

Preface

Syngas conversion to fuels and chemicals

This issue is devoted to recent research in the conversion of synthesis gas to higher value fuels and chemicals. The papers published here were first presented at the 217th ACS National Meeting in Anaheim, CA, 21–25 March 1999 in a symposium devoted to this subject. Syngas conversion is receiving increased attention as the result of two factors: more favorable long term economic incentives for the conversion of natural gas and coal resources to liquid fuels and chemicals, and new technologies and catalysts that are available for these processes.

Although the conversion of syngas to fuels and chemicals has been practised in the past, new research on catalysts, reactor design, and processes continues to drive the costs of these processes down to levels that are attractive. Reports of new pilot plants, new chemical synthesis routes, and large scale feasibility studies combine to suggest the growing importance of research in this area.

The papers presented here cover a wide range of topics — from next generation Fischer–Tropsch catalysis to novel processes for chemicals such as acetic acid. It is our hope that these papers will provide key information on how best to convert syngas to higher

value products and stimulate new thinking in this increasingly important area. Participants concluded that the growth and competitive advantage of this industry depend upon individual and collaborative efforts of industry, government, and academe to improve the nation's R&D enterprise.

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