Robinson Crusoe Study Guide

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Robinson Crusoe Study Guide.....1
Contents.....2
Introduction.....3
Author Biography.....4
Plot Summary.....6
Characters.....9
Themes.....12
Style.....15
Historical Context.....17
Critical Overview.....20
Criticism.....22
Critical Essay #1.....23
Critical Essay #2.....27
Critical Essay #3.....35
Adaptations.....39
Topics for Further Study.....40
Compare and Contrast.....41
What Do I Read Next?.....42
Further Study.....43
Bibliography.....44
Copyright Information.....45

Introduction

Daniel Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* was published as a fictional memoir in 1719. It was so commercially successful that he quickly wrote a sequel. Realizing that fake autobiographies made a good profit, Defoe wrote four more first-person narratives before 1724, The best known are *Moll Flanders* (1722), *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), and *The Fortunate Mistress, or Roxana* (1724).

Today *Robinson Crusoe* remains a popular adventure narrative. In fact, the book gave rise to the "Robinsonade," adventure tales that rework the structural elements of Crusoe's island tale. Moreover, the character of Robinson Crusoe is recognized as a literary and cultural icon, like Don Quixote, Don Juan, and Faust; the story of a man stuck on a deserted island has become familiar to nearly everyone in the Western world.

Author Biography

Daniel Defoe was born in 1660 in Cripplegate, just outside the walls of the City of London. His parents, James and Alice Foe, were Dissenters Protestants who refused to accept the authority of the Anglican Church (also known as the Church of England).

In 1670 Defoe's mother died and he was sent to boarding school. He attended Charles Morton's academy at Newington Green, where he received an excellent education and developed a taste for political radicalism.

Defoe finished his studies al Morton in 1679 and entered the hosiery business. In 1684 he married Mary Tuffley. a wealthy young woman. He prospered in business and became a member of the Butcher's Companyone of several companies that controlled business in London, He also gained several influential friends in the government.

Unfortunately. Defoe overextended his investmentsat one point he owed seventeen thousand poundsand was sued eight times between 1688 and 1694, ending up in debtor's prison in 1692. However, King William III proved to be a true patron and by the late 1690s Defoe's fortunes were on the mend.

His first important work. *An Essay upon Projects* (1697), proposed social improvement schemes; his first profitable work was a political poem satirizing xenophobia. *The True-Barn* ***Englishman*** **(1701).**

After the death of William **III,** Queen Anne succeeded him on the English throne. There was no one to protect Defoe when he was revealed as the author of *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters,* (1702). a pamphlet which satirically advocated extermination of religious, nonconformists. For his work, Defoe suffered three days in the pillorybut he was somewhat vindicated when the crowd threw flowers instead of rotten vegetables. Meanwhile, he went bankrupt.

Robert Harley, the Tory who headed Queen Anne's government, made Defoe a spy and forced him to gather information on his political opponents. Defoe's opinion journal, *The Review,* became a mouthpiece for Harley's views. While a Tory spy. Dei'oe loured Britain and invested in Scotland. In 1707, the year that England and Scotland were united in the Act of Union, Defoe owned every newspaper in Edinburgh.

Queen Anne's death in 1714 precipitated the decline of the Tory Party and put Defoea Tory spy but a Whig at heartin an awkward position. When Defoe was imprisoned for slanderous remarks. Lord Chief Justice Parker decided to release Defoe and make him a spy for George I. Defoe became saboteur of the anti-govemment Tory paper. *Weekly Journal.*

Meanwhile, Defoe experimented with prose and began to write innovative fiction. His first novel was his 1717 "memoir" chronicling the story of peace negotiations with France.

In 1719 *Robinson Crusoe* was published to commercial success. It was followed by four more very popular "biographies." as well as essays on crime, the family, and economics. He died in 1731.

Plot Summary

Born in York

A retired German merchant named Kreutznaer settles in the York country where, due to the "usual corruption of words in England." the German name becomes Crusoe. In York, Mr. Crusoe marries a woman whose surname is Robinson.

Robinson Crusoe, born in 1632, is their third child. Early on, Crusoe's father determines that his son will become a lawyer. Unfortunately, Crusoe "would be satisfied with nothing but going to sea." His mother and father do not allow it.

To London and Trade

A year later Crusoe sneaks away and accepts passage to London. He leaves on September I, 1651. During a terrible storm, he promises to return home to his parents. Yet after the ship sinks, he forgets his promise. Instead, he goes to London and befriends the captain of a vessel bound for Guinea. He joins the voyage.

After a successful voyage, Crusoe resolves to make another journey with his friend. Yet after his friend suddenly dies, he gives most of his money to the captain's widow, invests some money, buys trade goods with the remainder, and takes the same ship for another voyage. On the way to Guinea, Moorish pirates seize the ship and he is forced to become a slave.

Two years later, Crusoe escapes in a fishing boat with the slave boy Xury. They sail down the "Barbarian Coast" of West Africa. Finally, just off the Cape Verde Islands, a Portuguese ship bound for Brazil rescues them. With Xury's consent, he sells him along with the boat's inventory to the ship's master.

Deciding to make his fortune in the area, Crusoe purchases a slave and a Brazilian sugar plantation. He enjoys moderate success with the new venture. A bit restless, he becomes interested in leading a slave expedition to Africa. So, at the "evil hour, the 1st of September, 1659," he embarks for Guinea; tragically, a hurricane wrecks the vessel on a sand bar and only Crusoe survives.

"The Island of Despair"

Crusoe is shocked to find himself on the deserted island. His shock gives way to jubilation and thanksgiving for Ms survival. However, when he realizes the serious nature of his dilemma, he runs around in shock, paranoia, and fear. He finally falls asleep in a tree gripping a stick.

Crusoe spends several days cannibalizing the shipwreck for materials and provisions. With these salvaged goods, he begins to establish a fort— which he calls his "castle"—where he rules over a dog, some cats, and a parrot. He keeps a record of time, but after his ink runs out, he cannot maintain his journal.

Reviewing his life, he realizes that he has been selfish and cruel. He repents and resolves to lead a virtuous life. His days are filled with exploring the island, improving his castle, domesticating goats, experimenting with pottery, and developing other skills necessary for self-sufficiency.

Having secured shelter and food, Crusoe makes a boat. He constructs a small one, but he is nearly swept out to sea by dangerous currents. He uses the boat only for transportation to other parts of the island.

After twelve years, Crusoe nearly dies of fright over "the print of a man's naked foot on the shore." In a flurry of self-preservation, he expands his fortifications. He also discovers human bones and signs of cannibalism. Eleven years later, he witnesses a cannibal feast. A Spanish ship wrecks off the coast and Crusoe is able to salvage some provisions from the wreck.

The End of Solitude

One night, in his twenty-fourth year on the island, he dreams of saving one of the cannibals and civilizing him. Eighteen months later, on a Friday, his dream comes true. The savage falls at Crusoe's feet out of gratitude. Crusoe calls him Friday, and teaches him important English words like "Master," "Yes," and "No."

Gradually, Friday becomes civilized, converts to Christianity, and adopts English habits. Friday tells Crusoe about the Spanish castaways living with his tribe on the mainland. Crusoe begins work on a bigger boat to bring the Spaniards to his island

In the twenty-seventh year, cannibals hostile to Friday's tribe (along with a few of their captives) visit the island. One of the captives is a European, so Crusoe and Friday attack the cannibals to free the captive: Crusoe shoots several of them and the rest of the cannibals flee. One of the captives turns out to be Friday's father. With people to help and good advice, Crusoe expands his agricultural production.

On the condition that they accept Crusoe's leadership, the Spaniard and Friday's father leave to fetch the rest of the Spaniards. Meanwhile, a group of English mutineers lands on the island to dispose of their captain and his loyal officers. Crusoe and Friday rescue them, capture the mutineers, and take back the ship.

The mutineers choose to stay on the island as Crusoe's subjects rather than return for punishment in England. Crusoe takes Friday to England as honored guests of the rescued English captain.

Back to Civilization

After an absence of twenty-eight years, Crusoe returns London in June, 1687. After the English captain gives him a reward, Crusoe learns that his parents are dead

Crusoe discovers that he is rich because of some previous investments. After rewarding those who served him faithfully and selling his plantation, he returns to London.

Back in London, he marries and fathers three children. After his wife dies, he embarks on a final journey. On the way back, he visits his colony, which is thriving.

Characters

Captain of the Guinea Trading Ship

Arriving in London, Crusoe happens to meet the master of a ship bound for Guinea. The two men become friends, and Crusoe decides to make the journey too. Unfortunately, the man dies en route to Guinea.

Captain's Widow

The widow of Crusoe's friend the Captain of the Guinea Trading Ship is one of the two substantial female characters in the book. A trustworthy friend, she watches his money and becomes his London agent.

These responsibilities are appropriate to the gender roles governing the London financial district. Women as well as men were investors in the Bank of England□affectionately known as the lady of Threadneedle Street.

Comrade in Hull

Crusoe meets a friend in Hull who offers him a trip to London. This friend represents the youth of the English mercantile class as well as a life of adventure. He inspires Crusoe in his dreams of a life at sea.

The Comrade's Father

The Comrade's father is the master of the first vessel Crusoe travels on in Yarmouth, where he goes to recover. When his comrade tells his father that Caisoe was on the vessel as a sailor, he tells Crusoe that he ought to give up seafaring.

