Colonial Perspectives and Indigenous Resistance in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*

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This research paper examines how colonial views and indigenous resistance are portrayed in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, examining their historical context and significance. It looks at how the protagonist's interactions with indigenous people are shaped by colonial attitudes, illuminating themes of dominance, power struggles, and cultural collisions. The study invites readers to critically interact with the contradictions between colonizers and the colonized by revealing, via literary analysis, how Defoe both upholds and confronts colonial beliefs. It emphasizes how important it is to comprehend the long-lasting effects of colonialism and how they affect society, providing insightful information for postcolonial studies and current discourse.

In Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, colonial perspectives are central to the narrative, shaping the interactions between the protagonist and the indigenous characters encountered throughout the novel. This research paper aims to explore the portrayal of colonial attitudes in the text, examining the impact of these perspectives on the indigenous characters and considering how they reflect the historical context of the time period. By exploring the colonial dynamics at play in *Robinson Crusoe*, this study seeks to illuminate the complexities of power, resistance, and cultural exchange within the context of 18th-century colonialism. Through a literary analysis of the novel, we will uncover the ways in which Defoe's work both perpetuates and challenges colonial ideologies, shedding light on the tensions between colonizers and the colonized in a seminal piece of English literature. This dissertation examines how colonial viewpoints impact interactions between the protagonist and indigenous characters in *Robinson Crusoe*, focusing on the portrayal of domination, survival, and cultural conflict in the context of 18th-century colonialism. It examines indigenous resistance in the novel, particularly through characters such as Friday, highlighting their agency and strength in confronting colonial oppression and claiming their own identities.

The novel *Robinson Crusoe* provides a captivating narrative that reflects colonial perspectives and indigenous resistance during the era of European exploration and expansion. Set against the backdrop of imperialism and colonization, the novel offers a complex portrayal of cultural encounters and power dynamics between the colonizers and the indigenous peoples. By examining the interactions between the protagonist, Robinson Crusoe, and the native inhabitants of the island, one can gain valuable insights into the themes of domination, survival, and cultural clash that define the colonial experience in literature.

Robinson Crusoe's arrival on the deserted island marks the beginning of a narrative that is characterized by the imposition of Western values and norms on the indigenous environment. As a European colonizer, Crusoe initially views the island solely as a resource to be exploited for his own benefit, demonstrating the typical colonial perspective of viewing indigenous lands as empty and waiting to be claimed. This mindset reflects the Eurocentric worldview prevalent during the time of European expansion, where indigenous cultures were often dismissed as inferior or irrelevant.

British colonialism echoes throughout the pages of the novel *Robinson Crusoe* serving as a profound backdrop that shapes the narrative. Published in 1719, the novel follows the protagonist's journey as he ventures from his familiar life in England to embark on an extraordinary adventure. Defoe's work is not merely an adventure tale but an intricate examination of post colonialism, shedding light on the notions of superiority and ownership that were prevalent in European empires. *Robinson Crusoe* explores the complexities of colonial attitudes, portraying the protagonist's encounters with the "Other" as a key postcolonial technique. The novel weaves a tale that is deeply rooted in the colonial contexts of the time, offering a reflection of British colonialism in its various forms and aspects. Through the relationship between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, the novel explores images of colonialism in the Atlantic world, inviting readers to ponder the intricate dynamics of power, dominance, and cultural exchange. As readers delve into the allegorical layers of *Robinson Crusoe* they uncover themes of insecurity and personal growth intertwined with the broader themes of colonial power dynamics and unequal relationships that define the colonial experience.

Through the lens of postcolonial analysis, the novel skillfully explores the concept of the "Other," illustrating Crusoe's interactions with individuals who are perceived as different or inferior due to their indigenous backgrounds. This portrayal of unequal relationships between the colonizers and the colonized sheds light on the complexities of colonial power dynamics and the challenges faced by indigenous characters in navigating these oppressive structures. Furthermore, *Robinson Crusoe'*s status as an allegorical novel adds layers of symbolic meaning to its exploration of themes such as personal insecurity and spiritual transformation, offering a multidimensional perspective on the experiences of both the colonizer and the colonized. As scholars continue to revisit and reinterpret *Robinson Crusoe* within its colonial contexts, the novel remains a pivotal text for examining the enduring legacy of British colonialism and its implications for indigenous communities.

