



## REPRESENTATIONS OF PRIMITIVISM IN DANIEL DEFOE'S *ROBINSON CRUSOE*

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### Abstract

*In this paper, the notion of primitivism in Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) is analyzed through its representation in the story. Through a detailed reading of the text, it can be seen how primitivism serves in Robinson Crusoe as a literary mechanism that helps to express the superiority of Europeans and support their colonial expansion. The research is based on the following five main issues: Friday as the prototype of the "savage," the representation of the island as a place of primitive life, language as the mechanism of colonization, the Manichean model of colonial representation, and ideology of colonial domination behind the narrative. By using both historical and textual approaches, it becomes clear how "Robinson Crusoe" represents the ideas of the Age of Enlightenment concerning non-European cultures. The results show that through the representation of primitivism, Defoe fulfills certain ideological purposes by creating a hierarchy of civilized and primitive people according to the needs of imperialistic policy of England in the beginning of the 18th century.*

### Keywords

*Primitivism, Robinson Crusoe, Colonialism, Friday, Representation, Defoe, Postcolonial Criticism, Eighteenth-Century Literature, Language, Manichean Allegory, etc.*

### Full Article

#### **Introduction:**

The English novel Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe, which was first published in 1719, is a representative example of an extensively-read book in English literature.

Conceived as a story of entrepreneurship and human endurance, the novel has been considered as an exemplar of English fiction and a classic example of human endurance for ages. However, there is a hidden ideology of primitivism in the novel, which consists of the images of the primitive, the savage, and the non-civilized that conform to the colonial mentality of the era when Daniel Defoe lived (Defoe 1).

The term primitivism, when viewed in a literary and cultural context, refers to either the idealization or the disparagement of cultures thought to be beyond the realm of Western culture. As pointed out by scholars like Marianna Torgovnick, primitivism entails certain means of representation which make the "primitive" culture different from civilized Europe in a negative way (Torgovnick, 2). In the case of Robinson Crusoe, these representations do not serve only as descriptive features but as ideological aspects which support the European dominance in other lands and cultures.

The image of Friday, the native man who comes under Crusoe's rule and domination, is the main vehicle through which the primitive state is depicted in the novel. Friday is not just an individual character but a composite character through whom the text projects its fears and assumptions concerning non-Western people. The depiction of Friday and the overall landscape of the island are used by Defoe to construct a story of Western domination and superiority.

This paper asserts that Robinson Crusoe is a text based on primitivism, and the images of the primitive people presented in the text serve the purposes of ideology that form the core of the narrative in the book. It is not just a presentation of primitive communities, but a formation of



primitive societies through techniques adopted in the narrative in order to justify their enslavement by Europeans. Through the analysis of Defoe's images of the primitive through language, characters and narrative structure, the study proves how colonial assumptions are embedded in canonical literature that have contributed immensely towards forming Western ideas about non-European cultures.

### Literature Review:

Robinson Crusoe scholarship has come a long way since the past few decades when criticism focused on appreciating the revolutionary nature of literature depicted in the novel. Interpretation provided by scholars like Ian Watt focused more on how the novel contributed to the evolution of the novel form along with praising the aspect of agency (Watt 9). Though useful for understanding the formal aspects of the novel, they often overlooked the issues of colonialism and primitivism depicted in the book.

Contemporary post-colonial criticism has significantly changed the way scholars have viewed Robinson Crusoe. Edward Said's *Orientalism* offered an analytical approach for the examination of how Western writings construct images of the Other in order to serve imperial objectives (Said 1). While Said concentrated primarily on the literature and culture of the nineteenth century, his critical techniques have been helpful in the study of older literature such as that by Defoe. His followers have started realizing that canonical writings, including those seminal writings, are part of colonial ideology formation.

The reworking of the Robinson Crusoe by J. M. Coetzee in his postcolonial novel titled "Foe" is a landmark event in the scholarly consideration of this novel. Through its emphasis on the perspective from which Friday is telling his story and the violence that is implied in the act of colonization performed by Crusoe, Coetzee's novel encourages literary critics to reconsider the ideological aspects hidden in the original novel. The scholarly reaction to Coetzee's intervention has increasingly focused on the portrayal of native populations in the Robinson Crusoe and the institutionalizing of colonial relationships. This is especially true for the works of Peter Hulme who is engaged in the study of colonial encounters in Caribbean literature (Hulme, 116).

