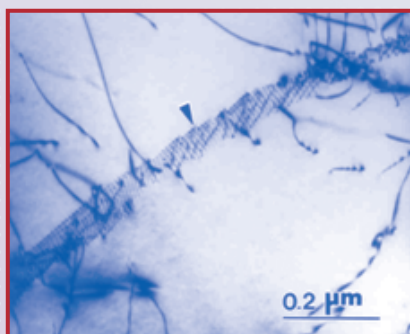
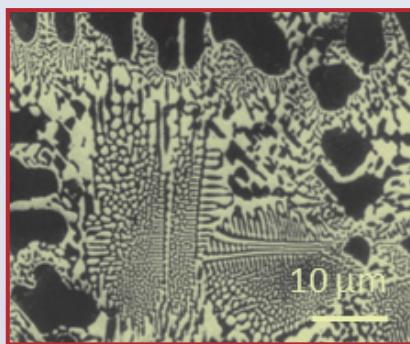
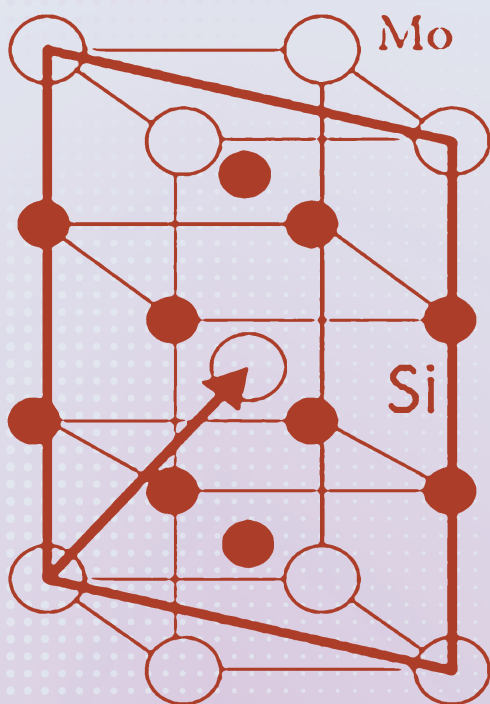


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Contents

List of Figures	xi
Preface.....	xix
Abbreviations	xxi
1. Phase Equilibria and Structure	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Stability of Intermetallic Phases	2
1.3 Nomenclature of Crystal Structures	4
1.4 Crystal Structures and Phase Diagrams of Silicides	5
1.4.1 Molybdenum Silicides.....	5
1.4.2 Tungsten Silicides	9
1.4.3 Titanium Silicides	9
1.4.4 Niobium Silicides.....	10
1.4.5 Chromium Silicides.....	11
1.5 Crystal Structure and Phase Diagram of Aluminides	12
1.5.1 Nickel Aluminides.....	13
1.5.2 Titanium Aluminides.....	14
1.5.3 Iron Aluminides.....	18
1.6 Summary	19
References	19
2. Methods of Processing	25
2.1 Introduction	25
2.2 Ingot Metallurgy Processing	26
2.2.1 Nonequilibrium Solidification	27
2.2.1.1 Rapid Solidification.....	27
2.2.1.2 Thermal Spraying.....	29
2.2.2 Directional Solidification.....	30
2.3 Powder Metallurgy Processing.....	30
2.3.1 Conventional Methods.....	30
2.3.2 Reactive Consolidation.....	31
2.3.3 Mechanical Alloying.....	35
2.3.4 Shock Consolidation and Synthesis	36
2.3.5 Displacement Reaction-Based Synthesis	36
2.4 Homogenization and Thermomechanical Processing	37
2.5 Summary	38
References	39
3. Mechanical Behavior	45
3.1 Introduction	45
3.2 Dislocations in Intermetallics.....	45

3.2.1	Antiphase Boundaries and Superdislocations	45
3.2.1.1	Observation of Antiphase Boundaries and Measurement of Fault Energies.....	48
3.2.1.2	Structure and Energies of Antiphase Boundaries	49
3.2.2	Dislocation Core and Peierls Stress	50
3.2.3	Possible Planar Faults in Intermetallics and Dislocation Dissociation Mechanisms.....	51
3.2.4	Relation between Dislocation Core Structure and Crystal Symmetry.....	53
3.2.4.1	Dislocations in L ₁₂ Alloys	53
3.2.4.2	Dislocations in D ₀₂₂ Alloys	55
3.2.4.3	Dislocations in L ₁₀ Alloys	56
3.2.4.4	Dislocations in B2 Alloys	57
3.2.4.5	Dislocations in L ₂₁ and D ₀₃ Structures	58
3.2.5	Effect of Alloying, Elastic Anisotropy, and Bonding on Dislocation-Core Structure	58
3.2.6	Slip Systems	59
3.3	Twinning and Displacive Transformation	60
3.4	Tensile and Compressive Deformation Behavior	61
3.5	Creep and Superplasticity	62
3.6	Fracture Behavior.....	63
3.7	Summary	66
	References	66
4.	Oxidation Behavior	73
4.1	Introduction	73
4.2	Mechanism of Oxidation and Oxidation Protection.....	73
4.2.1	Thermodynamic Stability of Oxidation Products.....	74
4.2.2	Kinetics of Oxide Scale Growth.....	75
4.2.3	Adhesion of Oxide Scale	77
4.2.4	Self-Healing Ability of Oxide Scale.....	78
4.3	Conditions of Exposure at High Temperatures.....	80
4.4	Stresses in the Oxide Scale	81
4.5	Pest Disintegration.....	83
4.6	Summary	87
	References	88
5.	Alloy Development for Structural Applications.....	91
5.1	Introduction	91
5.2	Development Strategy	93
5.3	Applications: Current and Futuristic	96
5.3.1	Silicides.....	96
5.3.1.1	Gas Turbine Engines of Aerospace Vehicles	96
5.3.1.2	Molten-Metal Lances	97

