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# Stonehenge: Making Space (Materializing Culture)



## Synopsis

This book is an imaginative exploration of a place that has fascinated, intrigued and perplexed visitors for centuries. Instead of seeing Stonehenge as an isolated site, the author sets the stones within a wider landscape and explores how use and meaning have changed from prehistoric times right through to the present. Throughout the millennia, the Stonehenge landscape has been used and re-used, invested with new meanings, and has given rise to myths and stories. The author creatively explores how the landscape has been appropriated and contested, and invokes the debates and experiences of people who have very different and often conflicting experiences of the same place. Today, heritage managers, archaeologists, local people, free festivallers, and druids come to the place with entirely different understandings and agendas. The book demonstrates that the creation of spaces and places for people to express divergent viewpoints is powerfully constrained by social and political forces that allow some voices to be heard while others are marginalized. With dialogues and illustrations that range from the conventional to the cartoon strip, this multi-vocal book not only presents a wide range of views in an innovative way, but provides important new insights on how people shape and are shaped by landscape.

## Book Information

Series: Materializing Culture

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Bloomsbury Academic; First Edition edition (August 1, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1859739083

ISBN-13: 978-1859739082

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.6 x 233.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.4 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #366,355 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #213 in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Landscape #296 in Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Archaeology #569 in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > History

## Customer Reviews

Ã¢â€šÂ“... a book that will enrage some and delight others: it is a milestone in writing about the past in the present.Ã¢â€šÂ• Julian Thomas, Journal of the Royal Anthropological InstituteÃ¢â€šÂ“A book for reading everywhere and for scribbling in (it even has a page to write

Barbara Bender is a Professor in Heritage Anthropology, at the University College London.

Everyone should read this book. Because identity, power, and the present are so wrapped up in how we interpret the past, the book is essential for understanding how there are multiple valid interpretations of history that can exist and be interwoven. Warning: some knowledge of Stonehenge is required to comprehend certain parts of the book.

My God, where to start.....This is the kind of fuzzy headed touchy-feely stuff that you were warned about by anyone with even a bare conception of scientific knowledge is about. Bender "is" an archaeologist, but quite frankly you wouldn't notice as she spends most of her time talking about

dirty Caucasian hippies and how "abused" they are by the British state. Multivocality should of course be a part of any good archaeological study, the voices of women, children, and other overlooked persons in the past is necessary to present a complete view of it, but Bender takes multivocality so far as to equate the aforementioned hippies with abused and downtrodden people in the third world, something that even Ian Hodder(the king of fuzzy logic and sloppy conjecture)takes her to task for during one of the Dialogue "chapters".That brings us to the structure of the book itself (or lack thereof). Bender obviously considers herself a brilliant post-modernist by doing away with such things as linear narrative, authoritative voice, and traditional writing. in the end, it comes off as lazy and ill-conceived. Four of the eight chapters consist solely of apparently recoded/email conversations with academics and activists lacking in both context and usefulness. One chapter engages the use of cartoons to illuminate her own personal and the book's theoretical background (a good idea in theory, academics should be self reflexive)but the execution is so slapdash that it imparts knowledge no better than the densest and most inaccessible theory chapter written by the type of academic she claims to be reacting against.This is a college text-book, there is no doubt about it (hell, look at the price). However, if the author of such a book essentially reduces their experience and expertise down to the thesis that "everyone's ideas matter" it is quite useless for students seeking to broaden their understanding in pursuit of a degree. As students we are paying to be tutored by those who know more than us about a particular subject so that we can go out into the world of work with at least a starting point of knowledge from which to generate our own expertise, refusing to take on the role of an experienced professional makes any academic author or professor lazy at best and a thief at worst.

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