

# Colonial Inculcation in *Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver's Travels*\*

Yao-hsi Shih

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## Abstract

*Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*, though generically diverse, coincidentally and correspondingly enact the scene of submission. Lemuel Gulliver's ceremonial prostration to his Houyhnhnm master parallels Friday's exquisite manners of gratitude to Robinson Crusoe. Through corresponding ceremonies of submission to their respective masters, the Horse Master and Master Crusoe acknowledge Gulliver's and Friday's "Subjection" and "Servitude." The respective ceremonies of "Subjection" and "Servitude" infiltrate genres as diverse as time-honored satire and new-fashioned novel in the eighteenth century

Albeit prized by their respective masters for their "Teachableness," "Civility," and "Cleanliness," Gulliver and Friday are dualistically defined as racial others, and hierarchically relegated as inferior subjects. Friday's anglicization is no more than the "metonymic" presence of Robinson Crusoe. No matter how much he emulates his master in the colonizer's dressing and language, the narratorial slippages of Friday's "tawny" skin and "broken English" in fact caricaturize the colonized/Friday, in Homi K Bhabha's term, as "a flawed colonial mimesis." Crusoe's caricaturizing of Friday's colonial semblance (or the colonizer's "partial vision") not only mirrors Crusoe's/colonizer's "narcissism," but also subjects the master/slave duo to an irreconcilably dualistic and structural deadlock. Comparable with Crusoe, the Horse Master never amends his judgment on Gulliver as a "perfect" and "exact" Yahoo, in

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spite of Gulliver's "Civility" and "Cleanliness," and most notably his "Prodigy" for language acquisition, which preferably distinguishes him from the Yahoos, "the most unteachable of all Brutes." Parallel to Crusoe's constant fear, Gulliver's persistent "Hatred and Contempt" for the Yahoos and latent anxiety over his identity as "a real Yahoo in every limb and feature" ring ever more racial and colonial, as Gulliver's portrayal of the Yahoo bears so close a resemblance to George Louis Leclerc Buffon's image of the savage Hottentot in *Natural History*.

The infiltration of racism and colonialism into the literary textures of *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe* gives Swift's satire and Defoe's novel a coordinate point, which on one hand, institutionalizes racism and colonialism in the service of empire, and which on the other, signifies the impasse of crossing racial boundaries in early eighteenth century English literature.

**Keywords:** *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*, colonial inculcation, racism, colonialism

## Introduction

As contemporaneous works of early eighteenth-century English literature, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)<sup>1</sup> seem to stand widely apart at both ends of the spectrum of literary genres. The former comes down in a continuous line from the time-honored genre of Menippean satire, which, according to Mikhail Bakhtin, "took its name from the philosopher Menippus of Gadara (third century B.C.) who fashioned it into its classical form" (112).<sup>2</sup> According to M. Keith Booker, the decline of this "classical form" in the eighteenth century gives way to the rising latter,<sup>3</sup> which as defined by Ian Watt in *The Rise of the Novel*, establishes a new benchmark, "annihilated the relationships of the traditional social order," and marks an important milestone in "the tradition of the novel" in the eighteenth century (103).

Though generically different, Linda Colley, in *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World 1600-1850*, relates and renders *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* as "parables" "about the making and meanings of the British empire." When it comes to empire-making, people habitually envision "seizing land, planting it . . . imposing rule, and subordinating those of a different skin pigmentation or religion" (1). But rather than deal with those familiar issues on conquests, Colley analyzes instead "the underbelly of British empire": namely "captives" and "captivities" (4), and interprets Robinson Crusoe's and Lemuel Gulliver's overseas adventures in the tragic light of "terror, vulnerability, and repeated captivities" (2).<sup>4</sup> This paper is inspired by

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<sup>1</sup> The final phase of Daniel Defoe's career begins with the immediate success of the trilogy of tales of adventure (1719-20): *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (April, 1719), *Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (August, 1719), and *Serious Reflection during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (August, 1720). This paper focuses on the first encounter between Crusoe and Friday and Crusoe's colonial inculcation, and thus dissects only a portion and certain dimension of the first book of the trilogy, which will hereafter be abbreviated as *Robinson Crusoe* throughout the rest of the paper.

<sup>2</sup> In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin categorizes *Gulliver's Travels* as Menippean satire, which he defines as "a special type of *experimental fantasticality* . . . completely foreign to ancient epic and tragedy. . . . This line of experimental fantasticality continues, under the defining influence of the menippea, into the subsequent epochs as well--in Rabelais, Swift, Voltaire (*Micromégas*) and others" (116). Northrop Frye, in *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, clarifies that "most people would call *Gulliver's Travels* fiction but not a novel" (308). He further defines that *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* are two different "species" in literature (303).

<sup>3</sup> M. Keith Booker, in *Flann O'Brien, Bakhtin, and Menippean Satire*, points out that "the emerging novel" in the eighteenth century succeeds menippean satire, "as the major generic site of carnivalesque energies in literature" (2). To elaborate, the decline of Menippean satire in the eighteenth century gives rise to the emergence of the novel, which, as Booker explicates, "is a special genre, unique in its contemporaneity, its contact with everyday life, its close connection with extraliterary genres" (2).

