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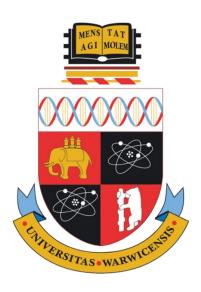
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# Understanding the formation and responsive behavior of aqueous polymer self-assemblies

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Away from the science, I'd like to thank all of you who have enabled me to work through the times when things didn't work, helped me accept when papers and grants got rejected, and joined me in celebration when results got published. Those of you at Warwick know who you are. I'd also like to take the opportunity to thank the Tennyson Terriers and all my friends and family back in London for allowing me to escape every now and then, and for reminding me that life exists outside of the Warwick bubble! A special thanks goes to Alex Downes, who convinced me not to quit the course in the first month of my studies.

I'd like to thank my parents, Julia and David Blackman, for their support throughout my undergraduate course at the University of Southampton and my postgraduate studies at the University of Warwick. I'm sure they still have no idea about the contents of this thesis, however they have always listened to my explanations with pride, and for that I am very grateful.

Finally, I would like to thank Charlotte Davison for all the love and patience you have shown me over the past five and a half years. This thesis truly would not have been written without your constant support and kindness. Everywhere I go I'm a tourist but when I'm with you I will always be at home.

## Declaration of Authorship

This thesis was composed by myself and has not been submitted previously for the award any degree. The work presented was carried out by myself, except in the following cases:

Chapter 2: Light scattering analysis of micelles comprised of polymers 1 and 4 was performed by Dr. Daniel Wright at the University of Warwick. Rheological analysis was performed with assistance from Miss Laura MacDougall. All differential scanning microcalorimetry experiments were performed by application specialists at Malvern Instruments Ltd. The quantitative <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum of polymer 5a and the 500 MHz <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra of polymers 1 and 4 in deuterium oxide were obtained by Dr. Ivan Prokes at the University of Warwick.

Chapter 3: The synthesis of the RAFT agents 2-Cyano-2-propyl dodecyl trithiocarbonate and 4-cyano-4-(((ethylthio)carbonothioyl)thio) pentanoic acid were performed by Mr. Robert Keogh and Dr. Craig Bell at the University of Warwick, respectively. High resolution electrospray ionization time of flight mass spectrometry was performed by Dr. Lijiang Song at the University of Warwick.

Chapter 4: MALDI-ToF analysis of the PHPMA oligomers was performed by Mr. Jon Husband at the University of Warwick. The synthesis of 4-cyano-4-(((ethylthio)carbonothioyl)thio) pentanoic acid was performed by Dr. Craig Bell, University of Warwick. The design and construction of the photoreactor used for all the light-mediated polymerizations was carried out by Mr. Rod Wesson at the University of Warwick.

Chapter 5: Expression and purification of GFP was carried out by Miss Alice Fayter at the University of Warwick. The *in vitro* assessment of ASNS-loaded vesicles, including the Western blot analysis of the lyzed cell lines, was carried out by Dr. Chiara Arno at

the University of Warwick. Western blot analysis of the enzyme-loaded vesicles was performed with assistance from Dr. Chiara Arno at the University of Warwick. The experimental sections for the *in vitro* studies and the GFP expression and purification were prepared with assistance from Dr. Chiara Arno and Miss Alice Fayter, respectively. Fluorescence microscopy was performed by Dr. Chiara Arno at the University of Warwick. Cryo-TEM analysis was performed with assistance from Mr. Spyridon Varlas and Mr. Robert Keogh at the University of Warwick, except in the case of the salt-free GOx vesicles, whereby the analysis was performed with assistance from Dr. Saskia Bakker at the University of Warwick. The design and construction of the photoreactor used for all the light-mediated polymerizations was carried out by Mr. Rod Wesson at the University of Warwick.

