



**Department of Distance Education**  
**Punjabi University, Patiala**

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**Class : B.A.II (English Literature) Elective    Semester : 4**  
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***Lesson No.***

**DANIEL DEFOE : ROBINSON CRUSOE**

- 2.1 : An Introduction
- 2.1 : Notes and Annotations
- 2.3 : A Critical Study of the Text
- 2.4 : Topics and Characters for Discussion
- 2.5 : Concluding Remarks

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**INTRODUCTION : DANIEL DEFOE**

**6.1 INTRODUCTION:**

This lesson on Daniel Defoe has been written with an aim to provide the learners, the knowledge of certain aspects of the writings of the author who is a leading novelist of his time and also to acquaint the learners with certain trends of the rise of the English Novel. Daniel Defoe wrote numerous pamphlets and many books on a variety of subjects but he is chiefly remembered as a novelist.

**6.2 OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of this lesson are:

- to familiarize the learners with the life of Daniel Defoe
- to acquaint the learners with the works of Daniel Defoe

**6.3 RISE OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL**

Although the novel took its proper shape, and was written in abundance during the eighteenth century, the early years of neo-classical era were certainly responsible for its growth as a literary genre. The Renaissance writers like Nashe and Deloney had pioneered the popular mode of prose fiction mixing comedy and satire. Their contemporaries like Lyly and Sidney had initiated the serious mode of aristocratic romance called the romantic fiction by combining idealism with romance. Both these strains remained rather dormant during the reign of the Puritans in the early seventeenth century. It was only with the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 that the prose fiction in English was also revived.

The English aristocrats during the Restoration period, the early phase of the neo-classical age, took pride in reading the French romances in original. Those who were not proficient in French read them in translation. It was thus inevitable that the English novel in the seventeenth century should seek its inspiration from the French masters of the heroic romance. The earliest known example of the English copy of the French model is *Gloria and Narcissus* of the *Royal Romance* (1653), followed by *Partenissa* of Roger Boyle in 1654. Along with the heroic romance, the French writer Paul Scarron also restored in the seventeenth century the picaresque model of prose fiction in his *Le Roman Comique* (1651-67). Also popular in Paris at the time were *Chroniques Scandaleuses*, a kind of shockers about notorious immorality in the higher circles of society. Combining these two strains came up in 1665 *The English Rogue*, described in *The Life of Mariton Lartoon* by Richard Head. Other notable beginnings of the English novel were John Bute's *Berinthia* (1664),

John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1665), Aphra Behn's *Histories and Novels* (1696), Congreve's *Incognita: or, Love and Duty reconciled* (1692). Besides, there were a host of anonymous prose fiction called secret histories, such as *A True history of the Most Renowned Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex*, *The Amours of Messalina*, *Late Queen of Albion*, which mixed freely fact and fiction about secret love affairs carried on at the royal courts of the time past or present. It was from these sources of the seventeenth century romances, fictionalized histories, allegories, travel narratives, etc. that the English novel in the eighteenth century emerged as the most popular form of literature for the fast emerging middle class, and it were the materialism and morality of this class which structured the form intent of neo-classical novel. In addition to the French sources, the Spanish sources also contributed towards the shaping of English novel. The Spanish tradition of the picaresque novel, ranging *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) to *Don Quixote* (1615) to the later varieties of the model, exercised great influence on the first generation of the English novelists.

The novel of neoclassical period was materialistic in vision, mock heroic in mode and realistic in medium. It catered to the needs of the middle class. The pressure of the quickly rising and fast expanding middle class with its newly acquired privilege of school and university education loosened the grip of classical norms and rules, which were rather loudly demonstrated by poetry and drama of the time.

The major novelists of the eighteenth century (the later phase of the neo-classical period) such as Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), Henry Fielding (1707-54), Tobias George Smollet (1721-71), and Laurence Sterne (1713-68), though very different from each other in style and temperament, shared a large variety of dominant strands, which constituted the main stream of the English novel. Richardson's domestic tragedies, Fielding's social comedies, Defoe's adventure narratives, Smollett's novel of ideas, and Sterne's experimental novel, are all branches of the same tree called the realistic novel.

#### **6.4 INTRODUCTION TO THE WRITER**

Daniel Defoe was born in 1660. He was the son of tallow Chandler James Foe, who lived in the city of London. During this time, Cromwell's Commonwealth had ended, and monarchy in England was restored with Charles II ascending the throne. James Foe was a dissenter by religion. The time was dangerous for dissenters, because the religious beliefs of those people were associated with the beliefs of the Commonwealth and to which Charles II was firmly opposed. In fact, the Puritans or the Dissenters had become a persecuted minority. The only

religious worship permitted by law was that according to the prayer book of the Church of England. Therefore, men like James Foe had to perform their duties of religious worship in secret.

James Foe was a well-to-do tradesman who at one stage in his life gave up his business of tallow - chandling and became a butcher. He was prosperous enough to be able to give his son a good education. The children of dissenters were not admitted to the grammar schools and to universities. It was necessary for the dissenters to provide their own private schools for their children. Daniel Foe was sent to Morton's Academy at Stoke Newington at the age of twelve or thirteen. He learnt French, Dutch, Italian, and Spanish, besides studying natural sciences, geography, astronomy and short hand. Most of the boys at such schools were destined to become dissenting ministers or clergyman. Thus, Daniel Foe also intended for the same vocation. However, he himself had no taste for that kind of work, even though he was a sincere Dissenter and remained so all his life. He went into business. He became an intermediary in the stock trade, buying from the manufacturer and selling to retailers. He also dealt in such goods as tobacco and liquor. He travelled extensively in Europe. He married in 1684 and acquired a rich dowry.

Daniel Defoe took an active interest in politics. He took up arms under the Duke of Monmouth who was an illegitimate son of the late King Charles II, and who had risen against his uncle King James II. By 1668, King James II had so antagonised the large majority of his subjects that he invited William of Orange to come from Holland to England and ascend the throne as joint sovereign with his wife Mary, who was James's sister. When William landed in England in response to the invitation, Daniel Defoe was one of the many Englishmen who rode out of London to greet him.

Daniel was quiet well in life as a trader. Indeed, he was rising in life, and perhaps it was at this time that he prefixed the aristocratic "De" to his name "Foe" thus becoming Defoe. Although he remained loyal to his religious beliefs all his life, he was not at all fanatic man. However, he was often regarded as an opportunist because later in his life, he worked as the paid agent of both Whig and Tory governments. Yet he never betrayed his own belief in the virtue of compromise. He always aimed at diminishing party differences between those with whom he came into contact.

The year 1692 was one of disaster for Defoe. He was involved in litigation over his business dealings and got more and more deeply entrenched under debt. In the end, he became bankrupt. In 1694, he established contact with Queen Mary

and began to serve King William as one of his private spies. Soon afterwards, he began to write pamphlets in support of the King's policies. One such pamphlet was a long poem entitled *The True-Born Englishman*. This poem was a strong plea for tolerance and for a civilized attitude towards people of all nationalities. The poem brought him its own reward-the favour of the King, and fame as well. It went into nine editions in the very year of its publication, that is 1701.

This was followed by another misfortune in Defoe's life. In 1702, King William died after falling from his horse while riding. After King William, Queen Anne ascended the throne and the persecution of dissenters began all over again. Defoe wrote a Pamphlet entitled *The Shortest Way with Dissenters* which was an ironic attack on Dissenters and was misunderstood by both the Dissenters and their opponents. The consequence of this misunderstanding was most unhappy from Defoe's point of view. The pamphlet was published on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1702 and on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1703 a warrant for its author's arrest was issued. Defoe was arrested on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1703. He was imprisoned in Newgate. He threw himself on the mercy of Queen Anne but he received no mercy and was sentenced to stand for three consecutive days in a pillory and also to pay a heavy fine. However, that was not all. He was further condemned to imprisonment during the Queen's pleasure. On 29 July, 1703, Defoe appeared in the pillory for the first time. He had already written a poem for this sad occasion. The poem was entitled *A Hymn to the Pillory* and it was an attack on those who had sentenced him. This poem brought him sympathy and support. He was not pelted with stones and mud, but with garlands. This friendly and warm reception was repeated on the second day and on the third day, the mob drank to his health and applauded him. From the pillory, he was sent to Newgate prison and was released after three months on the recommendation of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford.

After his release, Defoe became the follower and supporter of Robert Harley. He started a newspaper under the patronage of Harley. This newspaper proved a great success and continued to be published for nine years. It was a vehicle of propaganda in support of Harley's policies. Defoe published many pamphlets after the success of his newspaper.

Defoe went through many difficulties in his life. With his growing age, he began to feel disillusioned with politics. He made many friends and enemies in his life. In 1713, his enemies got the better of him and once again he was arrested and taken to prison. After some time, he was released on bail, but this was not the end to his difficulties. The Queen died, the Elector of Hanover ascended the throne as

King George I. Harley fell from the power and Defoe was in trouble again. The newspaper, which Defoe had been editing, stopped getting printed.

Despite his active participation in politics, Defoe never stopped writing. Most of his writing was political but he also wrote non-political literature. In 1719, his most famous book, *Robinson Crusoe* was published. This book was followed by a handful of novels namely *Captain Singleton*, *Moll Flanders*, *A Journal of the Plague Year* and *Roxana*. One prominent theme of these novels is simulation and dissimulation, which has been a part of Defoe's own life.

In the last part of his life, Defoe retired from politics and started living in his house at Stoke Newington. He kept himself busy by writing and at the same time started brick and tile business. Defoe proved to be one of the most prolific writers of his age. Few of his miscellaneous writings show that he was far ahead of the opinions of his time like his plans for a university in London and a foundling hospital, his scheme for the proper supervision of lunatic asylums and his plea for the control of the sale of gin. But his old age was not peaceful. One day, in 1730, he disappeared from Stoke Newington and went into hiding somewhere near Greenwich because a woman for the debts, which he owned her, was suing him. He wrote pathetic letter to his son-in-law from this hiding place,. He died in on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1731 at the age of seventy-one.

### **6.5 WORKS OF DANIEL DEFOE**

In the seventy-one years of his life, Defoe wrote more than four hundred works. Some of them are scarcely longer than modern newspaper articles and some are much longer than most modern novels. His poetry alone, which is not read these days, runs to more lines than Milton's does. This vast literary output shows an extraordinary energy in Defoe. Although Defoe was a voluminous writer, who produced numerous pamphlets and scores of books on many subjects, he is predominantly remembered as a novelist. The following are his important novels:

1. *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)
2. *Moll Flanders* (1722)
3. *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722)
4. *Roxana* (1724)

#### **Robinson Crusoe**

This novel is the story of a man who leaves home to go to the sea. After many preliminary adventures, the protagonist, *Robinson Crusoe*, is cast away on an uninhabited island where he leads a solitary life for many years. The major portion of this book deals with *Crusoe's* experiences and doings. The sufferings and

hardships, which Crusoe undergoes on the island, are due to his personal “original sin” which in his opinion is his disobeying his father’s advice. Defoe got the idea of writing this book from the actual adventures of a real man by the name of Alexander Selkirk who was forced by circumstances to spend four years all alone on the actual island of Juan Fernandez. This novel is regarded as Defoe’s masterpiece and as a great book. One reason for the appeal of the novel is that each individual can put himself in Crusoe’s position and regard himself as a sort of hero of the same caliber as Crusoe. Defoe claimed this novel as an allegory of his own life, but actually it may be regarded as an allegory of everyman’s life. It is a dramatization of universal experience.