<sup>4</sup> Colley reappraises the rise of the British empire and probes the triumphal end of the colonial spectrum: "those hundreds of thousands of English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish men, women and children who were taken captive in different regions of the extra-European world during the first quarter millennium of British imperial enterprise" (3). As captivity is also a constituent part in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*, Colley, on one hand, highlights Crusoe's captivity by Barbary corsairs,

Colley's correlation and association of Crusoe's and Gulliver's overseas experiences and exotic encounters in what she calls two "captivity narratives" (13). Nevertheless, it is by no means a study on captives and captivity. Rather, this essay discusses how racism and colonialism find their way into these two very dissimilar literary textures, during the heyday of the British empire.

Despite their diversities in theme, style, technique, linguistic properties and conventions, Crusoe and Gulliver coincidentally enact a similar scene of submission during their respective adventures. At the end of Gulliver's voyage to the country of the Houyhnhnms, the equine master accompanies Gulliver to his boat at the seashore. With "Eyes flowing with tears" and "Heart quite sunk with Grief," Gulliver prepares to "prostrate" himself before his master "to kiss his Hoof," the Houyhnhnm accordingly "did me [Gulliver] the Honour to raise it gently to my [Gulliver's] mouth" (324). This ceremonial farewell can neither be literally taken as an act of entertaining the eighteenth-century reading public,<sup>5</sup> nor is the truthfulness of Gulliver's account the focus of attention here. What makes Gulliver's subservient departure significant exceeds the generic boundaries of Menippean satire, which, as Frye points out, is concerned "less with people as such than with mental attitudes" and known for "its ability to handle abstract ideas and theories" (309). Perhaps rather than drive home the moral values--"mental attitudes," and "abstract ideas and theories"--of the fourth journey, the significance of Gulliver's farewell to his master lies in the fact that it plays a discordant tune from the Menippean layout of the protagonist's four voyages.

Interestingly, doesn't this farewell episode correspond to Crusoe's encounter with a wretched savage, running for his life from the other two cannibal enemies? Crusoe knocks one down, shoots the other, and rescues the savage from his pursuers. When the afflicted native comes vis-à-vis his savior, "kneeling down every Ten or Twelve steps in token of acknowledgement for my [Crusoe's] saving his Life," he

Kiss'd the Ground, and laid his Head upon the Ground, and taking me [Crusoe] by the Foot, set my Foot upon his Head; this it seems was in token of swearing to be my Slave for ever; I took him up, and made much

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enslavement in Morocco, and later imprisonment on an uninhabited island, which is constantly overshadowed by the presence of the cannibals. On the other hand, viewing that Gulliver's "voyages are aborted, time and time again, by events and beings beyond his control" (1), Colley lists the protagonist's three major setbacks: first Gulliver is captured by the Lilliputians, then toyed by Brobdingnagians, and lastly confined on the island of the Houyhnhnms.

<sup>5</sup> Gulliver, the narrator, is well aware of the narratorial credibility of his prostration to his horse master and the eighteenth-century reader's reaction to it. He swiftly makes a note:

I am not ignorant how much I have been censured for mentioning this last Particular. Detractors are pleased to think it improbable, that so illustrious a Person should descend to give so great a Mark of Distinction to a Creature so inferior as I. (324)

of him, and encourage'd him all I could. (147)

As much as the Master Horse takes for granted Gulliver's prostration and his own mastery, Crusoe takes the savage display of sincere gratitude for the savage's willing "Subjection, Servitude, and Submission" (149). As point of departure, this essay is concerned with the underlying connotation of Friday's and Gulliver's kowtowings and discusses how colonial inculcation makes its impact on the literary texts, and how colonialism and racism come into play and infiltrate these Eighteenth-Century literary genres.

### Crusoe's Eurocentric Vision of the World

Crusoe's colonial mapping starts with a dream, as he is stranded on the island. In his dream, Crusoe saves a cannibal, who becomes his "Servant," and serves as a "Pilot" to help him flee the island. As the dream later materializes, the presence of the savage, Friday, prompts Crusoe to take "Possession" of him (144). To possess the savage, this would be "Servant"/"Pilot" first must be domesticated to become less threatening and more useful as a guide. It turns out that this master-servant relationship replicates Crusoe's previous Moroccan experience, in which Crusoe instrumentalizes and objectifies Xury, the Moor boy.<sup>6</sup> In other words, this new relationship between Crusoe and the cannibal Friday transplants Crusoe's Moroccan experience onto the island and duplicates the relationship pattern.

But Crusoe would not establish the same relationship with the Spanish sailors;

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<sup>6</sup> During his second voyage, Crusoe is captured by the pirates and suffers the "surprising Change of my [his] Circumstances from a Merchant to a miserable Slave" in Sallee (15). He endures a time of what he describes as "the most miserable of all Conditions of Life" (26). Yet, this miserable experience of being enslaved does not make him empathetic. On the contrary, the hardship he goes through as a slave, doing the "common drudgery of Slaves about the house (16), has nourished his desire to instrumentalize and exploit people around him.

