

Crusoe in Gaza: Racism in Western Narrative Discourse from Defoe to Gallant

Mohamed Hamoud Kassim Al-Mahfedi

Department of English, Faculty of Education & Sciences, Albaydha University, Yemen.

Mahfadi76@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper examines the concept of "Othering" as the main tropic agency of racism in Western narrative discourse through a discursive analysis of Defoe's 18th-century novel, Robinson Crusoe, and its relevance to the contemporary Western narrative discourse during the Israeli war on Gaza. The study adopts an integrated critical perspective, incorporating Said's theory of Orientalism, Jameson's concepts of identity politics, Foucauldian notion of knowledge/power constellation, postcolonial critical tenets as well as Genette's principles of narrative discourse analysis. By examining the parallel structures between the colonial themes in Defoe's work and in contemporary Western public discourse, the study explores how racist tropes and stereotypes continue to shape the West's representations of the "Other" in contemporary society. The racist language used by Defoe and Gallant showcases the enduring legacy of racism in Western epistemic mentality and its implications for shaping societal attitudes and perceptions. The study concludes that the Western narrative discourse is a tri-composite construct of an Orientalist thought epistemologically constructed, Darwinist ideology culturally reified, and Fascist implementation of an imperialist / colonialist project politically supported.

Keywords: Gaza, Colonialism, Western Racial Discourse, Orientalism, Robinson Crusoe.

كروسو في غزة: العنصرية في الخطاب السردى الغربى من ديفو إلى جالانت

محمد حمود قاسم المحفدي

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية التربية والعلوم، جامعة البيضاء، اليمن.

الملخص

تتناول هذا الدراسة مفهوم "صناعة الآخر" في الخطاب السردى الغربى من خلال تحليل رواية "روبنسون كروزو" للكاتب دانييل ديفو في القرن الثامن عشر، وارتباطها بالخطاب السردى الغربى في تغطية الحرب "الإسرائيلية" على غزة. اعتمدت الدراسة منظوراً نقدياً متكاملاً يدمج بين نظرية إدوارد سعيد في الاستشراق، ومفاهيم جيمسون حول سياسات الهوية، ومفهوم فوكو لكوكبة المعرفة/السلطة، والمبادئ النقدية لما بعد الاستعمارية، بالإضافة إلى مبادئ جينيت في تحليل الخطاب السردى. تستعرض الدراسة تركيبة الذهنية الغربية ومنهجيتها النمطية العنصرية في تصويرها لـ "الآخر"، من خلال دراسة المفاهيم الاستعمارية في رواية ديفو وأوجه تشابهها في السردية الغربية للحرب على غزة، حيث تُظهر اللغة العنصرية التي استخدمها ديفو وغالانت الموروث العنصرى في العقلية المعرفية الغربية ودورها في خلق مواقف وتصورات ثقافية واجتماعية مغايرة للواقع مفاجية للحقائق. وقد خلصت الدراسة الى أن الخطاب السردى الغربى وتعاوية مع الحرب الاجرامية على غزة هو خطاب بناء ثلاثى، مركب من تمترس سردي للفكر الاستشراقى، وعرض إيديولوجي للطرح الدارويني، وتنفيذ فاشي للمشروع الامبريالي الاستعماري، مبني سردياً، ومسوقاً ثقافياً، ومدعوماً سياسياً.

الكلمات المفتاحية: غزة، الاستعمار، الخطاب العنصرى الغربى، الاستشراق، روبنسون كروزو

Introduction

Space and place have been the objects of colonial hegemony, while language has always been its machinery for constructing identities and working out subjectivities. Western narrative discourse is based on the constructive ideology of "Othering". The portrayal of the non-Western people and cultures in Western narrative has always been stereotypical, discriminatory and totalitarian. Othering serves as the mechanism by which colonialism perpetuates its dominance as a naturalized phenomenon. Through the racialization of subjectivity, colonialism's totalitarian project exclusively seeps into every facet of social life and reality, leaving no room for negotiation of change.

The paper argues that Western narrative is built upon three theoretical foundations: Orientalist epistemology, Darwinist social theory, and Machiavellian political ideology. These foundational myths have been reified and inculcated through a tri-compositional machinery of colonialism, imperialism and Americanism. In order to colonize land and nations and perpetuate its hegemonic control, the Western powers have worked out epistemic machineries that demonize the "Other" through literature and media. Hence, the projection of any Western enterprise across different time periods has always been preceded by a constructed narrative campaign characterized by racializing tropes, representational misconceptions, and cultural demonization.

Utilizing an amalgamated critical-approach methodology, this paper undertakes a critical examination of the colonial themes present in Daniel Defoe's 18th-century novel, *Robinson Crusoe*, and their parallels in the Western public narratives during the cruising war on Gaza. The study attempts to discursively deconstruct the epistemological Eurocentric

constructed image of the non-Western. While Said's critical concepts help debunking and deconstructing Western epistemic discourse, Genette's framework allows for a more intricate understanding of how narratives function and what effects they produce, emphasizing that storytelling is not merely about what is told but also about how a narrative is constructed.

