PENGUIN CLASSICS

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Edited with an Introduction and Notes by
JOHN RICHETTI

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ROBINSON CRUSOE

DANIEL DEFOE was a Londoner, born in 1660 at St Giles, Cripplegate, the son of James Foe, a tallow-chandler. Daniel changed his name to Defoe about 1695. He was educated for the Presbyterian Ministry at Morton's Academy for Dissenters at Newington Green, but in 1683 he abandoned this plan and became a hosiery merchant in Cornhill. After serving briefly as a soldier in the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion, he became well established as a merchant and travelled widely in England, as well as on the Continent. Between 1697 and 1701 he served as a secret agent for William III in England and Scotland, and between 1703 and 1714 for Harley and other ministers. During the latter period he also, single-handedly, produced the *Review*, a pro-government newspaper. A prolific and versatile writer, he produced some 500 books on a wide variety of topics, including politics, geography, crime, religion, economics, marriage, psychology and superstition. He delighted in role-playing and disguise, a skill he used to great effect as a secret agent, and in his writing he often adopted a pseudonym or another personality for rhetorical impact. His first extant political tract (against James II) was published in 1688, and his bestselling satirical poem *The True-Born Englishman*, appeared in 1701. Two years later he was arrested for *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, an ironical satire on High Church extremism, committed to Newgate and pilloried. He turned to fiction relatively late in life and in 1719 published his great imaginative work *Robinson Crusoe*. This was followed in 1722 by *Moll Flanders* and *A Journal of the Plague Year*, and in 1724 by his last novel, *Roxana*. His other works include *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, a guide-book in three volumes (1724–6; abridged Penguin edition, 1965), *The Complete English Tradesman* (1725–7), *Augusta Triumphans* (1728), *A Plan of the English Commerce* (1728) and *The Compleat English Gentleman* (not published until 1890). He died on 24 April 1731. Defoe had a great influence on the development of the English novel and many consider him to be the first true novelist. All his novels are published in Penguin Classics.

JOHN RICHETTI is A. M. Rosenthal Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. Among his books are *Popular Fiction before Richardson:*

Narrative Patterns 1700–1739 (1969), *Defoe's Narratives: Situations and Structures* (1975), *Philosophical Writing: Locke, Berkeley, Hume* (1983) and *The English Novel in History: 1700–1780* (1999). He is currently editing the Restoration and Eighteenth Century volume of the forthcoming *Cambridge History of English Literature*.

CHRONOLOGY

1660 Born in London (exact date unknown), son of James Foe and Alice Foe

1662 The Act of Uniformity passed. The Foes followed the lead of their minister, Samuel Annesley, and left the Church of England to become Presbyterian dissenters

1665–6 The Plague and the Great Fire of London

c. 1671–9 Attended school of the Revd James Fisher at Dorking, Surrey, and then the Dissenting Academy of the Revd Charles Morton, Newington Green, north of London

c. 1683 Established as a hosiery merchant in London, living in Cornhill, near the Royal Exchange

1684 Married Mary Tuffley and received a dowry of £3,700

1685–92 Fought in the rebellion against King James II led by the Duke of Monmouth. Prosperous businessman dealing in hosiery, tobacco, wine and other goods. Travels extensively on business in England and also in Europe

1688 James II forced to abdicate and William of Orange becomes William III of England

1692 Declared bankrupt for £17,000 and imprisoned for debt

1694 Established a brick and tile factory at Tilbury, in Essex

1695 Began to call himself De Foe

1697 First published book, *An Essay on Projects*, a series of proposals for radical social and economic changes

1697–1701 Agent for William III in England and Scotland

1701 *The True-Born Englishman*, a poetic satire of xenophobia and a defence of the (Dutch) King William III

1702 Death of William III and the accession of Queen Anne. *The*

Shortest Way with the Dissenters, a satiric attack on High Church extremists

1703 Arrested for writing the satiric pamphlet *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, charged with sedition, committed to Newgate Prison and sentenced to stand in the pillory for three days. Published the poem *A Hymn to the Pillory* and an authorized collection of his writings. Released through the influence of the powerful politician Robert Harley, but his brick and tile factory fails while he is in prison. Bankrupt again

1704–13 Secret agent and political journalist for Harley and other ministers; travelled widely in England and Scotland promoting the union of the two countries. Wrote single-handedly what was first called *A Weekly Review of the Affairs of France* and later *A Review of the State of the English Nation*, a pro-government news sheet appearing as often as three times a week

