



Exile, Identity Metamorphosis, and Colonial Traces on Nature: A Postcolonial Ecocritical Reading of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*

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Abstract

Exile appears as a central issue in early modern drama and eighteenth-century fiction, reconfiguring both human identity and ecological landscapes. Grounded in postcolonial ecocriticism, this article examines William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* through postcolonial ecocriticism in order to show how exile becomes a colonial threshold where displaced European subjects reconstruct authority by reorganizing island ecologies and subordinating indigenous figures. In *The Tempest*, Prospero's symbolic performance of power is used to control the island and its autochthonous inhabitants, while in *Robinson Crusoe*, Crusoe's authority is materially enacted through labor, agriculture, and spatial reorganization. Drawing on Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and ambivalence, as well as Timothy Morton's theory of dark ecology, the research depicts how exile functions as a place of marginalization where natural landscapes and indigenous people are subjected to colonial supremacy. The study ultimately reveals the involvement of exile in identity metamorphosis as well as the lasting effect of colonialism on environment and culture.

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Introduction

The literature of exile is often marked by rupture and renewal. The migration of characters and their uprootedness lead to the emergence of new identities and transform ecological landscapes. In William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), the banished Prospero, the Duke of Milan, who loses his power in his former kingdom, imposes authority on a mysterious host land through the use of magic. Similarly, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) narrates the solitary adventure of a shipwrecked man who establishes himself as the master of a deserted island. Although the two were written in different periods and belong to different genres, they are cornerstones of the colonial imaginary. They portray exile as not only a motif of the metamorphosis of identity but especially a place of ecological inscription where land and natives are subjected to colonial domination.

Recent works have analysed *The Tempest* and *Robinson Crusoe* from a colonial and ecocritical perspective. Haque et al. make a colonial investigation of both works highlighting the Master-Slave relations between Europeans and the colonized. However, their article pays little attention to the ecological consequences of colonialism. In contrast, Salma Naciri deals with ecological imperialism and the exploitation of nature, but her analysis is limited to Shakespeare's play. This current article bridges the gap by offering a comparative postcolonial ecocritical reading of *The Tempest* and *Robinson Crusoe*, showing that exile transforms displaced individuals into agents of both colonial expansion and ecological exploitation.

The uniqueness of these works lies in their focus on the destructive effect of exile and colonialism on the environment. In the name of progress, the exiled characters attempt to reconfigure the habitat of the native through both colonial and magic knowledge. It is in this same vein that Ram Sebak Thakur perceives colonialism as a double-edged sword, bringing exotic industrialization while “destroy[ing] forests and ecological balance” (Thakur 8). Both works then are invitations to perceive literature of exile as not only about displacement of people but also related to ecological distortion at the heart of colonial encounters. Nahiri Jean Charles Nahiri's research is particularly relevant here as he argues that “the adequately-managed relationship with nature ensures food supply and enforces African identity” (Nahiri 161). This indicates that, within various African ecological frameworks, a harmonious relationship exists in which nature is not simply a

provider of resources, but especially a marker of cultural identity and social continuity. Rather than only emphasizing harmony, this study reveals what is lost when such balance is broken. As Affoua Evelyne Doré and Nahiri point out, “environmental mismanagement has a perpetual effect on human existence” (Doré and Nahiri 97). This emphasizes that the impacts of environmental degradation are not short-lived; rather, they endure through generations, influencing both the material well-being of individuals and the stability of society as a whole. This sets the ground for the central problem of this study: how does exile transform marginalized individuals into agents of subjugation, and what are the ecological and cultural impacts of this metamorphosis in *The Tempest* and *Robinson Crusoe*?

