

## **Robinson Crusoe and the Pursuit of a Narrative Fiefdom**

**Shokery Abd Al menam**

### **Abstract**

This study of the politics of narration in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* proceeds from a basic analogy between text and island suggested by Watt's and Said's descriptions of the latter domain as respectively a 'personal empire' and a fiefdom. As a critical survey of the novel's narrative space reveals, Defoe's depiction of the network of human relationships in four phases of fictional development is an attempted simulation of the fiefdom political structure. Crusoe means to be 'lord-narrator' and all other characters, things, and events to be mere material in his personal narrative empire. Defoe created Crusoe to make him the ruler of an island and, more importantly of a narrative. When we investigate the nature of authorship in *RC*, we are also investigating the nature of rulership in the world of this seminal work. Crusoe begins his life with a demand of independence, which develops into a pursuit of absolute dominance over island and text. To achieve this he devises various kinds of political and textual arrangements. Narrative space and the quality of narrative presence of a character decide the question of authority in the text and consequently the island. All kinds of human ties can be sacrificed for this prize.

The pursuit of a sole proprietorship of the text technically manifests itself in a number of narrative strategies we propose to call 'growth regulators'. Two forces are thus at work in the text: the generative and the inhibitory, and the interplay of the two creates the tension which engenders the narrative both thematically and informally. Unable to control what Said calls the molestation of authority, Crusoe relocates himself politically and narratively from king to governor to one of the governors men, and from narrator-subject to eye-witness reporter to reporter of other actors' accounts. The paradigm of self-preservation, the acquisition of 'safe comfort', the procurement of unconditional help that Crusoe sets as condition for the residency in his text-island does not hold for long, and old Crusoe realize that the creation of a personal empire out of a desert island is more attainable than the creation of a narrative fiefdom.

## السعي إلى بناء إقطاعية سردية في رواية روبنسون كروزو

شكري عبد المنعم

### ملخص

هذه الدراسة لسياسات السرد في رواية دانيال ديفو روبنسون كروزو تفترض تماثلاً بين النص السردى والجزيرة المتخيلة يوحي به وصف كل من إيان واط وإدوارد سعيد للجزيرة بأنها "إمبراطورية شخصية" و"إقطاعية". ويبين المسح النقدي للفضاء السردى للرواية في مراحلها الأربع أنها تسعى إلى محاكاة البنية السياسية الإقطاعية من حيث علاقة السارد بغيره من البشر والأشياء. فقد خلق ديفو كروزو ليكون حاكماً لنص روائي قبل أن يكون حاكماً لجزيرة. وبذلك فإن دراسة سياسات السرد تصب في فهم آليات الحكم للنص والجزيرة معاً. يبدأ كروزو حياته بطلب الاستقلال، ويتطور تدريجياً حتى يسعى إلى الهيمنة على النص والجزيرة مستخدماً مجموعة من الاستراتيجيات النصية والسياسية التي تتيح له الافراد بالسلطة. من هذه ما نقترح تسميته "منظمات النمو" وهو مصطلح مستعار من علم الأحياء، وهي آليات يتحكم بها الكائن الحي في نمو أعضائه بدرجات تتسق مع طبيعة بنيته. من هنا، تتحكم قوتان بالنص الروائي: قوة التوليد والنمو، وقوة الكبح، والتفاعل بينهما هو مصدر الحياة للعمل كله. يحكم عالم هذه الرواية نموذج فكري من ثلاثة عناصر: "حفظ الذات والحصول على أسباب الراحة الأمانة واستجلاب العون غير المشروط". ولكن هذا النموذج يعجز عن تحمل ما يسميه إدوارد سعيد "تبعات السلطة" فيتراجع كروزو سياسياً من ملك إلى حاكم ثم إلى نائب للحاكم، وسردياً من الراوي والموضوع الأوحى إلى راوي شاهد عيان إلى راوٍ لما فعله أو راه غيره. ومن هنا يدرك كروزو أن تحويل جزيرة غير مأهولة إلى إقطاعية أقل صعوبة من بناء إقطاعية سردية ولو كان هو مؤلفها.

### **Shokry Abd - Elmeniem**

---

In his classical study, '*Robinson Crusoe*, Individualism, and the Novel', Ian Watt writes that the argument between Crusoe and his parents is a "debate about whether going or staying is likely to be the most advantageous course materially" (67), stressing the primacy of the economic motive over any other. Reviewing this part of the novel and relating it to its narrative context, however, we fail to see how it fits Watt's description in form or in content. To begin with, what Watt describes as a 'debate' is a straightforwardly one-sided fatherly discourse on the advantages of satisfaction with the middle station of life Crusoe is born into, and the miseries waiting for young men who unreasonably respond to their 'rambling thoughts'. Very briefly introduced, the disagreement that prompts this discourse is simply that the father 'design'd' Crusoe for the law, but the latter "would be satisfied with nothing but going to Sea" (13). The one-sidedness of this discourse is stated by the father and reported by Crusoe: "He ask'd me what Reasons more than a meer wandering Inclination I had for leaving my Father's House" (4). It is obvious that 'ask'd' here does not mean to get an answer from the son, and 'meer wandering Inclination' shows that the old man sees no reason at all in and for his son's position. It is also important to note that Crusoe is keen to state that his father did not listen to his son's plans. He only "foresaw" them (4).

Though the economic motive is present throughout Crusoe's life, it is almost absent as a reason for his decision to leave home. It is the father who assumes it. Prior to his departure, the son persistently gives one reason for his decision: "my thoughts were so entirely bent upon seeing the World" (5). Even when he offers a compromise to "go but one Voyage abroad", he makes no mention of economic gain. He promises to quit if he "did not like it" (6). Watt himself provides support against the primacy of the economic motive. At a later point of his argument he quotes 'old' Crusoe's statement in *Farther Adventures* that "sitting still ... was the unhappiest part of his life" (68). Thus before and after his private odyssey, Crusoe's reasons are seeing the world, liking, and being happy. If this means anything, it should mean, we believe, that the economic motive is subservient to a more dominant need in Crusoe's character. It is the need to be the

maker of his own story, not to be satisfied with – even or especially – his own parents' story. What we will generically refer to as the authorial or narratorial drive reinforces rather than contradicts the economic, as they both express the young man's crave for power or authority.

Authority, technically paralleled by voice, text, and space are key concepts of our discussion of the politics of narration in *RC*, with the authorial drive as the governing impulse in its two domains of text and experience. Text, used interchangeably with 'narrative', is relevant to that verbal domain where the narrator/author is the sole mediator of the fictional world, and to which no other character has access. In this sense the textual parallels or opposes the 'experiential', as the latter denotes the paralinguistic human experience that the 'text' gives structure to in accordance with authorial will or design, to adapt Bakhtin's definition of the internal politics of style (284). Characters occupy narrative space by authorial representation or by their own voice, and the proportion of these modes is a revealing indicator of the degree of authorial control practiced. Space is also used to parallel 'domain' in its political sense, "an area owned or controlled by a ruler or government" (OED).

Defoe created Crusoe to make him the ruler of an island and, more importantly, we believe, of a narrative. When we investigate the politics of narration in *Robinson Crusoe* [henceforth *RC*], we are also investigating the nature of rulership in the world of this seminal work. In this respect, Edward Said provides extremely valuable insights. In *Culture and Imperialism*, he confirms Ian Watt's description of Crusoe's island as "a personal empire" (Watt 90), by describing it as a "fiefdom" (Said xii). In 'Molestation and Authority in Narrative Fiction', Said traces the thematic genealogy of the novelistic form, basing his argument on what he calls "the principle of authority" (Said, *Reader* 54). Said discusses authority in connection with 'author', "a person who sets forth written statements", and relates it to notions of "beginning or inauguration, augmentation by extension, possession and continuity". "All four of these abstractions," Said goes on, "can be used to describe the way in which narrative fiction asserts itself

psychologically and aesthetically through the technical efforts of the novelist" (42).

