K. AA. STRAND, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C., *Astrometry*.

E. C. G. SUDARSHAN, Center for Particle Theory and Department of Physics, University of Texas, Austin, Texas. *Elementary Particles*.

ANDRIS SUNA, Central Research Department, Experimental Station, E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, Wilmington, Delaware. *Excitons*.

CHARLES SUSSKIND, College of Engineering, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Electronics*.

G. P. SUTTON, Envirotech Corporation, c/o Sumitomo Jukikai Envirotech, Inc., Tokyo, Japan. *Flight Propulsion Fundamentals*.

RICHARD M. SUTTON (deceased). *Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion*.

J. D. SWIFT, School of Physics, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath, England. *Electrical Discharges in Gases*.

S. M. SZE, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Murray Hill, New Jersey. *Semiconductor Devices*.

DALE T. TEANEY, Thomas J. Watson Research Center, International Business Machines, Corp., Yorktown Heights, New York. *Antiferromagnetism*.

NORMAN TEPLEY, Department of Physics, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan. *Fermi Surface* (with H. V. Bohm).

JAMES TERRELL, University of California Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico. *Fission*.

MATTHEW P. THEKAEKARA, NASA-Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland. *Interference and Interferometry. Solar Constant and Solar Spectrum*.

A. C. THORSEN, Rockwell International Science Center, Thousand Oaks, California. *De Haas-van Alphen Effect*.

RUDOLPH E. THUN, Raytheon Company, Bedford, Massachusetts. *Thin Films*.

PAUL W. TODD. *Radiation, Ionizing, Basic Interactions* (with H. C. Mel).

RICHARD TOUSEY, Space Science Division, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D.C. *Ultraviolet Radiation*.

WALTER J. TRAPP, U.S. Air Force Materials Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. Translator of article, *Paracrystal*.

MYRON TRIBUS, Information Technology Group, Xerox Corporation, Rochester, New York. *Entropy*.

G. J. F. TROUP, Physics Department, Monash University, Clayton 3168, Victoria, Australia. *Maser.*

JOHN G. TRUMP, Department of Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Accelerator, Van de Graaff. High Voltage Research.*

N. W. TSCHOEGL, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California. *Viscoelasticity.*

R. S. UNWIN, Geophysical Observatory, Physics and Engineering Laboratory, D. S. I. R., Christchurch, New Zealand. *Aurora and Airglow.*

ROLAND W. URE, JR., Electrical Engineering Department and Division of Materials Science and Engineering, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah. *Thermoelectricity.*

LEOPOLD B. VALDES, T R W Systems Group, Redondo Beach, California, *Transistor.*

THOMAS E. VAN ZANDT, Aeronomy Laboratory, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Boulder, Colorado. *Ionosphere.*

EDGAR VILLCHUR, Foundation for Hearing Aid Research, Woodstock, New York. *Reproduction of Sound.*

WILHELM H. VON AULOCK, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Whippany, New Jersey. *Ferrimagnetism.*

WILLIAM W. WALKER, Department of Physics, University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, Alabama. *Positron* (with B. Clark Groseclose).

ROALD K. WANGSNESS, Department of Physics, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona. *Theoretical Physics.*

KENNETH M. WATSON, Department of Physics, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Collisions of Particles.*

ELBERT C. WEAVER, Sterling Laboratory, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. *Density and Specific Gravity.*

M. B. WEBB. *Surface Physics.*

WALTER L. WEEKS, School of Electrical Engineering, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. *Electromagnetic Theory.*

VERNON G. WELSBY, Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England. *Inductance.*

H. L. WELSH, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada. *Raman Effect and Raman Spectroscopy.*

CHARLES WERT, Department of Metallurgy and Mining Engineering, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois. *Solid State Physics.*

LINDA S. WHATLEY. *Spectroscopy* (with E. R. Lippincott).

GERSHON J. WHEELER, Los Altos, California. *Waveguides.*

MILTON G. WHITE, Department of Physics, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. *Synchrotrons.*

FERD WILLIAMS, Physics Department, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware. *Luminescence.*

JOHN H. WILLS, Cheyney, Pennsylvania. *Phase Rule.*

A. J. C. WILSON, Department of Physics, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England. *X-ray Diffraction.*

G. MILTON WING, Los Alamos, New Mexico. *Transport Theory.*

DENNIS E. WISNOSKI, U.S. Air Force Materials Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. *Computers.*

FRANK L. WOLF, Department of Mathematics, Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota. *Statistics.*

HUGH C. WOLFE, American Institute of Physics, New York. *Symbols, Units and Nomenclature.*

T. WOLFRAM, North American Rockwell Science Center, Thousand Oaks, California. *Spin Waves* (with R. E. De Wames).

JOSEPH F. WOODS (deceased). *Photoconductivity.*

R. J. WOODS, Department of Chemistry, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. *Radiation Chemistry* (with J. W. T. Spinks).

