Book Review

Chemical Creativity

by J. A. Benson

Wiley-VCH, Weinheim, 1999; pp. xii + 195.
ISBN 3-527-2954-5. Price: DM 78.–/EUR 39.88

The subtitle of the book is "ideas from the work of Woodward, Hückel, Meerwein and others" and it aptly characterizes its scope: the investigation of *ideas*.

The book consists of six chapters. After an Introduction, Chapter 2 investigates creativity in chemistry, by noting discoveries which were made or were missed. Chapter 3 deals mainly with the activities of Erich Hückel, professor of theoretical physics at the University of Marburg, and the long struggle until his theories were accepted. Chapter 4 investigates achievements in the chemistry and synthesis of estrogenic hormones, with particular emphasis to Woodward's work. The title of Chapter 5 is "meditations on the special convictive power of symmetrization experiments" and in it, the author is using as illustrations various studies of a number of organic chemists, but also, he is going back 400 years to Johannes Kepler to explain the role of symmetry in cosmology. Finally, the brief (only two page long) Chapter 6

serves as an Epilogue to summarize the author's belief that knowledge of the struggles and controversies is needed to appreciate scientific achievements.

This is a very unusual book. It tries to investigate the origin of some chemical ideas, the reasoning and experiments pioneers in modern organic chemistry have used to solve certain problems and the circumstances, personalities and competition which influenced their achievements. The main aim of Professor Benson is to study the *nature of scientific discovery*, how major new results "arose from dubious reasoning, only to be purified in later refinements to their current shining state": to show that preliminary results and imperfect theories have an important role in new discoveries and that truth is always refined further and further.

Although the examples are from organic chemistry, this book can be enjoyed by any scientist who is interested in the genesis of ideas. It is not an easy reading; however, the reader is richly rewarded by gaining insight of many discoveries and learning that achievements must always be considered in the context of the time, personalities and parallel developments.

L. S. Ettre

Errata

Effect of Subambient Temperature on RP-HPLC of β -Carotene Isomers

by V. Böhm

published in Vol. 50, 282–286 (1999)

There was an error in the heading of Table I on page 284. In the right column please find the correct version

Table I. Retention times of lycopene and four β -carotene isomers, using different column temperatures between 0 °C and 30 °C, flow-rate 0.8 mL min⁻¹ (further chromatographic conditions see text).

Temperature	Retention time [min]				
	Lycopene	(E)- β -carotene	9(Z)- β -carotene	13(Z)- β -carotene	15(Z)- β -carotene
+ 30 °C	12.77	16.00	17.43	18.43	18.43
+ 25 °C	16.21	19.19	21.28	22.13	22.13
+ 20 °C	26.64	26.64	30.71	30.71	30.71
+ 15 °C	41.47	36.03	41.47	41.47	41.47
+ 10 °C	80.14	55.45	65.72	60.74	60.74
+ 5 °C	159.04	86.99	105.44	92.13	86.99
0 °C	293.73	133.25	164.16	133.25	124.27