



Social Science and the Challenge of Relativism: Vol. 3. Cultures of Nature: An Essay on the Production of Nature

Lawrence Hazelrigg

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"Philosophically challenging. . . . Hazelrigg's thesis seems to catch everyone short."--Steve Fuller, executive editor, *Social Epistemology*

"A quality piece of work; the central problematic is clearly articulated and important; the theoretical analyses are sophisticated and subtle; and the narrative is well crafted. . . . The focus of this work is at the heart of core issues now being discussed by much larger circles of interdisciplinary social theorists and cultural studies scholars."--Robert Antonio, University of Kansas

Lawrence Hazelrigg's thesis, argued in this concluding work of his trilogy, is that "nature, under any description whatsoever, is thoroughly a humanly made existence." Nature is a cultural production, he says, and any distinction between nature and culture is drawn from the relations of power that characterize a particular culture.

In this innovative vision of the very foundation of social theory, he sets out some of the terms and relationships of the nature-culture polarity and offers a map of the "circuits and relays" that exist between "that which counts as knowledge and that which counts as power." He extends the mapping to issues of philosophical anthropology and the "production" of human nature (and the Marxian roots of this production) and then examines three situations in which the circuits and relays operate in European and Euroamerican cultures: the sixteenth-century invention of culture; modern inventions of primitiveness; and "a long sequence of practices of sexing nature's body."

In conclusion, he addresses the question of an ecologism that begins to glimpse the artificiality of nature (the new "crisis of nature") and which must work anew to understand what counts as knowledge.

This work will be an important source for students in the growing area of sociology of culture as well as for scholars in philosophy, social and political theory, ethnography, and feminism and others interested in the social construction of nature and the politics of environmentalism.

Lawrence Hazelrigg is professor of sociology at Florida State University. He is the author of *A Wilderness of Mirrors* and *Claims of Knowledge* (both UPF, 1989), the first two books of this trilogy, and of *Class, Conflict, and Mobility and Prison within Society*.

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