JOHN YARWOOD, Department of Physics, The Polytechnic of Central London, London, England. *Vacuum Techniques* (with K. J. Close).

HSUAN YEH, Towne School of Civil and Mechanical Engineering, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Impulse and Momentum.*

A. M. ZAREM, Beverly Hills, California. *Solar Energy Utilization* (with Duane D. Erway).

ALEXANDER ZUCKER, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. *Nuclear Reactions.*

# PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

This second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Physics* follows the same general plan as was used for the first edition; that is, each article is written so as to be of primary value to the type of reader who is most apt to look for the particular topic. There are articles on major areas of physics which are at a low technical level, so as to be of maximum value to the reader with little prior knowledge of physics. There are also articles on major divisions and subdivisions of these areas. In general, these latter start with an introduction intended to define the topic and describe the concepts involved. This is followed by more detailed and advanced treatment for the reader with a stronger background in physics.

To cover more of physics, the book has been considerably expanded, both by adding new articles and by including new material on topics in the first edition. Many of the articles have been completely rewritten, others received major changes, while others, particularly those on major areas of physics, required little or no change.

As in the first edition, the major credit for any success the book may achieve belongs to the authors, many of whom not only contributed a tremendous amount of time and effort in preparing articles, but made valuable suggestions for other parts of the book.

The editors at the Van Nostrand Reinhold Company contributed a great deal to the readability and accuracy of the book, and to my wife, Leigh, goes credit for much careful proofreading, for the preparation of the extensive index, and for the typing and detailed record-keeping required in assembling a book of this magnitude.

To all of these workers my heartfelt thanks are due.

ROBERT M. BESANÇON

*Dayton, Ohio*
*April 10, 1974*

# PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

THE AIM of this book is to provide in one volume concise and accurate information about physics. It should be of use to physicists who need information outside of their own special areas of interest, to teachers and librarians who must answer inquiries, to students who wish to add to their funds of knowledge, and to engineers and scientists who encounter physical concepts in pursuit of their professions. The book has been made possible by the thoughtful and generous cooperation of more than 300 authors, both in this country and abroad, who have unstintingly contributed their time, skill and knowledge. Their names and affiliations are shown immediately before this preface.

The most challenging problem for the editor was deciding which topics to include and which to leave out, since the space available was very limited compared with the vast amount of knowledge that could have been included. The approach used was to provide short introductory articles on physics, on the history of physics, on measurements, and on symbols, units and nomenclature, plus general articles on the major areas of physics: heat, light, mechanics, acoustics, etc. To these were added entries on divisions and subdivisions of the major areas; these are more detailed and pitched at somewhat higher technical levels than the broader, more general articles. Other topics lie on the interfaces between major areas of physics or are on subjects that include both physics and other disciplines. These include, among others, astrophysics, geophysics, biophysics, and mathematical biophysics. Finally, a few articles cover sciences that are so closely related to physics that the differences are frequently merely matters of emphasis.

Each article attempts to provide not just a definition of a term but an explanation of an area of physics. No attempt was made to hold all articles at the same technical level; on the contrary, the level for each entry was aimed at those readers who would be most apt to look for information on that specific topic. The contents of each article was left to the discretion of the author as the one most capable of making the proper selection. Some of the authors found it necessary to use mathematics, as is done in many books on physics. However, the reader with a limited mathematical background will find many articles with no mathematics at all, and others with very little, while the reader who is so inclined can sink his teeth into the more mathematical paragraphs.

Most of the authors have provided references to summary articles and books, and in addition, cross-references to other articles in this book have been added wherever it was felt that they might be of particular help to the reader. A few cross-references are shown by the use of small capitals in the body of the text (thus, MECHANICS); others are listed at the end of the article. The index should serve to locate particular topics that might not be subjects of complete articles.

