

Day 3 Questions

Could Crusoe be suffering from a case of the sunken cost fallacy?

- Possibly! But could we make a “state of exception” for Crusoe? Being stranded on the island would put Crusoe in a new situation and he might still be learning what could or could not be lost. Or are you referring to his stubbornness to become a sailor? If so, then, I think you might be onto something, since Crusoe seems to have a weird illogical attraction to sailing. However, it seems to pay off for him in the end and in the long-term.

Where does the American Robinson Crusoe go since he’s already in America?

-The American Robinson Crusoe centers around a missionary that gets stranded on an island (most likely off of South America) and proceeds to convert the natives on the island into Christians. It is less about survival and more about religious conversion.

Do I like Robinson Crusoe (the character)?

-Would we be friends? Probably not. But he is an interesting character to analyze and he seems to act in contradictory ways, which makes him interesting.

Is there a difference between film and book adaptations?

-Yes! The concept of “Fidelity” plays into the ways in which adaptations are judged. Book adaptations are usually praised for deviating from the story and expanding the concepts involved in the original. On the other hand, movies are usually judged on how faithful they are to the source material or the “feeling” of the text.

Do I think Crusoe is supposed to be more of a discover of self rather than adventure?

-I think he is both. Defoe knew that adventure stories were compelling narratives, but I think the true brilliance of this book is to show Crusoe as a compelling character and deeply flawed person.

Was Defoe Religious? Does Crusoe’s sentiments about God mirror’s Defoe?

-For a long time, *Robinson Crusoe* was considered a secular work, since Crusoe seems to only invoke religion when it is convenient for him. However, recent scholarship has read the text as more religious, focusing on Defoe’s struggle to fit religion into an increasingly secular world (post-Enlightenment). I agree with the recent scholarship. I don’t think this is an overly religious or secular text, I think it is trying to figure out what role religion should play in one’s life.

What can I look at in Crusoe to determine whether or not Crusoe is experience fate or his own free will?

-We can examine Crusoe’s changing interpretations for the role of God in his successes and failures. Look at when he forgets about God and then when he asks for God’s help.

Is a writer’s note the same as a preface?

-I don’t think I have come across anything that has claimed to be a “writer’s note,” but I have come across editor’s notes, which usually are a comment on the editorial principles of the edition. An example would be, “all misspellings have been corrected because...”

Why is the book so popular? Is it mainly age and history?

-I am not sure. It is strange to me that this story is so compelling when it is just a story of someone stranded on an island. I don't find the plot itself to be that interesting, just the way the story is told is interesting. Maybe it is because so many English teachers continue to teach it.

What is my favorite adaptation of Crusoe?

-We are reading it! *Foe*.

Do I believe in free will via the context of literature. As in, can a fictional character show free will? How?

-Fictional characters can reveal how other people think about the world. Some novels hope to show us the complex causal network that could possibly be dictating all our life decisions for us. Others show us how we can be masters of our own destiny. It is important to think about story and narrative in these contexts. Let's just suspend what is "real" for a second.

-We often talk about "controlling the narrative" in marketing or how a perception/"story" of a business can influence its stock price. Stories/narrative can be immensely powerful tools for viewing the world differently or compelling others to share your worldview. Fiction can be a powerful tool for analyzing the world, even if it isn't necessarily true.

Are there different ways to pronounce "preface?"

-Yes and they are all correct.

How can translation of a book shape the author's message?

-Great question! We often ignore the work of translators, who try to interpret the "intension" of the work and then bring it into another language by drastically changing its literal translation. Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* is a great example of translation work that gets recognized. His translation is much different than a literal translation, but is considered the best translation.

How long should discussion be if you don't work with a partner?

-10 minutes! And the format is up to you. There could be activities, discussion questions, or you could give a presentation. It is up to you.

Why did Defoe want to try to make this a nonfiction novel?

-We talked about this on Day 2 with the conventions of early 18th century society and their expectations of fiction.

Do you need to quote the book in the reading posts?

-I will not require it, but it is helpful to include.

Crusoe mentions an "influence" that pushes him to keep sailing, what might it be?

-Great question! This could be interpreted many different ways, but for me it seems to be his "lack" as Lacan would call it. It pushes his desire to become a sailor.

Why does Defoe include the journals when this is already in 1st person? More details equals proof of fact?

-That could be true. You could also say its Defoe trying to figure out what type of forms the narrative can take in the novel.

Why do people write about or in the past?

-Huge question! It can be for a number of reasons; I find some of the best examples are to help us understand something that was hidden from us in the past by some societal structure or other force.

Does the shipwreck effect the way in which Crusoe narrates his story?

-One could do a psychoanalytical reading of this book by examining the way that maybe the narrative in the journal portion of the narrative is different than the surrounding narrative. We could say that the journal is closer to the Crusoe on the island and that the other narrative frame is him looking back on his experience.

What similarities do I find between Crusoe and Odysseus?

-There are shipwrecks in both stories. Each story has a long period of time on a remote island. And not to ruin it, a happy homecoming.

How significant is Xury to Robinson Crusoe's journey?

-I think it is an extremely important part of the book, because it leads him down the road to the eventual shipwreck and provides an interesting insight into how Crusoe treats others.

How to make these connections when reading? Like connecting date was written vs. where it takes place in?

-After you have read a paragraph or two, stop and ask yourself why are you being told these specific things. What about them is helping to drive the story? If you start getting in the habit of asking questions while reading, you will start notice these things.

Why isn't Crusoe considered religious at this point in the text?

-Lines like "I entirely forgot the Vows and Promises that I made in my Distress" make readers think he isn't talking God's wrath seriously, since those vows and promises are made to God.

What does it mean on page 75, "for me to do wrong that did right, was no great wonder?"

-Here is my analysis of that quote in its greater context. Crusoe admits that he was wrong to sell Xury, but does not think about the boy and his circumstance only retreating into himself and his thoughts. Xury's story is replaced with that of Crusoe, the story about how he could never follow his father's advice, which becomes the central motivating force of Crusoe's further misfortunes. By shifting the focus away from the sale of Xury, Crusoe can continue with his story.

Why did I choose the books I did for this course?

-I believe the concept of adaptations is helpful for thinking about how fiction functions in the world. Also, these are books that I have a deep knowledge of and can provide you with a good understanding of how and why they were made.

Why did Defoe not want his name associated with the story of Robinson Crusoe?

-Defoe didn't become really famous until after this book, so there was no real reason to try to attach his name to the project. He might have been nervous that people wouldn't like the book. Or that maybe his name took away from the possibility that Robinson Crusoe might have been a real person.

How does the book end?

-It has a "happy" ending.