The Comrade's father resembles Crusoe's own father. They are both old-fashioned men and fearful of change. For them, a man's destiny is determined at birth.

Robinson Crusoe

The protagonist of Defoe's fictional autobiography, Crusoe is an adventurous man who rejects the expectations of his family and the constraints of the English middle class for a life on the high seas. After a devastating wreck at sea □of which he is the only survivor□he is forced to live confront his fear aboul being alone in order to survive the harsh demands of his lonely and solitary existence.

Crusoe is not by nature a brave man. In time, his reason grows sharper and he conquers his fears. In fact, for a time he wanders the island without any weaponry. He learns how to do many diverse tasks, such as making an ax, baking bread, and building an elaborate shelter. When faced with marauding cannibals, he attacks them and rescues their captives. Finally, when he returns to London, he is able to readjust to English life and even gets married and has a family.

Friday

Friday is a native rescued by Crusoe; the young man eventually becomes his loyal servant. He is described by Crusoe as a Creole□a mix of African and Indian□-and represents the wildness of nature. Through his relationship with Friday, Crusoe is able to confront his fear of the native people of the region.

When Friday offers to exchange ideas with Crusoe on religion or technology, Crusoe refuses to learn from his knowledge. For example, when they begin to build a boat together, Friday wants to show Crusoe how to burn out the inside. Crusoe, however, insists on the more laborious method of using a hatchet. Crusoe's reluctance to treat Friday as an equal symbolizes general European attitudes toward "the savage."

Eventually, Friday becomes Europeanized, accepting English customs and religious concepts. He symbolizes the process of colonialization.

Mr. Kreutznaer

Crusoe's father is an immigrant from the town of Bremen, Germany. A merchant by trade, Mr. Kreutznaer's name is changed in England to Crusoe. He is a "wise and grave man" who pleads with Crusoe to give up his notions of adventure and settle in England at a solid middle-class occupation like law.

Mrs. Kreutznaer

Although his mother refuses to intercede on Crusoe's behalf and win him his father's blessing, she does support her son in private. She represents the "proper woman" referred to at the end□a hard worker who is not afraid of risks.

Old Savage

The Old Savage is one of the captives rescued by Crusoe and Friday; surprisingly, he turns out to be Friday's father. He too pledges allegiance to Crusoe.

Portuguese Captain

The Portuguese Captain's ship rescues Crusoe from Africa, takes him to Brazil, and purchases Xury. He also helps invest Crusoe's money and acts as a father Figure for him. He is an honest pilot of his crew and vessel and he serves Crusoe faithfully.

The Spaniard

The Spaniard is one of the captives rescued by Crusoe and Friday. After they release and give him a weapon, the group is able to kill many of the cannibals. The Spaniard turns out to be an honest fellow who advises Crusoe to expand the plantation. The Spaniard's belief in Roman Catholicism is of no importance to Crusoe; what matters to him is that the Spaniard has a good work ethic and a true sense of honor.

Mr. Wells

Mr. Wells is Crusoe's Portuguese neighbor; his plantation is next to Crusoe's in Brazil. Crusoe and Mr. Wells exchange labor and help each other when needed□a common practice for colonizers at that time. Accordingly, they become good friends and look out for each other's affairs It is Wells who takes over the management of Crusoe's estate while he lives on his island. Wells represents the settler and plantation operator.

Xury

Xury is a servant that is forced into slavery with Crusoe. Fortunately, they are able to escape their masters. Xury, like Friday, naturally assumes the role of obedient and affectionate slave. Xury represents a European's notion of the non-European. He has better natural instincts□he is a natural hunter, a hide processor, he can see better at night (or day, for it is Xury who spots the Portuguese ship), and his sense of self-preservation is keener. Xury agrees to being sold into slavery on the condition that if he converts to Christianity he will be free in ten years.

Themes

Fear

Robinson Crusoe must overcome his fear in order to survive his long ordeal on the deserted island. The trial by fear begins when he runs about like a madman, scared of every shadow, and sleeps in a tree with a weapon: "fear banished all my religious hope, all that former confidence in God." He quickly realizes that he must recover his wits and reason if he is to survive.

At several points in the narrative, Crusoe is almost overwhelmed by his fear of the unknown. It propels him to colonize the island, securing his shelter and becoming self-sufficient. His ability to funnel his fear into productivity and creativity allows him to survive under extreme conditions.

Crusoe masters his fear when he faces the ultimate challenge□the devil. Investigating a cave, he is met by a pair of eyes. At first scared, he realizes that he can confront this enemy just like he has met every other challenge on the island "He that was afraid to see the devil, was not fit to live twenty years in an island all alone "

With that, he rushes in to confront the devil and discovers a dying goat. He has passed his trial.

Had he not faced his fears, he would have run away in full belief that the devil lived in that cave. Instead, he investigates and confronts his fear.

Human Condition

Robinson Crusoe is a meditation on the human condition, and an argument for challenging traditional notions about that condition. Finding himself alone in a deserted island, Crusoe struggles to maintain reason, order, and civilization. His "original sin" is his rejection of a conventional life. When he leaves England for a life on the high seas, he refuses to be "satisfied with the station wherein God and Nature hath placed" him.

Crusoe struggles with□and eventually triumphs over□nature. The book suggests that this struggle is at the heart of human nature: man is on earth to triumph and gain profit from nature. Any profit makes sense in this view of the world, whether that means getting just one plank out of a huge tree or building a boat too heavy to bring to the water. Once Crusoe is able to overcome his fear and subdue nature is rewarded handsomely.

Money

Consistent with Defoe's writings on economics, money is an important theme in *Robinson Crusoe.* At the beginning of the narrative, Crusoe details how much money he has, what he does with it, and what he gains by his actions.

On the island, money loses all value. Crusoe has to find another way to measure his worth. While rummaging through a ship for salvage he laments aloud at the sight of some money, "O Drug! ... what are thou good for." At that point he realizes that just one knife is worth more than money. Usefulness is the key to evaluation of worth.

Crusoe's hope of returning to England is symbolized by these tokens of civilization□on the island, the money is only a reminder of his old life and he treasures it as a memento. In all of his other endeavors he freely admits his success or failure. But as a merchant, he knows that though separated from the world now, he can only reconnect with it if he has money. Once he returns to London, his old reliance on money returns.

Industrialization

Industrialization is defined here as a process whereby humans channel the forces of nature into the production and manufacture of goods for their economic consumption. This industrialization is Crusoe's occupation, according to his cultural background and his religion. He immediately sets out to be productive and self-sufficient on the island.

By the time *of Robinson Crusoe,* most villages were experiencing labor specialization. People began to buy bread instead of baking it. Thus Crusoe has to relearn many of these arts to survive. With practice, Crusoe is able to increase the level of industrialization on his island.

Crusoe has a few implements with which he is able to reconstruct a semblance of civilization as well as create more advanced technology. While building his house, he notes that every task is exhausting. In brief, he praises the idea of "division of labor" as he describes cutting timber out of trees, bringing the wood from the trees to the construction site, and then constructing his shelter. He soon devises labor-saving devices, thus increasing his efficiency and productivity.

The necessity of a sharp ax leads Crusoe to invent his own foot-powered sharpener. He has "no notion of a kiln," but he manages to fire pottery. He needs a mill for grinding his grain, but not finding a proper stone, he settles for a block of hard wood. The entire process of baking his own bread spurs a realization of how wonderful the state of human technology is.

People take the labor behind the necessities of life for granted when such items can be easily purchased in the market. Crusoe is not suggesting that people return to a world of self-sufficient households. Instead, as he goes about his Herculean tasks, like creating a simple shelf in his house, he comments that a carpenter could have finished the two-

day job in an hour. Thus he appreciates the process of specialization that helps make industrialization so successful.

Style

Narrative

Robinson Crusoe is a fictional autobiography written from a first-person point of view, apparently written by an old man looking back on his life. The story also includes material from an incomplete diary, which is integrated into the novel.

Spiritual Fable

Robinson Crusoe can be viewed as a spiritual or religious fable. Defoe was very concerned with religious issues, and nearly became a Dissenter minister. In the preface of the book, Crusoe asserts that he aims to "justify and honour the wisdom of Providence in all the variety of our circumstance."

In so doing, Crusoe clearly sees himself as part of the tradition of religious instruction manuals. The book does show similarities to the four different types of spiritual fable. Firstly, Crusoe, like many Puritans, keeps a diary in which he records his progress toward salvation. Of this first form of spiritual biography, the best known is John Bunyan's 1666 *Grace Abounding.*

The second form of spiritual fable evident in Crusoe is the guide or advice tradition. This type of fable is aimed at particular audiences□seamen, farmers, young people, women□-to point out the dangers of human existence, especially their own. The goal of such works is to show not just the dangers but the solution, usually a prayer.

The tale of Providence is the third tradition evident in Crusoe's story. In such tales, God is believed to be a being who intervenes in the affairs of people. Crusoe is constantly speculating on whether an event is due to God's intervention in providential terms.

The last form is the pilgrim allegory, like Bun-yan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). This form was very popular but often amounted to no more than a modernization of the parable about the Prodigal Son, or the story of Jonah.

In this form, a young man leaves his home and consequently isolates himself from God. This act results from pride, discontent, or the rejection of a "calling." God intervenes, usually with violence, to bring about a change in the prodigal's direction back toward Himself. By this intervention, the man realizes he should have stayed home or accepted his calling and thus willingly confronts evils and hardships to return to God. Crusoe's adventure follows this pattern.

