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A Review of "The New Chemistry" editor-in-chief Nina Hall, Cambridge University Press, 2000; ISBN 0 521 45224 4; xi + 493 pages; \$49.95

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Book Review

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"The New Chemistry" editor-in-chief Nina Hall, Cambridge University Press, 2000; ISBN 0 521 45224 4; xi + 493 pages; \$49.95.

From the preface by the editor(a science writer), this book seeks "to illustrate the ingenuity and imaginative breadth of modern molecular science by presenting a showcase of research over the past 30 years". For this task, the list of contributors alone(it includes 4 Nobel laureates: R. Hoffman, the late G.T. Seaborg, J.-M. Lehn, and I. Prigogine) guarantees that it is a success. However, after reading the editor's Preface and the Introduction by Roald Hoffman in his ever elegant prose, one is left with the question: Who is the intended reader of this book?

The book consists of 16 chapters that deal with topics ranging from transuranium elements and bonding theory through pharmaceuticals and a variety of approaches to new materials to the responsibility of chemists and the chemical industry toward the environment. Each chapter is well written and deals with the fundamental science as well as the implications of its topic. At the end of each chapter, a list of references for further reading is given. These references are mostly monographs and review articles, including many published earlier by the authors.

Liquid crystal topics are included in four chapters. Metallomesogens, structure, displays, and discotics are among the topics covered. The book is attractively produced with many excellent figures. It also has a useful 9 page subject index.

The book is certainly of interest as a "coffee table" decoration. But beyond that, who is the audience for this book? The level of the presentations is such that advanced undergraduates in science and engineering should be able to follow much of the material presented, and the book, through the references for further reading, may stimulate them to further study. The level of presentation is not sufficiently advanced for graduate students in their area of specialization. Professional researchers seeking information about a new area would quickly exhaust the materials presented here. Who is the audience for this book? Could it be science writers?

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