

Article

Joachim Heinrich Campe's Robinson the Younger: Universal Moral Foundations and Intercultural Relations

Claudia Nitschke

Modern Languages and Cultures, Durham University, Elvet Riverside, Durham, County Durham DH1 3JT, UK; claudia.nitschke@durham.ac.uk; Tel.: +44-191-334-3424

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Abstract: In his adaptation of *Robinson Crusoe*, Campe sets out to examine the legitimacy of his contemporary social reality (in Europe in the broadest sense) by tracing its origin back to the most basic roots conceivable. The experimental character of his book is emphasised and—to an extent—explicitly introduced through the frame narrative which constitutes Campe's most important addition to Defoe's story: Here the emergence of the rules and routines are extensively mooted by the father (who relates Robinson's story as a framed narrative) and his children who still have to internalise, grasp, and situate the moral rules around them and frequently offer divergent perspectives in the process. The frame narrative connects the moral "ontogeny" of the children to the "phylogenetics" of civilisation and suggests that both can be superimposed on one another. I will work with concepts that focus on the differentiation between "innate" moral characteristics and their social transformation on a cognitive, evolutionary level, from which Campe clearly deviates. However, his short-circuiting of the individual and the phylogeny leads to very similar specifications as laid out by, for instance, Moral Foundations Theory.

Keywords: Johann Heinrich Campe; Robinson Crusoe; Moral Foundations Theory

1. Introduction

"Was mich so in die Welt hinausgetrieben?—Will ich aufrichtig sein, so war der, der den ersten Anstoß dazu gab, ein alter Bekannter von uns Allen, und zwar Niemand anders als Robinson Crusoe." ([1], p. 244).¹

With this succinct statement, Friedrich Gerstäcker, the famous German traveler and novelist, captured the profound and lasting impact that Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* had made ever since its publication in 1719. Sixty years later, one of the most influential texts in the eighteenth century saw yet another re-iteration of its plot: The enlightened pedagogue Joachim Heinrich Campe wrote an adaptation for the "pleasant and useful entertainment of children" [2], following the purpose Jean-Jacques Rousseau suggested for Defoe's novel in his treatise *Émile*. This distinctly didactic overtone combined with the exotic elements of the story provide an insight into the specific "Germanization" of Robinson's fate [3]. Considered a veritable "bible for the bourgeois" [4], the novel indeed breaks down various ethical scenarios and rules, pertaining to both the moral entwinement with others and the "good life" as an ethical objective. The rules that materialise in the book at first seem predictable (especially in the heyday of Enlightenment); moreover, its foreign backdrop

¹ "What drove me into the world? If I am to be honest, it was an old acquaintance that first initiated it, namely none other than Robinson Crusoe." My translation.

is tightly connected to the conventional colonial discourse patterns of the time. However, on closer inspection the novel proves to be more complex than anticipated, as the second part of this article seeks to demonstrate: That, of course, does not change the fundamentally colonial slant of Campe's argument, but it demonstrates how authors at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries found multi-faceted answers to the challenges of colonial expansion in the age of Enlightenment.²

Robinsonades are often categorised as a sub-genre of the utopian novel. Johann Gottfried Schnabel's novel *Insel Felsenburg* [6] (*The Island Stronghold*, 1731–1743) offers a prime example of this classification, as the fourpartite novel combines shipwreck, insular isolation, and the conceptualisation of a utopian community far away from the war-ridden Europe of the eighteenth century. *The Island Stronghold*—at least in its first installment—presents a proper incarnation of the classic Utopia motif. The original Robinsonade, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, focuses on the new beginning for the protagonist, primarily in terms of his introspection, his conversion to Christianity and the rebuilding of civilisation (by means of tools and technical devices), in a constant fight against the forces of nature. Not only the conquest of nature, but also the conquest of self and the scale of human achievement have been read as utopian elements.

What has Campe's adaptation to offer beyond these ideas, which were routinely explored throughout the long eighteenth century, not least in Defoe's seminal novel? Campe himself found the material Defoe presented auspicious but objected to the dry delivery of the story. At first sight, the alterations Campe implemented seem geared toward making it more palatable to children for whom he foresaw the greatest pedagogical benefits. On closer inspection, his changes prove to have a far-reaching impact on the underlying argument. If read as (partially) utopian (or, by the same token, dystopian in certain respects), Defoe's text already interconnects personal growth with spatial isolation—in this sense it seems to anticipate aspects of a "temporal utopia" (as described by Reinhart Koselleck in reference to Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *L'an 2440*). Campe's appropriation of *Crusoe* brings out this aspect and fully aligns it with the idea of *Bildung* in the late eighteenth century ([3], p. 105). By means of an extensive frame narrative, in which the story is told and discussed with children, this pedagogical, evolutionary dimension comes to the fore. In view of the constant reflection and interpretation performed by the family and the children, Robinson's story presents less of an alternative reality and more of an illuminating experiment which doubles as a commentary on their coeval society.

With a particular focus on Wezel's *Robinson Crusoe* and Wilhelm Meisters *Wanderjahren* (1821, 1829) as a new type of literature, Torsten Hahn and Nicolas Pethes have argued that the idea of an open-ended experiment filled the void that providence had left [7]. Politically speaking, an "experiment" allowed for the notion of social governance to persist while also acknowledging a basic contingency of life. In clear contrast with these novels, the emerging social parameters in *Robinson the Younger* strike us as familiar as they resonate with the order in place in Europe. Furthermore providence is still an explicit and dominant concept in Campe's novel, although it mainly seems to be part of the overarching pedagogical message of *Bildung* and self-mastery: fearfulness is exposed and condemned as the main motivational source that is most likely to interfere with the principal notion of reason in the novel.³ Just as in Wezel's and Goethe's novels, the professed uncertainty of the outcome is crucial for the ideological undertone of Campe's book and for what I claim to be its experimental character.⁴ Campe sets out to examine the legitimacy of his contemporary social reality (in Europe in the broadest sense) by tracing its origins back to the most basic roots conceivable. Apparently he does not take the state of

² In the late eighteenth century, new scientific approaches were often tied to these challenges, such as the budding discipline of anthropology and its integral assumption of a "unified, trans-temporal category of the human" ([5], p. 326).

³ Robinson succeeds in mastering his fear and finds his unshakeable trust in God, which in turn provides him with equanimity required to cope with dangerous situation.

