

6. THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Plan:

1. Historical Background: Glorious Revolution;

2. Daniel Defoe (1661- 1731);
2.1. “Robinson Crusoe”;

3. Jonathan Swift (1667-1745);
3.1. “Gulliver’s Travels”.

Bibliography: O.V. Tumbina “Lectures on English Literature 5th-20th centuries”, St. Petersburg

1. Historical Background: Glorious Revolution

The Age of Enlightenment was a period in Europe during the 18th century (1688-1789) when the writers wrote that science and the use of reason would help the society to develop.

The history of England of the second half of the 17th century and during the 18th century was marked by British colonial expansion.

The Glorious Revolution was the political background of the development of the political literature. The writers of the Enlightenment fought for freedom. Most of them wrote political pamphlets , but the best came from the pen of Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift.

The writers of the Age of Enlightenment wanted to improve the world. But some of them hoped to do this only by teaching . Others openly protested against the social order.

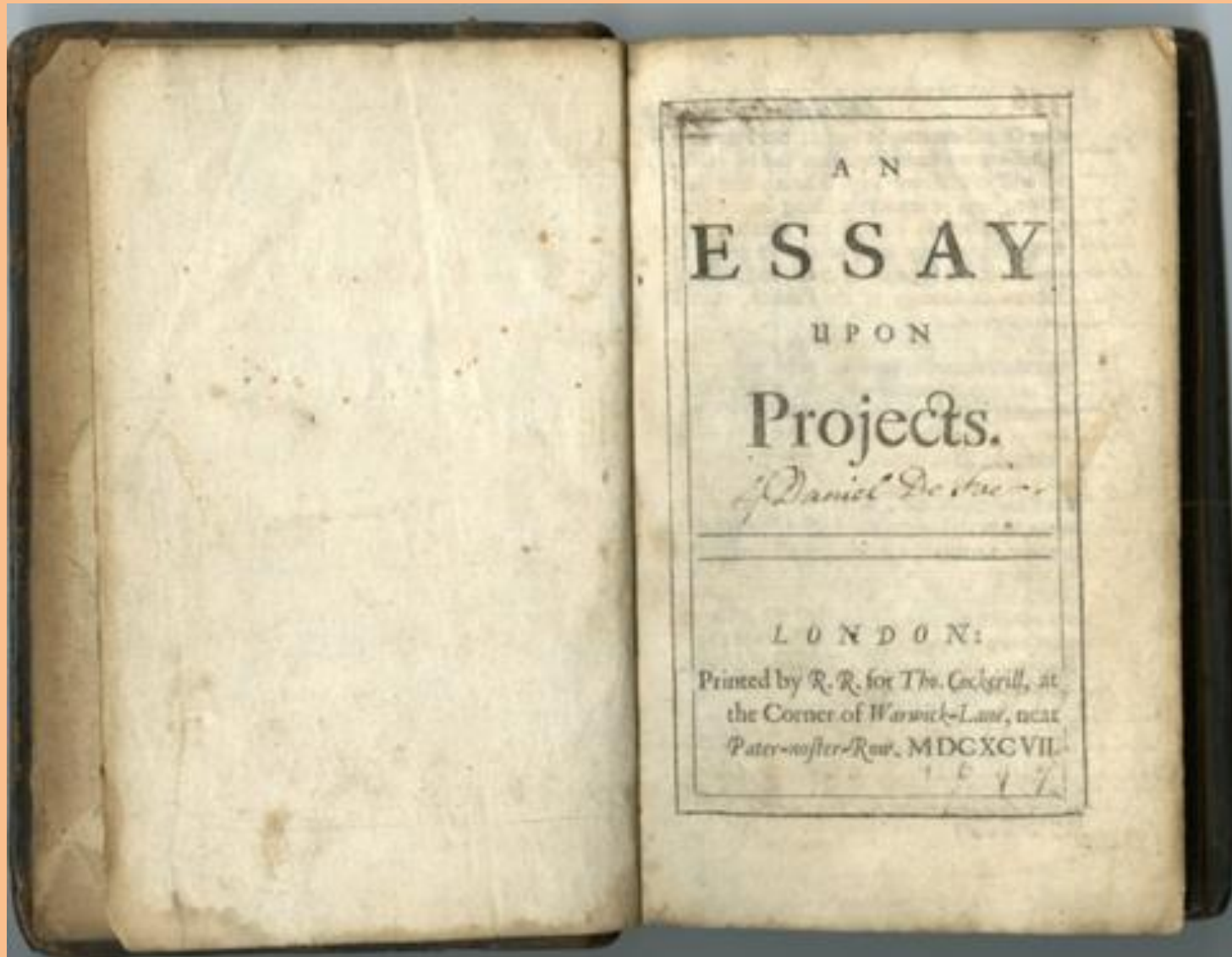


Daniel Defoe



Jonathan Swift

2. Daniel Defoe (Foe, he added “De” 40 years later) called himself fortunate in his education as well as in his family. His father expected him to become a Minister , but Daniel became a commission merchant. He travelled a lot and knew several languages. By the 1684 Defoe was a well-to-do businessman and he married a young girl of 20. Defoe was too energetic. That’s why when his business began to bore him he looked for more thrilling speculations. As a result , in 1692 Defoe was forced into bankruptcy. But he wasn’t upset. He was an optimist : he decided to publish his first book “An Essay upon Projects”. He wrote down the suggestions how to improve roads.