Reviewing Kierkegaard's investigation of the nature of aesthetic authorship, Said argues that the Danish philosopher "probes what is fundamental to all kinds of writing...in the center of which is the relationship between a focal character whose voice for the reader is authoritative and the nature of authorship such a voice entails" (44). Kierkegaard's analysis of authorship, Said explains, "exposes the uneasiness and vacillation with which narrative fiction begins and from which it develops" (47). Building on this, Said states what he sees as the three special conditions on which "the seminal beginning conception of narrative fiction [simultaneously] depends". By this he simply means three basic themes that the novel form rose to aesthetically express. They all center on the notion of creation, itself one denotation of the word author. Particularly relevant to our investigation of the nature of authorial rule in *RC* is the first generative condition which states that

there must be some strong sense of doubt that the authority of any single voice, or group of voices, is sufficient unto itself. In the community formed among reader, author, and character, each desires the company of another voice. Each hears in the other the seductive beginning of a new life, an alternative to his own, and yet grows progressively aware of an authenticity systematically betrayed during the course of partnership - the novelistic character feels it most of all. (48).

Another important conceptual tool that Said provides in this respect is that of molestation, a word Said uses to "describe the bother and responsibility" that authorial powers and efforts entail. This is the ever present awareness of an author or narrator that "his authority, regardless of how complete...is a sham" (42-43). This, we contend, is one source of uneasiness from which *RC* emerges. It is a fundamental conflict between its originator's assumption that he can achieve his utmost freedom when he is away from society, by authoring his own narrative, and his awareness that one man, one voice, is not "sufficient

unto [him]self". This uneasiness manifests itself in the guardedness and aggressiveness which mark Crusoe the character and narrator. Crusoe, as will be illustrated, does not hear "in the other the seductive beginning of a new life." In corporate terms, he starts his project as a sole proprietorship, not a partnership. When he cannot avoid the 'company' of others, it is the mechanisms of a take-over that he opts for. Belonging to the twin type of authority, molestation, voices other than Crusoe's are born almost against his will. They are denied lives of their own, till the moment he cannot sustain it with credibility, because he assumes that their lives in the text compromise his position as the only narrator and, wishfully, subject of his narrative.

In *Possessive Individualism*, C.B Macpherson identifies seven propositions as the social assumptions "common to the main seventeenth-century political theories, which all center on the concepts of will, independence, freedom, property, and human identity. Proposition (vi) reads: "Since freedom from the wills of others is what makes a man human, each individual's freedom can rightfully be limited only by such obligations and rules as are necessary to secure the same freedom for others" (264). The problematic that this proposition approaches forcibly recalls Crusoe's 'original sin'. He defies the patriarchal will to achieve independence, without which he could have neither island nor text. But he would not voluntarily observe the 'rules' and 'obligations' that come with freedom. As Said would put it, Crusoe tried to acquire authority and askew its molestation.

'Auctor', one etymological origin of author, as Donald E. Pease tells us, "did not entail verbal inventiveness...but the reverse – adherence to the authority of cultural antecedent". As for 'author' itself, Pease explains, the word "sometimes sanctions contradictory usages. At the time of its inception, for example, it was used interchangeably with...auctor" (Lentricchia and McLaughlin 105). This etymological development, which marks a shift from complete dependence to the freedom of self-assertion by verbal inventiveness in part explains Crusoe's project to set himself free from his own auctorial figure, his father, and to author his own life/narrative, with all the molestations

that authority entails. In this light we see Crusoe's method of narration as his way of casting off the image of the prodigal son, the heir to a tale, and taking on that of the originator. By the creation of an island and a text Crusoe acquires "the power to enforce obedience, influence action, inspire belief and trust" (OED), the modern dictionary common definition of 'authority', which we argue is indissociable from that relevant to verbal inventiveness.

Crusoe begins his life with a demand of independence, which develops into a pursuit of absolute dominance over island and text. To achieve this he devises various kinds of political and textual arrangements. Narrative space and the quality of narrative presence of a character decide the question of authority in the text and consequently the island. All kinds of human ties can be sacrificed for this prize. This recalls Watt's and Said's descriptions of Crusoe's island as respectively a 'personal empire' and a 'fiefdom'. As a critical survey of *RC*'s narrative space will reveal, Crusoe's depiction of the network of human relationships the four phases of fictional development involve is an attempted simulation of the fiefdom political structure. Crusoe means to be 'lord-narrator' and all other characters, things, and events to be mere material in his personal narrative empire.

As its full title and editor's preface suggest, *RC* is designed to make Crusoe not only its "authoritative character" or "conceptual matrix" (Said, *Reader* 55), but also its sole narrator and dominant subject. The novel's opening sentence, its "inaugural act of usurpation" (48), announces the simultaneous birth of Crusoe the narrator and character and the prevalence of the former over the latter. Crusoe immediately engages in the "accumulation of prerogatives" (48) to establish his authorial rule. In the battle over narrative space, there are always two Crusoes against any potential narrator. He not only knows what happened to his experiencing self, he also has the freedom to "slide up and down the time axis that connects his two selves" (Cohn 145). Whether the two selves in *RC* belong to the consonant or dissonant type, each of them draws the attention to the other in one way or another. As Cohn explains, the core of this mode of narration is "the retrospective cognition of an inner life that cannot

know itself at the instant of experience (146). But it is not the cognitive privilege of the narrating over the experiencing self that only explains Defoe's choice. It is rather the privilege related to free expression, interpretation and rearrangement. One basic assumption of narrative authority is that the narrator "arranges otherwise accidental events into an established context capable of making them meaningful" (Lentricchia & McLaughlin 106). It is not a question of temporal distance that separates the narrating and experiencing self, Cohn maintains, it is the will to see or picture, by event adjustment or interpretation or a size-adjusting technique, what took place in the world of experience (151).

*RC*'s retrospective narrator screens his scenes, enlarges, minimizes or completely absents characters and events at will. This pursuit of a sole proprietorship of the text technically manifests itself in a number of narrative strategies that center on the biological term 'growth regulation'. Growth regulators are mechanisms that the organism uses to keep in check undesired expansions and allow its vital parts better opportunity to grow, in accordance with an inbuilt code of growth that means to keep the proportions 'natural' to that organism. Because *RC*, we argue, is meant to be Crusoe's story not a story that he tells, its narrator puts himself vis a vis his own narrative. Using a set of growth regulators, he readily clips every branch of it promising shoots not directly stemming from the self. No character, event, or an object can readily have a life of its own in Crusoe's text. The 'strange surprising adventures' themselves are textually structured to give prominence to the actor not the act. Two forces are thus at work in the text, one relevant to the narrator and the other to the narrative; they are respectively the force of unification and the force of diversification. This interplay of the generative and the inhibitory creates the tension which engenders *RC* both thematically and formally.

In the pre-island stage Crusoe does not textually play any of the social roles he is 'reported' to play, because acquiring and exercising these narrative potentials would mean the creation of a social atmosphere. This in turn means the fragmentation of narrative authority and inevitably rivalry over narrative space, at a stage when



### **Shokry Abd - Elmeniem**

---

the self is not yet narratively empowered, i.e., in possession of something 'worthy' of telling. Though this part of the narrative is when Crusoe has a hometown and a family to belong to, the pre-island stage allows no narrative space for a voice other than Crusoe's. The narrator's family and birthplace are introduced in a prologue-like manner. The older brothers, nameless, are dead, the father, a distant, indistinct, 'reported' voice overshadowed by the voice and figure of old Crusoe. The 'prophetic' exhortations of the "wise grave old Man" raise concern over what would become of Crusoe, but draws no specific attention to the father's state of mind.

