

## List of Figures

Figure	Title	page
2.1	Flowchart of a classical trajectory simulation.	13
3.1	Equilibrium geometry of 3-oxetanone molecule and the two considered thermal decomposition pathways forming ketene + formaldehyde and ethylene oxide + carbon monoxide.	15
3.2	Optimized geometries at B3LYP/6-31G*, bond angle values are in degree (°) and bond lengths in angstroms (Å).	17
3.3	Potential energy profile of 3-oxetanone dissociation pathways computed at the B3LYP/6-31G* level of theory. The numbers in bracket are energies in kcal/mol relative to the reactant 3-oxetanone molecule. The corresponding optimized geometries are also shown.	18
3.4	Total energy as a function of time for a few sample classical trajectories. First, second, and third columns correspond to $E_{\text{tot}} = 150, 200, \text{ and } 300$ kcal/mol, respectively. Trajectory outcomes (reaction products) are shown inside the plots. In all plots, x-axes ranges are same.	19
3.5	Potential energy profiles for (a) 3-oxetanone dissociating to $\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2 + \text{CO}$ (b) isomerization of $\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2$ to ethylene oxide (c) dissociation of $\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2$ to $\text{HCHO} + \text{CH}_2$ and (d) ketene dissociation to $\text{CH}_2 + \text{CO}$ . The numbers in brackets are energies in kcal/mol, relative to the corresponding reactants.	21
3.6	Snapshots of trajectories showing dissociation of 3-oxetanone to (a) $\text{HCHO} + \text{CH}_2\text{CO} \longrightarrow \text{HCHO} + \text{CH}_2 + \text{CO}$ (b) $\text{CO} + \text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2 \longrightarrow \text{CO} + \text{c-C}_2\text{H}_4\text{O} \longrightarrow \text{CO} + \text{CH}_3\text{CHO}$ and (c) $\text{CO} + \text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2 \longrightarrow \text{CO} + \text{CH}_2 + \text{HCHO}$ .	21
3.7	(a) Snapshots of a typical trajectory showing dissociation of 3-oxetanone to CO and $\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2$ which isomerizes to ethylene oxide (b) $\text{C}_1-\text{C}_2$ distance (in Å) (c) $\angle \text{C}_1-\text{O}-\text{C}_2$ angle (in degree) as a function of time. Isomerization of $\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2$ to ethylene oxide happens around 1700 fs.	23
3.8	Optimized geometries of two isomers of ethylene oxide at B3LYP/6-31G* level	24
3.9	Optimized geometries at B3LYP/6-31G*, bond angle values are in degree (°) and bond lengths in angstroms (Å).	25
3.10	Snapshots of a typical trajectory showing dissociation of (a) $\text{c-C}_3\text{H}_4\text{O}_2 \longrightarrow \text{H}_2 + \text{c-COCH}_2\text{CO} \longrightarrow \text{H}_2 + \text{CO} + \text{CH}_2\text{CO} \longrightarrow \text{H}_2 + 2\text{CO} + \text{CH}_2$ (b) $\text{c-C}_3\text{H}_4\text{O}_2 \longrightarrow \text{CH}_3\text{COCHO} \longrightarrow \text{CH}_3 + \text{CO} + \text{CHO}$ (c) $\text{c-C}_3\text{H}_4\text{O}_2 \longrightarrow \text{CH}_2 + \text{CHOCHO} \longrightarrow \text{CH}_2 + \text{CO} + \text{HCHO}$ (d) $\text{c-C}_3\text{H}_4\text{O}_2 \longrightarrow \text{CO} + \text{CH}_2\text{CHOH} \longrightarrow \text{CO} + \text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{C}_2\text{H}_2$	26
3.11	Fraction of trajectories $f_T$ as a function of $E_{\text{tot}}$ showing (a) CO elimination via primary dissociation of 3-oxetanone (red), secondary decomposition of reaction products (green), and the total amount of trajectories eliminating CO (black) (b) the branching of 3-oxetanone dissociation products into various different pathways.	27
3.12	RRKM theory rate constants $k_{\text{RRKM}}$ as a function of energy for the dissociation pathways of 3-oxetanone.	28
4.1	Potential energy profiles of dissociation pathways of halons computed using density functional PBE0/6-31G* level of theory. Energies given are relative to that of respective reactants and are without zero point energy corrections.	37
4.2	Intrinsic reaction coordinate (IRC) data for the concerted elimination of $\text{X}_2$ from $\text{CF}_2\text{X}_2$ ( $\text{X}=\text{Cl}, \text{Br}$ ) computed using PBE0/6-31G* theory. Energies are in units of kcal/mol.	38