**Moll Flanders**

Moll Flanders is also named after its chief protagonist like Robinson Crusoe. Moll Flanders is the name of a woman. She can be called the female counterpart of Robinson Crusoe. Like Crusoe’s story, that is the realistic epic of human courage and energy, Moll Flanders is the story of a lovely woman cast upon her own resources, fighting against a world that has done its worse to destroy her. She is born in shame, damned by her birth, cruelly betrayed, suffers the worst misfortunes, falls into vice, and crime. She becomes a criminal under the pressure of circumstances and the defective organization of society. Born as the illegitimate daughter of a thief, she is seduced by the son of her employer. However, she is compelled by him to marry his younger brother who has fallen in love with her and who dies after a few years of their marriage. Then she marries a sea captain and goes with him to Virginia where she finds out that this man is her half brother. She leaves him and returns to England where she becomes the mistress of a rich man who soon deserts her. Once again, she catches another man who pretends to be rich but turns out to be fortune hunter. Moll leaves him and marries another man who dies after five years of marriage and leaves her with two children and no money. In this situation, she becomes a thief and earns a lot but is caught at last and sentenced to transportation. When she returns to England, she is seventy years old. she is full of remorse and repentance. This novel is a moral fable besides being an adventure story.

**Journal of the Plague Year**

This work is an excellent example of historical fiction. It creates in us the impression that it was written by a person who had actually lived through the time of plague in London. The protagonist of the story is a Puritan Saddler, a sober, shrewd and god-fearing citizen. He plays a commendable role in the fearful time of plague. Apart from the narrator there are other convincing characters in the book

such as Dr. Health, John Hayward, the gravedigger and the merry piper who lay drunk, is picked up as dead, and recovers consciousness afterwards when he finds himself in the cart among the dead bodies. This novel also has the realistic quality, which is Defoe's most conspicuous characteristic as a novelist.

### **Roxana**

In this novel, Defoe tells us the story of a flashy adventuress who becomes a prominent figure in London society. This novel's title is after the name of its protagonist Roxana. She is married to a wealthy brewer at the age of fifteen. She brings him a large dowry, but the man proves to be a spendthrift and goes bankrupt. He then abandons her with five children. She leaves her children with her reluctant relatives and prepares herself to face the world which has ruined her by depriving her of her fortune. She marries a prosperous jeweller and goes with him to France. However, after some time, her husband is murdered and she is again in difficulties. She has enough money now. She sets up her household as a wealthy woman, attracts an amorous prince, and enjoys life as his mistress for two years. The prince also leaves her. Then she meets a Dutch merchant who offers to marry her. She accepts the man, but does not agree to marry him. Again, she leaves him, returns to London, buys a large house in the fashionable locality, and gives herself out as a French lady of high rank. She becomes the mistress of several men of fashion and status. By now, she has a number of children but most of them are illegitimate. However, she makes a generous provision for each of them, without disclosing her identity. Finally, she falls upon evil days and repentance seems to be the only way open for her. The story ends at that point.

### **6.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. Daniel Defoe was born in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. 1659
  - b. 1660
  - c. 1662
  - d. 1663
2. Defoe was a \_\_\_\_\_ by religion.
  - a. Dissenter
  - b. Puritan
  - c. Catholic
  - d. Jew
3. Daniel Defoe got his education at \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Oxford university
  - b. Morton's academy



- c. Newgate
  - d. Convent school
4. In which year William of Orange was invited to England?
- a. 1690
  - b. 1688
  - c. 1686
  - d. 1685
5. Which work by Defoe is a strong plea for tolerance and for a civilized attitude towards people of all nationalities:
- a. The Shortest Way with Dissenters
  - b. A Hymn to the Pillory
  - c. The True Born Englishman
  - d. Roxana
6. Which poem was written by Defoe for the pillory ?
- a. A Hymn to the Pillory
  - b. The Mock Mourners
  - c. Caledonia
  - d. The True Born Englishman
7. When did Daniel change his name from Foe to Defoe?
- a. 1693
  - b. 1695
  - c. 1692
  - d. 1699
8. When was *Robinson Crusoe* published ?
- a. 1719
  - b. 1789
  - c. 1721
  - d. 1717
9. Where was Daniel Defoe imprisoned ?
- a. Newington
  - b. Newgate
  - c. Morton's Academy
  - d. London
10. Daniel Defoe died in the year-----.
- a. 1729
  - b. 1731
  - c. 1735

d. 1737

**True or False**

- a) Daniel Defoe was born in 1658 \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Daniel Defoe studied in Morton's Academy \_\_\_\_\_
- c) King James invited William of Orange from Germany \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Queen Mary was the wife of King Charles \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Defoe appeared in the pillory for the first time in 1705 \_\_\_\_\_
- f) Defoe was the supporter of Robert Harley \_\_\_\_\_
- g) *Roxana* was published in 1720 \_\_\_\_\_
- h) The hero of Robinson Crusoe was a Saddler \_\_\_\_\_
- i) Daniel Defoe was imprisoned in Newgate Prison \_\_\_\_\_
- j) Defoe died in the year 1731 \_\_\_\_\_

**6.7 GLOSSARY**

- Dissenter  
The persons who were the followers of Cromwell; a person who does not agree with opinions that are officially or generally accepted.
- Vocation  
A type of work or way of life that you believe is especially suitable for you.
- Tallow – Chandling  
Business of making candles by using animal fat.
- Fanatic  
A person who holds extreme or dangerous opinions; a person who is extremely enthusiastic about religion.
- Whig  
In Britain in the past, a member of a party that supported progress, reforms, and that later became the liberal party.
- Tory  
A member or supporter of the British conservative party.
- Pamphlet  
A very thin book with a paper cover, containing information about a particular subject.
- Pillory  
A wooden frame with holes for the head and hands into which people were locked as a punishment.
- Imprison  
To put somebody in a prison or another place from which he cannot escape.
- Condemn

To express very strong disapproval of somebody usually for moral reasons.

- Earl  
A nobleman of high rank.
- Patronage  
The support, especially financial that is given to a person or an organization by a patron.
- Propaganda  
Ideas or statements that may be false or exaggerated and are used in order to gain support for a political leader, party etc.
- Scarcely  
Only just; almost not.
- Simulation  
A situation in which a particular set of conditions is created artificially in order to study or experience something that could exist in reality.
- Dissimulation  
A situation in which someone hides his or her real feelings or intentions often by pretending to have different ones.
- Miscellaneous  
Consisting of many, different kinds of things that are not connected and do not easily form a group.
- Lunatic  
A person who does crazy things which are often dangerous.
- Asylum  
A hospital where people who are mentally ill are looked after, often for a long time.
- Isolation  
The state of being separate.

**SELF – CHECK QUESTIONS**

1. When and where was Daniel Defoe born?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why was the time of Defoe's childhood dangerous for dissenters?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why was William of Orange called from Holland to England and by whom?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did Defoe change his name from "Foe" to Defoe?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Why was 1692 a disastrous year for Defoe?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the theme of Defoe's long poem The True Born Englishman?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Where was Defoe taken from the Pillory?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Where did Defoe spend last years of his life?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Who were the contemporaries of Defoe?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What were the characteristics of Neo classical novels?  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What was the opinion of the public regarding the newspaper edited by Defoe?  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Why did Defoe go into hiding?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 6.8 Answer Key

#### Multiple Choice Questions

- |             |                               |                              |
|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. (b) 1660 | 2. (a) Dissenter              | 3. (b) Morton's Academy      |
| 4. (b) 1688 | 5. (c) A True Born Englishman | 6. (a) A Hymn to the Pillory |
| 7. (b) 1695 | 8. (a) 1719                   | 9. (b) Newgate               |
|             |                               | 10. (b) 1731                 |

#### Answer key

#### True or False Questions

- |          |         |          |          |
|----------|---------|----------|----------|
| a) False | b) True | c) False | d) False |
| e) False | f) True | g) False | h) False |
| i) True  | j) True |          |          |

#### Self – Check Questions

After reading the lesson, the concepts must be clear to you. If you have been able to find out the answers to the exercise questions, you deserve praise. If you have not been able to find any of the answers, here are a few answers for you:

1. Daniel Defoe was born in 1660 in the Parish of Cripple Gate in London. He was the son of a tallow chandler by the name of James Foe.

2. The time of Defoe's childhood was dangerous for dissenters because the religious beliefs of those people were associated with the beliefs of the Commonwealth which had recently ended and to which the new King was firmly opposed.
3. By 1688, King James II had so antagonized the large majority of his subjects that William of Orange was invited to come from Holland to England to ascend the throne as joint sovereign with his wife Mary.

### 6.9 Recapitulation of the Lesson

Daniel Defoe was the son of a tallow chandler and was Dissenter by faith. He started his life as a businessperson but later on, he took to writing. Among the major novelists of his age, his name is among the leaders. Defoe saw many difficulties in his life. He wrote about 400 works; important among them are *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner* (1719), *Captain Singleton* (1720), *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *Roxana* (1724). His novel that has survived as almost a classic is *Robinson Crusoe* in which an individual's experience of struggle for survival is representative of the general experience of life. *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* show a marked development of Defoe's art of characterization. The female protagonists of these novels are much ahead of their time in terms of their bold projection as unconventional heroines. Defoe's novels laid the foundation for the major tradition of the English novel by providing models of long narrative fiction in prose having a unified theme and recognizable structure.

### 6.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Sutherland, James. *Daniel Defoe : A Critical Study*.
- Curtis, Laura A. *The Elusive Daniel Defoe*.
- Blewett, David. *Defoe's Art of Fiction*.

**INTRODUCTION : ROBINSON CRUSOE**

**7.1 Introduction**

This lesson will introduce you to brief historical background of the age on which the novel is based and also the story of the sailor about whose adventure the novel is based. An attempt has been made to identify major social events of the age. Robinson Crusoe is based on the experiences of a sailor named Alexander Selkirk. Eighteenth century was the age of transition from aristocratic order to a capitalist system and Defoe is said to be one of the first writers to represent economic individualism and Robinson Crusoe, his first novel, is one of the best example of this.

**7.2 Objectives**

The main objectives of this lesson are

- To acquaint the learner with historical context of the novel.
- To familiarize the learners with the social background of the age in which this novel was written
- To acquaint the learners with the story of actual sailor on whose real life adventures the novel are based.

**7.3 Historical background of Robinson Crusoe**

Robinson Crusoe was published in 1719. It was the beginning of a century that witnessed great changes in economic order of the world. The rise of capitalism throughout the period exposed individuals to a system of evaluation that was different from aristocratic tradition. Instead of an individual's place in society being determined at birth, and being wholly related to their family, name and rank, people entered professions and new social arrangements. These new social arrangements were not based on family or church, but on their work. A relevant example of this is the fact that we don't learn much about Robinson's family. He abandons them in England within the first few pages of the book. This indicates the degree to which family and other collective relations were taking a backseat to the elaboration of the individual.

The shift from an aristocratic order to a capitalist system was complicated and it would be difficult to attempt to pinpoint the precise moment of transition. The century witnessed great changes such as the rise of print culture, the first copyright legislation, increased industrialization, and a shift from focus on community to an emphasis on autonomous individualism. Defoe is said to be one of

the first writers to represent this kind of economic individualism and Robinson Crusoe, his first novel, is one of the best places to see this shift at work.

Homo Economicus (economic man), was the symbol to discuss the new individualism of the eighteenth century. It depended explicitly on an individual's participation in a newly competitive, credit based market place. Robinson, the hero of the novel, spends the opening sections of the novel in heavy pursuit of money. He readily admits his reasons for travel to the readers. He is of the view that it is more profitable to trade with indigenous people of non western cultures because they value goods differently than Europeans do. To get more for one's money than it is worth, is one of the prime directives of capitalist economy and Robinson Crusoe is hooked on it from the moment he makes his first trade. He is able to buy a plantation in Brazil with the money he makes from trading and begin to reap great profit.