I should like to extend by heartfelt thanks to the authors who contributed so much and to Mr. G. G. Hawley and Mr. H. Simonds of the Reinhold Publishing Corporation who invited me to compile and edit this book as one of the series of scientific and technical encyclopedias published by that company. I also owe a very great deal to Mrs. Alberta Gordon and her staff, who did much of the editing and proofreading, and to my wife, Leigh, who contributed the bulk of the tremendous amount of clerical work involved as well as adding a great deal of enthusiasm and inspiration.

ROBERT M. BESANÇON

*Dayton, Ohio*
*November 1, 1965*

# A

## ABERRATIONS

The two sections of this article give a theoretical treatment. For an introductory discussion, see the article entitled LENS.

**Geometrical Theory** When a light wave passes through an instrument, the wave front suffers deformation due to the imperfection of the instrument. The optical distance between the emerging wave front (actual) and the converging wave front (ideal) when the mapping of object points is perfect is a measure of the aberration of the instrument. For an ideal instrument, the mathematical relation of such a mapping is given by the equations

$$\bar{x}_i = M x_i \quad (1a), \qquad \bar{\xi}_i = m \xi_i \quad (i = 1, 2, 3), \quad (1b)$$

where $M, m$ are constants characterizing the optical instrument and $(x_i, \bar{x}_i)$, $(\xi_i, \bar{\xi}_i)$ are the coordinates and optical direction cosines of a ray in the object and image space respectively. If the $z$-coordinates are fixed, $x_3 = z_0$, $\bar{x}_3 = z_1$, the ray enters the object plane $z_0$ and exits from the image plane $z_1$.

In general, the above relationship between object and image points is not realized in actual practice and instead of (1a), (1b) we have

$$\bar{x} = M x_i + f(x_i, \xi_i) \qquad (2a)$$

$$\bar{\xi}_i = m \xi_i + g(x_i, \xi_i) \qquad (2b)$$

where $f(x_i, \xi_i)$, $g(x_i, \xi_i)$ are complicated functions of the arguments. The functional dependence of these functions on $x_i$ and $\xi_i$ characterizes the optical instrument. These are called the aberrations of the optical instrument or system.

For a given optical system, such as a lens or a number of lenses as in a microscope or telescope objective, the aberrations can be calculated by tracing rays from the object plane to the image plane—object and stop positions—using the law of refraction. This method of computing the aberrations numerically is very laborious and does not yield a clear picture of the various types of aberrations even in simple optical systems. On the other hand, when the Hamilton characteristic functions are introduced, representing the actual emerging wave fronts, one obtains an analytical expression for the aberration function of an instrument and furthermore is able to classify various types of aberrations

caused by an optical system. The so-called point characteristic expressing the distance from a point on the object plane to the corresponding point of the same ray on the stop plane is hardly used in actual practice. However, the mixed characteristic $W$, which is a function of the object position of a ray and its emerging direction on the image or stop plane, forms the basis of the Hamilton, Seidel, and Schwarzschild theory of aberrations, and the fourth characteristic of Hamilton, the angular characteristic, is taken as the basis of the Smith theory.[11] However, the derivation of an explicit form of the mixed or angular characteristic is a very difficult mathematical problem and only in a few simple optical systems has the characteristic function been calculated in a closed form. For rotational systems, the characteristic functions (the point, the two mixed, and the angular characteristic) depend on three variables or invariants, and when the aberration is small they are expanded in power series of the invariants. In the following section on diffraction theory we give the expansion of the mixed characteristic $W(x_i, \xi_i)$ in two different forms, known as the standard and the Zernike-Nijboer expansions, and explain briefly the various classifications of the terms of the series arranged according to the powers of the invariants. For an extended analysis of the geometrical aberrations and their classifications we refer the reader to the general references listed, in particular, to recent studies[11,12,13,14] and to the following comprehensive treatises on the subject: M. Herzberger, "Modern Geometrical Optics," New York, Interscience Publishers, 1958, and H. Buchdahl, "Optical Aberration Coefficients," Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1954, where references to their researches and to more recent developments are to be found.