4.3	Snapshots of $\text{CF}_2\text{Cl}_2 \longrightarrow \text{CF}_2 + \text{Cl}_2$ trajectories dissociating via (a) isomerization and (b) roaming pathway. (c) shows C–Cl(1) and C–Cl(2) bond distances (in Å) for the isomerization (red) and roaming (blue) trajectories. The numbers present inside each frame is time in fs.	40
4.4	Snapshots of $\text{CF}_2\text{Br}_2 \longrightarrow \text{CF}_2 + \text{Br}_2$ trajectories dissociating via (a) concerted (b) isomerization and (c) roaming pathway. Number inside each frame is time in fs at which the snapshot was taken. (d) shows C–Br(1) and C–Br(2) bond distances (in Å) for the concerted (black), isomerization (red), and roaming (blue) trajectories. Distributions of time gaps (in fs) between the two C–Br bond cleavages dissociating via isomerization (black) and the concerted (red) pathway are shown in (e).	40
4.5	Snapshots of a $\text{CHBr}_3$ trajectory forming (a) $\text{Br}_2 + \text{CHBr}$ and (b) $\text{HBr} + \text{CBr}_2$ products. (c) shows C–Br(1) and C–Br(2) distances for the trajectory given in (a). (d) shows C–Br distance in $x$ -axis and C–H distance in $y$ -axis for the trajectory shown in (b). The bond distances are given in units of Å.	42
4.6	Snapshots of $\text{CH}_2\text{BrCl}$ trajectories forming $\text{HBr} + \text{CHCl}$ via (a) concerted and (b) radical recombination pathway. Corresponding time evolved C–Br ( $x$ -axis) and C–H ( $y$ -axis) distances (in Å) are given in (c) and (d).	43
4.7	Snapshots of trajectories showing $\text{CH}_2\text{BrCl} \longrightarrow \text{HCl} + \text{CHBr}$ reaction via (a) concerted and (b) radical recombinations. (c) and (d) show C–Cl distance in $x$ -axis and C–H distance in $y$ -axis in units of Å.	43
4.8	Snapshots of trajectories showing (a) $\text{CF}_2\text{Cl}_2 \longrightarrow \text{Cl} + \text{CF}_2\text{Cl}$ radical dissociation (b) $\text{CF}_2\text{Br}_2 \longrightarrow \text{CFBr} + \text{BrF}$ reaction via isomerization (c) $\text{CF}_2\text{Br}_2 \longrightarrow \text{Br} + \text{CF}_2\text{Br}$ radical dissociation (d) $\text{CHBr}_3 \longrightarrow \text{Br} + \text{CHBr}_2$ radical dissociation (e) $\text{CHBr}_3 \longrightarrow \text{HBr} + \text{CBr}_2$ via concerted mechanism (f) $\text{CH}_2\text{BrCl} \longrightarrow \text{Cl} + \text{CH}_2\text{Br}$ via isomerization and (g) $\text{CH}_2\text{BrCl} \longrightarrow \text{Br} + \text{CH}_2\text{Cl}$ radical dissociation. Number inside each frame is time in fs at which the snapshot was taken.	44
5.1	Dissociation energy profiles of $\text{RC(O)N}_3$ ( $\text{R} = \text{CH}_3$ and $\text{F}$ ) computed using B3LYP/6-31+G* level of electronic structure theory. Energies are given in kcal/mol units and zero point energy not corrected.	51
5.2	Optimized geometries of the stationary points on the $\text{CH}_3\text{C(O)N}_3$ potential energy surface	52
5.3	Optimized geometries of the stationary points on the $\text{FC(O)N}_3$ potential energy surface	53
5.4	Total energy as a function of time for a few sample classical trajectories. In all plots, $x$ -axes ranges are same, $y$ -axes show total energy in units of kcal/mol.	54
5.5	Numbering system used for discussion purposes in the text.	54
5.6	Density plots (a), (b), and (c) show time evolved N3–N4 ( $x$ -axes) and C2–N3 ( $y$ -axes) bond distances (in Å) for $\text{CH}_3\text{C(O)N}_3$ dissociation. (a) shows data from $E_{\text{tot}} = 90$ kcal/mol simulation, (b) and (c) show data from 120 kcal/mol simulation. Red, and Blue colors correspond to minimum and maximum density respectively.	55
5.7	(a) shows time evolved N3–N4 and C2–N3 bond distances (in Å) for $\text{CH}_3\text{C(O)N}_3$ dissociation for a few sample trajectories. Red circles correspond to a concerted trajectory and blue triangles correspond to a stepwise trajectory resulting in the $\text{CH}_3\text{NCO}$ final product. The green squares correspond to a stepwise trajectory existing as nitrene when the calculation was stopped. The black thick line in this plot is the IRC data for the concerted pathway. (b) shows lifetimes $\tau$ (in fs) of the intermediate nitrene species calculated from the trajectories.	56
5.8	Snapshots of few example trajectories, (a) concerted $\text{CH}_3\text{C(O)N}_3$ dissociation; (b) stepwise $\text{CH}_3\text{C(O)N}_3$ dissociation; (c) concerted $\text{FC(O)N}_3$ dissociation followed by $\text{FNCO} \longleftrightarrow \text{FC(O)N}$ isomerization; (d) $\text{FC(O)N}_3$ stepwise dissociation followed by $\text{FNCO} \longrightarrow \text{FC(O)N}$ isomerization. The numbers inside each frame is time in fs at which the snapshot was taken.	57

- 5.9 Time evolved N3-N4 and F1-N3 bond distances (in Å) computed from the FC(O)N<sub>3</sub> trajectories are shown in density plots (a), (b), (d), and (e). Distributions of lifetimes  $\tau$  (in fs) of the intermediate nitrene species are shown in (c) and (f). Top panels show data from the low energy ( $E_{\text{tot}} = 90$  kcal/mol) simulation and the bottom panels show results of high energy (120 kcal/mol) simulation. Red, and Blue colors correspond to minimum and maximum density respectively. 58
- 5.10 Time evolved N3-N4 and F1-N3 bond distances (in Å) of the FC(O)N<sub>3</sub> system, for a concerted trajectory (red circles), stepwise trajectory (blue triangles), and a concerted trajectory forming the nitrene intermediate (green squares). The black thick line in this plot is the IRC data for the concerted pathway. Distributions of lifetimes  $\tau$  (in fs) of the intermediate nitrene species are shown in (b). 59