1707 Union of England and Scotland

1710 Tories come to power

1713–14 Arrested several times for debt and for his political writings but released through government influence

1714 Death of Queen Anne and the accession of George I, Elector of Hanover; fall of Robert Harley and the Tory government

1715 *The Family Instructor*, the first of Defoe's conduct books

1719 *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*

1720 *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, *Captain Singleton*, *Serious Reflections . . . of Robinson Crusoe*

1722 *Moll Flanders*, *Religious Courtship*, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, *Colonel Jack*

1724 *Roxana*, *A General History of the Pyrates*, *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (3 volumes, 1724–6)

1725 *The Complete English Tradesman* (volume II in 1727)

1726 *The Political History of the Devil*

1727 *Conjugal Lewdness*, *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions*, *A New Family Instructor*

1728 *Augusta Triumphans*, *A Plan of the English Commerce*

1729 *The Compleat English Gentleman* (not published until 1890)

1731 Died 24 April in Ropemaker's Alley, London, in debt, hiding from creditors

INTRODUCTION

When *Robinson Crusoe* appeared in April 1719, Daniel Defoe was fifty-nine years old. Although he had begun his adult life as a businessman and ambitious entrepreneur, bankruptcy and imprisonment for debt in 1692 had forced him to turn to his pen to support his large family (he and his wife had seven children). In the first two decades of the eighteenth century, he had produced an astonishing amount of writing as poet, political and economic pamphleteer, historian, moralist and jack-of-all-trades journalist. Defoe is remembered (vaguely) by posterity as the man who wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, but that classic represents an entirely unrepresentative fraction of his voluminous literary production. As a professional writer struggling to earn a living in those years, Defoe was in the thick of new developments that look forward to modern mass print media: the emergence in London at the beginning of the eighteenth century of a substantial market-place for reading matter and a large audience hungry for print, for books, pamphlets and newspapers in unprecedented quantities. Whatever *Robinson Crusoe* has become for its millions of readers since Defoe's day, he wrote it like everything else he produced in his long career as a writer to sell in that market to that new audience in the emerging culture of printed matter. *Robinson Crusoe* must be one of the most popular books ever written, reprinted continuously and translated into many languages (one estimate is that by the end of the nineteenth century it had appeared in at least seven hundred editions, translations and imitations). Defoe's hero is instantly and universally recognized in his goatskin clothes, an archetype of modern heroic individualism and self-reliance – the man surviving alone on a deserted island. But for all that enduring and universal appeal, Defoe's book grows out of the early-eighteenth-century English world of the new market-place for print in which its author earned a precarious living.

Defoe was born in the autumn of 1660 in the parish of St Giles,

Cripplegate, just north of the old City of London. His father James Foe (as the family was known) was a tallow-chandler, a merchant who manufactured and sold candles made from animal fat, a trade at which he prospered and rose to be an eminent merchant in the City. In 1662 the Foes and the congregation they belonged to followed their pastor, Samuel Annesley, and became Dissenters, non-conforming Protestants (Presbyterians), separate from the established Church of England which had demanded what many people considered unacceptably strict adherence to its principles by the Act of Uniformity promulgated that year. The Foes belonged to the solid middle tier of the merchant class that Napoleon was thinking of a century later when he called England a nation of shopkeepers. Defoe had a privileged, quite comfortable childhood in this prosperous and pious household. The young Daniel received his higher education at one of the best of the so-called academies established for the children of prosperous Dissenters, who were by law deprived of most civil rights and therefore excluded from attending the universities at Oxford and Cambridge. Defoe entered Charles Morton's academy in Newington Green in 1674, and the excellent education provided there was probably better and certainly more useful than the traditional curriculum based largely on classical literature at the old universities. Morton was an Oxford-trained clergyman and scholar (who later became president of Harvard College), and his students were instructed in English (rather than in Latin) in the traditional subjects but also in modern languages and modern science and philosophy, including Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690), then banned at Oxford.

