

Crusoe the King and the Political Evolution of His Island

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AFTER ROBINSON CRUSOE has succeeded in conquering his environment and in contenting himself with his solitude, he declares himself "King" of his island, ruling, at first, over his parrot, goats, dog, and cat. He tells the reader, "I was Lord of the whole Manor; or if I pleas'd, I might call my self King, or Emperor over the whole Country which I had Possession of. There were no Rivals."¹ That Defoe was half-serious in suggesting Crusoe's right to call himself King of the island, there can be no doubt. Coleridge wondered whether Crusoe's claim was valid, but according to Grotius, islands in the sea belonged to the first inhabitant.² "I was King and Lord of all this Country indefeasibly," Crusoe reminds us, "and had a Right of Possession; and if I could convey it, I might have it in Inheritance, as compleatly as any Lord of a Mannor in England" (I, 114). Nor is there any doubt about the kind of monarch he is, for in the passage describing his "Subjects," he reveals his absolute power: "I had the Lives of all my Subjects at my absolute Command. I could hang, draw, give Liberty, and take it away, and no Rebels among all my Subjects" (I, 171).

Concerning this speech, Rousseau remarked that Crusoe's despotic powers were indeed unlimited, but only so long as his subjects included no human beings.³ In spite of this witty observation, Defoe seems to suggest that Crusoe's absolute control over the inhabitants of his island continues even after the arrival of men. This presents a problem, for why should Defoe, an ardent opponent of tyranny, have made his hero into a despot?⁴ In order to understand Defoe's purpose, we must re-

¹*The Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, Shakespeare Head ed. (Oxford, 1927), I, 148. Subsequent citations from this work and *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* enclosed within parentheses in my text will refer to this edition.

²See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. Thomas Raysor (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), p. 294; and Hugo Grotius, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, trans. Francis Kelsey (Oxford, 1925), II, 301. For Defoe's "great Veneration" for Grotius, see *A Speech without Doors* (London, 1710), p. 6.

³Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. G. D. H. Cole, Everyman Library ed. (London, 1955), p. 5.

⁴Throughout his life Defoe defended the "Revolution Principles" of 1688 and the right of the people to overthrow a bad ruler. See, for example, *Jure Divino* (London, 1706), which is entirely devoted to a discussion of the history and psychology of tyrants.

gard the *Surprising Adventures* and the *Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* as a single work concerned with the political evolution of society in the state of nature and keep in mind Defoe's love of paradox and his changing plan. Even Crusoe is not unaware of the humor inherent in his pretensions to being the "Emperor" of a small Caribbean island. And as Defoe gradually transformed his work into an exposition of some of his favorite political theories, he changed Crusoe's pretensions from those of an absolute to those of a patriarchal monarch, removed him from the island, and showed how society evolved from anarchy to what he regarded as the ideal government—a more or less democratic state with most of the power in the hands of the able and diligent.

Defoe often advanced the argument that whoever owned the property of a nation was the actual ruler. He developed this idea by suggesting that foreigners might conquer England merely by buying up all the land, a theory which seemed absurd even to Walter Wilson, Defoe's most idolatrous biographer.⁵ According to this dictum, Crusoe would have the same power as the Grand Seignior of the Turks whose ownership of the land gave him entire control over the lives and property of his people. But Crusoe establishes his absolutism on different grounds. "My People," he comments, "were perfectly subjected: I was absolute Lord and Lawgiver; they all owed their Lives to me, and were ready to lay down their Lives, *if there had been Occasion of it*, for me" (II, 30). His claim to power is based on the right of conquest; every person who comes to the island is forced to swear complete obedience to his commands.

Crusoe's conquest of Friday follows the pattern of natural law which Grotius set forth in *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*.⁶ Crusoe may be regarded as a monarch who is in a state of war with all those who threaten his kingdom. Friday is a prisoner of an enemy tribe who have a natural right to kill him, but Friday may legitimately attempt to preserve his life by escaping. Crusoe's slaughter of the cannibals pursuing Friday follows the natural laws of self-defense, and by saving the life of Friday, who is also a cannibal and hence his enemy, Crusoe gains absolute

⁵*The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England, Examined and Asserted* (London, 1702 [1701]), pp. 18-20; and Walter Wilson, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel Defoe* (London, 1830), I, 427. See also Defoe, *A Fourth Essay at Removing National Prejudices* [Edinburgh], 1706), p. 29.