## **Publications**

- Effect of micellization on the thermoresponsive behavior of polymeric assemblies. L. D. Blackman, D. B. Wright, M. P. Robin, M. I. Gibson and R. K. O'Reilly, ACS Macro Lett., 2015, 4, 1210-1214.
- Probing the causes of thermal hysteresis using tunable N<sub>agg</sub> micelles with linear and brush-like thermoresponsive coronas. L. D. Blackman, M. I. Gibson and R. K. O'Reilly, Polym. Chem., 2017, 8, 233-244.
- Comparison of photo- and thermally initiated polymerization-induced self-assembly: a lack of end group fidelity drives the formation of higher order morphologies. L. D. Blackman, K. E. B. Doncom, M. I. Gibson and R. K. O'Reilly, *Polym. Chem.*, 2017, 8, 2860-2871.
- Dispersity effects in polymer self-assemblies: a matter of hierarchical control. K.
   E. B. Doncom, L. D. Blackman, D. B. Wright, M. I. Gibson and R. K. O'Reilly,
   Chem. Soc. Rev., 2017, 46, 4119-4134.
- Permeable protein-loaded polymersome cascade nanoreactors by polymerization-induced self-assembly. L. D. Blackman, S. Varlas, M. C. Arno, A. Fayter, M. I. Gibson, and R. K. O'Reilly, *ACS Macro Lett.*, 2017, 6, 1263-1267.

#### **Summary of Thesis**

This thesis explores the self-assembly and responsive behavior of block copolymer amphiphiles in aqueous solution. In Chapter 1, an overview of the modern synthetic methods used for preparing such materials will be given, as well as the parameters governing block copolymer self-assembly in solution. An introduction into polymerization-induced self-assembly will be given, as well as an overview of stimuli-responsive polymers and polymer self-assemblies. Finally, an outline of the analytical techniques used throughout this thesis for studying polymer self-assemblies will be given.

Chapter 2 will introduce thermoresponsive polymers, which can respond to changes in temperature, before investigating the solution behavior of a series of thermoresponsive polymer self-assemblies. These micelles have a tunable average number of chains per particle and will used as a platform to investigate the thermoresponsive behavior of the system using a range of complementary solution-based characterization techniques.

Chapter 3 will build on the knowledge gained in the previous chapter and will explore the effects of factors such as the glass transition temperature and hydrogen bonding ability on the thermoresponsive behavior of such systems. This will give an insight into the reversibility of thermoresponsive phase transitions, more generally, and provide a unique tool with which to probe structure-property relationships in stimuli-responsive self-assemblies.

Chapter 4 will uncover the differences between the two initiation pathways for polymerization-induced self-assembly, thermally and photoinitiated, discussed in this Chapter. Isothermal non-equilibrium phase diagrams will be constructed using thermally initiated and photoinitiated polymerization-induced self-assembly. The effects of light intensity on the formed nano-objects will be investigated as well as the effect of post-

synthetic light irradiation, both are aspects that have not been widely explored in the literature.

Chapter 5 will explore the use of polymerization-induced self-assembly to prepare selectively permeable biohybrid vesicular nanoreactors. Functional proteins with fluorescent or enzymatic capabilities will be encapsulated inside hollow polymersomes and the selective permeability of the membrane will be demonstrated. A clinically relevant therapeutic protein will also be investigated as the encapsulated species and the formed nanoreactors' ability to prevent cancer cell proliferation will be validated. The non-covalent, yet protective nature of this protein compartmentalization will also provide several distinct advantages over covalent attachment of poly(ethylene glycol), the current state-of-the-art for this clinical therapeutic.

Finally, Chapter 6 will summarize the conclusions gained from the research herein, as well as offer some insights into possible areas of new research directed by the findings detailed in this thesis.

#### **Abbreviations**

[M] monomer concentration

[M]<sub>0</sub> initial monomer concentration

*D* dispersity

 $\alpha$  degree of ionization

 $\alpha$ -CT  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin

 $\beta$  experimental correction factor in the Siegert relation

 $\delta$  chemical shift

 $\eta$  viscosity

 $\eta_0$  specific viscosity

 $\eta_s$  viscosity of the solvent

 $\theta$  angle

 $\lambda$  wavelength

v wavenumber

 $\rho$  density

au relaxation time

 $\varphi$  composition

χ interaction parameter

area of a surfactant's polar head group

A<sub>2</sub> second virial coefficient

AA acrylic acid

Absx absorbance at a wavelength of x nm ACVA 4,4'-azobis(4-cyanopentanoic acid)

 $A_{\text{fast}}$  relative amplitude of the fast mode in a light scattering experiment

AM acrylamide AN acrylonitrile

AIBN 2,2'-azobis(2-methylpropionitrile)

