**Being Alive** is a manifesto; Tim Ingold shares his opinion of what anthropology is and can become. For him, anthropology is “the study of human becomings as they unfold within the weave of the world” (p. 9). The author critiques a widespread tendency in scientific experimentation to relate with the world as a realm from which one must detach oneself in order to study it free from subjective biases. For Ingold, such a science is lifeless. **Being Alive** surveys trails for a new paradigm bustling with opportunities for students at the forefront of academic innovation.

In order to revive anthropology and other sciences, Ingold calls for a re-immersion of experimental inquiry and description into the currents of life. He proposes an ‘animic ontology’ that focuses on the primacy of movement and relationality in the processes of life, knowledge and description. With Ingold’s animic ontology, the world we inhabit issues forth as a flow of materials mixing. Living organisms mingle with these materials and other organisms as they participate in the world’s continual self-generation, sustenance, and transformation. This mingling is the process of life itself, a relational movement through space and time.

Organisms lay physical trails in the world as they navigate the movements of their lives. As organisms, Earth and sky mingle their trails interweave, and as a result form the storied fabric of the world. Ingold calls this fabric, undistinguishable from its processes of animation, the *meshwork*. **Meshwork** is a concept that enables scholars to see our planet as a world in whose life we continually participate rather than a distinct surface against which we operate. Ingold distinguishes the **meshwork** from Latour’s (2005) *actor-network theory*. Rather than a network of connected entities animated by agency, Ingold’s world is a tangle of lines whose movement is animacy itself (Ingold, 2011: p.85).

Ingold develops Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) understanding that living bodies are inextricable from the world and its imminence. Like Bergson (1911), Ingold perceives the organism as an “eddy in the current of life” (Ingold 2011: p.13) rather than a bounded isolate. Such perception of life resembles Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) notion of *haecceity*, according to which organisms are bundles of lines entwined with the world. Hägerstrand (1976) and Ingold see this entwinement as the world’s texture.

Ingold encourages us to learn *with* people and *with* our bodies as we mutually participate in the world’s becoming and meaning. Here movement, knowledge and description are elements of the same process, that of life itself. Rather than transmitted through independent codes, cultural knowledge is continually rediscovered by humans as they creatively mediate other people’s life-stories with their own. Ingold suggests that with the normativization of footwear and chairs, humans have abstracted their bodies from tactile engagement with the world. Said normativization coincides with an epistemology spurred in the 18th century according to which movement is endured for the purpose of reaching a destination where one’s body can rest and so allowing one to think and know. Here thought
and corporeal action are distinguished as mutually exclusive. Such a distinction limits scientific experimentation to controlled environments removed from the dynamic world from which data are abstracted. Many anthropologists go into ‘fields’ in search of objective data to register about people and analyze these upon return home. Data-dependent methodology treats human experience as understandable by analyzing categorizable, self-bounded isolates of registered information. However, the relationally binding lives of humans cannot be dissected into isolates without skewing our understandings of humans and our world.

*Being Alive* features methodological innovation in promise and in practice. Ingold invites readers to go outside, wet a rock and watch it dry. This experiment helps us perceive the fluidity of material with tactile participation. Ingold also conveys tactility with storytelling and suggests drawing as a descriptive medium with which anthropologists can communicate meaning in trails of gestures attuned with the movements of life. *Being Alive* features many simple, communicative drawings. Writing is drawing symbols. Playing with the layout of letters and words on a page can convey meaning beyond standard linguistics. Ingold posits that the keyboard fails to join the world’s movements. I agree that handwriting is more flexible and improvisatory than typed text, however, I believe the latter can be dynamic. Playing with font, size and spatial positioning frees authors’ creativity in aesthetically complementing printed words. E.g:

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This is    s    g .....  ‘This’ is “vague” .........  This is CLEAR.
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The animic ontology implies potential paths that can be discovered and explored by students. Such paths include the senses as important ethnographic tools, as encouraged by Sarah Pink (2009). Other paths include storytelling and other media, such as music and videography, as salient pathways of description. Music evokes stories, relationships, emotions and meanings. Video records expansive sensory evidence of reality, and editing communicates stories and highlights their meanings. In tandem, these media are excellent methodological tools. If honest with ourselves as well as the people with whom we live and learn, creative anthropologists can put forth ethnographies in which the public finds unique meanings and inspirations. Such anthropology can help transform the world.

Ingold acclaims the importance of students in crafting anthropological knowledge. *Being Alive* can help students at any level find passion in our discipline and perceive the world in ways favorable to crafting vivid anthropological knowledge. The book is particularly pertinent to students interested in phenomenological, sensorial, and ecological approaches to anthropology, but is worth the read for anyone.

*Being Alive* is a breath of fresh air. It opens readers up to our world as a dynamic entanglement of lifelines. To live aware of this world is to ride the astonishing crest of the world’s continuous birth. Ingold shares this world with us through enjoyable literary style, well-explained drawings, and tangible experimentation. *Being Alive*’s innovative methodology and paradigm-shifting theories distinguish this book as pedagogically sound and socially pertinent as well as invite us to perceive the world in ways that immerse our attention in the bindingly participative processes of life.
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