

CRUSOE'S ADVENTURE IN *ROBINSON CRUSOE* AND MARLOW'S JOURNEY IN *HEART OF DARKNESS: literary adventure and making of the novel*

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Abstract: Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is the story of making of novel. The mould of adventure in this novel (adventure of Robinson Crusoe) implicitly depicts the adventure of an author in a new literary field and its experience. Again it implicitly tells the impact of an emerging genre both on the author and the reader. *Robinson Crusoe* tells the story of first generation novelist and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* tells about the next generation novelist through the journey of Marlow. The next generation novelists are controlled by the previous generation of novelists in many ways.

Keyword: literary adventure, making of novel, first generation novelist and second generation novelist.

It is widely recognized that the novel emerged as a distinct literary genre in the early 18th century and became a popular literary genre in the mid 18th century. Ian Watt in his classic book *The Rise Of the Novel* (1957) states that Defoe's fiction is the first, which has some association of newness and originality. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is written in the mould of an adventure story, that has some features of mediaeval adventure story, and at the same time it is a story of another kind of adventure that is related to politics, the politics of making of colony. This adventure can also be interpreted from a different point of view. It can clearly be said that, published in the early 18th century when novel was emerging as a distinct literary genre *Robinson Crusoe* tells the story of making of the novel and at the same time foretells the dominant nature of this literary genre that will later reign in the literary world. With the rise of the middle class in England people's attention to the novel became higher and it kept its growth constant for centuries.

Crusoe is a cast away sailor put to a distant island where there is no trace of so called human civilization (European civilization). He was put to that island due to a ship wreck. It was an accident. Crusoe was forced to enter into the island and this island has not been explored by anyone. Here a few questions arise: (1) Why Defoe presents Crusoe as a cast away sailor? (2) Why Crusoe was put to an island and was bound to suffer and struggle for years to make a habitation? (3) Why Crusoe's adventure in the island began accidentally? There is some intensions behind putting Crusoe in this way. In the mould of adventure Defoe has presented the story of the making of novel and its impact on the author as well as the reader. When the novel was emerging as a distinct literary genre, it was not easy enough to write it as there was no sublime evidence to follow. So, for the first time while practicing hands in this field one may think oneself an outcast, as there were a few hands practicing in this field. Again this genre seems to be an outcast as readers are usually accustomed to visit theatre or reciting poetry or sonnet or love poems. A work of prose with a different plot or design may be really a surprise to the reader and the instant impact of it may alienate it from all other literary genres. The readers may think it as an outcast literary work. Crusoe's situation as an outcast implicitly tells the outcast situation of the very genre novel when it was emerging. Crusoe was put to an island which is wild and the island is not linked with any main land. Symbolically this signifies the nature of novel as it was not linked with any literary genre significantly and that novel came out from prose fiction and prose romances is also implicitly stated in *Robinson Crusoe*. After the ship wreck Crusoe survived in an island and he took away all the necessary materials and shifted those materials to the island that can help him in creating a habitation in the island. On the island Crusoe had to suffer a lot and struggle too to survive. This is also an implied story of survival of a novelist and at the same time the genre, as it is new. Crusoe's adventure in the island took place accidentally. Crusoe was not ready to face this situation, it just happened because of the shipwreck. Crusoe did not know that he may be put to such a condition. Now it can be said that writing a novel when it was just emerging, better to say getting the shape or structure of a novel was like an adventure in literary field. Neither play nor poetry but novel (then prose fiction) which had no distinct design, was not generally read, so it can be legitimately said that Crusoe's adventure was symbolically an adventure of an author in a literary field. Again a piece of such work may appear to a reader as an accidental creation of which the creator was not enough aware, it just took place due to an accident and there was no deliberate intention in the mind of the creator regarding its design or structure or plot.

Crusoe is on a distant island which is not well enough to make a habitation and is wild. If anyone wants to create a habitation there, he must struggle hard. Symbolically this wild island refers to novel, as it was not then an established literary genre as it became in the mid 18th century and after that and after certain period of time it became the only literary genre which was much liked, written, read and sold in the market with the rise of the middle class. Not only in England but in all over the world the novel became the most dominating

literary genre. That the novel will be the most significant and dominating literary genre and it will dominate all the other literary forms has been foretold in *Robinson Crusoe* in the mould of the story of making of a colony by Crusoe. Crusoe's making of the colony not only states about making a change in world politics and dominating nature of Europe but the dominating nature of the novel also. And the novel became the most dominating genre in the middle of the 18th century and it is continuing its role till now.