AP alkaline phosphatase

ARGET activators regenerated by electron transfer

A<sub>slow</sub> relative amplitude of the slow mode in a light scattering

experiment

ASNS L-asparaginase

ATRP atom transfer radical polymerization

AZMB azomethyl benzoate

B 1,3-butadiene

bCA-II bovine carbonic anhydrase II

bpy 2,2'-bipyridine

br broad

BSA bovine serum albumin
BzMA benzyl methacrylate

c concentration

c\* critical entanglement concentration

CAT catalase

*c*<sub>corona</sub> effective mass concentration of coronal chains

CMC critical micelle concentration

ConA Concanavalin A  $C_p$  heat capacity

cryo-TEM cryogenic transmission electron microscopy

CTA chain transfer agent

D deuterium

D apparent diffusion coefficient

d doublet

*D*<sub>0</sub> absolute diffusion coefficient

DAAM diacetone acrylamide

DC direct current

DCC *N,N*'-dicyclohexylcarbodiimide

dd doublet of doublets

DEAEA N,N-diethylamino acrylate
DEAm N,N-diethylacrylamide

DEAMA *N,N*-diethylamino methacrylate

DEGMA diethylene glycol monomethyl ether methacrylate

DEPT distortionless enhancement by polarization transfer

DH hydrodynamic diameterDLS dynamic light scatteringDMA N,N-dimethylacrylamide

DMAEA *N,N*-dimethylamino acrylate

DMAEMA *N,N*-dimethylamino methacrylate

DMAP 4-(dimethylamino)pyridine
DMB 3,3'-dimethoxybenzidine

DMDMA (2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl)methyl acrylate

DMF *N,N*-dimethylformamide

DMPA 2,2-dimethoxy-2-phenylacetophenone

*dn/dc* refractive index increment

DNA deoxyribonucleic acid

DP degree of polymerization

dt doublet of triplets

E. coli Escherichia coli

ER endoplasmic reticulum

ESI-MS electrospray ionization mass spectrometry

ESI-ToF electrospray ionization time of flight

EY eosin Y

F frictional force

FITC fluorescein isothiocyanate

FT-IR Fourier transform infra-red

 $g_1(q,t)$  electric field autocorrelation function

 $g_2(q,t)$  scattering autocorrelation function

GFP green fluorescent protein

GOx glucose oxidase

GSH glutathione

HEA hydroxyethyl acrylate

HPMA 2-hydroxypropyl methacrylate

HPMAM 2-hydroxypropyl methacrylamide

HRMS high resolution mass spectrometry

HRP horseradish peroxidase

 $I_0$  intensity of scattered light at time = 0

ICAR initiators for continuous activator regeneration

Ig immunoglobulin

I<sub>micelle</sub> intensity of dye fluorescence emission at a wavelength

corresponding to the sequestered dye

IPTG isopropyl β-D-1-thiogalactopyranoside

 $I_{\text{sample}}$  intensity of scattered light from the sample  $I_{\text{solvent}}$  intensity of scattered light from the solvent  $I_{\text{standard}}$  intensity of scattered light from the standard

Iwater intensity of dye fluorescence emission at a wavelength

corresponding to the unsequestered dye in aqueous solution

 $I_{\rm t}$  intensity of scattered light at time = t

K contrast factor in SLS analysis

 $\vec{k}_0$  incident wave vector  $k_B$  Boltzmann constant

 $k_{\rm D}$  dynamic virial coefficient

 $\vec{k}_{\rm s}$  scattered wave vector

L lamellae

LB lysogeny broth

LAM less activated monomer

length of a surfactant's hydrophobic tail

LCST lower critical solution temperature

LED light emitting diode

LHS left hand side LPO lactoperoxidase

m multiplet

m/z mass to charge ratio

MADIX macromolecular design *via* interchange of xanthate

MALDI-ToF MS matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization time of flight mass

spectrometry

MAM more activated monomer

mCTA macromolecular chain transfer agent

MDO 2-methylene-1,3-dioxepane  $M_i$  mass of chain of length "i"

 $M_{\rm n}$  number average molar mass

 $M_{\rm n,\,corona}$  number average molar mass of the corona-forming block

 $M_{\rm n, NMR}$  number average molar mass determined by nuclear magnetic

resonance spectroscopy

 $M_{\rm n, \, SEC}$  number average molar mass determined by size exclusion

chromatography

mcoronamass of the corona chainsMLVmultilamellar vesiclesMMAmethyl methacrylate

MRI magnetic resonance imaging  $M_{\rm w}$  weight average molar mass

 $M_{\rm w, \, core}$  weight average molar mass of the core-forming block

 $M_{\text{w, particle}}$  weight average molar mass of the particle  $M_{\text{w, polymer}}$  weight average molar mass of the unimer

