

Introduction

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The passing of Fredrik Barth marked the end of an era in anthropology. Nevertheless, his contributions also promise new beginnings. As his students and colleagues, we felt nothing could honor our debts to him more than an intellectual effort that brings attention to his relevance to anthropology today, rather than simply celebrating his legacy. This volume attempts to do that by offering chapters that expand on his work, sometimes argue with it, but always honor its humanist approach. In the process, the book may also serve as a summary of some of his main themes, and it may illustrate how much we owe him intellectually, but our main goal is neither intellectual biography nor commemoration. It is instead to pass on Barth's humanistic tradition of knowledge, so it can live and evolve.¹

Such a process of continuous intellectual evolution characterized Barth's own career as well. In the late 1970s, when Robert attended his graduate seminar at Johns Hopkins, Barth was already highly celebrated. This was above all because of his introductory essay in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969), which had appeared a decade earlier. Though Barth repeatedly said that he was not an expert on ethnicity, this essay fundamentally shifted the way people conceptualize ethnicity—from “cultural stuff” to the boundaries actors set out to maintain. However, instead of dwelling on his fame or reiterating his earlier ideas, it was clear that Barth at that time was wrestling with new issues, especially with the problem of how to understand a person as both a potentially creative individual and as a product of broader social processes. In retrospect, the period marked a fruitful point in his career as he extended his thinking about how social forms can be generated from a primary focus on individual transactions to a new concern with how ideas can come to be shared and passed down through what he called traditions of knowledge.

Barth's next monograph thus moved not only to a brand-new field site, but also to a new interest in rituals and symbolic systems. *Ritual and Knowledge among the Baktaman of New Guinea* (1975) marked the beginning of what was to become his brand of the anthropology of knowledge. In the concluding essay

of his edited volume *Scale and Social Organization* (1978), Barth wrote, “What is required is a truly dynamic and empirically valid model of the entire process of cultural transmission and behavioral enactment, capable of showing how encounters both reflect and generate culture” (Barth 1978: 272). This concern with the relationship between individual behaviors and the shared culture they both make and are part of was one of the central theoretical concerns of Barth throughout his career.

Almost two decades later, when Keping attended his graduate classes at Boston University, Barth had already published his final major monograph, *Balinese Worlds* (1993), in which he most clearly established his position on those issues. By the time Keping was working with him, Barth’s teaching focused more on the central importance of methodology than anything else. He taught the seminar on anthropological methods each year, and on alternate years he would teach a seminar on ethnicity or anthropology of knowledge. Even in those classes, however, methods—how one collects the data and what constitutes the material for analysis—were always the starting point of his discussion. In a way, theory and methodology were the same things for him. His methodological “naturalism” and insistence on the “worm’s eye view” about “real people doing real things” left a deep mark on all the students who were in his classroom in those years. His anthropology was humanistic in the broadest sense, since it requires us to consider how we behave as true humans, in the fullest and most complex sense of the term. One of the lessons all of us learned from him is that human social life is neither simply the product of individual calculations or of cultural categories; instead “it happens among people” at particular places and times.²

Even if we distinguish an “early Barth” from a “later Barth,” there is a continued concern with working through the implications of human agency that matured over the course of a long career. From his thesis-turned-book *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans* (1959a) to *Balinese Worlds* (1993), Barth’s theoretical attention was always focused on how individuals thought and planned their ways through political systems and social organizations that seemed to have set rigid roles for them. His orientation is significantly different from the kind of anthropology that treats the person as the product of his or her social structure and/or culture. Nor is agency ever the product of an isolated and autonomous individual. Instead, Barth’s is an actor-centered perspective that emphasizes actions based on existing knowledge and interactions situated in the local context. Though Barth was not interested in starting a new school of theory—he has never even given his theory a name—by emphasizing a *transactionalist* and *generative* model, he steadfastly improved and perfected his understanding of agency.