⁴ Hahn and Pethes point out that the notion of an experiment is a fundamental element of utopias in any case ([7], p. 128).

things *per se* for the best of all possible worlds: However, in his thought experiment it might emerge as such after a profound logical examination of its workings.

In the following I seek to show how Campe's commentary is both highly affirmative and at the same time radically challenging in its intercultural outlook and its analysis of society. He dwells on processes of valuation themselves, thus, almost implicitly, tackling the premises of individual and collective moral engagement with the respective environment. While the 'formation of the German colonizer' ([3], p. 106) is indubitably crucial for the novel, the emphasis of my article lies exactly on Campe's attempt to focus on the activity of valuing which will here be understood and explored within the context of new cognitive research on issues of morality.

Campe's young Robinson has to grapple with two sets of values: one that is preordained by his Christian God, who is omnipresent in the novel, and another that actually emerges as the result of certain relational patterns of organism-environment interaction. This difference is vital. Campe's careful analysis of the human psyche differentiates between unchangeable constituents and malleable components, which are the result of upbringing and education. It is this distinct focus on perfectibility—topical in the eighteenth century—which transforms the utopian notion of virtuous self-fashioning into an experiment. What Campe holistically conjures up is a zero hour in which the protagonist loses all the privileges of civilisation. While Defoe's Crusoe is able to salvage goods from the shipwreck, Robinson the Younger is marooned on the shores of a remote island without any possessions, let alone pets. All the same he manages to establish a routine, constructs tools and progresses through different technological stages to relative luxury and comfort. In view of Robinson's emerging daily routine Campe's narrative indeed converges with utopian concepts, as he develops a timeless blueprint for a "good life" (in an ethical sense) which proves straightforwardly transferable to eighteenth-century Germany. By establishing the new order on the island based on no other presupposition than its congruence with (human) nature and common sense Campe's novel follows an essential rule of utopian fiction. However, since the order on the island—again, derived from nature and extrapolated from reason—coincides with a significant number of laws, premises, rules and ideas of eighteenth-century Europe, as the father in the frame narrative is keen to emphasise, the outcome of the insular experiment broadly affirms the Western order that is in force. In this respect, Campe's *Robinson*—despite its proximity to utopian literature—clearly deviates from this genre.

The experimental character is emphasised and—to an extent—explicitly introduced through the frame narrative which constitutes Campe's most important addition to Defoe's story: here the emergence of the rules and routines are extensively mooted by the father (who relates Robinson's story as a framed narrative) and his children who still have to internalise, grasp, and situate the moral rules around them and therefore frequently offer divergent perspectives in the process. Although the outcome of the discussion is often predictable, the conversation is genuinely open-ended and dependent on an ostensibly judicious, unbiased exploration of the problem in question, thus duplicating the scrutiny (and problematic confirmation) of the Western social order in the framed narrative. Like Rousseau before, Campe follows the line of eighteenth-century conjectural, philosophical history with its "thrust [...] toward a more systematic treatment of the social" and presents his case study as moral science ([8], p. 171). The development of civilisation unfolds around Robinson's shipwreck, a virtual resetting event ([9], p. 19), which starts the process of civilisation afresh. *Vice versa*, the moral progression of the children is facilitated by the proper comprehension of this very phylogeny.

The frame narrative thus connects the moral "ontogeny" of the children with the "phylogenetics" of civilisation and suggests that both can be superimposed on one another, as they both follow the same explainable and logical rules. I am using these technical terms in inverted commas here, as they only conceptually resemble the biological terms. In the following I will work with concepts that focus on the differentiation between "innate" moral characteristics and their social transformation on a

cognitive, evolutionary level, from which Campe clearly deviates.⁵ However, his short-circuiting of the individual and the phylogenetic moral development leads to very similar specifications with regard to stability and change as laid out recently by “Moral Foundations Theory” [10], with which a group of social and cultural psychologists attempts to explain the origins of and variation in human moral reasoning on the basis of innate, modular foundations.

Highlighting this more elusive aspect by accentuating the above mentioned developmental perspective only means to bring out the ambivalence in Campe’s novel more clearly: he heavily draws on characteristic colonial discourse patterns and topoi (savage, primitive, superstitious, illiterate, apolitical, child-like, *etc.* [11], p. 32), as Susanne Zantop has comprehensively shown [3]: Campe may admittedly foreground a dynamic concept of culture based on pedagogically guided transformation and change (which is distinctly German/European); he conceives of this process as strictly asymmetrical nonetheless. While the idea of a young German marooned on a remote island, who forges a friendship with the natives, seems to speak to the potential of transcultural hybridity, the novel concerns itself rather with basic processes of valuing which are unmistakably intended to justify the European order in place—just as the above mentioned experiment sets out to demonstrate. Thus the sphere on the island that opens up as an intercultural encounter zone cannot be perceived as reciprocal: only in view of peripheral aspects—for instance when it comes to merely technical know-how (Friday teaches Robinson how to ignite a fire)—Campe acknowledges a transcultural flow, *i.e.*, he concedes valuable knowledge (rendered unnecessary by the course the civilisation in Europe) to Friday, who is otherwise evidently the main recipient of worthwhile cultural input. While the novel defies the notion of transcultural hybridity proper (Friday is just transformed into a young European man), it still recognises the above-mentioned processual dimension of culture as civilisation—admittedly with a teleological bent. According to Campe’s conventional narrative these different timelines of progress are ostensibly bound to culminate in enlightened Europe.

At the same time, Campe offers a very basic notion of human equality hidden beneath the layers of hierarchised cultural diversity: as I will demonstrate, this underlying idea of human equality helps to disabuse the children in the frame narrative from preconceived notions of superiority and encourages them to assess and evaluate moral actions within their original, culturally determined context. With these two different perspectives in place, Campe can highlight the—in his view—unquestionable dominance of Europe, whilst simultaneously embracing the inherent logic of other cultural orders: although the colonial discourse is the dominant tone in this novel, I will focus on this latter aspect in the following and argue that Campe is amenable to it, as he is able to identify basic and universally binding, meta-cultural core values (such as moral accounting and reciprocity), connecting humankind across all geographical and temporal barriers.

