1 Benedict Anderson

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Benedict Anderson is the author of one of the most important concepts in political geography, that of nations being 'imagined communities'. Guggenheim Fellow and member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Anderson was born in Kunming, China in 1936. Brother of political theorist Perry Anderson and an Irish citizen whose father was an official with Imperial Maritime Customs, he grew up in California and Ireland before attending Cambridge University. Studying briefly under Eric Hobsbawm, Anderson graduated with a First Class degree in Classics in 1957. He moved to Cornell University in 1958 to pursue PhD research on Indonesia. At Cornell he was influenced by George Kahin, John Echols and Claire Holt (Anderson, 1999). In 1965 Indonesia's military leader Suharto foiled an alleged coup attempt by communist soldiers, purged the army, and killed hundreds of thousands of civilians. Working with two other graduate students, Anderson analysed Suharto's version of events, questioning their veracity. Their assessment reached the Indonesian military who in 1967 and 1968 invited Anderson to the country to persuade him of the errors in this monograph, then known as the 'Cornell Paper'. Failing to be convinced, Anderson was denounced by the Indonesian regime. Following formal publication of the original allegations (Anderson *et al.*, 1971), Indonesian authorities refused Anderson's visa applications, barring him from Indonesia for what became the duration of Suharto's regime. Anderson returned to Indonesia in 1999 following the dictator's death.

Anderson completed his PhD entitled *The Pemuda Revolution: Indonesian Politics, 1945–1946* in 1967 and taught in the Department of Government at Cornell University until retirement in 2002. Editor of the interdisciplinary journal *Indonesia* between 1966 and 1984, Anderson studied topics as diverse as Indonesia's government, politics and international relations (e.g. 1964), human rights (e.g. 1976), and its role in East Timor (e.g. 1980). As an expert on South East Asia, military conflicts between Cambodia, Vietnam and China in the late 1970s stimulated him to analyse the importance of, and political attraction to, nationalist politics. The result was *Imagined Communities – Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (1983, 1991) in which Anderson proposed the theory of 'imagined communities'. Major theoretical approaches, Anderson maintained, had largely ignored nationalism, merely accepting it as the way things are:

> **Nation, nationality, nationalism – all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyse. In contrast to the immense influence that nationalism has exerted on the modern world, plausible theory about it is conspicuously meagre.**
> **(Anderson, 1991: 3)**

Particularly culpable in this respect was Marxism, the relationship between it and nationalism being the subject of debate in *New Left Review* in the 1970s (e.g. Löwy, 1976; Debray, 1977). In this climate, Anderson (1991: 3; original emphasis) argued Marxist thought had not ignored nationalism; rather, 'nationalism has proved an

uncomfortable *anomaly* for Marxist theory and, precisely for that reason, has largely been elided, rather than confronted'. *Imagined Communities* was an effort to reconcile theories of Marxism and nationalism, and counter what Anderson envisaged as a skewed context for the assessment of nationalism, namely an almost wholly European focus to the detriment of examining South American 'Creole pioneers' of modern nationalist politics. This distortion, Anderson maintained, continues both within and outside the academy. From case studies of colonialism in Latin America and Indonesia, Anderson (1991: 6) proposed 'the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.

SPATIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Anderson's concept of nations being 'imagined communities' has become standard within books reviewing geographical thought (e.g. Massey and Jess, 1995; Crang, 1998; Cloke *et al.*, 2001). The contention that a nation is 'imagined' does not mean that a nation is false, unreal or to be distinguished from 'true' (unimagined) communities. Rather Anderson is proposing that a nation is constructed from popular processes through which residents share nationality in common:

> It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.
> (Anderson, 1991: 6; original emphasis)

This understanding both shapes and is shaped by political and cultural institutions as people 'imagine' they share general beliefs, attitudes and recognize a collective national populace as having similar opinions and sentiments to their own. Secondly,

> The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.
> (Anderson, 1991: 7; original emphasis)

To have one nation means there must be another nation against which self-definition can be constructed. Anderson is thus arguing for the social construction of nations as political entities that have a limited spatial and demographic extent, rather than organic, eternal entities. Further,

> It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm . . . nations dream of being free . . . The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.
> (Anderson, 1991: 7; original emphasis)

Anderson argues that the concept of the nation developed in the late eighteenth century as a societal structure to replace previous monarchical or religious orders. In this manner, a nation was a new way of conceptualizing state sovereignty and rule. This rule would be limited to a defined population and territory over which the state, in the name of nationality, could exercise power.

> Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much as to kill, as willing to die for such limited imaginings.
> (Anderson, 1991: 7; original emphasis)

Nations hold such power over imaginations, claims Anderson, that patriotic

calls to arms are understood as the duty of all national residents. Further, in war, national citizens are equal and class boundaries are eroded in the communal struggle for national survival and greatness.

Anderson's second key aspect of the development of nationalism is what he identifies as the role of 'Creole pioneers'. In both North and South America, those who fought for national independence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had the same ancestries, languages and traditions as the colonizing powers they opposed. Anderson (1991: 50) argues these 'Creole communities' developed nationalist politics *before* Europe, because as colonies they were largely self-administrating territorial units. Thus residents conceived of their belonging to a common and potentially sovereign community, a sentiment enhanced by provincial newspapers raising debate about intercontinental political and administrative relationships. Anderson stakes much of his thesis on 'print capitalism.' Drawing on Erich Auerbach and Walter Benjamin, Anderson argues that the standardization of national calendars, clocks and language was embodied in books and the publication of daily newspapers. This generated a sense of simultaneous national experiences for people as they became aware of events occurring in their own nation and nations abroad. Newspapers 'made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways' (Anderson, 1991: 36). Disparate occurrences were bound together as national experiences as people felt that everyone was reading the same thing and had equal access to information:

> the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation. The potential stretch of these communities was inherently limited, and, at the same time, bore none but the most fortuitous relationship to existing political boundaries (which were, on the whole, the highwater marks of dynastic expansionisms).
> (Anderson, 1991: 46)

The worldwide impact of *Imagined Communities* across academic disciplines led to a revised edition in 1991. In this enlarged edition Anderson noted that he had '[become] uneasily aware that what I had believed to be a significantly new contribution to thinking about nationalism – changing apprehensions of time – patently lacked its necessary coordinate: changing apprehensions of space' (1991: xiii–xiv). Utilizing South East Asian examples, Anderson corrected this omission by including chapters addressing the role of national census, museums, constructions of national memories, biographies and maps. Drawing on a 1988 PhD dissertation by Thongchai Winichakul about nineteenth century Siam/Thailand, Anderson (1991: xiv) argued that maps contribute to the 'logoization of political space' and their myriad reproductions familiarize people with the limitations of national sovereignty and community.

Having examined mass communication with his thesis of print capitalism, Anderson subsequently turned to the legacy of migration:

> The two most significant factors generating nationalism and ethnicity are both closely linked to the rise of capitalism. They can be described summarily as mass communication and mass migrations.
> (Anderson, 1992: 7)

Maintaining that nationalist movements were/are often initiated by expatriates, noting again the 'Creole pioneers' of Latin America and financial contributions from overseas to the Irish Republican Army and ethno-nationalist factions in the Balkan Wars of the early 1990s, Anderson assesses:

> It may well be that we are faced here with a new type of nationalist: the 'long-distance nationalist' one might perhaps call him [fn. 'Him' because this type of politics

> seems to attract males more than females]. For while technically a citizen of the state in which he comfortably lives, but to which he may feel little attachment, he finds it tempting to play identity politics by participating (via propaganda, money, weapons, any way but voting) in the conflicts of his imagined *Heimat* – now only fax-time away.
> (Anderson, 1992: 13)

Translated into dozens of languages and arguably the most regularly cited scholar on the topic, Anderson has appeared on television, addressed committees of the United Nations and US Congress regarding Indonesia and East Timor, and raised questions about human rights abuses in South East Asia (e.g. Anderson, 1976, 1980). He is one of the most influential scholars of his generation. Although not a geographer by training or career, issues of space, territory and place, and his criticisms of nationalist politics, have led to Anderson's work being widely utilized within geographical research.