Barth’s concern with individuals, agency, and generative models foresees developments that would follow later in anthropology. This introduction and the chapters that follow trace at least four themes that Barth’s works bring to contemporary theory. First, Barth’s work on traditions of knowledge and people

working through their networks and interactions with others resonates with the “ontological turns” in contemporary anthropology by challenging the conventional ways culture or society is conceptualized. It insists that we begin with real people in their environments, and not from abstracted concepts of society or culture. Second, a burgeoning anthropology of ethics and values can benefit from Barth’s discussion on values that guide transactions and the dialectic relations between moral codes and moral actions. Third, though much of Barth’s work has been on societies with a weak state presence, his interest in political leadership, power, and authority sheds light on classical and contemporary questions in political anthropology. He has sometimes been criticized for failing to deal adequately with the state, but many of the chapters that follow show how fruitfully his work can be applied to such problems as well. Fourth, Barth has always given variation central importance in his writings, and this resonates with much of later anthropology’s debates on multiculturalism and pluralism. In many senses, Barth was to develop an anthropology that we can build on today.

Traditions of Knowledge and Other Ontological Turns

One of the ways in which Barth’s work continues to inspire us today is the dissident relationship he always had to the Durkheimian mainstream in anthropology and sociology. Emile Durkheim had been the great champion of “society” as the proper unit of analysis. For him, this society was always greater than the sum of its individual parts and exerted a powerful influence over what anyone could do or think. As Durkheim wrote in *The Division of Labor in Society*, “The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinate system which has its own life; one may call it the *collective or common conscience*” (Durkheim 2013: 173). In this sentence we can see both the omnipotent “society” and the overbearing “culture” that characterized a great deal of twentieth-century anthropology.

Barth’s intellectual lineage, which one might trace back from Edmund Leach to Bronislaw Malinowski, ran counter to the most extreme versions of that Durkheimian tradition (Kuper 2014). It left far more room for conflict (e.g., Gluckman 1955) and change (e.g., Leach 1973) than the stronger Durkheimian models of culture and society. Nevertheless, Barth’s predecessors never fully succeeded in leaving behind a fundamentally Durkheimian anthropology or the functionalist assumptions that accompanied it. Thus, when Barth began his career in the 1950s, “culture” and “society” were perhaps at their height as taken-for-granted ways of understanding people’s lived worlds. Almost from the beginning we can see him struggling, more radically than most of his teachers and colleagues, for some kind of alternative that would allow room for human agency.

Much of the first two decades of his work was dedicated to finding a space for creative individual thought and action that let people be more than autom-

ata controlled by a larger culture or society. Examples discussed in the chapters that follow include the choice of some nomadic Basseri to become sedentary (Barth 1961, discussed by Thomas Barfield in chapter 5) and of course his famous introduction to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Barth 1969, discussed in chapters 9 and 10, among others). In these and other early works, Barth pioneered his concepts of transaction and process. He highlighted the individual as a strategic thinker and thus built “society” up from its many transactions, rather than seeing decisions simply as the reflex of social position and cultural inclination. This focus on the individual as a counterweight to an overpowering concept of society, however, left Barth open to being dismissed as a methodological individualist.

Had his career ended in 1969, it might make sense to discuss whether this critique was an adequate response to his approach. His continued work over the decades that followed, however, makes clear that his transactionalism cannot be reduced to a sort of early rational choice theory (discussed further in the following section). When Robert studied with him in the late 1970s, it was already quite clear that much of Barth’s theoretical labor was going into the problem of how to think through the dynamic interactions between individuals and groups in some way that would not be reductive. The results appear especially in his works on New Guinea and Bali, the last of his major ethnographic studies (Barth 1987, 1990, 1993). Here we see a focus less on the individual decision-maker and more on traditions of knowledge.

This was the topic of his 2000 Sidney W. Mintz Lecture, where he began by explaining how his understanding of traditions of knowledge differed from and offered advantages over the concept of culture as used by someone like Clifford Geertz:

Knowledge provides people with materials for reflection and premises for action, whereas “culture” too readily comes to embrace also those reflections and those actions. Furthermore, actions become knowledge to others only after the fact. Thus the concept of “knowledge” situates its items in a particular and unequivocal way relative to events, actions, and social relationships.

