

**The Functional Forms of Time in Classic English Narrative:
Robinson Crusoe as a Model**

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ملخص البحث: لا تعني هذه الورقة البحثية بالمفهوم الفلسفي التقليدي للزمن كوسيلة للترتيب والعرض المنطقي، بل تعني أكثر بفحص الأنماط الزمنية في الرواية الانجليزية الكلاسيكية كأحد تجسّدات الفهم النيوتوني للزمن كنمط خطي بحت. هكذا ستحاول هذه الورقة البحثية تقديم قراءة متواضعة للأنماط الزمنية الشائعة في الرواية الانجليزية بشكل عام وفي رواية روبنسون كروسو بشكل خاص كأحد أشهر نماذج الرواية الانجليزية التقليدية. كأحد أشهر الروايات الانجليزية التقليدية في القرن الثامن عشر الميلادي تمثل رواية روبنسون كروسو نموذجًا ممتازًا لما تسميه هذه الورقة البحثية بالبناء التقليدي للزمن حيث لا تساؤل بشأن التسلسل المنطقي أو الفهم السببي للأحداث، وبناءً عليه ستحاول هذه الورقة قراءة تلك الأنماط في إطار أربعة أشكال افتراضية للزمن كالتالي:

١- الوقت كمؤشر للزمن

٢- الوقت كمحدد أساسي لإطار واتجاه الحكي

٣- الزمن كنقطة ارتباط مع الواقع ووسيلة للنجاة

٤- الوقت كمحدد لايقاع ومدة الاحداث

سيتم فحص هذه الاشكال الزمنية في رواية روبنسون كروسو كما سيتم عرض بعد الاشكال التوضيحية فيمحاولة لشرح تلك المفاهيم الادبيه-الفيزيائية في ضوء كل من البناء التقليدي للرواية الانجليزية والمفهوم النيوتوني للزمن كوحدة كمية قابلة للقياس.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرواية الانجليزية التقليدية، رواية القرن الثامن عشر الميلادي، الاشكال الزمنية، مؤشر الزمن، الحكي الافتراضي، تطور الاحداث داخل الرواية، الأزمة.

1- Abstract:

This paper is not concerned with studying conventional sequencing of time as a philosophy of coherent narration. It attempts

to investigate narrative temporality in classic English literature as one manifestation of the Newtonian perception of time viewed as an infinite linearity. As such, the traditional temporal patterns followed in Classic narrative, in general, and in *Robinson Crusoe*, in particular are going to be the main focus of this endeavor. As one of the most significant 18th-century narratives, *Robinson Crusoe* seems to offer a radical exemplar of classic time-architecture where traditional concepts of what is sequential in tense is unquestioned. In this sense, functional forms of time fall into four main categories as follows: These are :

1. Time as a Tense Reference
2. Time as a Specifier of the Frame and the Direction of Narration
3. Time as a link to reality/ a means of survival
4. Time as the Pace and the Duration of the Actions

These forms are examined in this article in their different assimilations in the narrative structure of *Robinson Crusoe* as a selected classical model of conventional narrative conceptualization of time in the narrative. Diagrams and illustrations will be utilized to portray these distinct functional forms as at work in the narrative performance. This will help answer the main question posed by this article about the means with which classical narratives configure and practice time architecture as the backbone of their structural sequencing.

Key Words: Classic Narrative, 18th Century Narrative, Temporal Patterns, Tense Reference, Hypothetical Narration, Narrative Development, Time Crisis

1- Introduction: The Story of Time

Generally identified as “a legend that forever changed the world” (Christianson xi), Newton’s laws of motion dominated the human perception of the universe for more than two centuries. Born on December 24, 1642 (Christianson 3), Graduating

from Cambridge in 1661, and getting his master's in 1668, (Christianson 35) Newton discovered a phenomenon that would, eternally, change the face of humanity; Gravity. Later, in his *The Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687), Newton set three laws of motion that would govern the physical realm for the following three centuries. This book to physics, Hawking argues, is what “The Origin of Species” is to Biology (1). Newton’s laws of motion were most controversial in the sense of defeating the Aristotelian perception of the movement of the bodies that states “rest” as “the natural state of a body”, and that “a body moved only if driven by some cause” (Hawking 1). Instead, Newton’s work proved that “everybody continues in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a straight line, unless it is acted upon by a force” (Hawking 1), in what is, generally, known as Newton’s first law of motion.

Interestingly, Newton’s work, Gasperini argues, gave “an experimental support to the hypothesis of absolute space” (1). Through his work, Newton portrayed the world as “static”, “infinite” and “homogenous” (Gapersini 88). In his *Principia*, for example, Newton introduces time as ***an absolute and measurable quantity***. For him, like any other substance in the universe, time can be accurately measured by instruments; such as a clock. By “absolute”, Hawking argues, Newton suggests that “there was a quantity called time which would be measured by all properly constructed clocks, regardless of their motion” (3); a view that will be declined by Einstein later.

Newton’s theory of motion is but one part of much larger cultural and social transformations that affected almost every aspect of the era’s zeitgeist. Historically identified as the age of enlightenment, the 18th century witnessed an unprecedented leap in human awareness represented in “the expansion of scientific discovery”, “political reform”, “social liberation” and “individual empowerment” (Gerrard 1). Other critics such as Soergel,

Horkheimer, and Foucault identify enlightenment as “an increasingly secular spirit” (Soergel 182), “the triumph of invested capital” (Horkheimer 98), and “a privileged domain of analysis” (Rabinow 42) respectively. Such qualitative and quantitative transitions in human awareness were most formative of modern Western civilization as we know it today. In his *Counter-Enlightenment: From Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Gerrard argues:

Like it or not, West today (and not only the West) is a legacy of what has come to be known in English as “the enlightenment”. Many of the values, practices and institutions of our present civilization are rooted in the eighteenth century, which helped to liberate a vast human potential the determined much of the shape and direction of the world we now inhabit. (1)

Thus, the eighteenth century’s enlightenment seems one way or another, to release modern man’s potentialities in more than one sense. Politically, the eighteenth century is identified as a context of “military quiescence” (Spacks 6). Except for “politically uniting with Scotland” (1707), and “the American colonists’ rebellion” (Spacks 6), the eighteenth century was an age of peace. The most defining social phenomena of that age are “urbanization”, “criminality”, “the rise of bourgeois” and “increasing literacy”. By “urbanization”, Spacks suggests to the “movement towards London, imagined by those existing in rural poverty as a place of infinite opportunity” (Spacks 6). Among other phenomena, criminality was but one implication of such excessive and unplanned migration.

