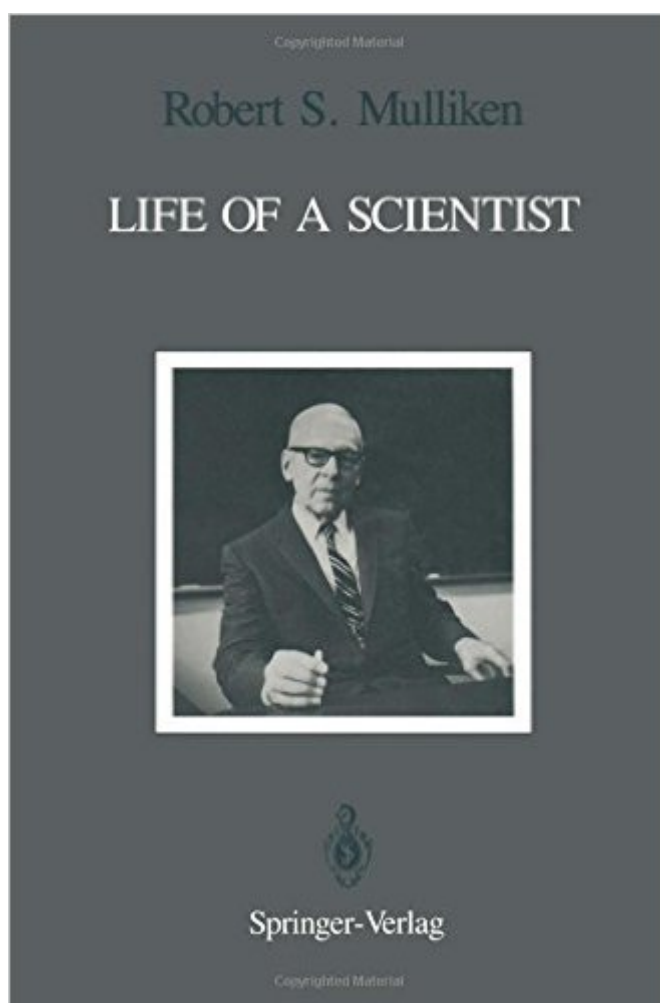


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Life Of A Scientist: An Autobiographical Account Of The Development Of Molecular Orbital Theory



Synopsis

Robert S. Mulliken, Nobel Laureate in chemistry, always had the intention to write a book about his field of research: molecular orbital theory. This is his scientific autobiography, edited posthumously by his former student Bernard J. Ransil and complemented with a memoir by Friedrich Hund, his scientific protagonist. Mulliken describes his career and gives an account of the contributions of his friends and colleagues at home and in Europe where he frequently travelled. And last but not least, he gives an accurate history of how the molecular orbital theory originated and how it evolved in an atmosphere of international exchange. The book is written in a particularly lively style, full of reminiscences and scientific facts, interwoven to produce an account of the Life of a Scientist.

Book Information

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Springer; 1 edition (April 3, 1989)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 3540503757

ISBN-13: 978-3540503750

Product Dimensions: 9 x 7.9 x 1.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (1 customer review)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,614,259 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #164 inÂ Books > Science & Math > Chemistry > Physical & Theoretical > Quantum Chemistry #2112 inÂ Books > Science & Math > Physics > Quantum Theory #90863 inÂ Books > Computers & Technology

Customer Reviews

In this book Robert Sanderson Mulliken, one of the pioneers of molecular orbital (MO) theory and Nobel prize winner, recounts about his original research and rich scientific life in the field of chemical physics which spanned half-century. An interesting aspect of the author's academic career is that he started his research activity in the field of molecular spectroscopy but in order to interpret the complex experimental results he gradually expanded his interests toward theory. During the 1930s, soon after the discovery of quantum mechanics, several physicists and chemists started to apply quantum mechanics to the study of molecules: Mulliken in America and Friedrich Hund in Germany developed MO theory while Walter Heitler and Fritz London in Europe and John Slater and Linus Pauling in USA developed the valence bond (VB) method. In 1966 Mulliken received the Nobel prize in Chemistry for the development of MO theory and his fundamental work on the

electronic structure of molecules (for an overview of Mulliken's research see the book: Selected Papers of Robert S. Mulliken, 1975). Unfortunately Hund did not receive the coveted prize but Mulliken stated that he would have been glad sharing it with him. The book contains many details about spectroscopic and theoretical studies performed on specific molecules (Mulliken's favorite molecule was molecular nitrogen, N₂) as well as the names of Professor Mulliken's collaborators and visitors at The University of Chicago. The book ends with the list of Mulliken's publications and a timeline of all the important events surrounding the life of this great scientist.

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