KEY ADVANCES AND CONTROVERSIES

Imagined Communities received little attention from geographers upon its publication. Largely without review in major geography journals such as the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Anderson's concepts entered geographical debate through their impact on interdisciplinary studies of nationalism. Yet engagement was typified by comment that nations are 'imagined communities' – Anderson being cited accordingly. Indeed, Spencer and Wollman (2002: 37) claim that such is the regularity with which articles about nationalism routinely cite *Imagined Communities* that Anderson's conceptualization 'has become one of the commonest clichés of the literature' the result being that 'invocation has, in some cases, been a substitute for analysis'. Geographers have not been immune to this (see, *inter alia*, Jackson and Penrose, 1993; Smith and Jackson, 1999).

Prolonged geographical assessments of Anderson's contentions seem few. For example, Blaut (1987) does not assess Anderson's work in his review of Marxist theories of nationalism, and Short's (1991: 226) *Imagined Country* simply proposes Anderson's *Imagined Communities* as additional reading. Arguably the most sustained utilization comes from Radcliffe and Westwood (1996: 2), who examine how a national imagined community is 'generated, sustained and fractured' in Ecuador. They maintain that Anderson's 'geographical imagination . . . permits him to link themes of space, mobility and the nation', but comment that he fails to fully acknowledge or develop the implications of this within his work (Radcliffe and Westwood, 1996: 118).

Primarily it is postcolonial scholars that have questioned Anderson's arguments. **Edward Said** (1993) contends that Anderson is too linear in his explanation that political structures and institutions change from dynasties, through the standardizing influence of print capitalism, to sovereign nations (see also McClintock, 1995). The most vocal critic has been Partha Chatterjee (1993), who contends that the imagination of political communities has been limited by European colonialism. Having had specifically nationalist institutional forms imposed on them as colonies, upon independence these areas had no option but to follow European paths, with Western powers ready to prevent any seemingly dangerous deviations. 'Even our imaginations', asserts Chatterjee (1993: 5) 'must remain forever colonized.' Nationalism and nations, Chatterjee maintains, operate only within limits formulated in Europe, and thus they can only be conceptualized within these European strictures. Anticolonial nationalisms thus typically opposed colonialism using the same nationalist arguments as the colonists. Distinction could not be made through political or economic conceptualization

due to the European dominance of these venues and thus the limited sovereignty and territory of the colony was already imagined for the colonized by the colonizers. Consequently, anti-colonial nationalism could only be imagined through cultural processes and practices. Here again Chatterjee challenges Anderson, maintaining that although the processes of print capitalism were important, Anderson's formulation of them as standardizing language, time and territorial extent is too simplistic to impose on the diverse, multilingual and asymmetrical power relations of the colonial situation.

A second major critique of *Imagined Communities* comes from a feminist perspective. With a focus on the 'fraternity' experienced by members of a nation (Anderson, 1991: 7), the protagonists in Anderson's conceptions of nationalism are typically assumed to be male. Mayer (2000: 6) argues that Anderson envisions 'a hetero-male project . . . imagined as a brotherhood', eliding gender, class and racial structures within and between national communities; and McDowell (1999: 195) demonstrates that although being seemingly neutral, 'the very term horizontal comradeship . . . brings with it connotations of masculine solidarity'. Subsequently, McClintock (1995: 353) laments that sustained 'explorations of the gendering of the national imagination have been conspicuously paltry'.

A third challenge comes from Don Mitchell, who argues that as well as *imagining* communities, there must be attention to:

> the *practices* and exercises of power through which these bonds are produced and reproduced. The questions this raises are ones about who defines the nation, how it is defined, how that definition is reproduced and contested, and, crucially, how the nation has developed and changed over time . . . The question is not what common imagination *exists*, but what common imagination is *forged*. (Mitchell, 2000: 269; original emphasis)

Anderson's proposal, therefore, is constrained by its narrowness. What does it matter that a nation is an imagined community? The issue must be to show the work needed to produce and maintain that imagination, how this impacts on people's lives and how power to enforce the national community that is imagined shapes behaviours across time and space.

