Robinson Crusoe and *Foe*: Deconstruction of Colonial Discourse Through Tropical Invalidism

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Abstract *Robinson Crusoe* and *Foe* are generally read through comparisons made to highlight marked contrasts between the ways Defoe and Coetzee treat colonialism. However, this article undertakes a comparison of both novels by representing them as analogous with an emphasis on the debilitating effects that the tropical climate produces on Europeans. Both Defoe and Coetzee deal with the harsh climatic conditions on the tropical island in a way that ultimately leads to severe impairment and deterioration in the body and mental health of the European characters. The extremes of the tropical climate such as the torrid heat, heavy rains and violent storms not only tend to be conducive to ill-health and a relapsing fever but also provoke the feelings of fear, distress and anxiety. The central focus of the Europeans shifts from fulfilling their basic needs to surviving the extreme weather conditions and protecting their health from the tropical diseases. According to both narratives, colonial stereotypes such as white-black and master-slave might be deconstructed on the grounds that the superiority of the Europeans is shaken through representations of tropical invalids whose body and mental condition are vulnerable to tremendous harm and threat that the tropical environment poses to their health.

Keywords Daniel Defoe; J. M. Coetzee; tropical invalidism; climate; disease

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Introduction

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe is a literary work of realist fiction which has received extensive critical comments for ages and is cited as among the pioneers of

novel genre. The main plot unfolds the adventures of the shipwrecked protagonist being stranded on a tropical island as well as his struggles to survive the harsh conditions causing serious privations and suffering. Crusoe appears as a man of intelligence, courage and heroic deeds, knowing how to cope with considerable hardships thanks to his extraordinary skills such as hunting, making bread, cultivating the soil and building a shelter. He rescues Friday from other cannibals and makes him his slave. At the end of the novel, he promotes from being simply a sailor embarking on an adventure on the sea and losing almost everything after the shipwreck to the ownership of plantations and wealth. He turns the catastrophic consequences of the shipwreck to his advantage through his rational thinking. Such recurrent motifs of colonialism and imperialist ambitions spreading throughout the narrative have inspired various levels of discussions raised in response to colonial discourses.

J. M. Coetzee, for example, produced *Foe* as a rewritten version of *Robinson Crusoe* and as a reaction to the Eurocentric narrative strategies by giving voice to the European female narrator, Susan Barton, who recounts the story from a marginalised perspective. "Instead of privileging a male heroic figure," the narrative unfolds the adventures of Susan Barton, "who is searching for her lost daughter," and "Robinson Cruso (Coetzee drops the 'e' of 'Crusoe') becomes a minor character in the story that is much more centred on the relationship between Susan and Friday" (Naidoo and Wittenberg 30). Gräbe argues: "This female castaway who is simultaneously participant in the events and focalizer of the fictional world provides a means whereby the historical fictional world may be invaded and the basic story thus transformed into a newly focalized narrative" (152). The author depicts Cruso as an old man who undergoes a total loss of health, fortune and honour and can no longer endure the ills of the tropical island; at last, a declining body and mental health cause his tragic death.

At first glance, the thematic concerns of Coetzee and his stance on colonialism seem to diverge much from those of Defoe; however, this article offers a different angle of vision through which it becomes possible to analyse both novels within the framework of striking similarities by deconstructing stereotypical images of colonialism with reference to tropical invalidism. In both novels, the tropical climate features extreme weather conditions such as a burning sun, torrential rains and strong winds whereby the Europeans' body and psychological health declines dramatically. They become disease-stricken maroons who concern themselves with an unremitting conflict with the harsh climatic conditions and whose main preoccupation is to shield their health from the deleterious effects of the tropical climate. Due to the extremes and erratic shifts in the weather conditions, the prevailing mood of

the tropical climate is characterised by pessimism, horror and psychological depression and thus worsens their psychological health. Both writers treat fever as a typical disease of the tropical climate whose symptoms incorporate shivering, debility, alarming rises and falls in body temperature, attacks, weakening body strength, as well as the failure of bodily functions. The tropical environment exerts an oppressive and maladaptive influence over the European characters. They become susceptible to the physical and mental disorders triggered by the tropical climate in which they feel threatened, helpless and weak. Thus, the fierce and uncontrollable tropical climate overshadows colonial divisions such as white-black, superior-inferior, civilized-savage and master-slave where colonisers feel secure and superior.

