

Group Theory and Chemistry

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Preface

THIS book is written for chemistry students who wish to understand how group theory is applied to chemical problems. Usually the major obstacle a chemist finds with the subject of this book is the mathematics which is involved; consequently, I have tried to spell out all the relevant mathematics in some detail in appendices to each chapter. The book can then be read either as an introduction, dealing with general concepts (ignoring the appendices), or as a fairly comprehensive description of the subject (including the appendices). The reader is recommended to use the book first without the appendices and then, having grasped the broad outlines, read it a second time with the appendices.

The subject material is suitable for a senior undergraduate course or for a first-year graduate course and could be covered in 15 lectures (without the appendices) or in 21 lectures (with the appendices).

The best advice about reading a book of this nature was probably that given by George Chrystal in the preface to his book *Algebra*:

Every mathematical book that is worth reading must be read "backwards and forwards", if I may use the expression. I would modify Lagrange's advice a little and say, "Go on, but often return to strengthen your faith". When you come on a hard or dreary passage, pass it over, and come back to it after you have seen its importance or found the need for it further on.

Finally, a word of encouragement to those who are frightened by mathematics. The mathematics involved in actually applying, as opposed to deriving, group theoretical formulae is quite trivial. It involves little more than adding and multiplying. It is in fact possible to make the applications, by filling in the necessary formulae in a routine way, without even understanding where the formulae have come from. I do not, however, advocate this practice.

London

November 1972

D. M. B.

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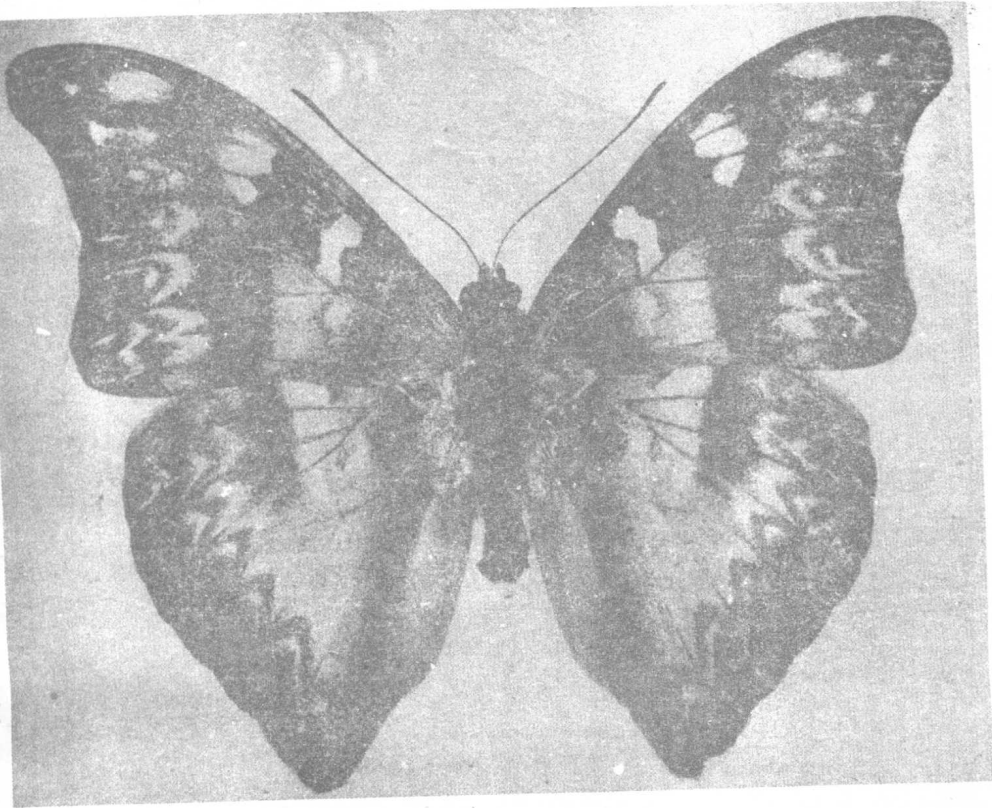
I am similarly grateful to Dr. D. S. Schonland for permission to reproduce, in Appendix I, the character tables of his book *Molecular symmetry* (Van Nostrand Co. Ltd.).

Last, I would like to thank Mrs. M. R. Robertson for her immaculate typing.

