Analysis “Chapter V, Builds a house” from Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe

The text is an extract from Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe. It is arranged into 11 paragraphs and it has the shape of a journal where the protagonist records all that happens in his daily life, the novel has a first person narrator (Robinson Crusoe) and the reader identifies himself in the protagonist. In each paragraph, Robinson tells which activities he is doing on the island. The extract represents the most famous part of the novel: Robinson tells he has been shipwrecked “during a dreadful storm” and he has come in an island near the mouth of the Orinoco river. The first paragraph conveys the effect of isolation, the language conveys this idea with adjectives like “poor” and “miserable” and the expression that concludes the paragraph “and myself almost dead”. The expression “dreadful storms” exalts the position of victim of the protagonist, Robinson calls this unknown island “Island of Despair” and it underlines the affliction of the character. In the second paragraph the protagonist’s fair are listed. He conveys the idea of local inhabitants like savages: it is the prejudice of the superiority of the English culture. It is a colonialist attitude, indeed the novel was considered really successful and met the needs and tastes of XVIII century readers that could satisfy their curiosity about foreign distant places that they heard of. Indeed the description of the island of the protagonist improves the reader’s attention conveying the idea of a dangerous island full of frights and populated by wild and ferocious creatures and savages, he tells “I slept in a tree for fear of wild creatures”. The third paragraph evidences the skills of survival of the protagonist. In this paragraph the protagonist describes the actions he is doing to survive like producing utensils and instruments or seeking out for food. In the previous paragraphs the protagonist was described by his feelings, now the reader know the protagonist also by actions. The spirit of initiative, the details about the environment and the solving skills conveys the idea of a self-made man, and this image respects the puritan ethic of colonialism. He spent the entire month of October using his skills of survival and describing the environment the reader understands that the island is an overcast territory, indeed it is situated near the mouth of the Orinoco river (Venezuela). The protagonist concludes the chapter telling how he is building a fortress made of timber and fences that would become his new house.

The sequence of the events is characterized by search for realism, the novelist used the realism to create the activity of the reader. Indeed the novelist gives a lot of details of the events using lots of adverbs and adjectives, he shows particular skills of creating the setting that is fundamental for the realism and involves the attention of the readers of his age that were curious about foreign and exotic places.

Ex 1 page 167

1. At first I would search for food and clean water because it is indispensable for survival, then I would try to identify my geographic position and I think which would be my possibilities.
2. I would miss my house, the comfort of my previous life.
3. I would appreciate it is an experience that fortify my spirit and improve my skills.

Ex 2 page 168

1. Robinson managed to reach the shore after the shipwreck.
2. He found shelter in a tree in order to spend the night.
3. He swam to the ship to get some provisions.
4. He continued to carry goods from the ship to the shore.
5. The raft overturned and he had to recover many of the goods when the tide was low.
6. He tried to store the goods so as not to have them spoilt about the rain.
7. He found the right place to
8. He carried all the goods to his ‘house’.
9. He looked for good.
10. He slept in his new fortification.
11. He built a fence around his tent.

Ex 3

Time

29 September - 2 November 1659

Space

Unknown island

Ex 4

Robinson Crusoe is the narrator, this narrative technique is the first-person narrator. Its main advantage is that the reader is more involved in the events and he can identify himself in the narrator.

Ex 5

The events are described in chronological order.

Ex 6

1. He is upset in the first part of the chapter because he realize he is alone in an unknown island.
2. “I hoped, if the wind abated, I might get on board, and get some food and necessaries”
3. I set up all my chests and boards, and the pieces of timber which made my rafts.

The 31st, in the morning, I went out into the island with my gun, to seek for some food…

1. Robinson had time for an intellectual speculation in the beginning paragraph, he writes about his feelings.
2. Robinson is a self-made man.

Ex 7

The sea provides the survival of the protagonist.

The ship contained the instruments that he would use to survive.

The fortification represents the stability on the island.

Ex 8 page 169

The main problems of Robinson on the island were the fear of savages and wild beasts and the difficulty of survival.

Writing a diary is a fundamental activity to hold the activity of his mind, in a similar situation becoming irrational isn’t difficult.