Chapter 1

Christians, Savages, and Slaves

From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic

Christianity has so long prevailed in these Parts of the World [Caribbean and American colonies], that there are no Advantages or Privileges now peculiar to it, to distinguish it from any other Sect or Party; and therefore whatever Liberties the Laws indulge to us, they do it to us as English-Men, and not as Christians.

—LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH
Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1711)
AN analysis of Daniel Defoe's *Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and its critical tradition exemplifies the way that a theory of multiplicity helps to recover the emergent character of race in the early eighteenth century. Because skin color became a more important racial category to the British only later in the eighteenth century, a color binary of black and white does not help to elucidate British reactions to other Europeans, Moors, West Africans, or native Caribbeans or, indeed, their representation of them. Of course, *Robinson Crusoe* does not perfectly reflect English culture or economic investment in the first two decades of the century, but it does present some fascinating ideological dilemmas conjured up by eighteenth-century articulations of human difference and colonial power relations.

Because *Robinson Crusoe* marshals categories of difference, such as savagery, slavery, and Christianity, it appears to define precisely the boundaries between people in various racial terms and thereby elicits a picture of European superiority. Despite this apparent precision, the novel has fostered a readerly confusion about the status of the Caribbean islander Friday, the Spanish Moor Xury, and even the English Crusoe in its many subsequent interpretations. Indeed, the novel's difficulty in situating Friday in a stable category of cannibal, slave, or servant reflects a cultural uncertainty about the signifiers of racial difference in the early eighteenth century and their significance, an idea seldom explored in critical assessments of Defoe's novel or other early eighteenth-century literature. Beginning with a recent interpretation of *Robinson Crusoe* emphasizes the problems that arise when an analysis seeks to confine an eighteenth-century colonial text to a color binary informed by current notions of race.

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In 1992, when Toni Morrison introduced *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality* and sought to make sense of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas's position in relation to racial politics in the United States, she chose a comparison to *Robinson Crusoe*. Morrison identifies Friday's subservience to Crusoe as a particularly appropriate analogy for Thomas's relationship to the Bush administration. Overall, because her attention is focused on Thomas, the effect of Morrison's comments is to homogenize race to a rigid binary that divorces the literary text from its cultural context. The result is a narrative about racial relations in *Robinson Crusoe* that seems remarkably contemporary.

Morrison's "Introduction: Friday on the Potomac" juxtaposes Clarence Thomas's Senate confirmation hearings with scenes from *Robinson Crusoe*. Her critique of Thomas and the Bush administration is first introduced in the epigraphs, which include comments by Thomas and Anita Hill as well as the scene in which Friday bends his head to Crusoe's foot. Arguing that the significance of the hearings is, in part, the interpretation of "history" and suggesting that the Hill/Thomas investigation was "the site of the exorcism of critical national issues" by being "situated in the mismas of black life and inscribed on the bodies of black people," Morrison's essay deftly unfolds the way that U.S. racial politics played out in 1992, exposing the structure of racial discrimination in which both Thomas and Hill were placed by the media and other Americans. Morrison contends that the Senate Judiciary Committee and the media coverage of the hearings positioned the two main players within a discourse derived from slavery that featured two stereotyped responses of slaves to their masters—codependency and rebellion—or the "tom" (Clarence Thomas) and the "savage" (Anita Hill). In her interpretation of the hearings and the aftermath, Morrison shows the ease with which this binary was adopted and claims that the hearings were a process "to reorder these signifying fictions ['natural servant' and 'savage demon']" (xvi). Not surprisingly, perhaps, these terms are the very terms in which *Robinson Crusoe* works out Friday's position, but in a way that is obscured by Morrison's invocation of them.

A comparison of Morrison's recollection of *Robinson Crusoe* with the novel itself reveals how she overlaid a late nineteenth-century racial sensibility on it. This change enables the racial dynamic between the English Crusoe and the Caribbean islander Friday to characterize Clarence Thomas's position in relation to the Bush administration. Beginning the comparison between the present and the past, Morrison spotlights Friday: "On a Friday, Anita Hill graphically articulated points in her accusation of sexual misconduct. On the same Friday Clarence Thomas answered... those charges. And it was on a Friday in 1709 when Alexander Selkirk found an 'almost drowned Indian' on the shore of an island upon which he had been shipwrecked. Ten years later Selkirk's story would be immortalized by Daniel Defoe in *Robinson Crusoe*" (xxxii).4 Morrison's version of the novel's origin is mistaken, but such a confusion, especially about Friday, has been part of the novel's critical history since its initial publication. First, it is arguable whether narratives of shipwrecks on Juan Fernandez Island in the South Seas are the basis for Crusoe's Caribbean island. There were two instances of solitary individuals on Juan Fernandez Island that Morrison's version conflates. One involved a Guamanian man, the Mosquito Indian Will, who was not shipwrecked but left behind accidentally by his shipmates in 1681; the other was the Scotsman
Alexander Selkirk, who was not shipwrecked either but abandoned by his captain in 1704. Thus, Selkirk did not find an Indian, drowned or otherwise. Will had been rescued by another buccaneer ship in 1684.

Transferring an Indian from Robinson Crusoe to Selkirk’s narrative creates space for a character Morrison refers to as a black, savage cannibal to replace the Caribbean native Friday in her recollection of Robinson Crusoe. Morrison has recalled a fiction of the fiction: “There [in Defoe’s novel] the Indian becomes a ‘savage cannibal’—black, barbarous, stupid, servile, abhorring... Crusoe’s narrative is a success story, one in which a socially, culturally, and biologically handicapped black man is civilized and Christianized—taught, in other words, to be like a white one” (xxiii)). Notably, in this passage, Morrison superimposes a more recent conception of race on Robinson Crusoe. In the novel, Friday is not “black,” “stupid,” or considered “biologically handicapped” (xxii), though I agree with Morrison that Friday is taught to behave like a white man, and a certain kind of white man—a servant. The stereotypical features that she lists are the products of mid-nineteenth-century racism and a North American, post-civil rights critique of the construction of race. They are also a measure of black power to act as proxy for all other oppressed groups. In the novel, the “savage” is not an African but a Caribbean islander, who is attached to a sociopolitical group with specific customs, religious and social beliefs, and rules of governance. The novel carefully depicts Friday in a way that it refuses to depict the other “savages.”

Morrison observes that the interaction between Crusoe and Friday takes place on Crusoe’s terms, not Friday’s, because of the way that power differences are structured by language use: “The problem of internalizing the master’s tongue is the problem of the rescued” (xxv). Commenting on Friday’s assimilation to Crusoe’s version of British culture, particularly the loss of his “mother tongue,” and the associated consequences of internalizing the norms of the master’s language, Morrison concludes that Thomas and Friday “are condemned... never to utter one single sentence understood to be beneficial to their original culture” (xxix). Of Clarence Thomas and his political allegiances, Morrison writes: “If the language of one’s culture is lost or surrendered, one may be forced to describe that culture in the language of the rescuing one... It becomes easy to confuse the metaphors embedded in the blood language of one’s own culture with the objects they stand for... One is obliged to cooperate in the misuse of figurative language, in the reinforcement of cliché, the erasure of difference, the denial of history, ... [and] the inscription of hegemony” (xxviii). Morrison’s critique of Thomas’s reinforcement of cliché and the resulting denial of history is applicable, in a different sense, to Morrison’s own erasure of the Caribbean Friday and to the association of blackness with servility. Substituting a black man for Friday in her recollection of Robinson Crusoe inadvertently repeats the material eradication of native Indian cultures (through disease and population manipulation as well as slaughter, despite their resistance, and, of course, through rewriting history) on a figurative level. This replacement also fails to articulate the historical connection between native Caribbean populations and African slaves, especially the forced introduction of African people to the Caribbean and mainland Americas as slaves to supplement a native labor force that Europeans could not adequately command or had destroyed. By making internalized racism seem eternal, Morrison’s greater truth about Clarence Thomas’s unthinking assimilation to hegemonic norms misses the historical difference I wish to untangle in this chapter.

Morrison emphasizes similarities between the past and the present. Her logic is reminiscent of the current political hegemony in the United States that encourages the construction of only one Other at a time. (Hence the confusion and general failure to find a way to discuss the ideological similarities between Thomas and Hill or the differences between a Caribbean Friday and an African one.) A corollary to acknowledging only one Other at a time is that if the black/white color binary breaks down, it tends to be in racist ways, such as in the construction of a “model minority.” An important implication is that, in general, only one group at a time is positioned as Other, marginalized, or disenfranchised from a white norm in the contemporary moment. Nevertheless, Morrison’s trenchant critique of dominant U.S. racial politics allows us to discern a troublesome aspect of the black/white binary: the way that race is made equivalent to blackness in the United States. Of course, the black/white opposition is never borne out in social reality, but it does constitute the metaphysics of present-day racism in the United States.

Despite my critique of Morrison’s substitutions and embellishments, that they appeared in 1992 is symptomatic of a relatively recent binary understanding of race. As I show below, a binary sensibility has largely informed critical attention to Robinson Crusoe and fostered cogent analyses of it. By also bringing a theory of multiplicity to bear on this material, I offer a more dynamic conception of early eighteenth-century ideas about human variety. Significant reasons for textual ambiguities about racial differences at this time include vast economic changes in the intensity of colonialism and a massive change in the population mixture of the Atlantic colonies. Robinson Crusoe harks back to the cataclysmic shift from a diversified subsistence-based or moderate profit economy to a single crop, profit-oriented economy.
dependent on African slaves that occurred first in the British West Indies. In fact, between about 1645 and 1665, the proportion of Europeans, Caribbean islanders, and African slaves changed dramatically, especially on Barbados, from one of European dominance in numbers on the settled islands to one of African majority in numbers.\(^9\) *Robinson Crusoe* conjures up older New World Others, however, and manifests a desire for European difference to be constructed in relation to Caribbean peoples.\(^10\)

Peter Hulme’s *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (1986) has been instrumental in framing *Robinson Crusoe* as a study of colonial discourse and in making visible the significance of cannibalism to constructions of European identity.\(^11\) Hulme and other critics have tended to regard the novel primarily in its construction of European superiority, and certainly such an emphasis is warranted given that, overall, power relations in the Atlantic benefited Europeans. Most of this scholarship, however, has focused only on the island segment. My analysis links the Caribbean to other geographies of imperialism in the early eighteenth century and attends to the way that a theory of multiplicity, not simply difference, helps interpret the representation of the relations between the English Crusoe and the Spanish Moor Xury and between Crusoe and the Carib Friday.

In examining eighteenth-century discourses about savages, Christians, slaves, and servants, it appears that race as we understand it today did not fully anchor European perceptions of difference at this time and cannot analyze colonial relations adequately. *Robinson Crusoe* corresponds to a particular episode of the colonial process when practices were not justified by relatively seamless ideology. In this early stage of colonialism, the representation of racial differences was not as systematized as it became later in the century. Indeed, the novel reflects the fact that only some differences were belatedly cobbled together to justify European domination. To eighteenth-century Britons, savage and Christian were crucial concepts of difference, while only to a lesser extent were slavery and skin color relevant. In practice, of course, both skin color and slavery effectively distinguished others from Europeans in the colonies, but a coherent ideology had not yet emerged to match the de facto situation. As scholars are just beginning to explore, British slavery and colonial life were structured as much, if not more, by custom than by law, the latter of which worked on a need-to-have basis rather than on a strictly ideological one, especially until the slave trade and conditions of enslavement came under parliamentary scrutiny in the late 1780s.

By emphasizing an interpretive practice based on the analysis of difference and multiplicity, it is possible to read *Robinson Crusoe* as a vindication of the European, specifically the British, colonial spirit and an exploration of its fissures.

Several colonial factors give impetus to the plot and align Crusoe indisputably on the colonizer’s side. For example, *Robinson Crusoe* rehearses the early stages of European colonial contact in the Atlantic twice, once in Brazil and then on the Caribbean island. Before Crusoe has even left Britain, the novel betrays its colonial underpinnings in Crusoe’s desire to improve his middling station in Britain through speculative trading schemes and sea voyages as well as in his ability to travel voluntarily to diverse parts of the world. On the island, his fear of bodily harm from the Caribbean islanders, the eventual necessity of eradicating the cannibals, and his desire to domesticate Friday all bespeak the imbrication of fear, violence, and optimism in forging an empire. All in all, the differences between Crusoe and the Others with whom he comes in contact establishes the superiority of enslaver to enslaved: the Africans he trades in, the Spanish Moor Xury whom he sells as a slave, and the Carib Friday whom he legislates to perpetual servitude.

