ABSTRACT

In this thesis we have done a research about the Scottish sailor, Alexander Selkirk, and the connection existing between him and the fictitious character Robinson Crusoe, created by Daniel Defoe. We have described the way in which Selkirk survived on a deserted island near Chile for about 4 years and 4 months, and how he was rescued and taken to England by a group of English privateers. The extraordinary things he had to do in order to dress and feed himself, during his solitude on the island, are also explained in this thesis.

This true story moved the British writer Daniel Defoe to create what we consider as the first novel ever written, The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. Many of the things that can be found in this literary masterpiece are clearly taken from the real life of Alexander Selkirk, and others, of course, are expanded and invented. We analyzed all these similarities and differences between both stories, making a contrast between real life and fictitious facts.

This thesis contains information about how popular Defoe’s novel became at the time it was published. It also provides a clear definition of what a novel is and its types. Finally, we have also discussed the reasons why we think Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe is, in our opinion, the first example of the novel. We believe that this thesis can be read by people of all ages, who can be either students or scholars, too.
KEY WORDS:
GOATSkin, LOOKOUT, WRECK, SCHOLAR, CREW, PRIVATEER, SEAMEN, VESSEL.
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“HOW ALEXANDER SELKIRK’S STORY IS RELATED TO ROBINSON CRUSOE, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE NOVEL.”

Tesis previa a la obtención del Título de Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación en la especialización de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa.

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CUENCA – ECUADOR
2012
All the content of this thesis is
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of its authors.

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Alex Portocarrero C.

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Jaime LLangari C.
DEDICATORY

My first gratitude goes to God for blessing me all my life.

I want to dedicate this thesis to my brothers and sisters,

who were a great support along my life and studies.

They encouraged me morally and economically

to finish my career and thus accomplish my goal.

Jaime W. LLangari C.
DEDICATORY

I want to express my deepest gratitude first to my mother,
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INTRODUCTION

The novel, as we know it nowadays, has its origins in the beginnings of the 18th century. This thrilling literary genre has been received with great acceptance on the part of the public. Actually, it is way too difficult to find a person who has not read at least one novel throughout his whole life; the romantic, adventure, mystery and police, scientific, and science fiction works being among the readers’ favorites in this field.

However, how many of the people who enjoy reading wonderful novels could imagine that the majority of their favorite literature masterpieces owe, in some aspects, their brilliance to one old but no less admirable story called “the life and strange surprising adventures of Robinson Crusoe.” Surely, very few of them know that it is in fact so, and even more so that the previously mentioned novel constitutes the basis of its modern and famous successors.

The fact that the famous English writer, Daniel Defoe, found the spark to write Robinson Crusoe based on the real story of a wayward Scottish sailor, Alexander Selkirk, reveals the beginnings of a revolutionary transformation in the 18th century ornamented writing style. A change that would eventually end up with the appearance of the first novel ever written in the world.

In consequence, and finding this matter very interesting, concerning literature, we have resolved to delve deep into the investigation of this topic, in order to shed a little more light on the relationship between the real story and the fictitious one.
The main objectives of this research are, in first place, to enlighten literature students and readers in general about Alexander Selkirk's life as a model for the creation of the famous novel called Robinson Crusoe, and compare Alexander’s true story with the fictional Daniel Defoe work. Secondly, we will help readers to understand the importance of this literary work as the archetype of the novel, and its influence on modern times.

The specific objectives of our thesis are the following: to talk about the life of Alexander Selkirk, his childhood, adulthood, his life as a castaway, and his final years. Second, to talk about the influence of Alexander Selkirk’s true story in England, and how it inspired Daniel Defoe to create his famous fictional novel, Robinson Crusoe. Finally, we want to show the impact of Robinson Crusoe in England and its relation to the beginnings of the novel in the 18th century.

Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe is perhaps the most popular book ever written, after the Bible, and almost everybody knows it, or at least has heard something about the story of the famous castaway.

Therefore, our thesis’ hypothesis is to show people the way in which a real story about the incredible life of a man called Alexander Selkirk turned into a successful literary work, thanks to the hand of the talented writer, Daniel Defoe.

Since Robinson Crusoe is considered the first novel ever written, we also want to explain something about the development of this literary genre, parting from the beginning until the end. Furthermore, our thesis will also provide
information related to the impact of *Robinson Crusoe* in modern times, which we consider is a very interesting point to talk about.

Finally, we believe that our work will be interesting and useful not only for us, but also for people who are interested in literature topics like the one we are dealing with.

The methodology we will be using to develop our thesis is based on the research, investigation, reading, and analysis of books, websites, and other sources of trustworthy information that provide real and effective support for the topic we have chosen. Therefore, our thesis will be a well-organized, clear, and precise investigative work about Alexander Selkirk’s life, *Robinson Crusoe*, and the history of the novel as a literary genre.
Chapter 1

The story of Alexander Selkirk

1.1 Alexander Selkirk’s Childhood.

Daniel Defoe’s world famous novel *Robinson Crusoe*, which has delighted all kinds of readers from dilettantes to literature experts, was written based on the extraordinary and fascinating life of a Scottish sailor who lived and had to survive in solitude for about four years and four months on a deserted island, in South America.

Alexander Selcraige - who later changed his last name to Selkirk, once he went to sea, was John Selcraige’s and Euphan Mackie’s seventh son. His mother, Euphane Mackie, firmly believed the old Scottish tradition that the seventh son was a God given gift born to fame and fortune. His father, John, worked as a prosperous tanner and shoemaker. He married his wife in the year 1657. They lived at the west end of the town of Largo, county of Fife, in Scotland, in a place called Drumochie, where Alexander was born in 1676.

The house inhabited by the Selcraige family, now claimed as Selkirk’s place of birth, belonged to his elder brother. Eventually, Alexander would spend some time there after his return from his island, on a visit to his parents.

When his parents considered he was at a proper age, they sent the child Alexander to school. There he proved to be proficient, especially at mathematics.
and navigation. Thanks to his skills, he could have easily found a job in the seamy dockyards of London. In the end, it seemed that his fate was to be an excellent sailor.

Though he was clever, he was also a very spoiled and wayward boy. His parents usually found their son involved in all kinds of mischief. Everybody knew him as a hyperactive and restless child. Nevertheless, his behavior can be better understood if we take into consideration the fact that his mother used to spoil him because she thought he was special. As is said above, he had been born the seventh son and so was destined to be the “lucky lad.”

The relationship between Alexander and his brothers was not the best kind of relationship one can expect to have with their family. They used to fight a lot and, most of the times, Alexander was responsible for the quarrels. In part because of his mother, who doted upon and provided him much more caring than she did with the rest of her sons.

The indulgence of his mother caused much trouble in Alexander’s family. She frequently used to conceal his faults from his father, who, on the other hand, was a very strict and disciplinary person.

Mr. John wanted his son to learn his office and was determined to apprentice him in the family business of tanning and shoemaking, just as he had done with his older sons. Due to Mr. John’s resolution, the older sons were already settled in life and doing their own prosperous businesses.
It is also important to mention that the other six of John Selcraige’s sons were not only applied to the office of shoemakers or tanners. In fact, they were unambitious and plain men, who were happy to be working as fishermen in the harbor of Largo, too.

However, Alexander’s mother’s superstitions made her believe that her son was destined to fame, and not to become a simple laborer or fisherman, like his brothers. The different opinions that John and Euphan had in regard to what their son, Alexander, was to do with his life were the cause of much domestic strife and bickering. They just could not agree with each other about this matter. The disputes became so harsh that Alexander’s father threatened to disinherit him.

Mrs. Euphan saw her husband’s attitude as a menace for the future of their son. Furthermore, the Selcraiges were a very religious family, and this represented an obstacle for Euphan’s fantastic dreams about her son coming true. As Alexander had been brought up under strict religious beliefs, his father John threatened to keep him at home for a long time, working hard for the prosperity of the family.

Selkirk’s father believed in the law of his family attending the parish church - an imposing 12th century grey stone building called the Kirk that was located high on the hill of Upper Largo, with a promontory spire seen miles away. The townspeople kept minutes of the session at the Kirk. Each Sunday morning the pastor read the minutes of the last session to his congregation. Alexander, always fighting with his brothers, had his name read by the
pastor several times, which embarrassed the family (Stu and Stevey Bruce, 2).

Alexander’s adventurous and aggressive personality is revealed once again by the fact that he fought by the side of his elder brother, John, when leading the mob against the non-complying clergyman at the church of Largo.

It is said that at thirteen years old Alexander flourished his bludgeon and was ready to fight. However, there was no resistance on the part of the clergyman and instead of fighting the pastor divided all the money contained in the poor-box among the people and then peacefully retired from his parish; the pastor had only a few supporters, since he had been forsaken by the government.

Alexander continued living in his parents’ home until the year 1695, and because of his wayward and irregular conduct, he gave much trouble to them. His rebellious way of being earned him a non-enviable reputation as a troublesome and problematic person. And that is why he was cited to appear before the session for indecent conduct in his parish church.

Nevertheless, he, who was at that time 18 years old, did not present himself before the religious authorities of his parish; but spurning his father’s control, he decided to go to sea, rather than being rebuked in church due to his bad conduct.

By deciding to go to sea, Alexander left behind everything he had in life, including his family, the kirk, the village of Largo, and even his friends. Perhaps some of the reasons why he chose to leave the place he was originally from were the following:
1. - He had developed useful navigation skills during his early years and naturally felt inclined to try his fortune at sea.

2. - The relationship with his family was not as good as it had to be in order to continue living with them; indeed, his conflictive personality led him to get into trouble, even with the ones who appreciated him the most.

3. - His mother encouraged him to be free and look for fame and fortune; she did so because she trusted in her wonderful dreams about the unique and special destiny of her “seventh” son.

4. - His problems with the church, which were the ultimate reason why he resolved to go to sea.

Thus we leave the restless and hyperactive boy, who lived and worked with his parents during his childhood and adolescence, behind, and start telling the story of the young, wayward, and adventurous Scottish seaman who changed his last name to Selkirk.

1.2. His life as a young man.

It is known that after his departure to the sea, Alexander spent about six years abroad. We do not know where he was at this time, nor in which condition he found himself. However, according to our research, we can say that he was probably in the company of the Buccaneers, in the South Seas. We have found two reasons to support this hypothesis:

1. Selkirk had a boisterous reaction when his younger brother Andrew, who was mentally disabled, began laughing at him for drinking salt water by mistake.
and for trying to grab a pistol he should have brought with him from sea. This type of conduct is common among pirates and other similar people.

2. Selkirk’s appointment to be Sailing master of the Cinque Ports Galley proved that he knew the seas and possessed specific and well developed navigation skills. Moreover, there were lots of candidates for this degree at that time; and Captain Dampier, who was famous because of his navigation deeds, would never chose a non-fully qualified master to join his crew.

In 1701, after six years of absence, Alexander returned to Largo, to stay with his family for a while. But his personality had not changed for the good; he continued being wayward and rebellious as before; we could say that he was even worse. Always quarreling with his brothers, he found himself once again cited to appear in front of the elders of the church. Strangely, this time he attended the citation and showed repentance for his disobedience.

Selkirk remained working in the house of his parents until the end of the winter, since it was a risk to go to sea during that stormy season. He was expecting the weather to allow vessels to navigate. And at the first opportunity to be taken on board, he eagerly sailed for England, keeping in mind a return to the South Seas with the hope of obtaining gold in abundance, for the taking.

During that time the Spanish succession war was raging, and this gave the pirates the perfect excuse to plunder with the consent of the law. This is what we call privateering. Many seamen were hired by the English rulers to attack and
plunder Spanish and French vessels, and from the loot, they could keep a part for themselves.

Captain Dampier, who had vast experience in the sea, managed to convince a group of merchants to equip two vessels and finance a privateering expedition to the South Seas.

He was excited with the news about the Buccaneers getting large amounts of gold, and overall he seemed to be sure about the easiness of his enterprise, and the great rewards he could attain from it.

Captain Dampier’s plans were to go up the river La Plata, in Buenos Aires, to capture two Spanish galleons that he said were stationed there. Their attempt to capture the galleons failed. Also, they were going to attack some rich towns and wait for the Acapulco ship, which was worth about fourteen million pieces of eight.

For these goals to be achieved, two vessels were equipped, The St. George, with 26 guns, commanded by Captain Dampier; and The Fame, also with 26 guns on board, commanded by Captain Pulling. After that, they were authorized by his Royal Highness, Prince George, to act in a warlike manner against the Spaniards and the French.

So they were provided for nine months of voyage, and the agreement was the following: no purchase, no pay. However, the main objective of the expedition was canceled at the very commencement because Dampier and Pulling argued
with each other. As a result of this argument, Pulling decided to sail alone, and nobody heard about him again.

So the Cinque Ports Galley arrived to take the place of the Fame, having on board the following officers: Charles Pickering, Captain, Thomas Stradling, Lieutenant, and Alexander Selkirk, Sailing-Master.

Thus the consorts finally got together. Nevertheless, Dampier, having been forced to wait for a long time before sailing, had to remain in Kinsale and then sail to Madeira, when he realized that the two Spanish Galleons that he hoped to capture had already arrived safe at Tenerife.

After that, the privateers left Madeira and decided to navigate until they found a rich town of the Spanish Main, which their captains had decided to attack and plunder. It is also important to mention here that by this time, even though the crew’s hopes were still alive, there was discontent because they had not met their first objective.

Next, on the 7th of October, 1703, they arrived at the island of San Jago and anchored in Prior Bay. The inhabitants of that place were so depraved that they amazed even the pirates who, as everybody knows, were familiar with almost all kinds of vice.

It was also at this time that Captain Dampier, due to his bad temper, quarreled with his first lieutenant and then put him and his servant on shore, along with their chests. This was one of the worst mistakes Dampier could have made
because this caused jarring discontent among the crew; these hard feelings threatened to spoil the success of his enterprise once again.

The 24th of November they anchored at La Granda, where Captain Pickering died. This event was a misfortune that disappointed the members of the crew, since they had all their hopes put in the capacity of their former captain. This was also the situation that led Alexander Selkirk to seriously think of landing on an island rather than being under the command of Stradling, Captain’s Pickering successor.

In fact, by this time, Alexander had had a dream in which he was forewarned about the failure and posterior shipwreck of the Cinque Ports Galley. So he had resolved to leave the embarkation and to land on an island, as soon as he had the opportunity.

Alexander did not know that circumstances were leading him to accomplish what he wished. Captain Dampier, once again, quarreled with his new first lieutenant, which was the reason why the latter and eight of the crew of the St. George left her, laying on shore along with their chests.

After that unpleasant incident, the seamen held a council to solve their differences. Even though there was much bickering and recrimination among them, they managed to get to an agreement and decided to sail directly for the island of Juan Fernandez.
The voyage was not easy. Actually, they had to face severe storms and strong winds. However, even worse was the fact that the two vessels lost contact with each other. On the 10th of February, 1704, only one of the ships, The Cinque Ports, arrived at her destiny. The vessel anchored in the Great Bay (Cumberland Bay), and had to wait for her consort to join her.

Three days later, on the 13th of February, the St. George arrived at Cumberland Bay. As soon as she arrived, both crews got very busy watering, hulling, wooding, and refitting their ships. It was at this time, also, when Alexander was 28, that a harassing quarrel between Captain Stradling and his crew broke out. The situation became so untenable that forty-two out of the sixty men on board decided to get off the ship and go ashore, leaving the vessel quite deserted.

The refractory men kept wandering about the island; nobody knows whether Alexander chose to be with them, and stand for their cause, or just stay with Stradling on board. However, if we analyze what happened next, we will certainly be more inclined to take the first option as the truth. We can also say that this could have been the perfect opportunity for Alexander to become aware of the conditions of the island, in order to make his subsequent critical decision about his future.

It took a while for Captain Dampier to convince the refractory crew to make up with their Captain, Stradling, but, in the end, the weary men agreed and were finally taken on board. During this time, the Pirates had resolved to save as much as they could of the provisions they had in their vessels; and for this reason the
Captains employed their crews in hunting wild goats that were abundant on the island of Juan Fernandez.

