

Temperature dependence of case II diffusion

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Rutherford backscattering spectrometry was used to measure the front velocity V and the local volume fraction $\phi(x)$ versus depth x of iodo-hexane in polystyrene as a function of temperature during case II diffusion. An effective viscosity η_0 of the pure polymer was found from the initial surface swelling kinetics, and the diffusion coefficient D of iodo-hexane in the glass could be estimated from the iodo-hexane volume fraction profile $\phi(x)$. The case II front velocity is thermally activated, i.e. $V = V_0 \exp(-\Delta H_V/k_B T)$, where k_B , T and V_0 are the Boltzmann constant, absolute temperature and a constant, respectively. The activation enthalpy ΔH_V for the velocity is found to be 1.07 ± 0.21 eV. The viscosity and diffusion coefficients are also thermally activated, i.e. $\eta_0 = \eta_\infty \exp(\Delta H_\eta/k_B T)$ and $D = D_0 \exp(-\Delta H_D/k_B T)$, where η_∞ and D_0 are constants. The activation enthalpies ΔH_η and ΔH_D are found to be 1.76 and 0.60 eV, respectively. These results strongly support recent models of the steady-state front motion in case II diffusion, which require that V scales as $(D/\eta_0)^{1/2}$, with the consequence that $\Delta H_V = (\Delta H_D + \Delta H_\eta)/2$.

(Keywords: Rutherford backscattering spectrometry; osmotic pressure; activation enthalpies; induction time)

INTRODUCTION

Case II diffusion of an organic penetrant in a polymer glass is characterized by the presence of a sharp front where the volume fraction ϕ of penetrant decreases abruptly with depth x , as illustrated in *Figure 1a*¹⁻³. The gradient in ϕ behind the front is negligible whereas the concentration profile preceding the front, which is approximately $\phi = \phi_0 \exp(-Vx/D)$, is consistent with Fickian diffusion (where D is a diffusion coefficient characteristic of the glassy state) in front of a boundary moving with a constant velocity V (ref. 4). As shown in *Figure 1*, some time must elapse before the $\phi(x,t)$ profile reaches its steady-state shape. The surface volume fraction ϕ_s does not reach its equilibrium value ϕ_e instantaneously, but does so rather over a period of time that can be as long as several weeks for low activities of the penetrant³. At short times the $\phi(x,t)$ profile appears qualitatively similar to that expected from Fickian diffusion with a surface concentration $\phi_s(t)$. Once ϕ_s reaches a critical value ϕ_c , the front develops as shown in *Figure 1b*, the gradient $\partial\phi/\partial x$ becomes flat behind the front and ϕ there gradually approaches ϕ_e .

While a number of models have been proposed to explain case II diffusion⁵⁻⁷, the model of Thomas and Windle^{1,8-11} appears to be the most successful of these. Their calculations based on the model suggest that the front velocity V should scale temperature as $(D/\eta_0)^{1/2}$, where η_0 is the viscosity of the glass at zero penetrant concentration. In this paper we test this prediction by independently measuring D , η_0 and V as a function of temperature.

The Thomas and Windle model of case II diffusion

The work of Thomas and Windle^{1,8-11} consolidated

earlier work^{6,7} in osmotic-pressure models of case II diffusion. They proposed a mathematical model for the case II mechanism and numerically solved the resulting non-linear equations. This model couples the viscoelastic response of the polymer chains to the osmotic pressure of the penetrant with Fickian diffusion. The viscoelastic response of the polymer, which is due to the relaxation of the polymer chains, describes the swelling that always occurs in case II polymer/penetrant systems. In the Thomas and Windle model, this viscoelastic response is represented by a simple linear viscous relationship¹:

$$\partial\phi/\partial t = P/\eta \quad (1)$$

where ϕ is the penetrant volume fraction created by the osmotic pressure P and η is the viscosity of the polymer glass. The osmotic pressure is given by:

$$P = (k_B T/\Omega) \ln \Theta \quad (2)$$

with

$$\Theta = a_e/a$$

where a_e is the activity of the penetrant at equilibrium, i.e. $P=0$, a is the activity of the penetrant and Ω is the partial molecular volume of the penetrant. Thomas and Windle made the further simplifying assumption that the activity is proportional to the penetrant volume fraction, resulting in:

$$\Theta = \phi_e/\phi \quad (3)$$

where ϕ_e is the penetrant volume fraction at zero osmotic pressure. The viscosity was represented by:

$$\eta = \eta_0 \exp(-m\phi) \quad (4)$$

where m is a constant of the material.

