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Sommario/riassunto

This unique book advances the frontier discussion of a wide spectrum of astrobiological issues on scientific advances, space ethics, social impact, religious meaning, and public policy formulation. Astrobiology is an exploding discipline in which not only the natural sciences, but also the social sciences and humanities converge. Astrobiology: Science, Ethics, and Public Policy is a multidisciplinary book that presents different perspectives and points of view by its contributing specialists. Epistemological, moral and political issues arising from astrobiology, convey the complexity of challenges posed by the search for life elsewhere in the universe. We ask: if a convoy of colonists from Earth make the trip to Mars, should their genomes be edited to adapt to the Red Planet’s environment? If scientists discover a biosphere with microbial life within our solar system, will it possess intrinsic value or merely utilitarian value? If astronomers discover an intelligent civilization on an exoplanet elsewhere in the Milky Way, what would be humanity’s moral responsibility: to protect Earth from an existential threat? To treat other intelligences with dignity? To exploit through interstellar commerce? To conquer?