

**MAN'S REAL NEED: A READING OF DEFOE'S *ROBINSON CRUSOE*  
AND GOLDING'S *LORD OF THE FLIES***, Biava Kodjo KLOUTSE (Université  
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### **Abstract**

Like any other discipline, literature, beyond its entertainment dimension, works like a science alongside humanities in their process to discover man. This article aims at shedding light upon both Daniel Defoe and William Golding's fictional works in order to find out their understanding of people's real need. It raises the sociologist profile of both authors through an anthropological analysis of the novels under study. Definitely, this article holds that in the light of both plots, people's needs are closely connected to their environment.

**Keywords:** man, need, environment, ordinary situation, crisis.

### **Résumé**

À l'instar des autres disciplines, la littérature au-delà de sa fonction distractive, fonctionne comme une science aux côtés des sciences humaines dans leurs processus de découverte de l'homme. Cet article se penche sur les œuvres fictives de Daniel Defoe et de William Golding afin de découvrir leurs versions sur le besoin réel de l'homme. Il permet d'appréhender le penchant sociologique des deux auteurs grâce à une analyse anthropologique des romans. En définitive, cet article soutient qu'à la lumière des deux textes, les besoins de l'homme sont étroitement liés à son environnement.

**Mots clés :** L'homme, besoin, environnement, situation régulière, crise.

### **Introduction**

Man got born, grows and later dies. That is his lot. That is his nature. But before dying, man lives or survives life's challenges from his birth till his death. To enjoy life, man uses his wit to preserve life and keep it moving. His becoming is then connected to his challenges which are closely linked to his choices throughout time and space.

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is a narrative which depicts various steps of man's endeavours and his priorities in relation to his environment around the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, the protagonist of the novel. These challenges moved Crusoe away from society to isolation whence he experiences not only sorrow but also a multidimensional bloom to be later reintegrated. In *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding depicts the birth and the evolution of a society of children away from adults. Within this novel, Golding unveils the manifestation of children's aspirations and all the evil and the good that they can achieve in group.

Both novels exhibit man in two situations: Man at the birth of his society and man as part of a society.

The current study explores man's natural needs especially those related to his priorities in connection to time and space in the light of Defoe and Golding's narratives. To this end, the anthropological approach is explored for Z. Doda, (2005, p.2), holds that it,

(...) investigates the strategies for living that are learned and shared by people as members of human social groups; and also examines the characteristics that human beings share as members of one species (*homo sapiens*) and the diverse ways that people live in different environments.

In this perspective, the article is subdivided into two sections. The first section deals with the man and the birth of a new society while the second is about man within community.

## **1. Isolation and Survival on Island**

Chance is said to be at the origin of many beginnings. For starts are generally not planned. The theory of the big bang is an illustration of this thought. The case of Robinson Crusoe in the isolated Island is an illustration of a new start of life. As a survivor of the shipwreck in which he is involved, Crusoe has remained the unique man to survive the accident along with the pets that he discovers in the ship. Hence starts the genesis of his new model of society turned to be a society of survival. This has also been the case for the kids dropped on the unknown island in Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

Freedom is a natural longing of people whether children or grown-ups despite intrinsic fetters (J.J. Rousseau, 1762, p.7). Freedom of choice is then one of the most prized privilege by children who feel more imprisoned under parental care. For under parental care, they could not bloom and especially express their taste for risk. The taste for risk has sent Crusoe to sea much against his father's will. This choice of going to sea can be interpreted as a break between of parental bound. Through his flight to sea he expresses his right to stand by himself.

Defoe raises then in his novel the problematic of children's age of capacity or age of majority. The majority being a crucial step in people's growth. According to legal dispositions it confers liberty of choice and expression to children. It is a step that recognises the end of parental authoritative care and involvement in children's life (G. Wiederkehr, 2019, p.644). Crusoe seizes this opportunity offered by time to run away to sea far away from his father's home to enjoy his majority up to his imprisonment for nearly three decades on a desert island. This situation denotes the limits of parents' interventions in children's affairs.

