



Defect and coherent transient optical spectroscopy of rare earth doped crystals  
by Guangming Wang

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
Physics

Montana State University

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Abstract:

Spectral and structural properties of rare earth doped crystals have been investigated with white light absorption, fluorescence, fluorescence excitation, optically-detected nuclear-magnetic-resonance (ODNMR), photon echo and optical nutation.

Conventional spectroscopy was used to study  $\text{Pr}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Nd}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Sm}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Eu}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Ho}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Er}^{3+}$  and  $\text{Tm}^{3+}$  doped  $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$  crystals. Besides the intrinsic site spectroscopy, systematic studies on dopant ions in defect sites were carried out. There were generally 3-6 defect lines within  $\pm 60 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  of the intrinsic line. Quantitative optical absorption measurements showed that 4-7% of the dopants appeared in defect sites for the  $\text{Eu}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Ho}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Er}^{3+}$  and  $\text{Tm}^{3+}$  doped  $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$  crystals and 15-21% of the dopants appeared in defect sites for the  $\text{Pr}^{3+}$  and  $\text{Nd}^{3+}$  doped  $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$  crystals. These defects were attributed to the 1% of excess  $\text{Y}^{3+}$  substituting at  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  sites ( $C_{3i}$  symmetry) with a random distribution for  $\text{Eu}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Ho}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Er}^{3+}$  and  $\text{Tm}^{3+}$  ions whose radii were close to  $\text{Y}^{3+}$  and a preferred distribution for  $\text{Pr}^{3+}$  and  $\text{Nd}^{3+}$  ions whose radii were much larger than  $\text{Y}^{3+}$ .

Angle dependent ODNMR was used to determine the nuclear principal axis orientations of  $\text{Pr}^{3+}$  ions in the intrinsic and defect sites of  $\text{Pr}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ . The intrinsic site has  $D_2$  symmetry which constrains the orientation of  $\text{Pr}^{3+}$  nuclear principal axes to specific directions. These directions were verified through ODNMR measurements. Using angle dependent ODNMR, one defect site was found to have  $C_1$  symmetry which is attributed to  $\text{Y}^{3+}$  substituting at  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  sites.

Optical dephasing was studied for  $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_7$  as a function of temperature and laser excitation intensity via photon echo measurements. Temperature dependence of the optical dephasing was attributed to phonon coupling between the ground states  $3\text{H}_6(1)$  and  $3\text{H}_6(2)$  which were  $6 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  apart. Instantaneous spectral diffusion is another dephasing mechanism in this crystal. Using photon echoes, a homogeneous linewidth of 14 kHz was measured at 1.24 K for the  $3\text{H}_6(1) \rightarrow 3\text{H}_4(1)$  transition. The relatively broad inhomogeneous linewidth of 100 GHz gave an inhomogeneous-to-homogeneous linewidth ratio of  $7 \times 10^6$ . This large ratio combined with a transition wavelength suitable for GaAlAs semiconductor lasers and the absence of hyperfine structure hole burning make this material an interesting candidate for time-domain signal processing and transient optically-addressed data storage.

Coherent transients were also studied for  $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$  via optical nutation measurements. Beats were observed due to the presence of several Rabi frequencies from the crystallographically-equivalent but orientationally-inequivalent crystal sites. Using symmetry considerations, we found for the first time that when the light electric field was along one of two special directions (111) and (001), the nutation had a single Rabi frequency. A general procedure for obtaining single Rabi frequency nutation ("single-dipole") in arbitrary crystals is presented.

DEFECT AND COHERENT TRANSIENT OPTICAL SPECTROSCOPY  
OF RARE EARTH DOPED CRYSTALS

by

Guangming Wang

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Physics

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Bozeman, Montana

April, 1997

D378  
W1853

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

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This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is grateful to all those who gave their time, expertise and wise counsel to him during his graduate career. First and foremost, he wants to thank his advisor, Professor Rufus L. Cone; only with his countless advice and assistance, could this thesis become possible.

The author also wishes to acknowledge the technical assistance from Norman Williams and Erik Andersen, and for the useful discussion and assistance from his lab colleagues: Greg White, Charles Thiel, Todd Harris, Gregory Reinemer, Dr. Nicholas Strickland, Dr. Flurin Koenz, and Sebastien Ermeneux, special thanks to Dr. Yongchen Sun and Dr. Randy W. Equall for their relentless tutoring in running the experiments and analyzing the data.

The author is indebted to Dr. R. M. Macfarlane and Dr. M. J. M. Leask for their stimulating discussion and productive collaboration.

The author would like to thank Scientific Materials Corporation for providing high quality crystal samples.

Finally, the author would like to express his gratitude to his wife Bingbing Chen and his family for all of their love and encouragement over the years.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL.....	ii
STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xvii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Homogeneous Broadening.....	2
Inhomogeneous Broadening.....	3
Satellite Lines in the Spectra.....	4
Crystal Structure and Selection Rules for $R^{3+}$ Doped $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ .....	5
Crystal Growth and Sample Preparation.....	9
Defects in $R^{3+}$ Doped $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ and Mechanisms for Defect Formation.....	10
References for Chapter 1.....	15
2. CONVENTIONAL SPECTROSCOPY.....	16
White Light Absorption.....	16
Fluorescence.....	17
Fluorescence Excitation.....	20
Experimental Results for $Pr^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ .....	22
Introduction.....	22
Results.....	23
Experimental Results for $Nd^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ .....	34
Introduction.....	34
Results.....	35
Discussion.....	47
Experimental Results for $Sm^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ .....	48

TABLE OF CONTENTS — Continued

	Page
Introduction .....	48
Results .....	48
Experimental Results for $\text{Eu}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ .....	50
Experimental Results for $\text{Ho}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ .....	54
Experimental Results for $\text{Er}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ .....	59
Introduction .....	59
Results .....	60
Discussion.....	66
Experimental Results for $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ .....	69
Introduction .....	69
Results .....	69
Conclusions.....	74
References for Chapter 2 .....	79
<b>3. HYPERFINE INTERACTIONS AND NONLINEAR SPECTROSCOPY.....</b>	<b>84</b>
Introduction.....	84
Experimental Results for $\text{Pr}^{3+}$ in the Intrinsic Site of $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ .....	85
Introduction .....	85
Theory.....	87
Raman Heterodyne Detection of NMR .....	88
Apparatus and Experiment .....	91
Analysis .....	96
Excited State.....	105
Conclusion.....	106
Experimental Results for $\text{Pr}^{3+}$ in Defect Sites of $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ .....	108
Introduction .....	108
Symmetry Considerations.....	109
Zero Field ODNMR Results.....	115
Angle-dependent ODNMR Results .....	120
Discussion.....	124
Conclusion.....	129
References for Chapter 3 .....	132
<b>4. OPTICAL DEPHASING MECHANISMS IN <math>\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_7</math>.....</b>	<b>134</b>
Introduction.....	134
Experiment and Results .....	136
Conclusion .....	141
References for Chapter 4 .....	144

