

Symposium 2 "Anthropology of outer space"

Assoc. Prof. Sean Mitchell, Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology at Rutgers University, opened the symposium with his plenary paper on *Scale, Politics and Possible Futures of Space Travel*. He presented the results of his ethnographic study of the Brazilian space program, in particular the debates between neoliberal and national models of space exploration, as well as a number of multi-level (from local to interethnic) conflicts that have unfolded around its implementation.

The symposium continued its work within the framework of two panels – “Anthropology of Near-Earth Technologies” and “Domesticating Outer Space: Case studies in Philosophy and History”. The final discussion took place at the round table on “The Prospects for the Anthropology of Deep Space in the USA, Europe and Russia”.

The “Anthropology of Near Earth Technologies” panel (moderated by Irina Pozravko, debutant Shawn Mitchell) combined three reports. Denis Sivkov from RANPEA, Moscow presented the results of his study on *Space Exploration at Home*. Denis spoke about his ethnographic research of amateurs, who literally have created at home: a) a satellite, b) trained a mouse (mouse) and launch them into open space, and c) make a space suit with their own hands. The main thesis of his report was that space is always a local story. The following two reports were methodologically related, but presented two cases separated from each other in time and space: Irina Popravko (LSAI, TSU) *Comprehensive amateur expedition (CSE) to study the Tunguska meteorite: searching for alternative forms of sociality of ep space in the Soviet science* and Ivan Tchalakov (University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria; PAST-Center, TSU) *Anthropology of “Lost” Technologies: Endurance, Symbols, and Rocket Engine*. Irina talked about the legendary expedition organized in Tomsk in the late 1950s that persistently studied the site of the Tungus catastrophe for more than 40 years, and Ivan about how in the late 1990s the young engineers and space entrepreneurs from XCOR company in the USA restored the forgotten technology for manufacturing reusable rocket engine. Both authors interpreted their stories through the common conceptual frame based on such categories as stamina, endurance, and passion, and as based on a special form of utopia.

The “Domesticating Outer Space” panel that unfolded on the second day combined three historical cases and one study of popular science materials. There were three stories about space on Earth:

(1) Anna Dvoretzkaya from the Siberian Federal University (Krasnoyarsk) presented the results of her and Anton Pavlov study of BIOS experiment in Krasnoyarsk, carried out between 1960-ies and 1980-ies, and where a team of Soviet scientists (biologists, nutritionists, psychologists, genetics, etc.) has made major steps in solving the problem of human life support in space. Archival materials, as well as data from interviews with participants in the experiment, which are the basis of their report, gave grounds for discussion on future interdisciplinary research of this case.

(2) Evgeny Kuchinov (Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University) presented a story from the history of the Soviet avant-garde - the philosophy of the Gordin brothers, Russian cosmists. In the 1920s, they were engaged in cosmolinguistics (Wolf Gordin invented the cosmic language of the joint-stock company) and space dietology, and also reflected on the beginning of cosmic life through overcoming morphism in technology. Surprisingly, the ideas of the Gordins fro, almost a century ago turned out to be in tune with contemporary philosophical questions of space exploration.

(3) The post-graduate student from the Department of Anthropology and Ethnology at TSU, Alexander Yermolova, opened for those present a page on the history of Tomsk related to space and children - her report "*He said: "Let's go!" - the Space in the World of Soviet Children in Tomsk*" explored the space theme in Tomsk children during the 1960s and was based on interesting visual materials (photos from the demonstrations), which illustrated the important place of space in the ideology of the USSR. The author noted that children were not accidentally chosen by Soviet propaganda - as those who will live in the future (which was also associated with space exploration). Participants discussed the reasons for sudden drop of visual materials on the topic of space in children's space after 1967 and possible ways to interpret this finding.

The meeting ended with the presentation of Anna Malyar (Novokuznetsk branch of Kemerovo State University), who analyzed how the Universe was visualized in the popular science materials. Studying the illustrations of Universe from more than 70 publications, the author presented the tools and visual means used by the authors of these publications to represent the topology of Universe, which included also an analysis of the special status of invisible objects in space and an original classification of the images and the techniques of how to make the invisible visible. The established dynamics the ways of visualization of the Universe turns out to be caused by specific cultural narratives.

A two-day round-table discussion on deep-space anthropology researches was opened with special presentation of Lisa Messeri from Yale University, one of the world's leading anthropologists in the field. She made her presentation online via Skype from the California coast, and presented the results of her ethnographic research among US astronomers, focusing on the human imagination of worlds beyond Earth. At the beginning she also made a short panorama of the emergence and development of anthropology of outer space as new field of modern anthropology in the USA and Europe and its relationships with other scientific fields such as the study of science and technology (ethnography of science), the philosophy of space, and visual anthropology. The discussion that followed made everyone present understand the potential of this new area of research for Russia, which can provide many interesting fields and theories in the future, not only for space research, but also for the development of anthropology in general.

In essence, the symposium was only a starting point in the further institutionalization of a new field of research in anthropology, and most importantly in the formation of a new research community.