To address these questions, this article is grounded in postcolonial ecocriticism and draws mainly on Homi K. Bhabha’s concepts of mimicry and ambivalence, along with Timothy’s Morton’s dark ecology. Mimicry implies the adoption of the colonizer’s culture, while ambivalence describes the oppositional nature of colonial power, which instantly produces domination and resistance. Dark ecology refers to the rejection of the idyllic representation of nature by focusing on its agency, unpredictability and the inexorable connection between humans and the nonhuman world. Methodologically, the study employs Bhabha’s concept of mimicry and ambivalence with Morton’s theory of dark ecology to examine how exile becomes a colonial threshold where displaced European subjects reconstruct authority by reorganizing island ecologies and subordinating indigenous figures. The first part of the study shows exile as a catalyst for identity metamorphosis where the oppressed exile turns into an oppressor by becoming the master of the natives and nature in *The Tempest* and *Robinson Crusoe*. The second one reveals the limits of colonial power and the agency of nature and the natives. It unveils the contradiction of colonial mastery and invites contemporary readers to reflect on the ecological and cultural consequences of imperial dominion.

I- Exile and the Genesis of Dominion: From Victimhood to Colonial Authority

Exile in colonial literature often functions as a metamorphic condition whereby transient individuals regain authority over foreign territories and indigenous people. Both *The Tempest* and *Robinson Crusoe* initially portray exile

as a condition of loss and insecurity. Prospero in *The Tempest*, is forced out of Milan and dispossessed of his political power as Duke of Milan, while Crusoe finds himself confined and cut off from European civilization after a shipwreck. Yet, this dislocation steadily becomes a means of empowerment that allows both characters to reconstruct their identities through assertion and mastery.

In Shakespeare's play, Prospero's footprints on the island represents the *début* of a new colonial order out of a magical authority. Deprived of his dukedom in Milan, he uses magic as a means to exert authority and reorganize the human system of the island. For Yvonne Patricia Chireau, magic refers to: "the beliefs and actions through which individuals engage with the unseen reality" (Chireau 2). In Prospero's case, magic functions not purely as a supernatural force but as a means of domination through which he reconfigures the ecological and cultural landscapes of the island. Therefore, exile transforms Prospero's from a position of dispossessed subject duke into a colonial authority whose magical power is exerted through the ownership of land, language and the environment of his new territories.

Prospero perceives the island as a *terra nullius*, a territory he can rightfully appropriate and rule despite the presence of its indigenous people. As a consequence, his domination focuses on the manipulation of natives' knowledge embodied by Caliban. Bhabha notes that colonizers rely on discursive and ideological strategies over the colonized. As a son of Sycorax and one of the first inhabitant of the island, Caliban is the custodian of the island's knowledge. Therefore, Prospero pretends to be benevolent toward Caliban in order to acquire practical knowledge for more supremacy. Caliban himself notes Prospero's affectionate and benevolent attitude:

When thou cam'st first, Thou strok'st me, and made much of me:
wouldst give me Water with berries in't, and teach me how To name
the bigger light, and how the less That burn by day and night: and then
I lov'd thee And show'd thee all the qualities o'the'Isle The fresh
springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile. (Shakespeare 1.2.397-410)

Indeed, Prospero introduces himself as a sort of kind educator who teaches Caliban language and European astronomical knowledge. From a Bhabhaian lens, this interaction reflects colonial mimicry as Prospero tries to reshape Caliban in line with European language and understanding. Through the naming of astronomical elements such as "the bigger light", Prospero incites