Knowledge is distributed in a population, while culture makes us think in terms of diffuse sharing. Our scrutiny is directed to the distributions of knowledge—its presence or absence in particular persons—and the processes affecting these distributions can become the objects of study. (Barth 2002: 1)

This view led toward an understanding of people as fundamentally diverse rather than culturally alike, because traditions of knowledge do not flow evenly over the ethnographic landscape. It also pushed us to think of knowledge as something that moves along varied networks, that changes in the process of transmission, and that has its roots in action. Barth takes pains to show, in all his late work, that he is trying to provide an alternative to the Durkheimian inheritance of static concepts like culture and social structure.

We thus see Barth's work in part as a push to break through the limits of an earlier anthropology. While he did this very much in his own way, it should be no surprise that his work often resonates with (and indeed generally pre-dates) other traditions of knowledge in anthropology that were also trying to break new conceptual ground. Unni Wikan, in chapter 1, for example, includes some discussion of Barth's reactions to postmodernism. He undoubtedly recognized a kindred spirit in some postmodern writing, for instance when she quotes him as saying that "in that sense the whole gang of Bergen folks in the 1960s was part of such a postmodern hubbub without any of us knowing it; we played with some ways of thinking that now can be given that sobriquet." In his influential article "The Guru and the Conjuror" (discussed at some length by Michael Herzfeld in chapter 2 and Charles Lindholm in chapter 7), to cite another example, he points out similarities to Renato Rosaldo's postmodernism, while also arguing that it is not enough simply to rest on the assertion that life is polyvocalic (Barth 1990: 651).

Equally striking are the reverberations with what has recently been called the "ontological turn" in anthropology, especially with those theorists most concerned with moving away from the Durkheimian legacy and reconceptualizing society and culture. Barth's conception of traditions of knowledge, with their networks and transactions, is not identical to Bruno Latour's discussion of assemblages and actor-networks, but one can see that both scholars are setting themselves up in opposition to conventional notions of culture and society, and both are looking to related alternatives that center on interacting networks of people and their worlds. As Gunnar Haaland points out in chapter 6, even "large-scale society . . . takes place between people" in Barth's understanding (Barth 1978: 256).

Had Barth been more prone to grand pronouncements, it would not be difficult to imagine him saying something quite like Latour's "The very notion of culture is an artifact. . . . Cultures—different or universal—do not exist" (Latour 1993: 104). There is no doubt that Barth was aware of this work: when Keping took his course on the anthropology of knowledge, one of the assigned readings was Latour and Woolgar's *Laboratory Life* (1986). One of our hopes with this volume is that it might encourage a deeper dialogue about what an alternative anthropology will come to look like, perhaps as suggested by some of the chapters that follow. Barth's ideas continue to provide us with an important trove of conceptual possibility.

Generating an Anthropology of Values

Graduate students under pressure to study for their comprehensive examinations often reduce the key thinkers of anthropology to a simple shorthand: Franz Boas the historical particularist, Malinowski the psychological functionalist,

Geertz the theorist of interpretation. For Barth, as we mentioned above, the sobriquet is usually “methodological individualist,” meaning someone who stresses above all the “rational” and strategic decisions of autonomous individuals.

All of these intellectual shortcuts draw on real features of the work of these thinkers, but of course none of them do justice to the complexity of their ideas. The problem seems especially egregious for Barth, who we think never imagined himself in those terms, and whose progression as a thinker shows him working systematically against such a view of what people are. This side of Barth’s opus is best understood as an early attempt in anthropology to think seriously about the problem of agency. As Chee-Beng Tan discusses in chapter 10, on the history of Barth’s thought, Barth’s strongest early influences in anthropology were probably Raymond Firth and certainly Edmund Leach. Both men helped lead the move away from the very muscular functionalism of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown in order to conceptualize problems of change and conflict. Barth’s early work was more radical than theirs in a sense: if we were not going to allow some abstracted “social structure” to explain everything, then individual agency would have to be taken more seriously. He thus never began with methodological individualism as a philosophical position or a theory of human nature. Instead, he was searching for alternatives to the conceptions of an all-powerful social structure, which dominated the anthropology of the 1940s and 1950s. Even his dalliance with game theory is framed primarily as a critique of “a Durkheimian conception of mechanical solidarity” (Barth 1959b: 5). Real people for Barth were always the core of the analysis and could never be reduced to mere puppets of a social structure. Coming from such a position, it is natural that he would be attracted to a theoretical position that left space for people to strategize, to choose, and to think. As Tan points out in chapter 10, the same was true for Pierre Bourdieu, writing at roughly the same time and responding to many of the same intellectual problems, even though their solutions are not entirely the same.