When his master is gone, Crusoe plans "to have a little Ship at my [his] Command" for an escape (17). Forcing Moley, a Moor, to jump off the boat and swim for his life, Crusoe turns to the other one Xury, telling him that if he swears loyalty to him: "I'll make you a great Man, but if you will not stroak your Face to be true to me, I must throw you into the Sea too." In line with Crusoe's other loyal acquaintances, Xury subserviently swears to be devoted to Crusoe, his master, and promises to "go all over the World with me [him]" (19). To pledge allegiance to Crusoe, Xury volunteers to go on shore and risk his life for some water, saying "with so much Affection," "If wild Mans come, they eat me, you go wey" (20). Although Crusoe is greatly touched and moved, and thus vows to "love him [Xury] ever after," he later breaches this contract and breaks his vow perfunctorily by selling off Xury to a Portuguese captain at "60 Pieces of Eight" (26), together with his boat. Rather than honour the contract and keep his vow, Crusoe disposes of Xury without any qualms or remorse at all, selling him into slavery like a piece of property. Since then, Xury falls into oblivion except for two occasions later in the narrative: first, when Crusoe is in dire need of free labour on his sugar cane plantation in Brazil and, second, when Crusoe hankers after assistance in escaping from the island. In short, only when Crusoe feels the need of help does he ruefully recall Xury. He laments that "now I found more than before, I had done wrong in parting with my Boy Xury" (27).

of course, if they are lucky enough to stay alive. Before Friday's presence, there is a Spanish shipwreck. Crusoe hopes to find some sailors alive, but only succeeds to retrieve all the sailors, drowned dead on the shore. At first sight of the wreckage, Crusoe bewails it as a great misfortune, but on second thoughts Crusoe relishes the disaster as a blessing. After all, sharing his island with other European castaways would threaten and jeopardize his dominion. In contrast, Friday, possessed and domesticated, does not pose any threat to Crusoe. Pat Rogers differentiates these two aspects of the same problem: "Friday is *acceptable* because, for obvious *racial* reasons, he represents no threat of *equality*" (389, my emphases). Rogers is right by pointing out the issue of racism at stake, in that Friday's racial inferiority promises peace and acceptance on the island. And it is racial inequality that becomes an imperative for both Xury's and Friday's unconditional loyalty and serves to rationalize Crusoe's superiority. This hierarchy of Crusoe's rationalized superiority and Friday's and Xury's relative inferiority reveals an underlying assumption which confirms the centrality of the European, Crusoe, and the marginality of non-European others, Xury and Friday.<sup>7</sup>

These two marginalized racial others--a Moroccan and an American cannibal--are instantly infantilized as Crusoe respectively calls Xury and Friday, "my boy" (27) and my "Child" (151), and invariably enslaved as Crusoe claims himself Xury's and Friday's "Master" (149). The former swears to be "faithful" to and "go all over the World with" Crusoe (19), while the latter pledges to protect his master and tell his own people "to live Good," "to *pray* God," "to eat *Corn bread, Cattle-flesh, Milk, no eat Man again,*" and most importantly to "*make they much Love*" Crusoe (162).

To theorize Crusoe's relations with Xury and Friday, J. M. Blaut's interpretation of "spatial elitism" and the "Inside-Outside model" sheds some light on Crusoe's establishment of master/slave relationship.<sup>8</sup> In *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*, Blaut reproves and refutes the time-honoured corpus of European theories, which are firmly embedded in various Western belief systems and which falsely claim that European society and religion are superior to all the other societies and regions of the world (8-9). The corpus is, in a word, Eurocentric and posits itself as a model of the world. This Eurocentric model of the world bases itself on "diffusionism," which diffuses European culture

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<sup>7</sup> The nuance of difference between the two lies in the fact that Crusoe's relationship with Friday eventually evolves into a detailed and full-scaled colonial discourse, taking up the last third of the novel, but that with Xury is only transient and too brief at the beginning of Crusoe's adventures.

<sup>8</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha, in her *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, also centers around this dualistic world view of Eurocentrism, "interpreting the out-group through the in-group mode of reasoning while claiming to speak the minds of both the in-group and the out-group" (1). This "in-group"/"out-group" demarcation of the world is not only compatible with, but also resembles Blaut's "Inside-Outside model."

outwardly from Europe, the only centre, to other parts of the World, the periphery. As Blaut interprets, this Eurocentric diffusionism is "spatial elitism" (12), which advocates the "Inside-Outside model" (13). It depicts a world dualistically divided into two divisions, with Greater Europe inside, and non-Europe outside. This Eurocentric model of the world offers theoretical basis, practical strategies of colonial power and knowledge, and the process by which European colonizers, here including Robinson Crusoe, come to understand and enter into their relationships to the rest of the world.