TABLE OF CONTENTS — Continued

	Page
5. SYMMETRY CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING LIGHT PROPAGATION AND LIGHT POLARIZATION FOR COHERENT INTERACTION WITH IONS IN CRYSTALS .....	146
Introduction .....	146
Experiment and Results.....	150
Conclusion.....	159
References for Chapter 5 .....	160
6. SUMMARY.....	163
APPENDIX.....	166
Programs for Angle Dependent ODNMR Data Analysis in $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ Crystals.....	166
Batch File for Combining the Fitting, Drawing, and Plotting Programs with Data Files.....	166
Program: angle_yg.for.....	167
Program: fdf_yag.for.....	176
Program: drawyag.for .....	184
Program: plotwin.for.....	192

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Crystallographic data for $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ . Cubic Ia3d, #230, Z = 8. X-ray data: a = 12.000 angstrom, x = -0.0306, y = 0.0512, z = 0.1500. <sup>5</sup> .....	6
Table 2. Full rotation compatibility table for the $D_2$ group <sup>7</sup> .....	6
Table 3. Electric-dipole and magnetic-dipole selection rules for $D_2$ symmetry. The $\Gamma_i$ 's are the representations of the initial & final states. E denotes electric-dipole; M, magnetic-dipole. The indices x, y, and z refer to the local site symmetry axes. ....	9
Table 4. The cationic coordination for $Y^{3+}$ in $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ . m represents the number of neighbors in a sphere of radius r. ....	14
Table 5. Detailed energy level information for intrinsic and defect sites of the 0.018% $Pr^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ (1.04 mm) crystal at 1.4 K. The levels in the same column for defect sites .....	30
Table 6. Linewidths and absorption coefficients for some transitions to $^1D_2$ , $^3P_0$ and $^3P_1$ of intrinsic and defect sites of the 0.018% $Pr^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ (1.04 mm) crystal at 1.4 K. ....	32
Table 7. Detailed energy level information for intrinsic and defect sites of the 10-62T 0.745% $Nd^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ (3.2 mm) crystal at 1.4 K. The defect transitions have about the same linewidth as the corresponding transition for the intrinsic site. The number of intrinsic levels is J+1/2 for each manifold.....	40
Table 8. Detailed defect line absorption coefficient information of $Nd^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ at 1.4 K. ....	42
Table 9. Detailed energy level information for intrinsic site of $Sm^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ at 1.4 K. ....	49
Table 10. Detailed energy level information for intrinsic and defect sites of $Eu^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ at 1.4 K.....	51

LIST OF TABLES—Continued

	Page
Table 11. Detailed energy level information for intrinsic and defect sites of $\text{Ho}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ at 1.4 K. ....	58
Table 12. Detailed energy level information for intrinsic and defect sites with linewidth in parenthesis obtained with the 3-12 1.14% $\text{Er}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ (4.04 mm) crystal at 1.4 K. The levels in the same column for defect sites do not necessarily belong to the same site except when in bold type. The number of intrinsic levels is $J+1/2$ for each manifold.....	64
Table 13. Detailed energy level information for intrinsic and defect sites of $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ at 1.4 K.....	73
Table 14. Compositions of eigenstates $ \pm m\rangle = \sum a_{im} \psi_i$ with $i$ and $m = \pm 1/2, \pm 3/2, \pm 5/2$ .....	98
Table 15. The gyromagnetic ratios for $\text{Pr}^{3+}$ doped crystals.....	102
Table 16. Optical and hyperfine parameters of the $^3\text{H}_4(1) \leftrightarrow ^1\text{D}_2(1)$ transition of $\text{Pr}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ at 1.4 K. Parameters noted by * were also measured by Shelby et al. <sup>11</sup> .....	107
Table 17. Optical and hyperfine parameters of the $^1\text{D}_2(1) \leftrightarrow ^3\text{H}_4(1)$ transitions for the intrinsic (in bold) and perturbed sites of $\text{Pr}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ at 1.4 K. ....	115
Table 18. Single Rabi frequency directions for several important rare earth doped crystals. ....	158

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. The very complex $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ crystal structure. $Al_1$ represents the $Al^{3+}$ ion in an $a$ site and $Al_2$ represents the $Al^{3+}$ ion in a $d$ site. There are eight molecules and a total of 160 ions per unit cell.....	7
Figure 2. Orientation in the crystal lattice of the six orientationally-inequivalent sites of the $Y^{3+}$ ion in the unit cell of yttrium aluminum garnet. <sup>6</sup> The rectangular boxes represent the local $D_2$ symmetries where each axis direction is different, and $x$ , $y$ and $z$ are the local axes for site 1 of 6 sites.....	8
Figure 3. Experimental apparatus for fluorescence and laser excitation.....	18
Figure 4. Helium temperature (1.4 K) white light absorption spectrum for $^3H_4(1) \rightarrow ^1D_2(1)$ and $^3H_4(1) \rightarrow ^1D_2(2)$ transitions of the 0.018% $Pr^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ (1.04 mm) crystal. The arrow indicates a defect peak which is used for further study in Chapter 3.....	25
Figure 5. Helium temperature (1.4 K) white light absorption spectrum for $^3H_4(1) \rightarrow ^3P_0$ transitions of the 0.018% $Pr^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ (1.04 mm) crystal.....	26
Figure 6. Helium temperature (1.4 K) white light absorption spectrum for $^3H_4(1) \rightarrow ^3P_1$ transitions of the 0.018% $Pr^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ (1.04 mm) crystal.....	27
Figure 7. Excitation and site selective fluorescence of $^3P_0$ of the 0.018% $Pr^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ crystal. The portions without data in the fluorescence curves are due to scattered laser saturation. The solid arrows indicate the laser energies used for site selective fluorescence. The forbidden intrinsic site transition from $^3P_0$ to $^3H_4(2)$ is indicated with a dashed arrow. The dotted arrows show the partially allowed $^3P_0 \rightarrow ^3H_4(2)$ transitions for some defect sites.....	28
Figure 8. Schematic of energy levels of the intrinsic site for $Pr^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ . Since some transitions from $^1D_2$ to $^3H_4$ are forbidden by transition rules, only six out of the nine levels of $^3H_4$ were determined.....	33