On the desert island Crusoe faced the necessity to deploy all his wit and talent to survive by taming his environment. Shelter happens to be the first need of Crusoe as he survives the loss (D. Defoe, 2000, p.34). This illustrates how security

is crucial to man's existence. For life is not enjoyable when peace is not guaranteed. This explains why many governments spend a great deal of their budgets in equipping and training army forces. To emphasise this issue, the next precious elements he fetched from the ship was the Gun and gunpowder, which denotes his earnest quest for security in order to preserve his life (D. Defoe, 2000, p.47). Gun, in this sense not only an assurance of defence but also that of superiority over any danger as even the noise by itself destabilises (D. Defoe, 2000, p.46). Crusoe puts, in (D. Defoe, 2000, p.38) "My next care was for some ammunition and arms; there were two very good fowling-pieces in the great cabin, and two pistols; these I secured first, with some powder-horns, and a small bag of shot, and two old rusty swords." Life is such precious that men are ready to try the unbelievable to preserve it. In this logic, Crusoe declares his worries:

I had a dreadful deliverance; for I was wet, had no clothes to shift me, nor anything either to eat or drink to comfort me, neither did I see any prospect before me but that of perishing with hunger, or being devoured by wild beasts; and that which was particularly afflicting to me was, that I had no weapon either to hunt and kill any creature for my sustenance, or to defend myself against any other creature that might desire to kill me for theirs. (D. Defoe, 2000, p. 35).

Following the above quotation, Crusoe expresses the ephemeral happiness of survivors. Life is to be preserved otherwise surviving an accident is meaningless. And this is only possible when one can guarantee food, physical and mental securities. Whence it can be argued that beside survival, is the security in all its dimensions. Security is such essential to existence that throughout the novel, Crusoe has been endeavouring to achieve them by all means. For security is meant for survival. Whence Crusoe's preservation of the gun, and gun powder, his domesticating wild goats and the mastering of the seasons for vegetable production are all related to the sustenance of survival (D. Defoe, 2000, p.51 & 176).

After basic security is assured, Defoe makes his protagonist look for help (D. Defoe, 2000 p.144). This art of Defoe shows that years of isolation have not corrupted the mind of Crusoe to forget the need to live in society. Desiring a fellow human, stands as a reference to Scriptures upon Creation which founds the social attributes of man by making life enjoyable and productive when there is a fellow around (Genesis, 2: 15 & 18), "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it [...] The Lord God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Without a fellow, Crusoe were just limited to his dreams and pets and also to his journal records which constitute his unique means to discuss with a possible reader who may find his journal one day on the island. But with his meeting Friday, Crusoe has changed his status. He has become the master of Friday and the latter being his obliged (D. Defoe, 2000, p.113).

By offering Friday as a male servant to Crusoe, Defoe displays Crusoe's human aptitudes such as discussing and relating with a fellow. This art of Defoe

leaves to observe that his protagonist is a full man enjoying all the attributes of human (D. Defoe 2000, p.156). He has not then turned to become a savage in the like of the abandoned Victor of l'Aveyron<sup>1</sup> captured by hunters on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1800. Victor was found with no real human attitudes. He lost all human reflexes such as language to develop animalistic reflexes instead.

Meeting Friday has typically changed Crusoe's daily life. It delivers him from loneliness to feel peace of mind as he grows tolerant to share his life with a former cannibal. Crusoe changes his mind upon his getting back to England to face his lot on the island he starts living as if the island is his last destination. Whence it can be deduced that, having a fellow man beside, is an incentive to success. This principle is well understood in sport wherein stadiums are opened to supporters who by their songs and shouts boost the winning envy of players.

In this perspective, Defoe through the adventures of his protagonist is pointing out that the real matter is life and its preservation. Everything else is superfluous extra. As a result, people must endeavour to preserve their lives by being open-minded to learn, and make good choices for the preservation of their lives. Beauty, marriage and begetting children are second-class needs. For they are meaningless without life. As an illustration, Defoe made his protagonist enjoy these pleasures after his rescue (D. Defoe, 2000, p.234). In this vein, Defoe is promoting reasonable choices or choices that have to do with hardworking and resilience. Crusoe said upon his success that, "it cost me much labour" (D. Defoe, 2000, p. 45). Which is why, Defoe sets his protagonist in a deserted island amidst a virgin environment of savage flora and fauna offering him the basics to survive such a long period there. In this line can be construed Defoe's belief in an environment friendly to life wherein people live in symbiosis with nature like in the legendary Eden Garden (B.K.Kloutse, 2020, p.34). A primitive life that is based on the essential. He even classified his priorities as he declares:

I consulted several things in my situation, which I found would be proper for me. First, health and fresh water, I just now mentioned. Secondly, shelter from the heat of the sun. Thirdly, security from ravenous creatures, whether men or beasts. Fourthly, a view to the sea, that if God sent any ship in sight I might not lose any advantage for my deliverance, of which I was not willing to banish all my expectation yet. (D. Defoe, 2000, p. 44).

