

## Pop Culture and Planetary Studies

A. M. James B. Foing<sup>1,2,4</sup> <sup>1</sup>ESA-ESTEC, <sup>2</sup>ILEWG, <sup>3</sup>KABK The Hague, <sup>4</sup>VU Amsterdam

### Abstract

We examine the role of man in space through the lens of pop culture. From the earliest incarnation of science fiction through the modern-day blockbuster what role does planetary exploration play in building the myths and dreams of the future?

### 1. The Power of Public Perception and the Shared Dream.

Human beings have been preparing for our journey to the stars from the earliest stories told by the fire under the infinite sky. By the time the space race had begun, the public psyche was groomed through science fiction and fantasy (see fig1&2), story and myth, to not only believe that we as humans could go to space but that we should. Once viewed through the religious lens, these stories transformed in the early eighteenth century through literature. The popularity of these stories created a sense of ownership in technology for the everyman. We do not fully understand why certain ideas are popular but we can recognize when they are and examine the importance those ideas play in moving

society. Would John F. Kennedy's famous speech declaring that we choose to go to the moon have had the same impact if the population had not been steeped in books and movies demanding mans rightful place amongst the stars?

Fig.1 - Fantasy and Science fiction Pulp cover

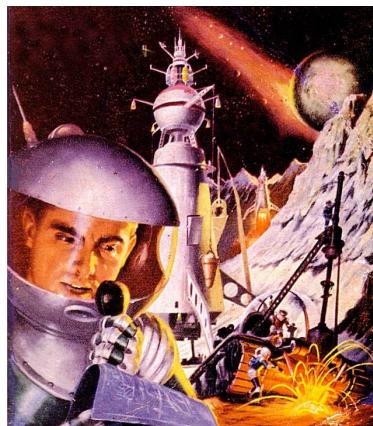


Fig.1 - Marvels Infinity Gauntlet comic book

