



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM - UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

## Scuola Superiore di Studi Umanistici

# Due incontri con Timothy Ingold

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Qui la biografia di Timothy Ingold: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/socsci/people/profiles/tim.ingold>

**Giovedì 20 Ottobre 2016, h. 15.00, *Human/Nature***

One of the intellectual mainstays of the European Enlightenment was the programmatic separation of humanity from the ‘state of nature’, whether understood physically, politically, or morally. Thanks to their possession of reason and conscience, human beings were thought uniquely capable of breaking through the bounds of instinct that held all other creatures captive, and of forming communities that could aspire to morality and progress. Civilisation itself was defined by the degree to which humans were raised both above the rest of the animal kingdom and above ‘the animal’ within – comprising those dispositions and passions that humans were supposed to share with the beasts. And by the same measure that humanity exceeded nature, so the diverse symbolic domains of culture and knowledge were held to exceed the one biophysical world within which they were forged. Anthropologists have by and large responded to this thesis in two different ways. On the one hand they have followed the example of many of the peoples among whom they have worked in rejecting any *a priori* division between nature and humanity in favour of an understanding of forms of life as emergent within fields of mutually conditioning relations, by no means confined to the human. On the other, they have continued to assert the ontological autonomy of the social and cultural domain from its biological ‘base’, and with it, the distinctiveness of sociocultural anthropology vis-à-vis the science of human nature.

It is not clear whether these two positions can be reconciled. If the nature/humanity divide is a particular product of Europe’s Enlightenment, then how should anthropologists think about community and polity, or indeed about the very explanatory domain of the ‘social’ sciences themselves? Is the ‘anthropos’ that gives the discipline its name destined to become an anachronism in a fully relational approach to the more-than-human world? Or, given that anthropologists are human and that no other animals appear to be so engrossed in the study of themselves, or to engage so extensively and enduringly with things, is the dissolution of the division between humanity and nature a step too far?

**Venerdì 21 Ottobre 2016, h. 11, *One world anthropology***

Anthropology is a philosophical inquiry into the conditions and possibilities of life in the one world we all inhabit. That this world is indeed one is a core principle of the discipline. By exploring the relation between the particular life and life-as-a-whole, I show how the latter can be understood as a correspondence in which lives are not added together but carry on alongside one another. Life itself, then, is not the summation but the correspondence of its particulars, not and ... and ... and but with ... with ... with. Comparing ideas of the self and the soul, founded respectively in regimes of naturalism and animism, I show how correspondence proceeds through a process of interstitial differentiation, in which agency is inside action rather than in front of it. This calls for a ‘turn’ that is not ontological but ontogenetic, and it leads us to conceive of the one world as neither a universe nor a fractiverse but as a pluriverse.

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