Ultimately, of course, these notions of diversity are the result of the (still) expanding colonial horizons of the eighteenth century, as the appreciation for different ‘histories’ (as in Johann Gottfried Herder’s historism) had to be squared with the increasingly central idea of progress ([12], pp. 375–78). The transformative quality of this perspective indeed constitutes a subliminal, transcultural dimension of Campe’s argument.⁶

2. History on a Small Scale

Based on the learning scenario in the frame narrative, Campe’s novel—like its precursor *Robinson Crusoe*—contains many historically specific references that proceed from the parameters of European

⁵ With his notion of deep history Daniel Lord Smail problematises this concept by drawing attention to a problem connected with the premises of conjectural history: “Conjectural historians, concerned with the process, did not trouble themselves with origins. To make their schemes work, all they needed was a set of primitive or presocial conditions.” ([9], p. 21).

⁶ In this sense, his argument resonates with central “fantasies of political origin” as for instance in Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan*. Hobbes refers to the “savages” in America who still find themselves in the state of nature. Philip Manow elaborates on this “phylogenetic” perspective ([13], pp. 21–34).

law and morality, in particular natural law. As we know, Robinson's solitary existence eventually ends when he comes across indigenous people, saves and eventually befriends Friday. His encounter with Friday shows how the rights of the superior come into being. On entering Robinson's abode, Friday is duly impressed with the various products emanating from Robinson's incessant work:

"Hier machte der Wilde große Augen, da er die bequeme und ordentliche Einrichtung der Wohnung seines Erretters sahe, weil er so was schönes in seinem ganzen Leben noch nicht gesehen hatte. Es war ihm ohngefähr eben so dabei zu Muthe, als wenn ein Landman, der nie aus seinem Dorfe gekommen ist, zum erstenmahl in einen Pallast geführt wird." ([2], p. 203).⁷

Friday's wonder again throws into sharp relief the fact that Campe—following Defoe's material⁸—is actually retelling the story of civilisation. In view of Robinson's conspicuous excellence in all areas, Friday has no choice but to submit himself voluntarily to Robinson, especially, and I will return to this, as he owes him his life:

"Freitag (denn so wollen wir ihn nun künftig auch nennen) näherte sich ihm mit allen ersinlichen Zeichen der Ehrerbietung und der Dankbarkeit, kniete alsdan vor ihm nieder, legte seinen Kopf abermahls plat auf die Erde, und setzte eben so, wie er es das erstemahl gemacht hatte, seines Befreiers Fuß auf seinen Nacken. [...Robinson] gab ihm also durch Zeichen und Gebehrden zu verstehen, daß er ihn zwar in seinen Schuz genommen habe, aber nur unter der Bedingung eines strengen Gehorsams: daß er sich also müsse gefallen lassen, alles das zu thun oder zu lassen, was er, sein Herr und König ihm zu befehlen oder zu verbieten für gut erachten wurde. Er bediente sich dabei des Worts Katschike, womit die wilden Amerikaner ihre Oberhäupter zu benennen pflegen, wie er sich glücklicher Weise erinnerte, einmahl gehört zu haben. Mehr durch dieses Wort, als durch die damit verbundenen Zeichen, verstand Freitag die Meinung seines Herrn und äusserte seine Zufriedenheit darüber, indem er das Wort Katschike einige mahl mit lauter Stimme widerholte, dabei auf Robinson wies und sich von neuem ihm zu Füßen warf. Ja, um zu zeigen, daß er recht gut wisse, was es mit der königlichen Gewalt zu bedeuten habe, ergrif er den Spieß, gab ihn seinem Herrn in die Hand, und setzte die Spitze desselben sich selbst auf die Brust, vermuthlich um dadurch anzuzeigen, daß er mit Leib und Leben in seiner Macht stehe. Robinson reichte ihm hierauf mit der Würde eines Monarchen freundlich die Hand zum Zeichen seiner königlichen Huld, und befahl ihm abermahls, sich zu lagern, um die Abendmahlzeit mit ihm einzunehmen. [...] Seht, Kinder, auf diese oder auf eine ähnliche Weise sind die ersten Könige in der Welt entstanden. Es waren Männer, die an Weisheit, an Muth und an Leibesstärke andern Menschen überlegen waren. Daher kamen diese zu ihnen, um sie zu bitten, sie gegen wilde Thiere, deren es anfangs mehr gab, als jezt, und gegen solche Menschen zu beschützen, die ihnen Unrecht thun wolten.—Dafür versprachen sie dan, ihnen in allen Stücken gehorsam zu sein, und ihnen von ihren Heerden und von ihren Früchten jährlich etwas abzugeben, damit sie selbst nicht nöthig hätten, sich ihren Unterhalt zu erwerben, sondern sich ganz allein mit der Sorge für ihre Unterthanen beschäftigen könnten." ([2], pp. 206–7)⁹.

⁷ "Here the savage stared, to see the convenient and regular disposition of his deliverer's habitation, because he had never seen any thing so handsome in his life. He was nearly in the same frame of mind, as a country man, who has never been away from his village, when he sees a palace for the first time." ([14], p. 58).

⁸ Johann Karl Wezel, who published his adaptation of *Robinson Crusoe* in 1779, highlighted this aspect in Defoe's novel, when he explicitly stated that *Robinson* describes—if presented appropriately—human history on a small scale, a miniature painting of different states humankind had successively gone through ([15], p. XVII). Campe's and Wezel's rather different adaptations appear at almost the same time; cf. for the ensuing controversy and further context [16].

⁹ "Friday (for so we will call him for the future) drew near with all possible marks of respect and gratitude, then kneeled down before him, laid his head flat on the ground and placed his deliverer's foot on the neck, as he had done the first time. [...Robinson] gave him therefore to understand by signs and gestures, that he had indeed taken him under his protection, but only on condition of the strictest obedience: that he must therefore consent to do or not to do, whatever he, his Lord and King should think proper to order or forbid him. In making him understand this, he made use of the word Katschike, a name, by which the Americans call their superious, which he luckily remember'd to have heard once. This word made Friday understand the meaning of his master, more than all the signs with which he accompanied it, and he expressed his satisfaction by repeating the word Katschike several times with a loud voice and by prostrating himself again at his feet. Nay, to convince him that he knew very well, what royal authority was, he took hold of the lance, put it into his master's hands, and placed the point of it on his breast, probably to indicate, that his body and life were in his power. Hereupon

It is worth quoting this extensive passage, since it not only touches on a plethora of colonial stereotypes, but is as much a historical explanation as a reference to contractarianism—a veritable “social contract” which will be brought into play in its proper legal form at the end of the novel, when Robinson, figuratively speaking, passes on the sceptre to his fellow islanders (at that point, the governmental system is already in place, fully adapted to human strengths and weaknesses).