Caliban to mimic colonial perspectives on the world. However, this relationship is profoundly ambivalent. While Prospero displays kindness, his main objective is to gain Caliban's trust and ultimately appropriate his knowledge and the island as a whole. His supposed affection creates empathy in Caliban in such a way that this latter delivers all the ecological knowledge of the island: "I lov'd thee And show'd thee all the qualities o'the'Isle". Caliban's behavior depicts a form of innocence and openness that contrasts strongly with Prospero's colonial manipulative strategy. Once Prospero acquires the indigenous ecological knowledge, he subverts Caliban's authority on the island and reduces him to a subhuman being. For Bhabha, colonialism's aim is to perceive the colonized as "a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (Bhabha 70). Actually, they are perceived as exotic pets with no civilization. Colonizers often used "terrifying stereotypes of savagery, cannibalism, lust, and anarchy" (Bhabha 72). These negative terms manifest themselves throughout Prospero's discourse. For instance, Prospero refers to Caliban as "tortoise" and uses term as "poisonous slave" when talking about Caliban: "PROSPERO Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself Upon thy wicked dam, come forth! (Shakespeare 1.2.384). The adjective "poisonous" relates Caliban with danger, while his association to the devil enriches his image as an evil and unnatural being. Furthermore, he perceives the native as uncultured, savage and violent: "A freckled whelp hag-born not honoured with/A human shape" (Shakespeare 1.2.335-37). This harsh language reduces him to a grotesque figure, in order to legitimize Prospero's domination over him. By depriving Caliban of "a human shape" Prospero excludes him from the realm of humanity. Such dehumanization shows the attitude of the colonizer who reduces the colonized as inferior beings lacking civilization.

In addition, he sees Caliban as his servant with gloomy adjective: "This thing of Darkness I acknowledge mine" (Shakespeare 5.1.330-31). The noun "thing" relegates to an object owned by Prospero, while "Darkness" figuratively links him to primitiveness and evil. Through Prospero's discourse, it is crystal clear that he positions himself as an enlightened ruler opposed to the uncivilized native. For Saif Al Deen Al-Ghammaz, Caliban's name echoes cannibalism: "Caliban as a name speaks of cannibal which is the eater of the human flesh repeatedly mentioned in the Elizabethan epoch's travel

narratives” (Al-Ghammaz 1375). This viewpoint reveals how Shakespeare’s play puts forward colonial stereotypes drawn from travel accounts that frequently pinpoint non-European as barbaric figures. Thus, the link between the character Caliban with calibanism dramatizes Prospero’s perception of the native as inhumane and violent, justifying then colonial control and exclusion.

After Prospero, other characters are involved in Caliban’s discourse of dehumanization, demonstrating the collective dimension of colonial discourse in the play. Stephano, for example perceives the native Caliban in terms of monstrosity:

STEPHANO Four legs and two voices; a most delicate monster! His forward voice now is to speak well of his friend; his backward voice is to utter foul speeches, and to detract. I fall the wine in my bottle will recover him, I will help his ague. Come. Amen! I will pour some in thy other mouth. (Shakespeare 2.2.92-98)

Through the depiction of Caliban as a monster, Stephano deprives him of humanity and labels Caliban as an exotic object meant for mockery. The expression “four legs” gives an animalistic state to Caliban and asserts colonial stereotypes that relate indigenous people to primitiveness. This depiction aligns with Bhabha’s argument that colonial discourse shapes the colonized subject as “the other” through pictures of degeneration and abnormality with an aim to reinforce oppression and impose imperial domination (Bhabha 70). Similarly, Miranda, the daughter of Prospero contributes to Caliban’s dehumanizing discourse by naming him “abhorred slave” (Shakespeare 1.2.422). Her word exemplifies the presence of colonial ideology in the domestic sphere of the colonized. Through Miranda’s lens, the play notes that colonial prejudice extends beyond political authority and becomes a shared ideology with colonial society itself. While colonial discourse attempts to reduce indigenous subject to inferiority and monstrosity, the play also exposes the various responses to Prospero’s supremacy through Ariel and Caliban.