In the first part of *Robinson Crusoe*, the hero travels between Britain, Africa, and Brazil. He encounters Moors, West Africans, the Morisco Xury, and other Europeans.\(^12\) Initially, Crusoe’s desire for advancement beyond the station allotted to him propels the plot forward and takes him well beyond England’s borders. Crusoe’s wish for advancement materializes when he joins a trading expedition to Guinea: “That evil influence which carried me first away from my father’s house, that hurried me into the wild and indigested notion of raising my fortune . . . whatever it was, presented the most unfortunate of all enterprises to my view; and I went on board a vessel bound to the coast of Africa.”\(^13\) Although Crusoe reiterates that his desire to travel and to amass wealth is inexplicable, a modern-day reader might explain these goals as a result of the unprecedented capital accumulation in Europe made possible through global trade and colonization from the sixteenth century onward. Expanded trade routes and new colonies stripped parts of what was called the “uncivilized” world of their natural and human resources and permanently altered those economies and ways of life to satisfy spiraling British consumer desire—including a desire for adventure and travel.

The novel establishes Crusoe’s method of rising in the world as possible because of a developed colonial labor force and because of the demands of trade. African trade, particularly in slaves, provides Crusoe’s capital and labor base for his profitable production of sugar in Brazil. Crusoe notes that by joining a slaving expedition, "This voyage made me both a sailor and a
merchants.” The gold dust he brought back yielded him £300 in London, and “this filled me with those aspiring thoughts which have since completed my ruin” (40). The even greater desire to increase this wealth leads to another African voyage, but Moorish pirates take him prisoner, and he is enslaved in Morocco. In North Africa, piracy fills the narrative function that the hurricane does in the Caribbean, “accidentally” situating Crusoe in a historic power struggle for European hegemony. The Moors function similarly to the later shipwreck because they both impede Crusoe’s success as a slave trader.

The Mediterranean was, of course, the first place of European imperialism; it was significant to Christian identity and fodder for exotic tales long before the Caribbean was. The representation of the Moors in Robinson Crusoe is more favorable than one might imagine given the way that the Moors had traditionally symbolized the Antichrist and had frustrated European aspirations in the Holy Land during the Crusades. By the early eighteenth century, Moors were not as Other as they once had been. For centuries, their appearance on the theatrical stage and in popular literature had been one of the main ways that the British signified religious and cultural difference.\(^\text{14}\) The Moors who enslave Crusoe are represented as frightening rather than inferior or savage. This depiction derives from the centuries of maritime and financial power wielded by the Moors and Turks, which was historically more threatening and much better known to eighteenth-century Europeans than either the history or civilization of the Caribbean islanders or West Africans. In this instance, neither the nature nor the customs of the Moors defines their status in relation to Europeans; their power does. Not surprisingly, perhaps, one of the first attempts to group the world’s known people according to physical appearance in the late seventeenth century decisively included the Moors with Europeans.\(^\text{15}\) Religious difference was not coterminous with physical difference.

The depiction of Crusoe’s enslavement in Morocco by a Turkish pirate underscores that difference and multiplicity cannot be separated conceptually in the analysis of racial ideology. What might seem the most significant alteration in Crusoe’s status receives little narrative attention; consequently, critics have not commented much on this part of the novel. At the level of plot, it is in Moroccan slavery, strangely enough, that Crusoe’s status as a free Englishman is most compromised and his body suspended from its self-mastery. The juxtaposition of Crusoe, his Moorish owner, and Xury, another slave who is a Morisco or Spanish Moor, represents a collection of national identities thrown together by the fortunes of international power differences. At the height of Corsair activity in the mid-seventeenth century, thousands of Europeans were enslaved by the Moors. Some were periodically released for ransom money or became wealthy renegades by converting to Islam.\(^\text{16}\) Many European captives were ransomed by Catholic religious orders or by European secular authorities. Petitions were regularly presented to European monarchs asking for ransom monies and negotiation.\(^\text{17}\) Crusoe’s enslavement is one of many signs that Defoe relied on older concepts of difference. During the sixteenth century and before, international warfare occurred frequently between the Turks and Christians, and the enslavement of Christians and Muslims resulted from these engagements. In fact, historian Winthrop Jordan reminds us how numerous and popular accounts of European captives and slaves were.\(^\text{18}\) Thus, the association between slavery and religious difference was customary by the eighteenth century but not necessarily related to skin color. In historical terms, then, it is no surprise that Crusoe becomes a prisoner to a pirate and his household slave; Crusoe’s change of fortune results in a temporary decline in status from a planter/merchant to a slave, a change that has nothing to do with his nature or national affiliation per se. The novel offers Crusoe’s ingenuity in escaping as a significant difference between Crusoe and other slaves.

Indeed, the predilection to regard enslaved Europeans differently from other slaves was not unremarked by Englishmen. One of Defoe’s contemporaries condemned the ubiquitous double standard that regarded a European slave in Barbary as less debased than an African slave in the West Indies: “Doth he [the European] therupon become a Brute? If not, why should an African, (suppose of that, or any other remote part) suffer a greater alteration than one of us?”\(^\text{19}\) Morgan Godwyn’s treatise questions common practice and assumptions about African slaves in the late seventeenth century, and he records the reasons West Indian planters gave for their low regard of Africans, which included color, national origin, and slave status itself.

A theory of multiplicity is especially important in relation to the analysis of slavery because Crusoe is an Englishman; the enslavement of European Christians is a little remembered historical phenomenon, particularly for men. As Godwyn notes, there are some powerful binaries newly pertinent to Englishmen in the colonies by 1680: “Negro and Slave, being by custom grown Homogeneous and Convertible; even as Negro and Christian, Englishman and Heathen, are by the like corrupt Custom and Partiality made Oppositer; thereby as it were implying, that the one could not be Christian, nor the other Infidel” (36). The semantics of colonial power relations prepare us for the binaries of racism. Even though slave signified “African” or “Negro” in common colonial usage, slavery was not a condition reserved only for Africans. In the novel, the section on Crusoe in Morocco follows Euro-
pean convention by depicting slavery in Asia and Africa as more benign than in European colonies. This part of the novel suggests that Crusoe was treated more as a household servant than as a slave and certainly not subject to recultivation like Xury or Friday. In such a context, slavery does not appear to be a particularly clear boundary of permanent difference between people, since it can happen to anyone in spite of religion, national origin, or skin color. In *Robinson Crusoe*, slaves are Moriscos, European Christians, black Africans, and Caribbean islanders. Nevertheless, the novel seems quite clear about the difference between Moors and West Africans: Moors are not savage, naked, or unfamiliar. In this part of *Robinson Crusoe*, savagery rather than slavery or the Islamic religion appears to draw the greatest distinctions between Europeans and Others.

Savagery constitutes the dominant contrast between Europeans and Others in the first part of the novel. After their escape from slavery, Crusoe and Xury sail southward from Morocco “to the truly Barbarian coast.” Crusoe speculates about their reception there, “where whole nations of negroes were sure to surround us with their canoes, and destroy us; where we could ne'er once go on shoar but we should be devoured by savage beasts, or more merciless savages of humane kind” (43). Even though Crusoe fears human savages in Africa, the novel offers only savage animals. Crusoe is terrified by the disturbing cacophony that the beasts create: they hear from their boat “the horrible noises, and hideous cries and howlings” on the African shore (47). It is aural, not visual, difference that is so remarkable and a much under-explored sensation in eighteenth-century texts. Finally, Crusoe and Xury sail far enough south to spot people. The narrative calls attention to the West Africans’ skin color and nakedness, the features that most clearly separate them from the English Crusoe and the Morisco Xury. Crusoe’s first observation of the inhabitants notes these outstanding attributes: “We saw people stand upon the shoar to look at us; we could also perceive they were quite black and stark-naked. I was once inclined to ha’ gone on shoar to them; but Xury was my better councellor, and said to me, ‘No go’” (50). Clothing was one of the most important visible signs of Christian profession and European class hierarchy; in secular custom, apparel separated the higher from the lower ranks at a glance. To Europeans, naked people were hard to read; in fact, most “naked” people were simply scantily clad rather than without any clothing. Nakedness was a metaphorical sign of strangeness and indicated a lack of hierarchical society. Although blackness and nakedness seem to constitute visible signs of the Africans’ alleged savagery, they are not sufficient to account for Crusoe’s conviction that these people are cannibals.

It must be said that Crusoe’s fear of African cannibals is completely unfounded in terms of the novel, which suggests it was an easy assumption to make about “savages.” The narrative exposes Crusoe’s fear of African cannibalism as a faulty perception of difference based on misinformation. As opposed to his violent and anonymous encounter with the Caribs later, Crusoe meets and communicates with a group of people on the west coast of Africa who offer to aid him, not to eat him. For instance, the people bring him food and water, a gesture that transforms their representation. Crusoe observes: “I was now furnished with roots and corn, such as it was, and water, and leaving my friendly negroes, I made forward” (52). The novel quickly reveals that these “savages” eat wild game (like Europeans), not men. The scene in which Crusoe gratifies the Africans by shooting “a most curious leopard” for their culinary delight confirms this crucial difference and exposes the preconception versus the “reality” of the encounter (52). Crusoe departs with provisions and a changed perspective. The phrase that Crusoe invokes to describe the Africans who have succored him and whom he has repaid is “my friendly negroes.” Using this phrase links Crusoe to a well-known English slaving voyage of the sixteenth century, the text of which used a similar phrase to denote the helpful middlemen vital for successful trade. At any rate, many of Defoe’s contemporaries had noted that cannibalism in Africa was limited to the unknown interior peoples and was suspected, even then, to be fictional. Cannibalism in Africa, Defoe confirms, is a strategy of keeping Europeans from penetrating their trading networks. Since the novel does not strictly maintain the savagery of the Africans as it does the Caribs, the only real cannibals, then, are the Caribbean Indians, whose several flesh feasts punctuate the latter part of Crusoe’s island sojourn.

The depiction of the Morisco Xury also demonstrates the efficacy of joining theories of racial difference and multiplicity. Xury’s and Crusoe’s interaction foreshadows Crusoe’s subsequent relationship to Friday; in both cases, the novel depicts Crusoe’s association with a younger, non-Christian man who does not fall easily into categories of difference. Aspects of colonialism structure the two relationships in which the English Crusoe acquires a young male servant. In the context of Moroccan slavery, Xury and Crusoe resemble each other more than they differ. At first, Crusoe’s greater age seems to be the only distinction between the two slaves. The similarity between Xury and Crusoe is further emphasized by their common difference from the Moors; their shared European origin counts most in this respect. Once out of the context of slavery, a different configuration is formed—first in relation to black Africans and then in relation to Europeans. When they escape, Xury and Crusoe are allied in their fear of the Moors who enslaved them and then in their initial fear of the people on the coast of West Africa.
The potential danger of the “wild mans” and the resulting fear of being eaten lead Crusoe to notice that which most clearly separates Xury and himself from the West Africans: their light skin color and clothed bodies.

While Xury is neither as powerful as Crusoe nor as abject as the Africans on the west coast, his status in the novel is not stable, reflecting British uncertainties about difference in the early eighteenth century. Xury is a household slave like Crusoe; the Moors emphasized Moriscos' European descent, and the Spanish denigrated Moriscos because they maintained Muslim cultural practices, even those who had converted to Christianity.21 Thus, Spanish Moors were one of the most vulnerable populations in the Mediterranean, likely to be enslaved by Turks or Christians. They occupied a liminal position, considered neither fully European nor fully Muslim; in fact, their name, meaning “little Moors,” was conferred on those who chose to convert to Christianity, and those who were forced to, in 1501.22 The Moriscos were part of the blending of Arab and Spanish populations that arose from the Arab conquest of the Iberian peninsula in the eighth century. Following the Christian reconquest in the fifteenth century, the condition of Moriscos worsened in Spain: some were forced to emigrate, and those who remained in Spain were forced to convert. The Moriscos who left Spain dispersed around the Mediterranean basin, and there was a considerable community in Salé, where Xury and Crusoe were enslaved (14). Because of their profession of Islam, they often worked on behalf of the African Moors, especially the pirates.

