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# **Island Fictions: Castaways and Imperialism**

By

Britta Ulrike Hartmann, BA (Hons)

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines nearly three centuries of island novels by focusing on Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and its textual legacy. Fictional islands lie at the heart of this analysis. A broad range of novels are discussed: Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Johann D. Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812-13), Frederick Marryat's *Masterman Ready* (1841-42), R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954), Muriel Spark's *Robinson* (1958), Michel Tournier's *Friday* (1967), J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986), and Marianne Wiggins's *John Dollar* (1989), together with a selection of castaway popular romance novels from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Analytical attention to setting gives original insight into these texts, and provides a scholarly lens through which they are brought together in a new light. Whilst the legacy of *Robinson Crusoe* now includes postcolonial novels, I contend that island representations within the later stories remain largely imperial: characters engage with their surroundings through inherited ideological assumptions and attitudes. Ranging from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century, these novels are principally focused on human mastery over, and conquest of, the island terrain.

The examination of insular settings is an invaluable means of understanding *Robinson Crusoe* and the island novels that came in its wake. Such analysis also gives insight into the function of islands within fiction in general. This thesis is located in literary studies, and is informed by scholars such as Martin Green, Diana Loxley, Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Rod Edmond, Gillian Beer, and Rebecca Weaver-Hightower. It also speaks to the interdisciplinary field of island studies, which has, to date, largely neglected literary islands. An examination of *Robinson Crusoe*—an archetypal island text—and its legacy provides an opportunity to begin addressing this gap in the

scholarship. Literary islands are brought to the forefront, and their relevance to the scholarly discourse on islands is made apparent. This study of island fictions draws on space/place theory, and borrows from the overlapping fields of island studies, ecocriticism, and cultural geography. Overall, the thesis re-evaluates several significant island novels in order to explore the broader role of islands within fiction.

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## **Introduction: The Fictional Island**

Islands—be they real or fictional—hold a heavy cultural position in Western society. The island image has, in a general sense, been extensively inscribed over time and is consequently steeped in meaning. Leading island studies scholar Godfrey Baldacchino argues that “Statements and assertions abound about what islands and islanders are ... It seems as if the geography is simply too gripping; the island image too powerful to discard; the opportunity to ‘play God’ on/for an island too tantalizing to resist” (“Islands” 247). His words, crucially, imply a link between island physicality and human attitudes towards these locations: people respond to islands through the “geography” of terrain. Their response, moreover, is one of God-like omnipotent control. Insular terrain is overlaid with a discourse of power. This discourse gains strength through repeated use, until it becomes a stereotypical means of engaging with islands. Baldacchino observes that people who are asked to draw an island will often give it a circular shape. “Why should this happen?” he asks, before suggesting that “Perhaps the answer lies in an obsession to control, to embrace an island as something that is finite, that may be encapsulated by human strategy, design or desire” (“Islands” 247). Again, it is insular physicality that comes to the forefront; islands are considered controllable through their shape. These circular islands, however, are constructed images: the landforms they represent are not inherently conquerable. Islands can be routinely dominated, because they have been re-imagined to suit such thinking.

Islands have been persistently thought of through notions of dominance and conquest in Western society: regardless of whether they are depicted in a positive or a negative light, islands are places to be possessed (often in a figurative sense through



abstract symbolisation). This thesis examines a chain of island texts from Daniel Defoe's iconic *Robinson Crusoe*<sup>1</sup> (1719) to the present day. The fictional islands being examined in this study, I argue, are possessed—in more ways than one—through the language of spatiality. Islands are constructed both as items of property and as spaces inhabited by a kind of haunting spectre. These insular places are possessed by the needs of others. They become property, contained pieces of land existing merely for the benefit of those unfortunate souls who find themselves trapped on their shores. Furthermore, these island locales are haunted by a certain castaway image and a certain kind of island lifestyle—they are negotiated through the ideologies and behaviours of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Characters and readers alike are expected to engage with insular spatiality through prior knowledge of the castaway tradition.

Western attitudes to islands are infused with a history of European dominance and the conquest of other nations. “Since the colonial expansion of Europe,” writes Elizabeth DeLoughrey, “its literature has increasingly inscribed the island as a reflection of various political, sociological, and colonial practices ... Broadly speaking, European inscriptions of island topoi have often upheld imperial logic and must be recognized as ideological tools that helped make colonial expansion possible” (*Routes* 13). These literary geographies are important empire-building territories: islands are shaped into ideal sites of imperialism and colonialism. As Diana Loxley contends in her influential study of nineteenth-century island novels, such texts function as ideal tools of empire. Examining the “island motif ... at the level of its institutionalisation as an *ideal* discourse—guaranteed by the state and embedded in the educational apparatus,” Loxley makes apparent the manner in which the motif's “nuanced negotiation of the relationship between Britain and the outside world

provides a model formula for the assimilation of the language of conquest, masculinity, supremacy and authority and also of the supposedly inherent, eternal values of that language” (xi). Insular geographies of fiction are sites of imperial ideologies, places where characters can learn how to be successful empire builders. Castaways generally transform their islands into colonial outposts, before then departing for other regions in the empire. They control, alter, and dominate their surroundings to suit their own needs and desires, and in so doing replicate real-world attitudes towards islands.

Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* is a key novel in this process, both in its own right and through the multitude of island texts that came in its wake. It is an archetypal tale of island conquest. James Joyce considers the titular character to be “the true prototype of the British colonist” (24) and Edward W. Said argues that “Robinson Crusoe is virtually unthinkable without the colonizing mission that permits him to create a new world of his own in the distant reaches of the African, Pacific, and Atlantic wilderness” (75). Defoe’s iconic text has had a strong cultural impact since its publication: authors have been writing back to the tale for almost three centuries. Martin Green considers *Robinson Crusoe* and its legacy to be “full of meaning for our past and present” (*Robinson Crusoe* 1), and describes the tale, in its various versions, as “the mythic fuel of our cultural engine” (3). Elsewhere, he makes the broader point that “the adventure tales that formed the light reading of Englishmen for two hundred years and more after *Robinson Crusoe* were ... the energizing myth of English imperialism ... they charged England’s will with the energy to go out into the world and explore, conquer, and rule” (*Dreams* 1). These novels drove generations of people to nurture and act upon ideologies of conquest. The *Robinson Crusoe* stories of the last century have been steadily less overt in their imperialism and have, more often

than not, sought to overturn their urtext. Nonetheless, they remain firmly rooted in the imperial history of Defoe's novel: islands remain places to be understood through a stereotypical discourse of empire.

*Island Fictions: Castaways and Imperialism* examines this chain of texts from *Robinson Crusoe* to the present day. The island is repeatedly brought to the forefront of analysis: that is to say, the focus is not simply on the island as a literary trope or figure, but rather on the actual spatiality of the various islands. This thesis argues that island physicality lies at the heart of the texts in question: imperial ideologies gain their strength through the depiction of island spatiality. The message of these texts is not itself the core focus of this thesis: whilst ideology and agenda play an important role in my analysis, it is more the “how,” rather than the “what,” that is under analysis. This thesis investigates the importance of island spatiality—borders, terrain, size, settlements, and so on—to the broader discourses of empire and imperialism. I argue that the analysis of insular geography gives insight into the manner in which imperial ideologies function in *Robinson Crusoe* and subsequent texts. Setting is the cornerstone of empire. Closely linked to this argument is the issue of character engagement with setting: how do characters engage with the physical spatiality of their setting so as to meet their own needs and desires? As can be seen, therefore, this thesis addresses two levels of island representation: the role of the island on an overall textual level, and the role of the island within the diegetic world of the text. Furthermore, analysis highlights the fact that character engagement with space has implications beyond the realm of empire-building: characters perceive their settings in certain ways so as to negotiate issues of a personal as well as colonial nature. Personal problems are displaced onto the island setting as a means of processing and overcoming intense emotional turmoil. Even this act of displacement, however, has

imperial connotations: the island setting is controlled, mastered, and altered by outsiders.

The discussion of empire necessitates the careful defining of “imperialism” and “colonialism.” For the purposes of this thesis, the former is defined as “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory,” whilst the latter, “which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory” (Said 8). First published in 1993, Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* further posits that “In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism ... lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices” (8). The cultural and contemporary existence of imperialism is particularly important to the later novels discussed in this thesis. The characters of these texts often exhibit attitudes that are strongly reminiscent of their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century forerunners, as they interact with their islands through ideologies of dominance and conquest. Western culture has, in the case of castaway island fictions, propagated the thinking behind historical real-world colonialism. The insular settings of these novels largely remain sites to be valued only through their use to the dominating castaway.

Analysis of the islands found within the range of texts being examined in this thesis gives original insight into the manner in which islands operate in fiction. DeLoughrey contends that, “In the Western imagination, ‘island’ and ‘islandness’ have metaphorical nuances which are contingent upon the repercussions of European colonialism and continental migration towards island spaces” (“Litany” 26). The analysis of island constructs should thus entail, by necessity, the exploration of an imperial foundation. Simultaneously, such an island-centric approach also allows

greater understanding of *Robinson Crusoe* and its legacy. The thesis speaks to, and situates itself alongside, the interdisciplinary field of island studies (which, broadly speaking, concerns itself with the study of islands and islanders). Questions of definition form an integral part of this field, as scholars like Baldacchino, Pete Hay, and Stephen A. Royle engage with, challenge, and seek to understand the underlying motivations and goals of island studies. Baldacchino makes the complexity of the task apparent in his editorial for *A World of Islands: An Island Studies Reader*. He writes that “It is difficult to assign even a tentative date to the origins of island studies scholarship” and that “It would be just as difficult to try and define *island studies* merely as material written about islands, on islands, by islanders or for islanders” (7, 8). Island studies, then, is just as much a field about questions as it is about answers and, as such, offers dynamic and original pathways into the analysis of islands and island issues.

The field is not, however, as interdisciplinary as it could be. Engagement with textual islands is limited: most scholarship on literary islands is, in fact, undertaken by scholars who are not situated within island studies. Furthermore, when such scholarship does occur within the field, it generally sees literary studies in a negative light. As Lisa Fletcher observes, there are certain “ideas about literature which hold sway in the field and ... undermine claims to genuine and generous interdisciplinarity” (17). Fletcher points out that there is “an implicit agreement [within island studies] that studying the real world is a more meaningful and important pursuit than inquiry into the imagined world” and that “Literature is frequently characterised as the field of falsehoods, misinformation and fancy which is responsible for creating and circulating (utopian and dystopian) stereotypes of islands” (23-24). Whilst this thesis does identify a range of stereotypes that are formed and supported by castaway novels, it

posits that their very presence makes it extremely important that such novels be analysed. There is no clear split between fiction and reality: they exist in a reciprocal relationship, wherein each is informed by the other. Much of Fletcher's article is driven by the impossibility of separating the two. Her concern is that the idea of "literature as a threat to islands takes off from a belief in the possibility of non-mediated experience of place" when in fact, "scholarship can only ever apprehend the meaning of place through language. The physicality of islands is ultimately inseparable from their textual topography" (26). Vilifying fiction is neither helpful nor logical: representation is an unavoidable aspect of human engagement with the world. This thesis aligns itself with Fletcher's views on the importance of literary islands, and states that we need to study, and not negate, such islands. It thus addresses a significant gap in island studies.

### **Mythmaking and *Robinson Crusoe***

*Robinson Crusoe* met with almost instantaneous success at the time of its publication: six official editions were published over the course of its first eight months alone (Shinagel 221). It has attracted a plethora of scholarship over the years, with critics, academics, novelists, and poets all sharing an invested interest in discussing or analysing the novel. The story has a broad geographic applicability, as it is not fixed to a particular island's literary history. This makes the narrative both easily accessible to readers, and able to be rewritten by authors. Though there are some islands—most notably Robinson Crusoe Island in Chile—that hold a stronger tie to the novel's insular setting than others, the fact remains that Crusoe is stranded on a fictional island. This adds to the versatility and malleability of the setting, and has helped ensure the longevity of *Robinson Crusoe*'s legacy. Samuel Taylor Coleridge considers

Crusoe to be “a representative of humanity in general” (194), and Katherine Frank describes him as a kind of everyman: “Crusoe is Anyone and Everyone. He is you and he is me” (15). Given the broad applicability of the novel, and the strong tie between Crusoe and the island, I argue that the same can be said of the novel’s insular setting: just as Crusoe is an everyman, his island has been perceived as a kind of every island. The analysis of this text and its aftermath is therefore of crucial importance to our understanding of islands: examining spatiality within *Robinson Crusoe* and its legacy gives insight into human engagement with island spatiality in a broader sense.

The versatility of the place, however, is not absolute. In the context of empire, the term “island” gains particular power through climate and distance from England. “It seems,” writes DeLoughrey, “that what the West associates with the signifier ‘island’ is a remote, temperate, and geographical ideal which is divorced from the colder weather of the northern climates and high industrialization” (“Litany” 25-26). The imperial allure of the island thus relies, in part, on climate. This carries through to the insular setting of *Robinson Crusoe* and subsequent island re-imaginings. As a result, this thesis is concerned only with warm-climate narratives. Though castaway-style novels set in cold climates do exist, they are very scarce in number and generally use their islands (which are sometimes insular icebergs) quite differently to their more traditional counterparts.<sup>2</sup> Rather than offering a contained insular location that functions as the novel’s principal setting, these stories often depict multiple islands that are used as stepping-stones en route to somewhere else. It takes a warm climate for insular settings to become expected and stereotypical zones of empire. The imperial island known through *Robinson Crusoe* is, first and foremost, a warm location. It is very telling that the every-island figure of Crusoe’s island is an island linked to a specific kind of climate. Returning to the discussion of the setting’s

versatile nature, it thus becomes clear that, from the outset, Defoe's every island is a kind of myth. The island on which Crusoe was stranded—a warm-climate island—has come to stand for all islands of the world; just as the notion of an everyman is impossible, however, so too is the notion of an every island. Reality and fiction become disjointed: there is a fictional island mould but it does not, of course, correspond to every island in the world.

The figure of Crusoe and his stereotypical isle are a part of Western culture. They speak to its past and its present, and are firmly etched into its psyche. Michel Tournier, the author of a twentieth-century *Robinson Crusoe* fiction entitled *Friday* (1967), goes so far as to say that “Crusoe is one of the basic constituents of the Western soul” (*Wind Spirit* 183). These words give the character a timeless quality and imbue him with a far-reaching psychological importance: as Tournier continues, “he is a living presence in each of us” (183). J. M. Coetzee—the author of *Foe* (1986), another twentieth-century rewriting of Defoe's novel—also refers to the broad and influential power of the story when he observes that “Robinson Crusoe with his parrot and umbrella has become a figure in the collective consciousness of the West” (*Stranger Shores* 20). That image, taken up by Western culture in a broad sense, is of course rooted in the history of the British Empire. Thus, in commemoration of the novel's two hundredth birthday, Virginia Woolf proclaimed that it “resembles one of the anonymous productions of the race rather than the effort of a single mind; and as for celebrating its centenary we should as soon think of celebrating the centenaries of Stonehenge itself” (86). Woolf's phrasing lends a kind of inevitability to the story's existence: it exists because Britain exists. The story has an authorial presence beyond Defoe. It is a product of its culture, rather than the product of a single author and,



when one thinks of islands and castaways, it is Crusoe and his island (not Defoe) that spring to mind.

*Robinson Crusoe* scholarship has traditionally tended to focus on the character of Crusoe and/or on topics like the novel's structure, symbolism, production, and reception. Watt analyses *Robinson Crusoe* in great detail with respect to both its status as the first English novel and the concepts of individualism and "homo economicus"; G. A. Starr and J. Paul Hunter focus primarily on the novel's spiritual essence; Maximillian E. Novak discusses the novel through the lens of economy; John Robert Moore and James Sutherland use historical and biographical details to approach the text; and Henry Clinton Hutchins and R. D. Hilton Smith map the story's success and evolution through their bibliographical studies. Defoe's novel may be an iconic island text, but it has only been in the last few decades that literary scholars have begun to focus more explicitly on the representation of the island within the novel. Such scholarship, however, is still greatly outweighed by other approaches: detailed textual analysis of the novel's island ground remains uncommon.

Nonetheless, Crusoe has been firmly islanded within the Western understanding of his story. The framing narrative of the novel—Crusoe's life before and after his island entrapment—and the novel's two sequels, *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1720), have largely faded from collective cultural knowledge. All that remains is the tale of the islanded castaway. Crusoe exists on his island—and only on his island. This paring down of the narrative is a function of its status as a myth. Watt's analysis of the novel sheds light on this point: "Myth," he writes, "always tends in transmission to be whittled down to a single, significant situation" ("*Robinson Crusoe*" 96). He suggests that only the "island episode" is a

part of the Crusoe myth and that the extraneous sections of the story hold little relevance to our overall understanding of the tale (96-97). Tournier's non-fiction work further speaks to the story's mythical nature. He considers Crusoe to be a "mythical hero" because "he escaped from the work in which he first appeared in order to bring life to many others" and, in a point echoing Woolf's earlier one, "his popularity surpassed and eclipsed that of his author" (183). Coetzee similarly argues that the figure of Crusoe "[transcends] the book which—in its multitude of editions, translations, imitations and adaptations ('Robinsonades')—celebrates his adventures" and that he consequently "finds himself in the sphere of myth" (*Stranger Shores* 20). This thesis argues that, in a similar fashion, Crusoe's island can be interpreted as a "mythical setting." It too has been replicated in other works and has gained meaning of its own. Moreover, the castaway and the island are mutually defining—they rely on one another for their cultural power. The island loses its voice without the castaway's presence, and the castaway loses his identity without the island: setting and character, then, are inseparable.

### **A Legacy of Island Stories**

The mythical status of the castaway and his island have been strengthened by a plethora of texts over the years. The majority of such texts are known as "Robinsonades"<sup>3</sup> and typically feature an individual, or a group of individuals, who find themselves wrecked on an island and who must learn to live in their new surroundings. As Green explains, "the Robinson story is much more than the book Defoe wrote. That story was being—and still is—pirated, adapted, abridged, dramatised, hundreds of times ... But it is above all the independent retellings that convince us that we are dealing with something of a different order from an ordinary

book” (“Robinson Crusoe” 35). The Robinsonade was particularly prevalent in children’s fiction of the nineteenth century: according to Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Prichard, it “became for a time the dominant form in fiction for children and young people” (458). Crusoe revisions of this era, Rebecca Weaver-Hightower explains, “packaged empire for children and provided an important vehicle for their enculturation into imperial society” (38). Island settings played an important role in this process of constructing, teaching, and endorsing imperial ideologies. Young readers and characters alike were given the space to become what their culture wanted them to be: empire builders. “The island territory,” writes Loxley, “provides the ideal mythic space—a fictional parallel of the actual historic and geographic sites of colonial activity—as a laboratory for the propagation and nurturing of a perfect masculinity” (117). Children’s Robinsonades thus relied on their setting to achieve their purpose: these texts needed to be anchored in a physical location so as to give their ideologies greater power. Textual islands acted as colonial sites that existed parallel to reality. They were places of childhood imperialism, stepping-stones en route to the much more insidious and ethically questionable sites of real-world empire expansion.

The twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, in turn, have seen the publication of Crusoe-style novels that are of a more critical or postcolonial nature. These narratives, to use cultural geographer Richard Phillips’s terminology, generally “unmap” the imperial ground of Defoe’s novel: “To unmap Robinsons, Robinsonades and other adventure stories,” writes Phillips, “is to open space in which to invent new worlds, to make room for new voices and new constructions of geography and forms of identity” (160). Phillips’s argument suggests that terrain, as well as identity, is constructed differently within these texts. This thesis argues, however, that novels in

this category are still largely driven by imperial island attitudes: the islands of these novels are described through the same imperial lexicon of spatiality as those of the earlier novels. Islands remain places to be understood through notions of dominance and conquest: little room has been made for “new constructions of geography.” It is fitting that the most successful novel to “unmap” the textual past—Coetzee’s *Foe*—does so through an implicit acknowledgement that such a task is almost impossible. Island representations within most of these novels remain strongly imperialistic: setting continues to be controlled and used by the characters, often to the detriment of the environment. William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* (1954) is a case in point. It features characters who learn a lesson in the error of their ways at the expense of their surroundings. By the end of the novel, the island has been “scorched up like dead wood” and reduced to a “burning wreckage” (224). More often than not, postcolonial Crusoe rewritings transfer their imperialistic agenda onto the terrain itself. In a sense, therefore, island space takes on the subservient role of a Friday figure. That is not to say, necessarily, that the island gains subjectivity, but rather that a kind of false agency is sometimes ascribed to it: islands act as pseudo-characters available for conquest in an era when it was and is considered less acceptable to overtly talk of conquering people.

The mid to late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have also seen the castaway island become a place of popular romance. Though islands have a long history of being romanticised and sexualised within Western culture, *Robinson Crusoe* and its nineteenth-century rewrites explicitly avoid these topics: at the most, islands are seen as places of non-sexual fraternal love. This absence, however, has been extensively addressed in the last fifty years. It is not uncommon, now, for certain types of castaway narratives to feature sex on the island. Popular romance fiction, one

can say, has embraced the castaway tale. The existence of such novels is fitting in terms of genre, for both adventure fiction and popular romance fiction fall under the broad heading of “romance.” Furthermore, the prolific nature of publication within this category underscores its cultural importance: castaway popular romance fiction offers a rich collection of texts spanning several decades. Despite this, it has attracted no in-depth scholarly attention thus far. These novels bring a highly charged sexual element to the castaway experience as characters live out dreams and fantasies on their islands: such texts are Crusoe stories rescripted in the language of popular romance.

Finally, another significant development within the chain of Crusoe texts is Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* and its aftermath. *Treasure Island* was first published as a serial in *Young Folks* between 1881 and 1882, and then as a novel in 1883. Though it is not a Robinsonade in the strict sense of the word, it owes much to Crusoe and its imperial predecessors. Indeed, the characters of Jim Hawkins and the maroon Ben Gunn even take on mannerisms and/or appearances of Defoe’s Crusoe and Friday. *Treasure Island*, Joseph Bristow writes, “places an extraordinary value on what it means to enjoy a familiar tale—one that reaches back into the past in every sense: to childhood and a line of enduring adventures leading all the way back to *Robinson Crusoe*” (111). *Treasure Island* can be seen as both a part of the Crusoe myth and a myth in its own right, as it has, like *Robinson Crusoe*, been prolifically rewritten, adapted, and continued on both the page and the screen. Stevenson’s novel has strong ties to the tradition of imperial adventure fiction and, whilst its imperialistic ideologies are somewhat more ambivalent than those of the nineteenth-century Robinsonades, it nonetheless depicts imperial human/island relationships. *Treasure Island* extends upon the representations of setting found in *Robinson*

*Crusoe*, and its influence on later texts like *Lord of the Flies* is also apparent. As a result, examination of *Treasure Island* allows for a broader understanding of the Crusoe legacy and the manner in which that legacy has constructed islands.

Whilst this thesis deals solely with fictional texts, it is worth noting that the myth of Crusoe has also had an impact in the realm of non-fiction. J. Ross Browne's *Crusoe's Island: A Ramble in the Footsteps of Alexander Selkirk* (1864), for instance, emphasises the attraction of Crusoe and his story, whilst Macdonald Hastings's *After You, Robinson Crusoe: A Practical Guide for a Desert Islander* (1975) follows its author's experiences of being voluntarily left alone on an uninhabited island. There has been a debate concerning Defoe's real-world inspiration for *Robinson Crusoe* from the moment of its first publication, with the most often cited source being the experiences of Alexander Selkirk. Selkirk spent the years from 1704 to 1709 marooned on the Chilean island now known as Robinson Crusoe Island (located in the Juan Fernández group). Scholars like Novak, Hunter, and Sutherland have written insightfully about the history of the debate, its value or lack thereof, and their own findings. The pursuit of the "real story" has also spilled into the realm of the more popular, with two of the most recent examples being Diana Souhami's creative non-fiction work *Selkirk's Island* (2001) and Tim Severin's travelogue *In Search of Robinson Crusoe* (2002). Non-fictional engagement with the Crusoe legacy is often driven by a search for authenticity, and features repeated use of the term "real" in its discourse. For instance, the title of R. L. Mégroz's biography of Selkirk—*The Real Robinson Crusoe: Being the Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Alexander Selkirk of Largo, Fife, Mariner* (1939)—mimics the full title of *Robinson Crusoe* and positions itself as the "real" story. In this discourse, fiction is given a lower status than fact: story-telling is represented as a mere means of relating to, and re-entering, the

more authoritative field of history. This privileging of the “real,” however, belies the power of the fictional. Crusoe has entered the Western collective consciousness in a way that Selkirk has not. Thus, although Selkirk’s name was given to one of the Juan Fernández Islands (Alejandro Selkirk Island), the island on which he was actually stranded was renamed Robinson Crusoe Island. The fictional has overtaken the factual, and Selkirk has been relocated to another island to make room for Crusoe.

### **The Heart of the Matter: Analysing the Island**

This thesis concerns itself with fictional islands, and spans almost three centuries of island narratives. Central to its analysis are *Robinson Crusoe*, Johann D. Wyss’s *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812-13), Frederick Marryat’s *Masterman Ready* (1841-42), R. M. Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island* (1858), Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, Muriel Spark’s *Robinson* (1958), Tournier’s *Friday*, Coetzee’s *Foe*, Marianne Wiggins’s *John Dollar* (1989), and a broad selection of castaway popular romance novels. It is important to note that two of these novels, *The Swiss Family Robinson* and *Friday*, were not originally published in English: as a result, the versions used in this thesis are English translations. This thesis contends that, although contemporary Crusoe rewritings generally do not display the overtly imperialistic agenda of the earlier Robinsonades, traces of past ideologies are nonetheless still present. Textual islands of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries largely remain places to be used, abused, and/or blamed for human follies and atrocities. Moreover, as the discussion of popular romance novels in particular shows, contemporary island representations are often imperialistic but dislocated from colonialism, thus obscuring the historic reasons behind their ideologies.

An interdisciplinary theoretical framework underpins the project as I draw on colonial studies, postcolonial studies, island studies, cultural geography, ecocriticism, and genre studies to examine the novels. Scholars like Green, Loxley, Weaver-Hightower, Phillips, DeLoughrey, and Ann Marie Fallon have, in the last few decades, analysed island narratives in general and/or *Crusoe*-related texts in particular. Both Green and Loxley, however, focus primarily on the socio-historical contexts of the stories, Weaver-Hightower approaches the topic from a psychoanalytical angle, Phillips examines island narratives alongside other adventure novels (and thus does not offer an island-specific discussion), DeLoughrey focuses primarily on indigenous narratives and the relationship between islands and oceans, and Fallon deals with contemporary texts and ideas of transnationalism and modernity. This thesis adds to that body of scholarship through analysis of the actual island within *Robinson Crusoe* and its legacy. The physicality of the island setting is taken as the core focus of analysis: island spatiality is foregrounded and its importance to the imperial agenda is made apparent. Islands and depictions thereof are at the heart of this thesis. Theories of island studies are related back to the novels in question; the works of scholars like Fletcher, Gillian Beer, and Rod Edmond are, in turn, used to strengthen the thesis' position as a literary studies work. Key concepts and ideas are also borrowed from other fields so as to facilitate in-depth analysis of textual island ground. In particular, Yi-Fu Tuan's concepts of space and place (taken from cultural geography) and the notions of nature, wilderness, and landscape (as used in particular, by ecocritics Greg Garrard, Roderick Frazier Nash, and Lawrence Buell, and philosopher Edward S. Casey) inform discussion throughout this thesis.

Reading the novels through these terms and theories offers original insight into their representations of islands. *Robinson Crusoe* and its successors use their island



settings to explore and promote certain human behaviours, attitudes, and ideologies. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts generally feature castaways who transform their islands from untamed “wildernesses” to tamed and colonised “landscapes,” and from unknown “spaces” to familiar “places.” Twentieth- and twenty-first-century texts, in turn, offer island/castaway dynamics that are rooted in these earlier approaches. Sexuality and dominance can play a role in these later novels: *Friday*, for instance, presents the reader with highly disturbing sexual images of the Crusoe character forcing himself onto, and into, the island. Castaway popular romance fictions, on the other hand, present their islands as places of healing and empowerment—such positive representations, however, rely on the imperial tropes of their predecessors. Insular settings can also become sites in which to contain negative human behaviour. In a general discussion on environment and human identity, Neil Leach argues that “the physical environment is essentially ‘inert,’ and has meanings ‘projected’ on to it,” and that “It serves as a repository of meanings that come to be identified with it, as though they were a property of that environment” (40). Novels like *Treasure Island*, *Lord of the Flies*, *John Dollar*, and *Robinson* feature characters who construct their islands as such “repositories.” They often blame their surroundings for physically and psychologically brutal events, and either desperately attempt to externally relocate human evil or illogically perceive their surroundings as mirroring that evil.

The textual analysis undertaken in this thesis is split into six chapters, with each chapter examining a particular novel or type of novel. The first chapter lays the foundations for the rest of the thesis by providing a detailed analysis of *Robinson Crusoe*. It argues that Crusoe and his island combine to form a crucial myth within our society—a myth in which the island is just as important as the figure of Crusoe.

This myth reflects eighteenth-century attitudes towards islands and informs our contemporary understanding of them. The chapter discusses Crusoe's relationship with his island, and charts the transformation of the island from space to place and from wilderness to landscape. This highlights the link between identity and spatiality—such a discussion necessitates reference to Robert P. Marzec's study of *Robinson Crusoe*, in which he offers the notion of “identity and land as an inseparable relation, for the structure of one's relation to the land determines the structure of one's identity” (17). The island is also read through Crusoe's sectioning of the locale, with particular attention being paid to the “clusters” (a term taken from Casey) that Crusoe creates and the fear that he displays of the island's “other” side. Significant castaway narrative tropes, concepts, and methods such as island boundaries, island transformations, “monarch-of-all-I-survey” scenes, and spatially focused language are identified within the novel, thus providing the groundwork necessary for the discussion of the other novels within this thesis.

Chapter two follows on from this with a detailed analysis of three nineteenth-century children's Robinsonades: Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson*, Marryat's *Masterman Ready*, and Ballantyne's *The Coral Island*. These novels allow their characters and readers to enact Crusoe's imperial narrative, and in so doing enable them to gain mastery over the island. Crusoe and his experiences are etched into the landscapes inhabited by all of these characters—insular terrain is haunted by the figure of Crusoe. Character engagement with space/place, this chapter argues, becomes an ideological tool at the level of narratological agenda and legacy: castaways relate to their colonial islands and urtext through the very physicality of the island. Furthermore, despite their similarities, all three novels have something different to offer in the context of islands. *The Swiss Family Robinson*, unlike other

nineteenth-century Robinsonades, depicts an island that is not clearly bounded. Examination of this novel, then, raises perhaps the most fundamental question within island studies, namely how to define an island. *Masterman Ready* provides the opportunity to imagine Crusoe's fate were he to have been shipwrecked on the "other" side of his island. Such a fate, we discover, is death. Lastly, the island found in *The Coral Island* acts as the ultimate imperial "adventure playground." In her study of nineteenth-century cross-cultural encounters, Vanessa Smith observes that "romance was the discourse of exotic settings. Within its fictional parameters the Pacific figured as an idealised adventure playground, realm of noble savages and cannibals, of shipwrecks and castaways" (13). *The Coral Island* offers a quintessential "adventure playground" in the form of its island setting. At the heart of this playground lies a skeleton that Susan Naramore Maher describes as a "former Crusoe" (172). The memory of Crusoe thus lives on in all of these novels.

The third chapter of this thesis deals solely with *Treasure Island*. It draws on the work of Loxley to highlight the manner in which the changing agenda of the British Empire influenced the motivations of Stevenson's novel. *Treasure Island* is first and foremost a locale of treasure, and not a long-term British settlement. Stevenson's novel, then, becomes a text of imperialism rather than colonialism. The chapter also takes into consideration Marah Gubar's original and somewhat contentious reading of *Treasure Island* and, although it does not support all that she argues, it does acknowledge that *Treasure Island* is less self-assured about imperial matters than its Robinsonade predecessors. Depictions of the setting reflect this ambivalence: the novel simultaneously portrays the island site as highly treacherous and undermines that very portrayal. Though the novel's primary narrator, Jim, engages with the island in a largely negative manner, his description of it is brought

into question through his role as an unreliable narrator. The novel's fractured depiction of the setting foreshadows the islands of the twentieth century, particularly those found in *Lord of the Flies*, *John Dollar*, and *Robinson*. Jim, like the characters of these later novels, displaces human evil onto his surroundings as he is unable to come to terms with the truth behind the horrendous events that happen on the island. The conflicted nature of the island image, furthermore, is heightened through the contrast between expectations and reality—Jim expects to find the kind of island present in the earlier Robinsonades, but instead finds a nightmarish zone of death and deception.

Chapter four brings the discussion forwards into the twentieth century. It focuses on Tournier's *Friday* and Coetzee's *Foe*, which are the most significant literary twentieth-century novels to engage directly with Defoe's work. Phillips's notion of "unmapping" provides a useful path into these texts, as do concepts of "writing back" and "counter-discourse" (as used, for instance, by Helen Tiffin). This chapter argues that *Friday* is not overly successful in its unmapping. *Foe*, on the other hand, achieves success by highlighting the near impossibility of challenging the ingrained imperialistic Crusoe island story. Tournier's novel depicts an island that is used and abused by its Crusoe (who is generally known as Robinson). The island is given a pseudo-voice, which creates a misleading dynamic wherein the space appears to have agency and be empowered. This voice, however, emanates from Robinson. Thus, there is no empowerment or agency at all: the lonely Englishman merely shapes the island to suit his own needs. *Foe*, on the other hand, overturns both the traditional Crusoe island and the traditional Crusoe island genre by questioning the stereotypes that have been passed down from generation to generation. It highlights the incongruity of expectations and reality by presenting readers and characters alike with

a castaway island and a Crusoe that do not conform to expectations. Moreover, the story also suggests that one cannot presume to tell the story of another (in this case, the character of Friday) who has been forcibly silenced. *Friday* is, to some extent, simply a replicated *Robinson Crusoe*, while *Foe* sets itself apart by being a story about that story and its legacy.

Following on from this discussion, chapter five turns to *Robinson Crusoe* rewritings that also look back to the Robinsonades. It examines three novels—*Lord of the Flies*, *John Dollar*, and *Robinson*—and expands on several of the points made about *Treasure Island*. These novels offer islands of wilderness that are falsely constructed as evil by castaways who displace guilt and blame onto their settings. The characters are, generally speaking, at least partially aware of what they are doing, but such awareness often develops at the expense (either ideologically or physically) of their surroundings. Characters in *Lord of the Flies* and *John Dollar* imagine their islands into fearsome geographies of wilderness that then take on a false culpability for the actions of the humans trapped on their shores. This is drawn to its full conclusion in *Robinson* as the island itself, shaped like a person, is known as “Robinson.” Spark’s novel acts as an extension of texts like *Lord of the Flies*: characters force their painful emotions onto the island scenery, but then see those emotions reflected back at them. Furthermore, the name and shape of the setting makes explicit an issue that is also discussed earlier in the thesis, namely the self/island dynamic. People and insular places are firmly bound together in castaway fiction; the analysis of that relationship gives insight into the manner in which personal and spatial identity work within the pages of the *Robinson Crusoe* legacy.

Finally, the sixth and last chapter of this thesis deals with castaway popular romance fiction. It offers an overview of these novels from the late 1960s to the

present day and gives detailed textual analysis of ten specific texts. It also briefly outlines the genre of romance so as to explain the relationship between adventure fiction and popular romance fiction. This gives insight into the manner in which castaway popular romance narratives speak to their adventurous counterparts. It then proceeds to explore how this sub-genre takes up the tropes of imperial island tales and uses them for its own purposes: imperial ideologies become dislocated from their colonial historicity, and all the reader is left with are decontextualised tropes. Whilst colonial castaways learn how to be successful colonists on their islands, romance castaways learn how to be successful lovers. Simultaneously, however, and somewhat unexpectedly (in comparison to other castaway tales), these stories tend to construct their islands as positive places where class distinctions can be bridged, trauma can be overcome, love can be found, and nature can be appreciated. Such enlightenment, however, is undermined by the lack of critical engagement with history—these texts generally use tropes of the colonial past without challenging or placing them, thereby misappropriating and/or silencing the trauma of their origins. Positive narratological outcomes are therefore founded on ethically problematic terrain—hope, in other words, is built on pain.

This thesis thus presents a survey of *Robinson Crusoe* and its textual aftermath from 1719 to the present day. It takes into consideration the established Crusoe myth and its *Treasure Island* branch, before then examining how this legacy has been translated into the genre of popular romance fiction. Crusoe and his island largely remain an imperial myth in our contemporary era. Myths, however, are constantly reshaped and retold for, in Tournier's poetic phrasing, "myths, like all living things, must be irrigated and replenished or die" (*Wind Spirit* 160). Mythmaking, then, is an ongoing process. Examining castaway narratives and related texts allows us to better

understand this myth in its current form and, the better our understanding of it is, the more chance we have of moving beyond its imperialistic ideologies. This thesis seeks to examine and understand the ways in which human relationships with islands are negotiated, constructed, replicated, and challenged in *Robinson Crusoe* and the novels that came in its wake. Key to that process are the issues of language and character engagement with space: castaway fiction achieves its agenda—whether imperial or postcolonial—through attention to setting. The island can thus be seen as the most important and influential element of these texts.