LIST OF FIGURES — Continued

	Page
Figure 9. The room temperature absorption spectra on two $\text{Nd}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ samples. The ${}^4\text{G}_{7/2}$ manifold is shown. The spectrum for the 0.0013% sample is expanded 100 fold. ....	37
Figure 10. The absorption spectrum of the ${}^4\text{F}_{9/2}$ manifold of the 10-62T 0.745% $\text{Nd}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystal (3.2 mm) at 1.4 K. The two lowest components of the intrinsic site are close to total absorption and saturated. High resolution spectra with absorption coefficients are given in Figure 12. ....	38
Figure 11. High resolution absorption spectrum of ${}^4\text{F}_{9/2}(1)$ of the 10-62T 0.745% $\text{Nd}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystal (3.2 mm) at 1.4 K. The round shape of the intrinsic line is due to the saturation. There are 6 defect lines around the intrinsic line. ....	39
Figure 12. High resolution absorption spectra of ${}^4\text{F}_{9/2}(1)$ for the 1.247%, 0.745% and 0.24% $\text{Nd}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystals. The intrinsic lines for the 1.247% and 0.745% samples are saturated. For each curve, there is one intrinsic line (A) and 6 defect lines (B, C, D, E, F, G).....	43
Figure 13. The ${}^4\text{F}_{9/2}(1)$ defect line intensities vs. concentration x. The solid lines are fits with $ax + bx^2$ . The dashed line is a linear fit. ....	44
Figure 14. The ${}^4\text{F}_{3/2}(1)$ defect line intensities vs. concentration x. The solid lines are fits with $ax + bx^2$ . The dashed line is a linear fit. ....	45
Figure 15. The ${}^4\text{G}_{7/2}(1)$ defect line intensities vs. concentration x. The solid line is a linear fit. ....	46
Figure 16. Absorption spectrum of the ${}^7\text{F}_0 \rightarrow {}^5\text{D}_1(1,2,3)$ transitions for the 1% $\text{Eu}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystal (3.75 mm) in liquid helium. There are several defect lines in the vicinity of ${}^5\text{D}_1(1)$ and ${}^5\text{D}_1(2)$ . ....	52
Figure 17. Absorption spectrum of the ${}^7\text{F}_0 \rightarrow {}^5\text{D}_2$ transitions for the 1% $\text{Eu}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystal (3.75 mm) in liquid helium. ....	53
Figure 18. The ${}^5\text{F}_3$ manifold absorption spectra of the 0.24% $\text{Ho}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystal(2.99 mm) at 1.94 K and 1.44 K. Three peaks originating from ${}^5\text{I}_8(2)$ are indicated with arrows. ....	56

LIST OF FIGURES—Continued

	Page
Figure 19. Absorption spectrum of the $^5F_3(1)$ of the 0.24% $\text{Ho}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystal (2.99 mm) at 1.4 K. There are three defect lines around the intrinsic line. ....	57
Figure 20. The room temperature absorption spectra of several $\text{Er}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ samples. The $^2H_{11/2}$ manifold is shown. ....	61
Figure 21. The room temperature absorption spectrum on the clean out #2 0.00062% $\text{Er}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ (10 mm) sample. The $^2H_{11/2}$ manifold is shown. The peak absorption coefficient is used for concentration calibration. ....	62
Figure 22. Absorption spectra of the 3-12 1.14% $\text{Er}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystal (4.04 mm). The $^4S_{3/2}$ manifold absorption was measured both at room temperature and at 1.4 K. Some of the lines in the room temperature spectrum are hot absorption transitions. ....	63
Figure 23. The fluorescence spectra of $^4S_{3/2} \rightarrow ^4I_{15/2}$ for the 3-12 1.14% $\text{Er}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystal (4.04 mm) at 1.4 K. The top trace is for the intrinsic site. The other traces are for three defect sites. ....	67
Figure 24. The fluorescence excitation spectrum was recorded for each site by monitoring its $^4S_{3/2}(1) \rightarrow ^4I_{15/2}(3)$ transition. A is for the intrinsic site; B, C, and D are for the three defect sites. ....	68
Figure 25. Absorption spectrum of the full multiplet of $^1G_4$ for the 1% $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystal at 1.4 K. ....	70
Figure 26. Absorption spectra of the lowest components of $^1G_4$ for the 1% and the 0.1% $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystals at 1.4 K. ....	71
Figure 27. Absorption spectra of the lowest components of $^3H_4$ for the 1% and the 0.1% $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystals. The intrinsic line of the 3-8 1% $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ (5.48 mm) crystal is saturated. A thinner crystal needs to be used to obtain the intrinsic line absorption coefficient. ....	72
Figure 28. Ionic radii of the lanthanides with coordination number = 6. ....	77
Figure 29. Percentage of $\text{R}^{3+}$ ions in defect sites for $\text{R}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystals. ....	78

LIST OF FIGURES— Continued

	Page
Figure 30. Zeeman-split hyperfine level diagram for the $\text{Pr}^{3+} \ ^3\text{H}_4(1) \leftrightarrow \ ^1\text{D}_2(1)$ transition of $\text{Pr}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ , showing the coherent Raman process (not to scale). The dashed line shows the RF field $\omega$ for driving the $ 1\rangle \rightarrow  2\rangle$ transition. The solid line $\Omega$ represents the optical driving field for the $ 2\rangle \rightarrow  3\rangle$ transition. The solid line $\Omega'$ is the anti-Stokes field.....	89
Figure 31. Schematic of apparatus ① is for the Raman heterodyne detection of NMR and ② is for the ODNMR.....	92
Figure 32. The transmitted laser beam intensity versus the protractor angle $\theta$ . The open triangles mark the data when the protractor was rotated clockwise. The solid triangles mark the data when the protractor was rotated counter-clockwise. The circles were data when the protractor was reset clockwise. The clockwise data was fit to $a \cdot \sin^2(\theta - b)$ . .....	94
Figure 33. Optically-detected NMR spectrum of the $\ ^3\text{H}_4(1) \leftrightarrow \ ^1\text{D}_2(1)$ transition in a $\text{Pr}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ crystal showing the $ \pm 1/2\rangle \leftrightarrow  \pm 3/2\rangle$ , $ \pm 3/2\rangle \leftrightarrow  \pm 5/2\rangle$ and $ \pm 1/2\rangle \leftrightarrow  \pm 5/2\rangle$ resonances at zero magnetic field. ....	97
Figure 34. Zeeman splittings are mapped for the $ \pm 1/2\rangle \leftrightarrow  \pm 3/2\rangle$ transitions in a 190-G magnetic field rotating in a plane perpendicular to $(1\ \bar{1}\ 0)$ . $\alpha$ is the angle between the magnetic field and $(001)$ .....	101
Figure 35. Zeeman splittings are mapped for the $ -3/2\rangle \leftrightarrow  +3/2\rangle$ transitions in a 140-G magnetic field rotating in a plane perpendicular to $(1\ \bar{1}\ 0)$ . $\alpha$ is the angle between the magnetic field and $(001)$ . The data points with crossed centers for angles between $60^\circ$ and $120^\circ$ are assigned to excited state hyperfine splittings.....	104
Figure 36. Stereographic projection <sup>28</sup> of the $\text{O}_h^{10}$ group. There are 48 elements in this group. They include $\text{C}_4$ , $\text{C}_3$ , and $\text{C}_2$ rotations and mirror reflections. Twenty-four elements are projected onto the top hemisphere as the dots, and the other 24 elements are projected onto the bottom hemisphere as the circles.....	110