Upon escape from slavery, Xury is not free like Crusoe is; his value is compromised from the beginning because the narrative construes him only in terms of his usefulness to Crusoe. For example, Crusoe remarks about his master’s kinsman: “I could ha’ been content to ha’ taken this Moor with me, and ha’ drowned the boy [Xury], but there was no venturing to trust him. . . . I turned to the boy, who they called Xury, and said to him, ‘Xury, if you will be faithful to me I’ll make you a great man’” (45). Crusoe’s age and initiative position Xury as a particular kind of subordinate—a servant. Crusoe orders him to kill wild beasts and to perform menial tasks, yet Xury also advises Crusoe and they hunt together (47). Their is not a relationship of equals but of roles that can be assumed by a trusty servant in relation to a master. Friday and Crusoe repeat such a pattern later.

The arrival of the Portuguese slave ship alters Xury’s status vis-à-vis Crusoe even further. If the least difference between Xury and Crusoe is discernible when they are slaves to the Moor, the greatest difference occurs when they are in the presence of other Europeans. In this context, Crusoe assumes the position of the owner of the goods, which he had stolen from his owner. The Catholic Portuguese captain treats Crusoe as an equal, even though he possesses only the stolen boat—and Xury. Crusoe explains his actions among strange Europeans: “I immediately offered all I had to the captain of the ship, . . . but he generously told me he would take nothing from me” (53–54). Indeed, the captain identifies with Crusoe’s plight: “I have saved your life on no other terms than I would be glad to be saved myself” (54). The captain offers to purchase Crusoe’s goods, and it is at this point that Xury’s status slips from servant and occasional partner in adventure to a slave because he is considered a legitimate object of exchange by both the older European men. Xury’s position as an object of exchange between the two Europeans becomes a sign of their friendship and newly established equality. Crusoe’s reluctance to part with Xury prompts the captain to mitigate Xury’s permanent servitude to a temporary term. Although the eventual conditions of Xury’s sale are more akin to indentured servitude than to permanent enslavement (ten years’ labor with freedom contingent on conversion to Christianity), Xury is a slave, not a servant, precisely because he is understood to belong to Crusoe, who has no contractual rights to his labor or person. Typically critics interpret Crusoe’s treatment of Xury as a relationship of master to slave, and certainly Crusoe’s selling Xury to the Portuguese captain confirms this idea. Yet Xury’s status is even more complicated by his religious affiliation.

Xury’s ability to be a “free” subject is silenced by the Europeans’ ominous concern for his spiritual welfare. The importance of Christianity as a significant bond between Europeans overrides even historical differences between the Church of England and Catholics by representing the greater difference as that between Christianity and Islam. It is clearly not Xury’s Spanish national origin that casts him as a slave but his Islamic religion.23 In this novel, Christianity represents the most significant category of difference that excuses European domination and establishes the conditions for enslavement. Xury, however, is not a permanent slave; he is linked to Europeans by his shared fear of being eaten by the “wild mans” on the west coast of Africa (47). In comparison to naked, black Africans, Xury is reassuringly similar to Crusoe. It is important, then, to distinguish between Xury’s national origins, which separate him from West Africans (and from Friday), and Xury’s Islamic profession, a religious category that compromises his similarity to Crusoe.

Xury, like Friday, has given rise to conflicting interpretations. His non-Christian religious status and his being sold by Crusoe have meant that he has easily slipped into categories of difference not licensed by the novel. Despite the fact that the first illustration of Xury in Robinson Crusoe depicts
him as a boyish replica of Crusoe, including the same clothing and coloring as well as the possession of a gun, there has been a persistent Negroization of Xury.24 For instance, in an eighteenth-century abridged edition of Robinson Crusoe, the editor Negroizes Xury by intensifying his pidgin English to approximate stereotypes of slave speech common on the stage. Similarly, in the Dublin edition of 1774, Xury alerts Crusoe to the savage animals in the following terms: “Look yonder, Mutter, says he in his broken tone, ‘and see that huge Monster that lies asleep on the side of de Rock!’” The Negroization of Xury occurs in the illustrations as well. In a 1781 illustration, Xury appears with dark skin and short black hair; in this version, he is no longer a young version of Crusoe. One of the least powerful groups of people, neither fully European nor Islamic, Morisco is synonymous with slave in this context. In A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, Antient and Modern (1757), there are several pictures of people from Egypt and other North African states, including an African woman, a noble lady of Alexandria, a woman of Fez, an Ethiopian, and a Morisco slave (illustrations were commonly copied from seventeenth-century travel narratives). Of all these people, the Morisco slave’s features are the most stereotypically Negro. This is surprising in many ways, not least because Morisco was decidedly not equivalent to Negro for the Spanish and Portuguese; if anything, Morisco designated an Islamic man of Arab descent who wore a long, close-fitting robe. As Morgan Godwyn notes about the equivalency between slave and Negro in the colonies, the signification of slave as black African seems fairly stable, at least in some eighteenth-century British illustrations.

Just as Crusoe made his first fortune in England by trading “trifles” on the African coast for slaves and gold, so the sale of Xury and other goods stolen from the Moor establishes him in Brazil as a land-rich plantation owner. After staying with a man who has a sugar plantation, Crusoe perceives sugar as the best path to improving his fortune: “Seeing how well the planters lived, and how they grew rich suddenly, I resolved, if I could get licence to settle there, I would turn planter among them” (55). He follows the pattern of European settlement in the Americas first by buying land, working it with his own labor, and eking out a living. Noting that his neighbor is in the same circumstance, Crusoe comments about the difficulty of producing profit: “We rather planted for food than anything else, for about two years. . . . In the third year we planted some tobacco, and made each of us a large piece of ground ready for planting canes in the year to come; but we both wanted help” (55). In the narrative time of the mid-seventeenth century, this choice places Crusoe in Spanish-controlled Brazil when it was the world’s leading exporter of sugar. Crusoe complains that all

Figure 6. Robinson Crusoe and European Xury on the West Coast of Africa. Daniel Defoe, The Life, and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (London, 1726). The illustration is set on the west coast of Africa and shows the Morisco Xury as a young replica of Crusoe. Morisco did not signify “Negro” to the Spanish and Portuguese, but it sometimes did to the British. The naked black bodies above the two escaped slaves offer the main contrast to Crusoe and Xury’s shared color and clothing style. Brown University Library.
the work is by the labor of his own hands and that his standard of living is lower than it was in England. Twice in the novel, Crusoe regrets parting with Xury, not out of loneliness or ethical regret but because he wishes to benefit from his unpaid labor. When Crusoe’s plantation begins to produce a profit, he desires Xury’s presence to enhance his income. To augment his profits, Crusoe purchases European and African labor. The ownership of property—land and especially slaves—permits the apparent equality of different nationals of European descent on the Portuguese ship and in Brazil. Thus, the status of European men in a colonial economy depends on the labor supply they command, which was overwhelmingly either Indian or African in South America. An important explanation for the absence of strife in the colonies, especially between countrymen, involves shared economic benefits in the Atlantic empires. From the mid-seventeenth century onward, successive travelers noted the undiluted friendliness among Caribbean planters. Important political and religious differences between Englishmen, particularly in the seventeenth-century British colonies (and to a lesser extent between European nationals), were often suppressed to pursue common economic goals.

In the first section of the novel, then, Defoe marshals categories of difference, including the Christian, savage, and slave to distinguish Crusoe favorably. Christian is the only category that is not undermined by its liminality. Europeans of various national origins are connected by their common Christian heritage and desire for economic advancement in exploiting African labor power and natural resources in the colonies. Neither ideologies of savagery nor slavery adequately maintain differences between Europeans and Others in Morocco or West Africa. In the novel, the hospitality of the black Africans replaces their savagery, though their color and lack of clothing still distinguish them from Europeans and Xury. Given the significance of West African slaves to European colonialism in the late seventeenth century and beyond, they strangely do not appear in the novel en masse in the role of embodied plantation slaves. Moreover, slavery is not represented as a permanent condition for Xury or Crusoe. While the novel fosters certain European differences from Moors and West Africans, the differences have little to do with complexion. Crusoe’s distinction from the Caribs is far greater and far more important to the plot.

The performance of labor is a more reliable index of status than other activities or physical attributes. Crusoe’s final action that lands him on the Caribbean island is his scheme to buy slaves in Africa and then sell them illegally in Brazil on behalf of himself and other planters who were inadequately supplied by the Spanish government (58-59). Crusoe periodically bemoans
the manual work he must perform. His own labor arrangements depend on profits from his sugar crop, and he augments his small labor force when possible: the more workers, the more land planted, and the greater the profits. The relations that Crusoe enters into as owner of others’ labor are much more perfunctory than his relationship to Xury or Friday. In Brazil, Crusoe purchases one European servant under six years’ bond, one permanent European servant, and one African slave. When Crusoe sets out on a third voyage to Africa, he characterizes his plan to buy slaves as a fulfillment of passion rather than a rational decision (60). A shipwreck arrests his trip to the slave coast, and he arrives on the uninhabited Caribbean island. The narrative initially validates Crusoe’s prosperity in the colonies; on the other hand, it reveals the manipulations, expropriations, and betrayals: his newfound status requires to attain power.

The same racial categories that were relevant in an African context apply to the Caribbean: savage, Christian, slave, and indentured servant. The narrative emphasis on the absence of clothing is more fully developed in relation to the Caribs than to West Africans. There are three related issues that I explain by focusing on difference and multiplicity in the Caribbean: the discursive construction of Friday as neither a savage nor an African in the novel; the depiction of Friday and the Caribs as Negroes in the 1720 frontispiece to "Serious Reflections on the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe;" and the changeability of Friday’s status as a servant and a slave. Even though Friday displays a lingering penchant for human flesh and is reluctant to give up his belief in Benamuckee, his god, the novel distinguishes Friday from other "savages" in remarkable ways.

The remainder of "Robinson Crusoe" locates the main character in the Caribbean on an uninhabited island and then briefly in Brazil. Unlike the frequent encounters with other populations in Africa and Brazil, Crusoe spends much of this part of the novel alone. His significant relations are with the mostly absent Caribs, Friday, and other Europeans, especially the Spaniard and the English captain who appear at the end of the novel. A colonial pattern similar to the one on the mainland repeats itself on the island: Crusoe acquires land, improves it with his own labor, and then acquires Friday as additional labor power. Before this point, when Crusoe is convinced he will remain on the island alone, he notes that his desire for advancement had dissipated because there are no competitors. By his fourth year, Crusoe is self-sufficient: "I had nothing to covet; for I had all that I was now capable of enjoying; I was lord of the whole manor; or if I pleased, I might call my self king or emperor over the whole country which I had possession of. There were no rivals; I had no competitor" (139). There is neither surplus nor a circuit of exchange. This fulfillment should end a novel driven by Crusoe’s desire for economic gain, but another motivating factor takes over the colonial plot: distinguishing Europeans from savages. At the point of apparent stasis in the plot, when his pecuniary desire has subsided, Crusoe sees a footprint, and the fear of cannibals takes over as the driving force of the plot (162–67, 171). Fear renew his plans to escape the island, but when he rescues Friday, the desire to domesticate his newfound servant soon replaces his desire to leave.

Savage had a long history of signifying European Christian superiority. A religious, cultural, and political category, it came into use in regard to people in the sixteenth century, according to the OED. As several studies of the early modern era suggest, the savage was linked to ideologies of European empire and human difference at this time.28 In general, the diverse tribes lumped under the generic term "Americans" or "cannibals" constituted the most significant population of savages during the eighteenth century, and the Caribbean islanders were distinguished among their peers for their resistant behavior to European conquest and enslavement: "Few groups were deemed more savage than island Caribs."29 Savagery embraces many attributes, particularly cannibalism, paganisms, social disorder and nakedness; dark complexion is not ideologically necessary, though it does bolster the negative image when it is present. The most casual assumption in Defoe’s novels is just what a "savage" might be; the word litters the text and is the primary label of difference.