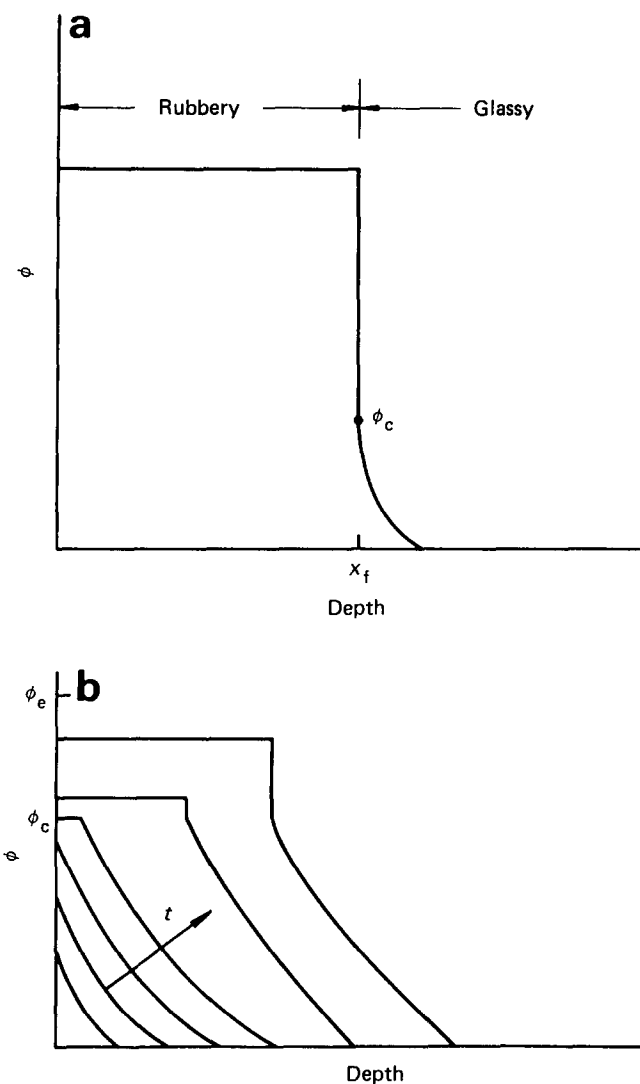


Figure 1 (a) A schematic of the penetrant volume fraction ϕ versus depth below the surface for case II diffusion. The front position is x and the penetrant volume fraction required for case II diffusion to begin is ϕ_c . (b) A family of ϕ versus depth curves as exposure time advances. Case II diffusion begins when the penetrant volume fraction at the surface ϕ_s equals a critical value, ϕ_c .

Thomas and Windle wrote Fick's first law in terms of activity as¹:

$$J = -D(\phi/a_c)\partial a_c/\partial x \quad (5a)$$

and Fick's second law as:

$$-\partial J/\partial x = \partial \phi/\partial t \quad (5b)$$

By coupling and solving equations (1) and (5) and selecting values for m , η_0 and D , they were able to generate diffusion profiles with sharp fronts and kinetics that agreed with gravimetric data.

The relationship between front velocity, diffusion coefficient and viscosity

Thomas and Windle's numerical solutions to (1) and (5) suggest a relationship among the case II parameters¹, which can also be obtained by dimensional analysis, as shown in Appendix A. That relationship is:

$$V(T) = C \left(\frac{k_B T D(T)}{\Omega \eta_0(T)} \right)^{1/2} \quad (6)$$

where C is a numerical constant dependent only on m . Hui *et al.*¹² subsequently obtained a solution to (1) and (5) that gives an asymptotic expression for the velocity of a propagating front with the same temperature dependence as equation (6). It has recently been demonstrated that modifications of (3) and (4) more accurately describe the kinetics of swelling at low penetrant activities³. In Appendix A it is shown that these modifications do not affect the temperature dependence of V .

Experiments have indicated that, in typical glassy polymer/penetrant systems, V and D are thermally activated with activation enthalpies of approximately 1 eV¹³⁻¹⁶ and 0.6 eV¹⁷, respectively. Therefore V would typically vary by a factor of 8 and D by a factor of 3 over a 15 K temperature interval near 300 K. Over the same temperature span $T^{1/2}$ varies by only 3%. Therefore the temperature dependence of V can be approximated by:

$$V(T) \propto \left(\frac{D(T)}{\eta_0(T)} \right)^{1/2} \quad (7)$$

By measuring $V(T)$, $D(T)$ and $\eta_0(T)$ we can test the physical basis of the Thomas and Windle model and its modifications.

