

Although a short, literary dissection of the problem of place this book is rewarding on a number of levels, including the role of the 'infra-ordinary' as a pedagogical tool in its own right (an issue outside the scope of this review). Ultimately, whilst it may not provide the depth of exposition present within academically oriented books dealing with a similar problematic, its futile attempt to draw out the experience of this one place in Paris nonetheless exemplifies how place is constantly unfolding, always in a process of change and never graspable.

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Geographies of Mars. By K. Maria D. Lane. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 2011. xiii + 266 pp. \$45.00 cloth. ISBN 9780226470788.

Mars has recently had a rebirth of sorts in geography, with numerous journal articles burbling through the publication system and a panel at the 2009 AAG Annual Meeting that brought together human and physical geographers to discuss the potential for further inclusion of Mars in our disciplinary consciousness. One outcome of that panel was a general agreement that understandings of Mars were indelibly linked to understandings of earth, whether through the application of earthbound geomorphologic principles to the Red Planet, or through the use of Mars-based science fiction to imagine alternative politics and economics for our own blue planet. More recently, at a 2011 panel discussion on science fiction and international relations at the London School of Economics, noted IR scholar Iver Neumann argued that whenever we do meet extraterrestrial life, it cannot possibly play out as a proper 'first contact', given that we have imagined that event innumerable times in literature, film, and so on. Maria Lane's previous published work helped initiate this theme of 'no-Mars-without-earth' in geography, and *Geographies of Mars* advances it by utilizing archival sources to show how inextricably linked the earth and Mars were at the beginning of the twentieth century. Mars became a battleground for the contestation of various earthly concerns, such as the nature of astronomy as a science, the relationship between nature and society, and of course various scientists' egos.

This excellent new book traces the interconnections between the disciplines of geography and astronomy at the fin-de-siècle, as debates and ideas from the field science of the former infiltrated the abstracting scientism of the latter. This occurred as astronomers, both professional and amateur, groped towards knowledge of Mars long before today's explicit universe of space probes and Martian rovers. *Geographies of Mars* may disappoint the cosmically-minded reader lured by the title; as Lane writes, 'In the end, this book is not really about Mars or even about Martian geography' (p.13). Rather, the book is a methodical examination of the social production of geographical knowledge in particular places and relational spaces. For a scholar interested in the geography of science and the science of geography, the book - drawing on critical cartography, science and technology studies, the geopolitics of empire, and the history of geography - will not fail to illuminate.

It is of course improper to fault a good book for its exclusions, and Lane's tight focus on the Martian canal craze lends itself to her thesis on the historical intertwining of geography and astronomy. Still, her detailing of the decline of the inhabited Mars thesis feels like an artificial stopping point. While she alludes to the continued relevance of Mars to science fiction and popular imaginations, there is only minimal follow-up — there is no explication of if, how, or why planetary astronomy and geography have remained linked or have diverged on distinct paths. Of course this is exactly the kind of complaining I said I would not do. Perhaps I just don't want to see such a good book come to an end.

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