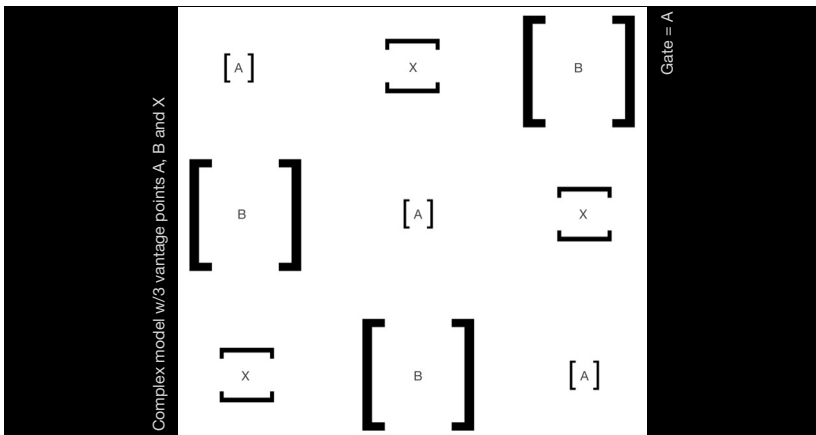




For a man careful *not* to engage with prognostics, predictions or forecasts, the fieldworks and ideas of Prof. Barth—if considered as brushstrokes on a [terrestrial](#) canvas—anticipated many of the dimensions later drawn out from fieldworks around the world by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing. Not the idea-base.

But the *world* that he was and she still is studying. Perhaps students driven by the call to *know the world as it is*—as post/industrial natural historians—will necessarily find similar things. Or, that what Prof. Barth found in his fieldworks reflected conditions at an earlier stage than Prof. Tsing’s.

However, for reasons already indicated, I became interested in how the trail left by inquiries as theirs also may be a *generative* one. In a way obliquely related to how our current knowledge of the world is generated from the trail of our trolling the internet. Returning to the immersive/active models.



The logic whereby a step-by-step approach (A)—in which tasks and occasions relate to *contingencies* before necessity—can come out as a plan (B), features a variant of the points I have made earlier, in this series, on the count and the account: the leap and relation (X) transforming A and B.

Complexity added to elementary simplicity yields terms that perhaps could be called *simplex*. If, for instance, we consider *intention* as an X-factor mediating between stepwise *contingencies* and a *plan*, the very idea of *mediation* can be considered as *negotiation* transposed to a *model*.

Which in turn would suggest that there is more in common between [Barth/Tsing](#) and [Adorno/Benjamin](#)—the concept of *negative dialectics* of the latter suggesting *mediations* as the alternative to synthesis—than Marxist/Positivist debates of the 1970s, in practice, appeared to allow for.

We may conceive *intention* as a product of *mediations* between *steps* and a *plan*—i.e., where steps come *before* the plan—where the intention starts by reflecting movements within what Kant called *categories of understanding*, and the stepwise *surfacing* of *synthetic a priori* that *feeds* a growing stock.

During my visits at Rødkleivfaret 16—Prof. Barth's residence by Lillevann—I remember him underscoring the sense of freedom and empowerment he felt when working out his *ethnography* from his field-record in *writing*. Contrary to other anthropologists in his circle. He did not feel the weight.

He was driven by the notion that the outcomes of ethnographic authorship were *multiple*. He was a man of academic dignity—maybe even honour—but he could at the same time be devastatingly critical about his own work. Which, of course, also reflects on the kind of relationship we developed.

Our relationship started with a curt meeting in his large office at the Museum of Cultural History—in Oslo downtown: he basically told me I was wasting our time. During my fieldwork, however, our correspondence grew. As I came back he phoned me for regular conversations. Then at his home.

When my work was finally completed he offered me a slice of toasted bread with blue cheese. As a fruit of many years of labour this final act carried a certain weight. But more importantly to our topic here, it was part of the *multiple mediations* in which he had handed over his fund of *experience*.

And that is the point: though I do not think he had expectations for me to extend his work by linear continuation, I had *this* sense of obligations for many years to come. Not thinking about the obvious: when you take over experience, as memories that are not your own, you have to *earn* them.

We are tied to the *contingencies* of our own lives, which is why the paths of knowledge reception is multiple, because it is settled in 3 moments, upon: **1)** reception [thought]; **2)** labour [extension]; **3)** interception of the substance—the vectorial sum—which I am attempting at this time of my life. X-factor.