In his theory of Orientalism, Said argues that "the Other" is produced as represented object, a perceived image, and a reductive stereotype focalized through narrative devices and character development. Relevant to this exclusionary essentialized representation, is Fredric Jameson's concept of identity politics, which supports the paper's argument of the intersection of political contexts and aesthetic choices, and stereotypical representation of the non-Western in Western narratives. This discursal construction epistemically contributes to culturally Eurocentric demonizing discourses of the "Other" through the complexities of construction. The examination of representation and the concept of "the Other" draws on postcolonial theory, which critiques colonial narratives, and emphasizes the importance of voice and agency for marginalized communities. This entails a subversive view of reality and the constructed collective memory, explicating how this impacts contemporary understanding of historical realities. By placing the subject under discussion within a wider scope of cultural studies, the paper aims to explore the interplay between language, culture, and politics, showcasing how narrative discourse reflect and shape social realities and ideologies.

Built upon these critical and theoretical tenets, the paper begins with defining the concept of "narrative discourse" and its paradigmatic forms. The paper then delves into defining the concept of "Othering" as it pertains

to Western narrative discourse in constructing non-Western identities in terms of us/them divide, using an epistemically exotic portrayal of the non-Western people as enchanting yet inferior. This sets the stage for colonial ideologies of supremacy and domination. The following sections critically examine the framing of non-Western people as "Others", as manifested in Western literary and public narratives.

Narrative Discourse

Narrative discourse pertains to the art of storytelling across different media platforms, including broadcasting, and encompasses genres such as films, drama, news, and reality television. This process involves converting personal narratives into public discourse utilizing specific techniques and modifications suitable for the broadcasting environment (Thornborrow, 2006, pp. 616-623). Fasulo (2010) argues that

One of the most powerful effects of narrative relies in its fostering thinking through analogy, or exempla. From different arenas ranging from philosophy to psychology to history of science, analogical or narrative thinking has been acknowledged as a vital component in a variety of intellectual activities. (p. 304)

For Hogan (2013), narrative discourse "concerns not only what information is given, but how much is given, when it is given, and how it is phrased" (p.4). Coherence in narrative discourse is "a matter of story structure" (Hogan, 2013, p.3). Narrative discourse analysis, therefore, is concerned with the macro-elements of language. This "involves questions of who is speaking to whom, what information is conveyed, and so forth". It "involves many of the same basic concerns as other [literary and nonliterary] forms of discourse", encompassing both cognitive and hermeneutic preoccupations as interrelated processes (Hogan, 2013, p.4). The "authorial force" and the "overarching

implied author," Hogan remarks, are responsible for "the production and reception of other" in the narrative, revealing how relations of power, authority, irony, reliability, and knowledge are represented in the events or story line of the narrative. (pp. 11, 14).

Furthermore, Shen (2006) opines that "*Story*, in simplest terms, is *what* is told whereas *discourse* refers to 'how' the story is transmitted" (p.566). So, whereas the first refers to the "narrational" or "communicative" part of the discourse, the latter refers to the "representational" element. According to Genette (1988), "narrative discourse is produced by the action of telling in the same way that any statement is the product of an act of enunciating" (p.26). For Genette, narrative discourse analysis is concerned with the production and perception of the narrative. It focuses on "the relationships between narrative and story, between narrative and narrating, and ... between story and narrating" (1988, p.29). The text "remains always open [for the reader], and its re-readings are unlimited" and he can "bring the experience back to life and be conscious of what happens during the crossing" of reading (Saramago, 2020, p.146). In his discussion of the concept, Genette focuses on the "mechanics" of "storytelling", distinguishing between the story (what is told) and the narrative (how it is told). In *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980), Genette provides a thorough analysis of the major principles of narrative discourse. While the "diegesis" refers to the world of the story, the "narrative" is the way that world is presented to the reader. Another concept essential for the analysis of the narrative discourse is the concept of "scene" which refers to the time mirrored by the storytelling. By "voice", Genette refers to how readers interpret the story whereas "focalization" refers to the principle of perception within and without the narrative.

Vocal to narrative discourse analysis is the concept of "collective memory". As argued by Bennett (2022), popular imaginary narratives serve as a crucial medium for the construction and dissemination of collective memory. In his study, "Palestine and the Middle East in the Popular Filmic Imaginary: Historical Memory, Grievable Lives, and Encountering the Other in Film", Bennett contends that the main goal of these narratives is to create a Eurocentric view and collective memories, influencing how these regions are perceived globally. By prioritizing certain narratives—typically those of Western characters or perspectives—at the expense of Palestinian experiences, these film narratives invest the concept of "grievable lives" as a working imaginary of epistemic reconstruction. Similarly, Goitia's (2024) "Constructing the Other: Unveiling the Exotic, Barbaric and Parodied Archetypes in Western Discourse" offered an epistemological excavation of Western literary narratives, and how these narratives work out perceptual images of the "Other" through deployment and perpetuation of racialized references and conceptions.

In this study, narrative discourse refers to both literary or fictional narrative and public or mass media discourse. The analysis involves examining how authors utilize various principles of narrative discourse to convey themes related to racism. The analysis can focus on key elements such as authorial voice, narrative structure, point of view, characterization, and the use of focalization.

