

V. The Humanistic Approach to Space Exploration: A Cultural Anthropological Look at Space Tourism

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Abstract

This paper examines private space flights from the viewpoint of “tourism anthropology,” a subfield of cultural anthropology. One difference that a private space flight has from national or scientific projects is that it is inseparable from the tourism industry. Advertisements for these private space flights use the same phrases as those used by “exploration tours” to the Amazon rainforest or Antarctica. The phenomenon of tourism today is closely related to globalization. Exploration of the Amazon or Antarctica by ordinary tourists has been enabled by the development of transportation and communication technologies in the process of globalization. This shows that private space flights are categorized as similar to or the extension of sightseeing tours on the ground. In other words, this is “space tourism.”

We may reasonably consider space tours to be an extension of these exploration tours. Thus, they would be a tool that provides an old experience or one that is a projection of the image on the ground. This raises another serious problem. When people begin to consume the place called “space,” an industrial system that supports this consumption may develop; however, we cannot expect other possibilities of space activities or scientific results to develop. In so-called “exploration tours,” tourists would simply reproduce their own image, but completely ignoring reality of the space.

Keywords: Space Anthropology, *Lebenswelt (Life world)*, Tourism, Sample, Perspective

1. Introduction

Many people, not only researchers in related fields, will agree that the advance of humanity into space has brought significant changes in all aspects of our thoughts, values, lives, and society. The aim of this paper is to consider this issue as a new possibility for human culture and examine it from an anthropological point of view. The final purpose of my study is to consider the following problems.

1. Will space tourism promote expansion into space and the exploitation of space by human beings?
2. Will space tourism result in change to the recognition of human beings' universe? And/or can space tourism bring the creation of the new worldview to human beings?

The topic we treat here is the problem of "tourism." The drastic development of transportation technology in the 20th century is not just a result of the development of scientific knowledge. It is people's "desire" for mobility in the capitalistic market that drove the restless improvement of the technology. The breakthrough in the cost problem of the technical development is not just a matter of scientific knowledge but of cost-effectiveness, which depends on "demand."

A typical example is "tourism." It is a subject in which economy, culture, and society come into play, and hence has been an important topic in recent anthropology.

However, what kind of influence space tourism has on further future space activities has not yet been sufficiently examined. In general, it may be expected that space tourism would promote the exploitation of space and expansion of human beings into space. Since not much data is available on this subject, I have attempted to consider space tourism with reference to previous studies on tourism from the domains of Cultural Anthropology and Sociology. Here can be found two research questions on space tourism.

The concept of "space tourism" today has the potential to promote the development of new technologies such as "space elevator" and "space hotels." In this paper I discuss the social and cultural problems of the concept of "space tourism," which may come to have a large influence on future space activities, from an anthropological point of view.

2. Separation of Space and "*Lebenswelt*"

The concept "space" has been, without doubt, the domain of scientists from the beginning of the modern era. The separation of science and religion can be dated from the establishment of modern science and folk or theological cosmologies. Cultural

science, however, established its foundation as an objective discipline by a positivist approach to the “world,” as distinct from the concept of “space (or cosmos).” The “world” here, however, should be considered as *Lebenswelt* (life world), namely the world of perceptual experiences in one’s life.

Concerning *Lebenswelt*, Edmund Husserl argues that “in whatever way we may be conscious of the world as universal horizon, as coherent universe of existing objects, we, each ‘I-the-man’ and all of us together, belong to the world as living with one another in the world; and the world is our world, valid for our consciousness as existing precisely through this ‘living together.’ We, as living in wakeful world-consciousness, are constantly active on the basis of our passive having of the world” [Husserl 1936/70:108–109].

Here, I emphasize the separation of the “cosmos” and “*Lebenswelt*” during the process on the foundation of modern scientific researches, which were continuous in the folk/religious cosmology. In ancient times, “cosmos” meant “the state of order” that developed from the “initial state of chaos,” forming part of a philosophical or religious cosmology.

Ancient cosmology is connected to contemporary astronomy and astrophysics via the modern scientific theory of the cosmological structure. However, there is a fundamental gap between ancient cosmology and modern science. Namely, in modern science the “state of order” is not an a priori premise but something to be elucidated a posteriori.