Even romantic love is secondary to economic gain. Robinson doesn't have opportunity for romance as he lives alone on the island. But he does not worry about it. While long passages are devoted to his reflections on how being away from Europe has changed his ideas of what is valuable, there is not a single moment of reflection on longing for love as an obstacle to economic advancement because it is believed that romance does not follow logical dictates, while market practices are assumed to some sort of logic or calculation.

#### **7.4 Background of Robinson Crusoe**

The adventures of Robinson Crusoe on the lonely island which constitute the main part of Defoe's novel, are largely based on the central incident in the life of an indisciplined Scotsman, Alexander Selkirk. It is possible that Defoe met Selkirk before he wrote his book. He used only one incident from the real sailor's turbulent life in the novel. In Selkirk's days, the island was known as Juan Fernandez. Selkirk was not the first person to be stranded there. At least, two other incidents of solitary survival are recorded. A Mosquito (Guyanese) Indian named Will, was abandoned there in 1681 when a group of buccaneers fled at the approach of unknown ships. The pilot of Will's ship claimed that another man had lived there for five years before being rescued. Three years later, Will was picked up alive and well by an expedition that contained William Dampier, a keen observer who was good enough to recount that journey.

Dampier was sailing in command of a privateering expedition that consisted of two ships. Alexander Selkirk was the first mate on one of them. The purpose was to harry the Spanish and Portuguese shipping off the estuary. Failing this, the

buccaneers would try their fortune off the shore of Peru. As they reached the area of Juan Fernandez islands, the ships could not agree on a course of action. By a stroke of bad luck, the ships were separated. Selkirk's ship, the Cinque Ports, found itself in the Juan Fernandez Islands, in great need of repair. Stradling, the captain of the ship, preferred to keep an account of the rescue: "Twas he that made the first lost night when he saw our ships, which he judged to be English... he had with him his clothes and bedding, with a first lock, some powder, bullet and tobacco, a hatchet, a knife, a kettle, a bible, mathematical instruments, and books..... He built two huts with pimento trees, covered them with long grass and lined them with skins of goats, which he killed himself..... he was greatly pestered by cats and rats.... At his first coming on board with us, he had so much forgot his language for want of use, that we could scarcely understand him." Upon returning to England, Selkirk was interviewed by the writer Richard Steele. His story appeared in the periodical *The Englishman*. It was a source of wonder for many.

### **7.5 Outline summary of Robinson Crusoe**

Robinson Crusoe is a young man living with his parents. His parents advise him to choose a stable life but Robinson is attracted by a different kind of life, a sea life. On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1651, Hull, a friend of Robinson invites him on a ship going to London. Robinson goes with him. On the way, a big storm caught them and Robinson is so scared that he promises himself to give up his dreams and obey his parents.

Once the storm is over and they reach the coast, Robinson soon forgets everything and decides to set sail to Guinea. Robinson also goes on a second voyage to Guinea, but this time he is captured by Moorish pirates and sold as a slave in North Africa. After sometime, Robinson provides himself with a gun and some provisions and escapes in a little boat with Xury who is another slave. In their adventure sailing with no direction, Robinson is aware of the threats of the unknown West African Coast which is inhabited by wild animals and savage tribes. Fortunately, a Portuguese ship heading to Brazil rescues Robinson and Xury. In Brazil, Robinson takes up a sugarcane plantation, but manpower is needed to work on the plantation. Then Robinson embarks on a ship to Guinea in order to get slaves for the plantation.

Suddenly, a violent storm lashes the ship near the Caribbean Islands. The ship is driven out of its course and finally it sinks. Robinson manages to reach the coast of the desert island. He is the only survivor. After an initial examination of the land, Robinson is able to rescue some provisions from the shipwreck like muskets,



pistols gunpowder, food, clothes, ink, paper, tools, bibles, two cats and a dog. He builds a hut incrusting in a rock to protect himself from the tropical climate and to store safely all his provisions. He sets a calendar and writes a journal and teaches a parrot some words.

Initially, Robinson hunts goats and turtles to feed himself. Later, he explores the island deeply and finds rich grapes. He sets traps to get goats alive to get them domesticated in order to assure him meat provision during the seasons of bad wealth. He also sows barley and makes pottery and baskets.

One day Robinson sees land on the horizon and he is determined to build a canoe with a big trunk. It took long time to finish the canoe, however it is too heavy to be carried to the sea on its own. Then he builds a smaller canoe and heads himself into the open sea, but a sea tide nearly makes him drown. After twelve years of solitude on the island, Robinson discovers footprints on the shore. Then he finds human bones. The idea of cannibals obsesses him enormously and he fears the Cannibal's rituals taking place periodically in the islands. A couple of years later, a Spanish ship sinks near the island. There are no survivors, but this supplies Robinson with new and fresh provisions.

One night, Robinson dreams that he saves a savage from death in a cannibal ritual and like a premonition it happens later. The savage named Friday is saved by Robinson and he becomes his servant. Robinson teaches him English language, Christian religious principles and civilized habits. Friday tells Robinson that the cannibals have Spanish prisoners. The cannibals revisit the island. Among their victims, there is a Spaniard and Friday's father. Robinson and Friday plan to rescue the victims by shooting the cannibals. The Spaniard tells Robinson that his compatriots live with Friday's tribe. A plan to rescue them is made on the condition of accepting Robinson's leadership.

In the meantime, English mutineers arrive at the island. They drop the captain of the ship and two of the crew members on the island. Robinson meets them and together they make a strategic plan to persuade the mutineers and recover the ship. Eventually, living on the desert island for twenty years, Robinson returns to England with Friday.

Now Robinson is a rich man. His wealth proceeds from the Brazilian plantation and from the shipwreck. He goes to Portugal crossing Spain and France and passing the Pyrenees, on the way his Convoy is attacked by wolves and a wild bear, which is killed by Friday with amazing skill. In his latest days, his adventurous spirit prompts him to travel to the East Indies as a tradesman.

Robinson also revisits his solitude island. He also travels to China where he is involved in a real battle against looters. Finally he returns to England.

### 7.6 Glossary

- Capitalism: an economic system in which a country's business and industry are controlled and run for profit by private owners rather than by government.
- Abandoned: left and no longer wanted, used or needed
- Relevant: closely connected with the subject you are discussing or the situation you are thinking about
- Complicated: made of many different things or parts that are connected; difficult to understand.
- Explicitly: said, done or shown in an open or direct way, so that you have no doubt about what is happening
- Pursuit: the act of looking for or trying to find something
- Profitable : that makes or is likely to make money
- Indigenous: belonging to a particular place rather than coming to it from somewhere else.
- Trinket: a piece of jewellery or small decorative object that is not worth much money.
- Baubles: a piece of jewellery that is cheap and has less artistic value.
- Obstacle: a situation, an event, etc. that makes it difficult for you to achieve something.
- Logical: seeming natural, reasonable or sensible
- Dictates: to tell somebody what to do, specially in an annoying way.
- Adventure: an unusual exciting or dangerous experience, journey or series of events.
- Turbulent: in which there is a lot of sudden change, confusion, disagreement and sometimes violence
- Solitary: without other people
- Buccaneer: a sailor who attacks ship at sea and steals.
- Expedition: an organized journey with a particular purpose, especially to find out about a place that is not well known.
- Privateer: a ship used in the past for attacking and stealing from other ships.
- Estuary: the wider part of a river where it flows into the sea

- Coast: the land beside or near to the sea or ocean.
- Savage: aggressive and violent; causing great harm
- Cannibal: a person who eats human flesh
- Shipwreck: the loss or destruction of a ship at sea because of a storm or because it hits a rock.
- Musket: an early type of long gun that was used by soldiers in the past.
- Horizon: the farthest that you can see, where the sky seems to meet the land or the sea.
- Domesticate: to make a wild animal used to living with or working for humans.

### 7.7 Multiple Choice Questions

1. Robinson Crusoe was published in
  - a) 1715
  - b) 1718
  - c) 1719
  - d) 1721
2. Defoe is said to be one of the first writers to represent
  - a) Collective relations
  - b) Economic individualism
  - c) Increased industrialization
  - d) Familial relations
3. The symbol used to discuss new individualism of eighteenth century was
  - a) Homo sapien
  - b) Homo economicus
  - c) Homo erectus
  - d) Neanderthal man
4. In Robinson's view, with whom trade was more profitable
  - a) Europeans
  - b) Non western people
  - c) Brazilians
  - d) Americans
5. The story of Robinson Crusoe was based on actual experiences of
  - a) Daniel Defoe
  - b) Alexander Selkirk
  - c) Friday

- d) Alexander Flemming
6. What is the name of the island where Selkirk's spent time in isolation
- a) Lakshwadeep  
b) Juan Fernandez  
c) Peru  
d) Andaman and Nicobar
7. What is the name of Alexander Selkirk's ship
- a) Titanic  
b) Angel  
c) Cinque Ports  
d) Rachel
8. Who invites Robinson on a ship going to London
- a) Defoe  
b) Hull  
c) Will  
d) Alexander Selkirk
9. Robinson was sold as a slave to which country
- a) North Africa  
b) South Africa  
c) America  
d) Guinea
10. Who was saved by Robinson from cannibals
- a) Alexander  
b) Dampier  
c) Pip  
d) Friday
11. Where does Robinson go for getting slaves for the plantation
- a) North Africa  
b) Peru  
c) Guinea  
d) Juan Fernandez
12. Robinson's ship was lashed by storm near
- a) Juan Fernandez  
b) Peru  
c) North Africa  
d) Caribbean Islands

13. Robinson escapes from North Africa with
- a) Xury
  - b) Friday
  - c) Dampier
  - d) Scotsman
14. Who tells Robinson that his compatriots live with Friday's tribe
- a) Alexander Selkirk
  - b) Xury
  - c) Spaniard
  - d) Friday
15. With whom Robinson returns England
- a) Xury
  - b) Friday
  - c) Spaniard
  - d) Dampier

**Self Check Questions**

1. **What was the social condition of England when Robinson Crusoe was published?**

**Ans.** Robinson Crusoe was published in 1719. It was the beginning of a century that witnessed great changes in socio-economic-political system. People entered professions and new social arrangement. These new social arrangements were not based on family or church but on their work. Also, during this period great changes took place such as the rise of print culture, the first copyright legislation, increased industrialization and a shift from focus on community to an emphasis on autonomous individualism.

2. **How did Robinson reach the isolated island?**

**Ans.** When Robinson takes a sugarcane plantation in Brazil, he finds out that manpower is needed to work on the plantation. So he embarks on a ship to Guinea in order to get slaves for the plantation. On the way, his ship is hit by a violent storm near the Caribbean islands. The ship is driven out of its course due to the storm and finally it sinks. But Robinson manages to reach the coast of the desert island.

3. **On whose real life adventures is the story of Robinson Crusoe based?**

**Ans.** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the meaning of the symbol Homo Economicus?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the prime directive of a capitalist economy?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

6. On his return to England, who interviewed Alexander Selkirk ?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

7. What happened to Robinson when he went on his second voyage to Guinea?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

8. What did Robinson do when he reached the desert island?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Why did Robinson go to Guinea?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

10. What did Robinson discover after spending twelve years of solitude on the islands?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

### Write True or False

1. Eighteenth century was a shift from an aristocratic order to a capitalist system .....
2. Robinson buys a plantation in America .....
3. The family life of Robinson is discussed in detail in Robinson Crusoe .....
4. Alexander Selkirk was a Scotsman .....
5. The name of Robinson's ship was Cinque Port .....
6. Dampier was sailing in command of a privateering expedition .....
7. Robinson was invited by Hull on a ship going to America .....
8. In Brazil Robinson takes up Sugarcane plantation .....

