



ReAction!: Chemistry in the Movies

Mark A. Griep, Marjorie L. Mikasen

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ReAction! gives a scientist's and artist's response to the dark and bright sides of chemistry found in 140 films, most of them contemporary Hollywood feature films but also a few documentaries, shorts, silents, and international films.

Even though there are some examples of screen chemistry between the actors and of behind-the-scenes special effects, this book is really about the chemistry when it is part of the narrative. It is about the dualities of Dr. Jekyll vs. inventor chemists, the invisible man vs. forensic chemists, chemical weapons vs. classroom chemistry, chemical companies that knowingly pollute the environment vs. altruistic research chemists trying to make the world a better place to live, and, finally, about people who choose to experiment with mind-altering drugs vs. the drug discovery process.

Little did Jekyll know when he brought the Hyde formula to his lips that his personality split would provide the central metaphor that would come to describe chemistry in the movies. This book explores the two movie faces of this supposedly neutral science. Watching films with chemical eyes, Dr. Jekyll is recast as a chemist engaged in psychopharmaceutical research but who becomes addicted to his own formula. He is balanced by the often wacky inventor chemists who make their discoveries by trial-and-error.

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