Barth’s work in the 1970s and beyond helped clarify the ways in which he differed from methodological individualism. For him, the answer to an overly powerful Durkheimian concept of society was not the autonomous individual, but instead the processes through which shared or differing values could be generated and regenerated in humans’ interactions with each other and their environment. By the time of his last major ethnographic work, *Balinese Worlds* (1993), this had matured into an extended discussion of multiple and partly competing “traditions of knowledge,” which are passed down over time, but which also change in the process. There is still ample room for agency, but this is emphatically not a world of autonomous rational choosers.

Barth’s approach here can be expanded in a number of fruitful directions that lead us, more or less, to some of the issues currently being discussed as a new anthropology of ethics. Much of that recent literature has also been phrased as an attack on Durkheim and then struggles with how to find room for agency. As Didier Fassin phrases the problem in a useful quick review:

Do human beings act morally because they obey socially defined rules and norms as the result of a routine of inculcated behaviors, or an embodied fear of sanction, or perhaps both? Conversely, do they act morally because they decide to do so as a consequence of a rational evaluation, or transformative endeavor, or inseparably both? (Fassin 2014: 429)

Durkheim is generally associated with the first view, that there are socially defined rules and norms; most of the current anthropologists of the topic are searching for alternatives.

Ethics are one sort of values, and it is thus not difficult to see that Barth and the anthropologists of ethics share a sense of problem, because Barth had a great deal to say about values. In chapter 6, Gunnar Haaland gives one example of how Barth's thinking about the generation of values can be extended, in this case concerning issues of trust. In keeping with the call for an "ordinary ethics" (e.g., Das 2007) in some of the recent anthropology of ethics, Haaland draws especially on Barth's insistence that we focus on behavior and on the unspoken acts as much as the spoken ones. This leads him to identify two quite different traditions of knowledge, which offer very different bases for an ethic of trust. The first is highly local, experience-near, and concerned above all with solidarity rooted in the mother-child complex. The second, and historically more recent in the Darfur region, is much wider-scale and rooted instead in a universalizing idea of Allah. As he shows, these differences have translated tragically into competing political movements in the decades since Barth was there. Part of the power of this analysis is the recognition that scale can make an enormous difference in the social consequences of traditions of knowledge, which Barth explored in his edited book *Scale and Social Organization* (1978). We thus see two very different ways of generating an ethic of trust out of lived experience, one relying on intimate experience at small scales, and the other on nation-spanning forms of literacy and formal institutions to shape and define orthodoxy.

In chapter 8, Joel Robbins also tackles the problem of the generation of values. Like Tan, he focuses our attention on some of the evolution in Barth's thinking about the problem. Like Haaland, Barfield, and Lindholm, Robbins bases his contribution on fieldwork carried out not far from one of Barth's many sites, but somewhat more recently. Most of those other chapters use the changes since Barth's fieldwork to pose questions about how far we can generalize Barth's work across places and times. Robbins, however, is more concerned with the broad theoretical issue of how we can understand values. He points to a conundrum already apparent in Barth's work on New Guinea: If values are generated by transaction, then how can the Baktaman generate their value of secrecy? Secrecy, after all, is a refusal to transact.

Robbins's answer is that secrecy has to be performed and enacted in order to be secret and to show the value of secrecy. In that sense, his argument is not far from the parts of Herzfeld's chapter that address secrecy among master artisans in Crete (see chapter 2). His goals, however, are different. Robbins is con-

cerned to show the utility of a distinction between what he calls the production of values and the realization of values—between creating value and enacting it. By showing how both aspects of value are necessary, he is trying to move beyond Barth's emphasis on the production side, which led to the puzzle of Baktaman secrecy. Barth's uneasiness with the "realization" approach to values may have stemmed from his distrust of anything that might reinforce the idea of a disembodied and all-powerful idea of culture, but Robbins is suggesting that a more balanced approach can help us solve some difficult problems.