Indeed, Richard Phillips also shares a similar idea:

Robinson Crusoe takes these elements of Britain, of his British social self, and transplants them to the island, where he amplifies them, in himself and in his engagements with the island. Thus, when Crusoe was removed from society, society was not removed from him. (31)

If readers put Robinson Crusoe in Blaut's model, they would identify the protagonist as a faithful practitioner of this Eurocentric "diffusionism," or "spatial elitism." Not only does he relocate "his British social self" and the "elements of Britain" to the island, he also "amplifies" them on the model of "spatial elitism" or Eurocentrism, by colonizing and inculcating Friday.<sup>9</sup> Although he is haplessly uprooted from Britain, Britain is "not removed from him," but is replanted to the island on a prototypical model of empire.

### Assimilating Friday: Almost but Not Quite

To implement this "Inside-Outside model, Crusoe conceives a series of Eurocentric cultural assimilation strategies to separate the wheat from the chaff by ridding Friday of that "Pitch of inhuman hellish Brutality, and the Horror of the Degeneracy of Humane Nature" (120). In other words, to segregate Friday from the other "dangerous" and "inhuman" cannibals, Crusoe constructs Friday as an exception with three assimilation tactics. Crusoe, first and foremost, harbors a Eurocentric illusion by ideally characterizing Friday as the "good" native, who is "comely handsome," "tall," and "perfectly well made." In other words, the master

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<sup>9</sup> In light of it, Peter Hulme comments that *Robinson Crusoe* did influence the course of British colonialism in a more general way, and Crusoe's island came to be regarded as a more generic, colonial space. Richard Phillips further adds: "*Robinson Crusoe* represents, promotes and legitimates a form of colonialism" (31). He hammers out a conclusion that "*Robinson Crusoe* was a map of British imperial geography and a myth of British imperialism" (32).

differentiates the slave from his tribe people by gracing him with a more subtle and refined European countenance: Friday has "all the Sweetness and Softness of an European in his Countenance too" (148). Moreover, Friday's complexion is further discursively negotiated to sever him from other "flat"-nosed Negroes. Most notably, the "Colour of his Skin" is whitewashed to distinguish his brownish skin of "bright kind of a dun olive Colour" from "an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, as the Brasilians, and Virginians, and other Natives of America" (149). To bear more resemblance to his master, Friday is dressed in "a pair of Linen Drawers," "a Jerkin of Goat's-skin," and "a Cap," either given or made by Crusoe. Trinh T. Minh-ha would simply consider this "a projection" of Crusoe's/the colonizer's "way of handling realities, here narratives" (141), because Friday is even said to be "well pleas'd to see himself almost as well cloath'd as his Master" (150). With his projective vision completed, not only does Crusoe pleasantly make Friday his "Man" (158), but he also readily takes Friday as his child, for "his very Affections were ty'd to me, like those of a Child to a Father" (151).

Besides constructing Friday's colonizer's/European semblance, Crusoe also converts and reforms Friday by Christian religion and English education. To make Friday more "useful, handy, and helpful," the master teaches his slave to speak the colonizer's language in order to "make him speak and understand me [Crusoe] when I spake" (152). While giving his slave English lessons, Crusoe time and again attempts to wean Friday of cannibalism, which he has long made a habit of, until the cannibal finally swears that "he would never eat Man's flesh any more" (154). On the other hand, Crusoe starts to "instruct him in the Knowledge of the true God" to replace "Benamuckee, who live'd but a little way off" (156), with a conviction that one day Friday's "Conscience might be convinced, his Eyes open'd, and his Soul sav'd" (159). Catechizing Friday of Christian belief and Biblical knowledge proves difficult, because "it was not easie to imprint right Notions in his Mind about the Devil, as it was about the Being of a God." It is equally a herculean task to talk him into realizing the falsehood of "Oowocakee," the savages' clergy, and thus to persuade Friday to renounce his own faith in "God Benamuckee" (157). For three years, Crusoe spends hours and hours of conversation in educating and converting Friday to Christianity, until the savage becomes "a good Christian, a much better than I [Crusoe]" (159). Assuming the roles as Friday's personal stylist, pedagogue and priest, the master eventually takes pride in the completion of Friday's assimilation in terms of appearance, education and religion. He is so puffed-up with his achievement and starts to fantasize that the master and slave "liv'd there together perfectly and compleatly happy, if any such Thing as compleat Happiness can be form'd in a sublunary State" (159).

But there is no bridging a benign colonial relationship and easing the inherent colonial tensions, as the ontological nature of colonial hierarchy is dialectical. Though the colonial hierarchy can be temporarily stabilized and institutionalized as Crusoe has envisioned through assimilating and inculcating Friday, the intrinsic structural contradictions between colonizer and colonized will never be settled.<sup>10</sup> Because of their dialectical nature, the irreconcilable tensions between colonizer and colonized will generate a new synthesis, which itself will engender further tensions between both sides. In line with this notion, Peter Singer proposes that "the world works dialectically," in interpreting Hegel. He contends that a synthesis, such as the colonial hierarchy, emerges out of the opposing and contradictory elements, such as the colonizer and colonized, but will be subject to change as it "in turn develops its own internal tensions" (80). And the "internal tensions" will heighten until they procreate another temporary synthesis, during which Crusoe could temporarily ensconce himself with Friday in his "Habitation," and "liv'd there together perfectly and compleatly happy" (159).

