



## Elements of a Chemical Geography

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This paper starts from two propositions. One is that chemistry and chemicals have been surprisingly marginal to the concerns of geographers. Biogeography and physical geography exist, of course, but there is no field of chemical geography. And when human geographers have come to consider the realm of the non or more-than-human they have tended to dwell on nonhuman life, or on the lively materiality of the material world, but not on its chemical composition or activity. My second proposition is that chemistry has nonetheless come to be fundamental to dominant ways in which collective and individual life is both imagined and transformed. For individuals, industries and governments, chemicals and chemistry simultaneously offer new solutions, while also generating new threats and inequalities. In these circumstances, the production and movement of specific chemicals has been both promoted and restricted, and measurements of isotopic concentrations have come to define the advent of the Anthropocene. Earlier concerns with the natural distribution of elements in the earth have become displaced, I contend, by a more pervasive preoccupation with the problem of how to manage the distribution and activity of chemical substances. The proposal for a chemical geography is a response to this situation.

