

Friday: An Alter Ego of Robinson Crusoe

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Abstract: In *Robinson Crusoe*, Crusoe saves a cannibal and names him Friday, and thereby gives him his identity. Along with this he transmits his ideology into Friday. This article seeks to introduce Friday as an alter ego of Robinson Crusoe in the light of the activities, attitudes, and instincts of the former. Crusoe makes Friday his disciple after his arrival in the island and Friday accepts Crusoe as his ideological father. He, in fact, is a harbinger of Crusoean ideology. The article, thus, aims at deconstructing the notion that Friday is only a slave—a mere representative of the Colonized. Considering the variegated events between the two, this study will add a new dimension to the existing criticism on the relation between Friday and Crusoe and motivate readers to reconsider Friday from a new perspective.

Keywords: adaptation, alter ego, ideology, instinct, relation

I. Introduction

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* features the story of a shipwrecked man, Robinson Crusoe, who has to live alone in an uninhabited island until he rescues a savage, Friday. In the course of time, Friday places himself in the position of Crusoe and functions as an alter ego of Robinson Crusoe. In his twenty four years of isolated life, Crusoe builds up his own world, his own kingdom with miraculous talent, hard work, and creativity. He manages to have food, gun, water, fire, shelter, and livestock—the resources quite enough for his survival. Even he keeps the Bible to get religious solace. Yet, he lacks a companion, a friend, a trusted comrade who will make his life comfortable. Later nature gifts him Friday who serves Crusoe and gradually transforms himself as the other self of Crusoe.

Friday possesses diversified identities. His status transforms from the category of a savage or cannibal into a loyal servant, a close friend, a true Christian, a talented disciple and a civilized herald. He learns everything that Crusoe knows. He possesses everything that Crusoe has. Crusoe's innermost thoughts, beliefs, values, and instincts replace Friday's former values, beliefs, and instincts. Even he defies his own religion to respond to the religious teaching of Crusoe and converts himself into a devout Christian. Crusoe's defiance of his father's advice is equal to the original sin of Adam and Eve. During his living in this secluded island, he swings in between sin and belief. His encounter with Friday resolves such fluctuation. Friday, in fact, replicates Crusoe's religious consciousness. For Crusoe, he is a reward from God—a kind of redemption. He is an essential apparatus who adds fulfillment in Crusoe's kingdom and represents Crusoe's psyche.

Crusoe's Experience and Friday's Knowledge

Friday is handsome in appearance, simple minded in nature, and exemplary in expression. Out of his quick adaptation quality, he abandons his cannibalistic nature, learns to wear clothes, make tools, cook foods, and use guns. He even manages to have command on explanatory gestures in English. He is so faithful, loyal and loving to Crusoe that he discards his native culture and native identity. Crusoe enriches Friday's knowledge and Friday, in return, enriches Crusoe's experience. One completes the other. Acknowledging this reciprocal relation with Friday, Crusoe declares:

... I had a singular satisfaction in the Fellow himself; his simple unfeign'd Honesty, appear'd to me more and more every Day, and I began really to love the Creature; on his Side, I believe he love'd me more than it was possible for him ever to love any Thing before. (154) [1]

Crusoe's Desire and Friday as the Desired

Friday represents Crusoe's latent desire manifested in Crusoe's dream. Crusoe longs for a companion in his solitary life. Seeing the cannibals on the island, he passionately yearns for a companion. At night he dreams of two canoes carrying eleven savages on his own side of the shore. A savage, who is going to be killed, runs towards his habitation and Crusoe accepts him warmly. In his dream, Crusoe is enchanted with the impression that the rescued savage will serve him and direct him "what to do, and whether to go for Provisions; and whether not to go for the fear of being devoured, what Places to venture into, and what to escape" (144) [1.1]. Friday's rescue from the savages mirrors the prophetic dream of Crusoe. The way Friday escapes and runs

into Crusoe's fortification manifests what Crusoe dreamt in his dream. Crusoe claims, "[...] when as I thought I saw him pursued by the whole Body, and now I expected that part of my Dream was coming to pass, and that he would certainly take shelter in my Grove ..." (146) [1.2]. He regards Friday as a consolation prize from the Providence in his solitary life and Friday proves his worth by his "more faithful, loving, sincere" (151) [1.3] service more than the desire of Crusoe.

