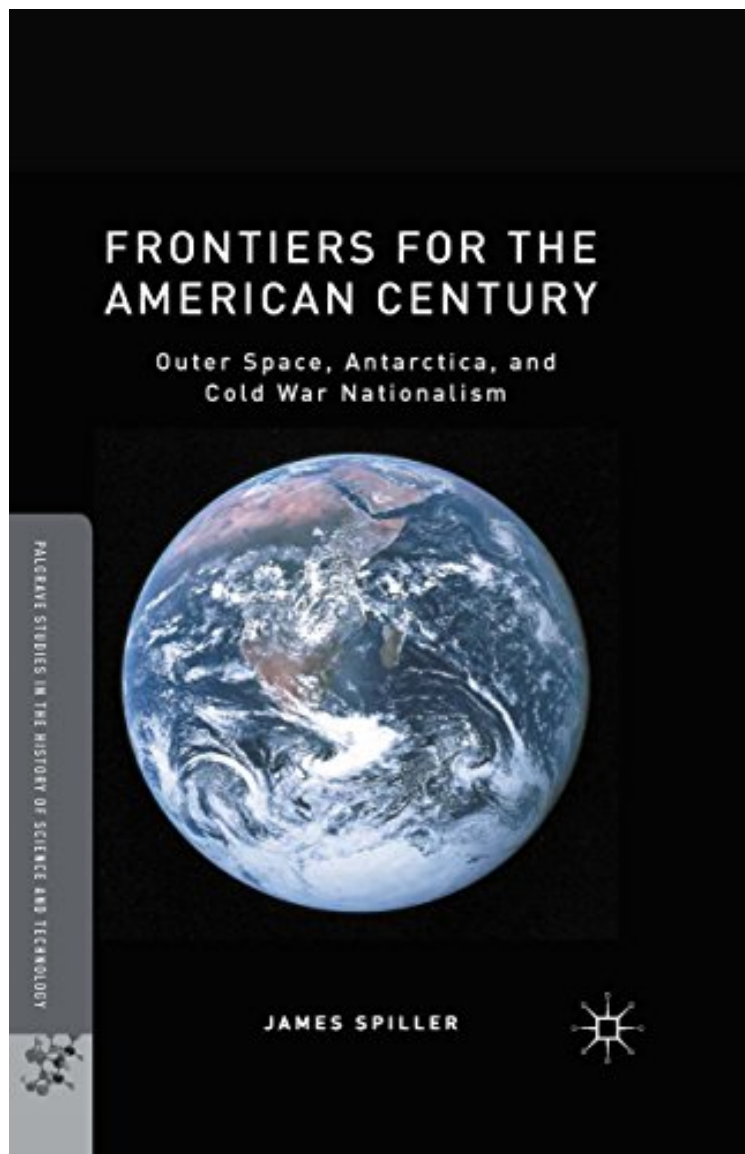


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Frontiers for the American Century: Outer Space, Antarctica, and Cold War Nationalism (Palgrave Studies in the History of Science and Technology)

James Spiller

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Nationalism (Palgrave Studies in the History of Science and Technology):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Fascinating Exploration of Science's Role in American Cold War Policy!By RDDIn "Frontiers for the American Century: Outer Space, Antarctica, and Cold War Nationalism", James Spiller argues, during the Cold War, "outer space and Antarctica became frontiers for the American Century, each a tabula rasa whose conquest would positively transform the human condition" (pg. 203). He demonstrates how Life Magazine founder Henry Luce's 1941 essay, "The American Century," coupled with the lingering effects of Fredrick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis shaped American policy and public perception of space and Antarctic exploration during the Cold War. Spiller structures his argument into four chapters. The first argues, "The imprint of Sputnik remained strong during the ensuing decade as NASA and the NSF managed these leading exploratory programs [space and Antarctica] so that they paid practical dividends, sparked domestic pride, and enhanced US prestige" (pg. 22). In his second chapter, Spiller argues that frontier ideology led Americans to believe that "the pioneering efforts of the US space and Antarctic programs would engender on a global scale the blessings of freedom and prosperity Americans had long enjoyed owing to their history of frontier expansion" (pg. 67). Focusing on Antarctic exploration, the third chapter argues, "In response to novel challenges to America's interests in the region and new priorities for research there, they [NASA and the USAP] primarily depicted the United States as steward of the south polar environment rather than conqueror of an Antarctic frontier" (pg. 115). In his final chapter, Spiller argues that NASA in the 1980s "embraced the rhetoric of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush and exalted the space frontier, now pioneered by American men and women of all races, as a means of revitalizing the nation and securing its international leadership" (pg. 159). Spiller adapted this book from his dissertation, "Constructing America at the Peripheries: The Cultural Politics of U.S. Science and Exploration in Outer Space and Antarctica, 1950s-1990s." Spiller draws upon a rich and varied source base, including internal memoranda of NASA and USAP, promotional materials of both programs, formerly confidential and declassified reports, and popular films and print media. He uses these to demonstrate how the ideology surrounding NASA and the USAP permeated all levels of the national discourse.

This book compares the cultural politics of the U.S. space and Antarctic programs during the Cold War. It analyzes how culturally salient terms, especially the nationalist motif of the frontier, were used to garner public support for these strategic initiatives and, more generally, United States internationalism during this period.

"Frontiers for the American Century is a sophisticated, nuanced, and welcome study of the cultural politics of the U.S. space and Antarctic programs. . . . the book is a fascinating study of the complex and changing motif of the American frontier in the context of outer space and Antarctic exploration. . . . Spiller thus gives welcome fine structure to one of the overarching frameworks of the Space Age . . ." (Steven J. Dick, *Isis*, Vol. 108 (1), March, 2017)About the AuthorJames Spiller is Professor of History and Dean of the Graduate School at The College at Brockport, State University of New York, USA.