Verisimilitude

Although heavily influenced by religious concerns and technique, Defoe's use of realism, or verisimilitude, is perhaps the most singular aspect of the work What Defoe did was apply and thereby popularize modern realism.

Modern realism□as formulated by Descartes and Locke but not fully outlined until Thomas Reid□holds that truth should be discovered at the individual level by verification of the senses. The realistic elements of *Robinson Crusoe* include the lists, time scale, repetition, diary, and Crusoe's ordinary nature. The reader could almost use *Robinson Crusoe* as a handbook if ever stuck on a deserted island.

Time

The concept of time is central to the structure of *Robinson Crusoe.* Defoe presents Crusoe's life chronologically. The details of Crusoe's life and activities mark the passage of time; and while exhausting to the modern reader, these small details reflect the concern with time during that period.

Allegory

Many critics view *Robinson Crusoe* as an allegory for Defoe's life. The first such attempt, by Charles Gildon, was spurred by a comment in the preface of Defoe's *Serious Reflections During the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.* Many scholars have since tried to match the known details about Defoe with the events in Crusoe. No one has been successful.

Earlier works by Defoe add credence to this view. His notebook of meditations, written when he was twenty-one, show that Robinson Crusoe's story was on his mind a long time, well before the sensational tales about Alexander Selkirk.

More clues can be found in Defoe's most autobiographical piece, *An Appeal to Honour and Justice* (1715). Defoe claims that he endured great solitude but had remained "silent under the infinite Clamours and Reproaches, causeless Curses, unusual Threatnings, and the most unjust and injurious Treatment in the World " Although it is impossible to be certain whether *Robinson Crusoe* is an allegory for Defoe, it is certain that Crusoe represents Defoe's thoughts on solitude and industriousness.

Historical Context

Dissenters

Dissenters (also Nonconformists) is a term that refers to Protestant ministers and congregations (among them: Quakers, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists) who rejected the authority of the Anglican Church. Dissenters refused to participate in Anglican services, take communion, or conform to the tenants of the Church of England under the 1662 Act of Uniformity and the later Five Mile Act.

The Act of Uniformity decreed that all ministers adhere to the Book of Common Prayer. Those who refused were penalized by the Five Mile Act, which ordered that lawbreakers could not come within five miles of their home parish or town.

When William and Mary assumed the throne in 1688, their need for money and their belief in tolerance prompted them to pass the Toleration Act of 1689. This law allowed Dissenters to license their meeting houses with their own ministers, provided they took oaths of allegiance to England according to the Test Act.

The Restoration

When Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) came to power in England in 1653 he instituted a strict government based on Puritan principles. Although this benefited the middle class and the merchants, his excessive taxes, his rule by force, and the absence of trial by jury or parliamentary representation gradually led the English people to hate him more than they had Charles I.

When Cromwell died in 1658, his son Richard (1628-1712) assumed the reigns of power. His weakness soon led to his resignation, and the army and parliament verged on a civil war. However, the monarchy was restored to power when General George Monck invited Charles II to return.

Charles II (1630-1685) restored the British monarchy in May of 1660. An enthusiastic parliament convened in the following year, and became known as the "Cavalier Parliament." Its session lasted until 1679. The Church of England was restored by the Clarendon Code, which also demanded oaths of allegiance to the king. It also made it unlawful to raise arms against the king.

Colonialism

Two dominant European powers lost much of their power during the seventeenth century. Firstly, Spain's decline began after a series of naval losses. Secondly, Portugal was not able to withstand Dutch aggression. Although both nations would retain control

over several colonies, by the end of the seventeenth century France and England became the dominant world powers.

England's colonies in North America Jamestown, Virginia (founded 1607) and Plymouth, Massachusetts (founded 1620)were becoming prosperous by the 1700s. The original English colonies in the New World were joined by new ones: the Carolinas (1663), Pennsylvania (1682), and islands in the West Indies.

Glorious Revolution

When Charles II died, James II (1633-1701) assumed the throne of England. A fervent Roman Catholic, James freed many Catholics, Quakers, and Dissenters from prison. Alarmed by his policies, the Earl of Argyll and the Duke of Monmouth joined to overthrow the King in 1685. They were defeated, due in large part to a lack of support from the noble classes and the London merchants. Some suggest that Defoe himself was among those captured.

In 1688, James II had an heir and he proceeded to impose his Catholic agenda, including Catholicizing the army. The nobles and merchants decided to bet their lives on an "invasion," by extending an invitation to the Protestant rulers William and Mary of the United Provinces (Netherlands).

William III (1650-1702), having promised to defend English liberties and Protestantism, landed with an army in 1688 and marched unopposed on London. James II fled to Ireland where his supporters, the Jacobites, were strong. He had French backing as well as the support of some of the Scottish clans. The Scottish Jacobites were defeated by William III at Killiecrankie in 1689.

In the following year, William III defeated James II at the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland.

William then turned his attention to Europe. With English money and troops, he fought against the French in the War of the League of Augsberg until 1697. William's need for money led to the creation of the Bank of England (1694), and a commercial revolution which would enable Britain to eventually dominate global commerce

England in 1719

In 1719 England was a more tolerant and stable country; as a result, emigration to America decreased. As Defoe reported while in London, the wages of workers in England were high and unemployment low. Competition in the textile trade resulted in an threatened market, but the English re-tooled and remained competitive.

After the instability of Cromwell and the Restoration, the Hanovers assumed the throne. By the Treaty of Utrecht, English vessels had access to Spanish trade. This latter development made economists like Defoe enthusiastic about the market.

When the stock market crashed as a result of the South Sea Bubble in 1721, a great number of previously wealthy people lost their fortunes. Unlike a similar bubble known as France's Mississippi Scheme, the incident did not cool English enthusiasm for capital speculation and stock trading. Consequently, England recovered from the South Sea Bubble to develop the financial resources necessary to launch the Industrial Revolution.

Critical Overview

Robinson Crusoe did not revolutionize the book industry in London, but it was a great commercial success; in fact, a second edition was released within only two weeks after the first had been published. Pirated editions came out within hours of the book's release. One of these pirated editions, known as the 'O' edition, is extremely valuable today.

Critical reaction to *Robinson Crusoe* is generally negative or patronizing. Many early commentators derided the novel as commercial and unrefined. Yet many commentators celebrated the adventurous hero, Robinson Crusoe.

Charles Gildon launched the first sustained attack on Defoe's novel with *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Mr. D-De F-,* in 1719. In his critique, Gildon focuses on the novel's inaccuracies, as well as a "Looseness and Incorrectness of Stile."

His most interesting criticism, however, charges Defoe with slander in regards to English shipping practices. He contends that there is "no Man so ignorant as not to know that our Navigation produces both Safety and our Riches and that whoever therefore shall endeavor to discourage this, is so far aprofest Enemy of his Country's Prosperity and Safety." Little did Gildon, or anyone else at the time, realize that *Robinson Crusoe* was to inspire many colonial and pioneering dreams.

Decades later, Theophilus Cibber, a playwright and Shakespeare reviser, signaled a change in critical attitudes toward *Robinson Crusoe.* In his 1753 essay, he praises Defoe for his "moral conduct" and "invincible integrity." *Robinson Crusoe,* he says, "was written in so natural a manner, and with so many probable incidents, that, for some time after its publication, it was judged by most people to be a true story."

Jean-Jacques Rousseau concurred with Cibber in 1762, when he recommended *Robinson Crusoe.* Furthermore, asserted Rousseau, since books are necessary, then *Robinson Crusoe* should be given to children for it teaches them self-sufficiency.

Scottish critics were just as enthusiastic about Defoe's novel, James Beattie included a review of *Robinson Crusoe* in his *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (1783) He maintained that the story is "one of those books, which one may read, not only with pleasure, but also with profit."

Sir Walter Scott, the leading advocate of verisimilitude in the early nineteenth century, praised the work for its realism. Scott also noted the tremendous impact it had on boys who go to sea for the first time "in the corner of the nursery." Robinson Crusoe's "situation is such as every man may make his own, and, being possible in itself, is, by the exquisite art of the narrator, rendered as probable as it is interesting."

In the second half of the nineteenth century, scholars began a debate to the real identity of Robinson Crusoe. Thomas Wright proposed that the character of Robinson Crusoe is

based on Alexander Selkirk. So prevalent was this belief that maps even to this day mark Selkirk's island off the coast of Chile as Crusoe's island, despite the clear description in the novel of the island's location.

In his *Das Kapital,* (1867), Karl Marx deemed *Robinson Crusoe* as capitalist propaganda. Ian Watt, in his *The Rise of the Novel,* concurred with Marx's analysis. Moreover, Watt asserted that Puritanism was merely a precursor to capitalism.

With this perspective, Watt echoed the theory of his contemporary, Max Weber, while setting the terms for much of the debate surrounding the novel. In fact, with the exception of Diana Spearman and George A. Starr, the economic reading of the novel dominated critical perspectives of *Robinson Crusoe* until the 1980s.

Although James Joyce explored the colonialist theme of *Robinson Crusoe* as early as 1911, his comments were not published until 1964. Since then, writers such as Toni Morrison, Derek Wal-cott, and Edward Said have viewed the novel as an allegory of colonialism.

Peter Hulme argues for the importance of placing the novel within its historical context. Hulme's article does not bash Defoe but praises him for his "scrupulous attention to financial details" as well as his honesty.