The principal diet of the sailors during that time was composed of the following elements: wild goats, which they boiled using the top of the cabbage palm and considered to be delicious food; sea lions, which they killed in order to use their fat to supply their lamps and fry the fishes they captured. They did not dislike eating the seals when necessary, and these young seals constituted their principal source of food; men killed lots of these animals and contrived to cook them in many different ways.

The sailors continued living on the island without knowing what they were going to do next, when suddenly, on the 29th of February, a strange ship came in sight. The crews were in a hurry and did everything they could to prepare their vessels, in a short time, and to approach the enemy without being noticed. Nevertheless, as soon as the other ship saw them, it tacked and got away from the two sails, and so the chase began.

Both the St. George and the Cinque Ports had released their boats in the pursuit, and even left some men and a dog to their own luck, in the sea. It proves that their haste was growing in intensity. Once they came up with the enemy, they realized that she was a French ship with thirty guns mounted and well manned. Then the fight began, and for seven hours the crews on the two ships fought without any decisive advantage.
After a while, the French ship began to slack, yet continued in the battle without effectiveness. Even so, unluckily for Captain Dampier’s intentions, just as the enemy was at the point of yielding, a breeze sprung up and made her sail. Being that the St. George was in no condition to chase her, the pirates lost their prize.

It is important to mention here that the St. George alone had borne the whole brunt of the battle, since the Cinque Ports could only fire less than a dozen shots before she found herself unable to continue fighting.

In the account of this incident, we can point to the French ship as the vessel which took the worst part. She had carnage on board, and later on her Captain had to put on shore a great number of sick and weak men, as a result of the battle. The St. George and the Cinque Ports also had their human losses; nine of their men were killed and many were wounded; besides that, others were sick at this time.

The crew of the St. George quickly repaired their ship and entreated their officers to go for the weak French vessel; but once again Captain Dampier’s unsteadiness of character made him refuse his crew’s proposal. Instead, he decided to wait for the Cinque Ports to arrive and join them. This decision on the part of the Captain created much discontent among the crew, who felt thwarted in their first attempt. When the Cinque Ports arrived, both Captains decided to return to Juan Fernandez Island, to collect everything they had left behind, including their sails, anchors, cables, and seamen.
On the 3th of March, when the Cinque Ports was reaching the island, she saw two ships at anchor there; and getting close to them, she was fired upon and had to flee in the direction of the St. George. In fact, the two French vessels were too powerful to cope with. So the pirates decided to sail direct for the coast of Peru, leaving their men and provisions in the hands of the enemy.

After navigating for some days, on the 22nd of March, while they were steering northward, near the Port of Lima, two more vessels came in sight. One of these vessels proved to be the same French ship they had fought some days ago. The sailors, excited with the new encounter, made the quick decision of attacking the two ships. They resolved that the Cinque Ports should stand for the other vessel, while the St. George would fight its former enemy and beat her once and for all.

However, Captain Dampier’s unsteadiness, once again, was the cause of great delay, as he had started with an extensive harangue about how inappropriate it was to start a rash attack against the French. As a result of this waste of time, the two vessels were able to get into the Port of Lima, and the pirate crews became really disappointed about this.

Two days had passed after their last failed attempt, and finally they managed to capture a Spanish ship, which offered no resistance. She was laden with such things as snuff, Flanders lace, silk, pitch, tar, tobacco, tortoise-shell, bees’ wax, cinnamon, Jamaica pepper, balsam of Peru, some planks, and a
tolerable sum of money. They kept the ship for six days, until the 30\textsuperscript{th}, and then Dampier allowed her to depart, not regarding the discontent of his men.

The next morning, they captured another vessel which contained things like indigo and cochineal on board, and on the 4\textsuperscript{th} of April, after taking the useful things from the ship, Dampier decided to set her free. This stirred up even more the discontent that had been in existence for a long time both in the Cinque Ports and the St. George.

Therefore, Dampier talked to his men, alleging that it was not necessary to encumber their vessels with provisions because they soon would be getting to some rich Spanish town, where they all would have their deserved reward at last.

On the 11\textsuperscript{th} of April, being near the island of Gallo, they took a bark full of planks, which captain Dampier decided to use for his next attack. The next day, they anchored at Gallo and remained in the inhabited island until the 17\textsuperscript{th}; but just as they were about to leave, they saw an unknown sail. The pirates waited for a time until she got close, and then they approached and captured it.

The ship they took was a Spanish sail whose master was a half – Indian man, who, having confused the three pirate vessels with other Spanish ships, got very close, in expectation of getting some provisions. On the contrary, this half-Indian man lost both his money and his ship.

However, this incident turned into the redemption of this man, since he had been taken prisoner by the Spaniards a long time ago; and after being obliged to
turn Catholic, in order to be released from his captivity, he had no other option than to sail aboard a Spanish Vessel in the South Seas.

It is important to notice that the Spaniards did not allow him to navigate in the North Seas, so he could not escape to Europe. So to this man his misfortune meant his relief, since Dampier did not keep him as a slave, thus setting him free of a fate of bondage.

Then Alexander and his consorts left Gallo; and now Captain Dampier's design was to attack the Santa Maria. Actually, he was pretty convinced that they could get a great booty from this enterprise, because the Santa Maria seemed to be richer than she used to be in the Buccaneers' time, when Dampier first met her.

So the crew prepared everything for the attack and, in compensation for the sinking of their last captured sloop, their Captain promised them a better vessel and a huge recompense for their efforts. Then they sailed full of confidence and resolution.

On the 25th of April, 1704, the seamen anchored at point Garachina, on the Gulf of Mexico. Following the orders of Captains Dampier and Stradling, part of the crew remained at this place, in their vessels. Then the two captains sailed for Santa Maria accompanied by 102 armed men, in three Spanish launches.

After a while, a canoe with Dampier, Stradling, and five Indian prisoners on board, returned to the shore. Next, Captain Dampier ordered his men to fire upon
the Indians and kill them, because he thought that the Indian prisoners were going to alarm the towns if they were released.

Immediately, two of the launches set off towards the town of Schucadero. The crew was under the command of Stradling, and they had an Indian as their guide. Later, the two launches entered the river of Santa Maria and went straight to Schucadero.

Then three Indians came in a canoe from the Congo River; the English-men saw them, and hiding near the junction of the currents caught the Indians as their prisoners. After that, the privateers continued with their voyage and, hearing barking dogs, they noticed that they were getting close to a town.

Later, the two captains, with their seamen in their launches, reached the shore and arrived at the town of Schucadero; and the inhabitants fled. The town had about 250 hectares with abundant fruit-trees, plantains, bananas, etc.

The following day, Dampier saw a canoe, with his men on board, coming towards him and bringing some letters, which they had taken from the three Indians. So Dampier took the letters and immediately read them. They had been written by the president of Panama to the governor of Santa Maria; announcing that 250 English-men from Jamaica had landed on the isthmus with direction towards the town, and that, he, the president, had sent 400 soldiers as reinforcement.
The next day, Stradling and Dampier's men, Clipperton and Funnel, had kept in charge of the bark, under the orders of their captains until their return. The two captains with their men proceeded on a voyage with 87 men on board, in their three launches and a canoe, up the river for Santa Maria. Later, they were attacked by three ambuscades, a quarter of a mile from the town.

After that, the two captains with their men had a council and supposed that the Spaniards had got the information about their coming. So they resolved to come back to the bark and leave the Indian town, and later proceed down the river, to join their ships at Point Garachina.

On the 6th of May, 1704, the two captains with their crews became poorer than before because they did not find any treasure. In consequence, the crews were unhappy and kept together with great difficulty. That night, at twelve o'clock, a strange vessel came up and anchored where they lay; so Dampier and Stradling's men immediately boarded the unknown ship, without permission, and found a lot of food, clothes, wine, etc. With all this merchandise, they could have victualled the ships for four or five years.

Funnel and Alexander Selkirk divided the prize among the two crews and their captains, Dampier and Stradling. Then they sunk the strange bark and ran across the bay of Panama. On the 14th they got to Tobago, anchored there, and immediately rummaged their provisions, to use or consume in those days.

On the 18th of May, a small bark appeared in front of the privateers; and they immediately took her to steal their fortunes. Then they found a sum of money,
around 80,000 dollars, on board, located specifically at the bottom of the unknown bark. Dampier and Stradling could not believe their eyes when they realized the great sum of money that they and their men now had in their power.

Then Dampier had another great design in his mind that consisted in taking the part of the money belonging to him. He did not want to lose much time dividing the money; this topic brought serious problems and caused a quarrel with Stradling.

Thus they resolved to separate one from another and give to their men the opportunity to choose which ship they wanted to go aboard; as a result of this agreement, five men from each ship changed their places and passed to the other ship.

The two ships continued their voyage in different directions, on the 19th of May, and then they never met again. It is important to mention that Alexander Selkirk remained on board of the Cinque Ports with Captain Stradling, because Selkirk did not trust Dampier.

From May to August, the Cinque Ports, under the command of Captain Stradling, kept cruising along the shores of Mexico, and among the unknown islands, without great success. On the other hand, the St. George continued her voyage towards the coast of Peru.

During the voyage, Alexander Selkirk was considered an honest person by his friends. However, he had a lot of dislikes and a violent quarrel with his Captain
Stradling, in this expedition. So Selkirk decided to leave the vessel and land anywhere, as soon as possible.

The Cinque Ports Ship, where Stradling, Alexander Selkirk, and the crew, sailed, was in no condition to continue sailing in the sea; so Stradling was compelled to sail towards the island of Juan Fernandez to refit his vessel.

Later, he landed on the island, with the hope of recovering the store and men which they left there at the beginning of their cruise in these seas. Nevertheless, he only recovered two of his men, who had been successful in concealing themselves on the island.

Meanwhile, Selkirk had decided to leave the vessel and remain upon the island. So when he landed on the island, in September, he leaped for freedom and joy on the shore, and shook hands with his comrades.

The only things Alexander brought with himself once he left the Cinque Ports were the following: His chest, (containing his clothes and a quantity of linen,) his musket, a pound of powder and balls in proportion, a hatchet and some tools, a knife, a pewter kettle, a flip-can, a few pounds of tobacco, the Holy Bible, some devotional pieces, some books on navigation, and his mathematical instruments.

The sailors remained on the island all the month of September, repairing their ship and trying to solve the problem between Alexander and Captain Stradling, but this disagreement became greater every day.
At the beginning of October, 1704, Alexander said goodbye to the crew while Stradling was sitting inside the Cinque Ports, waiting for the return of his men from the shore, to continue the voyage. Within a few minutes, they left the beach and began to navigate, feeling sad about Alexander, because he had been left alone on the island and cut off from all human society, perhaps for ever.

When Alexander saw the ship moving away, he immediately rushed into the water, imploring them to return to take him on board with them, but Stradling turned a deaf ear to Alexander’s entreaties and mocked his despair, too. Stradling also denounced the bad decision of Selkirk to remain upon the island as rank mutiny; and added that it was good for such a disobedient man to remain on a solitary island, where his examples would not affect others.
1.3. His experiences as a castaway on a solitary island.

The first days that Selkirk lived on his island were the hardest of his whole life. He did not even feel in the mood to taste any food and only ate when urged by hunger. He could not sleep at night, only closing his eyes when overcome by fatigue. In fact, his principal sources of food were the seals and some shell-fish he could pick up along the shore.

These kinds of things he ate since he was very afraid of getting away from the beach; in part because of his faint hope of seeing his former fellows coming to rescue him in a vessel. Alexander also knew that he needed to save his powder in case of necessity.

It was not easy for him to get familiar with his new way of living, particularly with the kind of food he had to eat in order to survive. We have to remember that not having the ingredients people normally use in order to make food agreeable to the taste, eating can be, at first, a torture instead of a pleasure. Selkirk did not have bread or salt to season what he cooked, and so it took him a time until he could become reconciled to his new menu.

In October, 1704, the spring had sprung on his island, and nature was overflowing with beauty; but his dejection of mind prevented him from enjoying himself with these natural pleasures. Actually, there was nobody present there, except himself, to share this beauty, nobody to talk to, and nobody to help or accompany him during the day or the night.
This situation may help us to feel the horror and despair which came upon Selkirk when he found himself completely alone and having to survive in such a desolate place.

Luckily for him, he still had the last resort a man can have to comfort his heart during hard times, religion. Coming from a very religious family, it was not hard for him to take his Bible, which he had not seen in a long time, and start reading the scriptures in the silence of his solitude.

This habit helped him a lot in the hard duty of accepting his fate. Thanks to religion, he found a way to reach the peaceful state of mind he needed in order to improve his situation on the island. Suddenly, the desolated wilderness of Juan Fernandez turned into a Garden to his devoted eyes.

As soon as Selkirk realized that the winter was coming, he knew it was time to look for a shelter, to protect himself from the overwhelming forces of nature. So he had set his first objective in mind; now he needed to build a hut.

Such a requirement constituted a positive thing to his mental state. Since he found himself in the inexcusable need of getting away from the beach to build the hut, he put his hands to work; and his labor gradually weaned his heart from the anxious thoughts that had made him remain sitting on his chest on the beach, waiting for some vessel to come and rescue him.

Next, he built himself two huts, out of the wood of the pimento tree, and thatched them with a kind of grass which produces straw resembling that of oats.
One of these huts was larger than the other and was situated near a spacious wood; he used each one of the huts for a different purpose.

The bigger one was his bedroom, where he had a frame, over which he spread all the bedclothes he had brought with him when he left the vessel and went on shore. As soon as these clothes wore out, or were used for some other purpose, he replaced them with goats’ skin.

He also used his pimento hut as his own chapel, where he prayed and read the Bible every day. In fact, he had the custom of singing a psalm right after waking up in the morning and before starting the duties of the day. This same thing he repeated at the end of the day, before going to sleep.

These things he did in order to keep the use of speech, and because of the pleasure that for a person it represents to hear the human voice, even when it is their own voice they hear. He spent a great part of the day praying, and later on, would recognize that he was a better Christian while in solitude than he had ever been in his whole life. Selkirk even kept an exact account of the days he remained in the island, and knew how to distinguish the Sabbath, too.

The smaller hut he used as his kitchen, which included some furniture that, although scanty, was composed of every convenience that could be found on the island. Among the items he used for cooking, his pot or kettle, which he had brought with him from the vessel and used to boil the meat, was his most appreciated object; but he also liked to manufacture his own tools and kitchen items, such as a spit made of wood from a tree that grew upon the island.
Something impressive about our famous castaway sailor is that he also took the time to tame some animals during his stay on Juan Fernandez Island. The first beasts he domesticated for his own benefit were the goats. Alexander had a group of them around his dwelling. What he did, in order to control the savage instincts of these animals, was to lame them to diminish their velocity. He chose the younger goats because they were easy to handle. These animals constituted his own personal store which he used in case of being sick or for some reason was unable to hunt more of them on foot.

Selkirk obtained fire by rubbing two pieces of pimento wood together until they ignited. Happily for him, this pimento wood had a particular, agreeable odor which contributed to create a relaxing atmosphere around him. Thus, having a shelter and a peaceful easy feeling, he also began to acquire new different kinds of food, such as the crawfish, which he cooked as his fancy led.

He also used Jamaica pepper to flavor his food, instead of salt. Not having bread he replaced it with the cabbage palm. Things like turnips, radishes, and watercresses, which he frequently used to season his fish or goat’s flesh, were also part of his new diet.

Now, having a good shelter, a great variety of food to eat, a pleasant climate on his island, and the spiritual support of the scripture, he began to enjoy his time there. And his feelings changed from melancholy to happiness.

Thus, he started to decorate his dwelling with fragrant branches he cut from a tree near his location. In this way he made a nice bower where he could enjoy
himself with the soft breezes that blow in that place, which constituted a relaxing
delight after his hunting activities.

Even though Alexander was having a good time on his island, he still had
some little problems with small animals which annoyed him. Rats, for example,
used to gnaw his feet at nights; and it resulted so disgusting for him that he took
the time to tame some wild cats in order to hunt the rodents and put an end to that
annoying situation.