⁶II, 169-185, 641-657.

dominion over him. At all times Crusoe has the right to kill Friday; instead he accepts a formal oath of complete obedience:

When he espy'd me, he came running to me, laying himself down again upon the Ground, with all the possible Signs of an humble thankful Disposition, making a many antick Gestures to show it; at last he lays his Head flat upon the Ground, close to my Foot, and sets my other Foot upon his Head, as he had done before; and after this, made all the Signs to me of Subjection, Servitude, and Submission imaginable, to let me know, how he would serve me as long as he liv'd.

(I, 239)

Friday's father and the Spanish captain are also saved from the cannibals, and Crusoe accepts them as "Subjects" who, like Friday, "*would die*" in his defense.

But Crusoe is less certain of the loyalty of the sixteen Spaniards and Portuguese whom he wants to bring over to his island. He tells the Spanish captain that since "Gratitude was no inherent Virtue in the Nature of Man; nor did Men always square their Dealings by the Obligations they had receiv'd, so much as they did by the Advantages they expected" (II, 34), he is afraid that they might turn him over to the Inquisition if they reached Spanish territory. The Spanish captain assures the suspicious Crusoe that his fears are unjustified and promises that

. . . he would make Conditions with them upon their solemn Oath, That they should be absolutely under my Leading, as their Commander and Captain; and that they should swear upon the Holy Sacraments and the Gospel, to be true to me, and to go to such Christian Country, as that I should agree to, and no other; and to be directed wholly and absolutely by my Orders, 'till they were landed safely in such Country, as I intended; and that he would bring a Contract from them under their Hands for that Purpose.

(II. 35)

This contract is clearly different from the one which the

Spanish captain swears he will follow: "Then he told me, he would first swear to me himself, That he would never stir from me as long as he liv'd, 'till I gave him Orders; and that he would take my Side to the last Drop of his Blood, if there should happen the least Breach of Faith among his Countrymen" (II, 35). For Hobbes, gratitude was a law of nature which man ought to follow, but it did not always bind man "*in foro externo*."⁷ Crusoe realizes this, and like a suspicious despot, he fears the rebellion of any of his subjects who have not sworn an oath of complete obedience.

Not satisfied with an oral oath, which Defoe regarded as entirely obligatory under the laws of nature, Crusoe insists on a written contract.⁸ He tells the captain ". . . Not to bring any Man with him, who would not first swear . . . That he would no way injure, fight with, or attack the Person he should find in the Island, who was so kind as to send for them in order to their Deliverance; but that they would stand by and defend him against all such Attempts, and where-ever they went, would be entirely under and subject to his Commands; and that this should be put in Writing, and signed with their Hands" (II, 38). Defoe humorously has Crusoe admit that his insistence on a written contract might be difficult without pen, ink, or paper, but these technicalities do not deter his single-minded hero.

Crusoe even asks for complete obedience from the Englishmen who are about to be marooned by their mutinous crew. The English captain makes an oral contract, swearing to "be wholly Directed and Commanded" by Crusoe and promising that "he would live and Dye" (II, 47) at Crusoe's orders. One might expect a generous disclaimer from Crusoe, for this is the first Englishman he has seen for twenty-eight years. Instead he insists on passage to England and absolute obedience from them while they are on his island: "That while you stay on this Island with me, you will not pretend to any Authority here; and if I put Arms into your Hands, you will upon all Occasions give them up to me, and do no Prejudice to me or mine, upon this Island, and in the mean time be govern'd by my Orders" (II, 47). There seems to be no question that Crusoe regards

⁷*Leviathan*, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge, Eng., 1935), p. 108. For Defoe's knowledge of Hobbes, see *The Storm* (London, 1704), p. 4.

