A direct dynamics study of the \( \text{F} + \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{F} + \text{H} \) product energy distributions

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Received 18 December 1997

Abstract

Ab initio direct dynamics was used to calculate product energy distributions for the \( \text{F} + \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{F} + \text{H} \) reaction. A broad product translational energy distribution, similar to that observed experimentally, is found when the trajectories are initialized with a statistical vibrational energy distribution at the exit channel barrier. The trajectories show that, on average, orbital angular momentum is conserved in going from the exit channel barrier to products, and a model which incorporates this dynamical constraint reproduces the ensemble averaged trajectory results. © 1998 Elsevier Science B.V. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

An explanation of the product energy distributions measured [1,2] for the reaction

\[ \text{F} + \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{F} + \text{H} \]  \hspace{1cm} (R1)

remains an important issue [1–10] in unimolecular reaction rate theory. Crossed molecular beam experiments [1,2] with a reactant relative translational energy \( E_{\text{rel}} \) of 2 to 12 kcal mol\(^{-1}\), indicate that the product relative translational energy \( E_{\text{rel}} \) distribution is broad, with an average value of \( \approx 50\% \) of the total available energy. Infrared chemiluminescence experiments [3] show that the \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{F} \) product is formed with a nonstatistical vibrational energy distribution. These results are not in accord with a simple model which assumes a statistical distribution of energy at the \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{F} \cdots \text{H}^+ \) transition state, as predicted by RRKM theory, followed by repulsive energy release in which all the exit channel potential goes to product relative translation. To reconcile theory and experiment, more detailed models [4–8] have been advanced for understanding the product energy partitioning. Though these studies provided more insight into the dynamics of the Reaction (R1) product energy partitioning, they have not given quantitative interpretations of the experimental results.

One of these previous studies [8] was a classical trajectory simulation based on an analytic potential energy surface (PES) derived in part from UHF/4-31G calculations. Subsequent higher level ab initio calculations [9,10] have identified shortcomings of this analytic PES, which may affect the product energy partitioning. Thus, there is an interest in performing an additional trajectory study with a more accurate PES.

An attractive trajectory approach is `direct dynamics' [11], in which trajectories are integrated `on the fly’, using forces and second-order derivatives (when required) obtained directly from an electronic structure theory at each integration step. However, such a
calculation is computationally expensive and there is a limit on the level of electronic structure theory which may be used. Fortunately, the UHF/6-31G* level of theory, which is tractable for direct dynamics, gives stationary point, geometries and normal mode frequencies and exit channel energetics for Reaction (R1) similar to those determined at higher levels of theory, e.g., QCISD/6-311G**. In the work presented here UHF/6-31G* direct dynamics is used to study product energy partitioning for Reaction (R1) and for the reaction

\[ \text{H} + \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_3 + \text{H} \]  

(R2)

so that the dynamics for Reactions (R1) and (R2) may be compared.

The trajectories are initialized at the exit channel barrier for each of these reactions, for both practical and fundamental reasons. First, it is computationally prohibitive to use ab initio direct dynamics to simulate the complete reaction and calculate a sufficient number of events. Second, even if this could be done (e.g., by semiempirical direct dynamics [11]) it would not be the best way to use direct dynamics to calculate the product energy distributions. By initializing the trajectories at the exit channel barrier, quasiclassical conditions [12] with the correct zero point energy may be assured at the barrier. In addition, comparisons between classical and quantum dynamics have shown [13] that classical dynamics gives accurate results for a direct process like the motion down a potential energy barrier, if the trajectories are initialized with the correct quasiclassical conditions. Thus, if the correct initial ensemble of states is chosen at the barrier and the exit channel potential is correct, agreement between classical trajectory and experimental results is expected.

