



STATE OF AFFAIRS

Daniel Defoe

I now began to consider seriously my condition, and the circumstances I was reduced to; and I drew up the state of my affairs in writing, not so much to leave them to any that were to come after me (for I was like to have but few heirs), as to deliver my thoughts from daily poring upon them and afflicting my mind. And as my reason began now to master my despondency, I began to comfort myself as well as I could, and to set the good against the evil, that I might have something to distinguish my case from worse; and I stated very impartially, like debtor and creditor, the comforts I enjoyed against the miseries I suffered, thus:

Evil

I am cast upon a horrible,
desolate island, void of all
hope of recovery.

Good

But I am alive and not
drowned, as all my ship's
company were.

I am singled out and separated,
as it were, from all the world, to
be miserable.

I am divided from mankind,
a solitaire; one banished from
human society.

I have no clothes to cover me.

I am without any defence or
means to resist any violence of
man or beast.

I have no soul to speak to or
relieve me.

But I am singled out, too, from all
the ship's crew, to be spared from
death; and he that miraculously
saved me from death, can deliver
me from this condition.

But I am not starved and perishing
in a barren place, affording no
sustenance.

But I am in a hot climate, where, if
I had clothes, I could hardly wear
them.

But I am cast on an island where
I see no wild beasts to hurt me, as
I saw on the coast of Africa, and
what if I had been shipwrecked
there?

But God wonderfully sent the ship
in near enough to the shore, that
I have got out so many necessary
things, as will either supply my
wants or enable me to supply
myself, even as long as I live.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Why does Crusoe comfort himself by setting “the good against the evil” in writing? (1)

- Why does Crusoe state his affairs “very impartially like debtor and creditor”? (1)
- Why did Crusoe list each item in the “Evil” column first?
- Why does each item in the “Good” column begin with the word “But”?
- Does Crusoe think the goods of his situation outweigh the evils or vice versa?