LIST OF FIGURES — Continued

	Page
Figure 37. The site orientations of defect sites on surface Z (001). The magnetic field rotates from (001) to (111) to (110) as indicated by the dash line. The un-numbered sites are mirror images of the numbered ones relative the mirror plane (1-10). They are equivalent in our experimental geometry. ....	111
Figure 38. The site orientations of defect sites on surface X (100). The orientations on X (100) are expressed relative to a new coordinate system which is formed by rotating the original coordinates 90° counter-clockwise about the Y (010) axis. ....	112
Figure 39. Zero field ODNMR spectra of defect sites in Pr <sup>3+</sup> :Y <sub>3</sub> Al <sub>5</sub> O <sub>12</sub> for different <sup>1</sup> D <sub>2</sub> (1) energies. Solid arrows mark the  ±1/2⟩ ↔  ±3/2⟩ resonances, dashed arrows mark  ±3/2⟩ ↔  ±5/2⟩ resonances and dotted arrows mark  ±1/2⟩ ↔  ±5/2⟩ resonances. ....	116
Figure 40. Zero field ODNMR spectrum of a defect site in Pr <sup>3+</sup> :Y <sub>3</sub> Al <sub>5</sub> O <sub>12</sub> , with <sup>1</sup> D <sub>2</sub> (1) at 16342.2cm <sup>-1</sup> , showing the  ±1/2⟩ ↔  ±3/2⟩,  ±3/2⟩ ↔  ±5/2⟩ and  ±1/2⟩ ↔  ±5/2⟩ resonances at 23.68, 32.97, and 56.73 MHz. ....	117
Figure 41. The quadrupole interaction parameter P is plotted vs. 1/(E <sub>1</sub> -E <sub>0</sub> ) for each defect site. The straight line is a fit to the function P = c/(E <sub>1</sub> -E <sub>0</sub> ). ....	119
Figure 42. The 161 Gauss field-split spectrum of the Pr <sup>3+</sup>  ±1/2⟩ ↔  ±3/2⟩ transition with the field direction at 37.4° from (001). ....	121
Figure 43. The 161 Gauss field-split spectrum of the Pr <sup>3+</sup>  ±1/2⟩ ↔  ±3/2⟩ transition with the field direction along (111). ....	122
Figure 44. The 161 Gauss field-split spectrum of the Pr <sup>3+</sup>  ±1/2⟩ ↔  ±3/2⟩ transition with the field direction along (110). ....	123
Figure 45. Zeeman splittings are mapped for the  ±1/2⟩ ↔  ±3/2⟩ transitions for a 161-G magnetic field rotating in a plane perpendicular to (1 1̄ 0). α is the angle between the magnetic field and (001). The	

LIST OF FIGURES—Continued

	Page
circles are data points while the curves are theoretical fits. Curves of the same line type arise from a single site orientation.....	126
Figure 46. The intrinsic $Y^{3+}$ site has $D_2$ symmetry and is surrounded by four $Al^{3+}$ ions and four $O^{2-}$ ions. When an excess $Y^{3+}$ ion replaces one of the four $Al^{3+}$ ions which are near neighbors to a $Pr^{3+}$ ion, the local symmetry of the $c$ site reduces from $D_2$ to $C_1$ .....	127
Figure 47. Absorption spectrum of ${}^4S_{3/2}$ of $Er_3Al_5O_{12}$ at 1.4 K. The two solid arrows indicate two allowed electronic transitions to ${}^4S_{3/2}$ (1) and ${}^4S_{3/2}$ (2) of $Er^{3+}$ at the intrinsic $D_2$ site. They are saturated. The solid and open triangles mark the vibronic transitions accompanying the two electronic transitions. The dashed arrow indicates the possible energy level position of $Er^{3+}$ at a $C_{3i}$ site. The vertical bars are the vibronic transitions of $Er^{3+}$ at the $C_{3i}$ site.....	131
Figure 48. Photon echo decays for the ${}^3H_6(1) \rightarrow {}^3H_4(1)$ transition of $Tm^{3+}:Y_2Si_2O_7$ recorded at temperatures of 1.24 K and 2.17 K using an excitation power density of $9.6 \text{ W/cm}^2$ and excitation pulse widths of $0.5 \mu\text{s}$ . These conditions yielded dephasing times of $T_2 = 23 \mu\text{s}$ and $T_2 = 1.9 \mu\text{s}$ corresponding to homogeneous linewidths of 14 kHz and 170 kHz respectively.....	138
Figure 49. Dependence of homogeneous linewidth on excitation power density recorded at a temperature of 1.45 K showing the contribution from instantaneous spectral diffusion. Both echo excitation pulses had the same intensity, and their intensities were varied simultaneously. The solid line is a fit to a simple rate equation model. ....	139
Figure 50. Temperature dependence of homogeneous linewidth of the ${}^3H_6(1) \rightarrow {}^3H_4(1)$ transition of 0.1% $Tm^{3+}$ in $Y_2Si_2O_7$ . The solid line is a fit to Eq. (4.2) representing the direct phonon process. All measurements were obtained using an excitation power density of $9.6 \text{ W/cm}^2$ .....	143
Figure 51. Schematic of the experimental setup for optical nutation.....	151
Figure 52. Observed nutation signal of the ${}^3H_6(1) \leftrightarrow {}^3H_4(1)$ transition of the 0.1% $Tm^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ crystal for a laser propagating along the	

LIST OF FIGURES—Continued

	Page
(1 $\bar{1}$ 0) direction. The solid trace is with the light electric field polarized along (111), the dashed trace is with the light electric field along (001). .....	154
Figure 53. The nutation frequencies vs. the laser electric field. The laser electric field vector is along (111). The solid line is a linear fit through the origin. ....	155
Figure 54. Nutation signal of the ${}^3\text{H}_6(1) \leftrightarrow {}^3\text{H}_4(1)$ transition of 0.1% $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ for a laser propagating along the (1 $\bar{1}$ 0) direction. The dotted trace is the experimental trace with the electric field vector of the light polarized $12^\circ$ from (110) and $78^\circ$ from (00 $\bar{1}$ ). The three dashed traces are simulated nutation signals for the three kinds of dipoles using the single Rabi frequency data. The sum of the three dashed traces according to Eq. (3) is shown in the solid trace which is in good agreement with the experimental nutation data (dotted trace), for that direction. ....	157

## ABSTRACT

Spectral and structural properties of rare earth doped crystals have been investigated with white light absorption, fluorescence, fluorescence excitation, optically-detected nuclear-magnetic-resonance (ODNMR), photon echo and optical nutation.

