

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space for All: Decolonial Practices in Space (2)

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KOONS MUSK: THE GLOBAL EXTRACTIVISM LEGACY TO COLONIZE SPACE

Abstract

This article presents a decolonial critique of Jeff Koons' proposed art sculptures on SpaceX's lunar project, examining the historical context and the underlying power dynamics within the realm of space exploration. In recent years, as private entities have increasingly engaged in space activities, the intersection of art and space has garnered attention for future aesthetics. However, this intersection is not devoid of historical baggage and power differentials, particularly concerning colonial legacies and ongoing struggles for decolonization. By focusing on Koons' sculptures, which symbolize a fusion of commercialism, art, and space exploration, this article aims to unveil the perpetuation of colonial ideologies within contemporary space endeavors. The Elon Musk colonial legacy in South Africa and its mining frenzy for lithium extractivism for was marked by its involvement in the State Coup in Bolivia against local indigenous Evo Morales affirming that "We will coup whoever we want!" The theoretical frameworks developed in this article offer practical insights for reimagining more equitable and inclusive approaches to space exploration. By challenging colonial legacies and centering marginalized voices, this work contributes to the ongoing efforts towards decolonizing the cosmos and fostering democratic process on modern and traditional developments. In an increasingly complex and interconnected globalization, politics needs to be thought of as a cosmos, a world where, not to say the Zapatistas, many worlds fit. Debating what kind of futures and ways of living can be imagined and experimented, can foster a multipolar culture for space explorations. Giving room to emerging ways of thinking and producing cosmos experimentations can be tracked since propaganda posters from the futurism movement and the fascist conception of destroying to rebuild new order, to the Soviet space communism and Zapatism movement that testify the growing conflict between earthlings (artificial space bound people) and earthbound people (local natural space connexion). Through a decolonial lens, this study seeks to challenge dominant narratives and interrogate the power structures inherent in the representation of space. Drawing on critical theories of decolonization and postcolonialism, the article engages with the complexities of cultural appropriation and commodification, in the context of space exploration.