This scene evokes an archaic political ritual, bearing out the explicit claim that power relations came into being as a logical and natural consequence of physical and/or intellectual superiority. Following this premise of natural law, the episode prior to this alliance also complies with eighteenth-century moral requirements. As Robinson shies away from killing an enemy to protect his life in the long run (Friday, untouched by civilisation as it were, has to step in and slay the native, which he incidentally does without any hesitation), the scene dispels any suspicion that Campe’s Robinson might act out of self-interest.¹⁰ Robinson’s impeccable actions and motivations prove instrumental in Campe’s attempt to show rather than to postulate the realisation of legitimate power hierarchies. By the same token, these scenarios supply the reader with a logical, reasonable justification of power.

What follows is the quasi-enthronement of Robinson as the island monarch in whose jocular description the father and the children revel: “Robinson war also nunmehr ein wirklicher König, nur daß seine Herrschaft sich nicht weiter, als über einen einzigen Unterthan und einige Lamas erstreckte; den Papagai mit einbegriffen.”¹¹ ([2], p. 207).

Strikingly, these two young men—later portrayed as brothers, *i.e.*, as family—are very clearly conceptualised as ruler and subject on the island. Thus the European understanding of order is seamlessly imposed on them; the children in the frame narrative laugh at this as expected, however, the whole etiology determines that Campe indeed associates the beginning of civilisation proper with concepts of legitimate, “reasonable” power hierarchies. Replaying this historical genesis on an island in the sixteenth century—this is how the father dates the events on the island—lends it an air of teleology where “history” naturally culminates in Western civilisation.¹² In so doing, Campe allows for different strands of history, but he is also keen to highlight the European superiority which he again not so much postulates but quasi scientifically establishes by dint of Robinson’s life on the island: the young castaway has to re-invent it from scratch, guided only by reason, necessity and a “natural” morality—all of these latter aspects belong to the experimental arrangement of the novel.

Campe also repeatedly emphasises Friday’s childlikeness,¹³ projecting the concept of family bonds onto the political realm in a way that was not uncommon in eighteenth-century Germany (especially in the reference to the *Landesvater*). The novel occasionally recognises that Friday might be better adapted to the life on the island, but it also clarifies that his mind (*Verstand*) is still less developed. In this sense, Robinson indeed serves as a well-meaning patriarch who loves, protects, and

ROBINSON kindly reached him his hand with the dignity of a monarch as a sign of his royal favour, and order’d him again to sit down, and take his supper with him. [...] Look ye, my children, the first kings in the world took their rise in this and the like manner. They were men, who surpass others in wisdom, courage and bodily strength. Therefore they came to them and begged their protection against wild beasts, of which there were anciently more than at present, and against such people as would wrong them.—For this they promised to obey them in every thing and to give them every year something of their flocks and fruit, that they might not be in the necessity of getting their own livelihood, but employ themselves solely with the care of their subjects.” ([14], pp. 62–64).

¹⁰ Campe’s effort to clarify the scenario morally becomes tangible in comparison with Wezel’s Robinson in which Robinson pursues the natives intentionally to satisfy his need for a companion: “*Er wollte den Wilden auflauern, sie anfallen und ein Schlachtopfer ihrer Grausamkeit erlösen, damit der Errettete aus Dankbarkeit sein Freund würde und ihm den Weg nach dem festen Lande zeigte. [...] Man merkt, daß ihm die Leidenschaft diesen Grund eingab, denn er ist falsch.*” “He wanted to ambush the savages and save a victim from their cruelty, so that the saved victim would become his friend out of gratitude and would show him the way to the mainland. [...] One realises that passion inspired him to think of this as the reason for it is false.” My translation.

¹¹ “Robinson was now a real king, only that his dominion reached no further, than over a single subject and some lama’s, the parrot included.” ([14], p. 64).

¹² This is obviously connected to the colonial discourse in Germany into which I cannot delve here, cf. ([17], pp. 19–21, 74–80).

¹³ This take again differs from Wezel, who extensively dwells on Franz’ (who is the equivalent of Friday in this text) animal-like qualities, when he describes how Franz follows his master like a dog ([15], p. 195).

educates his subjects. The notion of the non-European as a “child” is a familiar trope in postcolonial discourse of course, however, in Campe’s novel it serves another function as well: I will return to this notion of family as a master trope of power later; for now it remains notable that childhood is perceived as a form of immaturity that the adolescent is required (and, if taught and educated properly, bound) to overcome. In this sense the relation between Robinson and Friday is also determined by a temporal aspect (not in terms of their biological age, but rather their cultural stage) and supposed to balance itself out in the long run. As this trope is also famously an intercultural one, it ties together the “phylogeny” of mankind with the individual “ontogeny” which is insouciantly projected onto the status quo: The world presents itself to Robinson (and to the audience in the frame narrative 200 years later) as segmented into different historical-temporal layers, focussing on nations and ethnicities that find themselves at varying developmental stages. Automatically, the novel inculcates the reader with the importance of the Western world, as it defines the teleological endpoint of the journey on which Friday both studiously and successfully embarks. According to the text, the synchronisation of these different stages is conceivable (at least for young Friday, his father Thursday dies before they embark the ship to Europe) and can be achieved to a full extent, extinguishing almost all cultural differences.