Much of the current thinking about an anthropology of ethics proposes a turn from "Kantian reason to Aristotelian activity," as Michael Lambek phrased it (2010: 13). That is, these anthropologists are now less concerned with explicit moral codes than with the ways that ethics is embedded in daily life. Barth has not been an especially direct influence on this movement, and yet the chapters by Haaland and Robbins show how much he anticipated some of these developments and how much his thinking about values (of trust or secrecy, for example) still remains a potential source of inspiration today.

Power, Authority, and the State

How is political power generated? How do forms of authority differ from one another? Barth was concerned with political power and various forms of authority throughout his career. He paid particular attention to local political organization based on kinship networks. In his *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans* (1959a), he compared political power between the saints and landowners, each relying on different but intertwined constructions of legitimacy. Though sometimes criticized for lack of attention to the issue of class differences (e.g., Asad 1972), Barth's discussion of political organization builds on native categories and resonates with much of today's anthropology.

The apex of Barth's theory on authority comes with the article "The Guru and the Conjuror" (Barth 1990). The guru and the conjurer represent two paths of knowledge transmission and two different forms of authority. The guru (in the Balinese case) transmits knowledge overtly through verbal and textual means, whereas the conjurer (in the case of the Baktaman) reproduces knowledge by maintaining secrecy. While one generates authority by demonstrating knowledge, the other gains authority by demonstrating how much the others do not know. Though Barth is often regarded as a Weberian, Barth's types of authorities are different from Max Weber's ideal types because they are "native categories" and therefore context-specific. The same goes for Barth's concept of power, which is different from Michel Foucault's power that is everywhere the same. In chapter 7, Lindholm uses this Barthian logic and sketches out two indigenous forms of authority in Swat: the khan and the Sufi saint, which are "based on opposing premises, modes of inculcation, and styles of performance." The khan gains influence over his co-equals through his "natural" expression of

his manly virtues. The saint, on the other hand, gains authority through emptying himself in submission to a spiritual master. Lindholm argues that Sufis can sometimes gain power over khans, but only at the cost of their own sanctity.

Most of the peoples and groups Barth worked with lived in a stateless society or a society in which the state had a weak presence (with important exceptions like Sohar and Bali). Whether Barth's transactional model was useful in studying societies where the state has a strong presence was sometimes raised as a question. Some of the chapters in this volume address this issue. For instance, in chapter 5, Barfield revisits Barth's work on the Basseri, *Nomads of South Persia* (Barth 1961). Though the Basseri fell increasingly under the influence of the Iranian government and market economy in comparison to the time of Barth's fieldwork, Barfield concludes, "After more than fifty-five years, *Nomads of South Persia* still stands the test of time in spite of the many monographs about Iranian pastoralism that came in its wake." This is not because the state is unimportant in what happened, but because Barth's approach gives us an avenue to understand the state's role.

We suggest that there is potential in his transactional model to deal with societies with strong state presences. On the one hand, one-sided transactions are still transactions. In chapter 9, on the paradigm shifts in Chinese ethnology, Ke Fan illustrates the role of the state in solidifying categories and in influencing the ways academics study *minzu* ("ethnic" or "national") groups. Though it seems that there is little room for the ethnologists to talk back to the state, there is some room for agency when new theories such as Barth's ideas about ethnic groups and boundaries were introduced to Chinese academics. On the other hand, in some cases the state can dominate or even monopolize the terms of transaction. In Keping Wu's chapter about a mountainous area on China's periphery (see chapter 4), the state has been an increasingly powerful actor, affecting the transactions among other actors as well. In this actor-centered view, the state participates in the local transactions and engages in the boundary-making processes. Wu shows how such transactions have led to increased boundary-making, almost entirely as an unintended consequence. This only becomes sensible when we see how people are interacting locally with the state, its infrastructure projects, and each other. Herzfeld's chapter also deals with a strong state, especially where the Thai government shows its strong hand in cultural heritage narratives and management (see chapter 2). However, even in this case, state ideology is never a fully successful project. Barth's transactional model, with its room for individual agency, illuminates the intricate processes in which state interacts with society.