Sometimes Alexander entertained himself by teaching his cats to dance,
while he sang some funny songs. Selkirk also taught them all sorts of antic feats, to
have fun. However, at the same time, he felt sad while thinking that once he had
died nobody would bury his remains, and so the very cats he had nourished and
tamed would probably eat his dead corpse in the end.

Both his hunting skills and physical condition had improved greatly since his
stay on the island, so that he was able to chase and hunt the faster and stronger
goats with ease, and, tossing them over his shoulder, made his way to his hut.
Having acquired these skills, hunting went from being a necessity to be an
amusement activity which provided lots of fun to our solitary islander.

As with the cats, he also taught his goats to dance; and later on, he
confessed that he had never felt as happy dancing as he did in the company of
his tamed animals.
There were some places on Selkirk’s island which were dangerous for visitors. Actually, it was common to find some precipices, and near them the soil was so soft and shallow that the trees in that place were easy to tear down. Two men were victims of these unfavorable conditions, and one of them died in consequence. Alexander himself, who knew well the dangers of his island, suffered an accident in which he almost lost his life.

Selkirk was trying to catch a goat and got to the brink of a precipice, which he was not aware of because some bushes hid it from his sight; then the animal suddenly stopped and Alexander, in his attempt to catch it, extended his hands, but the branches did not resist his weight, making him and the goat fall together from a great height.

Alexander hardly managed to crawl to his hut. Once there, he was so badly injured because of the accident that he just lay upon his bed for a long time, about ten days. During these days, he suffered a lot and was not in capacity to “move a finger;” because of the horrid pain he was feeling all over his body.

There was not anyone to help Alexander while he was seriously wounded and going through painful situations. So Alexander decided to take the Bible and read it, seeking for some relief and peace of mind as well as of body. This was the only disagreeable accident that Selkirk had during his permanence on the solitary island.

Selkirk, without having any material for writing, frequently amused himself by cutting upon the trees his name and recording the date when he arrived at the
island, to not forget about it completely; he thought that by writing this information on the trees, he was helping anyone, who eventually might visit the island, to discover something more about him and the time he lived on Juan Fernandez.

Alexander usually made for himself his own cap, jacket, and short breeches, by drying the skins of the goats he had killed, and using a sharp nail for a needle. His long hair, great length of beard (as it had been untouched since he left the ship,) and his dress gave him a very uncouth appearance. However, he wore this kind of dress on his body while running through the underwood and pursuing the animals, to catch them.

Selkirk had his goats and cats as his only companions and passed much time with them. His appearance became as wild as theirs. However, he danced and sang with his companions for many hours, and he felt very happy doing that; as no other civilized man could have done upon the earth.

He usually kept walking along the beach, until one day, he suddenly found a few iron hoops, which had been left by some vessel as unworthy to be taken away; so he felt a lot of emotion and joy as if he had found a treasure of gold and silver. Then he used these irons to make knives and axes which were very long, approximately of two feet length.

Alexander was sometimes attentively looking at the strange vessels that passed in front of the island, and in two opportunities he saw two ships coming to an anchor; so he wisely concealed himself. On one occasion he wanted to learn whether the ship was French or Spanish, so he approached too near, and having
been perceived by the crew; he immediately began to escape by going among the small trees. The crew shot many times in the direction to which Alexander fled; fortunately none of these shots took effect, he got up into a tree unobserved.

However, the pursuers continued searching for him until they arrived near the tree, where Alexander was hidden, but could not see him. So they began to shoot and kill several of Alexander’s goats; then happily picked these animals up and put them on their ship; and decided to leave the island.

If these people had been French, Alexander Selkirk would have given himself up to them; but, being Spaniards, he chose rather to stay upon the solitary island trying to survive under several risks, and even to be devoured by his own cats rather, than to fall into Spaniards’ hands.

The French or the Spaniards never allowed any Englishmen, with some knowledge about South Seas, to return to Europe; so for this reason these men wanted to kill Alexander and followed him with their weapons for some minutes. After this event, Alexander promised himself to be more cautious in the future, when watching out for the arrival of some strange ships at the island.

Nevertheless, he wished and hailed the arrival of an English ship at Juan Fernandez, with rapture to be rescued by the Englishmen. Later, he had a depression of spirit, amounting almost to despair, because this situation was too hard and difficult to handle, that he often meditated suicide.
It was in the depth of his misery that the influence of an early religious education was felt in all its power. When every human resource had failed, he lost hope. Thus the triumph of religion became complete, and its divine power preserved him; he was able to become a better man than ever before; he entered upon a life of solitude.

In 1708, Dampier was again the promoter of a second enterprise while the question of the succession - war was still in agitation, so this captain applied to several merchants in Bristol, who agreed with Dampier’s proposal to fit out two armed ships, named the Duke and the Dutchess, to cruise against the French and Spaniards.

Dampier did not have success in his former adventures at sea, and he failed the crew under his command. Nevertheless, he was, on account of his nautical experience, appointed to the Duke as pilot for the South Seas. In this way the Duke carried thirty guns, and the Dutchess carried twenty-six guns towards their expedition.

The officers who sailed on the Duke were:

Woodes Rogers, Captain.

Dr. Thomas Dover, Second Captain.

Robert Fry, Chief Lieutenant.

William Dampier, Pilot for the South Seas.
John Ballet, Third Mate.

The officers who sailed on the Dutchess were:

Stephen Courtney, Captain.

Edward Cook, Second Captain.

Simon Hatley, Third Mate.

First of all, the two vessels were towed from Hung Road, near Bristol, to King Road on the 15th of June, 1708. After some time, specifically on the 1st of August, they began to sail with 333 men, including one negro and ten boys on board in both ships, toward different ports and islands until they anchored at the island Le Grande, on the coast of Brazil, on the 18th of November. After remaining fourteen days on Brazil Island, they sailed towards Juan Fernandez Archipelago.

On the 31st of January, 1709, the two vessels came in sight of Alexander Selkirk’s dominions. So these vessels rose into view, and Alexander could scarcely believe the sight, until they gradually approached the island without knowing that there was a person on it. Alexander, having verified that they were Englishmen, felt a great passion in his mind when he saw them getting closer to the island.

Alexander kept his eyes fixed upon them until the night fell. For that moment, he already had prepared a lot of wood to burn, as soon as it was dark, and kept it up till the dawn. Later, he produced fire as he had planned. That night he was anxiously waiting for his countrymen, and he did not sleep. He was killing
many of his goats to have them prepared for his expected guests. The following day was clear, and he still saw them on their ships, a long distance from the shore.

The presence of smoking caused the privateers a lot of worry; they thought the light was produced by some Frenchmen; so they were watching over from their ships and did not perceive any French sail. At noon, Captain Dover, Mr. Fry, and six men, all well armed, were sent on a boat from their ships towards the island, to ascertain the cause of the fire, and to see and confirm that all was safe.

When Alexander saw the boat coming toward the shore, he ran down joyfully to meet his countrymen, eager to see their faces and to hear the noise produced by lots of human voices speaking together. He felt rejoiced for the silence of his solitude had been broken for good.
1.4 His rescue by a group of men, and his return to England.

Selkirk started to wave a flag, that he had made using a small pole and a piece of linen; he wanted the Englishmen to see him. As soon as they approached, Alexander embraced them with great emotion. They asked our hero about a place to land on the island, and he immediately showed it to them.

The sailors were impressed by Selkirk’s appearance. He had some parts of his body covered with the skins of wild animals, wore a cap made of a rough goat’s skin, and his beard was remarkably grown and thick.

Suddenly, they started to talk, and Alexander invited them to his hut; but only captain Fry could get into it. There, our famous castaway entertained him the best way he could. After that, they returned to the boat, and Alexander told them his story while they were eating.

Then Captains Fry and Dover invited him to come on board, but Selkirk only accepted their invitation when they assured him that Captain Dampier was not in command of their expedition. Such was the resentment that Alexander felt towards Dampier, that he would rather continue living on his solitary island than returning to be under the command of such an unsteady Captain.

However, when Selkirk boarded the Duke, Dampier gave excellent recommendations about him to Captain Dover; he said that Selkirk had been the best man on board the Cinque Ports.
The Captains and their crews remained for 10 days on Juan Fernandez Island. During this time, Alexander was a great aid for them, especially by helping with the refitting of their ship and the recollection of many different kinds of resources, which they were going to need when they were ready to set sail.

Nevertheless, due to the long period he had spent in solitude, Selkirk was not in conformity with some of the things that came along with his new condition, as a member of the crew of the Duke. For instance, the salty food was something he disliked to taste, as well as wearing shoes and saying profane oaths.

Because of his solitude, he also had become silent and taciturn, and his religious beliefs had grown stronger, that he found some of his companions' attitudes to be against his principles.

In all of these concerns, he was greatly tolerated and respected by the Englishmen on board, as they saw him as a man who had survived in really hard conditions, and who also possessed a great variety of skills, both at hunting and at navigation.

The 15th of March, 1709, when Alexander was about 33 years old, the privateers captured a sail, whose crew informed them about the tragic end of Captain Stradling and his men, just as Alexander had foreseen in his strange dream. On the 26th, they took another prize, which they named the Increase, being Selkirk the commander of this ship.
Thus Alexander continued navigating with his new companions, getting involved in the capture of some new vessels and anchoring, along with his countrymen, at the Santa Clara Island, under the control of the Spaniards.

On the 22nd of April, they had arrived at the town of Guayaquil, Ecuador; where they realized that the Spaniards, being aware of their presence, had already set the town alarms. Therefore, the privateers decided to send two Spanish prisoners to start negotiations and get an agreement, but this effort was in vain.

Frustrated by their failed attempt to get an agreement with the Spaniards, the Englishmen prepared their arms and began the attack. They landed in Guayaquil and fought with such courage that the Spaniards fled. So, in only half an hour, the privateers had gained total control of the town; killing only one man and wounding another, during the struggle.

An Indian prisoner told Captain Rogers that there were great quantities of money and gold, hidden up the river in bark-logs and houses. So the two Captains sent Connoly and Alexander Selkirk, with twenty-one men, to take the booty with them. They landed at six different places until they got to a house full of young and beautiful women, who had fled during the attack on the town of Guayaquil.

Here, the pirates obtained many luxury accessories, such as gold chains and earrings from the women. Something remarkable about the sailors’ conduct is that they proceeded with politeness and delicacy when talking to these beautiful females, whose hair looked elegant by being graciously decorated with ribands. So
nice were the pirates with them, that the women offered to dress their victuals; and even brought them a cask of liquor.

The sailors having noticed that the ladies had concealed some gold chains under their dresses (by winding them round their waists,) they only limited themselves to press the outside of the women’s apparel, and to politely ask the ladies to take off the gold chains they were hiding. This gentle attitude, which Alexander had transmitted to his men, was the result of his constant study of the Bible while he was in solitude.

Being absent for about 24 hours, the sailors returned to Guayaquil with a loot worth 1000 pounds in gold earrings, gold chains, and plate. Then the Spaniards came to an agreement with the pirates by offering them 30,000 pieces of eight, in exchange for their departure from the town.

Later on, the pirates realized that their plunder in Guayaquil had not been very productive, except for the 1200 pounds they had captured in valuable objects, which we have already mentioned above.

Thus, Alexander expended a great deal of time navigating in the seas since he was rescued from his solitary island. He went on lots of missions, in benefit of the privateers, who had been his companions for a long time. They appointed Selkirk to be the sailing master of another one of their captured ships.

Plundering, fighting, and capturing prizes, were the things these men usually did in the seas. They were reckless in trying their best to achieve their goals and
get the richest booties they could get. That was the life pirates liked to live, and Alexander was one of them.

Almost three years had passed from the time Selkirk came on board again. He had experienced many risky adventures along with the crew, when they finally decided to sail for London, and so return to England.

On the fourth of October, 1711, when Alexander was about 35 years old, the sailors arrived at their destiny, putting an end to a hard and long voyage. As a result of this expedition, Captain Rogers had captured the generous sum of about one hundred and seventy thousand pounds value. So it can be said that the risks of the voyage were not totally in vain, and that the English pirates found their deserved reward in the end.

Therefore, Selkirk, after 8 years of absence since he departed from Kinsale - having experienced the most complete solitude a man can experience in life, being deprived of all kind of civilization or society, and forced to face the cruelties of nature and to survive on his own - had at last set foot in his native land again.

Before returning to England he visited Africa, Asia, and America; a privilege that only a few men could have in their lives. During his long stay at sea, he used to entertain his friends and officers by telling them about his experiences on the island of Juan Fernandez. All of his stories being interesting accounts of how he had learned to hunt to survive, the many times he was at risk, the hard times he had to endure, and also how he had to keep himself from going crazy by reading the scriptures.
In fact, Alexander, upon his return to England, was a very different man. He had gained so much in patience and tolerance. He was not anymore the rebel he used to be when young at Largo. Now, having acquired lots of religious values, he had turned into a more polite and friendly person. Nevertheless, he had gained some bad habits too. Feeling uncomfortable around people, for instance, was one of the bad traits he had developed while in solitude.

As soon as he had been paid for his long voyage and got all the benefits he could get from the expedition, he finally set out for Largo, to visit his family. Being 36 years old, he arrived there in the spring of 1712. It was during the Sabbath, while everybody was in the church, when he knocked at his birth house’s door. But not finding his parents at home, he set out for the church.

As soon as he got to the church, he entered and took a seat; raising the curiosity of the people who put their eyes upon him, for it was very rare to see this kind of person within the church of Largo.

He was elegantly dressed in gold-lace clothes; therefore, his presence called the attention of the common people of Largo, not used to such luxuries. Also, his agreeable manners and behavior intrigued the most suspicious minds of the town.

After taking a brief time for his devotions, he frequently turned his eyes to his beloved ones, in the church, whom sometimes met his gaze, yet not realizing he was part of their family. Finally, his mother, who surely had suffered a lot the
long loss of her son, recognized him, and uttering a cry of joy, could not content herself anymore.

Unconscious of her sudden interruption of the service and opening her arms, she rushed to embrace her long awaited son. Thus Alexander and his friends immediately retired to his father’s house, to celebrate such a blissful event.

1.5 His last days of life.

Even though Alexander had become a rich man with a lot of money, and dressed elegantly in a gold - laced uniform, he still felt averse to mixing in society. He felt more comfortable spending his time alone. Selkirk usually went out of his parents’ house, carrying his provisions for the day. Then he wandered and meditated alone in a secluded and solitary valley; so he spent almost all the day outside, and used to return home in the evening.

Selkirk was now far from being happy, for his introversion and lack of communication with society often led him to tears. Later on, he bought himself a small fishing boat, and when the weather would permit it he made little excursions, but always alone. He spent many hours in fishing and trapping lobsters, in the beautiful Largo Bay or at Kingscraig Point, where he entertained himself, trying to forget about his solitude.

He had a vision to form a domestic life, but it was impossible. He did not know what to do with himself because he found that he was not fit for society. His
enjoyments and pleasures were all solitary, so this lonely man had few friends and did not desire to make new ones.

In 1717, while on one of his solitary walks, Selkirk saw a young Scottish maid of sixteen years old; her name was Sophia Bruce. She used to tend a simple cow, the property of her parents. Her humble manners caused a deep impression on him. He was frequently watching her for hours unseen, while she amused herself with the wild flowers that she gathered, and chanted her rural lays.

Alexander’s interest in the young maid grew stronger at each meeting; some days later, he decided to address her, and they both began to talk and get to know each other. Alexander did not have aversion to commune with the girl, and for many hours they stayed together.

Selkirk believed that he could live and become a happy man in company of Sophia; his fishing expeditions were neglected for these days of romance. So they both fell in love, and he made the decision of marrying Sophia. However, Alexander did not mention this adventure and attachment to his friends or relatives because he felt ashamed.

Alexander resolved not to remain at home to be the subject of their jests. So they both decided to arrange this matter, and accordingly they set off to London without the knowledge of their parents.