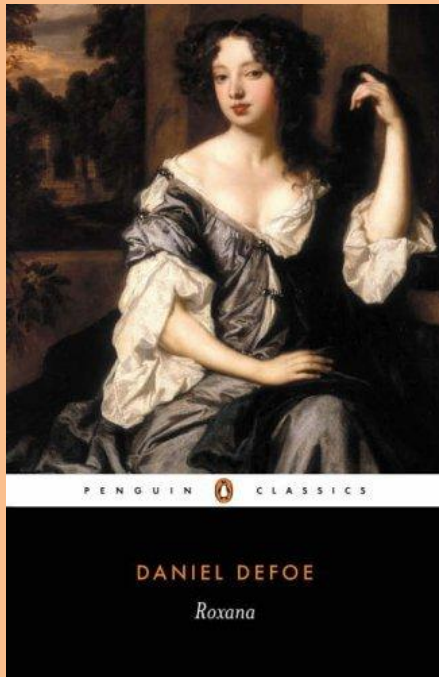


“An Essay upon Projects”

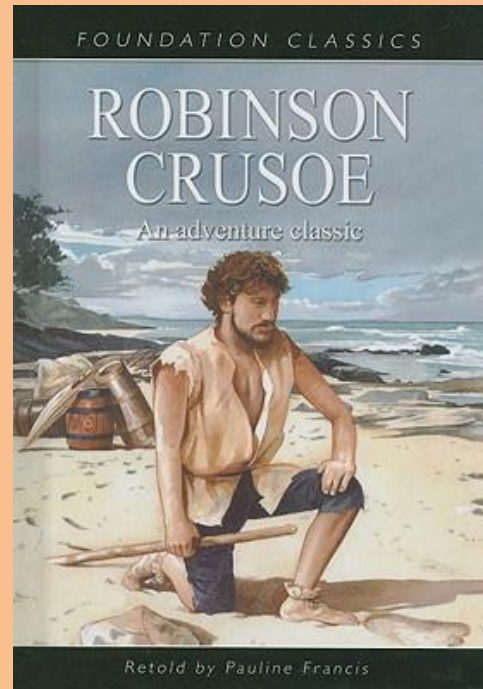
In 1719 his masterpiece “Robinson Crusoe” appeared. Then he retired to the comfortable country house that he shared with his wife and two unmarried daughters.

In 1722 Defoe published his novel “The Adventures of Colonel Jack”, then “Roxana” appeared.

Despite his several bankruptcies, Defoe wrote with enthusiasm about trade. Daniel Defoe died in 1731 in London.



“Roxana”



“Robinson Crusoe”

2.1. “Robinson Crusoe”

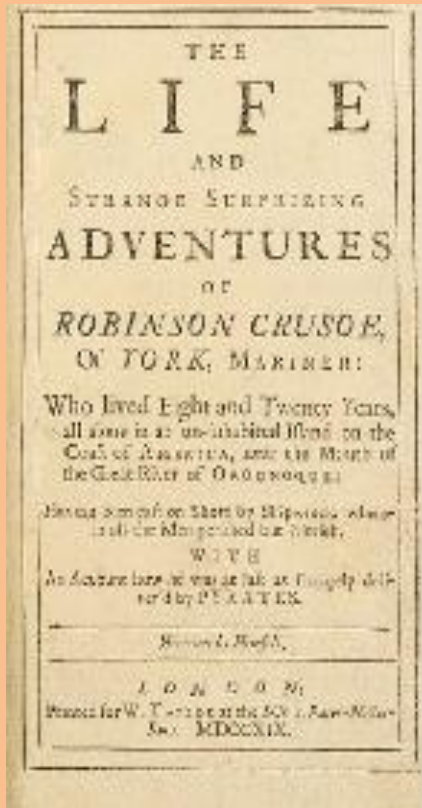
“Robinson Crusoe” is Defoe’s best novel. The story is based on a real event. Alexander Selkirk , a sailor who quarreled with his captain , was put on the island near Chile and lived there alone for four years. “Robinson Crusoe” praises human labour which saves him from despair. Defoe describes his hero with warmth and sympathy. He shows the development of Robinson Crusoe .

At the beginning of the story we get acquainted with an inexperienced young creature who later becomes a strong – willed and hard-working man, and at the end of the book we see a philosopher able to withstand all the misfortunes and hardships of his destiny.

Robinson Crusoe doesn’t lose his courage.

He always hopes for the best. Robinson Crusoe becomes an enthusiastic worker, he proves to be skilful and talented. Crusoe keeps his diary as long as he has something to write with.

