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Philippe Descola France

Dialogue

The author

Philippe Descola was born in Paris in 1949. He first studied philosophy at the  cole Normale Sup rieure de Saint-Cloud before moving on to ethnology at the University of Paris X and the  cole Pratique des Hautes  tudes (EPHE) (6th section). Appointed project director by the CNRS (French National Center for Scientific Research), he undertook an ethnographic study from 1976 to 1979 with the Jivaros Achuar indigenous people in Ecuadorian Amazon. His special focus was the environment, and his research became the topic of a doctoral thesis in ethnology under the supervision of Claude L vi-Strauss, which he defended in 1983. After teaching at the University of Quito, he became a visiting scholar at King's College in Cambridge as well as research associate with the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme. He then joined the  cole des Hautes  tudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) as lecturer in 1984, and later director of studies in 1989. During his weekly seminars and over a period of many years, he developed a new approach to comparative anthropology based on the relations between humans and non-humans.

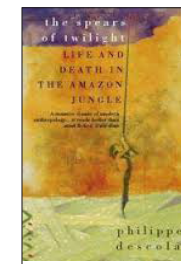
Links

www.college-de-france.fr/site/philippe-descola

Zoom

Wednesday November 13th 2013, MC2 Grenoble, 7.30pm

In the Society of Nature: A Native Ecology in Amazonia (Cambridge University Press, 1996)



The Achuar Indians live in the remote forest reaches of the Upper Amazon and have developed sophisticated strategies of resource management. This study documents their rich knowledge of the environment, and explains how technical knowledge of the increasingly threatened Amazonian ecosystems is interwoven with cosmological ideas that endow nature with the characteristics of society. It combines a symbolist approach with an ecological analysis, and contributes to a new theory

of the social construction of nature.

Bibliography

In the Society of Nature: A Native Ecology in Amazonia (Cambridge University Press, 1996, 372p.)

The Spears of Twilight: Life and Death in the Amazon Jungle (The New Press, 1996, 512p.)

Nature and Society, Anthropological Perspectives with Gisli Palsson, (Routledge, 1996, 310p.)

The Spears of Twilight: Life and Death in the Amazon Jungle (The New Press, 1996, 512p.)



The Jivaro tribe, or Achuar, as they prefer to be known, have survived in isolation in the Amazonian jungle by headhunting. They have preserved a tribal life which resembles that of our hunter-gatherer ancestors. Only one representative of civilized society, Philippe Descola

has been admitted to their company. This book depicts an unfamiliar civilization whose values are often bizarre to Western eyes. Over 20 years of increasing intimacy with the Achuar, Descola has produced a portrait of a culture no less complex than our own. He describes their myths, their interpretation of dreams and their concepts of time and nature and leadership.

Nature and Society, Anthropological Perspectives with Gisli Palsson, (Routledge, 1996, 310p.)



The contributors to this book focus on the relationship between nature and society from a variety of theoretical and ethnographic perspectives. Their work draws upon recent developments in social theory, biology, ethnobiology, epistemology, sociology of science, and a wide array of

ethnographic case studies — from Amazonia, the Solomon Islands, Malaysia, the Mollucan Islands, rural communities from Japan and North-West Europe, urban Greece, and laboratories of molecular biology and high-energy physics. The discussion is divided into three parts, emphasising the problems posed by the nature-culture dualism, some misguided attempts to respond to these problems, and potential avenues out of the current dilemmas of ecological discourse.