Selkirk left his chest and all his clothes at home. His friends, knowing nothing, did not hear anything about Alexander’s life. Many years after, Selkirk’s
friends still kept his effects untouched in hopes of his return. Meanwhile, in London advertisements began to appear in the newspapers, announcing the publication of a romantic novel that was about Alexander and his girlfriend.

Sophia Bruce came from Scotland to London, presumably to marry Alexander, but he delayed their wedding by treating her abominably. His attraction to her quickly wore off, finally he neglected Sophia.

In 1718, while visiting Plymouth, Alexander probably committed bigamy by marrying another woman named Frances Candis or Candia, and they both lived together for some months, but did not have children.

Nevertheless, two years later, Alexander went back to the sea and resolved, as he should have done earlier, that the only home for him was back at sea; so in 1720, he enlisted in the Royal Navy. His first appointment was as navigator of the HMS Enterprise.

Later, he became master in navigation. While serving as a lieutenant on board the Royal ship Weymouth, he sailed along the West coast of Africa to intercept pirates and slave traders, so he felt very happy at doing the work he liked best, but he never would have gone to Spain because Spain and England were enemies.

During this voyage, Selkirk once again found himself on the ship of misfortune because there was a tropical fever that struck down most of the crew. Alexander got very sick and could no longer resist this tropical fever, which took its
toll on him and caused his death, on December 13, 1721, when he was only 45 years old.

Alexander never had children with either of his two wives; and he was buried at sea off the West coast of Africa, as an authentic seaman deserves. Alexander’s parents died in 1724.

After Selkirk’s death at sea, the news about his decease was announced in a London newspaper. Later, the two wives showed up to claim his back pay from the Navy and what seemed to have been the remnants of his booty from the South Seas, such as a silver tobacco box, four gold rings, one gold head of a cane, a silver-hilted sword, and a pair of gold candlesticks.

Then both women argued with each other, and each one presented a will made out in her favor. Immediately, Sophia said that her husband must have been drunk when he married Frances. Nevertheless, Frances Candis countered with the claim that Selkirk had declared a solemn promise and said that, “he was a single, unmarried person, and was very importunate.” Finally, Frances Candis, having presented all the legal documents, won her case.
Chapter 2

The impact of the story in England

2.1. Alexander Selkirk’s story told in England for the first time.

Until his rescue, on the 3rd of February, 1709, Alexander Selkirk had spent four years and four months all alone on a solitary island. During this time he faced one of the most challenging survival tests in the history of mankind.

Naturally, such extraordinary exploits, plus the fact that our protagonist survived to tell the tale, piqued the interest of those that had the privilege to hear about them.

The first people to whom Alexander talked about his experiences on the island were, as can be expected, the English seamen who took him with them on board. Further on, two of the most important of these seamen, Captain Woodes Rogers and Sub Captain Edward Cook, would include some words about Selkirk’s experience in their own voyage stories.

Upon his arrival in England, in the year 1711, Alexander’s unusual story began to spread rapidly among the people. Although Selkirk never officially wrote a word about his life in Largo, or of his years on Juan Fernandez Island, his countrymen made sure that people knew about him.

Soon, some accounts appeared in English newspapers, and many intellectual men of that time became interested in the story of the rescued
castaway. The famous English Journalist, Richard Steele, was one of these people. He decided to meet Alexander in person and interview him.

Thus, in the year 1712, Richard Steele met the famous sailor, and he had a positive impression of him. This is the way the journalist referred to the famous castaway, in his own words, after the interview:

The person I speak of is Alexander Selkirk, whose name is familiar to men of curiosity. I had the pleasure frequently to converse with the man soon after his arrival in England in the year 1711. It was a matter of great curiosity to hear him, as he is a man of good sense, give an account of the different revolutions in his own mind in that long solitude. When I first saw him, I thought that even if I had not been let into his character and story, I could have discerned that he had been much separated from company, from his aspect and gestures. There was a strong but cheerful seriousness in his look, and a certain disregard of the ordinary things around him, as if he had been sunk in thought. The man frequently bewailed his return to the world, which could not, as he said, with all its enjoyments, restore to him the tranquility of his solitude (Howell 125-126).

Selkirk's story must have really inspired Richard Steele, so that he would publish the following words, in The Englishman Magazine, in 1713:

This plain man's story is a memorable example, that he is happiest who confines his wants to natural necessities, and he that goes farther in his desires increases his wants in proportion to his acquisitions; or, to use his
own (Alexander’s) expression, ‘I am now worth eight hundred pounds; but shall never be so happy as when I was not worth a farthing(Howell 139,140).

Thus, as soon as it was told for the first time in London, Alexander Selkirk’s true story became famous and spread out over all England. It was also turned into a main source of inspiration for the writing of some documents and magazines related to navigation. Besides, the story was included in some books about pirates’ life that most English readers of that time were eager to read, so that they could learn more about the life of the hero who survived all alone on Juan Fernandez Island.

The first publications concerning Selkirk’s extraordinary experience date from the years 1712 to 1713. These were a considerable number of written documents and some books (which included the story). The most important of these came from people like Captains Edward Cook and Woodes Rogers, and the journalist Richard Steele. These men were precisely the ones who met the famous surviving sailor in person.

2.2. First publications and written documents about Selkirk’s experience on a strange (unknown) island.

As we have mentioned above, there were lots of written documents originating from Selkirk’s experience on the island. Some authors even dedicated a part of their books to refer to such an interesting event in the life of a sailor. We have done research and found the following documents and books related to Alexander’s true and extraordinary story:
• **A Voyage round the World**: containing Captain Dampier’s expeditions into the South Seas in the St. George, in the years 1703 and 1704… Together with the Author’s Voyage from Amapalla to East India. By William Funnel. Lond. 1707.

This work includes details of Alexander Selkirk’s life from the period that the St. George and the Cinque Ports sailed from Cork until the separation of the Captains Dampier and Stradling, on May 19, 1704.

• **A Cruising Voyage round the World**, by Captain Woodes Rogers: Begun in 1708, and finished in 1711, this book contains an account of Selkirk’s experiences on Juan Fernandez Island, based on the conversations between Alexander and Captain Rogers, after his rescue from the Island.
• **A Voyage to the South Sea and round the World**, by Captain Edward Cook. 2 vols. Lond. 1712:

Here, Captain Edward Cook includes an account of Alexander Selkirk’s way of living, and his custom of taming wild beasts, during the time he was living on Juan Fernandez.

These books describe Selkirk’s adventures from the time he was left in solitude upon the Island until his return to England, in the year 1711.
• “The Englishman,” by Richard Steele. Number 26, dated 3rd December, 1713, relates wholly to Alexander Selkirk. This work was the result of the interview that Richard Steele had with the real Crusoe. Consequently, the journalist wrote a magazine on Selkirk’s life, and it turned out to be very interesting for English readers.

• “Providence Displayed,” it was published in the year 1800, by Isaac James. This document is an account of Alexander Selkirk’s life during the time he was on board the Cinque Ports. It also tells us that he asked to be left on the island of Juan Fernandez, and that he managed to survive there for about 4 years and 4 months until he was finally rescued by the two Bristol Privateers called the Duke and Dutchess.

This written document also contains information about his birth and education, a description of the island, and some words presumably written by his own hand. In summary, the document is a quarto of 12 pages which is evidently a transcript from the voyages. It has some mistakes which demonstrate that Alexander had definitely no hand on it; however, it is, without doubt, a valuable source of information about the life of the famous castaway sailor.

Out of all these sources of information about Alexander’s life, we have selected three as the most reliable and trustful documents concerning the life of our famous mariner and hero; they are, A Cruising Voyage round the World, A Voyage to the South Sea and round the World, and “The Englishman Magazine.”
Below we will include a short biography of their Authors, who we consider very important actors in Selkirk’s life. We will also provide an extract of each one of these documents relating to Alexander. It is interesting to observe the exact way they were written in that time.

**Captain Woodes Rogers**

Captain Woodes Rogers was born in Poole, Dorset, England in 1679; he was the son of an aspiring merchant; Woodes married Sarah in 1704. When his father died at sea in 1705, Woodes took control of the family’s affairs.

Two private warships, the Duke and the Dutchess, were under Rogers’ command. His 1708-1711 expedition circumnavigated the globe, captured a small Manila ship, rescued the castaway Alexander Selkirk, traded slaves, and made Rogers a household name throughout the British Isles. Finally, he died in Nassau on July 15, 1732.

In his book *A Cruising Voyage round the world*, Woodes Rogers offers much detail about Selkirk’s stay on the island. Some of these things can be fully
appreciated in the following extracts from Captain Rogers' book that we have added below:

Here, Captain Rogers explains why Selkirk chose to be left on shore, his posterior repentance, and his begging to be taken on board again, which was, of course, refused by Captain Stradling:

The reason of his being left here was a difference betwixt him and his Captain; which, together with the Ships being leaky, made him willing rather to stay here, than go along with him at first; and when he was at last willing, the Captain would not receive him. He had been in the Island before to wood and water, when two of the Ships Company were left upon it for six Months till the Ship return'd, being chas'd thence by two French South-Sea Ships (academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu).

In these paragraphs Rogers talks about some of the things Alexander used to do in order to survive on the island:

He built two Hutts with Piemento Trees, cover’d them with long Grass, and lin’d them with the Skins of Goats, which he kill’d with his Gun as he wanted, so long as his Powder lasted, which was but a pound; and that being near spent, he got fire by rubbing two sticks of Piemento Wood together upon his knee. In the lesser Hutt, at some distance from the other, he dress’d his Victuals, and in the larger he slept, and employ’d himself in reading, singing Psalms, and praying; so that he said he was a better Christian while in this Solitude than ever he was before, or than, he was
afraid, he should ever be again. At first he never eat any thing till Hunger constrain'd him, partly for grief and partly for want of Bread and Salt; nor did he go to bed till he could watch no longer: the Piemento Wood, which burnt very clear, serv'd him both for Firing and Candle, and refresh'd him with its fragrant Smell.

He might have had Fish enough, but could not eat 'em for want of Salt, because they occasion'd a Looseness; except Crawfish, which are there as large as our Lobsters, and very good: These he sometimes boil'd, and at other times broil'd, as he did his Goats Flesh, of which he made very good Broth, for they are not so rank as ours: he kept an Account of 500 that he kill'd while there, and caught as many more, which he mark'd on the Ear and let go. When his Powder fail'd, he took them by speed of foot; for his way of living and continual Exercise of walking and running, clear'd him of all gross Humours, so that he ran with wonderful Swiftness thro the Woods and up the Rocks and Hills, as we perceiv'd when we employ'd him to catch Goats for us. We had a Bull-Dog, which we sent with several of our nimblest Runners, to help him in catching Goats; but he distane'd and tir'd both the Dog and the Men, catch'd the Goats, and brought 'em to us on his back (academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu).

Another interesting thing that Rogers points out in his book is the way Alexander Selkirk amused himself while he was in solitude:
After he had conquer'd his Melancholy, he diverted himself sometimes by cutting his Name on the Trees, and the Time of his being left and Continuance there. He was at first much pester'd with Cats and Rats, that had bred in great numbers from some of each Species which had got ashore from Ships that put in there to wood and water. The Rats gnaw'd his Feet and Clothes while asleep, which oblig'd him to cherish the Cats with his Goats-flesh; by which many of them became so tame, that they would lie about him in hundreds, and soon deliver'd him from the Rats. He likewise tam'd some Kids, and to divert himself would now and then sing and dance with them and his Cats: so that by the Care of Providence and Vigour of his Youth, being now but about 30 years old, he came at last to conquer all the Inconveniences of his Solitude, and to be very easy (academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu).

Captain Edward Cooke:

Edward Cooke was second captain on board the Dutchess, on a richly rewarding buccaneering expedition round the world. It is generally supposed that Defoe took his 'Robinson Crusoe' from the account here given of Alexander Selkirk. The second half of vol. 52 contains sailing directions for the American coasts.

As a part of the second volume of his popular travel book, A Voyage to the South Sea and round the World, Captain Edward Cooke also explains some
relevant aspects of the life of the real Robinson Crusoe, which became very interesting for the people of his time, as follows:

February 1. In the Morning tack’d and stood to the Westward; but the Wind shrinking, and blowing off the Island in Squalls, could not get in 'till Eight in the Evening, when having little Wind, we row’d and tow’d into the great Bay, and came to an Anchor in 50 Fathom Water with our best Bower, carrying our Stream-Anchor in with the Shore. All this Day had a clear Ship, hoping to get some Purchase, but saw no Vessel, only one Man ashore, with a white Ensign, which made us conclude, that some Men had been left there by some Ship, because the Island is not inhabited. The Duke’s Boat went ashore, and found one Alexander Selkirk, who had been formerly Master of the Cinque Ports Galley, an English Privateer in those Parts; and having some Difference with the Captain of the said Ship, and she being leaky, he left the said Capt. Stradling, going ashore on this Island, where he continu’d four Years and four Months, living on Goats and Cabbages that grow on Trees, Turnips, Parsnips, &c. He told us a Spanish Ship or two which touch’d there, had like to have taken him, and fir’d some Shot at him. He was cloath’d in a Goat's Skin jacket, Breeches, and Cap, sew'd together with Thongs of the same. Hetam’d some wild Goats and Cats, whereof there are great Numbers (academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu).
SIR RICHARD STEELE was born in Dublin, Ireland in March, 1672; he was an Irish writer and politician. Steele was baptized in Dublin. Richard's father died before Richard had reached his sixth year, but the boy found a protector in his maternal uncle, Henry Gascoigne.

The purpose, afterwards more fully effected in his famous periodicals, of reconciling wit, good humor, and good breeding with virtuous conduct was already deliberately in Steele's mind when he wrote his first comedy. It was produced and published in 1701, and was received on the stage with favor.

The Tatler made its first appearance on the 12th of April, 1709. It was partly a newspaper and partly a journal of politics and society, published three times a week.

Steele founded the magazine, and although he and his friend Addison collaborated, Steele wrote the majority of the essays; Richard Steele wrote roughly
Following the demise of “The Tatler,” the two men founded “The Spectator”, “The Guardian”, and also “The Englishman” (dedicated wholly to Alexander Selkirk’s life and his experiences on Juan Fernandez Island.)

Steele spent his last years on his wife's estate of Llangunnor in Wales, and, after his health was broken by a paralytic seizure, died at Carmarthen on the 1st of September, 1729.

Richard Steele, the famous English Journalist, was the first person who formally interviewed Selkirk. Being impressed by his interviewee’s story, he took the job of writing a complete magazine about this strange man, who had survived, all alone, a surpassing tragedy.

Below we add some of the eloquent Richard Steele’s words showing the deep impression and respect that Selkirk’s story inspired in him:

Under the Title of this Paper, I do not think it foreign to my Design, to speak of a Man born in Her majesty's Dominions, and relate an Adventure in his Life so uncommon, that it's doubtful whether the like has happen'd to any other of human Race. The Person I speak of is Alexander Selkirk, whose Name is familiar to Men of Curiosity, from the Fame of his having lived four years and four Months alone in the Island of Juan Fernandez. I had the pleasure frequently to converse with the Man soon after his Arrival in England, in the Year 1711. It was a matter of great Curiosity to hear him, as he is a Man of good Sense, give an Account of the different Revolutions in his own Mind in that long Solitude. When we consider how painful Absence
from Company for the space of but one Evening, is to the generality of Mankind, we may have a sense how painful this necessary and constant Solitude was to a Man bred a Sailor, and ever accustomed to enjoy and suffer, eat, drink, and sleep, and perform all Offices of Life, in Fellowship and Company. He was put ashore from a leaky Vessel, with the Captain of which he had had an irreconcilable difference; and he chose rather to take his Fate in this place, than in a crazy Vessel, under a disagreeable Commander (academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu).