Significantly, the rising “literacy” at that time created “an increasingly large and eager audience that devoured fiction in many forms” (Spacks 1). The increasing capacity to read and write among various social classes, to say, created a new market space for novels at that time. The large and devoted audience of drama, in other words, was eager for a new literary genre with more complicated

narrative structures. (Faller xv). Another major denominator in the eighteenth-century novel's popularity as an emerging literary genre was the rise of the typographic machine. The spread of typography, in other words, created widespread destinations of distribution across England. By the end of the seventeenth century, Spacks argues, all publishers were primarily settled in London. Yet, "hundred years later, hundreds of presses flourished in small towns across England" (Spacks 7). The relationship between money and literature has, consequently, changed from a "patronage" system into "publication"/ "subscription" (Spacks 7). In the previously prevalent "patronage" system, writers used to benefit from having wealthy audiences in the form of support, propaganda, and presents. The newly spread "subscription" system guaranteed the audience's "advance purchase of a forthcoming book" (Spacks 7). This, in turn, embeds writers not only an advance payment but also a widespread audience. Another influential benefit of typography was embedding a novel as an identifiable tangible entity as a concrete body of numerous folded papers within a nominated cover with a signature. This, in turn, enhanced not only the mobility and propagation of early novelistic works but also pushed writers from both genders to publish their works for fame and money. In his *The Eighteenth Century Novel and Print Culture: A Proposed Modesty*, Flint argues:

The print medium has, of course, the advantage of more concrete and accessible body of lasting evidence than many other communication networks...this advantage has often encouraged scholars of eighteenth-century prose fiction to grant the novel a crucial and representative role in the communication revolution of the period. (343)

As such, in an age of colonialism, discoveries, worldwide trade, industrial revolution, literacy and typography, literature, in general, and novels, in particular, became an exchangeable commodity, with

both locally and universally increasing audiences. It was, for this very reason, a nascent literary genre of its time. As an emerging literary genre of the time, the novel seems to have met the expectations of such an increasing audience. Adapting with the rapid paradigm shifts particularly relevant to eighteenth-century thought, the novel was a good fit. In “recognizable ways”, Spacks argues, it was most reflective of “the assumptions and disturbances of the society from which they emanate” (3). Unlike other texts, for example, it is only through the newly invented novelistic techniques that many “strong felt contradictions in technique or practice” were “escaped” and “smoothed” (3). Eighteenth-century novel’s themes and structures seem one way or another, to reflect the dominant scientific and philosophical instauration at that time.

In its early phase of maturation, for example, eighteenth century’s novel seems to have echoed Bacon’s “emphasis on open, skeptical attitude which accepted nothing on trust” (Erskine 10). Unlike other scientific, philosophical, or even dramatic texts prevalent at that time, the eighteenth-century novel made no claims. Instead of embedding the reader with the pleasure of uncertainty, it offered gradually revealed structures, with abundant space for the reader’s expectations. Attuned to Bacon’s submission of experiment and observation as the only trusted scientific methods, the eighteenth-century novel permitted the reader to start in doubt and end in certainty. Among other techniques, the temporal structure of the eighteenth-century novel, as shall be investigated in detail, taught the reader to wait, analyze, discover, and slacken over expectations. In its novelty, consistency, and sequentiality, it seems also representative of “the mechanical Newtonian view of disenchanted nature that dominated Enlightenment thought” (Garrard 2). Both in its temporal structures and characterization style, it echoes the prevalent state of discovering, adjusting, and reforming previously unshakable beliefs in all fields. As a major denominator in the eighteenth century’s novel rise,

adaptation, and popularity, the temporal structure will be investigated, hereunder, in detail.

There are, so to speak, three major phases that generally crystallize the narrative understanding of time throughout history. Each stage seems to respond to, and manifest, the temporal concepts offered by physics in each phase. The first is the chronological mono-direction temporal structure reflective of the Newtonian perception of time as absolute and infinite linearity. The second stage is when time is largely considered in relative non-absolutist non-linear way, embodying Einstein's theory of General Relativity. The third is radically different as it conceptualizes time as fundamentally fluid and non-linear where there is no present past or future but a bundle of possibilities activated by the observer in what is generally known as quantum physics. Here is an illustrative diagram of these stages:

Era	Physics' Perception of Time	Narrative's Temporal Patterns
18 th Century	Absolute and Infinite	Chronological- Mono-directed
Late 19 th and Early 20 th Century	Relative	Unspecific, relative to speed
Late 20 th and 21 st Century	Quantum	Disseminated, fluid, observer based

(Figure 1)

Among these stages, the first is what this paper is mainly concerned. These literary-scientific duos can probably be charted as the following:

2- Literature Review:

Utilizing time references has always been the simplest and most direct way to tell readers what happened first, second...etc. Yet, the scientific and cultural shift from Gravitation to Relativism, then from relativism to Quantum Physics seems to affect the aesthetic ideals of human culture, in general, and narrative acts, in particular. Such tremendous shifts in human awareness, in other words, seem to create an equal shift in not only narrative perspective but also narrative sequence, characterization, and reception.

Traditionally, there have always been two major functions of time in a narrative discourse: the first is the simplest and most direct function as a tense reference, and the other indirect one is its perceived function as a holder of the logical temporal sequence of events. As a tense reference, time sets the whole narrative into a specific time-zone structure. It tells readers, in clear terms, whether the story is a series of past events, recalled from memory, or mere aspirations, imagined events, future expectations, or combination of all. It signifies and keeps distances between the narrator and the narrated through what is known in Narratology as “perspective” (Prince 29). That is; the position of the narrator relative to the events of the narrative either as a Protagonist, or a second, or a third person teller: a witness; observer, participant or teller. The most common of these traditional structures prefer the narrator as either 1) first-person protagonist (narrator-protagonist omniscient (knower of everything), 2) first person witness (narrator-protagonist witness knows only what s/he witnesses) 3) first-person re-teller (the first person who only knows about the events but never actually attended them him/herself (Prince 30).

As an unapologetically commodity, whose priority is being as much pleasing and entertaining for customers (readers) as possible, conventional narratives have always afforded its narratees the comforting identity-indulging pleasure of an unfolding convivial sequence. Traditional narratives’ techniques were kept simple, (or

rather simplistic) by adopting accumulative pretenses of common sensuality, two-dimensionality of compositional logic, and apparent coherence and patterning in the narrative approach. It never really challenges readers for any complexity of under-structures, or paradoxicality of cultural or intellectual messages. Instead, the resolution of knowing; the comfort of understanding, what has happened; what has happened thereafter...etc. has always been guaranteed! In his *Narratology: The Form and Function of Narrative* (1982), for example, Gerald Prince defines traditional narrative as “the representation of real fictive events and situations in a time sequence” (Prince 1). In Prince's terms, there must be two major elements to create any narrative: “fictive events” and “time”, or rather, “fictive events” within “time”. One persistent question here is probably what creates the narrativity of a narrative? Is it structural temporality, narrative discourse, or something else that initiates and keeps the narrative mood of a text? Commentators on such subject are divided very roughly into two main camps: those like Schmid, Stanzel, Child, and Fowler who primarily, define narrativity as a mediative process, through which the narrator is the sole and the whole performer, and those like Prince, Foster and Genette, who identify narrativity as the process of weaving quasi-real event within time.