For rovibrationally cold reactants, the conditions in the crossed molecular beam experiments for Reaction (R1), the energy available to the products \( E' \) may be expressed as

\[ E' = E_{\text{rel}} - \Delta H_0^0 \]  

(1)

where \( E_{\text{rel}} \) is the reactant relative translational energy and \( \Delta H_0^0 \) is the 0 K heat of reaction. The experimental 300 K heats of formation [14] for \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{F} \) (−33.2 kcal mol\(^{-1}\)), \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \) (12.5 kcal mol\(^{-1}\)), \( \text{H} \) (52.1 kcal mol\(^{-1}\)) and \( \text{F} \) (19.0 kcal mol\(^{-1}\)) and experimental anharmonic frequencies for \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{F} \) and \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \) give [15] \( \Delta H_0^0 = -12.8 \) kcal mol\(^{-1}\) for Reaction (R1), which is similar to the values of \(-11\) [1], \(-14\) [2] and \(-15 \pm 2\) [10] assumed previously. \( E' \) may also be expressed as

\[ E' = E^i + E_0 \]  

(2)

where \( E^i \) is the energy at the exit channel barrier in excess of the zero point energy and \( E_0 \) is the exit channel barrier height with zero point energies included.

2. UHF/6-31G* potential energy surface

The \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \) and \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{F} \) minimum energy geometries obtained at the UHF/6-31G* level of theory are planar and in very good agreement with experiment [16,17]. The UHF/6-31G* geometries for the \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \cdots \cdot \cdot H^2 \) and \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{F} \cdots \cdot H^2 \) transition states are in good agreement with those determined at higher levels of theory [18].

The height of the exit channel barriers for Reactions (R1) and (R2) have not been converged by ab initio calculations [10,18]. The UHF/6-31G* exit channel barrier height, \( E_0 \), for Reactions (R1) and (R2), with zero point energies included, are 6.39 and 3.11 kcal mol\(^{-1}\), respectively. Using ab initio structures and vibrational frequencies to fit the \( \text{H} + \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_3 \) experimental rate constant, \( E_0 = 2.70 \) kcal mol\(^{-1}\) has been deduced for Reaction (R2) [19], in good agreement with the UHF/6-31G* value. Since the \( \text{H} + \text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{F} \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{F} \) association rate has not been measured, the above approach cannot be used to deduce a value of \( E_0 \) for this reaction. However, ab initio and experimental data were used to estimate a value of 5–6 kcal mol\(^{-1}\) for this \( E_0 \) [10], in agreement with the UHF/6-31G* value.

At the UHF/6-31G* level of theory, the two transitional bending mode frequencies are 414 and 446 cm\(^{-1}\) for \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \cdots \cdot H^2 \) and 456 and 480 cm\(^{-1}\) for \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{F} \cdots \cdot H^2 \). The QCISD/6-311G** and MRCI/cc-pVDZ higher levels of theory give transitional mode frequencies for \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \cdots \cdot H^2 \) which are

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To be discussed in a subsequent paper.
only ten and two percent different than the UHF/6-31G* values, respectively [18]. Fig. 1 shows that the UHF/6-31G* reaction coordinate eigenvectors for both C₂H₄ · · · H⁺ and C₂H₂F · · · H⁺ include H–C···H angle bending motion. The same property is found at the higher level of theories (see footnote 1).

3. Direct dynamics method

Ensembles of trajectories with total energies \( E^\text{rel} \) of 14, 19 and 24 kcal mol\(^{-1} \) were initialized at the exit channel barriers for Reactions (R1) and (R2) and propagated towards products. From Eqs. (1) and (2), these \( E^\text{rel} \) values correspond to \( E^\text{rel} \) of 8, 13 and 18 kcal mol\(^{-1} \) for Reaction (R1), which are in the range of \( E^\text{rel} \) values studied experimentally (2–12 kcal mol\(^{-1} \)) and in the classical trajectory simulation (20 kcal mol\(^{-1} \)).

