

The evolution of space exploration From the moon landing to space tourism

The dream of living in space is becoming real, even more today with the growing number of private investments by a new generation of young entrepreneurs.

This is the issue raised by the dossier composed of 4 documents : 2 editorials published in the Economist, respectively in June 1969 and fifty years later, in June 2019 , a cartoon by Dave Granlund published in March 2017 and the lyrics of David Bowie's song called Space Oddity published in 1969. With these documents, one can wonder what the impact of space exploration is for mankind.

Problématiques possibles

Are the new possibilities of space exploration worrying?

How has space exploration evolved throughout the ages?

When the first men landed on the moon, there was much ambition and hope. One can read in the 1969 Economist article that the moon seemed to be a positive place and that it had opened the door to future discoveries of other planets. It had not cost a lot of money and it was useful for humanity. As mentioned at the beginning of the song, the success of the trip to the moon was incredible, with new sensations. The 2019 Economist article mentions that now it is even cheaper and with new technologies, new ambitious countries such as China and India and new entrepreneurs, everything seems possible. In 1969, It was a way to seek something new and people knew that Russia and Europe would soon do the same. It was even thought that a collaboration to go to Mars could be possible. Indeed, the first space industry was international with the USA and Great Britain working together. Nowadays, as mentioned in the 2019 editorial, tourism for the rich, or even for ordinary people as can be seen in the cartoon, and better communication for everybody is about to be achieved as well as mineral exploitation and mass transportation in the future. Space has become an extension of Earth for firms and private individuals and China is ready to send people to the moon too and the USA as well. These possibilities can raise money and could remake how humanity lives with settlers on Mars and space tourism for the rich. According to the 2019 article , space can offer optimism at a time of climate change.

However, there was much disappointment and many failures as well. The end of the song can be interpreted as a possible future where man can be lost because of his ambition in space. What seemed extraordinary 50 years ago has now become usual as one can see in the cartoon. As mentioned in the 1969 editorial, after the first step on the moon, people could disagree with the money spent on space that they would like to be spent solving problems on earth. In fact, the article published in 2019 puts forward the fact that the mission in 1969 did not mean that man could go everywhere in space. It was only a way to signal America's capacities and nothing has been achieved since then, especially by governments. Indeed, a big problem needs to be solved. Laws are needed as space is already crowded. The use of force in space with satellites and anti-satellites weapons and destructive capacities are being developed by all countries. In the USA and France there are already space forces. Governance is required. It seems impossible and could take long and lead to a worse earth.