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ROBINSON CRUSOE OR THE FATE OF AN ADVENTURE LIFE: A CRITICAL
EXPLORATION OF *ROBINSON CRUSOE* BY DANIEL DEFOE

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ABSTRACT

We live in a world where everyone has his passion, desire and makes his choices. Some are ready to take any rough road to fulfill their ambitions. People talk about fate or destiny. I decided to focus on the above aspects through a critical exploration of *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe. This research paper aims to explore the actions and determination of a human being when it comes to achieving a specific goal. The research highlights how far the latter is ready to go to achieve his ambition. To reach my goal, I applied the new historicism and psychoanalysis as theories. Apart from these literary theories, I had gone through some books and articles. As main results, the study shows that people sometimes do not care about the consequences of their acts on the way to their dreams. It often fatal for those to whom it does not work the way they expect it to be.

Keywords: Fate; Adventure; destiny, critical exploration, life.

Résumé

Nous vivons dans un monde où chacun a sa passion, son envie et fait ses choix. Certains aimeraient atteindre leur objectif et réaliser leurs rêves en avançant pas à pas en tenant compte des conditions de vie actuelles. A l'opposé, certains sont prêts à abandonner famille, amis et parfois emplois dans le même objectif. Ils sont prêts à emprunter n'importe quel chemin difficile pour assouvir leurs ambitions. Certaines évoque parlant du phénomène de la question du de destin, propre à tout être humain. Ce document de recherche vise à explorer les actions et la détermination de l'être humain lorsqu'il a pour ambition l'atteinte d'un objectif spécifique. La recherche souligne jusqu'où ce dernier est prêt à aller pour la réalisation de son ambition. Pour atteindre notre objectif, nous avons appliqué le nouvel historicisme et la psychanalyse en tant que théories. En dehors de ces théories littéraires, nous avons parcouru quelques livres et articles. Comme principaux résultats, l'étude montre que certaines personnes ne se soucient parfois pas des conséquences de leur acte sur le chemin de leurs rêves. Pour ceux qui n'y parviennent pas, cela leur ai parfois fatal.

Mots-clés : Destin ; fatalité ; Aventure ; vie, Analyse critique.

INTRODUCTION

We often make choices without taking into account their impact on our present and future life. "Today I am what I am because of my yesterday's choices. And where I shall be tomorrow will be decided today." Unknown Author.

The above citation from an unknown author sums up the matter the best. Every decision that you make, the choices you make, the paths you decided to take in and for your life would lead you to a destination. People some assimilate the consequences of their acts to fate. This seems to be far from the reality. The consequences of our deeds may be linked destiny. Once you decide to undertake an action, you decide to shape your destiny as well. Tony Robins, an American author, coach, speaker, and philanthropist said words “It is your decisions and not your condition that determine, your destiny” The good illustration of this could be seen through the main protagonist of the novel under study.

Robinson Crusoe made up his mind long years ago to become a sailor but his fate led him through many troubles. He went from adventure to adventure, from trouble to trouble but he was determined to make his dream become true. The main objective of this paper is to highlight how individual decisions could positively or negatively impact their life. The research also aims to show that not all life situation we face is due to fate.

1- Theoretical background of the study

Taking into account the different stages and various situation through which Robinson went through in the novel I have decided to use historicism and psychoanalysis theories for the purpose of the study. Psychoanalytic theory was developed by Sigmund Freud in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Freud's theory has sometimes been seen as deterministic, in that he saw an adult as a product of a small group of people, the family, who interpreted the nature of society for her or him. Erik Erikson's theory of ego psychology, developed in the United States, suggested fruitful amalgamations of history and psychoanalysis. According to Peter Loewenberg, ego psychology and character analysis are particularly important and welcome to historians because they are based on the evidence of adult behaviours. Psychoanalytic approaches can explain more than the irrational in history. Many historians are committed to explanations based on individual or group self-interest. (Green Troup, 2020) Daniel has been more than a history for himself. He went through so many troubles but He always found way out from each misfortune.

2- Problem statement and study purpose

“you don't listen to me then that would be your destiny” (Defoe,1719). This statement from Robinson father when he decided to quit home without his agreement could explain the difficulties he faced during the long stay he spent outside London. Can this be considered as his destiny? Did he deserve the dangers and risks he went through? Should all the difficulties we face be considered as a matter of fate or destiny? These are some of key questions the paper tries to explain. The main purpose the study shows how important the decision to take could positively or negatively impact our life. The research also aims to show that sometimes fate as nothing to do with the hard time you facing at a given time.

3- Study method

While conducting this research, I mainly collect the data by applying library research. According by Elmer E. (2016), library research involves a systematic process used to gather information in order to write a paper, create a presentation, or complete a project. As you progress from one step to the next, it is commonly necessary to back up, revise, add additional material, or even to change the topic, there are two types of data supporting the research: primary, and secondary data. As the resource of primary data, I have used the work of Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. The secondary data are gained from any books, articles, journals and other sources. In the end, the writer uses descriptive way to present the result of the analysis.