5.3.1.3	Protective Sheaths of High-Temperature Sensors	97
5.3.1.4	Industrial Gas Burners	97
5.3.1.5	Diesel Engine Glow Plugs	98
5.3.2	Nickel Aluminides	98
5.3.3	Titanium Aluminides	99
5.3.4	Iron Aluminides	100
5.4	Summary	101
	References	102
6.	Silicides: Processing and Mechanical Behavior	107
6.1	Introduction	107
6.2	Crystal Structure–Related Properties	110
6.3	Processing	112
6.4	Mechanical Behavior	114
6.4.1	Fracture Toughness	114
6.4.1.1	Molybdenum Silicides	114
6.4.1.2	Niobium Silicides	120
6.4.1.3	Silicides of W, Ti, and Cr	124
6.4.2	High-Temperature Deformation Behavior of Molybdenum Silicides at Constant Strain Rates	126
6.4.2.1	Dislocation-Based Deformation Mechanisms in MoSi ₂	126
6.4.2.2	Yielding and Flow Behavior of MoSi ₂	132
6.4.2.3	Effect of Alloying	135
6.4.2.4	Effect of Reinforcements	139
6.4.3	Creep Behavior of Molybdenum Silicides	140
6.4.3.1	MoSi ₂	140
6.4.3.2	Mo ₃ Si	149
6.4.3.3	Mo ₅ Si ₃	149
6.4.3.4	Mo ₅ SiB ₂	151
6.4.3.5	Mo–Si–B Multiphase Alloys	152
6.4.4	Deformation Behavior of Silicides of W, Nb, and Cr	155
6.4.4.1	WSi ₂	155
6.4.4.2	Niobium Silicides	157
6.4.4.3	CrSi ₂	160
6.4.4.4	Ti ₅ Si ₃	161
6.5	Summary	165
	References	165
7.	Silicides: Oxidation Behavior	181
7.1	Introduction	181
7.2	Oxidation Behavior of Molybdenum Silicides	182
7.2.1	MoSi ₂	182

7.2.1.1	Oxidation Behavior in the Range of 400°C–600°C.....	183
7.2.1.2	Oxidation Behavior in the Temperature Range of 600°C–1000°C.....	184
7.2.1.3	Oxidation Behavior at Temperatures $\geq 1000^\circ\text{C}$...	185
7.2.1.4	Effect of Alloying Elements on Oxidation Behavior.....	186
7.2.2	Oxidation Behavior of Mo_5Si_3	190
7.2.3	Oxidation Behavior of Mo–Si–B Alloys.....	191
7.3	Oxidation Behavior of Niobium Silicides.....	196
7.4	Oxidation Behavior of WSi_2	203
7.5	Oxidation Behavior of Ti_5Si_3	203
7.6	Oxidation Behavior of Chromium Silicides.....	205
7.7	Summary.....	206
	References.....	207
8.	Aluminides: Processing and Mechanical Behavior.....	213
8.1	Introduction.....	213
8.2	Processing.....	214
8.3	Nickel Aluminides.....	218
8.3.1	Ni_3Al	218
8.3.1.1	Dislocation-Based Mechanism and Anomalous Increase in Yield Strength.....	219
8.3.1.2	Grain-Boundary Embrittlement.....	222
8.3.1.3	Effect of Alloying on Strength and Ductility.....	224
8.3.1.4	Creep Behavior.....	225
8.3.2	NiAl	227
8.3.2.1	Physical Properties.....	228
8.3.2.2	Mechanical Behavior.....	228
8.4	Titanium Aluminides.....	231
8.4.1	Al_3Ti	231
8.4.1.1	Physical Properties.....	231
8.4.1.2	Deformation Mechanisms.....	231
8.4.1.3	Strategies for Improving Ductility.....	232
8.4.2	TiAl	233
8.4.2.1	Physical Properties.....	233
8.4.2.2	Microstructure.....	234
8.4.2.3	Deformation Mechanisms.....	234
8.4.2.4	Microstructure–Mechanical Property Relationship.....	235
8.4.2.5	Effect of Alloying Additions.....	242
8.4.3	Ti_3Al	242
8.4.3.1	Alloying and Phase Composition.....	242
8.4.3.2	Slip Systems.....	243
8.4.3.3	Mechanical Behavior.....	246

- 8.5 Iron Aluminides 248
 - 8.5.1 Basic Information 248
 - 8.5.2 Environmental Embrittlement 249
 - 8.5.3 Room-Temperature Mechanical Properties 250
 - 8.5.4 Elevated-Temperature Mechanical Properties 252
 - 8.5.5 Effect of Alloying 253
 - 8.5.6 Effect of Dispersion Strengthening 254
- 8.6 Summary 256
- References 257

- 9. Aluminides: Oxidation Behavior 275**
 - 9.1 Introduction 275
 - 9.2 Nickel Aluminides 275
 - 9.2.1 Ni_3Al 276
 - 9.2.2 NiAl 277
 - 9.3 Titanium Aluminides 278
 - 9.3.1 Al_3Ti 278
 - 9.3.2 TiAl 279
 - 9.3.3 Ti_3Al 282
 - 9.4 Iron Aluminides 282
 - 9.4.1 Oxidizing Environment 282
 - 9.4.2 Corrosive Environment (Other than Oxidizing Atmosphere) 284
 - 9.5 Summary 285
 - References 286

List of Figures

FIGURE 1.1	Schematic illustration of the thermodynamic stability of intermetallic phases (I = stable phase, I' = metastable phase, α and β are solid-solution phases): (a) phase equilibria in the temperature (T)–composition (c) diagram; and (b) the corresponding free energy (G)–composition (c) diagram for true and metastable equilibria at absolute temperature, T_1 2
FIGURE 1.2	Plots depicting the variation of enthalpy of formation of binary intermetallic phases with temperature in Ni–Al, Ti–Al, and Fe–Al systems. The data have been taken from the literature 3
FIGURE 1.3	Schematic illustrations depicting the unit cells of (a) MoSi_2 (C11 _b , tP8); (b) Mo_5Si_3 (D8 _m , tI32); (c) Mo_3Si (A15, cP8); and (d) MoSi_2 (C40, hP9) 7
FIGURE 1.4	The Mo-rich section of the ternary isothermal phase diagram of the Mo–Si–B system corresponding to 1600°C. The position of Mo_5SiB_2 in this phase diagram is shown as T_2 8
FIGURE 1.5	Schematic illustration of the unit cell of Mo_5SiB_2 (D8 ₁ , tI32) 8
FIGURE 1.6	Schematic illustration of the Ti_5Si_3 unit cell (D8 ₈ , hP9) 9
FIGURE 1.7	Schematic representation of the Nb–Si–X ternary phase diagram 11
FIGURE 1.8	Schematic illustrations of the unit cells of (a) NiAl (B2, cP2) and (b) Ni_3Al (L1 ₂ , cP4) 13
FIGURE 1.9	Schematic illustration of Al_3Ti unit cell: (a) L1 ₂ and (b) D0 ₂₂ 15
FIGURE 1.10	Modified Ti-rich part of the Ti–Al binary phase diagram showing the positions of various intermetallic phases 16
FIGURE 1.11	Schematic representation of the crystal structures of: (a) α_2 and (b) O phases 17
FIGURE 1.12	Schematic illustration of the crystal structures of FeAl (B2) and Fe_3Al (D0 ₃) 18