In *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Albert Memmi also considers the colonial hierarchy "unstable and its equilibrium constantly threatened." From Memmi's perspective, the threat will originate from the colonized, who will "one day begin to overthrow his unlivable existence with the whole force of his oppressed personality" (120). Memmi argues that "revolt is the only way out of the colonial situation, and the colonized realizes it sooner or later" (127). In fact, Memmi, a Tunisian Jew, views colonialism from the perspective of the colonized, as much as Crusoe, whose Father is a German, and mother, native English, sees colonialism from that of the colonizer. Friday, in the colonizer's narration, is so docile that he does not harbor the slightest idea of attempting to "overthrow his unlivable existence" and never thinks about the possibility of "revolt" as "the only way out of the colonial situation."

Rather, Crusoe's colonial assimilation projects are themselves self-contradictory. For one thing, isn't it true that Crusoe readily relinquishes his faith at the sight of the footprint, in spite of reiterating his ardent Christian belief over and again? For this reason, under Crusoe's spiritual guidance, catechizing and baptism, can Friday's conversion to Christianity be taken seriously? For another, Crusoe compliments

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<sup>10</sup> Regarding his overall interactions with Friday, Crusoe wavers between the idea that Friday is dangerous and primitive, and his view that Friday is a "good" savage, though there "was still a Cannibal in his Nature" (150). The "compleat Happiness" does not stay long enough for the antithetical power on the other side of the colonial lever to keep challenging the other extreme of Crusoe's authority, tilting his balance, despite his laboured confirmation of Friday's honesty and innocence. Notably, Crusoe's mastery is threatened when Friday joyfully catches sight of his homeland: "Friday . . . looks very earnestly towards the Main Land, and in a kind of Surprise, falls a jumping and dancing, and calls out to me. . . . O glad! There see my Country, there my Nation" (160). Crusoe cannot but panic, hearing Friday calling "my Country," "my Nation." The sparkle in Friday's eyes and the "Eagerness" (161) in his face further stir up Crusoe's suspicion that Friday and his tribesmen would "Make a Feast upon" him (162).

Friday on his outlook and intelligence on several occasions, proud to see him "*almost* as well cloath'd as his Master" (150, my emphasis), and praising him for understanding the English "Names of *almost* every Thing I [Crusoe] had occasion to call for," and being able to "answer me [Crusoe] *almost* any Questions" (154, my emphases). Yet, for all the considerable acclaim, Crusoe's semantic uncertainty already contradicts and interrogates the truthfulness of his narration. As a matter of fact, Friday will never be incorporated into the governing class; as Crusoe consciously or unconsciously reveals the futility and improbability of Friday's assimilation: Friday could "speak fluently, though in *broken* English to me" (160, my emphasis).

Although Friday is said to emulate Crusoe in appearance and English proficiency, his "tawny" skin calls in question "all the Sweetness and Softness of an European in his Countenance," and his "broken English" also tacitly undermines the resemblance of his language fluency and proficiency. Friday's assimilation, as Homi Bhabha would put it, is no more than "mimicry" of the colonizer. Bhabha defines "colonial mimicry" as

the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. (86)

Constructed in the image of Crusoe, Friday's blemished semblance at most presents "the effect of a flawed colonial mimesis." The "slippages" of his skin and his English-based pidgin narratorially make the "colonial mimesis" "partial" and metonymic," and backfire on Crusoe's "discourse of mimicry" (86). To sum up, it is the slippages of the colonized's "*broken* English" and defective semblance of the colonist's "white presence" (90) that both doubles and parodies the image of the colonist's colonial authority, and thus "deauthorizes" Crusoe's colonial discourse *per se* (91).

As a "form of colonial subjectivity," Friday is constructed to meet the colonizer's "narcissistic demand of colonial authority" (87-88). Crusoe is "narcissistic," because he models Friday on his own image, through three assimilation tactics. But this "discourse of mimicry" problematically presents a "partial vision of the colonizer's presence" (88), which paradoxically presents the coercion of Friday's assimilation into the colonizer's self-image, and the denial of it. Therefore the appropriation of Friday's identity has contradictorily turned him into an "inappropriate" colonial subject, since the slippages already expose Friday's racial and

cultural differences and dialectically interrogate Crusoe's "narcissistic" assimilation strategies. Even though the "inappropriate" colonial subject in the colonizer's account is silenced throughout the process of assimilation and inculcation, and given no opportunity to defend and speak for himself, the coexisting antithesis on the other side of the colonial lever discursively challenges Crusoe's colonial authority and questions his assimilation tactics, despite his naive and labored idealization of Friday's submission and loyalty.