"Gone Primitive" by Marianna Torgovnick provides a comprehensive explanation of primitivism as a cultural practice in Western literature and philosophy. Torgovnick argues that primitivism is not just a simplistic glorification of primitive people, but a series of representational techniques through which Western societies identify themselves in relation to their primitive counterpart (Torgovnick, 3). The author illustrates how primitivism serves several purposes, even contradictory ones, including expressing both fascination with and disgust towards non-Western civilizations as well as representing both progressive and conservative ideologies. Torgovnick's theory is particularly effective for analyzing the novel "Robinson Crusoe," where primitivism is praised in some passages (e.g., Crusoe's skill acquisition) and denounced in others (e.g., intelligence of Friday).

Friday is becoming a central focus of discussion within the postcolonial studies realm. Scholars like Gayatri Spivak have analyzed the representation of the colonized subject within classic literature to discover that he has been rendered silent by or assimilated into the story of the colonizer. This can be seen in Robinson Crusoe where Friday's inability to speak English and his quick submission to the will of Crusoe suggest that he lacks intelligence and that his depiction is for the purpose of fulfilling the ideological agenda of the novel (Spivak, 73). However, there have been instances of resistance found in Friday despite his silence within the text.

Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* offers an early analysis of language as the main site of colonial domination. As Fanon writes, speaking in a particular tongue amounts to embracing a world and a culture; this definition highlights the significance of the challenge facing



Crusoe when he sets about educating Friday in the English language (Fanon, 25). This idea is elaborated on by Homi Bhabha in terms of the concept of colonial mimicry, whereby colonial discourse produces subjects who are very much like but not quite like their colonizers – a process that is actually stabilizing rather than destabilizing of colonial power (Bhabha, 86). The discussion by Abdul R. JanMohamed of the Manichean Allegory in colonial discourse illustrates how difference of race is transformed into a metaphysical difference and how binaries are created in texts such as Robinson Crusoe (JanMohamed, 80).

However, despite such developments in the field, there still remain certain gaps within the critical discourse. While many postcolonial critics have tended to interpret Friday as a figure embodying the notion of colonized otherness, considerably fewer efforts have been made to analyze the depiction of the island environment that positions primitivism as something natural that justifies the necessity of European colonization. Moreover, while there is plenty of research on the ways in which the novel discusses certain historical instances of colonization, there is little research on the construction of primitive identity through language and narrative.

#### Contribution of the paper to Postcolonial Criticism

The present paper will be an addition to the postcolonial critique of Defoe's novel as it explores how the mechanisms of primitivism are constructed in Defoe's novel. The paper will pay attention to the following five aspects of primitivism in Defoe's novel: the representation of Friday, the representation of the island as a primitive land, language as a tool of colonization, Manichean scheme of colonial representation, and narrative techniques that bring the reader to the position of Crusoe's colonial point of view. Thus, the joint consideration of the mentioned aspects allows us to understand how the representations of primitivism in Robinson Crusoe are ideological.

#### Primitivism and Characterization: The Case of Friday:

The arrival of Friday marks the beginning of a significant phase in the novel Robinson Crusoe, setting up readers' perspectives on both the island and Crusoe's place in it. Yet the character of Friday needs to be understood not just as a real-life person but also as primitivism itself as embodied in text. Defoe's creation of a primitive becomes an endorsement of colonial domination and relations.

The first impression of Friday from the novel is useful for understanding Defoe's depiction of the natives. Crusoe meets Friday when he is running away from his attackers, who are "a young and strong young man, well-shaped and straight-limbed" (Defoe, 149). This emphasis on physical attributes over mental or emotional attributes instantly places Friday in the position of primitivism that emphasizes the body over mind. This depiction is related to Enlightenment historiography, where the non-European people are often placed in hierarchical stages of development based on their intelligence.

More importantly, Friday's poor fluency in English plays an important part not only in his characterization but also in the depiction of primitivism in the novel. The learning process involved as Crusoe teaches Friday his language becomes a signifier of Friday's advancement towards civilization. However, Defoe's portrayal of the linguistic development of Friday shows the underlying assumptions about language, intelligence, and cultural hierarchy. Firstly, Friday is shown to have been able to make noises and learn some basic words, his speech being represented in a phonetic form so as to emphasize his otherness. Crusoe observes that "he could speak but very little, and that very imperfectly" and could only "frame a few words to ask me questions" (Defoe, 181). Such characterization fulfills a number of ideological functions: firstly, it confirms the presumed intellectual superiority of English and English-speaking people; secondly, it legitimizes



Friday's subordinate position by attributing his poor mastery of language to his poor mental abilities; thirdly, it provides an ideological framework for colonization.

