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J. D. Buckmaster and G. S. S. Ludford  
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# *Theory of Laminar Flames*

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## CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b>	ix
<b>1 Governing equations of combustion</b>	
1 Approach	1
2 Continuum theory of a mixture of reacting species	2
3 The Arrhenius factor	5
4 Differential mass diffusion; equality of $c_{pi}$ and of $m_i$	7
5 The combustion and constant-density approximations	11
6 Constant properties: nondimensionalization	13
7 Equidiffusion: Shvab–Zeldovich variables	15
8 Activation-energy asymptotics	17
<b>2 The premixed plane flame</b>	
1 Models of mixtures	20
2 Cold-boundary difficulty	21
3 Anchored flames	23
4 Asymptotic analysis	25
5 Flat burners	28
6 Near-surface, surface, and remote flames	31
7 Reactions of arbitrary order	33
8 The two-reactant model	34
<b>3 Perturbations: SVFs and NEFs</b>	
1 Prologue	38
2 Modifications of the plane premixed flame for $\mathcal{L} \neq 1$	39
3 Theory of perturbations	41
4 Steady heat loss: the excess-enthalpy flame	43
5 SVFs	47
6 Nonuniform ducts	50
7 An elementary flame holder	51
8 NEFs	53

vi *Contents*

<b>4</b>	<b>Steady burning of a linear condensate</b>	
1	Responses	58
2	Experimental results; extinction	60
3	Solid pyrolysis under adiabatic conditions	61
4	Radiation from the surface	64
5	Background radiation	67
6	True nature of effective extinction	71
7	Liquid evaporation under adiabatic conditions	73
8	Radiative exchange at the surface; distributed heat exchange	76
<b>5</b>	<b>Unsteady burning of a linear condensate</b>	
1	The problem	79
2	Solid pyrolysis	80
3	Liquid evaporation	86
4	Response to an impinging acoustic wave	87
5	Amplification	90
6	Stability of anchored flames	92
<b>6</b>	<b>Spherical diffusion flames</b>	
1	Diffusion flames	95
2	Steady combustion for $\mathcal{X} = \mathcal{L} = 1$ ; $D$ -asymptotics	98
3	The nearly adiabatic flame for $\mathcal{X}, \mathcal{L} \neq 1$ and its stability	103
4	General ignition and extinction analyses for $\mathcal{X} = \mathcal{L} = 1$	108
5	Remarks on the middle branch of the S-response	112
6	Other responses	113
7	The burning fuel drop	115
8	Further results on stability	117
<b>7</b>	<b>Cylindrical and spherical premixed flames</b>	
1	Cylindrical flames	120
2	Planar character	120
3	Near-surface, surface, and remote flames	123
4	Spherical flames; $D$ -asymptotics	124
5	Ignition and extinction	127
6	Other aspects of responses	130
<b>8</b>	<b>Multidimensional theory of premixed flames</b>	
1	The flame as a hydrodynamic discontinuity	136
2	Slow variation and near-equidiffusion	139
3	The basic equation for SVFs	142
4	Flame stretch	146
5	The basic equations for NEFs	149
6	Reduction to Stefan problems	151
<b>9</b>	<b>Burners</b>	
1	Features of a tube flame	154
2	Hydrodynamic considerations	156

<i>Contents</i>	vii
3 SVF tips	159
4 NEF tips	163
5 Quenching by a cold surface	168
6 Further hydrodynamic considerations	170
<b>10 Effects of shear and strain</b>	
1 Nonuniformities	175
2 Response of NEFs to simple shear	176
3 Response of NEFs to simple strain	179
4 More general nonuniformity	185
5 Effect of slowly varying shear	187
6 Effect of slowly varying strain	189
<b>11 Stability</b>	
1 Scope	193
2 Slowly varying perturbations of the plane wave	196
3 Buoyancy and curvature	199
4 Stability of plane NEFs	202
5 Cellular flames	206
6 Hydrodynamic effects	209
7 Curved cellular flames	214
8 Delta-function models and the right stability boundary	218
<b>12 Ignition and explosion</b>	
1 Synopsis	221
2 Spontaneous combustion (auto-ignition)	222
3 Adiabatic explosion	227
4 Explosion with heat loss	232
5 Ignition by heat flux	238
6 Auto-ignition and explosion of separated reactants	241
<i>Text references</i>	248
<i>Further references</i>	256
<i>Citation Index</i>	261
<i>Subject Index</i>	263

## PREFACE

Existing combustion books are primarily phenomenological in the sense that explanation, where provided, is usually set in an intuitive framework; when mathematical modeling is employed it is often obscured by *ad hoc* irrational approximation, the emphasis being on the explanation of existing experimental results. It is hardly necessary to add that the philosophy underlying such texts is scientifically legitimate and that they will undoubtedly stay in the mainstream of combustion science for many years to come. Nevertheless, we are of the opinion that there is need for texts that treat combustion as a mathematical science and the present work is an attempt to meet that need in part.