There is much to commend in the concept of imagined communities, but there is a need to explore power relations inherent in the processes Anderson describes and in their material impacts, whether these are founded on gender, racial, ethnic, class, sexual or other aspect of individual identity. Recent work begins to address such challenges. Angela Martin (1997: 90) maintains that although 'intellectuals have been given the power to ''imagine'' the nation or national community . . . the material dimension, or political economy, of nationalism and the nation have been ignored'. Her assessment of late nineteenth-century Irish nationalism argues for a 'corporeal approach to the nation' to interrogate how gender roles were constructed both in the Irish national imagination and how they restricted behaviour in everyday life (Martin, 1997: 91). In turn, Steven Hoelschler's (1999: 538) study of the construction of a Swiss heritage community in New Glarus, Wisconsin, invokes Anderson to explain that specific 'forms of imagining' are utilized by elites to produce place and community identities, and examines how these elite images are contested by non-elite groups. Thus geographers are moving beyond Anderson's thesis to understand both imagined and *material* communities of nations and nationalisms.

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Euan Hague

2 Trevor Barnes

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Trevor Barnes was born in London, England in 1956. Having grown up in Cornwall, he studied economics and geography at University College London between 1975 and 1978. Barnes completed MA and PhD degrees in Geography at the University of Minnesota under the supervision of Eric Sheppard, and from 1983 taught at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Barnes' work extends across theories of economic value; analytical political economy; flexibility and industrial restructuring; and most recently the 'theoretical histories' of Anglo-American economic geography. He also sought to make key statements on the position of economic geography at the end of the millennium through a number of edited volumes (Barnes and Gertler, 1999; Barnes and Sheppard, 2000) as well as reviews of political economy approaches in the journal *Progress in Human Geography* (e.g. Barnes, 1998).

Although perhaps giving the appearance of a relatively divergent set of themes, there are strong threads of continuity running through Barnes' research and writing interests. He has long been captivated by the work of the economist Piero Sraffa, for example. In Barnes' view, Sraffa's terse expositions on value in *The Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities* (via a set of simultaneous production equations) usefully speak both to rigorous abstract theorists as well as to scholars who are more interested in the contextual and the concrete (Barnes, 1989, 1996, chapter 7). Barnes regards anti-essentialist accounts such as Sraffa's as a useful means of critiquing both classical Marxist accounts of the labour theory of value (which essentialize the role and nature of labour power) as well as neo-classical utility theory.

Together with Eric Sheppard (Sheppard and Barnes, 1990), Barnes has sought to ground political economy in space and place through the development of analytical approaches. Engaging with, but also developing a substantial critique of analytical Marxism, such approaches use 'both mathematical reasoning and rigorous, formal statistical testing to determine logically how space and place make a difference both to the definition of social processes and to their relation to the economy' (Barnes and Sheppard, 2000: 5). Although cursory readings (particularly if solely focused upon the use of formal mathematical language) might discern a preference for the abstract over the concrete and contextual, Barnes would refute such a contention. For example, Barnes' engagement with debates surrounding flexible production has drawn upon research on the forestry industry in British Columbia conducted with Roger Hayter (Barnes and Hayter, 1992; Hayter and Barnes 1992). Whereas many accounts of flexibility through the 1980s and 1990s centred on developments in 'new industrial spaces', Barnes and Hayter sought to extend conceptualizations of flexibility through a consideration of 'in situ' restructuring in the context of a marginal resource economy. The theoretical and the political are also closely connected in Barnes' recent use of the work of Canadian economic historian Harold Innis to understand 'the dependency and disruptions' that have emerged in British

Columbia (Barnes, 2001a: 4; see Barnes *et al.*, 2001). Barnes' explicit concern has been to confront the profound devastation of lives and communities wrought by the decline of the forest products sector in British Columbia (Barnes, 2001a).