The second part of the novel, which is entitled as "The Journal" starts with a date "September 30, 1659", and Crusoe describes himself -"I, poor miserable Robinson Crusoe, being ship wrecked during a dreadful storm, in the offing, came on shore on this dismal unfortunate Island, which I called the Island of despair, all the rest of the ship's company being drowned, and myself almost dead" (Ed. Saha & Sarkar 129) . Crusoe is poor and miserable. The poverty and miserableness is the poverty and miserableness of a novelist when novel puts its first step in its long and dominating literary journey. The gorgeous epic or renaissance or Shakespearean or Jacobean or after math of Jacobean age plays were of immense importance to Englishmen than prose fiction. Side by side poetry was also in vogue. The very beginning of "The Journal" tells the story of emerging condition of novel as a literary genre, and marks out the experiment done not only by Defoe alone but also by all the writers who tried to experiment prose fiction. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is the story of the writers who tried to experiment on prose fiction or prose romance and their experience in this field. Crusoe's making of home in a distant wild island is making of a gorgeous genre out of prose romance or prose fiction which was later known as novel. Here the crashing of the ship and the death of the fellow men of Crusoe may suggest the unfruitful struggle of the previous practitioners or the lack of interest on the part of the practitioners in this field due to lack of sufficient model, structure, design and plot, and how the plot could be constructed, as well as the lack of reader. So the spirit of the practitioner is 'almost dead' as Crusoe's spirit 'is almost dead'. Crusoe " had neither Food, House, Clothes, Weapon, nor Place to fly to, and in Despair of any Relief, saw nothing but Death before " (Ed. Saha & Sarkar 128) him. It implicitly tells the lack of materials and model using which or following which a writer can write while he is entirely in a new field or genre ,each and everything is to be created and there is no relief and always there is a question whether he will be successful in this new literary field or not. Ultimately the question of existence arises, whether the new genre will flourish or not, whether it will be able to confirm its existence or not.

On the first day in the island Crusoe slept in a tree, he had no shelter, but he 'slept soundly though it rained all night'. It implicitly tells the uncertain career of a writer or practitioner of novel. The career is at stake. It also tells the hindrance faced by writers while practicing their hands in new literary field or genre, and the struggle one must have to do while in a different and new field. Creating of something new is always hard and one must have to struggle hard to create something new. The very next day Crusoe becomes able to

see the ship which was driven on shore again much near the Island “which as it was some comfort on one hand for seeing her sit upright and not broken to pieces”(Ed. Saha& Sarkar. 128). It clearly echoes to previous prose fictions or prose romances which were published though failed to create much impression on the readers. Again the prose fictions or prose romances such as John Lyly's *Euphues* (1578) were vehicles by which a writer reached a new and distinct literary field as Crusoe reached the island through sailing the ship. The "ship" is not broken to pieces and Crusoe can find some food to feed the "island":

I spent great Part of this day in perplexing myself on these things; but at length seeing the Ship almost dry, I went upon the Sand as near as I could, and then swam on board; this Day also it continu'd raining , tho' with no Wind at all (Ed. Saha& Sarkar 128)

Now there is at least one idea which can help an author in creating the new genre i.e. the novel. For the first time he can take prose fiction for initiation and mould it as necessary , but the perplexities are still in his mind as he is not expert enough in moulding it. So the raining continues and the cloud of perplexity covers everything.

The next paragraph is a description of some 24 days:

"All these Days entirely spent in many several Voyages to get all I could out of the ship, which I brought on Shore, every Tide of Flood upon Rafts. Much Rain also in these Days, tho'with some Intervals of fair Weather: But, it seems, this was the rainy Season"(Ed Saha & Sarkar 128).

Defoe continues to bring materials from prose romance as much as possible though there is some unavoidable hindrance. The rain continues i.e. scarcity in getting proper material to create the novel continues.