Ariel a spirit related to the elements symbolizes the obedient “native” who accepts Prospero’s authority in exchange for the promise of freedom throughout his rescue from Sycorax’s imprisonment. By exerting his authority on Ariel, Prospero applies his power beyond human subjects to the natural forces of the island itself. Indeed, Ariel therefore becomes the mediator through which Prospero manipulates the storms, sounds and climactic forces with the aim to impose colonial order upon the island. This domination

appears when Ariel follows Prospero's commands during the tempest: "To every article. I boarded the King's ship; now on the beak, Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin, I flamed amazement" (Shakespeare 1.2.230-34). Through Ariel's manipulation of fire, winds and storm, Prospero uses nature as an object of fear, surveillance and revenge. Indeed, the tempest in this context is not a natural catastrophe but an instrument of revenge used by Prospero to punish Alonso and Antonio for having usurped his dukedom and forced him into exile. Although Ariel's service is helpful, he remains dispossessed of autonomy and thus reclaims freedom: "Remember I have done thee worthy service" (5.1.378-79). This demand highlights Ariel's subaltern status, since his freedom exclusively depends upon Prospero's will. Prospero makes use of his power to overexploited Ariel through threatens and psychological domination: "If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak / And peg thee in his knotty entrails" (1.2.349-50). This threat reveals the dark side of colonial power who oblige the colonized of doing services without consent. Prospero's frequently postpones Ariel's freedom and applies continued obedience as a condition for liberty. Fortunately, Ariel's constant obedience makes him finally delivered of Prospero's command: "Then to the elements / Be free" (5.1-293). Ariel therefore embodies the figure of docile spirit whose obedient serves Prospero's ecological and colonial authority.

In contrast, Caliban represents a figure of resistance in the face of Prospero's colonial domination. Unlike Ariel, he contests Prospero's authority and claims his ownership of the island. This assertion displays Caliban's historical legitimacy and inheritance of the island. Through his mother Sycorax, one of the original inhabitants of the island, Caliban claims that his authority and appropriation of the island precedes the arrival of Prospero: "This Island's mine, by Sycorax my mother/ which thou tak'st from me" (1.2.396-397). Unfortunately, Caliban becomes silenced by colonial authority. This conflict can be understood in terms of Bhabha's concept of colonial ambivalence whereby the colonized although trying to rebel against the colonial regimes remains alienated within colonial structures. In the play, indigenous characters oscillate between submission and rebellion.

Caliban uses mimicry as a means to upset colonial domination: "You taught me language; and my profit on it is I know how to curse; the red-plague rid you for learning me your language" (1.2.437-439). Indeed, for Bhabha the consequence of mimicry is camouflage, a strategy to rebel against colonizer.

Caliban's previous discourse pinpoints the paradox of linguistic education by revealing the double function of language as a tool of manipulation and also as a means of resistance. Through mimicry, Caliban takes profit of his knowledge of the English language to destabilize the system and express his anger and opposition. This reinforces Bhabha's argument that mimicry often threatens colonial power instead of reproducing it.

Caliban's resistance endangers Prospero's political authority over the island, especially his lineage. He begins to fear that Caliban might threaten his lineage through Miranda. The status of Caliban as the only man in the isle at Prospero's arrival, creates anxiety when knowing that he attempts to violate his daughter in order to overcome his power. This creates anxious masculinity in Prospero; the fear of losing his authority or masculine identity. For Mark Breitenberg: "individuals whose identities are formed by the assumption of their own privilege must also have incorporated varying degrees of anxiety about the preservation or potential loss of that privilege" (Breitenberg 3). In the Elizabethan era, fathers were expected to guard their daughters' chastity before marriage. They behaved as the guardians of their virginity and everything contrary could cast dishonour on the entire family. As a consequence, Prospero enslaves Caliban in order to avoid any disgrace upon his family and to protect his daughter. He turns him into a slave through painful labor as a strategy of domination and punishment: "What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps, Fill all the bones with aches, make thee roar" (Shakespeare 1.2.444-45). By means of his magical power, he threatens Caliban with physical punishment. This threat shows how magical power serves not only as a tool to control the island but also as a means to discipline Caliban through pain and forced labor in order to impose obedience and overcome his resistance.

