

Handout 2 - Arguments against the Apollo Mission

Document 1: "Moon Dust and Black Disgust" by Booker Griffin, Jr. Los Angeles Sentinel, July 24th 1969

America's landing on the moon is one of the miracles of the ages. Few instances in the chronicles of man, at their time, were as significant. It is a truly remarkable feat and for that success I congratulate the country.

Taken at face value, it would seem that all Americans would rejoice at such a monumental occurrence. I do not.

The high priority that this country has put on landing on the moon and exploring outer space in the face of deplorable human suffering in this nation and throughout the world again asserts the fact that mechanical values supersede human values in this country.

NOT ELATED

Since I was a small boy and read the Buck Rogers comic strips, I have always hoped to be alive when man landed on the moon and explored outer space. Now that this has happened and will continue to happen, I am not elated, but alienated. As I watched the historic event on TV and thought of how proud Americans must be, inclusive of people like Mississippians, Sam Yorty, and others, I experienced the human urge to vomit.

As I peered into the TV screen, I asked myself, Can't these people see how inhuman, how unjust, how criminal it is to spend \$24 billion dollars for space exploration and to dribble out sparse thousands to improve the human predicament "down here on the ground."

Life to every single human being on this earth was granted without consent. The actions of our mothers and our fathers gifted us with life by proxy. We did not choose to gain life. We did not view life and say I want to live. Uncontrollable consequences gave us life and at some point in our consciousness we realized the value of life and wished to sustain it.

Once the umbilical cord was cut and the breath of life flowed into us, the forces of creation granted us the ability to feel and want and need and desire and suffer and wish and all the other things that being human means. As long as we have life these factors encompass us. When we die or if we were never born these sensate sensibilities are not realized.

RESPONSIBILITY PLACE

All societies that sanction birth, and they all do, and grant the right to bear children, must by necessity, also assume the responsibility of using the fruits of the labors of that society to enhance the human sensibilities of the persons it permits to be born without consent of the persons born. To fail to do this is a civic crime.

America's insensitivity to human life is a human disgrace. Beyond humanism, when we consider the black condition in our own country, the space program soundly tells black people that we are still

Moon Dust and Black Disgust
Griffin, Booker
Los Angeles Sentinel (1934-2005); Jul 24, 1969; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Sentinel
pg. B7

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By BOOKER GRIFFIN

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America's insensitivity to human life is a human disgrace. Beyond humanism, when we consider the black condition in our own country, the space program soundly tells black people that we are still considered less than human by this country.

Here is a country that cannot pass a rat control bill to protect black babies from rats, but can spend billions to explore rocks, craters and dust thousands of miles away.

Thing of Value?

These strange, faraway places with no ability to feel, see or touch are more valuable in America than black humans who can feel the anguish of denial, degradation and oppression.

America's space appropriations make pari demands for 40 acres and a mule and almost any form of reparation that blacks demand currently reasonable, feasible and fair. Space has received special treatment, why shouldn't blacks?

We are as underexplored by this country as space was before we spent \$24 billion. If the space agency has been nickle and dimed by this country like black people have been, we wouldn't be able to rocket to the top of the Empire State Bldg., let alone the moon.

America has proved that she will pay for what she honors and believes in. Look at space; look at Vietnam; look at the South and then face the facts: we ain't in the "in crowd" yet.

America does not honor and believe in the dignity and rights of black people. While some brothers and sisters will rejoice with scoops of dead moon dust, I feel live human disgust.

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Discussion Questions:

- After reading the article, what might you believe was the author's sentiment toward the Apollo 11 moon landing and the Apollo program? Why?
- What does "40 acres and a mule" refer to in the article? Why might the author have included that phrase?
- What may have been the purpose of the article being published?



Document 2: CNN Soundtracks, “Moon Landing Criticism”

Go to bit.ly/AgainstApollo and watch the video.

Discussion Questions:

- What might you believe were the public’s feelings about the Apollo 11 mission in 1969 based on the content and comments you saw and heard in the video clip?
- Using the content and comments made in the video clip, how might you argue that the Apollo 11 mission, and the Apollo program in general, was an unnecessary endeavor?

Document 3: Historical Photos



Image 1: New York City urban decay in 1969



Image 2: Abandoned Automobile on City Streets



Image 3: Group protesting the Apollo 11 mission at NASA's Kennedy Space Center

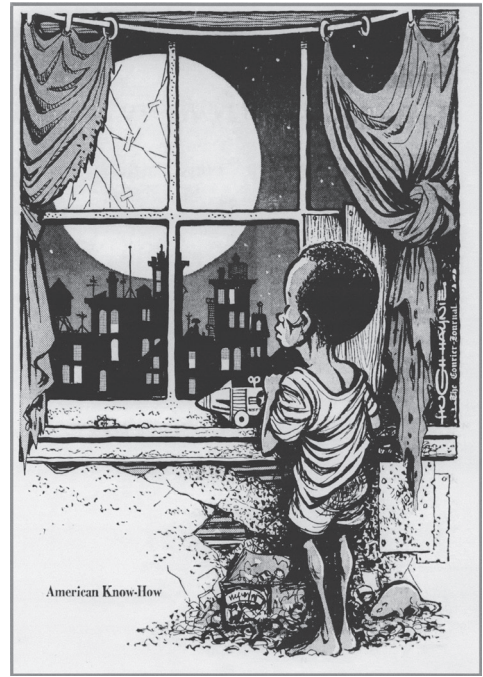


Image 4: "American Know-How" editorial illustration



Discussion Questions:

- What do you see in **Image 1**? How might you describe the environment? Does the environment look to be supported financially?
- What do you see in **Image 2**? How might you describe the environment? Does the environment look to be supported financially?
- What do you see in **Image 3**? How might you describe the group in the image? What might be the intention of the group?
- What do you notice in **Image 4**? What items in the illustration stand out to you? Why might the artist have chosen certain items to be in the illustration? What might the artist be trying to convey with this illustration?