Colonial Narrative Discourse: An Epistemic Lineage

The European exploration expeditions of 15th-17th centuries utilized the "The Noble Savage" trope to justify their brutality, cleansing and enslaving of the natives. Christopher Columbus's accounts of the indigenous peoples as "monsters", "cannibals", "beast-like", "with tails", and "no reason or religion" living in "gold

island" expose the racial history of Western demonization and dehumanization of the "Other" as an instrumental policy of colonialization. In his letter on February 15, 1493, Columbus suggested that if supported by the Catholic Monarchs, he would convert locals to Christianity and bring back an abundance of valuable resources and more slaves to finance a new crusade to take Jerusalem. *The Papal Bull "Inter Caetera"* (1493) and *The Treaty of Tordesillas* (1494) known as the "Savage vs. Civilized" binary created a narrative of European superiority and established the notion of "Othering" that granted the European powers the right to invade and convert non-Christian territories (Columbus, 1893).

The 18th-19th century colonialism—associated with what is called the "Enlightenment" or European scientific discoveries—disseminated the discourse of Whiteman's supremacy and Eurocentric moral triumph, legitimating European domination of the "Other". The rise of pseudoscientific theories, such as anthropology, phrenology and eugenics, perpetuated harmful myths about racial inferiority of the non-European through rationalizing the supremacy of white race and popularizing the idea of the "White Man's Burden" that justified colonial exploitation and oppression (Hitchens 63-64). In "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question," Carlyle (1849), notoriously asserted that enslavement is a cure for the "black" race for which the "beneficent whip" would improve what he called "the subhuman . . . two-legged cattle" (p.675)

The imperial European expansionism of 19th-20th centuries was largely driven by the narrative discourse that delineated the colonial policy and enterprise. Colonial fictional narratives—backed by orientalist and other scientific theorizations—were taken as roadmaps for colonial policy implementations

and political pamphlets that propagated the European "hero" vs. the irrational "subhuman" "Other". Orientalists, Western social scientists, political thinkers and writers created a huge gamut of work that legitimated and paved the way for colonial invasion and exploitation of the non-Western nations and territories. Stuart Mill (1861) proposed that some societies are "backward" and therefore in need of the guidance of the civilized nations (pp.17, 293). Hegel (1975) advocated a Eurocentric view of human history where Europeans represented rationality and the glorious end of history, arguing that only people of "a superior position can . . . truly see things for what they are and see everything " (p.15). He posited that "world history travels from east to west; for Europe is the absolute end of history, just as Asia is the beginning" (p.197). Proponents of Social Darwinism purported that races are subjected to natural selection whereby "the survival" is only for "the fittest" (Spencer, 1876, pp. 34, 56, 89, 204).

The "Dark Continent" trope popularized by German geographer, Carl Ritter, in 1832 perpetuated negative stereotypes about Africa as a mysterious, unexplored, and uncivilized continent, justifying European colonization. The "White Men as Heroes" narratives epitomized by Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" (1899), glorified European colonizers as heroes who brought civilization to supposedly primitive lands, reinforcing the notion of European superiority.

Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Haggard's *She* (1887), Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* (1899), Burroughs's *Tarzan* (1912), Forester's *A Passage to India* (1924), and de Brunhoff's *Babar* (1931) are among the racially classical colonial novels. With the turn of the century, the traditional imperial project has been invigorated by hegemonic Americanism that has subtly propagated the former epistemo-cultural

colonial narratives of "cannibalism", "savagery", and "Whiteman's burden", using politically charged and psychopathic terminologies such as, "political threat", "evil axis" and the "dangerous Other". These new colonial public narratives aim to construct truths about human realities and manipulate thinking by creating images and monopolizing and mobilizing idea production. They serve as major epistemic pillars for shaping public perception and informing policy decisions.

Through a critical examination of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1919) and selected Western mass media articles and reports, the study attempts to identify the related cognate structures that inform these racist narratives and explain how they create a liaison of interconnected dehumanizing and deflated mentality. Additionally, the study highlights the phenomenon of "colonization of the conscience," in which these narratives impose a stereotypical colonialist ideology by constructing justifications for violence against Palestinians under the pretext of national security.

Racism and Dichotomous Thinking in Western Narrative Discourse

Racism has been a pervasive and ingrained element of Western discourse, permeating various aspects of culture—societal, intellectual, political, attitudinal and behavioral. Colonialism as an expansionist project was mostly projected through the narrative imaginaries created by Western authors and academic writers, signifying Eastern people and cultures as a site for exotic endeavors and Whiteman's achievement: "The East is a career" (Disraeli, 1847, I. p.161). Goldberg's *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (1993) offers a critical exploration of how racism become a normalized way of life of the structured reality in Western thought and institutions. In *The Racial Contract* (1997),

Mills (1997) argues that racism is foundational to Western social theory (pp.31,72). In continuum to its traditionally monolithic method, globalization is a Western process and socio-economic and cultural discourse within which racial and ethnic identities are constructed and represented: "the colonized Other was constituted within the regimes of representation of such a metropolitan center." (Hall, 1997, p.20)

One of the arenas where racism has been both reflected and perpetuated is in narrative discourse, particularly within the realm of media and literature. From the early colonial narratives to contemporary works, Western narrative discourse has often served as a mirror reflecting the binary thinking and colonial trajectory of the Western mindset. Defoe's Friday, Shakespeare's Caliban and Othello, Kipling's Mowgli, Haggard's Ayesha, and Bronte's Heathcliff, are prototypical racialized characters that encapsulate the dehumanizing racist mentality that dominate Western discursal realities. Serving as a strategy to differentiate oneself from those perceived as "different" or "foreign", Western authors textures narratives and various modes of theorizations to rationalize this Manichean dichotomy and cultural triumphancy. This gave rise to the emergence of various schools of thought that challenge human agency beyond the Western mainstream model. This include, among others, the theory of modernism which advocates ahistorical rendering of reality and the production of meanings; orientalism, as an epistemological style of representation; and rationalism, as a method of polemical reasoning for truth production. These theories and other relatedisms are part of a larger epistemological project aimed at legitimating colonial domination, imperial exploitation, and political intervention. (Said, 1979, p. 12)

