Scherrer's Quantum Mechanics Problems

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Chapter 1

The Origin Of Quantum Mechanics

1. **Assume that a human body emits blackbody radiation at the standard body temperature.**

   (a) **Estimate how much energy is radiated by the body in one hour.**
   The power emmitted by a blackbody is given by:

   $$P = \sigma A T^4$$

   where A is the surface area of the body, T is the temperature and σ is the Stefan-Boltzmann constant. Therefore the energy radiated by a body in a given time interval Δt:

   $$E = \sigma A T^4 \Delta t$$

   The surface area of the human body is approximately 2m^2, the average body temperature is $36.1°\text{C} = 309.25\text{K}$, and there are 3600s in an hour. Therefore:

   $$\begin{aligned} E_{\text{hour}} &= \left(5.67 * 10^{-8} \frac{\text{J}}{\text{s m}^2\text{K}^4}\right)(2\text{m}^2)(309.25\text{K})^4(3600\text{s}) \\ &= 3733\text{kJ} \end{aligned}$$

   (b) **At what wavelength does this radiation reach a maximum**
   The formula for the maximum wavelength is:

   $$\lambda_{\text{peak}} = \frac{w}{T}$$

   where $w = 2.90 * 10^{-3}\text{m K}$ and $T = 309.25\text{K}$ as before. Therefore the maximum wavelength is:

   $$\lambda_{\text{peak}} = \frac{2.9 * 10^{-3}\text{m K}}{309.25\text{K}} = 9.37 * 10^{-6}\text{m}$$

2. **A distant red star is observed to have a blackbody spectrum with a maximum at a wavelength of 3500Å[1Å$= 10^{-10}$ m]. What is the temperature of the star?**

   Inverting the formula from the pervious question:

   $$T = \frac{w}{\lambda_{\text{peak}}}$$

   giving:

   $$T = \frac{2.9 * 10^{-3}\text{m K}}{3500 * 10^{-10}\text{m}} = 51428\text{K}$$

3. **The universe is filled with blackbody radiation at a temperature of 2.7K left over from the Big Bang. [This radiation was disvoered in 1965 by Bell Laboratory scientists who thought at one point that they were seeing interference from pigeon droppings on their microwave reciever.**

   (a) **What is the total energy density of this radiation?**

   The energy density of the radiation is given by:

   $$\rho = aT^4$$

   where $a = 7.56 * 10^{-16}\frac{\text{J}}{\text{m}^3\text{K}^4}$. Therefore:

   $$\rho = 7.56 * 10^{-16}\frac{\text{J}}{\text{m}^3\text{K}^4} * (2.7\text{K})^4 = 4.01 * 10^{-14}\frac{\text{J}}{\text{m}^3}$$

   (b) **What is the total energy density with wavelengths between 1mm and 1.01mm? Is the Rayleigh-Jeans formula a good approximation at these wavelengths?**

Chapter 2

Math Interlude A: Complex Numbers and Linear Operators