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University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742-4111**

**Physics 603**

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #3**

Spring 2014

Due date for problems: Thursday, Feb. 20 [deadline on Feb. 25].

1. (10) Construct the normalized canonical distribution  $\rho(\mathbf{r}, \mathbf{p})$  for a single (classical) particle moving in the presence of gravity in a vertical cylinder of [large] cross-sectional area  $A$  (and infinite height above its base at  $z=0$ ). Then calculate

- a) the probability of the particle being found between heights  $h$  and  $h+dh$  above the cylinder's base,
- b) the mean height, and
- c) the mean (total) energy of the particle.
- d) Find the mean energy associated with a mode  $\propto x^n$  in the half-space  $x > 0$ , for any positive integer  $n$ .

2. (10) A particle of mass  $m$  moves in a circle of radius  $R$  in a vertical plane in the earth's gravitational field (so forming an ideal rigid pendulum).

- a) Write the Hamiltonian  $\mathcal{H}$  of the system in terms of the angular coordinate  $\theta$  describing the displacement from the position of lowest potential energy and the angular momentum  $\ell$ . You may do this directly or more formally starting from the Lagrangian  $\mathcal{L}(\theta, \dot{\theta})$
- b) Then construct the normalized canonical distribution function  $\rho(\theta, \ell=p_\theta) = Z^{-1} \exp[-\beta \mathcal{H}]$ .
- c) Obtain therefrom a formula for the probability of an angular displacement between  $\theta$  and  $\theta + d\theta$ .
- d) In the limit of large mass (or low temperature), find an explicit expression for the mean square angular displacement  $\langle \theta^2 \rangle$  for the mean height above the lowest point of the circle. [Use the small-angle approximation  $\cos \theta \rightarrow 1 - \frac{1}{2} \theta^2$ ].
- e) Find a similar expression for  $\langle \theta^2 \rangle$  at high temperatures, both the leading term and the first  $T$ -dependent correction.

Problem 4, on the next page, is from a qualifier exam.

A fourth problem will be added, but I want to post this before the storm closure.

3.

First consider a classical ideal gas at temperature  $T$  consisting of  $N$  molecules and initially confined in a volume  $V_i$ . Then the gas is allowed to expand to a final volume  $V_f$  in two different ways:

- Free expansion.* The gas is thermally insulated from its environment and experiences free irreversible expansion into a vacuum. Calculate the entropy change of the gas  $\Delta S_{\text{irr}}^{\text{gas}} = S_f - S_i$  by comparing the number of accessible states before and after the expansion. (8 points)
- Isothermal expansion.* The gas is in thermal contact with a reservoir of temperature  $T$  and experiences a slow reversible quasistatic expansion, e.g. produced by a slow motion of a piston that limits the gas volume. Calculate the work  $W$  done on the gas in this process, the change  $\Delta U = U_f - U_i$  of the internal energy of the gas, and the heat  $Q$  transferred to the gas from the environment. Calculate the entropy change of the gas  $\Delta S_{\text{rev}}^{\text{gas}} = S_f - S_i$  in this reversible process by using the formula  $\Delta S = Q/T$ . Compare your answers for  $\Delta S_{\text{irr}}^{\text{gas}}$  and  $\Delta S_{\text{rev}}^{\text{gas}}$ . Are the two results the same or different? Explain why. (8 points).
- What are the entropy changes in the environment for these two cases:  $\Delta S_{\text{irr}}^{\text{env}}$  and  $\Delta S_{\text{rev}}^{\text{env}}$ ? What are the total entropy changes in the gas and the environment for these two cases:  $\Delta S_{\text{irr}}^{\text{tot}} = \Delta S_{\text{irr}}^{\text{gas}} + \Delta S_{\text{irr}}^{\text{env}}$  and  $\Delta S_{\text{rev}}^{\text{tot}} = \Delta S_{\text{rev}}^{\text{gas}} + \Delta S_{\text{rev}}^{\text{env}}$ ? Are  $\Delta S_{\text{irr}}^{\text{tot}}$  and  $\Delta S_{\text{rev}}^{\text{tot}}$  the same or different? Explain why. (5 points) [The second half of this problem deals with a degenerate Fermi gas.]

NOT ASSIGNED, BUT SOLUTION WILL BE PROVIDED.

The assigned #4 is on p. 1

XXX  
XX  
XXX

"Whether the second law really is a law in any meaningful and scientific sense of the term may legitimately be doubted. Interestingly enough, the theory of evolution itself contradicts the second law of thermodynamics, as does each and every instance of life." (Tom Bethell, *The American Spectator*, Nov. 1980)

(a) Give a quantitative statement of the second law of thermodynamics involving the entropy, clearly stating under what conditions the law holds. [4 points]

(b) Comment briefly (in fifty words or, preferably, fewer) on how life might exist and evolution might occur without violating the second law. [4 points]

*SKIP this*  
(c) Lord Kelvin's classical statement of the second law was that a transformation whose only final result is to transform heat (from a fixed-temperature reservoir) into work is impossible. Show that this is true by using part (a) and energy conservation. [4 points]

(d) By having two reservoirs at  $T_h$  and  $T_c$ , where  $T_c < T_h$ , it is possible to convert some heat into work. Derive an expression for the efficiency of a reversible motor which operates between  $T_c$  and  $T_h$  in terms of  $T_c$  and  $T_h$ . [4 points]

(e) Calculate the change in entropy of an ideal monatomic gas that is reversibly taken from a temperature  $T_c$  to a temperature  $T_h$ . Assume that the volume of the gas is constant. [4 points]