**ADAB AL-RAFIDAYN vol. (48) 1428 / 2007**

***Theme of Colonization in the English Novel(\*)***

***Abdul-Jabbar Jassim Mohammed(\*\*)***

**The Colonial- Colonizer's Politics And the Colonized People's Identity in Robinson Crusoe**

**By Nashwan M. Alhemyari**

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, England became a super power economically and militarily. As a result of this England dominated over many colonies in both Asia and Africa. In these two continents England established many companies like The East Company in India and The Royal African Company in Africa. These companies and other commercial settlements in the colonies and the growing and expanding in size, it is necessary needed a military force to protect their existence. Therefore, from the middle of the eighteenth century the British colonial policy became both merchntile and military in nature. With time, these trading companies became industrial settlements guarded by a military force to secure their production.

Thinking of maintaining its hegemony on the various colonies of the world, the British State felt the necessity for a disguise to cover the real purposes behind its domination of other nations. In consequence, it tended sometimes, to use moral and religious justifications, as attempting to convince people, the Europeans as weIl as the natives of the colonies, that its main aim is only to civilize and lead these nations, the colonized, to the light of civilization. It pictured itself as a supreme leader to these countries towards welfare, liberty and education. While on the religious level, various religious circles emphasized that the main purpose behind the British colonization was to save the souls of the primitive people in these colonies and to teach them the Bible. The best example is the description of the Archbishop of Canterbury (1848-1882) of the British colonization as a mission to teach his people the gospel. Whereas James Anthony Froude (1818-1892) justified this issue in a different way. He mentioned that the British colonization was only a response to the natural law of the supremacy for the best, and that the English people were superior over other nations with their physical qualities and their courage that enabled them to dominate other nations.

With these bright claims of the British Empire as a superior power and a savior to the whole world, the English colonizer covered his merciless exploitation of the various colonies he conquered and dominated. However, before tackling the subject, it seems appropriate to give definitions of some terms like *coloni****alism:*** is a political-economic phenomenon starting about 1500 whereby various European countries discovered, conquered, settled and exploited various areas of the world. ***Colonialist Fiction*:** is a kind of fiction that is written by a member of a colonizing community in a colony, as an Englishman who is born and raised in a colony writes fiction about his society in that colony . This kind of fiction supports colonization and camouflages its merciless exploitation of other nations. Rudyard Kipling's novel! Kim (1901) might be a good example on this kind of fiction. ***Colonial Fiction*:** Is a type of fiction that is written about the activities of colonization from the point of view of the colonizer, usually for consumption by the citizens of a colonizing nation in their original country. The best example is Forster's A Passage to India (1924).Literature was extensively exploited as a means of propaganda to convince the Europeans and the natives of the colonies that the aim of colonization is humanitarian and for the benefit of the colonized. Novel was used besides other literary genres for this purpose.

***Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)*** is a very important adviser in the English government. During his service as a secret agent, he presents various projects, suggestions and political ideals which are constantly adopted by the government to secure the welfare and prosperity of the English Empire. Defoe's faithfulness and devotion to his work reflect the great admiration he maintains toward the British Empire. Moreover, he has strong faith in the capacities of the English man. Defoe believes that an honest English man is not easily defeated, hardened by difficulties, but never overwhelmed by them. The English men enjoy, as Defoe explains, a unique sense of achievement and an extraordinary ability for endurance. These opinions are reflected in many of Defoe's pamphlets, essays and articles. But they are more prominently seen in Defoe's novel Robinson Crusoe (1719). Robinson Crusoe describes a journey of an English merchant, Robison Crusoe, towards Africa. Unfortunately, the ship is destroyed by a storm and all the crew dies except Crusoe who finds himself all alone on an isolated in island. Crusoe makes many great achievements in this island as the building of houses and boats, the plantation of rice and barley, the domestication of his goats and various other activities. The sudden appearance of one of the savages, Friday, is a turning point in the novel for Cruso is no longer alone and Friday becomes of a good help to him. They remain together for many years till an English ship comes and takes them both to England.

Robinson Crusoe is considered a propaganda' for 'the British colonization in the eighteenth century glorifying its creeds and embodying all the significant features of this movement as the discovery of the isolated lands, the cultivation of these places, the meeting with the primitives and cannibals which are supposed to be the inhabitants of these colonies, the promise of liberty and respect to those people and the superiority of the English nation over other nations. This is clearly seen in the Spaniard's conversation with Crusoe: ***"Seignor" says the Spaniards, "had we poor Spaniards been in your case, we should never gotton half these things out of the ship, as you did. Nay, says he "we should never have found means to have gotton a raft to carry them, or to have gotton the raft on shore without boat or sail ".***

Defoe portrays, through Crusoe, an ideal self - relied man who is hardened by difficulties but never overcome by them. James Sutherland mentions, in his criticism of the novel, that Defoe "be1ieves an honest Englishman is hard to beat.” Thus, Crusoe is made to behave truly as a brave Englishman, full of energy and enjoys both the practical side which enables him to dominate nature and the religious side which insures him a direct relation with God.