Conventional spectroscopy was used to study  $\text{Pr}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Nd}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Sm}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Eu}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Ho}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Er}^{3+}$  and  $\text{Tm}^{3+}$  doped  $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$  crystals. Besides the intrinsic site spectroscopy, systematic studies on dopant ions in defect sites were carried out. There were generally 3-6 defect lines within  $\pm 60 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  of the intrinsic line. Quantitative optical absorption measurements showed that 4-7% of the dopants appeared in defect sites for the  $\text{Eu}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Ho}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Er}^{3+}$  and  $\text{Tm}^{3+}$  doped  $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$  crystals and 15-21% of the dopants appeared in defect sites for the  $\text{Pr}^{3+}$  and  $\text{Nd}^{3+}$  doped  $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$  crystals. These defects were attributed to the 1% of excess  $\text{Y}^{3+}$  substituting at  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  *a* sites ( $\text{C}_{3i}$  symmetry) with a random distribution for  $\text{Eu}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Ho}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Er}^{3+}$  and  $\text{Tm}^{3+}$  ions whose radii were close to  $\text{Y}^{3+}$  and a preferred distribution for  $\text{Pr}^{3+}$  and  $\text{Nd}^{3+}$  ions whose radii were much larger than  $\text{Y}^{3+}$ .

Angle dependent ODNMR was used to determine the nuclear principal axis orientations of  $\text{Pr}^{3+}$  ions in the intrinsic and defect sites of  $\text{Pr}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$ . The intrinsic site has  $\text{D}_2$  symmetry which constrains the orientation of  $\text{Pr}^{3+}$  nuclear principal axes to specific directions. These directions were verified through ODNMR measurements. Using angle dependent ODNMR, one defect site was found to have  $\text{C}_1$  symmetry which is attributed to  $\text{Y}^{3+}$  substituting at  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  *a* sites.

Optical dephasing was studied for  $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_7$  as a function of temperature and laser excitation intensity via photon echo measurements. Temperature dependence of the optical dephasing was attributed to phonon coupling between the ground states  $^3\text{H}_6(1)$  and  $^3\text{H}_6(2)$  which were  $6 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  apart. Instantaneous spectral diffusion is another dephasing mechanism in this crystal. Using photon echoes, a homogeneous linewidth of 14 kHz was measured at 1.24 K for the  $^3\text{H}_6(1) \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_4(1)$  transition. The relatively broad inhomogeneous linewidth of 100 GHz gave an inhomogeneous-to-homogeneous linewidth ratio of  $7 \times 10^6$ . This large ratio combined with a transition wavelength suitable for GaAlAs semiconductor lasers and the absence of hyperfine structure hole burning make this material an interesting candidate for time-domain signal processing and transient optically-addressed data storage.

Coherent transients were also studied for  $\text{Tm}^{3+}:\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$  via optical nutation measurements. Beats were observed due to the presence of several Rabi frequencies from the crystallographically-equivalent but orientationally-inequivalent crystal sites. Using symmetry considerations, we found for the first time that when the light electric field was along one of two special directions (111) and (001), the nutation had a single Rabi frequency. A general procedure for obtaining single Rabi frequency nutation ("single-dipole") in arbitrary crystals is presented.

## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Defect sites in crystals doped with trivalent rare earth ions have been studied extensively, but there are still many interesting and challenging questions waiting to be answered. This thesis studies the defects in rare earth ion doped  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  crystals. In particular, the defects in  $Pr^{3+}$ ,  $Nd^{3+}$ ,  $Sm^{3+}$ ,  $Eu^{3+}$ ,  $Ho^{3+}$ ,  $Er^{3+}$ , and  $Tm^{3+}$  doped  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  crystals were systematically studied using conventional spectroscopic methods including white light absorption, fluorescence, and fluorescence excitation. Energy levels of the rare earth ion in defect sites were measured, and the intensities of the transitions were used to determine the defect site concentration. The local structure of one defect site in  $Pr^{3+}$  doped  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  crystal was studied using nonlinear spectroscopic methods including optically detected nuclear magnetic resonance (ODNMR) and Raman heterodyne detection of NMR.

A better understanding of the defects is very helpful in improving laser efficiency, laser longevity and crystal growth techniques. Because the  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  crystal has a relatively complex structure compared to other crystals, the techniques used in this thesis can also be applied to other crystals for defect or structural studies.

There are several excellent books on rare earth ion spectroscopy.<sup>1-3</sup> Readers are referred to these books for overviews. This chapter introduces several spectroscopic and structural topics: homogeneous broadening, inhomogeneous broadening, satellite lines in the spectra, crystal structure and selection rules for  $R^{3+}$  doped  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ , crystal growth and sample preparation, defects in  $R^{3+}$  doped  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ , and mechanisms for defect formation. These topics will provide the background for further discussion in the following chapters.

### Homogeneous Broadening

Spectral lines of the rare earth ions in crystals are normally broadened by two major classes of mechanisms i.e. homogeneous broadening and inhomogeneous broadening. Homogeneous broadening arises from dynamic perturbations caused by lattice phonon coupling, nuclear or electron spin couplings and population decay. This broadening is experienced equally by all the ions but can be different for different energy levels. Within one J manifold, the splittings between different crystal field components are less than average phonon frequencies. When the upper crystal field components are excited, they nonradiatively decay to the lowest crystal field component through phonon coupling which increases their homogeneous linewidth. On the other hand, since the separation between J manifolds is often larger than the maximum phonon frequency at liquid helium temperatures, multiphonon emission is normally required to relax the lowest crystal field component. Therefore, the lowest component of a J-manifold has

smaller homogeneous broadening (kHz-MHz scale) than the upper crystal field components.

The lowest crystal field component is generally chosen for detailed spectroscopic studies for several reasons. Small broadening makes the satellite lines easily resolved around this lowest crystal field component. With little non-radiative decay, it is possible to detect fluorescence, apply optical pumping and use advanced nonlinear spectroscopic techniques. A long lifetime is also desirable for optical memory applications by allowing time for recording and retrieving optical data pulses.

Changes in temperature can dramatically change the homogeneous broadening by changing the phonon population. In order to reduce the homogeneous broadening, most of our experiments were done with the samples immersed in superfluid liquid helium pumped to a temperature of 1.4 K unless otherwise specified.

### Inhomogeneous Broadening

No crystal is perfect; strains, impurities, and defects are common. For example,  $\text{Y}_3\text{Al}_5\text{O}_{12}$  crystals are grown from the melt at high temperature. Compositions can change on a microscopic scale during growth introducing strains. When the crystals are cooled, static lattice strains are also introduced. Impurities may come from the raw oxide starting materials and from the melt crucible. Defects such as striae may appear when there are small temperature variations during the growth. Growth departing from the stoichiometric composition can also form local defects.

