



A Critical Study of Crusoe’s Mind and Character

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe is considered as the most important precursor of the English Novel or even as the first English Novel. Literary critics have discussed the character of Robinson Crusoe from different literary perspectives. The purpose of this article is to examine Crusoe's attitude towards business, religion and non-Europeans in its historical context. These three elements of Crusoe's character are inseparably linked to each other and are therefore essential to an appreciation of Crusoe's mind and character.

Keywords:

English novels, classification, mind and characters, literary perspective

Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe is a post-colonial literary work. It was a part of the process of “fixing” relations between Europe and its “other”, of establishing patterns of reading alterity as the satire as it inscribed the fixity’ that alterity, naturalizing difference with its own cognitive codes Helen Tiffin’. The narration is conducted in the first person, enhancing the effect of plausibility, the author is completely removed from the text. However, although the genre of the novel is close to the descriptive genre of a real incident (marine chronicle), the plot cannot be called purely chronicle. Robinson's numerous reasonings, his relationship with God, repetitions, descriptions of the feelings that possess him, loading the narrative with emotional and symbolic components, expand the scope of the genre definition of the novel. Not without reason, many genre definitions were applied to the novel "Robinson Crusoe": an educational adventure novel (V. Dibelius); adventure novel (M. Sokolyansky); a novel of education, a treatise on natural education (Jean Jacques Rousseau); spiritual autobiography (M. Sokolyansky, J. Günther); island utopia,

allegorical parable, “classical idyll of free enterprise”, “fictional adaptation of Locke's theory of the social contract” (A. Elistratova).

According to M. Bakhtin, the novel "Robinson Crusoe" can be called romanized memoirs [1, p. 450], with sufficient "aesthetic structure" and "aesthetic intentionality" (according to L. Ginzburg [2, p. 12]). As A. Elistratova notes: “Robinson Crusoe” by Defoe, the prototype of an educational realistic novel in a still unseparated, undivided form, combines many different literary genres” [3, p.113]. All these definitions contain a grain of truth. So, “the emblem of adventurism, writes M. Sokolyansky, is often the presence of the word “adventure” already in the title of the work” [4, p. 45]. The title of the novel just says: “Life and amazing adventures ...”. Furthermore, an adventure is a kind of event, but an emergency event. And the plot of the novel "Robinson Crusoe" itself is an extraordinary event. Defoe performed a kind of educational experiment on Robinson Crusoe, throwing him onto a deserted island. In other words, Defoe temporarily "separated" him from real social relations, and Robinson's practical activity appeared in the

universal form of labor. This element constitutes the fantastic core of the novel and at the same time the secret of its special appeal.

The signs of a spiritual autobiography in the novel are the very form of narration, characteristic of this genre: a memoir diary. Elements of a parenting novel are contained in Robinson's reasoning and his opposition to loneliness.

As K. Atarova writes: "If we consider the novel as a whole, this action-packed work breaks up into a number of episodes characteristic of a fictionalized journey (the so-called *imaginaire*), popular in the 17th-18th centuries. At the same time, the central place in the novel is occupied by the theme of maturation and spiritual development of the hero" [5, p.11].

A. Elistratova notes that: "Defoe in Robinson Crusoe is already in close proximity to the educational "novel of education".

The novel can also be read as an allegorical parable about the spiritual fall and rebirth of a person, in other words, as K. Atarova writes, "the story of the wanderings of a lost soul, weighed down by original sin and finding the way to salvation through turning to God" [5, p.11]. "It was not for nothing that Defoe insisted in the 3rd part of the novel on its allegorical meaning," notes A. Elistratova. The reverent seriousness with which Robinson Crusoe ponders his life experience, desiring to comprehend its hidden meaning, the severe scrupulousness with which he analyzes his spiritual impulses - all this goes back to that democratic puritan literary tradition of the seventeenth century, which was completed in "The Way Pilgrim" by J. Bunyan. Robinson sees the manifestation of divine providence in every incident of his life; he is overshadowed by prophetic dreams... shipwreck, loneliness, an uninhabited island, an invasion of savages - everything seems to him divine punishments" [3, p.113]. Robinson interprets any trifling incident as "God's providence", and an accidental combination of tragic circumstances as a fair punishment and atonement for sins. Even coincidences of dates seem meaningful and symbolic to the hero: "... a sinful life and a

solitary life," Crusoe calculates, "began for me on the same day."