Tropical Invalidism

Colonialist discourses were founded upon racial hierarchies where whites were superior to blacks. But these arguments were not restricted to racial divisions. In addition to race-based assertions, "landscape, flora and fauna, seasons, climatic conditions" differ radically from "the place of origin as home/colony, Europe/New World, Europe/Antipodes, metropolitan/provincial, and so on" (Ashcroft et al. 11). According to deep-rooted perceptions "associating the African climate, geography and people with disease," "races were naturally best suited to the climatic and topographical features of the places in which they had been born and raised" (Crozier 403). The death of white colonisers in the tropical lands was thought to be the result of "the climate or bad luck considering the individual's selfless bravery" whereas the death of blacks was regarded as resulting from "their perceived folly and filth" (Crozier 407). Hence, a threatening and frightening atmosphere concealing deadly diseases is a prominent feature of the tropical climate.

The issue of tropical invalidism, constituting the health-related part of colonial period, has remained almost unexplored in literary studies. Describing "tropical invalids" as "figures of colonial return," Bewell claims: "In these people, the British saw not only the extent of their involvement in colonial activity but also its negative effect on their constitutions. Colonial disease was not therefore something that existed 'over there'" (Bewell 13). Unable to maintain "the physiological capacity to adapt to a tropical region" and "his native constitution," "the 'climate-struck' tropical invalid discovers that he inhabits a body fit for" neither England nor tropical environment, and thus having to live in "an epidemiological limbo, a permanent state of maladaptation and continued suffering" (Bewell 284-285). Along with physical suffering, tropical invalids probably experience a state of trauma and sorrow over disturbances in the functioning of the body as well. Gaining an abundance of material possessions

from colonies and a high status of being administrators, soldiers and researches rarely provides relief from physical and mental distress. Johnson discusses:

> It is really lamentable to see men returned from a tropical climate, walking about the streets of London, or going to places of amusement, in the cold raw evenings of winter, while the hacking cough, emaciated figure, and variegated countenance, proclaim a condition of the lungs which ill comports with this exposure to the vicissitudes of a northern climate. (567)

All their attempts to find solace in a change of air and in activities of entertainment frequently prove futile. Troubled by intrusive thoughts recurring persistently about their poor health and its possible consequences, they are no longer self-confident and proud to have taken part in the process of colonialism.

The major crisis is, nevertheless, beyond "a physical mismatch between the white male's refined mental apparatus and an alien, depleting climate;" it emerges as "a personal maladaption to civilized social life" (Anderson 155). Undergoing "changes in his moral and physical nature but little considered or understood by his kinsmen and countrymen in general," the tropical invalid "finds himself, in middle, or more advanced life, differing in habits, associations, and pursuits, from those around him his nearest relatives departed, and he an invalid and a stranger in the land of his birth" (Martin 450). Encountering the invalid's body ravaged by the tropical climate and diseases, his friends and relatives feel a sense of frustration and pity. His body does not reflect a sign of physical strength and vigour any longer. Besides, concerned about the possibility of being infected with the invalid's disease, they try to keep away from him. Having already been influenced terribly by his ill-health, he also suffers from a mode of living dominated by loneliness where he is seen as an outsider and those around him show no empathy.

The notion that "the tropics were dangerous fever nests, probably uninhabitable by Europeans for any prolonged period, greatly complicated the fact of their increasing economic and imperial importance" (Edmond 177). Bewell sums up the questionable side of colonial activity: "European medicine addressed fundamental questions about the relation between biology and colonialism, seeing in these ruined bodies a dark allegory of imperial ambition and its limits" (Bewell 279). The instances of tropical invalids raised doubts about to what extent colonialism might be sustainable in the future. It was brought into question that whether it was worth risking the lives of Europeans, settling in colonies, for the sake of exploitation followed by financial profits.

Foe

In *Foe*, Coetzee provides a dramatic illustration of how the tropical climate heavily deteriorates the Europeans' physical and mental condition and involves them in a perpetual conflict with the harsh weather conditions on the island. The violent sun emits extreme heat in a way that the narrator's skin turns dark whereas the sound of the strong wind begets immense pain and psychological disturbance. As for Cruso, he is reduced to a fever-stricken invalid whose bodies fail to function properly owing to such symptoms as tremors, fits of the disease, sharp increases and decreases in body temperature as well as mental disorder and hallucinations. His psychological decline and malfunctioning of his body become so intense that the failure of a proper adaptation to the tropical climate gradually kills him.