It is not until a “describing authority makes itself apparent” in any ordinary “descriptive text”, that it turns into “narrativity” (Schmid 6). “Descriptive authority”, as a term, is quite self-explanatory; it simply refers to the egoist voice, the implied author, and the omniscient narrator, to name only a few. In its totality, narrative, as Schmid views it, is a “story”, whose presentation requires both “narrative” and “descriptive” modes (Schmid 5). Thus, it is only through the authoritative (descriptive) presence of the narrator “as a mediator between the author and the narrated world” (Schmid 1), that the “story”, as well as

its “temporal structure” are representable. Furthermore, any possible change in the narrative mood, Schmid argues, is but one consequence of a parallel change in the “consciousness of the describing authority”, or the narrator, as defined by Schmid. It is not a temporal structure, in a vacuum, therefore, that signifies the narrativity of the text. Instead, a well-constructed “temporal structure” and “change of state” between “initial” and “final” situations are always in need of a dominant “describing authority”, to get unfolded and revealed (Schmid 6).

By the same token, in his *Narratology: An Introduction*, Schmid refers to the “temporal links” of a narrative as “fundamental for the reconstructive ascription of meaning” (Schmid 21). Yet, those temporal links, Schmid argues, remain one way or another derived from and subjected to other “non-temporal links”. By non-temporal links, Schmid refers to a troop of “similarities” and “contrasts” represented as “bundles of identities concerning those features actualized by the story” (Schmid 20). Such “non-temporal” links, particularly relevant to characters’ progress throughout the narrative, are not only essential in the sense of “bringing the temporal changes and their logic to the surface” (Schmid 20). It is also through tracing such “similarities” and “contrasts” between the “initial” and the final situations/ characters/ narrators inside the narrative that the narrative itself is eligible and perceivable; they are, therefore, not any less “fundamental” than the temporal links in the structure of the narrative (Schmid 20). Likewise, in their *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Peter Childs and Roger Fowler define “Narrative” as the “recounting of a series of facts or events” that, primarily, initiates what they term as a “link between the reader and the text”. This “link”, Child and Fowler argue, is only constitutive through the presence of the “narrator” (Child & Fowler 148).

By contrast, Foster and Prince offer a different view. The narrativity of any narrative, for Foster, for example, is totally and undoubtedly swept under the banner of “temporality”. Even in its most slight and marginalized presence, time, as Foster sees it, offers a “thread” that collects events together, and prevents them from gliding into “intelligibility” and “blunder” (Foster 50). In our daily narrative discourse, it is probably not that urgent to stress our sense of time; we don’t have, for example, to say that “Monday is followed by Tuesday, or death by decay” (Foster 50). On the contrary, it is our deliberate, and probably claimed, ignorance of such axiomatic and granted details that keep our “supposed” sanity. Yet, subjected to multiple paradigmatic norms, of which “time” is probably the most significant, whenever one dares to declare his denial of time or behave apart from it, he has to face his fate of being, unquestionably, “sent by our fellow citizens to what they choose to call a lunatic-asylum” (Foster 50).

As such, holding our sanity in daily life, our touchy relationship with time, as humans, seems to keep our narrative sanity, as well. It is only through such attachment to the illusion of time; the illusion that we can neither take nor break; that man’s daily discourse and narrative act are put together. For this very reason, Foster undoubtedly states in one shot that “in narrativity, allegiance to time is imperative, and no novel can be written without it” (Foster 50). Representing “Narrative” as a “doubly temporal sequence”, in his *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, Gerard Genette identifies narrative as a dual-temporal pattern that signals a discursal space between a “signifier” (the time of the thing told) and a “signified” (the time of the narrative) (Genette 33).

3- The Functional Forms of Time in Eighteenth Century’s Novel:

4-1: Time as a Tense Reference:

The Newtonian representation of time and space as “the seat of the physical phenomena” (Ferraro 1) seems to affect not only the

logical but also the temporal structure of the eighteenth-century novel. For him, time and space are absolute and infinite media through which physical phenomena, of which narration is but one example, occur inefficaciously, while space “remains equal to itself” and time “passes uniformly” (Ferraro 1) throughout the physical world unhindered by anything else. Such prevalent perception of time as inflexible, independent, and absolute aspect of the world promoted mono-directional temporal patterns into eighteenth century's thought and consequently also narratives. The eighteenth century's neatly woven narrative formula of (narration-events-time) is but one resultant of the common perception of the universe at that epoch, in which time has the upper hand in defining the structure of any other phenomena, including narration. Time as a reference to action and direction, therefore, was the first and utmost component in any eighteenth-century narrative formula.

Represented by prominent twentieth-century novelists and critics such as Virginia Woolfe and James Joyce as “great precursor(s) of the realist movement” respectively (Keymer viii), Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is an early model of a realistic narrative with consistent structural and temporal patterns. Such consistent temporal pattern, can, for this reason, be seen as an inherently realistic work through which tense and action, harmoniously, work together to create as much realistic details as possible.

Other critics such as Patricia Meyer Spacks view it more as a "deviation from realism" (Meyer 2) than a dedication to it. *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, documents the day-to-day survival experience of an eighteenth-century sailor who survived a fatal shipwreck and was cast out on a desolate island for 36 years. Such an unbelievable experience had to be made as much convincing as possible through a sequence of chronologically and logically built actions through which tense dynamicity functions as a thread that holds the frame of narration.



(Figure 2)

The Gap Between the Time of Narration and the Time of the Narrative in *Robinson Crusoe*

Significantly, the whole novel is set back in time. It is told by sixty-year-old Robinson Crusoe, who recalls, not only his on-island experience, but also preceding and following adventures from memory. The time gap between authoring (1696) and story's time period (1694), as is perhaps obvious in (figure 1), could have taken away some of the narrative's credibility. In most cases, "the narrator's unreliability", as Prince terms it, "forces us to reinterpret many of his statements in order to arrive at a knowledge and understanding of what really happened" (Prince 12). As such, being merely recalling past memories the excessive and full day-to-day details delivered by Crusoe could have been doubted as unrealistic or untrustworthy.