Defoe's biographers have concluded that he had serious thoughts in 1681 of becoming a clergyman, but after what seems to have been a crisis in his faith and in his commitment to such a career he decided instead to go into business. That choice, those alternative careers, will continue to resonate in all of Defoe's writing, where the sometimes conflicting (although often complementary) demands of religion and commerce, piety and secular ambition, share the stage and occupy the thoughts of both author and characters. Instead of a minister, Defoe became a wholesale merchant in stockings, a hosier, part of the expanding trade in manufactured clothing, a growth industry in those days as domestic production of wearing apparel began to give way to mass production. He dealt extensively in wine and tobacco as well, and he travelled widely in England and perhaps to the Continent during the mid 1680s. Defoe had large ambitions

as a businessman, and he seems to have played recklessly for high stakes in land speculation. Legal records indicate that he was involved in eight law suits in those years. By 1692, thanks to serious losses of cargo at sea during the war with France, he was bankrupt for the immense sum of £17,000 (in modern purchasing power more than £500,000 or $750,000), and the closing years of the seventeenth century found him surviving by various odd occupations and government posts: he served as one of the trustees of the government lottery in 1695 and 1696, and from 1695 to 1699 he was accountant for the government duty on glassware and bottles. In 1694 he opened a brick and roof tile factory in Tilbury, east of London, on the Thames, which seems to have prospered and allowed him to pay off many of his debts and to set up as a substantial householder in the London suburbs. In 1697 he published his first book, *An Essay on Projects* (a collection of proposals for radical social and economic reforms such as a rational banking system, a national highway commission, improvements in social welfare and in female education). From that point on the sheer quantity of Defoe's literary production is extraordinary, thousands and thousands of pages on every conceivable subject in a wide variety of forms and formats. During the early years of the eighteenth century, he was an active political pamphleteer, defending the policies of his hero, King William III, the Dutch Prince of Orange, who had succeeded to the throne upon the forced abdication of his brother-in-law, James II, in 1688. By 1703, Defoe became virtually a full-time writer and in the years that followed one of the most prominent (for his enemies, notorious) journalists and political writers (and poets) of the time. He seems to have been employed by William's government to defend their policies, and he was certainly a paid political writer and operative by the time Queen Anne succeeded William in 1702.

A transforming event in Defoe's early life as a writer came in 1703 when he was arrested for publishing the previous year a satirical attack on conservative, High Church extremists who wished to intensify the suppression of religious nonconformity. *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* parodies the High Church position at its most radical and violently intolerant, concluding with the exhortation to 'crucifie the Thieves . . . let the Obstinate be rul'd with the Rod of Iron'. The government saw the pamphlet as inflammatory, seditious in its effects rather than merely ironic, and Defoe was arrested and eventually sentenced to stand in the pillory (a contraption that held in place a man's head and arms and often enough

exposed him to the sometimes fatal physical abuse of the spectators) for three days and to serve an indefinite jail term. He spent six months in Newgate prison, and when he emerged, thanks to a pardon obtained through the influence of Robert Harley, the Speaker of the House of Commons, his brick and tile factory had failed and he was bankrupt for the second time. He became an informant and secret agent for Harley, and his production as a writer was from then on prolific in its extent and variety. Most remarkable of all was *A Weekly Review of the Affairs of France, Purged from the Errors and Partiality of News-Writers and Petty Statesmen of all Sides*, a thrice weekly political news and commentary sheet that Defoe produced single-handedly from 1704 through 1713. In addition, he turned out in these years a stream of other journalism, more political polemics, a book-length verse treatise on government, *Jure Divino* (1706), a satirical political allegory, *The Consolidator* (1705), a long history of the recent political union of England and Scotland, *The History of the Union* (1709), and two works on what we would call economics, *An Essay upon Public Credit* and *An Essay upon Loans* (1710).

Nominally a Whig, Defoe was employed by the Tory Harley, and his support of Harley's government's efforts when it came to power in 1710 to end the war with France provoked attacks from those who saw him as a turncoat. Something like a crisis for Defoe and possibly for the nation arrived in 1713. Queen Anne had no surviving children, and by the terms of the Act of Settlement promulgated when James II was forced to abdicate, the throne was to bypass the Stuart Pretender, James (Queen Anne's brother), in exile at the French court and go to the Elector of Hanover in Germany. The Stuarts had considerable support in England, and the Jacobite (after *Jacobus*, Latin for James) threat was real and urgent as the Queen was unlikely to produce an heir. Defoe quickly wrote several inflammatory anti-Jacobite pamphlets, including *An Answer to a Question that Nobody thinks of, viz. But What If the Queen Should Die?* (1713), whose ironies were not understood or appreciated. Once again, his enemies managed to have him arrested. It took a pardon from the Queen (obtained by the ministry) to free him.