Experimental determination of V , D and η_0

We will use Rutherford backscattering spectrometry (RBS) to measure penetrant volume fraction *versus* depth profiles like those shown schematically in *Figures 1a* and *1b*. By monitoring the front position after several different exposure times, the front velocity can be directly determined. The diffusion coefficient is assumed to be constant in the glass and can be obtained from the shape of the $\phi(x)$ profile ahead of the front. The form of this profile is approximately that predicted for Fickian diffusion ahead of a moving boundary (source) and is given by^{2,4}:

$$\phi = \phi_c \exp(-Vx/D) \quad (8)$$

where x is the distance ahead of the case II front and ϕ_c is the critical volume fraction of penetrant required for front formation. The value of D can be obtained by fitting equation (8) to the $\phi(x)$ profile.

The viscosity of the glass η_0 is determined from the initial swelling kinetics at the surface. Using RBS the volume fraction ϕ_s at the surface is measured as a function of exposure time t . A numerical solution of equation (1) using a modified version of the Thomas and Windle model³:

$$t = (\eta_0/B') \int_{\phi_v}^{\phi_s} \left[\exp(-m\phi)/\ln \Theta \right] \Theta^{-\alpha} d\phi \quad (9)$$

is used to fit the experimental $\phi_s(t)$ data. Here $B' = k_B T/\Omega$ and $\alpha = k_B T \alpha'/\Omega$, where α' is a parameter describing the osmotic pressure dependence of the viscosity; α' is assumed in what follows to scale as $1/T$ so that α is independent of T . The lower limit of the integral is the initial free volume fraction ϕ_v that can be occupied by the penetrant molecules without polymer chain relaxation and is taken as 0.02^{3,18}.

The parameters m and α primarily control the shape of a ϕ_s versus $\log t$ curve while changes in η_0 shift the curve parallel to the $\log t$ axis. Since the shape of the ϕ_s versus $\log t$ curve changes very little over the range of temperature covered by our experiments, m and α are assumed to be independent of temperature. Therefore $\eta_0(T)$ can be determined by adjusting its value at each temperature to produce the best fit to the experimental $\phi_s(t)$ data.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

Rutherford backscattering spectrometry (RBS) has been established as a powerful technique for the analysis of diffusion profiles^{3,19-21}. In this technique a beam of He^{2+} ions is incident on the sample. By measuring the energy of the He^{2+} ions backscattered from heavy nuclei in the penetrant molecules, a depth profile of the penetrant can be obtained^{3,19-21}. This technique has been used to analyse the initial stages of case II diffusion of 1-iodohexane in polystyrene^{2,3}. This penetrant/polymer system was selected because it exhibits case II diffusion and the concentration of the iodine 'tag' can be measured as a function of depth by RBS down to a depth of $4 \mu\text{m}$ below the surface. Details of the analysis of the RBS spectrum are given in previous papers^{2,3}.

Sample preparation

The samples for the RBS experiments were prepared in the following way. Aluminium substrates were dip-coated in an 11% solution of polystyrene (PS) in toluene. The polystyrene had a molecular weight of 390 000 and a polydispersity index less than 1.10 as specified by the supplier, Pressure Chemical Co. The resulting films, which were approximately $4 \mu\text{m}$ thick, were then dried in air for 24 h. The samples were subsequently annealed at 125°C for 1 h and physically aged at 50°C for 24 h. Controlled physical ageing was found to be necessary so that reproducible diffusion profiles could be generated²². Ageing at 50°C was done to minimize the effects of further ageing at room temperature²³.

The iodo-hexane used as the penetrant was purchased as a copper-stabilized grade from Kodak. The PS samples were exposed to iodo-hexane vapour by placing them in an Erlenmeyer flask that contained a mixture of polystyrene and iodo-hexane in the bottom. Therefore ϕ_e was equal to that of the mixture. The temperature was controlled by placing the flask in a water bath, which had a temperature stability of $\pm 0.01^\circ\text{C}$. After exposure to the iodo-hexane vapour for a certain time t , the samples were quickly immersed in liquid nitrogen, since the diffusion could be very rapid at room temperature. The samples were transferred to the liquid-nitrogen-cooled stage of the RBS apparatus under a dry nitrogen atmosphere in a glove bag to minimize water condensation on the sample surface. All RBS spectra were measured at a temperature below 100 K. Besides stopping further diffusion, the low temperature had the additional advantage of preventing mass loss and penetrant redistribution due to radiation damage in the polymer produced by the energetic He^{2+} ions.