4- Daniel Defoe the adventurer

Daniel Defoe is a famous English adventure fiction writer. He was born around 1659 to 1660 in England. During his life, Defoe has written numerous essays and novels. Some of his notable works are The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719), Captain Singleton (1720), Memoirs of a Cavalier (1720), Colonel Jack (1722), and A Journal of the Plague Year (1722). Most of his works are characterized by his tone and detail on adventure, survival and romantic point of view with the critique on politic in the 17th and 18th century in England. Defoe passed away in London on April 24, 1731. In 1870, a memorial monument created in Borough of

Islington, London, to remember Defoe works and contributions in the English literature. Robinson Crusoe is Daniel Defoe's masterpiece of all his literary works. This novel was first published in 1719 and consists of 287 pages and 20 chapters. This novel is divided into two major genres, which are adventure and survival. Thus, these two major genres represent what is at that time "...often credited as marking the beginning of realistic fiction as a literary genre and it is in general a contender for the first English novel" (Margaret 265). Considering the plot of the novel itself, which is an adventure of a man named Robinson Crusoe in a faraway unknown island, the writer believes that in the novel Defoe shows human connected to his destiny. At the beginning the decision to go for adventure is like a jock but with time the protagonist adapt himself to the various situations. From all the difficulties he faced he always learn. One may think that it is fate but this is destiny as his father's said. From the beginning of the novel to the end he adopted different attitude in relation with the confronted situation.

4.1- Robinson Crusoe or the Fate of an adventure life

I find it necessary to explain the concepts of fate and destiny before tackling this part of the research. In fact, Fate and Destiny both words are likely to be heard together when people usually talk about life and its circumstances. Though, both of the words have slightly different meanings and different consequences. People might get confused between both of the words but they represent different situations and different experiences in our lives. The difference between Fate and Destiny is fate doesn't have to do with human involvement whereas destiny is everything about what a human chooses in his/her life. Fate is predecided to occur in life and destiny is something is the outlook of choices we make. According Soloveitchik (1993), fate is the journey towards our destination which is our destiny. Fate is always reality whereas destiny is a future where we will end up. Fate is a continuous process of our life and Destiny is the fruit or outcome of our Fate. Whatever you say, in the end, fate and destiny work hand in hand so accept fate and create your destiny.

4.2- Robinson Crusoe, a character of total conviction

Human being is said to be at the center of the world. Under the same social background, family environment, some may be successful while others are not. The reason is behind this may be lies on the qualities of the decision each of them make. The long life adventure of Robinson Crusoe is a good illustration. Even in the first few paragraphs, it becomes apparent how Robinson Crusoe wants to be an individual and set himself apart from the future his parents, and mostly his father, want for him as the last-born son. Very early on in the narrative, he implies that he himself, like his brothers, also has no contact with his family anymore: "What became of my second brother I never knew, any more than my father or mother knew what became of me" (Defoe 2). His father describes his life as the "middle state" which "had the fewest disasters" (Defoe 3) and is therefore quite comfortable, albeit not as luxurious or adventurous. Crusoe, however, seeks the adventures and despises the comfort because it bores him. His father does not understand his youngest son's needs, but his advice and words will come to haunt Crusoe with guilt. When he finally decides to board a ship to London, it is a rather impulsive decision that he seems to make quickly, in a moment of clarity, and which he describes as "I broke loose." Before that moment, he had been "obstinately deaf" (Defoe 7), meaning that he had felt repressed and imprisoned in his own home. Still he continues the adventure believing I himself with a total conviction that his dreams would become true. In a word, he wanted to attain most of what he wanted, and be far away from the earthly world. He wanted to live a special life. On the other hand, he liked freedom, and attempted to pursue his own life, he was also willing to achieve his dream at any price. His weakness in the common life just converted to the strong point of his later sailing life, which was a sharp different world from what he had lived for about twenty years.

4.3- Robinson Crusoe as a risk taker

Robinson Crusoe was supposed to live a happy and easy life, but he decided to leave home in opposition to his parent's will to become a civil servant. That was his decision, then his destiny. The risks he took to go for sailing is not part of his fate by his destiny. He has decided to go for an adventure at the sea without following his parent's advice for his own dream though his parents had leaved lots of property for him. Early in the novel, he frequently blames himself for disobeying his father's advice or blames the destiny that drove him to sea. But He succeeded in dominating the bad situation we went through overcoming obstacles, and controlling his

environment. Once he decided to stay in the sea, his fate could not be controlled by himself but only the disasters in the sea. The storm was varied and changeable. It could take away his life anytime. Crusoe often referred to his father as a prophet his hi “prophetic” statement “if you don’t listen to me that would be your destiny”. Considering the consequences and hard situation he went through during his adventure. He often compared himself has a fool because he had not listened to his father. Like if it is prophecy, the captain of the sunken ship repeats similar words: “[...] if you do not go back, wherever you go, you will meet with nothing but disasters and disappointments, till your father’s words are fulfilled upon you” (Defoe 17). Despite all the difficulties he continues taking risks moving from one adventure to the other.