3. Eighteenth-Century Law and Value Concepts

The discussions between the father and the children in the frame narrative extensively cover legally specific questions ranging from self-defence to the *jus litoris* (which entitles Robinson to take possession of the jetsam after the shipwreck). *Vis-à-vis* the notion of self-defence, the father re-emphasises the foundation of natural law, but also refers to the rare necessity to resort to it in Hamburg (viz. Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation):

“Allerdings, lieben Kinder, ist eine solche Nothwehr nach menschlichen und götlichen Gesezen recht, aber wohl gemerkt!—nur in dem einzigen Fal, wenn ganz und gar kein anderes Mittel zu unserer eigenen Rettung übrig ist. [...] Vergeßt nicht, lieben Kinder, Gott zu danken, daß wir in einem Lande leben, in welchem die Obrigkeit so gute Veranstaltungen zu unserer Sicherheit getroffen hat, daß unter hundert tausend Menschen höchst selten ein Einziger in die traurige Nothwendigkeit gerathen kan, von dem Rechte der Nothwehr Gebrauch machen zu müssen.” ([2], pp. 201–2).¹⁴

The status quo is perceived as similarly exemplary with a view to “Wrecking”; Robinson, who is the owner of the island, has an obvious right to appropriate the jetsam. This notion also derives from a distinctly European context of property, which is presented as (ahistorical) common sense in the novel. Robinson’s political power, prompting him to think of himself as a “proper king”, not only emanates from what the novel understands as his intellectual and spiritual superiority, but also from a specific conceptualisation of property: “Die ganze Insel war sein Eigenthum” ([2], p. 307). While he specifies that the loyalty of his subjects originates in the fact that they all owe him their lives, the notion of the island (that is also frequented by cannibals) as his property harks back to Locke’s extensive treatment of the property question in the *Second Treatise of Civil Government*.¹⁵ The concept of self-ownership that extends to the products of one’s labour permeates the entire novel and provides yet another layer of justification for the power relations depicted in the novel. The acquisition of power is perceived as a natural process that not only depends on innate superiority, but is also fundamentally connected with

¹⁴ “To be sure, my dear children, such self-defence is just according to divine and human laws, but—observe me well! In this case only: when there is no other remedy so save ourselves. Whereas if we have an opportunity to escape, or to be protected by others, or to disable our pursuers from hurting us: any attempt upon his life is real murder, and is punish’d as such by the law. Don’t forget to thank God, my dear children, that we live in a country, in which our superiors have made such good dispositions for our security, that scarce one man in a thousand can ever come in the melancholy necessity of fighting for his own preservation.” ([14], p. 56).

¹⁵ “27. Though the earth, and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man has a *property* in his own *person*. [...] The *labour* of his body, and the *work* of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *labour* with and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property.” [18].

a humble work ethic (which Robinson decides to maintain even when he could delegate all work to his subjects).¹⁶

Many of the concepts are historically specific to the onset of modernity in Europe and closely tied to the discourses connected with it. However, as I said earlier, Campe's originality lies in the specific addition of the narrative frame, which focuses on the emergence, appropriation and production of rules. The father and the children in the frame narrative are eager to explore the moral dimension of every event that occurs: not only on the island, but also in the dialogues between grown-ups and children we encounter a second and decisive zero hour narrative, as the children go through different stages of evaluation when they are confronted with the various ethical dilemmas in their father's story. Again the insight the reader is supposed to gain from this is twofold: first, children prove to be adept in common-sense (and thus confirm it as "natural"); second, where they seem more susceptible to subjective perspectives led by personal preferences, the father forces them to probe and evaluate these false assumptions and—as a result of this rational and reasonable scrutiny of all relevant facts and premises—they prove happy to part with them. The conclusion they reach is thus in keeping with their natural instinct where it is compatible with the intersubjective morality of the family and not driven by unrationalised feelings.¹⁷

4. Individual and Collective Developmental History: Moral Foundations

In this sense, Campe's *Robinson the Younger* not only concentrates on a miniature version of the history of civilisation, but also explores the developmental aspect of moral standards.¹⁸ In view of recent cognitive theories, Campe's approach seems "modern" in this respect, as he conceptualises morality as a form of "complex problem-solving—the reworking of a situation that has become problematic and has inhibited our ability to skillfully, meaningfully, and harmoniously navigate our social space", drawing on a constellation of "human capacities and propensities for making sense of our experience and engaging in problem-solving forms of inquiry." ([20], p. 160).

Robinson does not find himself at a proper neutral point of course: he enters his adventure with a primary understanding of values endorsed by his devout parents and transcendently substantiated by God. While everything related to human power is in need of an explanation and a reasonable justification, Campe deems Christian morality an axiom for his exploration, as God holds unlimited moral authority over people. It is striking nonetheless that Robinson's relation to God is metaphorically predicated on the notion of paternal guidance and protection, dovetailing with Campe's approach to power. Cognitive theories have engaged with the premises of morality by analysing its evolution but also by searching for universal, quasi-biological (or biologically evolved) patterns. Although the answers to these questions are still tentative, they conspicuously coincide with parts of Campe's analysis. Georg Lakoff's and Mark Johnson's thesis that virtually all our abstract moral concepts are structured metaphorically is a long-established theory in the area of cognitive studies [21,22]. They have not only suggested that conceptual metaphors are omnipresent in our quotidian life and shape the way we think. Proceeding from the principal idea that the human mind is intrinsically embodied, they have also introduced a 'philosophy in the flesh', concluding that "virtually all of our abstract moral concepts are structured metaphorically." ([22], p. 290). At the same time, they propose that the range of metaphors relating to morality is limited, as basic moral metaphors are rooted in bodily experience and social interactions: "We have found that the source domains of our metaphors for morality are typically based on what people over history and across cultures have seen as contributing to their well-being." ([22], pp. 290–91).

¹⁶ This notion goes hand in hand with a specific take on nature. Cf. [19].

¹⁷ Cf. also Wezel's above quoted, identical comment of the narrator: "Man merkt, daß ihm die Leidenschaft diesen Grund eingab, denn er ist falsch."

¹⁸ As such it differs from other adaptations of Defoe's novel, as they lack the specific layout of Campe's dialogical frame narrative.

Indeed when we examine the text more closely, we can see how Robinson's realm is borne by bodily projections (encapsulating above mentioned ideas of labour and property) which emanate from various forms of bodily well-being: Robinson strives for (and achieves) security, safety, and comfort for him and others, which is intricately interwoven with his ethical principles. All these categories relate back to "basic possessions, bodily movement, and freedom from the infliction of pain" ([22], p. 329): Campe's Robinson aspires to the "freedom from the infliction of pain" accordingly—nature appears as particularly threatening, and, as the protection mechanisms that civilisation has developed (shelter, clothes, *etc.*) are unavailable to him at first, he has to recreate them. His remarkable trajectory begins by reacquainting himself with basic necessities—aspiring to the absence of pain and harm, well-being, physical intactness.