Yet, the actions remain coherent and convincing for two reasons. First, throughout the narrative, an obvious temporal balance between the sequence, the direction, the duration, and the development of the actions is neatly kept, as shall be exemplified shortly in detail. The second reason is probably tense dynamicity. Unlike other eighteenth-century dramatic past tense-based narrative discourse such as Richardson's *Pamela*, and its 18th century satirical sequel *Shamela* (1741) (Jacobson 110), *Robinson Crusoe* does not submit past-simple as a single tense of narration. Instead, several transitions

between past- and present-simple tenses were made, making the utmost use of the syntactical flexibility English offers in this concern. Making use of the present simple as a syntactical sign of facts, for example, the author sets preliminary and foreshadowing sentences with high tension or extravagant emotions in the present simple tense; an early trial of tense-manipulation which will vastly be utilized and expanded in later models of post-modernist narrativity. Describing the scene of the shipwreck, for example, Crusoe states:

It is not easy for any one, who hasn't been in the like condition, to describe or conceive the Consternation of Men in such Circumstances; we knew nothing where we were, or upon what Land it was we were driven, whether an island or the main, whether inhabited or not inhabited ...In a word, we sat looking upon one another, and expecting Death every moment, and every Man acting accordingly, as preparing for another World, for there was little or nothing more for us to do in this; that which was our present Comfort, and all the Comfort we had.
(38)

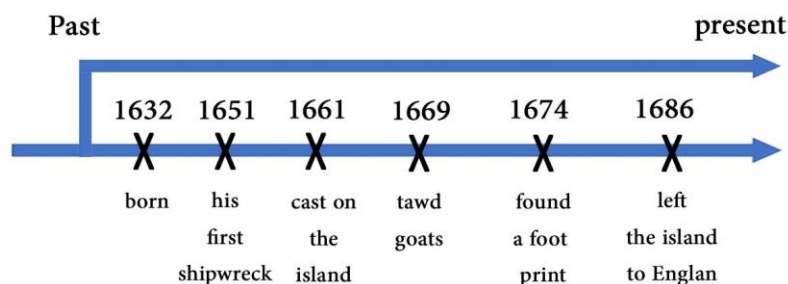
Among other techniques such as capitalizing keywords like “Consternation”, “Circumstances”, “Land” and “Death”, and speaking in a collective voice, the present-simple tense is utilized to bring past details to the moment. In the context of past actions, a preliminary sentence in present-simple was set at the beginning of the scene to state an assumingly ultimate fact on the tongue of the narrator. Through such tense dynamicity, Fludernik argues, the author could make the utmost use of the present tense’s “multi-functionality” as a “substitute of all tenses except the present perfect and the future” (Fludernik 189). As an omniscient narrator, for example, Crusoe consistently gives ongoing commentaries on the

past situation in the present voice in order to share details with the reader, in an attempt to gratify the typical eighteenth-century reader's hunger for rationality and credibility. Utilizing present tense, for example, Crusoe states: "It is not easy for anyone, who hasn't been in the like condition, to describe or conceive the Consternation of Men in such Circumstances" (38). Tense shift, therefore, was used to assert specific feelings in the past, highlight moments of great tension, and foreshadow the following incidents. Men's only "present comfort" at that time, Crusoe states, was their helplessness against nature's absolute power. They sat there "looking at one another", "expecting death" and "acting as preparing for another world", which are all set in the present tense in order to maximize the credibility and reality of the scene. Other examples of such tense shifts are: "Nothing can describe the Confusion of Thought which I felt when I sunk into the water" (Defoe 39), "I believe it is impossible to express to the life what the Extasies and Transports of the Soul are when it is so saved" (Defoe 40) and "I am cast upon a horrible desolate Island, void of all hope of Recovery, but I am alive, and not drowned as all my Ship'd Company was" (Defoe 56).

2-5 Time as a specifier of the Direction and the Frame of Narration:

Despite its tense dynamicity, the direction of the actions of *Robinson Crusoe* as a typical 18th-century narrative, is significantly static and mono (figure 2). It follows an accumulative and progressive direction that extends firmly from past to present. The major incidents of the narrative, in other words, are chronologically ordered forwardly in an easily traceable logical temporal sequence. Crusoe, for example, was born in 1632. He ran away to sea and witnessed his first shipwreck in 1651. His on-island adventure started in 1659. He successfully cultivated barley and rice for the first time on the island in 1661. He tamed goats in 1669. He noticed a single footprint on the island in 1674. In 1685, he and

Friday constructed a boat. At last, after 35 years of consistent chronological actions, Crusoe left the island back to England on the 19th of December, 1686.



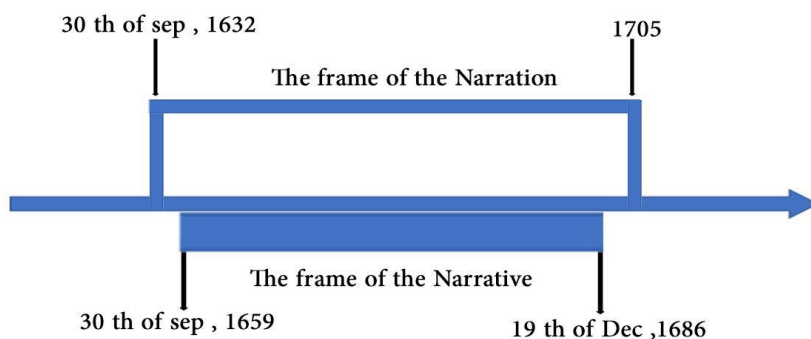
(Figure 3)

Narrative Direction in *Robinson Crusoe*

Despite being a mere flashback, itself, *Robinson Crusoe* goes on into an absolute linearity through which actions are neatly chronologically and logically woven. Despite being itself a leap in time, the narrative offers no trace of any violation of what time, traditionally, is. On the contrary, delivering day-to-day details, the narrative seems to skip no record of a single moment. It offers a consistent chronology of almost every single detail, glorifying every single moment of survival, as well as any accomplishment, be it crucial or trivial. For example, watching the flourishing fields on the island Crusoe states: “When I came home from this journey, I contemplated with great pleasure the fruitfulness of that valley, and the pleasantness of the situation; the security from storms on that side of the water, and the wood” (Defoe 103). Creating a semantic field of positive words such as “pleasure”, “fruitfulness”, “pleasantness” and “security”, Defoe could signal a paradigm shift in Crusoe’s character. New Crusoe, to say, is more able to celebrate smaller details and count blessings over distress. The consuming proud city man seems to have retrograded and a more conscious minimalist is brought to the front.