The outstanding characteristic of the savage was cannibalism, and in the European imagination, this practice stood in for religious belief. Until the eighteenth century, Caribbean islanders conjured up "the most extreme form of savagery. Truculent by nature and eating human flesh by inclination, they stood opposed to all the tenets of Christian and civilized behaviour."30 Frans Lestringant contends that Defoe’s influential characterization of monstrous cannibals represented the mainstream English attitude.31 Not surprisingly, then, cannibalism is the motivating fear most constitutive of Crusoe’s (fictional) subjectivity and of his ideas about the inhabitants. Crusoe’s fear is subsequently justified in narrative terms by his repeated witnessing of cannibal festivities. Initially, however, the unsubstantiated fear of cannibals results in Crusoe’s altering his mode of production from a subsistence-based to a surplus economy (164). Later the first visual verification of cannibalism leads Crusoe to vomit at the scene of frenzied ingestion.
Immediately he thanks God “that had cast my first lot in a part of the world where I was distinguished from such dreadful creatures as these” (172). Eventually, of course, cannibalism justifies Crusoe’s colonization project, which is instituted when he murders scores of island Caribees. Crusoe’s security in his difference from cannibals participates in a larger cultural phenomenon; in The Man-Eating Myth (1979), W. Arens demonstrates that “anthropology has a clear-cut vested interest in maintaining some crucial cultural boundaries—of which the cannibalistic boundary is one—and [in] constantly reinforcing subjective conclusions about the opposition between the civilized and savage.”32 This same desire to maintain the boundary between the civilized and the savage may be found in most European travel literature and fiction located in the Atlantic, of which Robinson Crusoe is a well-known example.

Since the early sixteenth century, Spaniards had used cannibalism as a justification to enslave Caribbean people who refused their overtures to trade and colonize their land; indeed, Europeans had long distinguished between friendly Indians and cannibals—at least in theory. Europeans believed that compliant native people were members of sovereign nations. Cannibals had foreclosed the question of rights by virtue of their threatening behavior and resistance to European plans, and they thereby became legitimate candidates for slavery.33 This combination of cannibalism and enslavement constitutes a major racial boundary exploited in Robinson Crusoe. Friday is an enslavable cannibal (at least initially) who turns out to be a friendly Caribbean islander. In volume 3, The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719), Defoe revises the identification of Friday and his people as Caribees—long synonymous with cannibals—and thereby erodes a “valid” reason for their massacre in volume 1. Modern anthropologists and historians are still divided over the historical existence of cannibal practices in the Caribbean.34 Nevertheless, it is appropriate to conclude, as historian Philip Boucher does, that cannibal should be viewed as the nomenclature signifying a dynamic political contest.35

Historically, one way that Europeans had made Caribs and cannibals equivalent was to connect their threatening behavior to their allegedly monstrous appearance. From Columbus’s third voyage onward, there was a close association between cannibals and hideous appearance. Europeans did not have to witness acts of cannibalism to confirm that a certain group of people were, in fact, cannibals and hence eligible for guilt-free forced servitude or eradication: they could tell by looking at the Caribs (Arens, 48). Furthermore, Columbus’s text introduces cannibalism as a theme once the possibility and profitability of a slave trade seemed likely to materialize. This increasingly naturalized cluster of terms should alert us that where Europeans find cannibals, their enslavement often ensues.36 Europeans developed the concept cannibal complete with an imaginary visual referent for the failure to comply with their terms, a pattern that Robinson Crusoe repeats. Despite this powerful mode of representation, there was another history of representation that can help elucidate the depiction of Friday, who looks and acts so differently from the other Caribs.

The novel’s difficulty in defining the precise nature of Friday may be explained by the minority European tradition of representing Indians positively, which was fostered predominantly by French writers and is now called the noble savage tradition.37 In this view, traceable to classical conceits about the golden age, Indians were gentle and intelligent; they lived simply without the corruption of civilization. In the eighteenth century, significantly, writers who found Indians physically similar to Europeans often adopted this approach. The category of Carib was not fixed, then, especially not in terms of representation. Although Caribbean Indians were occasionally considered black, they were more likely to be considered visually akin to Europeans, much more so than Africans. In 1667, Jean Baptiste du Tertre’s observation provides a typical example of perceiving essential kinship between Indians and Europeans: “Only skin color distinguishes them from us, for they have bronzed skin, the colour of olives.”38 Similarly, in A Philosophical Account of the Works of Nature (1731), Richard Bradley conveys a positive perception of Indians in his taxonomy of human variety when he characterizes them as “a sort of White Men in America (as I am told) that only differ from us in having no Beards.”39 In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Indians were often illustrated as naked, beardless versions of Europeans; frequently, they were considered white because artificially colored (by roucou). Even writers who ascribed to the permanent effects of climate on skin color reported that Caribees were quite similar in coloring to the Portuguese, Spaniards, and Italians, being only a slightly more tanned version.40 Despite an occasionally more favorable representational history than Negroes, Indians did not escape murder or enslavement either. These two representational histories help explain not only how the character Friday appears to be so different from other cannibals but also how Toni Morrison envisions Friday as the native image of the English Crusoe.

One of the main reasons for the negative representation of Indians was their failure to be Christians. The paganism of savages is threatening in a different way than their cannibalism even though the two are often sublated, and the Caribbean Indians are the ideological center of this concern in the novel rather than the Moors or West Africans. In Robinson Crusoe, Crusoe’s most thoughtful and extended musings about differences between people
concern religion. Crusoe couches religious difference in the language of light and dark—those to whom God reveals the light and those from whom God hides the light—referring not to skin color but to knowledge of divine revelation. Crusoe can account for this difference only in terms of a rough geographic injustice, which permits some nations to be Christian and "forces" others to be sinners and punishes them in their absence from God (172). The ideological work of Crusoe's religious speculations makes unequal access to God's will seem divinely ordained instead of man-made and temporally convenient to excuse European domination. As Hayden White suggests in his analysis of the Wild Man, the Christian tradition promoted the equation of Christianity with humanity and savagery with sinfulness: "Christianity had provided the basis of belief in the possibility of a humanity gone wild by suggesting that men might degenerate into an animal state in this world through sin. Even though it held out the prospect of redemption to any such degenerate humanity, through the operation of divine grace upon a species-specific 'soul,' supposedly present even in the most depraved of human beings, Christianity nonetheless did little to encourage the idea that a true humanity was realizable outside the confines either of the Church or of a 'civilization' generally defined as Christian." As a result of his colonial experiences, Crusoe undergoes a conversion of sorts, to an active Christian, a shrewd narrative decision that undeniably positions the solitary Englishman outside the savage realm.

Yet Crusoe's musings on religion also underscore that there is no human difference that explains the lot of savages. For example, Crusoe's delight in Friday prompts him to question what he had previously believed: that God had taken "from so great a part of the world of His creatures, the best use to which their faculties and the powers of their souls are adapted; yet that He has bestowed upon them the same powers, the same reason, the same affections, the same sentiments of kindness and obligation, the same passions and resentments of wrongs, the same sense of gratitude, sincerity, fidelity, and all the capacities of doing good and receiving good, that He has given to us;... this made me very melancholly sometimes,.... why it has pleased God to hide the like saving knowledge from so many millions of souls" (212). It is worth emphasizing that this meditation on savages, with Friday uppermost in his thoughts, leads Crusoe to enumerate all of the similarities between the Carib savages and European Christians. The single greatest difference is not located in appearance, mental prowess, or technological sophistication but in God's inexplicable will. Crusoe finds "so arbitrary a disposition of things" worrisome, and it makes him momentarily disbelieve (212). He notes, however, "But I shut it up," and he concludes in a stunning non sequitur that "if these creatures were all sentenced to absence from Himself, it was on account of sinning against that light" (212). Note the shift here from an arbitrary to a just God; these disruptive questions lead not to permanent doubt but to a comforting reinsertion of polarization, such as Hayden White investigates.

Crusoe offers a purely religious explanation for the Indians' plight rather than the climatic one common to early science. For instance, in his poetic taxonomy of human variety, "The Nature of Man" (1711), Richard Blackmore attributes all variations in intellectual faculties, disposition, and passions to a country's exposure to the heat of the sun. Although his understanding derives closely from humoral theory, Blackmore discovers much greater distinctions between Europeans and Indians than Defoe, and he insinuates that natives of Africa, the arctic, as well as East and West Indians seem "a middle Species." According to Blackmore and others who subscribed to the effects of humors and climate, the torrid zones did not foster human potential: "Their Spirits suffer by too hot a Ray, / And their dry Brain grows dark with too much Day. /... Their Spirits burning with too fierce a Fire / Unqualify'd by proper Pleaching, acquire / A Disposition so inept for Thought / Few just Perceptions in their Minds are wrought" (180).

The section of the novel featuring religious difference uses extremely vague language to assign actual difference. At the points when Crusoe seems most convinced of the savages' difference, the text often fails to account for it satisfactorily. Working on political and religious registers, the several terms referring to the Caribs are a symptom of such a failure. Crusoe alternately calls the Caribs "criminals," "prisoners," "sinners," and "sovereign nation," and it is never clear which terms will suffice to represent their relationship either to God or to Crusoe—except through ad hoc practice. Finally, it seems, Crusoe's deliberations lead him to conclude that the national character of the Carib crimes means he cannot intervene or kill them because they have not harmed him by their rituals of cannibalism (179, 233). The Caribs' status as a sovereign people triumphs momentarily over religious difference—until the sight of a European victim completely reverses Crusoe's intentions toward the Caribs. Thus, significant issues of human difference are raised only to be falsely resolved into the previously available paradigm of European and Christian superiority. Similarly, as a convert, Friday crosses the most significant boundary of European identity, and this event is awkwardly resolved. As The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe suggests, Crusoe persisted in referring to Friday as "my trusty savage" despite his servitude, European clothing, English-language acquisition, and conversion and adherence to Christianity (18). Volume 3, Serious Reflections (1720), offers a more redemptive and interventionary view of Christianity.
because Crusoe sees it as legitimizing conquest. Nevertheless, this logic leads him to the conclusion that the practice, not the profession, of Christianity is the key point; on this account, he condemns the nominal Christians of Barbados and Jamaica for not instructing their slaves or baptizing them (143). In this way, the three volumes of *Robinson Crusoe* are typical of many other eighteenth-century documents that are not uniform in their approbation of British colonists or slavery.

If paganism and cannibalism are crucial factors separating Europeans and Others, the absence of clothing helps maintain important visible differences between savages and Christians. The significance of clothing to identifying European difference from savages should not be underestimated; its absence or scantiness signifies a negation or paucity of civilization. As Gordon Sayre demonstrates, contemporary European documents offered conflicting accounts about whether various groups of Indians were clothed and whether they manifested any signs of civilization (145). In both Africa and the Caribbean, Crusoe repeatedly notes the nakedness of the people; on the island, neither the gender nor the skin color of the Caribbean islanders warrant mention. Conventionally, a state of savagery is a state in which there is little distinction between the sexes in physical appearance, labor, or dress.

The several scenes focusing on clothing emphasize European superiority at crucial junctures in the novel. For example, when Crusoe is determined to attack the cannibals, he indicates their inferiority in this way: “I do not mean that I entertained any fear of their number; for as they were naked, unarmed wretches, ‘tis certain I was superior to them” (232). The symbolic value of clothing distinguishes Crusoe from savages in two other scenes. First, Crusoe accounts for why he cannot bear nakedness despite the weather: “It is true that the weather was so violent hot that there was no need of cloaths, yet I could not go quite naked; no, tho’ I had been inclined to it, which I was not, nor could not abide the thoughts of it, tho’ I was all alone” (144). The blistering sun does not fully account for his lack of inclination, but it may be more understandable given that clothing helps maintain his difference from savages. Crusoe reveals uneasiness about the issue of clothing, indicating that it is impractical in the tropical climate though necessary as a sign of his distinction from naked savages. At different times, Crusoe is nearly naked or burdensomely overdressed. Another crucial scene involving the presence of clothing concerns securing Friday in his new status as “not cannibal.” Notably, it is only after Crusoe discourages Friday’s lingering desire for human flesh that he is clothed European style (210).

In spite of the importance of clothing and technology to notions of European superiority, there is a recognition that these are, in fact, cultural artifacts, not innate differences. On these occasions, European difference from savages seems entirely accidental; nevertheless, they also serve as moments to conjure up disgust at the animal-like behavior of savages. For example, realizing that tools and clothing obtained from the ship separate him from savages, Crusoe worries: “How I must have acted if I had got nothing out of the ship; . . . that I should have lived, if I had not perished, like a meer savage; that if I had killed a goat or a fowl, . . . [I] must gnaw it with my teeth and pull it with my claws like a beast” (141). As Lestringant notes, Friday’s religious conversion is accompanied by an “alimentary conversion” in one of the more improbable scenes of the novel when Crusoe interests Friday in goat’s flesh to wean him off humans (141). Even the sensitive issue of cannibalism is both abhorred (for savages) and understood as a potential survival tactic for Europeans (192). Indeed, Crusoe’s distrust of the Englishmen who arrive at the end of the novel is dramatized by Friday’s comment that Englishmen will eat prisoners as well as savage men (250). The double standard for clothing and cannibalism is, then, another way that *Robinson Crusoe* offers contradictions and qualifications of its seemingly rigid divisions.