The Problems of Variation, Group Formation, and Pluralism

How do we live with those who are truly different from us? This is how people often phrase the problems of pluralism, which once again dominate news head-

lines around the world. The post-Enlightenment solution of privatizing our differences while displaying only our “universal” characteristics in the public sphere (seen most recently in headlines about wearing headscarves in France, performing circumcisions in Iceland, or speaking Spanish in American public spaces) is no longer providing much comfort. This is because another modern invention continues to expose that façade: the nation-state, with its conflation of culture, ethnic origins, and political structures.

Barth wrote directly about such things primarily in his position as a public intellectual, rather than in his academic writing. Nonetheless, we could see his entire career as a process of continued wrestling with underlying theoretical and moral issues of pluralism. As one of the pioneers in trying to return some sense of agency to anthropology, he naturally became very concerned with the process of group formation, which always includes the possibility for intolerance. The existence and boundaries of groups had been taken for granted in much earlier anthropology, but Barth’s move toward an emphasis on generative models made the process suddenly problematic and interesting. For that reason, his work brought an improvement in how we can think about the related policy issues.

This had two important consequences for anthropology. The first, of course, was his work on ethnic boundaries as something produced through generative contact with others, rather than being natural and simply inherited. The key idea generalizes to any kind of group—it is often more fruitful to see the group as something created by interactions at its edges, he suggests, rather than the expression of some shared essence. Few works in the social sciences have had as much impact as Barth’s 1969 *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* volume (which has over thirteen thousand citations as of this writing), and few have such clear lessons for policy makers. Failure to appreciate the dynamics of group formation that Barth clarified helps explain numerous policy problems. In this volume, evidence of those includes chapter 6, where Haaland’s final few pages discuss some of the relation of political violence in the Sudan to conflicts over essentializing understandings of Islam (that is, seeing group formation as coming from a religious core rather than from boundary construction) and ultimately of the nature of group trust. In chapter 4, Wu, in a very different context, also shows how the government’s essentializing ethnic categories have brought completely unintended consequences to seemingly unrelated economic development policies. Thus, constructing roads, resettling people in new villages, and even building basketball courts have hardened ethnic boundaries and increased group tensions, compared to the “plastic pluralism” she saw there in the past.

The second consequence stems more clearly from Barth’s later work, where he often focused on the problem of variation. After all, if groups are constructed, the construction materials are the myriad differences that make each person unique, out of which we can manufacture both similarities and differences. His work in Bali focused especially on the enormous variation that had

already attracted significant anthropological attention, although he offered a new kind of explanation. The exquisite ritual variety that spread across tiny neighboring groups in New Guinea (including the people Robbins discusses in chapter 8), however, seemed more surprising. This was especially true because these groups shared almost entirely identical material lives and languages.

If we begin from Barth's theoretical standpoint, however, the variation no longer seems so astonishing. For him, there is nothing automatic about sharing culture or practice. Sharing only comes about because knowledge (in a broad sense that includes practice) can be reproduced over space and time. Yet the very acts of reproduction, whether through socialization or schools or ritual performances, create the possibility of change. Barth thus started at almost the opposite place from Geertz in the analysis of Balinese variation. Instead of assuming that cultural similarity is a given and the high degrees of internal variation are thus puzzling, as Geertz did in his classic work on Bali (e.g., Geertz 1959), Barth began with the understanding that change and variation are natural and that our hardest job would be to explain the continuities instead of assuming them. From this point of view, we can see the continuity in Barth's sense of problem throughout his career, with the earlier work focusing more on how groups can be created out of people's varying understandings, and the later (e.g., Barth 1987, 1993) seeking to illuminate the variation itself and to show more flexible forms of organizing shared life than just ethnic identity—especially in his concept of traditions of knowledge.