## Chapter One

### Castaway Roots: Placing Robinson Crusoe and the Island

The island setting of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* lies at the heart of the text. It is both a metaphorical space and a physical place, and is integral to the novel's core motivations and ideologies. Rather than being a mere backdrop to plot and character development, the setting dictates the nature of the story and the behaviour of its main protagonist. Peter Redfield describes Crusoe's island entrapment as "the central experience of his life, the one that defines him as a character" (6). Such a definition is predicated on the presence of the island, which provides the opportunity for Crusoe to become a castaway. Crusoe's experience is "real" and not figurative, and thus depends on a "real" location for definition. Simultaneously, however, the setting also operates in a metaphorical manner. John R. Gillis reminds us that "Western culture not only thinks about islands, but thinks with them" (1) and that the island, "Like all master metaphors, ... is capable of representing a multitude of things" (3). *Robinson Crusoe's* island is used as a space through which themes of mastery and conquest are explored. Crusoe's relationship with his surroundings comes to represent broader issues of imperialism and colonialism. The text thus works as a double narrative: it is both a castaway tale and a story of empire. The island is the crux of this dynamic as it brings the two narratives together.

The very language of *Robinson Crusoe* invites readers to think constantly about location and geography. The word "place" and derivatives like "plac'd" and "places" are used more than one hundred and seventy-five times throughout the entire text, which averages out to approximately once every 1.25 pages. This lexicon of spatiality is particularly prevalent during Crusoe's time as a castaway. The island is,



for instance, considered “this desolate Place” (47), “that wild miserable Place” (58), “this horrid Place” (64), and, when Crusoe finds himself cast adrift from it, “the most pleasant Place in the world” (101). Smaller, more specific parts of it can also be a “Place” as in “a proper Place for my Habitation” (39) and “the Place where I had laid up my Boat” (111). The word is also occasionally used as a verb—“I had plac’d” (151)—or, more often, in the context of chronological story-telling through phrases like “In the next place” (48, 57) and “Of which in its Place” (59). Setting-related words thus infiltrate the very fabric of the narrative: they are a part of the story-telling process. *Robinson Crusoe* is fixated on grounding its story in location through constant spatial language. The prevalence of such wording during the castaway phase of the narrative indicates the extent to which the castaway experience is one of spatiality. “Place” is, of course, not an island-specific term: by narrating the island sojourn through such language, however, the reader is encouraged to bind together the two elements. The island, then, is a setting to be interpreted through a lexicon of spatiality.

Scholarship on the novel has, historically, prioritised analysis of Crusoe over analysis of the setting. This chapter, in contrast, foregrounds the island. Whilst the focus is on *Robinson Crusoe*’s castaway story, it also considers the framing narrative and Defoe’s two sequels so as to contextualise analysis. It reads the central castaway setting closely, paying particular attention to the manner in which island ground is perceived, transformed, tamed, and used by its coloniser. Setting, this chapter argues, is firmly tied to the imperial agenda of the novel. Crusoe’s changing attitude towards the island is theorised through the notions of “space” and “place,” with the spectrum of these two terms explaining the underlying subtext of the character’s growing fondness for the location. Such fondness is implicitly tied to the act of colonisation:

the more successful Crusoe becomes as a colonist, the more his island is transformed from an unknown “wilderness” into a known “landscape.” Key castaway tropes like the “monarch-of-all-I-survey” scene play a significant role in this process as they enable Crusoe to gain control and mastery over his environment.

### **Contextualising a Decontextualised Island**

Defoe’s novel, narrated by an older Crusoe as a retrospective account interspersed with journal entries, begins with Crusoe as a young man in England. Frustrated by his life and situation, he yearns for adventures beyond the horizon. His parents, however, wish him to stay in England where he can benefit from “the middle Station of Life” (5) into which he was born. Crusoe’s father tells him that only “Men of desperate Fortunes on one Hand, or of aspiring, superior Fortunes on the other” should go “abroad upon Adventures, to rise by Enterprize, and make themselves famous in Undertakings of a Nature out of the common Road” (4-5). The pursuit of adventures and excitement, then, is deemed “too far above” or “too far below” Crusoe (5). It is a point of great conflict between the young man and his parents, and one that stays with him for the rest of the novel. He attempts to honour his parents’ wishes but, eventually, succumbs to his inner desires. “I would be satisfied with nothing but going to Sea,” (4) he tells the reader and, when an opportunity for departure arises, he takes it and leaves home without a word to his family.

Once on the high seas, he experiences storms, seasickness, and his own enslavement. He is not, as is pointed out frequently throughout the novel, a successful or “fortunate” adventurer. After a particularly traumatic encounter with a storm, for instance, the ship’s master tells him that “*you ought never to go to Sea any more, you ought to take this for a plain and visible Token that you are not to be a Seafaring*

*Man*” (12). The novel insists, again and again, that Crusoe would be happier and more fulfilled if he remained in one place instead of travelling throughout the world. He is constructed as a character who, though he desires to be an explorer, should instead be a colonist. After several adventures, Crusoe eventually makes his way to the “Brasils” where he establishes a prosperous plantation. His life again becomes static and confined, and requires him to work tirelessly. This turn of events does not sit well with him for, as he laments, “I was coming into the very Middle Station, or upper Degree of low Life, which my Father advised me to before; and which if I resolved to go on with, I might as well ha’ staid at Home” (27). Predictably, Crusoe soon leaves his plantation for the open ocean, having been persuaded by “some Merchants and Planters” to embark on a journey to the coast of “Guinea” so as to purchase slaves for private use on the plantations (30). He gladly sets out on the voyage but does not reach his destination: the trip ends prematurely in the shipwreck that casts him ashore on a lonely, uninhabited island.

There he remains for almost three decades, adapting to life on the island and acquiring “subjects” in the form of animals—a dog, cats, a parrot, and, to a lesser extent, goats —and, much later, Friday and, even later still, Friday’s father and a Spaniard. The eventual arrival of an English ship drastically changes the situation. Crusoe masquerades as an official “Governour” of the island so as to help the English captain regain his ship from a band of violent mutineers (193-200). Several of the mutineers are left behind on the island, and Crusoe (accompanied by Friday) is finally able to return to England. Once at home, he discovers that his parents have passed away, and that the years of his absence have made him “as perfect a Stranger to all the World, as if I had never been known there” (200). He then travels to Lisbon in search of news regarding his plantation in the “Brasils” (201) and, having settled his affairs,

elects to return to England via a route that favours land whenever possible. It is a decision that leads Crusoe into yet another dangerous adventure as he and his travelling companions are hunted and besieged by a pack of ravenous wolves during a crossing of the Pyrenees Mountains. He survives, and the novel concludes with a foreshadowing of adventures to come. Crusoe describes a future visit to “my new Collony in the Island,” detailing its inhabitants (Englishmen, Spanish men, native Islander male and female “Prisoners,” and children) and their trials and tribulations (219-20). This foreshadowing suggests the possibility of more adventures and, indeed, the novel ends with the claim that “All these things ... I may perhaps give a farther Account of hereafter” (220). Crusoe’s story, as presented by Defoe, is expansive: it is not a finite tale.

Nevertheless, only Crusoe’s island sojourn has made its way into our collective understanding of the story. Generally speaking, Crusoe is not, for instance, associated with the Pyrenees. It is the shipwrecked man and his desert island (accompanied, at the most, by the figure of Friday) that come to mind when one thinks of *Robinson Crusoe*. Crusoe is an isolated colonist. His island mastery is founded on his being without human company, as isolation and confinement force him to focus on himself and his surroundings. This distillation of the story is further emphasised when one takes into consideration the now lesser-known sequels to the book. *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* sees Crusoe briefly return to the colony he established on his island, before then moving on to other adventures. The final book, *Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, is a collection of fictional essays on morality, theology, and philosophy that discusses the island but lacks the adventurous essence of its two predecessors. Both novels develop the reader’s knowledge of Defoe’s Crusoe by situating him within the

wider world and its people. Neither of these novels, however, has made its way into our popular understanding of the character.

The fragmentation of the narrative is not a new phenomenon. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for instance, famously decrees that his model student Emilius should only have access to one novel—*Robinson Crusoe*—during his adolescence and, from within that novel, only one section: Crusoe’s island sojourn. “This romance,” Rousseau claims, “beginning with his shipwreck on the island, and ending with the arrival of the vessel that brought him away, would, if cleared of its rubbish, afford Emilius, during the period we are now treating of, at once both instruction and amusement” (61). Rousseau, moreover, advocates for Emilius to take on and imaginatively live Crusoe’s situation: “I would have him indeed personate the hero of the tale, and be entirely taken up with his cattle, his goats and his plantations ... He should affect even his dress, wear a coat of skins, a great hat, a large hanger” (61) and, a little later in the piece, “Let us hasten, therefore, to establish him in this imaginary isle” (62). *Robinson Crusoe*’s value, according to Rousseau, thus rests with the castaway on his island. There is no mention of Emilius following Crusoe’s footsteps by trekking across the Pyrenees, for instance. Crusoe and his island, in short, belong together.

### **Island Mastery and the “Tabula Rasa”**

The agenda of Defoe’s novel is shaped, developed, and driven by the setting. The island provides Crusoe with the space and isolation needed to think, act, and grow as a character. It is a powerful and grounding component of the narrative, a physical geography filled with tangible rocks, mountains, beaches, and caves. As Peter Conrad points out, “Defoe does not permit islands to be hideouts for unemployed gods or

frisky malevolent spirits” (91). Conrad thus contrasts Crusoe’s island with those of other famed island stories like Homer’s *The Odyssey* and William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. These well-known settings are defined by their lack of reality: islands are otherworldly sites of fantasy, magic, and intrigue. *Robinson Crusoe*’s island, on the other hand, derives its power from its concrete physicality and materiality. This enables the story’s depiction of the day-to-day trials and consequences of a “real” castaway life. Such attention to verisimilitude, as discussed in this thesis’ introduction, plays a large role in the text’s cultural resonance. The castaway experience, *Robinson Crusoe* suggests, is one that can be translated into reality. Crusoe’s island is attainable and imaginable: readers can picture it as a real space through Defoe’s attention to realistic geography.

The novel strives for and promotes verisimilitude. This “reality” is, of course, itself a construction: it cannot be anything other than an artifice. It is, importantly, a construction biased towards imperialistic ways of thinking. The island is presented as a terra nullius or “tabula rasa,” a blank site that requires Crusoe’s presence, and presence of mind, to fill it. He does this through various “Improvements” (132) that alter the very face of the island. This concept of the island as a “tabula rasa” is often used in imperial island texts to justify both diegetic and real-world colonialism. “Island discourses,” writes Loxley in her study of such narratives, “represent the model cultural framework for the production of an idealised, sanitised account of European colonial history since their central impulse is to create a *tabula rasa* upon which they can erect their own story” (102). To achieve this, such texts “remove from the territory all trace of any original human inhabitants, thus displacing from the outset the basic act upon which European history is in fact based” (102). Loxley’s use of the word “displacing” is telling for, of course, the “basic act” still remains, albeit in

a less explicit manner. The colonial “act” of clearing the land of its “original human inhabitants” occurs prior to the story’s beginning. The author empties the colonial island before it enters into the narrative, and readers accept the island as it appears. This aligns them with the characters of the novel. Writers, readers, and characters alike shape the colonial island into something that appears, at least superficially, to be more ideologically agreeable. The underlying tale, of course, is a different story—one of displacement, dispossession, marginalisation, trauma, and death.

For the most part, these novels thus condone textual and real-world imperialism and colonialism through misrepresentation and obfuscation. “British colonial activity in island spaces,” explains DeLoughrey, “became mystified through the literary construction of isolated islands, which presumably were awaiting European material and narrative ‘development’” (“Island” 300). In the context of this discourse, islands exist merely for the benefit of their colonists. Crusoe’s island appears to be “empty” land that is available for the taking: this allows both the character and his readers to re-envisage history. Redfield emphasises the importance of setting to the novel’s agenda, writing that the novel “provides us with key elements of the settler myth,” one of which is “The land is empty and waiting” (8). *Robinson Crusoe*’s erasing of the island’s history results in an imperial and colonial encounter that attempts to ignore or forget the harsh and unpleasant realities of actual colonisation. Just as real-world colonialism seeks to clear already inhabited space so as to erect its own culture, so too does *Robinson Crusoe*. The island functions as a bounded site where Crusoe, somewhat lost in the wider world, is able to nurture his colonial self without becoming distracted. His life in the world beyond the island is itself imperial: the voyage that sees him shipwrecked on the island is, after all, one of slave acquisition. Colonisation, however, requires both adventurous exploration and

static settlement. Being trapped on the island forces Crusoe to remain stationary so as to complete the colonial mission.

The island's constructed emptiness extends to textual constructions of its history. This aligns the novel with other texts of its kind: "British island narratives," DeLoughrey observes, "are notorious for emptying island spaces of history" ("Island" 302). Crusoe's attitude towards the setting illustrates his lack of knowledge concerning, and curiosity towards, the island's past. Shooting at a bird, the Englishman muses that "I believe it was the first Gun that had been fir'd there since the Creation of the World; I had no sooner fir'd, but from all the Parts of the Wood there arose an innumerable Number of Fowls of many Sorts, making a confus'd Screaming" (40). His words suggest that nothing dramatic, exciting or even worthwhile has happened on the island since it first came into existence: empty both physically and historically, it has simply been waiting for his arrival. Crusoe's claim ascribes great importance to his presence, almost as though his appearance heralds a second birth, or an awakening, of the island. He further confirms his assumption of the island's emptiness when, after having lived there for over ten months, he grandly states "I firmly believed, that no humane<sup>4</sup> Shape had ever set Foot upon that Place" (72). Any knowledge of the island's actual indigenous history comes much later and, even then, it remains secondary to the history Crusoe gives the island through its colonisation.

The perceived emptiness of Crusoe's island also highlights the castaway's prejudices regarding how one should live. The island lacks many things that Crusoe considers vital to his survival; the proximity of the wrecked ship to the island's coast, however, allows him to salvage an extraordinary amount of items. The wreck offers, amongst other things, food, weapons, tools, books, clothing, ink, and navigational



equipment. Access to these supplies dramatically shapes his time on the island and enables him to live in a “civilised” fashion:

I spent whole Hours, I may say whole Days, in representing to myself in the most lively Colours, how I must have acted, if I had got nothing out of the Ship. How I could not have so much as got any Food, except Fish and Turtles; and that as it was long before I found any of them, I must have perish'd first. That I should have liv'd, if I had not perish'd, like a meer Savage. That if I had kill'd a Goat, or a Fowl, by any Contrivance, I had no way to flea or open them, or part the Flesh from the Skin, and the Bowels, or to cut it up; but must gnaw it with my Teeth, and pull it with my Claws like a Beast. (95)

Material goods become tied to one's way of life. It is not deemed possible to live on this island as a European unless one is able to supplement the space with European items: in its raw state, the island is fit only for “savages” or “beasts.” The things that Crusoe salvages from the ship are described as the “Necessaries of Life, or Necessaries to supply and procure them” (47), when in fact they are, of course, merely the “Necessaries [of his way] of Life.” Crusoe's attitude explicitly discounts any other way of living on the island—there is only one method of surviving on its shore, and that is his way.

Once Crusoe has salvaged the most important items from the shipwreck, he is able to undertake his next task: to “view the Country, and seek a proper Place for my Habitation, and where to store my Goods to secure them from whatever might happen” (39-40). He climbs a nearby hill to give himself a better view of the area and there “I saw my Fate to my great Affliction, (*viz.*) that I was in an Island environ'd every Way with the Sea, no Land to be seen, except some Rocks which lay a great Way off, and two small Islands less than this, which lay about three Leagues to the

West” (40). The trope of islands off islands is common in castaway fiction, and suggests a desire for connection rather than isolation: the castaway experience is less isolating, if there is hope of escape to somewhere else. On occasion, novels also feature a barely discernable mainland in addition to, or instead of, islands off islands. Hazy landforms on the horizon extend the adventure: they represent a question mark on the edge of the castaway’s domain. This is space into which the castaway could potentially move or, alternatively, space from which danger (generally represented by unfriendly natives) could appear. Of the two options, it is generally only the second that actually eventuates: castaways themselves tend to remain on their island or, at most, travel to very small islands and rocky outcrops that lie close to the shore. Castaways, by definition, need to remain isolated from the outer world. They can be visited by it, but they cannot visit it themselves. If too much distance is put between their island and themselves, they cease to be island castaways. Characters and insular settings, in short, depend upon one another for their meaning: thus, whilst Crusoe does leave his island by the end of Defoe’s novel, he has remained there in the Western cultural consciousness.

Generally speaking, a castaway’s sense of mastery over his surroundings owes much to the act of being contained on the island. The moment in which the castaway realises the insularity of his new surroundings is, therefore, rich with imperial and colonial ideologies and ramifications. Surveying the island from the mountaintop, Crusoe is able to see it in its entirety. Such mountaintop visits, labelled “monarch-of-all-I-survey scenes,” occur in most castaway narratives and can be considered crucial to the imperial motivations of the texts. Mary Louise Pratt, applying the term to her discussion of non-fictional travel narratives, describes it as “a brand of verbal painting whose highest calling was to produce for the home audience the peak moments at

which geographical ‘discoveries’ were ‘won’ for England” (197). Vision and the recounting thereof thus become integral to the process of acquiring foreign land. Scholars like Phillips and Weaver-Hightower have, in turn, applied the term to fictional island stories.<sup>5</sup> Weaver-Hightower writes that such scenes when used in island narratives “[provide] the fictional colonist with a fantasy of power over the land he views” (3). Crusoe, standing on the mountaintop, sees the island spread out around him and in so doing claims it as his own. He interprets his vision of the land through a seemingly inherent right to possession. The island is his: it has, to use Pratt’s phraseology, been “‘won’ for England,” and won for himself.

It is a powerful moment for both Crusoe and the reader for, as Weaver-Hightower explains, “such fictional texts also enable their readers to establish and maintain a fantasy of legitimate ownership over colonized lands symbolized by the fictional island” (3). Integral to the scene is, again, the island’s emptiness. Looking out over the space, Crusoe describes it as “barren, and, as I saw good Reason to believe, un-inhabited, except by wild Beasts, of whom however I saw none, yet I saw Abundance of Fowls” (40). The word “barren” suggests a lack of life and life-giving vegetation, yet the presence of wildlife contradicts this. There must be sufficient life on the island to support the birds that Crusoe can see, yet he chooses to ignore this. His attitude harks back to this chapter’s earlier discussion of the “Necessaries of life” (47) that Crusoe salvages from the ship. The island is “barren” because the European castaway considers it to be a sub-standard place. Its barrenness is represented as an invitation to colonisation: the island is empty and available for “improvement.” In Green’s words, “this is a story of *morally justified* imperialism. Crusoe starts with a desert island and a wrecked ship, two things of no use to anybody. But after a while, swimming to and fro between the two, he has sewn them together to make a valuable

property” (*Robinson Crusoe* 23). The island, then, is not only available for colonisation but in need of it—Crusoe’s presence as a “good colonial steward” (Weaver-Hightower 11) is required for it to be turned into something lush, healthy, and useful.