The content of the lessons given to Friday by Crusoe highlights another aspect of the ideology that shapes the characterization of Crusoe. He does not teach Friday anything about politics, philosophy, or literature, which are considered the spheres of higher human achievements during the period of the Enlightenment. On the contrary, he is interested in practical skills; thus, the first thing that Crusoe teaches Friday is "to know his name should be Friday" (Defoe, 181). The naming process becomes a colonial act since the original name of Friday is replaced by the European name taken from the name of the day of the week. Crusoe instructs Friday to call him "Master" and to demonstrate his obedience.

Religion is yet another way of creating primitivism within the portrayal of Friday. Crusoe's efforts at converting Friday to Christianity become a process of civilization, which would help both to improve Friday as well as justify Crusoe's role as a colonizer. When Crusoe asks Friday about his religious beliefs, it becomes evident that Friday is quite lacking in terms of religion as well as morality. The rapid acceptance of Friday to Christianity suggests primitivism since it means that without any education Friday did not have a set of beliefs and was willing to take up anything that was being taught to him.

One interesting thing is that the depiction of Friday has been consistently passive all along the story. He rarely talks, always does things as per Crusoe's directions, and does not have any aspirations for himself. Even when it comes to Friday rescuing Crusoe from death, this scene has been shown as being motivated by a simple feeling of gratitude on his part without him making any kind of independent judgment call of his own. The primitive, in Defoe's description, lacks both independent actions and thoughts. Friday has been consistently shown as being an extension of the will of Crusoe and this association is shown as being natural and mutually beneficial.

These portrayals carry important ideological weight. Through the portrayal of Friday as a character who is mentally limited, unable to speak, and morally weak, Defoe is able to present an ideological justification for colonial exploitation. The subjugated subject in colonialism is not presented as someone who is oppressed but rather as lucky enough to experience the fruits of civilization. The contentment and loyalty of Friday seem to prove that the colonial endeavor was a benevolent one after all.

Furthermore, Defoe's representation of Friday needs to be considered within the framework of the ways in which racial thought was being constructed during the period. Even though Defoe's novel precedes the form of institutionalized racism that came into being later on in the eighteenth century, it nevertheless takes part in the process of constructing racial differences which were going to evolve even further in the following years. Friday, for instance, can be distinguished physically by his black skin as compared to Crusoe's white skin; and yet, this racial difference is not challenged at all, but rather presented as just one of the many factors which make up Friday's primitive nature.

### **Language as Colonial Instrument:**

The role of language in Robinson Crusoe is not merely to serve as the narrative technique; instead, it becomes the main tool that is used by Crusoe in order to create and perpetuate his colonial power over Friday. In his analysis of the significance of language in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon asserts that "to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture." Thus, one can see the importance of learning a certain language in case when Crusoe teaches Friday English (Fanon, 25). According to Fanon, the colonized person who learns the language of the colonizer does not simply learn the language itself; instead, he adopts the values and culture of the colonizer. Indeed,



the story of Defoe perfectly exemplifies the process. Friday does not learn English in the context of an equal conversation; instead, he learns how to call “Master” and names of objects.

Defoe uses phonetic transcription to describe Friday's discourse lexically in the novel, hence registering the errors and inaccuracies in a way that emphasizes difference rather than progress. In this respect, the representation goes beyond indicating the foreignness of Friday to showing an enduring disparity in the linguistic prowess of Crusoe and Friday. As such, whatever improvement that Friday makes is taken as an indication of his originary deficiency. It is important to note that this situation can be explained using Bhabha's colonial mimicry. According to Bhabha, colonial discourse produces subjects that are “almost the same, but not quite,” and this unfinishedness contributes towards reinforcing colonial power (Bhabha, 86). The English of Friday is a good example of such a phenomenon: it is close enough to imply the ability to learn and improve but far from being perfect enough to relieve Crusoe of his duty to guide him.

As much as Crusoe denies to Friday, it becomes as enlightening as what he teaches him. Friday is not given any lessons in writing, access to the books rescued from the ship, or any participation in the political and philosophical considerations which Crusoe uses in their situation. The language that Crusoe teaches to Friday makes him useful but not equals. The theory by Fanon about the effect of colonial education in limiting the intellectual growth of the colonized individual is clearly illustrated through this selective teaching process. In the story by Defoe, the language stops serving as the medium of communication between the two people and instead becomes a tool for the construction of a certain type of subject.