Experimental parameters

At iodo-hexane activities greater than 0.45, the case II diffusion front was so sharp that it was impossible to

measure the diffusion coefficient D . Therefore a value of $a_e = 0.37$ ($\phi_e = 0.16$) was chosen for the flasks because at this activity case II diffusion is established but the front velocity is slow enough that the diffusion coefficient in the glass can be obtained from the $\phi(x)$ profile ahead of the front³. Since case II front velocity was a strong function of activity near this value^{3,24}, considerable care was taken to maintain a constant activity. Approximately one week was allowed to elapse after a small amount of penetrant was added to the flask (such additions were necessary to maintain ϕ_e and the amounts required were determined by weighing the flask periodically), or after the temperature was changed. This waiting time ensured that equilibrium in the flask was established before a new sample was added. Samples were exposed to the iodo-hexane vapour for various times at temperatures of 25, 26.7, 30, 32.5, 35 and 40°C .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A family of ϕ versus depth profiles for the experiments performed at 30°C are shown in Figure 2. The maximum in ϕ in the swollen region is due to a small amount of out-diffusion of iodo-hexane during the quenching procedure. Similar profiles were obtained at all other temperatures if the exposure times were adjusted to smaller values at higher temperatures.

The front position, defined as the depth at which the slope of $\phi(x)$ is a maximum, is plotted as a function of time in Figure 3 for the profiles in Figure 2. After an initial induction period, the case II front velocity V was approximately constant, as shown in Figure 3; values of V were obtained from the slope of this and similar plots. The diffusion coefficient D of the glass was determined by applying equation (8) to the $\phi(x)$ profile ahead of the front; the diffusion coefficient D_r of the swollen material behind the front is at least several orders of magnitude higher (a lower limit of $10^{-9} \text{ cm}^2 \text{ s}^{-1}$ can be estimated) and is not important in determining the front velocity. The velocity used to extract D from the fit was the one determined experimentally, e.g. from Figure 3. Figure 4 shows a $\phi(x)$ depth profile and a typical fit.

Following the procedures outlined above, ϕ_s , the penetrant volume fraction at the surface measured by

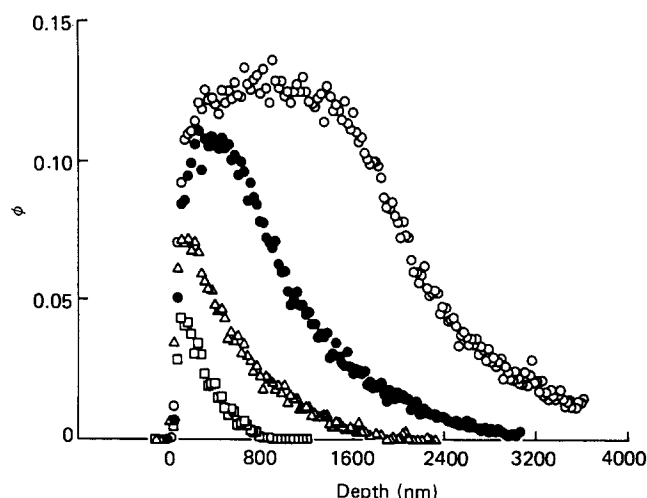


Figure 2 A family of volume fraction versus depth curves of iodo-hexane in polystyrene at $a_e = 0.37$ ($\phi_e = 0.16$) and $T = 30^\circ\text{C}$ after exposure times $t = 3.3 \times 10^5$ (○), 1.6×10^5 (●), 6×10^4 (△) and 10^4 s (□)

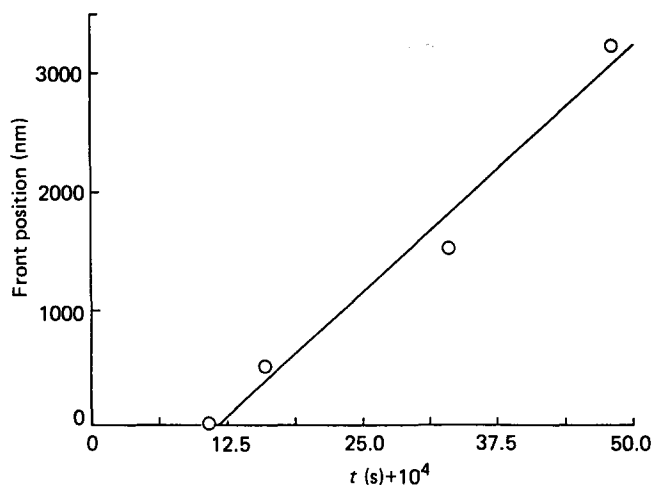


Figure 3 The position of the front x during case II diffusion of iodohexane in polystyrene versus exposure time for $a_c=0.37$ and $T=30^\circ\text{C}$

