

## Book Review: Putting science in its place: geographies of scientific knowledge. By David Livingstone. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2003. ISBN 0-22648-722-9

Larsen, Soren C.

Postprint / Postprint

Rezension / review

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:

[www.peerproject.eu](http://www.peerproject.eu)

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Larsen, S. C. (2005). Book Review: Putting science in its place: geographies of scientific knowledge. By David Livingstone. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2003. ISBN 0-22648-722-9. *Cultural Geographies*, 12(1), 115-116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147447400501200110>

### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter dem "PEER Licence Agreement zur Verfügung" gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zum PEER-Projekt finden Sie hier: <http://www.peerproject.eu> Gewährt wird ein nicht exklusives, nicht übertragbares, persönliches und beschränktes Recht auf Nutzung dieses Dokuments. Dieses Dokument ist ausschließlich für den persönlichen, nicht-kommerziellen Gebrauch bestimmt. Auf sämtlichen Kopien dieses Dokuments müssen alle Urheberrechtshinweise und sonstigen Hinweise auf gesetzlichen Schutz beibehalten werden. Sie dürfen dieses Dokument nicht in irgendeiner Weise abändern, noch dürfen Sie dieses Dokument für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, aufführen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Mit der Verwendung dieses Dokuments erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen an.

**gesis**  
Leibniz-Institut  
für Sozialwissenschaften

### Terms of use:

This document is made available under the "PEER Licence Agreement". For more information regarding the PEER-project see: <http://www.peerproject.eu> This document is solely intended for your personal, non-commercial use. All of the copies of this documents must retain all copyright information and other information regarding legal protection. You are not allowed to alter this document in any way, to copy it for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the document in public, to perform, distribute or otherwise use the document in public.

By using this particular document, you accept the above-stated conditions of use.

Mitglied der  
  
Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

courses on economy–culture relationships. At the research level, it will be equally invaluable. I dare you not to buy it.

Manchester University

NOEL CASTREE

**Reinventing Eden: the fate of nature in Western culture.** By Carolyn Merchant. New York: Routledge. 2003. 308 pp. \$25.00 paper. ISBN: 0 41593 164 9.

Was Eve of the Bible the first scientist? After all, as Carolyn Merchant remarks in *Reinventing Eden*, Eve's consumption of the forbidden fruit illustrated her 'independent and curious' (p. 23) nature and her preference for knowing the world through empirical observation rather than through God's word alone. The question, inspired by Mark Twain's *The diaries of Adam and Eve*, illustrates the sort of insightful gems that Merchant produces in her ambitious and richly illustrated eco-feminist rethinking of Western culture. She aims to show how Western culture has long conformed to variants of a master narrative of recovery – Eden is lost, – but since the seventeenth century secular society has embarked on the project of 'reinventing' it on a global scale. Shopping malls, theme parks, genetically engineered agricultural products and the Internet are contemporary fruits of this dream. Merchant devotes much of her book to critique: the 'Recovery narrative' has legitimated the dominance of nature, women, the poor and non-white peoples. She concludes by proposing a new narrative for the new century. Her postmodern-influenced 'partnership ethic' rejects the linear logic of traditional narrative while promoting equality between men, women and the natural world.

*Reinventing Eden* offers fresh insights into Western culture and, boldly and constructively, it offers a new master narrative (or set of narratives). However, I doubt that feminist geographers and environmentalists already versed in the white male anthropocentrism of Western culture will find the bulk of Merchant's book – the eco-feminist critique – to be fundamentally surprising or new. Students interested in the technical subject of geography and narrative will not find much here either: Merchant writes only a few simplistic paragraphs on the structure of narrative, defining it as 'an ideal form into which particular bits of content are poured. The form is the organizing principle; the content is the matter' (p. 37). For the purpose of introducing alternative environmental histories to undergraduate and graduate students, however, the book would be an excellent resource.

California State University, Northridge

RONALD A. DAVIDSON

**Putting science in its place: geographies of scientific knowledge.** By David Livingstone. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2003. 234 pp. \$27.50 cloth. ISBN: 0 22648 722 9.

Scholars have long recognized the importance of history in understanding the social dimensions of science. Biographies of prominent figures and institutional histories of leading disciplines have established historical context as a central supporting theme

in the scientific legacy. Whether intentional or not, such narratives often resonate with popular conceptions of the scientist-as-recluse or with the drama associated with novel experimentation and high-profile public debate. Geography has not been anywhere near as prominent in critical explorations of science. As David Livingstone illustrates in his wonderfully written *Putting science in its place*, geography challenges scientific culture by concentrating on the particularities of what turns out to be a highly localized and regionally distinctive social practice. Livingstone deftly uses three simple spatial concepts – site, region and circulation – to deconstruct science’s claims to universality and thereby reveal an intriguing set of relationships that begin to characterize the social geography of scientific endeavor.

Livingstone’s account is ambitious in scope, ranging from the spatial politics of laboratory investigation and medical examination to the ways museums and gardens interacted with popular perceptions of far-flung regions and peoples. By design, he rejects a chronological ordering of events and opts instead to juxtapose temporally disparate episodes in an effort to discover science’s site-specific and regional qualities. The relative lack of historical analysis, however, ends up concealing what might be some insightful connections between science and society. This deficiency is perhaps most evident in the third chapter, which concerns the regional cultures of science. Livingstone demonstrates how the political-economic pressures of various regional contexts (for instance, Victorian Manchester) shaped the type of science that was accepted and supported there (utilitarianism, in this case). Yet, beyond the point of identifying a basic interaction between regional culture and scientific practice, broader socioeconomic connections and trends remain undeveloped and unexplored. It would be fascinating, for instance, to undertake a systematic investigation of the relationships between science’s spatiality and the political economies and cultural formations evolving in different parts of Europe. Such an analysis is most certainly beyond the scope of Livingstone’s current book, which serves as a highly accessible and introductory typology of science’s social geography. But the point remains that space and time have factored equally in the production of science as an intellectual division of labour, and that both have been manipulated and erased to create the unfortunate illusion of a placeless social project.

*Georgia Southern University*

SOREN C. LARSEN

**Race, nature, and the politics of difference.** Edited by Donald S. Moore, Jake Kosek and Anand Pandian. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press. 2003. 475 pp. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 0 82233 076 2.

The essays collected here explore the connections between blood, genes, selves, community, soil and geography. The underlying themes of race and nature – as they are socially produced and experiential – structure the text and advance innovative ways of reconceptualizing, and respatializing, uneven socio-spatial patterns. That is, race, nature and difference in the text are simultaneously evident in the built and natural