Through its stable and progressive temporality, the narrative celebrates what Crusoe terms "God's providence" who consistently provided him with multiple chances, aids, and means of survival all around his adventure on the island. This speaks directly not only to the prevalent Newtonian perception of time at that age as absolute, noticeable, and measurable, but also to the eighteenth-century novel's adherence to strict chronological temporality as one of its major priori conceptions of the world. Shedding light on the typical chronology of eighteenth century's English novels, in her *Novel Beginning Experiment in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction*, for example, Meyer Spacks signifies eighteenth century's English novel as basically initiated with "the locale and circumstances of each first-person narrator's birth and continues more or less straightforwardly with year-by-year accounts of what happens next. Typically, a lot happens" (41).

"Owing its success to the power of its castaway" (Keymer viii), the frame of *Robinson Crusoe* is identified by most critics as starting with the shipwreck and ending with Crusoe's departure from the island. Yet, the frame of narration extends far pre- and post-on-island-adventure (figure 2). While the frame of the narrative, as identified by most critics, extends between the 30th of September, 1659, and the 19th of December, 1686 (the period of the castaway), the frame of narration extends from Crusoe's birth in the 30th of September, 1632 up to 1694, with sixty-two-year-old Robinson Crusoe boarding a ship in another voyage with one of his nephews.



(Figure 4)

Narrative Vs Narration Frames in *Robinson Crusoe*

Though generally ignored by critics such as Rousseau (Keymer viii), the first three chapters of *Robinson Crusoe* seem one way or another, to add to the realism of the narrative. The narrative, in other words, doesn't start with the shipwreck. It is not until chapter five that readers are told about the shipwreck. There is an obvious reason for this. Those preceding parts actually state personal details and cultural backgrounds that would justify following decisions, behaviors, and actions making them more expected and logical. The first two chapters, for example, are dedicated to introducing Crusoe's childhood and social status. They also document two of Crusoe's unsuccessful voyages preceding the one in question, as well as his father's objections of his general choices. This can be seen as a bad omen that foretells what is to become next. The casting away, therefore, was not entirely unimaginable or fantastical. Instead, due to these preliminary chapters, it was normalized and expected as a coincidence in the context of unsuccessful voyages. Crusoe's rejection of his father's advice in the first chapter, on the other hand, seems to sow the early seeds of guilt in his subconscious mind. It, in other words, reveals some form of inner guilt of which he latter dwells over /while on the island.

On the other hand, these three preliminary chapters barely offer any spiritual or religious aspects of Crusoe's character; attributes that he will remarkably develop later on the island. As such, the first three chapters can be seen as a stake of narration that provides a primary version of the character through which its development and alteration can be traced.

By the same token, the last three chapters seem to categorize an updated version of Robinson Crusoe. Seemingly more aware of his choices in life, on the 11th of June, 1687, Crusoe sailed back to London with piles of money, a deep spiritual sense, and probably an obvious PTSD. Despite the death of most of his family, Crusoe established a new big family by adopting two of his nephews and taking a wife, with whom he had three children. Showing more gratitude than usual, on his arrival to London, Crusoe thanked the captain of the ship for being his “deliverer”; “a Man sent by Heaven to deliver him” (Defoe 230). Showing more gratitude, instead of asking the captain’s widow for his money, Crusoe gives her money and promises to take care of her. Representing his gratitude to the captain’s widow, Crusoe states:

When I came to England, I was as perfect a stranger to all the world, as if I had never been known there. My Benefactor and faithful Steward, who I had left in Trust with my Money, was alive; but had had great misfortunes in the world; was become a widow the second Time, and very low in the world: I made her easy as to what she ow’d me, assuring her, I would give her no Trouble; but on the contrary, in Gratitude to her former Care and faithfulness to me, I reliev’d her as my little Stock would afford, which at that time would indeed allow me to do but little for her; but I assured her, I would never forget her former kindness to me. (234)

He checked out for his plantation in Brazil and discovered that it was a great success. He sold his plantation and got good wealth. Yet, Crusoe's decision to travel by land instead of riding the sea probably signals a post-traumatic stress disorder. On his way back from Lisbon to London, Crusoe preferred traveling by land, fighting bears and wolves to riding the sea and getting face to face with the same possibility of losing his way and getting cast to a desolate island. Crusoe's abnormal choice probably signals a developed PTSD, that is, to say, quite expected and apprehensible after 36 years of isolation. Investigating his choices, Crusoe states:

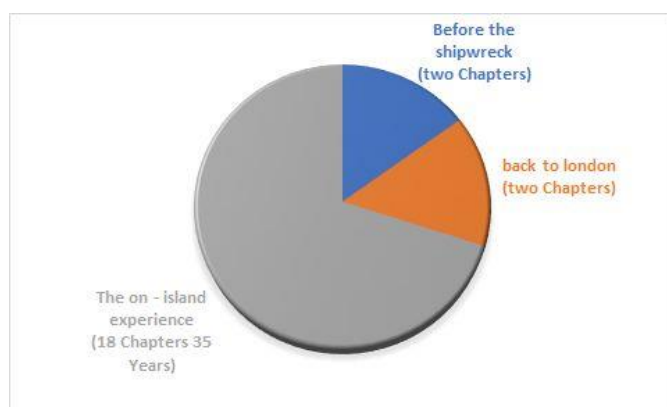
Having thus settled my affairs, sold my Cargoe, and turned all my Effects into good Bills of Exchange, my next difficulty was which way to go to England: I had been accustom'd enough to the Sea, and yet I had a strange Aversion to going to England by sea at that time; and though I could give no reason for it, yet the Difficulty encreas'd upon me so much, that tough I had once shipp'd my baggage, in order to go, yet I alter'd my Mind, and that not once, but two or three times.(242)

As such, Crusoe's personal doubts and deep trauma seem to inform his sea travel back to London. On his way back to London, he seemingly has an internal conflict between his familiarity with sailing, and the trauma of his ordeal resulting from sailing; a struggle through which his fears seem to win and force his decision to travel back by land.

In this sense, both the initial and final two chapters seem to function as limiting borders of the narrative. They do not only signal the start and end points of the narrative, but also the most significant transformations in his character. Namely, they are dedicated to documenting the most defining emotional, psychological, and spiritual characteristics of the pre and post-cast Crusoe. They, in other words, offer the reader both the initial and the final versions of the same person to observe, trace, and compare. This, in turn, speaks

directly to eighteenth-century reader's tendency to trace change within time as both linear and progressive from the least, to the most complex and mature.

