

Bistable [2]Rotaxane Based Molecular Electronics: Fundamentals and Applications

Thesis by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

California Institute of Technology

Pasadena, California

2007

(Defended May 17, 2007)

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Dedicated with Love and Gratitude

To Dami, Justin and Alexis

And to my dearest parents, Kyungwon Choi and Kisoan Lee

Acknowledgement

I would not be able to stand at this point without advice and helps from many people nearby. Here, I like to leave my sincere gratitude toward all who have been in my scientific journey in the past five years.

In my native land of Korea, there is an old saying - the wisest mother is the one who finds home near a school where her children can be educated by the smartest teacher. In such a sense, I found home here in Southern California exactly on time when the best teacher just moved in the school crossby. The period with my primary mentor, Professor Jim Heath, can hardly be described by words of gratitude. Locally, his insightful guidance in all the projects I have been involved in as well as his sharp advice on finding breakthroughs have been always primary driving forces in moving the projects forward and eventually, completing the decent scientific stories. Globally, his endless passion for every single piece of science has been constantly inspiring a number of people in the society including many young scientists as myself and even the general public. I believe that he will maintain his prestige as a true leader in the field for good.

I was even luckier to have another great mentor in a neighboring school. The marvelous fortune to meet Professor Fraser Stoddart is also beyond a simple description. Having such a supportive and experienced scientist directly in all of my molecular electronics projects must have been very rare privilege. Fraser has also shown that one scientist's passion throughout his entire life could flourish the society by sharing scientific visions and joys with younger generations over the years. On other collaboration sides, I would appreciate Professor Bill Goddard for molecular dynamic

studies on rotaxane molecules, and Professor Bob Grubbs for the supports of polymers in the nanofluidic project.

Also, I can not forget all of my group members for sharing pleasure and frustration on real job spots: Especially, Dr. Yi Luo and Dr. Amar Flood were great mentors in teaching detailed experimental and problem-solving skills in the very beginning of research. I thank Jonathan Green for the perfect teamwork in the 160 kbit memory project and Ehud Vermesh for thorough help in the nanofluidic project. I also appreciate John Nagarah for numerous joyful discussions at many nights. Conversation with John was always a fun and was very helpful in forgetting research problems during the day. Many Korean friends will be in my memory forever as well. I feel very grateful and indebted for their sharing in scientific visions and general life. Finally, and most importantly, I would give my best heart to my lovely family, Dami, Justin and Alexis. I am literally a lucky person to have Dami as a companion for my lifetime journey. Thank you very much for all of your love, support and tolerance. All the wonderful moments with my adorable kids, Justin and Alexis, will also remain as a great happiness forever. Above all, I thank God, my Lord, with my true sincerity for being in my mind all the time and giving confidence at every hard moment.

All of the works in this thesis were funded from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Samsung Lee Kun Hee Scholarship Foundation (SLSF) and Caltech.

Chapter 1 is taken in part from “Recent advances in molecular electronics,” in *CRC Handbook of Nanotechnology*, in press, 2006.

Chapter 2 is taken in part from “Ground-state equilibrium thermodynamics and switching kinetics of bistable [2]rotaxanes switched in solution, polymer gels, and molecular electronic devices,” *Chem. Eur. J.*, 2006, 12, 261-279. Copyright 2006 Wiley-VCH Verlag GmbH.

Chapter 3 is taken in part from “A 160 kilobit molecular electronic crossbar memory circuit patterned at 10^{11} Bits per square centimeter,” *Nature*, 2007, 445, 414-417. Copyright 2007 Nature Publishing Group.

Abstract

Bistable [2]rotaxanes are a unique class of supramolecules that have two constitutional isomers. Upon sandwiched between two electrodes, these two isomeric states show different conducting states, thus behaving as molecular switches. In this thesis, I describe how the bistable [2]rotaxanes have been investigated to ensure that the switching characteristics in solid-state devices are those of the bistable [2]rotaxanes and not those of extraneous elements. In addition, integration of these molecules onto ultra-dense nanowire arrays to constitute a memory circuit is presented.

The bistable [2]rotaxanes have been examined in various environments to study kinetics and ground-state thermodynamics between both isomeric states. In the kinetic study, as molecules are embedded in more viscous environments (solution→polymer gel→solid-state device), a key step in switching cycle slows down significantly, thus reflecting the environments where the molecules are surrounded. In thermodynamic study, one of the major units in the molecular structure was modified and then equilibrium population ratio between both isomeric states was monitored at various temperatures. In both solution and solid-state devices, the population ratio of the modified [2]rotaxane was more sensitive to temperature. This result is very critical in that the properties of devices can be tailored by manipulating the structure of molecular components.

The bistable [2]rotaxanes were integrated into crossbar nanowire arrays to constitute a memory circuit. Ultra-dense nanowire arrays used as electrodes are generated by superlattice nanowire pattern transfer (SNAP) method. Due to extremely narrow pitch (~ 33 nm) of the SNAP nanowire arrays, the device sets a remarkable record in memory density ($\sim 10^{11}$ Bits/cm²). Although the circuits were found to have large

numbers of defects, those defects were identified through electronic testing and the working bits were configured to form a fully functional random access memory for storing and retrieving information.

Finally, nanofluidic devices have been developed by utilizing the SNAP method. Due to small channel dimensions ($<$ Debye screening length), passage of ions was modulated by electrostatic interactions between the ions and the nanochannel walls. Devices are being developed to quantify isoelectric points of peptides so that ultimately, the device could function as a protein identifier at a single molecule level.

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