Defoe proves the fact that man can live by himself even in such a situation , on an uninhabited island. Defoe is a writer of the Age of Enlightenment , that's why he teaches people how to live and what to do in order to live better. Defoe's Crusoe like Defoe himself , is very practical. He is extremely interested only in himself and his property. He wants to be the master of the island. He is glad and proud of his self-confidence. As soon as a coloured man appears on the island, Robinson Crusoe makes him his servant, because slavery seems natural to Defoe. "Master" is the first word he teaches Friday to pronounce.



Robinson Crusoe and

First book



Friday is the other main character of the book. The author sympathizes with him , appreciates his willingness to help , his obedience to his “master”. The author reveals his characters superstitious . Both are very religious Crusoe believes in God and in Providence.

The novel is a glorification of labour and energy. But these qualities are exaggerated. According to Defoe man can live by himself comfortably and make all the things he needs with his own hands. Besides , Robinson Crusoe uses the experience of the previous generations and civilizations.

Daniel Defoe is a master of realistic details . His novel “Robinson Crusoe” is not only a work of fiction and an educational pamphlet. It is a study of man in relation to nature. The author emphasizes the triumph of man over nature.

3. Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)

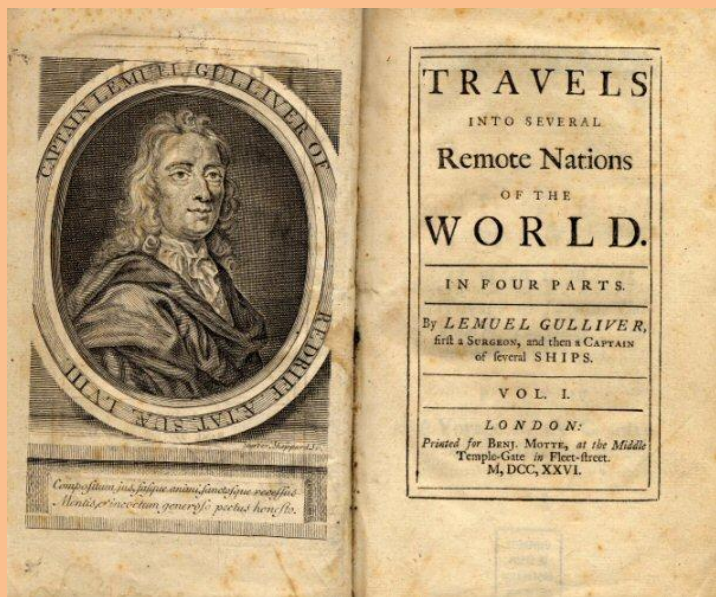
Jonathan Swift was one of the famous English writers of the Age of Enlightenment. He was a bitter satirist of the beginning of the 18th century. Swift was born in Dublin in 1667. But his parents were both English. His father was unfortunate, he died at 25. Swift was born on 30 November 1667, six months after his father's death. His uncle Godwin Swift undertook to pay for his upbringing and education, but Swift hated his uncle.

Swift was educated at Trinity College with little satisfaction. He was graduated without honours in 1688 and became a secretary of an important statesman and diplomat in England. When his master died in 1699, he was given the position of chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley. Swift visited different political clubs, wrote his important pamphlets and got acquainted with famous people.

In 1742 at the age 74 Swift was declared insane. In 1745 he died and was buried with simplicity. Swift remains one of the very few who have made satire an effective weapon with which he attacks the enemy.

3.1. “Gulliver’s Travels”

Jonathan’s masterpiece ,“Gulliver’s Travels” appeared in 1726. It is divided into 4 books, but the young people prefer to read only two of them: about Gulliver’s voyages to Lilliput and Brobdingnag (where the people are giants). The Lilliputians fight wars which seem foolish. The King of Brobdingnag thinks that people are the most terrible creatures on the Earth.



First book of "Gulliver's Travels"

Gulliver



Lemuel Gulliver is the main character of the book. He is educated both as a doctor and as a sailor. He is given the job of a ship surgeon and sets sail from Bristol on 4th May, 1699.

It is his first voyage. The cruise is a success, but after a long trading tour the ship is driven out of their route by a storm and got on a strange land.

While asleep he is captured and bound by several thousand of small inhabitants. After many adventures Gulliver returns to England. There he succeeds in a small business by selling a number of the Lilliputian sheep, cows and other things which he has taken with him.

Two months later, on 20 June 1702, he goes to sea again. The ship is driven out of its course by a storm. The members of the boat got on the strange shore. While Gulliver wanders along the shore the others are terrified by some giants and escape, leaving Gulliver alone.

But in the end Gulliver manages to escape, and returns home.

Gulliver's third voyage takes place a few months later: Gulliver is captured by pirates. After that he manages to escape with the help of people of Laputa- a sort of floating island. These people are very strange. They are fond of mathematics and music. Moreover , they can make their floating island move at will. Gulliver returns home, to England. He has been absent for about six years.