Hulme suggests that the hero has two personalities: one is in isolation on an island working on his individualism while his "ghostly 'partner'" is enslaving people and managing a plantation. The most dangerous point of the book is when the two are reunited.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Jeremy W. Hubbell is a graduate student in History at SUNY Stony Brook and has written for a wide variety of business, academic, and educational publishers. In the following essay, he views Robinson Crusoe *as a guidebook for English colonialism.*

Today, the typical reading of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* assumes that the novel is central to the bourgeois myth However, as Diana Spearman and others have pointed out, the story of a man in isolation for twenty-four years is a strange myth for a class of people dependent on an economic system that requires people to interact with one another through an economic medium.

Instead, Defoe's novel meditates on the redeeming qualities offered by the labor of colonialism for the Englishman. Work was the way to civilize the wilderness of the New World and achieve peace with God The project of colonialism, as the Puritans were proving at the start of the eighteenth century, provided a profitable way of realizing God's directive in Genesis: "be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it."

Although too old to follow God's directive, Defoe hoped to persuade the English people to engage in the good work. He even shows them how□ the Englishman must be ruthless yet reasonable in order to conquer nature and receive God's reward. Defoe's novel encourages England to emulate the Puritans in their success.

He believed that Englishmen were destined to succeed at colonialism if they overcame their fear through the use of their psychological tools: their reason, their work ethic, and their Protestant faith. In *Robinson Crusoe,* Defoe imagines a *true-born Englishman* fulfilling his fantasy. Throughout the novel, Defoe makes clear that a man's power over himself and nature depends upon ceaseless labor□ this is the secret to the colonial project.

Before the colonialist can begin to work, security precautions must be taken. This is Crusoe's first concern. The next phase of conquest is the act of possession.

Both concerns are demonstrated during his escape from slavery and his dealings with Xury, who embodies the barbarities of both slavery and Africa Crusoe has two advantages over the boy, in that he is bigger and he has a gun. In other words, Crusoe's first providential trial is a small contest. He passes and is and is amply rewarded.

In this first trial, his planning and stealth (both are forms of work) have already provided him with possessions, but Xury's subordination secures his claim to the ownership of the commandeered vessel, the stolen goods, and even Xury himself. This pattern of getting and securing by force is repeated throughout the novel. The power of the patriarch, however, comes only by the grace of God, and only after vast expenditures of labor.

On the island, Crusoe cannot immediately carry out this model as well as he wishes. He must first master himself The process of mastering himself and his environment takes twenty years, finally culminating when he faces what he believes to be a devil, which turns out to be a dying goat.

During those twenty years, Crusoe illustrates the small steps towards self-sufficiency and self-mastery His entire scheme of labor and conquest serializes the lesson of patience. Part of this lesson involves a day-to-day manufacture of an organized civilization.

He wants to construct a castle, but he must first "make me some tools." Thus, he recovers as many items of civilization as possible from the wrecked ship. Next, he sets about remaking civilization with those salvaged objects. He constructs a shovel, a table, and a chair. These things prevent him from existing "like a mere savage."

As a civilized man, he makes peace with God and institutes daily readings from the New Testament. From this point on, there are few skills he cannot master with the use of logic and reason, although issues of security and ownership remain unsettled

The island contains no singular embodiment of nature to be conquered, so instead every element of the island presents a threat. Crusoe vacillates on how to deal with these threats The first method involves visualization of mastery:

I came to an opening... the country appeared so fresh . . it looked like a planted garden . surveying it with a secret kind of pleasure .. to think that this was all my own, that I was king and lord of all this country mdefeasibly, and had a right and possession; and, if I could convey it, I might have it in inheritance as completely as any lord of a manor in England

Here, Crusoe is expressing a Lockean sentiment: the perception that "I own it" is half of ownership. Yet this is insufficient, because anyone or anything could perceive and state likewise.

So Crusoe uses fear to complete his conquest. A metaphor for his use of terror is found in his conflicts with his winged enemies, the crows. He era-ploys terror in the same way the English crown does; he hangs three dead crows as if they were "notorious thieves" and, consequently, he never sees another bird in that part of the island.

He also employs terror with the goats. He learns the value of entrapment and starvation as coercive devices, and soon has a tame herd serving his nutritional needs. The most radical element of terror Crusoe employs in his campaign against the armies of nature and barbarity is the fortification of his shelter. For this, he uses trees, cables, and the earth to make impenetrable shelter.

However, his construction never serves a defensive purpose. Rather, it signifies the completion of his ownership; with his ten-foot walls, there is no doubt that he rules the land he has surveyed.

Crusoe's power depends upon a constant supply of labor. Once he has conquered the island with his hedges, fences, granaries and boats, he begins to fear that the cannibals will take it all away from him. Clearly, God's work is never finished, but Crusoe soon finds help.

As in his earlier ceremony of possession, he visualizes having a servant before he even rescues Friday. Colonialism, according to Crusoe, demands a steady state of mind developed in the course of laborious exercises. Even when Friday shows him an easier way of constructing a boat, Crusoe sticks to his own method.

Crusoe's success results from a cruelty to self. By doing things the hard way, he learned hard lessons, and he wants Friday to imitate him. His relationship with Friday reflects his relationship with himself

Away from the hectic world of 1719, Crusoe is on his island in perfect isolation Not only is Crusoe geographically located where Defoe had pinned his hopes (a colony at the mouth of the Orinoco where Sir Walter Raleigh attempted a settlement), but he lives in the time of greatest hope.

Defoe admired many of Oliver Cromwell's projects, especially the Navigation Acts, so it is not surprising that Crusoe is lost to civilization in 1659, the year Cromwell's son, Richard, lost political power. Once on the island, Crusoe reinvents society for himself. The island becomes his benevolent garden and he laboriously constructs the infrastructure of civilization by subjugating nature.

This is precisely the process the Puritans went through. As Joyce Appleby describes them in his *Capitalism and a New Social Order,* "Far from turning into modern entrepreneurs, Puritan men became rural patriarchs ... who commanded their wives, controlled their [children] and kept out any deviants who might spoil the sweet harmony of their peaceable kingdom." Crusoe behaves in the same way, keeping out crows, cannibals, or anyone refusing his authority. Power, for Crusoe, comes down to control:

It would have made a stoic smile to have seen me and my little family sit down to dinner, there was my majesty, the prince and lord of the whole island, I had the lives of all my subjects [two cats, a parrot who is the only one permitted to talk, and a dog] at my absolute command, I could hang, draw, give liberty, and take it away; and no rebels among all my subjects

This, and like passages, express Crusoe's belief in his "undoubted right of dominion" over the whole island. Such a belief in patriarchal forms of government led Philip Morgan to comment in his opus, *Slave Counterpoint,* that "Defoe had shrewdly caught the tenor of idealized plantation life." Granted, Defoe remains anxious about his ownership until he can register his claim in a European court.

The story of Crusoe is a counterpoint to the attitude that prevailed m London at the time: work, not speculation, will offer people full employment and contentment. Defoe was prophesying doom for the stock market, but he was echoing the warnings and calls for moderation issued by Horace Walpole

The only thing of value in Crusoe's story is his *right* to rule his work and accomplishments. All of his speculations lead only to his distraction and endangerment. With a cool head and reason, as well as the backing of God, Crusoe will be safe, fed, and happy□not to mention rich. Defoe hoped the same for England and its people.

If Defoe wanted to write a novel of capitalism, he would not isolate his hero on an island for twenty-four years. In fact, Defoe never tired of pointing out that a proper economy depends upon an individual's free access to the market, other people, currency, and an unimpeded right to invest and profit with that capital Defoe did not write a novel about the trials and tribulations of those attempting to involve themselves in commerce. His novel does not resemble a Horatio Alger story.

Robinson Crusoe is a religious instruction manual, cautioning the people of England against capital speculation or abandonment of their Puritan work ethic. Furthermore, the novel suggests that the English are destined to reap the rewards of colonialism due to their work ethic and their religious convictions.

Unlike every other castaway story popular in Defoe's time, in which the "hero" essentially goes crazy as a result of solitude, Crusoe thrives utilizing the Puritan principles□reason, work, and God. That is the lesson he wanted to provide to the English people.

Source: Jeremy W Hubbell, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 2000

BOOKRAGS

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay, MacDonald argues that the novel is about order, both physical and psychic, and that the establishment of order is its main myth.

A favourite scene of the illustrators of *Robinson Crusoe* is Crusoe's discovery of the footprint on the sand. Crusoe can be seen peering downwards in surprise and shock at an oversize and remarkably distinct single footprint, which, when we check the story, oddly enough is still visible several days later. The image remains in the mind, a crystallization of what the book has come to mean to us, the hero in his shaggy goatskins, his isolation, his ever-present danger from unknown cannibals. The footprint scene comes well on in the novel, and its effect belongs as much to what popularity, posterity and Disneyland have done to Crusoe, as to the text itself. For the reader, an image as strong appears earlier: that of Crusoe driven by the earthquake from his refuge in the rock, sitting alone in the storm, outside his palisade. He is, he tells us, "greatly cast down and disconsolate," "very much terrify'd and dejected,'[7] and remains in his solitary, defenceless position for upwards of two hours. His wits quite leave him at first, he has no notion of what to do, and it is not until he all of a sudden decides that the wind and the rain which follow the earthquake are the consequence of the earthquake, and it would be safe for him to retreat once more into his cave, that he can make any motion at all. Defoe does not tell us so, but we imagine Crusoe as sitting and shivering, clasping his knees, his head bowed in despair.