All of these perturbations will generate local environments with slightly different crystal fields. When the rare earth ions are doped into these various environments, the resulting distribution of transition frequencies for all the ions will have a typically Gaussian form; this is called inhomogeneous broadening. When the dopant concentration is high, the dopant ions themselves can also cause extra perturbations which will in turn inhomogeneously broaden the lines.

Inhomogeneous broadening usually completely dominates the linewidths of transitions of the lowest level in a given J manifold at temperatures below ~50 K. The inhomogeneous linewidth obscures other important spectroscopic parameters such as the homogeneous linewidth and hyperfine or superhyperfine splittings that are on the order of kHz - MHz. Advanced techniques are needed to extract these important parameters.

#### Satellite Lines in the Spectra

Impurities not only cause inhomogeneous broadening but may also give rise to additional lines in the absorption and emission spectra. This phenomenon was attributed to the formation of different impurity clusters, as a result of which a distribution of  $R^{3+}$  ions among different sites with different crystal fields occurred. This subject has been studied by many researchers. A recent paper was published by John Wright's group.<sup>4</sup> More detailed references will be provided for specific  $R^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  crystals.

Using the conventional spectroscopic techniques described in Chapter 2, one can separate the spectra of  $R^{3+}$  ions with inequivalent crystallographic environments (activator centers) and consequently analyze the mechanism of cluster formation in

connection with the nature of the valence and size of the impurity ions and the specific crystal structure. This phenomenon is closely related to the laser performance of rare earth doped  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  crystals. This thesis will classify and study  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  defects with a variety of spectroscopic techniques.

### Crystal Structure and Selection Rules for $R^{3+}$ Doped $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$

The  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  garnet crystal structure is shown in Figure 1. The ideal structure of the simple rare-earth garnets  $A_3B_2C_3O_{12}$  is cubic  $O_h^{10}$  (Ia3d), and the unit cell contains eight molecules. In these garnets all the cations are trivalent; the *A* ions are rare-earth elements such as  $Pr^{3+}$ ,  $Nd^{3+}$ , or group-III elements such as  $Y^{3+}$  located at dodecahedral *c* sites (with local  $D_2$  symmetry), while the *B* and *C* ions are group-III elements such as  $Al^{3+}$  or  $Ga^{3+}$ . The *B* ions are placed in trigonally distorted octahedral *a* sites ( $C_{3i}$  symmetry), while the *C* ions occupy tetrahedral *d* sites ( $S_4$  symmetry). Crystallographic data for  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  is shown in Table 1.

The  $R^{3+}$  ions that substitute for  $Y^{3+}$  ions on the dodecahedral sites experience a crystal field of  $D_2$  symmetry. There are six magnetically-inequivalent orientations of these sites in the crystal, as shown in Figure 2.<sup>6</sup> The local  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$  axes of site 1 are oriented along the (110),  $(1\bar{1}0)$  and (001) directions of the crystal with the  $z$  axis coinciding with the (001) axis by convention. The local axes of other sites can be obtained by applying the cubic symmetry operation.

Table 1. Crystallographic data for  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ . Cubic Ia3d, #230,  $Z = 8$ . X-ray data:  $a = 12.000$  angstrom,  $x = -0.0306$ ,  $y = 0.0512$ ,  $z = 0.1500$ .<sup>5</sup>

Ion	Position	Symmetry	X	Y	Z
Y	24©	$D_2$	0	1/4	1/8
Al <sub>1</sub>	16(a)	$C_{3i}$	0	0	0
Al <sub>2</sub>	24(d)	$S_4$	3/8	0	1/4
O	96(h)	$C_1$	x	y	z

The  $D_2$  point group contains four one-dimensional irreducible representations,  $\Gamma_1$ ,  $\Gamma_2$ ,  $\Gamma_3$ , and  $\Gamma_4$ . For  $R^{3+}$  ions with an even number of  $f$  electrons such as  $Pr^{3+}$  with a  $(4f^2)$  configuration, each  $^{2S+1}L_J$  manifold is split into  $2J+1$  nondegenerate components, often called Stark levels. Table 2 gives the irreducible group representations for each value of  $J$  up to 6. From the multiplication tables given by Koster et al.,<sup>7</sup> the selection rules for electric-dipole and magnetic-dipole transitions can be determined and are summarized in Table 3. When the initial and final states have the same representation, the electric-dipole and magnetic-dipole transitions between them are forbidden.

Table 2. Full rotation compatibility table for the  $D_2$  group<sup>7</sup>

J	$\Gamma_1$	$\Gamma_2$	$\Gamma_3$	$\Gamma_4$
0	1	0	0	0
1	0	1	1	1
2	2	1	1	1
3	1	2	2	2
4	3	2	2	2
5	2	3	3	3
6	4	3	3	3