"War" and "Othering" in Western Narrative Discourse

Unlike "difference" which entails natural distinctive features within the normal human and cultural relativist variation, the concept of "Othering" is a loaded term which refers to the process of constructing and representing individuals or groups as fundamentally different from oneself, often leading to the dehumanization and marginalization of the "Other." Othering then is the result of a discursive epistemological process in which individuals are classified as a dominant in-group (Us, the Self) and dominated out-groups ("them", Other) by stigmatizing a difference-real or imagined- presented as a negation of identity" (Staszak, 2020, p.2). Crang (1998) defines Othering as a "a process ... through which identities are established in an unequal relationship" (p.61). It is a "style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority [of the West] over the Orient". (Said, 1979, p. 3)

Western narrative discourse is based on a hierarchical world-view discursive system that produced a set of "formalized systems" and classified images of the superior West and the inferior "Other" (Foucault, 1972, p.191). Constructed on racial and stereotypical distinction, the concept of the "Othering" serves as a colonial tool for distorting the reality of the "Other" in order to perpetuate colonial domination. This representational narrative is based on "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and . . . 'the Occident'". (Said, 1979, p.2)

With advent of Americanism as an "intellectual authority over the Orient", the West reinvented itself through the working of popular culture as a vital narrative discourse in which knowledge of reality is structured "formed, irradiated, disseminated" instrumentally by establishing "canons of taste and value" through

"virtually indistinguishable. . . ideas it signifies as true" and taken from "traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces" (Said, 1979, pp.19-20). As highlighted by Said, "One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed" (1979, p.26). This new Orientalist discriminatory machinery has legitimized not only social discrimination, but also State discrimination and institutional apartheid.

It is through the objectivization of the Oriental "Other" that the West defines itself and creates its allegedly "normative" image in contrast to the constructed "abnormal Other". As such, Balfour's, Cromer's, and recently, Gallant's statements are the outcome of this "systematic knowledge", produced by the narratives that rationalize the colonial rule, and justify the means for achieving the end. The power-knowledge constellation is ingrained in Western colonial mentality whereby the Europeans "continuously [re-invent] themselves either through struggle. . . or through conquest and colonization". (Pattberg, 2009, p.5)

"Othering" and war are two foundational concepts of Western history of ideas. As Al-Mahfedi (2013) argues, "The idea of war lurks deep in the concept of dichotomy in which there is no sense of equilibrium and balance". Hence, and in the Darwinian terms, "any inferior culture could be eliminated" (p.97). The dichotomous thinking "entails the meaning of antagonism and war and indicates the struggle for encroachment and expansion over the 'Other'" (98). Pattberg aptly remarks, "as a matter of perception, till today, the Western ways are universally associated with 'war', 'aggression', and 'exclusiveness'". (2009, p.49)

The "Other" in *Robinson Crusoe*

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) is a part in a sequel of an established colonial discourse that includes, among others, R. M.

Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). As a prime example of this canon, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* centers on the consequent trips of a white Englishman, called Crusoe, "the founder of a new world" who is "explicitly enabled by an ideology of overseas expansion" and driven by an imperial desire for wealth and discovery (Said, 1994, p.70). The dominating discourse of the sea, as an epitome of the British imperial power at that time, compels Crusoe to undertake these adventurous journeys. Encapsulated by Said, Robinson Crusoe is "virtually unthinkable without the colonizing mission that permits him to create a new world of his own in the distant reaches of the African, Pacific, and Atlantic wilderness" (1994, p. 64)

A close investigation of the novel reveals a work packed with racist images, misconceptions and misrepresentations. The language is purely racist, based on constructed epistemological knowledge of the non-western "Other" as the West's "contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (Said, 1979, p.2). Crusoe's island is depicted as an isolated island inhabited by a tribe of indigenous "savage" people, described as "cannibals" and "wild beasts," worshipping "idols" and are prone to violence (Defoe, 1919, p.172). In his comment on the narrative, Said found that "Defoe locates Crusoe on an unnamed island somewhere in an outlying region" to trivialize and deny the existence of the native people (Said, 1994, p.77). This dehumanizing portrayal reinforces the stigmatized stereotypical constructs of the "Other" as fundamentally different from Crusoe's self and culture.