Crusoe's travel companions are mere apparitions who never outlive their assigned servile parts. The unnamed 'comrade' on the first sea experience is less a character than an element in the indirect revelation of Crusoe's character and the circumstance he is involved in. Making this comrade "less forward than I", though he was "the Master's son" (RC14) means to show the magnitude of Crusoe's obstinacy and deservedness of his later 'punishment'. The ship-master serves the same purpose. The man resonates the voice of the father, the Lord, and Crusoe himself, and exits the same way the second brother exits: "I saw him no more" (15). This 'flashy' or short-lived character is a handy growth regulator. In reply to the ship-master's 'fatherly exhortations', Crusoe says he has "little answer" (15). This inhibits the possibility of a dialogue, and strips his assumed interlocutor's speech of its effect, thus denying him a share in narrative space.

Crusoe tends to push himself out of any human community where he is not the focus as speaker and/or actor. This means that such parts are not textually represented. The major experiences of this kind in the pre-island stage are two shipwrecks with two years of slavery and a four years' stay in Brazil in between. The young traveler blocks the community of the first ship by a "swoon" that lasts for "a great while" (12). This is a time when he is textually a 'nobody': "no Body minded me, or what was become of me." He has to diffuse his presence in that of others. Though he did not see the ship sink and a man "rather put me into the boat than I might be said to go in", (13) he consistently

uses 'we' to refer to every rescue act that others did to partake of the authority of vision or action others only are entitled to.

The two-year-stay with the Moors has nothing worthy to describe or recount. The surprising adventures cannot be about 'other' people, however exotic their lives might be. Crusoe himself is not entitled to occupy narrative space as a slave, though the whole narrative is presented as a chastising journey. The English captive dismissed his assumed ordeal as "the common drudgery of Slaves" (19), because this is not a common tale of victimization, or chastising by humiliation. The chastiser and the chastised in Defoe's design have to be one, i.e., Crusoe himself. This double role not only secures more narrative space, but also stands as sound basis for the division into a narrating and an experiencing self. On another level, being a tool of regeneration and self-discovery, suffering cannot be the expression of another man's will. If any, it has to be divinely directed. To suffer at the hands of mere pirates is to lose not only the dignity, but also the very meaning of suffering.

Defoe's re-creation narrative could not have started among either fellow slaves or fellow planters. Crusoe is only nominally a master in Brazil, because he literally comes into a fortune of the kind his father had in mind. The direct connection with the things owned is not there. Having slaves and labourers to create his plantation does not legitimize possessing a narrative of his own. These phases of the journey have to be 'regulated' i.e., briefly reported not represented. This is where the force of unification is in full tide, but the end of this stage witnesses the contrivance of major generative textual strategies.

Crusoe blocks the two realms of "the common drudgery of slaves" and the life, manners, and customs of his captors, for all their narrative potentials, because the self would not be the subject of narration. The English captive is not even tempted to illustrate the "nimbleness" that caught the attention of his captor and allowed him a different life from that of common slaves. This inhibitory procedure is contrasted to the rather detailed treatment of the escape episode, which depicts the experience where Crusoe gains, experiences, and imposes his subjectivity on others. From this point on, Crusoe holds obstinately on

to the subject position more on the textual than the experiential level. Experientially, Crusoe makes his meticulous preparations with regard to equipment and provisions. Textually he carefully prepares for the moral justification of his appropriation and later selling of the boat and equipment by informing the reader that most of the supplies and the boat itself had originally been taken from an English ship.

The escape episode is not less about survival in the text than at sea. It early points that the event or character that endangers Crusoe's presence in the text has to be disciplined. This textually means that the narrative life of any character or object depends on how he/it would highlight the subject position of Crusoe. In other words, survival in the text of *RC* is for the experientially less fit. Ismael and Xury illustrate this edict. The older and abler Ismael is quickly "tost" overboard into the sea, out of the narrative, because he poses more danger to Crusoe's subject position. The man would create a rather 'balanced' conflict on the boat, and even if eventually defeated by the narrator, would take an undue portion of the narrative. Ismael is never directly heard; his dialogue with Crusoe is strictly reported. In the realm of experience, the Moor is pushed out of the boat and has to swim miles to the shore. In the text, Ismael is in no danger thanks to the eight references to the young man's excellent swimming, and two more references to the convenient weather. The 'fact' that Crusoe has done Ismael "no hurt" (23) – repeated three times – derives authority only from the silent endorsement of the Moor in the water. It is Crusoe with fowl in hand who is in danger, "he would have reacht me...there being but little wind" (23).

The first Moor's pledge that "he would go all over the world with me" is turned down, because he is not as impressionable as Xury, whose offer of subjection is more readily accepted by Crusoe only because he is less strong and less resourceful. As 'help', Ismael would have been the right choice, but help in *RC* has to come with the least 'bother'. What is curious about the report of Ismael's part of the episode is Crusoe's in passing – in fact – needless – remark that he would have "taken this Moor" and "drown'd the Boy" (23), which renders pointless the several assertions of Crusoe that he has done

Ismael “no hurt”. It also reveals Crusoe’s determination to ‘keep’ only one Moor. Two Moors on the boat would likely restore Crusoe’s state of subjection.

Ismael poses more danger because he cannot be silenced by force, reasoning, or moral coercion. He is more ready to take initiative and originate events. In other words, he has narrative potentials that have to be regulated. One such potential is linguistic ability. Crusoe had to ‘grant’ him that to make their verbal communication possible. The alternative is that Crusoe would speak Arabic, which would endanger the fabric and the design of the whole narrative, with the possible introduction of interactions with Arabs. This linguistic ability alone, as it appears from the reported dialogue with Ismael, could have taken the narrative, or at least this part, off its designed course.

Xury is easier to use and dispose of and this only prolongs his narrative life. The young Moor’s personal qualities and responses, contradictory and often incredible as they are, help display aspects of Crusoe’s character essential to his later island life and his adventurous career at large. After appropriating the boat and its contents, deporting one master and counter-slaving the other, Crusoe comfortably slides into the role of the master. The fugitive man makes promises to make his follower “a great man”, though he is not himself even close to that. He rewards obedient Xury with “a piece of Rusk-bread to eat and a Dram” (26), assuming the role of a treasurer. This is a necessary exercise before the main battle of domestication with the island, its creatures, and later attackers and ‘authorized’ settlers.

With all its servile connotations, ‘the boy’ is the standard textual reference to Xury. We say ‘textual’ because we assume that Crusoe actually calls the Moor by his first name. Xury is an able hunter, lacking in neither bravery nor vigilance. Venturing alone in a ‘wild’ land in search for food and water, the young man’s “eyes were more about him” than Crusoe implying that Xury is more protective. Yet this protectiveness rather establishes his position as a watchdog than a fellow adventurer. At a later point, Xury is described as a ‘poor boy’, when he rejects Crusoe’s joking order to go, and kill the great lion and idiotically answers: “Me kill! He eat me at one Mouth; one Mouthful

### **Shokry Abd - Elmeniem**

---

he meant” (27). One has to wonder who is the African and the pirate of the two? This character revealing response justifies Crusoe’s confident report “I said no more to the boy, but bad him lye still”. Where Crusoe gains his lion hunting expertise and courage is not known. What is certain is that the text grants Crusoe these skills to be a doer and therefore legitimate teller, not reporter of a native's adventures. With bravery, skill, and collectedness also comes moral superiority as the basis of authority.

Crusoe acquires yet more authority by having Xury care for superstitious things as cutting the lion’s head and foot. ‘The boy’ skins the lion because he is “the better workman” (28), but the skin is the sole property of Crusoe. Xury is mere working hands, devoid of private will, authority and therefore of narrative presence. What Xury does is ‘in fact’ an enactment of his master’s will. When Crusoe says “we filled our jars, feasted on the hare we had killed”, readers should remember that except for the feasting, everything else is Xury’s doing. This dispossession means to display Crusoe as the ‘real’ doer. Xury is invisible even for the Africans who provide the water. They show gratitude only to Crusoe for killing a fierce lion, during which experience Xury is totally absent. Even the nonverbal negotiations with the Africans are made by Crusoe. The killing of the lion and the tiger, needless as it is admitted, serves wrap Crusoe’s image in an air of awe, which further reinforces his position as master.