“Space” has become, therefore, an “unknown area” for scientists. It is a field that imparts rich scientific knowledge; however, it is no longer an obvious thing that can be experienced directly by human beings. Modern cultural science, on the other hand, has been attempting positive study of the “*Lebenswelt*,” namely the empirical/inductive search for a universal law by reducing everything to a fact, in order to establish their foundation as a “science.” It can be considered a pseudoscientific approach, whose point of view fails to capture the concept of “space.”

3. Globalization: Space Returning to “*Lebenswelt*”

Today, we are facing an historic turning point in “globalization” as a consequence of the advance of modernization, in particular the overwhelming market economy. We sometimes interpret the English word “globalization” as “terrestrialization” or “worldization.” But it is not that our “*Lebenswelt*” has expanded to a terrestrial scale, but rather “forced to expand.” On the other hand, the rapid expansion of our “*Lebenswelt*” is no longer obvious nor is it familiar to everyone.

It is the premise of this paper that “space” is again becoming the subject of cultural science in today’s situation, as described above. Our “*Lebenswelt*” is no longer separated from “space,” when we consider globalization. Throughout the 20th century space has been becoming a place of human activities. It began as a place to express national prestige, but the economic aspects, the political aspects directly related to military action, and public acceptance are obtaining more and more influence on space activities.

The important point here is the fact that the direction of the development of space technologies today is not only a significant factor influencing globalization but also lies along the same line as the social and cultural movements that led to the globalization.

4. Sociological and Cultural Anthropological Approach on Tourism

Let us examine space trips from the viewpoint of “tourism anthropology,” a subfield of cultural anthropology. One difference that private space flights have from national or scientific projects is that they are inseparable from the tourism industry. Advertisements for private space flights tend to use the same phrases as “exploration tours” to the Amazon rainforest or Antarctica. This shows that private space flights are categorized as similar to or the extension of sightseeing tours on the ground, and hence they are “space tourism.”

We should note that tourism is a modern phenomenon. The concept of tourism for recreation or entertainment by the general public began in the 19th century along with a drastic change in lifestyle due to the development of transportation and the Industrial Revolution.

Thus, on beginning the examination of space tourism, I would like to introduce some definitions of tourism from sociological studies.

McKean, who is a pioneer of tourism studies, presented a typical example of the definition of “tourism.” He states tourism is “a profound, widely human desire to know ‘others’* with the reciprocal possibility that we may come to know ourselves ... a quest or an odyssey to see, and perhaps to understand, the whole inhabited earth” [McKean1977].

McKean treated tourism as a subject in which economy, culture, and society come into play, and hence has been an important topic in recent anthropology and sociology.

In addition, it may be said that the definitions of MacCannell and Middleton are representative.

“Tourism is a primary ground for the production of new cultural forms on a global base. In the name of tourism, capital and modernized peoples have been deployed to the most

remote regions of the world. Tourism is not just an aggregate of merely commercial activities; it is also an ideological framing of history, nature, and tradition; a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature to its own needs" [MacCannell, D. 1992].

Middleton argues that "although travel and tourism is invariably identified as an 'industry,' it is best understood as a total market ... [which] reflects the cumulative demand and consumption patterns of visitors for a very wide range of travel-related products" [Middleton, 1998].

The drastic development of transportation technology in the 20th century is not just a result of the development of scientific knowledge. It is people's "desire" for mobility in the capitalistic market that drove the restless improvement of this technology. The breakthrough in the cost problem of technical development is not just a matter of scientific knowledge but of cost-effectiveness, which depends on "demand." As McKean wrote, tourism is "a profound, widely human desire to know 'others' with the reciprocal possibility that we may come to know ourselves ... a quest or an odyssey to see, and perhaps to understand, the whole inhabited earth" [McKean, *ibid*]. However, until recent times space had not become an object of tourism. In a consideration of space tourism, Urry, a well-known researcher on tourism, examined the characteristics of space tourism. He argues that the study of tourism is about "how and why for short periods people leave their normal place of work and residence. It is about consuming goods and services that are in some sense unnecessary. They are consumed because they supposedly generate pleasurable experiences that are different from everyday life" [Urry 1990].