From the above facts, the readers may hold that Robinson was a person with unreasonable, even mad personality, he could be easy and happy whatever life style he chose as long as he had not decided to go to Africa. Before he was reduced to be a lonely man, he had experienced the similar condition, the only difference was he was saved and could live the normal life, he himself once said that if he was not so aggressive and impious, he could never experience such kind of terrible life. When he was concentrated in the great ecstasy of survival, new danger was waiting for him. The life on the isolated island was difficult that we cannot imagine. There was no existed food, no place to have a rest, no people to communicate with, besides all of these, the worst was the fear itself, he would be attacked by wild animal anytime, Therefore, he must be alert to everything every time. If Robinson Crusoe was weak, he might have lost his heart to continue his life, and might do nothing. But he did not do so, the base of his unlucky fate was just his aggressive behaviours, therefore, he was not depressed, not negative but positive to fight against nature, all of his activities were not only for survival, but also for creation. The first problem he must solve on the island was survival, Robinson Crusoe was born in the middle class family, so he believed his own strength very much, he believes only his own effort, not others, can help him to make his dream come true, to help him climb up the ladder of the social. Therefore, he moved all of the useful materials to the island and did not fell tired for about forty times. So, he felt not so sad when the wrecked ship was flown by sea wave and then he built tent, made fence, built the house to live in, caught fish and sheep as food. In a word, he did everything he could to prepare for his later life on the isolated island. Thank goodness, he attained enough food and materials to live on, and because of his kindness, he saved a person named Friday, who helped Robinson Crusoe a lot, finally they saved a ship, in turn, the people in the ship saved them, they took them back to Britain. Until now, we could see Robinson Crusoe was reduced to be a vagrant, but finally he came back to human being.

4.4- The fate of life Adventure

From his life that he escaped from his family to being saved by others, what he faced was almost all difficulty. Through the slight description and discussion, we have been informed that what Robinson Crusoe faced was almost all difficulty and dangers that a common people can hardly deal with, even dare not confront with, but Robinson Crusoe faced them bravely. Just as his words, it is disgusting to cherish the thought of going home to live easy life. He held there was a kind of mysterious force made him go forward, and he attributed all of this to Gods will, he showed his aggressive behaviour that he did not want to obey the traditional life style, his so-called mysterious predestination just reflected spirit condition of denying the bound of modern tradition and demanding the development of primate freedom, his strange thought just reflected his courage and lofty quality of opening up new world, all of which formed his bourgeois behaviour. From all these above, we could come to the conclusion that Robinson Crusoe chose his life, and was responsible for his own choice, he saved himself in the loneliness for a long time, he was successful. His success was not only due to his survival, but also his maintained health and integrity and personality, he still had the common sense, which had not been corroded by endless loneliness, in turn, he gained the fruit of his self-determination. We could praise him undoubtedly that he is a hero, not only in his own times, his own country, but also in all human being. His strong mind, kind heart, aggressive temperament helps him achieve the utmost of his life, in the above passage. After my analysis, I come to the conclusion that Robinson Crusoe was a person with complex behaviour, he was weak in the earthly society, but strong minded in his own choice and he was kindhearted to save Friday who finally helped him escaped from that isolated island. The adventure story tells us, as a human being, we’d better live according to our own convictions, whatever difficulties we come across. The most important point is to assume and have in

mind the road map we build for yourself. It is important to have a behaviour of strong minded, steadfast, tough and tensile to face our life. Just as Shakespeare's motto in *Cymbeline*: "trouble is the mother of strong forever."

CONCLUSION

The objective of the paper is to highlight how individual decisions could positively or negatively impact their life. It allowed me to demonstrate that the choices we make in life always impacted our life the consequences we draw from deeds are not always a matter of fate our, they are part of our destiny. Robinson Crusoe succeeded in saving his own life by adapting himself to each situation he was confronted with. Robinson believed his he need repentance to have disobey his father. He believed that all the sad adventures he went through are due to the fact he did not listen to his father. This moral and religious dimension of the tale is indicated in the Preface, which states that Crusoe's story is being published to instruct others in God's wisdom, and one vital part of this wisdom is the importance of repenting one's sins. Crusoe may never have learned to repent if he had never sinfully disobeyed his father in the first place. From this we have to know that whatever clever or intelligent we are you have to take time and listen to our parents.

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