⁸See *The Wickedness of a Disregard to Oaths* (London, 1723), pp. 8-14, 26-37. For Defoe's argument that a literal contract exists see *The Protestant Jesuit Unmask'd* (London, 1704), p. 29.

himself as a legally constituted monarch, jealous of his power and unwilling to allow anyone on the island who does not owe absolute obedience to him. Defoe seems to be saying that this kind of control over the lives of his subjects is the only kind of absolutism possible. It is significant that Crusoe has little influence upon the further development of the island, for his attitude towards the inhabitants is closer to that of a Louis XIV than to the patriarchal monarch he thinks he is.

Instead Defoe decided to depict the struggle of a society from the anarchy of the state of nature to an acceptance of law and limitations on freedom. With the coming of the Spaniards to the island there is merely a loose grouping of individuals: the three English mutineers led by Atkins, who is slothful but capable when he wishes to exert himself; the two diligent English sailors, who in spite of their efforts are not very fortunate; and the inhabitants of Crusoe's castle, including the Spanish captain, his sixteen followers, and Friday's father. They live in a state of nature without laws or any single authority; they have sufficient food, and there is no reason why they should not live together peacefully. But Atkins and his companions are ruled by their passions and refuse to live by the laws of nature and their touchstone: "*Do not that to another, which thou wouldst not have done to thy self.*"⁹

By their acts of violence against the other inhabitants of the island, they force the rest of the community to resort to the first law of nature, self-defense. The leader of the Spaniards, later made the Governor of Crusoe's colony, describes how it was necessary to create laws for their protection. "I hope you will not be displeas'd," he remarks to Crusoe, "when I shall tell you how forc'd by Necessity we were oblig'd, for our own Preservation, to disarm them" (II, 148). The anarchy of the state of nature is always insufficient for constraining human evil. Will Atkins and his friends are like Hobbes's "needy men and hardy, not contented with their present condition."¹⁰ The drive for power and the urgings of man's mischievous soul are too much for human nature where there are no laws to restrain the passions.

After the Spanish captain and his men arrive on the island, Atkins claims that he and his companions own the island and ought to be obeyed as absolute monarchs. This is the same

⁹*Leviathan*, p. 108. Cf. Defoe's *The Wickedness of a Disregard to Oaths*, p. 32.

¹⁰*Leviathan*, p. 63.

claim which Crusoe makes to his island, but the Spanish captain and the two diligent Englishmen know that the island belongs to Crusoe and reject Atkins's assertion of political and economic authority over them. The villains then decide to destroy the houses and farms of the two "Honest" Englishmen, threatening the laws of property which exist in the state of nature, even though there is yet no legally constituted authority to protect possessions. The two wronged men appeal to the castle for help, and by force of numbers, they convince Atkins and his friends that they must make reparations for their crime. Although Atkins and his companions have violated the laws of nature which urge men to seek peace and to live justly, the Spanish captain, following these natural laws, refuses to pursue revenge and merely asks that they restore what they have destroyed. The punishment is significantly mild, for in the state of nature capital punishment may be inflicted only in the immediate defense of one's life.¹¹

Such violations of property indicated, according to Locke, a ". . . varying from the right rule of reason, whereby a man so far becomes degenerate, and declares himself to quit the principles of human nature and to be a noxious creature."¹² Although Defoe clearly distinguished between a crime against property and a crime against human life, it is obvious from Atkins's behavior that the social disorder of the state of nature is insufficient to cope with human evil. The laws of reason which direct man to seek happiness soon lead him to seek security and peace.¹³

After a while, the crimes of Atkins and his men threaten the very lives of the rest of the colony. In a general meeting of the entire society, the Spanish captain tells the rebellious Englishmen that ". . . if they had been of his own Country, he would have hang'd them; for all Laws and all Governours were to preserve Society; and those who were dangerous to the Society, ought to be expell'd out of it" (II, 176). When it is discovered that Atkins planned to murder all the Spaniards while they slept, Atkins is banished from the castle. By forcing the three rebels to build their own homes and farm their own lands,

¹¹See Carracioli's speech in Defoe's *General History of the Pyrates* (London, 1724-1728), II, 98.

¹²*Two Treatises of Civil Government*, Everyman Library ed. (London, 1955), p. 121.