Crusoe's provisions indicate not only his awareness upon life as made of risks but also his hope and faith in the future. Consequently, Crusoe stands as a prototype of a visionary. In fact, he always leaves his belongings or properties into safe hands whenever he is about to take part in a voyage. The case of his leaving his properties into the safe hands of the widow of the Old Captain his benefactor

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<sup>1</sup>La mystérieuse histoire de Victor, « l'enfant sauvage » de l'Aveyron, [https://www.retronews.fr/societe/echo-de-presse/2018/11/15/lincredable-histoire-de-victor-lenfant-sauvage-de-laveyron,01/07/2021 at 10h05](https://www.retronews.fr/societe/echo-de-presse/2018/11/15/lincredable-histoire-de-victor-lenfant-sauvage-de-laveyron,01/07/2021%20at%2010h05)'.

and that of leaving his manor of Brazil into that of good people's hands with records denotes his notion of the value of management and that of testament. Through this practice, he is able to keep safe his properties and have a respondent if that property happens to be used unlawfully. But even if he happens to die, the wealth is bequeathed into the hands of his chosen heir (D. Defoe, 2000, p.12 &29).

His resilience has made him possess a big property and enough food to feed more than one mouth. Within the resilience of Crusoe can be read the output of the freedom of choice. In fact, Crusoe shows a great deal of responsibility in struggling for his survival as going to sea is his private choice. Blooming has followed the choice despite the hardship. As a consequence, Crusoe feels the need to have a fellow companion. This mentality stands as Defoe's will to teach the younger generation about the need for the principle of planning. An individual cannot make a community by himself. It takes at least two people to start a community. In *Robinson Crusoe*, the case is atypical as the island of Crusoe is uninhabited. The very community he has around is that of his parrot and dog (D. Defoe, 2000, p.113). But these pets though can react as fellow companions cannot take the stead of a human being. In this context Daniel Defoe, is revealing the necessity of man beside a fellow man. For no pet or companion could take efficiently the place of a human being despite its capacity.

Longing for a fellow, Crusoe declares in D. Defoe (2000:114), "(...) neither could I be said to want anything but society". He finally got a fellow as he saved a black indigenous from the hands of his executioners (D. Defoe, 2000, p.156). From this meeting starts a community of two people, with Crusoe as the Master and Friday as the Servant. The community is such balanced that Friday takes Crusoe as his benefactor to whom he is loyal while to Crusoe, Friday is a gift from heaven to break with his solitary life on his island.

With such approach to each of the parties, a symbiotic life is guaranteed. In the image of married couples, this meeting has been conducted by Crusoe to a great success. The meeting with Friday has been followed by many other meetings. But there is need to raise the issue that life became easier. Hence, Defoe tries to show companionship is a key element for life. People need to feel their belonging to a community within which they can easily interact. For isolation is just taken for a punishment as Crusoe thinks since his arrival on the Island to his encounter with Friday.

## **2. Community and Needs: Children's Taste in *Lord of the Flies***

W. Golding through the *Lord of the Flies*, raises awareness upon the corruption of mind amongst children. In setting his novel on an island far away from the care of the society and the hierarchy of their fatherland, Golding has been able to create a typical childish laboratory wherein can be observed children's imagination and innocence. (B.K. Kloutse, 2018, p.406).

The characters of Golding are kids. They are such immature and unfitted to be left alone without any care. He made them dropped by chance on an island. The plot then takes in innocent children in search of guidance on the island. They could just remember they were passengers in a plane and later got to a tube (W. Golding, 2009, p. 12&13). By putting only kids in the tube, Golding has been able to shed light upon the sense of responsibility of the pilot and the adult passengers in the plane who privileged the survival of the children to theirs as they left children get into the safety tube to save them from the accident.

Once on the island, children are scattered. Ralph stands as the first character mentioned in the novel. He is depicted as a bold boy, courageous enough to pity his situation. He is introduced to the reader walking by himself without any sign of sadness as if he is ready to face nature alone. W. Golding, (2009, p.11), puts, "The boy with fair hair lowered himself down the last few feet of rock and began to pick his way towards the lagoon." This depiction by the novelist highlights the innocence of Ralph before the seriousness of the situation. For as survivor of a tube crash, common sense expects him to wonder upon the lot of his fellow companions and upon the new land he is dropped in. but this seems not to be his priority. This innocence is even more perceptible as he met Piggy the fat boy. There, he starts joking.