He experimentally formulates his life rules over the course of the novel, for instance when he decides that he ought to maintain his daily routine borne by moderation and diligence, even though Friday (as his "subject") could relieve him of all physical labour.

Moreover, the novel isolates two distinct principles of "moral accounting" which coincide with the definition given by Lakoff and Johnson, who understand moral action as something that gives "something of positive value" (*i.e.*, to save Friday's life, provide him with shelter and food *etc.*) ([22], p. 293); *vice versa*, immoral action is something of negative value (*i.e.*, eating enemies without necessity). In addition to this first principle, the second principle adds that there is a moral imperative to pay one's debt and the failure to do so is in turn immoral (Friday's unconditional loyalty derives from this second principle).

The novel in fact introduces various forms of basic moral accounting schemes which extend beyond Christian concepts. Although there are examples for altruism and forgiveness (*i.e.*, when the mutineers arrive on the island), the most common principle of moral accounting in the novel is reciprocity in the sense of moral debt as it underpins the relationship between Robinson and Friday.

In so doing the novel attempts to develop ideas of power, rights, and duties as abstract "second-order metaphorical concepts" from very concrete cases of debts and credits.

This brings us back to the above-mentioned moral initiation which Robinson has experienced in his Christian family home. We can see how his Christian devotion is clearly modeled upon a father-child relationship. Lakoff and Johnson suggest that morality might "be based on models of family" and thus also connected to immediate, human experience. When Lakoff and Johnson tentatively conclude: "To think of morality in general as some form of family morality requires another metaphor, in which we understand all of humanity as part of one huge family which has traditionally been called the 'Family of Man'. This metaphor entails a moral obligation, binding on all people, to treat each other as we ought to treat our family members." ([22], p. 317).

Campe conforms with this statement as he indeed casts his protagonists in different roles that conspicuously correspond with roles within a family. Friday might enter Robinson's life as a subject (*i.e.*, as Robinson rules as a *Landesvater*, as a child), but, in the course of the novel, he evolves and becomes his nominal brother. With this evolutionary dimension hierarchies can be devised on a very basic notion of equality as human beings. Casting the "savages" as children not only coincides with a specific colonial discourse pattern, it also chimes with core ideas of development and *perfectibilité*. Enlightenment ideas about childhood and education follow a similar notion, when they consider the immaturity (and thus inferiority) of children to be temporary.¹⁹ Both discourses are intrinsically connected, as the European "ontogenetic" take on childhood provides the moral blueprint for the colonial "phylogenetic" development: Campe's frame narrative proves indispensable for this perspective.

¹⁹ Cf., for instance, Karl Ludwig Pörschke: "Es findet zwischen Eltern und Kindern ebenso wenig als zwischen Bürgern [Ungleichheit statt...], denn die Eltern befehlen dem Kind nur in seinem Namen das, was das Kind selbst sich bei voller Vernunft befehlen würde." [23]. "There is no inequality between parents and children, nor is there between citizens, for the parents command their child only what the child would command herself if she were fully mature." My translation.

Friday becomes a paramount example of such developmental achievement, not without implying a national superiority on Robinson's part (owed to some sort of "phylogenetical" evolution as well, which cannot fully be achieved by the people who join Western civilisation late). The asynchronicity that Campe alludes to is both validating in general terms, as Campe is quite clear that even the 'savages' are fellow human beings, and condescending in a concrete respect, for instance, when the father labels the "Wilden" as only "*menschenähnliche*" "*Geschöpfen*" ([2], p. 187),²⁰ who resemble "wild beasts" ([2], p. 188) given their brutish and "stupid" ([2], p. 187) upbringing. What the "savages" need is proper education that builds on and fully develops their humanity: cannibalism derives from ignorance ([2], pp. 225–26), but is nevertheless tied to ethical rules, as 'only' enemies are eaten. Although this of course does not validate the abhorrent practice as such, the specification implies that even 'savages' follow rules of moral accounting (enemies are paying their debt with their own flesh) and are quite upset if accused that they would harm the innocent (who are debt free). Whilst forming a fairly inclusive concept of humanity and drawing attention to these crucial nuances, Campe offers a harsher view of their state of civilisation and confidently promotes his European ideas as binding and fully-fledged. Thus, Campe's *Robinson* affirms the civilised society in place, presenting the bourgeois values implemented by Robinson as natural and perfectly adapted for survival,—even and specifically—in competition with other *modi vivendi*. By dint of his "micro-history" of civilization Campe is nonetheless forced to put European values up for discussion (even if they ultimately re-emerge uncontested). The urge to perform an analysis of the origin of the power relation and the question of its legitimacy is revealing as it indirectly formulates the need of justification in the first place. Political theory was exploring these questions throughout the centuries—with special rigour since the Renaissance—but Campe goes one step further and shows the inherently evolutionary quality of the moral valuing processes (and thus their degree of changeability).²¹

Against this background, I will now investigate Campe's reflections on 'innate' and taught values. Robert McCauley has proposed a distinction between maturational naturalness and practiced capacities. For him maturational naturalness describes natural cognition whose acquisition does not depend on any form of explicit instruction, specifically structured learning environments, artifacts, inputs that are particular to a culture or (even) on inputs that are culturally distinctive. Maturational natural actions are undertaken spontaneously and a few of them feature general forms that are shared by other species ([24], p. 29).

McCauley famously uses this specification to explore "why religion is natural and science is not". Maturationally natural capacities are in this sense theories with which humans are typically equipped and which influence their implicit cognition. In his book *Morality for Humans* Mark Johnson extends this definition to maturationally natural values which are of interest here. Johnson follows John Dewey in the notion that valuing presents a more appropriate term than value, as it emphasises the dynamic situation between organism and environment. He sees the preferential directness which aims for certain states of organism-environment interaction as an evaluative process which can be "selectively and abstractly described as that organism's value, as long as we refrain from turning those 'values' into abstract entities." ([20], p. 52).

With his specific adaptation of Defoe's novel for children, Campe promotes both the relational, interactive and the dynamic nature of valuing: we observe Robinson's journey on which he not only builds a material existence, but on which he also defines and expands on rules which are brought into being as necessary; Campe might emphasise divine providence and reason specifically, however, what bestows legitimacy on Robinson's actions is the fact that they coincide with 'values' that are indeed shared (or are potentially shareable) by everyone, even the 'savages'. Only if Robinson meets this very

²⁰ "Men; but no, only of such creatures, as have the mere shape of man" ([14], p. 36).