FIGURE 2.1	Plots showing the change in free energy and heat of formation of MoSi_2 with temperature.....	33
FIGURE 3.1	A square superlattice unit cell in the two-dimensional lattice of an ordered MN alloy. The location of the antiphase boundary (APB) and the antiphase domain (APD) is shown. The part of the boundary marked x is considered to be nonconservative, as N-type atoms are completely absent. The vector p in the unit cell is a typical APB vector	46
FIGURE 3.2	Schematic illustration of slip in $\{111\}$ planes leading to formation of APB in the MN_3 superlattice	47
FIGURE 3.3	Schematic illustration of three successive $\{111\}$ planes in the L1_2 -structured MN_3 alloy. This illustration depicts (a) three $\{111\}$ planes in a perfect lattice; (b) sliding of the top layer in (a) by $b_A = \frac{1}{2}[\bar{1}01]$ to produce an APB, causing the formation of incorrect M–M nearest-neighbor bonds (shown using dashed lines); (c) sliding of the top layer in (a) by $b_S = \frac{1}{3}[2\bar{1}1]$ to cause the formation of a SISF; and (d) sliding of the top layer in (a) by $b_C = \frac{1}{6}[\bar{1}\bar{1}2]$ to produce a CSF.....	52
FIGURE 3.4	Schematic illustration of a typical Kear–Wisdorf lock in an L1_2 -structured intermetallic alloy: superdislocation in dissociated form in an octahedral $\{111\}$ plane, which has further cross-slipped into the $\{100\}$ plane. The <i>arrow</i> in the $\{111\}$ plane shows the direction of glide in the $\{111\}$ plane	55
FIGURE 4.1	Plots depicting the variation of free energy per mole of oxygen with absolute temperature for the formation of selected oxides.....	74
FIGURE 4.2	Plots depicting the variation of (a) mass gain against temperature for Ti_5Si_3 and (b) variation of \ln (mass gain) with \ln (temperature) to find values of n and k	76
FIGURE 4.3	Plots depicting the variation of parabolic rate constants for the growth of selected oxide scales with temperature.....	77
FIGURE 4.4	Oxide scale of MoSi_2 after exposure in air at 1200°C : (a) scanning electron microscopy (SEM) (backscattered electron) image and (b) wavelength-dispersive x-ray map of O.....	78

FIGURE 4.5	Plots depicting stepwise mass change with increasing time of exposure of MoSi_2 at 500°C	82
FIGURE 4.6	SEM images of the oxide scale formed after exposure at 1150°C for 20 s: (a) top surface showing pores formed due to the vaporization of MoO_3 (g) and (b) cross section of alloy–oxide interface	83
FIGURE 4.7	Top view of the MoSi_2 oxide scale formed on exposure in air at 500°C for 250 h showing the presence of MoO_3 whiskers.....	86
FIGURE 4.8	Plots depicting severe mass loss in the case of Mo–Si–B alloys during exposure at 700°C for 24 h.....	87
FIGURE 5.1	Plots depicting the variation of Young’s modulus of NiAl, TiAl and Ti_3Al with temperature along with data representing typical nickel-based superalloys	93
FIGURE 6.1	SEM image depicting the toughening mechanism in the <i>in situ</i> MoSi_2 – Al_2O_3 composite (MoSi_2 –5.5 at.% Al): crack deflection (D), crack bridging (BG), and interface cracking (IC).....	115
FIGURE 6.2	SEM image depicting an indentation crack path in 76Mo–14Si–10B alloy, where crack arrest and bridging due to the presence of α -Mo particles are observed. Arrows show α -Mo particles involved in crack bridging.....	119
FIGURE 6.3	Load–displacement plot obtained on fracture toughness testing of 76Mo14Si10B alloy.....	120
FIGURE 6.4	SEM (BSE) images depicting paths of indentation cracks through Nb–Si–Mo alloy, where (a) crack arrest and (b) bridging by the ductile Nb_{ss} phase ligaments are observed. BSE, backscattered electrons; SEM, scanning electron microscopy	123
FIGURE 6.5	Indentation cracking: (a) Ti_5Si_3 , (b) Ti_5Si_3 –20 vol.% TiC composite, and (c) variation of crack deflection frequency with angle.....	125
FIGURE 6.6	Slip systems observed in MoSi_2 single crystals: (a) $\{110\}\frac{1}{2}\langle 111\rangle$, (b) $\{011\}\langle 100\rangle$, (c) $\{010\}\langle 100\rangle$, (d) $\{023\}\langle 100\rangle$, and (e) $\{013\}\langle 331\rangle$	130
FIGURE 6.7	Dislocations arranged in low angle boundaries in MoSi_2 with an average grain size of $5\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ after compressive deformation at 1200°C	131

FIGURE 6.8	Stress–strain curves showing yield-point phenomena and serrated plastic flow in polycrystalline MoSi ₂ with average grain sizes of 5 μm, tested at strain rate of (a) 10 ⁻³ s ⁻¹ and (b) 10 ⁻⁴ s ⁻¹	133
FIGURE 6.9	Variation of the logarithm of yield stress with logarithm of strain-rate sensitivity for RHP MoSi ₂ (5 μm grain size) and Starck MoSi ₂ (27 μm grain size).....	134
FIGURE 6.10	Polarized light optical micrograph of MoSi ₂ , showing the location of globular SiO ₂ particles at grain interior and grain boundaries	135
FIGURE 6.11	Intergranular cracking on softening of amorphous SiO ₂ layer during deformation at 1300°C. A diffraction pattern depicting a diffuse halo (arrowed) as evidence of amorphous intergranular film is shown as an inset	136
FIGURE 6.12	Variation of yield stresses of MoSi ₂ and MoSi ₂ –Al alloys with temperature at strain rates of 10 ⁻³ and 10 ⁻⁴ s ⁻¹ . Strain rates are shown in parentheses. The yield stresses of single crystals (marked as X in the legend) were obtained in the [0 15 1] orientation. The CRSS corresponds to the {1 $\bar{1}$ 0}(111) slip system.....	137
FIGURE 6.13	Comparison of the elevated-temperature yield stress of the MoSi ₂ -based composites with that of MoSi ₂	139
FIGURE 6.14	Creep behavior of MoSi ₂ with different grain sizes: (a) diffusion creep, (b) dislocation creep, and (c) transition from diffusion to dislocation-creep regime when subjected to incremental loading	144
FIGURE 6.15	Comparison of creep rates of MoSi ₂ with varying SiO ₂ content and SiC reinforcements added externally or formed by <i>in situ</i> reaction	145
FIGURE 6.16	Comparison of steady-state creep rates of polycrystalline MoSi ₂ with grain sizes of 5, 18, and 27 μm, MoSi ₂ –20 vol.% SiC composite with matrix grain size of 18 μm, and MoSi ₂ –5.5 and 9 at.% Al alloys with matrix grain sizes of 20 μm and 25 μm, respectively. The stress exponents are shown next to the grain size.....	146
FIGURE 6.17	Comparison of steady-state creep rates of polycrystalline MoSi ₂ and MoSi ₂ –5.5 at.% Al alloy, as well as single crystals of MoSi ₂ and Mo(Si _{0.97} Al _{0.03}) ₂ tested with [0 15 1] and [001] orientations at 1300°C. Single crystals are marked as X	147