Xury’s ‘spontaneous’ cry “Master, Master” (32) marks the transition from the ‘de facto’ to the ‘de jure’ state of mastership. It also signals the final exit of Xury from the scene. This violent turn of character relationships is effected to relieve Crusoe of the moral responsibility of enslaving a free man and manipulating him as part of his ‘fairly’ earned cargo. The real problem, we believe, is the muddled make-up of Xury’s character, who often seems to lose his very human presence. The text to a large extent fails to create a credible character even with recourse to stereotyping. More importantly, it was a structural mistake to take the reader into confidence at the beginning and state that Crusoe had plans to kill Xury. For readers know that this is the voice of old Crusoe, the narrating self who now knows Xury and

still expresses neither affection for nor regret about his treatment of him. Knowing this before Xury ever makes his appearance should cast claims of moral superiority and due gratitude in irony and consequently discredit them. The Moorish boy lives longer than Ismael in the narrative because he can be personally duped and narratively exploited.

Also cast in irony is another untactful violent turn in Crusoe-Xury relationship and in the character of Xury: “the foolish boy was frightened out of his wits, thinking it must need to be some of his Master’s Ships sent to pursue us” (32). In terms of plot, apart from enslaving the boy, Crusoe did utterly nothing to gain the emotional attachment or loyalty of the young Moor. Moreover, there is nothing in the young man’s revealed history to justify being frightened at all to return to his home and family. One wonders why he should be frightened to regain his freedom. “Out of his wits” is obviously an unwelcome textual imposition, a perversion of the experience the text is supposed to represent. Now Crusoe uses the text to ‘possess’ Xury before he sells him to the Portuguese captain and thus tosses him out of his narrative.

Defoe subtly prepares for this textual takeover. After “Master, Master” concludes Xury’s presence, Crusoe is now presented as the only passenger, seeker of help and object of rescue. “I” dominates the scene: “I stretched out to sea...I could make any signal...I had crowded to the utmost...it seems they saw me... let me come up...lay by for me...I came up with them”(32). The singular first person is not simply metonymically used. It does mean to put Crusoe alone in view. Neither is this a simple case of occultation. The boat and ‘everything’ in it are also “my goods”. Authority, this time, is reinforced by the Portuguese captain whose assumptions about Crusoe’s ownership of hands and property are readily endorsed by Crusoe’s act of selling the whole lot. Treating Xury as a free man with a share in the goods would entail a share in the narrative space, the prize that Crusoe cherishes most.

In this scene, there are textual and structural problems that we describe as narratorial acts of violence. These are descriptions, setting

and plot arrangements, and any form of commentary that do not find support in the fictional world so far unfolded. In other words, they are impositions introduced on the sole, private, authority of the narrator. They signal points of departure between experience and textual representation and help unravel the authorial design that details alone do not make readily discernable.

The scene of the deliverance of Crusoe by and the delivery of Xury to the Portuguese captain involves a series of narratorial acts of violence that can only be understood by reference to strictly egocentric and racial assumptions governing *RC*. 'The short happy life' that Crusoe and Xury spend together unaccountably ends in the restoration of one's liberty and the initiation of the other's captivity. The optimal magnanimity of the Portuguese captain means appreciation, wealth, and safe passage to Brazil for the English, and a life of slavery and religious bigotry for the Moor. The 'integrity' of the Portuguese and the 'gratitude' of the English are displayed in the scene where the Moor is crushed both as a person and a novelistic character, pointing an unresolved conflict between what the narrator does and what he reports.

Crusoe commends Xury's faithfulness and admits his crucial role in his own redemption at the very time he is needlessly selling him. The only reason reported for the transaction is gratitude to the captain, a sentiment Xury is much more entitled to than the undemanding Portuguese. Contrary to expectations, the purchasing offer is made and concluded and neither the 'boy' nor reader is prepared for it even by an indent marking a new paragraph or a period marking a new sentence. The sudden development 'stealthily' takes its way into the middle of the paragraph reporting the financial settlements:

I told him he had been so generous to me in everything...he offer'd me also 60 pieces of Eight more *for my boy Xury*, which I was loath to take, not that I was not willing to let the captain have him, but I was very loath to sell the poor Boy's Liberty, who had assisted me so faithfully in procuring my own. However when I let *him* know my reason, *he* own'd it to be just..., and Xury saying he was willing to go to *him*, I

let the captain have him.

We had a very good voyage to the Brasils (33-34) [emphasis added].

It is obvious that this part reports a dialogue between Crusoe and the Portuguese captain and that “Xury saying...” does not at all make him part of the negotiations. This is a very good reason to believe that Crusoe communicated this to Xury after the conversation itself was over. “My Boy Xury” seems to be a repetition of the Portuguese captain’s ‘your boy’ and Crusoe’s superfluous use of it with the name stresses, not only his shaky belief that Xury is really a slave, but also means to unobtrusively derive authority of endorsement from readers. They would not stop much at Xury’s fate when Crusoe’s adventurous career is the real subject of the narrative.

The point in this part is not Xury’s fate, nor is it the question of selling his liberty, but Crusoe’s assumed reluctance to sell, which is meant to give him a humane touch. Everything in the sentence, however, speaks against the decorative parts preparing for the reluctant act of selling. “Very loath...poor Boy’s Liberty...assisted me”. A case of ambiguity regarding the referents of the italicised pronouns in the quote above marks a rather subtle example of a narratorial act of violence. It is not Xury who is “let to know” Crusoe’s reason, it is the captain to whom the three italicised pronouns refer. The ambiguity we believe to exist derives not from a grammatical imprecision, but rather from an assumption suggested by the sequence of events and subjects of narration. The last sentence “who had assisted me” refers to Xury and this prepares the reader to know more about the fate of the young man, not about Crusoe justifying his reluctance to his benefactor. The end of the sentence corrects the misinterpretation and violently regulates the narrative by practically reminding that only what Crusoe says, does, and feels is the subject of narration.

This rendition of the escape and redemption episode treats the Moor not simply as nonself but as nonhuman. Crusoe introduces the first part of the episode by the justification of murder to regain liberty. In



### **Shokry Abd - Elmeniem**

---

the middle he admits that being at sea under the threat of enslavement is “a miserable and almost hopeless condition” (33). At the end he describes slavery as “the most miserable of all conditions” (34). Contradicting Crusoe’s treatment of Xury, these statements signal a point where text parts with experience. More importantly, they illustrate how Defoe resorts to an unstated conceptual framework, i.e., racial assumptions about and attitudes towards non-Europeans, to solve a technical problem. In other words, Defoe’s decision to eliminate Xury from the narrative and clear it for Crusoe is culturally not technically supported, to recall Bakhtin's description of the politics of narration as determined by its external politics [its relationship to alien discourse] (284).

Because *RC* is meant to be the story of one man, the versatility – especially of character – that changes of setting normally impart to fiction is almost absent in Crusoe’s account. Aware of the potential fragmentation of narrative space and of his position in the society of the ship, where he is only an object of rescue, and in the Brazilian colonial setting where he is a common planter, Crusoe completely excludes the former: “We had a very good voyage to the Brasils” (34), and dismisses the latter as “a desolate island” with “no body to converse with” (35). Crusoe’s fellow planters are mostly anonymous. They make their impersonal appearance only as unskeptical listeners to his surprising adventures, and the authority of telling soon begets ‘real’ authority, profitable trade and ship mastery. It now appears that the Brazilian planters and traders are in the account for two purposes: to put Crusoe in position of authority and to send him back to sea. Their anonymity and submissive presence make it easier to exit the narrative. The fellow enterprisers are quietly ‘drowned’. “The broader narrative reason for Crusoe's decision to leave Brazil”, Richard Braverman contends, “emerges only with his exile on the island”. “It is only there”, he goes on, “that he will be able to assert his political will” (8).