¹³See *Jure Divino*, Bk. II, p. 4.

the captain becomes the temporary magistrate and lawgiver of the island, removing the society from the total anarchy of the state of nature. In *Jure Divino*, Defoe wrote:

Society to Regulation tends,
 As naturally as Means pursue their Ends;
 The Wit of Man could never yet invent,
 A Way of Life without a Government;
 Subordination is the Soul of Law,
 And Rules of Life to Rules of Living will draw;
 What need had Power to prescribe the Man,
 Let him go on without it if he can.¹⁴

The recalcitrants receive their banishment with a strange docility. Once law is established, it is usually obeyed. Swearing to obey the rules of the society, the English never again disturb the peace of the community.

The final solidification of the colony comes through "Necessity" and the common need to preserve their lives as an army of cannibals descends upon the island to threaten the complete destruction of the community. Now the energies of Atkins and his two companions are directed towards a righteous war for self-defense. Defoe argued in *Jure Divino* that government was created from the necessity of a community to preserve its existence:

Necessity Confederate Heads Directs,
 And Power United, Power Expos'd Protects;
 The Nature of the Thing directs *the Mode*,
 And Government was born in *Publick Good*:
Safety with *Right* and *Property* combines,
 And thus *Necessity* with Nature *joins*.¹⁵

The conflict with the cannibals, therefore, strengthens what internal crime had already made necessary, and the inhabitants of Crusoe's island become members of a society with clearly defined laws of property and restraints on individual freedom.

There is a startling contrast between the brutality of the battle with the savages and Crusoe's attitude towards the cannibals. Indeed Crusoe's tolerance of primitive behavior increases

¹⁴*Jure Divino*, Bk. II, p. 10.

¹⁵*Jure Divino*, Bk. II, p. 4.

with age. In the *Farther Adventures*, he enrages the crew of his nephew's ship by refusing to lend his approval to the "Massacre of Madagascar," his name for the crew's slaughter of an entire village in Madagascar. And when forced to kill some natives of Cochin-China in self-defense, Crusoe remarks that he "thought it was a sad Life, which we must be always oblig'd to be killing our Fellow-Creatures to preserve . . ." (III, 129). Crusoe's attitude reflects a Christian approach to the problem of self-defense and the laws of nature. He never denies a right of self-defense, but he seems to regret the fact that man cannot avoid his obligation to preserve his life.¹⁶

The settlers on Crusoe's island reveal none of this reluctance. Acting in the name of "Necessity," they slaughter their prisoners and after the battle, hunt down the helpless survivors. Although the use of necessity as a justification for the colonists's actions in this conflict is kept within the rules of natural law in the conduct of warfare as laid down by Grotius, there is a clear reminder of Machiavelli's doctrine that men never do anything important "unless necessity drives them to it."¹⁷ Defoe once confessed that necessity was "the worst plea in the World, and generally made use of the worst Things," yet he frequently resorted to the "tyrant's plea," as Milton called it, to justify political and economic expedience.¹⁸ The behavior of the colonists may be closer to *raison d'état* than natural law, but unlike Crusoe, they have been attacked by the cannibals and are too involved in their situation to speculate on the moral propriety of their actions.

After the skirmish with the cannibals, the colony adds thirty-seven of the remaining savages to their number, and many of them eventually become slaves and servants to the whites. In his study of the expansion of the colony through war and through the fertility of the five Englishmen who take native wives, Defoe was obviously hinting at the same idea which Neville had exploited in his *Isle of Pines* and its sequel—the image of purity and vigor in a new land uncorrupted by the luxury of Europe. But unlike George Pine, Crusoe does not remain on the island to rule. He tells the reader:

¹⁶For a more general discussion of this problem in Defoe's writings see my article "Necessity and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe," *PQ*, XL (1961).

¹⁷Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses*, trans. Leslie Walker (London, 1950), I, 217. See *A Collection of Miscellany Letters Selected out of Mist's Weekly Journal* (London, 1722-1727), III, 185, for Defoe's knowledge of the "wise MACHIAVEL" and his doctrine of necessity.

¹⁸*An Appeal to Honour and Justice*, in *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, Shakespeare Head ed. (Oxford, 1927), p. 225.