*n* refractive index

*n*<sub>0</sub> refractive index of the solvent

 $N_{\rm A}$  Avogadro's constant  $N_{\rm agg}$  aggregation number

NaTFA trifluoroacetic acid sodium salt

*n*BA *n*-butyl acrylate

N<sub>i</sub> number of chains of length "i"

NIPAM *N*-isopropylacrylamide

NMP nitroxide-mediated polymerization

NMR nuclear magnetic resonance

NVC N-vinylcarbazoleNVP N-vinylpyrrolidone

OEGA oligo(ethylene glycol acrylate)

OEGMA oligo(ethylene glycol) monomethyl ether methacrylate

OmpF outer membrane protein F

p dimensionless packing parameter

P4VP poly(4-vinyl pyridine)

PAA poly(acrylic acid)

PAD poly((*N*-amidino)dodecylacrylamide)
PAEMA poly(2-azepane ethyl methacrylate)

PAGMA poly(o-azidomethyl benzoyl glycerol methacrylate)

PAMAM poly(amido amine) dendrimer

PAME poly(L-arginine methyl ester acrylamide)
PAPBA poly(3-acrylamidophenylboronic acid)

PAZo poly[6-(4-((4-nitrophenyl)diazenyl)phenoxy)hexyl methacrylate]

PBS phosphate buffered saline PBzMA poly(benzyl methacrylate)

PD polydispersity

PDAAM poly(diacetone acrylamide)
PDMS poly(dimethylsiloxane)

PDEAEA poly(*N*,*N*-diethylamino acrylate)

PDEAm poly(N,N-diethylacrylamide)

PDEAMA poly(*N*,*N*-diethylamino methacrylate)

PDEGMA poly(diethylene glycol monomethyl ether methacrylate)

pDMA poly(*N*,*N*-dimethylacrylamide)

PDMAEA poly(*N*,*N*-dimethylamino acrylate)

PDMAEMA poly(*N*,*N*-dimethylamino methacrylate)

PDPMA poly(2-(diisopropylamino)-ethyl methacrylate)

PEHA poly(2-ethyl hexyl acrylate)

PEG poly(ethylene glycol)

PEG-ASNS L-asparaginase poly(ethylene glycol) conjugate

PEO poly(ethylene oxide)

PET photoinduced electron transfer

PGA poly(glyceryl acrylate)

PGlyMA poly(glycidyl methacrylate)
PGMA poly(glyceryl methacrylate)

pH negative base 10 logarithm of the molar proton concentration

PHPMA poly(2-hydroxypropyl methacrylate)
PHPMAM poly(2-hydroxypropyl methacrylamide)

PIAT poly(3-(isocyano-L-alanyl-aminoethyl)thiophene))

 $pK_a$  negative base 10 logarithm of the acid dissociation constant

p $K_{aH}$  negative base 10 logarithm of the acid dissociation constant of the

conjugate acid

PLMA poly(lauryl methacrylate)

Pm• growing radical chain

PMAA poly(methacrylic acid)

pMeO<sub>x</sub>VAc poly(oligo(ethylene glycol) vinyl acetate)

PMMA poly(methyl methacrylate)
PMOXA poly(2-methyloxazoline)

PMPC poly(2-(methacryloyloxy)ethyl phosphorylcholine)

P<sub>n</sub>• growing radical chain

PNA *N*-phenyl-1-naphthylamine

pnBA poly(*n*-butyl acrylate)

PNBOCA poly(2-((((2-nitrobenzyl)-oxy)carbonyl)amino)ethyl acrylate)

pNIPAM poly(*N*-isopropylacrylamide)

PNBMA poly(O-nitrobenzyl methacrylate)

POEGA poly(oligo(ethylene glycol) acrylate)

POEGMA poly(oligo(ethylene glycol) monomethyl ether methacrylate)

PPMA poly(pyrenylmethyl methacrylate)

PP-OH 2-hydroxy-4'-2-(hydroxyethoxy)-2-methylpropiophenone

PRE persistent radical effect

pProlA poly(*N-tert*-butoxycarbonyl-*O*-acryloyl-*trans*-4-hydroxy-L-

proline)

PS poly(styrene)

PSA poly(solketal acrylate)

PSPMA poly[1'-(2-methacryloxyethyl)-3',3'-dimethyl-6-nitrospiro-(2*H*-1-

benzopyran-2,2'-indoline)]