The RRKM assumption [20,21] that vibrational energy levels of the transition state have equal probabilities of being populated, is used to choose initial conditions for the trajectories. The total angular momentum \( J \) and its components \( J^x, J^y \) and \( J^z \) in the principal rotational axes frame of the transition state were chosen from distributions appropriate for the molecular beam experiments. These distributions were determined by running trajectories on the analytic PES for the complete F + C₂H₄ → C₂H₂F + H reaction and halting the trajectories at the exit channel barrier (specified by the C₂H₂F · · · H⁺ distance \( r_\text{HC} = 1.95 \) Å). The C₂H₂F · · · H⁺ moiety was then rotated into its principal axis frame to find \( J^x, J^y \) and \( J^z \). The total angular momentum \( J \) distribution is quite broad, as found in the previous trajectory study, i.e., Fig. 3c of Ref. [8]. For a F + C₂H₄ \( E^\text{rel} \) of 13.0 kcal mol\(^{-1} \), i.e., \( E^\text{rel} = 19 \) kcal mol\(^{-1} \) for the UHF/6-31G* PES, the \( J \) distribution is peaked at approximately 40 \( h \) with an average of 52.3 \( h \). The distributions of \( J^x, J^y \) and \( J^z \) for this \( J \) distribution are shown in Fig. 2 (\( J^x \) is the component of \( J \) that
approximately lies along the F-C-C axis and \( J_i \) the component perpendicular to the F-C-C plane. The average values of the magnitudes of the distributions are \( \langle J_x \rangle = 15.6 \hbar \), \( \langle J_y \rangle = 30.4 \hbar \) and \( \langle J_z \rangle = 31.1 \hbar \). It is interesting to note that the similar values for \( \langle J_x \rangle \) and \( \langle J_y \rangle \) and the finding that the probabilities for all three components peak at zero \( \hbar \) consistent with a random projection of \( J \) do not support the kinematic model proposed by Lee and coworkers as deduced previously.

Quasiclassical rigid rotor/normal mode sampling [12,23] was used to select initial conditions for the UHF/6-31G* direct dynamics trajectories by: (1) selecting \( J \) and its components from the above distributions and calculating the transition state rotational energy from

\[
E_{\text{rot}} = \sum_{i=x,y,z} \frac{(J_i^*)^2}{2I_i^*}
\]

where the \( I_i^* \) are the transition state’s principal moments of inertia; (2) randomly selecting a transition state normal mode vibrational energy level in the range \( 0 - E_{\text{rot}} \) [23], where

\[
E_{\text{rot}} = E^1 - E_{\text{rot}}^1
\]

and (3) transforming the normal mode energies to Cartesian coordinates and momenta [24,25].

The trajectories were propagated by integrating Newton’s equations of motion either in Cartesian coordinates and momenta using the Gauss-Radau algorithm [26–28], or by integrating the instantaneous normal modes [29–31]. The relative merits of these techniques will be discussed elsewhere [32]. Trajectories were integrated until the force between the product fragments was less than \( 10^{-4} \text{ kcal mol}^{-1} \text{ Å}^{-1} \). Trajectories were typically 50 to 100 fs, and the products were separated by 5.5–6.0 Å. A typical trajectory for Reaction (R2) was integrated in \( \approx 176 \text{ min on an IBM RS6000/560.} \)

Properties that were monitored are product relative translational, rotational and vibrational energies, \( E_{\text{rel}}^1 \), \( E_{\text{rot}}^1 \) and \( E_{\text{vib}}^{0} \); the orbital \( I \) and \( C_2 \text{H}_4 \text{F} \) (or \( C_2 \text{H}_4 \)) rotational angular momentum \( J \) at the transition state and for the products; the fragment’s relative translational energy \( E_{\text{rel}}^2 \) at the transition state; the centrifugal potential at the transition state,

\[
V_{\text{cen}}^{\pm} = \frac{(l^2)^2}{2\mu(r^2)^2}
\]

where \( l^2 \) is the fragments’ orbital angular momentum, \( \mu \) their reduced mass and \( r^2 \) their center of mass distance; and the sum

\[
E_{\text{rel}}^{\pm} = E_{\text{rel}}^1 + V_{\text{cen}}^{\pm} + E_{0}^{\pm}
\]

which would be the product relative translational energy for an isotropic exit channel potential.