- FIGURE 6.18** Log-log plots of secondary creep rates against stress for [0 15 1] and [001]-oriented MoSi_2 , [314]-oriented Mo_5Si_3 , and [021] Mo_5SiB_2 150
- FIGURE 6.19** Comparison of yield strengths of selected orientations of single crystals of MoSi_2 , WSi_2 , Ti_5Si_3 , NbSi_2 , and CrSi_2 161
- FIGURE 6.20** Comparison of the secondary creep rates of polycrystalline MoSi_2 , Ti_5Si_3 , Nb_5Si_3 , and Cr_3Si at 1200°C 162
- FIGURE 6.21** Typical serrations in the flow curve of polycrystalline Ti_5Si_3 compression tested at 1200°C with a strain rate of 10^{-3} s^{-1} 163
- FIGURE 6.22** Comparison of the secondary creep rates of Ti_5Si_3 having average grain size of $5 \mu\text{m}$ and in the range of $20\text{--}30 \mu\text{m}$ and the effects of alloying with Al or dispersion of TiB_2 reinforcement particles 164
- FIGURE 7.1** Plots showing the variation of (a) mass gain with time of exposure, and (b) logarithm of mass gain with that of time, for MoSi_2 and $\text{MoSi}_2\text{--SiC}$ composite at 500°C 183
- FIGURE 7.2** Plots showing the variation of mass gain with time of exposure for MoSi_2 and $\text{MoSi}_2\text{--Al}$ alloys at 1200°C 185
- FIGURE 7.3** Oxide scale of the $\text{MoSi}_2\text{--}5.5 \text{ at.\% Al}$ alloy after exposure in air at 1200°C : (a) SEM (back-scatter electron [BSE]) image, and WDS x-ray maps of: (b) Si, (c) Al, and (d) O 187
- FIGURE 7.4** Plots showing (a) the change in mass of the $76\text{Mo--}14\text{Si--}10\text{B}$ alloy isothermally exposed for 24 h in the temperature range of $500^\circ\text{C--}1300^\circ\text{C}$ and (b) mass change in initial stages of isothermal exposure at 1150°C 195
- FIGURE 7.5** Oxide scale of the $76\text{Mo--}14\text{Si--}10\text{B}$ alloy subjected to cyclic exposure at 1150°C with air cooling at 1 h intervals. Here, a protective scale of $\text{B}_2\text{O}_3\text{--SiO}_2$ is observed: SEM (SE) images of (a) top surface and (b) alloy-oxide cross section, as well as energy-dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) x-ray maps of (c) O, (d) Si, and (e) Mo. 196
- FIGURE 7.6** SEM (BSE) images depicting the morphology of the top surface of the oxide scale formed on the $76\text{Mo--}14\text{Si--}10\text{B}$ alloy after 40 s, 60 s, 120 s of exposure (a) and BSE images of the oxide-alloy cross-section (b) 197
- FIGURE 7.7** SEM (BSE) images depicting the morphology of the top surface of the oxide scale formed on the

	76Mo–14Si–10B alloy after 240 s, 480 s, 3600 s of exposure (a) and BSE images of the oxide-alloy cross-section (b)	198
FIGURE 7.8	SEM (SE) micrograph of the oxide scale formed over the 76Mo–14Si–10B alloy after 24 h of exposure at 1150°C. It shows the presence of ripple-like features on the surface, which suggest the viscous flow of borosilicate glass	199
FIGURE 7.9	Plot of scale thickness (S) against duration of exposure (t) in the course of the transient-stage oxidation of the Mo76Si14B10 alloy (<i>Inset</i> : Plots showing $\log S$ vs. $\log t$ with the best-fit line used to calculate the exponent)	199
FIGURE 7.10	Plots depicting the kinetics of isothermal oxidation during exposure for 24 h at 1000°C for alloys with compositions: Nb–19Si–5Mo (Alloy A), Nb–18Si–26Mo (Alloy B), Nb–13Si–4Mo (Alloy C), and Nb–12Si–15Mo (Alloy D)	201
FIGURE 7.11	SEM (BSE) image of the cross section of the oxide scale formed on the Nb–12Si–15Mo alloy due to exposure at 1150°C for 24 h. The SiO ₂ layer at the metal–oxide interface is shown with a pair of arrows. Transverse cracks (single arrow) are visible in the oxide scale	201
FIGURE 7.12	SEM (SE) images of the top surfaces of oxide scales formed on (a) Nb–19Si–5Mo (Alloy A), and (b) Nb–18Si–26Mo (Alloy B)	202
FIGURE 7.13	Oxide scale formed on Ti ₅ Si ₃ on exposure at 1200°C for 80 h: (a) SEM (BSE) image and EDS x-ray maps of (b) Ti, (c) Si, and (d) O.....	204
FIGURE 7.14	Plots of mass gain against temperature for MoSi ₂ and Ti ₅ Si ₃ subjected to cyclic exposure at 1200°C	205
FIGURE 8.1	Schematic illustration of splitting of $\langle 110 \rangle$ superdislocation into superpartials separated by SISF in L1 ₂ -structured Ni ₃ Al	220
FIGURE 8.2	Plots of yield strength of Ni ₃ Al-based alloys against temperature depicting anomalous behavior using published data	221
FIGURE 8.3	Schematic illustration of slip vectors in B2-structured NiAl.....	229

