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Affinity, That Elusive Dream: A Genealogy of the Chemical Revolution

By Mi Gyung Kim

MIT Press Ltd, United States, 2008. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 218 x 146 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. In the eighteenth century, chemistry was transformed from an art to a public science. Chemical affinity played an important role in this process as a metaphor, a theory domain, and a subject of investigation. Goethe's Elective Affinities, which was based on the current understanding of chemical affinities, attests to chemistry's presence in the public imagination. In Affinity, That Elusive Dream, Mi Gyung Kim restores chemical affinity to its proper place in historiography and in Enlightenment public culture. The Chemical Revolution is usually associated with Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, who introduced a modern nomenclature and a definitive text. Kim argues that chemical affinity was erased from historical memory by Lavoisier's omission of it from his textbook. She examines the work of many less famous French chemists (including physicians, apothecaries, metallurgists, philosophical chemists, and industrial chemists) to explore the institutional context of chemical instruction and research, the social stratification that shaped theoretical discourse, and the crucial shifts in analytic methods. Apothecaries and metallurgists, she shows, shaped the main theory domains through their innovative approach to analysis. Academicians and philosophical chemists brought about...



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