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DECOLONIAL SPECULATIONS ON SPACE EXPLORATION

Abstract

With successful landings by space agencies and growing interest from private companies, the prospect of colonising Mars, along with other planets, is no longer a distant dream but an increasingly tangible reality. However, this also entails Mars becoming a prime target for capitalism, which may perpetuate colonial practices such as resource exploitation, economic instability, repression, climate change, and environmental degradation.

As we send probes to gather data in space, they're evolving into modern instruments for staking claims on new worlds. Presently, Mars is regarded as neutral territory, but what if ownership of Martian land is determined by data collection prowess? This prompts critical questions about the management of space exploration and the equitable distribution of its resources.

This work delves into the convergence of speculative design, decolonial theory, and space exploration, offering critical reflections into the socio-political implications of space exploration.

By drawing upon historical contexts of colonialism and guided by decolonial praxis, the work explores parallels between present-day terrestrial challenges and the potential future colonisation of Mars. It serves as a platform for critiquing contemporary immigration discourses through the lens of inter-planetary colonisation, the use of creative storytelling, visual narratives, and design props to provoke critical reflection on societal structures.

The work exemplifies the use of speculative fiction as a tool for social critique and imaginative exploration. By presenting a narrative that blurs the boundaries between Earth and Mars, audiences are prompted to challenge dominant narratives and envision alternative futures that prioritize equity, justice, and inclusivity in space exploration. This approach encourages international collaboration and dialogue on decolonial methodologies in the space sector, underscoring the importance of recognising and addressing colonial legacies in shaping future trajectories of space exploration.

The primary objective of this work is to raise awareness about the colonial legacies shaping space exploration narratives and to stimulate critical dialogue on issues such as migration, nationhood, and power structures in space.