According to J. Starr, Robinson acts in a twofold hypostasis both as a sinner and as God's chosen one. "Merges with such an understanding of the book, notes K. Atarova, and the interpretation of the novel as a variation of the biblical story about the prodigal son: Robinson, who despised his father's advice, left his father's house, gradually, having gone through the most severe trials, comes to unity with God, his spiritual father who, as if as a reward for repentance, will ultimately grant him salvation and prosperity" [5, p.12].

M. Sokolyansky, citing the opinion of Western researchers on this issue, disputes their interpretation of "Robinson Crusoe" as a modified myth about the prophet Jonah. "In Western literary criticism, he notes, especially in the latest works, the plot of Robinson Crusoe is often interpreted as a modification of the myth of the prophet Jonah. At the same time, the active vital principle inherent in the hero of Defoe is ignored ... The difference is palpable in a purely plot plane. In the "Book of the Prophet Jonah" the biblical hero appears precisely as a prophet...; Defoe's hero does not act as a predictor at all ... ". This is not entirely true. Many of Robinson's intuitive insights, as well as his prophetic dreams, may well pass for predictions inspired from above. But further: "The life of Jonah is completely controlled by the Almighty ... Robinson, however much he prays, is active in his activities, and this truly creative activity, initiative, ingenuity does not allow us to perceive him as a modification of the Old Testament Jonah."

The modern researcher E. Meletinsky considers Defoe's novel, with its "installation on everyday realism", "a serious milestone on the path of demythologization of literature" [6. p.280].

Meanwhile, if we draw parallels between Defoe's novel and the Bible, then rather it suggests a comparison with the book of Genesis [7]. Robinson essentially creates his own world, different from the island world, but different from the bourgeois world of pure entrepreneurial creation left by him. If the heroes of the previous and subsequent

"Robinsonades" fall into ready-made, already created worlds before them (real or fantastic, for example, Gulliver), then Robinson Crusoe builds this world step by step like God. The whole book is devoted to a thorough description of the creation of objectivity, its multiplication and material growth. The act of this creation, divided into many separate moments, is therefore so exciting that it is based not only on the history of mankind, but also on the history of the whole world. In Robinson, his godlike nature strikes, declared not in the form of Scripture, but in the form of a diary of life.

The rest of the arsenal characteristic of Scripture is present in it: covenants (numerous advice and instructions from Robinson on various occasions given in parting words), allegorical parables, obligatory disciples (Friday), instructive stories, kabbalic formulas (coincidences of calendar dates), temporary breakdown (day one, etc.), keeping biblical genealogies (whose place in Robinson's genealogies is occupied by plants, animals, crops, pots, etc.). The Bible in Robinson Crusoe seems to be retold on an understated, sophisticated, third-word level. And as simple and accessible in presentation, but capacious and difficult in the interpretation of St. Scripture, also outwardly and stylistically simple, but at the same time fabulously and ideologically capacious "Robinson." Defoe himself assured in print that all the misadventures of his Robinson were nothing more than an allegorical reproduction of dramatic twists and turns in his own life.

Many details bring the novel closer to the future psychological novel. "Some researchers, writes M. Sokolyansky, not without reason emphasize the importance of Defoe the novelist's work for the formation of a European (and above all English) psychological novel. The author of Robinson Crusoe, depicting life in the forms of life itself, focused not only on the outside world surrounding the hero, but also on the inside world of a thinking religious person "[4, p.92]. And according to the witty remark of E. Zimmerman, "Defoe in some respects connects Banyan with Richardson.

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