Crusoe's racist interactions with the indigenous people he encounters on the island exemplify the ethnocentric superiority that underpins colonial attitudes towards non-Western cultures:

I smil'd at him, and look'd pleasantly, and beckon'd to him to come still nearer; at length he came close to me, and then he kneel'd down again, kiss'd 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; ... I was resolv'd to kill him; for he came and kneel'd down to me, and embracing my Knees, said a great many Things I did not understand; but I could easily see that the meaning was to pray me not to kill him." (Defoe, 1919, pp.172-178)

The narrative of Crusoe's dominance and "civilizing mission" over the indigenous inhabitants reflect the hierarchical and discriminatory power structures underlying the Eurocentric constructed view of the "Other". In "A Critique of Postcolonial Reason", Spivak (1993) argues that colonial discourse constructs the colonized as inferior, reinforcing a power dynamic that perpetuates inequality. Defoe's portrayal of indigenous people as "wild beasts" exemplifies this colonialist ideology (Defoe, 1919, p.34). In the same line, in *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha (1994) asserts that colonial discourse often creates a sense of anxiety about the borders between self and other, leading to the construction of an "Other" that is perceived as a threat to one's own identity. (p.23)

As a colonial narrative built on the psychology of the mind, Defoe's novel doesn't show us a Whiteman's foils inasmuch as it presents to us a hero, who journeys the seas, fights the "monstrous" forces of nature, and eventually masters a land and subjugates its people. Right from the very beginning, the image of the protagonist is shaped by discursive practices disseminated through language, style, structure and characterization to create a world-view image through a process that deludes the mind of the reader into following the adventurous epic of a strong heroic Whiteman—

the fittest—who creates the history of the island and deserves to survive. (Spencer, 1876, pp.31, 34, 56, 89, 204, 414, 741)

This discourse is actually informed by knowledge/power constellation, orientalist misrepresentation and Darwinist theorization. Following a make-belief technique, the narrative flows on, creating a false perception of the reality in the audience's mind, so they start forgetting the fact this Crusoe is nothing but a "disobedient", "anti-human", "usurper" and "imperialist" and "colonizer". This "structured reality" is constituted within what Ankhi Mukherjee calls Western "concept metaphors" or in Thomas Sankara's words "mental colonization". (Mukherjee, 2022, p.36; Murrey, 2018, p.82)

What Defoe succeeds in constructing in the audience's mind through the detailed depiction of the plot and the reified cultural materialist style of the events is a fossilized representation of the savagery of the natives, the inferiority of their culture and nature, their worthlessness of their lives. This representation shows their "Otherness" as a burden threatening the Whiteman's ontological place and space, so that we perceive only "pagan creatures", "man-eater cannibals", and subhuman "negroes" with "strangest" habits inhabiting an isolated island cultivated and ruled by an Englishman (Defoe, 1919, pp.183, 93, 166, 22, 25, 26, 34, 164, 179). This demonizing narrative discourse ultimately paves the way for the colonial displacement, cleansing and eradication of the natives.

The language of the narrative is purely racist, or vaguely woven so as to plague the meaning. The writer/narrator refers to the Caribbean people as the "Moor" and "Barbarian Negroes", finding no restraint to "tost him [Xury] clear over-board into the Sea" as an object or "drugged cockroaches in a bottle" (Defoe, 1919, pp. 21-22; *The Guardian*, 30 May, 2000). The language is manipulated to animalize the human

and humanize the animal setting, thus blurring borders between humans and animals. The words "savages", "monsters", "beasts" and "creatures" with "hideous cries and howlings" are used interchangeably to refer to both the natives and the jungle animals (Defoe, 1919, pp. 23, 25). Throughout the novel, the writer demonizes the native culture and people by exoticizing and stigmatizing the space and the place of the narrative. On the other hand, throughout the narrative, Europeans are portrayed as Captains and Traders, and "very kindly", "generous", "honest" fellows (Defoe, 1919, p p. 29, 30, 31, 3, 121).

Crusoe is depicted as a civilized fellow whose mission is to humanize the people, cultivate the lands and rule the native subjects: "I likewise taught him to say *Master*, and then let him know, that was to be my Name; I likewise taught him to say, YES, and NO" (Defoe, 1919, pp. 174). He is further presented as a messenger with a "Duty" on the island (Defoe, 1919, p.177). He talks about natives in terms of possessions and belongings. This is evident in the recurrent use of possessive pronouns "My island", "My Plantation", "My Man", "My subjects", "My servant", etc., which emphasizes the imperial colonial drive of the narrative. The most detesting passage in the novel is the scene when Crusoe, in a racially colonial triumphant tone, declares that: "How like a King I look'd. First of all, the whole Country was my own meer Property; so that I had an undoubted Right of Dominion. 2dly, My People were perfectly subjected: I was absolute Lord and Law-giver; they all owed their Lives to me ..." (Defoe, 1919, pp. 203).

The racial depiction of the "Other" continues to dominate modern and contemporary Western literary narrative discourse. Works like H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887) reflects European fears and fascinations with the exotic "Other", portraying the conflicts

between civilized Europeans and "barbaric" cultures while reinforcing colonial superiority. The depiction of Ayesha, the titular "She," stresses on exoticism and the "barbaric" nature of African peoples, marked by exaggerated traits of primitive sensuality and otherness. *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912) by Edgar Rice Burroughs buttresses the idea of the "noble savages," as a prototype of African culture. The characters are depicted as primitive and subservient, usually voiceless, serving as lackeys. The narrative reinforces colonial stereotypes, portraying Western civilization as superior and aligning it with adventure and heroism against "savage" cultures. This dichotomy reflects larger imperial attitudes of the time. *Babar*, a series of stereotypical storytelling written by Jean de Brunhoff in 1931, is undoubtedly an endorsement of French colonialism. The narrative celebrates the civilizational Eurocentric position, and Western colonial ideologies. Babar's journey from the jungle to the city suggests progress and civilization, which is attainable only through adopting Western norms. The narrative subtly conveys the superiority of Western culture through depicting a "civilized" African elephant adopting French cultural practices and values. Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936) is another narrative of the racialized "Other", featuring African-American characters through stereotypical lenses, primarily as submissive, loyal servants. Characters like Mammy exemplify the "mammy" stereotype, emphasizing a nurturing but subservient role. The portrayal of African Americans reflects the romanticized antebellum South, minimizing the harsh realities of slavery and racial oppression. It reinforces white supremacy and nostalgia for a racially unequal society. These racial tones find echo in the political statements and media narratives of the Israeli and other Western leaders during the racially cursing war on Gaza.