Unlike cannibalism and nakedness, complexion is not fully exploited for its potential to carry ideological difference. Instead, skin color plays a significant secondary role in distinguishing Europeans from Others. In terms of the Caribs, Crusoe connects the ugliness of their color to a general sense of their disagreeableness, not unlike the traditional association between cannibals and hideous appearance discussed earlier. The Caribs’ skin color is not represented directly in the novel, even when Crusoe describes the cannibal scenes; instead, he refers to their color obliquely as “ugly yellow nauseous tawny” in the description of Friday, whose attractive color is “very tawny” (208). Crusoe uses white skin color as an identifying distinction of Europeans (as opposed to Friday, who uses the presence of beards as an alternative system of difference). This is one of many instances in which the novel opens up the possibility for alternatives to Crusoe’s interpretation. Hence, it is important not to mistake the ideology associated with Crusoe with Defoe’s point of view. Because Crusoe’s culturally produced criteria associate Christians, Europeans, and white, bearded men, his seeing a European fall victim to the cannibals is a major turning point in the colonial plot. When Friday alerts Crusoe that the next victim of the cannibals “was not one of their [Friday’s people’s] nation, but one of the bearded men, who he had told me of, that came to their country in the boat,” Crusoe responds to this revelation with righteous indignation: “I was filled with horror at the very naming the white bearded man. . . . I saw plainly by my glass a white man who lay upon the beach . . . and that he was an European, and had cloaths on” (233).
This emotional and visible kinship leads to the destruction of those who are clearly Other (234).

Crusoe’s first contact with the Spaniard on the island reveals the array of terms to refer to nonsavages and their interchangeability. Crusoe “asked him in the Portuguese tongue what he was. He answered in Latin, ‘Christianus.’ . . . I asked him what countryman he was, and he said, ‘Espagnole.’ ” (235). Obviously, in terms of representing Europeans to each other, “white” was not an appropriate response, but it is notable that religious markers carry more meaning than national ones at this point. White is not a term of subjective identification but an attribute. As Theodore Allen aptly notes, when the terms were used to write colonial laws, there was a world of difference between laws in favor of whites and laws in favor of Christians.47 In regard to Europeans, the novel vacillates between using the designation Christian and white (the Spaniard identifies himself as a Christian, and Crusoe sees him as a white European), and free remains a crucial, if repressed, subtext always distinguishing Europeans in the Atlantic.48 Thus, complexion is most frequently part of a larger cluster of differences and not able, on its own, to signify racial difference. Nevertheless, it is the visible differences between Europeans and savages that trigger Crusoe’s anger and result in the massacre of the cannibals. This scene of a potential European victim marks the change in the island from an individual to a corporate colonial relation in which the Europeans command a domestic labor population composed of Friday and his father and in which they all fight the native enemies of Friday’s village.

Changes in terms of European colonial identity after the first century of English colonization were linked to the use of slave labor. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, religion lost its edge as the most important difference in the colonies. In addition to Christianity, national origin, slavery, and skin color all served as competing divisions between Europeans and people of both Native American and African descent. The epigraph reflects this transition. In finessing the use of Christian by replacing it with Englishmen to reassure planters that converting their slaves would not alter their temporal status, the Lord Bishop of St. Asaph unwittingly revealed why the term Christian declined over the course of the century: it no longer denoted only Europeans and was not as reliable in its signification as free or white. Free, of course, had long referred to landowning men in Britain. Only men who were not dependent on others could truly be said to think and act for themselves: only a minuscule proportion of the English were truly free. Nonetheless, Britons in general could, at times, laud their freedom in comparison with Catholic, Islamic, or pagan countries. Parliament, a limited monarchy, and the constitution were widely believed to make Britons peculiarly free,
pare to increase food stores for the arrival of the other Spaniards and Portuguese residing with Friday's people. Crusoe chooses trees for use, Friday and his father cut them down, and the Spaniard is the trusty middle manager of their labor. Crusoe refers to the Spaniard as someone "to whom I imparted my thought on that affair [escape from the island], to oversee and direct their work" (246). This passage naturalizes British supremacy and highlights the way that supervising manual labor separates the men from the "boys." As with Xury and the Portuguese captain, other Europeans negatively impact the relationship between Crusoe and his servant/companion.

Based on English prejudice and on sixteenth-century policy, the Spaniards' ruthless behavior as colonizers helps account, in part, for their liminal position. Musing on Spanish colonial relations as evidence of their tendency to participate in barbarity, Crusoe decides not to attack the Caribs because "this would justify the conduct of the Spaniards in all their barbarities practised in America, where they destroyed millions of these people, who, however they were idolaters and barbarians, and had several bloody and barbarous rites in their customs, . . . were yet, as to the Spaniards, very innocent people" (178). Because of this "unnatural piece of cruelty," "the very name of a Spaniard is reckoned to be frightful and terrible to all people of humanity, or of Christian compassion; as if the kingdom of Spain were particularly eminent for the product of a race of men who were without principles of tenderness" (178). Rejecting the Spanish model for conduct in the Americas, Crusoe temporarily finds more comfort in being "not Spanish" than in eradicating cannibals. Later, Crusoe claims that his fear of the Spaniards exceeds his fear of dismemberment by the cannibals. Imagining being made a prisoner in New Spain, where an Englishman was certain to be made a sacrifice, Crusoe observes: "I had rather be delivered up to the savages, and be devoured alive, than fall into the merciless claws of the priests, and be carried into the Inquisition" (243). In volume 3, Crusoe continues his diatribe against Spanish savagery, conceding at one point that the Spanish Inquisition was preferable to being at the mercy of the northern Chinese (249). In the more philosophical mode of volume 3, Crusoe explains Spanish cruelties as the will of God and thereby dismisses them (224). These far-fetched claims use the most extreme form of difference from Europeans to denigrate Catholicism. Crusoe's inadequate solution to the Spaniards' potential savagery and treachery is a contract with them. Even though contracts did not necessitate equivalence between the parties, as marriage and labor both suggest, its ideological manifestation encouraged this view. Certainly a contract is out of the question in terms of Crusoe's relations with Caribbean islanders (notably, a contract defines Xury's terms of servitude). The novel uses savagery as the linchpin not only to separate Europeans from those with whom they came into violent conflict in the Atlantic but also to create hierarchies among Europeans.

In this depiction of Spaniards, the novel reveals profound anxiety about the price of European control of the Caribbean islands—the potential of domination tipping over into savage behavior and the likelihood of slave owners being corrupted by their own power. Both of these anxieties attest to a vulnerable conception of identity, not a monolithic one. At the same time, however, the novel helps obscure the role other European powers had in making colonial conditions dangerous for each other. Many historians have documented the almost equal danger from the Caribs and other Europeans to the British in the West Indies especially during wartime when the Caribbean was a major theater of intra-European aggression.30 In the novel, however, the similarities among Europeans far outrank national differences and sectarian Christianity in the colonial context, implicitly indicating the overriding importance of European unity against the indigenous peoples. Such a desire for unity, however, rarely transpired in the Atlantic empire. The major European nations capitalized on national and tribal rivalries among Indians to their advantage against each other, as did the Caribs and other native Americans, in their turn. Robinson Crusoe assumes that because the Spanish are European and Christian, they are within nonsavage boundaries, even though they acted like savages toward the native populations whom they murdered and colonized. This rough sense of European similarity is, of course, dramatized by the contrast to savages in the same way that taxonomies of human difference collapsed stereotypical national characteristics to produce a homogeneous European at this time. An interest in national characters had produced well-known stereotypes of various European nations for centuries. While these ideas persisted, largely undisturbed, the composite European emerged in racial taxonomies, which was a powerful parallel construction.

* * *

Two pivotal scenes in the novel illustrate the way that Robinson Crusoe simultaneously establishes and undermines racial differences. These scenes seem to promote rigid distinctions between the English and Caribs, yet they are ultimately more interesting for the way that they question the stability of racial boundaries. In each case, the passage describes the appearance of Friday and Crusoe through Crusoe's "eyes." The most significant feature in comparing the two is the lack of symmetry in the narrative object: Crusoe
defines Friday by his body and himself by his clothing.54 Both feminist and postcolonial scholars have noted that one of the persistent forms of producing and maintaining a sense of inferiority in Western, patriarchal culture involves focusing on the body of the Other. Despite this telling difference, the effect of these scenes makes imprecise the boundary between savage and European Christian. At first glance, the description of Friday appears to attend only to how he differs from Crusoe. Ultimately, however, the representation of Friday furthers the case for multiple rather than singular difference between Europeans and Caribs. The careful description interperses taxonomic detail with approbation of what Crusoe sees:

He was a comely handsome fellow, perfectly well made; with straight strong limbs, not too large; tall and well shaped, ... twenty six years of age. He had a very good countenance, not a fierce and surly aspect; but seemed to have something very manly in his face, and yet he had all the sweetness and softness of an European in his countenance too, especially when he smiled. His hair was long and black, not curled like wool; his forehead very high and large, and a great virility and sparkling sharpness in his eyes. The colour of his skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, as the Brasilians, and Virginians, and other natives of America are; but of a bright kind of a dun olive colour, that had in it something very agreeable, tho' not very easy to describe. His face was round and plump; his nose small, not flat like the negroes, a very good mouth, thin lips, and his fine teeth well set, and white as ivory. (208–9)

This passage is key in preparing us to read Friday not primarily in his difference from Crusoe but in his difference from other Amerindians and black Africans.55 Most critics who mention this passage reiterate that Friday is not of African descent but that he is similar to Europeans. Defoe’s idealized portrait of Friday is even more remarkable when one considers Philip Boucher’s argument that an eighteenth-century male Carib would likely have had ear and lip plugs, scarification, and probably a flattened forehead and nose.56

To eighteenth-century Britons, Crusoe’s first observations about Friday carry positive connotations, including his seeing a European countenance as somehow present in Friday’s visage. Mostly the physical description distinguishes Friday from a stereotypical African slave. Notably, Crusoe also distinguishes Friday from stereotypes about cannibals in terms of attitude and skin color. This hybrid physical description mirrors Crusoe’s treatment of Friday, who is alternately a laboring slave, trusted servant, affectionate companion, and fellow Christian. Clearly we are meant to share in Friday’s je ne sais quoi, which is neither fully Carib nor European but a pleasing mixture of the two. Among the first attributes that Crusoe notes are Friday’s “strength and swiftness” (205); it is not until four pages later that he mentions Friday’s nakedness and preference for eating men’s flesh—the two overriding and, in fact, sole characteristics of the group from which Friday comes that are acknowledged in the novel. Such an important contradiction stems from the narrative desire for Friday to be simultaneously a savage and a Christian. Although the novel introduces Crusoe’s initial intention to treat Friday as a slave or servant (it is not clear which status will prevail), his subsequent desire to convert Friday to Christianity raises the issue of whether Friday’s status then may be “upgraded.” An ideological compromise constructs Friday as an exceptional savage and silences this issue.

