



The Rainbow Bridge: Rainbows in Art, Myth, and Science

Raymond L. Lee Jr, Alistair B. Fraser

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Venerated as god and goddess, feared as demon and pestilence, trusted as battle omen, and used as a proving ground for optical theories, the rainbow's image is woven into the fabric of our past and present. From antiquity to the nineteenth century, the rainbow has played a vital role in both inspiring and testing new ideas about the physical world. Although scientists today understand the rainbow's underlying optics fairly well, its subtle variability in nature has yet to be fully explained.

Throughout history the rainbow has been seen primarily as a symbol—of peace, covenant, or divine sanction—rather than as a natural phenomenon. Lee and Fraser discuss the role the rainbow has played in societies throughout the ages, contrasting its guises as a sign of optimism, bearer of Greek gods' messages of war and retribution, and a symbol of the Judeo-Christian bridge to the divine.

The authors traverse the bridges between the rainbow's various roles as they explore its scientific, artistic, and folkloric visions. This unique book, exploring the rainbow from the perspectives of atmospheric optics, art history, color theory, and mythology, will inspire readers to gaze at the rainbow anew.

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