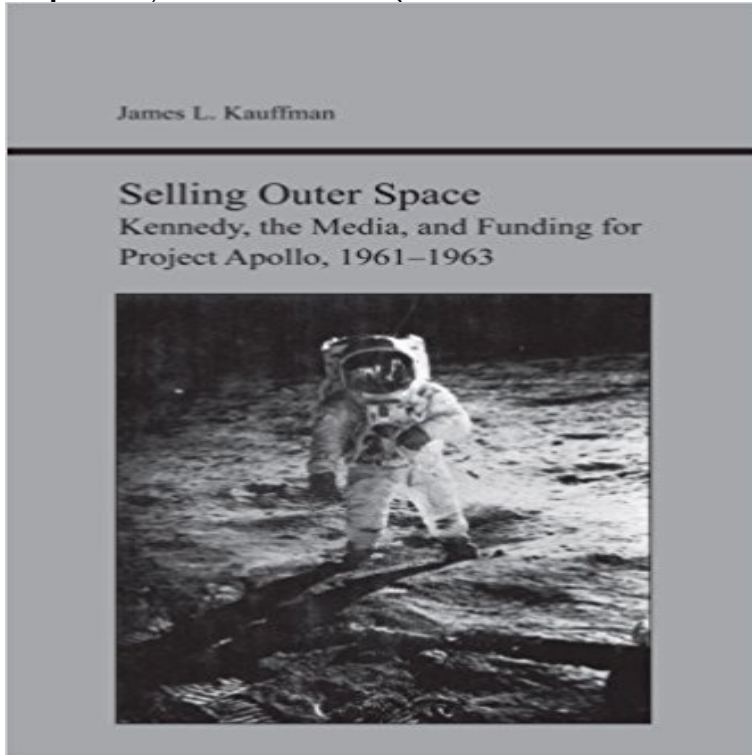


Selling Outer Space: Kennedy, the Media, and Funding for Project Apollo, 1961-1963 (Studies Rhetoric & Communicati)



In the early 1960s, the Kennedy administrations public campaign to sell Project Apollo met with little opposition from Congress, the media, or the public. Only in the aftermath of space disasters like the Challenger explosion have Americans seriously questioned the primacy - or even the need - for human beings to explore outer space. This book examines the Kennedy administrations rhetoric to understand why Project Apollo received so little opposition. Although the Kennedy administration advanced a number of political, scientific, military, and economic arguments for a manned moon mission, its rhetoric ultimately sold the space project as a great frontier adventure story with deep roots in American history and culture. The administration enticed Congress, the media, and the public to think of Project Apollo not in logical terms, but as a reaffirmation of the romantic American frontier myth. By describing space as the New Frontier, the Kennedy administration shaped the way Americans interpreted and gave meaning to space exploration for years to come. The frontier narrative subsumed arguments about the technology and economics of the program, and it established a presumption in favor of massive commitments of the nations resources to staffed space flight. The continuing influence of the frontier mythology is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the decision to develop the space shuttle program. Ultimately, the shuttles attraction may have been the symbolic importance of the fact that the astronauts flew the craft as a plane, thereby reaffirming the rugged individualism and daring of the frontier myth.

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