**A cartoon by Sinann, January 19, 2017**



**Introduction**

The early era of space exploration was driven by a "[Space Race](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Race)" between the [Soviet Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) and the [United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States). The launch of the first human-made object to orbit [Earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth), the Soviet Union's [Sputnik 1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sputnik_1), on 4 October 1957, and the first [Moon landing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon_landing) by the American [Apollo 11](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_11) mission on 20 July 1969 are often taken as landmarks for this initial period.

On Dec. 14, 1972, Apollo 17 commander Eugene Cernan lifted his foot off the surface of the moon. It is the last footprint that was ever left on our nearest celestial neighbour. That legacy — being known as the “last man on the moon” has lived on for 42 years. There hasn’t been a mission to the moon in that time and there are no plans to return.

The future of the American space program isn’t at the forefront of American consciousness as the country struggles with its own economic and political concerns, but the desire to explore still exists in the general public as today’s space tourism seems to suggest.

The document under examination is a black and white cartoon by Sinann drawn in 2017.

**Description**

The cartoonist **pits** an image of the moon in 1969 (a virgin planet as well as **a clean slate**, from which humanity would take giant steps into a better future) against another picture, 50 years on, with the landing spot now **a complete mess**, covered by heaps of garbage **left behind** by the successive lunar missions.

Through the prism of caricature, this cartoon nonetheless raises a number of **wedge issues**: intimating that **man hardly ever learns from his mistakes**, it not only calls into question the status of the space race as **a flagship policy**, but also casts doubt on whether the future space missions represent **the dawn of a new era**.

Obviously enough, if the first man on Mars acts like the last man on the moon, he may be well-advised to **change tack**. More commonly depicted as a heroic figure, the astronaut is debunked and described in a way that enables the viewer to lament the environmental mess left by NASA’s missions. The so-called hero is dismissed by the cartoonist as a carefree garbage-dumping space-tourist.

For all the technological and ethical progress, for all the awareness that mankind’s ventures into space are also ego-trips as a new dawn of space exploration is making it possible for wealthy individuals to try their hand at space travel.

**Transition/ problématique**

Space tourism is not without criticism, despite being an exciting idea in theory. I’ll explore the advantages and disadvantages of space tourism, raise questions about the billionaire space race, and think about whether space tourism is the beginning of a new future or an environmental catastrophe.

**1.Definition**

Space tourism is human space travel for recreational or leisure purposes. So the fundamental purpose is for human pleasure, as [all tourism is](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/the-impacts-of-tourism). uly 2021 was a pioneering month, with both Virgin Galactic and Blue Origin successfully launching suborbital spaceflights with tourist passengers from their spaceports.

The second space company interested in commercial space travel is [Blue Origin](https://www.blueorigin.com/), founded by Amazon CEO, Jeff Bezos. Just nine days after the Virgin Galactic flight, Blue Origin’s New Shepherd Rocket took Bezos and three other passengers to space on July 20th 2021.

the biggest draw for commercial space passengers is the awe-inspiring experience, a new perspective of Earth, and the most beautiful view humans have ever seen. Most people grow up believing that they will never go to space, and the fact that going can become a reality for some is a huge achievement.

**2.Benefits**

**a)Human**

The experience of [observing the Earth from space](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/observing-earth-from-space) has a name: the Overview Effect. Essentially, this is a cognitive change of consciousness, where astronauts experience a new sense of obligation and responsibility to protect planet Earth. If this truly means that everyone who visits space will want to protect the planet, then perhaps space tourism could be beneficial for human compassion

**b)Scientific:**

There are a few scientific benefits of space tourism, though the most recent flights were perhaps not long enough to offer too much insight. When, in the future, we see longer space flights, we’ll have the opportunity to study long-term physiological changes in humans as a result of being in space.

There are also chances to carry out small-scale experiments on these touristic flights. For example, on the recent Virgin Galactic flight, plants were taken on board to see how they would react to microgravity.

One of the end goals of space tourism is to prepare for the creation of a colony on the moon or Mars for research purposes or even as a kind of backup plan for if Earth goes up in flames.

It can be easy to ignore the negatives when we’re talking about something that’s as pioneering and unique as space travel, but it’s essential that we have a well-rounded conversation about it.

**3.Drawbacks**

**Space tourism cost and inaccessibility**

Blue Origin sold one seat on their spaceflight for $28 million as part of a charity auction, demonstrating that the super-wealthy have exclusive access to the opportunity of being a pioneer. Regarding Space X, an early 2022 mission with Axiom will see a crew of 4 go to the ISS and stay for 8 days carrying out 25 science experiments. The cost? A cool 55 million per ticket. Although they’ll be carrying out research, three of the passengers are investors, while only one is a former NASA astronaut.

Besides it being unfair that the wealthy are given access to space travel above all others, there are other problems with the cost of space tourism. So many justifications for space tourism talk about the future of humanity and protecting the planet – but why then can’t these billionaires pour some of their dollars into solving the climate crisis, world hunger, and general inequality?

To many, it appears that the billionaire owners of space companies are more interested in “winning” the space race and gaining monopoly over space than protecting the planet we currently live on

### The environmental cost to the planet

Finally, it’s time to discuss the huge environmental cost of space tourism. This is one of the biggest concerns that people have about the prospect of regular commercial space travel

There are several ways space tourism can contribute to a depleting ozone layer. CO2 emissions and soot trap heat in the atmosphere and [rockets emit up to 10 times more nitrogen oxides than the largest thermal power plant in the UK](https://ideas.ted.com/environmental-impact-carbon-emissions-of-space-tourism/). Passengers generally create between 50 and 100 times more CO2 emissions than a passenger on a long aeroplane flight.

**Conclusion**

Is space tourism a necessary and exciting scientific advancement, or the [least sustainable tourism sector](https://www.futurelearn.com/info/blog/what-is-sustainable-tourism) to ever exist, favouring the wealthy and leaving behind ordinary citizens who need help on Earth?

It seems as though the current plans that the billionaire space company owners have for space tourism are perhaps too ambitious, and focus on the wrong things. It’s true that space exploration and research could bring a wealth of new ideas and resources to Earth, and could provide a future existence for humans.