When his patron Harley (and the Tory government) fell from power in 1714 with the death of Queen Anne and the accession of George I, the German Elector of Hanover, Defoe had to scramble to survive and to find new patrons for his work as a writer. It is now known that he went to work for the new Whig government as a covert moderating influence through

his political journalism on extreme Tory opinion. At the behest of the ministry, he edited the Tory monthly journal *Mercurius Politicus* from 1716 to 1720. He also in 1717 infiltrated the rabidly Tory *Mist's Weekly Journal*, although his voice was soon recognized and he was attacked by Whig pamphleteers. In later years he continued this secret undermining of the opposition in his work for other papers. What makes all this journalistic work of interest for the modern student of Defoe and especially for readers of his fictional narratives is his extraordinary capacity for disguise and impersonation, his facility for projecting himself into the personalities and ideas of other people, to ventriloquize or mimic so effectively the voices of other people.

It is perhaps no accident that the political journalist and secret agent, the government's mole in the opposition press, turned in 1719 to writing fiction, since for most of his life he had been playing roles and assuming identities distinct from his own. *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner*, followed a few months later by its sequel, *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, is the beginning of a remarkable series of fictionalized autobiographical narratives that we nowadays call novels: *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, *Captain Singleton* (1720); *Moll Flanders*, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, *Colonel Jack* (1722); and *Roxana* (1724). But even as he was churning out these fictions, he continued to write prolifically in other formats and genres. The list of just some of his books during these last twelve years of his life is varied and extensive: *Religious Courtship* (1722), *A New Voyage Round the World* (1724), *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (3 volumes, 1724–6), *The Complete English Tradesman* (2 volumes, 1725–7), *The Political History of the Devil* (1726), *Conjugal Lewdness; or Matrimonial Whoredom. A Treatise concerning the Use and Abuse of the Marriage Bed* (1727), *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions* (1727), *A Plan of the English Commerce* (1728) and *The Compleat English Gentleman* (written 1729).

Like these multifarious productions – conduct books, moral polemics, travel narratives, popular economic and theological treatises, collections of ghost stories – *Robinson Crusoe* is first and foremost a response to commercial possibilities and opportunities in the early-eighteenth-century publishing market, Defoe's effort to give the public what he thought they would buy. Capitalizing on its instant popularity, Defoe produced a sequel in that same year, in which Crusoe not only returns to his island but travels

to the Far East, to China, and overland through Asia to Russia and then home to England. The subtitle of the first part appeals breathlessly to an audience envisioned as hungry for narratives of travel to exotic places, for sensational and unusual adventures and breathtaking wonder and mystery.

The germ for the book seems to have come from the experiences of an actual marooned sailor, the Scotsman Alexander Selkirk (1676–1721), who was part of a privateering expedition of several ships led by William Dampier to prey on Spanish merchant ships. In 1704, Selkirk quarrelled with his captain, Thomas Stradling, and asked to be set ashore on one of the small islands of the Juan Fernandez group some three hundred and fifty miles off the coast of Chile in the Pacific. (This island, Mas à Tierra, is now officially called Isla Robinson Crusoe, even though Defoe placed Crusoe's island thousands of miles to the north in the Caribbean!) Four and a half years later, Selkirk was picked up by an English ship under the command of Captain Woodes Rogers, who had been part of the expedition that dropped Selkirk on the island. When Selkirk returned to England in 1711, he achieved a certain fame when Richard Steele wrote about him in 1713–14 in his periodical *The Englishman*. Defoe himself may also have met Selkirk, but the sailor's story provided only the bare starting point. Selkirk's tale is a tabloid headline – SAILOR SURVIVES FOUR YEARS ON DESERTED ISLAND!, a curious anecdote of a sojourn in which, as Steele reports it, the sailor reverted to a kind of natural state, living naked as his clothes wore out, learning to do without bread and salt for his meat, catching goats by running after them on bare feet, which grew hardened with use. In the interview with Steele, Selkirk remembered his days on the island as idyllic: 'This manner of Life grew so exquisitely pleasant, that he never had a Moment heavy upon his Hands; his Nights were untroubled, and his Days joyous, from the Practice of Temperance and Exercise. It was his Manner to use stated Hours and Places for Exercises of Devotion, which he performed aloud, in order to keep up the Faculties of Speech, and to utter himself with greater Energy.'[1] So Selkirk's story celebrates the virtues of isolation: regression to a primitive or natural state accompanied by sentimental, unwordly contentment in delicious solitude. He tells Steele that he 'frequently bewailed his Return to the World, which could not, he said, with all its Enjoyments, restore him to the Tranquility of his Solitude'.[2] Defoe's narrative largely avoids those sentimental popular themes and delivers instead a detailed account of the narrator's physical survival on the island that includes a complex rendition of his psychological

and religious development in an alienating, a distinctly dangerous solitude.