The "Other" in Western Public Narrative Discourse

Parallel to high culture narrative discourse, Western discourse develops a subtle and more effective public narrative discourse, utilizing the mass media machinery to inform its ideological apparatus. The recent war against Gaza provides a stark example of how this "Other" continues to be manipulated, constructed, and produced by Western discourse.

Ideologically, Israel is a construction of the West both politically and epistemically. Discoursed in the 1917 Balfour Declaration, and reified during the 1948 partition of the historic Palestine, Israel was geared and identified as an offshoot of the Euro-American colonialist/imperialist project, tethered to the same line of thought and discourse. Guided by the Orientalist ideology that "Zionism would finally bring enlightenment and progress [to Palestine] where at present there was neither," the Western public narrative located Palestinians within a space of non-being both physically and ideologically. (Said, 2008, p.68)

The genesis of the depiction of the Palestinian life in Gaza as "creaturely" and "grotesque" goes back to the earliest European colonial view of the indigenous population, where Defoe's Friday in *Robinson Crusoe* is no different from Shakespeare's Caliban in *The Tempest*, Palestinians in Menachem Begin's visualization as "beasts walking on two legs" or Gazans in Gallant's perception as "Human animals"

These representational narratives typify a deep-seated epistemological Western view of the native people as sub-human and animalistic. "Many Western media outlets often view the lives of Palestinians as less significant than those of Israelis, reflecting the influences of colonial and white supremacist ideologies, whereby dehumanization becomes a stage of genocide" (*The New Humanitarian*, 23 Oct. 2023). Jardina and Piston (2023) note that

indigenous peoples' humanity in Western discourse has always been denied, and their existence itself was always questioned. They go on to argue that "the land European settlers coveted was often depicted as vacant" (p.371). "This kind of thinking," Said argues, "informed the Zionist slogan formulated by Israel Zangwill for Palestine toward the end of the century: a land without people, for a people without land" (2008, p.9). This colonially Zionist narrative has been reified in the Israeli rejection of the Palestinians' existence and the genocide policies of the Palestinians under the discursual support of the West.

Historically, these constructed ideologies have always been justified and legitimated by epistemic and religious doctrines. "Doctrine of Discovery", issued by Pope Alexander VI on May 4, 1493, laid down the foundation for all European colonial and imperial expansion. This Papal covenant granted the colonizers the possession of all "discovered" territories and permitted perpetual enslavement of the indigenous populations. In this regard, Israeli claim of Palestinian nonexistence reflect a colonial continuum of an entrenched European legacy of genocide, racial discrimination and dispossession. The Israeli gardening metaphor and frequent sweeping attacks on the besieged Gaza Strip as "mowing the lawn" or "mowing the grass" suggest a Darwinist view of Palestinians as "weeds," or unwanted elements in a yard, and therefore are liable to extermination through indiscriminate bombings; hence, stripping away their political identity, citizenship, and legal recognition. (Miyashiro, 2023)

Western public narrative discourse has remained epistemologically essentialist and culturally reductionist. The sustained misrepresentation and stigmatization of the Palestinians, from Golda Meir's (1969) declaration that "Palestinians did not exist"

through Menachem Begin's (1982) Orientalist conception of Palestinians as "beasts walking on two legs", to Eli Ben Dahan's (2013) infamously racist Darwinist ideology that "Palestinians are like animals, they aren't human", and Gallant's and Gillerman's (2023) discriminatory stigmatic view of Gazans as "human animals", have led to the rationalization of the Israeli aggression on Gaza, under the same epistemic slogan of "war against evil". This is reminiscent of the dichotomously stigmatizing propaganda of the American-led Allies' War against Iraq in 1990, and the "War on Terror" in 2001, epitomized in George Bush's infamous statement: "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists".

Thus, Western public narrative discourse is ingrained in the concept of "coloniality", wherein "language is a weapon . . . used to erase the humanity of the colonized." During the recent Israeli war on Gaza, Western media proved to be "mediating" rather reporting. So, what we have is "a textbook case of colonizer's journalism", based on a systemic knowledge of othering where colonial genocide of the native people is reported as the "right of defense" against what they described as "hordes of vital statistics" and "hysterical masses" with "children who seem not to belong to anyone" (Krishnan, 2024; Fanon, 2007, p.7).

The examination of the Western narrative discourse during the recent Israeli inhuman war on Gaza reveals that Western "Othering" of the Palestinians has been inculcated through three main trajectories: 1) dehumanization through which Palestinians have been depicted as "human animals", and "savage" natives rather than human beings with human rights and dignity, 2) stigmatization, whereby Palestinians have been portrayed as violent "terrorists", "irrational" beings, and "Whiteman's burden", and 3) exoticization by which Palestinians were described as racial

"Others", fundamentally different from the Eurocentric Israeli ethnicities.