In chapter 2, Herzfeld shows one way in which these lines of thought can be extended. In a broadly comparative study that moves between the Mediterranean and Southeast Asia, he draws inspiration from both strands of Barth's thought. On the one hand, he works out of Barth's influential article on two very different modes of institutionalizing knowledge and their social consequences—the guru and the conjuror (Barth 1990). These show how we can begin to make sense of broad lines of non-ethnic variation that extend across social and national boundaries; for Herzfeld, this approach offers an alternative to what he calls methodological nationalism (following Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). On the other hand, Herzfeld extends Barth's thinking in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969) to focus explicitly on how these processes help us to see how we can take a new approach to some idea of culture areas freed from the conceptual bonds of the nation-state.

In chapter 3, Robert P. Weller extends Barth's work on variation in a different direction. His cases take place within a single small region of China but still show wide variability, which he explains primarily as stemming from different ways of thinking about time and about how knowledge can flow across it. He identifies three main lines of variation (which he calls continuous, folded, and emergent time), each of which frames different possibilities for how groups form and relate to each other. Conflicts and interactions among these frames are leading to changes from new senses of place to identity claims with implications for the relations between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland.

Toward a Broader View of Barth

The essays collected here touch on a great deal of Barth's intellectual legacy as it continues to shape our field: specific studies that shaped thinking on topics ranging from nomadic and sedentary agricultural economies (chapters 5 and 6) to ritual secrecy (chapter 8); essays that continue to be touchstones for new thinking, from *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (chapters 2, 9, and 10) to more recent work like "The Guru and the Conjurer" (chapters 2 and 7) or *Cosmologies in the Making* (chapters 3 and 8); and broad theoretical problems that continue to challenge us (all the chapters, as we have been discussing). Nevertheless, Barth's lasting influence extends even farther. In this final section, we want to make quick mention of three areas that do not always receive extensive discussion in the chapters that follow or in the academic literature, but that we feel are just as important a part of his legacy. These include his understanding of an appropriate anthropological method, his commitment to public anthropology, and his lasting contributions as teacher.

Only our bookend essays by Unni Wikan and Ulf Hannerz begin to do justice to these issues.³ In chapter 1, Wikan emphasizes how much Barth felt that theory and method in anthropology were inextricable. For him, as she says, theory could only grow from field experience. It is not so much that he disapproved of armchair theorizing. Rather, he simply considered it impossible, at least for him. He was interested, above all, in how people interacted with each other as people. He thus frowned on reliance on key informants, whose overuse encouraged a kind of disembodied and abstracted anthropology.

Barth was always full of fieldwork advice, although he never wrote the text on methodology that he had long contemplated. Robert remembers Barth telling him that the first job is to learn everyone's name—not their official name, but whatever everyone actually calls them. And at the same, one should learn all the place names, again not the ones on the map, but the ones people actually use. Otherwise, he explained, you cannot understand half of what people are saying to each other. It seemed like common sense, but only after he said it. In a way, it was absolutely typical of Barth, showing his interest in how people lived and dealt with each other, and not just with an anthropologist. It was, above all, a humanistic anthropology.

By the time Keping took his methodology course in the early 2000s, Barth was still not given to grand abstraction, but rather to stories showing how specific ideas grew out of unique experiences in the field. The method was to accept people as people (as Wikan says), rather than types. He thus had little patience for methods designed to reduce the complexity of daily life, whether those were statistical summaries or pile sorts. In some ways, perhaps *Balinese Worlds* can stand in for the methodology book he never wrote or at least give us some idea of where he would have headed. Even for a very difficult topic like Balinese sorcery, for example, he emphasized the importance of starting from

open-ended engagement with people he had good relationships with and only then trying to build some model of what was going on (Barth 1993, 249). Theory and method, for Barth, are one.

Bringing anthropology beyond the academy is the second broad area of Barth's work that is underrecognized in discussions of his contributions to anthropology, as both Wikan and Hannerz make clear. In part, this took the form of extensive consulting on applied projects, where Barth's enormous field experience must have provided a significant advantage in trying to make sense of local data quickly, as such projects almost always demand. Some of his consulting work took place in areas where we already know his academic work well (like the New Guinea gold mine mentioned in chapter 8, with Barth's role discussed at more length in chapter 1). Much, however, took place in areas that led to very few or no academic publications. He consulted extensively in Southwest China, for instance, toward the end of his career but published on it only in Norwegian. Wikan describes his long-term work on child health in Bhutan, which may have been his most lasting and important such contribution. Barth was equally committed to bringing anthropology to a broader public. He did this more in Norwegian than in English (as Wikan says, he was always a Norwegian first). This included numerous television appearances and several books in Norwegian, including a policy-directed book on Afghanistan and the Taliban (as Hannerz discusses), as well as a memoir.