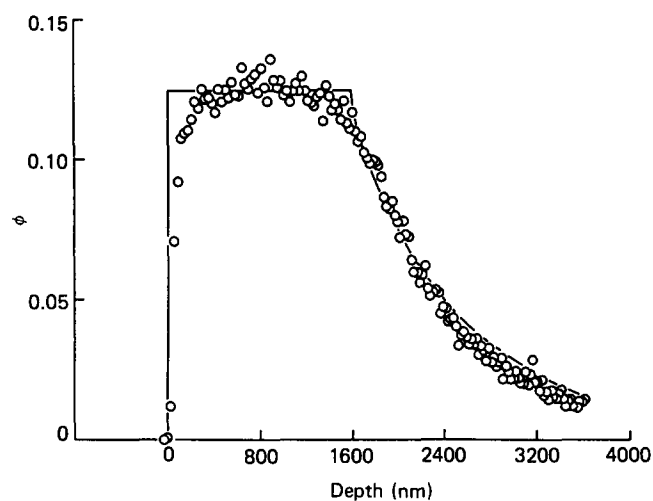


Figure 4 A volume fraction versus depth profile of iodohexane in polystyrene at $a_c=0.37$ and $T=30^\circ\text{C}$. The full curve is a solution to equation (8) with $V=0.0085\text{ nm s}^{-1}$ and $D=1.2 \times 10^{-13}\text{ cm}^2\text{ s}^{-1}$

RBS, was plotted as a function of time and compared to a numerical solution of equation (9). Values for $m=25$ and $\alpha'=1.31 \times 10^{-7}\text{ m}^2\text{ N}^{-1}$ were selected as giving a theoretical curve with shape closest to that of the data. (This value of α' is close to that ($1.22 \times 10^{-7}\text{ m}^2\text{ N}^{-1}$) obtained from creep experiments³.) Since the value of η_0 does not affect the shape of the curve but only shifts it along the $\log t$ axis, η_0 was varied until the theoretical curve best overlaid the experimental data. The ϕ_s versus $\log t$ data for the iodohexane exposures at 25, 30 and 35°C are shown in Figure 5. Theoretical curves are also shown in this figure for the η_0 values that result in the best fits to the data. These values of η_0 are $\eta_0(25^\circ\text{C})=2.5 \times 10^{15}$, $\eta_0(30^\circ\text{C})=1.0 \times 10^{15}$ and $\eta_0(35^\circ\text{C})=2.8 \times 10^{14}\text{ N s m}^{-2}$. Values of $\eta_0(T)$ were determined for all of the other temperatures using the same procedure.

The values of the logarithms of V , D and η_0 obtained from the analysis of the RBS data are plotted versus $1/T$ in Figures 6, 7 and 8, respectively*. The activation

* At 40°C the η_0 point fell off the curve in Figure 8. It is believed that this occurred because ϕ_c changed abruptly at this temperature (see Figure 9). In Appendix A it is shown that one of the assumptions underlying the derivation of equation (11) is that ϕ_c is constant with temperature, hence the points at 40°C in Figures 8 and 9 were not used to calculate the activation enthalpies of η_0 and t_i respectively