9. Robinson's ship was lashed by storm near Caribbean Islands .....
10. Robinson saved Xury from Cannibals .....

### Answers to Multiple choice and True False Questions

After reading the contents of the lesson, the concepts must be clear to you now. If you have been able to write the answers to the exercise questions, you deserve praise. If you have not been able to find out any one of the answers, here is a list of answers. Refer to these for your convenience.

#### Answer key

#### 2.8 Answers to multiple choice questions

- |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. c  | 2. b  | 3. b  | 4. b  |
| 5. b  | 6. b  | 7. c  | 8. b  |
| 9. a  | 10. c | 11. c | 12. d |
| 13. a | 14. c | 15. b |       |

#### Answers to true or false questions

- |          |           |          |         |
|----------|-----------|----------|---------|
| 1. True  | 2. False  | 3. False | 4. True |
| 5. False | 6. True   | 7. False | 8. True |
| 9. True  | 10. False |          |         |

#### Suggested Reading

- Shinagel, Michael .Ed. Robinson Crusoe. New York: Norton Critical Edition, 1994. print
- Ross, Angus .Ed. Robinson Crusoe. Penguin .1965. print

**ROBINSON CRUSOE : A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT**

**8.1 Introduction**

This lesson will acquaint the learner with the adventures which Robinson undertook during his stay on the isolated island.

**8.2 Objectives**

- To familiarize the learner with the adventure of story of Robinson Crusoe.
- To acquaint the learner with the conditions in which Crusoe spent many years of his life on the isolated island.
- To expose the learner to various characters in the novel.

**8.3 Detailed Summary of Robinson Crusoe**

Although commonly referred to as Robinson Crusoe, the book's complete, original title that appears on the title page of the first edition is *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: who lived Eight and Twenty years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoke. Having been cast on shore by shipwreck, where all the men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pyrates.*

Robinson Crusoe is an Englishman from the town of York in the seventeenth century. He is the youngest son of a merchant of German origin. He is encouraged by his father to study law but Crusoe expresses his wish to go to sea. His family is against his going out to sea and his father explains that it is better to seek modest and secure life for oneself. Initially, Robinson is committed to obey his father, but eventually he succumbs to temptation when he is invited by his friend Hull to go to London on a ship. So he embarks on the ship bound for London. On the way, the ship is hit by a storm. When the storm causes near death of Crusoe and his friend, the friend is dissuaded from sea travel, but Crusoe still goes on to set himself up as merchant on a ship leaving London. This trip is financially successful. Then Crusoe plans another voyage, leaving his early profits in the care of a friendly widow. The second voyage does not prove as fortunate and successful as first one. The ship is attacked and seized by Moorish pirates and Crusoe is enslaved to a potentate in the North African town of Sallee. Once they go on a fishing expedition, there he and a slave boy break free. They manage to escape and sail down the African coast. On their way, a kind Portuguese Captain picks them up. He buys the slave boy Xury from Crusoe and then takes Crusoe to Brazil. In Brazil, Crusoe buys a coffee plantation and establishes himself as plantation owner. He soon becomes successful. Then he finds out that man power is required for working on the plantation.



Eager for slave labour and its economic advantages, he decides to go to Guinea to buy slaves. So he embarks on a slave gathering expedition to West Africa. On the way, his ship is hit by a violent storm near the coast of Trinidad.

He somehow manages to reach some unknown island. On the Island, Crusoe soon learns that he is the sole survivor of the expedition. He seeks shelter and food for himself. He returns to the wreck's remains twelve times to salvage guns, powder, food and other items. On the shore, he finds goats he can graze for meat and then he builds a shelter for himself. He erects a cross and on that cross he inscribes the date of his arrival, September 1, 1659, and makes a notch everyday in order to keep the track of time. He makes a calendar for himself. He also keeps a journal of his household record activities. In that journal, he notes his attempts to make candles, his lucky discovery of sprouting grain and his construction of a cellar, among other events. In June 1660, he falls ill and in that state of illness, he hallucinates that an angel visits him, warning him to repent. After sometime he recovers from the illness. One day while drinking tobacco-steeped rum, Crusoe experiences a religious illumination and realizes that god has delivered him from his earlier sins. After recovering completely from the illness, Crusoe makes the survey of the area and discovers that he is on an island. He also finds a pleasant valley abounding in grapes. There he builds a shady retreat. Crusoe begins to feel more optimistic about being on an island. He starts describing himself as the 'king' of that island. He trains a pet parrot and tames a goat as a pet. He also develops skill in basket weaving, bread making and pottery. He makes beautiful pots. Then he cuts down an enormous cedar tree and builds a huge canoe from its trunk. But he soon discovers that the canoe is so huge that he cannot move it to sea. Then he starts building a smaller boat and after building it, he rows around island but nearly perishes when swept away by a powerful current. Somehow he manages to reach the shore. When he reaches the shore, he hears his parrot calling his name. He again thanks god for being saved once again. Then he spends several years in peace on the island keeping himself busy in different activities.

One day Crusoe discovers a man's foot print on the beach and he is shocked to see those footprints because for several years he has not seen any man or man's footprints on that lonely island. He first assumes that the footprint is of devil's then decides that it must belong to one of the Cannibals said to live in the region. He feels terrified. Then he regains his courage and arms himself with weapons which he has salvaged from the shipwreck. Then he goes out on the lookout for Cannibals. Afraid of Cannibals, he builds an underground cellar to keep his goats at night. He also devises a way to cook underground. One evening, he hears gunshots and the next day he is able to

see a ship wrecked on his coast. When he arrives on the scene to investigate, he finds that it is empty. Crusoe is able to obtain the necessary goods from the wrecked ship. He once again thanks Providence for having been saved. Soon afterward, Crusoe discovers human bones or carnage on the shore. They are apparently the remains of Cannibal feast. He is alarmed to see the shore strewn with human carnage and from that moment he continues to be vigilant. Later Crusoe sees thirty cannibals heading for shore with their victims. One of the victims is killed by the Cannibals. Another victim, waiting to be slaughtered, suddenly breaks free and manages to escape. He runs toward Crusoe's dwelling. Crusoe protects him by killing one of the pursuers and injuring the other whom the rescued victim finally kills. As Crusoe is well armed, he defeats most of the Cannibals onshore. The victim vows total submission to Crusoe in gratitude for his liberation and from that day onwards he becomes Crusoe's faithful servant. Crusoe names him Friday, to commemorate the day on which his life was saved and takes him as his servant.

Crusoe finds Friday cheerful and intelligent. He teaches him some English words and some elementary Christian concepts. Crusoe also teaches Friday to call him his master. Friday, in turn, explains that the Cannibals are divided into distinct nations and he also tells Crusoe that the Cannibals eat only their enemies. Friday also informs Crusoe that the men saved in the shipwreck were Spaniards and those men are living nearby. Friday, then, expresses his desire to return to his people but Crusoe is upset at the prospect of losing Friday. He is attached to Friday and he does not want to lose him. Then Crusoe entertains the idea of making contact with the Spaniards. He asks Friday to make arrangement for making contact with the Spaniards. But he does not want to lose Friday. Friday also admits that he would rather die than lose Crusoe. The two build a boat to visit the Cannibals land together. Before they have a chance to leave, they are surprised by the arrival of twenty one Cannibals in canoes. Actually, the Cannibals occasionally visit the island to kill and eat the prisoners. The Cannibals are holding three victims. One of those victims is in European dress. Friday and Crusoe kill most of the cannibals and release the European, a Spaniard. Friday also tells stories of his own god Benamuckee. After rescuing the victims, Crusoe takes them to his dwelling for food and rest. Crusoe prepares to welcome them into his community permanently. After spending sometime on the island, Crusoe sends Friday's father and the Spaniard out in a canoe to explore the land nearby.

Eight days later, Friday sees an English ship and he is alarmed. He informs Crusoe about the approaching ship. Crusoe is suspicious. Friday and Crusoe keep an eye on the ship. They watch as eleven men take three captives onshore in a boat. Nine of

them set out to explore the land leaving behind two men to guard the captives. Friday and Crusoe overpower these men and release the captives. One of those Captives is the captain of the ship, which has been taken in a mutiny. Crusoe and Friday plan to confuse the remaining mutineers. They begin to shout at the mutineers from different points. It makes the mutineers tired and confused. They start running from place to place. Eventually both Crusoe and Friday confront the mutineers telling them that all may escape with their lives except the ringleader. Again, Crusoe and Friday tell the mutineers to save their lives and run away, leaving their ringleader. The men surrender. Crusoe and the captain pretend that the island is an imperial territory and that the governor has spared their lives in order to send them all to England to face justice. Crusoe and Friday keep five men as hostages and send the other men out to seize the ship. When the ship is brought in, Crusoe nearly faints.

On December 19, 1986, Crusoe boards the ship to return to England. When he reaches England, he finds out that most of his family members are dead except for two sisters. Then he visits his widow friend. She has kept his money safe. After giving a share of that money to his widow friend, he travels to Lisbon. There he meets the Portuguese captain again. He informs Crusoe that his Brazilian investments are secure. He also tells Crusoe that his plantations in Brazil have been highly profitable. He arranges to sell his Brazilian land. By this time, Crusoe becomes weary of sea travel. He attempts to return to England by land but is threatened by bad weather and wild animals in northern Spain. He encounters many wild animals, which are killed by Friday. When he arrives in England, he comes to know that the sale of his plantations has been completed and he has made a considerable fortune. Crusoe now becomes a rich man. He donates a portion of his fortune to his sisters and his widow friend. During his stay in England, Crusoe becomes restless and he thinks of going back to Brazil but later on he is dissuaded by the thought that he would have to become Catholic. So he decides to stay back in England. His true friend, the widow, prevents him from running abroad for almost seven years. He takes his two nephews- the children of one of his brother's in his care. He raises the eldest of them as a gentleman and gives him a settlement. He puts his other nephew in the care of the captain of a ship and after five years, finding him a sensible, bold and enterprising young fellow, he puts him into a good ship and sends him to sea.

In the mean time, Crusoe gets married. He has three children, two sons and a daughter. But his wife dies. Then his nephew comes home with good success from a voyage to Spain. Crusoe's inclination to go abroad and his nephew's importunity prevails and engages Crusoe to go in his ship, as a private Trader to East Indies in 1694.

During voyage, Crusoe revisits his island. There he sees his successors, the Spaniards and learns about the whole story of their lives and of the villains that he left there, how, at first, they insulted the poor Spaniards, how they afterwards agreed, disagreed, united, separated and how at last, the Spaniards felt obliged to use violence with them; how they got subjected to the Spaniards; and how honestly the Spaniards used them. He also comes to know about the battles of the Spaniards with the Caribbean's who landed several times on the island and he also finds out the improvements which the Spaniards have made upon the land itself and how five of them made an attempt upon the main land, and brought men and five women prisoners by whom Crusoe finds twenty young children on the island.

Crusoe stays in the island for twenty days. When he leaves, he gives them supplies of all necessary things particularly of Arms, Powder, Clothes, Tools and two workmen which he brought from England with him. These two workmen are a Carpenter and a Smith. Then he divides the island into parts. He reserves for himself the property of the whole, but gives them some parts respectively. After settling all the things with them, he asks them not to leave the place and then he departs.