Over the course of his career, Barnes (1992, 1996, 2002a) has become increasingly interested in tracing the social and political connections that produced the spatial scientific narratives that came to dominate geography – and particularly economic geography – during the 1950s and 1960s. Drawing in part upon studies in the sociology of scientific knowledge (including the work of **Bruno Latour**), Barnes has been keen to read changes in the nature of Anglo-American economic geography as transformations in attitudes towards theory itself. Ironically, the most significant aspect of geography's quantitative revolution was not that it ushered in a set of new methodologies – in fact 'geography had been quantitative from the time of its formal institutionalization as a discipline in the nineteenth century' (Barnes, 2001c: 552) – but rather that it involved a shift in theoretical sensibilities. This is not to say that the practices of geography remained static: computerization and 'even more complex statistical methods' (Barnes, 2001c: 553) became increasingly dominant. New 'scientific' vocabularies were important in the valorization of new technical competencies, but most significantly the quantitative revolution sought to produce foundational understandings of the world in which the truthfulness of representation was guaranteed (Barnes, 2001c: 553).

In researching the connections between and among spatial scientists in North America, Barnes (2001b, 2001c) has been concerned to reflect upon the socially embedded nature of geography's quantitative revolution. Crucially, transformations in geographical thinking emerged as 'local affairs' within particular institutional sites (Barnes, 2001c: 552). Again, his perspective is informed by philosophy of science literatures and particularly by the notion of externalism, or 'the belief that . . . knowledge is intimately related to the local context in which it develops' (Barnes, 2003: 70). This contrasts sharply from an internalist perspective, which presumes that 'there is a deep-seated, autonomous and universal principle that guides theoretical development' (Barnes, 2003: 70).

Barnes' interest in understanding the production of knowledge derives at least in part from a desire to be conscious of the social power and interests that shape such knowledge. In Barnes' (1996: 250) view, 'from the moment we enter the academy, we are socialized into pre-existing networks of knowledge and power that, whether we are conscious of them or not, come with various sets of interests'. Shifting and changing interests are thus inextricably bound up with transformations in knowledge itself. Writing about the use of locational analysis in geography, for example, Barnes reflects upon 'the duration of . . . principles, that is, how long people were willing to continue using and elaborating them, to pass them on and to defend them' (Barnes, 2003: 91). He suggests that the persistence of particular knowledges 'is a social (and geographical) process, and has as much to do with local context as any inherent quality of the principles themselves' (Barnes, 2003: 91).

SPATIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

One of the key contributions provided by Barnes' examination of the histories of economic geography lies in his provision of a more nuanced story of the discipline than narrations of strict succession and progression of knowledge generally would suggest. The notion of a quantitative *revolution* in geography itself obviously implies a move beyond pre-existing theoretical perspectives – and indeed post-spatial science approaches such as

Marxism, feminism, locality studies and accounts of flexible production were an explicit 'attempt to create something different from the past' (Barnes, 1996: 4). However, Barnes goes on to suggest that economic geography through the 1970s and 1980s remained in the grip of a strong Enlightenment ethos that sought certainties and foundations. Despite seeking to distance themselves from both the language and practice of spatial science, most analysts ultimately were unable to escape the legacy of the seventeenth century.

Excavating the subdisciplinary histories of economic geography might at first glance seem a somewhat atavistic project. However, Barnes explicitly argues that:

> **Only by understanding . . . earlier issues can we both comprehend the shape of contemporary discussions in economic geography and, more important, define a real alternative to the Enlightenment view that hitherto has dominated the discipline.**
> **(Barnes, 1996: 6)**

Barnes characterizes such emergent alternatives as 'post'-prefixed economic geographies that reject the search for a singular order. Exemplary work includes poststructuralist feminist economic geographies (e.g. Gibson-Graham, 1996); feminist work on local labour markets (Hanson and Pratt, 1995; see also Pratt 1999); and development geography informed by postcolonial sensibilities. Most recently, Barnes (2002b: 95) has exhorted researchers to strive for a more 'edgy' engagement with their topic: to '[attempt] to undo formerly fixed conceptual categories of economic geography, and put them together again in different ways, and add new ones as well'. In the same way that he has sought to use the work of Sraffa (among others) to demonstrate the possibility of 'embrac[ing] openness, context and reflexivity', Barnes hopes that other economic geographers similarly will shun 'closure, universals and dogmatism' (Barnes, 1996: 251).