4. Results and discussion

Ensembles of 140–160 trajectories were calculated for Reactions (R1) and (R2), with different conditions for \( E^1 \) and \( J \). The results are listed in Table 1. The entry in the fifth row of the table is for a calculation in which the forces are for the \( C_2 \text{H}_4 \) PES, but with the mass of one of the ethylenic H atoms of the \( \text{H} \cdots \text{CH}_2 \) moiety changed to the mass of a F atom to model the kinematics of the \( C_2 \text{H}_4 \text{F} \cdots \text{H} \cdots \text{H} \rightarrow C_2 \text{H}_4 \text{F} + \text{H} \) reaction. The average fraction \( \langle f_{\text{rel}}^1 \rangle \) of the available energy that goes to \( E_{\text{rel}}^1 \) is slightly larger for Reaction (R1) than for Reaction (R2). Within statistical uncertainty, \( \langle f_{\text{rel}}^1 \rangle \) is the same for \( J = 0 \) and the simulations with a \( J \) distribution to model the beam experiments, and is also insensitive to substituting the mass of an ethylene H atom by the F mass. The value of \( \langle f_{\text{rel}}^1 \rangle = 0.50 \) found here for Reaction (R1) is larger than the 0.32 found from the previous trajectory study.

The same angular momentum constraints observed in the previous trajectory study are found in this direct dynamics simulation. The system’s total angular momentum \( J \) is primarily converted to product \( (C_2 \text{H}_4 \text{F} \text{ or } C_2 \text{H}_4 \text{F}) \) rotational angular momentum \( J' \). This correlation explains why \( \langle f_{\text{rel}}^1 \rangle \) significantly increases for the \( C_2 \text{H}_4 \cdots \text{H} \cdots \text{H} \rightarrow C_2 \text{H}_4 + \text{H} \) simulation when \( J \) changes from zero to a distribution.
representing the molecular beam experiments. The ensemble averaged orbital angular momentum is conserved quite well when proceeding from the transition state to the products. This is illustrated by the similarity of the \( \langle l^2 \rangle \) and \( \langle l' \rangle \) values in Table 1. The correlation coefficients for \( \langle l^2, l' \rangle \), which provide a measure of the orbital angular momentum conservation over individual trajectories, range from 0.75 to 0.99 for the conditions shown in Table 1. Substituting the fluorine mass for the hydrogen mass increases the \( \langle l^2, l' \rangle \) correlation, and integration on the \( \text{CHF} \) PES instead of the \( \text{CH} \) PES decreases the correlation.

Because of the conservation of \( \langle l \rangle \) in the exit channel, the centrifugal potential at the transition state, Eq. (5), is, on the average, converted to product relative translational energy. Furthermore, a model that assumes the exit channel barrier potential is transferred to product translation, Eq. (6), gives a good representation of the \( E_{rel} \) averages. The only differences between \( \langle E_{rel} \rangle \) and \( \langle E_{rel} \rangle \) larger than 0.3 kcal mol\(^{-1}\) are for the \( J = 0 \) \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \cdots \text{H}^+ \) calculations with \( E^s \) of 19.0 and 24.0 kcal mol\(^{-1}\). This correlation between \( E_{rel}^{iso} \) and \( E_{rel} \) is only mildly retained for individual trajectories. For Reaction (R2), the \( \langle E_{rel}^{iso}, E_{rel} \rangle \) correlation coefficient varies from 0.76 at \( E^s = 24 \) kcal mol\(^{-1}\), \( J = 0 \), to 0.84 at \( E^s = 19 \) kcal mol\(^{-1}\) with \( J \) representing the beam simulations. For Reaction (R1) at \( E^s = 19 \) kcal mol\(^{-1}\) and \( J \) representing the beam simulations, the \( \langle E_{rel}^{iso}, E_{rel} \rangle \) correlation coefficient is just 0.69.

Distributions of \( E_{rel} \) and \( E_{rel}^{iso} \) are compared in Fig. 3 for Reaction (R2) with \( E^s = 19 \) kcal mol\(^{-1}\). The \( E_{rel}^{iso} \) distribution gives a good overall representation of the product relative translational energy distribution \( \mathcal{P}(E_{rel}) \). Choosing \( J \) to represent the beam simulation instead of setting it to zero has the effect of broadening, but not significantly shifting, the distribution (see \( \langle f_{rel} \rangle \) in Table 1).