According to Urry, a trip first heads outside the field of residence and labor, and the stay there is short and temporary. There is a clear intention that the tourist will return "home" after a relatively short period of time. Namely, a tour should return "home" at the end. It does not continue on to a long stay or emigration.

Besides which, one can find a perspective to the object of the tour. Various places are chosen as the object of this perspective, because people strongly expect the pleasure of finding measures or meanings that are different from those of their daily lives. These expectations are produced and supported by films, TV programs, magazines, and other media. They produce and enhance the perspective.

The selection of "places to see" in a typical guidebook comes from the perspective of the media. And perspectives are produced by the activities of the media that are different from the scientific knowledge of space.

Such perspectives of the tourism are reproduced. They are directed to scenes different

from tourists' daily experience. And if they are captured, understood, and reproduced via pictures, postcards, films, and models, also in space tours the tourists capture and reproduce those scenes that have been already captured and understood in the films, etc. This changes our recognition of space.

Furthermore, perspectives are constructed through symbols, and tourism is nothing but a collection of the symbols. For tourism, the image of the destination must be systematically produced and supplied. If a tourist reads a guidebook, takes a space flight, goes to a place shown in the book and takes a similar picture, his experience there is just a confirmation or consumption of the images and symbols he had already received before he started. It is a kind of pseudo-event.

Thus, it is possible that all we will obtain from a space tour is the confirmation of the images and consumption of the symbols of space that have already been constructed. Therefore, we cannot expect changes in our cosmology, views on the world, history, and nations.

The phenomenon of tourism today is closely related to globalization. The exploration of the Amazon or Antarctica by ordinary tourists has been enabled by the development of transportation and communication technologies, namely those same products that enable globalization. The space tour we see now lies in the extension of these exploration tours. It will probably be a tool that provides a "new experience" that projects the images on the ground. This invokes another serious problem.

When people simply consume the place called "space," an industrial system supporting it may develop, but given that, perhaps we would not be able expect that other space activities or scientific results would be possible scientific results. In so-called "exploration tours," the tourists just reproduce their own image, ignoring knowledge brought by the exploration or the reality in the destination.

I may demonstrate with the following diagrams the argument that the above-mentioned tourism relates to space tourism.

Diagram1. Separation of Space and “*Lebenswelt*” : Before Space Tourism

- Pre-modern

Cosmology. View of the world
(Integrated inhabited world and Space)



- Modern

Separation of “*Lebenswelt*” and Space
Lebenswelt;
the world of perceptual experiences in one’s life

(cf Husserl)

Husserl Edmund, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*

Hrsg v Elisabeth Stöcker, 3 Aufl Meiner, Hamburg 1936/70

Diagram2. Separation of “*Lebenswelt*” and Cosmos

Lebenswelt: The object of Humanities.

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Cosmos

Space: The object of Science

Diagram3.Re-integration of *Lebenswelt* and Space

21th Century

Globalization as a consequence of the advance of modernization, in particular the overwhelming market economy.



**Space Returning to "*Lebenswelt*"
And also, it have become the object of tourism.**

5. Space Tourism

Today, our "*Lebenswelt*" is closely related to space, even for those who are not astronauts nor involved directly in space activities. Namely, space is no longer an "unknown space" separated from people's lives.

The approach of cultural studies may be useful as we consider relations between ordinary people and space such as space tourism, as well as future problems such as resource mining in, and emigration to space.

Recent technological improvements have raised the possibility of space flights for ordinary citizens, thus invoking the emergence of new businesses. Various projects for space travel are ongoing on a private basis. Furthermore, some are considering concrete plans for the construction of space elevators or space hotels.

fig.1

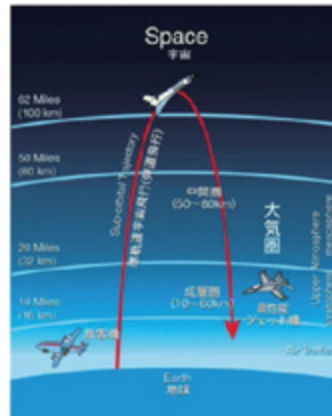
Space Tourism



fig.2

JTB Corporation: Space trip plan

JTB and an American space travel agency, Space Adventures, have begun providing space tours to Japanese customers. A trip to the International Space Station costs 20 million dollars, and a tour around the moon costs a hundred million doll