From there, Crusoe goes to Brazil from where he sends a bark with more people to the island and in that bark, besides other supplies, Crusoe sends seven women whom he finds proper for the service of wives to such as would take them. As for the Englishmen, Crusoe promises to send them some women from England. He also sends them five cows, three of them being big with calf, some sheep and some hogs. When Crusoe revisits his island he finds that their number has considerably increased.

But later on, about three hundred Caribbeans come and invade the island. They ruin their plantations. The Spaniards fight with them twice. At first they get defeated and three of them are killed but at last a storm destroys their Enemy's Canoes and they destroy the rest of them, renew and recover the possession of their plantation and still live on the island.

#### **8.4 Glossary**

- Modest: not very large, expensive, important etc.
- Committed: willing to work hard and give your energy to something; believing strongly in something.
- Succumb: not to be able to fight an attack, an illness, a temptation etc.
- Dissuade: to persuade somebody not to do something
- Voyage: a long journey especially by sea or in space
- Fortunate: having or bringing an advantage, an opportunity, a piece of good luck etc.
- Seize: to take somebody or something in your hand suddenly using force.

- Pirates: a person on a ship who attacks other ships in order to steal from them.
- Enslave: to make somebody a slave
- Plantation: a large area of land, especially in a hot country, where crops such as coffee, sugar, rubber, etc. are grown.
- Embark: to get onto a ship: to put something onto a ship
- Sole: only; single
- Survivor: a person who continues to live, especially despite being nearly killed or experiencing great danger or difficulty
- Salvage: the act of saving things that have been, or are likely to be, damaged or lost, especially in a disaster or an accident.
- Inscribe: to write or cut words, your name, etc. into something.
- Notch: a level on a scale, often marking quality or achievement.
- Cellar: an underground room often used for storing things
- Hallucinate: to see or hear things that are not really there, because of illness or drugs.
- Illumination: understanding or explanation of something.
- Retreat: a quiet, private place that you go to in order to get away from your usual life.
- Current: the movement of water in the sea or a river
- Devise: to invent something new or a new way of doing something
- Providence: God or a force that some people believe controls our lives and the things that happen to us
- Carnage: the violent killing of a large number of people
- Strewn: to cover a surface with things
- Slaughter: the cruel killing of a large number of people at one time
- Pursuer: person who is following or chasing some body.
- Fortune: chance or luck, especially in the way it affects people's lives
- Mutineer - a person who takes part in a mutiny.

### 8.5 Self Check Questions

Answer in true or false

1. Robinson Crusoe is a French man \_\_\_\_\_
2. Crusoe is encouraged by his father to study law \_\_\_\_\_
3. When Crusoe plans another voyage he leaves his early profits in the care of a friendly widow \_\_\_\_\_

4. Crusoe embarks on a slave gathering expedition to Trinidad \_\_\_\_\_
5. He reached the island on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1659. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Crusoe escapes from North African town of Salée with Friday \_\_\_\_\_
7. Crusoe sees 30 Cannibals on the shore with their victims \_\_\_\_\_
8. Friday was an African \_\_\_\_\_
9. Crusoe boards the ship to return to Brazil \_\_\_\_\_
10. After coming back to England, Crusoe gives the share of his property to his widow friend only \_\_\_\_\_

### 8.6 Multiple Choice Questions

1. Robinson Crusoe belonged to the town of
  - a) York
  - b) London
  - c) Cambridge
  - d) England
2. His father was of \_\_\_\_\_ origin
  - a) English
  - b) French
  - c) German
  - d) Italian
3. Crusoe embarked a ship bound for
  - a) India
  - b) England
  - c) Germany
  - d) Africa
4. Crusoe arrived on the island on
  - a) 5<sup>th</sup> September 1659
  - b) 1<sup>st</sup> October 1659
  - c) 1<sup>st</sup> September 1659
  - d) 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1669
5. Crusoe fell ill in
  - a) 1660
  - b) 1670
  - c) 1680
  - d) 1655
6. Crusoe made a huge Canoe from
  - a) a Cedar tree

- b) an apple tree
  - c) a neem tree
  - d) a pine tree
7. The Portuguese Captain picked up Crusoe and Xury and takes Crusoe to
- a) Bahamas
  - b) Canada
  - c) Brazil
  - d) London
8. One of the three victims rescued by Friday and Crusoe turns out to be Friday's
- a) Brother
  - b) Father
  - c) Uncle
  - d) Cousin
9. When did Crusoe board a ship to return to London?
- a) 19<sup>th</sup> December 1686
  - b) 19<sup>th</sup> January 1687
  - c) 20<sup>th</sup> September 1686
  - d) 12<sup>th</sup> December 1686
10. How many Children did Crusoe have?
- a) 2
  - b) 3
  - c) 4
  - d) 5
11. Crusoe engaged his young nephew as a Private trader in a ship bound to
- a) West Indies
  - b) Caribbean
  - c) East Indies
  - d) England
12. Crusoe went to East Indies in the year
- a) 1693
  - b) 1694
  - c) 1696
  - d) 1695
13. How many children did Crusoe find on his revisit to the island?
- a) 10
  - b) 25

- c) 22
  - d) 20
14. How many women are sent to the Island by Crusoe from Brazil?
- a) Seven
  - b) Eight
  - c) Nine
  - d) Ten

### 8.7 Short Answer Questions

#### Q1. Who was Robinson Crusoe?

**Ans.** Robinson Crusoe was an Englishman from the town of York. He was the youngest son of a merchant of German origin.

#### Q2. What is the full title of Robinson Crusoe?

**Ans.** The original title that appears on title page of the first edition is The Life and Strange Surprising Adventure of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty years, all alone in an un-inhabited island on the coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoke; Having been cast on shore by shipwreck, where in all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely delivered by Pyrates.

#### Q3. Why is Robinson's family against his going to sea?

**Ans.** Robinson's family is against his going to sea because his father thinks that it is better to seek a modest, secure life for oneself.

#### Q4. What happens to Crusoe when he goes for the second voyage?

**Ans.** The second voyage of Crusoe does not prove fortunate. The ship of Crusoe is seized by the Moorish Pirates and Crusoe is enslaved to a potentate in the North African town of Sallee. There, while on a fishing expedition, he and a slave boy Xury break free and sail down the African Coast.

#### Q5. What did he do to keep the track of time?

**Ans.** In order to keep a track of time, he erects a cross. He inscribes the date of his arrival, September 1, 1659 on it and makes a notch everyday.

#### Q6. What happens to Robinson in 1660?

**Ans.** In 1660, he falls ill and hallucinates that an angel visits him. He warns him to repent. One day when he is drinking tobacco-steeped rum, Crusoe experiences a religious illumination and realizes that god has delivered him from his earlier sins.

#### Q7. What does Crusoe do after recovering from illness?

**Ans.** After recovering from illness, Crusoe makes a survey of the area and discovers that he is on an island. He finds a pleasant valley abounding in grapes, where he builds



a shady retreat. He begins to feel more optimistic about being on the island and describes himself as the 'king' of that island.

**Q8. What did Crusoe discover on the beach one day?**

**Ans.** One day Crusoe discovers a man's footprints on the beach. He is shocked to see the footprints and assumes the footprints to be of a devil.

**Q9. What did Crusoe do when he finds out that there are Cannibals on the island?**

**Ans.** Crusoe felt terrified. He armed himself and remained on the lookout for cannibals. He also built an underground Cellar to herd his goats at night. He also devised a way to cook underground.

**Q10. How did Crusoe meet Friday?**

**Ans.** One day Crusoe discovers the shore strewn with human carnage. He is alarmed and continues to be vigilant. Later Crusoe sees thirty Cannibals heading for shore with their victims. One of the victims is killed. Another one, waiting to be slaughtered, suddenly breaks free and runs towards Crusoe's dwelling. Crusoe protects him, killing one of the pursuers and injuring the other. The saved victim vows total submission to Crusoe in gratitude for his liberation. Crusoe names him Friday.

Q11. Why does Crusoe name the victim Friday?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q12. What does Crusoe teach Friday?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q13. What does Friday inform Crusoe?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q14. What were the Cannibals holding?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q15. How does Friday and Crusoe overpower the mutineers?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q16. How does Crusoe befool the mutineers?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q17. What does Crusoe pretend to be in front of the mutineers?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q18. What does Crusoe find when he comes back to England?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q19. What does Portuguese Captain inform Crusoe about when he comes back to England?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q20. What does Crusoe find out when he revisits the island?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

### 8.8 Answer Key

After reading the contents of the lesson, the concepts must be clear to you. If you have been able to find the answers- congratulations but if you have not been able to find the answers don't feel disheartened. Here is a list of answers to Multiple choice and True/False questions for you.

#### Answers to True / False questions

- |          |           |         |          |
|----------|-----------|---------|----------|
| 1. False | 2. True   | 3. True | 4. False |
| 5. True  | 6. False  | 7. True | 8. False |
| 9. False | 10. False |         |          |

### 8.9 Answers to multiple choice questions

- |       |       |      |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. a  | 2. c  | 3. b | 4. c  | 5. a  | 6. a  |
| 7. c  | 8. b  | 9. a | 10. b | 11. c | 12. b |
| 13. d | 14. a |      |       |       |       |

### Suggested Reading

- Moore, John Robert. A Checklist of the Writing of Daniel Defoe. Bloomington: Indiana UP. 1960.
- Hutchins, Henry Clinton. Robinson Crusoe and its Printing, 1719-1731. New York: Columbia UP. 1925.
- Dottin, Paul, Ed. Robinson Crusoe Examined and Criticized. London: Dent, 1923.

**MAJOR CRITICAL ASPECTS**

**9.1 Introduction**

This lesson has been written with an aim to acquaint the learners with various characters in Robinson Crusoe. Defoe possesses the gift of creating living characters and all of his novels are named after the protagonist of the novel. His characters are not mere symbols, they are creatures of flesh and blood and compound of weaknesses and virtues.

**9.2 Objectives**

- To familiarize the learners with major and minor characters of Robinson Crusoe.
- To acquaint the learners with the role of major and minor characters in the development of the story.
- To make the learners aware of the contribution of various characters to the theme of the novel.

**9.3 CHARACTER SKETCH OF ROBINSON CRUSOE**

Robinson Crusoe is the hero of the novel with the title after his name. He is the narrator as well as the protagonist of this autobiographical novel. He is a young man of seventeen. He belongs to a middle class family but is fond of sea life. His father wants him to study law but he is interested in voyaging. When his father comes to know that Robinson wants to be a voyager, he tells his mother that “the boy might be happy if he would stay at home but if he goes abroad, he will be the miserable, most wretched that was ever born.” These words of Crusoe’s father become the main source of conflict between father and son. As a result, Crusoe resolves to run away from home.

He boards a ship leaving for London along with his friend. He leaves his home and parents. Many a time, Crusoe thinks of going back but fear of humiliation in the eyes of his friends, relatives and family makes him go ahead. On his first voyage, his ship comes under storm and his friend has a narrow escape. Then he sets out on a voyage to Guinea. Pirates hijack his ship and he is enslaved. The chief pirate is impressed by Crusoe’s good looks and his handy knowledge. He keeps him at his personal service. Crusoe spends two years there as a slave.