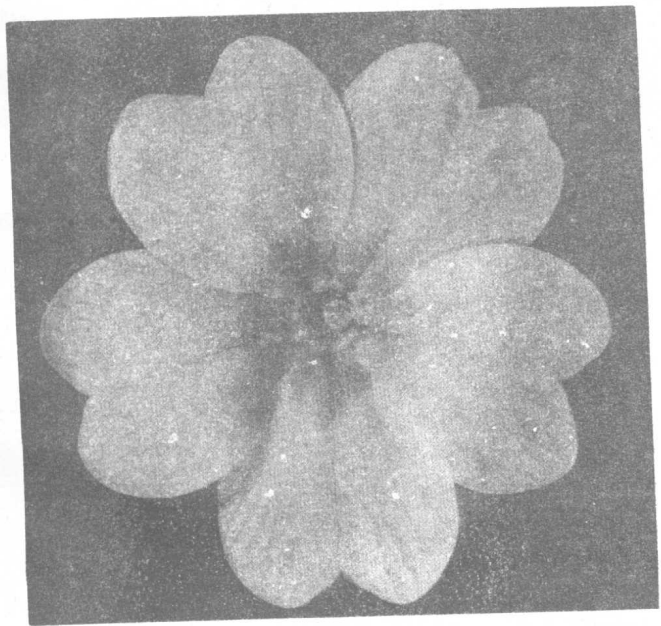
List of symbols

R	symmetry element
R	symmetry operation
$D(R)$	matrix representing R
$D_{ij}(R)$	element in the i th row, j th column of $D(R)$
O_R	transformation operator corresponding to R
A	matrix, elements are displayed between two pairs of vertical lines
A_{ij}	element in the i th row, j th column of A
\mathcal{A}_{ij}	cofactor of A_{ij} in $\det(A)$
$\det(A)$	determinant of A
$\text{Trace}(A)$	trace of A
A^*	conjugate complex of A
\tilde{A}	transpose of A
A^\dagger	adjoint of A
A^{-1}	inverse of A
X	matrix
x_i	i th column of X
x_{ij}	element in the i th row, j th column of X
E	identity matrix
θ	null matrix
\mathcal{G}	point group
g	order of a group (number of elements in a group)
g_i	number of elements in the i th class of a group
δ_{ij}	Kronecker delta (equals 0 if $i \neq j$, equals 1 if $i = j$)
x_1, x_2, x_3	Cartesian coordinates of a point
Γ	a representation of a point group
Γ^μ	the μ th representation of a point group
$D^\mu(R)$	the matrix representing R in Γ^μ
$D_{ij}^\mu(R)$	the matrix element in the i th row and j th column of $D^\mu(R)$
n_μ	the dimension of Γ^μ or the order of $D^\mu(R)$
$\chi(R)$	the character of R in Γ
$\chi^\mu(R)$	the character of R in Γ^μ
$P^\mu(R)$	the projection operator $\sum_R \chi^\mu(R)^* O_R$
$P_{ij}^\mu(R)$	the projection operator $\sum_R D_{ij}^\mu(R)^* O_R$
a_μ	the number of times Γ^μ occurs in Γ
k	the number of classes in a group
$D^{\text{reg}}(R)$	the matrix representing R in the regular representation Γ^{reg}
C_i	any operation of the i th class of a point group
R_j^m	the j th operation of the m th class of a point group
\oplus	symbol linking the irreducible components of a reducible representation
\otimes	symbol linking two representations in a direct product representation

E_v	v th energy level
ψ^v	a wavefunction associated with E_v
X	a set of coordinates for a number of particles
X_{nuc}	a set of coordinates for a number of nuclei
X_{el}	a set of coordinates for a number of electrons



(a)



(b)

FIG. 1-2.1. (a) *Cymothoe aloatia*; (b) primrose.