In between, the on-island adventure is written in the form of diaries. Journal style, in other words, is intentionally utilized in order to create a day-to-day record of the on-island transitional phase. In her *The World's Most Famous Diary: Robinson Crusoe the First Novel*, Cindy Lange argues: "Defoe's choice of the journal as his vehicle for telling the tale also set the stage for what became known as an epistolary novel, which would consist of a series of either letters or journal entries, commonly interspersed with narration by the letter writer, or possibly by another narrator who is telling that person's story" (Lange). As such, submitting journal-style as a writing method does not only hold the general frame of the on-island-experience as a major transitional phase that anatomically occupies most of the narrative (eighteen chapters), but also paved the way for a brand-new literary sub-genre, known as "epistolary narrative". Thus, the narrative seems to be generally divided into three phases with different writing styles, through which the I voice is, one way or another, dominant. The whole narrative, in this particular sense, can be viewed as a time section (figure 3), in which some parts are probably of high impact in nature, yet the whole section remains consistent, bordered, and ultimately temporally sequential.



(Figure 5)

Robinson Crusoe as a Temporal Section

3-5 Time as a link to reality/ time as a means of survival:

In its detailed and neatly woven representation of almost every single moment on the island, journaling, as a writing style, seems to drag such an inconceivable experience of exceptional survival closer to reality. It, in other words, adds to the credibility of the narrative through persistently pumping minute-to-minute daily details such as hunting, salvaging munitions, making crafts, cultivating land, “carpentry” and “sewing”; activities that seem, one way or another, to “virtually constitute the story” (Spacks 48). The more common and usual daily details are offered, in other words, the more verisimilar the narrative becomes. Ordinary daily routines are utilized in order to normalize a beyond-mind experience of survival for 28 years on an obsolete island in the Caribbean. In this particular sense, Defoe was widely identified as “assigning a category all his own” (Spacks 29). He created a whole narrative style in which an undeniable balance between realism and imagination is efficiently constituted. In his *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, Defoe assigns day-to-day details as a pushing power that restlessly, and more importantly, profitlessly pushes actions forward. It, therefore, constitutes a microcosm through which exuberant realistic actions

function as a stake to reality for “abundant unlikely coincidences than life customarily offers” (Spacks 20).

The whole narrative, therefore, can be viewed as a battle against solitude through filling time vacancies with normal activities. Time management and daily routine, in this particular sense, can be viewed as means of survival. The adherence to timing offered by Crusoe’s diaries highlights not only the way time functions as a sequence holder but also the role it plays as a survival mechanism. It was not a mere writing technique that was intentionally selected in order to keep the reader engaged and simultaneously satisfy his tendency to both novelty and logicity. Instead, it also functions as a stake that attaches not only the narrative but also the characters to reality as one means of survival. Psychologically speaking, keeping a record of actions and days can be identified as one defense mechanism through which Crusoe could keep his sanity on the island. In his *A Cruising Voyage Around the World*, Woodes Rogers identifies Crusoe’s “efforts to impose meaning on adversity and structuring the vacancies of time” as “central to his recovery” (Rogers 125).

Crusoe’s main struggle, therefore, was not against nature or the island; his real battle was against time. Crusoe’s insistence on keeping a record of his time on the island, literally, saved him from insanity. Documenting his first day on the island, for example, Crusoe journals: “September 30, 1659. 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 drown’d, and myself almost dead” (60-61).

Crusoe’s keenness on keeping time records in such moments of absolute despair seems to stem not only from an instinctive sense of survival but also from other religious motives. Knowing “Sabbath days”, for example, was one of his major purposes for keeping a time record. Crusoe states:

After I had been there about Ten or Twelve Days, it came into my Thoughts, that I should lose my Reckoning of Time for want of Books and Pen and Ink, and should even forget the Sabbath Days from the working days; but to prevent this I cut it with my Knife upon a large Post, in Capital Letters, and making it into a great Cross I set it up on the Shore where I first landed. (55)

In this sense, Crusoe's founding of other alternatives such as a "knife" and a "post", as malleable tools to keep a time record, stands for his instinctive motives of survival, forming it into the shape of a "great cross" stands for his religious ones. Among other attitudes such as praying to God, reading the Bible, and discovering nature, Crusoe's cross-time-post provides a clue to some of the ways in which *Robinson Crusoe* is sometimes identified as a religious narrative. Erskine argues: "Crusoe works not just as a scientist, but as a Christian, sharing the belief of many seventeenth-century scientists that the study of the created world would give insight into the divine order" (4). Thus, Crusoe's struggle for survival is probably a mere reflection of a typical religious identity that he, originally, shared with all men at his time. He, like most individuals at his time, tends to "explore nature and learn to control it for his advantage" (Erskine 14). More to the same point, creating a primitive tool of time measuring reflects the common Newtonian perception of time at that age as ultimately stable and measurable. Such adherence to the philosophical and scientific spirit of the context seems to root of the realism and credibility of the narrative.

As a "committed Beconian", Defoe embeds his protagonist in a "Beconian mentality of observation and experiment" (Erskine 4). In his persistent struggle for survival, Crusoe exemplifies an average eighteenth-century individual who "learns step-by-step from his mistakes" (Erskine 4). As a means of survival, Crusoe gets totally engaged in handcrafts making pottery, baskets, bread, and clothes.

He journaled his diaries, observed weather, tide, and sun, and kept a time record of almost every single detail in his surroundings.

In addition to psychological survival, Crusoe's Beconian mentality enhanced his chances of physical survival. It enabled him, for example, to find a consistent source of food by cultivating land, taming goats, and making fire. Time reckoning, as another Beconian methodology, enabled him to classify time into seasonal cultivation zones. Crusoe states: "But by this experiment, I was made Master of my Business, and knew exactly when the proper season was to sow; and that I might expect two Seed Times, and two Harvests every Year" (90). Another benefit was expecting specific crops in each season; Crusoe journals: "I was now, in the Months of November and December, expecting my Crops of Barley and Rice. It also posted his time management skills through scheduling and rescheduling daily activities to proper day times. Crusoe states: "Sometimes I chang'd my Hours of Hunting and Working, and went to work in the morning, and Abroad with my Gun in the Afternoon" (98). The way Crusoe managed and consumed time on the island, to say, was the clue to his psychological, physical, and spiritual survival in more than one sense. It kept him attached to reality, and therefore to sanity. It also saved him from absolute despair and kept him engaged in life-preserving crafts such as land cultivation through knowing months and seasons. Crusoe naming his first and sole friend on the island; Friday, after the name of the day he met him, probably signals his appreciation of time as his main savior at that time.