Literary historians have singled out *Robinson Crusoe* as perhaps the first true instance in English of what we now call the realistic novel. They mean that Defoe's book fairly consistently renders its main character and narrator as a particularized individual situated in very recent history and society in all their moral and ideological complexity. Crusoe is not simply as the title declares a 'mariner'. Thanks to the fullness and the acute particularity of the narrator and the world he evokes, Robinson is an individualized personality, an individual and not simply a type. Defoe implicitly subordinates the various moral and religious themes the book also explores to the rendering of that person in all his uniqueness and singularity. In place of Selkirk's pastoral (and clichéd) contentment, Defoe dramatizes his hero's deep ambivalence about his life and identity, his confusion, loneliness, sheer terror, self-loathing as well as growing self-knowledge and religious awareness gained through introspection that leads to confidence and to a powerful stewardship of the island and, finally, to successful mastering of the dangers that develop with the arrival of the cannibals and later of English mutineers. Crusoe's narrative in the long run offers what the novel since Defoe's time especially aspires to represent: personal growth, self-realization, development and maturation, as Robinson in his isolation overcomes his moral and physical limitations, finds solace and serenity in religious belief and material self-sufficiency and becomes master of himself as well as the lord of his island.

To be sure, for many twenty-first-century readers, Defoe's book anticipates rather than fulfils the modern realistic novel to which they are accustomed. Psychologically and ideologically, Crusoe necessarily belongs to his time and place rather than ours, and not everyone will find Crusoe's struggles with his faith in God's Providence compelling or even convincing. The immediacy that Defoe was after in Crusoe's 'Journal' doesn't really work. The journal is an awkward narrative device that ends abruptly when he runs out of ink, and the net effect of inserting that day-to-day account into the retrospective narrative is at first distracting and then insignificant. After a while, some readers will be just a bit bored by Crusoe's minute, wordy recording of his domestic arrangements on the island. Indeed, Defoe may have realized that the story of Crusoe's survival tends to drag, so he introduces some excitement with the arrival of the cannibals and the mutineers and turns the book into an adventure story and away from a psycho-religious drama of survival.

The crucial narrative feature of *Robinson Crusoe* that makes it much more than a thrilling adventure story, however, is the narrator's retrospective, intensely thoughtful perspective on his life. Robinson looks back from a wiser late middle age to his heedless and restless youthful days in which he disregarded his old father's advice to stay at home instead of going to sea. Crusoe's father counsels middle-class safety and comfort for his son as he evokes upper-class moral decadence and working-class ('the mechanick part of mankind') misery, but of course if we are to have a novel to read his son must disregard such sober advice, and these opening scenes of Crusoe's rebellion establish him in a paradoxical position that will be maintained in various senses throughout. Looking back on his life, Crusoe will evoke an ambitious and aggressive younger individual but will tell his story from the perspective of a wiser and more mature man who has learned about the limitations on individual action and ambition and who has acquired the proper sense of divine or providential arrangement in human affairs. Crusoe's divided personality returns us to the young Defoe, the pious Dissenter who wrestled with a call to the ministry but turned to the wheeling-and-dealing life of a businessman and entrepreneur in the emerging, rough and tumble proto-capitalist order of late-seventeenth-century England and Europe. On the one hand, Robinson Crusoe exemplifies the modern adventure capitalist, full of energy and resourceful ingenuity: his early years as a youthful trader to Africa (as well as a slave in Morocco) and a planter in Brazil show his determination and undaunted spirit. Crusoe is a young man ready to seek profit in the face of great risks and to manage his daring escape from slavery. On the other hand, Crusoe awakens to terror and existential confusion on his deserted island, alone and fearful of dangers all the more terrifying because they are unknown and uncertain. He avoids madness in this isolation by discovering God, by learning to read the Bible attentively and to find in his plight some signs of divine purpose and plan. Active and aggressive, independent and self-constructing, Robinson is also in time defined by his patient submission to God's will, by his pious acceptance of a mysterious fate he can't alter.