Crusoe’s hasty dismissal of his Brazilian company causes him to commit a narratorial act of violence highly significant for our argument that Crusoe uses the text to simulate the fiefdom power

relation model. It is the confusion of the narrative stance in the depiction of the scene starting the island phase of the narrative. When the wreck survivor realizes he is “free from Danger, and quite out of the Reach of the Water”, he walks “about on the shore...reflecting...that there should not be one Soul sav’d but my self; for, as for them, I never saw them afterwards, or any sign of them’ (46). Crusoe, the character, just out of sea, should be oblivious to whatever has befallen the others, having no means yet to verify his ‘reflection’, yet he claims that he was reflecting upon his “Comrades who all died”. Crusoe confounds the narrating and the narrative time by providing a retrospective proof which his use of the time marker “afterwards” exposes.

The haste in judgment betrays a form of ‘wishful thinking’ on the part of the narrator, who wants to cut his ‘exposition’ short to clear the scene for the core of the narrative: Crusoe’s solitary adventures. Crusoe never says that he looked for survivors, never shouted in expectation of an answer. His reference to his reflection on the dead comrades does not mean that he recalled any of them personally; it simply means that he is now finally alone. Crusoe looks around only “to see that kind of place I was in” (47). From this point on, the narrative space will be allotted to Crusoe’s “miraculous survival” on the uninhabited island-text.

In the new setting, things replace people as narrative material, but the subject is always Crusoe. Yet this material has to be contained so as not to acquire subjectivity. Realizing that his authority is “the result of his isolation” (McInelly 14), Crusoe makes sure things remain things, controllable and exploitable. His first move is to explore the island. “Rather than being overwhelmed by the vastness of his environment and dwindling under feelings of insignificance, Crusoe’s self image enlarges.” McInelly refers to this as a “double movement serving to position Crusoe at the center of both the world he inhabits and Defoe’s novel” (5).

One regulatory measure that Crusoe uses to guard his narrative space against the intrusions of nonselves is to eliminate reminiscing, strip things of their suggestiveness and the pathos that they may

generate. The lonely retrospective narrator, ironically, hardly misses a soul, a place, a habit or a thing. When a narrative line brings his parents to mind, they are silent reminders of his sin and of his own agency in his present condition. The allegorical shrouds they are clad in impersonate their voices and therefore obliterate their subjectivity. It is true “adventure stories demand the absence of conventional social ties” (Watt 67), but Crusoe rejects social ties even with absent people. As Roberto Assagioli explains, “we are dominated by everything with which our self becomes identified. We can dominate, direct, and utilize everything from which we disidentify ourselves” (211). Fully aware of this, Crusoe literally and figuratively strips people of their ‘effects’ i.e., possessions and influence. This measure is critical to the appropriation of the island-text.

The nostalgic strain and all forms of reminiscing now in check, Crusoe denies narrative presence to all ship wreckers by anonymity and the arrest of the suggestive power of the things he retrieves from the sunken ships. The only survivor makes his own efforts in retrieving those people’s things the focus of narration, the larger context being the depiction of how he introduces civilization into ‘his’ island. One striking example is the case of the drowned boy in the second shipwreck. What Crusoe sees is the boy’s clothing in addition to “two Pieces of Eight, and a Tobacco Pipe”. The fact that he searched the dead body is neither mentioned nor loaded with emotional charge. The suggestive power of the sight is arrested by a rather violent shift to Crusoe’s concluding comment that the tobacco pipe “was to me of ten times more value” than the money in the dead boy’s pocket (189).

The narrative presence allowed to people and things, as Crusoe’s last remark reveals, is determined by their ‘value’ to him. To recall Watt, Crusoe treats place, people, and things “all in terms of their commodity value” (71). The value meant in our argument is the potential narrative space that an article would help Crusoe secure for himself as subject and narrator. This explains Crusoe’s attachment to tools of any sort. Their ownership uncontested, and their suggestive power arrested, these tools are not used to reconstruct a past that

Crusoe is alien to, but a future that Crusoe is determined to 'create'. Tools, Braverman observes, are "the true valuables that give Crusoe an advantage over nature... they are the legislative instruments by which he will manifest his dominion – his political will – over the island" (9). Braverman insightfully establishes the relationship between tool and word as narrative material. The time Crusoe finishes his warehouse of tools and other values, he observes, is the time he "began to keep a journal of every day's employment" (14-15).

Tools help bring the roles of maker and teller together. The two roles part only when other characters overstep their roles as witnesses to Crusoe's achievements. These are a civilized island to rule and a regulated narrative to tell. Crusoe gives priority of attention and depiction only to things of his own making. This makes only one aspect of nature in the focus of Crusoe's attention. The natural scene on the island appeals not for adoration, but for exploitation (Watt 73), because only the latter response secures a subject position. The master of the island cannot afford to be 'charmed', or 'infatuated', the romantic way, because his very survival as a person and narrator depends on treating everything around him as material for the industry of a civilization and the manufacturing of a narrative, both originating from the 'self'. Non-economic appeal of natural scenery would greatly undermine Crusoe's essential agency in favour of 'Mother Nature'. This form of submission to nature renders irrelevant the core experience of the narrative, which is the conscious though unstated rejection of parental authority. Even Mother Nature cannot take lead in Crusoe's domain.

The pre-Friday phase on the island helps unravel Crusoe's assumptions about the society he committed his 'original sin' to create. It does not reveal him as anti-social or a misanthrope, but rather as a dictator who, in the light of his assertion: "I bought All my experience before I had it", (104), 'bought' his domination before he had it. Crusoe exercises his early fantasies of lordship with animals, assuming the position of the patriarch and calling the souls he possesses his family.

With the gun as enforcer of his code of rule, Crusoe starts his

### **Shokry Abd - Elmeniem**

---

family by laming a young goat and leading it home. Later he “bound and splintered up its leg” (75). He thus gives himself the authority to injure and heal. He saves another kid from his dog. “I made a collar to this little creature...I always carr’d about me a string... and led the kid by it” (111). Tamed with hunger, the wild goat takes on the character of a dog: and “would never leave me afterwards” (112). This implicit ‘pledge’ strongly reminds of Xury’s and foreshadows Friday’s submissive presence. Crusoe has always to begin with the gun or any other coercive means. He inflicts pain, confines, or threatens with death, then comes the role of the healer and provider. The result is everlasting gratitude and awe. Even when unchallenged, Crusoe imposes his lordly presence on his subjects. He readily drowns some of his cats because they have outgrown the number he deems inconvenient, thus adding the role of executioner to the list of his lordly roles. Frank Donoghue argues that such acts mean to assure Crusoe that “everything in his political world is his property and that everyone is properly subjected and completely under his control”. It also reveals that even in an desolate island-text “the issue of rivalry figures the chief threat”(2).

For very special reasons, Polly, the parrot, is an extraordinary subject in Crusoe’s state, but this does not secure him independent narrative space at any time. On the contrary, the talking bird makes a sudden exit as most of the human or animal characters in the narrative. Crusoe “taught him to call me by my name very familiarly”, (109). ‘Very familiarly’ most probably means accurately, but the phrase, we suggest, have rather unplanned but highly significant ironic overtones. The irony stems from applying the code of social respectability regarding forms of address to a bird. Crusoe does not mention that everybody else has called him by his first name. He makes a concession in Polly’s case, because the pet’s use of ‘Robinson’ does not disrupt the class structure the master is creating. Xury and Friday, by contrast, have to be made, not only class-conscious, but also race-conscious. They have to call him master, not mistaking it for his name, we believe. With no will of his own – unlike the two ‘slaves’ – Polly is taught to talk not only to interpose the surprising event of

hearing a human voice calling his name in the middle of his wilderness, but also to bring to attention Crusoe's constructed self-image as 'poor Crusoe', to emotionally counter-balance the image of lordly Crusoe. As usual in Crusoe's narrative, to commend a character is to put an end to its narrative life. Polly, Crusoe briefly puts it, "was a trusty servant to me many years" (64).