I pleased my self with being the Patron of those People I placed there, and doing for them, in a kind of haughty majestick Way, like an old Patriarchal Monarch; providing for them, as if I had been Father of the whole Family, as well as of the Plantation: But I . . . left it as I found it, belonging to no Man; and the People under no Discipline or Government but my own; who, tho' I had Influence over them as Father and Benefactor, had no Authority or Power, to Act or Command one way or other, farther than voluntary Consent mov'd them to comply.

(III, 80)

Although Crusoe states that his colony has no government at all except a vague allegiance to him, it is actually a democracy. He compares himself to a "Patriarchal Monarch," but except for sending a few supplies and some additional colonists, Crusoe does little to help the inhabitants of his island. Defoe once listed "*CAPACITY, INTEGRITY, COURAGE, and APPLICATION*" as the qualities of a good political leader.¹⁹ Although Crusoe is certainly a capable man, his courage and integrity are questionable, and he certainly refuses to apply himself to the task of governing, preferring, instead, to travel around the world on a "*Wild Goose Chase*" (II, 81). In an attack upon the proprietary governors of the Carolinas, Defoe complained that ". . . they never learnt to be kings; . . . they have not taken the Hint of *Pater Patriae*, they don't know that a King must be the Father of his People; and that there is a sort of Patriarchal Affection, as well as Obligation, between a King on the Throne, and the People he Governs. . . ."²⁰ Like the proprietors of Carolina, Crusoe bears little resemblance to the patriarchal ruler, since he has little affection for his people and no realization of the obligations which a monarch must assume.

Crusoe is correct in stating that he left the island as he found it but seems unaware that it is actually a democratic state just barely removed from the state of nature. And this seems to have been Defoe's concept of the ideal government. In spite of some

¹⁹*Rogues on Both Sides* (London, 1711), p. 30.

²⁰*Party-Tyranny*, in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, ed. Alexander Salley (New York, 1911), p. 235. Although he wrote this pamphlet in 1705, Defoe's ideas on the government of the Carolinas were still vivid at the time he was writing the three parts of *Robinson Crusoe*. See, for example, Defoe's journal *The Commentator* (April 11, 1720).

statements concerning a hero-king to whom all powers might be surrendered, Defoe's utopias always approach a type of democracy which borders on anarchy.²¹ His attitude towards revolution was more radical than Locke's, and he had none of the conventional terror of mobs which appears in other Augustan writers.²² Once he even defended the actions of some rioters, and in his *Hymn to the Mob*, which purports to be an attack on mob rule, he wrote:

Nor is thy Judgment often wrong,
Thou seldom are mistaken, never long;
However wrong in Means thou May'st appear,
Thou gener'ly art in thy Designs sincere.²³

Defoe regarded the "Noun of Multitude" as the "Original Power" of government. In describing the democratic institutions of the natives of Madagascar, he suggested that democracy was the purest and most natural form of government: ". . . in the State of Nature, and the Beginning of Mens joining in Societies, this was the Form of Government; and with due Reverence to the Learned, I think, we need not turn over many Volumes to find the Original of *British Parliaments*; for they are earlier than all their Histories, or even Letters themselves; and as to their Power, it is founded on the strongest Basis, REASON and NATURE."²⁴ But the democracy of these natives is not merely a savage form of government. Defoe's hero, Captain Misson, the captain of the pirate ship, *Victoire*, and ruler of the utopian

²¹See especially the state of Libertalia (or Libertatia) in *A General History of the Pyrates*, II, 99-101; and Defoe's remarks on the possibility of a pirate state in *A Collection of Miscellany Letters*, IV, 196. See also *Madagascar: or, Robert Drury's Journal* (London, 1729), pp. xiii-xv, 155. For Defoe's willingness to give all political power to an ideal monarch (if to be found), see *The Protestant Jesuit Unmask'd*, p. 16; and *A Farther Argument Against Ennobling Foreigners* (London, 1717), p. 28.

²²See his letter to Harley in which he argues that "Generally Speaking the Common People have been Allways in the Right" (*The Letters of Daniel Defoe*, ed. George Healy [Oxford, 1955], p. 33; and *Reasons for a War* [London, 1729], p. 13).

²³(London, 1715), p. 11.