But Defoe also achieves a unique sense of another order of reality that contains the moral, social and theological realms in which Crusoe's personal drama unfolds. Realism derives from the Latin word *res* (thing, object, matter), and *Robinson Crusoe* is a pioneering work of modern novelistic realism because Defoe renders for much of the narrative the force and feel of Crusoe's material and phenomenal world with an unprecedented density

and fine-grained immediacy and intricacy. Although Crusoe's narrative is necessarily much concerned with his own thoughts and feelings, Defoe manages things so that his hero, especially on the island, situates those inner subjective explorations in a precisely and often minutely observed external objective world. Looking back, Crusoe shows us how he instinctively cooperated with the sequences of natural phenomena, their movements and rhythms, and thus survived the shipwreck and the solitude. That relationship anticipates his larger strategy on the island where he learns to cooperate with the nature of things, accommodating himself to the form and feel of the natural world that he needs to cultivate and manage for his survival.

To some extent, however, that natural world resists such management, and in a larger philosophical sense opposes human ordering. For the single most moving example of this tension between the exactly observed world Crusoe renders and his own ordering and understanding, consider the following moment just after Crusoe's shipwreck:

> I walk'd about on the shore, lifting up my hands, and my whole being, as I may say, wrapt up in the contemplation of my deliverance, making a thousand gestures and motions which I cannot describe, reflecting upon all my comrades that were drown'd, and that there should not be one soul sav'd but my self; for, as for them, I never saw them afterwards, or any sign of them, except three of their hats, one cap, and two shoes that were not fellows. (pp. 38–9)

'Deliverance' is a resonant moral-religious term that Crusoe will come to meditate upon during his early years on the island and learn to understand in a specific theological sense: he is delivered not simply from death but from spiritual indifference and ignorance of the workings of God's Providence. But notice how this psychological moment – Crusoe's longing for company and puzzlement over his singular fate – is inserted by the last almost casual but precise enumeration of objects in a faithfully observed world of absolutely random material happening where things manifest themselves without regard for order or human significance. That flotsam is endowed with tremendous pathos by Crusoe's lonely plight. In their irreducible and impenetrable randomness, their tenuous connections to the people who once wore them, those hats, the cap and those two shoes that don't match evoke a material world that is frighteningly arbitrary, impervious and indifferent to human emotions and ordering. These miscellaneous adjuncts of his dead comrades provide a bleak answer to

Crusoe's reflections about his survival: there is no meaning in events, just accident and chance, even in his singular fate. Like the single human footprint that Crusoe stumbles on later in the book, these objects and occurrences defy explanation and seem to exclude coherence or consolation. But for Crusoe they also provoke creative thought and transforming activity, and that is what makes him such a remarkable and resonant modern figure. In the midst of randomness and in the face of what looks like an arbitrary set of circumstances, he struggles and creates personal and satisfying order.

These are philosophical implications that Crusoe doesn't dwell on at all, and this is not a language that he or Defoe would have understood. From his first few terrified days on the island (sleeping in a tree, fearful of wild animals and even more of unknown human enemies), Robinson moves on without hesitation to the tactics for survival. Resourceful, efficient and enterprising, he quickly gets busy and sets about stripping the wrecked ship of anything useful. The heart of the book and the centre of its longest episode is Crusoe painfully establishing himself on the island, exploiting the materials and tools (crucial technological supplements to his own intelligence and resourcefulness) that he salvages from the ship, building his cave and strengthening his fortifications, exploring his habitat and categorizing its useful as well as edible flora and fauna, charting its tides and its seasons, learning to hunt and to gather, to farm, to bake bread, to domesticate animals, to make pots and baskets and furniture and to fashion rough clothing (and, eventually, that most English of artifacts, an umbrella) for himself. All this activity has proved perennially fascinating to readers ever since, and Defoe's novel has been most influential and imitated in this aspect. In edited and modernized versions, *Robinson Crusoe* is one of the most popular children's books ever written. Crusoe building his fort and playing house, as it were, may be what children respond to with most delight, although the cannibals and mutineers who come later in the adventure are also part of the book's perennial appeal.

Crusoe's efficient outer life of rational application, mastering 'mechanick' arts and steadily producing goods, is balanced by the inner anxieties that provoke it; the outer calm and control balances deep and recurrent inner turmoil that Crusoe also charts for us. He spends a good deal of his time wondering obsessively and despairingly about the meaning of his situation, wondering 'Why Providence should thus compleatly ruin its creatures, and render them so absolutely miserable, so without help abandon'd, so