

STRUGGLE OF LIFE AGAINST THE ENVIRONMENT IN DEFOE'S THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF ROBINSON CRUSOE

By

I Wayan Gede Ariarta

Jurusan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas Sastra dan Budaya
Universitas Udayana

Abstrak

*Dalam studi ini karya penulis terkenal Inggris Daniel Defoe yang berjudul *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* dipilih untuk dianalisis. Buku ini dianggap sebagai novel pertama dalam kesusasteraan Inggris. Tokoh utama dalam cerita ini adalah Robinson Crusoe, seorang pemuda yang berasal dari keluarga kaya berkebangsaan Inggris. Ayahnya seorang pedagang yang sukses dan berharap sang anak menjadi seorang ahli hukum kelak. Namun bukan impian seorang Robinson untuk hidup nyaman dengan hartanya, ia lebih memilih menjadi seorang pelaut. Crusoe kabur dari rumah hanya untuk menemui bencana. Kapalinya karam dihantam badai sampai pada akhirnya Crusoe terdampar di sebuah pulau terpencil tak berpenghuni.*

Di pulau tersebut, dia mempelajari semuanya dari awal dengan peralatan seadanya. Peralatan itu dia dapatkan dari kapalnya yang hampir karam tak jauh dari pulau itu. Dari mulai membuat rumah, perkakas dapur, menumbuhkan padi dan gandum, membuat kapal, menjinakkan binatang hingga beternak. Robinson melanjutkan hidup dan belajar dengan keterbatasan. Tak ada teknologi dan komunikasi dengan sesama manusia. Sempat ia menyalahkan takdir dan menyesal, namun itu tidak melunturkan semangat hidupnya. Dalam kesendiriannya, Crusoe justru menjadi lebih dekat dengan Tuhan, lebih bersyukur hidup dengan segala sesuatu yang dimilikinya. Daniel Defoe menggunakan sudut pandang orang pertama, sehingga pembaca seperti membaca sebuah diary seorang petualang.

*Paper ini menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif. Sumber data primer dalam penulisan ini adalah novel *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* sendiri dan data sekunder berasal dari sumber lain yang berhubungan dengan analisis data seperti buku tentang teori sastra yang dikemukakan oleh William Kenney (1966) dalam bukunya *How to Analyze Fiction*, dan buku *Theory of Literature* yang ditulis oleh Rene Welek and Austin Waren (1962).*

Hasil dari penulisan ini menyatakan bahwa ada hubungan yang erat antara manusia dan lingkungannya dan bagaimana manusia mampu bertahan hidup melawan lingkungan yang liar tersebut.

Key word: shipwreck, deserted island, survive

1. Background of the Study

Literature refers something creative, imaginative, and expressive of which the material is language. It is created based on human consciousness and

imagination which is translated by the artist into a concrete form. One of the important aspects of literature is its relationship with human life because it expresses and shares human life as well as human experiences

Kenney in his book *How to Analyze Fiction*, describes that a work of fiction deals with events that occurs in temporal sequence – that is, one after another. The story of a man’s life, for example, will include his birth, his growing up, his marriage, his growing old, and his death (1966: 12 – 13).

In literature, there are many things that can be analysed both intrinsically and extrinsically, there are elements to study such as theme, setting, character, plot, point of view, style and tone, structure and technique, and so forth. Extrinsically it can be concerned with the author’s biography; social and cultural status, personal experience with life and language, moral values, and so forth.

Wellek and Warren (1973:39) state that the works of literature themselves justify all our interests in the life of an author, in this social environment and the whole process of literature.

2. Problem of the Study

Through the problem to be discussed; it is formulated to prove that Robinson Crusoe can survive against wild the environment.

3. Aims of the Study

This study is intended to fulfil three aims: the general, specific, and academic aims.

The general aim of this writing is to apply theories related to novel in order to get better understanding of Daniel Defoe’s book entitled *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, meanwhile the specific aim of this writing is to find out what message the writer wants to convey.

The last is an academic aim that is to apply the theory of literature studied in the English Department to write a scientific work which gives contribution to this department, so this writing can be used as a reference to help the student who is interested in analysing literary works.

4. Research Method

There are three points covering this section: data source, method and technique of collecting data, and method and technique of analyzing data.

4.1. Data Source

The data of this study were taken from the novel entitled *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* written by Daniel Defoe. This novel is very popular and almost people all over the world know it. It was first published in 1719.

4.2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data of this study were taken from the main character in the novel entitled *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe (1996. London: Seeley, Service & Co. Limited).

All the information was collected through library research and note taking, and the important step in collecting the data is reading the novel carefully, as the source.

4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The data were analyzed according to the theory to find out the data and the source of the data. The other relevant information obtained from other sources was used to support the analysis of the study.

The data were collected from the data source then through the data collection, they were analyzed using the theory of William Kenney. 1978. *How to Analyze Fiction*, and theory of Warren and Wellek. 1962. *Theory of Literature*.

5. Analysis

When Defoe decided to write a more realistic novel than was usual at the time, he could do better to decide for an uninhabited island. It is very difficult to make a character seem more realistic when he is completely alone. It is very hard to describe in detail solitude on such a long time and still remain true to realism. Solitude may be something people have all experienced at one time or other, but

Robinson's long time completely devoid of any human contact whatsoever and his logical despair is incredibly hard to describe convincingly.