### **The Manichean Structure of Colonial Representation:**

“Manichean world” is an idea credited to Frantz Fanon. In his work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon describes the colonized world as being split by nature, where there exists a distinct division between the settler and native that goes further than just physically but is ontological and moral as well since the settler represents order and value whereas the native lacks it (Fanon 37–38). It is not accidental that such a division exists in colonialism because it forms the very basis of colonialism. According to Fanon, “the colonial world is a Manichean world in which the settler portrays the native as ‘a sort of quintessence of evil’” (Fanon, 41). Following Fanon's theory, JanMohamed bases his study of colonialism literature on this Manichean system as well.

The analysis of colonialist literature made by Abdul R. JanMohamed provides a remarkably rigorous approach to interpreting the mechanisms of racial and moral valuing in *Robinson Crusoe*. According to JanMohamed, the colonialist literature functions according to the “Manichean allegory,” which can be considered “the dominant metaphor in a complex ‘economy’ of colonialist discourse” (JanMohamed, 80). This economy involves the translation of racial otherness into moral and even metaphysical difference (JanMohamed, 80). The allegory is Manichean because there is no middle ground between the European and the non-European. Instead, the European and the non-European are represented as irreconcilable moral opposites, good and evil, reason and instinct, civilization and barbarism. It is important to note that this duality is not a description of cultural differences but rather an ideology constructed by economic interests: before the colonial era, the Africans “were viewed in a more or less neutral and benign light,” but now they must be depicted as “the epitome of evil and barbarity” (JanMohamed, 80).

In this precise structure, *Robinson Crusoe* orders the totality of its cast of characters. Crusoe is depicted as thoughtful, educated, spiritually advanced, and productive. The island's other characters – Friday and the cannibals – are defined by the negation of these qualities, insofar as they lack Crusoe's language, religion, sense of property, and ability to govern himself. JanMohamed explains precisely how the process works: “Colonialist literatures do not depict the native; they depict the native for the first time by creating him as ‘a generic being that can be



exchanged for any other native” (JanMohamed, 82-83). For Robinson Crusoe, the cannibals are never individuated; their presence in the text is only as the threat of fear or as preparation for war. Individuation is a necessity that cannot be fulfilled because giving a colonized character individuality would involve what JanMohamed calls a “modifying dialectic” (JanMohamed, 82), which is incompatible with the Manichean allegory. Friday is somewhat individuated, but only in the process of the successful colonizing process. Friday remains, in JanMohamed's terminology, an object in the colonialist signifying system (JanMohamed, 83).

JanMohamed identifies two levels on which colonialist fiction can operate: the “imaginary” and the “symbolic” (JanMohamed, 84). In an imaginary text, there is a dialectic relationship between Self and native, where “the designation of the native inevitably means evil” (JanMohamed, 84). However, a symbolic text seeks to interact with cultural difference, but it is often tempted by the mirror-like attraction of the imagined Other, and ends up creating hierarchical structure (JanMohamed, 85). Mostly, Robinson Crusoe belongs to the genre of imaginary text: Difference of Friday is morally evident right from the start, and there is no place in the text where one can challenge the perspective of Crusoe. Even those sections of the novel, which seem sympathetic to Friday – such as, Crusoe's enjoyment of Friday's company, and his intellect and loyalty – are all from within the colonial perspective, where Friday's qualities are shown as a result of his being taught.

Moreover, JanMohamed introduces a specific economic aspect of the Manichean allegory that is particularly relevant for analysis of Defoe's text. According to JanMohamed, the economy of colonialist representation turns exploitation into an obligation – the clear objective of colonial discourse is to show the civilizing mission of colonizers as a gift, which, in turn, means that colonial domination is seen as a pedagogical and noble endeavor (JanMohamed, 81). Indeed, the way Crusoe treats Friday demonstrates the same principle. By giving Friday a name, instructing him, feeding him, arming him, and converting him, Crusoe makes Friday indebted to him. The reader is persuaded to consider Friday's obedience as a form of payback rather than an exploitation. Moreover, Crusoe himself describes his education of Friday in similar terms: “I was greatly delighted with him, and made it my business to teach him everything, that was proper to make him useful, handy, and helpful; but especially to make him speak and understand me when I spoke” (Defoe, 181). Here domination appears as a form of instruction and delight. The concept introduced by JanMohamed shows how ideology operates through such frames – the relationship between colonizer and colonized becomes represented as generous.