Between them the two scenes might serve to epitomize two views of the novel: if the first is our dominant image, we see Robinson Crusoe as the resilient hero of adventure, the man who survived, the man alone, triumphant over not only nature but all outside danger. Giving the second image precedence in our imagination leaves us with a different Crusoe, a solitary, pathetic figure, an outcast, rejected by man and deserted by God. Chronologically, of course, these images need not be contradictory, and we can read the novel as the history of the outcast's triumph, his finding of God, and with God, strength. With this in mind, our memory of Crusoe as an orphan of the storm fades, and the scene of his isolation becomes but a prelude to his inevitable victory. Yet such a reconciliation seems unsatisfactory; the image of isolation is too strong to be forgotten.

The criticism of recent years has forced us to look at *Robinson Crusoe* with more respect, and has gone a long way to explain the novel's extraordinary force and strength. We know that the book is full of faults, that it is repetitious and often boring, that it is sloppily written by a forgetful author. We are aware that the time scheme is improbable and the end of the novel is tacked on. We are told that Crusoe's life is unrealistic, that he does not seem to suffer from the lack of company, or women, or an adequate diet. We know too that all these things matter very little, since the book has a mythic simplicity, an appeal that owes little to realism and nothing to chronology.

Yet what is the central myth of *Robinson Crusoe,* what is the one theme that gives the novel its organizing structure and its rationale? Ian Watt, in his familiar thesis of Crusoe as *Homo economicus,* argued for the novel as a myth of man alone, independent and

free, while E.M.W. Tillyard placed the book in the tradition of epic. More recently, J. Paul Hunter has substantially reminded us of the background or religious allegory in the story, with Crusoe as a type of Adam, his sufferings and trials patterned upon the wanderings of the children of Israel. These views are well known, and each is necessary to an understanding of the novel: Crusoe *is* economic man, the hero of epic, *and* a reluctant pilgrim; he is all of these and more. Yet in thinking of him as a type we neglect his humanity, we forget how close he stands to ourselves. An article by Eric Berne on the psychology of the novel suggests a way of adjusting our perspective, in drawing attention to the man himself. Berne argues that Crusoe's behaviour on the island is motivated by his need to explore and secure the space around him, and in this Crusoe is at least partially successful. What is important about Berne's argument is not its conclusion□as a Freudian he sees Crusoe as something of a neurotic, the victim of an oral fixation□but his realization that the hero's conquest of the outer space of the island parallels the exploration of the inner space of the self.

I propose to look at this dual exploration from an archetypal viewpoint. Crusoe's quest is to find himself, a quest, both extraordinary and commonplace, heroic and human. He is the exceptional man, yet one of us, no neurotic, but a man undergoing the archetypal crises of life. Our response to him is one of sympathy, understanding and immediate recognition of his situation *Robinson Crusoe,* I will argue, is a novel about order, both physical and psychic, and the establishment of this order is its dominant myth.

The island is Crusoe's microcosm; it contains the extreme conditions he must learn to cope with, the dangers and the delights, both around him and within his own self. On the island he learns to progress from spiritual ignorance to psychic integration. In the middle of the storm after the earthquake, we see him at perhaps his lowest point He has survived his shipwreck, he has overcome his first fears of savages and wild animals, and he has laboriously salvaged innumerable articles from the hulk on the rocks. He has begun his system of fortification, erecting a semi-circular palisade of stakes around the face of a wall of rock, and he has tunnelled out his cave from this rock. Just before this point in the story, he seems to be well on his way to establishing himself in safety and some measure of repose, since he has seen his first miracle, the first sign of God's hand, in the discovery of the stalks of barley. Then comes the earthquake, which finds him inside his cave. His first action is to escape into the open, and he does this instinctively, being afterwards "like one dead or stupi-fy'd." His first fear is of being buried himself, his next, that his tent and all his goods will be buned even if he is not. When the storm is over and he has had time to consider, he finds himself subject to two equal fears: one, of being swallowed up alive, the other, of being in the open, of "lying abroad without any fence."

Seeing the novel as a record of the hero's establishment of some kind of psychic order within his personality, this scene takes on a powerful meaning. We remember that Crusoe has been buried before: when he is shipwrecked we are told that the wave swallowed him up, and "buried me at once 20 or 30 Foot deep in its own Body." Now, he again lives in fear of "being swallow'd up alive." His battle with Nature is cosmic; she seems a most terrifying and powerful force, ready to devour her unfortunate child. We remember that Crusoe is a Jonah, and that Leviathan lurks in the waves, even that he is

a type of Christ, and must needs descend into the dark jaws of Hell before he can be reborn. With these mythic and allegorical parallels in our minds, we can see this earthquake scene as a second beginning, a thrusting out from the womb-like cave into the open world. Until Crusoe has become aware of his defencelessness he cannot (like Jonah) begin the ordering of his life.

One of the peculiarities of the beginning of the novel is the nature of Crusoe's sin. He tells us repeatedly that he is a sinner, and that his sin is filial disobedience. He is guilty not only for his refusal to obey his father, but also because he has resisted the will of God, who gives him clear signs that he should never go to sea. Yet in spite of these explanations, we sense that Crusoe's actual sin is only important as a rationalization, and that he is a victim of an unrelenting fate. His father's constant advice is that he should seek the "middle state," for the golden mean brings man's only chance of earthly happiness. This is "the just Standard of true Felicity," and it can only be Crusoe's "meer Fate or Fault" that stirs him to wander, for he is by no means content with this middle state, either in England or later on his plantation in Brazil, but must explore the extreme. This indeed is the eternal fate of the hero. Crusoe has been singled out, chosen for testing by Providence, and we can have no reluctance to accepting his claim to be the Wanderer; being someone very special, he becomes a surrogate for ourselves. As a story of crime and punishment, *Robinson Crusoe* is incomprehensible; as a record of an individual's struggle to accept the responsibilities of the heroic role, to go to limit of self and return sane, the novel is in the mythic tradition. Crusoe cannot reach an equilibrium until he has both discovered and come to an accommodation with the world of extremes. This world is both around him and within him, both in his conscious and his unconscious self.

What emerges from the first part of the story is the inevitability of Crusoe's role as wanderer, a man driven by Providence towards some critical moment. That this moment is not just retribution, nor yet another adventure, but a meeting with God and Self, is central to any thematic reading of the novel. Crusoe's God is of course an external power, controlling the elemental forces, showing Himself to Crusoe through the sea, the storm, the earthquake and nature, but He is at the same time within Crusoe, manifesting Himself in his thoughts and his dreams, directing his soul through secret stirrings. It does no historical injustice to the novel to see in this communication with God Crusoe's exploration of his psyche, and in particular, to recognize, in the gradual freeing of Crusoe's soul, his acceptance of his unconscious.

It is when he becomes sick with an ague that Crusoe has his first real experience of God and makes his first prayer In the middle of his sickness he has a dream, in which "I thought, that I was sitting on the Ground on the Outside of my Wall, where I sat when the Storm blew after the Earthquake" when he sees a man descend from "a great black Cloud, in a bright Flame of Fire." This apparition seems unspeakable to Crusoe as it moves forward towards him with a "long Spear or Weapon" in its hand to kill him, and he is terrified when the figure speaks:

I heard a Voice so terrible, that it is impossible to express the Terror of it; all that I can say, I understood, was this, Seeing all these Things have not brought thee to Repent,

BOOKRAGS

now thou shalt die At which Words, I thought he lifted up the Spear that was in his Hand, to kill me.

Crusoe wakes filled with the horrors of this terrible vision.

This is clearly intended to be a symbolic conversation, the moment when Crusoe's Saul becomes Paul. The image of Crusoe's absolute isolation after the earthquake is repeated at the beginning of the dream: the two events in a sense are but one episode, when Crusoe is forced to reach down into his inner depths and find accommodation with his worst fears. In his half-conscious reflections upon his moral depravity immediately after his dream he casts his eye over his whole sinful life and comes to a true realization of his utter helplessness:

now I have Difficulties to struggle with, too great even for Nature itself to support, and no Assistance, no Help, no Comfort, no Advice; then I cry'd out, Lord be my Help, for I am in great Distress.

From this point on his spiritual cure is hardly in doubt. Looking for tobacco as medicine for his sickness, he finds a Bible; looking in the Bible he finds guidance from the word of God. He is led to reconsider his past life, and given hope for the future. He comes to understand that from being confined upon a barren island, he has been delivered from a sinful career, from being imprisoned, he is now free.

On recovering from his sickness—which is of course spiritual as well as physical—he is able for the first time to set out upon a journey of exploration. He has a "great Desire to make a more perfect Discovery of the Island, and to see what other Productions I might find, which I yet knew nothing of." He crosses over into the other half of the island, finding that it is fruitful—his own part is barren—having meadows, a great deal of tobacco (the herb that had cured his illness), sugar canes, melons, and grapes. Going further, Crusoe finds a spring, and everything m "a constant Verdure.... that is looked like a planted Garden." He immediately imagines himself as the lord of this fair country.