FIGURE 8.4	Schematic illustration of the slip vectors in L1 ₀ -structured TiAl	235
FIGURE 8.5	Plots depicting the variation of 100 h rupture strength with temperature for γ -TiAl-based alloys with duplex and fully lamellar structures	239
FIGURE 8.6	SEM micrographs of Ti-22-25Al-(22-7)Nb alloy depicting typical microstructures containing O + B2 phase mixture with the following morphologies: (a) equiaxed O along with aged B2; (b) transformed B2 showing α_2 laths	244
FIGURE 8.7	Schematic illustration of slip vectors in (a) the α_2 phase (Ti ₃ Al) and (b) the O2 phase (Ti ₂ AlNb)	245
FIGURE 8.8	Plots showing the variation of elongation of binary Fe-aluminide alloy with Al concentration in vacuum, oxygen, and air	250
FIGURE 8.9	Plots depicting the variation of yield strength against temperature for Fe-aluminides with different Al concentrations.....	252
FIGURE 8.10	1000 h rupture strength of Fe ₃ Al and FeAl with or without dispersion strengthening at (a) 600°C and (b) 700°C	255
FIGURE 9.1	Schematic illustration of oxide scale formed on an aluminide-based intermetallic alloy showing: (a) diffusion paths of metallic cations and oxygen anions; (b) decohesion and buckling of the oxide scale due to formation of voids at the alloy-oxide interface	276
FIGURE 9.2	Bar charts showing mass gain by TiAl and TiAl-5 wt.% X alloys (X = Nb, Mo, Cr, and V) on exposure at 900°C for 100 h.....	280
FIGURE 9.3	Bar charts showing mass gain by TiAl alloyed with Nb, Mo, or both along with other elements, drawn using data from literature.....	280

Preface

Significant research has been carried out on structural intermetallics for several decades, involving both experimental and theoretical approaches. As a result, the structure–property relations of these materials are reasonably well understood, which has led to a road map for further research to develop high-performance materials for several diverse engineering applications. Work is in progress in many parts of the world to develop selected multicomponent intermetallic alloys based on silicides and aluminides for specific applications, particularly at elevated temperatures and in different types of extreme environments. Of course, there are excellent reviews and book chapters on many of these intermetallics. This monograph has been drafted as a part of the Diamond Jubilee Series of the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. The author has been working on silicides for two decades and has also taught topics related to intermetallic alloys for a postgraduate course on advanced materials. A student learner often finds it difficult to grasp the complexities of the structure of intermetallics and their effect on various physical and mechanical properties. Keeping the requirement of students in mind, the first four chapters of this monograph are devoted to necessary fundamental aspects including thermodynamic principles, phase diagrams and crystal structures, processing methods, deformation and fracture mechanisms of ordered intermetallics, and oxidation behavior with mechanisms for protection against environmental degradation. The fifth chapter focuses on possible applications on the basis of the attractive properties of aluminides and silicides. The last four chapters contain exhaustive reviews of the existing literature on selected structural silicides and aluminides. The contents of this monograph are expected to be helpful to students interested in learning about intermetallics, as well as professionals beginning their research in this area.

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Abbreviations

APB	Antiphase boundary
APD	Antiphase domain
BDTT	Brittle-to-ductile transition temperature
CRSS	Critical resolved shear stress
CSF	Complex stacking fault
CSL	Coincidence site lattice
CT	Compact tension
CTE	Coefficient of thermal expansion
DS	Directionally solidified
EAM	Embedded atom method
HIP	Hot isostatically pressed
HP	Hot pressed
KW	Kear–Wilsdorf
LPPS	Low-pressure plasma spraying
MA	Mechanical alloying/mechanically alloyed
PM	Powder metallurgy
Poly	Polycrystalline
RT	Room temperature
SC	Single crystal
SEM	Scanning electron microscope
SENB	Single-edge notch bend
SHS	Self-propagating high-temperature synthesis
SISF	Superlattice intrinsic stacking fault
TEM	Transmission electron microscope
UHV	Ultrahigh vacuum
WB TEM	Weak-beam transmission electron microscopy

1

Phase Equilibria and Structure

1.1 Introduction

In many of the binary equilibrium phase diagrams for alloys, new phases are found at intermediate concentrations and their range of existence does not extend to pure components. Either these phases are line compounds or they are characterized by their nonstoichiometric composition and extended range of compositions. The line compounds with a fixed ratio of metallic components are often called *intermetallic compounds*. This terminology is appropriate only for stoichiometric compositions. It is not suitable for alloys with nonstoichiometric or extended range of compositions, and therefore such materials are referred to as intermetallic phases or alloys.

For substantial or complete solid solubility, the Hume-Rothery rules need to be satisfied: (i) the difference of atomic radii should not exceed 15%; (ii) the difference of electronegativity (chemical affinity) should be small; (iii) the crystal structures of solute and solvent must match; and (iv) the number of valence electrons should not be very different. The formation of intermetallic phases is preferred when the aforementioned rules are not satisfied. For example, both gold and copper have a face-centered cubic (fcc) structure, but the difference between their lattice constants is $\approx 12.8\%$, which promotes the formation of intermetallics in the Cu–Au system.

The formation and microstructural evolution of intermetallics depend on their thermodynamic stability. Very often, metastable phases with inhomogeneous compositions are formed through solidification, and suitable heat treatment is required for the evolution of equilibrium phases. For desirable mechanical properties or for carrying out forming operations, it may be necessary to stabilize desirable metastable phases through the addition of suitable alloying elements. Furthermore, the mechanical properties of the intermetallics are strongly dependent on their crystal structures. Hence, knowledge of phase equilibria along with crystal structures is necessary to understand the processing–structure–property relations of various binary and multicomponent intermetallic alloys.

1.2 Stability of Intermetallic Phases

A reduction of the Gibbs free energy of the system provides the driving force for the formation of intermetallics. The stability of the intermetallic phase depends not only on the reduction of free energy due to its formation but also on the free energies of the phases in equilibrium with the intermetallic phase. An example of a two-component system (A–B) is shown in Figure 1.1a.¹ In this system, α and β are solid-solution phases along with a stable intermetallic, I, and a metastable intermetallic, I'. In Figure 1.1b, the Gibbs free energies of the phases present at temperature T are plotted as a function of atomic fraction, $c = c_B$.¹ For the phases coexisting in equilibrium, the first derivatives of the Gibbs free energy (dG/dc) are equal, such that the chemical potentials or partial molal free energies are equal. Thus, common tangents can be drawn to G – c curves for the phases in equilibrium, as shown in Figure 1.1b. The stable intermetallic phase exists over the homogeneity range