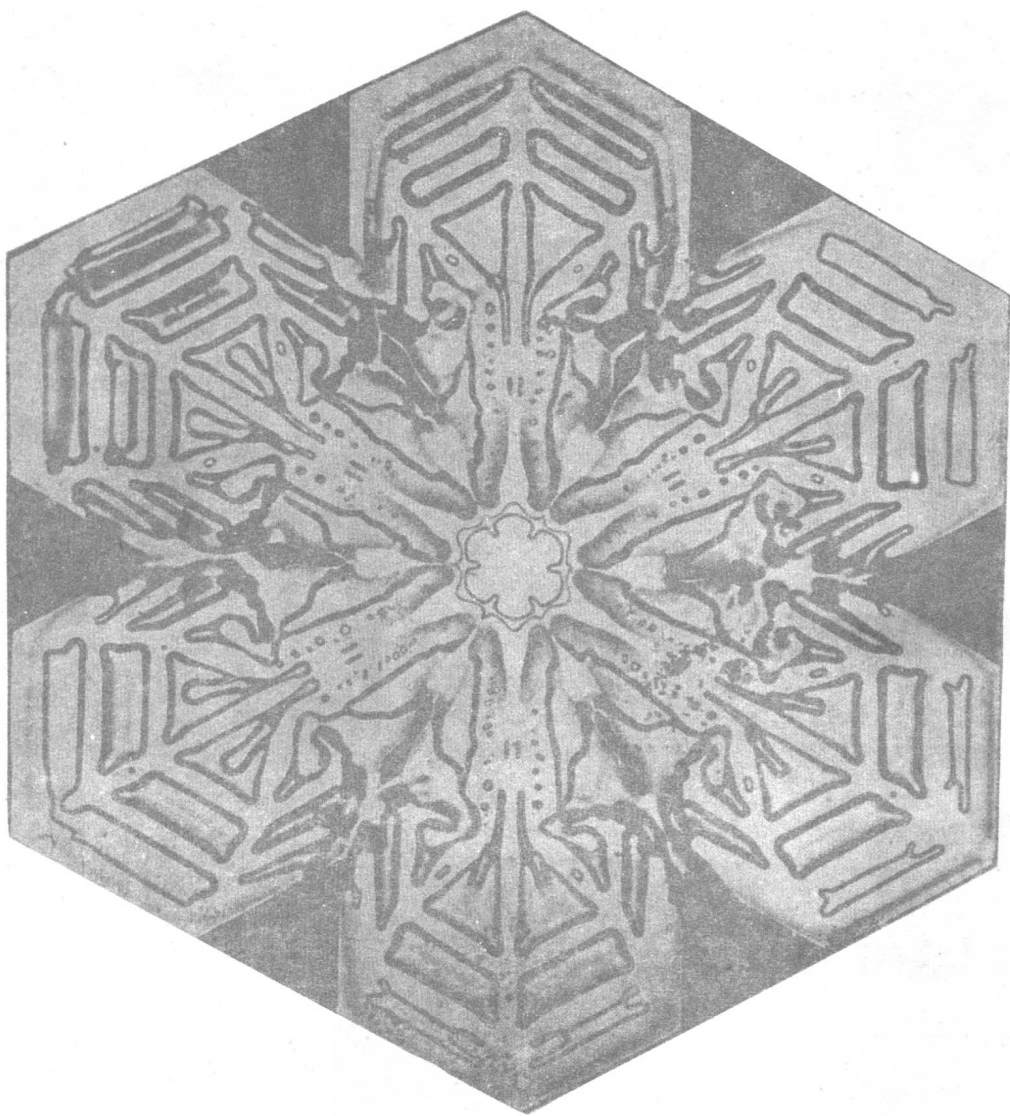


FIG. 1-2.1. (c) ice crystal.