In terms of narrative space, a trusty servant for many years is not given advantage over enemies; all are there to bear witness to some lordly character of Crusoe. Crusoe's "enemies of several Sorts" recognize his authority, derived in this case and many others from his resourcefulness. Taken up and served "as we serve notorious Thieves in England" the "villainous" birds which attack Crusoe's crop reveal two aspects of his rulership: law giving and law enforcement. Thus 'served' and serving, these enemies exit the narrative as fast as they respond to Crusoe's disciplinary measures. This obvious improbability in terms of realist depiction is, in political terms, an edict of deportment, for Crusoe concludes the episode by the claim that the birds were terrorized and forsake his part of the island" (117).

In this pre-society phase of his island life, Crusoe gives several hints at the conditions for residency – not full citizenship – in his territories. Self-preservation, the acquisition of safe comfort, and the procurement of unconditional help, we argue, is the paradigm governing the world of *RC*, and in its light these conditions are defined. In his pursuit of security and comfort Crusoe misses people in the same manner he misses things. The danger of cannibals makes Crusoe "impatient for Intelligence abroad", which means the need for "spies to send out". Xury and the boat are recalled in the same breath – the same way the act of selling was reported. It is not human presence or creativity that is required, it is strictly 'help'. "[W]hat might be a little to be done with help and Tools", he explains, "was a vast labour to do alone" (115). Even at a time of most urgent need for company, Crusoe talks of help, "I have none to help or hear me" (86, 91).

Crusoe's dream society is one where he "ha[s] no Rivals...no competitor, none to dispute Sovereignty or Command with" (128). As narrator and subject, Crusoe inhibits elements of conflict over the

narrative space as he takes precautions against intrusion into his island. He has to avoid deriving authority, because it is the Trojan horse of other narratives and narrators. In textual terms, every incident, experience, or piece of wisdom introduced has to originate in Crusoe.

Crusoe's assumptions about the 'use' of society in the narrative and on the island shape the society he creates in both. To begin with, Crusoe's need for society is only briefly admitted, but never 'dramatized'. "I had no society" (132) does not exceed the realm of text into that of experience. Even the regret of "the want of conversation" is 'economically' expressed "...neither could I be said to want anything but Society", which renders society more an accessory than a basic need. It is as help or witness that society is required, as subjects not partners. Society has to come after Crusoe has mastered enough skills and controlled enough territory to take its members under his wing. Only this can guarantee him the master narrative that 'captivates' late comers. Other potential narratives if unavoidable would be on the margins of the master one. This is why the first society Crusoe sees on the island is a cannibalistic structure that literally feeds on the flesh of its outnumbered, and therefore vanquished party. This kind of society would metaphorically devour Crusoe's yet incomplete narrative.

A revealing expression of Crusoe's dilemma as sole subject and narrator is "my Reign, or my Captivity" (137). Crusoe envisions the danger of losing audience because of the tedium he knows might result from the absence of society. Others are needed more for the industry of narrative than that of civilization. The paradox of captivity in reign is better understood as the ambiguity of captivity in Crusoe's case is revealed. Terrified at being captured by others – society – Crusoe acts as his own captor. This situation is further exposed when Crusoe accuses himself, in a confessional mode, of hypocrisy regarding his position of society. When he muses "I might be more happy in this solitary condition than I should have been in a liberty of society" (112), he 'confesses' that he would "rather pray heartily to be delivered" (114). The irony which helps solve the ambiguity is that Crusoe, as his manipulative method of narration reveals, is more

truthful in his 'false' statement of being content with his solitary state than in his confessional one. Crusoe does not need society for physical survival, but for recognition as author, otherwise authority and authorship would be void of meaning.

The differentiation between 'need' and 'want' is critical for the ethics from which authority is primarily derived in Crusoe's dream society. Only need is relevant to survival, whereas want is relevant to comfort. It cannot be said that Crusoe does not need society, but this must not be admitted or allowed to shape his power relations. One condition that the text makes and acts to is that the individuals who come to the island, first, do not come as a society. They must not have an acknowledged body of authority or coercive power of arms or knowledge to pull them together. Second, for survival, they must need Crusoe more than he needs them. This makes Crusoe a rescuer, provider, and a true saviour, the roles of a deserved ruler. Ironically, the assumption of rulership in a real society comes with its 'molestation'. In our case, this bother means the worry over the fragmentation of authority, not less textually than politically. The fact that Crusoe's condition remains "para-social...until he rescues Friday" (Bell 31) in itself establishes the new comer's claim to space not only as a narrative subject, but also as a potential narrator. Crusoe has to adapt to the new conditions and still maintain his monopoly on the text. He has to extend the use of old means and devise new ones to contain the potential narratives and voices that come with new novelistic lives, exactly as he works to control them as subjects or citizens. On these conditions Friday is created.

Crusoe unwaveringly seeks to undermine Friday's narrative presence and appropriate his narrative space. Tailored to predetermined specifications, the rescued African's past life practically ends with his saviour's decision to 'save' him, with all the economic denotations of the act; the new one he readily surrenders to that saviour-investor. With all the power that a takeover, not a merger, gives, to extend the business metaphor, Crusoe uses such textual strategies as "occultation, editing ... truth claims" and disclaimers (Karimi 12), as well as some features of third person narration, violating the mimetic model of his chosen



perspective. Expressions such as 'as if ', 'seemed', and 'token of' are supposed to disclaim omniscience, but this does not make Crusoe less articulate regarding his interpretation of Friday's actions, for example, Friday behaved "as if he had been taken prisoner and had just been to be kill'd" (203). Crusoe's explanatory remarks thus relate to what is, "as if taken prisoner" as well as what would be, "...to be killed", with no later verification from the only authority on the subject, Friday. Acting as a sign language interpreter, Crusoe takes Friday's behaviour as "token of acknowledgement for saving his life (203), or of "swearing to be my Slave for ever" (204). What is curious about the time markers 'for ever' and "as long as he liv'd" (206), is that all the signs of subjection however explicit cannot confirm a life pledge such as that they mean to convey. What is more probable is that Crusoe lays the bases for the master-slave relation by hastily 'subtitling' the scene in the manner he does.

At times it can be justifiably assumed that Crusoe only reports what Friday later informs him of, but this is very rarely textually documented. This exclusion is not meant to avoid repetitiveness – already a compelling feature of the narrative – or stating the obvious. The reason, we argue, is that such documentation means the explicit admission of Crusoe's – now – derived authority which, in turn, secures Friday a recognizable share of narrative space both as subject and implied narrator. This is technically expressed in the use of what can be described as thin covers of omniscience. To the point is how Crusoe got to know the way Friday perceived the power of the gun, its effect on him, and what he privately said to it. Reluctant to 'quote' his slave, Crusoe introduces this part of Crusoe's consciousness by the rather generic "I found" (211) and concludes it by the parenthetical "as I afterwards learn'd of him" (212). Even what is meant to be an 'exotic' image, "fund of Death and Destruction", carries more of Crusoe's economic mentality than of the savage's superstitious mind.

The determination to inhibit Friday's narratorial presence technically expresses a political determination to usurp his subjectivity. The new subject is claimed to be without "Passion, Sullenness or Designs", that is an absence. Nevertheless, Crusoe takes all "Precautions" – regulatory measures as to his narratorial "Safety"

on Friday's "account" (209). In this light Friday's image and role are designed; he can be interesting, but not capturing, useful, but dependent. When he is not Crusoe's double, alter ego, or projection screen, but a rivaling character in the narrative and a fellow resident on the island, Friday's role is to give occasion to his creator's speculations, and self-reassurances, or to shed further light on his inventiveness, resourcefulness or any aspect of his character that his lonely existence could not bring to light.