PISA polymerization-induced self-assembly

pVDMA poly(4-vinyl-4,4-dimethylazlactone)

q quartet

q scattering wave vector

R rods

 $R_{\theta}$  Rayleigh ratio of the sample

 $R_{\theta, \text{ standard}}$  Rayleigh ratio of the standard

RAFT reversible addition-fragmentation chain transfer

RCA<sub>120</sub> Ricinus communis agglutinin

 $R_{\text{core}}$  radius of the core

RDRP reversible deactivation radical polymerization

REPES regularized positive exponential sum

 $R_{\rm g}$  radius of gyration

*R*<sub>H</sub> hydrodynamic radius

RHS right hand side

RI differential refractive index

R<sub>membrane</sub> vesicle membrane thickness

RNA ribonucleic acid

ROMP ring opening metathesis polymerization

RONSS reactive oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur species

ROP ring opening polymerization

ROS reactive oxygen species

S spherical micelles

s singlet

SANS small angle neutron scattering
SAXS small angle x-ray scattering

SDS sodium dodecyl sulfate

SEC size exclusion chromatography siRNA small interfering ribonucleic acid

SLS static light scattering
SOD superoxide dismutase

SPTP sodium phenyl-2,4,6-trimethylbenzoylphosphinate

St styrene

T absolute temperature

t triplet t time

TEA triethylamine

 $T_{\rm g}$  glass transition temperature

 $T_{\rm p}$  thermal transition temperature determined by differential scanning

microcalorimetry

TEM transmission electron microscopy

TPP 5,10,15,20-tetraphenyl-21H,23H-porphine

UCST upper critical solution temperature

ULV unilamellar vesicles

UV ultraviolet

volume of a surfactant's hydrophobic tail

VAc vinyl acetate

VAZO-44 2,2'-azobis[2-(imidazolin-2-yl)propane] dihydrochloride

 $V_{\rm core}$  volume of the core

 $V_{\rm corona}$  volume of the corona

V<sub>lumen total</sub> total volume of the vesicles' lumens

V<sub>H</sub> hydrodynamic volume

Vinternal volume of an individual vesicle lumen

 $V_{\rm membrane}$  volume of an individual vesicle membrane

 $V_{\text{polymer}}$  volume of an individual polymer chain in the core or membrane

W worm-like micelles

ZnTPP 5,10,15,20-tetraphenyl-21*H*,23*H*-porphine zinc

## 1.1. Declaration of Authorship

Parts of this Chapter have been published in *Chemical Society Reviews*.

K. E. B. Doncom, L. D. Blackman, D. B. Wright, M. I. Gibson and R. K. O'Reilly, *Chem. Soc. Rev.*, 2017, **46**, 4119-4134. 6. Conclusions and Outlook

In this thesis, the self-assembly and solution behavior of amphiphilic block copolymer nanoparticles have been studied in aqueous solution. In Chapters 2 and 3, it was found that the  $N_{agg}$  of micellar aggregates could be tuned in solution by copolymerization of two monomers with very different aqueous solubility to form the core-forming block, thereby varying the core hydrophobicity of such aggregates. This subtle difference in the solution self-assembly across each series was found to have a marked effect on the reversibility of the thermal phase transition for various LCST-type corona blocks. This was shown to be a result of differences in the core hydration across the series. This micellar platform was then used to investigate the effects of the chemical structure, architecture and physical properties, such as the  $T_g$ , on the reversibility of LCST-type transitions, which revealed unprecedented irreversible transitions for coronas with a brush-like architecture.

In addition to the contribution towards the understanding of hysteresis in thermoresponsive polymer systems in this specific example, looking to the future, micelles of such well programmed self-assembly behavior could be used to uncover structure-property relationships for a wealth of other properties. Possible avenues could be their implementation in the study of other stimuli-responsive self-assembled systems, such as those responsive to light, pH, etc. As these assemblies have programmable surface densities, they could also be utilized to study biologically relevant interactions such as those between glycans and lectins, which are known to show a large dependency on shape and multivalency. Other than their potential in uncovering fundamental behavioral relationships, the micelles themselves show potential for biomedical applications. If the responsive corona was functionalized with dyes with a solvochromatic shift, or a hydration-dependent ON/OFF fluorescence output (such as an aminobromomaleimide), the micelles could feasibly be used to monitor an increase in physiological temperatures. A change in physiological temperature is an indicator of a number of diseases and processes, so these micellar assemblies could be used for diagnostic purposes. For

instance, the transition temperature could be tuned such that the micelles were stable at healthy physiological temperatures, but aggregated inside tumors owing to the elevated temperatures typically observed in such an environment. Micelles with brush-like architectures, which showed irreversible transitions, could be designed to aggregate inside the tumor, whist also switching on the dyes' fluorescence. This would allow for visualization of the tumor as well as potentially limiting the tumor's blood supply through the irreversible aggregation of the particles, which is the basis of embolization therapy.