Now, let us examine the space flights from the viewpoint of “tourism anthropology,” a sub-field of cultural anthropology. One difference of private space flights from national or scientific projects is that they are inseparable from the tourism industry. Advertisements for space flights use the same phrases as “exploration tours” to the Amazon rainforest or Antarctica. This shows that private space flights are categorized as similar to or the extension of sightseeing tours on the ground, and hence they are “space tourism.” So are private space flights a new experiment with scientific knowledge or only a repetition of the existing image of industrialized “esoteric tours” in the marketing system?

I would like to emphasize that tourism is a modern phenomenon. Tourism for recreation or entertainment by the general public began in the 19th century with a drastic change in lifestyle due to the development of transportation and the Industrial Revolution.

Here, I use the discussion by Urry, a well-known researcher on tourism, to examine the characteristics of space tourism. According to Urry, a trip first heads outside the field of residence and labor, and the stay there is short and temporary. There is a clear intention that the tourist returns “home” after a relatively short period of time. Namely, a tour should return “home” at the end. It does not continue on to a long stay or emigration.

Besides, one can find a perspective to the object of the tour. Various places are chosen as the object of perspective in a tour, because people strongly expect the pleasure of finding measures or meanings that are different from those in their daily lives. Such expectations are produced and supported by films, TV programs, magazines, and other media. They produce and enhance the perspective.

The selection of “places to see” in a typical guidebook comes from perspective of the media. And the perspectives are produced by the activities of the media that are different from the scientific knowledge on space. Such perspectives of the tourism are reproduced. They are directed to the scenes different from the daily experience.

And if they are captured, understood, and reproduced via pictures, postcards, films, and models, also in the space tours the tourists capture and reproduce those scenes that have been already captured and understood in films, etc.

Furthermore, the perspectives are constructed through symbols, and tourism is nothing but a collection of symbols.

For the tourism, the image of the destination must be systematically produced and supplied. If a tourist reads a guidebook, takes a space flight, goes to the place shown in the book and takes a similar picture, her/his experience there is just a confirmation or

consumption of the images and symbols she/he had already obtained before beginning. It is a kind of pseudo-event.

Thus, it is possible that all we will obtain from space tourism is just confirmation of the images and consumption of the symbols about space that have been constructed on Earth. Therefore, we cannot expect changes in our cosmology, views on the world, history, and nations.

6. Conclusions

In this paper, I point out that, in future space activities, the approach of cultural sciences is important, as social and cultural influences are becoming increasingly significant and also that space activities may bring significant changes in contemporary understanding of society and culture. In the discussion of space tourism, however, I pointed out the possible problem that, as space is industrialized, we may no longer be able to count on new ideas nor scientific development.

Here, I would like to ask again the following questions on space tourism.

1. Will space tourism promote the expansion of human beings into space and the exploitation of space?
2. Will space tourism result in change to the idea of the universe of human beings? And/or can space tourism bring about the creation of a new worldview for human beings?

The phenomenon of tourism today is closely related to globalization. The exploration of the Amazon or Antarctica by ordinary tourists has been enabled by the development of transportation and communication technologies, which are the products that enable globalization.

The space tour we see now lies in the extension of these exploration tours. It will probably be a tool that provides a “new experience” that projects images onto the Earth. This would create another serious problem. When people come to only consume the place called “space,” an industrial system supporting this may develop, but perhaps we cannot expect the other possibilities of space activities or scientific results. In so-called “exploration tours,” the tourists just reproduce their own image, ignoring knowledge brought by exploration or reality in the destination.

In this paper, I point out that, in future space activities, the approach of cultural sciences is important as social and cultural influences are becoming increasingly significant and also that space activities may bring significant changes in contemporary understanding of society and culture.

In the discussion on space tourism, however, I am concerned with the possible problem that, as space is industrialized, we may no longer be able to be sure of new ideas or scientific development. Lastly, the future direction of this study will take into consideration methods of overcoming the limits of modern tourism. Concerning applying a theory into practice, training facilitators of space tourism equipped with both nature scientific and humanistic knowledge.

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