



The Public Image Of Chemistry

By Joachim Schummer

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Popular associations with chemistry range from poisons, hazards, chemical warfare and environmental pollution to alchemical pseudoscience, sorcery and mad scientists, which gravely affect the public image of science in general. While chemists have merely complained about their public image, social and cultural studies of science have largely avoided anything related to chemistry. This book provides, for the first time, an in-depth understanding of the cultural and historical contexts in which the public image of chemistry has emerged. It argues that this image has been shaped through recurring and unlucky interactions between chemists in popularizing their discipline and nonchemists in expressing their expectations and fears of science. Written by leading scholars from the humanities, social sciences and chemistry in North America, Europe and Australia, this volume explores a blind spot in the science society relationship and calls for a constructive dialog between scientists and their public.

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Review

The volume may be of more interest to historians of science and chemistry ... chemists can benefit from some knowledge of the many historical forces affecting chemistry's public image, and this volume is a start.
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