

The kind of anthropology I propound here has a different purpose. This is not to interpret or explain the ways of others; not to put them in their place or consign them to the 'already understood'. It is rather to share in their presence, to learn from their experiments in living, and to bring this experience to bear on our own imaginings of what human life could be like, its future conditions and possibilities. Anthropology, for me, thrives on this engagement of imagination and experience.

(Tim Ingold, *Why Anthropology matters*. p. 8).

UYWAÑA:

ANTHROPOLOGY OF LIFE AND AYMARA COSMOPRAXIS

The paths of learning and reflection that we expect to open and let flow/interact through this meeting place (*taypi*) derive from an anthropology research project named *Cosmopraxis Aymara y mundo relacional*: “*hacer familia*” con muertos, vivos y *wak’as*¹ (Aymara Cosmopraxis and relational world: “creating family” with the dead, the living and the *wak’as*). It is a collective project that seeks to study the natural social or ecological-cultural practices that are regularly used by Aymara families through their attentive relating with their changing life environments in Bolivia and in Chile and, by extension, through the whole Andean region, giving way to learnings that we hope might lead to open pathways towards a more “viable” and decent world for everything that and all who inhabit and shape it.

We speak of *cosmopraxis* because we want to primarily focus on what people do or practice (Ingold, Yampara, Rivera, Ortner, Sloterdijk) and less so on the “vision,” meanings, or representations² generated along that complex praxis. Here “make family” should not be interpreted in terms of the strictly human – for example kinship– rather, we aim to encompass all those social dynamics that manage to weave the lines of life among human beings as well as non-human beings and other life presences. *Uta*, in Aymara, means family but it also means house and, in our project, we study the *utanaka* through its intrinsic and dynamic relationship with the *oikos* or *home-pachamama* that wraps around us, nurtures us, and of which we partake. The anthropological field work is done by accompanying specific families in their complex relationships with others, visiting and assisting live beings, dead beings, and protective presences, (*wak’as*), and generally moving attentively through the earth-Pachamama. This anthropological joining needs to pay attention, just as the people from the Andean region do, to the climate and the atmospheres – winds, smells, dances, and affects - to the ground they are stepping on or working, and to the stories they share.

In the website –*an open meshwork of crossings*– we invite you to explore with us how this “ecology of attention” is woven, as we broaden our interest to encompass all types of explorations – not only ultimately artistic ones – of *natural social* dynamics. At the same time,

¹ Fondecyt Regular Project 1190279 Aymara Cosmopraxis and relational world: “creating family” with the dead, the living and the *wak’as*. Senior Investigator: Koen de Munter (Anthropology Department, UAH) Co-investigators Vivian Gavilan and Andrea Chamorro (both from Anthropology Department, UTA) April 2019 – March 2023.

² For an “academic” description of the project see “documents related to the research project”.

anthropology aims to be in the service of this multiple exploration, recalibrating itself, not so much as a “discipline” that proposes the critical study of complex intercultural dynamics and ecological conditions from an objective distance, but from both a bold yet vulnerable stance, as a way of learning from and with life, a “philosophizing in and with the world” (Ingold), flowing out there in full involvement with the meshwork of the being-alive.

This way of “doing anthropology” carries with it important political, ethical, and “educational” dimensions. In line with the recent work, not only of a Tim Ingold but also of contemporary thinkers like Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing, or Vinciane Despret, we can maintain that faced with the profound and often sordid messiness in which we humans are immersed and that we have managed, it is crucial to seriously explore paths to imperfect “savior” trajectories that allow to forge new or renewed alliances among all participants of life –the “more-than” Erin Manning writes about. In this sense we feel that to carefully study, with the Aymara families, how these ecological-social practices are developing, can be a very important path. What Ingold refers to as “e-ducating through attention” perfectly summarizes the political-pedagogical dimension of this “project.” In that sense, e-ducating involves leading human beings outside of their all too comfortable “study-places” (and life-places), so they can subject to and be attentive to what is happening out there; accompanying, visiting, and learning to pay attention to all those other life lines. This is precisely what *uywaña* refers to: to nurture or to rear, and let oneself be reared, to educate and to protect, as it notably occurs through the “human correspondence” with the “protector-educator” hills of Aymara communities, called *uywiri*. The ongoing findings of our field experiences can be found in the entry “Cosmo-practicando”.