The self-assembly behavior of various poly(ethylene glycol)-b-poly(2-hydroxypropyl methacrylate) (PEG-b-PHPMA) nano-objects prepared using aqueous reversible addition fragmentation chain transfer (RAFT) dispersion polymerization-induced self-assembly (PISA) was also studied. Fundamentally, the question was posed of how the self-assembly behavior differed between identical formulations formed by two initiation mechanisms. It was found that those derived from a photoinitiated PISA methodology formed generally higher order self-assembled structures, such as vesicles and lamellae, whereby those formed using thermal initiation had the tendency to form lower order structures, such as spherical and worm-like micelles. The findings from this fundamental study could be used to compare the wealth of literature already published for thermally initiated PISA, to photoinitiated PISA. The former is a self-assembly technique that has gathered considerable attention over the past decade but the latter offers numerous advantages, of which a rapidly growing number of research possibilities are being realized. The effects of altering the experimental parameters, such as the light intensity and the degree of postsynthetic irradiation, were also uncovered, which could be important for certain industrial aspects, such as the scale-up and pilot plant design for preparing such materials. Only once these factors have been considered in detail will PISA-derived self-assembled formulations be able to be translated into numerous potential real life applications (e.g. as rheology modifiers, drug delivery vehicles, gels for cell storage and manipulation, etc.).

Finally, photoinitiated aqueous RAFT dispersion PISA was shown to be a versatile mild synthetic technique for the preparation of PEG-b-PHPMA vesicles loaded with functional proteins. These hybrid materials showed fluorescence, catalytic and therapeutic capabilities depending on their encapsulated species. It was shown that the hydrated PHPMA membrane of such vesicles was highly permeable towards small molecules but could act as a robust physical barrier against larger macromolecules such as proteases. This intrinsic property afforded the encapsulated proteins excellent proteolytic stability, even superior to direct PEGylation of L-asparaginase, the current stabilization strategy employed for this clinical biologic. Furthermore, owing to the molecular sieving effect of this membrane, the therapeutic efficacy of this encapsulated species was also demonstrated *in vitro*. As no functionalization of the protein was required, this approach could be applied to a range of therapeutic enzymes in order to improve their pharmacokinetics, which could be explored for the treatment of a wealth of other diseases.

Although the PEG-b-PHPMA block copolymer components have been shown in the literature to have good biocompatibility, in order to capitalize on these promising results, the next stage of the research would be to optimize the hydrodynamic volume of these therapeutic vesicles. It is unknown whether these vesicles would show good overall pharmacokinetics, such as favorable clearance pathways etc., owing to their large average diameter of around 350 nm. Smaller vesicles could be achieved by reducing the overall molar mass of the block copolymer, whilst keeping the block ratios the same, or by post-synthetic procedures such as extrusion. Larger vesicles could be investigated for therapeutic applications targeting the stomach or gastrointestinal tract, where large particle sizes become less of an issue. The next steps in investigating the particles' therapeutic potential would be to assess the RAFT agent biocompatibility and the vesicles' *in vivo* biodistribution, clearance mechanism and blood half-life. Additionally, if other therapeutic proteins were encapsulated, which relied on endocytosis for their

therapeutic effect, it would be interesting to explore factors governing endocytosis. These could include investigation into the effect of cross-linking of the vesicles on tissue or tumor penetration or coronal decoration with ligands for active targeting. Additionally, imparting biodegradability into the structure for controlled release or pre-programmable blood half-lives would be a further step in uncovering their therapeutic potential.