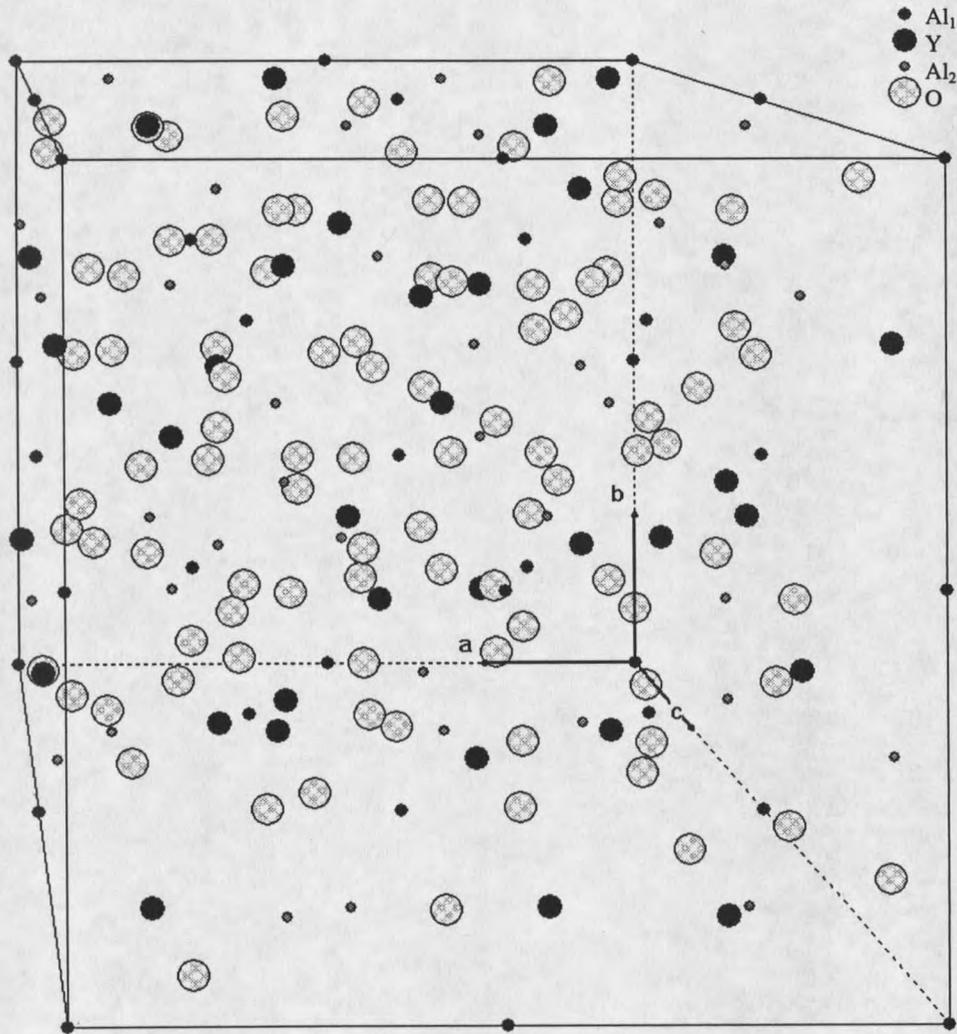


Figure 1. The very complex  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  crystal structure.  $Al_1$  represents the  $Al^{3+}$  ion in an  $a$  site and  $Al_2$  represents the  $Al^{3+}$  ion in a  $d$  site. There are eight molecules and a total of 160 ions per unit cell.

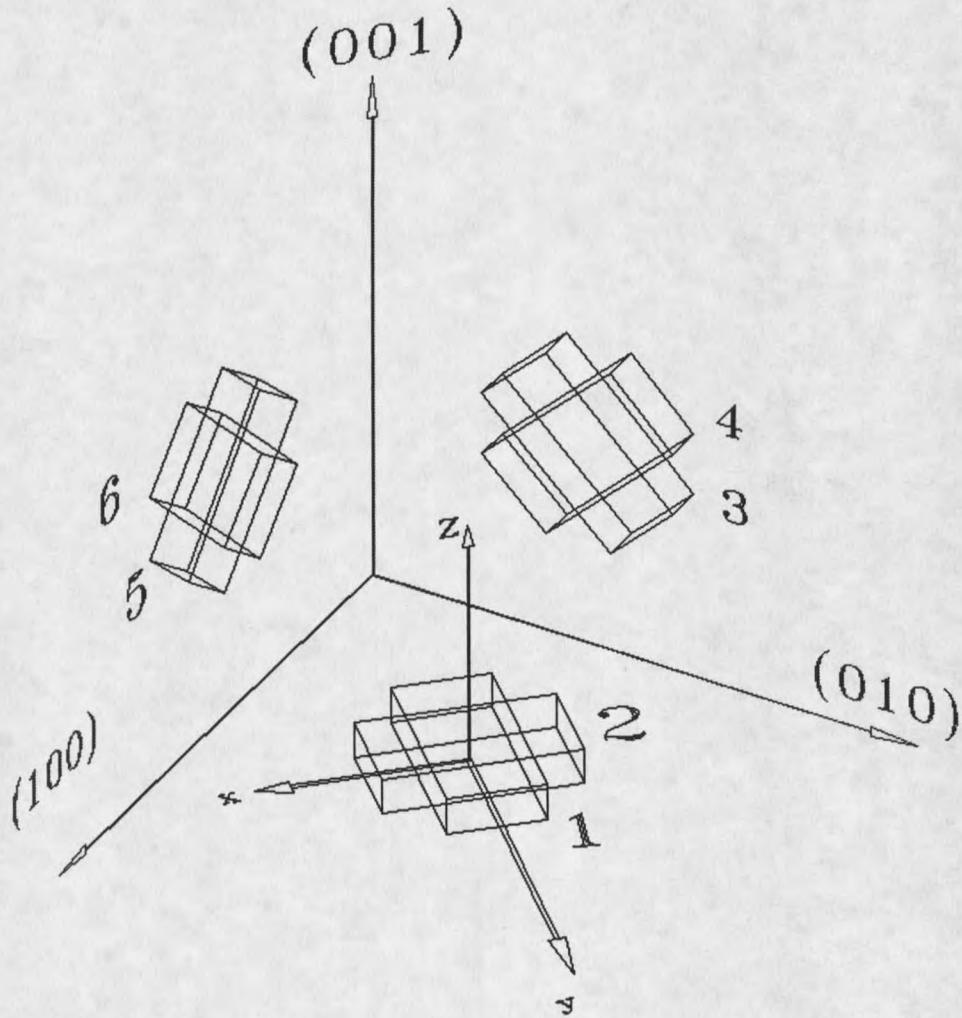


Figure 2. Orientation in the crystal lattice of the six orientationally-inequivalent sites of the  $Y^{3+}$  ion in the unit cell of yttrium aluminum garnet.<sup>6</sup> The rectangular boxes represent the local  $D_2$  symmetries where each axis direction is different, and  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$  are the local axes for site 1 of 6 sites.

Table 3. Electric-dipole and magnetic-dipole selection rules for  $D_2$  symmetry. The  $\Gamma_i$ 's are the representations of the initial & final states. E denotes electric-dipole; M, magnetic-dipole. The indices x, y, and z refer to the local site symmetry axes.

	$\Gamma_1$	$\Gamma_2$	$\Gamma_3$	$\Gamma_4$
$\Gamma_1$	-	$E_y, M_y$	$E_z, M_z$	$E_x, M_x$
$\Gamma_2$	$E_y, M_y$	-	$E_x, M_x$	$E_z, M_z$
$\Gamma_3$	$E_z, M_z$	$E_x, M_x$	-	$E_y, M_y$
$\Gamma_4$	$E_x, M_x$	$E_z, M_z$	$E_y, M_y$	-

For  $R^{3+}$  ions with an odd number of  $f$  electrons, such as  $Nd^{3+}$  ( $4f^1$ ), each  $^{2S+1}L_J$  manifold is split into  $(2J+1)/2$  doubly-degenerate components. For an arbitrarily oriented crystal there are no restrictions by the selection rules for electric dipole transitions; hence, the crystal field levels of excited states can all be directly obtained from the absorption spectra.

#### Crystal Growth and Sample Preparation

Most of the samples studied in this thesis and their measured concentrations were provided by Scientific Materials Corporation in Bozeman, Montana. Growth of garnet materials has been carried out for more than 35 years and is technologically well advanced. Yttrium aluminum garnet is a congruently melting compound (m.p. 1970 °C). The dopant incorporation into the host crystal is governed by the following expression<sup>8</sup>

$$C_S = kC_L \quad (1.1)$$

where  $C_S$  is the dopant concentration in the solid,  $C_L$  is the starting melt composition, and  $k$  is the distribution of the dopant between the solid and liquid phases. The value of  $k$  is

ordinarily less than unity and depends markedly upon the dopant radius and growth condition.<sup>8</sup>

Pure  $R_2O_3$ ,  $Y_2O_3$ , and  $Al_2O_3$  powder is mixed and melted in a crucible to growth  $R^{3+}:Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  crystal. The maximum  $R^{3+}$  concentration is limited by the ionic radius mismatch between relatively large rare earth ions and smaller aluminum ions. In the extreme end, the rare earth garnet  $R_3Al_5O_{12}$  grown from three part  $R_2O_3$  and five part  $Al_2O_3$  mixture is found only for the  $R^{3+}$  ions between  $Gd^{3+}$  and  $Lu^{3+}$ . Ions larger than  $Gd^{3+}$  do not form garnets in the simple two oxide system. However, a garnet crystal with low concentration of ions from  $Ce^{3+}$  to  $Sm^{3+}$  can be formed from the molten phase.