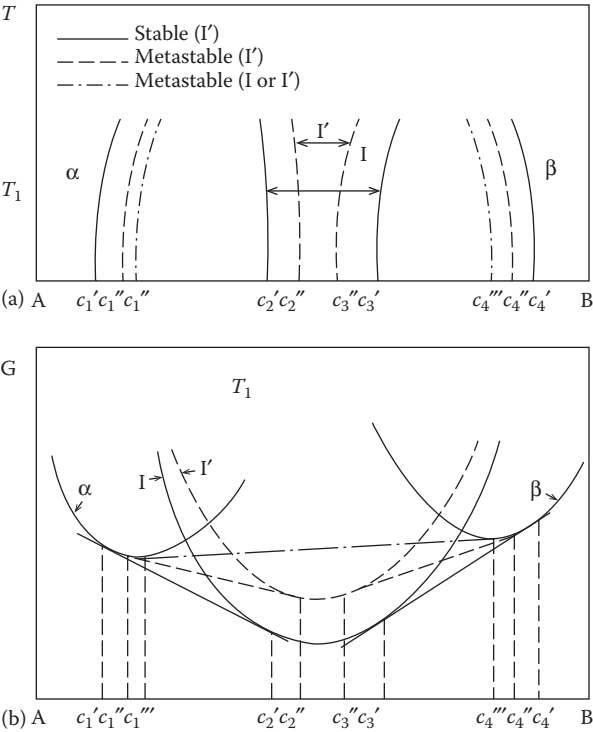


FIGURE 1.1
Schematic illustration of the thermodynamic stability of intermetallic phases (I=stable phase, I'=metastable phase, α and β are solid-solution phases): (a) phase equilibria in the temperature (T)–composition (c) diagram; and (b) the corresponding free energy (G)–composition (c) diagram for true and metastable equilibria at absolute temperature, T_1 .

between c_2' and c_3' . The atomic fractions of the phases α and β coexisting with I have compositions of c_1' and c_4' , respectively. The metastable intermetallic phase, I', exists over the narrower homogeneity range c_2'' to c_3'' . The atomic fractions of the phases coexisting with I' are the phases α and β , with compositions of c_1'' and c_4'' , respectively.

The formation of ordered solid solutions is preferred in a binary alloy system if the bonding between unlike constituents is stronger than that between like atoms. In such cases, each atom tries to have the maximum number of unlike nearest neighbors. This is the example of a regular solution with large negative exchange energy²:

$$H_0 = H_{AB} - \frac{(H_{AA} + H_{BB})}{2} \ll 0 \quad (1.1)$$

where H_{AB} , H_{AA} , and H_{BB} are the heats of formation of A-B, A-A, and B-B bonds, respectively. The heat of formation in the case of a binary intermetallic alloy system (such as Ni-Al or Fe-Al) varies with its composition, increasing to a maximum value and then decreasing. The variation of enthalpy with concentration for binary Ni-, Ti-, and Fe-aluminides is plotted in Figure 1.2 on the basis of the experimental data.³⁻⁷ The heat of formation of intermetallics is usually determined using experiments based on solution calorimetry with the help of high-temperature calorimeters specially designed for such experiments.⁸ First, the intermetallic alloy is dissolved in a liquid metal used

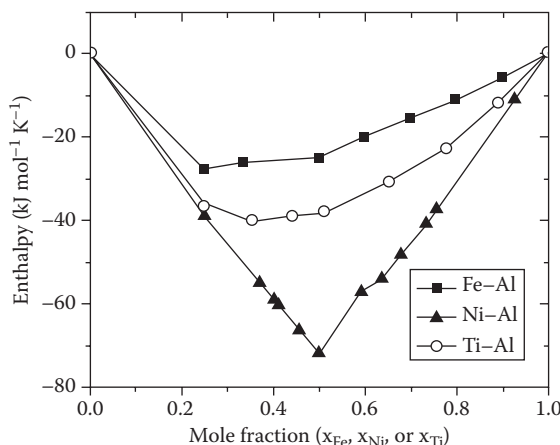


FIGURE 1.2

Plots depicting the variation of enthalpy of formation of binary intermetallic phases with temperature in Ni-Al, Ti-Al, and Fe-Al systems. The data have been taken from the literature. (From Desai, P. D., *J Phys. Chem. Ref. Data*, 16, 1, 109–124, 1987; Kubashewski, O. and W. A. Dench, *Acta Metall.*, 3, 339–346, 1955; Nash, P. and O. Kleppa, *J. Alloys Compd.*, 321, 228–231, 2001; Huang, W. and Y. A. Chang, *Intermetallics*, 6, 487–498, 1998; Samokhval, V. V., et al., *Russ. J. Phys. Chem.*, 145, 1174, 1971.)

as a solvent, and the heat of solution is determined. Subsequently, the heat of solution of the unreacted elemental mixture is measured. The difference between these two heats of solution provides the heat of formation of the intermetallic phase.

For stoichiometric intermetallic compositions, strictly periodic arrangements of atoms are attained. In the case of an intermetallic phase, AB, with the composition $c_A = 0.5$ and an ordered body-centered cubic (bcc) structure, the body-centered and corner positions of a unit cell are occupied by atoms of A and B, respectively, or vice versa. In other words, the ordered bcc unit cell comprises two simple cubic sublattices. If each sublattice site is occupied by only one type of atom, that is, either A or B, each A atom will have a B atom as its nearest neighbor.

1.3 Nomenclature of Crystal Structures

Two types of notation, Strukturbericht and Pearson's symbols, are normally used for the nomenclature of crystal structures of different intermetallic phases. Strukturbericht symbols are a partly systematic method for specifying the structure of a crystal. Here, the structures named A are monatomic (either X or Y, e.g., Al and Fe), Bs are diatomic with equal numbers of atoms of each type (XY, e.g., NaCl, NiAl, and FeAl), Cs have a 2:1 atomic ratio (X_2Y or XY_2 , e.g., $MoSi_2$ and $NbSi_2$), D0s are 3:1 (XY_3 or X_3Y , e.g., Al_3Ti and Fe_3Al), E and H are used for perovskite and spinel structures, respectively, and Ls represent ordered cubic structures. It is customary to write the aforementioned structure notations with examples of real materials. A1 (fcc), A2 (bcc), A3 (hexagonal close-packed [hcp]), A4 (diamond), and A9 (graphite) are some examples of monatomic phases. The only example of A with a diatomic composition is the A15 structure, and the examples of intermetallic phases having this structure are Cr_3Si and Mo_3Si . Examples of diatomic phases are the B1 (NaCl), B2 (CsCl), B3 (zinc blende), and B11 (CuTi) structures. Similarly, typical C-type structures are C11_b ($MoSi_2$), C14 (Laves— $MgZn_2$), C49 ($ZrSi_2$), etc., whereas typical D-type structures are D0₁₁ (Fe_3C , cementite), D0₂₂ (Al_3Ti), D0₂₃ (Al_3Zr), etc. Some of the L-type structures are L1₀ (AuCu), L1₁ (CuPt), L1₂ (Cu_3Au), etc.

