

## Problems and Poetics of Defoe's Novel Adventure of Robinson Crusoe

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**Abstract:** The topicality of the given paper is "Adventure of Robinson Crusoe" is written by Daniel Defoe who was well known English writer. An interesting aspect of the prominent literary work, "Adventure of Robinson Crusoe" is the a man struggles to survive after being shipwrecked on a deserted island. According to the novel Robinson Crusoe cannot overcome his great desire to cross the seas in search of adventure. This essay will analyze the characteristics and personalities of the novel. Characters: Robinson Crusoe, Friday, Xury, Portuguese captain, the widow and others.

**Keywords:** Novel, adventure, literary work, main characters, writer, personalities, sailing, colonialism.

**Introduction.** Robinson Crusoe was written at the high-water mark of British colonialism and the slave trade. Crusoe's decision to trade toys for gold in West Africa, his ability to set up a plantation in Brazil, and his nonchalance about getting involved in the slave trade are all signs of the times. His own occupation of a deserted island can also be said to mirror the colonial process at the individual level: Crusoe brings agriculture and modern technology to the island. He even gives one native inhabitant an English name, makes him his servant, teaches him English, and converts him to Christianity.

A wholly new type of writing when it was first published by Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe tells the story of a resourceful individual's struggle for survival while marooned on an uninhabited island off the coast of modern-day Venezuela. This extraordinary experience, told from the first-person point of view, is loaded with true-to-life details, meandering thoughts, and occasional repetition that make it seem like the real narrative of an ordinary human being rather than a polished piece of prose fiction.

Ambitious for more wealth, Crusoe makes a deal with merchants and other plantation owners to sail to Guinea, buy slaves, and return with them to Brazil. But he encounters a storm in the Caribbean, and his ship is nearly destroyed. Crusoe is the only survivor, washed up onto a desolate shore. He salvages what he can from the wreck and establishes a life on the island that consists of spiritual reflection and practical measures to survive. Back at home, Crusoe settles down, marries, becomes a father, and is generous towards all his friends and relatives.

Daniel Defoe claimed that Robinson Crusoe was both history and allegory. Insisting that his protagonist was a real person whose experiences he was only relating, Defoe tried his best to make the events in the book seem plausible (however improbable). As an allegory, Robinson Crusoe provides an account of the development of civilization (or at least the western European variant of it) as Crusoe moves from taking hapless shelter in a tree to mastering agriculture, pottery, shepherding, and ship-building, taking more and more of the island as his domain. The story suggests that the role of a loving God—or luck or grace—was essential to this development. It also suggests, more problematically, the superiority of that civilization. It makes no qualms about killing or enslaving those of other, supposedly lesser civilizations.

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL "ROBINSON CRUSOE"

Robinson Crusoe was published in 1719 during the Enlightenment period of the 18th century. In the novel, Crusoe sheds light on different aspects of Christianity and his beliefs. The book can be considered a spiritual autobiography as Crusoe's views on religion change dramatically from the start of his story to the end.

Epistolary, confessional, and didactic in form, the book is presented as an autobiography of the title character (whose birth name is Robinson Kreutznaer) – a castaway who spends 28 years on a remote tropical desert island near the coasts of Venezuela and Trinidad, roughly resembling Tobago, encountering cannibals, captives, and mutineers before being rescued. The story has been thought to be based on the life of Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish castaway who lived for four years on a Pacific island called "Más a Tierra" (now part of Chile) which was renamed Robinson Crusoe Island in 1966.[5 ; 23–24].

Despite its simple narrative style, Robinson Crusoe was well received in the literary world and is often credited as marking the beginning of realistic fiction as a literary genre. It is generally seen as a contender for the first English novel. Before the end of 1719, the book had already run through four editions, and it has gone on to become one of the most widely published books in history, spawning so many imitations, not only in literature but also in film, television, and radio, that its name is used to define a genre, the Robinson age. At the beginning of the book, Crusoe is concerned with sailing away from home, whereupon he meets violent storms at sea. He promises to God that, if he survived that storm, he would be a dutiful Christian man and head home according to his parents' wishes.

However, when Crusoe survives the storm, he decides to keep sailing and notes that he could not fulfill the promises he had made during his turmoil.[1:6]. After Robinson is shipwrecked on his island, he begins to suffer from extreme isolation.

He turns to his animals, such as his parrot, to talk to but misses human contact. He turns to God during his time of turmoil in search of solace and guidance. He retrieves a Bible from a ship that was washed along the shore and begins to memorize verses. In times of trouble, he would open the Bible to a random page and read a verse that he believed God had made him open and read, and that would ease his mind. Therefore, during the time in which Crusoe was shipwrecked, he became very religious and often would turn to God for help.