**Brave man**

One day his master sends him and two other slaves on a fishing expedition. Crusoe and Xury, the other slave boy, run away from there. Captain of that ship

picks up Crusoe and Xury and they reach Brazil. The Portuguese Captain purchases Xury. In Brazil, Crusoe gathers a lot of money from plantation business. He establishes himself as a plantation owner and takes up sugarcane plantation, but manpower is required to work on the plantation. Eager for slave labour and its economic advantages, he embarks on a slave gathering expedition to West Africa in order to get slaves for the plantation. Suddenly, a violent storm lashes the ship near the Caribbean islands. The ship is driven out of its course and it finally sinks. Robinson manages to reach the coast of a desert island. He soon learns that he is the sole survivor of the expedition.

**Far sighted**

Next day, he takes a bird's eye view of the island from the top of a hill and finds it completely deserted. He looks at the deserted ship just a mile and half away from him and thinks of the wrong decision of the captain who asked them to board a boat to find some island nearby. He goes to the ship and brings many things including rifles, powder, bullets, swords, knives, ropes, planks, biscuits, oats, clothes, razors, coins etc. on the island. He brings them ashore by making an amazing raft with his handy knowledge, resourcefulness and untiring courage. On shore, he finds goats he can graze for meat and builds a shelter for himself.

**Wise man**

When he is clear enough that his stay could extend to many years, he erects a wooden cross and engraves on it "I came on shore here on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1659." He goes on marking everyday with a scar on the plank and he makes a foolproof calendar for his record. It is one of the chief characteristic of neo-colonial system.

**A man of wits**

Crusoe single handedly establishes English life on the island. First, he makes his home by erecting a tent. Half part of it is inside the hill-grotto and half is out of it. Another sheet of tent further overprotects it. In front of it, he embeds wooden logs and mast pieces in semi-circle shape and interfastens them with metallic strings etc. Similar to them, he embeds another array of logs and mast pieces firmly fixed in the earth with pointed tops at the distance of six inches from them. They are also interfastened with ropes, metallic pieces and he uses ladder instead of a gate. He digs the inner of the cave further and brings the soil out which he spreads out on the cave opening. It makes the compound a bit higher than the other part of the fence. Building of his house is the finest example of his resourcefulness, intelligence, sense of security and future planning. He plants barley, domesticates animals, develops the

art of pottery, prepares umbrella and builds a farmhouse in the interior of the valley that becomes nice resort in the final episode of betraying ship crew.

A man of concern and care

He has spent more than 25 years on the island when he finds an imprint of footprint on the sand of the beach. Instead of being happy, he becomes scared and obsessed to find the footprint because he thinks that the fellow creature could be his enemy, rival or a cannibal. He takes measures of his safety, security and defense. Later he comes to know about Cannibals. When he comes to know that the cannibals have come there and have eaten away human beings, he resolves to fight with them. He becomes champion of the dignity of humanity and finally rescues Friday from the Cannibals. Friday becomes servant, friend and loyal soldier of Crusoe. Crusoe teaches him English and first he teaches him to call him 'master'. After a few months, when Friday learns English, Crusoe makes him know Christianity, God, Nature and Civic sense.

Later both of them rescue two more victims from the cannibals. After a few months, they rescue a captain, his mate and a traveller from the group of the crew of a ship who has fallen prey to the mutiny of the crew of the ship that anchors near the island. In this way, Robinson Crusoe can rightly be called a Saviour of so many people. He saves them with his mind, art, intelligence, bravery and high-spirited nature. He behaves like a monarch while launching the last strategy of making the captain regain control of the ship.

He gets his moiety from Brazil and reaches his fatherland at the age of 37. He establishes himself as a successful trader, business person and managing director. He forgets the pain and sufferings he passed through when he gets his deserve multiplied many times from the plantation business he had left in Brazil. His insolence punishes him and turns him to be a man of heroic qualities but his faith in Providence rewards him with the fruit of his sincere efforts in Brazil.

In short, bravery, steadfastness, self-awareness, prudence, honesty, resourcefulness, unflinching faith and futurist mind of Robinson Crusoe make him a living character of the real life. His industry, resourcefulness and solitary courage make him an exemplary individual but his vices are social and his urge to subjugate others is highly objectionable. In bringing both sides together into one complete character, Defoe gives us a fascinating glimpse into the succession, failures and contradictions of modern man.

#### **9.4 CHARACTER SKETCH OF FRIDAY**

Friday has a huge literary and cultural importance because he is probably the first non-white character to be given a realistic, individualized and humane portrayal

in the English novel. If Crusoe represents the first colonial mind in fiction, then Friday represents not just a Caribbean tribesman but also all the natives of America, Asia and Africa who would later be oppressed in the age of European Colonialism or Imperialism. When Crusoe teaches Friday to call him “master”, Friday becomes an enduring political symbol of racial injustice in a modern world which is critical of imperialist expansion. Recent rewritings of Crusoe’s story like J.M Coetzee’s *Foe* and Michel Tournier’s *Friday* emphasize the sad consequences of Crusoe’s failure to understand Friday and suggest how the tale might be told very differently from Friday’s perspective.

Friday is a key figure within the context of the novel. In many ways, he is the most vibrant character in *Robinson Crusoe*, much more charismatic and colorful than his master is. Defoe, at times underscores the contrast between Crusoe and Friday’s personalities. In his joyful reunion with his father, Friday exhibits far more emotion towards his family than Crusoe. Crusoe never talks about missing his family or dreams about the happiness of seeing them again but Friday jumps and sings with joy when he meets his father. This emotional display makes the reader see what is missing from Crusoe’s heart. Friday’s expression of loyalty in asking Crusoe to kill him rather than leave him is more heartfelt than anything Crusoe ever says or does. Friday asks many questions to Crusoe about the devil and Crusoe answers his questions only indirectly and hesitantly. It leaves the reader wondering whether Crusoe’s knowledge of Christianity is superficial and sketchy in contrast to Friday’s full understanding of his own god Benamuckee. In short, Friday’s exuberance and emotional directness often point out the wooden conventionality of Crusoe’s personality.

Crusoe appreciates Friday much more than Crusoe would appreciate a mere servant. Crusoe does not seem to value intimacy with humans but he does say that he loves Friday. This is the only time Crusoe makes such a confession in the novel, since he never expresses love for his parents, brothers, sisters or even his wife. The mere fact that an Englishman confesses more love for an illiterate Caribbean ex-cannibal than for his own family suggests the appeal of Friday’s personality. Crusoe may give Friday Christianity and clothing, but Friday gives Crusoe emotional warmth and a vitality of spirit which Crusoe’s European heart lacks.

### **9.5 CHARACTER SKETCH OF PORTUGUESE CAPTAIN**

The Portuguese Captain is presented more fully than any other European in the novel besides Crusoe. He is more vividly portrayed than Crusoe’s widow friend or his family members. He makes his appearance in the novel during two very important incidents in Crusoe’s life. First, he picks up Crusoe after his escape from the Moorish

pirates and then he takes him to Brazil where Crusoe establishes himself as a plantation owner. Twenty-eight years later, again the Portuguese Captain informs Crusoe that his Brazilian investments are secure. He also arranges the sale of the plantation. The Portuguese Captain is the agent of Crusoe's extreme good fortune. In this sense, he represents the benefits of social connections. If the captain had not been located in Lisbon, Crusoe would never have cashed in on his Brazilian holdings. Despite Crusoe's hard individual labour on the island, it is actually the Portuguese captain, and not his own resourcefulness, that makes Crusoe wealthy in the end.

In addition to this, the Portuguese Captain is associated with a wide array of virtues. He is an honest person. He informs Crusoe about the money he has borrowed against Crusoe's investments and repays a part of it immediately even though it is financially difficult for him to do so. He is loyal, honoring his duties toward Crusoe even after twenty-eight years. He is extremely generous to pay Crusoe more than the market value for the animal skins and slave boy after picking up Crusoe at sea. He also gives Crusoe handsome gifts when he leaves for Brazil. All those virtues make the Captain a paragon of human excellence. In some ways, the Captain's goodness makes him the moral counterpart of Friday, since the European seaman and the Caribbean cannibal mirror each other in benevolence and devotion to Crusoe.

### 9.6 Glossary

- Protagonist: the main character in a play, film or book; one of the main people in a real event, especially a competition battle or struggle
- Narrator: a person who tells a story, especially in a book, play or film/movie
- Voyager: a person who goes on a long journey; especially by ship to unknown parts of the world.
- Miserable: very unhappy or uncomfortable
- Wretch: a person that you feel sympathy or pity for.
- Conflict: a situation in which people, group or countries are involved in a serious disagreement or argument
- Humiliation: loss of respect or to feel ashamed
- Acquaintance: a person that you know but who is not a close friend
- Hijack: to use violence or threats to take control of a vehicle in order to force it to travel to a different place or to demand something from a government.
- Enslave: to make somebody a slave
- Inexplicable: that cannot be understood or explained

- Hurricane: a violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the Western Atlantic Ocean.
- Capsize: if a boat capsizes, it turns over in the water
- Furious: very angry
- Deserted: a place with no people in it
- Prudence: sensibility and carefulness when you make judgements and decisions, avoiding unnecessary risks.
- Amazing: very surprising, especially in a way that makes you feel pleasure or admiration
- Raft: a flat structure made of pieces of wood tied together and used as a boat or floating platform
- Courage: the ability to do something dangerous, or to face pain or opposition without showing fear
- Engrave: to cut words or designs on wood, stone, metal etc.
- Colonial: connected with or belonging to a country that controls another country.
- Grotto: a small cave, especially one that has been made artificially
- Array: a group or collection of things or people, often one that is large or impressive
- Fortress: a building or place that has been made stronger and protected against attack.
- Imprint to have a great effect on something so that it cannot be forgotten; a mark made by pressing or stamping something onto a surface.
- Mutiny: the act of refusing to obey the orders of somebody in authority, especially by soldiers or sailors.
- Saviour: a person who rescues somebody or something from a dangerous or difficult situation.
- Strategy: a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose
- Subjugate: to defeat somebody or something to gain control over somebody.
- Exemplary: providing a good example for people to copy
- Glimpse: a look at somebody for a very short time, when you do not see the person or thing completely.
- Contradiction: lack of agreement between facts, opinions, action etc.
- Humane: showing kindness towards people and animals by making sure that they do not suffer more than is necessary.



- Realistic: representing things as they are in real life
- Portrayal: the act of showing or describing somebody or something in a picture, play, book, etc; a particular way in which this is done.
- Imperialism: a system in which one country controls other countries, often after defeating them in a war
- Context: the situation in which something happens and that helps you to understand it.
- Emphasize: to give special importance to something; to make something more noticeable
- Perspective: a particular attitude towards something; a way of thinking about something.
- Vibrant: full of life and energy
- Charismatic: having charisma, the powerful personal quality that some people have to attract and impress other people.
- Underscore: the symbol that is used to draw a line under a letter or word and used in computer commands and in internet addresses; underline.
- Intimacy: the state of having a close relationship with somebody.
- Fortune: a large amount of money; chance or luck especially in a way it affects people's lives.
- Enterprise: the development of business by the people of a country rather than by the government
- Gratitude: the feeling of being grateful and wanting to express your thanks
- Virtue: behaviour or attitudes that show high moral standards, a particular good quality or habit
- Vice: evil or immoral behaviour or quality in somebody's character.