The crystal structures of the intermetallics can be any of the seven Bravais lattices: cubic (c), hexagonal and rhombohedral (h), tetragonal (t), orthorhombic (o), monoclinic (m), and triclinic (a). The unit cells with each of these crystal structures can further be classified as primitive (P), body centered (I), face centered (F), side-face centered or base centered (S), and rhombohedral (R). Fourteen possible Bravais lattices are represented by the following notations: primitive cubic (cP), face-centered cubic (cF), body-centered cubic (cI), rhombohedral hexagonal (hR), primitive hexagonal (hP), primitive tetragonal (tP), body-centered tetragonal (tI), primitive orthorhombic

(oP), body-centered orthorhombic (oI), face-centered orthorhombic (oF), side-centered orthorhombic (oS), primitive monoclinic (mP), side-centered monoclinic (mS), and primitive triclinic (aP). Besides the nature of the atomic arrangement, the number of atoms per unit cell is also included in the notation for a complete description of the unit cell. For example, the notation for the structure of any ordered fcc alloy can be written as cP4, as there are four atoms in its unit cell. In a similar manner, a body-centered, tetragonal-structured unit cell with eight atoms can be referred to as tI8.

1.4 Crystal Structures and Phase Diagrams of Silicides

The major silicide phases of interest for high-temperature structural applications are drawn from the following binary phase equilibrium systems: Mo–Si, W–Si, Ti–Si, Nb–Si, and Cr–Si. The crystal structures and lattice constants of different silicide-based intermetallics are shown in Table 1.1.

1.4.1 Molybdenum Silicides

The binary Mo–Si phase diagram shows the presence of stoichiometric compounds with compositions Mo_3Si and MoSi_2 .⁹ On the other hand, Mo_5Si_3 has a homogeneity range of 3 at.% Si. While MoSi_2 has a body-centered tetragonal (bct) structure (C11_b, tI8) with eight atoms in the unit cell (Figure 1.3a), the tetragonal unit cell of Mo_5Si_3 has 32 atoms (20 Mo atoms and 12 atoms of Si, D8_m, tI32) (Figure 1.3b).¹⁰ Mo_3Si has a cubic structure (A15, cP8) comprising eight atoms in its unit cell, with six atoms of Mo and eight atoms of Si (Figure 1.3c). The bct structure of MoSi_2 has a fixed c/a ratio of 2.452 and appears similar to three bcc unit cells, stacked one on top of another with the body-centered site occupied by the atom of Mo or Si, alternately. It has been shown by Francwicz¹¹ that the c/a ratio of approximately 2.45 remains unchanged with minor alloying of tetragonal-structured MoSi_2 , and is essential for the stability of C11_b crystal structure. Alloying with transition-metal elements such as Nb, Ti, and Cr, having an atomic radius and an electronic structure close to those of Mo, substitutes Mo sites, while alloying elements such as Al with atomic radius comparable to Si occupy the Si sublattice sites. Alloying MoSi_2 with other elements to an extent that exceeds the limit of 3 at.% has been observed to affect the stability of the bct structure.

MoSi_2 has a hexagonal structure (C40, hP9) (Figure 1.3d) at high temperature (1900°C). The lattice vectors of $\text{Mo}(\text{Si},\text{Al})_2$ formed on alloying with Al in excess of 3 at.% also possess C40 structure.^{12–14} Interestingly, the c/a ratio for the perfect hexagonal arrangement is $6^{1/2} = 0.2449 \text{ nm}$,¹⁵ which is very close to that of the C11_b structure ($c/a = 0.2452 \text{ nm}$). The [001], $\frac{1}{2}$ [111], $\frac{1}{2}$ [331], and [110] directions in the C11_b (110) plane are equivalent to [01 $\bar{1}$ 0], $\frac{1}{3}$ [11 $\bar{2}$ 0], [01 $\bar{1}$ 0],

TABLE 1.1

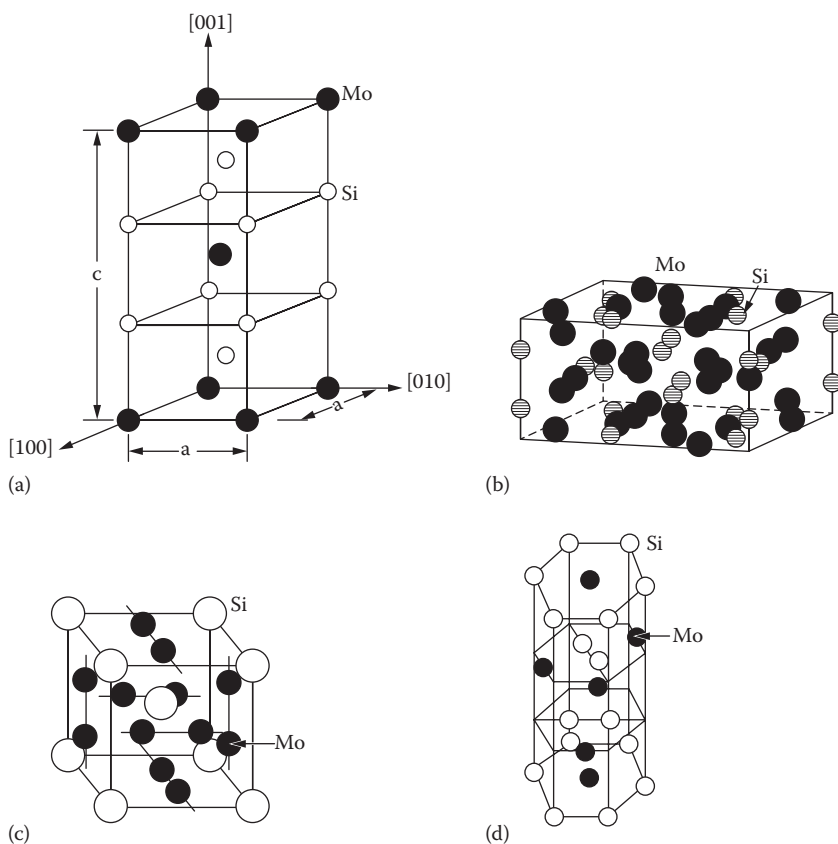
Crystal Structure and Lattice Constants of Silicides

