

Is it ethical for humans to explore space?

For thousands of years, humans have explored the universe through observation and imagination, but now, with the rapid approach of extensive human space travel, a myriad of questions are coming to the forefront of philosophical debate that concern the entirety of human space exploration.

As is studied in the branch of philosophy called cosmic philosophy developed by Comte, the question of whether it is ethical for humans to explore space is a prominent topic for discussion. But we must ask ourselves first if this question even arises?

The question of the ethicality of human space exploration emerges from questions regarding the sustainability of humanity which themselves concern environmentalism. The application of environmentalist principles to the context of space causes concern for the survivability of space and astronomical objects to remain pure and unscathed by the somewhat destructive tendencies of human civilisation.

From the environmentalist perspective, the question is perhaps not whether it is ethical to explore space, but whether we are ethically ready to explore space as a civilisation. This is taking into consideration the current and forever-imminent climate change crisis that we ourselves have caused. Just because we have the technology to explore space doesn't mean that we have the right mindset to explore space.

Essentially, The Solar System is currently an untouched and unpopulated place whose natural beauty and rich resources need protecting as well as much as they need exploring. However, I do feel the saddening inevitability that the entire universe will always be subject to humanity's lust for greater and greater wealth.

Despite this, the stage that we are at now in our exploration of space, which is of course, very initial and primitive provides us with an opportunity to conduct our spacefaring endeavours in a way that does not ruin the environment of space like we have ruined the environment of The Earth.

Is the untold wealth of space exploration too tempting to resist? With the untold amounts of money that can be made from the resources of space, it is perhaps an inevitability that those whom seek enormous amounts of wealth will race to get their way in the realm of space. The economic and financial temptations will be so great that the tycoons and politicians will not be able to resist the literally astronomic amounts of wealth that will be up for grabs. Not only do we need to think about the preservation of space, but also need to think about the preservation of ourselves.

Can we really say that we ready? It is the nature of humanity to fight for to suggest otherwise is to disregard both current affairs and those of history. Warring in the Middle East could soon turn to warring on the Moon and on Mars, as was demonstrated in the recent Brad Pitt film, Ad Astra. Watch the film and ask yourself, is this truly our future? We need to think about what type of spacefarers we wish to be. Will we emulate the way we have explored The Earth in pillaging and plundering the world of its resources? Or will we act in a way that we place sustainability and preservation of the beauty and uniqueness of the cosmic environment at the forefront of all our spacial endeavours?

Is it right to subject spacefarers to the unavoidable psychological traumas that will most definitely result from extensive space travel? We do perhaps not know enough about our own selves to embark on such a grand endeavour as extensive space exploration. Not only will our bodies be placed under unprecedented physical pressure, but our minds will be vulnerable to inordinate psychological issues.

For me personally, the question of space exploration is not framed by a ‘For and Against’ structure for it is my belief that we are destined to explore The Cosmos. However, we should perhaps still take caution in how we approach space exploration. Currently, we have the opportunity to explore space in the right way; in a sustainable, ethical, and environmental way. We should be looking to follow that particular methodological route rather than the route fixated with dollar signs.

“My faith is strongest when the night sky is clear.”

— Cometan, the Omnidoxy

Written by Cometan.