The narrative calls into question racial hierarchies of colonial discourses concerning skin colour and destabilises the inalterability of racial features by laying stress on the tropical sunlight altering the narrator's skin colour. According to "scientific discourse" in the colonial period, "the skin colour of specific races did not change when their members moved to a new location" as "it was a biological and natural difference;" therefore, "races were now seen to be the expression of a biological (and therefore immutable) hierarchy" (Loomba 57). However, the author seems to contest the assertion that skin colour is merely an innate biological characteristic and is not vulnerable to any climatic influence. After heavy exposure to the tropical sunlight that burns skin, the skin colour of the narrator turns from white into brown. "My skin was as brown as an Indian's. I was in the flower of my life, and now this had befallen me" (Coetzee 35). Observing that her skin colour gets darker shakes her self-confidence and the feeling of superiority over blacks. She becomes aware that the tropical climate has bereft her of one of the basic markers serving to separate her race from colonised peoples. Concerning the climatic impacts on the skin, Senior argues: "As climate and natural surroundings were imaginatively mapped onto the skin, which was understood to display and convey the effects of external influences, skin took on a crucial role in mediating environment" (102). The tropical climate becomes a venue where stark distinctions between racial colours are reconciled and white skin is integrated into the prevalent atmosphere of the island by getting darker. At first glance, one is likely to suppose her as a black female slave on account of her dark skin. Hence, the burning sun absorbs her into the dominant biological structure of black folks in the tropical lands. For the narrator, her body displays an undesirable adjustment to the tropical atmosphere through a descent to a darker appearance.

According to the narrator, the most troubling and painful side of the island is the tropical wind. She thinks that it is not "the loneliness nor the rudeness of the life, nor the monotony of the diet," but "the wind" that causes more misery and discomfort by whistling in her "ears," tugging at her "hair" and blowing "sand" into her "eyes" (Coetzee 15). The constant sound of the wind, along with its shattering force to induce persistent and harsh pains in her ears and eyes, jangles on her nerves to such a degree that she, unable to take drastic measures under inadequate conditions, has to find temporary solutions ways to cope with the wind. She relates:

> ...sometimes I would kneel in a corner of the hut with my head in my arms and moan to myself, on and on, to hear some other sound than the beating of the wind; or later, when I had taken to bathing in the sea, would hold my breath and dip my head under the water merely to know what it was to have silence. (Coetzee 15)

She always makes an attempt to drown out the sound of the wind by moaning to herself and to remaining under the seawater, while bathing, to attain a state of tranquillity and calmness. Such attempts offering short-term palliatives do not satisfy her need nor alleviate her suffering strongly, so she has recourse to other means that could provide radical solutions. "I made a cap with flaps to cover my ears; I wore this, and sometimes closed my ears with plugs too, to shut out the sound of the wind. So I became deaf, as Friday was mute..." (Coetzee 35). This solution, though muffling the sound of the wind completely, impairs her ears' function by hindering her from hearing any sound. While trying to deal with the wind, she cannot come up with a perfect method offering any radical solution. Her attempts, working out in some respects, leave her open to further troubles in other respects.

Far from being predictable, calculable and controllable, sudden and drastic shifts from one harsh climatic condition to another cause heavy damage and suffering. When it is sunny, the sunlight leads to weather-beaten skin; when it is rainy and windy, the rain converts to a torrential downpour, and the wind becomes a fierce storm. The narrator underlines how trees are damaged by exposure to the wind: "I do not wish to be captious, but we lived on an island so buffeted by the wind that there was not a tree did not grow twisted and bent" (55). Likewise, she gives an account of how both the storm and the rain have catastrophic results: "Shortly hereafter we had a great storm, the wind howling and rain falling in torrents. In one of the gusts part of the roof of the hut was tom off and the fire we guarded so jealously drowned" (28). Despite all of their endeavours to save the bed from the torrent, they

fail: "We moved the bed to the last dry corner; even there the floor soon turned to mud" (28). The wind and the rain pose tremendous hardship for them and obstacles to fulfilling their basic need for shelter, warming themselves, eating and sleeping. During such events, she notices Friday's indifference towards the harsh weather and is staggered at how Friday's response to the weather sharply differs from hers. She states: "I had thought Friday would be terrified by the clamour of the elements... But no, Friday sat under the eaves with his head on his knees and slept like a baby" (28). Unlike the narrator who is not accustomed to such violent storms and whom the power of the tropical climate strikes as frightening and worrisome, the black Friday continues to sleep with complete disregard as if the fierce storm does not blow in a devastating way. Being utterly familiar with such harsh weather conditions, he accepts strong winds and heavy rains as the normal course of nature and copes with them calmly. Probably in order to reveal the stark contrast between Europeans and blacks in psychological terms, the author presents the ways the psychological response of the narrator contrasts with that of Friday; that is, the tropical climate arouses feelings of fear, gloom and anxiety in the narrator whereas Friday takes it in his stride.