### **From Wilderness to Landscape: Taming Crusoe’s “Kingdom”**

Most of Crusoe’s time on the island is spent diligently transforming his surroundings. Construction and cultivation become his everyday routine, his brand of domesticity. He builds himself a “chief Seat” near the beach and a “Country Seat” further inland (110-11). Agriculture and animal husbandry form a core component of his survival mission. His homes, described as “plantations” (110), generally serve some kind of purpose in this respect. His seaside habitation, for instance, is where he grows corn and his inland residence is located next to his goat enclosure. As the years pass, his domain spreads out over the island. Marzec observes that Crusoe “[attempts] to restructure the apparently chaotic nature” of his surroundings, so as to “unearth some significance in a land uncharted and indeterminably distant from the known, and thus meaningful, land of the England [sic]” (13). “Defoe’s interest in cultivation,” he continues, “concerns more than the domination of land; it is part and parcel of British and Western identity formation” (13). As Marzec’s discussion of the novel emphasises, Crusoe’s development of the island is inextricably bound to the growth of his colonial subjectivity: the “disciplining of the land” cannot be separated from the “disciplining of his identity” (17). The island enables the castaway to progress to the next stage of his imperial identity. Crusoe steadily domesticates and tames his surroundings, thereby turning unmapped and unfamiliar wilderness into an ordered

and tamed landscape. Simultaneously, he takes control of his behaviour and thought processes, and learns how to be a successful colonist.

Crusoe's transformation of both himself and the island is thus grounded in the principles and concerns of empire. Redfield considers the domestication of Crusoe's surroundings to be another "key [element] of the settler myth," namely that "Wilderness must be tamed into familiarity" (8). The terms "wilderness" and "landscape" provide an invaluable pathway into the novel's representation of terrain. Only the former is used within the novel and that often with a somewhat different function, as in the Biblical phrase "What a Table was here spread for me in a Wilderness" (107). However, Casey provides definitions that support an application of the terms to Crusoe's novel. "[Wilderness] is the undespoiled natural realm," he writes, "Nature in its aboriginal independence. Wilderness is the natural world *not on view*, and especially not on view for human beings' enjoyment or exploitation. Landscape, on the other hand, is the natural world as collected in coherent clusters and *placed on view*" (203). In the case of *Robinson Crusoe*, these clusters are presented in writing. Crusoe carefully defines his island world via various sections, or clusters: his "chief seat," his "country seat," his cave, his woodland goat pen, and the creek in which he lands his cargo from the shipwreck, to name the most important ones. Moreover, though Casey focuses primarily on the notion of landscape as linked to the "natural world," he does observe that the term can also "[signify] not just a literal stretch of land-in-view but, by extension, any coherent vista, whether the vista gives onto land or city or self" (203). Thus, Crusoe's domain can be considered a landscape through its tamed coherency, even though it contains both man-made and natural locations. Underlying this schematic is Crusoe's sense of self, the development of which becomes a part of the landscaping process.

The rescripting of the island from an unseen wilderness to a seen landscape is gradual. The steady and methodical nature of Crusoe's work allows him to break his surroundings into more manageable components. His clusters thus have a practical benefit, as they enable him to gradually increase the size of his domain. Crusoe's relationship with his environment suggests that they also have an aesthetic quality and purpose. Casey considers "Landscape painting and landscape photography" to be of particular importance when discussing the definition of "landscape," as they "regard landscape as an object of aesthetic enjoyment" (203). Crusoe, having no access to either of these mediums, instead finds pleasure in the real landscape that he erects on, and inscribes into, the island. He gains great satisfaction from the clusters he creates, and often travels from one to the other so as to inspect, enjoy, and make use of their various advantages. Moreover, when a ship taken over by a band of mutineers is brought to the island, Crusoe takes the time to proudly show, or in some cases describe, his most cherished sections to the ship's captain and his handful of loyal men. This exhibition of his colonialist successes is deemed important enough to be undertaken whilst the little group is frantically plotting how to overcome the mutineers. Sharing his landscape clusters and telling their story proves to be very important to the castaway.

Overall, the process of creating a landscape centres on possession. Crusoe tames his surroundings one step at a time, and in so doing fosters within himself a sense of mastery and ownership over the island. In this sense, landscaping shares similarities with the monarch-of-all-I-survey scene: both allow the castaway to possess his or her surroundings. Furthermore, as with the trope of the mountaintop moment, the term "landscape" also suggests visual appropriation of terrain. Buell contends that "landscape implies the totality of what a gaze can comprehend from its

vantage point. Although the ‘scape’ of the English noun implies a reified ‘thereness,’ landscape should also be thought of as shaped by the mind of the beholder, as well as by sociohistorical forces” (143). In the case of *Robinson Crusoe*, the island terrain is subjected to Crusoe’s desire. He shapes the environment according to the principles of empire and, in so doing, turns the unknown wilderness into a known landscape. The rescripting of terrain in both a visual and physical sense is not exclusive to Defoe’s novel: as DeLoughrey explains, a key step in the Robinsonade is for characters to “[subject]” the island “to empirical observation and experiment, which leads to rational control of unknown natural forces” (*Routes* 14). Crusoe’s domination over the island forms a foundation for the later novels: possession of territory becomes a driving force, acted out through physical labour and the process of visual/cognitive perception.

The entire island is not, however, tamed during Crusoe’s time there. It is split into two parts: the safe side of Crusoe’s habitation, and the dangerous side of the cannibals. This split is implied to the reader early in the novel. As the narrator, Crusoe foreshadows what is to come through statements like “had I happen’d to be on the other Side of the Island, I might have had Hundreds of [Turtles] every Day, as I found afterwards; but perhaps had paid dear enough for them” (63-64). As the castaway character, however, Crusoe does not realise the danger until much later. Fifteen years into his island entrapment, he finds a single footprint on the beach. The discovery sends him into agitation and panic as he fears that the footprint is either the work of the Devil or else proof that local islanders, or “Savages,” have landed on his shore (112-13). The calm and ordered life he has built for himself over the years is instantly disrupted: in Beer’s words, “The inscribed body of another, whether male or female, white or black, invades Crusoe and the island sand alike” (“Island Bounds” 38). His

fear alters his island lifestyle and vocabulary and, from this moment onwards, his home by the beach also becomes known as his “Castle” (112). Domesticity is overshadowed by his newly discovered fear and the need to defend himself against unknown terrors.

The next two years are spent in perpetual anxiety. Crusoe increases the fortifications around both of his homes and splits his herd of goats into several different flocks so as to lessen the chance of losing his entire flock to unwanted visitors. Roaming the island in search of appropriate places to surreptitiously shelter his goats, he finds himself in a part of the island he has not explored before. There, he makes a brutal discovery:

When I was come down the Hill, to the Shore ... I was perfectly confounded and amaz'd; nor is it possible for me to express the Horror of my mind, at seeing the Shore spread with Skulls, Hands, Feet and other Bones of humane Bodies; and particularly I observ'd a Place where there had been a Fire made, and a Circle dug in the Earth, like a Cockpit, where it is suppos'd the Savage Wretches had sat down to their inhumane Feastings upon the Bodies of their Fellow-Creatures. (119-20)

This sight both horrifies and saddens Crusoe, and causes him to remain for some time within his “own Circle”—that is, “my three Plantations, *viz.* my Castle, my Country Seat, which I call'd my Bower, and my Enclosure in the Woods” (120-21). As with his discovery of the footprint, Crusoe again negotiates his emotions through his engagement with the setting. He responds to the graphic scene on the beach and his subsequent fears by rescripting the island: his home becomes a fortress surrounded by the unknowable terrain of cannibalism. As Elleke Boehmer points out, “No matter how much Crusoe, like the archetypal colonist he is, strives to assert his own reality



and establish his rights to the island ‘kingdom,’ the unknown remains a constant anxiety, represented by his horror of cannibalism” (18). The discovery of the human remains cements Crusoe’s fear and violently splits the island into the two domains of safety and peril. The place now has a civilised side and a savage “other.”

This horror-filled section of the island is tamed, to some extent, in *Farther Adventures*. The island is divided into parts, with different areas being allocated to a wide variety of new island inhabitants. The east side of the island is still left uninhabited, so “that if any of the savages should come on shore there, only for their usual customary barbarities, they might come and go; if they disturbed nobody, nobody would disturb them” (165), but it no longer instils terror into the hearts of the island’s colonists. Defoe’s depiction of cannibalism being tamed rather than eradicated ensures that the island landscape retains an other, something for the European side to define itself against. This taming begins, to some extent, with the conversion of Friday in *Robinson Crusoe*, and reaches its height in *Farther Adventures* when thirty-seven “savages” are incorporated into several households within the European island community (164). This incorporation lessens the fearsome and sinister nature of the cannibal population. The more the other is domesticated and made familiar, the less interesting it becomes.

The process of taming the island into a landscape also gives rise to notions of space and place. Tuan writes that “‘Space’ is more abstract than ‘place.’ What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (*Space* 6). Space is unknown ground, whilst place is inscribed with cultural values, knowledge, and attachment—crucially, space can become place through the act of cultural inscription. Crusoe’s initial experience of the island occurs during the shipwreck, and is very vague and abstract. He tells the reader that “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” (33). The coast eventually becomes more visible, and is seen to be hostile and unknowable: “as we made nearer and nearer the Shore, the Land look’d more frightful than the sea” (34). Crusoe’s first night on the island is spent in a tree where he hides out of fear, and his first actions on the island, as described earlier, include the salvaging of items from the shipwreck. These behaviours further underscore his attachment to what he knows, and his fear of what he does not know. In Marzec’s words, he is “Uncontrollably thrown into the space of uncultivated land”: the island initially functions as a “meaningless presence that bewilders Crusoe’s sensibility, and by extension the sociosymbolic order of the British Empire that he carries on his back” (2). However, time passes and, as Crusoe grows familiar with the island, he develops a sense of attachment to it. When he is nearly carried out to sea by a strong current, the “desolate solitary Island” suddenly becomes “the most pleasant Place in the World, and all the Happiness my Heart could wish for, was to be but there again” (101-02). Representations of the island evolve in direct relation to Crusoe’s experiences: first it is a vague and abstract space; then it becomes tangible, but fearsome and unknowable; and finally it is a beloved place of salvation and attachment.

Importantly, Crusoe’s place has a central point of reference, a hub from which the rest of his island emanates. Though he travels throughout the place and builds plantations, shelters, and storage holes in various locations, such endeavours are always undertaken with reference to his primary residence, his “chief seat” near the shore. This residence is so important to the castaway that, visiting a particularly beautiful part of the land, he still remains true to it: “I confess this Side of the Country was much pleasanter than mine, but yet I had not the least Inclination to remove; for

as I was fix'd in my Habitation, it became natural to me, and I seem'd all the while I was here, to be as it were upon a Journey, and from Home" (81). Upon Crusoe's return to the island in *Farther Adventures*, the Spaniard who meets him takes him directly to this old home:

He then asked me if I would walk to my old habitation, where he would give me possession of my own house again, and where I should see there had been but mean improvements; so I walked along with him. But alas! I could no more find the place again than if I had never been there; for they had planted so many trees, and placed them in such a posture, so thick and close to one another, and in ten years' time they were grown so big, that, in short, the place was inaccessible, except by such windings and blind ways as they themselves only who made them could find. (36)

The habitation is still the primary point of reference within the territory as it represents the "capital city" (164) of the now extensively populated island, but it is no longer Crusoe's home. The place is not his place, and the island is not his island.

This visit is the last of its kind. Crusoe spends his time there undertaking various pursuits for the benefit of the people, seeing himself as "an old patriarchal monarch; providing for them, as if I had been father of the whole family, as well as of the plantation" (186). However, this care does not extend beyond the visit. Several years later, Crusoe receives (and does not act upon) a letter from his partner in the "Brasils" stating that the islanders had written to him to say that "they went on but poorly ... and that they begged of him to write to me to think of the promise I had made to fetch them away, that they might see their own country again before they died" (184-85). Crusoe does not physically return to the island again; psychologically, however, he returns countless times throughout the rest of the novel, most notably

towards the end when he tells a prince the story of his island. “I told him that all the lands in my kingdom were my own, and all my subjects were not only my tenants, but tenants at will; that they would all fight for me to the last drop; and that never tyrant, for such I acknowledged myself to be, was ever so universally beloved, and yet so horribly feared, by his subjects” (300). Thus Crusoe’s island lives on in his mind in an ideal state that hinges on nostalgia for the past rather than concern for the future. Casey writes that “Even when we are displaced, we continue to count upon *some* reliable place, if not our present precarious perch then a place-to-come or a place-that-was” (ix). Crusoe looks to the past, and so the island becomes a “place-that-was,” something to sustain him throughout the rest of his travels. That ideal place is, of course, itself a fiction: the further Crusoe ventures from his island, the more he shapes the experience of having been shipwrecked on its shores into something pristine and satisfactory. Crusoe yearns for his perfect island but does nothing to help the settlers whom he has left behind: the reality of the place becomes irrelevant once he has moved on with his life. His nostalgia for this ideal island is reflective of the island stereotype so prevalent in Western society: as in *Robinson Crusoe*, the real-world nostalgia for the perfect island is dislocated from island realities. It is the abstract concept that has become cultural capital, and not the reality behind that concept.

### **The Problem of Too Many Places**

Crusoe is a lost character, unable to stay in one location for very long unless he is forcibly trapped there. Redfield describes him as “a man out of place” (5). Shipwrecked on the island, he is “painfully displaced” yet, as Redfield points out, “he has, in some senses, always been so” (5-6). Much of Crusoe’s difficulty, I argue, stems from concern, anxiety, and guilt surrounding home and attachment. Phillips

believes that Defoe's novel "illustrates ... the dialectical geography of home and away, in which adventures are set away from home, in unknown space that is disconnected, simplified, liminal and broadly realistic" (29). According to him, "The geography and the narrative of *Robinson Crusoe* is divided between home and away" and "everything that happens to Crusoe, everything he does and everywhere he goes, is a comment on his home – his family home and his home country" (29). Redfield, on the other hand, posits that "[Crusoe's] sojourn on the uncharted isle, his furthest displacement beyond the bounds of society, in the end brings him closest to home. Once wedded to his island, he can never leave it, returning at the end of the book to inspect it again and bearing everywhere its mark on him" (6). The "home" that Redfield is referring to, then, is the island and not England. The difficulty for Crusoe, I believe, is that both Redfield and Phillips are correct. Crusoe has two homes—England and the island—and he is torn between both. He is "out of place," but he also has, one could say, too many places.

England is Crusoe's first home and his first place. It is filled with culture and history, both familial and national, which give him roots and stability. His background, however, is not entirely English: whilst he is born in England, his father is from Germany. The opening paragraphs of *Robinson Crusoe* simultaneously indicate this split in the family history and emphasise the Anglicisation of the family through the representation and naming of Crusoe. His first name, "Robinson," is the original surname of his English mother, whilst his own surname, "Crusoe," is the English version of "Kreutznaer" (4). As Crusoe explains, "by the usual Corruption of Words in *England*, we are now called, nay we call our selves, and write our Name *Crusoe*, and so my Companions always call'd me" (4). The family thus actively rescript their nationality by Anglicising their paternal German roots and embracing

their maternal English roots. Their acquaintances, in turn, accept this branding of the family. Only partly English by birth, Crusoe becomes fully English by name. His loyalty towards, and love for, a home country lies with England: Germany is not maligned, but it is marginalised and forgotten with determination and intent.

It is England, then, and not Germany that provides Crusoe with his primary experience of place. This experience fosters a stability that allows him to yearn for the rest of the world, thus illustrating Tuan's observation that "From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa" (*Space* 6). Much of the security experienced by Crusoe, however, is derived from the presence of his parents. The novel constructs England, specifically York, as Crusoe's family-focused place. People and place become inextricably tied through emotional investment: Crusoe experiences, and remembers, York in relation to the people whom he holds dear in his heart. This, however, causes it to embody more than just security and stability, as it also functions as a centre of familial reproach. Place can have both negative and positive connotations, with stability and security potentially engendering feelings of dissatisfaction, obligation, and entrapment. Crusoe's unhappiness with his routine English "middle station" life causes him to run away from it, and the guilt of having abandoned his parents shadows his adventures for the rest of the novel. Threats of danger (such as storms on the open space of the ocean), in turn, cause him to think back to the comfort of England, which is less about guilt than about self-preservation and homesickness. Space and place thus bring with them a complicated and complex set of fears and attachments for Crusoe.

This complexity is increased in the aftermath of his time as a castaway on the island. Being shipwrecked forces Crusoe to turn a new location—the island—into a place and a home. He is attached to the island, but returns to England at the first

opportunity, just as he left that country all those decades previously. Living in his birthplace again, however, makes him unhappy. This escalates in *Farther Adventures* when he looks around and sees his fellow countrymen miserable in their pursuits of “labouring for bread” or “squandering in vile excesses or empty pleasures” (7). He unfavourably compares their lives to the one he led on the island where “I suffered no more corn to grow because I did not want it; and bred no more goats, because I had no more use for them; where the money lay in the drawer till it grew mouldy” (8). His island becomes an ideal location against which other locations are measured. Despite this, England is never far from his thoughts when travelling, and it is England to which he returns at the end of both *Robinson Crusoe* and *Farther Adventures*. He longs for one place but, once there, yearns to be either in another place (generally a “place-that-was,” to return to Casey’s term) or in the unknown space of travelling. This longing becomes particularly unbearable when, in *Farther Adventures*, he is living in England but has the theoretical means of returning to the island.

Crusoe can only be content in one location, if he is forced to remain there. Life on the island in *Robinson Crusoe* provides him with just that, as he has no choice but to remain where he is. Unable to escape, he must learn to listen to his thoughts and commit to his actions. His island is a bounded territory, encircled by an ocean and oceanic currents that prevent his escape from the island and, by extension, prevent his escape from himself. Though the reader is aware that there are several other small islands in the area (40) and one large island or continent “at a very great distance” (79), he/she is not invited to engage extensively with that knowledge. As Richard Grove points out in *Green Imperialism*, “above all, *Crusoe* emphasised the theme of isolation” (228). The idea of the island as a bounded and isolated entity is vital to the development of Crusoe’s identity: fixed to one location, he is forced to become a

colonist. Isolation enables the imperialistic agenda of the novel. This is reflective of a broader method of engagement with islands, both in history and fiction: “In the grammar of empire,” writes DeLoughrey, “*remoteness* and *isolation* function as synonyms for island space and were considered vital to successful colonization” (*Routes* 8). Furthermore, DeLoughrey continues, “The construction of isolated island space is an implicit consequence of European colonialism” (9). Isolation therefore becomes both a product, and a tool, of empire. In the case of *Robinson Crusoe*, that isolation is created through Crusoe’s engagement with his environment. He is fixated on the island, and his world shrinks to accommodate that fixation. The reader, in turn, is forced to take on a similar perspective as he/she can only access the island through the castaway’s eyes: we are forced to see the space as Crusoe sees it, though we know that his vision is compromised and unreliable. The island, then, is made to be geographically isolated (despite the various landforms surrounding it) through the behaviour of the castaway. Crusoe sees the island as isolated, and it is treated accordingly within the pages of the novel.