Purpose or function decides narrative treatment and accordingly narrative space is rationed. The 'process' of Friday's education and exploration by Crusoe illustrates this. In this respect, the description 'process' refers to the experience not its textual representation. Crusoe teaches Friday about religion, language and other aspects of European civilization, but hardly shows how. A key sentence in this regard is "I learn'd him English so well that he could answer me almost any Questions" (214). Crusoe does not care to represent any of the difficulties, mistakes, funny experiences, and challenges that "I learn'd...him English" implies. This use of verbal representation to submerge narrative experience is one doubly useful growth regulator. It saves the teacher the trouble of thinking of fictional situations showing his pedagogic skills, minimizes the appearance of his pupil, yet secures him the position of a skillful teacher. Experientially the statement is put to point Crusoe's solidification of his authority by being the teacher and better speaker of the now official language of the state. Moreover, language is used to scrutinize Friday, getting out of him what Crusoe deems of value, but we do not really have an English-speaking Friday.

Only two words of Friday's mother tongue are permitted to appear in the text: 'Benamuchee' – God and 'Oowocakee' – clergy (217). Friday uses a form of 'broken' English, a sign of permanent dependency and subjectivity. The African is never reported to use a word of his native tongue to show understanding, ask how to express it in English, or spontaneously express an idea or a sentiment. This means that the linguistic preparation or its textual representation is oriented towards the expression of 'new' ideas, attitudes, and

sentiments – if possible. With this kind of linguistic preparation, the native content of language is not only held in check but held cheap. This partly explains the impression that Friday does not – is not allowed to – show the slightest linguistic pride, and Crusoe the slightest curiosity regarding Friday's language and culture, unless it is assumed that it is all included in the "thousand Questions" that Crusoe speaks of (219). The many, lengthy conversations Crusoe refers to are – if at all – sparingly represented; two of these reinforce Crusoe's moral triumph over his disciple. In the first Friday declares his renunciation of cannibalism (214), in the second his native religion (216, 217).

Friday's religious education is another strictly regulated dimension of the new character's narrative life. "[B]y Degrees" Crusoe says, "I open'd his Eyes" (216), reporting the result and abstracting the process. The incredible submissiveness of the pagan taken for granted, the sentence is a statement of the undeniable truth and appeal of the Christian faith in its Protestant version and the sincerity and skill of its advocate. Statements such as Friday "listen'd with great Attention, and received with great Pleasure the Notion of Jesus Christ being sent to redeem us" (216), are mere assertions signifying the narrator's dilemma when faced with an aspect of his account unconvincing in its reported form, but that he would not venture to realistically represent. For instance, when Crusoe tries dialogue, not direct instruction, and allows Friday to argue back, the novice asks "why God no kill the Devil, so make him no more wicked?" (218). To escape the authority threatening embarrassment, Crusoe uses two regulatory devices at his disposal in life and text. He pretends not hear or understand then sends Friday away, out of the scene. The teacher/author is shocked to find that Friday is not exactly "the tabula rasa" upon which "he can inscribe the legacy of his power", to contradict Braverman's statement (19).

"The Savage was now a good Christian" (220) is one of three assertions that Crusoe boldly makes about his man's religion and politics, and the quality of his island life with this only disciple and subject. Friday "made me at last entirely his own again" (224) asserts

the native's loyalty after the change of the political situation; now that they have a boat by which they can go to his country. The third assertion that Crusoe makes to conclude this important phase and introduce a more important other is that the company of Friday has made the last three years on the island "quite of another Kind than...[in] all the rest of the Time" (229). Put together, these assertions are subtle admissions of Crusoe's derived or diminished authority in life and text. The man realizes that maintaining the subject position or the self as the dominant narrative subject is not in the capacity of any narrator-character, once he/she has used his/her authority to create another. It can, therefore, be safely said that in the final stage of his island life Crusoe acts on the realization that the authority of any single voice, or group of voices, is [not] sufficient unto itself" (Said, *Reader* 48).

The narrative space between the first rescue operation, in which the first European is introduced into the island, and the communion scene between Crusoe and the English captain as mutual rescuers is, to adapt Crusoe's description, of "another kind than in all the rest of the " narrative. As narrator and ruler, Crusoe gradually releases his grip on the island-text, but hardly gives up pretensions of dominance, sustaining the tension we claim to have engendered the narrative. The early part of this final phase is the only time that Crusoe could express the fantasy that he "was absolute lord and law-giver" and that his 'subjects' "all owed their Lives" to him "and were ready to lay down their Lives" for him (241). As the events of this phase unfold, however, we can see that Crusoe is now beginning to become one subject of his narrative.

The claim that " My People were perfectly subjected" cannot find enough textual support, and the regulatory measures taken to discipline their narrative presence solidify that presence. To illustrate, during the first rescue operation and after the two prisoners are liberated, Crusoe allows his three subjects recognizable narrative space, but regulates it by the use of what we propose to call 'expropriators'. Such verb phrases as 'set', 'made', 'caused', 'ordered', 'bad', 'had...do', and 'gave directions' mean to make them 'do as I bid'

fellows. Crusoe repeats the order seven times in eight lines during the preparation of the first attack (234). 'Expropriators', we contend, make a fine dividing line between doers and performers. This illustrates what Ann Van Sant calls "an elision common in eighteenth-century novels where the servant is not figured as either absent or present" (130). Crusoe boasts that he made the rescued victims "a very good Dish of Flesh and Broth" (241). He uses fourteen verbs to describe the process of making, seven of them are directly related to him, only two of which signify action: 'cut off' and 'chop'. Everything else is done by Friday, but it is Crusoe who 'ordered', 'set', or 'caused', his man to 'kill', 'boil', 'stew', and 'put' things into the dish. 'Asked' is not an option, because it would disrupt the political arrangement the other verbs assume, by recognizing the referents' right of incomppliance or "freedom from the will" of the commander, to recall Macpherson's sixth proposition (264).

Because the novel is "traditionally... always subject to a comparison with reality" (Said, *Reader* 43), Crusoe's technical efforts to control narrative space do not bear their desired fruit. With Friday as interpreter he cannot enter into conversations with his "two new subjects" and remain the originator or only subject of 'the surprising adventures' he gives account of. Paradoxically, the narrative space that Crusoe describes as his dominion is where he loses claims of sovereignty, not only because he is now just one quarter of the island-text's population, but also because some of his regulatory measures defeat their own purpose. One such measure is the language barrier. The most immediate answer to the question 'why should Crusoe give Friday the mediary role of interpreter?', we contend, is his uneasiness about the narratorial potentials of the new comers. Contrary to its purpose, the linguistic barrier distances the narrator more than it does the subjects, by making him wait for Friday to interpret what the 'Old Savage' and the Spaniard have to say. This plot detail also causes Defoe to commit an obvious violation of the mimetic model for realistic prose narrative: Friday is made so able a consecutive interpreter from his native tongue into English that he is literally invisible. He finds the conceptual and linguistic equivalents for such sophisticated topics as the Spanish Inquisition. Overlooking Friday's

agonies as a novice translator is meant to reinforce Crusoe's narrative authority as a direct interlocutor, but it, to some extent, compromises the narrator's credibility. Crusoe concludes this phase of his account by seeking and taking the advice of his two new subjects on the questions of the possible return of cannibals and the provisions for the sixteen expected Spaniards. This completely eradicates the line Crusoe tried to draw between 'doers' and 'performers'. Crusoe now listens to other voices and acts on what he hears, thus the subaltern... appears to have found a way to speak" (Loar 20).

The final phase of *RC*'s island life witnesses a remarkable shift in the narrator's attitude toward his narrative subjects, reflecting an equally drastic change in power relations. As Frank Donoghue argues, "Crusoe is forced, by the arrival of fellow Englishmen, to negotiate the closure of the gap that separates his divided selves and to reinsert himself into a universal imperialist narrative" (4). Claims of exclusive deservedness of gratitude, superiority in language, culture, religion, and position give way to an apparent sense of – at least – reciprocity. Realizing that it is now a question of survival not dominance, Crusoe 'relocates' himself politically and narratively, moving in parallel lines from king to governor, to one of the governor's men, and from narrator-subject to eye-witness reporter, to reporter of other actors' accounts. These relocations allow the appearance of narrative elements which help bring text closer to experience - the divided selves of his book in Donoghue's language - and therefore gain more credibility.