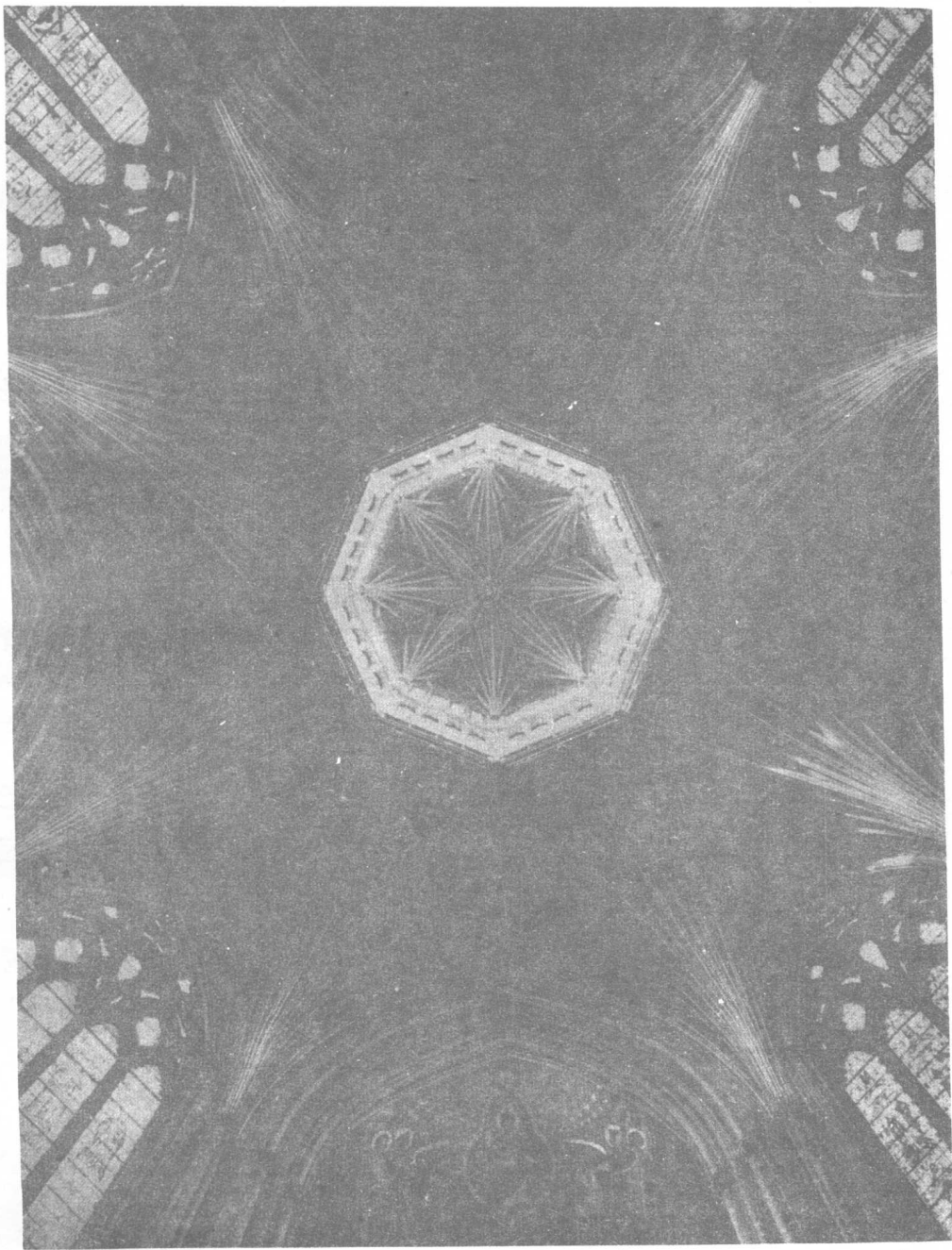


FIG. 1-2.3. The octagonal ceiling in Ely Cathedral.