²¹ He not only suggests that a legitimate form of government has to be "natural" and comply with reason, but he also draws a distinct line between nature and nurture, when he describes an underlying universal human understanding of morality, displayed even by "savages" on remote islands.

premise, learning and readapting is possible. He can influence the process of valuing and its evaluative results, but he cannot interfere with the 'blueprint' that is shared by all human beings. Friday's innocent comment about his ignorance in view of cannibalism ("I didn't know yet that it was wrong" ([2], p. 250) can be adduced as evidence for this twofold value spectrum Campe introduces and with which he indeed draws a distinction between cultural manifestation and inherent, *i.e.*, maturationally natural value: as such the concept of self-defence also formulates an exception from the explicit rules Robinson knows (for instance, the fifth commandment). It is important that the "savages" are by no means disqualified by their killing, as Campe recognises that they behave in correspondence with their own culturally learned practices. As they "only" harm their enemies, Campe also accentuates the relevant rule which cannot be infringed on: the immorality of harming the "innocent" within a complex moral accounting scheme of reciprocity which happens to bear on the elaborations on self-defence as well. Admittedly, this discourse is not Campe's invention; he models his thoughts on Robinson Crusoe's scruples, as longwindedly portrayed by Defoe [25]. As opposed to Defoe, Campe however offers a confident solution to this inconclusive and arduous examination of conscience by tying the question of "self-preservation" closely to the educational frame narrative in which the father—in reference to contemporary law—rationally decides that self-defence constitutes no crime.

In addition to this, Campe's entelechical concept of humanity historicises the anthropological concept he espouses with regard to maturational values; by focusing this process on the Western world he immobilises the dynamic (that he suggests for Robinson within the parameters of the zero hour narrative) on a historical level and thus caters to both a liberation narrative of the *conquistadore* and the highly complacent notion of a "German special path": "Imperceptibly but all the more powerfully, *Robinson the Younger* helped propagate the myth of the benign, efficient, and restrained German colonizer, a myth that would permeate not just nineteenth-century, but also a good part of twentieth-century German literature." ([3], p. 120).

While this aspect proves highly ideological, Campe's novel indirectly gives an answer to the question of how other nations can be converted to other cultural practices (in particular if the latter prove to be more "reasonable"): all human beings are fundamentally the same in view of certain maturationally natural values (a "family of man"). He shows himself as aware of the—at times counter-intuitive—complexity of these maturationally natural values and is keen to explore the origin(s) of and variation in human moral reasoning with a clear focus on "innate" foundations. In the debate between young Christel and her father about cannibalism Campe consequently differentiates between cultural values and innate instincts connected with it by proceeding from a widely accepted moral rule echoing throughout human history: absence of harm:

"Christel. O das hätten sie doch auch wohl wissen können, daß das nicht hübsch sei! Vater. Und woher, lieber Christel, hätten sie das denn wohl wissen können? Christel. O das weiß ja das kleinste Kind, daß es nicht recht ist, einen umzubringen, um ihn aufzuessen! Vater. Aber woher weiß denn dieses das kleinste Kind? Nicht wahr, weil es frühzeitig belehrt worden ist? [...] Vater. Und wenn's nun nicht belehrt worden wäre? Wenn sogar seine Eltern und andere erwachsene Menschen, die es liebte und ehrte, ihm von früher Kindheit an immer vorgesagt hätten, daß es etwas sehr schönes sei, seine Feinde zu ermorden und aufzuessen? [...] nicht wahr, dan würd' es wohl schwerlich einem Kinde jemahls einfallen, das Gegentheile zu vermuthen? Es wurde vielmehr, sobald es groß genug dazu wäre, mit schlachten und mit verzehren helfen. Und das war der Fall worin diese armen Wilden sich befanden. Wohl uns, daß Gott uns nicht unter ihnen, sondern von gesitteten Eltern hat lassen geboren werden, die uns frühzeitig lehrten, was recht und unrecht, was gut und böse sei!" ([2], p. 303).²²

²² The English translation curiously replaces young Christel with a male child, Christopher: "Oh, they might very well have known, that such actions are not good! Father. And how could they have known that, my dear Christopher? Christopher. Why, the least child knows, that it is not right, to kill and eat people! Father. But whence does the least child know that? Because it has been told so, is not it true? Christopher. Yes. Father. Now we'll suppose, it had not been taught so? Suppose, even its parents and other grown people, whom the child loved and honour'd, had from its infancy always told it, that it

In contrast to his daughter, the father identifies very general “foundations” of morality. He thus ensures that the violation of specific rules suggested by Western civilisation does not qualify the ‘savages’ as immoral per se. While Christel indirectly suggests that right and wrong are hard-wired into everyone’s psyche as a fixed moral premise,²³ the father emphasises the role of education and customs, even when it comes to actually killing and ingesting people. This radical take on learned values stresses rather than undermines the above mentioned distinction Campe emphatically draws; first of all, he is keen to underscore that the “savages” “only” kill and eat their enemies (thus still following a basic norm of moral accounting, albeit within an—according to Campe—false framework of culturally learned values). Campe acknowledges that there are different moral foundations whose varying priorities, if colliding, define distinct, cultural approaches. Based on links between evolutionary theory and anthropological observations Jonathan Haidt arrives at a similar conclusion in view of the political spectrum nowadays, determining five moral foundations²⁴ on which different political attitudes rely in different ways, all of which appear in Campe’s *Robinson*: “care/harm” as a moral foundation (which “evolved in response to the adaptive challenge of caring for vulnerable children” ([10], p. 178), revolves around protection and an “innate” aversion towards violence (as Christel explicitly points out). “Fairness/cheating” ([10], p. 178) presents a response to exploitation, as it provides us with a sense for persons who prove trustworthy partners for collaboration and reciprocal altruism (as becomes visible in Friday’s and Robinson’s friendship). “Loyalty/betrayal” which “evolved in response to the adaptive challenge of forming and maintaining coalitions” ([10], p. 178) is evoked throughout Campe’s novel as one of the primary values, especially when it comes to parent-child relations. Campe also addresses the foundation “authority/subversion” ([10], p. 179) in his political reflections (see above) and of course also in view of filial respect and submission whose violation provides the starting point for the story in the first place, as Robinson goes to sea against his parents’ better judgement, thus disrespecting their legitimate authority. Finally “sanctity/degradation” ([10], p. 179)—evolved as a response to the adaptive challenge of potentially compromised food—is a recurrent proof for the inferiority of the cannibalistic “savages”.