One such element is human voice. What has been mostly a silent picture subtitled by the single voice of a narrator, who permits other voices only when they echo his fears or justify his actions, is now given a sound track. From this point on, voices other than Crusoe's are heard, names mentioned, and direct dialogue used to introduce and reveal new characters. The long held growth enhancer "What is your case?" (255) introduces another "I" – voice and life – into the island-text. The fact that Crusoe and the captain "enquire into one another's circumstances" (257-8) declares the lifting of the ban on recognizable people as subjects and originators of narrative material. Even Crusoe's

parents, we recall, were not exempted from the ban. The captain's potential political power permits him to introduce his case and relate his story, 'Circumstances', in a manner very close to 'I' narration. The man begins his account using 'I' and 'me', then a shift is made to 'he', but, the simple replacement of this third person by 'I' would make it straight forward 'I' narration (225).

Variation of perspective is another narrative feature indicative of the shift in power relations on the island, bearing on the text. Now the experiences represented deservedly resist a single point of view (Karimi 33). Two new facts dictate this change. First, the ship, not the island, is now the prize as well as setting of decisive events. Second, "for reasons of State", Crusoe has to keep himself "out of sight" (268) or "retire[d] in the Dark" (269). These restrictions on Crusoe's movement make him a much less able reporter, not to mention actor. All the events that take place in a setting where he should not be seen are reported to him 'later' or 'afterwards', two time markers that negate claims of immediacy in any sense. This is how he knows that the prisoners committed to Friday "promis'd *faithfully* to bear their Confinement with Patience, and were *very thankful* that they had such good Usage"[emphasis added] (261). What is interesting about the italicised words is that Friday's report does not only include the act but also the manner.

When we read that the mutineers on the ship expected their fellow accomplices' boat to move, "but no Boat stirr'd" (260), we understand that Crusoe does not simply guess or state what is obvious, but that he temporally gives himself access to their consciousness. This flashy shift to their perspective is one device to break the restrictions that Crusoe uses to move from the world of the island, that has already served its purpose, to the world of the ship.

Crusoe's implicit decision to treat himself as one subject and source of narrative material allows him to weave other material into the texture of what has now become the account of an outcast who helps a sea captain restore his usurped ship. This decision to share focality allows us to hear Will Atkins's voice imploring his captain to give him 'quarter'. It more importantly allows Crusoe to borrow the captain's

voice to inform us that “ Will Atkins was the first Man that laid hold of the Captain...and used him barbarously, in tying his Hands, and giving him injurious language” (268). It has to be admitted, though, that Crusoe’s use of “it seems” to introduce this interpolation makes Crusoe’s decision a rather reluctant one. Without this reluctant decision, Crusoe realizes, he could not have reported the negotiations with the mutineers and the details of the ship recovery battle, to neither of which he was a witness.

A mark of the new emerging reciprocity is the replacement of the ubiquitous ‘I’ by ‘we’ as the narrative subject and reporter. On the political plane, Crusoe expresses his recognition of the nature of change that came with the English ship by making two conditions for cooperation with the captain, both of which are obvious admissions that “the real authority on the island lies elsewhere” (Donoghue 8). The second is a request for a free passage to England. The first demands the captain not to “pretend to any Authority on the Island” (256). Crusoe makes these conditions after the captain and his men pledge to “live and dye” with him (255), which reflects a realization of the insufficiency of moral obligation as source of political authority, though it is still the basis of his relationship with Friday. The paradox that the use of ‘pretend’ in the second condition underlies is that Crusoe himself drops all pretensions to authority before his fellow Englishman, and that it is the captain who ‘causes’ Crusoe to theatrically assume a range of state positions to regain his – the captain’s – own authority. “These impersonations”, which Donoghue rightfully sees as “displacements of power” (8) are technically paralleled by the relocations of narrative perspective mentioned earlier. Both sets of measures are taken in consideration of a new power structure which can guarantee Crusoe survival but certainly not lordship.

With sure determination does Crusoe reject his father's advice to go "silently and smoothly thro' the world, and comfortably out of it" (5). *RC* is conceived the moment the son decides to author his own narrative out of " Calamities of life", "Vicissitudes", distempers, "Uneasiness of Body and Mind", and "Want of necessaries", the very



list of vices his father has produced to scare him into staying. The rejection of a predetermined career points more to the need to take control of one's life than to a belief that it is not the most economically profitable course for the son to follow. It is not a question of results but rather of process whose decisive element is the acquisition and wielding of authority. The descriptions of Crusoe's island as a "personal empire" and a 'fiefdom' strongly suggest an analogy between island and text which helps relate the politics of narration to that of rulership. In other words, to ask what kind of narrator is also to ask what kind of ruler Crusoe is.

Respectively denoting a colonial and a feudal power structure, where at least one body of power controls or lords over a certain territory, and all others are at best subjects or tenants, 'empire' and 'fiefdom' seem to provide a model for Crusoe the character and narrator to simulate with similar degrees of disillusionment. Such a structure cannot be built under normal circumstances, because narrative authority is directly related to the role Defoe's first person retrospective narrator has to play in life. Crusoe cannot wield authority in any setting where he has to follow rules not of his own making. This is why the boat he used to escape from his Moorish enslaver is the only pre-island setting where he exercised authority. On the boat Crusoe has the power of life and death over two subjects. The measures he takes to guarantee control of the boat are narratively paralleled by textual arrangements he has made to sustain his position as sole narrator.

In hope of achieving "absolute equivalence between individual effort and individual reward (Watt 75) or, as we argue, to give full vent to his authorial impulse, Defoe moves his narrator to his exile island. With his set of growth regulators Crusoe controls the elements that would allow other voices to occupy space. Things suggest nothing beyond the process of making. Nostalgia is rejected as a back door for rival narrators. Even gold is temporally deemed a creature "whose Life is not worth saving" (57), because it cannot be made into anything other than that already decided by external society, the cannibalistic structure that at once undermines his authority and gives it meaning.

With the introduction of Friday and the later characters in the last few years of his island life, Crusoe is forced to release his grip on the narrative. Other voices and tales occupy narrative space, and fantasies of sovereignty give way to self-preservation, which is technically possible only with the role of a reporter of what others do or tell. As he had a swoon on his first journey, marking his vulnerability as a character and narrator, on his last journey he almost falls to the ground, but for the English captain's strong arms. As for the island, the first settler has to share it "into parts" with its new settlers, "giving them such parts as they agreed on" (305). In narrative terms, Crusoe realizes that no one voice can be 'lord narrator'. It might be argued that Crusoe, the adventurer, managed to create a fiefdom out of a desert island, but the narrator will always be far short of that dream.

## Works Cited

- Assagioli, Roberto. *The Act of Will*. N.Y: Penguin Books, 1976.
- Bakhtin, M.M. "Discourse in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Bayoumi, Mustafa and Andrew Rubin eds. *The Edward Said Reader*. New York: Vintage Books, 2000.
- Braverman, Richard. "Crusoe's Legacy." *Studies in the Novel* 18.1 (1986): 1-26.
- Butler, Mary E. "the Effect of the Narrator's Uncertainty on the Fiction of *Robinson Crusoe*." *Studies in the Novel* 25.2 (1983): 77-90.
- Cohn, Dorrit. *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.
- Defoe, Daniel. *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner*. Ed. and introd. J. Donald Cowley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Donogue, Frank. "Inevitable Politics: Rulership in Robinson Crusoe". *Studies in the Novel* 27 (1995): 1-11.
- Karimi, Mohamed. "Distancing Discourse and the Disruption of Ideology in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*: A Symptomatic Reading." Diss. Case Western Reserve University, 1997.
- Lentricchia, Frank and Thomas McLaughlin eds. *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Macpherson, C.B. *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. N.Y: Vintage Books, 1993.
- "Molestation and Authority in Narrative Fiction." *The Edward Said Reader*. Eds. Bayoumi and Rubin 38 – 60.
- Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*. London: Penguin Books, 1963.