We will identify that Robinson Crusoe represents the British Empire in that time and characters such as Xury and Friday are the representatives of the colonized people in the novel. Xury, for example, is a slave whom Robinson Crusoe meets when they, both of them, are under slavery of the Moor. Crusoe rebels against the Moor and flees with the Moor’s servant who belongs to the barbaric pirates, Robinson chooses Xury and throws the Moor to the sea believing that “ it was so venturing to trust him.”  Xury is a character which I propose that is the symbol to what is going to be like Man Friday after being ‘civilized’ by Robinson. Xury speaks English and clearly that he underwent the same process that later on applied on Friday. This can be seen through the way he speaks and his fidelity towards Crusoe:

‘Then we give them the shoot gun,’ says Xury laughing, ‘make them run wey’such English Xury spoke by conversing among us slave.(2011:p41) Xury knows the nature of his people, what they fear and how is their behavior, so he serves Robinson and ready to reveal all the secrets to him. Xury is such a stereotype of those who have been changed by the colonizer, though he is still a slave. First, he speaks English-like language, it is the same language that Friday speaks after being taught by Robinson. With broken grammar and punctuation. … says he,’ if wild mans come, they eat me, you go wey.’ (2011: p42)

Xury is ready to sacrifice his life for Robinson; even though, he does not do anything for him. It is the fact that Xury is a slave, and used to be so, so his previous masters, taught him to risk his life before the life of his masters. Xury’s mind is endowed with the idea that the White Man is superior than those “wilds mans” because the latter are aggressive and cannot be dealt with. In my opinion, it is the same idea that is happening nowadays, western people created the word “terrorists” and convince the masses and even the people of the countries from where the terrorists appear that they are actually terrorists who pose a threat on the peace of the world.

Xury, therefore, thinks that those wild mans are really cannibals and he should be aware of them. Moreover, later when Robinson and Xury are searching for a shore to settle and have something to eat, Xury in their passing with an island said to Robison,’ No go, no go.”(2011: p45) Xury is described by Crusoe as the “ best counselor” due to his  useful advice. For Crusoe, he feels save with Xury because he proves to be loyal to him; with this, he rewards Xury by giving him bread to eat and dram to drink.

Robinson when he arrives at one island with Xury, he comes to meet the inhabitants of this island with Xury; after the visit, the indigenous people are complaining about the presence of creature who terrifies their clan, this wild creature eats their animals and even humans in side the island, so they couldn’t kill him. Robinson with his advance technology (his pistol) follows that creature and he killed him. It is actually a leopard, the people become very happy and they are afraid at the same time the machine that he holds because they heard a terrible noise when he shot the leopard: “hey offered me some flesh, which I declined, pointing out that I would give it them, but made signs for the skin.”(2011:p47) Robinson does not do favor for the people for free, he refuses to take flesh, though, he demands the skin of the leopard since he knows that he can sell it and gain a bounty money. The strategy of exploiting is the colonizer’s, so he will not help you for free, there should be something in return.

Xury cannot forget his first word in English when he was ‘civilized’ before; even though, Crusoe doesn’t ask him to call him ‘Master’ as he does later with Friday, but the idea of superiority of the ‘white man’ is already existed in Xury’s mind: Master, master, a ship with a sail. (2011:47) Xury is surprised to see a ship because both of them, Xury and Robinson, are starving and in thirst. He calls Robinson ‘Master’ without being asked to  say so, even Robinson in his previous statement describing the language of Xury he equates himself to Xury as being slaves: Such English Xury spoke by conversing among us slaves.(2011:41)

That is to say, the character of Xury is predicting the status of Friday later on the novel and it shows us how the colonizer will attempts to create a “New” human who, according to him, deserves to be called a Human, and that by changing his name, religion, language etc.

The character of Man Friday in the novel represents basically the colonized people in all aspects of colonial imperialism. It is the relation between Friday and Robinson that most of the critics consider it as Master-slave relation; before Robinson’s meeting Friday, he was alone in the island for twenty five years, now how the question of colonialism is clear through the novel is that Robinson is not showing a real passion to find somebody to be with as a friend or even companion, after all this period of imprisonment in the island he first tells Friday to call him ‘Master,’ then, this is why the theme of this novel can be conceived to some extent as being colonial rather than a fictional story. The initial step to change the identity of Friday is changing his name, Robinson does not even ask “Friday” about his real name, what is important to him is that to let the savage ‘ know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life,’

Friday in turn sees himself as inferior to the power of Robinson, when he sees Robinson very advancing weapon which can take the life of human being, that is why he kneels to the pistol when he hears its horrifying noise. He could think of Robinson as being a god who can take people’s souls.

Crusoe tends to teach Friday English language and the first word he was taught is calling him ‘Master’, this word was intended by Robinson since he knows for sure that Friday will never forget his first word in English. He also is aware that Friday is vigilant and prompt in grasping what he is taught by Robinson, the Englishman is, out of imperial duty, shaping the identity of Friday as he wishes and also as he thinks what is suitable for the savage to look like a human. Robinson takes Friday back to his “castle” in order to turn him into a human: After I had been two or three days returned to my castle, I thought that, in order to bring Friday off from his horrid way of feeding, and from the relish of a cannibal’s  stomach, I ought to let him taste other flesh.(2011:p100)

Friday is taught by Crusoe that the flesh of human is not good for him, he should eat other meat which is healthy for human, Friday gets adopted to the new changes in his life. Even the clothes, Robinson brings to Friday attire which he brought from the shipwreck, he said that Friday is completely naked and he has to wear clothes like human being. Things get new shapes and styles when Robinson proceeds in his process to transform poor Friday into a Christian, Friday is firstly resisting to Crusoe claims but at the end Crusoe teaches him all what he needs about Christianity.

Crusoe, in the island, achieves what the other Englishmen usually achieve in these colonies as the plantation of the lands, the taming of the goats, the investment of the resources of these areas, the challenge of the hostility of the natural force and establishing a good relation with the inhabitants of these colonies as Crusoe's relation with Friday. Defoe includes in his novel the trade wars between Spain and England which are real events in the eighteenth century. Defoe regards all the lands where Crusoe wanders as possible areas for colonization and ripe for exploitation. Furthermore, the novel speaks about piracy, mutiny and slavery which are dominant phenomenon in that age. Thus, the myth of this courageous man and his experience in the island becomes a representation of the British colonization in the eighteenth century.