The concept of time correlation functions is a very convenient theoretical tool in describing relaxation processes in multiparticle systems because, on one hand, correlation functions are directly related to experimentally measured quantities (for example, intensities in spectroscopic studies and kinetic coefficients via the Kubo-Green relation) and, on the other hand, the concept is also applicable beyond the equilibrium case. We show that the formalism of memory functions and the method of recurrence relations allow formulating a self-consistent approach for describing relaxation processes in classical multiparticle systems without needing a priori approximations of time correlation functions by model dependences and with the satisfaction of sum rules and other physical conditions guaranteed. We also demonstrate that the approach can be used to treat the simplest relaxation scenarios and to develop microscopic theories of transport phenomena in liquids, the propagation of density fluctuations in equilibrium simple liquids, and structure relaxation in supercooled liquids. This approach generalizes the mode-coupling approximation in the Götte-Leutheusser realization and the Yulmetyev-Shurygin correlation approximations.

Keywords: relaxation process, spatial–time correlation, self-consistent description, mode-coupling approximation, disordered system, projection operator, integro-differential equation, recurrence relation

Contents

1. Introduction ..................................... ................ 450
2. Projection operators and dynamical correlations ...................................................... 451
3. Method of recurrence relations .............................................................. ................ 456
3.1. Basic recurrence relations .............................................................. ................ 456
3.2. Continued fraction and integro-differential equations .................................................. 457
4. Self-consistent approach .............................................................. ................ 459
4.1. Finite set of dynamical variables .............................................................. ................ 460
4.1.1. Case ν = 2 ............................................. 460
4.1.2. Case ν = 3 ............................................. 460
4.2. Infinite set of dynamical variables: Relation between time scales .................................................. 461
4.2.1. Gaussian relaxation .............................................................. ................ 461
4.2.2. Damped oscillating correlator .............................................................. ................ 461
4.2.3. Kinetic coefficients: Self-diffusion and the density of vibrational states in an equilibrium simple liquid .............................................................. ................ 462
4.2.4. Density fluctuations in equilibrium simple liquids .............................................................. ................ 465
4.3. Scaling in relaxation .............................................................. ................ 470
4.3.1. Structure relaxation in supercooled liquids: Mode-coupling approximation ............. ................ 470