Although his reflections and descriptions relate to Haidt’s pluralistic scenario, Campe offers a conclusive hierarchy of these foundations (whose legitimate existence he discerns and accepts) insofar as he insists that Christian values, as implemented in the eighteenth century, embody a perfected version of morality. Ultimately, it is this customary (*i.e.*, pedagogically inculcated) viewpoint, a kind of moral shortcut, that Christel confidently assumes, at first oblivious to the more complex developmental, moral scenario to which the father has to alert her eventually.

In this particular dialogue he also reiterates one of the uncontested “values” that seem omnipresent in the novel: the bond between parent and child. For Campe, in his capacity as pedagogue, the parent-child relation is the vital moral interface. Built on devoted filial trust as the most important moral reflex, proper values can be learned and developed, *i.e.*, they take on a certain cultural shape.

was something very good, to murder one’s enemies and to eat them? Christopher. Nay then—Father. Then a child would hardly ever get a contrary idea, is not it true? Such a child would rather, as soon as it was big enough, begin to assist the rest in killing and eating. And that was the case with these poor savages. Happy for us, that God almighty has not suffer’d us to be born among them, but of civilized parents, who taught us from our infancy, what is right and wrong, good and bad!” ([14], pp. 202–3).

²³ This coincides with the resurgence of the idea that men as such possess a moral faculty, as elaborated on by Marc Hauser: “Moral judgements are mediated by an unconscious process, a hidden moral grammar that evaluates causes and consequences of our own and other’s actions. [...] I show that by looking at our moral psychology as an instinct—an evolved capacity of all human minds that unconsciously and automatically generates judgements of right and wrong—that we can better understand why some of our behaviours and decisions will always be construed as unfair, permissible [...]” ([26], p. 2). Johnson argues persuasively that it is heuristically not necessary to assume a preexistent moral faculty inherent in humans that underpins their intuitive judgements. ([20], pp. 137–62).

²⁴ Haidt later also includes the foundation “liberty and oppression” as a likely candidate for the moral foundations, which, maybe not surprisingly, is missing from Campe’s otherwise comprehensive compilation. Given the utopian context Campe is more concerned with legitimate authority and illegitimate rebellion (mutiny).

It is their filial and parental loyalty that stands out as the crucial maturationally natural value in Campe's moral universe, as it promises change, development, and perfectibility.

Campe's stance chimes with the potent concept of education and *Bildung* in the eighteenth century. By the same token, this specific scenario admittedly also seems a great concession to the malleability of human essence and potential in the eighteenth century, as the individual does not command autonomously over her/his own individuality: Campe concedes that society and its rules assume an important role in forming a person.

His twofold approach to "values" and the valuing process interestingly appears—despite all displayed determination to prove the superiority of the West with recourse to reason—indeed to be in line with the results of *Moral Foundation Theory*, which also focuses on the phenotypical diversity of values and the naturally maturational sameness of certain underlying patterns. Moral Foundation Theory follows Gary Marcus' specification of innateness in that it acknowledges that "nature bestows upon the newborn a considerably complex brain, but one that is best seen as prewired—flexible and subject to change—rather than hardwired, fixed, and immutable." ([27], p. 12).

In keeping with Marcus' concept of "innateness", *Moral Foundation Theory* emphasises that nature provides a first draft, which is then revised by experience: "The genes (collectively) write the first draft into neural tissue, beginning in utero but continuing throughout childhood. Experience (cultural learning) revises the draft during childhood, and even (to a lesser extent) during adulthood." ([28], p. 8). This notion of a first draft and its manifold realisations as a pluralistic take on morality stands out in Campe's novel, even though he renders this very notion conspicuously less explosive by integrating it in the progress achieved by the civilising process,²⁵ simply by providing a clear moral destination in the present.

While Campe thus assumes a common humanity by "relegating some peoples to the past moments of a European humanity's historical becoming" (as Chad Wellmon implies for Kant ([5], p. 432)), his theories prove to be pertinent to another important aspect of these anthropological/ethnological/colonial discourses: *i.e.*, the debate around human rights and their reach which started to unfold around 1800. In a pedagogical manual intended for his daughter (*Paternal Advice for my Daughter*, [29]) Campe stresses that she is both human and female, but has to conform to the limits of the latter definition which he acknowledges to be artificial, *i.e.*, socially imposed. However, beneath this schizophrenic imposition on female behaviour, it reveals the same potential for unconditional inclusion,²⁶ as Friday's fate shows. To Campe women and "savages" clearly are (or have the potential to be) full-fledged humans in the *moral* sense and are eligible to enter the realm where human rights—as envisaged by the eighteenth century—apply: this is one of the subliminal outcomes of his social experiment which draws so much explicit attention to Western superiority. In this sense Campe's novel is not only revealing with regard to the question of concrete morality; it is also an illuminating attempt to determine the moral rules and properties of humanity in the eighteenth century, when a clear look at the diversity of different cultures and norms actually preempted any clarity of such definition.

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²⁵ Campe's notion of a civilising process indeed reminds the reader of Norbert Elias' reflections on psychogenesis and sociogenesis in his eponymous work *The Civilising Process* (*Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation*).

²⁶ Campe's French adaptation of Sophie von La Roche's *Erscheinungen am See Oneida* (*Appearances at Lake Oneida*, 1798) is quite striking in this context. La Roche's protagonist Emilie also encounters Native Americans, 'savages', however, "analyzing her own reaction leads Emilie to empathize with the Native Americans. She sees similarity between their situation and her own with respect to the obstacles they both face on their path to knowledge." ([30], p. 122). Campe "deleted La Roche's arguments for equal education and her critique of colonial projects" ([30], p. 130). Against this backdrop, Campe's very specific conglomerate of progressive educational thoughts and distinct, sometimes conspicuous, sometimes subliminal disenfranchisement becomes even more tangible.

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