As we have discussed above, all of these written documents and books on the life and unusual adventures of this man called Alexander Selkirk, not only made him famous, but also piqued more and more the curiosity of British people, to the point of his becoming the talk of the town for a very long period of time. Therefore, we consider it appropriate to dedicate the last part of this chapter to briefly describe the people’s reaction to Alexander Selkirk’s true story.
2.3 People’s reactions to Alexander Selkirk’s story.

All the publications about Alexander Selkirk’s true story became very popular among the British people. His adventures on the island stirred great interest, and readers were constantly increasing in number. People were amazed, and they could not believe how a person was able to survive for such a long time out of touch with any type of society.

Alexander’s family was also surprised that his life and experiences had made him famous and earned him the appellative of hero. Actually, the only person in Selkirk’s family who believed in his special design was his mother, and she proved her dreams were not mere superstitions.

Writers and intellectuals began to feel inspired by the accounts of Selkirk’s life included in some travel books of that time. Among these very intelligent men was the famous English writer Daniel Defoe, who, having the opportunity to read about Selkirk’s story, got the inspiration to write his world-famous book, The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.
Chapter 3

The story as a germ in Daniel Defoe’s mind, as the basis of a fictional story.

3.1 Daniel Defoe’s First contact with Alexander Selkirk’s true story.

The celebrated English writer Daniel Defoe was born in or about the year 1659, in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, London. He was the son of Alice and James Foe. His father, James, was a city tradesman and worked as a butcher, a member of the Butcher’s company. The Foe family was Protestant and belonged to the persecuted minority. So Defoe was a Protestant Presbyterian by inheritance (considered to be a person who thought differently and did not believe in or belong to the Church of England.)

Religion played an important role in Defoe’s time, but there existed no tolerance for the different religious beliefs in England. In Defoe’s time Roman Catholics were feared and hated, while dissenters were oppressed and despised. Daniel Defoe belonged to the dissenting-middle class, and this fact troubled him a lot if he remained true to his beliefs.
Defoe was educated for the Presbyterian Ministry at Charles Morton's Academy for Dissenters at Newington Green, in London. Although his father wanted him to be a Presbyterian minister, the young Defoe had other plans in mind. When he was about 18 years old, he left his studies and after some preparation, entered the hosiery business.

During his youth, he became keenly interested in politics and public matters. Clear and strong points of view about these concerns were taking form in his mind. In 1684 he married Mary Tuffley; they had two sons and five daughters.

Defoe was not a poet in the strict sense of the word, but he showed certain mastery in the art of writing, which allowed him to write plain, vigorous, sensible and convincing verses. Perhaps, the very great amount of energy he put into the attainment of his literary and political pursuits, distracted him from his trade, causing his subsequent failure in business. However, after a while he returned to his commerce and became involved with a brick and tile manufactory at Tilbury, a little town on the Thames below London. This was probably the most prosperous period of his life.

After the end of King James’ rule in England, a Protestant double monarchy constituted by Mary (King James’ daughter) and her Dutch husband William of Orange (known as William III) was put on the throne, in 1689.

Although William was not an Englishman, and many people did not trust him, Defoe had full confidence in the new king. Actually, he helped him by writing
pamphlets and verses in his defense. “The True Born Englishman” (1701) was his most famous work in favor of the king.

This document was a satirical poem which tried to defend the reputation of the King against the xenophobic attacks from which he suffered in England. It pointed out the fact that people in England were the result of a diverse mixture of races and cultures from Ancient Britons to Anglo-Saxons, Normans, and beyond, and therefore it was nonsense to importune someone just because of their original place of birth.

In essentials, Defoe was trying to convey that all of those Englishmen who claimed to be pure in race were actually of mixed decent. In other words, there was no “true born Englishman” in England.

Thus, from a mixture of all kinds began,

That het'rogeneous thing, an Englishman:

In eager rapes, and furious lust begot,

Betwixt a painted Britain and a Scot.

Whose gend'ring off-spring quickly learn'd to bow,

And yoke their heifers to the Roman plough:

From whence a mongrel half-bred race there came,
Defoe’s prosperous days came to an end with the death of William in 1702. The new sovereign was very strict about the situation of the Dissenters in England. The high church party also was pushing to remove them from their position in the state.

In response to all of these threats, Defoe wrote an anonymous pamphlet, “The Shortest Way with Dissenters”. In this document, instead of attempting a direct attack against the intolerance of his oppressors, the writer resourcefully takes their position, exaggerating their faults to the extreme to make people dissent with them.

However, Defoe had done a very good job, and both sides, the dissenters and the Church, took the message of the pamphlet literally. So while Dissenters were angry for such a vile treachery on the part of one of their fellows, some
churchmen were really delighted with Defoe's work; but when the real nature of the pamphlet was evidenced, both sides got angry and turned on Defoe.

Thus, the writer was condemned to stand in the pillory at Temple Bar, and he was imprisoned for about two years. Nevertheless, the punishment did not diminish his will to fight against the oppression, and he continued writing pamphlets and started his new periodical, Review.

The Review discussed the current news that occurred not only in England but also in a Great part of Europe. We can say that Defoe certainly did an outstanding work, considering the difficulties he had to deal with in order to write the Review, and the scarcity of appliances and resources for journalists at that time.

It is remarkable that Defoe kept writing his Review for about nine years, without any help. This enterprise required a great effort to be carried on, and only a hardworking man like Daniel Defoe could have taken such an enormous duty on his shoulders. This was, of course, another proof of his genius and his tireless dedication to work.
Defoe was released from prison in 1704, and from that time on he was employed as a government agent in some risky secret missions. These were times of change, and the author’s livelihood always depended on the situation of the political party he was involved with.

Politics were divided into two sides, the Whigs and the Tories. The ingenious journalist always managed to be on the winning side, and he proved to be bold in defending an unpopular cause, too. His moves were in accordance to his convenience; he was a master of the art of deception. Even though this kind of conduct helped him to survive, it also brought him troubles.

However, it would be a mistake to think of Defoe as a man without principles. In fact, behind all his subtle tricks laid a great sense of conscience and integrity. He frequently changed from one political party to the other, and he also used falsehood when it was necessary; but all of these things he did in order to promote and defend what he considered worthy and true, civil and religious freedom.

We can certainly say that the writer remained loyal to his principles, even though he sometimes had to wear a disguise to deceive the enemy. It is more likely that Defoe knew the political game in detail and consequently used double dealing as an effective strategy to protect himself and the cause for which he was fighting.

This was the way in which Defoe spent his life for about 60 years, between hard work and political issues. He had been considered by his contemporaries as a journalist who served the interests of the politicians of his time. This is true, since
during all of these years he only wrote articles devoted to the questions of the hour, trying to fulfill the present needs of his employers.

He had deeply influenced the men of his time, without doubt, yet he was not counted among the famous writers of his country until he published his most famous story, *Robinson Crusoe*. It is extraordinarily curious that this author, who dedicated a great part of his life to write about political affairs, had now turned to his imagination to write the story of a poor castaway and his efforts to survive on his own on a lonely island.

Nobody can tell for sure whether or not Defoe met Alexander Selkirk in person, by visiting him at Bristol, but we are more likely to believe that this is only a myth originated from the imagination of the people who tried to give a romantic explanation to the origins of the novel.

We are more inclined to think that Defoe’s first contact with the Scottish sailor’s story occurred thanks to the publications which included some accounts of it. Indeed, it is very probable that Defoe read Captains Rogers’ and Cooke’s books on the matter, and also Richard Steele’s interview with Selkirk. So he subsequently got the spark for the creation of his wonderful literary text.
3.2. The influence of Selkirk’s story on Daniel Defoe’s mind.

Robinson Crusoe owes its origins to Alexander Selkirk’s life, particularly to the time he had to survive on the solitary island of Juan Fernandez. This was the germ that stimulated the creation of this fictional story, and the principal source of information that the author could use to give form to the character of the protagonist of his novel.

Defoe was fifty-nine years old when he began to write Robinson Crusoe. For this task, he used all the knowledge he had treasured throughout his long life. He had written in many different styles and many types of papers, such as travel, history, historical novels, and of course lots of pamphlets, and periodicals, too. All of this work eventually prepared him to write a successful realistic novel.

As a journalist, Defoe always used diverse literary resources like realistic dialog, fabricated memories, and allegorical elements. He mainly wrote in the first person, and was also accustomed to take different identities. All of these resources can be found in Robinson Crusoe.

All Alexander Selkirk’s characteristics associated with his extraordinary experience helped Defoe to develop his story. Alexander’s appearance and personality, his solitude, his religious beliefs, the way he dressed himself with wild clothes, his hunting skills, the two hut’s he built to protect himself from nature’s forces, and his rescue, were all invaluable materials in the author’s hands.
Even Richard Steele’s observations about Selkirk’s personality exerted a great influence. Defoe surely felt interested in Steele’s words when he said that, "It was matter of great curiosity to hear him, as he was a man of sense, give an account of the different revolutions in his own mind in that long solitude."

When Daniel Defoe was writing his famous novel he was also going through a prosperous period of his life, and he was even richer than when he counted with King’s William aegis. Robinson Crusoe was widely accepted by the people, and it in 1719 turned out to be the basis of English realistic fiction.

The success of Robinson Crusoe moved Defoe to enter into a new style of writing. He began writing some other stories, which constituted the most brilliant literary period of his time. The most famous of these stories are, The Memories of a Cavalier, The Life of Captain Singleton, and The History of Colonel Jack.

Another of marvelous Defoe’s creations is The Journal of the Plague Year (1722). In this work he mingles fact and invention about a plague that desolated London in 1665. The writer makes a single witness describe in his journal the horrors he lived through in the city during the plague.

At the end of his life Defoe was beset by poverty and troubles, his prodigious vitality had at last left him. He died of Lethargy in a London lodging-house in 1731. He was buried in a cemetery in Bunhill Fields, London.
3.3 The structure of the novel, “Robinson Crusoe.”

Robinson Crusoe
Frontispiece and Title page from the first edition

Author: Daniel Defoe

Country: England

Language: English

Genre(s): Historical Fiction

Publisher: William Taylor

Publication: Date 25 April, 1719

Media type: Print

ISBN: N/A

Followed by: *The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*

The original title as it appears on the title page of the first edition is: *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver’d by Pirates.*

**Robinson Crusoe**
This novel is a fictional autobiography of a young man whose name reads, as in the title: Robinson Crusoe. The original book is not divided into chapters; however, the newer versions do. They have been distributed into twenty chapters to facilitate reading:

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Main characters in *Robinson Crusoe*:

**Protagonist:** Robinson Crusoe

**Antagonist:** The Island

**Guide Mentor:** God

**Slave:** Xury

**A cannibal (Crusoe’s servant and friend):** Friday

**A Native of Bremen:** Robinson’s father

**Native Islanders:** Cannibals

**Expeditionary:** Portuguese Sailing Captain

Summary:
Robinson Crusoe was born in 1632, in the city of York, of a good family. He dreamed of going on sea voyages; so he was against the wishes of his parents, who wanted him to stay at home and pursue a career, possibly in law.

In September 1651, Robinson defied his parents and went to sea. During that voyage, he was involved in a series of violent storms at sea. Later, Crusoe boarded another ship towards Africa; on this trip Crusoe met with bad luck, and he was taken prisoner in Sallee by some pirates, for about two years. One afternoon, his captors sent Crusoe out to fish, and he used this to his advantage and escaped in the little boat, along with a slave named Xury, in their adventure sailing with no direction.

After some days on the sea, he was rescued by a Portuguese ship and started a new adventure. He landed in Brazil, and, after some time, he became the owner of a sugar plantation. Hoping to increase his wealth by buying slaves, he aligned himself with other planters and undertook a trip to Africa in order to bring back a shipload of slaves. But he was shipwrecked in a storm about forty miles out to sea on an island, near the mouth of the Orinoco River on September 30, 1659. His companions all died, Robinson saved himself and three animals, the captain's dog and two cats.

Crusoe made immediate plans for food, and then shelter, to protect himself from wild animals. He brought as many things as possible from the wrecked ship, things that would be useful later to him. In addition, he began to develop talents that he had never used in order to provide himself with necessities.
Then he began to communicate with God, thus beginning the first part of his religious conversion, to keep his sanity and to entertain himself. He also used a journal and recorded in it every task that he had performed each day since he had been marooned.

Crusoe became a skilled craftsman, able to construct many useful things and diverse comforts; he also learned about farming. Crusoe explored his island, discovering another part of the island much richer, and more fertile; and he built a summer home there.

After spending about fifteen years on the island, Crusoe found a man's naked footprint, and he was sorely beset by apprehensions, which kept him awake many nights. So he began to take extra precautions against a possible intruder. He was also horrified to find human bones scattered about the shore, and was plagued again with new fears.

Robinson Crusoe even witnessed a human sacrifice where some cannibals, the Caribbees, coming from the opposite mainland, as it was their custom, were going to have a feast with other two cannibal prisoners of their own tribe. One of
the captive savages was slain and eaten while the other man ran very swiftly in a
desperate attempt to escape from his captors and the chase began. Robinson,
who was attentively watching the whole action with his perspective glass, hurried to
help the young savage, knocking his pursuers down and delivering him from a
certain death.

Thus Robinson rescued that man, and named him “Friday”, in remembrance
of the day he saved him. Friday was taught to speak English and became a great
help and companion to Crusoe in his lonely life. When Robinson's clothes wore
out, he immediately made for himself his own cap, jacket, and short breeches, by
drying the skins of the goats he had killed. Moreover, he frequently ate goat for
food. He lived on the island for 28 years.

Robinson finally escaped when a ship that had been a victim of mutiny
arrived at the island. He helped the captain and the prisoners to fix the ship and
eventually voyaged to London. So Crusoe left the island on 19 December 1686,
and he arrived safely in England on 11 June 1687.

He learned that his family believed him dead, and there was nothing in his
father's will for him. Crusoe departed for Lisbon to reclaim the profits of his estate
in Brazil, which has granted him a large amount of wealth. Finally, he sold his
plantation in Brazil for a good price, took his wealth, and came back to England.
Later he got married, and had three children.
Character Analyses:

Robinson Crusoe

Robinson was a good man, who had good set of values; we can consider them very important. So Robinson was a man of faith; he was first the rebellious son, then the repentant castaway, and finally the faithful Christian convert. As a businessman, Crusoe was involved in early mercantile capitalism.

With respect to his reason, Robinson after landing on the island, quantified and calculated nearly everything. He made a calendar and recorded all of his observations in his journal. Crusoe has an interesting role in terms of the different cultures he comes into contact with.

Crusoe saw himself as the ruler and the king of the small society on the island. Crusoe's attitudes toward other cultures were centered on Europe or European values and experiences; an attitude in which he assumed that white, Western culture was superior.
When Robinson Crusoe first had an urge to go to sea, his father lectured him upon the importance of staying home and being content with his "middle station" in life. His father maintained that the "middle station had the fewest disasters and was not exposed to so many vicissitudes as the higher or lower part of mankind." So his father expressly forbade him to go to sea, and, furthermore, promised to do good things for him if he stayed home.

Xury

Xury was the young boy with whom Crusoe escaped from captivity in Africa. One of the most important points about Crusoe's encounter with Xury was the power dynamic between the two. As a non-white European, Xury was always
assumed to be subordinate to Crusoe. Finally, Crusoe gave Xury to the Portuguese sea captain.

**Captain’s Widow**

The wife of the first captain that took young Crusoe under his wing. Crusoe left his savings with the widow, who looked after his money with great care. Crusoe saw her again after he left the island and returned to England; she encouraged him to settle in England.

**Friday**

Friday was the first person Crusoe introduced into the social order of the island. His name, of course, was not Friday by birth, but this was the name that Crusoe gave him after saving him from the hands of the cannibals. Crusoe also taught Friday to speak English, encouraged him to eat goat, and aided in his conversion to Christianity. Crusoe’s dominant relationship to Friday produced a pretty interesting dynamic between them.
The Cannibals

The cannibals were the native islanders and they served as a contrast to Crusoe's own culture and beliefs.

Portuguese Captain

The Portuguese captain came across Crusoe and Xury after they escaped from captivity, and he rescued them on his boat. He traveled with the men to Brazil. The most notable point about the captain was that Crusoe seemed to view him as his equal. (The captain was, after all, a white European.)