Not surprisingly, Crusoe’s self-representation implicitly establishes his difference from Africans and Caribs, but the description also singularizes him in regard to other Europeans. In the representation of Friday cited above, Crusoe tries but fails to establish a sharp picture of Friday’s distinction; here, Crusoe represents himself in his difference from contemporary readers and from himself as he was in England. As part of the system signifying European, Crusoe describes what is on his body rather than the body itself, as with Friday. For instance, he imagines “had anyone in England been to meet such a man as I was, it must either have frightened them, or raised a great deal of laughter; and as I frequently stood still to look at myself, I could not but smile at the notion of my travelling through Yorkshire with such an equipage, and in such a dress. Be pleased to take a sketch of my figure, as follows” (158). The description centers on Crusoe’s clothing: goat skin hat with a flap hanging down behind, a short jacket of goat skin falling to his mid-thigh, open-kneed breeches with goat hair hanging down to the middle of his legs, and buskins to cover his legs. Carrying a saw and hatchet on his belt, a powder pouch and shot on his body, Crusoe also totes a basket on his back, a gun on his shoulder, and the goat-skin umbrella. In terms of his complexion, Crusoe is relatively unchanged despite his exposure to the elements: “As for my face, the colour of it was really not so moletta-like as one might expect from a man not at all careful of it, and living within nine or ten degrees of the equinox” (158). Crusoe’s one concession to fashion rather than functionality is his whiskers, which, because of their style and length, visibly distinguish him from other Europeans who wear beards and from Moors and Amerindians who do not: “I had trimmed [my mustache] into a large pair of Mahometan whiskers, such as I had seen worn by some Turks who I saw at Sallee; for the Moors did not wear such, tho’ the Turks did, ... they were of a length and shape monstrous enough, and such as in England would have passed for frightful” (159). Indeed, while a beard was
traditionally a mark of virility, whiskers were considered slightly inferior and worn mainly to frighten enemies in war.57

Here, Crusoe represents his body as laden with Western artifacts and tools, although his European fashion is fabricated with native materials. Moreover, Crusoe's body is a fortified body, not unlike the structures he builds to protect himself from the savages. His facial hair, clothing, and accoutrements, however, are every bit as foreign as the Caribs' nakedness. Yet the presence of the whiskers connects him to the Spaniards, who, among Europeans, were most attached to whiskers and beards (76). Overall, there is very little in his self-representation to distinguish him as a European, even though his own color, "not so moletta-like" from the intensity of the sun as he imagined, changes the least of all. Even so, in terms of skin color, Crusoe fails to correspond to other Europeans who are called "white." His color is closer to Friday's: tawny and mulatto were often associated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.58 In these examples, complexion bears no relation to subjectivity and provides no key to character.

In the description of Crusoe and Friday, it is possible to detect a pattern of partially collapsed boundaries of difference. On first reading, the representation of Friday seems to suggest an unadulterated colonial desire for the Other only as different; in the case of Crusoe, his self-description at first seems to conform the way he re-creates himself in the image of a typical European. Yet, as I have indicated, neither passage maintains a stable boundary between savage and European: in the one, there is a Europeanized savage; in the other, a barbaric-looking European. The collapse of absolute difference between savage and European helps support the idea that the savage, and Carib in particular, is a complicated representational category, especially in terms of Friday.

Friday compromises the effort to maintain traditional distinctions between Europeans and savages in terms of clothing and physical features. Curiously, although Robinson Crusoe describes black Africans for us, the novel does not provide a single physical description of the cannibals, despite Crusoe's intensive gazing and habitual monitoring of their feasts. Their difference is embodied in acts of cannibalism; the description of Friday, on the contrary, is one of the most sustained in the novel. In fact, Friday is Robinson Crusoe's solution to the often undetectable boundary between friendly natives, or unenslavable inhabitants, and cannibals. The text retains the "hideous" cannibals (many of whom are massacred by the Europeans) but puts one of them (who does not resemble the others) in servitude, thereby providing a relationship in which power clearly remains in European hands but allows an individual Caribbee's spiritual welfare to be at-
tended to. Friday's treatment after his religious conversion parallels the terms of Xury's exchange between Crusoe and the Portuguese captain, but this time Crusoe does not require liquid capital and keeps possession of Friday's labor. The economic nature of their relationship disappears almost from the beginning as the spiritual and affectionate aspects are emphasized. Historically, Caribs successfully resisted religious and political "hegemonization" but not trade relations.59 The pairing of spiritual welfare and religious conversion with "free" labor allows Crusoe to fill the role of a benefactor rather than an exploiter in terms of colonial plot and theme. Such a role, however, carries a great deal of historical irony. As sixteenth- and seventeenth-century documents reveal, many Caribbean and Native American groups had befriended colonists, making their survival possible. Historically, the benefactor was not the European but the native, a reverse Robinson Crusoe and Friday situation. Thus, there is a splitting within the representation of Caribbean islanders—of an individual from the whole. Everything other than Friday's savagery is foregrounded. Such an embrace of another on an individual basis is perfectly compatible with the exercise of European colonial power because it is nonthreatening, piecemeal assimilation. Acceptance of these Others reflects the ubiquitous conviction about the changeability wrought by influences of climate or education—that exposure to English climate or ways of living would rehabilitate savages.

The analysis that I have offered above works satisfactorily only if one ignores the illustrations of the novel and the several changes in the narrative language to describe the cannibals and Friday. Since the novel defines Friday's features and color so precisely, the first illustration of Friday as a black African comes as a surprise. Beginning his illustrated life as a black man, Friday is physically undifferentiated from the other savages. In the frontispiece to The Serious Reflections During the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1720), Friday appears with short, black curly hair and a black body, as do the rest of the Caribbean islanders featured at a cannibal feast.60 By the 1780s, however, the illustrated Friday is an idealized Caribbean Indian, which follows the text closely. In the nineteenth century, Friday is a black African in some of the illustrations and in pantomime versions of the novel. In general, Defoe's novel emphasizes Friday's resemblance to Europeans, but the illustrations emphasize his affiliation with Negroes and Indians.

Despite the novel's precision about the Caribs' yellow color and savage attributes, and that the island is not off of the African continent but in the Caribbean, an aspect duly noted by the title page, the idea of savage signified Negro rather than Carib, as the 1720 illustration reveals: those who were
most clearly different from the Englishman Crusoe were blackened. There are several ways to account for the slippage between Indian and African. A brief consideration of colonial labor conditions, ideological pressures, and clues from the novel may help elucidate the periodic Negroization of Friday. Possibly the most important reason for the interchangeability of Africans and Caribbean islanders is due to the practices of labor-hungry planters who enslaved both groups on a temporary basis as well as for life; for instance, in the Caribbean plantations, there were quarters known as “Indian houses.” Additionally, by the late seventeenth century, hundreds of Native American men had been taken into slavery in New England alone, and by the first decade of the eighteenth century, about one-quarter of all slaves in South Carolina were Indians. Routinely, colonists transported them to the West Indies in exchange for African slaves to forestall rebellion and lesser forms of resistance. So there was literally an exchange of Indian bodies for African ones to meet labor requirements and to ensure the dominance of planters. For Europeans, the exchangeability between different subordinate groups may be explained by a desire for a numerous, inexpensive, and docile labor force.

Changes in the laboring population were not the only factor resulting in confusion between Carib and African. Friday’s Negroization in eighteenth-century illustrations is also connected to the makeup of the colonial population. The movement of bodies from Europe and Africa to the Americas and between the Americas and the Caribbean gave rise to many blended identities. This hybridity is nowhere more evident than in the people who were known as the Black Caribs. Several slave shipwrecks over the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries resulted in the Islanders assimilating the survivors. Because of intermarriage and concubinage between Africans and Caribbean islanders, there was a literal blending, giving rise to a population the British called Black Caribs, who were considered particularly dangerous to Europeans and to indigenous people alike. Moreover, on St. Vincent in 1674, there were reports of Africans as well as Englishmen (who had been carried off when young) living with Caribees. Of the African population, many women married the Caribees, and many men were enslaved; others, who were Maroons, inhabited a separate part of the island. All in all, there were about 4,000 Black Caribs on St. Vincent alone at the end of the seventeenth century and possibly twice that number a century later. Some of the confusion about the difference between Caribs and Africans did not result solely from European policy of substituting an imported labor force for the indigenous one, but from maroonage and other instances of oppressed populations resisting European assimilation.

A rarely noted factor contributing to the Negroization of Friday is the...
discrepancy between the narrative time and the publication date. Published in 1719, *Robinson Crusoe* takes place between the 1640s and 1690s. The events of the book correspond roughly to the political and economic situation of the mid-seventeenth century as opposed to the time of publication, although *Robinson Crusoe* does not reflect either historical period accurately. Between the narrative time and 1719, the changes in territory, trade, and labor conditions in the British colonies alone were sufficient to introduce several possibilities for confusion between Caribbean and African people. Written during the year when the duke of Chandos was reinvigorating the Royal African Company, and British involvement in the slave trade was skyrocketing, the novel harks back to Spanish- and Portuguese-dominated sugar production. By the 1660s, the British West Indies had shifted broadly from a labor system of indentured servants with some slaves in a diversified economy to a slave economy with a few European servants for the production of sugar. After the mid-seventeenth century, people of African descent outnumbered the European population for the first time on many islands; the black population in the West Indies increased over sevenfold in the second half of the seventeenth century. Indigenous people still occupied some of the Caribbean islands and were considered formidable enemies. In narrative time, Crusoe's confrontation with the cannibals takes place at a crucial moment in England's empire formation. Between 1665 and 1688, the island Caribs were in a constant conflict with the English colonists and sought French aid in their endeavors (never an affiliation endearing to the English). After 1688, their numbers decreased dramatically through the kind of violence depicted in the novel and through demographic attrition. By 1719, native inhabitants were scarcely a threat to Europeans. In this way, England gained security in the leeward island region, which was a major factor that intensified the sugar boom and slave trade of the eighteenth century.

Conditions of slavery and servitude changed for Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans throughout colonial contact; in general they improved only for Europeans. Similarly, the ability to be defined as free rather than as a slave or servant changed continually for all populations. The category of slave signified a significant difference from free Britons and was a real as well as an ideological force. In the Caribbean, slave primarily referred to Africans but also to Amerindians who were enslaved. Because slave signified both African and Indian difference from Europeans, on the one hand, and difference between Africans and Caribbean islanders, on the other hand, it was an unstable category in theory. As many historians have contended, Europeans treated Caribs and Africans differently sometimes and similarly at other times. The Caribs' relation to Africans and to Europeans was not firmly established in the realm of representation either. The transition to a monocrop economy with intensive labor requirements meant that slave became a much more rigid category, especially for people of African descent. In the mid-seventeenth century, the status of Africans as slaves in British colonies was less rigid than in 1719 because not always permanent or hereditary: "It was only in the period from 1660 to 1710 that hereditary lifetime African slavery was first regularly instituted." Even though colonists enslaved both Indians and Africans, by the time *Robinson Crusoe* was published in 1719, slave was a condition most particularly associated with Negroes, partly because most Caribbean Indians were still considered to be members of sovereign tribes and partly because their enslavement was never as visible to Britons who were familiar with the Guinea trade. In Jamaica, Indians were legally removed from the slave category in the 1740s. These tremendous changes in labor and colonial power relations help explain why Crusoe refers interchangeably to Friday as a savage, slave, servant, and Christian.

Servant designated any population, though most commonly it signified people of Irish, Scottish, and English descent who initially dominated the category of indentured servants. There were other less exalted categories of servants. European redemptioners arranged with a ship's captain to exchange the passage for payment of the fare upon arrival in the colonies or at a specified time thereafter. Failure to pay resulted in sale of the European, usually at an auction. Convicts were sent by the English government to serve for a specified period. Between 1654 and 1685—crucial years during which Crusoe is on the island—about ten thousand servants of various kinds sailed to the West Indies and Virginia.

Indeed, in the mid-seventeenth century, the distinctions between a slave and an indentured servant were not always as significant as the similarities in terms of their value and treatment as individual labor units and as an overall workforce. As a slave in Morocco, Crusoe exemplifies such a blurring of status as do both Xury and Friday in relation to Crusoe. Hilary Beckles's *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627–1715* (1989) focuses on the connections between slave and servant status in the British West Indies and on the way that African slavery systematically replaced other forms of servitude in the mid-seventeenth century. Noting that British planters were committed to a white indentured labor force before the midcentury shift to a sugar-driven economy, Beckles provides convincing evidence for the negligible planter distinction between indentured servants and slaves in terms of the market use of their labor until after the 1660s. Both indentured servants and slaves, no matter what their national origin, worked in the fields and at other unskilled manual labor jobs. Other similarities extended to the
conditions of their labor. Both populations were subject to kidnapping from their country of origin, to restraining in the ship's holds during the middle passage, and to general conditions of trade, such as medical inspection and auction (65). In the colonies, both groups were corporally punished and used to repay debts (33), and they were valued in terms of other commodities such as cotton bales or livestock for trade or sale (72).

Eric Williams attributes these deplorable conditions for all laborers to the general welter of the age (13). Of course, one crucial difference was that planters regarded indentured servants, even Irish political prisoners, as “temporary chartels”. In fact, until the African slave economy dominated the West Indies in the mid-seventeenth century, indentured servants were considered a better short-term investment because they did not require training and were a preferred form of debt repayment. The supply of indentured servants never met the demand, and it was not until the end of the seventeenth century that planter demands for indentured servants abated. By then, the price of slaves had decreased dramatically and the price of servants had doubled (Beckles, 168, 170).

