

Is Defoe for or against British Colonialism?

It is hard to say what Defoe definitively desired, but Crusoe seems to be for British Colonialism in the book.

Why does time go by so fast in this book?

Actually time goes by quite slow compared to more contemporary works. Ted Underwood's paper (there is a cool graph on page 7) on literary time shows how it has changed over time (<https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/91604/WhyLiteraryTimeIsMeasuredInMinutes.pdf?sequence=2>)

Do I think "lost" is a version of R.C?

I don't think lost is an adaptation of Crusoe. The "shipwreck" is all that really ties the two stories together. A good blog post would be if you could make a good justification for why it might be an adaptation.

How do you post a blog post?

Please follow the instructions at: <http://introtfictionf18.web.unc.edu/blog-posting/>

If you cannot access the website with your onyen, please email me and I will add you to the course.

How related does the post have to be to the story?

I want to post to be somewhat related to the reading, so try to link it back to the text somehow. You can talk about one scene or concept from the book and link it to somewhere else.

How would I interpret Kamil's quote?

There are many "lenses" to look at that particular passage. I prefer to read the quote as an example of the disturbing way that the British in the 18th century viewed native and non-white people, which later lead to the justification of slavery and colonial activity. Another way to read the quote would be from a "psychoanalysis" perspective that focuses on the internal processes of Crusoe and what that says about the way he views "otherness."

How would I react to the footprint?

Ha! I would probably tell myself it was just my print and carry on.

Did Defoe use the dream as some sort of divine motivator to save Friday? Would Crusoe have chickened out without it?

Great question! It depends on how you view Crusoe's motivations. He seems to be brave in many different situations including going back to the shipwreck 11 times. However, he does seem to be a different person after the dream. Maybe the dream changes the way that Crusoe thinks/acts? I think there is a good argument to be made for how the dream becomes the motivator for Friday's rescue, but do we believe that Crusoe can really change that quickly? I think the story until this point makes us feel that any change that Crusoe claims to make is probably temporary.

Do I think it is normal to question everything like Crusoe? He seems to overdo it a little bit.

If you look at a movie like *Cast Away*, Tom Hank's character seems to go crazy with questioning everything. I think it is believable. There are stories about people going crazy because they are isolated from other human beings.

Is it alright to continue reading the novels online via adobe?

I think it is a fine idea to read the books online. You just need to make sure you are reading an 1818 edition of *Frankenstein* and not the 1831. Everything else in the class only has one edition, so it will work out.

Is RC losing his humanity for not having social contact?

Yes. Look two questions before this one.

What are some ideas for Discussion Leader Activities?

"Interviewing" a character, asking the class to adapt one of the scenes in a different time/place, asking us to look at a passage in a certain way, mapping out the story, trying to summarize the plot in only a few sentences....

Do you think the footprint scene is the most pivotal part to analyze? What's the framing?

I think it is an interesting scene to look at the psychology of Crusoe, the framing would be how Crusoe has talked to himself before that point in the novel and how he changes after that point. However, I think there are much more interesting portions of the book to analyze like the scene with Xury or Friday.

Whats the damaging effect of having different interpretations of the same story?

We will talk about Fidelity later in the term, but oftentimes stories get "rebooted" and return to their original source material. I don't think there are permanent effects, but just movements in the framing of a text.

What do you think Crusoe's changing views on religion after the footprint say about Defoe's own religious perspective?

I think Defoe is intentionally trying to be ambiguous in what he says about religion. He gets much more political in his later works, but I think he is trying to play both sides. You could easily interpret that Crusoe gets more or less religious depending on the textual evidence that you present.

Why did Crusoe assume he was the master of the "savages?" Crusoe doesn't kill some of the "savages" because he said he doesn't have the authority of being Judge, Jury, and executioner; but who gives him the authority over Friday?

This is an interesting question. The fact that Crusoe views some of the people on the shore as "wretches" or "slaughter" or "victim" compared to the "savages" could be an early indicator that he was already going to spare some of the people on the shore. He seems to perceive the gesture where Friday puts his head under his foot as indication of Friday's request to be subservient. We could read this as Crusoe misreading a custom of Friday's culture. I think there are indications that Friday is using Crusoe as much as Crusoe is using Friday. Which means any "authority" Crusoe claims is purely of his own design.

Do I think Defoe intended for others to review his book as more religious or secular?

I think he wanted to keep the novel ambiguous and have the reader decide.

Why are there are so many wolves at the end of the book?

I am not sure (pages 292-294), it might be a way to work up to the bear (are wolves less terrifying than a bear?). Or it might be a way to round out the adventure since there were no wolves on the island and it is a way to make the story seem more Worldly.

What is the dynamic between how Crusoe saw Xury vs. Friday?

I think you can look at the way Crusoe names the two, "my boy Xury" or "my man Friday." Both characters exit from the story are a little abrupt and both center around a Christian conversion. One thing to consider is if the life of Xury is that much different from Friday?

Does Crusoe display solipsism (David Hume—"I can't see you, you can't see me") when discussing religion?

I think the frame in which you view the text is important to answering this question. If we take Crusoe at the end of the novel, this is completely correct. But if we look at Crusoe throughout the whole story, I don't think this is necessarily true. There is a small part of me that feels Crusoe seems to want to just end the story and this might be why there might be religious aspects missing from those last few pages.

How does Friday affect Crusoe's faith in the rest of the novel?

I think the point in the story where Friday essentially questions why there is evil in the world (page 230) and Crusoe cannot give him a good answer seems to be the beginning of the slow degradation of religion in the novel.

Why is Crusoe so flip-flop when it comes to religion?

I think this is Defoe trying to allow you to read this novel as religious if you really want it to be and ultimately just trying to wrap up the story at the end to the determinant of the rich religious debate mapped out in the beginning of the novel.

Why don't I like the movie version of Crusoe?

Much of what makes this "the first novel" is about understanding the internal struggles and emotions of Crusoe, which is absent from most movie versions of the story.

What are my thoughts on the debate about whether or not this is a religious or secular text?

Look at my comments two questions prior.

Did Crusoe have different places to live? Did he ever get completely lost once he wandered away from his first cave/living area?



In one of the editions, we are treated to a map of the island. You can see there are a few different places that Crusoe builds to live and farm. He seems to get temporary lost, but he eventually finds his way.

As time has passed, regardless of Defoe's depiction of natives, why is the book not deemed offensive?

I want more of these types of questions! I think we should discuss this in class on Thursday.

I find it offensive and think it is important to contextualize this book to better understand why it continues to be sold and studied. Mainly I am trying to ask why do we still tell this story (in slightly different forms)? This is a highly problematic story, so why is this told to children and made into movies?

Why does Defoe not follow the utopian society form of the other shipwreck tales?

It is hard to say why, but my guess is that it is a well established genre and Defoe seems like the type of writer that likes to challenge genres.

How do I feel about Crusoe's treatment of the many people on the island?

I personally feel that his treatment of the people on the island is deeply wrong and morally disgusting. This story becomes a key narrative for the justification of the slave trade and colonial activity. It becomes a difficult text to teach, because it is highly problematic, but is an important text to understand how British colonial activity started and how the British justified the continued existence of the slave trade.

When writing our blog post is it acceptable to make connections in the book for a more current book or topic?

Yes! But please make links to passages/concepts in the book first and then relate it to something in the present.