When Crusoe meets his servant Friday, he begins to teach him scripture and about Christianity. He tries to teach Friday to the best of his ability about God and what Heaven and Hell are. His purpose is to convert Friday into being a Christian and to his values and beliefs. "During a long time that Friday has now been with me, and that he began to speak to me, and understand me, I was not wanting to lay a foundation of religious knowledge in his mind; particularly I asked him one time who made him?"[1; 158].

### Robinson Crusoe Characters

While the overwhelming focus of Robinson Crusoe is on its eponymous hero, there is a fairly large cast of supporting characters in the story.

#### Main Characters

Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday are the main characters of the novel.

**Robinson Crusoe:** The narrator of the novel who gets shipwrecked. Born in 1632 to German immigrants who settled in northern England and succeeded as merchants, Robinson Crusoe is a restless young man with a thirst for adventure. He is resourceful, intelligent, and skillful, succeeding as a businessman and later learning to make everything he needs by himself with only limited resources. He also proves adept at fighting towards the book's end. The character of Robinson Crusoe was partly inspired by the life of Alexander Selkirk, a

Scottish sailor who was dropped on an uninhabited island off the coast of Chile after arguing with his captain in 1704. When he was discovered four years later, he was dressed in goat skins and had gone somewhat crazy. Many details used in Robinson Crusoe were taken from Selkirk's memoir.

**Friday:** A handsome, athletic, and intelligent native rescued by Crusoe from the hands of cannibals and subsequently named "Friday." Friday is Crusoe's loyal servant and companion during his final years on the island and back in Europe. About 26 years old when rescued (by Crusoe's estimate), we never learn what Friday's real name is or how he feels about leaving for England.

### Minor Characters

A large cast of characters, many of whom remain anonymous, play small but critical roles in the story. Here is a sampling of the most important.

**Xury:** Robinson Crusoe's companion as he escapes from his Moroccan captors, Xury is a young boy of unknown origin (probably Arab or African). Xury is friendly and loyal, traveling with Crusoe all the way to Brazil. Crusoe later sells him into slavery and only seems to regret it when he realizes he could have used him as a slave on his own plantation. Servant to Crusoe after they escape slavery from the Captain of the Rover together. He is later given to the Portuguese Sea Captain as an indentured servant.

**The Widow:** Friend to Crusoe who looks over his assets while he is away.

**Portuguese Sea Captain:** This unnamed captain rescues Crusoe and treats him very well, helping him establish himself in Brazil and access his profits when he returns. Later helps him with his money and plantation.

**The Spaniard:** A man rescued by Crusoe who later helps him escape the island.

**Robinson Crusoe's father:** A merchant named Kreutznaer.

**Captain of the Rover:** Moorish pirate of Sallee who captures and enslaves Crusoe.

**Traitorous crew members:** members of a mutinied ship who appear towards the end of novel.

**English Mutineers and Their Captain:** An English ship rebels against its captain and tries to bring him and the ship's officers as prisoners on Crusoe's island. There are a few malicious ringleaders, but most of the men are undecided about whether the mutiny was a good idea.

**Cannibals:** Identified only as "Caribs", dozens of cannibals visit Crusoe's island to perform their ritualistic sacrifices, occasionally having confrontations with Crusoe.

**The Savages:** Cannibals that come to Crusoe's Island and who represent a threat to Crusoe's religious and moral convictions as well as his own safety.

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### CONCLUSION

Daniel Defoe is widely recognized as an innovator of fictional prose forms, and Robinson Crusoe is often credited as the first novel in the English language. Like the novel tradition that would develop in England throughout the 18th century, Robinson Crusoe is a long work of prose fiction with an ordinary person for a

protagonist and a wealth of life-like details. Unlike other contenders for the title of the first novel, Robinson Crusoe does not take marriage or family life as one of its central themes, dealing instead with the exotic, the extraordinary, and the exciting. If its claim to be the first novel is uncertain, its claim to be the first adventure novel is not.

Robinson Crusoe is a thematically rich work. Individualism, the place of chance and God in human affairs, and the nature of colonialism are among the most interesting and important themes developed in the novel. The theme, of "Robinson Crusoe" is survival. Not only does Crusoe have to physically survive on the island by securing food, water and shelter, but he also has to develop his self-confidence to survive, so he doesn't give up hope of a rescue.

Robinson Crusoe, who is inspired by a desire to travel and make a fortune, is the protagonist of the novel. Although initially moved by his father's words of caution, he eventually gives in to his impulse to become a sailor. His life on the sea leads from one adventure to another, taking him to many foreign places and landing him on a deserted island, where he forced to spend twenty-eight years of his life. At the most simplistic level, Crusoe's antagonist is the series of calamities that befall him. He must overcome each of his trials during the book in order to become successful and return to England. At a deeper level, the antagonist is Crusoe's tortured soul, which is personified almost as a character in the novel. As he searches for peace, he must come to grips with his relationship to God.

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