

UniSysCat - Special Colloquium in presence

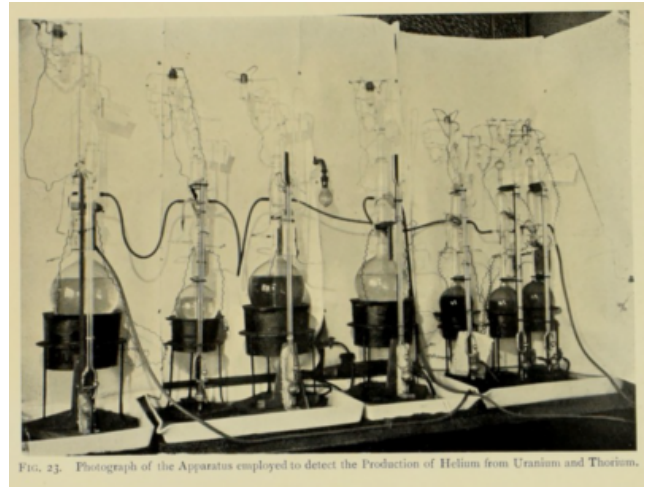
Prof. Dr. Andrew Barry

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Start Time: Monday, May 22, 2023

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Room C 264, TU Berlin, Straße des 17. Juni 115



Chemical Geography: a non-existent field?

A lecture by Prof. Dr. Andrew Barry

University College London

As all researchers know, what is absent may be just as significant as what is present. This lecture revolves around a significant absence. Why is there no field of chemical geography? Without doubt, chemical sciences and industries – and in particular industrial catalysis – have affected on many levels modern landscapes and societies.

After all, there are conferences and research programmes in fields such as biogeography, physical geography and geochemistry, and there is a well-established interest in the social sciences, including geography, in practices such as biomedicine, data science, and conservation. Yet there have been no systematic surveys of the relation between chemistry and the social sciences, and there are no major conferences or journals, although there is an emerging interest.

However, in this lecture I'm not going to propose that such a field should be brought into existence. Rather, I argue that there are already a series of connections between chemistry and geography, some of which are widely recognised, such as the environmental geography of

pollution and toxicity for example, while others are not, and remain remarkably absent.

How might we conceive of chemical geography then, perhaps not as a field, but rather as a set of connections and problems that have continued to multiply the relations between chemistry and the social sciences that have always existed, yet are seldom acknowledged?

From the perspective of UniSysCat the input from geography can help to address also reverse questions: How can the concept of chemical geography be used to discuss the societal role of chemistry and catalysis research?

Prof. Dr. Andrew Barry is Professor of Human Geography at University College London and is currently teaching on the Science and Technology Studies programme at Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main. He studied Chemistry and the History and Philosophy of Science at Cambridge University before becoming a social theorist and geographer. He is currently working on two books titled *Chemical Geography* and *Critical Evidence*.").

<https://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/people/academic-staff/andrew-barry>

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