## Friday-esque Assimilation of Gulliver

By comparison with Friday, isn't Gulliver also subject to his Houyhnhnm master and immersed in a similar host culture in Houyhnhnm Land? As Friday submits himself to Crusoe with absolute "loyalty and devotion" (80), so does Gulliver take the Houyhnhnms to be "an *absolute* authority" (114).<sup>11</sup> Perhaps more than Friday, Gulliver is so submissive to the Houyhnhnms that Peter Steele senses "something flatly idolatrous" about him and remarks that Gulliver "takes the Houyhnhnms to be not only impeccable but also simply directive" (114). Indeed, Gulliver adores the Houyhnhnms to the extent that he wishes

they were in a Capacity or Disposition to send a sufficient Number of their Inhabitants for civilizing *Europe*; by teaching us the first Principles of Honour, Justice, Truth, Temperance, public Spirit, Fortitude, Chastity, Friendship, Benevolence, and Fidelity. (340)

Although most of the horses are unconcerned with Gulliver, his Houyhnhnm master, like Crusoe, is keen on inculcating him. Comparing Gulliver with the most "filthy" Yahoos (311), the equine master curiously examines Gulliver's clothing and comments on his naked body:

I [Gulliver] differed very much from the rest of my species, in the Whiteness, and Smoothness of my Skin, my want of Hair in several Parts of my Body, the Shape and Shortness of my Claws behind and before, and my Affectation of walking continually on my two hinder Feet. (266-67)

The horse master distinguishes Gulliver from the savage Yahoos in the colour and

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<sup>11</sup> Homer O Brown explains that it is Friday's "loyalty and devotion" that, for the first time, Crusoe perceives a savage's humanity, while Peter Steele explicates that Gulliver is enlightened, also for the first time, through the examples and inculcation of his horse master.

texture of his skin, trim fingernails, manicured toenails, and upright walk.

Like Friday, Gulliver is favoured by his master and accepted by the Houyhnhnm society because of his “Teachableness, Civility and Cleanliness,” “which were Qualities altogether so opposite to those” Yahoos (263). The most prominent feature that sets Gulliver apart from those dirty Yahoos is his outfit, together with his skin, “want of Hair,” neat nails, and, last but not least, his upright posture. (In a similar manner, Crusoe also clothes Friday in a pair of knickers, jerkin, and cap, to separate him from the rest of the “ugly,” “naked” savages.) Gulliver is further segregated from the Yahoos because of his “Civility.” He is refined at the dining table and refuses to eat the loathsome, smelly and rotten “Piece of Ass's Flesh,” which in contrast, when given to the Yahoos, is “greedily devoured” (258). (Correspondingly, under Crusoe's repeated inculcation, Friday eventually also swears not to practice cannibalism again.)

Most notably, the Houyhnhnm master differentiates Gulliver's “Teachableness” from Yahoo's “Follies” (319). (It is difficult not to notice a parallel with that of Friday's teachableness which keeps himself apart from the other cannibals, even his own biological father!) In the horse society, the Houyhnhnms hold language in a very high esteem and “looked upon it as a Prodigy,” a mark of “a rational Creature” (263). Gulliver happens to be so gifted for language acquisition that his master, and “his Children, and every Servant of his House were desirous to teach me [Gulliver]” (263). (Likewise, Crusoe is also committed to teaching Friday English and making him understand what he says!)

Comparable to Friday, Gulliver “pointed to every thing, and enquired the Name of it, which I [Gulliver] wrote down in my Journal Book when I was alone” (263). In contrast to the Yahoos, who are widely regarded to be “the most unteachable of all Brutes,” Gulliver, within a period of ten weeks, is able to understand most of his master's questions; in three months he can give “*tolerable* Answers” (264, my emphasis). (In analogy, Friday, in three years, “could understand almost all I [Crusoe] said to him, and speak fluently, though in broken English to me [Crusoe].”)<sup>12</sup>

For Friday, his talent for learning English is meant to accelerate his assimilation and eradicate his cannibal heritage. Likewise, for Gulliver, the “Prodigy” and his “principal Endeavour” to learn the Houyhnhnm language will further set himself apart from the Yahoos, “for which I [Gulliver] had so utter an Hatred and Contempt” (267). However, the issue at stake is the Houyhnhnm master never questions his initial

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<sup>12</sup> As I emphasize in part three, *Assimilating Friday: Almost but Not Quite*, Crusoe's uncertainty of Friday's assimilation in clothing and language undercuts the credibility his recount. Friday's “broken” English is now echoed by Gulliver's “tolerable” Houyhnhnm language. These instances of understatement in both *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* invariably presage the impossibility of the colonized integrating into the governing class and set the undertone for the improbability of the colonized assimilating into the colonizer's society.

recognition of Gulliver as a Yahoo: a "perfect" (266) and "exact" Yahoo (313), despite Gulliver's virtues of "Teachableness, Civility and Cleanliness." For all that the Houyhnhnm considers Gulliver more clever and civilized than the Yahoos, Gulliver is still defined and identified as at best a "wonderful" Yahoo (265), or, in Bhabha's terms, at most a "partial" and "metonymic" Houyhnhnm. (In the same way, no matter how closely Friday resembles his master in his clothing and language proficiency, Friday's assimilation is at best a mimicry of Crusoe's presence.) Although superior to the Yahoos by "some Tincture of Reason," Gulliver is still hierarchically "inferior to the Houyhnhnm Race" (313), as much as Friday is dialectically subordinate to Crusoe. The inferior pair, Friday and Gulliver, are inculcated to meet but, at the same time, reject their masters' "narcissistic demand."