Third, Hannerz reminds us of Barth the editor. His first edited book concerned entrepreneurship in Northern Norway (Barth 1963)—a classic topic for someone interested in human agency. Hannerz points out that editing a book is itself the act of an entrepreneur, and we can see this very clearly in Barth's three edited books, where he is using the books to help build a Scandinavian anthropology and an anthropology of Scandinavia. Perhaps more importantly, Barth is also hoping to construct new ways of thinking about problems—entrepreneurship itself in the first, and then ethnicity and scale in the two that followed. We can see Barth as entrepreneur as well in the way he constructed an anthropology program at Bergen.

Finally, although not all of the contributors to this book knew Barth personally, he was teacher or colleague (or both) for many of us. It is no surprise that Wikan begins her reminiscence about Barth with a description of him in the classroom. None of the other chapters discuss Barth in this sense, but all of us who knew him found him quietly inspirational, both in and beyond the classroom. When Robert first knew him, he was already so established and successful that all the graduate students (and all of them flocked to his class, of course) expected him to be resting on his laurels. Nothing could be further from the truth, however. He was actively thinking about how to maintain an emphasis on people's agency through transactions while still recognizing the force of what is shared. In retrospect, we had the privilege of hearing him think out loud as he was moving toward the new ideas that would shape his late

work, culminating in *Balinese Worlds*. His frequent stints as visiting professor meant that his influence as teacher extended far beyond the sizable impact he had on Norwegian anthropology.

His humility was as remarkable as his knowledge and his ability to communicate. He would not hesitate to ask students for advice on the next project he was thinking about (although he certainly felt no compunction to follow that advice). Even the fact that he consistently pushed his theoretical positions forward throughout his entire career showed a kind of intellectual humility—he was never satisfied with his earlier positions, no matter how influential they became. It is not just the attitude of a proper southern Norwegian (as Wikan describes it); it is the attitude of a genuine scholar, one who was never satisfied but continued to question throughout his life.

For many of us collected here, Barth was a model of how to do fieldwork, how to craft theory, how to teach, and how to be a human being. That is why this volume does not attempt simply to celebrate his life and accomplishments, but to extend them and to try to push even further at the frontiers of anthropology. Such an effort, we feel, honors his memory better than just memorialization.

We have organized the chapters that follow into three broad sections (and alphabetically within each group). We begin with Wikan's chapter, which approaches Barth in a personal way that no one else could. It builds on her intimate knowledge of him in many contexts, from teacher to intellectual collaborator to husband. The next three (Herzfeld, Weller, and Wu) deal with parts of the world on which Barth never published (at least not in English). Each chapter takes inspiration from parts of Barth's oeuvre but does not hesitate to push the ideas in new directions. The next set of chapters (Barfield, Haaland, Lindholm, and Robbins) is based on more recent studies of areas in which Barth's work was a benchmark. This lets those authors address some important issues that come up in the work of almost any influential pioneer: how much can the results generalize to other similar groups or to later times? Each of these essays makes clear that Barth's legacy in the field has sometimes led people to be too quick to read his work as broad general claims, rather than as the empirically grounded studies that he intended. These are followed by two chapters that address Barth's work in a more general way, including Fan's essay on how Barth's approach is causing a rethinking of how ethnicity should be conceptualized in China, and Tan's review of Barth's work, especially as it evolved over time. The book concludes with an afterword by Ulf Hannerz, who draws on Barth's oeuvre and on personal experience to show him as a "rooted cosmopolitan" and cultural broker.

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Notes

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2. "It Happens among People," from which we take the title of this book, is also the Norwegian title of Barth's currently unpublished memoir, discussed in chapter 1.
3. See also Eriksen's very useful biography (Eriksen 2015).

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