²⁴*Madagascar*, p. 155. Defoe believed that the origins of government lay in what he called "the nature of man": "Government is an Appendix of Nature, one of the first rational Dictates to Man from his Understanding; 'tis form'd in the Soul, and therefore of Divine Original; he would cease to be rational when he ceased to live regularly; and if twenty Men born in the dark, and that had never known Men or things, were set on Shore in an Island, where they had no body to imitate, and nothing to do but to live; the first thing they would apply to by the Light of Nature after Food, would be to settle Government upon them" (*Review*, ed. Arthur W. Secord [New York, 1938], III, 431a).

colony, Libertalia, refuses to use his powers of command, depending instead upon the will of the majority among his followers. Even after a more stable government is established at Libertalia, the form is entirely democratic. Misson is elected for a three-year term as "Conservator" and rules with the assistance of a parliament.²⁵

Although Defoe apparently thought that democracy was the ideal form of government, he may have regarded it as impracticable. Misson's colony is destroyed through its very basic belief in human equality, while the inhabitants of Crusoe's island have already begun to depart from economic equality. In any society, natural talents and diligence separate the superior man from the slothful—the master from the servant. Crusoe's colony languishes because Crusoe fails to help the inhabitants, but it becomes clear that had the community survived, it would eventually have been like any other West-Indian settlement. Observing the effects of the labor of the two industrious Englishmen in contrast to the farms of Atkins and his friend, Crusoe reads the moral: "The Diligent liv'd well and comfortably, and the Slothful liv'd hard and beggarly; and so I believe, generally speaking, it is all over the World" (II, 193).

Crusoe's colony fails when left to its own resources, but this does not mean that Crusoe could have ruled the island as an absolute monarch had he remained. Defoe once remarked that the power of the patriarch depended upon kindness, wisdom, and authority of age. Where the father was cruel the son could not be expected to obey.²⁶ Crusoe's original claim to power, the right of conquest, possession, and a contract of absolute obedience, would hardly have stood the test of time. When he gives away his land upon vague and generous terms of rental, he is merely ratifying the colonists' right to keep what they have already possessed through their labor. Thus Crusoe's concept of himself as a monarch, whether absolute or patriarchal, is a delusion; his surrender of command over the inhabitants of the island is little more than a histrionic gesture.

Crusoe's island therefore reveals the development of society.,

²⁵A *General History of the Pyrates*, II, 14, 99-101.

²⁶*Jure Divino*, Bk. II, p. 2. Defoe argued that a patriarchal monarchy could no longer exist and, indeed, had not existed in the West for thousands of years and that no contract between a monarch and his people could be valid if it forced the subject "to swear to pay a larger Obedience to Princes than the Laws of Nature have furnish'd the Man to perform." See *The Compleat English Gentleman*, ed. Karl Bülbring (London, 1890), p. 147; and *Jure Divino*, Bk. IV, p. 24.

but Defoe was unable to present this idea without removing his hero from the scene. Crusoe was useful for presenting the solitary man in the state of nature, but he was an obstacle in the way of Defoe's attempt to present his theories on the political evolution of society. For Defoe had a specific example in mind—the early history of Bermuda.²⁷

The first person to land on Bermuda, Henry May, resembles Crusoe only to the extent that he rescued his carpenter's tools from his ship and used his ingenuity to construct another vessel by which he escaped. But the arrival of Somers and his men resulted in the same kind of disputes which plagued the island after Crusoe's departure. One of the crew, Stephen Hopkins, contended that all governmental authority had been dissolved by the wreck and that it was “. . . no breach of honesty, conscience, nor Religion to decline from the obedience of the Governour, or refuse to goe further, led by his authority (except it so pleased themselves) since the authority ceased when the wracke was committed, and with it, they were all freed from the government of any man.”²⁸ After frequent quarrels three men were left on the island in the manner of Atkins and his two companions. In almost every account these three were described as kings or rulers of the island. John Oldmixon remarked that they “were sole Lords of the Country, but like Kings of the World they soon fell out among themselves.”²⁹

In retelling this story in his *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis*, Defoe used the quarrels of these “Lords of the Island” as an