Silicides	Crystal Structure	Structure and Space Group	Lattice Parameters (nm)
MoSi ₂	Body-centered tetragonal	C11 _b (tI6), I4/mmm	$a = 0.3202$ $c = 0.7845$
Mo ₅ Si ₃	Body-centered tetragonal	D8 _m (tI32), I4/mcm	$a = 0.959$ $c = 0.487$
Mo ₃ Si	Cubic	A15 (cP8) Pm3n	$a = 0.4892$
Mo ₃ SiB ₂	Body-centered tetragonal	D8 ₁ (tI32), I4/mcm	$a = 0.6013$ $c = 1.103$
Mo(Si,Al) ₂	Hexagonal	C40 (hP9), P6 ₂ 22	$a = 4.644$ $c = 6.548$
WSi ₂	Body-centered tetragonal	C11 _b (tI6), I4/mmm	$a = 0.3211$ $c = 0.7868$
Ti ₅ Si ₃	Hexagonal	D8 ₈ (hP16), I4/mcm	$a = 0.7444$ $c = 0.5143$
NbSi ₂	Hexagonal	C40 (hP9) P6 ₂ 22	$a = 4.7971$ $c = 6.592$
Nb ₅ Si ₃	Body-centered tetragonal	α : D8 ₁ (tI32) β : D8 _m I4/mcm	α phase: $a = 0.656$ $b = 1.187$ β phase: $a = 1.0$ $b = 0.507$
CrSi ₂	Hexagonal	C40 (hP9) P6 ₂ 22	$a = 0.4428$ $c = 0.6363$

Source: Mitra, R., *Inter. Mater. Rev.* 51, 1, 13–64, 2006.

and $1/3[\bar{2}110]$, respectively, in the C40 (0001) plane. While the C11_b structure is characterized by ABAB... type stacking along the c axis, the C40 lattice shows ABCABC... type stacking. Hence, a stacking fault in the (110) plane of the C11_b lattice would lead to the creation of localized C40-type structure.

The tetragonal structure of Mo₅Si₃ is quite different from that of MoSi₂ (compare Figure 1.3a and b), as the former material exhibits the following characteristics:¹⁶ (i) the value of a (lattice parameter) is greater than c such that $a/c \approx 2$; (ii) close-packed planes are absent; and (iii) the –Si–Mo–Si– chains are along the [100] and [010] directions, while the –Mo–Mo– and –Si–Si– chains are along the [001] direction. In MoSi₂, the close-packed planes and directions are distinct, and the –Si–Mo–Si– chains in MoSi₂ are along the [001] direction, while the –Mo–Mo and –Si–Si chains are along the [100] and [010] directions. The interatomic bond along the [001] direction containing the –Si–Mo–Si– chain is believed to be stronger and more directional compared with either Mo–Mo or Si–Si bonds.

**FIGURE 1.3**

Schematic illustrations depicting the unit cells of (a) MoSi_2 (C11_b, tP8); (b) Mo_5Si_3 (D8_m, tI32); (c) Mo_3Si (A15, cP8); and (d) MoSi_2 (C40, hP9).

The Mo-rich section of the ternary isothermal phase diagram¹³ of the Mo–Si–B system corresponding to 1600°C is shown in Figure 1.4. Mo–Si–B ternary alloys can be designed to have the optimum volume fractions of α -Mo, Mo_3Si , and Mo_5SiB_2 phases. All three phases have a nearly fixed composition with a limited solubility for other elements and hence provide microstructural stability at high temperatures. The α -Mo phase has a bcc structure with the solubility for Si and B atoms being 3 and <1 at.%, respectively, while the Mo_3Si possesses a single-phase composition close to 76Mo–24Si (at.%).¹⁷ On the other hand, Mo_5SiB_2 possesses a bct structure (D8₁, tI32) with 32 atoms in the unit cell, comprising 20 atoms of Mo, 4 atoms of Si, and 8 atoms of B (Figure 1.5). In the unit cell of Mo_5SiB_2 , three layers can be identified, the first comprising only Mo atoms, the second having only Si atoms, and the third having a mixture of Mo and Si atoms. It is interesting to note that the Mo-nearest neighbors

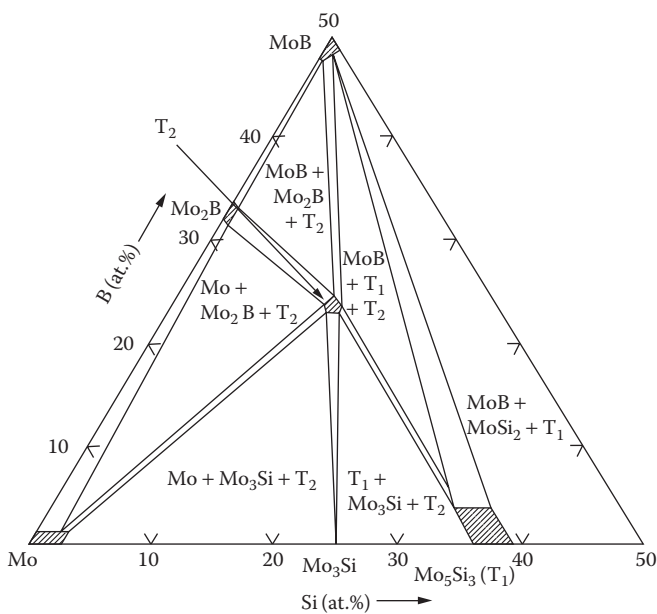


FIGURE 1.4
The Mo-rich section of the ternary isothermal phase diagram of the Mo–Si–B system corresponding to 1600°C. The position of Mo₅SiB₂ in this phase diagram is shown as T₂.

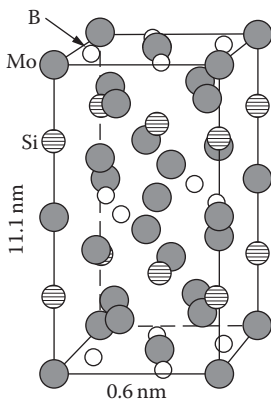


FIGURE 1.5
Schematic illustration of the unit cell of Mo₅SiB₂ (D8₁, tI32).

of the Mo sites in the unit cell are in bcc arrangement, which implies that the solubility of transition-metal atoms in Mo₅SiB₂ is similar to that in the bcc-Mo. The coefficient of thermal expansion anisotropy (α_c/α_a) of Mo₅SiB₂ has been found to be 1.4 at 500°C,¹⁸ which is significantly lower than that (≈ 2.2) of Mo₅Si₃.¹⁶