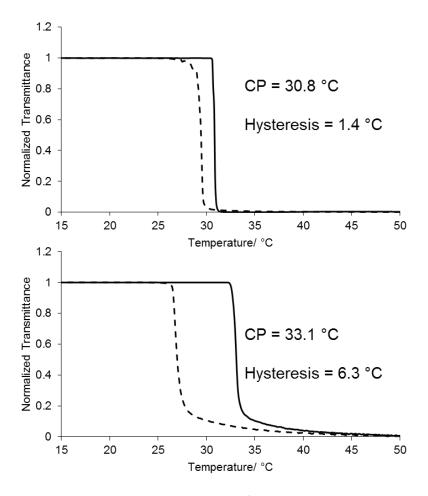
It was also shown that the vesicles, separately loaded with distinct enzymes, could interact with one another by way of a cascade. In some regards, this behavior could be considered rudimentary protocell communication. In order to further increase the complexity in such a biomimetic system, it would be of great fundamental interest to enable some sensing capability. This could be in the form of introducing membrane proteins such as porins or transporters, which could selectively allow small molecules to enter the lumen. If such species were gated by the presence of ions, a change in temperature, or pH, certain reactions could be triggered in a modular fashion by the use of external triggers. Better yet, the product of one cascade could be used to gate a reaction between other loaded vesicles present in solution. This behavior would be analogous to the interactions between organelles inside a cell, for instance. However, if membrane proteins were to be incorporated in such a way, the membrane would need to be functionalized or redesigned in order to limit the non-specific permeability of small molecules.

Multi-compartmentalization is another avenue yet to be fully explored in PISA, which could be further utilized to mimic natural cells in terms of their structure. Furthermore, enzyme-loaded vesicles could be designed to synthesize their own functionality, for example biosynthesis of their own functional proteins inside the lumen using external energy and nutrients. The vesicles could also be designed to synthesize amphiphiles inside the lumen, thereby resulting in self-replicating vesicles, another prerequisite for life. Such artificial systems would much better resemble those found in nature.

## 7. Appendix

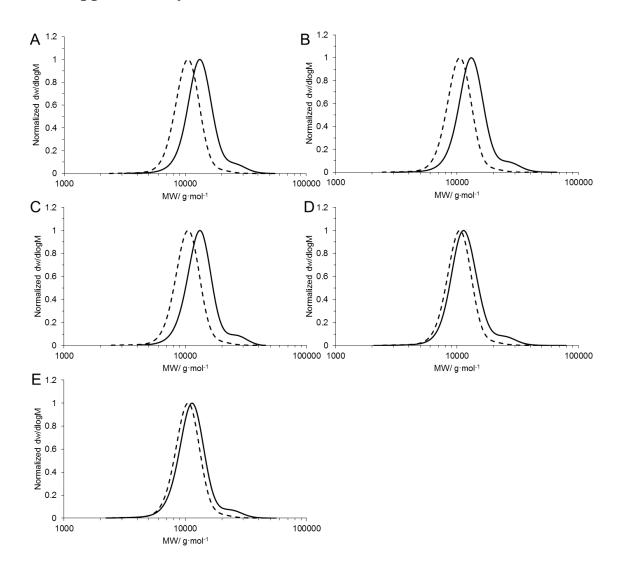
## 7.1. Technical note

It should be noted that the measurement of hysteresis in thermoresponsive polymers in solution is highly dependent on the experimental parameters. It is therefore of utmost importance to use an identical heating and cooling rate when comparing samples. Additionally, the method by which the instrument measures the reference temperature is crucial to the absolute hysteresis value measured. Instruments that use an internal reference cell to measure a volume of water being subjected to identical conditions as the sample (such as a Perkin Elmer Lambda 6 UV/Vis instrument) report more accurate hysteresis values. This is because of the accuracy of the estimation of the true sample temperature upon heating and cooling the sample, which allows the instrument to accurately report the transmittance at the correct temperature, and to maintain an accurate rate of heating and cooling. Instruments that measure the temperature of the coolant water or the heating block during the measurement (such as an Agilent Cary 60 UV/Vis instrument) give somewhat comparable cloud point values upon heating the sample but greatly overestimate the degree of hysteresis owing to errors in estimating the cooling rate of the sample. This can be seen in Figure 7.1, which shows turbidimetry curves for polymer 9 from Chapter 3 measured on both instruments. This issue therefore contributes to discrepancies found throughout the literature in the reported hysteresis values of thermoresponsive polymers, even under seemingly identical conditions, and should be kept in mind when discussing absolute literature hysteresis values. All samples discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 were analyzed on a Perkin Elmer Lambda 6 UV/Vis instrument at a heating and cooling rate of 1 °C·min<sup>-1</sup>.

