



MARS

A Tour of the Human Imagination

Eric S. Rabkin

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Description:

What is Mars? From the ancients to the present, we have imagined Mars repeatedly and studied it longingly. As scientific knowledge of Mars has changed, so has the cultural imagination of this celestial neighbor. The earth-centered beginnings of astronomy connected the blood-red planet with the God of War. The Copernican Revolution and a later, simple mistranslation from Italian supported fantastic visions of distant Mars as the abode of life variously bizarre, ideal, or malignant. In the work of H. G. Wells and Orson Welles, in books, films, radio, and television, Mars reflected not only eternal hopes and fears but then-current political realities. In recent years, "NASA-fication" has brought Mars home, imagining the Red Planet almost as an eighth continent of Earth, a candidate for exploration and exploitation both in fiction and in fact.

Reviews:

"[P]robes the ways in which Mars has influenced not only the field of astronomy but also mythology, astrology, cultural and literary studies, and more." - **Library Journal**

Author Information:

ERIC S. RABKIN teaches in the Department of English at the University of Michigan. He is the author (and editor) of more than 30 books on science fiction and writing, including *Science Fiction: A Historical Anthology* and *The Fantastic in Literature*, and more than 100 articles in scholarly and mainstream media.

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