The historical context of the time period, particularly the era of British colonialism, deeply influences the themes and narratives presented in *Robinson Crusoe*. The novel is intricately woven with colonial ideologies that reflect the prevailing attitudes of the time. The text serves as a lens through which post colonialism can be analyzed, shedding light on the dynamics of power and ownership established by European empires. Robinson Crusoe's interactions with Friday epitomize the colonial relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, emphasizing the unequal power dynamics and cultural hierarchies inherent in colonial settings. Moreover, the portrayal of the "Other" in the novel underscores the dehumanization and exoticization of non-European characters, a common postcolonial technique used to critique colonial attitudes and practices. Through the character of Crusoe, the novel explores themes of insecurity and the disruption of comfort zones, mirroring the uncertainties and challenges faced during the colonial expansion. Additionally, *Robinson Crusoe*'s allegorical nature not only conveys a spiritual journey for the protagonist but also serves as a commentary on the economic aspects of colonization, highlighting the exploitative nature of colonial enterprises. In essence, the historical context of British colonialism permeates every aspect of *Robinson Crusoe*, inviting readers to engage critically with the complexities of colonial ideologies and their enduring impact on society. When he finds himself stranded on a deserted island, the way in which he interacts with the native inhabitants can be interpreted as a reflection of European colonization during the time period. Crusoe's dominance over the indigenous people on the island highlights the power dynamics at play in colonial encounters. The novel portrays the Europeans as superior and the indigenous people as primitive and inferior, perpetuating colonialist ideologies.

Despite Crusoe's attempts to control and impose European values on the island, indigenous characters display resilience and resistance. Friday, a key indigenous character in the novel, emerges as a symbol of resistance and autonomy. He challenges Crusoe's authority and ideologies, showcasing the agency and strength of indigenous peoples. Through their actions, indigenous characters in *Robinson Crusoe* push back against colonial oppression and assert their own identities. These resistances are manifested through subtle acts of defiance, such as Friday's selective sharing of abilities or his hesitation to fully embrace Christianity. Crusoe's rescue from the cannibals shifts the power dynamic, as Friday becomes a possession while still owed to Crusoe. Friday's selective integration, which includes some pre-colonial ideas, illustrates his refusal to completely give up his identity. The escape attempt of an indigenous prisoner represents a desire for freedom and a rejection of Crusoe's authority.

In *Robinson Crusoe* indigenous characters, particularly Friday, show resistance to colonial domination. They reject oppression, actively engage in decision-making, and preserve their cultural identity. Friday's refusal to be enslaved by Crusoe, his active participation in decision-making, and his determination to preserve his cultural customs are all hallmarks of indigenous resistance. His final release from Crusoe's captivity marks a victory for indigenous agency over colonial oppression, undermining the notion of European supremacy and dominance. These examples contribute to a more nuanced depiction of colonial encounters.

By examining the novel through a postcolonial lens, it becomes evident that Defoe's work serves as more than just a thrilling adventure tale; it is a reflection of the prevailing colonial attitudes and ideologies of the time. The protagonist, Robinson Crusoe, symbolizes the colonizer's journey into the unknown, highlighting themes of insecurity, displacement, and the disruption of comfort zones synonymous with colonial expansion. Through Crusoe's encounters with the "Other," Defoe effectively critiques notions of superiority and ownership that underpinned European empires, inviting readers to critically engage with the lasting impacts of colonialism on society. Furthermore, the allegorical nature of *Robinson Crusoe* extends beyond a mere spiritual journey for the protagonist; it also serves as a poignant commentary on the economic exploitation inherent in colonial enterprises, shedding light on the exploitative nature of colonization. By contextualizing the novel within the historical backdrop of British colonialism, this discussion underscores the significance of understanding and confronting colonial ideologies embedded within literary works like *Robinson Crusoe* thereby contributing to a deeper appreciation of postcolonial studies and their relevance in contemporary discourse.

In conclusion, *Robinson Crusoe* offers a rich exploration of colonial perspectives and indigenous resistance that continues to resonate with readers today. Through the character of Robinson Crusoe and his interactions with the native inhabitants of the island, the novel illuminates the complexities of cultural exchange, domination, and survival in the context of European colonization. By exploring the nuances of power and agency in colonial encounters, Defoe challenges traditional narratives of conquest and invites readers to reconsider the lasting impacts of colonialism on both the colonizers and the colonized.

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