The insular setting serves as a contained site in which Crusoe can “better” himself as a man and a colonist without fear of distraction from the extended outside world. As several critics have noted, a key aspect of this supposed character building is the maturation of Crusoe’s spirituality and morality. Hunter, for instance, argues that “The island is a fitting climax to Crusoe’s early aimlessness, but at the same time its confinement provides him with a new pace which is more conducive to reflection and redemption. The island, then, represents both punishment and potential salvation” (12). Critically, however, this maturation can also be seen in a very different light. Loxley points out that the high morality offered by the nineteenth-century Robinsonades “which makes them, apparently, so pious is in fact a morality of



militarism, warfare, aggression and violence” (116-17). Defoe’s novel lays important groundwork for these later texts, as its island functions as a space promoting the ideals of the early imperialistic period. Crusoe develops a strong sense of morality and piety, but supporting this morality are the ideologies of empire. It is not the space itself, however, that brings these concepts together but rather Crusoe’s perception of that space: the castaway constructs a mental image of the island that allows him to develop a symbiotic “morality” of piety and imperialism.

It is no coincidence that an island setting (that is, a supposedly empty location waiting to be colonised) provides Crusoe with the possibility to reflect and reconcile himself with the guilt of his decision to leave England and his father’s house. Crusoe is able to sanctify his lust for unknown space by colonising a new place. The island’s absolute boundaries force the Englishman to deal with his inclination towards being “out of place.” He is trapped, both physically and psychologically. It is the very physicality of the island that forces him to become content through self-awareness; unlike England, the island confines him in a physical sense, and for a very long period of time. Crusoe tells the reader that, after two years of island habitation, his thoughts change from “I was a Prisoner, lock’d up with the Eternal Bars and Bolts of the Ocean, in an uninhabited Wilderness, without Redemption” (83) to “I began to conclude in my Mind, That it was possible for me to be more happy in this forsaken Solitary Condition, than it was probable I should ever have been in any other Particular State in the World; and with this Thought I was going to give Thanks to God for bringing me to this Place” (83). Though this last comment is followed by Crusoe calling himself a “Hypocrite” as he knows that he would escape from the island if he could (83), it nonetheless shows the evolution of his thinking. His time on

the island has influenced his attitude towards his immediate surroundings, the broader world, and himself.

The binary of space and place in Defoe's novel can be read as the divide between imperialistic exploration and geographically fixed colonisation. Said highlights the connection of these dual pursuits. He describes *Robinson Crusoe* as "a work whose protagonist is the founder of a new world, which he rules and reclaims for Christianity and England," before then pointing out that "Crusoe is explicitly enabled by an ideology of overseas expansion—directly connected in style and form to the narratives of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century exploration voyages that laid the foundations of the great colonial empires" (83). Defoe's novel, set in the seventeenth century and published in the eighteenth century, situates itself in a period both of exploration and colonisation, space and place. Each mode of engaging with one's physical surroundings is necessary for a successful empire. Crusoe's primary drive is to explore the world; once he becomes trapped on a suitable piece of land, his secondary drive is to colonise. This colonisation, and Crusoe's attitude towards it, is described in blatant terms: "I was Lord of the whole Manor; or if I pleas'd, I might call my self King," the castaway proclaims, "or Emperor over the whole Country which I had Possession of. There were no Rivals. I had not Competitor, none to dispute Sovereignty or Command with me" (94). The island becomes a colony and, even more importantly, it becomes Crusoe's colony.

The early stage of island colonisation brings together control of the island and control of the self. Weaver-Hightower argues that islands within "castaway tales" are gendered as masculine, and that such tales "[present] stories in which castaways could control the naturally bounded space of the island as they control the naturally bounded space of their bodies" (xi). Her claim enables us to better understand both the

relationship between Crusoe and his island, and the accompanying consequences. It is somewhat of a stretch to consider Crusoe's island as masculine, for such a personification would deviate substantially from the novel's insistence on physical "reality." However, reflective of Weaver-Hightower's argument, Crusoe's control of the island is enmeshed with, and runs parallel to, his control of himself. The longer he stays on the island, the more developed the location becomes, and the more mature he grows. The experience is a lesson in colonisation, with Crusoe passing through several stages of being an accidental colonist: arrival on the island; initial shipwreck salvaging and assessment of the island; construction of a temporary shelter; the beginning of long-term shelter construction; short-term food acquisition; securing of food for the long-term; the accumulation of practise subjects in the form of animals; the acquisition of a human subject; and, finally, leader of a colony. To control himself is to control the island. This dynamic allows him to become so successful a colonist that Joyce considers him to be "the true symbol of the British conquest" (24). The island setting and his attitude towards it allow him to attain this status.

The focus on controlling the island is closely aligned to possession of it. The island is objectified. It becomes something to be claimed, controlled, possessed, and even passed on to the next generation. Exploring his surroundings, Crusoe comes across a "delicious Vale" filled with a variety of fruit trees (73). He examines the area and delights in the knowledge that "this was all my own, that I was King and Lord of all this Country indefeasibly, and had a Right of Possession; and if I could convey it, I might have it in Inheritance, as compleatly as any Lord of a Mannor in *England*" (73). The irony of the situation does not occur to him. Trapped on an island and alone for the foreseeable future, Crusoe of course has no one to whom he could possibly pass the land as an inheritance. Ownership of the place is a driving force behind his

thoughts and behaviour. Bruce McLeod pinpoints the heart of the matter: “[Crusoe] defines or realizes his selfhood through the process of mapping and circumscribing the island. In other words, he revives his sense of self, his identity and well-being through possession” (198). Extending on this, it becomes clear that threats to Crusoe’s island possession are synonymous with threats to Crusoe himself. The footprint in the sand, for instance, disrupts the colonist’s peace of mind as it threatens both his own safety and his grip on the island.

The tie between castaway and location remains strong even when it is time to leave. At his departure, Crusoe gives those staying behind advice on how to survive:

I then told them, I would let them into the Story of my living there, and put them into the Way of making it easy to them: Accordingly I gave them the whole History of the Place, and of my coming to it; shew’d them my Fortifications, the Way I made my Bread, planted my Corn, cured my Grapes; and in a Word, all that was necessary to make them easy. (199)

Life on the island revolves around Crusoe’s way of living. Moreover, his knowledge is considered “the whole History of the Place” when, of course, he cannot possibly know all there is to know about the island and its past. His lifestyle is deemed the only way of surviving on the island. In Redfield’s words, “To live on his island is to live *as* Crusoe, to adopt his ways and habits, as well as to walk the same ground” (7). Crusoe’s instructions to the new colonists pave the way for future fictional castaways. Characters in other castaway novels, though they are not necessarily shipwrecked precisely on Crusoe’s island, nonetheless follow in his footsteps. Moreover, other textual islands often come to resemble the island of Defoe’s novel simply through the actions of the castaways: living in the style of Crusoe, either directly or indirectly, changes the island terrain. Tim Cresswell explains that a location can have “hauntings

of past inhabitation,” physical evidence that others have lived there, and that it then “has a history—it meant something to other people” (2). Creswell’s words have pertinent implications when applied to *Robinson Crusoe* and its textual aftermath. Whilst castaways are not shipwrecked on Crusoe’s exact island—and therefore cannot be subjected to any physical reminders of the past—they are nonetheless “haunted” by Crusoe. Imperial castaways negotiate their sense of a castaway identity through the legacy of Crusoe: their behaviour is dictated by their urtext, to the extent that their spatial interactions restructure their islands. Moreover, Crusoe’s method of island living haunts the castaway narrative even today.

### **Mapping Crusoe’s Island: Cartographic Mastery**

This idea of the island being haunted by Crusoe was beautifully illustrated in the late nineteenth century. Readers of the novel were given the chance to become masters of Crusoe’s island through a mapmaking competition held by *The Boy’s Own Paper* in 1895 (“Our Prize”). Examination of this competition shows that fictional characters were not alone in taking on the role of Crusoe. John Adams, at whose wish the competition was organised, explains that its purpose was to establish “how far Crusoe’s Island was clearly apprehended by the readers of De Foe’s narrative” (225). Crusoe’s descriptions of the island were central to the competition, and part of the announcement in *The Boy’s Own Paper* read,

What is wanted is a map of Robinson Crusoe’s Island, such as he might have shown to his friends after he came home. It should indicate the size and position of the island, and the position of all the important places, such as the Creek, the Castle, the Arbour, the Grotto, the spot where the footprint was found, where the shipwreck took place, where the savages used to land. The

general nature of the surface of the Island should also be indicated—the hills, valleys, rocks, and currents. (270)

The novel lends itself well to such a task, for Crusoe provides his audience with a multitude of reference points, geographical estimates, and terrain details. Adams points out that Defoe's descriptions are sometimes contradictory (223), but that nonetheless "We find ourselves in the very heart of stubborn fact. The island has latitude and longitude, tides and currents, accurately marked-out distances" (228). Though fictional, it is an island of reality.

The competition, in short, asked readers to translate Crusoe's verbal mapping into an actual map. There were, according to Adams, more than one hundred and fifty submissions in total, sent in "from all parts of the world" by males and females aged between nine and thirty-two (226). Adams goes on to comment that "They are all carefully labelled *Robinson Crusoe's Island*, and yet no two of the one hundred and fifty are alike" (226). Each cartographer has thus taken the details from the text, and moulded them into something new; they have transformed the setting into their own island. Unlike Crusoe's subjects, they have become the master of the place—still in Crusoe's shadow, but not eclipsed by it. Crusoe, however, continues to haunt all of these islands in his role as the initial coloniser and master. One particular map illustrates, quite literally, the extent to which the original castaway and his island are mutually defining. This map conflates the face of Crusoe with the island itself (see fig. 1), which led Adams to call it "the face map" (239). Recalling Weaver-Hightower's reading of the island as the castaway's body, one could consider this map as a kind of in-between approach: instead of the castaway imagining the island as his own body, however, it is the map-maker who is conflating the two elements. Even here, though, the reality of the island is not ignored. Adams writes that the map is

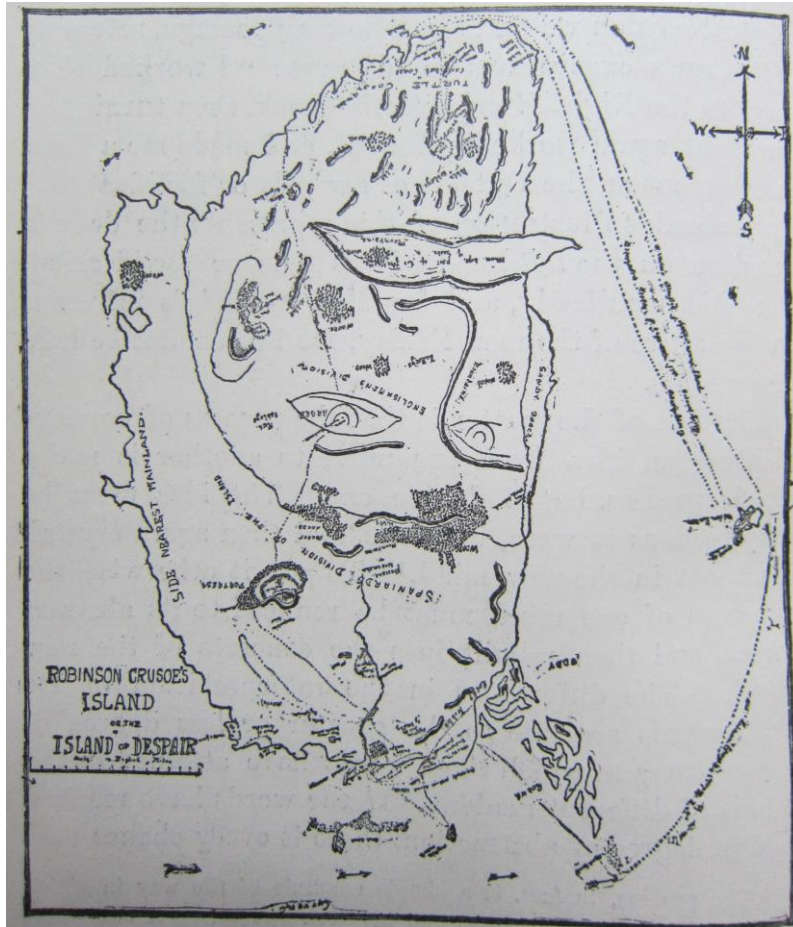


Fig. 1. “The Face Map”

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“very obviously a deliberate attempt to fit in all the facts into a fanciful order of things which symbolizes, without representing, the true state of affairs” (239). Composed of rearranged facts, the map functions as a symbol of the relationship between character and setting. Crusoe and his island are inseparable.

The castaway’s identity is thus engraved into the very terrain. We cannot read the island without also seeing the man, and vice versa. Crusoe has been islanded and, in direct relation to this, the island has been subsumed into the British Empire. Crusoe’s isolation enables him to focus on domesticating and taming his island from a wilderness into a landscape. The abstract space of imperialism is turned into the familiar place of colonisation. Exploration gives way to settlement as Crusoe is taught

how to remain in one location long enough to “improve” it. *Robinson Crusoe* acts as a forerunner of the nineteenth-century children’s castaway stories to be discussed in the next chapter. As Loxley observes, these novels depict their islands as “military training schools” (119). Defoe’s island does not offer “military” lessons but it does function as a setting in which other lessons of empire can be learnt. Crusoe is able to develop into a successful colonist because he is shipwrecked in an “ideal” classroom.



## Chapter Two

### Enacting the Urtext in Nineteenth-Century Children's Robinsonades

*Robinson Crusoe*'s foregrounding of the island flows through to the children's castaway stories of the nineteenth century. This chapter examines three of the most well known texts within this category: Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson*, Marryat's *Masterman Ready*, and Ballantyne's *The Coral Island*. It argues that these novels hark back to Defoe's text through character engagement with island spatiality: spatial transformation plays a crucial role in their imperial agenda. The families or, in the case of *The Coral Island*, the unsupervised children, relate to their physical surroundings through the legacy of Crusoe. They are able to follow in Crusoe's footsteps by taking on his attitude towards insular locations. Island and castaway are thus enmeshed: the characters access a Crusoe lifestyle by responding to their surroundings in the manner of their predecessor. The relationship between Defoe's castaway and his nineteenth-century successors is one of powerful and persistent spatial negotiation: this negotiation has such a strong impact on the setting that the islands of the later novels come to resemble Defoe's island. The imitative behaviour of the nineteenth-century castaways, moreover, allows characters to identify with Crusoe (primarily in a figurative manner). Such identification is made all the more powerful through its largely unspoken nature, as it then functions as an inherent element of the castaway experience. This process centres on character attitudes towards physical surroundings: being cast away results in characters acting in a certain manner, which in turn allows them to flourish as empire builders.

The novels being examined in this chapter also allow a level of insight into Crusoe's experience as transplanted onto other islands. This indicates the broad

applicability of his attitude, and the manner in which it can be taken up and used to dominate a variety of insular settings. Each of these texts offers a different type of island: Wyss's family are wrecked in a large and unbounded territory, Marryat's castaways find themselves on a small and relatively flat island, and Ballantyne's boys are wrecked on a pre-domesticated and hilly island. The characters' experiences are, to a certain extent, shaped by the peculiarities of their locations—as a result, each castaway story offers a somewhat different experience. The idiosyncrasies of the individual islands, however, are overshadowed by the tradition into which the novels were written: the island settings encountered in these novels must be understood through their urtext. Abstract reminders of *Crusoe* are present on all islands: these locations, to return to Cresswell's terminology, are haunted by *Crusoe*. The novels of this chapter, one could say, allow a glimpse into *Crusoe*'s hypothetical fate on different islands and on different parts of his own island.

The concept of *Crusoe* identification is a useful pathway into the relationship between the diegetic world of the text and the external world of its readers. In the nineteenth century, John Ballantyne claimed that “there is hardly an elf so devoid of imagination as not to have supposed for himself a solitary island in which he could act *Robinson Crusoe*, were it but in the corner of the nursery. To many it has given the decided turn of their lives, by sending them to sea” (279). *Crusoe* plays a similarly influential role within *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *Masterman Ready*, and *The Coral Island*. Figuratively speaking, characters return to the urtext and act out *Crusoe*'s story. Simultaneously, the novels also allow their readers to enact the *Crusoe* story through the adventures of the fictional children. Loxley argues that “the attraction of the desert island genre” stems, in part, from “the fact that the reader (particularly the child reader) is, in a classic case of under-distanciation, ‘drawn into’ the fabric of the

fiction, made to ‘identify’ personally with the predicament of the major character(s)” (10). Child readers identify with Robinsonade characters, who themselves identify (in a loose sense) with Crusoe. This process enables the ideologies and lessons of empire, so prevalent in these novels, to be adopted by the readers. Fictional islands provide a middle ground between characters and readers, a setting in which imperial and colonial concepts can be explored and replicated. Bristow theorises that islands offer “the possibility of representing colonialist dreams and fears in miniature. In children’s literature, the island regularly serves as an appropriately diminutive world in which dangers can be experienced within safe boundaries. Boy heroes can act as the natural masters of these controllable environments” (94). Nineteenth-century children’s Robinsonades offer an enactment of global imperialism on a smaller scale. Characters confidently dominate their islands in preparation for conquest over the seas; this in turn reflects real-world pursuits of empire.

The islands of these novels thus become vital tools in promoting the conquest and expansion of territory. As referred to earlier in this thesis, Loxley considers the island to be “a fictional parallel of the actual historical and geographical sites of colonial activity” and a “laboratory for the propagation and nurturing of a perfect masculinity” (117). The fictional realm of the island exists in relation to the imperial world of the nineteenth century: an era in which Britain steadily rose to the peak of its imperialistic power. Loxley’s use of the word “laboratory” suggests that the island is an isolated location where desired traits can be “nurtured” in castaways, before those characters are then unleashed on the outside world. Masculinity, in particular, plays an important role in this dynamic. Loxley emphasises the link between masculinity and pursuits of empire, writing that “Indissolubly anchored to [the] image of a national identity (or Europeanness) is a specific and equally powerful mythology of

masculinity: an association between colonial activity and exploration and a concept of manhood which became more strongly forged as the century, and the empire, progressed” (117). Islands function as “military training schools” (119), classrooms in which boys, or “imperialists-in-training” (Weaver-Hightower 83), can test their strength, develop their masculinity, and broaden their knowledge. The island setting is therefore invaluable to the ideologies of these texts.