Crusoe's Instinct and Friday's Adaptation

Friday's quick adaptation quality is a prototype of Crusoe's adaptation instinct. To settle in a newer way of living is quite challenging. Crusoe quests to adapt to every means of life. He wisely fights for his survival by developing his talents to accomplish his required things. He builds up a tent to protect him from wild animals. He starts farming and begins to make baskets necessary to preserve his harvest. He, indeed, becomes an adept craftsman. He also explores the island and builds up a summer camp on the other part of the island which seems to be fertile in nature and thus helps him to be rich. He plants trees around his home to keep himself safe that "no Men of what kind so ever, would imagine that there was any Thing beyond it, much less a Habitation" (137) [1.4]. He learns to make earthen vessels for cooking. Crusoe's own contemplation on those earthen pots demonstrates both practical and aesthetic implications of those vessels, "they were very indifferent, as anyone may suppose, when I had no way of making them; but as the Children make Dirt-Pies, or as a woman would make Pies, that never leant to raise Past" (103) [1.5]. Virginia Woolf (1960) elucidates how such kind of earthen pots can be significant symbols:

Thus Defoe, by reiterating that nothing but a plain earth ware pot stand in the foreground, persuades us to see remote islands and the solitudes of human soul. By believing fixedly in the solidity of the pot and its earthiness, he has subdued every other element to his design; he has roped the whole universe into harmony. (48-49) [2]

Crusoe has attained domination over the island— "he has roped the whole universe into harmony". Friday represents Crusoe's astounding adaptation quality. He quickly adapts to Crusoe's world. He starts eating animal flesh and in many ways he tells Crusoe "[h]e liked it, that I (Crusoe) could not understand him; and at last he told me he would never eat Man's flesh any more ..." (Defoe 154) [1.6]. Crusoe orders him "to beating some Corn out" (154) [1.7] and to Crusoe's surprise "[h]e soon understood how to do it" (154) [1.h]. He learns how to make bread. He develops his talent to the standard of that of Crusoe. Crusoe acknowledges, "[i]n a little Time Friday was able to do all the Work for me, as well as I could do it myself" (154) [1.8]. He learns cooking, farming. He shows sensibility on his part to make Crusoe realize "[h]e would work the harder for me, if I would tell him what to do" (154) [1.9]. Just within one year, Friday begins to talk English and he understands the names and places that Crusoe utters. Crusoe's speech demonstrates how Friday replicates his adaptation instinct:

I was greatly delighted with him, and made it my Business to teach him every Thing, that was proper to make him useful, handy, and helpful; but especially to make him speak, and understand me when I spake, and he was the aptest Schollar that ever was, and particularly was so merry, so constantly diligent, and so pleas'd, when he cou'd but understand me, or make me understand him, that it was very pleasant to me to talk to him; and my life began to be easy. (152) [1.10]

Crusoe's defiance of his father's advice is equal to Friday's defiance of his native culture. Showing disobedience to his father's advice Crusoe commits an original sin similar to that of Adam who disobeyed God's command by testing the fruit of knowledge. Crusoe belongs to a merchant family. His elder brother died in a battle and another brother is missing. His father wishes him to be educated so that he can have a moderate standard of living. His father advises him:

... the middle Station had the fewest Disasters, and was not expos'd to so many Vicissitudes as the higher or lower Part of Mankind; nay, they were not subjected to so many Distempers and Uneasiness either of Body or Mind, as those were who, by vicious Living, Luxury and Extravagancies on the one Hand, or by hard Labour ... That middle Station of Life was calculated for all kind of Virtues and all kinds of Enjoyments; that Peace and Plenty were the Handmaids of a middle fortune ... (5) [1.11]