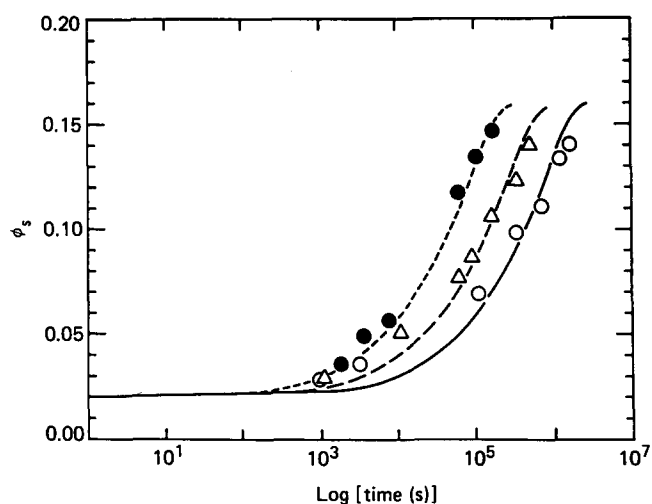


Figure 5 Volume fraction of iodohexane at the surface of polystyrene versus $\log(\text{exposure time})$ at $a_c=0.37$ and $T=25$ (\circ), 30 (Δ) and 35°C (\bullet). The curves are obtained by numerically integrating equation (9) with $m=25$, $\alpha'=1.31 \times 10^{-7}\text{ m}^2\text{ N}^{-1}$ and $\eta_0=2.5 \times 10^{15}$ (—), 1.0×10^{15} (---) and 0.28×10^{15} (.....) N s m^{-2}

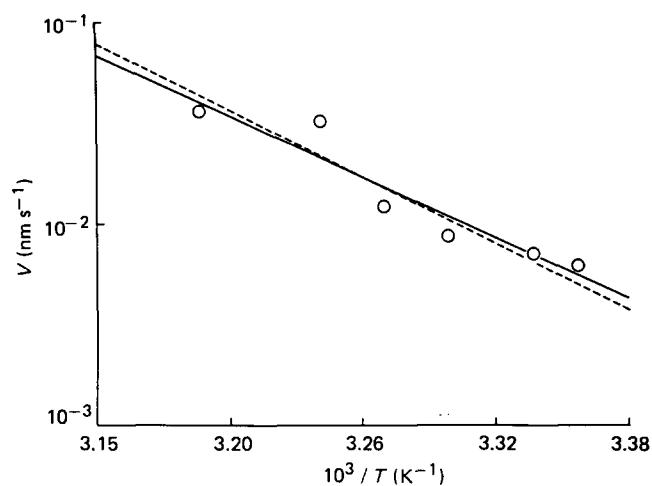


Figure 6 The logarithm of the front velocity versus $1/T$ for polystyrene in iodohexane at $a_c=0.37$. The full line is a linear least-squares fit to the data. The broken line corresponds to an activation enthalpy of 1.18 eV predicted by equation (11) using the experimentally determined activation enthalpies of D and η_0

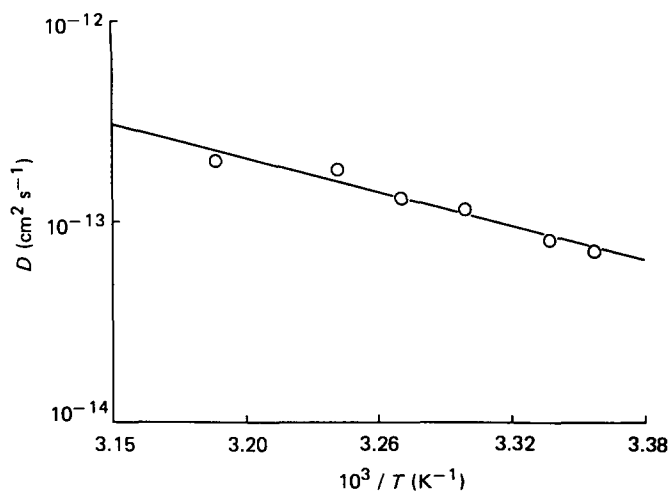


Figure 7 The logarithm of the diffusion coefficient for iodohexane in polystyrene versus $1/T$ at $a_c=0.37$. The full line is a linear least-squares fit to the data

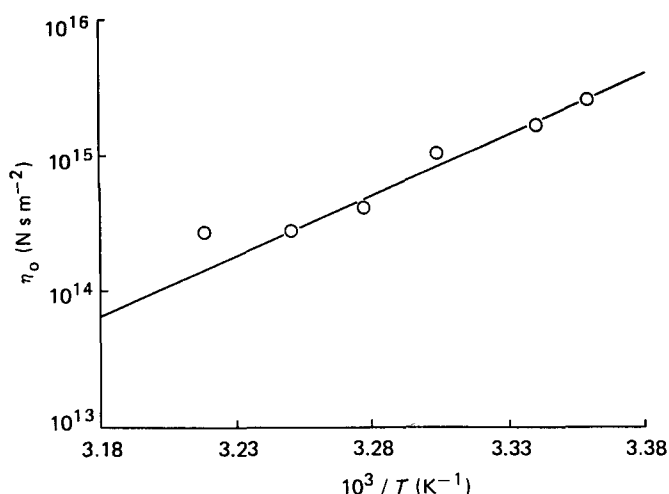


Figure 8 The logarithm of the viscosity η_0 for iodohexane in polystyrene versus $1/T$ at $a_c = 0.37$. The full line is a linear least-squares fit to the data