These conclusions are in line with Fanon's psycho-political theory that "the colonial world is a [compartmentalized] Manichean world", wherein the colonized subject is dehumanized, and reduced to "an absolute evil", and referred to in purely "zoological terms" as "an animal", a savage being, in need of structure and aid from the foreign occupants (Fanon, 2007, pp.41-42; Peteet, 2005, p.167). Among these infamous representational otherings are the racial statements made by the Israel's former ambassador to the UN, Dan Gillerman, who described Palestinians as "horrible, inhuman animals", and statement Former Israeli Minister for Defense, Avigdor Liberman who described Palestinians a "bunch of cannibals" (Aaron, 2019, p.59; *The Times of Israel*, 16 May 2018). Another outrageously dehumanizing statement came from IDF expert Stern Gang, who is notorious for his participation in the Deir Yassin massacre of Palestinians in 1948. Gang called for the obliteration of the Palestinians: "Erase them, their families, mothers and children. These animals can no longer live." (Aderet, 2023)

It can be safely said that within a globalized world dominated by public narrative machinery, language has become the battlefield of truth-seeking war. Informed by the historical tradition of epistemologically Manichean thought, language in Western public narrative is a vital apparatus for appropriating truth and shaping people's perception of reality. Building upon a discourse of "us" and "them" divide, these Western constructions were reinforced through the use of sensationalist, sometimes deceptive, language, emotive imagery, and selected reporting. Israeli deaths were reported with names and pictures to detail their pains and stories, while Palestinians victims were mostly referred to in charts and numbers. On its front-

page, *The Times*, 13 October 2023, headlined a misleading use of imagery "Israel Shows Mutilated Babies", whilst the accompanied image was not for Israeli babies, but of badly wounded and bloodily killed Palestinian children. Moreover, headlines such as, " Hamas Rockets Rain Down on Israel", created a sense of urgency and danger around Israeli civilians, while neglecting the suffering of Palestinian civilians (*The New York Sun*, May 5, 2024). Consequently, the framing of these Western narratives was systematically designed to representationally buttress a politico-epistemic leaning. In his article in *Middle East Eye*, 25 Dec. 2023, Abdulkader Assad, a US-based linguist and journalist, stated that "The way the western media is 'framing' headlines . . . of the Israeli occupation's war on Gaza is intentionally meant to sway opinions and help consolidate a perception of Gaza with its entire population as 'militants', and thus the bombardment and killing then becomes justified" (*Middle East Eye*, 25 Dec. 2023).

Beside adopting a vague language, Western media promoted certain essentialized and reductionist terminologies such as anti-Semitism, the "Israel's right", and "Israeli-Hamas" instead of "Israeli-Gaza" war, to create an epistemic image of the good-evil conflict. The use of passive voice in media narrative to describe Palestinians, and the active in describing Israelis is also an act of dehumanization strategies. A headline in *The Reuters* appeared as: "Issam Abdallah, a Reuters videographer, was killed while working in southern Lebanon". Though the victim is killed by Israeli forces, the language of the narrative makes it debatable, and creates a sense of doubt, neglecting their right to defend themselves, by featuring an imagery which favored the Israeli narrative.

Additionally, selection policy was a Western ideology in dealing with the "Other". Terms such as "atrocities", "brutal murder", "mass murder", "brutal cold-blooded murder",

"lynching", "killed" and "massacre" were used to describe Israeli deaths, while using terms like "Palestinian militants", "terrorists" and "died" were associated with Palestinians (*Glasgow Media Group*, 2011; Shabibi, 2023). In "Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance", Chomsky (2003) argues that Western media often portrays Middle Eastern conflicts through a lens of fear and mistrust, perpetuating stereotypes about Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. This rhetoric reinforces a narrative that demonizes Hamas and justifies Israeli aggression (p.123). *Human Rights Watch* reports documented numerous instances of Israeli human rights abuses during the war on Gaza, including indiscriminate bombing campaigns and attacks on civilians. These reports highlight the devastating consequences of Western-backed Israeli aggression on Palestinian civilians (*Human Rights Watch*, 2020). This is dehumanizing to Palestinians since it minimizes their suffering by rendering them as invisible losses, for the sake of the survival of Israelis, thus emphasizing the Darwinist philosophy of extinction and a fascist ideology of justification. These humiliating practices are characteristically systematic in Western discourse where "derogatory stereotypes of alien peoples as subhuman often accompany and expansionist ideology". (Moughrabi, 1992, p.50)

These experiences of dehumanizing narrative representation go beyond the individualistic idiosyncrasy, as a systemic "massive psychoexistential complex" is inherent in colonial mentality (Fanon, 1986, p.12). The underlying effect is devastating for the Palestinians and as it invalidates their voice and nullifies their right. In her speech at Oyoun center in Berlin, Anna Younes states that "It has been a structural and systemic endeavor by German state institutions for the past 20 years to mainstream an understanding of antisemitism"

(*The Guardian*, 25 Mar. 2024). So, to attach terms like "apartheid" or "massacre" with Israel is perceived as threateningly an antisemitic antagonism.

