

MULTILINGUAL ASTRONAUTICAL TERMINOLOGY SYMPOSIUM (E8)
Multilingual Astronautical Terminology (1)

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WHAT IS IN A NAME? PERCEIVED IDENTITY, CLASSIFICATION, PHILOSOPHY, AND IMPLIED
DUTY OF THE ‘ASTRONAUT’

Abstract

Various cultural-specific names and labels are assigned to someone who travels to space. Some familiar names include: astronaut, cosmonaut, taikonaut, y háng yuán (“space navigating personnel”), tài kng rén (“spaceman”), as well as Citizen Astronaut, civilian astronaut, space tourist and spaceflight participant. But what is in a name? What are the philosophical and cultural values that are applied in identifying ‘astronaut’? Why are we identifying them accordingly? What are the implications of these labels, on a social, moral and legal level? Moreover, how do spacefaring individuals identify themselves in comparison with popular perceptions?

The complexity of ideas and interrelationships raised here may benefit greatly from a visual representation. In creating a mandala that serves as a tool for visualising this research-as-design, we will highlight these label identifications and classifications from predominant poetic, legal and aesthetic perspectives. Distinctions in labels and concepts change depending on the classification of the space activity, chronological time and culture. Consequently, the implications of the role may also vary implicating associated ethical and legal duties. This poster will collate and demonstrate some of these fundamental concepts and interpretations of ‘astronaut’ from an interdisciplinary and multicultural approach. This visual framework serves to contribute substantive content on these issues while encouraging further discussion on the evolving nature and interrelationship between names and consequences, philosophy and practice, providing both a historical and modern account of the term ‘astronaut.’