

Post-colonialist Perceptions of Lewis' Out of the Silent Planet

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The Italian artist Michelangelo Buonarroti viewed the goal of sculpting as the manipulation of a marble block until the figure within is set free. Just as a carving artist seeks to release its piece from rock, a literary artist desires his art form to be carved from an obscure idea into clear apprehension. The most beautiful of these art pieces are placed in a museum of their own right, the literary canon. A great part of literature's beauty is the ability of the artist to present his purpose in indiscrete ways, in some degree or another, sliding his message in the literature's elements during its construction. In an enjoyable science fiction/fantasy book, C.S. [Lewis](#) uses his own techniques to convey his feelings and attitudes as he often had in the past. With *Out of the [Silent Planet](#)*, Lewis reveals his acquiescence to "[Post-colonialist](#)" thought in a very hidden way. He presents a story on an alien world, navigating around a reader's earthly partialities to open their minds to his beliefs.

Post-colonialism is a discourse draped in history. In one point in time or another, European

colonialism dominated most non-European lands since the end of the Renaissance. Naturally, colonialists depicted the cultures of non-Europeans incorrectly and inferior. Traditionally, the canon has misappropriated and misrepresented these cultures, but also the Western academia has yet to teach us the valuable and basic lessons that allow true representations to develop. Partly in response, Post-colonialism arose. Though this term is a broad one, Post-colonialists generally agree on certain key principles. They understand that colonialism exploits the dominated people or country in one way or another, evoking inequalities. Examples of past inequalities include “genocide, economic exploitation, cultural decimation and political exclusion...” (Loomba 9-10). They abhor traditional colonialism but also believe that every people, through the context of their own cultures, have something to contribute to our understanding of human nature (Loomba 1-20). This is the theme that Lewis prescribes in his, self described, “satirical fantasy”, *Out of the Silent Planet* (Of Other 77).

Sold in bookstores throughout the world and mostly on the “religious” shelves, C.S. Lewis is hardly recognized in the post-colonial field. But of dozens of authors that could express this discourse, there is no better suited than the British professor.

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