**Diffraction Theory** The starting point of the modern theory of diffraction of optical instruments may be traced to the famous paper on diffraction theory of the phase contrast method by Zernike.[1] The extension to the diffraction theory of aberrations was carried out by him in collaboration with his pupils, especially, Nijboer.[2] Since then, many advances have taken place, both in theory and experimental observation leading to important applications in the improvement of optical instruments. However, prior to Zernike's pioneering work, some significant contributions to the theory were made by

a number of authorities, notably Ignatowski, Fischer, Steward,[3] and Picht.[4]

The basis of the diffraction theory of optical instruments is founded on Kirchhoff's integral or a modified form of it, namely

$$U(P) = -\frac{ikn}{2\pi} \iint_S \sqrt{K}\, U_0(Q)$$

$$\cdot \exp ik\,[W + (\mathbf{r}\cdot\mathbf{s})]\,dS \quad (1)$$

where $U_0(Q)$ is the value of the field on the wave surface (front) $S$, $K$ and $\mathbf{s}$ are respectively the Gaussian curvature and optical normal vector of $S$, $n$ is the refractive index of the medium in the image space, and $W$ is the Hamiltonian mixed characteristic of the optical system. The image field $U(P)$ at an image point $P(x, y, z)$ is the geometrical optics wave solution of the scalar wave equation, or Maxwell equations.

A more convenient form of Eq. (1) used frequently in actual problems is

$$U(P) = -\frac{ik}{2\pi} \iint_{p^2+q^2\,\leqslant\, n^2} g(p,q)\, \exp ik\phi(P;p,q)$$

$$dp\,dq,$$

$$\phi(P;p,q) = W + (\mathbf{r}\cdot\mathbf{s}) \quad (2)$$

where a point $Q$ on the wave surface $S(Q)$ is represented parametrically in terms of $(p, q)$, $x = -W_p + \lambda p$, $y = -W_q + \lambda q$, $z = \lambda\sqrt{n^2 - p^2 - q^2}$, $\lambda = \lambda(p,q)$. Here $p, q$ and $(n^2 - p^2 - q^2)^{1/2}$ are the optical direction cosines (components) of the normal vector $\mathbf{s}$. The amplitude function $g(p,q) = |n\|\Delta|^{1/2} \cdot U_0(p,q)$ remains constant along a ray $(p \cdot q)$ in image space, and $\Delta$ is the discriminant of the second differential form of $S$. Equations (1) or (2) are known as the Picht-Luneburg integrals.[4,5]

The above formulas give all the information about the image produced by an optical instrument for a monochromatic source. Thus the problem is reduced to the evaluation of such integrals over the arbitrary wave front $S$. In general, $W$ is not known explicitly (closed form) on $S$, so instead of the wave surface $S$ one takes a reference surface $S_0$, usually a spherical wave front with center at the Gaussian image point of the optical system, and expands $W$ in a Taylor series in the parameters. In practice $S_0$ is the aperture (entrance or exit-pupil) of the instrument. For rotational symmetric systems, most frequently employed in practice, $W$ depends on three invariants, $u_1 = x_0^2 + y_0^2$, $u_2 = p^2 + q^2$, $u_3 = x_0 p + y_0 q$, and an additional invariant $u_4 = x_0 q - y_0 p$ for electron optical systems. Therefore, the expansion of $W$ is of the form

$$W = W_0 + \Sigma a_i u_i + \Sigma a_{ij} u_i u_j + \Sigma a_{ijk} u_i u_j u_k + \cdots,$$

$$(i, j, k = 1, 2, 3),$$

$$= W_0 + \sum_{p=1}^{\infty} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \sum_{m=1}^{n} b_{lnm}\sigma^{2l+m}\,\rho^n \cos^m \phi =$$

$$W_0 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \sum_{m=0}^{n} f_{nm}(\sigma)\rho^n \cos^m \phi \quad (3)$$

$l, n, m$ are positive integers, $n - m$ even $> 0$ and $u_1 = \sigma^2$, $u_2 = \rho^2$, $u_3 = \sigma\rho \cos \phi$. The individual constants $b_{lnm}$ are the aberration coefficients. This standard development has been used by Steward and others in their treatment of diffraction of aberrations. However, even for individual aberrations of lower order, the evaluation of the diffraction integral leads to complicated expressions for the image field or intensity distribution, since the various orders of a single type aberration are not separated; consequently, it is difficult to separate the contributions of each order to the total intensity in the image plane. For these reasons, both Steward and Picht and later Born obtained incomplete figures of the intensity distributions of the image. On the other hand, Nijboer, following Zernike's ideas, was able to calculate to a great degree of accuracy (unknown before) the intensity distribution for several types of aberrations and high orders. The experimental observations made at Zernike's laboratory, as well as those made at McGill University on microwaves[2a] are in agreement with Nijboer's figures or with those calculated by Nijboer's method.[2a]