**Self Assessment Test****9.7 Multiple Choice Questions**

1. The age of Robinson Crusoe at the beginning of the novel is
  - a) 10 years
  - b) 15 years
  - c) 17 years
  - d) 21 years
2. Crusoe's father wants him to be a
  - a) Doctor
  - b) Lawyer

- c) Professor
- d) Voyager
- 3. Crusoe spends two years as a slave in
  - a) Guinea
  - b) London
  - c) Carribean
  - d) Trinidad
- 4. The slave with whom Crusoe escapes from pirates is
  - a) Moley
  - b) Xury
  - c) Hull
  - d) Friday
- 5. Robinson spent \_\_\_\_\_ years on a deserted island
  - a) 25
  - b) 26
  - c) 28
  - d) 30
- 6. Who is rescued from cannibals by Crusoe?
  - a) Xury
  - b) Hull
  - c) Portuguese captain
  - d) Friday
- 7. Robinson returns back to England at the age of
  - a) 30 years
  - b) 37 years
  - c) 42 years
  - d) 27 years
- 8. Friday worships
  - a) Jesus Christ
  - b) Crusoe
  - c) Benamuckee
  - d) Guardian angel
- 9. What is the name of Crusoe's story written by Michel Tournier?
  - a) Foe
  - b) Robinson Crusoe
  - c) Xury

- d) Friday
10. Crusoe teaches Friday to call him
- a) Teacher
  - b) Master
  - c) Friend
  - d) Sir
11. Who takes Crusoe to Brazil?
- a) Portuguese Captain
  - b) Cannibals
  - c) Crusoe's widow friend
  - d) Hull
12. After how many years Portuguese Captain meets Crusoe again
- a) 25 years
  - b) 28 years
  - c) 30 years
  - d) 27 years
13. Crusoe meets Portuguese Captain again in
- a) Carribean
  - b) England
  - c) Lisbon
  - d) Trinidad
14. Who is the moral counterpart of Friday?
- a) Robinson Crusoe
  - b) Portuguese Captain
  - c) Cannibals
  - d) Moley
15. Crusoe buys plantation in
- a) Brazil
  - b) Trinidad
  - c) Lisbon
  - d) England

**Write True or False**

1. Robinson goes on fishing expedition with Moley and Xury. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Robinson purchases Xury. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Robinson goes on a slave gathering expedition to South Africa. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Robinson reaches the deserted island on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1759. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Robinson reaches back to England at the age of 27 years. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Friday informs Robinson about his success in plantation business. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Friday worships god Benamuckee. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Robinson teaches Friday to call him master. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Robinson and Xury are picked up by Cannibals. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Portuguese Captain is a European seaman. \_\_\_\_\_

### 9.8 Self Check Questions

#### Q1. What happens to Robinson when pirates hijack his ship?

**Ans.** When pirates hijack Robinson's ship, he is enslaved. But because of his good looks, handy knowledge and something inexplicable, the chief pirate keeps him at his personal service. He spends two years as a slave there.

#### Q2. How did Robinson Crusoe establish English life on the island?

**Ans.** Robinson Crusoe single handedly established English life on the island. First, he made his home by erecting a tent whose half part was inside the hill grotto and half was out of it. In front of it, he embedded wooden logs and most pieces in a semi circle shape and inter-fastens them with metallic strings etc. He built up not a house but a fortress. Then he planted barley, domesticated animals, develops the art of pottery, prepare umbrella and built a farmhouse in the interior of the valley.

Q3. How can Robinson be called a Savior of so many people?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q4. What happens when Robinson returns to England?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q5. What makes Robinson Crusoe a living character of the real life?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q6. How does Friday have a huge literary and cultural importance?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q7. What are the various questions that are asked by Friday to Crusoe?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q8. Discuss in brief the character of Friday.

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q9. How does the Portuguese Captain help Robinson Crusoe?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q10. What are the various virtues possessed by the Portuguese Captain?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

### 9.9 Answer Key

Dear learners, after reading the contents of the lesson, the concepts must be clear to you. If you have been able to find the answers to the self-check questions, you deserve applause. However, if you have not been able to find the answers, here is a list of answers of multiple choice and true / false questions for you.

#### Answers to Multiple Choice Questions

- |       |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. b  | 2. b  | 3. a  | 4. b  | 5. c  |
| 6. d  | 7. b  | 8. c  | 9. d  | 10. b |
| 11. a | 12. b | 13. c | 14. b | 15. a |

#### Answers to True/False

- |          |          |         |          |
|----------|----------|---------|----------|
| 1. True  | 2. False | 3. True | 4. False |
| 5. False | 6. False | 7. True | 8. True  |
| 9. False | 10. True |         |          |

### 9.10 Suggested Reading

- Shinagel, Michael, Ed. Robinson Crusoe. New York: W.W Norton and Company. 2010.
- Blewett, David. Defoe's Art of Fiction. Toronto: University of Toronto. 1979. Print.

**MAJOR CRITICAL ASPECTS**

**10.1 Introduction**

This lesson will provide the learners the knowledge of various aspects of the novel Robinson Crusoe which is interpreted in many ways- as a religious allegory, as a spiritual biography etc. An attempt has been made to analyse various interpretations of the novel. This lesson also discusses the theme and symbolism in Robinson Crusoe.

**10.2 Objectives**

- To familiarize the learners with various interpretations of the novel.
- To acquaint the learners with different themes and symbols used in Robinson Crusoe.

**10.3 Robinson Crusoe as a Religious Allegory**

Apart from being an exciting account of a man's adventures on an uninhabited island, Robinson Crusoe has a profound allegorical significance. For most of the readers, Crusoe's many references to God, Providence and sin are extraneous to the real interest of the novel. Readers of the nineteenth century read Robinson Crusoe in the light of religion. In the Preface, Defoe announces that his intention is "to justify and honour the wisdom of Providence in all the variety of our circumstances."

Robinson Crusoe can be viewed from two levels : Theological and Practical. If we view it from theological perspective, we will find that man's extreme aspiration is the cause of sin. As seen in Paradise Lost by John Milton that Adam and Eve are banished from Eden because of their aspirations and disobedience to God, similarly, Crusoe is thrown on an uninhabited island because of his disobedience towards his father.

Crusoe's father warns him against the dangers of going to sea . When he goes on a voyage to England with his friend Hull and their ship is hit by a violent storm, Hull gives up voyaging and warns Crusoe against the dangers of sea. Both these persons are figures of authority and can be seen as proxies for God. In ignoring their warnings, Crusoe is denying God's providential social order in the world. Crusoe's conversation with his father about leaving home can be interpreted from a religious perspective. Crusoe repeatedly refers to leaving home without his father's permission as his 'original sin'. He not only associates God and his father but also regards his sin against his father as a sin against God. When he remembers his first voyage he

says, "...my conscience, which was not yet come to the pitch of hardness to which it has been since, reproached me with the contempt of advice and the breach of my duty to God and my Father." (5). In the Puritan way of life, father is regarded as God's deputy and in rejecting his father's advice, Crusoe is committing sin of disobedience like Adam and Eve's. For Crusoe, disobedience grows out of restlessness and discontent with the work assigned by God.

When Crusoe is cast ashore on a deserted island, he sees his situation as the fulfillment of his father's prediction that if Crusoe disobeyed him and neglected his advice, he would find himself alone without any source of help. As his father said with a little sigh, "That boy might be happy if he would stay at home; but if he goes abroad, he will be the most miserable wretch that ever was born". Alone on the island, Crusoe is everyman, alienated from God because of sin.

Robinson Crusoe is also regarded as a spiritual autobiography. The spiritual biography/autobiography portrays the Puritan drama of the soul. Puritans constantly scrutinized their lives to determine the state of their souls and their relationship with God. They are concerned about being saved and possess a profound sense of God's presence. They see His will manifest everywhere and are aware of the unceasing conflict between good and evil. The spiritual biography/autobiography usually follows a common pattern. The narrator sins, ignores God's warnings, hardens his heart to God, repents because of God's grace and mercy, experiences a soul wrenching conversion and finally achieves salvation. The writer emphasizes his former sinfulness as a way of glorifying God. The deeper is his sinfulness, the greater is God's grace and mercy in electing to save him. He reviews his life from the new perspective, which his conversion has given him and he writes of the present and the future with a deep sense of God's presence in his life and in the world.

In Robinson Crusoe, there is a touch of spiritual autobiography. Crusoe throughout uses religious language, imagery and Biblical references. From the beginning of his story, Crusoe presents the account of his adventures not only from his point of view as a youth but also from a Christian perspective. He looks at his past through the eyes of a convert who now constantly sees the working of Providence. He tells of his first shipwreck and of his then ignoring what he now perceives as God's warning, "... Providence, as in such cases generally it does, resolved to leave me entirely without excuse. For if I would not take this for deliverance, the next was to be such a one as the worst and most hardened wretch among us would confer both the danger and the mercy." (7). And he found, "the secret hints and notices of danger." (244)

After his dream and the beginning of his regeneration, Crusoe reviews his life. His understanding and sense of God get profound. Crusoe turns to the Bible and its study reveals God's word and will to him and he finds comfort, solace, guidance and instruction in it. He prays for the first time in many years not for his rescue from the island, but for God's help: "Lord be my help, for I am in great distress" (88). He also prays to God to fulfill His promise, "that if I called upon him in the day of trouble, he would deliver me." His next step towards conversion is asking for God's grace: "Jesus, Thou son of David, Jesus, Thou exalted Prince and Saviour, give me repentance!" (93). He realizes that spiritual deliverance from sin is more important than physical deliverance from the island. Crusoe's faith in God is fervent and honest. In short we can say that Defoe's Robinson Crusoe is a great religious allegory. It shows the inner conflict of Crusoe and portrays the Puritan drama of the soul.

#### **10.4 MAJOR THEMES IN ROBINSON CRUSOE**

There are three major themes in Robinson Crusoe. They are :

1. The Ambivalence of Mastery.
2. The Necessity of Repentance.
3. The Importance of Self-Awareness

##### **1. The Ambivalence of Mastery.**

In the beginning of the novel, Crusoe's success in mastering his situation, overcoming his obstacles and controlling his environment shows the condition of mastery in a positive light. Crusoe is cast ashore on an uninhabited island where climate is inhospitable yet he makes it his home. He tames and domesticates goats and parrots. His mastery over nature makes him a master of his fate and of himself. In the later part of the novel, Crusoe stops viewing himself as a passive victim and strikes a new note of self-determination. When he builds a home for himself on the island, he finds that he is the master of his life.

However, this theme of mastery becomes more complex and less positive after the arrival of Friday because it is after Friday's arrival the idea of mastery applies more to unfair relationships between human beings. In Chapter 23, Crusoe teaches Friday the word, "master" even before teaching him "Yes" and "No" and indeed he lets Friday know "master" was to be Crusoe's name. Crusoe never considers Friday his friend or equal. Here superiority comes instinctively to him. Later in the novel, Crusoe considers himself the "King" of the island and considers the natives and Europeans as his subjects. Defoe explores the link between Crusoe and natives in his depiction of the colonial mind.



**2. The Necessity of Repentance.**

Crusoe's experience on the deserted island constitute not simply an adventure story in which exciting and thrilling things happen but also a moral tale which illustrates the right and wrong ways to live one's life. The moral and religious dimension of the tale is indicated in the Preface. It states that Crusoe's story is published to instruct others about God's wisdom and the most important part of this wisdom is the importance of repenting one's sins. Although it is important to be thankful for God's miracles but it is not enough simply to express gratitude or even to pray to God as Crusoe is grateful to God when his grain sprouts and he also expresses his gratitude several times. Crusoe needs repentance most and he learns this from the fiery angelic figure that comes to him during his illness. In his feverish hallucination he says, "Seeing all these things have not brought thee to repentance, now thou shall die." Crusoe believes that his major sin is his rebellious behaviour towards his father. He refers to it as his "original sin" which is same as Adam and Eve's sin of first disobedience to God. This biblical reference also suggests that Crusoe's exile from civilization represents Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. For Crusoe, repentance consists of acknowledging his wretchedness and his absolute dependence on the Lord. This acknowledgement marks a turning point in Crusoe's spiritual consciousness. It is a rebirth for him. When he repents, he gains prosperity and serenity. Now he complains less about his sad fate and views the island more positively. Later when Crusoe is rescued and his fortune is restored to him, he compares himself to Jove, who also regained divine favour. His view of the necessity of repentance ends up justifying sin. Crusoe may never have learned to repent if he had never sinfully disobeyed his father.