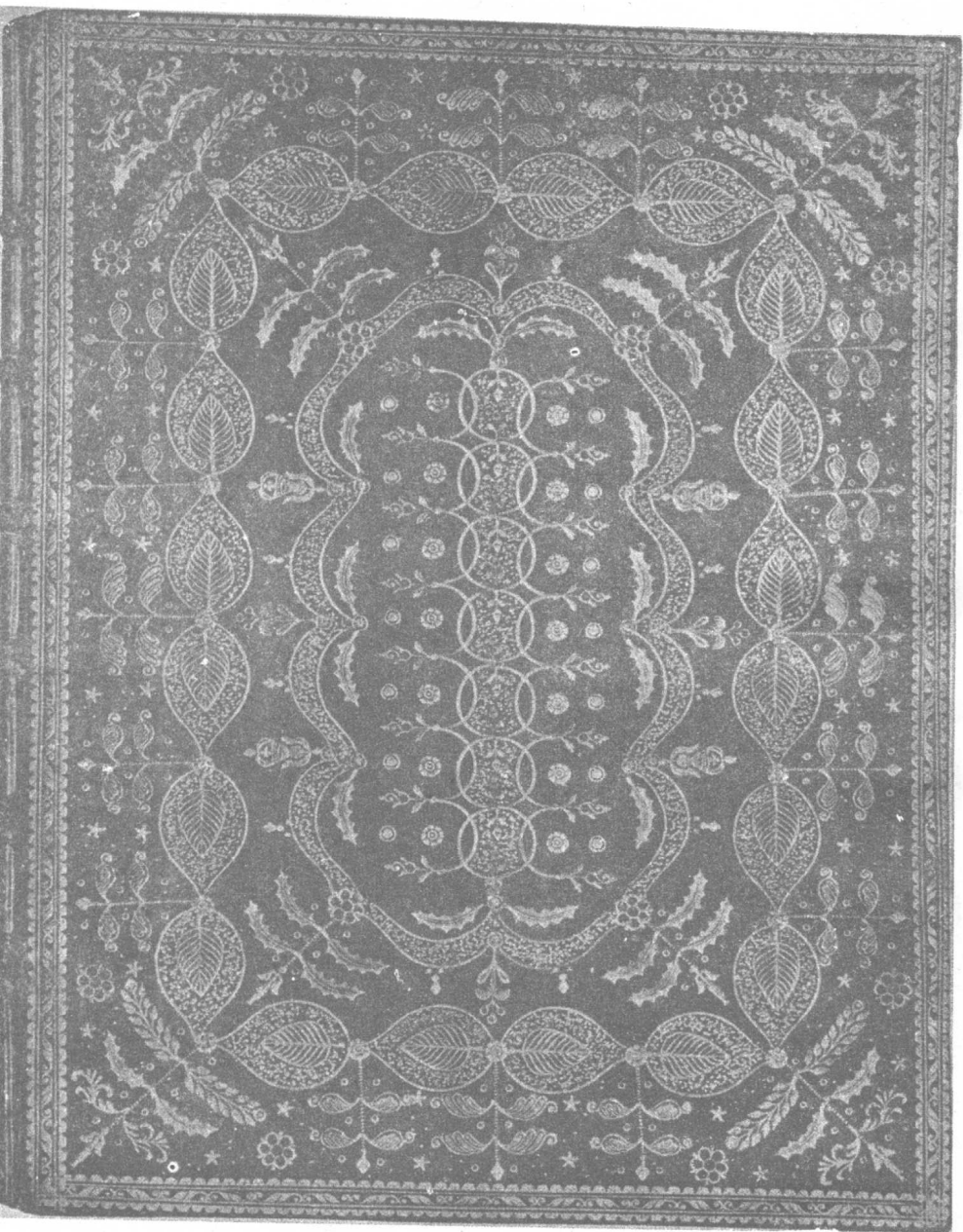


FIG. 1-2.5. An example of Scottish bookbinding, circa 1750.

Contents

LIST OF SYMBOLS

xv

1. Symmetry

1-1. Introduction	1
1-2. Symmetry and everyday life	1
1-3. Symmetry and chemistry	4
1-4. Historical sketch	5

2. Symmetry operations

2-1. Introduction	7
2-2. The algebra of operators	8
2-3. Symmetry operations	10
2-4. The algebra of symmetry operations	15
2-5. Dipole moments	19
2-6. Optical activity	20
Problems	23

3. Point groups

3-1. Introduction	24
3-2. Definition of a group	24
3-3. Some examples of groups	25
3-4. Point groups	26
3-5. Some properties of groups	31
3-6. Classification of point groups	35
3-7. Determination of molecular point groups	38
A.3-1. The Rearrangement Theorem	40
Problems	47

4. Matrices

4-1. Introduction	48
4-2. Definitions (matrices and determinants)	48
4-3. Matrix algebra	51
4-4. The matrix eigenvalue equation	55
4-5. Similarity transformations	57
A.4-1. Special matrices	58
A.4-2. Method for determining the inverse of a matrix	61
A.4-3. Theorems for eigenvectors	63
A.4-4. Theorems for similarity transformations	65
A.4-5. The diagonalization of a matrix or how to find the eigenvalues and eigenvectors of a matrix	67
A.4-6. Proof that $\det(AB) = \det(A)\det(B)$	69
Problems	70

5. Matrix representations

5-1. Introduction	72
5-2. Symmetry operations on a position vector	73
5-3. Matrix representations for \mathcal{C}_{2h} and \mathcal{C}_{3v}	78
5-4. Matrix representations derived from base vectors	82