The Zernike-Nijboer diffraction theory of aberration is based on the development of the aberration function, or $W$, in terms of orthogonal polynomials (functions) over the region of integration (wave front) which, in their case, was a circle. Instead of Eq. (3), $W$ is expanded in the form

$$W = W_0 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} f_{mn}(\sigma) Z_n^m(\rho) \cos m\phi,$$

$$(m = 0, 1, \cdots, n; n = 1, 2, \cdots) \quad (4)$$

where $Z_n^m(\rho)$ are called the Zernike polynomials, which are orthogonal over a unit circle. In this development, a typical aberration term is of the form $b_{lnm}\sigma^{2l+m} Z_n^m(\rho) \cos m\phi$. On account of the orthogonality of $Z_n^m$, the various orders of a single aberration enter individually (are not mixed) in the expression representing the intensity distribution function; i.e., different aberrations cannot counterbalance each other's contribution for all $\sigma$. In general, the amplitude function can also be expanded in Zernike polynomials, or other functions such as Fourier-Bessel, or Dini functions,[10] if the field over the aperture is not constant (coating of lenses). In general, the idea of expanding both the amplitude and the phase function in orthogonal functions over the domain of integration has many advantages over previous methods, since the double integral cannot be reduced into a single

integral, except for the simplest type of apertures. However, when only spherical aberration of all orders is considered, the method of integration by parts of the diffraction integral leads to rather simple expression for the image field. This case has been treated exhaustively for both circular and annular apertures by Boivin.[8] The calculation of the diffracted field in the presence of higher order aberrations including the more general problem of nonsymmetric optical systems is given in reference 14.

All the methods discussed above are valid only for small aberrations. For large or moderately large aberrations, one must resort to asymptotic methods, which at present are sufficiently developed to include most of the interesting cases occurring in the theory of diffraction of optical systems. When these analytical methods are combined with the present progress in computational methods, the intensity distribution produced by an optical system can be calculated to any desired degree of accuracy.

NICHOLAS CHAKO

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Cross-references: DIFFRACTION BY MATTER AND DIFFRACTION GRATINGS; LENS; OPTICAL INSTRUMENTS; OPTICS, GEOMETRICAL; OPTICS, PHYSICAL.

## ABSORPTION SPECTRA

The first experiment in which the light from the sun was dispersed into its spectrum was performed by Sir Isaac Newton in 1666. The chief effect was, obviously, the transformation of the round pinhole image of the sun in white light into a sausage-shaped array of colors, starting with red and ending, further up the wall, with violet. There was only a gradual transition from one color to the next, and apparently no colors were missing between violet and red.

The next step in the new optical topic of spectroscopy was the observation by W. H. Wollaston (1766–1828) in 1802 that the solar spectrum is not complete, but is crossed by a large number of dark lines—apparently missing wavelengths. A dozen years later Joseph von Fraunhofer (1787–1826) again observed these dark lines in the solar spectrum. In 1859 they were explained by Kirchhoff as due to the fact that the elements which, when in the laboratory, give characteristic bright lines in their spectrum, would in the solar atmosphere absorb those very lines—hence relative darkness is apparent at these places in the spectra when viewed from the earth.

Distinctions should be made at this point between several terms used in the discussion of absorption spectroscopy.

The *absorption coefficient* of a material ($\alpha$) is expressed in the equation, known as the law of absorption and enunciated by Bouguer and Lambert,*

$$I_x = I_0 e^{-\alpha x}$$

*Pierre Bouguer (1698-1758) and Johann Lambert (1728-1777). It was later shown by Beer that the absorption coefficient for a solution is directly proportional to the concentration of the absorbing species. The relationship, known today as Beer's law, is

$$I = I_0 10^{-abc}$$

where $a$ is the *absorptivity*, $b$ is the thickness through which the initial intensity $I_0$ drops to $I$, and $c$ is the concentration of the absorbing material.

in which the intensity of an incident plane wave $I_0$ is shown to decrease as the reciprocal of an exponential function to a value $I_x$ after the energy has penetrated to a distance $x$ in the sample of the material. In other words, the fraction $dI/I_0$ of the initial intensity is "lost" in traversing the distance $dx$, since $dI/I_0 = -\alpha dx$.

*Absorption* is the general phenomenon taking place within the body of the material as measured by the absorption coefficient.