Such a stance correspondingly informs Barnes' own thinking about space and place. Moving beyond singular conceptions of economic space as (for example) a surface or territory, he has sought to argue that 'there is neither a single origin point for enquiry *or* a singular logic, spatial or otherwise' (Barnes, 1996: 250; emphasis added). Elsewhere, contrasting 'first' and 'new-wave' economic theory, he has argued that the former – which leant heavily on the work of von Thünen, Christaller and Weber – demonstrates that 'one should not explain events or phenomena by reducing them to fundamental entities taken as natural, or at least lying outside the social' (Barnes, 2001c: 559). In this sense, Barnes' (2001b, 2001d, 2002a) considerations of the performances of networks of actors (including, for example, economic geographers as well as textbooks) represent attempts to work with and through anti-essentialist conceptualizations of space and place. His work thus has contributed substantially to the reconfiguration of economic-geographical approaches in ways that seek new theoretical understandings of space and place but which at the same time reject a 'single route from here to there' (Barnes, 1998: 101).

KEY ADVANCES AND CONTROVERSIES

One of Barnes' first statements about the importance of knowledge production was in an editorial for the journal *Environment and Planning A* (Barnes, 1993). Taking his cue from emergent debates surrounding the sociology of scientific knowledge (see **Latour**), Barnes argued for a specific examination of the sociological construction of *geographical* knowledge, suggesting that geographers should be more reflexive both about the form and nature of the explanations they use, as well as the

strategies they adopt in presenting these explanations to their audiences. Barnes' argument prompted considerable reaction. For example, Bassett (1994) expressed concern about the implications of increased reflexivity in research and writing, arguing (*contra* Barnes) that certain 'rational' or 'foundational' standpoints might be necessary for the achievement of social justice. Interestingly, Barnes utilized a multiply positioned narrative structure to make his case, arguing that 'there are many different ways to make a convincing argument, [but] there is no formal commonality among them' (Barnes, 1994: 1657). Thus Barnes' writing strategy – 'replying' in five different ways – was a deliberate attempt to take seriously a key tenet of the sociology of scientific knowledge: that the meanings of any particular 'reality' are 'constructed within a wider social network of meanings' (Barnes, 1994: 1655).

Certain commentators have been sceptical of Barnes' approach to the history of economic geographies and of his interest in the economic landscapes created through the use of metaphor (Barnes, 1992). Scott (2000: 495), for example, is uncomfortable with Barnes' emphasis upon the subdiscipline's fissures and dislocations, preferring to foreground 'evident continuities' in economic geography. Scott (2000: 495) also is concerned that attention to the textual effects of metaphors is 'rather off target' when compared with a need to address 'the immensely real substantive issues and purposive human practices that have always been and still are fundamentally at stake'. As is visible in his reviews of geographical work in political economy, however (see particularly Barnes, 1998), Barnes certainly does not eschew a focus on worlds of (for example) production, class divides and labour market change.

Much of Barnes' writing has sought to contest the drawing of lines around the coherent entities of 'economy', 'politics' and 'culture' (see especially Barnes, 2002b). He has, for example, considered the performances of 'classic' economic geography textbooks (via the networks through which they moved) as a means of developing 'a cultural geography of economic geography and economic geographers' (Barnes, 2002a: 15). In narrating multi-layered histories of economic geography, Barnes is critical of attempts to police where different 'types' of geography are allowed to be and where they cannot. He acknowledges:

> **There are critics like Harvey (2000) and Storper (2001) who argue that the focus on culture distracts too much from 'the 'hard world' of production and things' (Hall, 1988), and economic geographers would be better off if they devoted their energies to them.**
> **(Barnes, 2002b: 95)**

At the same time, he maintains that economic geographers would do better to overturn and rupture existing categories. For Barnes, recognition that there is no single road to truth is essential in developing critical theories. Further, he argues that we need a range of imaginative approaches particularly because of the potential role they can play in 'reconfigur[ing] the world and our place within it' (Barnes, 2001a: 12).

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