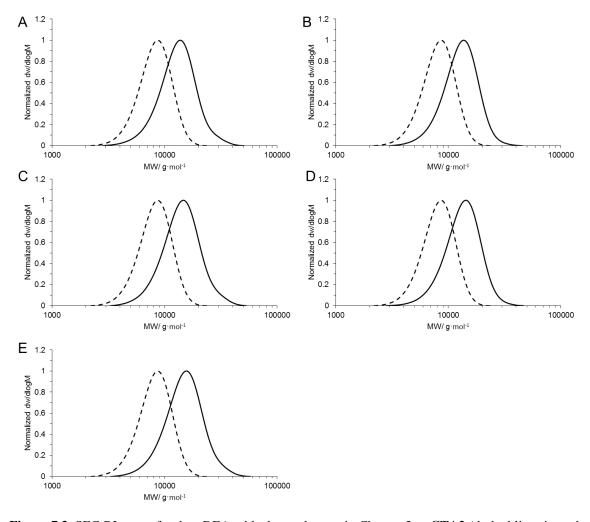


**Figure 7.1.** Turbidimetry curves of polymer **9** at 1 mg·mL<sup>-1</sup> at a programmed heating and cooling rate of 1 °C·min<sup>-1</sup> measured on a Perkin Elmer Lambda 6 instrument (top) and an Agilent Cary 60 instrument (bottom).

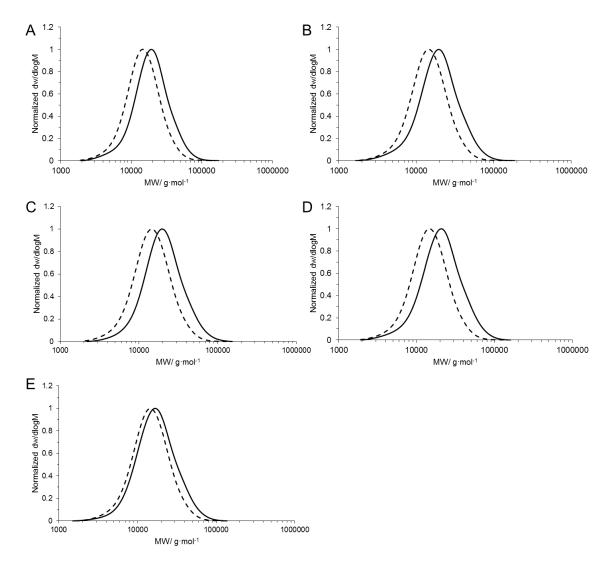
## 7.2. Supplementary SEC Data



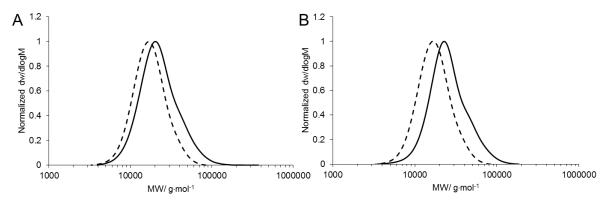
**Figure 7.2.** SEC RI traces for the pNIPAM block copolymers in Chapter 2. **mCTA1** (dashed lines in each case) and polymers **1** (A), **2** (B), **3** (C), **4** (D) and **5** (E) are shown. 5 mM NH<sub>4</sub>BF<sub>4</sub> in DMF was used as the eluent in each case and the molar mass distributions were calculated against poly(methyl methacrylate) standards.



**Figure 7.3.** SEC RI traces for the pDEAm block copolymers in Chapter 3. **mCTA2** (dashed lines in each case) and polymers **6** (A), **7** (B), **8** (C), **9** (D) and **10** (E) are shown. 2% TEA in THF was used as the eluent in each case and the molar mass distributions were calculated against poly(methyl methacrylate) standards.



**Figure 7.4.** SEC RI traces for the pDEGMA block copolymers in Chapter 3. **mCTA3** (dashed lines in each case) and polymers **11** (A), **12** (B), **13** (C), **14** (D), and **15** (E) are shown. 2% TEA in THF was used as the eluent in each case and the molar mass distributions were calculated against poly(methyl methacrylate) standards.



**Figure 7.5.** SEC RI traces for the pOEGMA block copolymers in Chapter 3. **mCTA4** (dashed lines in each case) and polymers **16** (A) and **17** (B) are shown. 2% TEA in THF was used as the eluent in each case and the molar mass distributions were calculated against poly(methyl methacrylate) standards.