Apart from Prospero, other figures of colonial power are also anxious about Caliban's linguistics ability. Stephano for instance perceives his linguistic ability in terms of strangeness: "This is some monster of the isle with four legs, who has got, as I take it, an ague. Where the devil should he learn our language?" (2.2.66-69). He feels outraged of Caliban's linguistics ability. Stephano's reaction portrays the colonial anxiety provoked by the linguistic mastery of the colonized by the colonizer. While *The Tempest* dramatizes colonial domination through Prospero's magical power, *Robinson Crusoe* portrays Crusoe's domination through practical occupation and

transformation of the island and native.

Before becoming a colonizer of the island, Crusoe first experiences slavery in Sallee, Morocco. Captured by a Turkish pirate, he notes: “I was kept by the captain of the rover, as his proper prize, and made his slave” (Defoe 15). As a captive, Crusoe perceives Africa from a Eurocentric perspective, portraying it as a dangerous country where there are: “Savage beasts, or more merciless savages of human kind” (19). This description pinpoints Huggan and Tiffin’s argument that colonial discourse constructs both land and colonized peoples as subalterns. Once freed after the shipwreck, Crusoe reproduces the same system of domination that once oppressed him, shifting from slave to Master. Indeed, his escape from domination gives rise to a form of psychological compensation. He feels the need to master nature and natives in order to erase his own past oppression. As a consequence, he turns the island into a small version of European society; especially as a replica of the English farming by clearing fields, fencing land, raising animals and creating enclosures. This action represents an attempt to domesticate the island.

Crusoe imposes the colonial principles on the island uses the island’s resources without restraint and tries to exploit every centimetre of land in order to construct his own British empire: “If I wanted a board, I had no other way but to cut down a tree” (56). This assertion highlights the utilitarian function of nature. Crusoe perceives nature as an object of resources and survival disregarding ecological balance and the significance of sustainability. This is a perfect illustration of Rob Nixon’s concept of “slow violence” that portrays the constant and often unseen annihilation of the ecosystems through human exploitation (Nixon 2). In the novel, Crusoe frequently modifies the ecological landscapes of the island through cultivation, construction and domestication. He tries to possess the land and creates version of his English territory: “I began to apply myself to make such necessary things as I found I most wanted” (Defoe 56). The island progressively becomes his new home where he expects to find comfort: “I made me a cave just behind my tent, which served me like a cellar to my house (Defoe 50). The possessive word “my” and the term “house” underline his appropriation of the land and willingness to build his own empire. He made an investigation of the land to establish a map as a strategy to better exploit it. His anthropocentric view makes him “cut a piece [of wood], and brought it home too with difficulty enough” (61). He uses wood and other tools for

constructing infrastructures to every corner of the islands: “I went to work to make me a little tent, with the sail and some poles which I cut for that purpose; and into this tent I brought everything that I knew would spoil either with rain or sun” (Defoe 46). For Maximillian Novak, “Crusoe creates all and possesses all as much by the power of naming as by his labor” (Novak 120). By naming places on the islands and fencing land, Crusoe imposes his authority on the island, from exile to colonization, he turns the former hostile and alien environment of the island into a second England: “being eager to view the circumference of my little kingdom” (Defoe 117). Therefore, the island becomes materially dominated through environmental domestication and cultural imposition of European culture. Huggan and Tiffin note when dealing with the notion of “green imperialism” that this kind of cultivation are not a question of neutral adaptations to the environments but rather a demonstration of imperial domination (Huggan and Tiffin 6-7). The transformation of the island by Crusoe goes beyond a simple exploitation for survival. It demonstrates a strong desire to modify the ecological space according to European values and interests. Nature serves then as an instrument of exploitation for imperial expansion.