Yet, the reciprocal relation between Crusoe's mental state and his ability to manage time throughout the narrative is undeniable. It is not only his time-management activities that kept his sanity on the island. Rather, Crusoe's mental state seems to have significantly influenced his sense of time in more than one sense. During his initial years on the island, for example, like many other materials, Crusoe viewed time as an "abundant resource" that he had to make the best

use of (Yahav 1). He, in other words, acted like the master of his own “world of time”, as Yahav puts it, giving due times and deadlines for each mission, prioritizing and scheduling activities to days, and selecting proper seasons for each. This pretty much attunes to the common Newtonian perception of time at that era as absolute and measurable.

Later, Crusoe’s discovery of a footprint on the sand seems to paradigm-shift his perception of time. Discovering the footprint, Crusoe is not anymore able to go normally on his neatly woven-within- time daily activities. Instead, seemingly losing his sense of time, he gets totally indulged into a series of possibilities, imaginations, and, accordingly, defensive actions; in what this thesis terms as “hypothetical narration” that will be discussed later in detail. Signaling this shift, Yahav argues:

The moment he discovers the footprint on the island- his time no longer circulates among varying purposes, and he instead becomes solely devoted to formulating opinions about his new-found neighbors and devising strategies for an encounter.. immobilized by anxiety, which then gives way to the spurt of defensive actions- building second fortification- and the superman fantasies. (1-2)

Thus, Crusoe’s discovery of the footprint seems to have altered the time curve; it transshipped the battle yard from the island to inside Crusoe’s mind, and replaced time, as an opponent, with an anonymous real one, whose footprint was curved there on the sand. It has also redeployed his priorities, replacing time management with fortification as the whole target at that moment. The narrative, in this particular sense, represents time as relative and dependent on, either internal elements such as fear and anxiety, or external ones such as threat and hostile environments; a perception yet to be offered a century later by Albert Einstein. it seems one way or another, to diminish time’s “autonomy” through internalizing and representing

it as subject to other lineaments, be it physical or psychological. It transforms time from “an external resource, one that is especially abundant on the island” into “an approach that considers duration as an endurance, and links time with persons” (Yahav 2). It is in this particular sense that the narrative introduces a totally new temporal pattern that is, on one hand, renovative, and liberating, on the other. It liberates English narrative from rigid temporal patterns through which time is represented as an ultimate narrative taboo, that is both absolute and untouchable in nature. It offered an early form of time liquefaction; a narrative style that would, particularly, prevail in nineteenth century’s narrative performance.

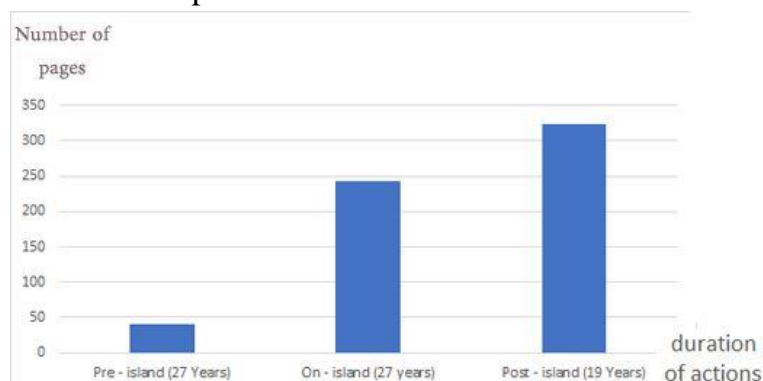
4-5 Time as the Pace and the Duration of the Actions:

The neat proportion eighteenth-century novelists constitute between the real (the time an action might consume in real life) and the narrative (the time an action consumes inside the narrative) time of the actions emphasizes them being, to say, stuck into the real-time trap. As one of the earliest ever English novels, Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1747-48), for example, is paced so slowly that tedium and loss of logical sequence were inevitable. Signaling the extreme prolongation *Clarissa* offers, Samuel Johnson comments: “If you read the plot, you’d hang yourself” (Spacks 18). In an attempt to re-customize the novel so that logical sequence and entertainment, as the two most defining structural characteristics of an eighteenth-century narrative, are kept away from fatal prolongation, the modern versions of the same novel eliminated almost half of the original text. The modern version, Spacks argues, was “less likely to encourage suicide, but eliminates...destroys, or greatly weakens, the works impact” (18). Thus, one of the earliest obstacles eighteenth-century narratives came face to face with was keeping a logical and ontological balance between the number of actions the narrative offers, and the pace, duration, and rhythm they deploy.

Yet, by the end of the eighteenth century, Spacks argues, the pace of the English novel was “normalized” (19). Other elements like “objects” and “appearance” were utilized as “impetus of the plot” (Spacks 19). In *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, the pace of the single story of a single protagonist within a single setting was unprosaically constitutive through a stream of stimulating events studiously positioned within the plot such as finding a second shipwreck, finding a footprint and the arrival of the English ship. Through such stimulatory events, the extraordinary prolongation of *Robinson Crusoe*, as the most significant eighteenth-century narrative, was disposable within a structural unity that keeps the balance between the pace and excessiveness of the actions. Crusoe’s activities on the island, for example, were “meticulously timed” (Yahav 1-2). It took him “twenty-four days to rescue supplies from his drowned ship”, “three and a half months to build a wall” and “two weeks to build a bower” (Yahav 1-2). Thus, the narrative seems to keep a neat temporal balance between the real and the narrative time of the actions.

Anatomically, *Robinson Crusoe* implies another form of structural-temporal proportion between the nature of the actions, and the number of pages it occupies in the narrative (figure 4). Though following no chapterization, *Robinson Crusoe* can be divided into three major parts: the pre-island phase, the on-island phase, and the post-island phase. In the edited-after-the-original Globe Edition (1868), for example, the first 27 years of Crusoe’s life are represented in 40 pages. Being not too full of significant actions, except for his two unsuccessful voyages, the first period of Crusoe’s life, generally identified in this thesis as “the pre-island phase” occupies 40 pages of the oldest known version of the narrative. On the contrary, being full of ordinary, but excessive and persistent habitual actions such as cultivating land, taming goats, making cutlery and furniture...etc, the second part of the narrative, identified in this article as “the-on-island phase” occupies 243 pages of the

same version. Dedicated to portraying the new Crusoe, the third part of the narrative, “the post-island phase”, occupies 324 pages. It represents behavioral shifts and major decisions that naturally take extended periods of time such as selling his plantation, getting married, having kids, buying a house, and setting into a new adventure with his nephew.