### Specifying Gulliver's Lurking Hatred and Fear

At first sight of the Yahoos, Gulliver responds "I never beheld in all my Travels so disagreeable an Animal, or one against which I naturally conceived so strong an Antipathy. So that thinking I had seen enough, full of Contempt and Aversion" (250). Charles H. Hinnant makes a shrewd observation by pointing out the nuance of difference of Gulliver's perception of the Yahoos. He claims that Gulliver's initial "Contempt and Aversion" for the Yahoos is "pre-ethical: the Yahoos are loathesome because they fail to conform to any known principle of animal taxonomy." Hinnant explains, "We should notice that nothing as yet has been said about their resemblance to men, nor about their filthy habits as scavengers" (73).

Indeed, not until Gulliver and the "Beast" are "brought close together" and their "Countenances diligently compared" by his horse master, does Gulliver see in the Yahoo the semblance of humankind: "My Horror and Astonishment are not to be described, when I observed, in this abominable Animal, a perfect human Figure." But as he views that "the Face of it indeed was flat and broad, the Nose depressed, the Lips large, and the Mouth wide," Gulliver holds them in contempt as "these Differences are common to all savage Nations" (257). In light of the above, it stands to reason that Gulliver's latter perception of the Yahoos exacerbates his initial "Contempt and Aversion" and gradually develops into a hysterical fear of being identified as the savage himself. Gulliver has been very uneasy about "so often the Appellation of Yahoo" by the Houyhnhnm master and pleads with him to stop "applying the word to me [Gulliver]" (267). Although the equine master graciously agrees, he offhandedly forgets the promise, as he resumes the "Appellation" only five paragraphs later. So time and again, Gulliver keeps hearing himself called a Yahoo, but only with a shade of difference. He is a Yahoo with "some Glimmerings," or

“small Pittance,” or “Rudiments,” or “some tincture,” or “some small Proportion” of reason.

Felicity A. Nussbaum’s idea in *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* may shed some light on this incongruous combination of civilization and savagery in characterizing Gulliver, as well as Friday. Nussbaum interprets,

These fictional characters . . . combine the highest status with the lowest rung on the chain of being, noble and slave, refined and fierce, tangled together in emblematic figurations which both replicate our understandings of British manhood in the period and threaten to expose the myths of a white masculinity still uneasy about its nationalist moorings. (195)

The asymmetrical composites of “Yahoodom”<sup>13</sup> and the spirit of Enlightenment in Gulliver, and English civility and American savagery in Friday unilaterally cross the racial boundaries with an intention to turn both Gulliver and Friday into “inappropriate” colonial subjects and to accentuate racial and cultural hierarchy. On the other hand, Crusoe’s restlessness and Gulliver’s constant fear chime well with Nussbaum’s notion of the colonial anxiety about the “nationalist moorings” of “white masculinity.”

As it turns out, Gulliver suddenly comes to terms with this "Appellation" after the anecdote of bathing in the stream, which victimizes Gulliver but amuses the equine family. The turning point happens when a young female Yahoo, "inflamed by Desire," makes sexual advances on Gulliver, who is "never in my [his] Life so terribly frightened." As Gulliver recounts:

She embraced me after a most fulsome Manner; I roared as loud as I could, and the Nag came galloping towards me, whereupon she quitted her Grasp, with the utmost Reluctancy, and leaped upon the opposite Bank, where she stood gazing and howling all the time I was putting on my Cloaths. (305)

Like Crusoe coming to Friday's rescue, it is Gulliver's "Protector the Sorrel Nag" that

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<sup>13</sup> I cite the term “Yahoodom” from Robert C. Elliott’s “The Satirist Satirized,” in which Elliott analyzes Swift’s self-involvement in the state of Yahoooness in *Gulliver’s Travels*. Elliot concludes, As a clergyman, there is a sense in which Swift might have accepted those implications; but as a humanist and an author he could not. He could accept his own involvement in the great range of human folly which Gulliver avidly depicts, but he could not accept the total *Yahoodom* of man. (45, my emphasis)

wards off this possible inter-species sexual assault. This incident of embarrassment and "Mortification" brings to light the protagonist's lurking fear. As Laura Brown comments in *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes*, "Swift is clearly experimenting with the established miscegenation fantasy by proposing, in the event, that these alien creatures are, surprisingly, of the same species as the human" (88). Indeed, finding that he is attracted to the most "disagreeable" Yahoo, Gulliver finally could do nothing but give himself away: "For now I could no longer deny, that I was a real Yahoo, in every Limb and Feature, since the Females had a natural Propensity to me as one of their own Species" (305).

Irvin Ehrenpreis, in "The Styles of Gulliver's Travels," ascribes Gulliver's fear to Jonathan Swift's observation of the Irish people on the streets of Dublin. In "A Letter to the Archbishop of Dublin, concerning the Weavers" in *Irish Tracts*, Swift is bemused by those animal-looking Irish, walking "with two legs and human faces, clad, and erect, be of the same species with," as he recounts, "what I have seen very like them in England, as to the outward Shape, but differing in their notions, natures, and intellectuals" (65). But it would be strained to link the Irish with the Yahoos on the grounds of this general and sketchy description. Perhaps the link between them is better forged by Nussbaum, who, in "Black Women: Why Imoinda Turns White," suggests that in the eighteenth century people from "the Indies, the Americas, Africa," and "the South Pacific," as well as "the Irish" are tagged and generalized by the color of black. . . . Yet it was not clear how fundamental dark coloring might be" (151).