Single crystals used in this study were grown parallel to the (111) direction by the Czochralski technique from yttrium aluminum garnet melts doped with  $R^{3+}$  oxide. Normally rods about 5mm in diameter were cut from the boules parallel to the (111) direction. Two end faces were polished to optical quality. Most white light absorption experiments were done along (111). The sides of some rods were polished for fluorescence experiments. Most crystals studied in this thesis have low dopant concentration for high resolution spectroscopy, hence, they are colorless.

#### Defects in $R^{3+}$ Doped $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$ and Mechanisms for Defect Formation

Doping of garnet crystals with  $R^{3+}$  ions is expected to lead to the appearance of a very limited variety of structural centers, according to the site preference of the dopant. Conventionally, one assumes that only the transitions belonging to a single structural center ( $D_2$  site for the  $R^{3+}$  doped garnet) exist, but this is not the case in practice. A much

more complex behavior is observed in optical spectra. The multisite structure of  $R^{3+}$  ions in garnet crystals is not a completely elucidated problem, and is a major focus of this thesis. The analysis of defect structures requires further attention, due to the structural information that can be obtained, the impact on laser design, and information on the  $R^{3+}$  -  $R^{3+}$  interaction mechanisms. One objective of this thesis is to develop a better understanding of structural defects, using both conventional spectroscopy and nonlinear spectroscopy.

The ideal garnet has the compound formula  $A_3B_2C_3O_{12}$ , where  $A$ ,  $B$ ,  $C$  ions occupy the dodecahedral  $D_2 c$  site, the octahedral  $C_{3i} a$  site, and the tetrahedral  $S_4 d$  site, respectively. Lattice parameter measurements using X-ray powder diffraction on rare-earth gallium garnets have shown that the compositions of garnet crystals grown from the melt are different from the compositions of stoichiometric ceramic samples.<sup>9,10</sup> This difference is attributed to an excess (up to several percent as a function of composition) of  $A$  ions occupying the octahedral sites; the composition can be written as  $A_3(B_{1-x}A_x)_2C_3O_{12}$ . The value  $x$  may vary depending on the synthesis temperature, the composition of the melt, and the type of RE ions. For  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  crystals grown from the melt at 1970 °C, the estimated formula is  $Y_3(Al_{0.985}Y_{0.015})_2Al_3O_{12}$ .<sup>9</sup>

Several types of optical spectra for  $R^{3+}:A_3B_2C_3O_{12}$  have been investigated by a number of groups:<sup>11-14</sup>

- (1) the main spectrum, corresponding to  $R^{3+}$  in unperturbed dodecahedral  $c$  sites,

- (2) satellite lines, whose relative intensity does not depend on  $R^{3+}$  content, assigned to  $R^{3+}$  in  $c$  sites perturbed by the presence of  $A$  ions in anomalous  $a$  sites,
- (3) satellite lines, whose relative intensity does depend on dopant concentration, assigned to the near-neighbor pairs of  $R^{3+}$  ions in  $c$  sites,
- (4) weak lines assigned to  $R^{3+}$  in octahedral  $a$  sites,
- (5) lines arising from the perturbation by anionic impurities such as  $OH^-$ .

Spectra of type (1) are usually studied first. Energy levels can be readily determined using the selection rules for  $D_2$  symmetry given in Table 3. This provides the starting point for studying the satellite lines. Spectra of types (2), (3), and (5) originate from  $R^{3+}$  ions in perturbed dodecahedral  $c$  sites. Normally for each type, there are several weak lines surrounding the main line of type (1); these three types have different properties such as fluorescence lifetime and energy transfer rate, and their properties are closely related to the local environment. Spectra of type (4) originate from  $R^{3+}$  ions in the  $C_{3i}$  site and have selection rules quite different from those in Table 3. Different types of the defect spectra mentioned above may dominate depending on the dopant concentration, dopant radius, and host crystals. Spectrum types (1), (2), and (4) were observed and will be explained in this thesis. More work needs to be done to correlate the spectrum type (5) to  $OH^-$  impurity by comparing samples with different  $OH^-$  concentrations.

In order to have a quantitative study of the defect lines, we need to consider the distributions of  $R^{3+}$  ions and of the defects in the crystal. Substitution of trivalent  $A$  ions by  $R^{3+}$  activators does not require charge compensation, and therefore there is no reason

for an electrostatic-interaction correlation in their distribution in the lattice. Since at low concentration the difference in the ionic radii between an  $R^{3+}$  ion and the host cation  $A$  normally does not lead to size correlation, the most likely model for  $R^{3+}$  distribution in garnets is random uniform occupancy of the available sites. Similar arguments are valid for other structural defects such as anomalous  $A$  ions in octahedral sites.<sup>15</sup>

For a random uniform distribution of activators, the probability of occurrence of ensembles formed by a given activator ion with  $n$  neighbor activators in a sphere with  $m$  sites is given by<sup>16</sup>

$$C_{nm} = \frac{m!}{n!(m-n)!} C^{n+1} (1-C)^{m-n}, \quad (1.2)$$

where  $C$  is the concentration of activators. For low  $C$  values, the most probable ensembles are pairs, i.e.,  $n = 1$ . From Eq. (1.2), the pair concentration is  $C_{1m} = mC^2(1-C)^{m-1}$ . For low dopant such as  $C = 0.1\%$  the pair concentration is negligible ( $\sim 1$ ppm).

The probability of occurrence of ensembles formed by a given activator ion with  $n'$  neighbor defects in a sphere with  $m'$  sites is given by<sup>16</sup>

$$C_{n'm'} = \frac{m'!}{n'!(m'-n')!} C(C')^{n'} (1-C')^{m'-n'}, \quad (1.3)$$

where  $C'$  is the concentration of defects. The most probable ensembles are with one defect neighbor, i.e.,  $n'=1$ , whose concentration is  $C_{1m'} = m'CC'(1-C')^{m'-1}$ . When  $C'$  is a few percent, these clusters make a significant contribution to the defect lines.

The number of sites in the neighboring spheres around different sites and the radii of these spheres for  $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$  are given in Table 4.















































































































































































































































































































































