Robinson Crusoe is said to be the first realistic novel ever, and it is written by Daniel Defoe. In this novel it tells that Robinson Crusoe is stranded on an uninhabited island.

Though Robinson Crusoe is stranded on an island in the middle of nowhere without any facilities, he is not a desperate man in any way. He sees himself as a king or an emperor, and feels kind of free, despite the limited geographical space. Robinson Crusoe, who casts away on a desert island, in his pocket a knife and a pipe, becomes an architect, a carpenter, a knife grinder, an astronomer, a baker, a shipwright, a potter, a saddler, a farmer, a tailor, an umbrella-maker, and a clergyman. He is the true prototype of the British colonist. The fact that the environment around Crusoe has been changed completely as well as it has also changed his way of thinking. Woman has been less important, which is natural since there are no women around. But it can also be seen how the lack of material things, forces Crusoe to focus on other things and get other values. He starts thinking and reflecting about life and his own surroundings. Crusoe becomes pleased with the fact that he has everything he needs on the island, and he uses only what is needed; nothing more. The religious aspect of Robinson Crusoe should be mentioned. Crusoe thinks a lot about God and the Devil. He looks upon every positive thing, such as the rich nature, as gifts from God. Crusoe

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is very thankful to this, and he is happy that he is able to consider what he enjoyed, rather than what he wanted. But also the Devil was something he believed to exist. This shows when Crusoe one day sees the footprint in the sand, and first thinks that it must be the Devil. After sometimes though, he concludes that this cannot be right.

Crusoe and the Environment

On the island Crusoe encounters cannibals that habitually come there to have feasts. Crusoe, who has mastered most of his environment, become confused the visiting cannibals enough so that he could rescue a prisoner who the cannibals

had intended to consume. This rescue gives Crusoe the chance to have an equal or friend on the island although the man speaks no English. The man, named Friday because of the day he was saved, gives thanks to Robinson for saving his life by showing a position of subservience to him. Crusoe's traits return as he begins to teach Friday English. The first word he teaches Friday is "master" and he shows that this is how Friday is to always address Robinson. Rather than even considering that Friday is an equal, he immediately makes himself the master of the man. This is likely because he considers Friday a savage and lesser being or that the fact that he saved Friday's life means that he now possesses it. Whatever the reason, Robinson makes Friday clearly subservient to himself.

Robinson Crusoe displays character traits that have won him the approval of generations of readers. His perseverance in spending months making a canoe, and in practicing pottery making until he gets it right, is praiseworthy. Additionally, his resourcefulness in building a home, dairy, a shelter of grape, country house, and goat stable from practically nothing is clearly remarkable.

Self-Awareness

Crusoe's arrival on the island does not make him revert to a brute existence controlled by animal instincts, and, unlike animals, he remains conscious of himself at all times. Indeed, his island existence actually deepens his self-awareness as he withdraws from the social world. It is seen that in his normal day-to-day activities, Crusoe keeps accounts of himself enthusiastically and in various ways. For example, Crusoe's makeshift calendar does not simply mark the passing of days, but instead, he marks the days he has spent on the island: it is about him, a sort of self-conscious or autobiographical calendar with him. Similarly, Crusoe keeps a journal to record his daily activities, even when they amount to nothing more than finding a few pieces of wood on the beach or waiting inside while it rains. Crusoe feels the importance of staying aware of his situation at all times. This sort of self-examining thought is natural for anyone alone on a desert island, but it is given a strange activity that Crusoe has spent months teaching the bird to say it back to him. Crusoe teaches nature itself to voice his own self-awareness.

Since Crusoe is unattached to any family members and is used to a wandering life, he again thinks about leaving England, though the widow does all she can to dissuade him. Crusoe marries, but after the death of his wife he decides to head for the East Indies as a private trader in 1694. On this voyage he revisits his island. Crusoe finds that the Spaniards who have remained there have subjugated the mutineers, treating them kindly. Crusoe provides them with gifts of cattle, supplies, and even women. The colony has survived a cannibal invasion and is now prospering.

6. Conclusion

Crusoe's success in mastering his situation, overcoming his obstacles, and controlling his environment shows the condition of mastery in a positive light, at least at the beginning of the novel. Crusoe lands in an inhospitable environment and makes it his home. His taming and domestication of wild goats and parrots with Crusoe as their master illustrates his newfound control. Moreover, Crusoe's mastery over nature makes him a master of his fate and of himself.

Early in the novel, he frequently blames himself for disobeying his father's advice or blames the destiny that drove him to sea. But in the later part of the novel, Crusoe stops viewing himself as a passive victim and strikes a new note of self-determination.

The parts of the story dealing with ship wreckage, mutiny, pirates and cannibals will surely fascinate the young and old alike. The book tells the reader a great deal of loneliness and how a man survives on an island with no human inhabitants. The major part of the book shows us how Robinson copes with hardship and overcomes his shortcomings thereby learning to appreciate his strange life.

Robinson Crusoe finally has a ship and a way off the island. Crusoe relates his journey home and how he resolves the outstanding issues he left behind in his life. It is one of the greatest adventures ever written and so began the great art of the English novel. Daniel Defoe created a character that has influenced every writer and every reader's imagination since he wrote this incredible book.

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