In as much as there was a certain blurring of distinction between slave and servant in terminology and treatment, the novel also encourages a sliding between Friday's status as a servant and his status as a slave. In *Colonial Encounters*, Peter Hulme accounts for the persistent connection of Friday and slavery: Crusoe's relationship to Friday, he argues, functions as “a veiled and disavowed reference to the more pressing issue of black slavery.” A confusion between Caribs and Africans arises possibly because Caribs are the focus of the novel precisely at the time when Africans had become the most significant laboring population in the Atlantic world. Indeed, the connection between Friday and slavery is inconsistent at best in the novel, but one of the most frequently illustrated scenes from the 1780s onward was Friday's moment of submission to Crusoe after Crusoe saves him from being devoured by other cannibals. Crusoe uses the word *slave* only this one time when interpreting Friday's putting his head beneath Crusoe's foot. The reinvention of Friday as an African was under way from the first illustration in 1720, and it depends on an intersection of European labor needs with the discourse of savagery and slavery that was first solidified during the eighteenth century, earlier in the colonies and later in Britain. Friday is most often remembered as Crusoe's slave, and *slave* has come to be connected almost exclusively to black Africans.

Nevertheless, at other times, Crusoe refers to Friday as his servant. Indeed, Crusoe's efforts to convert Friday to Christianity suggest his servant status, since slaves were routinely denied baptism and conversion at this time in the British colonies. Initially, when Crusoe sees Friday, before he meets him, he automatically connects Friday to servitude. This unthinking association is saturated with the colonial assumptions already in place: “It came now very warmly upon my thoughts, and indeed irresistibly, that now was my time to get me a servant, and perhaps a companion or assistant; and that I was called plainly by Providence to save this poor creature's life” (206). The uncertainty about Friday's future relationship to Crusoe is dramatized in the slippage among servant, companion, and assistant, which persists until the novel ends. Before Christianity is introduced as the determining difference in the interpretation of Friday, Crusoe perceives him as a political prisoner (207). *Prisoner*, as Chapter 2 details, translates as “enslavable.” In terms of the law of nations and of a militaristic conception of empire, the taking of slaves was legitimated by conditions of warfare, much like the conflict between Muslims and Christians in the Mediterranean and Atlantic regions. Even more strangely, it is not mainly through the lens of Crusoe's desire as much as Friday's actions that lead Crusoe to think of him as a slave. Crusoe explains Friday's slavish reaction as stemming from fear of him: “I cou'd then perceive that he stood trembling, as if he had been taken prisoner, and had just been to be killed, as his two enemies were. I beckoned him again to come to me, and gave him all the signs of encouragement[,] . . . he came nearer . . . kneeling down every ten or twelve steps in token of acknowledgment for my saving his life[,] . . . he knelted down again, kissed the ground, and laid his head upon the ground, and taking me by the foot, set my foot upon his head; this it seems was in token of swearing to be my slave for ever” (206-7). Later, Crusoe also refers to Friday as a companion (213), but as the adventures with Xury demonstrate, *companion* is entirely compatible with a subordinate.

During the narrative time of *Robinson Crusoe*, the category of servant was not reliably different from slave in many instances; slaves could become servants and indentured servants could become free servants. Winthrop Jordan has argued for a similar elasticity among the laboring categories in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Although there were legal and cultural distinctions between servants and slaves, particularly from the late seventeenth century on, including diet, clothing, and punishments, terminology and custom often lagged behind legal distinctions until well into the eighteenth century in some cases. For instance, it was not uncommon for masters to refer to slave laborers as servants even though the legal and social standing of the two groups was different.

While the text wavers between defining Friday as either a slave or a servant in the Caribbean, Friday's status as Crusoe's servant seems more secure when they travel in Europe, where it was not uncommon for Britons to have
African or East Indian servants (often unpaid). In fact, Friday seems to be the model servant that Defoe had in mind when he wrote *The Great Law of Subordination Consider'd* (1724). Two of his main complaints are that British servants were increasingly difficult to distinguish in dress from their masters and that they lacked a due sense of their subordination. Masters were partially responsible for fostering this "insolence" by giving servants high wages, a problem resulting from the colonies' depleting Britain of working bodies, especially women. Of course, Friday's skin color, gratitude, and unpaid status solve all the problems Defoe diagnosed in British master-servant relations.

There is a homogenizing tendency detectable in British culture itself that encourages a sense of exchangeability between Indians and Africans. Britons believed that Caribees and Africans lived far less polisher than their own: both groups were scantily clad non-Christians. There was also a crucial difference between the way Britons viewed slaves and Indians and the way settlers in the colonies viewed them, a difference frequently noticed at the time. (Britons were considered much more hostile to slavery and less prejudiced in regard to dark skin color.) Thus, the distinctions between Indians and Africans commonly made in the colonies were not as important or discernible to Britons who had never been to the Caribbean. The overall effect of the difference between the novel and its illustrations was to promote divergent colonial stories. Combined with selective cultural memory, *Robinson Crusoe* encourages confusion about cannibals, Indians, and slaves that periodically surfaces in critical commentary. The portrayal of Friday as a black man in some illustrations and abridged editions, combined with his changeable designation as savage, slave, servant, and companion to Crusoe, reflects and participates in the ideological confusion generated by the far-reaching changes in colonial relations and in the makeup of the labor force.

To return briefly to Toni Morrison's claim that the Senate confirmation hearings reordered the signifying fictions of "natural servant" and "savage demon" through the bodies of Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill (xvi): my analysis of savagery, servitude, and slavery suggests that their sole application to people of African descent was not inevitable historically. Like Thomas and Hill, Friday and the Caribs represent the splitting of these two signifying fictions in *Robinson Crusoe*. That they later became a crucial legacy of North American slavery is another, though related, story.

A focus on Xury, Friday, and Crusoe demonstrates that emergent racial categories of difference are indeed produced but are not stable in either the novel or the social formation that gave rise to their representation. On the one hand, *Robinson Crusoe* revises colonial relations by featuring a more palatable version of power differences than existed in practice; for instance, the depiction of Friday, Crusoe, and Xury focuses on slavery as an individual and even temporary phenomenon and not as the systemic oppression necessary to a successful colonial empire based on the large-scale production of sugar in the West Indies, cotton and tobacco in North America. On the other hand, the novel can hardly be read as a simple vindication of the colonial enterprise. The hesitations Crusoe shows in his treatment of Africans and Caribs, the disconcerting questions Friday asks about Christian doctrine, and the lack of coherent logic in many of Crusoe's musings undermine a monolithic notion of empire or race.

In fact, Defoe's contemporaries did not wholly endorse the depiction of Xury, Friday, or Crusoe. In a wonderfully satiric commentary on the improbability of *Robinson Crusoe*, Charles Gildon stages a dialogue between the author and his two main characters. Crusoe complains to Defoe about the disconcerting religious toleration he is made to espouse, especially in regard to "Papists." Friday's grievance is that Defoe makes him a blockhead through his pidgin English, which never improves. In a later section when Gildon has abandoned the fictional confrontation, he makes Xury's broken English a point of criticism by suggesting its ethnocentric bias. Gildon argues, "It had been more natural to have bade Robinson speak broken Arabick" (13). Finally, Gildon objects to the consideration Crusoe affords savages over slaves: Crusoe's acting as supercargo on a slave ship does not offer "any check of Conscience in that infamous Trade of buying and selling of Men for Slaves" compared with his scruples about killing the cannibals (14).

Analyses that have relied primarily on a binary sensibility to elucidate the novel or eighteenth-century racial ideology, for example, by opposing Crusoe to Xury and Friday, have erased a significant aspect of European colonialism—its contradictory history of contact and oppression. Thus, a reading practice emphasizing the multiple components of racial ideology makes a difference to the way in which modern readers interpret the novel. By selecting connections between Xury and Friday rather than simply focusing on their difference from Crusoe, I have argued that despite British participation in the African slave trade and domination of the Caribbean islands, *Robinson Crusoe* reflects some of the confusion that changing colonial practices elicited. *Robinson Crusoe* makes obvious the fact that colonialism was not simply staged between white and black men—nor even between Europeans and Caribbean Islanders—and brings to the foreground the way that the desire for clear boundaries of difference has always informed both the writing and subsequent readings of *Robinson Crusoe*. 
its omissions of gendered considerations or for its monolithic construction of the Orient and the West, most have not noted the way that nineteenth-century European imperial rule overdetermines Said’s categories of inquiry.

96. Technically, the eighteenth-century West Indies and some American colonies were slave societies rather than colonial societies; nevertheless, because of the many populations that coexisted temporarily and permanently in these regions, I retain the term colonial to describe the eighteenth-century Atlantic, especially since colonial societies encompass various forms of exploitative labor arrangements.

Chapter 1. Christians, Savages, and Slaves

1. William Fleetwood, Lord Bishop of St. Asaph’s annual sermon for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts encapsulates a transition from thinking of colonists as Christians to regarding them as the more narrowly defined Englishmen. The sermon is typical of the yearly reassurance that the Church of England offered to slaveowners about the compatibility of Christianity and slavery.

2. For many social critics, including Toni Morrison, Robinson Crusoe and Friday are paradigmatic of power relations between whites and nonwhites. Bernard McGarve’s Beyond Anthropology: Society and the Other (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) and Patrick Brantlinger’s Crusoe’s Footprints: Cultural Studies in Britain and America (New York: Routledge, 1990) are exemplary cultural analyses of Robinson Crusoe and Friday as a paradigm of colonial relations. McGarve examines the shifting history of European conceptions of difference from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Robinson Crusoe was McGarve’s choice as a representative text of the Enlightenment’s concept of the Other. That is, the representation of Friday tells us not about Caribs but about the British.


4. Some critics speculate that Selkirk and Defoe actually met, including Angus Ross, editor of The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719; London: Penguin Books, 1963), who notes that since the eighteenth century, Robinson Crusoe has been believed to be “based on the central incident in the life of an undisciplined Scot, Alexander Selkirk” (301). Selkirk’s adventures are a disputed source for Defoe’s novel.

5. The scientific racism of the mid-nineteenth century featured everything from skull measurements to nationalized notions of blood types; this is the idea of race that informs Morrison’s observations. See Nancy Stepan, The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800–1960 (London: Macmillan Press, 1982), for a general discussion of the historical development of race in the nineteenth century. In comparison with scientific racism, the most basic difference of Defoe’s time is that human variety was generally thought to result from external factors, such as the sun, or chance historical conditions.

6. There are other national confusions in Morrison’s account of the novel. She recalls a scene of Spanish mutineers, some of whom Crusoe saves, she speculates, because worthy, and some of whom are singled out as villains for slaughter. Morrison observes in Race-ing Justice: “This discrimination [recognition of difference within a group] is never applied to Friday’s people” (xxvii). In fact, in the novel the mutineers are English. The effect of replacing the English with the Spanish confounds whom Crusoe valued and whom he didn’t and thus (falsefully) solidifies her case for the insignificance of the native. Morrison neglects to mention that Friday and his father are represented as different from the rest of the cannibals in significant ways. In another example, Morrison mistakenly points out that Friday’s father does not return from his island but that the Spaniard does: “Once his services [Friday’s father] are no longer needed, there is no mention of him again” (xxvii). But both the Spaniard and Friday’s father remain outside the text after they go to retrieve the other Spanish and Portuguese men. In fact, neither resurfaces until volume 2, The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719).

7. While one could contend that Morrison’s complaint of contamination is true of all discourse, I agree with her argument that a bicultural or minority person entering hegemonic discourse and assuming a relatively empowered position frequently entails such damage. Thus, hegemonic discursive power relations are particularly complex for a bicultural or minority person and should be discussed accordingly. Not everyone enters them equally, contaminated though they “always already” are or negotiate them similarly.

8. Sumi Cho, “Korean Americans vs. African Americans: Conflict and Construction,” in Reading Rodney King: Reading Urban Uprising, ed. Robert Gooding-Williams (New York: Routledge, 1993): 196–214, identifies the production of a model minority as “an embrace of ‘racist love’” because the basis of that love is “to provide a public rationale for the ongoing subordination of non-Asian people of color. Because the embrace or love is not genuine, one cannot reasonably expect the architects truly to care about the health or well-being of the model minority” (203).

9. Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (1944; reprint, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 23. Williams reports that the losers in this numbers game in terms of their status were small white farmers and African slaves. The white flight to other islands was enormous: In 1645, there were about 11,000 small white farmers and about 5,500 Negro slaves in Barbados; in 1667, there were 745 large plantation owners and about 82,000 slaves (23).

10. In volume 2, The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, ed. George Aitken (1719; London: J. M. Dent, 1899), Crusoe acknowledges that Friday is not, in fact, Carib: “The savages who came to my island were not properly those which we call Caribees, but islanders, and other barbarians of the same kind, who inhabited something nearer to our side than the rest” (52). I have retained the term Carib because the novel uses it to signify savagery, especially cannibalism; such a specific reference, even if later repudiated, indicates its ideological power as a term of opposition to European. Peter Hulme’s Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797 (1986; London: Routledge, 1992) provides a thorough examination of the asso-
cation between Carib and cannibal and the etymology of other Caribbean islander naming, especially in the introduction and chapter 1. Cannibalism usually referred to eating those outside one's community; see Philip Boucher, Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492–1763 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 15.


12. In Robinson Crusoe, the word Africans refers to black Africans south of Morocco on the west coast (near present-day Senegal, opposite the Cape Verde Islands where the Portuguese ship finds Crusoe and Xury). In this chapter, I frequently refer to black Africans as West Africans; either generic term, however, is a "trap" because they both homogenize the diverse histories and physical features of coastal Africans and make Africa appear as a unified continent or nation.


14. In Robinson Crusoe, the term Moors signifies Muslim inhabitants of north-west Africa, particularly Morocco. Moors were part of the governing structure of the Ottoman Empire in North Africa. The OED indicates that people from Algeria and Mauritania, who were of mixed Berber and Arab ancestry, were also called Moors. While Europeans popularly considered Moors very swarthy or, indeed, black until well into the seventeenth century (OED), there were other factors that acknowledge this European "myth" and that Moor was an unstable category. For instance, there was a common distinction between twany Moors and white Moors which recognized that not all Moors were black. There was, however, the simultaneous usage of Moor as a popular synonym for Negro. In British literature through the eighteenth century there was a tradition of the Moorish quality ennobling black Africans. See Wylie Sypher, Guinea’s Captive Kings: British Anti-Slavery Literature of the Eighteenth Century (1942; New York: Octagon Books, 1969), 234, 237. Anthony Bartholomew’s Black Face, Malignant Race: The Presentation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southern (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987) features an excellent history of the evolution and complexities of the term Moor, especially in chap. 1. He makes several crucial arguments: Moor (similar to Turk and Indian) is difficult to define but shares with these other terms the connotation of alien or foreigner (6). In Spain, the earliest form of Moor distinguished Christian from non-Christian (10). Moor could refer to people of different colors and religions; the only certainty is that a Moor is not a European Christian (7).

15. François Bernier, "A New Division of the Earth, According to the Differ-
view 23.4 (September 1971): 11-36; Lennard Davis, “The Fact of Events and the Event of Facts: New World Explorers and the Early Novel,” Eighteenth Century 32.3 (1991): 240-55. In contrast to Hymer’s identification of Xury as an African, Davis claims that Xury is not easy to classify in terms of national origins: “Xury, whose exact racial origin is unclear, although he is clearly ‘Other,’ is the prototype of the friendly native.” (242). In the following sentence, however, Davis does try to distinguish Xury from West Africans: Xury “is somewhat morose and in this case the natives are ‘Negroes’” (243).

24. Maximilian Novak reprints “Robinson Crusoe & His Boy Xury on the Coast of Guindy Shooting a Lyon” in Reallm, Myth, and History in Defoe’s Fiction (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 38. This illustration was one of six plates added to the sixth edition of 1722. It must be noted that there are several sets of illustrations connected with various eighteenth-century editions of the novel, and at different times, Xury is European in features and black African.

25. Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe (abridged; Dublin, 1774), 20. Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, (abridged; Birmingham: J. Skeehly, 1765) also has Xury speak in pidgin but leaves out the reference to his “broken tone.” This pidgin—the liberal use of do and dat for the and that—characterizes the representation of Indians in the West Indies in William Chetwood’s Voyages, Dangerous Adventures, and Imminent Escape of Captain Richard Falconer (London: W. Chetwood, 1720). There is no apparent correlation between alterations in Xury’s speech and his representation as a Negro.


27. William Chetwood, Captain Richard Falconer, is typical of this tendency in the description of St. Kitts: “The island is inhabited by both English and French, who even in Time of War live very friendly together” (22).

28. Savagery is a traditional discourse of absolute difference traceable to Herodotus. See Hulme, Colonial Encounters, for excellent historical and analytical work on savagery in the Caribbean, especially the introduction and chap. 1.


31. Frank Lestringant, Cannibalism: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 141.


33. In The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), David Brion Davis sketches the shifts in European policies and attitudes toward Amerindians as slaves (167-70). From time to time in North and South America, enslavement of the Amerindians was forbidden; in the earliest Spanish colonies, there was an ongoing conflict between the pope and the demands of colonists, who were often backed by the Crown. The need for a law forbidding the enslavement of Amerindians tends to indicate that in practice they were regarded as “legitimate” slaves at this time, even if ideologically there were reasons not to regard them as natural slaves. Also see Jordan, White over Black, 89-95, for a discussion of why “Indian slavery never became an important institution in the [North American] colonies” (89). Richard Popkin, “The Philosophical Basis of Eighteenth-Century Racist,” Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture, vol. 3, Racism in the Eighteenth Century, ed. Harold E. Pagliaro (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), 245-62, is also helpful concerning the hybrid position of Amerindians.

34. See the introduction to Cannibalism and the Colonial World, ed. Francis Barker et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), for a summary of the scholarship.

35. Boucher, Cannibal Encounters, 7.

36. Arens, Man-Eating Myth, 48-49. Arens explicates this in terms of Spanish ideology; he contends that by the sixteenth century, “Resistance and cannibalism became synonymous and also legitimized the barbaric Spanish reaction.”

37. Boucher, Cannibal Encounters, 10, 117, is particularly helpful in showing lines of influence from French authors to English writers. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century, several popular books made somewhat more positive views of Caribs available (108-10).

38. Hulme and Whitehead, Wild Majesty, 130.

39. Richard Bradley, A Philosophical Account of the Works of Nature (London: W. Mears, 1721), 169. For the contrast between beardless Indians and Europeans, see Londa Schiebinger, “The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science,” Eighteenth-Century Studies 23.4 (1990): 387-405. Observing that the beard was historically considered a sign of virility, Schiebinger notes that “the absence of a beard in native American males led to great debate. Many natural historians took this to be a sign that they belonged to a lower class of humans; some even argue that this absence of hair follicles on the chin proved that they belonged to a separate species” (391). Many Britons regarded this argument as spurious and refuted it. For instance, the 1771 Encyclopædia Britannica included accusations that Americans did not have beards, but subsequent editions included the commentary that ridiculed this point of view. This criterion is particularly curious given that
it was customary even by the late seventeenth century for Englishmen to be clean shaven, a custom which was almost universal in the eighteenth century.

40. Boucher, *Cannibal Encounters*, chap. 5, argues that British representations of Caribs were more negative than their French counterparts. The frontispiece to William Crotch's *Captain Richard Foulcano* is typical of this tendency to represent Indians as similar to Europeans in facial features and skin color, even though scantily clad. The Indian warrior burning the English hero at the stake are the same hue as he is—despite the fact that he refers to his Indian wife as his "Tawny Rib." By the sixth edition of 1769, however, the Indians are dark in color and have short curly hair.


45. In one of the several taxonomies that Crusoe creates, he states: "I have not clothes to cover me," but on the positive side, he counters: "But I am in a hot climate, where if I had clothes I could hardly wear them" (83). As we find out later, he is clothed as thoroughly as if he were in a sub-Alpine climate. This initial naturalization and justification of his own near-nakedness gives way to an emphasis on the symbolic value of clothing as a sign of difference from savages.

46. *Tawny* represents not one but several possibilities in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and here it is clearly meant to convey pure color and hence attractiveness. Often it was the intermediate shades that elicited derision.


48. Beckles, *White Servitude*, cites a 1675 description of Barbados's population that emphasizes the significance of free to distinguishing among people in the Caribbean: the four categories were freetholders (landowners), freemen (former indentured servants), Christian servants, and Negroes (141). As these categories suggest, ownership of property, station, religion, and color all apply variously to the different populations.


as an African. Another logical explanation for the appearance of the black Caribees in the frontispiece to volume 3 is the sensational ability of the illustration to sell this final, less riveting volume of adventures.


63. That Europeans often confused Black Caribs and African slaves is borne out by a remark made by Louis XIV about the maroon communities of Black Caribs: “It would be much in the interest of the islands if all these negroes could be destroyed so that those who have the desire to run away would no longer have an assumed haven” (Boucher, Cannibal Encounters, 103).

64. Hulme and Whitehead, Wild Majesty, 150; Boucher, Cannibal Encounters, 95.

65. The narrative time roughly corresponds to Cromwell’s Commonwealth and the Restoration, a time when both Portugal and Spain were more powerful nations than in 1719, by which time English merchants largely controlled Portuguese trade. Defoe wrote the novel after the gaining of the Asiento from Spain in 1713, a monopoly on the slave trade in the Atlantic; after the formation of the Royal African and South Sea Companies, two of the most powerful and lucrative organizations responsible for trade in slaves, gold, and other raw materials between Europe and parts of the Atlantic empire; and after the establishment of the Bank of England, a reliable institutional and financial partner of the slave trade. The mid-eighteenth century was also the height of Corsair activity, and Brazil was the leading exporter of sugar, not the West Indies; these conditions changed by the early eighteenth century. Although the narrative time predates these events, it is crucial to account for the differences these events make to the emphasis on and nature of the slave trade and representations of Africa and the Caribbean in Robinson Crusoe.


67. Davis, Problem of Slavery in Western Culture, 132; Boucher, Cannibal Encounters, 93.


69. Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, 9.


71. I wish to emphasize that in practice, planters were not as selective in terms of choosing a more desirable labor force until later in the seventeenth century.

72. Eltis, “Europeans and the Rise and Fall of African Slavery,” for one, has argued that nonslave ships tended to carry fewer servants per ton (1405); evidence seems to support this, but abuses of this general rule were also rife.

73. Hulme, Colonial Encounters, 205.

74. David Blight, Illustration of Robinson Crusoe, 15.


76. Frank Pitman, The Development of the British West Indies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917), 35. It is remarkable that this passage does not occur once they reach Europe; the novel represents Friday’s position unambiguously as a servant (see 284). Also, at the end of the novel, in Europe, Crusoe’s status among other Europeans is cast in terms of the labor power he commands. Because Friday is “too much a stranger to be capable of supplying the place of a servant on the road” (284), Crusoe hires an English sailor as an additional servant. The other European men assign Crusoe the position of command based on his superior age and number of attendants.


78. Charles Gildon, The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Mr. D—— DeF——, of London, 2d ed. (London: J. Roberts, 1719), ix. The exchange among Crusoe, Friday, and Defoe culminates in a characteristic early eighteenth-century moment, however, when Crusoe commands Friday to force-feed Defoe the volumes of Robinson Crusoe and they toss the author in the air until he defecates—and then Defoe wakes from a dream, so he thinks, until he smells himself.

Chapter 2. Racializing Civility


2. The second edition of 1728 includes the European norm that governs the entire definition: “[A Negro is] an individual (especially a male) belonging to the African race of mankind, which is distinguished by a black skin, black tightly-curled hair, and a nose flatter and lips thicker and more protruding than is common amongst white Europeans.”

3. Africa and African were not transparent or monolithic terms in the eighteenth century; our present-day notions have no parallel in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Africa and African have no less heterogeneity today, but ideologically and geographically many Westerners have created a more unified picture of Africa than its various histories, customs, religions, and languages demand. Novels such as Captain Singleton are part of this homogenizing tradition. I use the term African most frequently as a substitute for black or for the eighteenth-century terms Negro and Native, although this practice also has a homogenizing tendency. Nevertheless, as a term of reference, it reflects the eighteenth-century tendency to think of people in relation to the continents where they are or their ancestors were born. For analysis of the European invention of Africa versus heterogeneous definitions of Africa, see Kwame Anthony Appiah, In My Father’s House: Africa in the Philosophy