Beyond the colonization of the physical environment, Crusoe applies this same logic of domination to the natives of the island. Crusoe’s encounter with Friday mirrors the Prospero-Caliban relationship in *The Tempest* where the colonizer meets the colonized. After rescuing Friday from cannibals, he decided to name him Friday simply because he “made him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I[he] saved his life” (Defoe 177). This act of renaming symbolises the beginning of a colonial relationship because it deprives Friday of his identity, culture, and language. In his exchanges with Friday, Crusoe perceives himself as a savior, what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak called “white male heroism” (Spivak 296). This idea points out a frame of mind that sketches western white male as a model of civilization and salvation whose actions are constructed as ethical and honorable although involving violence and domination. The irony is noticeable in Crusoe’s judgement of the cannibals ‘violence, while simultaneously making use of brutality himself: “I had killed the other Indians so far off” (Defoe 175-76). This contradiction unveils the hypocrisy of imperial ideology, where acts of colonial violence are blurred by paternalistic rhetoric of protection and guidance. For Huggan and Tiffin, Western ideology and development often obscured acts of violence by

depicting domination as a benevolent mission that contributes to the protection and improvement of indigenous people and their environments (Huggan and Tiffin 24).

Crusoe also perceives Friday in terms of Calibanism and wilderness: “I found Friday had still a hankering stomach after some of the flesh, and was still a cannibal in his nature (Defoe 178). Consequently, he believes part of his mission is to paternalize Friday and transmit his knowledge of European culture. Crusoe therefore tries to transmit his cultural and religious belief as a strategy to deconstruct his bad habits and make him a civilized citizen: “I likewise taught him to say Master, and then let him know that was to be my name; I likewise taught him to say Yes and No” (177). This relationship is an example of Bhabha’s mimicry respectively, the imitation of the colonizer’s language and culture by the colonized subject. Linguistic education allows Crusoe to trigger Friday’s adoption of European identity and value (Bhabha 86). Crusoe’s choice of the words “Master”, and “Yes” and “No” serves as a linguistic means of discipline to impose his strategy. The teaching of English language appears at that moment as a means to assure Friday’s loyalty and secure colonial domination: “I was greatly delighted with him, and made it my business to teach him everything that was proper to make himself useful, handy and helpful, but especially to make him speak, and understand me when I spoke” (Crusoe 192). Friday’s linguistics education illustrates the colonial project of assimilation, in which language serves as an instrument of power. It also facilitates communication in order to make Friday, exploited, disciplined, Friday within the colonial enterprise. As Crusoe noted: “I pitched upon a straight young cedar tree, which I found near the place, and which there was a great plenty of in the island; and I set Friday to work to cut it down, and gave him directions how to shape and order it” (197). Language allows Crusoe to exercise authority over Friday’s labour and the natural environment, transforming communication into a mechanism of colonial control. However, this colonial power finds its limits when nature resists revealing the limits of human mastery.

II- Dark Ecology and the Disquiet of Nature: Toward an Ecological Ethics in *The Tempest* and *Robinson Crusoe*

Both works reveal nature’s trajectory from harmony to fear. They revolve around the concepts of pastoralism and dark ecology. Pastoral critics perceive

nature as a virgin space free from urban civilization. In *The Tempest*, nature serves as a canvas for revenge and reconciliation. Simultaneously, it demonstrates its fearful side by provoking tempest and creating anxiety into the characters' mind. In *Robinson Crusoe*, the land appears as a means of survival that provides food and security and a place of creation of colonial empire. However, it causes storm and creates fear and hallucinations in Crusoe's mind. This ambiguity of nature reveals the ecological tensions embedded in both works. Crusoe's island displays pastoral characteristics. It is an Edenic location and fertile land where Crusoe applies English agriculture and builds his little empire. In *The Ecological Thought* (2010) and *Dark Ecology* (2016), Morton argues that nature should be perceived in its "strange strangeness" rather than as an idealized and harmonious entity.

In *The Tempest*, nature appears as a hybrid zone that mirrors colonial exploitation. The title of the play and the opening scene reveal the fearful side of nature. Nature, through the tempest, appears as something uncontrollable and chaotic. Ariel describes this battle between man and nature: "roaring war" between "the green sea and the azured vault" (Shakespeare 5.1.52-53). It discloses the fragility of man before the power of nature. However, this performance of nature is acted by Prospero through magic. The island becomes an instrument for revenge: "bedimmed the noontide sun" and "called forth the mutinous winds" (5.1.50-51). Read through the lens of dark ecology, Prospero's manipulation of nature puts forward the intricate relation between human power and non-human world rather than idealized vision of nature.

