

DENSE STAR POLYMERS AND DENDRIMERS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. 456,226, filed on Jan. 1, 1983, now U.S. Pat. No. 4,507,466, and a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. 565,686, filed on Dec. 27, 1983.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a novel class of branched polymers containing dendritic branches having functional groups uniformly distributed on the periphery of such branches. This invention also relates to processes for preparing such polymers as well as applications therefore.

Organic polymers are generally classified in a structural sense as either linear or branched. In the case of linear polymers, the repeating units (often called mers) are divalent and are connected one to another in a linear sequence. In the case of branched polymers, at least some of the mers possess a valency greater than 2 such that the mers are connected in a nonlinear sequence. The term "branching" usually implies that the individual molecular units of the branches are discrete from the polymer backbone, yet have the same chemical constitution as the polymer backbone. Thus, regularly repeating side groups which are inherent in the monomer structure and/or are of different chemical constitution than the polymer backbone are not considered as branches, e.g., dependent methyl groups of linear polypropylene. To produce a branched polymer, it is necessary to employ an initiator, a monomer, or both that possess at least three moieties that function in the polymerization reaction. Such monomer or initiators are often called polyfunctional. The simplest branched polymers are the chain branched polymers wherein a linear backbone bears one or more essentially linear pendant groups. This simple forms of branching, often called comb branching, may be regular wherein the branches are uniformly and regularly distributed on the polymer backbone or irregular wherein the branches are distributed in nonuniform or random fashion on the polymer backbone. See T. A. Orofino, *Polymer*, 2, 295-314 (1961). An example of regular comb branching is a comb branched polystyrene as described by T. Altors et al. in *J. Polymer Sci., Part A*, Vol. 3, 4131-4151 (1965) and an example of irregular comb branching is illustrated by graft copolymers as described by Sorenson et al. in "Preparative Methods of Polymer Chemistry", 2nd Ed., Interscience Publishers, 213-214 (1968).

Another type of branching is exemplified by cross-linked or network polymers wherein the polymer chains are connected via tetravalent compounds, e.g., polystyrene molecules bridged or cross-linked with divinylbenzene. In this type of branching, many of the individual branches are not linear in that each branch may itself contain groups pendant from a linear chain. More importantly in network branching, each polymer macromolecule (backbone) is cross-linked at two or more sites to two other polymer macromolecules. Also the chemical constitution of the cross-linkages may vary from that of the polymer macromolecules. In this so-called cross-linked or network branched polymer, the various branches or cross-linkages may be structurally similar (called regular cross-linked) or they may be structurally dissimilar (called irregularly cross-linked).

An example of regular cross-linked polymers is a ladder-type poly(phenylsilsesquinone) as described by Sorenson et al., supra, at page 390. The foregoing and other types of branched polymers are described by H. G. Elias in *Macromolecules*, Vol. I, Plenum Press, N.Y. (1977).

More recently, there have been developed polymers having so-called star structured branching wherein the individual branches radiate out from a nucleus and there are at least 3 branches per nucleus. Such star branched polymers are illustrated by the polyquaternary compositions described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,036,808 and 4,102,827. Star branched polymers prepared from olefins and unsaturated acids are described in U.S. Pat. NO. 4,141,847. The star branched polymers offer several advantages over polymers having other types of branching. For example, it is found that the star branched polymers may exhibit higher concentrations of functional groups thus making them more active for their intended purpose. In addition, such star branched polymers are often less sensitive to degradation by shearing which is a very useful property in formulations such as paints, in enhanced oil recovery and other viscosity applications. Additionally, the star branched polymers have relatively low intrinsic viscosities even at high molecular weight.

While the star branched polymers offer many of the aforementioned advantages over polymers having more conventional branching, it is highly desirable to provide polymers which exhibit even greater concentrations of functional groups per unit volume of the polymer macromolecule as well as a more uniform distribution of such functional groups in the exterior regions of the macromolecule. In addition, it is often desirable to provide polymers having macromolecule configurations that are more spheroidal and compact than are the star branched polymers.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In its broadest aspect, this invention is a dense star polymer having at least one branch (hereinafter called a core branch) emanating from a core, said branch having at least one terminal group provided that (1) the ratio of terminal groups to the core branches is more than one, preferably two or greater, (2) the density of terminal groups per unit volume in the polymer is at least 1.5 times that of a conventional star polymer having similar core and monomeric moieties and a comparable molecular weight and number of core branches, each of such branches of the conventional star polymer bearing only one terminal group, and (3) a molecular volume that is no more than about 60 percent of the molecular volume of said conventional star polymer as determined by dimensional studies using scaled Corey-Pauling molecular models. For purposes of this invention, the term "dense" as it modifies "star polymer" means that it has a smaller molecular volume than a conventional star polymer having the same molecular weight. The conventional star polymer which is used as the base for comparison with the dense star polymer is one that has the same molecular, same core and monomeric components and same number of core branches as the dense star polymer. In addition while the number of terminal groups is greater for the dense star polymer molecule than in the conventional star polymer molecule, the chemical structure of the terminal groups is the same.