Literary Devices in Robinson Crusoe:

Setting: The Transatlantic

Crusoe began his journey in September 1651 and traveled to Africa, Brazil, and a lost island in the Atlantic. He moved primarily through and around the Atlantic Ocean. In this sense, the setting of the novel is a transatlantic one. The significance of this setting is that it was also the primary location of eighteenth-century trade routes, including the slave trade.
Narrator:

Robinson Crusoe told his own story retrospectively from his personal point of view. This meant we get to read every little detail that went on in his head – very important, since we would be interested in the interior spiritual awakening that Crusoe underwent over the course of the novel.

Genre:

Adventure

Robinson Crusoe was a very exciting adventure story. There were sailing ships, stormy seas, a desert island, guns, cannibals, and a whole lot of rollicking action in exotic and faraway places. Basically, it set a standard for all the other adventure stories that followed.

Writing Style:

Catalogue

As a tradesman, Crusoe liked to take stock of his surroundings and described things in great detail. He often catalogued his inventory on the ship and on the island.
What happened at the end?

At the end of the novel, Crusoe returned to Europe, where he came into a great deal of money from his sugar plantations. He then got married, had children, and eventually revisited his island.

Literary and Philosophical References:

The Bible was the ultimate intertext in *Robinson Crusoe*, and it appears continuously throughout the novel.
Chapter 4

Alexander Selkirk vs. Robinson Crusoe

4.1 Elements obviously taken from Alexander Selkirk.

It is not so hard to notice Alexander Selkirk’s influence on Robinson Crusoe’s story. In the first part of this chapter, we are going to talk about the elements or ideas that were obviously taken from Alexander Selkirk’s life and experience on Juan Fernandez deserted island.

First of all, we find that both sailors, Crusoe and Selkirk, had their names changed. Alexander Selkirk changed his original family name, Selcraige, to Selkirk, once he went to sea with pirates and buccaneers, while Robinson was called Crusoe due to the usual corruption of words in England. This fact is, of course, something that Defoe must have known about the Scottish sailor, and so he took it in order to make the main character of his novel more alluring to the people of his time.

Just like Alexander, Robinson also had a family, but with some differences and changes that we will discuss in the second part of this chapter. However, both the fictional and the real protagonists of these stories experienced a great desire and eagerness of going to sea; and they both faced the opposition of their families referring to this concern - even though Crusoe seemed to value more the commodities and pleasures of a comfortable life-style.
Another important thing to notice is that Alexander, as well as Robinson, was raised Christian. Defoe made his fictional character share this trait with the Scottish privateer, perhaps because he read about the influence of religion during Alexander’s years of solitude, and considered it a very interesting point to develop in his story.

Selkirk, however, was encouraged by his mother and censured by his father, even to the point that he was disinherited for disobeying him. Crusoe disobeyed, both his father and his mother, to go to sea. They were both young and in certain ways restless and wayward people.

They both were 18 years old when they left their home towns, but Alexander eventually returned to Largo after his first adventures with the buccaneers were finished; whereas Robinson planned to return to London because of the hard times he had endured at sea, but instead of doing that he took another short voyage, which was the best of his life.

We could say that neither Alexander nor Robinson chose the best option because their restless spirits pushed them out to sea again, in search of gaining fortune.

The friendship between Crusoe and the plain good Captain of the Merchant ship shows us that Defoe knew about the good impression that Selkirk made on Captain Dampier, when he went on board the Cinque Ports.
The author even describes a fight at sea, in which the main character is involved, and that has much to do with the conflict that Selkirk faced when the Cinque Ports and the Saint George fought the French ship that appeared in sight, near Cumberland Bay. However, the author develops this incident in a very different way, that we will talk about further below.

Both Robinson and Alexander stay on a solitary island; this fact clearly shows that the author based his novel on Alexander Selkirk’s experience. The way in which Robinson gets to that desolate place, and even the place itself, are both invented, but they constitute clear evidence of the influence that Alexander’s story exercised upon the mind of Defoe, and how it prompted him to write his most famous creation.

Other similarities that we can find are that both men suffer from solitude, both of them feel the want of food and a refuge, and of course they both manage to satisfy these needs, though in different ways. At first, Alexander feeds himself by picking up fish or seals on the shore, but Crusoe initially ate the food he could take from the ruins of his ship.

While Selkirk at first found a cave near the shore, Crusoe build a tent using things he brought from his wrecked vessel. We should not forget that Selkirk went on shore only with his chest, which contained such things as a compass, powder, some clothes, navigation books, a Bible, and his weapon. Crusoe did it with only a knife, a tobacco pipe, and a little tobacco in a box. The two men hunt for food and build two huts/tents. Crusoe fenced his refuge so that the beasts could not disturb
him, and he also dug a cave behind it. Cats and goats were also familiar to both Alexander and Robinson.

Alexander Selkirk’s cave on Juan Fernandez Island.

Crusoe’s cave
Defoe obviously read about Selkirk’s problems with rats chewing on his toes, nibbling on his food, and tearing his clothes, and of his clever solution of taming cats to repel the rodents. All these things the author took from reality and added to his story; and thus, the two sailors tame these animals to supply their needs and for fun; they both taught them tricks, such as dancing and singing.

Since the two sailors expected a ship to deliver them, they both had their “lookouts”. Selkirk had his own on a point half way up the side of “El Yanque”, facing westward towards the great Pacific Ocean, while Crusoe had “El Mirador”, where he frequently climbed up to look for visitors with his perspective glass.

Crusoe also made his own tools, as Selkirk did in real life, but the latter must have been more skilled at this labor, since his father was a tanner.

Religion was another borrowing from Alexander’s experience, indeed. The author knew about the religious education of the Scottish sailor, which, though not firmly attached to him, was very important in his early life. Actually, the Bible provided him a relief from his melancholic state. Defoe gave Crusoe the same religious inclination and resignation that Alexander had in real life. Thus, they both not only kept an account of the days they stayed on their island, by making notches on the trees with their knives, but they also took the Sabbaths into consideration as especially religious days. They both read the Bible, and they did it aloud to feel more accompanied in their solitude.
It is interesting to appreciate how Defoe pictures his main character as a man who never thought of God when being in good conditions, but when he fell into disgrace he became a devotee of the scripture and even prayed with sincere devotion. It is well known that Alexander went through the same situation, as he confessed, almost at the end of his life, that he was never a better Christian than when he found himself abandoned and completely alone on Juan Fernandez. So it is clear that Defoe used this circumstance to enrich his story, too.

As happened with Selkirk, Crusoe also gets seriously ill and blames himself, and has a pang of conscience. It reveals that, even when Defoe recreates the same situation in his novel, he gives Robinson a more sensitive personality, that was not a characteristic of Alexander. In other words, both men suffer a lot, but Crusoe cries and finds his situation more painful and difficult to endure. Perhaps the most difficult situation that Alexander had to deal with was the one we have spoken about in the first chapter, when he, attempting to catch a goat, fell from a
precipice and almost died, but did not because the body of the goat lightened the impact of the fall.

After he had built the huts, having plenty of food, and started to read the Bible every day, Selkirk finally began to enjoy his stay on the island; the same happened to Robinson who, after finding some grapes, which he dried and hung up to make raisins, provided himself with a good source of food.

Both men had the luck of being in such fruitful places, with plenty of vegetables, fruits, and even the meat of wild animals; and both ate birds’ eggs from time to time, too. Also, they both felt the want of salt when they cooked, using their kettles. But in the case of Selkirk the pepper plant was a good substitute, as the heart of the pimento palm substituted for his bread. Robinson also ate radishes and watercresses in abundance. These things are clear borrowings from Alexander’s experience.

The climate factor is another borrowing from Selkirk’s life. Because it rarely bothered Selkirk, it made him think that God was trying to spare him, and to reinforce this thought he prayed faithfully every day. This is another borrowing, though Crusoe had some problems with the climate, because there were times in which it rained too much and others when the ground was dry for the lack of rain, and it was difficult to him to sow his grain.

Spaniards were something that worried Alexander, and knowing that, Defoe knew enough about Selkirk’s life; it is not a coincidence that Crusoe also feared Spaniards and Cannibals. We should remember that Selkirk had the custom of
climbing his lookout to see if a vessel approached the shore. Upon one occasion he could see some vessels, but he did not discern if it was Englishmen or Spaniards who piloted them. So he approached them, but was seen, and a pursuit started; luckily Alexander could escape from the shots by climbing up a thick tree. However, the Spaniards killed many of his tame goats.

Crusoe also explored his island, as Selkirk did, but he found this activity more delightful than the Scottish pirate, since it did not represent a risk for him. Selkirk’s island had many precipices and dangers he had to be careful of.

Both Crusoe and Selkirk kept themselves occupied by reading either the Bible, or navigation books, in the case of Selkirk. They also had fun with their animals.

Selkirk playing with his cats and goats, in front of the Duke’s crew

As for Selkirk, he did reach a really good peaceful state from spending his time with his tamed creatures, which he knew very well and even noticed that some of them were more intelligent than others, and he was delighted with them.
Sometimes he asked himself if they could have a soul; after all, they also were God’s creatures, thought he.

Fright and isolation happened to both of them. Both Crusoe and Selkirk had learned to believe strongly in God; they believed that the Bible was sacred. Both men left their islands and returned to England, and they both got married. They both had changed, and when they returned to their homelands it was very difficult for them to start a “normal” life again.

4.2 Elements expanded and developed by Daniel Defoe.

Defoe not only borrowed some elements from Alexander Selkirk’s real life, he also expanded and developed many things, using his own fancy to enrich his story.

As we said in the first part of this chapter, there are many differences between Robinson’s and Alexander’s families. This shows us how the English writer took some ideas and developed them in a very different way, using his admirable and fertile imagination.

So, in regard to the protagonists’ families, it is important to notice the way in which Daniel Defoe pictures his main character’s father, as a well-educated and wise man from a higher class family, quite the contrary of Selkirk’s father, who is a prosperous, honorable, and skillful tanner and leather maker.

Also, there is a difference between what both fathers wanted for their sons. Defoe makes Robinson’s progenitor wish his son to be a lawyer, while John,
Selkirk’s father, wanted his son to continue with the family business of tanning and leather manufacture.

There is also another change in the beliefs that John and Robinson’s father hold. The first was a very religious man that regularly visited his parish church- an imposing 12th century great stone building called the Kirk, that was located high on the hill of upper Largo, with a prominent spire seen miles away. But Crusoe’s father mostly talked about class, status, and law.

While Alexander was the seventh son in his family and had six brothers who were perfectly content with being fishermen in the harbor of Largo, Robinson Crusoe, in contrast, had only one elder brother with the high rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Other examples of the manner in which Defoe develops his story in a different way from the original one can be found in the following details:

Even though Robinson and Alexander went on board two expeditionary ships at a very early age, with much enthusiasm, Alexander found the Cinque Ports to be unseaworthy, while Crusoe believed he was on a good ship.

Concerning navigational matters, Crusoe appears to be a little bit more naive and inexperienced than Alexander. He did not know anything about ships and navigation, indeed. He learned, thanks to the Captain of the bark he boarded for the second time, but Alexander learned about navigation during his childhood.
and while he spent some time among the buccaneers, before boarding the Cinque Ports.

During Selkirk’s isolation on his solitary island, Captain Stradling and his men’s ship sank, as Selkirk had predicted. Defoe makes a reference to this incident when, in the first chapter, Robinson watches with horror the sinking of the vessel he had been in, due to a terrible storm that blew up in the sea.

Another point is that Crusoe was ashamed to return home, after the captain of the ship told him to do it. He felt guilty for disobeying his father. But Alexander was never ashamed of going home; instead, he was proud of what he had done.

In real life, Alexander and the crews of the Cinque Ports and the Saint George fought against a French vessel near the Cumberland bay. They won, though they could not capture their prize due to Captain Dampier’s unsteadiness of character. In the case of Crusoe, he and the crew of his vessel fought a Turkish enemy, but they were beaten. Consequently, the main character is taken prisoner and made a slave – something that Alexander never was.

Thus, the author develops his story according to the time Alexander lived. We should remember that it was the golden age of piracy and privateering, a time of reckless fellows, who did not fear to venture into the sea in order to get booty.

The privateers, specifically, were a sort of “legal pirates”, promoted and auspiced by the English monarchy. The English rulers wanted to take away control of the seas from the hands of the Spaniards, for Spain had an enormous fleet at
that time. So the British encouraged as many seamen as they could to craftily raid and plunder Spanish vessels, with the consent of the English government.

Pirates and Privateers

Therefore, it was common for these kinds of sea conflicts to happen in that time, and so it was not weird that Robinson ended up as a slave in the hands of the Turkish men. But it is just the beginning of his pains. As he was a clever man, he managed to escape from his owner, and along with a slave kid called Xury sailed to sea, looking for a place to land.

After the adventure with Xury and the Portuguese captain, Crusoe, attempting to get fortune by negotiating along the coast of Africa, wrecked along with his comrades, who died on the spot, on a strange island in which he was going to stay not only for 4 years, like Alexander did, but 28 years; which is, of course, something that Defoe took from real life and expanded in order to make the story more interesting and dramatic for the reader.
Both Robinson and Alexander were in distress because they realized that the night was about to come, and that they were alone on their islands. Nevertheless, while Crusoe feared for his life, since he thought he was at the risk of being devoured by some wild beasts, Selkirk, on the other hand, suffering from the anguish of being left alone in such a desolate place, could not sleep, or even leave the beach, expecting the vessel to return and take him on board again.

Alexander spent a long time sitting upon his chest and scarcely sleeping, concerned by these thoughts, till he felt resigned and; leaving it to chance, started to help himself the best he could. On the other hand, Defoe tells us that Crusoe found lodging in a big bushy tree which he climbed, to spend the night satisfactorily.

Though both men built their huts, the way in which they built them was very different. Crusoe used sails and materials he could take from his ship, but Alexander went inland and found some pimento trees, which he cut down to build his two huts.

The story tells us that Robinson moved out of his cave because of an earthquake; Alexander also moved out, but he did it for fright of the ferocious barks of the seals that came from the shore. Crusoe did have candles made of the tallow of the goats; Alexander just lighted fire by rubbing two pimento branches together, and did not have such things.

While the author makes Robinson give God credit for corn and barley growing on his island, Selkirk was lucky to be living in a very rich valley too, in
which things like eucalyptus, “guayaba”, “chonta”, and pimento trees grew; and some of them were planted by pirates. Selkirk usually ate the heart of the chonta palm, which was one of his favorite vegetables. He seasoned it with wild pepper, that grew in abundance in that place; and sometimes he had the privilege of eating some lobsters and a slice of sea lion meat, too.

Also, the author explains to us that Robinson hunted with his fowling piece; but Selkirk, having wasted all his powder, had become dexterous at catching the goats on foot.

Defoe develops his story in a different way and tells us that Crusoe, in order to save powder, managed to set traps and pitfalls that he perfected, to catch the goats; while Alexander used his extraordinary physical condition to pursue and catch them. Selkirk tamed his animals and feed himself with the flesh of the goats, the seals, and the eggs of some birds; but Crusoe not only tamed and feed from the flesh of his goats, he also milked them and even got to make butter, cheese, and salt from them.

In the real story, Alexander tamed the cats, and they served him pretty well; these animals helped him to exterminate the vermin; and, at the same time, they turned out to be his diversion and his company. In the book, Robinson’s cats had multiplied in such great quantities that he had to kill many of them.

They both had powder, but Crusoe had more than enough to assure his survival. He had taken a lot of powder from his ship and with 3 fowling pieces and 8
muskets, he was way better armed than Selkirk. This is something that the author has expanded, too.

Eventually, both men felt “the Kings” of their islands; Selkirk subjects were his cats and goats. Besides the Goats and the cats that Alexander tamed in real life and were his company; Robinson also counted with a dog, parrots, and seafowls as his “subjects” on the island.

Crusoe teaching his parrot some words.