5-5. Function space	86
5-6. Transformation operators O_R	88
5-7. A satisfactory set of transformation operators O_R	89
5-8. A caution	91
5-9. An example of determining O_R s and $D(R)$ s for the \mathcal{C}_{3v} point group using the d-orbital function space	92
5-10. Determinants as representations	97
5-11. Summary	97
A.5-1. Proof that, if $T = SR$ and $D(R)$, $D(S)$, and $D(T)$ are found by consideration of R , S , T on a position vector, then $D(T) = D(S)D(R)$	98
A.5-2. Proof that the matrices in eqn 5-4.2 form a representation	99
A.5-3. Proof that the matrices derived from a position vector are the same as those derived from a single set of base vectors	99
A.5-4. Proof that the operators O_R are (a) linear, (b) homomorphic with R	100
A.5-5. Proof that the matrices derived from O_R form a representation of the point group	101
Problems	101
6. Equivalent and reducible representations	
6-1. Introduction	103
6-2. Equivalent representations	103
6-3. An example of equivalent representations	106
6-4. Unitary representations	108
6-5. Reducible representations	110
A.6-1. Proof that the transformation operators O_R will produce a unitary representation if orthonormal basis functions are used	113
A.6-2. The Schmidt orthogonalization process	113
A.6-3. Proof that any representation is equivalent, through a similarity transformation, to a unitary representation	115
7. Irreducible representations and character tables	
7-1. Introduction	117
7-2. The Great Orthogonality Theorem	118
7-3. Characters	120
7-4. Number of times an irreducible representation occurs in a reducible one	123
7-5. Criterion for irreducibility	124
7-6. The reduction of a reducible representation	125
7-7. Character tables and their construction	128
7-8. Notation for irreducible representations	131
7-9. An example of the determination of the irreducible representations to which certain functions belong	134
A.7-1. The Great Orthogonality Theorem	138
A.7-2. Proof that $\sum_{\mu} n_{\mu}^2 = g$	143
A.7-3. Proof that the number of irreducible representations r equals the number of classes k	145
Problems	149
8. Representations and quantum mechanics	
8-1. Introduction	151
8-2. The invariance of Hamiltonian operators under O_R	151
8-3. Direct product representations within a group	155
8-4. Vanishing integrals	158

A.8-1. Proof of eqns 8-2.12 to 8-2.15	160
Problems	163

9. Molecular vibrations

9-1. Introduction	164
9-2. Normal coordinates	164
9-3. The vibrational equation	169
9-4. The Γ^0 (or Γ^{3N}) representation	172
9-5. The reduction of Γ^0	175
9-6. The classification of normal coordinates	178
9-7. Further examples of normal coordinate classification	182
9-8. Normal coordinates for linear molecules	184
9-9. Classification of the vibrational levels	184
9-10. Infra-red spectra	186
9-11. Raman spectra	189
9-12. The infra-red and Raman spectra of CH_4 and CH_3D	190
9-13. Combination and overtone levels and Fermi resonance	192
A.9-1. Proof of eqns 9-2.17 and 9-2.18	193
A.9-2. Proof that $D^n(\mathbf{R}) = \mathbf{C}^{-1}D^0(\mathbf{R})\mathbf{C}$	194
A.9-3. Symmetry properties of polarizability functions	195
Problems	195

10. Molecular orbital theory

10-1. Introduction	197
10-2. The Hartree-Fock approximation	198
10-3. The LCAO MO approximation	201
10-4. The π -electron approximation	203
10-5. Hückel molecular orbital method	205
10-6. Hückel molecular orbital method for benzene	206
10-7. Hückel molecular orbital method for the trivinylmethyl radical	212
A.10-1. Atomic units	217
A.10-2. An alternative notation for the LCAO MO method	217
A.10-3. Proof that the matrix elements of an operator \hat{H} which commutes with all \mathbf{O}_R of a group vanish between functions belonging to different irreducible representations	218
Problems	218

11. Hybrid orbitals

11-1. Introduction	219
11-2. Transformation properties of atomic orbitals	221
11-3. Hybrid orbitals for σ -bonding systems	225
11-4. Hybrid orbitals for π -bonding systems	229
11-5. The mathematical form of hybrid orbitals	234
11-6. Relationship between localized and non-localized molecular orbital theory	241
Problems	241

12. Transition metal chemistry

12-1. Introduction	243
12-2. LCAO MOs for octahedral compounds	244
12-3. LCAO MOs for tetrahedral compounds	251
12-4. LCAO MOs for sandwich compounds	252
12-5. Crystal field splitting	257
12-6. Order of orbital energy levels in crystal field theory	260

xiv Contents

12-7. Correlation diagrams	262
12-8. Spectral properties	271
12-9. Magnetic properties	273
12-10. Ligand field theory	276
A.12-1. Spectroscopic states and term symbols for many-electron atoms or ions	276
Problems	278
Appendix I: Character tables	279
BIBLIOGRAPHY	289
INDEX	291

1. Symmetry

1-1. Introduction

IN everyday language we use the word *symmetry* in one of two ways and correspondingly the Oxford English Dictionary gives the following two definitions:

- (1) Mutual relation of the parts of something in respect of magnitude and position; relative measurement and arrangement of parts; proportion.
- (2) Due or just proportion; harmony of parts with each other and the whole; fitting, regular, or balanced arrangement and relation of parts or elements; the condition or quality of being well proportioned or well balanced.