*Absorbance* is the common logarithm of the ratio of the incident to the transmitted intensities.

*Absorptance* is the measure of the amount of light that disappears at a single reflection.

No substance has been found to exist that does not strongly absorb some wavelengths if the range be sufficiently extended. Dielectrics usually exhibit three extensive regions of large transmission, one in each of the three distinctive portions of the electromagnetic spectrum—very short wavelengths, intermediate wavelengths, and very long wavelengths.

A *blackbody* absorbs all of the radiant energy incident upon it—is a perfect absorber—and likewise acts as a perfect radiator. Kirchhoff's law of radiation states that the ratio of the *emissive power* to the *absorptive power* is the same for all bodies at a specified absolute temperature, or $E/A =$ a constant $= E_B$. $E$ is the total energy radiated per square centimeter of surface per second and $A$, the *absorptive power*, is the fraction of the incident energy that is not reflected or transmitted by the surface. Obviously, $A$ is unity for a blackbody, and hence the constant in the above equation is $E_B$, the emissive power of a blackbody at the specified temperature. Absorption lines in a spectrum can be explained on the assumption of RESONANCE of the atoms of the absorbing material to that portion of the incident energy spectrum which presents the same oscillation frequency. The atoms reradiate all of the absorbed energy *but in all directions*, so that the portion in the line of sight of the observer is relatively less than what would have been in that position without the intervening vapor.

A material that reduces the intensity of incident light almost entirely without regard to wavelength is said to exhibit *general absorption*. White light becomes gray. In the instances cited in this article, there is *selective absorption*. Flowers, paints, skin, etc., have color by selective absorption since some of the light penetrates ever so slightly into the body of the material.

The absorption bands in the spectra of solids and liquids are usually continuous, gradually fading out along the wavelength axis, but gases show narrow lines in their absorption spectra as a general rule.

We know from elementary optics that the *index of refraction* ($n$) of a nonconducting material (dielectric) at a definite wavelength is its essential property, for by its use in Snell's law, we can obtain the sequence of deviations of a ray as it passes through or from an interface bounding two media (see REFRACTION). The case is very different for metals (conductors) due to the presence of free electrons in among the atoms. Strong absorption at once occurs so that metals are opaque, certainly to visible light. When the optical properties of metals are being considered, it is more efficacious to use the quantity known as the *absorption index*, defined for a given wavelength $\lambda$ by

$$\kappa = \frac{\alpha\lambda}{4\pi n}$$

where $n$ is best determined by the measurement of Brewster's angle. (see POLARIZED LIGHT). For silver at $\lambda = 589.3$ nm, $n = 0.177$ and $\kappa = 20.554$.

The theory of dispersion shows that generally, in the visible region, transparent materials exhibit a decrease in refractive index with wavelength (section AB of Fig. 1). This part of the
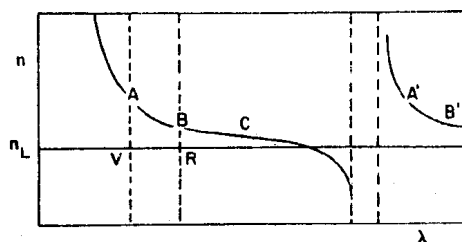


FIG. 1. Index of refraction vs. wavelength for a typical material. Adapted from Fig. 23D of *Fundamentals of Physical Optics*, by Francis A. Jenkins and Harvey E. White, courtesy of McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, 3rd Edition, 1957.

graph (AB) is known as the *normal dispersion curve* for the material and can readily be plotted from data taken with a prism spectrometer. The earliest attempt to relate $n$ to $\lambda$ was made by Cauchy in 1836, namely,

$$n = A + \frac{B}{\lambda^2} + \frac{C}{\lambda^4}$$

where $A$, $B$ and $C$ are constants. Although based, as we now know it, on false assumptions, this relationship has proved valuable as a practical working equation, as long as one keeps far from an absorption band. Considering the effect of the frequency of the incident light ($\nu$) upon the particles of the medium, having a natural frequency $\nu_0$, Sellmeier (1971) derived the more acceptable relation

$$n^2 = 1 + \frac{A\lambda^2}{\lambda^2 - \lambda_0^2}$$

where $A$ is a constant proportional to the number of oscillators affected and $\lambda_0$ is the wavelength corresponding to $\nu_0$ in a vacuum. We see from this equation that at resonance (when $\nu = \nu_0$), the index of refraction becomes very large. In