Castaway attitudes towards the islands remain highly imperial. These are novels about domesticating, taming, dominating, and triumphing over the island. Crusoe informs these attitudes. He is a largely implicit guide to the castaways, a figurative teacher who is overtaken by his students. The characters of these novels step back into Crusoe’s situation and improve on his resilience, resourcefulness, and skills. Not only are they able to showcase their Crusoe skills, they are also able to prove themselves as better castaways and imperialists than their predecessor. This foreshadows the later map-making competition described in the previous chapter, in which readers were able to gain mastery over Crusoe’s island by altering it to suit their own desires. In a similar fashion, novels like *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *Masterman Ready*, and *The Coral Island* allow their characters to enter Crusoe’s world and to shape the island into a place of their own. They are better castaways than Crusoe was, because they benefit from his experience: this is, however, primarily an implicit process, thus making the castaways appear to be inherently better than Crusoe. *Robinson Crusoe* paves the way for the subsequent Robinsonades. Whilst Defoe’s hero must learn how to live on his island, his successors already possess an inherent knowledge of the castaway life. They have inherited his legacy and, by being better castaways than their predecessor, are also able to be better empire builders.

### **Infinite Exploration: The Unbounded Island in *The Swiss Family Robinson***

Analysis of *The Swiss Family Robinson* requires a prefatory discussion of editions. The novel has a complicated publishing history, further confused by the fact that one of Wyss's sons (Johann R. Wyss) was responsible for its original publication. It has been edited, altered, translated, and expanded countless times over the centuries, most notably by Johann R. Wyss, Isabelle de Montolieu, Mary Jane and William Godwin, and W. H. G. Kingston. Many of the editions differ substantially from the original as they introduce a new character, a young girl who is not related to the castaway family, and feature more adventures. Choice of edition thus impacts on analysis (a point that will be returned to later in discussing the island's unbounded nature). This thesis uses the 2007 Penguin Classics version edited by John Seelye. Seelye writes, in his introduction to the text, that it "is the original, the faithful Godwin translation of Wyss's novel, read in English by two generations of children before the Montolieu material was added to it" (xix). David Blamires, it must be said, offers a study of the novel's publishing history that seems to cast doubt on Seelye's claim: he examines, in particular, the manner in which Montolieu material played a role in the first Godwin translation (82). Nonetheless, this Seelye edition of 2007 remains the most authoritative to date.

*The Swiss Family Robinson* presents its protagonists—an unnamed father and mother, and their four sons Fritz, Ernest, Jack, and Francis—as potential colonists from the very beginning of the novel. Though they leave their war-ravaged and economically depleted home of Switzerland to travel to Tahiti for missionary work (the father being a pastor), their ultimate goal is to travel on to Australia to become "free [settlers]" (7). The ship on which they travel is itself situated in the colonial mission. Having been "sent out [from England] as a preparation for the establishment

of a colony in the South Seas,” it is stocked with “a variety of stores not commonly included in the loading of a ship” such as animals, plants, seeds, and tools (80-81). A violent storm encountered between Java and New Guinea, however, cripples the ship and disrupts the family’s plans. The crew abandon the vessel using the only boats available, and the six passengers suddenly find themselves alone on the wreck. They, however, are able to construct a kind of raft, or boat, with which they escape to a nearby island. Once there, they set to work building new lives for themselves. The island ground fulfils their desires: it is not the geographical location they intended to inhabit, but it provides them with the opportunity to turn colonial dreams into a colonial reality far sooner than their initial plans could have.

This colonial reality is anchored in Crusoe’s island experiences. The Swiss characters undertake the same kinds of tasks that their predecessor does: they salvage valuable items from the wrecked ship, build a temporary shelter, explore the island, construct permanent shelters, grow crops, domesticate animals, and teach themselves new trades like carpentry. The parallel is implicit for most of the novel as Defoe’s hero is rarely mentioned in the context of these actions. This makes the behaviour of the family seem natural rather than intentionally imitational. Their actions appear to be driven primarily by an inherent attitude towards the situation and location. That is not to say that prior knowledge is not used—indeed, the father and (to a lesser extent) Ernest constantly showcase, share, and apply their knowledge of the local flora and fauna—but rather that their overall style of living is implicit and inherent. Moreover, by dislocating Crusoe’s castaway behaviour from its text, the novel presents his method of survival as *the* method when placed in such a situation. Defoe’s central story informs *The Swiss Family Robinson*’s plot and characterisation, and supplies it with a structural and narratological foundation. Seelye notes in an editorial endnote

within Wyss's novel that *Robinson Crusoe* "provided the model for all subsequent castaway stories" (445). The figure of Crusoe plays a key role in this process within *The Swiss Family Robinson*. His attitude towards the island is taken up and turned into a generic and largely unspoken stereotype. Indeed, Seelye's words could easily be adapted to suit a discussion of setting: *Robinson Crusoe* "provided the model for all subsequent castaway [engagements with island spatiality]." Wyss's castaways see their island through the eyes of Crusoe, and transform it accordingly.

Defoe's hero is, however, also present in a more explicit manner. The family's references to their predecessor, though scarce, nonetheless establish early in the story that they are aware of, and entertained by, his experiences. Ernest, for instance, believes that Fritz and their father will find coconuts "like Robinson Crusoe" did (40) and, when the family finds turtle eggs, he exclaims "Oh! ... if they are not the very same sort which Robinson Crusoe found in his island" (92). The fear and novelty of "savages" also becomes linked to Crusoe's story. Hearing unexpected sounds, Francis fears, in his mother's words, "that it must be the savages come to eat us up, like those described in Robinson Crusoe's Island" (104) and, later in the novel, the young boy suggests that strange "howlings" are "savages come to eat their prisoners on our island; I wish we could save them, and get a good *Man Friday*, as Robinson Crusoe did" (364). Their engagement with the story suggests an imperfect knowledge of it for, as Seelye points out in an editorial endnote, these comments are not always correct—Crusoe, for instance, does not have coconuts on his island (445). Knowledge of the tale, moreover, is restricted to the island portion of Defoe's novel and does not take its author into account. As such, it becomes a clear textual example of the manner in which Defoe's novel has been pared down and split from its author over the centuries. Wyss's characters engage with the story of Crusoe in much the same way as

Western culture has over time: the framing narrative is forgotten, and all that remains is the mythic core represented by the island experience.

The family's relationship with the story, furthermore, causes Crusoe to appear factual rather than fictional. This becomes particularly apparent when Fritz discovers a copy of the book amongst their possessions. He interrupts a discussion concerning the need for a secure winter shelter to announce that "Here ... is our best counsellor and model, *Robinson Crusoe*; since Heaven has destined us to a similar fate, whom better can we consult? as far as I remember, he cut himself an habitation out of the solid rock: let us see how he proceeded; we will do the same" (381). The family members then "read the famous history with an ardent interest" and "entered earnestly into every detail and derived considerable information from it" (381-82). The moment is a very rare instance of a direct correlation being made between Crusoe's method of surviving on the island and their own, and occurs towards the very end of the novel. *Robinson Crusoe* is given historicity, authenticity, and authority, all of which elevate its protagonist to the position of a real person whose lesson can be accessed through text. He thus shapes the experiences of the family, both as a model dictating their actions at the level of genre (the result of which is the family's unacknowledged imitation of Crusoe's behaviour) and as a textual guide within the story itself.

This dynamic has a profound effect on the setting of *The Swiss Family Robinson*. The island of this novel is quite different to the one found in Defoe's narrative: it is larger and located in the Pacific Ocean (rather than the Atlantic Ocean), and has a far broader, even impossible, range of flora and fauna. However, by superimposing Crusoe's lifestyle onto their location, the family cause the larger island to take on certain attributes of Crusoe's island. Wyss's characters construct several habitations and plant a number of agricultural plots across their domain which, when



seen collectively, are strongly reminiscent of Crusoe's clusters. These clusters create an aesthetic similarity between the islands, with "empty" island territory being gradually filled by domestic hubs. The unfamiliar space of the family's island is steadily transformed into familiar place through developments like their initial home near the shore, the bridge across the river, their tree-top home, their retreat in the rocks, and their two farms. Place becomes understood through notions of home, sustenance, and protection—as in *Robinson Crusoe*, the work undertaken by the castaways directly relates to their survival and comfort in their new surroundings. Furthermore, this process changes the face of the island. Rocks are shattered and dug into, trees are felled, seeds are sown, and houses are built. Crusoe's lifestyle is etched into the very topography of the island; his story is carved into the adopted home of the family.

Clusters (as discussed earlier in the thesis) also play an important role in allowing characters to gain better mastery over their island setting. The act of breaking the island into more manageable portions, already an important tool for smaller islands, becomes crucial in navigating the larger space of this setting. Each new cluster extends the castaway domain and represents another step forward in the colonisation project. As the novel progresses, the family's network of homes and other constructions extends further and further from their initial point of landing. Travelling between the varied locations becomes a form of entertainment, with Fritz for instance asking his father "When you go again to Tent House, or on any other excursion, will it not be my turn to go with you? For here at Falcon's Stream there is nothing new to amuse us" (211). The castaways decide to formally name various parts of the island for ease of conversation and to create for themselves "the soothing illusion, of inhabiting a country already known and peopled" (173). Names are given

to natural locations as well as constructed ones, thereby allowing the characters to also claim, turn into clusters, and gain mastery over sections of the island that they have not physically altered. As in *Robinson Crusoe*, the castaways work to transform their surroundings so as to incorporate them into their own worldview.

Geographical naming is a key step in taking control of and colonising an unknown location. Weaver-Hightower points out that such behaviour is a significant “trope” of castaway fiction (14). The act, moreover, binds the family’s experiences to particular sections of the island and situates this process within a historical tradition of empire. “We will do as all sorts of nations have done before us,” says the father, “We will name the places by different words from our own language, that shall express some particular circumstance with which we have been concerned” (173). The bay where they first float ashore, for instance, becomes Providence Bay or Bay of Safety; the cape where they search, without success, for their shipmates becomes Cape Disappointment; their initial home is dubbed Tent House; their bridge is given the name Family Bridge; and places like Flamingo Marsh and Porcupine Field are named for encounters with certain animals. The act of geographical naming gives the family a sense of ownership over, and belonging to, these parts of the island. Named locations become integral to their concept of home. This naming, moreover, is an ongoing process, as the family constantly expand their domain.

Crusoe, by contrast, has far less of a landmass at his disposal, with his island being rigidly contained by a smaller and finite boundary. As a result, comparison of these texts raises a fundamental island studies question: how does one define an “island”? The question, open-ended and “not conclusively settled” according to Hay (20), is integral to island studies. Indeed, Fletcher considers engagement with it to be “a foundational task for researchers who situate their work in this burgeoning field”

(20). Analysis of *The Swiss Family Robinson* offers new insight into the term's definition: not only is the island of this novel very large, it is also never actually seen in its entirety by the castaways. *Robinson Crusoe*, to return to the previous chapter's discussion, offers a monarch-of-all-I-survey scene that is unequivocal about the island's bounded nature. A similar moment related in *The Swiss Family Robinson* is far less conclusive. In search of other shipwreck survivors, Fritz and his father climb a hill "which would not fail to give us a clear view of all adjacent parts" (50). Once on the peak, they see "a magnificent scene of wild and solitary beauty, comprehending a vast extent of land and water" (50). The passage gives no evidence that they are viewing a panorama of land entirely surrounded by sea, nor does it suggest that the hill climb is motivated by a desire to confirm their insular state. It therefore becomes a kind of false or misleading monarch-of-all-I-survey scene: the castaways act in a stereotypical manner by climbing the hill, but the act neither stems from a need to confirm their island setting nor does it provide them with an all encompassing view of the land on which they find themselves. Crusoe can only discover that he is on an island by seeing that the land is "environ'd every Way with the Sea" (40); Wyss's castaway family, on the other hand, simply know (or rather, assume) that they are on an island.

The lack of evidence regarding the insularity of the setting has been largely ignored by scholarship.<sup>6</sup> Seelye is one of very few scholars to discuss the non-insular depictions of the castaway location, having done so in the introductions to two different editions of the text (1991 xiii; 2007 xvi). Most scholars (including Green, Loxley, and Weaver-Hightower) generally take *The Swiss Family Robinson*'s island setting as a given. This is particularly surprising, given the novel's status as an iconic *island* text. It appears that the assumptions held by characters within the story have

carried through to scholarship on the novel. A telling example is Weaver-Hightower's discussion of the, as I argue, inconclusive monarch-of-all-I-survey scene involving Fritz and his father. Weaver-Hightower reads the hilltop moment as though the castaways have discovered that they are on an island, and uses the scene to illustrate certain points of her theory concerning monarch-of-all-I-survey scenes (30). The Watermill Press edition being referred to in her reading includes more adventures than the edition being used in this chapter, and thus is a little clearer about the nature of its setting—nonetheless, it does not contain an insular monarch-of-all-I-survey scene. Standing on the mountaintop, Fritz and his father see water to one side and an “inland” view to the other (32). Weaver-Hightower's argument thus appears to be informed, to a certain extent, by genre expectations. Such an engagement with the novel is not unique: most scholars (excluding Seelye) assume, like the Swiss family themselves, that the setting is an island. Its insularity is, generally speaking, never questioned nor proven—it is just accepted as such.

The unfounded nature of this assumption is apparent throughout the story. Several editions of the text contain a map that, although it varies in design, usually illustrates the same content (see fig. 2 for the map included in the 2007 Seelye edition). This map clearly juxtaposes the characters' assumptions with their actual reality: it is entitled “Settlements of the Swiss Pastor & his Family in the Desert Island” but depicts a peninsular outcrop bordered by ocean and blank territory. The map “reveals,” Seelye observes in his 2007 introduction, “that despite several insular allusions in the book, the family has landed on part of a larger land mass” (xvi). As with *Treasure Island's* map, it has a place within the diegesis of the text: one can presume it to be the “sketch,” drawn by one of the castaways, that is referred to in the novel's fictional “Postscript by the Editor” (433). It thus serves a dual purpose by both



Fig. 2. The castaway family's domain in *The Swiss Family Robinson*.

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informing the reader and reflecting the contradictory understanding characters have of their surroundings. Despite being faced by a clear lack of island evidence (as exemplified by the map), the castaways explore their surroundings as though they are on an island. Even the discovery of a long barrier of rocks blocking their path (represented by the thick black line running diagonally across the right side of the map in fig. 2) does not give them grounds for changing their attitude. Travelling beyond this rock wall is important to the father, but not for the sake of addressing an uncertainty regarding their insular state: "I had formed a wish to penetrate a little further into the land, and ascertain whether any thing useful would present itself beyond the wall of rocks. I was, besides, desirous to be better acquainted with the extent, form, and general production of our island" (284). His desire is thus motivated

by the search for resources and the broadening of his knowledge concerning the *island* domain.

Defining the domain as an island is not considered necessary. The father returns to the topic of the unknown space a little later, explaining that the group wanted to determine “what might be found on the other side of the rocks, for as yet we were ignorant whether they formed a boundary to our island, or divided it into two portions” (320). The possibility that they may have been wrecked on a continental peninsula, and that the rocks might be hiding territory far larger than a “portion” of an island, is never raised. Moreover, when the area beyond the rocks is eventually described, no evidence is given that the overall setting is insular: the father and Jack see “a chain of gently rising hills” that “stretched as far as the eye could discern” and a wide-reaching plain (321). This plain is so large that buffalos grazing “at a great distance” appear as “specks upon the land” that can only be seen “By straining our eyes” and, when Jack and his father reach this spot and cause the buffalos to flee, the animals run “beyond the reach of our sight” (321-23). The novel thus emphasises the largeness of the space but, simultaneously, refuses to acknowledge that the location might be a continent. A non-insular setting would, after all, raise a myriad of problems for the narrative: first and foremost, of course, would be the problem of definition. The Swiss family could no longer be considered castaways for, as argued earlier in this thesis, a Robinsonade castaway is defined through his or her island entrapment.

The systematic and false representation of the setting as an island is thus a vital element of the novel that can be read through the lens of genre and narrative tradition. The setting must be represented as an island, so as to conform to the narratological expectations that accompany a Robinsonade. As with other Crusoe

novels, this agenda is met through character engagement with space. Wyss's Swiss family actively imagine their surroundings as an island, and that imagining, in turn, shapes the setting into exactly that: it is an island, because the characters—and, by association, the readers—can see it as such. This allows the text to have an island setting without restricting itself to the boundaries implied by such a location: to a certain extent, the unknown space stretching into the distance thus takes on the role of an island (or a hazy mainland) off an island. The difference here, however, is that the space can be used without a loss of the castaway status. The family members can experience the adventure of living on an island—and can continue to define themselves as island castaways—whilst simultaneously benefiting from the expanded space of an unbounded territory.

The area beyond the rocks is never fully explored, thus ensuring that the novel retains the possibility of future explorations into the unknown. The open nature of this territory, coupled with the presence of the animals, allows it to be seen as a wilderness. According to Buell, “wilderness denotes *terra incognita*, typically of large size, the abode of beasts rather than humans: a place where civilized people supposedly do not (yet) dwell” (149). The untamed nature of the area gives the family something against which to define themselves (much like Crusoe is able to define himself against the cannibals so long as they remain a spectacle rather than a domesticated presence on the island). Their part of the island is a safe home, and not a wild “wilderness.” The “yet” of this definition is particularly important to *The Swiss Family Robinson*—though the area behind the rock wall is uninhabited space, it could become inhabited place. Tuan posits that “Space lies open; it suggests the future and invites action ... It has no fixed pattern of established human meaning; it is like a blank sheet on which meaning may be imposed” (*Space* 54). By contrast, he

continues, “Enclosed and humanized space is place. Compared to space, place is a calm center of established values” (54). A balance between the two is vital, as people “require both space and place. Human lives are a dialectical movement between shelter and venture, attachment and freedom” (54). Wyss’s setting is a perfect example of this dynamic. It offers both space and place—the place of the family’s “settlements” (to use the map’s label) and the uninscribed space beyond the rocks. Crusoe eventually leaves his island and travels into the space and freedom of the outside world; had he remained on the island, he would have stagnated in the shelter and attachment of place. The Swiss family, on the other hand, remain in their adopted home. There are countless more adventures to be had in the space/place of their unbounded island, as is indicated by the complicated publishing legacy of the text.