(Figure 6)

Anatomical-Temporal Proportion in *Robinson Crusoe*

As perhaps is obvious, just like in real life, long-term shifts and far-fetched transformations seem to consume not only a large amount of time but also anatomically consume a huge part of the narrative body. The narrative, therefore, seems to both temporally and structurally reflect the common perception of time at that age as an infinite and absolute medium through which life events are re-countable. More to the same point, the narrative seems to structurally satisfy the eighteenth-century reader’s mentality, to which an extraordinary life story of survival for 27 years on an obsolete island can NOT be represented in less than 607 pages.

In such a context, particularly governed by reason, *Robinson Crusoe* could have lost a large part of its popularity, except for its rational, lavishing, and obviously set

resolution. This is probably why Defoe spent most of his authorship time bringing the narrative to a convenient conclusion. It took him 324 pages to portray the evolved version of Crusoe, generally revealed through his new decisions, new choices, and interests. The concluding part, to say, had to be as revealing and convincing as possible, so as to satisfy the eighteenth century's reader. It, in other words, embeds the reader a bird's eye over an exceptionally prolonged text as a sort of compensation. Those who might get anxious while reading the on-land-part, for example, can just skip to the last part and make sure that Crusoe can make it; an option that post-modernist reader is completely deprived of, as will be explained later in detail.

As such, through offering assumingly balanced temporal structures, classic narratives, in general, and *Robinson Crusoe*, in particular, construct microcosms through which man and fate work together within a medium of time towards a specific and obvious resolution. Yet, this seemingly balanced temporality is still, in one way or another, unconvincing to the modern reader. Despite its exuberant details and extreme prolongation, the time of authorship of Robinson Crusoe, for example, remains way less than the duration it covers (72 years). It might have taken Crusoe a lifetime to survive, but it didn't take Defoe a lifetime to write the story of his survival. In order to overcome this rational diversion, the narrative deploys multiple convincing techniques such as auto-biographical writing, utilizing the I voice, chronological structures, obvious resolution, and neat investigation of reality.

Despite its assumed temporal proportionality, the relativity and volatility of the Classic narrative's pace of actions should be not mistaken. It constitutes pace patterns that are totally dependent on the psychology of the protagonist. It, in other words, internalizes concepts that are inarguably identified as independent and absolute in this context such as time, endowing it with psychological and emotional tendencies. It seems to turn upside down a culturally

rooted perception of time as autonomous and untouchable. In *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, the rhythm of time is significantly subjected to the Crusoe's mentality. After discovering the footprint on the island, Crusoe's life, in general, and time schedule, in particular, turned upside down. Instead of his regularly-paced and time-relevant activities such as plantation, making tools, and discovering the island, Crusoe gets totally indulged in extremely anxious and time-consuming fortification activities. He doubled his fortification by building an additional "wall of trees" with seven holes through which he could "fire all the seven guns in two minutes' time" and "muskets" in between that took him a whole "weary month" to be fully constructed (Defoe 136). Crusoe's turn from planting wheat and barley to mosquitoes probably echoes his psychological transformation from security into survival, which, in turn, influences the way he consumes and manages time. His regular, habitual, and in the first place, conscious time investigating activities turned into unconscious, long-term, and survival-based ones. Immediately after doubling his fortification wall, for example, Crusoe had a plan of constituting a "thick grove" in front of his dwelling, that would turn into a "wood" in "five or six years time" (Defoe 137). Such a turn in Crusoe's perception and management of time highlights Defoe's early identification of time as volatile and subjected to the psychological state of the individuals, in an early attempt to "undertake extensive exploration of consciousness as a complex and nuanced interface of material, psychological and social experience" (Yahav 3). Unlike his first years on the island, after noticing the footprint, Crusoe developed an internal survival-paced attitude through which actions accelerated inside his mind, but not in reality.

4- Conclusion:

This paper reviews the Classic narrative's temporal patterns as an echo of classic physics' gravity-centered laws of motion. It traces the early roots of the postmodernist narrative experimentation by investigating Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as a typical classic narrative. It ends with a premise that as a major narrative component, the classic narrative's time, did not only hold the actions' logical/chronological sequentiality, but also the character's unity and credibility.

In terms of its temporal functions, time is re-introduced in this paper as a tense reference, a direction specifier, a sequence holder, a means of survival, and a pace/duration specifier, both in the literary and physical meanings of the words. It differentiates, between two major temporal functions: time as a frame holder and time as the direction and duration of narration. Light is shed upon each temporal function, its nature, development, and forms.

Supported by clarifying figures, selected quotes from *Robinson Crusoe* are discussed to exemplify each identified function. In this very sense, the paper probably provides a tangible understanding of conventional temporal patterns, as detected within an iconic classic narrative, upon which further comparisons and analytical points can be introduced. The early beginnings of the gradual and accumulative shift from rigid temporal forms to more malleable and, later, totally disseminated postmodernist temporality are also detected and investigated. The paper ended to the following:

1- Governed by its conservative context, 18th-century narratives offer rigid structural and temporal patterns within which actions, developments, and socially/politically oriented morals are consistently delivered. The Newtonian perception of time as an infinite and measurable matter seems to have heavily influenced the 18th century's narrative performance both thematically and structurally. It offers a neatly sequential temporal structure through which actions are logically ordered and easily traced. Time, in the

18th century's novel, seems to have specific functions within a perceived stable narrative formula; it is, in the first place, a medium of narration. Some of these temporal functions including time as a tense reference, time as a frame holder, time as the pace and the duration of actions, and time as a link to reality are represented in this paper.

2- Avoiding any temporal leaps or great plot twists, *Robinson Crusoe* depicted a typical 18th-century narrative that is undeniably linear and context-reflective. Time temporal functions, as identified by this paper, are detected and illustrated within it as a showcase of the paper's main argument.

3- Yet, in more than one way, such rigid temporal patterns, seem to imply some resisting connotations. Adding the psychological dimension and its implications on Crusoe's sense of time, behavior, and ideas, for example, seems to open the door for a gigantic stream of relative narrative performance generally adopted in the 19th and early 20th century novels.

4- One major implication of the 18th century's narrative temporal linearity and forward accumulative progressive structure is submitting the heroic figure in characterization. Embedding the 18th century's reason-oriented reader a developing figure to follow, *Robinson Crusoe*, as a typical 18th century novel, traces Crusoe's character development as going through three phases: the pre-island, the on-island, and post-island.

5- Thus, both thematically and structurally *Robinson Crusoe* reflects not only the cultural and aesthetic ideals of its time but also the physical perception of time as an indispensable and measurable narrative component. The four functional temporal forms identified by this paper could easily be detected and traced within the body of the narrative.

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