The spatial arrangement in the novel operates within a Manichean model. The house that Crusoe builds in the middle of the island stands for the space of order and civilization, whereas the space surrounding it, which is home to the cannibals, represents violence and irrationality. When he sees the footprint, Crusoe becomes afraid not so much of his physical security but rather of the fear of penetration of the primitive into the space he has established. His construction of walls, trees, and a second hiding place becomes an act of spatial manifestation of Manicheanism. The organized center has to constantly expand its boundaries in order to fight the primitive space around it.

### **The Island as Primitive Space:**

Apart from the individual depiction of Friday on Friday, the island is used in the text to represent primitivism in the novel Robinson Crusoe. Unlike the case of being used as the background of Crusoe's actions and exploits in the novel, the island is represented in such a way that it is portrayed as being in the realm of primitivism, far away from civilization and culture.

In the beginning, the island is portrayed as a wilderness, which refers to the primitive state of nature juxtaposed with civilization. The arrival of Crusoe marks the presence of civilization in



the island. The story depicts how the island was transformed through the efforts of Crusoe: building a home, planting crops, taming animals, and making schedules. This can be viewed as a positive story about the power of human work and innovation. From the viewpoint of primitivism, it can be seen as the conquest of the primitive land by the European civilization. The island before the arrival of Crusoe is described as being empty, uncultivated, and barren, ignoring the fact that there were people living on the island earlier.

The depiction of the environment of the island by Defoe always focuses on its primitiveness. The plants and animals are shown in abundance but in a chaotic manner, requiring European management in order to make them useful. The sowing of the crops and the domestication of the goats are examples where order is brought to primitiveness through European intervention. The story of civilization through European intervention to primitiveness is what justifies the colonizing endeavor. The island "improves" under the rule of Crusoe; it becomes useful and orderly.

The native population of the island, as shown in the images presented through the cannibals and later through Friday, are shown to be living in perfect harmony with the primitive surroundings around them. They need nothing more than what the natural surroundings provide for them; they have no sense of possession, production, or development. Their civilizations are represented as static, unchangeable, and timeless. This is a representation that carries a very specific ideological function, which is to present non-European people as a naturally integrated part of the primitive surroundings, as an inherent part of nature itself, not as creators of civilization.

Isolation of the island and its separation from civilization are recurring themes within the text. The isolation of the island is represented as having a twofold nature: On the one hand, it ensures that Crusoe does not become corrupted by civilization; on the other hand, it restricts him from enjoying benefits and conveniences of civilization. Still, the dominant image is that of the island being outside civilization. It is a world where people live in their primitive condition, devoid of any law or religion or any benefit that comes with the civilization of the Europeans. Crusoe living on the island and ruling it is an indication of civilization slowly conquering the primitive world.

However, there should be a close consideration of the footprint scene on the island that Friday visited on Friday in relation to the way in which this scene constructs the image of the island as a place of danger and primitiveness. First of all, the footprint denotes other people's presence. In particular, it refers to cannibals who are supposed to live on nearby islands. Secondly, the fear of Crusoe concerning the footprint and his preparations for a possible fight construct the island as a place where danger exists. The danger is related to the primitive world, which implies the cannibals living on neighboring islands. As a result, the domination of Crusoe over the island and over Friday can be considered as some kind of defense, which means civilization that should protect people from the violence of the primitive.

The layout of the island is yet another instance of Defoe's characterization of the island as a basic space in need of civilization by the Europeans. According to Crusoe, there are two areas on the island: one that is orderly and well-regulated, and the other that is the outer part of the island. This layout reinforces the colonial idea of the mission of civilizing, since culture spreads from the center outwards.

### **Narrative Perspective and Colonial Ideology:**

Apart from the aspects of characters and setting, the structure and perspective of the story of Robinson Crusoe help in the naturalization of primitivism and colonial ideology. The story is told through the eyes of Crusoe alone, so that the reader is able to see the island and its people mainly



through his interpretation. This technique is crucial for the psychological impact of the novel and also helps to make Crusoe's colonial perspective acceptable to the readers.

Crusoe is presented as a character who is introspective, intelligent, hardworking, and ethical. The book shows Crusoe's process of growth from spiritual and psychological standpoints, his struggles with being isolated and feeling despondent, and his achieving satisfaction and happiness in the end. It is suggested that readers be sympathetic toward Crusoe, understand his fears and aspirations, and appreciate his accomplishments. This sympathetic attitude towards Crusoe applies also to his dealings with Friday and his control over the island. Since everything happens from Crusoe's point of view, readers are predisposed to think of his dominance over Friday and the island as rational, legitimate, and even benevolent at times.