Crusoe called his fence his “castle”, and after some time he had humans living with him, too; of course, they were also subjected to his will, since the author invented them in order to make the story more attractive to the readers.

Robinson and Alexander dressed similarly, with clothes they had made out of the skins of goats and from linen. They both wore such things as jackets, caps, breeches, and shoes, and had a rudimentary appearance.
Crusoe’s rudimentary appearance

In the book, Crusoe also furnished himself with all the commodities he could afford in such a situation; just as Alexander did, he had his own kitchen, with things like a pot and a spoon, and a sort of living room, a place to rest and read the Bible.

However, Crusoe seemed to have more commodities; he even had shelves that he designed by using the wood of the ruined vessel. Crusoe slept in a hammock, but Alexander extended a piece of linen over a comfortable place in order to sleep, and when it wore off, he just used goats’ skin to make his bed.
After being rescued, Selkirk raided Spanish ships, looking for gold. Robinson, on the other hand, noticed that a Spanish ship had wrecked on his island, and plundering it he also found some gold, clothes, and valuable articles for his subsistence in that desolate place.

While Alexander dreamed of the sinking of Stradling’s vessel, Crusoe dreamed about cannibals and capturing one, to have a servant and human company. Both dreams, though very different, came to be true and very significant in the lives of the two castaways.

Selkirk remained quietly in a tree when Spaniards came to the shore, and Crusoe was silent when the savages came to his island. These things have to do with each other; the author took the real event that happened between Selkirk and the Spaniards and developed it in a different way, in the book.
Both Crusoe and Selkirk leave the island to return home, but Robinson did so after 28 years, and Alexander after only 4 years. Selkirk is rescued by English privateers and meets Dampier again, while Crusoe helps some English sailors, who help him to capture a ship for his deliverance.

Alexander Selkirk, being rescued by Wood Rogers, boards the Duke.

After being saved, Crusoe went directly to England, but Selkirk continued navigating with Captain Wood Rogers - who became the first person to whom Alexander told his whole story in detail.

When Robinson returns to England nobody knows him, he only has two good friends, indeed, the poor widow to whom he gave some money and the Portuguese Captain, who lived in Lisbon and helped him when he was lost at sea.

Thus, Crusoe resolved to travel to Lisbon to see his old friend, and to talk about his businesses in the Brazils. Alexander, in contrast, became very famous once he returned to England. People were eager to hear his story, even such
intellectuals as the renowned Richard Steele, who wanted to meet and interview him, and so it was. Selkirk had become the talk of the town.

While Selkirk became rich by plundering Spanish ships after his rescue, Crusoe did so thanks to the plantations and businesses he had in the Brazils.

Both men return to see their families, but while Selkirk meets his mother, his father, and his siblings again, Crusoe sadly finds out that his parents have died, and he only has some sisters.

Both have changed, but Selkirk has become aloof and is often seen alone; he looks for loneliness, goes fishing, and even tries to build a cave like the one he had on his island. Both men get married, but Crusoe has children; Alexander did not have any, though he married twice-first to Sophia Bruce and after that to Frances Candis. Here we can notice how the author modifies the real story to give his own a new, different, and original plot.

In real life, Alexander dies at sea, as he probably wished to do, from a tropical fever, on December 13, 1721. His two widows came to claim their part of their husband’s fortune; however, Frances Candis won the case against Sophia Bruce, since she presumably had proofs and a letter from her deceased husband leaving her all his possessions. However, Defoe even invented a different ending for his main character, that we will see further below.
4.3 Elements invented and added by Daniel Defoe.

As in every good story, the author has also used his fertile imagination to fill it with places, characters, and things which never existed in reality, but that make the whole book way more interesting for the reader.

One of the first things that Defoe added was the place of birth of his main character. Robinson is originally from York, one of the most important cities in England and a more sophisticated and civilized place than Largo, where Alexander was born. This, of course, gave the story of Crusoe a certain allurement to the readers of the 18th century. This way they could feel more identified with the unwise and rebellious boy that departed to sea without the consent of his family.

The character of Xury, the slave who escaped along with Robinson and accompanied him, is also an invention of Defoe's mind. In real life Alexander was alone. Also, the wild beasts, such as lions, leopards, etc., that frequently frightened Robinson and Xury, were placed there by the author and never existed in real life.

While Alexander actually navigated the seas with his comrades, the privateers, Defoe figured out a way to give Crusoe another opportunity in life, but just to make him fail again and show how a man can be the only architect of his own disgrace.

According to the novel, Crusoe had the good fortune of finding a good-hearted captain of a Portuguese ship, who took him on board without taking anything of his effects in exchange, and even made him a good offer for his vessel
and servant, Xury. Being in debt to his new friend, Robinson accepted these proposals, and so he sells both his ship and Xury, receiving a good deal of money for them.

Once they got to the Brazils, Crusoe realized that it was a good idea to invest his capital in the business of the place, which was to become a planter; and so he did. He managed to have his own plantation and worked hard in order to thrive and reach prosperity. He also learned the language of the place and made some friends among the planters.

One day, some of these fellow planters, feeling in want of negro slaves to work their plantations, and having heard Crusoe speaking about the easiness of trading with the negroes upon the coast of Guinea—saying that they were easily persuaded with trifles like axes, glasses, gold dust, etc. came to talk to him and proposed to the inconstant Crusoe to venture with them to sea, in search of slaves, for they needed him to trade with the negroes. In exchange, he could have their own slaves without providing any part of the stock to them.

This proposal, though good, was of course inconvenient for a prosperous planter like Crusoe; yet he, disobeying the good inclination of his conscience, and listening to his fancy again, accepted the offer and prepared to sail.

However, the voyage went wrong. They aimed to go to the Coast of Africa, but a violent storm blew against their vessel, and they all got lost. Their ship was seriously damaged by the impact of the waves and the wind, so they chose to get into a boat rather than to wait for their vessel to break up, with them on board. In
this way, they were hopeless and rowing, just expecting for death to come at any moment, for they were afraid of the shore as well as the sea. Unluckily, a dreadful enormous wave, like a mountain, came rolling against them, and the boat was capsized on the spot, and none of the eleven men on board survived except for Robinson.

He swam towards the shore till he reached the desolate island, which he called “the island of despair”. He was now shipwrecked and alone there. Here we should notice that, in reality, Alexander (who previously knew his island) chose to be a castaway after the quarrel he had with Stradling, the captain of the Saint George, while Robinson was wrecked on his island.

Besides, Selkirk’s island, called “Más el Tierra” was located near Chile, in the archipelago of Juan Fernandez, whereas Crusoe was shipwrecked on an island near the Orinoco’s mouth, and close to Trinidad Island. All of these things about Crusoe were, of course, invented by Daniel Defoe.

Alexander Selkirk’s Island on Juan Fernandez archipelago.
Crusoe’s fictitious Island (The Isle of Despair.)

In the story, Crusoe had the advantage of being near his wrecked boat, so that he could provide himself with valuable things for his subsistence, such as tools, food, and parts of the vessel, with which he managed to make a raft in order to get to the wasted ship and take more provisions to the shore. Alexander never had this possibility. Also, Crusoe even had ink and paper to write with, and he did keep a journal. Alexander never had ink and he did not write anything on paper. Crusoe even had a dog and two cats which he took from the wrecked bark. All of this was another invention of Defoe.

Crusoe sowed his own grain, rice and barley, and that is something that Alexander never did. We should not forget that Robinson had learned how to cultivate the ground when he was a planter in the Brazils, an experience that Alexander never had, indeed, and that is totally added by the author.
Robinson struggles to harvest his corn.

Robinson also made earthen jars on his own, and managed to build a mortar to grind his corn. He baked his own bread, and brewed his own beer. Crusoe even had a lot of rum he had taken from the wrecked ship. He figured out how to make his own umbrella, too, so that he could spend more time walking under the heat of the sun. As we said before, he also built two small boats. Crusoe certainly travelled by boat a lot. None of these things happened in Alexander’s real story, either.

The fictional part of the story tells us how Robinson had to deal with some fowl which wanted to steal and spoil his crop. He got so angry at this situation that he shot at them, killing three of the robbers, and by hanging them showed the others of their kind that the same would happen to them if they tried to steal his corn again. Curiously, the birds left the place and never came back to bother Crusoe again.
The author wisely created tension in his story, when he makes Crusoe find a human footprint on his island—something that Alexander never found. This footprint is from a cannibal—another added and extra element in the novel—and it scares the comfortable and relaxed Robinson very much. As he was very religious, he thought it could be the devil, at first. But then he thought over this issue and reached the conclusion that it must be cannibals, who lived on a nearby island and came to his island in canoes. Much greater was his horror and fear when he found the remains of some cannibals who had been devoured by their own tribe, the Caribbees.

As soon as Crusoe saw with horror the remains of the cannibal feast of human flesh, he started to figure out a way to kill those “murderers who did not believe in God.” But then he mused on the matter and realized that these cannibal wretches had no idea of who God was, and he resolved not to act in a hurry and kill them. Here we may notice that Robinson is much more philosophical than Alexander, who was more practical, indeed.

Friday, the cannibal who was saved from his pursuers by Crusoe, is also another invention of Daniel Defoe, who wanted to provide company for the solitary Robinson. Crusoe even educated Friday. He taught him not to eat human flesh, and everything he knew about sowing corn, and the English language, and even talked to him about English customs and religion. In other words, he civilized Friday, and even dressed him with imitations of European clothes he had made out of the animals’ skins. Crusoe gets to feel a great esteem for his new native friend and servant, whom he describes as a strong, swift, and fast learning young man of
tawny color, but of fine traits, too. In real life, Alexander did not find any cannibal or native on Juan Fernandez.

The fictional part of the novel tells us how Robinson and Friday saved Friday’s father and a Spaniard from the hands of the cannibals, who were going to eat them, since they were their prisoners. Robinson, as the commander of his island, managed to give them food and shelter for a while. But he had planned to visit Friday’s tribe because he knew that there were some Spanish white men living among the savages, and he wanted to relieve them from their captivity in order to find a way to escape from the island together. In this disposition, Crusoe sent Friday’s father and the Spaniard to negotiate the liberation of the white men with the cannibals. Of course, the Spanish prisoners first had to swear fidelity and sign a document granting their loyalty to their redeemer, if they wanted to be relieved.

However, before the two men return to Crusoe’s island, an English boat approaches the coast. Robinson and Friday observe three men being mistreated
and insulted by others, who seem to be their comrades; the men are desperately begging for their lives, but their captors leave them to their own luck on the shore. Then Crusoe and Friday appear to talk to them, and offer to save their lives, and the hopeless men agree.

One of these rescued men tells Robinson that he was the captain of a ship that is a little bit farther from the shore, but he says that there was a mutiny and that there are some sailors, the Boatswain, especially, who are incorrigible villains. Crusoe offers to help the captain to get his revenge, and so he gives him some of the guns and fowling pieces he had. So when they see the wretches, the captain kills one of them and captures the others.

Thus, Crusoe and his army- Friday, the Captain and his two men, along with the three prisoners they took first and converted to his cause, attack and kill some of the traitors, including the Boatswain, and so the captain gets his revenge. He is so glad that he obeys Robinson’s commands with pleasure; and with his men he goes to capture the ship for him. So, after he does that, now Crusoe’s escape from the island is at hand, and so easy to do, since he has a ship to go anywhere he wants.

Therefore, they departed to England, leaving their prisoners on the island, instead of taking them to be tried and hanged as criminals in their native country. However, two of these prisoners begged to be taken on board, and so they were. All of these things are the result of Defoe’s wonderful imagination.
While Crusoe chooses to travel by land, Selkirk mostly travelled by sea, as was his custom. Besides, Crusoe went to Madrid, Spain, and to France by crossing the mountains along with his friends. Selkirk would never have gone to Spain, since England and this country were enemies.

To end his novel Defoe makes Friday fight a bear in the mountains, to divert his patron and the rest of the fellows who accompanied him. They fight with wolves, too. But the most important and curious thing is that Defoe makes Robinson return to his island to see that the Spaniards and the British prisoners who inhabited the island had had lots of quarrels, and the Spanish men, being more in number, had taken control of the British by force. He also notices that there were women and children among them, so he is happy to see such a thing, and offers to send more women, to be brides, to the island, if the Englishmen work and change their rebel behavior and disposition.

The last things that Crusoe does are to give a pension to his friend, the Portuguese captain and his son, and he also sends many things from England to the island, to improve the life of the people who are living there. Defoe never mentions anything about the death of his main character; instead, he makes Robinson say, at the end of the novel, that he will continue with the second part of his story someday. The fact that Robinson continued living and never died at the end of the novel constitutes a completely different ending, added and invented by Daniel Defoe; and it does not have anything to do with the real story of Alexander Selkirk, who, as we have said before, died at sea.
Chapter 5

The reception of the novel in England

5.1 Robinson Crusoe’s first publication in England.

The celebrated English writer Daniel Defoe was a novelist, pamphleteer, and journalist, who published his novel *Robinson Crusoe* in England in April, 1719; and he gained enduring fame for this novel. Defoe is notable for being one of the earliest practitioners of the novel, who helped popularize the genre in Britain.

Here we can see the Frontispiece and title-page of the book *Robinson Crusoe*, which was printed in 1719.

Defoe was a prolific and versatile writer, who wrote a lot: several hundred books, pamphlets, and journals on various topics, including politics, crime, religion, marriage, psychology, and the supernatural.
Robinson Crusoe is a story told with modesty, seriousness, and a religious interpretation of events, and it was written as a first person narrative, causing its unrivaled popularity. No book in the history of Western literature has spawned more editions, translations, imitations, continuations, and sequels than Robinson Crusoe.

Moreover, it was the first time in English literature that someone had written an invented story in a way that appeared to be true. This was a very original way of writing in the early 18th century, when Daniel, with extraordinary thoughts of travel and adventure, wrote this novel, and became a famous writer around the world.

For this reason, from the moment of its first publication in 1719, Robinson Crusoe became a commercial success, becoming immediately a best-seller in England; however, this novel is still a very popular book nowadays.

In Robinson Crusoe, Defoe used the tale of a shipwrecked man to criticize society. Mainly, the story of Crusoe is based on the experience of a Scottish sailor named Alexander Selkirk, who lived alone on the island of Juan Fernandez for over four years, until he was rescued by a British ship.

This book contains adventures of all sorts: pirates, shipwrecks, cannibals, mutiny, Biblical references in many of its themes and discussions, and so much more. For example, some elements of the story are related to when Crusoe was ill. Here, Robinson cries out for deliverance and says, “Lord, be my help, for I am in great distress.” Robinson questions God, asking, “Why has God done this to me?
What have I done to be thus used?" But he makes peace, and goes on with his solitary existence.

### 5.2 British people’s reaction to Robinson Crusoe’s story.

It is important to mention that *Robinson Crusoe* produced a great impact on the British people. For example, with men, the novel fired their imaginations with thoughts of travel and adventure. On the other hand, for women, the attraction of the story seems to have lain in its connections with their own lives. Moreover, some printers included a drawing of a man in goatskins, some kinds of images, and a map of Crusoe’s island in some illustrated novels, to show the location of the episodes, which became an interesting novel for children, too.

Furthermore, many scholars have attempted to account for the extraordinary popularity of *Robinson Crusoe* and its imitations, and have speculated about what it was that readers were responding to in Defoe’s book. For example, Pat Rogers made an intensive study of the publication history of *Robinson Crusoe* in chapbook form, looking particularly at what was included or omitted in these radically shortened versions of the novel.

Rogers concluded that the readers of these chapbooks were responding to *Robinson Crusoe* as a story of survival, as an epic of mastery over the hostile environment, as a parable of conquest over fear, isolation, and despair.
We can appreciate the title-page of an eight-page chapbook version of *Robinson Crusoe*, created in the eighteenth century.

The following picture shows us a female poet, Elizabeth Landon, who liked to read the novel *Robinson Crusoe* since her childhood. It was her inspiration to begin to write poems, and she became a famous poet in England.

Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838)
For a very different account, we might take a letter written by the poet Letitia E. Landon, known as (L. E. L.) in which she spoke of the imaginative power Robinson Crusoe had exerted over her in childhood:

For weeks after reading that book, I lived as if in a dream; indeed, I scarcely dreamt of anything else at night. I went to sleep with the cave, its parrots and goats, floating before my closed eyes. I awakened in some rapid flight from the savages landing in their canoes. The elms in our hedges were not more familiar than the prickly shrubs which formed his palisades, and the grapes whose drooping branches made fertile the wide savannahs (Mrs. Elwood. Memoirs of the Literary Ladies of England).

Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925)

Moreover, we can see above H. Rider Haggard’s picture, and how he credited his own decision to become a famous English writer of adventure books to his love of books like Robinson Crusoe as a boy.
Next, we can mention that the Robinson Crusoe edited by Sir Walter Scott, and published in 1810, had a great acceptance; and he claimed that this novel was read eagerly by children, and young people. Also, Joseph Greenwood, a weaver’s son, read a cheap edition of Robinson Crusoe as a child in the late 1830s, and he said, “To me Daniel Defoe’s book is a wonderful thing, it opens up a world of adventure, new countries and peoples, full of brightness and change; an unlimited expanse.”

Similarly, John Ward, a ploughboy of twelve years old read this novel in 1878, and he said that the content of the book gave him all the spirit of adventure, and forces to resolve the problems presented in his life. So these people are part of the British readers who learned from and enjoyed the famous novel, Robinson Crusoe, in the nineteenth century.

5.3 Impact of Robinson Crusoe on the Literature of its time.

Robinson Crusoe was inspired by a real life event; it was also the first notable work of literature in the eighteenth century, where the story was independent of mythology, history, legends, or previous literature.

Before Robinson Crusoe, there existed some comedies, plays, tales, etc. that English writers used to write at the beginning of that period.

For example, William Congreve’s play The Way of the World is a good example of the sophistication of theatrical thinking during the early 1700s.
In 1703 Sir Richard Steele's comedy *The Tender Husband* achieved considerable success.

In 1704 Jonathan Swift published two books - *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books*, and political pamphlets, using his satirical writing sprung from a body of liberal thought.

From 1704 to 1717, Antoine Galland published the first European translation of the *One Thousand and One Nights*; his version of the tales appeared in twelve volumes. After all these works by some English writers were presented in England, *Robinson Crusoe* impacted the Literature in 1719.

*Robinson Crusoe* was a very popular novel for the European colonial mentality. So this novel went to four editions within the first four months and spawned two mediocre sequels. Later, by the end of the nineteenth century, the novel went on to be published in over 700 editions, translations, and imitations throughout Europe and America. Moreover, Defoe had changed English literature forever, and the novel has never been out of currency.

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is probably the best known and developed novel, since the eighteenth century until nowadays. The novel is accepted by children, young people, adults, students, and English writers because it is considered the first of its type, having helped to define its genre by dispensing with the ornate style of the 18th century English upper class.
Chapter 6

The story of Robinson Crusoe as the archetypal novel

6.1 What is a novel?

In this part of chapter six we are going to define what a novel is, and its types, too:

A Novel is a fictional piece of prose usually written in a narrative style. Novels tell stories, which are typically defined as a series of events described in a sequence. The novel has been a part of human culture for over a thousand years, although its origins are somewhat debated. Regardless of how it began, the novel has risen to prominence and remained one of the most popular and treasured examples of human culture and writing.

First of all, a novel is written down, rather than told through an oral account. Secondly, novels are meant to be fictional in form, differentiating them from myths, which are said to have their basis in reality or theology. Although some modern scholars argue differently, there is no truly established guideline for length, point-of-view, or even establishment of a moral or philosophical point in novels.

Naturally, novels could not receive wide distribution until the use of printing presses became common throughout the world. Even so, a few fictional works from the medieval and early modern periods stand out as landmarks of literary style.
Throughout the centuries, the novel stumbled along with great waxing and waning in popularity. Many modern examples held up as great novels were written throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, when novels finally gained a permanent position as an acceptable form of literature. Since that time, novels have become the most common form of published literature, far outpacing the published plays, poetry, and works of non-fiction that once held sway over the literate world.

Novels are often beloved for their creation of spectacular worlds, empathetic characters, and carefully thought-out arguments. They are often seen as a boundless realm of exploration and creativity, with subgenres springing up to include nearly every type of subject that can be written about.

The literary style remains cost-effective despite the range of imaginary things that can be put into novels; unlike the soaring costs of special effects and computer graphics needed to make a fantastical movie, a novel requires only imagination and talent to create massive worlds and detailed characters.

We know the first recognized novel all around the world is *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by Daniel Defoe. There are various categories of novel which happen. Commercial fiction is divided into many genres, or categories. This kind of classification helps readers find the types of novels they like to read. Also, each genre has sub-genres, or sub-categories. For example, the romance genre includes historical romances, erotic romances, young adult romances, etc.

**TYPES OF NOVELS**
Allegory, Autobiographical, Characters, Consciousness, Comic novels, Education, Epistolary, Feminist, Gothic, Ironic, Magic realism, Narrative structure, Narration, Naturalism, Picaresque, Postmodern, Psychological, Realism, Reflexive, Romance, Satire, Science fiction, Stream of consciousness, Style, Utopian.

Novels exhibit several qualities; below we give a short definition of the most common genres.

- **Allegorical**: This type of novel is representative and symbolic.
- **Autobiographical**: This readily identifiable type is always told in the first person and allows the reader to directly interact with the protagonist.
- **Epistolary**: These novels utilize the convention of letter writing and are among the earliest novel forms.
- **Fantasy**: Like science fiction, fantasy is about imaginary worlds. But the imaginary part of fantasy novels usually involves magic, while the imaginary part of science fiction involves science or technology.
- **Picaresque**: This early, episodic novel form concentrates on the misadventures of a young rogue.
- **Gothic**: This type of novel is concerned with the macabre, supernatural, and exotic.
- **Historical**: This form is grounded in a real context and relies heavily on setting and factual detail.
• **Horror:** This is focused on creating emotions of terror and dread in the reader.

• **Mysteries:** These are about a crime, usually a murder, and the process of discovering who committed it. The hero or heroine is usually a detective or an amateur doing detective work.

• **Romantic:** This novel form is about love and passion, idealistic, imaginative, and adventuresome. The romantic hero is the cornerstone of the novel, which often includes exotic locales.

• **Science fiction:** This is fiction that imagines possible alternatives to reality. It is based on known scientific facts.

• **Thriller:** This is like horror; a thriller gets its name because of the feeling it creates in the reader. Thrillers are designed to make the reader’s pulse race, to keep him or her turning pages. Often thrillers are about a crime that is going to be committed or a disaster that is going to happen.

• **Westerns:** These normally take place in the Western U.S., although sometimes in other locations, most often during the 19th century. Common elements include cowboys, ranchers, the difficulties of frontier life, frontier justice, and conflicts between natives and settlers.

Next, we can see how “Fiction” can be divided into three varieties: genre, literary, and mainstream.

• **Genre fiction** is the most popular variety of fiction. It can be divided into categories, such as mysteries, thrillers, and romances.
- **Literary novels** are generally far less commercial than genre ones; but only generally. If a literary novel happens to win a major prize or receive some positive word-of-mouth buzz, it could still make anyone very rich.

- **Mainstream fiction** sits more or less halfway between the other two. In fact, it is often defined in terms of how it differs from literary and genre novels. The best definition of mainstream fiction, though, is that it is a category in its own right.

Novel is a prose work of fiction believed to have begun with Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" in 1719. It can be classified as literary or commercial. And Commercial Fiction has many types of novels, known as genres, including romance, thriller, and mystery.

Concerning types of novels, there are generally two types. The first one is a full-length novel with over 200 pages in length, and contains a long and well developed story with a variety of characters.

The second type of novel is commonly referred to as a novella. These kinds of novels are generally under 200 pages; however, they still contain a full-length story with a beginning, middle, and end.

There are three possible points of emphasis in prose fiction. Each point can be emphasized in either a long or a short narrative, as presented in the following chart.
As we can see from the above table, the novel is one form of an extended fictional prose narrative. It differs from allegory (which functions to teach some sort of moral lesson) and romance (with its emphasis on spectacular and exciting events designed to entertain) in its emphasis on character development.

The novel, however, arises from the desire to depict and interpret human character. The reader of a novel is both entertained and aided in a deeper perception of life’s problems.

6.2 Why Robinson Crusoe can be considered the first novel ever written and the archetypal of the novel.

According to many critics, Robinson Crusoe is considered the first novel ever written in English, but we think that it is, in fact, the first novel of all time.

Robinson Crusoe was written by the famous English journalist and writer, Daniel Defoe, who had a wide experience in writing a great variety of political and religious articles; and, who, after hearing about Alexander Selkirk’s real story, felt
really inspired to write his best seller and most famous creation, *The life and strange surprising adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, as we know it nowadays.

Defoe’s novel changed the world of literature forever, and this author, who was around 60 years old at that time, never noticed that he was creating a new literary genre. In fact, *Robinson Crusoe* set the basis of modern literature by establishing itself as the archetypal of the novel, which was subsequently accepted by the majority of literature experts and scholars around the world.

*Robinson Crusoe* is a novel in the sense that it exemplifies all the characteristics a good novel should have. First of all, although Defoe’s creation is based on the life of the Scottish sailor, Alexander Selkirk, it is still an invented story, since Daniel Defoe developed and added many things to the events that happened in Selkirk’s real life. We can even say that the very fact that Defoe’s book is inspired in a real story makes it appear more “novelistic”; since novels, even when they are, in essence, invented stories, are also developed in such a way that they seem very realistic and move people to get involved with the plot, as if it were real life what they are reading or watching. That’s the allurement of the novel. Moreover, the majority of novels, if not all of them, are always inspired by real facts, just as *Robinson Crusoe* is.

Another reason why *Robinson Crusoe* can be considered as the archetypal novel is that no other writer before Defoe had written using the writing style that he used. Defoe describes everything in detail, which makes the story seem real, and he also narrates it in a retrospective way. He makes his main character tell his own
story, to narrate it in the first person, so that all he says seems to be autobiographical; and it appears that the writer is talking to the reader through Robinson.

Besides, the author wrote his book using common colloquial language, which is not very poetical and was against the writing style of his time, where everything was more baroque-like and artificially decorated, indeed. Defoe’s writing style cares more about describing events and actions very clearly. There is a lot of action in Robinson Crusoe, and everything happens quickly, just as it happens in reality.

Thus, it is easy to understand that this book was a visionary creation, and so it was not fully understood by the critics of its time. They thought that the book was not elegant; they did not like it, indeed, and argued that it was not “proper literature.” But these literature experts of the XVIII century, though they were very intelligent and illustrative people did not have the vision of Defoe, to perceive that he was creating something new in the field of Literature.

Novels frequently make people think about their lives and the problems they have to face daily. Actually, novels teach people valuable lessons and talk about important things for the development of human society. Robinson Crusoe is not the exception to the rule; it is a great book with a great lesson; even more it is the first literary work that states the problem of isolation and loneliness. In other words, the absence of all kinds of society or law.
Robinson Crusoe makes readers question life. It is interesting to observe the relationship between man and society in the novel. Defoe’s creation makes us reflect upon this point. Robinson, the main character, is alone on his solitary island, he is not subjected to any law, there is no society that influences him; he can do whatever he wants to do; however, he decides to be organized and to have a civilized life, preserving the values of the society of his time, even becoming very religious, too. He cares about the calendar and also the Sabbath day in order to pray.

Robinson is alone, and he has to create his own tools; he manages to become a builder and a farmer. He makes clothes out of the skins of the animals and values everything that is useful to him. It suggests to us the idea that we need each other in society; we need the help of the competent experts in order to make our lives more comfortable. Robinson does not have this possibility, so he has to contrive and figure out many different ways to furnish himself with the necessary things for his long subsistence on the island.

The idea of value is also another very interesting point in the novel. It is interesting to notice that when he finds golden coins he says, “This is no use to me.” Referring clearly to the fact that we esteem valuable only those things which are useful to us.

Moreover, Defoe pictures his characters in a very realistic way; he describes them in detail and places them in the right time and space, giving a personal description to all of his characters in Robinson Crusoe. Defoe did not take his plot
from mythology, history, legend, or previous literature. He established the novel as an authentic account of the actual experiences of individuals.

In Conclusion, nobody else had written a literary work with all the characteristics we have described above before Defoe did. Therefore, it is clear to us that Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe is, in fact, the first novel ever written and consequently the archetypal of this literary genre.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

CONCLUSIONS

In fact, Selkirk’s story inspired Daniel Defoe to create his most important literary work, called *Robinson Crusoe*, which, according to some experts, can be considered as the archetype of the novel, or, in other words, the first novel ever written.

Throughout this thesis we have given an exact account of the life of Alexander Selkirk, the man who really inspired this fantastic pirate and navigation novel called Robinson Crusoe. We have explained in detail, and following a precise order, all the important events of his rebellious existence and experience at sea, his exile on the island of Juan Fernandez, and his posterior rescue and return to his homeland, in Largo, Scotland.

We have also provided information on the impact of the real story in England, and how it got to be known by the famous journalist and novelist, Daniel Defoe. We have point out the fact that this extraordinary event in the life of the Scottish sailor was the germ in Defoe’s mind for the production of his famous book, setting at the same time the basis of the fictional story, which was finally published in 1719.

Moreover, we have deeply analyzed both stories and proved that most of the content that can be read in Robinson Crusoe is taken from the real Selkirk’s
experience. We have focused upon those elements that we consider as to having been expanded or added upon by the author's fruitful imagination, as well.

Furthermore, we took care to show the impact of Robinson Crusoe on the literature of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, the reception it had, particularly in England, and the enthusiastic reaction of the British people of that time, who were eager to read such a fantastic seafaring story.

Finally, we defined the novel as a relatively new literary genre, explained each one of its parts, and talked about its types too. Our thesis' final chapter focuses on the beginnings of the novel in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, and ends up giving reasons why Robinson Crusoe is considered the first novel ever written and the archetype of the genre.

After all this investigative work, we can notice that Defoe’s greatest creation in the literature field, with the general agreement of critics and the acclaim of readers throughout the world, is undoubtedly Robinson Crusoe; because this novel was a great success in that period, it was also immediately pirated, abridged, imitated, translated, and adapted for the stage as pantomime, and as drama.

In a poll of nearly 1,000 children carried out by the Daily News in 1899, where they were asked to make lists of all their favorite books, Robinson Crusoe came out on top, among 921 books. Worldwide there have also been produced many movies about Robinson Crusoe; so it is clear evidence that the novel
continued impacting people’s minds in the twentieth century. Even the Chilean president, in the name of tourism, renamed “Mass el Tierra” Robinson Crusoe Island in 1966. Another nearby uninhabited island was renamed Alexander Selkirk, too.

Some examples of films based on Robinson Crusoe are listed below:

Modern version of the novel adapted into a film, dating from the year 2006.

Part of Delta's Animated Children's Classics series, Robinson Crusoe is a cartoon adaptation of Daniel Defoe's 18th century book.
Robinson Crusoe on Mars (1964) is exactly what it sounds like: the Daniel Defoe classic on the surface of Mars.

Moreover, from 1719 to 1895, 196 editions of Robinson Crusoe were published, as well as 144 revisions, 277 imitations, and 110 translations. These translations were in Dutch, Bengali, Persian, Hebrew, Armenian, and even Eskimo. The novel continued to be published, adapted, and transformed for over two centuries.
RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, we have to say that we have enjoyed a lot the researching and writing of this interesting topic, and hope that all who read this thesis will also find enjoyment and pleasure while researching this thrilling novel called Robinson Crusoe. We highly recommend that readers read it with enthusiasm, and joyfully, in order to obtain a better, agreeable, and fruitful result of their investigation.

We sincerely expect that this work will not only serve you as an investigative resource, but that it also moves you to muse on your own life and the way you are carrying it out, in order to change it, always for the better.
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