enthalpies for the velocity, the diffusion coefficient and the viscosity were determined by fitting a line using least-squares linear regression to the data in Figures 6, 7 and 8 respectively. The values were:

$$\Delta H_V = 1.07 \text{ eV}, \quad \sigma_V = \pm 0.21 \text{ eV}$$

$$\Delta H_D = 0.60 \text{ eV}, \quad \sigma_D = \pm 0.08 \text{ eV}$$

$$\Delta H_\eta = 1.76 \text{ eV}, \quad \sigma_\eta = \pm 0.31 \text{ eV}$$

where ΔH_V , ΔH_D and ΔH_η are the activation enthalpies for front velocity, diffusion and viscosity respectively. The indicated error σ is one standard deviation.

The Thomas and Windle model implies (equation (7)) that the front velocity $V(T)$ must scale as:

$$V(T) \propto \left(\frac{D(T)}{\eta_0(T)} \right)^{1/2} \quad (10)$$

where the proportionality constant is approximately independent of T over the range of interest. Since all three quantities, $V(T)$, $D(T)$ and $\eta_0(T)$, are thermally activated, the activation enthalpies should be related by:

$$\Delta H_V = (\Delta H_D + \Delta H_\eta)/2 \quad (11)$$

The ΔH_V predicted from the average of ΔH_D and ΔH_η is 1.18 eV, which agrees with the experimental value of ΔH_V (1.07 eV) to within the error of the experiments.

The recent RBS experiments of Mills *et al.*⁴ on the diffusion of 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCE) in crosslinked RistonTM (major component poly(methyl methacrylate) (PMMA)) showed that the activation enthalpy of both the case II front velocity and the diffusion coefficient were the same, namely 1.19 eV. The ΔH_η was not measured. While equation (11) suggests that for Riston the activation enthalpy for η_0 should be approximately 1.19 eV, several caveats must be mentioned. The TCE used contained small amounts of small-molecule inhibitors, the removal of which decreased the V by at least an order of magnitude²⁵. The controlling diffusion for these experiments may not have been that of the TCE measured by RBS but that of the small-molecule inhibitors, which were invisible to RBS. Secondly, the

glass transition temperature of the Riston lies in the range 55 to 60°C, suggesting that the PMMA composing the photoresist is plasticized, which almost certainly will affect the case II diffusion kinetics. (The glass transition temperature of pure PMMA is 100°C). For this reason we view the measurements of D of TCE in this system with some suspicion. The present experiments involving a well characterized polymer, polystyrene, and a pure penetrant species, iodohexane, constitute a much better test of the Thomas and Windle model of case II diffusion.

CONCLUSIONS

The case II front velocity V , diffusion coefficient D and viscosity η_0 are thermally activated with activation enthalpies 1.07, 0.60 and 1.76 eV, respectively.

The front velocity $V(T)$ scales as:

$$V(T) \propto \left(\frac{D(T)}{\eta_0(T)} \right)^{1/2}$$

a form predicted by the Thomas and Windle model of case II diffusion.

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APPENDIX A

The derivation of the temperature dependence of the case II front velocity

The governing equations for case II diffusion can be written in the form (from equations (1) and (5b) respectively):

$$\partial\phi/\partial t = Bf(m, \alpha, \phi, \phi_c) \quad (A1)$$

where $B = k_B T / \Omega \eta_0$, f is a dimensionless function of its dimensionless arguments m , α , ϕ and ϕ_c and:

$$\partial\phi/\partial t = \partial[D(\phi, T)\phi \partial \ln a_c / \partial x] / \partial x \quad (A2)$$