Comparison of the \( \mathcal{P}(E_{rel}) \) and \( \mathcal{P}(E_{rel}^{iso}) \) for Reaction (R1) with \( E^s = 19 \) kcal mol\(^{-1}\) and with the \( J \) distribution representing the beam simulation is given in Fig. 4. (These conditions correspond to \( E_{rel} = 12.6 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial conditions</th>
<th>Transition state</th>
<th>Products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( E^s )</td>
<td>( J )</td>
<td>( E_{rel}^{iso} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>C(_2)H(_4) \cdots \text{H}^+ \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 + \text{H}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>beam (^b)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>beam (^b,c)</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>beam (^b)</td>
<td>C(_2)H(_4) \cdots \text{H}^+ \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{F} + \text{H}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Energy is in kcal mol\(^{-1}\) and angular momentum in units of \( \hbar \). The standard deviation in the average \( E_{rel}^{iso} \), \( f_{rel}^{iso} \), and \( f_{vb} \) is \( \approx 6\% \), and in \( E_{rel}^{iso} \), \( f_{rel}^{iso} \), \( l^2 \), \( j^2 \), \( f \) and \( f' \) is \( \approx 3\% \). \(^b\) The \( J \) distribution simulated for \( \text{F} + \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{F} \cdots \text{H}^+ \) is shown in Fig. 2. \(^c\) Forces determined from the \( \text{C}_2\text{H}_4 \) surface, but propagation performed using masses appropriate to the fluorinated reaction (see text).
The $E_{\text{rel}}$ distribution is broader than the $E_{\text{rel}}^0$ distribution, but since the broadening is to both higher and lower energies, there is not a significant shift in the averages of the distributions. Also shown in Fig. 4 is the $E_{\text{rel}}$ distribution for $E_{\text{rel}} = 12.1$ kcal mol$^{-1}$ deduced from the crossed molecular beam study of Reaction (R1) [2]. The UHF/6-31G* direct dynamics distribution has similar broadening as the experimental distribution, and the $\langle f'_{\text{rel}} \rangle$ of 0.5 obtained from the direct dynamics study is the same as the experimental value. The stronger peaking in the direct dynamics $E_{\text{rel}}$ distribution is probably not significant. To deduce the experimental $P(E_{\text{rel}})$, a translation to a center of mass frame from the experimental laboratory frame was required. This transformation may be rather insensitive to peaking in $P(E_{\text{rel}})$ as long as the distribution has the proper breadth. Also, in the experiment there is a small spread in the initial relative translational energy, which has the effect of removing structure, e.g. peaking, in the $P(E_{\text{rel}})$ [33].

In summary, the following are the important results of the direct dynamics study of the $\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{F} \cdot \cdot \cdot \text{H}^+ \to \text{C}_2\text{H}_2\text{F} + \text{H}$ exit channel dynamics.

1. As observed in the previous trajectory study of the complete reaction, angular momentum constraints are important. Overall rotational angular momentum is converted to $\text{C}_2\text{H}_2\text{F}$ rotational angular momentum and orbital angular momentum is, on the average, conserved in proceeding from the exit channel transition state to the products.

2. A model based on isotropic exit channel dynamics which assumes the product relative translational distribution $P(E_{\text{rel}})$ arises from the centrifugal potential and relative translational energy distributions at the transition state plus the exit channel potential release, gives very good agreement with the ensemble averaged trajectory results. However, this model is not valid for individual trajectories.

3. If a statistical population of vibrational energy levels at the exit channel transition state is assumed, and the angular momentum is chosen to represent the molecular beam experiment, the UHF/6-31G* direct dynamics $E_{\text{rel}}$ distribution is similar to the distribution deduced from crossed molecular beam experiments, and the average fraction of the available energy that goes to product translation is the same, i.e., 0.5.

Acknowledgements

K.B. and W.L.H. are grateful for financial support from the National Science Foundation, CHE-94-03780. H.B.S. is grateful for support from the same source, CHE-94-00678.

References