But even when they turn their discussion upon the rest of the passengers of the plane, both boys seem to be less interested in their possible sad lot they may encounter. About the pilot, they just found a good explanation of his absence. An explanation that justifies their innocence and the indifference upon the danger surrounding them. Golding puts:

The fat boy thought for a moment.

"That pilot." [...]

"He must have flown off after he dropped us. He couldn't land here. Not in a plane with wheels."

"We were attacked!"

He 'll be back all right."

The fat boy shook his head.

"When we was coming down I looked through one of the windows. I saw the other part of the plane. There were flames coming out of it." [...]

What happened to it?" he asked. "Where's it got to now?"

"That storm dragged it out to sea. It wasn't half dangerous with all them tree trunks falling. There must have kids still in it."

He hesitated for a moment then spoke again.

"What is your name?" (W. Golding, 2009, p.12&13).

The above quotation exposes two different views. That of Piggy who seems to be concerned with the lot of others while Ralph seems less concerned. The position of Ralph finally dominates the rest of the discussion and matches that of the choir boys who join them later on. The innocence visible in the behaviour of the kids can be traced to their will to face nature without any assistance.

Apart from the innocence and the indifference which characterise kids there are jokes and games. Ralph is introduced as a boy with athletic body. He jumps and runs for pleasure and with the purpose to explore the new place he is dropped in as if he is familiar to the new land (W. Golding, 2009, p.14). This attitude of Ralph that makes him to overlook Piggy's worries and questions highlights his view of Piggy as a troublesome and a person of inferior calibre.

He could then run and jump without minding the impression or feeling of his fellow Piggy. Turning him to his laughing stock. (W. Golding, 2009, p.16). This attitude of Ralph seems to be proper to children especially those enjoying a good health. Jack and his fellow choir boys step in. In fact, Jack and his fellow choir boys step in the plot of Golding as courageous people with the same indifference upon the lot of their fellow companions of the plane. Their attitudes uncover a kind of egotism which seems to be general to them for "we need something independent to spark the pleasure" (S. Blackburn, 2016, p.148).

Liberty is really visible through the actions and reactions of the kids. In fact, the taste of joke and game has proved to be dear to the children. At the blowing of the shell, many come out from the trees half naked or totally naked which denotes that they have been handling life each at his side as if they just enjoy the life they are offered on the island (W. Golding, 2009, p.25). The way Jack addresses Piggy makes the children laugh at Piggy even the little ones surprisingly overlook a possible reprisal from the fat boy. This audacity of the kids to laugh at Piggy confirms not only their innocence but also their confidence upon the protection Jack can provide them against Piggy.

Aware of the merit he may get by bullying Piggy, Jack, the leader of choir boys keeps on capturing the attention of the children as he has been victimising Piggy to offer laughing sessions to his fellow kids. The happiness that is felt by the boys as they are victimising Piggy can be seen as a clear means to express their superiority over Piggy. Despite their inferiority, they have a lesser one. They seem to have been expressing their boldness as they all find themselves bolder or superior to the fat boy. This behaviour of the children can be taken for an illustration of their longing to be repositioned within their community before Piggy. As if none of them will like to be regarded as the smallest with regard to the age. Boldness should be priced instead of age. This is this longing to boldness that the ambitious Jack exploits to destabilise the democratic authority of the elected chief Ralph.

Jack Merridew seizes the occasion of giving pleasure to the kids to draw their attention as to rebel against the norms that they have just set by voting Ralph as their leader. In fact, the mission of Ralph is to assure a policy to gather boys and insure a rapid rescue (W. Golding, 2009, p.29). But this noble mission has swiftly been corrupted by Jack who proposes games to his fellow boys as to crumble the authority of Ralph (W. Golding, 2009, p.68). With Jack, children find a leader

which incarnates their puerile desires while Ralph is taken for the embodiment of the parental presence. They naturally join the tribe for entertainment and food.