The tropical island in the narrative is ravaged not just by the harsh weather conditions but by tropical diseases as well. The existence of certain pathological conditions peculiar to the tropical regions becomes manifest; it is no coincidence that the narrator puts particular emphasis on sleeping sickness as a typical feature of the tropical climate. She recounts:

> For the danger of island life, the danger of which Cruso said never a word, was the danger of abiding sleep. How easy it would have been to prolong our slumbers farther and farther into the hours of daylight till at last, locked tight in sleep's embrace, we starved to death (I allude to Cruso and myself, but is the sleeping sickness not also one of the scourges of Africa?)! (82)

The physical and automatic reaction of the body to the tropical climate may be to fall into a deep sleep, but the narrator extends the case beyond a simple body reflex towards a pathological condition that may turn into a fatal case because of lack of nutrition after a long process of sleeping. While mentioning the sleeping sickness as an outstanding characteristic of the tropical island, she also makes an explicit reference to Africa, where it figures prominently as an inherent part of the climate. Defining "sleeping sickness, or human African trypanosomiasis" as "a parasitic disease caused by *Trypanosoma brucei* and spread via the bite of infected tsetse flies,"

Taylor-Pirie claims that its "symptoms" involve "fever, headaches, itchiness, joint pains, fatigue, and swollen lymph nodes" (187). In case of its progression, "neurological symptoms" "such as tremors and seizures, and a disrupted sleep-wake cycle, as well as aggressive behaviours, apathy, and delirium" might become visible; moreover, if not treated, it may result in "coma, systemic organ failure, and death" (Taylor-Pirie 187). Not simply being a disease showing symptoms of fatigue, lethargy and sleeping disorder, it is also concerned with the nervous and psychological deterioration where the normal patterns of behaviour are impaired and almost the whole body fails to function properly. The narrator proves that a European, even if not infected with the disease, possibly does not follow a regular sleep routine in the tropical land nor desires it for fear that it might be the last sleep before death.

The novel gives an accurate depiction of the detrimental and disastrous impacts of the tropical diseases on invalids. A case of relapsing fever, running a chronic remitting and recurring course, reduces Cruso to a person of broken constitution, health and spirits. The disease spreads over his body at an alarming rate through severe symptoms. His body temperature occasionally decreases suddenly: "One night, indeed, when for hours he had been moaning and shivering, his hands and feet cold as ice, I lay down beside him, holding him in my arms to warm him, fearing he would die otherwise" (27). It also increases unexpectedly at other times: "That night Cruso, who had seemed quite mended, complained of being hot, and tossed off his clothes and lay panting. Then he began to rave and throw himself from side to side as if unable to breathe..." (29). In addition to uncontrollable body movements, tremors and an uneven course that his body temperature follows, he sometimes lays motionless without any response: "This time there was no raving or shouting or struggling. Cruso lay pale as a ghost, a cold sweat standing out on his body, his eyes wide open, his lips sometimes moving, though I could make out no word" (38). As the fever progresses, it seems that the disease produces a hallucinatory effect on Cruso: "For twelve days and nights I nursed him, sometimes holding him down when fits of raving overtook him, when he sobbed or beat with his fists and shouted in Portuguese at figures he saw in the shadows" (27). He gives visible signs of a gradual physical and mental sinking and falling into decay. The narrator observes that he reflects illusory perceptions as a common symptom of a severe mental disorder. The fever progresses to such an extreme degree that it goes beyond impairing the bodily functions of Cruso and penetrates deep into his neurological and psychological health.