If Ehrenpreis' reference of the Irish on the streets of Dublin faintly echoes the Yahoos in Houyhnhnmland, then George Louis Leclerc Buffon's account of the Hottentots would make out a better case for specifying Gulliver's fear. If we juxtapose the details of a Hottentot in Volume Nine of George Louis Leclerc Buffon's influential *Natural History* and Gulliver's perception of a Yahoo, we may not only hear numerous echoes between literature and anthropology, but also give a better argument for Gulliver's fear:

The head covered with bristly hairs . . . and still longer hairs in the front . . . the lips thick and projecting, the nose flat . . . the ears, body, and limbs are covered with hair, the nails long, thick, and crooked . . . the breasts of the female long and flabby, and the skin of her belly hanging down to her knees; the children wallowing in filth . . . and, in short, the adults . . . rendered more so by being smeared all over with stinking grease. (136).

Comparable to Buffon's portrayal of the savage Hottentots' "hairs," the Yahoos are

also covered with hair in different parts of their body: “Their Heads and Breasts were covered with a thick Hair,” as well as “the fore Parts of their Legs and Feet” (249). Besides, while the Hottentots’ nails are “long, thick, and crooked,” the Yahoos are also featured by their long nails (257). As for the females, the breasts of the Hottentot females are “long” and “flabby,” and their loose belly flesh hangs down to their knees. Likewise, their Yahoo counterparts’ “Dugs hung between their fore Feet, and often reached almost to the Ground as they walked” (250). As to the younger generation, Buffon, in Volume Four, places the responsibility for the young Hottentot’s flat nose on the mother who “is apt to strike the nose of the child against her back” (282). Similarly, Gulliver’s adult Yahoos either spoil “their Infants to lie grovelling on the Earth,” or disfigure them “by carrying them on their Backs, nuzzling with their Face against the Mother’s Shoulders” (257). The most striking similarity between the Yahoos and Hottentots is their facial features—broad face, thick lips, and flat nose, which, as Gulliver understands, are “common to all savage Nations” (257).<sup>14</sup> Indeed Gulliver’s picture of the Yahoo in many ways resembles Buffon’s image of the savage Hottentot to the extent that one may easily take one for another. Brown, in *Ends of Empire*, also notes that these two species “belong to the eighteenth-century accounts of racial difference focusing on the Negro” (194), and thus infers that “by the logic of Swift’s satire the Yahoo’s lust for Gulliver, the Negro’s for the white European, proves them to be of the same species as well” (197). Therefore, if the Yahoo is pictured in the image of the Negro, Gulliver’s fear and final confession of himself as “a real Yahoo in every limb and feature” ring ever more racist and colonial in Swift’s satire.

## Two Historical Referents

As point of departure, this essay deals with the corresponding acts of submission in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver’s Travels*, in which elements of colonial and racial fantasy are compared, analyzed, reflected and commented. In *Robinson Crusoe*, years of hard work on assimilating and inculcating Friday turns out a parody of colonizer’s narcissism, while, in *Gulliver’s Travels*, the link between the Yahoo’s resemblance to the Hottentot and Gulliver fear for and final self-identification as a Yahoo rings ever more racial and colonial. Both literary works promote and partake in the narcissistic project of colonial inculcation during the heyday of empire-

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<sup>14</sup> Besides their shared physical characteristics, both Buffon and Gulliver respectively make much of the themes of filth and stench in portraying racial others. For instance, Buffon visualizes the Hottentot “children wallowing in filth, and crawling on their hands and feet” and imputes the adult Hottentots’ “hideous appearance” to the habit of “being besmeared all over with stinking grease” (136). By comparison, Gulliver finds the young Yahoos’ “Flesh to smell very rank, and the Stink was somewhat between a *Weasel* and a *Fox*, but much more disagreeable” (304).

building.

The infiltration of colonial and racial elements associates these two literary texts together and gives these two old and new genres a coordinate point. In *Fables of Modernity*, Brown points out insightfully that “a cultural fable transcends particular writers and texts: it is generated collectively in many texts over a period of time. . . . It may make up a small portion or a specific dimension of a text” (2). By the logic of Brown, the shared coordinate point connecting *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* is the “cultural fable” of colonial inculcation that “transcends” Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift, and their narratives, regardless of their difference of styles in the early eighteenth century English literature. Despite making up only “a small portion and presenting only “a specific dimension” of each individual narrative, colonial inculcation, “generated collectively,” conveys two levels of meaning. On the historical level, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*, as historical referents, mark the impossibility of crossing racial boundaries in literature during the early eighteenth century. On the literary level, inculcating Friday and Gulliver politically and culturally institutionalizes racism and colonialism in early eighteenth-century English literature.

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*Yao-hsi Shih, Assistant Professor, Department of Applied English, Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology*  
*Email: donjose@mail.stust.edu.tw*