The first definition of the word has a more scientific ring to it than the second, the second being related to some extent to the rather more nebulous concept of beauty, for example John Bulwer wrote in 1650: 'True and native beauty consists in the just composure and symetrie of the parts of the body'.† It is nonetheless interesting that when we go deeper into the scientific meaning of symmetry we find that the underlying mathematics involved has itself a beauty and elegance which could well be described by the second definition.

In this chapter we will first look at symmetry as it occurs in everyday life and then consider its specific role in chemistry. We will end the chapter by giving a historical sketch of the development of the mathematics which is used in making use of symmetry in chemistry.

1-2. Symmetry and everyday life

The ubiquitous role of symmetry in everyday life has been neatly summarized by James Newman in the following way:

Symmetry establishes a ridiculous and wonderful cousinship between objects, phenomena, and theories outwardly unrelated; terrestrial magnetism, women's veils, polarized light, natural selection, the theory of groups, invariants and transformations, the work habits of bees in the hive, the structure of space, vase designs, quantum physics, scarabs, flower petals,

† This quotation comes from a book with the extraordinary title, *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd; or the Artificial Changeling. Historically presented, in the mad and cruel Gallantry, foolish Bravery, ridiculous Beauty, filthy finenesses, and loathsome Loveliness of most Nations, fashioning and altering their Bodies from the Mould intended by Nature. With a Vindication of the Regular Beauty and Honesty of Nature. And an Appendix of the Pedigree of the English Gallant.*

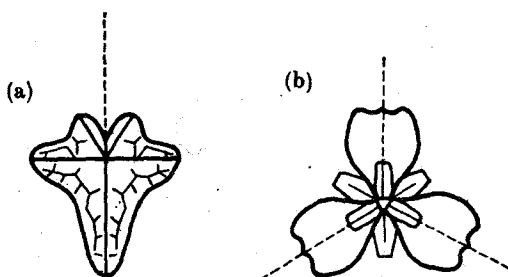


FIG. 1-2.2. (a) Ivy leaf; (b) iris. Dotted lines show planes of symmetry perpendicular to the page.

X-ray interference patterns, cell division in sea urchins, equilibrium positions in crystals, Romanesque cathedrals, snowflakes, music, the theory of relativity.†

In nature we find countless examples of symmetry and in Fig. 1-2.1 we show some rather beautiful examples from the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. Externally, most animals have bilateral symmetry that is to say they contain a single *plane of symmetry*; such a plane bisects every straight line joining a pair of corresponding points. This is the same thing as saying that the plane divides the object into two parts which are mirror images of each other. In Fig. 1-2.2 it is seen that the ivy leaf and iris have, perpendicular to the plane of the page, one and three planes of symmetry respectively. Actually, the most frequent number of planes of symmetry in flowers is five. Anyone interested in the predominance of bilateral symmetry in the animal world, with its corollary of left and right handedness, is recommended to read *The ambidextrous universe*.‡ In the iris we also notice that there is a three-fold *axis of symmetry*, that is, if we rotate the flower by $2\pi/3$ radians about the axis perpendicular to the page and running down the centre of the flower, then we cannot tell that it has been moved. Similarly, the ice crystal in Fig. 1-2.1 has a six-fold axis of symmetry: a $2\pi/6$ rotation leaves it apparently unmoved.

Because of its basic aesthetic appeal (regularity, pleasing proportions, periodicity, harmonious arrangement) symmetry has, since time immemorial, been used in art. Probably the first example a child experiences of the beauty of symmetry is in playing with a kaleidoscope. More erudite examples occur in: poetry, for example the *abccba* rhyming sequence in many poems; architecture, for example the octagonal ceiling in Ely Cathedral (see Fig. 1-2.3); music, perhaps the most astute use of symmetry in art is a two part piece of music which is sometimes

† *The world of mathematics*, vol. 1, p. 669, Allen and Unwin, London (1960).

‡ M. Gardner, *The ambidextrous universe*, Allen Lane, Penguin Press, London (1967).