The narrator becomes aware that the tropical island converts Cruso over time from an ambitious European, aiming to dominate and colonise nature and then to

escape, into an impotent invalid whose body and mental health gradually decline in the face of the tropical climate. The narrator witnesses his reluctance to leave the island: "Besides, as I later found, the desire to escape had dwindled within him" (13). She highlights the point that Cruso deliberately waits for his tragic end: "But now he was dying of woe, the extremest woe. With every passing day he was conveyed farther from the kingdom he pined for, to which he would never find his way again. He was a prisoner..." (43). Feeling surrounded and thereby intimidated by the tropical climate and finding himself embroiled in an inescapable and relentless conflict with harsh weather conditions, he diminishes to a psychologically depressed figure losing his enthusiasm and zest for living. He enslaves Friday and makes use of the fertile soil, animals and nature through domination and violence to the extent that the climatic conditions permit, but he cannot bring the climate under control, so the island becomes his prison where the tropical climate often makes him feel a sense of pessimism, helplessness and defencelessness. He can no longer endure the depressive mood exceeding the limit of his physical and mental stamina and dies.

Robinson Crusoe

In *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe gives a grim portrayal of the tropical climate which draws the protagonist into failing physical and psychological health and in which he is dragged into an overwhelming preoccupation with protecting his constitution against the harmful effects of the extreme weather conditions. The climate becomes his central concern to such an extent that he has to structure his shelter and daily activities in accordance with the climatic conditions. The tropical climate generally moves between extremes such as the torrid sun, heavy rains and violent storms, and thus transforming Crusoe into a tropical invalid. Whereas the burning heat raises blisters on his skin and causes headaches, the heavy rains, combined with the fierce storms, provoke feelings of horror and apprehension and result in a fever afflicting his body with tremors, drastic changes in body temperature and attacks. Even after a return to Europe, he is not fully restored to health as his skin cannot acclimatize itself to the freezing weather and snow.

Crusoe tries to stay away from exposure to the tropical sun in case he catches the sun and has a sunburnt skin. Awareness of the detrimental effects of the sunlight on his skin and health fills him with apprehension and fear. Though it is oppressively hot and sweltering, he avoids staying naked in order not to make his skin receive the sunlight directly and deems it necessary to have something on. He explains his agony:

> ... though it is true that the weather was so violently hot that there was no need of clothes, yet I could not go quite naked - no, though I had been inclined to it, which I was not - nor could I abide the thought of it, though I was alone. The reason why I could not go naked was, I could not bear the heat of the sun so well when quite naked as with some clothes on; nay, the very heat frequently blistered my skin: whereas, with a shirt on, the air itself made some motion, and whistling under the shirt, was twofold cooler than without it. (183)

Both being naked and putting on some clothes disrupt his physical and psychological comfort; at last, he decides to wear a shirt that partly provides relief from suffering and developing blisters on his skin. Normally, skin provides human body with isolation and protection against external harmful impacts; however, in the narrative, it seems to refer to the white man's vulnerability to the destructive effects of the tropical sun through the painful swellings on Crusoe's skin. Furthermore, his head is also terribly influenced by the tropical sun emitting torrid heat: "... the heat of the sun, beating with such violence as it does in that place, would give me the headache presently, by darting so directly on my head, without a cap or hat on, so that I could not bear..." (184). He cannot go outside without a cap on account of the extreme heat. Hence, the fierce heat on the tropical island forces him into a constant attempt to keep his skin and head safe from any disease and pain.

As well as the torrid heat posing a threat to his health, the harsh climatic conditions such as rains and storms also cause Crusoe to catch a fever. The narrative unfolds intermittent recurrences of the fever after short periods of improvement. The narrator describes his poor health condition: "Very bad again; cold and shivering, and then a violent headache... Much better... An ague very violent; the fit held me seven hours; cold fit and hot, with faint sweats after it" (123). He feels the perceptible symptoms of the fever such as tremors, sweating, dramatic fluctuations of his body temperature, becoming unconscious and sudden attacks. The disease confines Crusoe to bed and leaves him motionless: "The ague again so violent that I lay abed all day, and neither ate nor drank. I was ready to perish for thirst; but so weak, I had not strength to stand up..." (124). The fever enfeebles his constitution to a considerable extent and makes him lose his appetite. He soon discovers that the extreme weather conditions in the tropical climate such as heavy rains and violent storms deteriorate his health sharply.