In addition, Caliban reveals the ambivalence of nature as being both dangerous and beautiful at the same time: "The isle is full of noises, Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not" (3.2.148-149). The noises may represent the subjugation of the natural elements and the silenced voices of the subaltern such as Ariel and Caliban under the colonial dominion of Prospero. Caliban as a dark ecological subject underlines his nostalgia with the beauty of nature, his familiarity with nature and the alienation he undergoes under Prospero's manipulation. This matches with Morton's assertion that ecological awareness is dark, melancholy, and full of loss. He reveals the intersection between the ecological violence and native alienation under colonialism. At the end of the play, Prospero's renunciation of the magic represents an acknowledgment of the intrinsic relationship between man and

nature and the limits of his power: “This rough magic I here abjure” (Shakespeare 5.1.59-60). He recognizes the fragility of human power and the needs to be unite with nature: “We are such stuff / As dreams are made on” (4.1.173-174). A similar case of ecological uncertainty and human vulnerability appears in *Robinson Crusoe*, where the natural environment constantly challenges Crusoe’s attempt to impose his authority.

In the novel, Crusoe’s arrival on the island and his perception abound of fear and perplexity. As a shipwrecked, he encounters an isolated, silent and hostile island. A place that seems to be out of men’s control. It introduces a place without resources that will guarantee man’s life: “had neither food, house, clothes, weapon, nor place to fly to” (Defoe 58). This creates a kind of fear in Crusoe what Morton’s calls “the horror of ecological entanglement”: “I was forced to lie down on the ground to repose, but durst not sleep for fear of being devoured” (57). The former sailor who uses to feel secure and at ease with the idea of travelling and discovering new place to explore confronts now itself with nature in an isolated island. The storm and the shipwreck which drive him here is a symbol of dark ecology. It deconstructs the romantic ideals of nature as harmonious and not a main character. The footprint in the sand increases his fear and deconstructs his project of autonomy and civilization: “I came home to my fortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground I went on, but terrified to the last degree, looking behind me at every two or three steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man” (131). This mark on the sand represents island as a character that is unpredictable. For him, nature is no longer a backdrop but a character that makes him anxious. Even if, he establishes himself as the Master of the land by exploiting it and creating his little kingdom, he still feels afraid of losing everything.

In addition, Crusoe’s overexploitation of the natural resources provoked a kind of climatic disruptions on the island that characterize today’s ecological crisis: “those rains which came attended with storms and hurricanes of wind; for, as the rain which came in a dry season was always most accompanied with such storms, so I found this rain was much more dangerous than the rain which fell in September and October” (81). He also notices the rebellion of nature when he attempted using it abusively: “But as the beasts ruined me before while my corn was in the blade, so the birds were as likely to ruin me now, when it was in the ear; for, going along by the place to see

how it throve, I saw my little crop surrounded with fowls I know not how many sorts, which stood as it were watching till I should be gone” (Defoe 98). While Crusoe tries to impose authority upon the island, he faces the instability of the natural world. Climactic disturbances and unpredictable natural events point out the transcendental aspect of nature in its destabilization of human control. As Timothy Morton notes, nature is an active entity able to challenge anthropocentric assumption of supremacy. Consequently, Crusoe starts managing the resources carefully to prevent any rebellion from nature. Facing the rebellion of nature leads him toward an ecological awareness that confront him with human vulnerability before nature. He starts using the natural resources with moderation. For instance, he decides to conserve medical plants. He also made clothes and light with dead animals: “After this I made a suit of clothes wholly of those skins” (114). Moreover, he used corn to make bread and learnt to make pots to keep his food in. Instead of exploiting nature as a bottomless reservoir of resources, Crusoe gradually learns to apply more sustainable practices. He reuses animal remains for essential needs such as clothing, lighting and the production of pottery for food reservation. These practices underline an emergence of Crusoe’s shifting relation with nature moving from overexploitation to an ecological consciousness based on sustainability. This change opposes Tiffin and Graham’s view about the commodification of nature by the colonizer.

