

# *The Martian* and the Colonial Frame of Mind

Can Ulucan



*The shot in which Dr. Mark Watney (Matt Damon) says, “... so technically, I colonized Mars,” is a clear example of the colonial frame of mind Can Ulucan’s video essay explores. Watch the video essay here: <https://flowcasts.uni-hannover.de/nodes/rzæeM>*

## Creator’s Statement

I have always been and still am fascinated by space exploration. Even today, learning, thinking, talking and daydreaming about the universe takes up a certain amount of my time (probably a tiny bit more than it should). Our technology and scientific knowledge have been growing exponentially, especially since the nineteenth century. I am not sure if our sense of ethics has always been able to catch up with that speed. “Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they could, they didn’t stop to think if they should,” says the fictional Dr. Ian Malcolm (Jeff Goldblum) in the movie *Jurassic Park* (Steven Spielberg, 1993). This quote was one of the things I had in mind while working on the video essay. I take a skeptical stance toward space exploration in order to make people pause and think about its possible consequences – before getting excited about spending their winter vacation at a five-star hotel on Mars.

In the first half of the video essay, I present a very general timeline of the history of aviation and space travel to show how fast humanity’s collective technology has been developing, and in the second half, I wanted to remind people of how quickly the aforementioned technologies can be and have been used to the advantage of a certain group of people, instead of for humanity’s good as a whole.

Even though I have immensely enjoyed watching *The Martian* (Ridley Scott, 2015) both as a work of science fiction and a thriller, I could not stop myself from considering the possibility of bestowing all that technology on people whose primary goal is to possess things. To have simply more! I sincerely hope that my anxiety and skepticism will turn out to be unnecessary and false, and that humanity will be able to make use of our galaxy and its resources without leaving a big mess behind.

### Author Biography

**Can Ulucan** (he/him) is a student of the North American Studies Master's program at Leibniz University Hannover (LUH) and holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Ege University, Turkey. His research interests are Science Fiction, movies of Spike Lee, and remakes and parodies of movies. He also enjoys rereading works of literature from a postcolonial point of view. He is currently working on an essay about spin-off movies from the 2000s.

### Works Cited

Scott, Ridley. *The Martian*. Scott Free Productions, 2015.  
Spielberg, Steven. *Jurassic Park*. Universal Pictures, 1993.