In this monograph we describe, within a mathematical framework, certain basic areas of combustion science, including many topics rightly covered by introductory graduate courses in the subject. Our treatment eschews sterile rigor inappropriate for a subject in which the emphasis has been physical, but we are deeply concerned with maintaining clear links between the mathematical modeling and the analytical results; irrational approximation is carefully avoided. All but the most fastidious of readers will be satisfied that the mathematical conclusions are correct, except for slips of the pen.

Although the material covered inevitably reflects our special interests and personal perspectives, the entire discussion is connected by a singular perturbation procedure known as activation-energy asymptotics. The description of reacting systems characterized by Arrhenius kinetics can be simplified when the activation energy is large, corresponding to an extreme sensitivity to temperature. The notion is an old one; certainly the Russian combustion school was aware of it by the '40s. But its full power is only achieved within the formal framework of modern singular per-

turbation theory. Developments of this nature are quite recent. Although the earliest example is possibly a 1962 study of P. A. Blythe on the flow of a reacting gas through a Laval nozzle, it was not until the '70s, following a seminal paper by W. B. Bush and F. E. Fendell (on the laminar flame speed) and the call by F. A. Williams in the 1971 *Annual Review of Fluid Mechanics*, that extensive applications to combustion theory were undertaken.

Development has been increasingly rapid. A few years ago this monograph would not have been possible; but now there are more than enough results in a wide range of topics to justify the connected account attempted here. Our hope is that, by collecting many of the results together in a single volume with unified and self-contained presentation, other applied mathematicians will be encouraged to enter the field; for, although activation-energy asymptotics is no panacea, many exciting discoveries undoubtedly lie ahead.

Our discussion is concerned only with these modern developments; we have made no attempt to trace the history of the subject before the advent of activation-energy asymptotics. No disparagement is intended. On the contrary, this new tool has been used on problems that were largely identified, formulated, and discussed by the giants of the past; those who developed the material used in this monograph stood firmly on broad shoulders. Our failure to trace the earlier work stems from the conviction that it is better left to someone more scholarly than we are, someone who has been immersed in the subject longer than we have. (Similar remarks apply to our neglect of parallel problems in other areas, such as chemical reactor theory.)

Our treatment of the physical aspects of the subject requires some comment. The neophyte is well advised to read a traditional text in conjunction with ours, since phenomenology plays only a minor role in our presentation. The description of a physical phenomenon by clear-cut mathematical analysis is applied mathematics at its best and this ultimate justification of our efforts is not neglected in the discussion. But we are never in danger of letting the existing physical world be both judge and jury for the mathematical results. Where the results do not presently appear to have convincing physical counterpart, we say so; but no topic has been omitted for lack of such a counterpart. The value of rational deductions from physically plausible models is not always immediately apparent and applied mathematics is ultimately most fruitful when permitted a great deal of independence.

Reaction-diffusion equations arise copiously elsewhere, but activation-energy asymptotics has been largely restricted to combustion. In bio-



chemical contexts, temperature effects (when present) are of a different character. For chemical reactors, problems involving large activation energy are far less common than for combustion. While significant results for chemical reactors have been obtained by activation-energy asymptotics, and more will be, it seems unlikely that the coverage will ever be as extensive as for combustion.

This monograph is not a review of laminar flames for large activation energy but an essay on the subject. The text only mentions works that helped us in writing a connected account of the topics chosen. To recognize other contributions and to give an idea of the wealth of results that has been obtained, we have compiled a list of further references. Substantial use of activation-energy asymptotics was a necessary qualification; in particular, treatments of thermal ignition in the style of Frank-Kamenetskii were excluded. Such a list is bound to be incomplete, especially since no serious attempt was made to search the literature. Any omissions are due to carelessness or ignorance, but not to malice. Only published work available to us by the end of 1981 is included; in particular, theses do not appear.

The notation has been kept as simple as possible. Rather than conscripting exotic symbols, we have made latin and greek letters do multiple duty; the meaning of a symbol should be clear from context. We have also been economical in the designation of and reference to chapters, sections, figures, and displays (so as not to litter the page with numbers): a decimal is used only for reference to another chapter. When part of a multiple display is intended, the letters *a*, *b*, ... are added to indicate the first, second, ... part. Finally, the notation used uniformly throughout the text for coefficients in asymptotic expansions is explained on page 19.

The task of writing this book has been lightened and made more pleasant by the enthusiastic encouragement we have received from so many friends and colleagues. We particularly want to thank and identify those who provided direct technical help, all of which was invaluable; they are

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xii      *Preface*

For bringing the material into the form of a final typescript we are indebted to Julia Dethier; her editorial touch is evident everywhere.

The constant support of our research by the US Army Research Office provided the climate in which such an endeavour could be undertaken. We salute Dr. Jagdish Chandra of ARO-Mathematics, whose confidence seldom seemed to waver over the years.

The monograph was started six years ago during a sabbatical at the University of Queensland, arranged by A. F. Pillow. Solid progress was made during a joint leave at the Mathematics Research Center–Wisconsin in the Fall of 1977, arranged by B. Noble. The work was finished early this year, but we have tried to up-date the material as the printing process slowly ran its course.

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December, 1981