²⁷Defoe refers to the history of Bermuda in *Jure Divino*, Bk. VII, p. 12; in *A General History of Trade*, No. 1 (July 1713), p. 40; and in *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis* (London, 1728), pp. 307-309. The latter is a lengthy retelling of the story to illustrate the “Nature of Man.” It has often been suggested that certain similarities exist between Shakespeare's *Tempest* and *Robinson Crusoe*, but if there is any doubt that Defoe knew the play in its original form, there can be no question that he was thoroughly familiar with Shakespeare's sources as well as numerous accounts of the history of Bermuda. See John Robert Moore, “*The Tempest and Robinson Crusoe*,” *RES*, XXI (1945), 52-56; and Moore, “The Canon of Defoe's Writings,” *Library*, XI (1956), 167-169.

²⁸Samuel Purchas, *Hackluytus Posthumus* (Glasgow, 1907), XIX, 30.

²⁹*The British Empire in America* (London, 1741), II, 442. Defoe draws the same moral: “In the Discovery of *Burmooodas*, it was very remarkable, that there were but Three Men left upon the Island, they were Masters of the Place, it was then all their own, but these Three Kings fell out about Property, and could never decide the Difference: Two of them quarell'd to that Degree, that they often fought, and had not the Third secured their Swords, they had certainly murder'd one another; afterwards, the third Man dying, they found a large Piece of Ambergreece, enough to have enrich'd them both for this World, could they ha' been true to one another; but they quarell'd so violently, that when the Ships return'd from *England*, they betray'd one another, and so lost the Prize to both. This is an eminent Instance of the Power of Ambition and

example of "the contentious quarrelsome Nature of Man, and how impossible it is for him to agree with his fellow Creatures, if the least View of Profit or Glory comes in the way."³⁰ Although there are numerous parallel incidents, this moral constitutes Defoe's primary indebtedness to the history of Bermuda for the *Farther Adventures*.³¹ The extent of Defoe's borrowings, however, is less significant than the enormous changes he made. Here, as with the story of Selkirk in the *Life and Surprising Adventures*, Defoe was mainly concerned with the central concept. He was not trying to fictionalize the story of Bermuda's first colonists, but to show how laws arose in the state of nature both because and in spite of the "Nature of Man" and how the existence of property and certain restraints upon freedom preceded the creation of a strongly centralized state.

Rousseau once wrote that "when we leave the state of nature we compel others to do the same; no one can remain in a state of nature in spite of his fellow-creatures."³² This remark concerns Emile, whom Rousseau described as a natural man living in civilization, but it also suggests the political lesson of Crusoe's island. Crusoe tries to usurp the power of the patriarchal monarch who ruled man's earliest societies in the state of nature, but in no sense does he fit the role he has assumed. E. M. W. Tillyard has argued that Crusoe's assumption of kingship is a sign of his growth, but the means he uses to attain power are almost Machiavellian³³ and suggest that twenty-eight years of solitude have not made any permanent changes in the shrewd Brazilian plantation owner. After Crusoe and Friday leave the island, the colonists live in a political state of nature, until the Spanish captain forces everyone to recognize the sanctity of property and restrictions on individual freedom; until, in other words, the establishment of law removes the society from the state of nature. Although the islanders were probably happy enough to be living without the restrictions of government, it

Pride in the Nature of Man, from whence all Tyranny proceeds" (*Jure Divino*, Bk. VII, p. 12).

³⁰*Atlas Maritimus*, p. 308.

³¹Notice for example how much Atkins and his gang resemble Carter, Chard, and Waters. There is also a concern with hunger and isolation, discovering treasure, shipwrecks, and even some plants which spring up miraculously. See John Smith, *The General Historie of the Bermudas, Works*, ed. Edward Arber (Birmingham, 1884), pp. 638-640, 645, 652, 656; and *The Historie of the Bermudaes*, ed. J. Henry Lefroy (London, 1882), pp. 41, 63-68.

³²*Emile*, trans. Barbara Foxley, Everyman Library ed. (London, 1911), p. 156.

³³*The Epic Strain in the English Novel* (London, 1958), pp. 40-41.

is obvious that this is not the best of human conditions. Without good government mankind cannot long live comfortably, securely or happily.

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