As in the Thomas and Windle model, we have assumed that the diffusivity is a function of ϕ and T only. Consistent with the fact that the gradient of ϕ behind the front is negligible, the diffusivity D_r behind the front must be much larger than D , the value in the glass ahead of the front; the diffusivity undergoes a rapid increase from D to D_r in a narrow region of depth at the front. Let ϕ^* be a characteristic concentration where the change in diffusivity is most rapid. We will assume that ϕ^* is independent of T . (In ref. 2, ϕ^* is taken to be ϕ_c .) With these assumptions $D(\phi, T) = D(T)h(\phi/\phi^*)$, where h is a dimensionless function of its dimensionless argument with the properties that:

$$h(\phi/\phi^*) \rightarrow 1 \quad \text{for } \phi < \phi^*$$

$$h(\phi/\phi^*) \gg 1 \quad \text{for } \phi > \phi^*$$

For the Thomas and Windle model¹, f in equation (A1) is:

$$f = \exp(m\phi) \ln \phi_e / \phi$$

whereas our modifications to this model resulted in³:

$$f = \exp(m\phi)\Theta^2 \ln \Theta$$

where $\Theta = \phi_e \exp(1 - \phi_e) / \phi \exp(1 - \phi)$. Thus the only dimensional quantities in all equations are B and D , which have dimensions of T^{-1} and L^2T^{-1} , respectively. From dimensional considerations the steady-state velocity must have the form:

$$V = (DB)^{1/2} g(m, \alpha, \phi_0, \phi_c) \quad (A3)$$

where ϕ_0 is the equilibrium volume fraction of the penetrant at the surface of the sample, and is assumed to be constant, and g is an unknown dimensionless function of its dimensionless arguments, and is independent of T . The temperature dependence of V is therefore given by $[D(T)B(T)]^{1/2}$ or:

$$V(T) \propto \left(\frac{k_B T D(T)}{\Omega \eta_0(T)} \right)^{1/2} \quad (A4)$$

The original Thomas and Windle model is obtained when α in (A1) equals zero. Since the value of α does not affect the temperature dependence of V in (A4), that dependence holds for all models that are of the form of (A1), i.e. for the modified Thomas and Windle model proposed in ref. 3 as well as for the original Thomas and Windle model.

APPENDIX B

The induction time and the critical volume fraction for case II diffusion

Figure 2 shows that a critical ϕ_s must first be reached before case II diffusion can begin. Thus an induction time t_i for case II diffusion exists³. This induction time can be estimated from a plot, e.g. Figure 3, of the front position versus time as the intercept of the $V = \text{constant}$ line on the time axis. By obtaining ϕ_s at the induction time, it is possible to estimate $\phi_c = \phi_s(t_i)$. At 30°C from Figure 5, $\phi_c = \phi_s(t_i = 10^5 \text{ s}) \approx 0.1$. This procedure was performed at all of the temperatures (see earlier footnote).

Integrating equation (9) to $\phi_s = \phi_c$ results in an expression for the induction time t_i that should scale approximately with $\eta_0(T)$. Hence t_i should be thermally activated with an activation enthalpy ΔH_i equal to that of $\eta_0(T)$. Figure 9 is a plot of t_i versus $1/T$. From the slope of the plot the activation enthalpy of the induction time is $2.13 \pm 0.19 \text{ eV}$. This value was 0.37 eV greater than that of the viscosity but just within the experimental error of 0.37 eV. The value of the experimental error was determined by adding the squares of the errors in ΔH_i

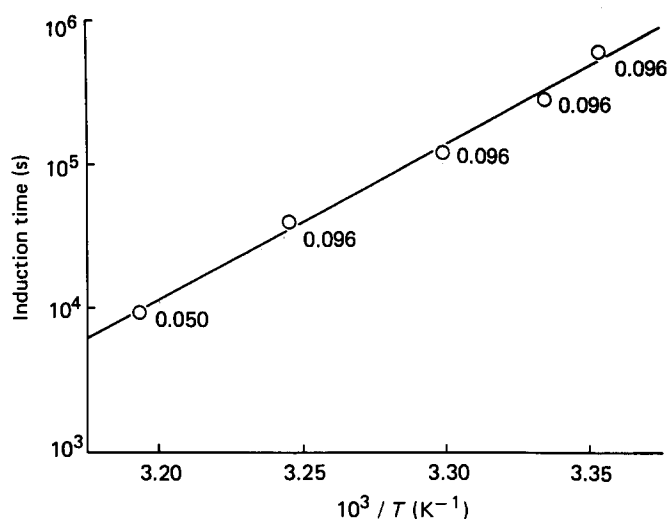


Figure 9 The logarithm of the induction time for case II diffusion for iodo-hexane in polystyrene versus $1/T$ at $a_e = 0.37$. The full line is a linear least-squares fit to the data. The numbers next to each circle are values of ϕ_c

and ΔH_i and taking the square root. The values of ϕ_c are next to the data points for t_i in Figure 9.

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