Contents

1. Introduction 1

PART I: BASIC LASER THEORY

2. Elements of Quantum Mechanics 9

2.1. Introduction 9
2.2. Wave Packet 9
2.3. The Schrödinger Equation 13
2.4. Physical Interpretation of Ψ and Its Normalization 16
2.5. Expectation Values of Dynamical Quantities 17
2.6. The Commutator 19
2.7. The Uncertainty Principle 19
2.8. The Linear Harmonic Oscillator 22
2.9. Orthogonality of Wave Functions 25
2.10. The Hydrogenlike Atom Problem 27
2.11. Some Simple Solutions of the Schrödinger Equation 29

3. The Einstein Coefficients and Light Amplification 33

3.1. Introduction 33
3.2. The Einstein Coefficients 33
3.3. Quantum Theory for the Evaluation of the Transition Rates and Einstein Coefficients 43
3.3.1. Interaction with Radiation Having a Broad Spectrum . 46
3.3.2. Interaction of a Near-Monochromatic Wave with an Atom Having a Broad Frequency Response 50
3.4. More Accurate Solution for the Two-Level System 51
3.5. Line-Broadening Mechanisms 54
3.6. Saturation Behavior of Homogeneously and Inhomogeneously Broadened Transitions 59

4. Laser Rate Equations 63

4.1. Introduction 63
4.2. The Three-Level System 64

4.3. The Four-Level System 69
4.4. Variation of Laser Power around Threshold 75
4.5. Optimum Output Coupling 81
4.6. Laser Spiking 82

5. Semiclassical Theory of the Laser 85

5.1. Introduction 85
5.2. Cavity Modes 86
5.3. Polarization of the Cavity Medium 92
5.3.1. First-Order Theory 96
5.3.2. Higher-Order Theory 101

6. Optical Resonators 107

6.1. Introduction 107
6.2. Modes of a Rectangular Cavity and the Open Planar Resonator 108
6.3. The Quality Factor 115
6.4. The Ultimate Linewidth of the Laser 119
6.5. Transverse and Longitudinal Mode Selection 121
6.5.1. Transverse Mode Selection 121
6.5.2. Longitudinal Mode Selection 122
6.6. *Q* Switching 123
6.7. Mode Locking in Lasers 125
6.8. Confocal Resonator System 129
6.9. Planar Resonators 138
6.10. General Spherical Resonator 141
6.11. Geometrical Optics Analysis of Optical Resonators 144

7. Vector Spaces and Linear Operators: Dirac Notation 155

7.1. Introduction 155
7.2. The Bra and Ket Notation 155
7.3. Linear Operators 156
7.4. The Eigenvalue Equation 158
7.5. Observables 159
7.6. The Harmonic Oscillator Problem 160
7.6.1. The Number Operator 163
7.6.2. The Uncertainty Product 164
7.6.3. The Coherent States 165
7.7. Time Development of States 167
7.8. The Density Operator 169
7.9. The Schrödinger and Heisenberg Pictures 172

8. Quantum Theory of Interaction of Radiation Field with Matter 177

8.1. Introduction 177
8.2. Quantization of the Electromagnetic Field 178

8.3. The Eigenkets of the Hamiltonian 184
8.4. The Coherent States 186
8.5. Transition Rates 189
8.6. The Phase Operator 194

9. Properties of Laser Beams and Types of Lasers 199

9.1. Introduction 199
9.2. Coherence Properties of Laser Light 199
9.2.1. Temporal Coherence 199
9.2.2. Spatial Coherence 202
9.2.3. Directionality 205
9.3. The Ruby Laser 209
9.4. The Helium–Neon Laser 211
9.5. Four-Level Solid State Lasers 214
9.6. The Carbon Dioxide Laser 215
9.7. Dye Lasers 217
9.8. Semiconductor Lasers 219

PART II: SOME IMPORTANT APPLICATIONS OF LASERS

10. Spatial Frequency Filtering and Holography 227

10.1. Introduction 227
10.2. Spatial Frequency Filtering 227
10.3. Holography 233

11. Laser-Induced Fusion 239

11.1. Introduction 239
11.2. The Fusion Process 239
11.3. The Laser Energy Requirements 241
11.4. The Laser-Induced Fusion Reactor 245

12. Lightwave Communications 253

12.1. Introduction 253
12.2. Large Information-Carrying Capacity of Lightwaves 255
12.3. Components of a Lightwave Communication System 264
12.3.1. The Optical Fiber 264
12.3.2. Modulators and Detectors 270

13. Lasers in Science 273

13.1. Introduction 273
13.2. Harmonic Generation 273
13.3. Stimulated Raman Emission 277
13.4. Self-Focusing 278
13.5. Lasers in Chemistry 279

13.6. Lasers and Ether Drift 280
13.7. Rotation of the Earth 281
13.8. Photon Statistics 283
13.9. Lasers in Isotope Separation 286
13.9.1. Separation Using Radiation Pressure 288
13.9.2. Separation by Selective Photoionization or Photodissociation 289
13.9.3. Photochemical Separation 290

14. Lasers in Industry 291
14.1. Introduction 291
14.2. Applications in Material Processing 294
14.2.1. Laser Welding 294
14.2.2. Hole Drilling 295
14.2.3. Laser Cutting 297
14.2.4. Other Applications 299
14.3. Laser Tracking 300
14.4. Lidar 304
14.5. Lasers in Medicine 306
14.6. Precision Length Measurement 307
14.7. Velocity Measurement 308

PART III: THE NOBEL LECTURES

Production of Coherent Radiation by Atoms and Molecules . . . 313
Charles H. Townes
Quantum Electronics 341
A. M. Prochorov
Semiconductor Lasers 349
Nicolai G. Basov
Holography, 1948–1971 365
Dennis Gabor

Appendix
A. The Fourier Transform 403
B. Propagation of a Gaussian Wave Packet 412
C. Planck's Law 413
D. The Density of States 416
E. The Fourier Transforming Property of a Lens 418
F. The Natural Lineshape Function 421

References 425
Index 429