It is clear that the effect of this scene is symbolic Crusoe could not have found the fruitful part of the island until he had made peace with God; once he has realized he is no longer a prisoner the bars are open, and he is ready to be led into green pastures. On the psychological level, with his visionary dream Crusoe reaches into his unconscious, and is afterwards guided through his sickness by intuition and instinct. Until this point he has been resisting the forces within himself; after this dream he becomes resigned to his condition. On his recovery from his ague he is able to proceed further and explore the wonders of a new and delightful country, which in a sense may be said to stand for the unconscious itself. He builds a "bower" in this lotus land, and eventually sets up a little farm there, but significantly enough he never abandons his first home on the barren side of the island, telling himself that his rescue must come from that direction. The fruitful side has an almost seductive charm; there is something dangerous about it: it is from this side that the savages come when they do. Crusoe never thoroughly makes it his own, never quite surrenders himself, tempted though he is, to the "Pleasantness of the Place."

He is now able, however, to set up a reasonable and almost complete order in his new world after this first exploration of the island. He finds no want of food, and delights in all its variety. He tames first a parrot, then a young goat; added to his dog and cats they form his society. He professes himself increasingly comfortable, and his own house becomes a "perfect Settlement" to him. He still has his wanderings and doubts, but essentially he is at peace with himself:

I began to conclude in my Mind, That it was possible for me to be more happy in this forsaken Solitary Condition, than it was probable I should ever have been in any other Particular State in the World; and with this Thought I was going to give Thanks to God for bringing me to this Place.

It is at this point that we can see how completely Crusoe's inner order is reflected by his outer order. His actions at this stage of the novel are methodical and precise; working with hope in his breast he becomes increasingly constructive. He is an experimenter, hindered only by the inadequacies of his tools; he is a creator, limited only by his diminishing ignorance. We notice that Defoe's treatment of work is symbolic when we compare what Crusoe did before his dream and after. His first attempt to organize his solitary life was energetic rather than directed; with beaver-like industry he worked to create a world about him, making himself a home, fixing himself furniture, exploring a part of his neighbourhood. Immediately before his sickness he had worked frantically on a second salvage of the wreck, but all to very little purpose: he was frustrated by the tide and the sand; he could only hack pieces off the roll of lead, and the figurehead itself, freed by the wind, proved too heavy for him to move He did manage to bring a mass of timber, planks and iron-work ashore, enough to build a boat "if I had known how." What characterizes this labour is its pointlessness. This is made quite plain by the contrast of the work done after his recovery from his sickness: now his labour is as tedious, but it is purposeful He makes himself a board, and though it takes him five days before he can even begin to flatten the sides, he does succeed in his design, for he is patient. What does he need with boards, we might ask, remembering that he had salvaged enough planks from the ship to build a boat? The answer□unless we are willing to accept the explanation of the forgetful author□ is that the labour is symbolic of his spiritual and physical cure, now Crusoe is a creator, who is building his own order. He does not want nor need the abundance of the wreck, which in a sense is tainted by his previous sin, but he must make do with natural material. He must make his own things, and he must make things work. So he proceeds by trial and error, often laboriously, but with a new sense of design. He discovers how to grow his corn, and in his many difficulties he is "content to work it out with Patience, and bear with the badness of the Performance."

In settling the small world about him, he adjusts to the cosmos itself, observing and taking note of the seasons. He organizes his agriculture according to these observations, sowing and harvesting at the proper times. He sets his daily routine in strict and sensible parts; no time is unaccounted for, no time is wasted:

I was very seldom idle; but having regularly divided my Time, according to the several daily Employments that were before me, such as *First,* My Duty to God, and the

BOOKRAGS

Reading the Scriptures, which I constantly set a part some Time for thnce every Day. *Secondly,* The going Abroad with my Gun for Food, which generally took me three Hours in every Morning, when it did not Rain *Thirdly,* The ordering, curing, preserving, and cooking what I had kill'd or catch'd for my Supply, these took up great Part of the Day ..

He becomes an inventor, and after a fashion, a craftsman, discovering rough and ready ways to make his tools and pots. He sets himself up as the judge and executioner of his society, first over the animals (as with the birds that rob his field) and later over the savages and the mutineers. He still on occasion "wastes" his labour, spending long and fruitless hours on such a hopeless project as the first dug-out canoe, but this is a lapse, a backsliding from his real knowledge of God In the main he is at peace with his inner self. He has long dialogues with his soul, questioning his fate and the workings of Providence, reassuring himself

Thus I liv'd mighty comfortably, my Mind being entirely composed by resigning to the Will of God, and throwing my self wholly upon the Disposal of his Providence This made my life better sociable .

He still has occasional meetings with the world of the unconscious which unnerve him, and show him the limits of his psychic order. On launching his second canoe, he is carried away by the current; on reaching firm land with much difficulty he regains his bower, and drops into a sleep of exhaustion. He is awakened by a voice calling his name, "where are you Robin Crusoe? Where are you? Where have you been?" This excursion into unknown waters is a frightening experience, and it is only after an extended self-explanation that he really accepts his questioner as "honest Poll," the "sociable Creature."

It is in the middle of a long and circumstantial account of Crusoe's ordered world□his plantations, his fortifications, his stores, his goats□that we are suddenly surprised, as he is himself, by the appearance of "the Print of a Man's naked Foot on the Shore." Crusoe of course is more than surprised, he is 'Thunder-struck," and all his carefully constructed tranquility seems at once overturned. He hurries home to his fort, imagining intruders behind every bush, and immediately shuts himself up in great 'Terror of Mind." His fears are far from rational: he finds it impossible "to describe how many various Shapes affrighted Imagination represented Things to me in, how many wild Ideas were found every Moment in my Fancy, and what strange unaccountable Whimsies came into my Thoughts by the Way." He supposes at times that the footprint belongs to the devil, for there is something supernatural about its appearance, something terrifying in it being a *single* mark. His musings at length take a more balanced note, and he turns once again to God, finding in His revealed work comfort and direction.

The footprint is a disruption of Crusoe's little kingdom; it is a sign that there have been trespassers about on the island. Its dramatic effect is all the more powerful for the detailed description we have just had of an island apparently tamed; now civilization is shown to be a facade, the inviolate society broken into almost by malevolent magic. Crusoe's immediate action is to re-organize his world, to set up more and yet more lines

of defence about his fortifications, to crawl once more back into his island womb, to regret even the door on his cave. It is two years before he sees any further sign of the savages, and his mind, at first obsessed by thoughts of his own defence, then significantly enough turns to thoughts of revenge. "It would take up a larger Volume than this whole Work is intended to be, to set down all the Contrivances I hatch'd, or rather brooded upon in my Thought, for the destroying these Creatures." The savages are the intruders from another world; they must be met and destroyed before order can be restored.

It is as much Crusoe's inner peace that has been threatened as his outer order. Musing upon his now unsettled condition, he resolves to take direction from his unconscious:

How when we are m (a *Quandary,* as we call it) a Doubt or Hesitation, whether to go this Way, or that Way, a Secret Hint shall direct us thts Way, when we intended to go that Way ...

He makes it a rule of conduct from this time forth to obey these "secret Hints, or pressings of my Mind." To the Puritan this was a familiar way of receiving God's own instruction; Crusoe's speculations go a little further than usual, since he goes on to suppose that these "Intimations of Providence ... are Proof of the Converse of Spirits, and the secret Communication between those embody'd, and those unembody'd...." It is just after these thoughts that he has another nasty fright in a second encounter with the devil, when, exploring a cave, he sees "two broad shining Eyes of some Creature," which terrifies him with a pair of loud, deep sighs. The devil turns out to be a goat Crusoe once again in crawling into this enclosed and dark world which reveals itself to be in its innermost depths the most "glorious Sight seen in the Island"learns that the fear is of the unknown within and that indeed there is nothing so fearful as fear itself. Taking possession of this inner and most splendid cave, Crusoe fancies himself "like one of the ancient Giants," and for the first time feels quite safe from even "five hundred Savages."

Up to this point we have been shown a series of archetypal images in the life-voyage of this Wanderer: his disengorgement from the sea, more helpless and no wiser than Jonah himself; his isolation; his peril, first from (imaginary) wild animals, and later, from wild men; his burrowing back into the elemental earth: his expulsion from this womb to face the divine. As we have seen, this crisis, this meeting with the unconscious, is followed by the meticulous re-ordering of both the inner and the outer realities. The island, though still surrounded by the dangerous currents of the elemental waters, turns from prison into a kingdom, while the images of the wilderness give way to those of the enclosed garden. Now Crusoe, faced with the threat from the outside world, significantly seeks the solution within himself, enters the mouth of hell, confronts the devil, and finds in that cave of the unconscious a secure and hidden retreat.

He is by no means settled and easy after this experience in the cave, but still finds himself prey to innumerable doubts and fears. It is not until he meets his danger in the form of Friday that he becomes his old self once more: by taming, teaching and forming Friday after his own image he sets his world back to rights. Once the unknown becomes

familiar, once he is able to make it his own and impose his own order upon it, it no longer offers a real threat to him With Friday at his side, Crusoe spends "the pleasantest Year of all the Life I led in this Place."

Crusoe has now regained his confidence, and during the rest of the novel he is in command of his growing society. With the addition of Friday's father and the Spaniard "my Island was now peopled," and he is no longer just king in fancy. His resoluteness in guiding the attack on the savages, and later, in directing the defeat of the mutineers, makes us accept his title of "Governour" as real rather than ironic just as later, safe in Spain, his companions call him their "Captain." The order that he has imposed so carefully upon his own life is extended to those who come near him he plans the rescue of the fourteen shipwrecked Spaniards, and he restores to his ship the captain and his companions, imposing resolute yet merciful justice upon the mutinous crew. The final imposition of order upon his by now expanded world is the settlement of his commercial affairs, whose notable success□ and it is none of Crusoe's doing□is a reward for his finding of God and self.