### ***Masterman Ready: Cannibals and Death on the Island’s “Other” Side***

Marryat’s *Masterman Ready* was written as a direct response to *The Swiss Family Robinson*. Marryat explains, in the preface to his novel, that his children wanted him to write a continuation of Wyss’s narrative. He could not, however, bear to do so as the earlier tale did not “adhere to the probable, or even the possible” (xi) through its many geographical and ecological errors. Instead, he chose to write his own Robinsonade, *Masterman Ready*, which follows the plight of a family (Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave; their children William, Tommy, Caroline, and Albert; and their maid Juno) and an old man, Masterman Ready. The novel opens with the characters aboard a ship (the *Pacific*), the family as passengers and Ready as the second mate. The ship and its voyage, as in Wyss’s novel, are situated within a discourse of colonial development and expansion. Travelling from England to Australia via Cape Town, the vessel is laden with “a valuable cargo of English hardware, cutlery, and other manufactures”



(3). It is a veritable storehouse of colonial tools and supplies, particularly as the family are also accompanied by their own possessions, which include “implements of agriculture, seeds, plants, [and] cattle” (4). Having spent the last three years in England, they are now returning to Australia where they own “several thousand acres of land” with sheep and cattle (4). Not long after leaving Cape Town, however, the ship encounters a ferocious storm that damages it beyond repair. Most of the crew abandon the vessel and its passengers, but Ready and the family are able to sail the crippled ship to a small and uninhabited island. They then beach the wreck on a coral reef, make their way ashore, and become castaways.

Marryat’s characters, like their Swiss predecessors, live their island life as a largely implicit replication of Crusoe’s lifestyle. They build an initial shelter, salvage items from the wreck, construct other habitations, nurture crops, raise animals, and explore the island. Ready is the driving force behind the family’s castaway behaviour and survival. Indeed, his very reason for being on the island is to guide the family. He refuses to accompany his crewmates when they abandon the sinking ship and its passengers, as he believes that “I may be of use if I remain, for I’ve an old head upon my shoulders, and I could not leave you all to perish when you *might* be saved if you only knew how to act” (28). Ready takes control of the family, and becomes a kind of oracle. Life has formed him into a quintessential post-shipwreck guide. As he tells William, “a man like me, who has been all his life at sea, and who has been wrecked, and suffered hardships and difficulties, and has been obliged to think or die, has a greater knowledge, not only from his own sufferings, but by hearing how others have acted when they were in distress” (65). Ready is responsible for the family’s approach to their situation and is, therefore, responsible for their adopting a Crusoe-like lifestyle on the island. Crusoe is never mentioned in the context of their actions, thus

making the connection between the group and their predecessor implicit. As in *The Swiss Family Robinson*, this creates a dynamic wherein Crusoe's castaway style appears as though it is an inevitable attitude towards an island location.

Direct references to Crusoe are, within *Masterman Ready*, restricted to a single passage very early in the novel. Prior to being cast away, William asks Ready if he was "ever shipwrecked on a desolate island, like Robinson Crusoe?" (2). He replies, "Yes, Master William, I have been shipwrecked; but I never heard of Robinson Crusoe. So many have been wrecked and undergone great hardships, and so many more have never lived to tell what they have suffered, that it's not very likely that I should have known that one man you speak of, out of so many" (2). Ready's response contradicts the group's behaviour on their island as it suggests that there are various castaway stories and diverse ways of living as a castaway. William then states, "it's all in a book which I have read. I could tell you all about it—and so I will when the ship is quiet again" (2-3) whereupon Ready agrees that, "when the weather is fine again, I'll tell you how I was wrecked, and you shall tell me all about Robinson Crusoe" (3). Crusoe's story is never told, and the reader is instead given an account of Ready's life and travels. This narrative substitution indicates that Ready is to take on the role of Crusoe in this story: the sailor comes to symbolise the earlier castaway. The histories of the two men, moreover, share some obvious similarities. Ready is also fixated on the ocean in his youth and wishes to go to sea; his mother, like Crusoe's parents, is deeply unhappy at the thought. Ready eventually runs away to sea (albeit at an earlier age than Crusoe does) where he experiences many adventures and misfortunes. The guilt of abandoning his mother follows him throughout the world and, when he returns to England some years later, his mother (like Crusoe's parents)

has passed away. Both characters hurt a loved parent or parents, quickly become obsessed with this guilt, and return too late to make amends.

Ready's history is broken into fragments and scattered throughout a large portion of the novel. Bristow discusses the multitude of tales (both those related to Ready and others of a more general nature) found within Marryat's narrative, and points out that "This island story turns out to be an island of stories. But these are all tales about places far away from the island itself" (98). The most important of these within Ready's life history is an African adventure from his youth, the telling of which adds an extra dimension to the castaway experience of the Seagraves and their companions. This tale follows Ready and two other boys as they trek through the dangerous African wilderness and are confronted by savage animals and cruel Dutch settlers. The vast expanse of the African space is integral to Ready's account of the experience. Though the boys spend the majority of their time as captives of a Dutch farmer, only a small portion of the story is given to this event—the emphasis of the tale is the trio's journey through the wilderness. Moreover, whilst the entire African story composes the vast majority of Ready's narrated life history, it is certainly not the longest of his adventures. This indicates the significance of the event within Ready's life, while the disproportionate emphasis on it causes his entire life-story to appear as though it is primarily one of movement.

Ready's long account of adventurous space, as mentioned earlier, replaces the tale that William promises to tell—that is, Crusoe's static castaway tale of domesticity and place. This is particularly pertinent given the timing of Ready's story. Bristow argues that, "having dutifully made this strange environment almost identical to their British home, there is nothing else to while away the time but escape from it—into other stories: about Africa, about the rise and fall of Empires, and so on" (102). The

notion of escaping is an apt one, but it is important to realise that the African tale does not arise from a permanent lack of occupation felt by the castaways. Island exploration is integral to the group's wellbeing as it occupies the characters and allows them to discover the island's resources. However, the location's climate dictates their movement. It features both sunshine, which supports outside endeavours, and a "rainy season" (82) that keeps the group indoors through heavy rain and storms. This confinement is tempered by Ready's life-story. The old man embarks on his narrative near the beginning of the rainy season, and concludes at its end. The improvement in the weather marks a change in occupation for the group: they are now able to travel freely throughout the island once more. This link between story and climate is made explicit on the evening preceding the first major expedition of the new season, when Ready suggests that "before we start on our travels, I think I may as well wind up my history" (210). Ready's adventures, then, entertain the family during a very specific and restrictive portion of their castaway experience. The arrival of fine weather makes the story superfluous—the sense of space constructed through the tale becomes unnecessary, as the family now have access again to their own unexplored space. However, the island's diminutive size prevents the group from undertaking long and extensive journeys. Ready's story thus gives the overall novel an extra dimension of spatial exploration and adventure—his continental tale expands the narratological boundaries of the location.

The island, however, retains its clear insular boundary at the level of physical setting. *Masterman Ready* offers an island that is wooded, flat, and clearly bounded. It is smaller than Crusoe's island, and much smaller than the perceived island of *The Swiss Family Robinson*. A monarch-of-all-I-survey scene is impossible, as the island has no large hills that provide an unencumbered and all-encompassing view of the

surroundings. Its status as an island is nonetheless clear from the outset. As the soon-to-be-castaways approach it in their sinking ship, “they could make out that it was a low coral island covered with groves of coco-nuts” (35-36). Aside from its location and vegetation, the island is a smaller and flatter version of Crusoe’s island. Parallels between the two spaces (and castaway perceptions of them) are suggested early in the novel. Mr. Seagrave’s response upon landing, for instance, echoes Crusoe’s musings concerning the island’s empty history: “perhaps mortal man has never yet visited [this spot] till now: these coco-nuts have borne fruit year after year, have died, and others have sprung up in their stead; and here has this spot remained, perhaps for centuries, all ready for man to live in, and to enjoy whenever he should come to it” (42-43). Like Crusoe’s island, the setting is perceived to be an empty space that has been waiting for the arrival of the castaway or castaways.

The most significant parallel between the two settings, however, is the presence of a safe side and a dangerous side. The group feel, as Crusoe does, that a different part of their island would make a far more pleasant permanent residence than their initial location. Crusoe does not act on this sentiment, which proves providential for him as he comes to realise that cannibals occasionally visit that area. Marryat’s characters, however, do decide to relocate so as to be closer to spring water, turtle flesh, and turtle eggs. *Masterman Ready* places a strong emphasis on this split in the setting, but focuses on the “other” side as a positive place of health and safety. Ready, for instance, tells Mrs. Seagrave that “when we are all safe on the other side of the island we hope to feed you better” (89), to which she replies “I must say that, after the last gale, I am as anxious as you to be on the other side of the island ... It must be a paradise!” (90). Moreover, William muses that the new location will strengthen his mother’s health. The desired site is soon turned into their primary residence and,

through this process, ceases to be the “other” side of the island. As Mr. Seagrave says to Ready after the move, “I feel myself much happier and my mind much more at ease since I find myself here, than I did before. On the other side of the island everything reminded me that we had been shipwrecked; and I could not help thinking of home and my own country; but here we appear as if we had been long settled, and as if we had come here by choice” (99). The unknown space is thus domesticated, and the castaways gain mastery over both their predicament and their surroundings. Furthermore, the island is clearly seen in relation to events that occur to the family: various parts of the island are understood through human emotions. Perceptions of spatiality, then, are a product of events. Place and affect, in short, are inextricably bound to one another.

The safety of their new location, however, proves somewhat illusory. The castaways are particularly drawn to it due to the large number of turtles that breed there. Defoe’s novel also features its other side as prime turtle territory, with these animals being representative of danger. As Crusoe writes in his journal, “had I happen’d to be on the other Side of the Island, I might have had Hundreds of [Turtles] every Day, as I found afterwards; but perhaps had paid dear enough for them” (63-64). *Masterman Ready* also links its turtles to the location. Ready, for instance, serves a new dish for the group’s first communal meal post-relocation. Upon being questioned by Mrs. Seagrave, he says that the dish is “turtle soup, ma’am; and I hope you will like it; for, if you do, you may often have it, now that you are on this side of the island” (98). Crusoe’s sign of danger—a large number of turtles—is thus present at the permanent settlement of Marryat’s castaways. The Seagraves, Juno, and Ready have, figuratively speaking, settled on the dangerous other side of Crusoe’s island. This has dire consequences, as the similarity between *Robinson Crusoe* and

*Masterman Ready* is not yet over: just as turtles arrive in the area, so too do cannibals. Hundreds of “savages” descend on the island, a battle is fought, many of the attackers are killed, and Ready is fatally wounded. The safe and wholesome side of the island, then, turns into a dangerous and fearsome zone of combat, desperation, and death. Given Ready’s role as a surrogate Crusoe, *Masterman Ready* becomes an account of what could have happened to Crusoe, were he to have settled on the other side of his island.

Ready’s presence on the island is entwined with the presence of the Seagraves and Juno, whilst his death is synonymous with their departure. He is wounded just hours before help arrives on the island in the form of Captain Osborn (who was the captain of the wrecked *Pacific*, but who played no part in the abandoning of the family). Ready survives long enough to speak to the Captain. “You have come in good time, sir” he says, “I knew you would come, and I always said so: you have the thanks of a dying man” (329). He is not concerned about his own tragic situation, as his priority is the safety of his companions (or, to describe them in blunter terms, his charges). He is buried on the island, and the family’s departure is mingled with the sadness of knowing that their future will not involve him. Juno puts it aptly when she responds to Mr. Seagrave’s question of “are you not glad to leave the island?” by saying that “One time I think I would be very glad, but now I not care much ... Island very nice place, all very happy till savage come. Suppose they not kill old Ready, I not care” (332). Mrs. Seagrave expresses similar sentiments: “now that the hour is come, I really feel such pain at quitting this dear island. Had it not been for poor Ready’s death, I really do think I should wish to remain” (336). As they watch the island fading into the distance, she laments that “We shall never be more happy than we were on that island” (337). Remaining on the island is thus linked to Ready

remaining alive, whilst leaving the island is about leaving the sad site where their friend and mentor was killed. The loss of Ready's life is equated with the loss of the island.

The old man and the insular setting are inseparable, just as Crusoe and his island are. Jackie C. Horne asks "Why must Ready die?" (98). Whilst her answer focuses in particular on Ready's dying words and the representation of William's younger brother, Tommy, I posit that the answer lies in *Masterman Ready's* relationship to its urtext, *Robinson Crusoe*. Ready must die because he has become the embodiment of the mythic Crusoe. Whilst Defoe's original Crusoe leaves his island, the mythic Crusoe is fated to remain on its shores forever as he does not exist without his island (and vice versa). Ready cannot leave the island but he also cannot have permanent company, as the figure of Crusoe is a solitary one. The Seagraves and Juno must leave, and Ready must remain. The inevitability of Ready's island death, moreover, is signposted throughout the text, most notably by Ready himself. "I should like to remain here as long as I can be useful, and then I trust I may depart in peace. I never wish to leave this island, Master William; and I have a kind of feeling that my bones will remain on it," he tells the young boy (93) and, some time later, "I would willingly remain upon the island for the remainder of my days, and have the boughs of the coco-nut trees waving over my grave. I don't know, but I really have a kind of feeling that such will be the case, and I dwell upon the idea with pleasure" (213). This mindset remains until his death—as Mrs. Seagrave cries over the dying man, Ready says "Don't weep for me, dear madam ... my days have been numbered" (321). His fate was written from the very beginning of the story.

Furthermore, his death serves an important function in strengthening and maintaining the Eurocentric representation of the setting. The island, already situated



in a discourse of empire, becomes European property in its entirety when the other side is tamed through Ready's brave death and his gravesite. The island now has a permanent Crusoe figure enshrined in what has traditionally been a foreign and unknown section of the setting. The idea that Europeans have a general claim, not just to this location but also to all other islands in the region, runs through the narrative. This brings many different islands together in an artificial manner, and makes them gradually appear quite similar. Ready explains, early in the tale, that "there is seldom anything wild on these small islands, except a pig or two has been put on shore by considerate Christians. I once sailed with a captain on these seas, and he never landed on a desolate island without putting a couple of pigs or something on shore to breed, in case anybody should hereafter be shipwrecked" (43). Each passing ship alters the image of the locations so as to suit the needs of the colonising power. Similarly, at the novel's end, the Seagraves and Juno leave their goats and chickens behind "for other people if they come to the island" (336). These places, then, are considered intrinsically the property of the Europeans, islands that can be stocked with food to support future castaways. They are places to be used solely for the benefit of Europeans.

### ***The Coral Island and Its "Story-Book" Crusoe Tale***

Ballantyne's *The Coral Island*, though of the same tradition as *The Swiss Family Robinson* and *Masterman Ready*, offers a different set of characters. It tells the tale of three youths (Ralph, Jack, and Peterkin) who encounter a violent storm whilst sailing on a ship in the Pacific Ocean. Their vessel sinks close to the coast of an island, but only the three boys are able to reach land safely. They are thus cast away without adult supervision. This allows them to prove their inherent imperial skills—they are

able, in Weaver-Hightower's words, to "maintain the discipline of good imperialists without direct coercion from parents or parental figures" (83). A familial atmosphere is nonetheless created, with eighteen-year-old Jack acting as a role model for Ralph and Peterkin (who are fifteen and thirteen respectively). Jack is the leader of the trio, someone who is looked to for advice and unquestionably obeyed in times of danger. Rather than being a "parental figure," however, he occupies the position of a knowledgeable, courageous, and strong elder brother. It is important to the novel's ideologies that he is constructed as, and considered to be, a "boy" and not an adult. As Green explains, "'Boy' in this sense is one of the group of words associated with 'manly' and 'manliness'; which included also 'pluck,' 'heart,' and (later) 'guts' ... 'boys' were young males, who were being readied to run an Empire" ("Robinson Crusoe" 46). The novel strives to place Jack with the younger characters. He spends most of his time, prior to the shipwreck, with Ralph and Peterkin and, when the vessel sinks, does not join the adults in their small boat but instead escapes via a different method (taking his two friends with him). Moreover, despite the age differences between the boys, the novel also emphasises their equality, with Ralph professing that they "made a trio so harmonious that I question if there ever met before such an agreeable triumvirate" (124). This image of unity strengthens Jack's place alongside the younger characters, thereby further constructing him as a boy rather than a man. The character dynamic on Ballantyne's island is thus quite unlike those on Wyss and Marryat's familial islands.

The novel nonetheless depicts character/setting relationships that are similar to those found in the earlier two Robinsonades. The boys undertake several of the traditional Crusoe castaway behaviours, such as creating an initial shelter post-shipwreck, acquiring food on the island, and pursuing a monarch-of-all-I-survey

scene. The ship sinks too quickly for the characters to salvage items from the wreck, but even this substantial deviation from the *Robinson Crusoe* urtext is contextualised within the Crusoe tradition. “Oh ... if the ship had only struck on the rocks we might have done pretty well,” thinks Ralph to himself, “for we could have obtained provisions from her, and tools to enable us to build a shelter” (16). A little later, Jack professes that, “If this is a desert island, we shall have to live very much like the wild beasts, for we have not a tool of any kind, not even a knife” (17). Jack’s words echo Crusoe’s realisation that, had he not had access to the wreck’s stores, he would not have been able to cut the meat off his game and would consequently have had to “gnaw it with my Teeth, and pull it with my Claws like a Beast” (95). Circumstances do not, as it turns out, reduce Jack and his companions to “wild beasts” as they find that they are in possession of several useful items (including a knife) that were carried to the island either in their pockets or in their hands. However, though the novel indicates an awareness of fictional tropes, it also occasionally undermines their very necessity: “we erected a sort of rustic bower, in which we meant to pass the night. There was no absolute necessity for this, because the air of our island was so genial and balmy that we could have slept quite well without any shelter” (29). The boys know how they are expected to behave, but consider some of this behaviour—such as the construction of the bower—as unnecessary. An overall awareness of Crusoe and other Robinsonades is thus present within the novel; the accompanying lifestyle, in turn, is both replicated and, to some extent, destabilised.

*The Coral Island* is, amongst other things, a story *about* other stories. Loxley posits that “The dream of running away from home—a dream nourished by those impelling narratives of adventurers in exotic lands—becomes a reality, yet one in which the participants are themselves constructed as heroes in a story-book” (115).

Tied to this notion is her observation that the boys “[act] according to the precedents of an already-inscribed word, of parameters laid down in advance,” thereby giving “a laborious predictability” to “what is confronted and finally overcome” (116). Jack, Ralph, and Peterkin actively construct themselves as inherent masters in a discourse of empire. That discourse is both fictional and historical: Ballantyne’s novel is just as much about the story of empire as it is about actual empire building. The importance of narrative is suggested in an exchange between the boys after they are shipwrecked. “We’ll take possession [of the island] in the name of the king,” says Peterkin, “we’ll go and enter the service of its black inhabitants. Of course we’ll rise, naturally, to the top of affairs. White men always do in savage countries” (16). Jack then asks what they will do in the absence of natives, to which Peterkin replies “we’ll build a charming villa, and plant a lovely garden around it, stuck all full of the most splendiferous tropical flowers, and we’ll farm the land, plant, sow, reap, eat, sleep, and be merry” (17). Peterkin’s comments are an apt description of castaway behaviour in colonial island narratives. Their context, however, indicates that he is not being serious, thus making his suggestions read as though they are a subtextual mockery of the Crusoe stereotype. The fact that the three castaways do take “possession” of the island places them directly in the narrative that they are mocking. They are, to adapt Loxley’s broader point, “heroes in a [Crusoe] story-book.” Their implicit mockery, coupled with the occasional destabilising of tropes, draws attention to the intertextuality of castaway tales. This process highlights the fictional nature of the narrative, and their own presence within it. Jack, Ralph, and Peterkin are enacting the Crusoe story.