The representation of Palestinian people in Israeli and Western mass media as "animals", "human animals", "inhuman animals" and "barbaric animals" who "deserve to be bombed" without challenge, reverberates with the Western colonial narrative discourse in *Robinson Crusoe*, and similar other stories, wherein the natives are depicted as "savage" and "cannibal" inhabitants (*Al Jazeera English*, 9 Oct. 2023; *Human Rights Watch*, 20 Oct. 2023; Dannon, 2023). The callous representation of the "natives" as inferior and primitive is a classic example of the colonialist trope of the "savage subjects," that disfigures the non-Western as a "savage" race—"a Whiteman's burden" that must be cleansed away.

The meeting point between the Defoe's and Gallant's narrative discourse is the inherited episteme and the structural design. The epistemic relationship is all orientalist and colonialist. While "Friday" is portrayed as "a cannibal" and "uncivilized" savage, who should obey his master and seek his mercy, Gazans were described as "human animals" that should be slaughtered and left without food, water and any other facilities. According to Fanon, "violence itself is a fundamental component of colonialism" (2007, p.23)

The concept of colonial anxiety is at the heart of colonial project. The imperialists/colonialists intersected class, race and gender to demarcate the "boundaries of the human", from the "abnormal" "non-human" who are "unfit for liberty" or "incapable of civilization", and thus beyond human rights and freedoms (Lowe, 2015, p.7). They invested the idea of colonial anxiety as a key factor for perpetuating their colonial feelings of superiority and dominance, and tethered their

imperial project to placing their brutalities onto this "zone of non-being" (Fanon, 1986, p.10). Consequently, peoples, culture and histories inhabiting this zone have to be coerced to erasures either by cultural assimilation or segregated subjectivity of exclusion. As argued by Fischer-Tiné, "the history of colonial empires has been shaped to a considerable extent by negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and embarrassment, as well as by the regular occurrence of panics". (2016, p.1)

In line with this perspective, Netanyahu and Galant describe the Gazan people as a threat to Israeli colonial existence. This narrative rationalizes their attacks, massacres, and acts of genocides, as well as the dispossession and displacement of the Palestinians. This narrative discourse parallels the colonial narrative of *Crusoe's* feeling of fear, hostility, and violence towards the natives. He perceives them as a threat to his survival, domination, and resources. Friday is portrayed as a primitive and irrational figure, with a tendency toward violence. However, it is concerning to observe that a similar racist trope is emerging in the 21st century in the portrayal of the people of Gaza within Western public narrative discourse.

The dehumanizing representation of Palestinians in Western narrative discourse shows the dwindling of Western value system. The ongoing demonstrations decrying the Israeli atrocities and genocides lay bare the West's claims of human rights, democracy, and freedom. Their colonizing public discourse has paradoxically produced a sort of counter-narrative discourse represented by the boycott campaigns and world-wide marches against the inhuman and double-standard Western alignment with Israeli narrative. Being "one of the swiftest ethnic cleansing efforts in history," the war on Gaza "has put civil society in many western countries under intense strain" and causing "fissures in society and the

arts"(Krishnan, *Al Jazeera*, 2 Feb. 2024). The Western claim of democracy and civilization "was always just a facade", in the words of Louna Sbou, Oyouun's co-founder in Berlin. (*The Guardian*, 25 Mar. 2024)

Conclusion

Through a critical examination of the Western narrative discourse, the paper demonstrates that Western narratives have systematically represented the non-White, non-western characters as the racialized "Others" who lack depth or agency, reflecting a deep-seated Western racial hierarchy of the time. The Western narrative discourse is characterized by a focalization model with a Eurocentric view, presenting a singular, authoritative narrative. These narratives are not just stories about individual characters but are embedded within broader socio-political ideologies through which Western narratives construct identity and otherness.

Throughout Western narratives from the Papal orders and Middle Ages Crusades during the fifteenth-century geographical excursions, through eighteenth and nineteenth-century narratives as in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* to modern and contemporary narratives, such as Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*, Haggard's *She* (1887) Rice's *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912), Brunhoff's *Babar* (1931), and recent mass media reports and public narratives, the "non-Western" is commonly presented and constructed over time from a Eurocentric viewpoint, reflecting the colonial mindset.

The concept of Othering is a colonial powerful tool used in Western literature, sociology, and public narrative discourse to justify discrimination, oppression, domination, subjugation and violence against the "Other". The Western narrative discourse is epistemologically essentialist, politically colonialist, culturally racist and philosophically dichotomous. There is an ancestral lineage between Defoe's depiction of the natives as "savage cannibals", "beasts", and "creatures", is parallel to the stereotypical representation of Palestinians in Western public narratives as "human animals," "two-footed animals",

"barbarians" and "marons" that must be starved to death, reinforcing the colonially orientalist, Darwinist and Machiavellian ideology.

By exposing the dehumanizing portrayal of Palestinian people and its effect on genocidal bombarding of a whole nation, the study critically detracts and morally debunks the long-standing Western claim of human values, human rights, equity and freedom. The ongoing worldwide civil awareness revolution that denounces the racially brutal West-backed Israeli war against Palestinians reveals the baseless claim of Western rationality, humanity, and civilization. Additionally, the study highlights that the enigmatic dilemma of "colonial anxiety" inherited in the Western discourse creates a narrative that is morally anti-human and self-destructive. The study calls for the liberation of humanity from the Eurocentric discursive hegemony, and demands the promotion of a more inclusive representation that acknowledges the agency and humanity of all individuals.

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