He is now quite in touch with God and is content to be guided by the promptings of his inner self. His unconscious speaks to him in moments of crisis, and he listens: "I had some secret Doubts hung about me, I cannot tell from whence they came...." And they bid him to be on his guard, and so he is cautious. He speculates on the nature of such warnings, speaking of "certain Discoveries of an invisible World, and a Converse of Spirits." "Let no Man despise the secret Hints and Notices of Danger" he says, and later, on his way home to England, when he finds he has a "strange Aversion" to going to sea, he repeats the lesson: "let no Man slight the strong Impulses of his own Thoughts in Cases of such Moment."

Seen in this light, Crusoe's life becomes the experiencing and the ordering of the unknown. The peculiar scene of the wolves in the pass of the Pyrenees is felt as one last attack upon his psyche; by now he is so strong that even when "above three hundred Devils come roaring and open mouth'd" to devour him, and he tells us that he gives himself over for lost, we have little sense of crisis, and no fear for his safety.

This scene may be unrealistic, but realism, for all the detail of *homo economicus,* is not always Defoe's point. Crusoe's island is a world of creation and experience, and his twenty-eight years on the island should be read in somewhat of the same light as Jehovah's six days of creation. All is drawn into the myth of order Crusoe becomes more than *homo economicus* and more than the Wanderer: he becomes, finally, every man who has ever tried to cope with a chaotic and hostile world.

Source: Robert H MacDonald, "The Creation of an Ordered World in Robinson Crusoe," in *Dalhousie Review,* Vol. LVI, 1976, pp. 23-34

Critical Essay #3

In the following essay Benjamin discusses Defoe's contention that Robinson Crusoe *was autobiographical in nature, concluding that the book symbolized the author's spiritual development rather than an account of the historical facts of his life.*

Although Defoe claimed in the *Serious Reflections* that *Robinson Crusoe* was in part an allegory of his own life, attempts to connect details in the book with specific experiences in the life of Defoe have not been found convincing Complicated as the connection is between Defoe's life and his works, I believe that the claim may yet be found valid if we look at the book as a symbolic account of a spiritual experience rather than a kind of cipher of its author's life. It is quite possible that the symbolism is by no means a part of Defoe's intention; as his imagination warmed to its task, the story began to take on its symbolic overtones, and his later comment is merely an attempt to defend himself against the charges of trying to pass off fiction as fact.

Allegory seems to have been always congenial to the Puritan mind as a legitimate province in which the imagination might exercise itself; and although at times in the eighteenth century it came to be looked down upon as a rather crude vehicle of literary expression, it continued longer as a vital tradition in the dissenting milieu in which Defoe's mind was molded than in more advanced intellectual and literary circles. Defoe can hardly have been unaffected by the forces that shaped Bunyan and that accounted for the continued popularity of his allegories It is perhaps surprising that in view of his background we do not find more evidences of allegory in the work of Defoe.

Robinson Crusoe is far more than the account of a practical man's adjustment to life on a deserted island. Side by side with Crusoe's physical conquest of nature is his struggle to conquer himself and to find God. It is really a conversion story; like that of Augustine or Baxter, with the classic symptoms of supernatural guidance (in this case in a dream), penitential tears, and Biblical text. Despite repeated signs and warnings, Crusoe only gradually awakens to the necessity for salvation; and it is not until in his illness he stumbles to the tobacco box and comes upon the Bible that he crosses the hump. The final stage is his realization that his deliverance from the island is unimportant in comparison with his deliverance from sin through the mercy of God.

Now I began to construe the words mentioned above, *Call on me, and I will deliver you,* in a different sense from what I had ever done before; for then I had no notion of any thing being called deliverance, but my being deliver'd from the captivity I was in, but not I learn'd to take it in another sense Now I look'd back upon my past life with such honour, and my sins appear'd so dreadful, that my soul sought nothing of God but deliverance from the load of guilt that bore down all my comfort as for my solitary life, it was nothing; I did not so much pray to be deliver'd from it, or think of it, it was all of no consideration in comparison to this.

From this point on, his mind is essentially at peace, and the remainder of his autobiography is in the nature of an account of the due rewards and powers of the man who has been saved.

Although Defoe's Christianity is at times fairly materialistic, especially in comparison with that of Augustine, Bunyan or Baxter, the account of Crusoe's conversion has a peculiar force and intensity to it that tempts one into believing it of some greater than ordinary personal significance to Defoe. It is indicative, I think, that as soon as Crusoe gets back to Europe, he sheds his Christianity like an old cloak and pursues his complacent way with only the most perfunctory expressions of gratitude to his Creator and Preserver (e.g., the scene in the Pyrenees when he is attacked by wolves). But whatever the personal associations of the story to Defoe, at least a part of the effectiveness of the novel is due to the way in which the parallel struggles set off and suggest one another. Some of the details of Crusoe's struggle with nature seem to symbolize his spiritual quest, though perhaps not intentionally on the part of Defoe. One notices that many of these are among the most emphatic and memorable incidents of the novel.

The main outline of Crusoe's story lends itself readily to allegorization. Given the notion of life as a voyage, which is at least as old as patristic commentaries on the *Aeneid,* bom storm and desert island, punishment and proving ground, are logical corollaries. Contemporary use of some of these ideas can be found, for instance, in Matthew Greene's witty urbane *The Spleen.*

Thus, thus I steer my bark, and sail On even keel with gentle gale; At helm I make my reason sit, My crew of passions all submit. If dark and blustering prove some nights, Philosophy puts forth her lights; Experience holds the cautious glass, To shun the breakers, as I pass, . And once in seven years I'm seen At Bath or Tunbndge to careen. Though pleased to see the dolphins play, I mind my compass and my way.. I make (may heaven propitious send Such wind and weather to the end) Neither becalmed nor over-blown, Life's voyage to the world unknown

However, it should be emphasized that the distinctive feature of *Crusoe* is that which is apparently original with Defoe, the detailed account of Crusoe's adjustment to the island.

By no means all the details of the novel are allegorical. Some of these I have chosen may be found unconvincing, the well-disposed reader may wish to add others; but at least this will be a start toward isolating one of the elements that make the book such an appealing one.

The geography of the island is conceived in moral terms. The side of the island on which Crusoe lands and where he establishes his "home," as he calls it, although it affords a better prospect of the ocean, is less favored naturally than the other side that he explores later and where he builds his "bower." The latter yields not only a greater variety of fruits□aloes, limes, wild sugar cane, grapes□but a more numerous fauna. Goats abound in the rich meadow, also hares and fox-like creatures, and on the shore a

great profusion of turtles, which are something of a rarity on the other side of the island. Crusoe is tempted to move, but decides against it-wisely, as it turns out; for the shore where the turtles can be found is the one where the cannibals are accustomed to land for their inhuman feasts. Also, the richness proves to be largely illusory. Crusoe doesn't dare eat the grapes until dried, for fear of flux; a batch he gathers and leaves overnight are "trod to pieces" and spread about by some "wild creatures"; the goats, though more numerous, are harder to catch because of lack of cover. In a curious passage in his second trip he describes descending into a large wooded valley where he becomes lost for several days in the forests and in a haze that springs up.

It is difficult not to sense allegory at work behind all this. Turtle, as in Pope and Fielding, is a symbol of luxurious living; the grapes are harder to fix, though there may be Biblical overtones here; and the hot misty forest has suggestions of sloth and lassitude: " ... and then by easy journies I turn'd homeward, the weather being exceeding hot, and my gun, ammunition, hatchet, and other things very heavy." Since these experiences happen to Crusoe on his two exploratory trips shortly after his conversion, the thither side of the island becomes to him, like Egypt to the Israelites on the march to Canaan, a temptation to be resisted.

Fundamentally, the temptation to move is an appeal to a species of pride; not to remain where he had been cast up by divine Providence, but to go whoring after false gods. When it comes to attempting to escape from the island entirely, however, which presumably he must not do until a sign has been given, Crusoe shows that he is not proof against this sin. In his first effort, pride acts to blind his reason; he selects for his *periagua* a cedar so large (there is a significant reference to the temple of Solomon at this point) that when fashioned into a vessel, it cannot be launched by one man. Yet despite this warning he persists, builds a second boat, and, in maneuvering about the island, is almost swept away by currents to certain death. It is only then that Crusoe realizes where his unwillingness to accept his lot has led him, falling on his knees, he thanks God for his preservation and resolves "to lay aside all thoughts of my deliverance by my boat"

This incident acts as a turning point in Crusoe's career, from here on he makes no major mistakes, though he is capable of certain indiscreet plans in reference to the cannibals in the long course of his preoccupation with them.

