

THE TEMPEST AND ROBINSON CRUSOE: SLAVERY AND OMNIPOTENCE

The comparison of two literary works, especially when one is a brilliant representation of prose and the other one – a magnificent sample of drama, is not an easy task. Being written in more or less different periods of time and incorporating a great variety of themes, such as man and nature, man in the wilderness, isolation, humane feelings, love, betrayal, compassion, interpersonal relationships and so on, William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* create a perfect ground for comparative-contrastive analysis. In both works, the main characters are represented as almighty "kings" of the societies they themselves have created, however, other sides of their personality are shown with the development of the plot. Even in isolation and far from civilization, both heroes – Crusoe and Prospero manage to become masters and have slaves, thus making slavery a major theme and proving once again their power and superiority within their societies. The survival of the characters in loneliness, their limited and small societies, their needs and ambitions and even the locations reveal and thoroughly illustrate a great deal of personal, interpersonal and social issues. Although slavery is a central theme in both works, this similarity is a source of major differences as we deal with two different kinds of slavery.

One of the brightest examples of slavery in *Robinson Crusoe* is when Xury becomes Crusoe's slave. Crusoe tells Xury that the latter should always be by his side and never betray him. Throughout the work, Crusoe demonstrates traits of a ruler and tries to establish authority. In fact, he will do anything to broaden the limits of his authority. Although in the beginning Crusoe considers himself superior to his slaves for some reasons, especially Xury, we can also see that with time he starts treating both Xury and Friday as friends and companions. There is also some controversy; on the one hand, Crusoe treats them like advisors, on the other hand, sometimes he does not feel sorry for them and treats them like objects. It is not a single example but a part of his mentality, as he encourages slave trade also at the end of the novel. The theme of slavery is central in the novel and the action of the novel develops around it. So we have two major and controversial points here; in the beginning Crusoe wants to have friends and some people to talk to, that is why he enslaves Xury and Friday, but despite all this, he encourages slavery. There are paradoxical, inhumane and humane traits in him. He even remains faithful to the word of God and does not want to spill blood or make harsh decisions.

Sometimes he decides to simply hide in order not to meet savages. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, we have the theme of slavery in the centre as well. Prospero has two slaves – Caliban and Ariel. These two do not want to stay with Prospero, they want him to set them free, because Prospero is cruel to them and uses them. Prospero pretends to have power but half of his power comes from his slaves. The society on the island in case of *The Tempest* is under Prospero's control as well. Both Crusoe and Prospero try to exploit their power because they possess something the natives of the islands do not; in Crusoe's case the example is the gun, and in Prospero's case – his knowledge. The similarities between Prospero and his slaves, as well as Crusoe and Friday become clearer when both Crusoe and Prospero first save the slaves' lives, then start using them for their intentions. However the two instances of slavery have not only similarities, but also differences.

One of the main differences between these two characters is that Prospero is driven and inspired by revenge, but Robinson Crusoe considers himself to be a man of god, thus keeping himself from harming the foreigners of the island. Consequently, the fact that Prospero is in full control of the island, and Crusoe sometimes has to hide in order not to harm anyone is a major difference between them. So Prospero has full control, Crusoe somehow shares his control with the natives of the island. Although Crusoe does not intend to do any harm to the inhabitants of the island, he wants to have a friend and someone to talk to so much, that in the end he hurts someone for saving Friday. Prospero does the same thing but with more or less negative intentions. Both Prospero and Crusoe said that they wanted to enslave someone just to help them with the work, but Prospero wanted to have a slave just to make his cruel plans come true, so he wanted a tool for revenge rather than a companionship of someone. Crusoe just wanted someone to talk to, a friend to have conversations with, because before that he only had his cat, his dog and his parrot, but now he needed human company as well. Also, he thought that maybe someday this person could help him run away. There is a clear contrast in their motives of having slaves. We can also see some contrast between how the slaves of both masters feel about them. Prospero's slave Ariel wants to be free from the master as soon as possible. Friday, on the contrary, is a slave but is also like a friend and wants to stay with his master despite everything. Friday finds ultimate happiness and pleasure in the companionship of Crusoe and does not want to be sent away, while Ariel and Caliban continuously curse their master and want to escape and be free from him. In both stories we see that masters teach their slaves their own native language, but the purposes of doing so and the motives behind this are different in each case. In case of Friday, the main goal is companionship and conversations, in case of Caliban, Prospero teaches him the language only to make him understand and carry out his orders.

Reading both works we can clearly see that although slavery has a negative meaning and negative connotations in general, in some cases slavery can vary and take various forms, as it is illustrated in *The Tempest* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Sometimes we cannot clearly see that there are different forms of slavery and we treat it as just loss of freedom. Some individuals, like Shakespeare and Defoe see completely different images of slavery. In the first case slavery is for cruel intentions, in the second one it takes a form of friendship, companionship and the slave himself is willing to stay by the master's side. In both cases we deal with the establishment of authority, self-establishment and absolute power over the societies where the protagonists live, the use of knowledge and tools which the natives of the island do not possess. Most importantly, in both cases we have the same setting, same sort of actions, but we have difference in motives and relationship developments. In spite of the fact that the setting, the ideas and the major themes share similarities, Defoe's and Shakespeare's images and perceptions of slavery somewhat differ from each other and, consequently, take different forms and lead to different outcomes.