> I learned from it also this, in particular, that being abroad in the rainy season was the most pernicious thing to my health that could be, especially in those

> rains which came attended with storms and hurricanes of wind; for as the rain which came in the dry season was almost always accompanied with such storms, so I found that rain was much more dangerous than the rain which fell in September and October. (137)

Unlike the European climate, generally and relatively marked by mild changes between weather conditions despite being colder, the tropical climate includes sharp changes in temperatures and weather conditions where heavy rains and violent storms weaken body strength and energy. As the case of Crusoe illustrates, particularly Europeans, not accustomed to such debilitating climates, suffer from diseases peculiar to the tropical regions more heavily and commonly than native peoples whose bodies are immune to such extreme conditions.

The prolonged extremes of rains and storms on the island not only disrupt the normal functioning of Cruose's body but also precipitate his psychological collapse by arousing feelings of horror, distress and anxiety in Crusoe. He states that "the sea was all on a sudden covered over with foam and froth; the shore was covered with the breach of the water, the trees were torn up by the roots, and a terrible storm it was" (115). The storm blows so violently that it devastates the trees severely and disrupts the calmness of the sea by rendering it rough and tempestuous. Tuan claims that the ocean is characterised by two opposite sides; "uncanny stillness is one extreme of the ocean's moods" whereas, "at the other extreme, the ocean roars - its waves rise and crush like an enraged beast" (Tuan 57). This holds true for the sea since it is nearly the same as the ocean in many aspects. The mood of Crusoe shifts in parallel with drastic changes in the climate: "This held about three hours, and then began to abate; and in two hours more it was quite calm, and began to rain very hard. All this while I sat upon the ground very much terrified and dejected..." (115). Having no fixed and regular course and lacking consistency, the tropical climate becomes frightening and depressing for Crusoe. Contrary to the European climate, divided into seasons rendering weather conditions calculable and foreseeable, the unpredictability of the tropical climate means that it is too violent and unknown to be controlled and resisted; that's why, Crusoe feels a sense of insecurity and nervousness.

He concerns himself with an unremitting and strenuous struggle against the destructive effects of the climate and attempts to adjust his ways of sheltering and the hours of hunting and labouring to the weather conditions. He has to leave his tent and retreat to the cave thanks to the heavy rain: "But the rain was so violent that my tent was ready to be beaten down with it; and I was forced to go into my cave,

though very much afraid and uneasy, for fear it should fall on my head" (115-116). Then, he tries to protect his cave from the stream of a heavy downpour: "This violent rain forced me to a new work - viz. to cut a hole through my new fortification, like a sink, to let the water go out, which would else have flooded my cave" (116). As the tropical heat is so extreme and burning that he needs to arrange his daily activities in accordance with the position of the sun. For instance, at the hours when it is extremely hot and sunny, he alters his daily routine: "... so that about four hours in the evening was all the time I could be supposed to work in, with this exception, that sometimes I changed my hours of hunting and working, and went to work in the morning..." (158). Preoccupied with guarding against any harm that may be caused by the climatic conditions, he feels it necessary to restructure his mode of daily life and meet his the basic needs by allowing for the violence of the climate.

The narrative portrays the tropical nature and plants as dangerous and deadly and as parts of a landscape injurious to Europeans' health. When Cruose encounters grapes on the island, he does not eat them immediately, albeit the desperate need to satisfy his hunger. He narrates: "I was warned by my experience to eat sparingly of them; remembering that when I was ashore in Barbary, the eating of grapes killed several of our Englishmen, who were slaves there, by throwing them into fluxes and fevers" (139). Considering that each species of plants belongs characteristically to a certain region where climatic conditions are conducive to their growth, the poisonous grapes are a product of the tropical climate. Deeply concerned about the risk of being poisoned and dying among the tropical plants, he approaches them with hesitation and fear. Forming a notion about the tropical plants from the earlier experiences of dying individuals, he views them as hotbeds of disease.

Crusoe returns to Europe with the help of a captain whose ship approaches the island. Acclimatization to the cold weather and snow in Europe becomes a major problem for Crusoe after a prolonged period of exposure to the tropical climate. He relates: "When we came to Pampeluna itself, we found it so indeed; and to me, that had been always used to a hot climate, and to countries where I could scarce bear any clothes on, the cold was insufferable" (383). When marooned on the island, the intense heat of the tropical climate blisters his skin and produces severe headaches. Now, the European climate in winter seems to bite his skin: "... and immediately to feel a wind from the Pyrenean Mountains so very keen, so severely cold, as to be intolerable and to endanger benumbing and perishing of our fingers and toes" (383). Crusoe appears as a typical tropical invalid who is maladapted both to the tropical heat and to the European cold. His response to cold and snow seems to be almost the same as Friday's: "Poor Friday was really frightened when he saw the mountains all