Ultimately the ship is broken to pieces and Crusoe has already taken away all the necessary materials and shifted those to the island that can be drawn from the ship. Once again it is an implicit story of making of novel from prose fiction and prose romance. Taking the necessary materials from the ship he works hard though the rain hinders him many days, sometimes weeks together but he thought that he should never be "perfectly secure ‘till this Wall was finish'd; and it is scarce credible what inexpressible Labour every Thing was done with, especially the bringing Piles out of the Woods, and driving them into the Ground...(Ed. Saha& Sarkar 133) ". Crusoe's making of the walls is very much similar to making of a perfect model or structure of the novel, it's features, design and many others, and as long as the structure or design is not created perfectly it will suffer from lack of concrete shape and for this one must have to struggle hard as described by Crusoe as "inexpressible Labour". The labour is also a great factor in creating any new thing. Finally Crusoe becomes able to make a habitation in the wild island and it took years, not done in a few days. The process of making of novel has also taken place through years not in a single day and Crusoe's creation

of the habitation in an island is symbolically the creation of the novel. In the island Crusoe rescued a native from the hands of other cannibal natives whom he named Friday and took to his home and made him his disciple not only that he controlled Friday's activities, made him a civilized person. Crusoe made Friday a member of his house. Obviously this tells about the colonial activities at an early stage but it can also be said that Friday is the symbol of uncontrolled and wild raw material with which a novelist creates a novel when novel was emerging as a literary genre as Crusoe makes a home with Friday. Wild Friday is the symbolical representation of raw plot. As Crusoe had to make Friday from a native cannibal in order to make his companion, an author also had to make a well form and structured plot out of some raw materials. Crusoe had to make Friday a civilized and it was not so easy, as there were so many barriers, such as racial, linguistic and so on, but Crusoe became successful in his mission. Similarly a novelist also was bound to give shape to a raw material and that was not easy enough as he had no evidence in front of him as Crusoe had not, because he was making a man his disciple for the first time, who is from a different origin, different land and above all from a different linguistic background. There was barrier in communication which was the most prominent barrier to Crusoe in making of Friday from a native cannibal. And again we see that there were many cannibals but Crusoe was able to meet with only one and it was possible because he rescued him. Crusoe could make his disciple many others but he did not. This also implies the process of taking up materials and selection of it and creation of plot in making of novel.

Defoe's Crusoe is privileged enough as the world was not explored entirely and so the risk of getting lost in any unknown part of the world was possible. It was easy enough to discover new land in the world, and Crusoe being lost in an island discovered it, he is the first man who told the world first about it. But Marlow in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness has no such opportunity. The deed is done. He can set sail but there is a map in his hand with which he can navigate. Here if we take Marlow as an author of novel the map available to him is obviously the work of the previous novelist that can guide him. Not only that as the map can give a shape to Marlow's journey the previous novels also can give shape to the work of the next generation novelist, it can give the new novelists some limitations too as Marlow's journey has some limitations. Marlow can join in a trading company and work, the company has already been created. Similarly the novel as a literary genre has also been created. During Crusoe's time it was not available. Now Marlow, if desired to set sail for new land can find new parts of land in the world but these parts belong to a great part which has already been explored, discovered and exposed to human civilization (European civilization). Marlow is bound to follow his previous explorers. He joined the company and sailed for his ever cherished 'blank spaces'. But his is not an adventure or exploration as Crusoe's was, as the 'blank spaces' has already been explored, observed, and colonized, an European company is already there, operating the colonial activities. Marlow has the same stubborn will that Crusoe had, he has taken the risk of being killed and thrown away

to a wretched condition that Crusoe had taken, yet his is a 'journey' not an 'adventure' which Crusoe's was. So, Marlow's journey implicitly depicts the aftermath of the exploration of the World. That the colonies have already been formed on those lands which were previously unknown to the world and the persons taking air to venture have to change their mindset. Crusoe, being a member of early generation had enough privilege to explore and to take an adventure, but Marlow as he is a member of newer generation is deprived of such privileges. So, his is a 'journey' a 'colonial journey'. He can mitigate his desire of exploring emotionally or mentally and not physically. After the Age of Exploration not only the map of the world has been changed and the geographical knowledge has been widened, but also some human activities have also been changed or altered entirely. The exploration has drawn a veil on the stage of exploration. It can be said that Crusoe is the representation of the previous generation of writers when novel did not emerged as a distinct literary genre, it was just emerging, and Marlow belongs to the next generation of author when novel has already become a popular genre and the limitations in creating it are also given. One generation makes a structure or frame that has some certain limitations and the next generation cannot but follow it though they are given the opportunity of adding something and reducing something too. Crusoe had to create his own while Marlow can only follow; he has enough evidence in front of him. He can also create new but that will also become a part of what has already been created. Marlow's joining in trading company as a servant signifies the next generation of practitioners of novel, they can practice their hands in this field easily and can earn money. They can add various features to it, they can ignore some minor features, can mould it in various manners but cannot ignore the basic structure created by the earlier novelist.

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