**3. The Importance of Self-Awareness**

Third notable theme in Robinson Crusoe is the importance of self-awareness. Crusoe's arrival on the island does not make him revert to a brute existence controlled by animal instincts. He is aware of his existence and remains conscious of himself all the times. His stay on the island deepens his self-awareness because now he is all alone, cut off from the external social world and has turned inwards. The idea that the individual must keep a careful reckoning of the state of his own soul is a key point in Presbyterian doctrine that Defoe considered seriously all his life. In his daily routine activities, Crusoe keeps account of himself in various ways. In his calendar, he not only marks the passing of days but also instead more egocentrically marks the days he has spent on the island. It is a sort of self-conscious or autobiographical calendar with him at its centre. He also keeps a journal to record

his daily activities even when the activities are meagre. Crusoe feels the importance of staying aware of his situation all the times. His impulse is seen when he teaches his parrot to say the words, "Poor Robin Crusoe... where have you been?" This kind of self-examining thought is natural for anyone alone on a desert island, but it is given a strange intensity when we see that Crusoe has spent months teaching the bird to say it back to him.

### **10.5 SYMBOLS IN ROBINSON CRUSOE**

#### **The Footprint**

In Chapter XVIII Crusoe discovers a single footprint on the sand and gets disturbed instead of being happy. It is one of the most famous moments in the novel. It symbolizes Crusoe's conflicted feelings about human companionship but the evidence of a man on his island makes him shocked. He interprets the footprint negatively as the footprint of the devil. He never entertains a hope that the footprint could belong to some angel or another European who could have come for his rescue. This negative and suspicious attitude towards others gives rise to the possibility that Crusoe may not want to return to human society or may be the isolation or loneliness he is experiencing is his ideal state.

#### **The Cross**

In Chapter VII, Crusoe erects a cross on the sand in the island because he is concerned that he will "lose his reckoning of time." On that cross, he marks the passing of days "with knife upon a large port, in capital letters and making it into a great cross... sets it up on the shore where I first landed..." The large size and capital letters show how important that cross is to Crusoe. It is not only a time keeping device but also a way of relating himself to the larger social world where dates and calendar matter. The cross is not only a time keeping device but is also a symbol of his own new existence on the island, just as the Christian cross is a symbol of the Christian's new life after baptism. However, Crusoe's large cross seems somewhat blasphemous and he does not refer to Christ. It is a memorial to Crusoe himself, highlighting how completely he has become the center of his own life.

#### **CRUSOE'S BOWER**

In Chapter XII, Crusoe discovers a delightful valley when he goes on a scouting tour around the island. He decides to build a country retreat or bower in that valley. This bower is sharply in contrast with Crusoe's residence that he built on his arrival to the island since it is not built for practical purpose of shelter or storage, but simply for pleasure. Crusoe is no longer focused solely on survival which is more or less guaranteed. For the first time since his arrival, he thinks in terms of

“pleasantness”. Thus, the bower symbolizes a radical improvement in Crusoe’s attitude toward his life on the island. Now for the first time, Crusoe has realized that island life is no longer necessarily a disaster to suffer through, but may be an opportunity for enjoyment.

### 10.6 Glossary

- Allegory: a story, play, picture etc. in which each character or event is a symbol representing an idea or a quality, such as truth, evil, death etc.
- Adventure: an unusual, exciting or dangerous experience, journey or series of events
- Profound: very great, felt or experienced very strongly.
- Sin : an offence against God or against a religious or moral law.
- Bower: a pleasant place in the shade under trees or climbing plants in a wood or garden/yard.
- Extraneous: not directly connected with the particular situation you are in or the subject you are dealing with.
- Intention: what you intend to or plan to do; your aim.
- Justify: to show that somebody/something is right or reasonable.
- Providence: God or a force that some people believe controls our lives and the things that happen to us usually in a way that protects us.
- Theological: related to religion or beliefs.
- Aspiration: a strong desire to have or to do something.
- Disobedience: failure or refusal to obey.
- Proxy: the authority that you give to somebody to do something for you when you cannot do it yourself.
- Conscience: the part of your mind that tells you whether your actions are right or wrong.
- Reproach: blame or criticism for something you have done.
- Restless: unable to stay still or be happy or be happy where you are because you are bored or need a change.
- Discontent: a feeling of being unhappy because you are not satisfied with a particular situation; something that makes you have this feeling.
- Prediction: a statement that says what you think will happen; the act of making such statement.
- Discontent: a feeling of being unhappy because you are not satisfied with a particular situation.

- Sigh: to take and then let out a long deep breath that can be heard, to show that you are disappointed, sad, tired etc.
- Alienated : the feeling that somebody does not belong to any particular group.
- Spiritual: connected with the human spirit rather than the body or physical things.
- Scrutinize: to look at or examine somebody or something carefully.
- Repent: to feel and show that you are sorry for something bad or wrong that you have done.
- Wretch: a person that you feel sympathy or pity for.
- Solace: a feeling of emotional comfort when you are sad or disappointed, a person or thing that makes you feel better or happier when you are sad or disappointed.
- Conversion: The act or process of changing something from one form to another.
- Fervent: having or showing very strong and sincere feelings about something.
- Ambivalence: having or showing both good and bad feelings about somebody/something.
- Obstacles: a situation, an event etc. that makes it difficult for you to do or achieve something.
- Domesticate: to make a wild animal used to living with or working for humans.
- Repentance: The fact of showing that you are sorry for something wrong that you have done.
- Dimension: a measurement in space, for example the height, width or length of something, an aspect , or way of looking at or thinking about something.
- Wisdom: the ability to make sensible decisions and give good advice because of the experience and knowledge that you have.
- Feverish: showing strong feelings of excitement or worry, often with a lot of activity or quick movements.
- Expulsion: the act of forcing somebody to leave a place.
- Rebellious: unwilling to obey rules or accept normal standards of behaviour, dress etc.
- Fiery: looking like fire, consisting of fire
- Rebirth: a period of new life, growth or activity

- Exile: the state of being sent to live in another country that is not your own, especially for political reasons or as a punishment.
- Presbyterian: a member of the branch of a Christian Protestant Church that is the national church of Scotland and one of the largest Churches in the US. Elders who are all equal in rank govern it.
- Doctrine: a belief or set of beliefs held and taught by a church, a political party etc.
- Radical: concerning the most basic and important parts of something, thorough and complete.

### 10.7 Self Check Questions

#### Multiple Choice Questions

1. In which part of the novel, Defoe announces that his intention is to justify and honour the wisdom of Providence?"
  - a) Chapter I
  - b) Preface
  - c) Chapter VII
  - d) Chapter XX
2. Crusoe is thrown on an uninhabited island because of his disobedience towards his
  - a) Father
  - b) Providence
  - c) Portuguese Captain
  - d) Friday
3. Who gives up voyaging after his first voyage to England
  - a) Xury
  - b) Robinson Crusoe
  - c) Hull
  - d) Friday
4. Crusoe refers to leaving home without his father's permission as his
  - a) Fortune
  - b) Original sin
  - c) misfortune
  - d) Good luck
5. In Puritan way of life, Father is regarded as
  - a) Life giver
  - b) God's son

- c) God's deputy
  - d) Friend
6. Jesus in Robinson Crusoe is referred to as son of
- a) Mary
  - b) David
  - c) God
  - d) Angel
7. Robinson Crusoe portrays the Puritan drama of
- a) life
  - b) sin
  - c) repentance
  - d) soul
8. On the island Crusoe domesticates
- a) Goats and Parrots
  - b) Dogs
  - c) Cows
  - d) Sheep
9. In which chapter of the novel Crusoe teaches Friday to call him master?
- a) Chapter II
  - b) Chapter XIX
  - c) Chapter XXIII
  - d) Chapter IX
10. In which chapter of the novel Crusoe discovers a footprint on the island?
- a) XVIII
  - b) XX
  - c) VIII
  - d) XIX
11. Crusoe interprets the footprint as the footprint of
- a) Angel
  - b) Cannibal
  - c) Devil
  - d) European
12. The Cross erected by Crusoe symbolizes
- a) his own new existence
  - b) his rebirth
  - c) his loneliness

d) his time keeping device.

**True or False Questions**

1. Robinson Crusoe is a religious allegory. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Crusoe's sin can be compared with the sin of Adam and Eve. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Crusoe is thrown on the uninhabited island due to his disobedience to God. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Portuguese Captain warns Crusoe against the dangers of the sea. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Robinson Crusoe is also regarded as a spiritual autobiography. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Crusoe uses references from Greek mythology. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Robinson Crusoe portrays the Puritan drama of the soul. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Crusoe teaches Friday to call him 'master' in Chapter XXIII. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Crusoe keeps a journal to record his daily activities. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Crusoe's bower symbolizes a radical improvement in Crusoe's attitude towards his life. \_\_\_\_\_

**10.8 Short Answer Question****Q1. What does Defoe announce in the Preface of Robinson Crusoe ?**

**Ans.** In the Preface to Robinson Crusoe, Defoe announces that his intention in writing the book is to "justify and honour the wisdom of Providence in all the variety of our circumstances ....."

**Q2. What is the theological significance of Robinson Crusoe?**

**Ans.** Readers of the nineteenth century read Robinson Crusoe in the light of religion. If we view it at theological level, we will find that man's extreme aspiration is the cause of sin. In Paradise Lost by John Milton, Adam and Eve were banished from Eden because of their aspirations and disobedience to God. Similarly, Crusoe is thrown on an uninhabited island because of his disobedience towards his father.

**Q3.** Who are the two persons in Crusoe's life who can be seen as proxies for God? How?

**Ans.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Q4.** How does Crusoe commit the sin of disobedience?

**Ans.** \_\_\_\_\_

Q5. Discuss Robinson Crusoe as a religious allegory.

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q6. How does Robinson Crusoe portray the Puritan drama of the soul?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q7. Discuss Robinson Crusoe as a spiritual biography.

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q8. Comment on the use of biblical references in Robinson Crusoe .

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q9. What is the symbolical significance of the footprint in Robinson Crusoe?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

Q10. Discuss the various themes in Robinson Crusoe.

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

### 5.9 Answer Key

After reading the contents of the lesson, the concepts must be clear to you. If you have been able to find the answers to self-check questions, you deserve praise, but if you have not been able to find the answers, here is a list of answers to multiple choice and true/false questions.

#### Answers to multiple choice questions

- |      |      |      |       |       |       |
|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. b | 2. a | 3. c | 4. b  | 5. c  | 6. b  |
| 7. d | 8. a | 9. c | 10. a | 11. c | 12. a |

#### Answer Key to True / False questions

- |          |         |          |          |          |
|----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. True  | 2. True | 3. False | 4. False | 5. True  |
| 6. False | 7. True | 8. True  | 9. True  | 10. True |

### 5.10 Suggested Reading

- Shinagel, Michael. Ed. Robinson Crusoe. New York: Norton Critical Edition. 1994. Print.
- Ross, Angus. Ed. Robinson Crusoe. Penguin. 1965. Print.