Crusoe starts developing a spiritual intimacy with nature. He feels compassion for animals. Animals appear as friends in his pastoral world that make him forget his loneliness and gives him courage to adapt to his new environment. The beauty of nature and his usefulness make him grateful toward God. His colonial mind seems to decrease. He acknowledges nature not as a passive object but rather as a beautiful active subject: “I saw barley grow there [...] and some other straggling stalks of rice” (65). He becomes humble and more closed to nature and God: “I began to bless myself that such a prodigy of nature should happen upon my account” (16). The harvest and rainfall evoke a sense of happiness and gratefulness toward God. Nature inspires him to write as most of the romantic poets of 18th century. He starts recording his days, emotions and perception of the natural environment around him in a diary.

However, Crusoe’s diary serves not only as a therapeutical tool but especially as colonial reports of his exploration and conquests of his new

territories. It recalls historical events during the colonial period where colonists write throughout diaries, reports and letters their adventure in New England. His writing justifies his exploitation of nature and Friday. It appears as a kind of narrative ownership. He wrote: “September the 30th, after I got to shore, and had escaped drowning” (Defoe 57). Beyond his domination of nature and Friday as a slave, he manifests in the process of civilization, a sense of sympathy for Friday: “But I needed none of all this precaution; for never man had a more faithful, loving, sincere servant than Friday was to me...his very affections were tied to me like those of a child to a father” (179). He combines his knowledge of nature with that of Friday’s practical knowledge: “I found he was a most dexterous fellow at managing it[the boat]” (193). Crusoe acknowledges Friday’s technical knowledge, showing that survival on the island is not only achieved through domination but also depends on cooperation, shared knowledge and adaptation to the natural environment. This cooperation favors a more balanced relationships with the island’s ecosystem, revealing that nature when treated with respect provides material resources and spiritual fulfilment. This communion is profitable and Defoe through Crusoe reveals the need for humans to treat nature with respect and adopting responsibility when managing natural resources: “I had now a flock of tame goats, that yielded me every day milk” (92). Crusoe’s gradual adaptation emphasizes Morton’s (2016) ecological philosophy about the interdependence of humanity with nature. His domestication of goats indicates a good management of the island’s resources to secure his own survival.

Conclusion

Using postcolonial ecocriticism, Timothy’s Morton’s dark ecology, and Bhabha’s concept of mimicry and ambivalence, the study depicts how exile functions as a place of marginalization where landscapes and indigenous people are subjected to colonial supremacy. Out of a civilizing mission, these exiled characters attempt to impose their culture over the natives and their environments. In *The Tempest*, Prospero’s use of magic imposes his authority over nature, Ariel and Caliban. In Defoe’s novel, Crusoe perceives the island as a space of conquest and imposition of English culture over the native and the ecosystem of the land. The island appears as a colonial location where colonial ideologies are performed through naming, mapping and enclosing.

Crusoe does not preserve the wilderness of the island but rebuilds it as a colonial space. His experience represents a kind of solitary imperialism.

However, both works when examined through Timothy Morton's concept of dark ecology reveal the limits of imperial domination by instances where nature and natives rebel themselves. The rebellion of Caliban as well as the wilderness of Crusoe's island represents a moment where imperial power was threatened by both nature and natives. Prospero's rejection of his magic and Crusoe's symbolic reconciliation with the land and native suggest a partial reconsideration of the colonial authority. Through a postcolonial ecocritical analysis, the texts under study interrogate the ecological and cultural violence inherent in colonial narratives and invite readers to think about the legacy of imperial domination. In today's context of environmental crisis and decolonization, these colonial texts reveal the need to envision a postcolonial ecology based on mutual respect rather than domination.

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