Crusoe is unwilling to lead "that middle Station of Life" and plans to go to the sea for his career. His father does everything to prevent him from leaving home. He even reminds him of the destiny of Crusoe's elder brother "to whom he had used the same earnest Perswasions to keep him from going into the Low Country Wars, but could not prevail, his young Desires prompting him to run into the Army where he was killed ..." (6) [1.12]. He utters religious aspects, "[t]hat if I (Crusoe) did take this foolish Step, God would not bless me, and I would have Leisure hereafter to reflect upon having neglected his Counsel when there might be none to assist my Recovery" (6) [1.13]. Crusoe leaves home and thus shows disobedience to his father who is believed to be the deputy of God according to religion. Leopold Damrosch Jr., (1994) says:

Crusoe's "original sin," like Adam's, is disobedience to his father. After going to the sea against express warnings, he is punished by shipwreck and isolation, converted by God (who communicates through a monitory dream during sickness, an earthquake, and the words of the Bible) ... Crusoe likens

himself to the Prodigal Son, a favorite emblem for a fallen man in Puritan homiletics, and a shipwrecked sea captain indignantly calls him a Jonah. (374) [3]

Crusoe never fulfills his responsibility towards his parents. He should have fulfilled his duty to his family even if it goes against his career and adventure. Like Crusoe, Friday also shows disobedience. He believed in paganism. He had undoubted trust in cannibal God *Benamuckee* who was believed to be “[m]uch older than the Sea, or the Land, than the Moon, or the Starts” (Defoe 156) [1.14]. Crusoe teaches Friday that *Benamuckee* is a “[c]heat and their bringing Word from thence what he said” (157) [1.15]. Friday renounces his own religion to comply with Crusoe’s Christian belief. Of course, Friday exhibits extreme joy while he reunites with his father. This does not mean that Friday will return to his native culture. Crusoe has the wrong notion that “[i]f Friday could get back to his own Nation again, he would not only forget all his Religion, but all his Obligation to me; and would be forward enough to give his Country an Account of me … make feast upon me” (162) [1.16]. Friday proves Crusoe’s concern wrong and Crusoe becomes “very sorry afterwards” (162) [1.17]. Friday develops into a “religious Christian” (162) [1.18] giving up his own Pagan beliefs. He renounces cannibalism. He wears goat-skin clothes to cover him up. Carol Houlihan Flynn (1994) claims, “Friday even wears a ‘waistcoat’ constructed from the skin of a goat, that version of Crusoe’s other self” (Flynn 429) [4]. Friday fully rips his savage identity. He tells Crusoe that if he can go back to this native land he will tell the natives “[t]o live Good, tell them pray to God, tell them to eat Corn bread, Cattle-flesh, Milk, no eat Man again” (Defoe 162) [1.19].

Friday bears similarity with Crusoe even in his countenance. Homi k Bhabha (1994) asserts that skin is a significant signifier of difference. The appearance of Friday distinguishes himself from other savages. He has “[a]ll the Sweetness and Softness of a European in his Countenance too, especially when he smiled” (198) [1.20]. His countenance is so agreeable that Crusoe can associate his European countenance with him. He is a “[c]omely handsome Fellow, perfectly well made; with straight strong Limbs, not too large; tall and well shap’d” (148) [1.21]. His hair is “not curl’d like Wool” (149) [1.22] and there is a great sharpness in his eyes. Crusoe describes, “[t]he Colour of his Skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, as the *Brasilians* and *Virginians*, and other Natives of *America* are” (149) [1.23]. According to Crusoe, the cannibals he has seen in his island had “[a]n ugly yellow” skin. However, Friday with his “very tawny” skin colour is different from other cannibals.

Crusoe as Priest and Friday as Disciple

Friday is a representative of Crusoe’s religious consciousness. Before coming to this wilderness Crusoe was not a true Christian in practice. When he faced any misfortune he vowed to please God, “[i]f ever I got once my Foot upon dry Land again, I would go directly home to my Father, and never set it into a Ship again while I liv’d” (9) [1.24]. He quickly forgot all his vows. His true passion for religion starts from the moment he steps on the island. During his living in the island, he moves from the stage of repentance to redemption and finally to regeneration. Concentrating on the Bible he finds solace, guidance, and peace. When he starts reading the Bible more seriously, he realizes God’s words, “call on me in the Day of the Trouble, and I will deliver, and thou shalt glorify me” (81) [1.25]. He realizes that satisfying his spiritual needs should be his primary concern rather than thinking in which way he can be rescued. He declares, “I was remov’d from all the Wickedness of the World here. I had neither the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, or the Pride of Life” (109) [1.26]. However, the discovery of a footprint shakes his religious belief. Although he reads the Bible, prays to God, and follows God’s instructions, in the bottom of his heart there is a constant battle between his belief and his fear. Stephen Hymer (2011) talks about Crusoe’s mental state on the discovery of that footprint:

When signs of other human beings come to him, he does not run out with joy, ready to risk everything to hear human voice after so many years in solitary confinement. Instead his fears and anxieties rise to a frenzied pitch and he fences and fortifies himself more, withdrawing further and further into isolation. (50) [5].

Crusoe’s religious belief becomes stable after his encounter with Friday. Crusoe engages himself completely to instruct Friday the “[k]nowledge of the true God” (Defoe 156) [1.27]. He teaches him about the knowledge of the heaven, the omnipresence of God, the divine power, the “notion of Jesus Christ” (156) [1.28]. As a sincere learner, Friday tries to know and understand every single aspect of Crusoe’s religious lesson. Hence, he asks, “if God much strong, much might as the Devil, why God no kill the Devil, so make him no more do wicked?” (158) [1.29]. For teaching Friday the religious lessons, Crusoe learns many things “that either I (Crusoe) did not know, or had not fully consider’d before” (159) [1.30]. Friday becomes a true Christian. As a reward from God, he lights Crusoe’s grief. He makes Crusoe’s life so peaceful that Crusoe no longer considers the island as a prison where Crusoe has been confined to and gives up his concern of being rescued. Crusoe feels “a secret joy” that runs “through every part” (159) [1.31] of his soul. Crusoe happily says:

... Friday and I, was such, as made the three Years perfectly and completely happy, if any such Thing as compleat Happiness can be form’d in a sublunary State. The Savage is now a good Christian, a

much better than I; though I have reason to hope, and bless God for it, that we were equally penitent, and comforted restor'd Penitents; we had here the World of God to read, and no farther off from his Spirit to instruct, than if we had been in *England*. (159) [1.32]

Crusoe as State and Friday as Apparatus

Friday is an essential apparatus for Crusoe's kingdom which he builds up in the island. With his chivalric spirit, Crusoe makes his own kingdom. He enjoys absolute power having "no competitor, none to dispute sovereignty" (128) [1.33]. His subjects are a dog, a parrot, and two cats. He says, "[...] my little family sit down to dinner; there was majesty the prince and lord of the whole island; I had the lives of all subjects at my absolute command. I could hand, draw, give liberty, and take it away and no rebels among all my subjects" (148) [1.34]. Although his empire is full of resources, he feels a kind of void for his solitude. Friday's arrival fulfills the emptiness. Crusoe gets a human companion with whom or by whom he will enjoy his domination on the island. Crusoe states:

My island was now peopled, and I thought my self very rich in Subjects; and it was a merry Reflection which I frequently made, How like a King I looke'd. First of all the whole Country was my own meer Property; so that I had an undoubted Right of Domination. (174) [1.37]

Crusoe as Self and Friday as the Other Self

Friday is Crusoe's other self. They complete each other and become a unified whole. Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" demonstrates how Nippers and Turkey make one another complete. Turkey can work swiftly before noon. However, he becomes tired and ill-tempered after having his lunch. Nippers becomes nervous in the morning. He is prolific in the afternoon. Their combined work makes the whole day. Similarly, Friday's relation with Crusoe is reciprocal. Crusoe teaches him and he, in return, upholds Crusoe's thought. Friday worships Crusoe in such a scale that he cannot think of his existence without Crusoe. Hence, when Crusoe tells him to back to his nation, he cries, "*you take, kill Friday; ... What you send Friday away for? Take, kill Friday, no send Friday away*" (164) [1.38]. Crusoe also confesses his love for Friday. Crusoe projects Christianity, civilization in Friday's soul and Friday provides emotional warmth to Crusoe. Their relation is equal to that "of a Child to a Father" (162) [1.39]. At this point we have to shed light on the matter, if there is a father-son relation between Crusoe and Friday, why Crusoe calls Friday "my man" (157) [1.40] and Friday calls him "[m]aster" (149) [1.41]. Does it indicate to a master-slave relationship? When Crusoe rescues Friday, Friday expresses his gratitude by giving the signs "of Subjection, Servitude, and Submission" (149) [1.42]. We have to analyze whether these signs are indicative to a dominant-dominated relation or more than that. In William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, relation between Prospero and Caliban echoes a dominant-dominated relation. Prospero subjugates Caliban—the rightful owner of the island. Prospero enslaves Caliban with his tricks and knowledge. Caliban exists as a slave on the island to serve Prospero. Sometimes, he asserts his right:

CALIBAN. I must eat my dinner.
This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother
Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first
Thou strok'st me and made much of me, woud'st give me
Water with berries in't, and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less

...
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me (Shakespeare 1. 2. 335-36) [6]

Caliban's speech is a clear illustration of Prospero's violent domination and his exercise of absolute power. Like Prospero, Crusoe establishes absolute power in the island. He considers him a "[k]ing and lord" (Defoe 101) [1.43] of the island. He sees him equal to "[a]ny lord of a manor in England" (101). He feels absolute peace. However, the fear of the cannibals jeopardizes his idea of absolute power—absolute peace. Friday's arrival re-establishes his peace. Contrary to Caliban, Friday is agreeable to him. Friday is not a Caliban to him; rather, it is Friday who introduces social order in Crusoe's kingdom. H.U. E. Thoden Van Velzen (1973) remarks:

Crusoe has pulled himself through the crisis of the first few years and managed to build a secure position before the Indian arrives. This is the basis for the hierarchical relationship between the two men. The Red Man derives his identity from Crusoe; although he is treated with com-passion and understanding, he is nonetheless a human machine for Crusoe, without culture or personality. Crusoe gives him a name (Friday), converts him to Christianity and teaches him useful trades. Crusoe defines both the identity of Friday as well as the nature of their relationship. (59) [7]

Of course, Crusoe defines Friday's identity, changes his religion, and teaches him English. However, these don't mean that there is only a "hierachal relationship" between Friday and Crusoe. We disagree with Velzen because

Velzen's speech indicates to a dominant-dominated relationship between Friday and Crusoe. Bc Barbora Novotnà (2014) claims that there is an "egotistic master-slave relation between Crusoe and Friday" (10) [8]. We also disagree with Novotnà. The reason is that Friday is not a mere slave to Crusoe. Their relationship is reciprocal. Crusoe has rescued Friday and Friday has made a stable life for Crusoe. Friday, of course, calls Crusoe "[m]aster". The word "master" is an indicative to Crusoe's earned status. Generally, Crusoe calls Friday "my man". It is an acknowledgement of his intimate relation with Friday. They are friends—the most intimate friends. Friday possesses loving nature and Crusoe loves him. For this reason, when they save Friday's father from the cannibals, Crusoe becomes jealous because of the fear of losing his adopted son, Friday. Like Friday, he also thinks Friday as an indispensable part of his love. Friday responds to his love by providing solace, guidance, and worth in his life. He develops himself what Crusoe wants him to be. He can be called a "traditional intellectual" (Gramsci 114) [9]. Antonio Gramsci (1926-37) claims that, traditional intellectuals are those who are "already in existence" and "represent a historical continuity uninterrupted by the most complicated forms" (114) [9.1]. A traditional intellectual works for the state. His role is to carry out the ideology of the state. There is no option to express his ideology. Similarly, Friday works for Crusoe. Psychologically, he becomes another Robinson Crusoe—Crusoe's alter ego.

II. Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears that Friday upholds the ideology of Crusoe. He does not show any ideology of his own, rather, his attitudes, behaviors and activities are the reflections of that of Crusoe. He has no newness and innovation of his own. To him, Crusoe is the ideological father. Though he has no blood connection with Crusoe, he is no less than a biological son. What he does is a replica of Crusoean ideology. In fact, he exists as an alter ego of Crusoe.

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