Generally, the symbolism is clustered around the conversion. The peculiar effectiveness of the descriptions of the shoots of barley and the making of the earthen pot is probably due to their symbolic value in the religious context Crusoe sheds tears at the realization that the stalks are "perfect green barley," and for the first time begins to reflect seriously on God's providence. Clearly, they are the seeds of grace stirring in his heart and sending forth their first tender sprouts. Similarly, Crusoe's ultimate success in fashioning an earthen pot after certain false starts is analogous to his ultimate success in attaining a spiritual goal. In a sense Crusoe is the pot himself. Several times he has been brought to the fire, but nothing had come of it. Finally, however, his trials redouble (fresh fuel is brought to the fire), he glows clear red, and emerges a serviceable, if not handsome pipkin of the Lord. The analogy may seem far-fetched at first; but one should remember,

in addition to the fact that the very intensity of these descriptions suggests a special meaning for them, that dissenting circles were accustomed to think and to express themselves in terms of "chosen vessels" and seeds of grace or doctrine.

Other incidents may be susceptible of such an interpretation, the goatskin clothes he makes after his old ones wear out may be the new armor of faith, and the elaborate system of defense that Crusoe establishes on the island may suggest the invulnerability of the true believer, but the four examples I have chosen are the most obvious in respect to both their nature and their position in the narrative.

Source: Edwin B Benjamin," Symbolic Elements in Robinson Crusoe," in *Philological Quarterly,* Vol. XXX, No. 2, April 1951, pp 206-11.

Adaptations

Since the silent black-and-white film in 1916 with Robert Paton Gibbs, there have been some sixteen film adaptations of *Robinson Crusoe* This count includes versions in French, Spanish, Russian, Swiss, and German.

However, this count does not include all of the spin-offs, such as a female Crusoeas early as a silent film made in 1917or animations of Crusoe as a rodent in, *Rabbitson Crusoe* (1956). In 1965, *Robinson Crusoe* was made into a TV series. The book was made into a TV movie in the United Kingdom in 1974.

The most recent movie adapted from Defoe's novel is *Robinson Crusoe* (1996), produced by USA pictures. Directed by Rod Hardy and George Miller, Pierce Brosnan stars as a lovestruck Robinson Crusoe separated from the object of his desire.

Topics for Further Study

Research the ecological impact of colonialism. Use your research to explain the problematic overpopulation of cats on the island in the novel. What kinds of problems do we have today with exotic specie invasions? Investigate such a problem in your area.

How is the character of Friday presented in the novel? How is he different from other representations of native people in Defoe's time[9] Read Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko.* Contrast the character of Prince in that novel with Defoe's Friday.

Robinson Crusoe was very popular as a children's book What do you think children were supposed to learn from Crusoe? What moral lessons, if any, can be drawn from his story?

Many economists use *Robinson Crusoe* when explaining basic economic theory. What principles of economics does Crusoe demonstrate?

Crusoe is an ex-slave trader, but is horrified by the Spanish treatment of native South Americans Research the role of England in the slave trade. Is Crusoe's treatment of the native population any better than that of the Spanish Conquistadors?

Based on the novel, what was the eighteenth-century family like? How does it differ from your family?

BOOKRAGS

Compare and Contrast

1600s: Religion is a central focus of life. Many European countries-such as England, Spain, the Netherlands, and Portugalpersecute religious reformists and dissenters. As a result, many religious radicals emigrate to the New World in order to practice their religious beliefs.

Early 1700s: Religious fervor cools. The *philosophes* in France are trying to eradicate religion from their country with little success.

Today: Religious tolerance, while not universal, is accepted. The percentage of people that believe in some kind of organized religion remains high in most countries.

1600s: Countries such as England, France, and Spam strive to remain formidable imperialistic powers Maintaining colonial power and building a formidable military force is very expensive.

Early 1700s: Between the banking developments in Amsterdam and the Bank of England, the foundations of modern national finance are laid and the concept of the national debt is created.

Today: For poor nations, a national debt prevents them from challenging rich nations. In the wealthy nations, national debts cause much worry, but their existence is vital to the global financial market.

1600s: Trade is mostly in raw goods, luxury items, or expensive manufactured items. Occupational specialization is accelerating in European economies. For example, a farmer might begin to focus on dairy production.

Early 1700s: Manufactured goods are growing more plentiful while becoming less expensive The average person can now buy bread, candles, and cloth from specialized merchants.

Today: The economy of most Western countries has shifted away from manufacturing to technology

What Do I Read Next?

Another of Defoe's fictional biographies, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders,* was published in 1722. It is the story of an orphan, Moll Flanders, who is brought up in the house of the Mayor of Colchester. Moll leads an interesting life as she is involved with a succession of men, journeys to Virginia, returns to England, becomes destitute and, consequently, a prosperous thief.

A Journal of the Plague Year (1722) exhibits Defoe's talents as a journalist. The book details the devastating effects of a crippling plague.

Defoe's *Roxana, or the Fortunate Mistress,* (1724) chronicles the story of Roxana. The daughter of French Huguenots, Roxana and her children are abandoned by her husband. Along with her trustworthy maid, Amy, Roxana leads a life of adventure and dissipation.

One of the more famous Robinsonades grew out of the bedtime stories which Johann David Wyss (1743-1818) told to his family. Along with overseeing the education of his sons, Wyss loved to read tales of exploration such as those of Captain Cook and George Forster. His bedtime stories were written down by the family and published in 1812 as *The Swiss Family Robinson.*

Jules Verne was one of the most enthusiastic writers of the Robinsonade. Verne modernized Defoe's story. In his version, Robinson is a scientist who by accident finds himself in an unexplored world. His most explicit Robinsonade is the 1874 novel, *The Mysterious Island.* In this story a group of men in a hot-air balloon crash on an island, where they proceed to build mines, kilns, and factories.

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) remains a popular adventure tale. The story takes place in the eighteenth century, and begins when Jim Hawkins secures an old treasure map. He recruits some friends to go look for the treasure.

William Golding's 1954 novel, *Lord of the Flies,* is considered a contemporary Robinsonade. When a plane of schoolboys crashes on an island, the boys' attempt to create a semblance of civilization fails. The boys separate into civilized and primitive camps.

BOOKRAGS

Further Study

Alfred W Crosby, in *Ecological Imperialism- The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900□1900,* Cambridge University Press, 1986

Crosby documents the ecological history of colonialist expansion He details how epidemics destroyed incredible numbers of people who hitherto had no exposure to certain diseases. He also describes how animals and fauna of the Old World establish themselves in the New World, such as the practice of leaving goats on islands while exploring in order to have a source of European-style food

Peter Earle, *The World of Defoe,* Atheneum, 1977 Earle examines Defoe's view of the world as well as social relations in the England of the eighteenth century.

Maximilian E Novak, *Defoe and the Nature of Man,* Oxford University Press, 1963.

Drawing on the authors contemporary with Defoe as well as Defoe's other writings, Novak provides a thematic analysis of Defoe's fiction

John J Richetti, *Popular Fiction Before Richardson* Clarendon Press, 1969.

Richetti traces the development of the novel by examining early works. This work is an essential resource for anyone interested in the origins of the novel genre

Pat Rogers, *Robinson Crusoe,* George Allen and Unwin,1979.

Rogers praises Defoe's novel for its mastery of narrative form as well as its exploration of psychological and spiritual experiences.

Arthur Secord, *Studies in the Narrative Method of Defoe,* University of Illinois Press, 1968

Secord investigates Defoe's narrative methods.

Diana Spearman, *The Novel and Society,* London, 1966 Spearman is one of the few twentieth-century critics to examine *Robinson Crusoe* as a book of religious instruction. Her motivation steins from the idea that a man alone on an island is a poor device for exploring economic tfieory□but a great one to explore an individual's relation with God in an increasingly secular world.

Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding,* Chatto and Wmdus, 1957

This seminal study analyzed the novel as a historical document reflecting human thought

Bibliography

Joyce Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order. The Republican Vision of the 1790s,* New York University Press, 1984

James Beattie, "On Fable and Romance," in his *Dissertations Moral and Critical,* W Strahan, 1783.

Theophilus Cibber, "De Foe," in *The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland,* Vol IV by Mr Cibber and Other Hands, R Griffiths, 1753, pp 313-25

Charles Gildon, *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Mr D-De F-,* J Roberts, 1719

Peter Hulme, "Robinson Crusoe and Friday," in his *Colonial Encounters Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797,* Methuen, 1986

Philip D Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint' Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry,* North Carolina Press, 1998

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Rousseau on 'Robinson Crusoe'," in *Defoe The Critical Heritage,* edited and translated by Pat Rogers, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, pp 52-4

Sir Walter Scott, "Daniel Defoe," in *On Novelists and Fiction,* edited by Ian Williams, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968, pp 164-83

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Novels for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

©1997-2002; ©2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc.

Gale and Design® and Thomson Learning™ are trademarks used herein under license.

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any

form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

For permission to use material from this product, submit your request via Web at http://www.gale-edit.com/permissions, or you may download our Permissions Request form and submit your request by fax or mail to:

Permissions Department
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

Permissions Hotline:
248-699-8006 or 800-877-4253, ext. 8006
Fax: 248-699-8074 or 800-762-4058

Since this page cannot legibly accommodate all copyright notices, the acknowledgments constitute an extension of the copyright notice.

While every effort has been made to secure permission to reprint material and to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, The Gale Group, Inc. does not guarantee the accuracy of the data contained herein. The Gale Group, Inc. accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's For Students Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on classic novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of classic novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members educational professionals helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamedfor instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as The Narrator and alphabetized as Narrator. If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name Jean Louise Finch would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname Scout Finch.
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an at-a-glance comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature, a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

Night. Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the Criticism subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on Winesburg, Ohio. Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition, Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. Richard Wright: Wearing the Mask, in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Novels for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535