The justification that Crusoe uses in order to explain and defend his right to instruct Friday is one that makes him the authoritative voice, explaining that his pedagogical activities are in no way anything more than benevolent. Specifically, he speaks about his pedagogical intentions as an effort on his part to make Friday a useful and capable individual who will be able to speak and understand his language: "I was greatly delighted with him, and made it my business to teach him everything, that was proper to make him useful, handy, and helpful; but especially to make him speak and understand me when I spoke" (Defoe, 181).

Narrative is employed to suppress the other point of view. Friday is denied any agency in this story; he does not speak for himself; instead, his inner voice and feelings are revealed through the mouth of Crusoe. Even when Friday attempts to speak for himself, his limited vocabulary and Defoe's attempt to imitate his way of speaking emphasize his foreign status and language disability. The cannibals who actually outnumber Crusoe and comprise an indigenous majority are presented only as frightening savages without individual features or point of view.

Time works itself ideologically through the story as well. The things Crusoe does on his island occur along a linear path of betterment and improvement. The growing of crops, the taming of animals, and the creation of routines all follow the process of civilization. The point being made here is that they signify the process through which one moves from the primitive to the civilized, and this is part of the natural evolution of man. Friday enters into this timeline through his learning of language and his understanding of the authority of Crusoe.

The portrayal of cannibalism in the novel plays the role of an important ideological sign in the literary discourse. Cannibalism can be seen as the ultimate sign of barbarism and primitiveness that is the most serious breach of civilized standards. But cannibalism is more than just a practice; in the novel it serves as the sign of essential otherness and depravity. The stress placed on cannibalism explains not only Crusoe's alertness and precautions but, implicitly, the whole colonial enterprise. Colonization is seen as the necessity of suppressing such acts and incorporating primitive people into civilized and moral society.

### Conclusion:

In Daniel Defoe's novel Robinson Crusoe, it is crucial to emphasize the issue of the representation of primitivism. Firstly, through the character of Friday, through the image of the island as a primitive place, through the usage of language as an instrument of the colonial power, through the Manichean division of moral and racial categories, and finally through the identification of the point of view with the colonial ideology, Defoe creates a strong image of the primitive which becomes a justification for the European domination (Defoe, 1-10).

The significance of understanding primitivism in Robinson Crusoe goes far beyond the scope of literary studies. The models created by Defoe in his book—primitives as intellectually limited, morally needy, without language and culture, living in nature but not society—have had quite a considerable impact on how the Western world has perceived and dealt with non-Western



peoples. Such models, present in one of the most seminal books in English literature, have been constantly reproduced and elaborated upon in further literature, art, philosophy, and politics. It is crucial to analyze how the organizational structure of primitivism in the text has influenced our contemporary world in order to understand how colonial ideology has formed it.

The postcolonial reading of literature shows that even the most canonical works, and those considered the best in their genres, are involved in the production of the colonial discourse. Robinson Crusoe is more than the tale about the struggle for survival; it is the narration which encodes colonial power relations. Crusoe's domination on the island and over Friday is shown as rational, justified, and even beneficial. Primitives are represented as naturally subordinated people who need to be led and governed by civilization.

Yet recognizing the ideological work performed by Robinson Crusoe does not require dismissing the novel as simply propaganda. Rather, it demands a more sophisticated understanding of how literary texts operate, how they engage with ideology not simply through explicit argument but through character, setting, narrative structure, and perspective. The power of Defoe's novel lies partly in its ideological effectiveness—in its capacity to make colonial relationships seem natural, inevitable, and even beneficial.

Modern readers and critics can reinterpret Robinson Crusoe by viewing primitivism in this novel as something artificial and ideologically motivated. Such interpretation will not lessen the value of the novel as a piece of literature; on the contrary, it will help us better understand how literature participates in the construction of culture and ideology. Reading carefully Defoe's representation of primitivism enables us to understand how primitivism works as a system of representation and legitimation. In addition, this way of analysis provides us with a methodology for finding similar representations in modern culture.

Analysis of the concept of primitivism in Robinson Crusoe is, therefore, not just an issue for historical significance. The systems of civilization and primitivism, along with the differences of culture and nature, created by Defoe in his novel, continue influencing the modern Western identity and its connection with the non-Western world. In the current world, where there is still impact of the past colonial period, understanding how certain works were responsible for the creation of colonial ideology is crucial scholarship.

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