covered with snow, and felt cold weather, which he had never seen or felt before in his life" (383). Through the remarkable similarity between the responses of Crusoe and Friday, the author probably defies the perception that there are unbridgeable divisions between Europeans and blacks. Borders in master-slave relations are blurred in the climatic conditions in Europe. Crusoe has a strange feeling that the European climate is no longer characterised by moderate weather conditions, albeit lacking drastic changes between violent storms, heavy rains and extreme heat belonging to the tropical climate.

Conclusion

On the surface, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Foe* seem to treat colonialism in a different manner in that Defoe's protagonist holds a prestigious position through plantations and slaves after his survival in the tropical island whereas Coetzee's Cruso cannot survive the harsh tropical environment. However, through a closer reading, it becomes possible to discover that both writers employ tropical invalidism as a deconstructive strategy of contesting colonial discourses and stereotypical representations. The European characters' confidence in superiority over blacks is challenged by the extremes of the tropical climate giving rise to tropical invalidism and designating a fall to poor body and psychological health. Rapid and violent changes moving between the intense heat, strong winds and heavy rains persistently endanger their health and result in incurable disorders. Such a process is accompanied by psychological depression, worry and despair. As a result, the tropical climate exposes the Europeans to grave maladies, sometimes lasting throughout their life or resulting in death.

In *Foe*, the climatic conditions on the island impair the physical and psychological health of Susan Barton and Cruso. Barton finds the wind the most intolerable side of the island thanks to its unceasing sound and whistling in her ears. When it begins to wind, she covers her head with her arms and moans to herself in order to muffle the sound of the wind. While bathing, she holds her breath and keeps her head under the sea as a means of feeling silence and escaping the sound of the wind. Even though these attempts give her some relief, they do not provide solace completely. She, at last, decides to cover her ears with a cap with flaps, but because of that, she can hear nothing and becomes almost deaf. Also, the tropical sun emits heat so intensely that her skin turns brown like an Indian's. The narrative undermines the biological privilege of a European by means of a darkening skin and shatters her pride. In a similar vein, the tropical climate exerts a pernicious effect on Cruso's body and mental health. He suffers from a relapsing fever that debilitates

his body with tremors, body temperature rising and falling suddenly and loss of strength and energy. He loses his mental health via hallucinations step by step. In spite of the narrator's efforts to heal him, he loses his life. During his relapses, the narrator reminds the reader of the sleeping sickness belonging to Africa and making an invalid starve to death after heavy sleeps. The torrential rains and the strong winds affect seriously not just the health of the Europeans but their living conditions as well. Such extreme weather conditions demolish their hut and flood their bed, which mostly pushes them into being on the alert to similar dangers.

In *Robinson Crusoe*, considering his maladaptation both to the tropical environment and then to Europe, along with blisters on his skin formed by the torrid sun and a fever he contracts on the island after exposure to heavy rains and strong winds, the protagonist epitomises tropical invalidism plainly. The tropical sun shines in such a violent way that raises blisters on his skin and leads to acute headaches when he stays under the sun. He cannot wear clothes nor can stay naked in the oppressive heat; finally, he comes to a decision to wear a shirt and a cap as a partial solution, though not completely helpful. Besides, he becomes a fever-stricken invalid on account of exposure to the tropical climate and displays severe symptoms of shivering, sweating, attacks, body temperature following an erratic course through abrupt changes and debility. Likewise, he has to arrange his daily activities concerning hunting, working and shelter by taking into account hours when the climate is less violent. The extreme climatic conditions such as fierce storms, heavy rains and a tempestuous sea awaken fear and pessimism in Crusoe. He hesitates to eat fruits in the island as he knows that plants growing in the tropical environment might be poisonous and have fatal consequences. After his ill acclimatization to the tropical environment, a return to Europe does not make any notable contribution to his recovery; he fears that he may have fingers and toes numb with cold in Europe, so he avoids a direct contact with the freezing cold. He responds to the cold weather in the European climate in a way that is similar to Friday, having never experienced winter and snow in the tropical island and therefore being afraid of the cold. Through these comparable responses, Defoe shakes Crusoe's authority and questions hierarchies in master-slave relations.

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