The promise to play freely and to hunt pigs on the island makes Merridew become the natural leader of the island dispossessing thence Ralph from his authority. In such a perspective, it can be inferred that children have prized freedom given by Jack instead of the reason advocated by Ralph (W. Golding, 2009, p.216). Though freedom has turned them to become violent as to commit horrible crimes such as the assassination of their fellow companions namely Piggy and Simon. They just take these assassinations for a game overlooking the atrocity behind this actions. This situation of children and the subjectivity of mistake leaves to infer that mistake is linked to law and once law is absent offenses are also absent. Only the laws approved by Jack are valid. Since the game is approved by the leader Jack, there is no evil (W. Golding, 2009, p.229). This condition of appreciation of deeds raises that responsibility of political leaders upon morality. Despite the subjectivity of laws and principles all over the world, there is need to point some universal principles that cannot be deprived. Such as the right to live and the freedom of association that have been heavily compromised by the tribe of Jack on the island.

With Jack, children are blooming for they can express their pulses of 'men'. They enjoy their being hunters and the excitement with which they account their encounters with pigs, shows their happiness of great achievement (W. Golding, 2009, p.168). Consequently, With Jack they could affirm themselves. And this is natural for people who are more inclined to stay in places where they could bloom (S. Blackburn, 2016, p.119). For nobody likes oppression. For with Ralph, things following some principles which incarnate the society of grow ups. Within the society of Ralph, some children are requested to stay by the fire while others are free to hunt. This repartition of charges which is wise in fact, does not meet the taste of all the children. The children requested to stay by the fire in order to keep the smoke as to attract the attention of passing ships find this role as a punishment. They finally join the group of hunters (W. Golding, 2009, pp.58&83). For every child would like to try activities that are considered mannish for they would like to try themselves into the shoes of their absent fathers (J. Piaget, & B. Inhelder, 1978, p.98).

In their search for guidance, Ralph the first character introduced by Golding, tries by the advice of Piggy, the fat kid, to organise a society in expectation of a possible rescue (W. Golding, 2009, p.12). The sorrow of the boys lastbut a while as they can find fellow boys to play together with. The Freedom they are enjoying far away from the parental care has turned them to start enjoying the new life they are compelled to live in (W. Golding, 2009, p.14). Even Piggy, finds himself useful in being the Chief Advisor of Ralph the elected leader instead of being the small child under the care of his aunty. He is the one that advises, the call for meeting and the election as the means a choosing their leader. He has been



very crucial in the implementation of the rescue policy. A role which opposes him to Jack's rebelled community. (W. Golding, 2009, p.22). On the island, children have faced responsibility and the necessity of survival within adversity.

In this novel by Golding, it appears that the real quest for the children on the island is not rescue. For they have left the leader that incarnates rescue policy to join the one that proposes to forget home and entertain themselves. As if they do not mind getting back home. Whence it can be deduced that children on the island enjoy their freedom as they enjoy their new life of hunters. Which is the celebration of their freedom. Within this novel there are many facets of freedom prized by the kids. Freedom of expression can be traced back to the election of Ralph to the laughing sessions within which children are involved without any fear to be rebuked. The freedom of association has shown up in their fellowship of Jack and Piggy's fidelity to Ralph. One may see many other forms of the manifestation of freedom promoted by many conventions and constitutions all over generations within Golding's novel (W. Laqueur & B. Rubin, 1989).

## **Conclusion**

Through an anthropological reading it has been found that man is whatever his age is inclined to more freedom and self-affirmation. Whether this quest can lead to danger, they are ready to bear such a danger once it fits their need for freedom. This is the case in *Robinson Crusoe* who left home for adventure much against his parents and proved to become a model of self-made man. For where there no freedom, rebellion can be said to be at hand. This is applied to families and communities. In consequence, education should mind the freedom tendencies of man.

The same observation is made in *Lord of the Flies* wherein resilience has much to do with their rebellion against Ralph who stands as the incarnation of the parental control to their joining Jack. With Jack they experience a new life of hunters coupled to game that made them bloom despite their mistakes and excessive violence against their fellows. To avoid the atrocities that children can be involved in, their enjoyment of freedom, the society must offer them freedom a great deal of education based of the respect of the other. For what lacks in Jack community is the respect of the group of Ralph. For the respect of the other insures peace and tranquillity. S. Blackburn, (2016, p.148), puts that, " a society of egoists do worse for themselves than a society of altruists).

In nutshell, liberty is core to people's existence, for through liberty they are able to work their resilience to face life challenges which train them to maturity. Every community which is longing to development should not undermine the need of freedom. For every society in which freedom is restrained is likely to face rebellion sooner or later. For beyond riches is freedom.

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