They are also enacting the *Robinson Crusoe* story, as the novel’s island tale is contrasted by other adventures. Ralph is kidnapped by pirates approximately two-

thirds of the way through the novel. He is taken aboard their ship, and travels to several local islands where he witnesses violent acts perpetrated both by the pirates and by local “savages.” Seven chapters are spent discussing this turn of events. He eventually escapes the situation, and finds his way back to the island. Once there, he rescues Jack and Peterkin, and the trio embark on a final daring adventure amongst the “savages” of the region, before then sailing home to England. The novel is similar to *Robinson Crusoe* in that a broader narrative of adventure accompanies the island experience. One particular abridgement of *The Coral Island*, published by Priory-Haddock, significantly condenses this outer narrative, explaining in a prefatory note that “the episodes after the three heroes get away from the island have been dropped, as being in the nature of an anticlimax; the book, as a story, is improved by their omission.” A similar process has thus occurred in this abridgement as it has in the mythic understanding of *Crusoe*—the story has been pared down to its island core. By contrast, *The Coral Island* in its original form tells a *Robinson Crusoe* story through its inclusion of other off-island adventures.

The boys not only enact the *Crusoe* tale and its novel of origin, they also live a kind of extension of these texts. Defoe’s hero can only cultivate appreciation of his enforced location with the passing of time; Ballantyne’s boys, on the other hand, instantly embrace their island and the castaway situation. The families of *The Swiss Family Robinson* and *Masterman Ready* also improve on *Crusoe*’s castaway style, but they take a little longer to whole-heartedly appreciate the experience than the trio of boys do. Ralph, Jack, and Peterkin are delighted almost from the very beginning. Despite the trauma of being shipwrecked, they lose little time in exploring their immediate surroundings. After describing the setting, Ralph tells the reader that “My heart was filled with more delight than I can express at sight of so many glorious

objects” (22) and that Jack also “derived much joy from the splendid scenery” (22). The castaway experience is thus made pleasurable through the setting or, to be more precise, through the boys’ reaction to the setting: it is not the setting in itself that makes the castaway experience pleasurable, but rather character perceptions of it. Tasks that should be difficult and laborious, for instance, are conducted with ease: “[cutting] two large clubs off a species of very hard tree” (38), for instance, does not seem to take much time or energy, though logic dictates that such a task would be quite difficult. The boys’ attitude thus impacts on the very plot itself: they approach their tasks through an assumption of effortless success which, in turn, ensures that those tasks are not fraught with difficulty. Though the problem of making a fire at the end of their first day does briefly cloud their happiness, the issue is soon resolved, and the day retains its “capital” atmosphere. Furthermore, Peterkin’s initial response to their problem highlights a lack of concern for the real dangers of the situation: “we have had such a capital day,” he says, “that it’s a pity to finish off in this glum style” (30). His thoughts do not turn to the long-term ramifications of possibly having no fire on the island, but instead relate simply to their pleasure in the moment. Being cast away in *The Coral Island* is an adventure, akin to a camping vacation, and not a situation to be taken seriously.

The physicality of the island location is integral to this dynamic. It provides the characters with a setting in which to showcase their talents, and it is also described as having influential powers on their emotions. Ralph blissfully describes the natural scene to which he awakens the morning after the shipwreck, and notes that “such sights and sounds” are particularly

charming ... when one awakens to them, for the first time, in a novel and romantic situation, with the soft sweet air of a tropical climate mingling with

the fresh smell of the sea ... When I awoke on the morning after the shipwreck, I found myself in this most delightful condition; and as I lay on my back upon my bed of leaves, gazing up through the branches of the cocoa-nut trees into the clear blue sky, and watched the few fleecy clouds that passed slowly across it, my heart expanded more and more with an exulting gladness, the like of which I had never felt before. (32)

The island setting and the experience of being cast away thus lead Ralph to feel a new sense of euphoria and excitement. The boys do not need to go through the lessons learnt by Crusoe on his island, as their love for the location is already present in their minds. Moreover, Ballantyne's characters appear to be preordained castaways. After they are shipwrecked, Ralph notes that "The gale had suddenly died away, just as if it had blown furiously till it dashed our ship upon the rocks, and had nothing more to do after accomplishing that" (21). The boys are meant to be cast on the island—this is their fate but, unlike Crusoe, they meet it with ease and joy.

The trio's enchantment with the static setting hinges on their pursuit of geographic exploration. The characters of Defoe, Wyss, and Marryat are all shipwrecked whilst they are travelling to, or intending to travel on to, continental locations; Ralph and his friends, on the other hand, choose to explore an insular region. Ralph is particularly clear regarding this point. Whilst still in England, he is "captivated and charmed" by sailors' stories of the "Coral Islands of the Southern Seas" (4). After painting a poetic picture of islands "where the trees were laden with a constant harvest of luxuriant fruit" as described by the sailors, he explains that "These exciting accounts had so great an effect upon my mind that, when I reached the age of fifteen, I resolved to make a voyage to the South Seas" (4). The boys are not colonists like the families of *The Swiss Family Robinson* and *Masterman Ready*, but are instead

constructed as adventurers. Nor do they feel, as Crusoe does, guilt over their love for adventure. Ralph exuberantly proclaims that “Roving has always been, and still is, my ruling passion, the joy of my heart, the very sunshine of my existence” (1). As Green points out, this attitude is “strikingly unlike the tone of Defoe’s hero, who is ashamed of his unregenerate itch to travel” (“Robinson Crusoe” 47). Whilst Crusoe’s desire is at odds with his family situation, Ralph is born into a legacy of travelling. His ancestry includes midshipmen and captains, and leads him to “inherit a roving disposition” (2). Travelling is fundamental to his identity: having been dubbed “Ralph Rover” by his friends, he is a traveller both by nature and by name.

Moreover, as is evidenced by the sailors’ stories, the boys do not travel to uncharted territory. These islands are known, and have already experienced a European presence. This generalisation is also, more specifically, true for the island on which Jack, Ralph, and Peterkin are shipwrecked. Ballantyne’s novel offers a setting that has, to a certain extent, been pre-domesticated. As the three characters explore their surroundings, they discover signs of prior habitation including “the stump of a tree that had evidently been cut down with an axe” (45) and a square patch of sugarcane. Their concern that these things might be the work of “savages” is put to rest when they discover a human skeleton lying next to that of a dog in a derelict hut on a hillside in the island’s interior. The identity of the deceased person (presumed, by the boys, to be a European male) is unclear but he can, given the novel’s preoccupation with intertextuality, be usefully read as a Crusoe figure. Maher provides a precedent for such interpretation, by describing the bones as those of a “former Crusoe” (172). *The Coral Island* thus allows a glimpse into Crusoe’s fate, were he to have resided in the centre of his island. Furthermore, Defoe’s novel supports such a reading. Crusoe considers living amongst the central hills of his



island, but decides to remain by the seashore “where it was at least possible that something might happen to my Advantage, and by the same ill Fate that brought me hither, might bring some other unhappy Wretches to the same Place” (74). By contrast, “to enclose my self among the Hills and Woods, in the Center of the Island, was to anticipate my Bondage, and to render such an Affair not only Improbable, but Impossible” (74-75). Living in the hilly interior of the island is equated with permanent and deadly entrapment: such is the fate that has befallen the deceased person in *The Coral Island*. Different parts of the island thus come to stand for different outcomes in *The Coral Island*—just as they do in *Masterman Ready*—all of which are understood in relation to Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*.

Ballantyne’s setting, generally filled with happiness, sunshine, and schoolboy adventures, has a dark shadow drawn over it when the boys stumble upon the hut. As Ralph tells the reader, “there was a deep and melancholy stillness about the place that quite overpowered us; and when we did at length speak, it was in subdued whispers, as if we were surrounded by some awful or supernatural influence” (99). The discovery of the skeletons increases their sorrow, and they “could scarce refrain from tears on beholding these sad remains” (101). As in *Masterman Ready*, Ballantyne’s deceased Crusoe figure is soon honoured with a grave. The boys, upon leaving the hut, tumble the fragile construction to the ground and in so doing “formed a grave to the bones of the poor recluse and his dog” (103). This action sees the figure of Crusoe entombed within the island, thereby creating a symbolic link between the two. Simultaneously, the boys’ decision to attribute the tree stumps and the square sugarcane patch to the deceased European man ensures that only Crusoe haunts (to return to Cresswell’s term) the island. Any haunting of an indigenous presence is

erased, thus enabling the novel to appropriate indigenous land and history. This island is explicitly and unashamedly constructed as a European place.

### **Leaving the Island**

The Seagraves and Juno of *Masterman Ready* are eventually rescued and return to their property in Australia, whilst the family of *The Swiss Family Robinson* remain on their unbounded colonial island. Ballantyne's boys, however, occupy a far less settled role. Their emotional reactions to the discovery of the skeletons, though initially empathetic for the "poor man, who had thus died in solitude" (101), quickly become personal and, again, echo Crusoe's fears concerning his own future. They see their own fate in the death of the man, and they "were much saddened by the reflection that the lot of this poor wanderer might possibly be our own, after many years' residence on the island, unless we should be rescued by the visit of some vessel or the arrival of natives" (101). Their ambivalence concerning an island future is also apparent in their earlier hesitancy at building a permanent shelter on the island, as "although everything around us was so delightful ... we did not quite like the idea of settling down here for the rest of our lives, far away from our friends and our native land" (50). The three castaways love their island but they do not consider it a suitable permanent home. They eventually find an opportunity to return to England, and the novel ends as "a thrill of joy, strangely mixed with sadness, passed through our hearts; for we were at length 'homeward bound,' and were gradually leaving far behind us the beautiful, bright green coral islands of the Pacific Ocean" (339). Kin and country thus call them home, but they are saddened at leaving the islands.

Moreover, though their love for the homeland is clear, they are ultimately driven by a thirst for space. As Ralph explains, "In childhood, in boyhood, and in

man's estate, I have been a rover; not a mere Rambler among the woody glens and upon the hilltops of my own native land, but an enthusiastic rover throughout the length and breadth of the wide, wide world" (1). His adventures do not end with the events of *The Coral Island*,<sup>7</sup> nor is his return to England permanent. The desire for space surfaces while the boys are still on the island. They build themselves a small boat with which to reach offshore islands and the reef. On the evening before their first expedition, they "retired to rest and to dream of wonderful adventures in our little boat and distant voyages upon the sea" (137). Having experienced the island, Ralph and his friends now yearn for the freedom of open space. They visit the reef the next day, where "as we stood beside the foam-crested billow of the open sea, all the enthusiasm of the sailor was awakened in our breasts" (139). Their desire for space overshadows their fondness for the island: looking out at the ocean, "we forgot the Coral Island behind us; we forgot our bower and the calm repose of the scented woods; we forgot all that had passed during the last few months, and remembered nothing but the storms, the calms, the fresh breezes and the surging billows of the open sea" (139-40). Several adventures occur in the novel's subsequent chapters, including a bloody battle with cannibals and the piratical kidnapping of Ralph. These exciting events (and others) are spread over many months, but the fast-paced movement of the narrative creates a sense of rapidity and even urgency. The desire for space, rekindled so explicitly in the reef scene, has influenced the very fabric of the narrative. The novelty of place has worn off, and the island has become too domesticated—what is now required, in a foreshadowing of *Treasure Island*, is the freedom and excitement of space.

## Chapter Three

### *Treasure Island: Adventure and Terror on an Undomesticated Island*

Stevenson's *Treasure Island* tells the tale of a very short island visit. Jim Hawkins (the narrator for most of the novel) and his friends are not forced to inhabit the island in a long-term manner, and are therefore unable to cultivate familiarity towards and affection for it. Beer contends that an island, generally speaking, "emphasizes both inhabiting and observing. The observer comes in upon a complete world secured within natural boundaries; the island can be observed fully only by inhabiting it" ("Discourses" 22). The temporary nature of Jim's island experience has a profound impact on the novel's depiction of setting: he does not inhabit the island and thus cannot, to apply Beer's argument, provide the reader with detailed "observations" of his surroundings. Unlike *Robinson Crusoe* and the nineteenth-century children's Robinsonades, *Treasure Island* does not prioritise the domestication of its setting. Several characters do become trapped on the island after they are marooned there, but these events occur prior to, or at the very end of, the novel's storyline. Jim's engagement with the location is, however, lengthened through his prior knowledge of it. He knows about the island before he visits it, and spends much time imagining it, and his adventures on its shores, from afar. This imagining encourages him to expect a certain kind of island: an "adventure playground," to return to Smith's phraseology. The divide between expectations and reality, this chapter contends, is central to *Treasure Island*. Stevenson's novel offers character/setting interactions that are rooted in tales like *The Coral Island* but that have evolved into quite different scenarios. Jim expects an island in the style of *The Coral Island*, but instead finds himself in an apparently nightmarish locale of death, disease, and decay.

His depictions of the island as inhospitable and terrible are an emotional response to cruel human behaviour. Trauma is increased through the unexpected nature of what Jim observes and indeed finds himself a part of: he must come to terms with the fact that some of his companions (one of whom, Long John Silver, he initially respects and feels great fondness for) are in fact bloodthirsty pirates. Representations of the island are directly linked to the events of the narrative: as with all of the texts being examined in this thesis, *Treasure Island* offers a setting that is approached through human affect. Leach's general assertion—as discussed in the introduction—that the “[physical environment] serves as a repository of meanings that come to be identified with it” (39-40) can be insightfully applied to Stevenson's novel. The island setting is tainted by brutal human actions. Jim is repeatedly exposed to various scenes of murder and corruption during his island sojourn. Unable to cope with the situation, he displaces the cause of his terror onto the island and, in so doing, perceives the cruel and degenerate actions of the pirates to be mirrored by his surroundings. The island becomes the domain of the pirates—a location to be visited and exploited by honest Englishmen, but not one to be considered a home. It represents death and, unlike the settings of *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Robinsonades*, is not thought of with great fondness by its visitors.

The novel as a whole, however, presents Jim's perceptions of the island as somewhat biased and distorted: he is an unreliable narrator. This creates an element of analytical distance between the overall text and the negative portrayal of the island, and indicates *Treasure Island's* preoccupation with reality and constructions thereof. The novel illustrates the manner in which experiences can colour perceptions of a location to the extent that setting becomes synonymous with the source of the character's psychological pain. This process is fundamental to the novel's underlying

ideologies and agenda, as it allows the island to be represented as a temporarily experienced locale that is valued only for its resources. Depictions of the insular setting in *Treasure Island* promote and endorse specific ideologies and ideals. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the evolution of Britain's empire saw an important change to the manner in which the island image was utilised within adventure fiction. The island has been altered from a zone of colonial domesticity to one of imperial wealth. The analytical distance created through the unreliability of Jim becomes a useful tool in understanding how this transformation and the accompanying agenda function: the reader can see both the island and Jim's flawed perception of it.

*Treasure Island* explicitly recalls a legacy of adventure tales. It is, from the very outset, linked to imperial adventure fiction through an epigraph that invokes three well-known authors of this genre: W. H. G. Kingston, R. M. Ballantyne, and James Fenimore Cooper. The epigraph appeals to the "ancient appetites" of its readership, and declares that readers will only accept *Treasure Island* if they still "crave" the works of these authors. The idea of an "ancient appetite" for tales of imperialistic adventure implies that such stories are a natural part of the human experience. The desire for adventure thus becomes an inherent trait of humankind—so too, by association, do the underlying imperialistic ideologies of that desire and the accompanying attitude to physical surroundings. Tales of oceans and islands are given particular importance in this dynamic: Stevenson locates his story alongside "sailor tales to sailor tunes, / Storm and adventure, heat and cold, / ... schooners, islands, and maroons / And Buccaneers and buried Gold / And all the old romance, retold." The novel owes a particularly significant debt to the Robinsonade. All three authors named within the epigraph figure in this tradition: Ballantyne through *The Coral Island*, Kingston as one of the key translators of Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson*, and

Cooper through his novel *The Crater* (1847). Even Stevenson himself openly admits that some elements of his story are borrowed from castaway tales: “No doubt the parrot once belonged to Robinson Crusoe ... The stockade, I am told, is from *Masterman Ready*” (“My First Book” 195). *Treasure Island*’s engagement with imperial adventure fiction is thus achieved through particular emphasis on the castaway tale. The novel writes back to earlier castaway stories and is, in part, a product of their tradition.

Nevertheless, Stevenson’s novel is not, strictly speaking, a Robinsonade. It does not feature castaways, nor does it offer the stereotypical Robinsonade plot in which characters adapt to new surroundings after being wrecked on an island. Despite its clear departures from the stereotype, *Treasure Island* is, on occasion, classed as a Robinsonade (e.g. Boehmer 45). Such a classification of the novel is unhelpful and misleading, as it distorts understanding of the text and blurs the term’s parameters. That is not to say that *Treasure Island* does not belong in a study of Crusoe-style narratives: it does not have to be a Robinsonade, for it to be relevant to the Crusoe tradition. As Green emphasises in *The Robinson Crusoe Story*, “*Treasure Island* comments on the Robinson story even by its omissions and perversions. We are always being reminded of Defoe’s [*Robinson Crusoe*] and its revisions as we read Stevenson ... It would be absurd to omit such a book from our discussion” (143). Even the novel’s deviations from the Robinsonade mould thus reflect back on the earlier stories. Analysis of *Treasure Island* allows for a more nuanced understanding of *Robinson Crusoe* and nineteenth-century Robinsonades. In turn, the study of Stevenson’s novel in the context of its predecessors highlights the complexity of its engagement with empire. This becomes particularly apparent, as is argued in this chapter, at the level of setting and the manner in which location is perceived and

depicted by characters. *Treasure Island* simultaneously looks back to the past and reshapes that past within the present of its own publication.

The mutual relevance of *Treasure Island* and *Robinson Crusoe* is further highlighted through their textual legacies, which often intersect with and inform one another. Jane Gardam's *Crusoe's Daughter* (1985), set in the twentieth century, is a quintessential example of this dynamic. The story takes place in England and therefore falls beyond the scope of this thesis, but its engagement with both *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island* makes a brief discussion of it important to this chapter. *Crusoe's Daughter* is a conscious meditation on textual legacies; analysis of the novel, therefore, allows for a clearer understanding of the two legacies in question. Gardam's key protagonist and narrator (barring the conclusion) is Captain Flint's daughter, Polly Flint. Both of these names recall *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island*. Poll (a form of Polly) is Crusoe's parrot in Defoe's novel, whilst *Treasure Island* features both a deceased pirate known as Captain Flint and a parrot (belonging to Silver) who is named after this pirate. The dual nature of Polly's full name is emphasised at the novel's end, when she engages in a long conversation with an imagined Crusoe in which he shortens her name to "Pol Flint" (303-09). The merging of the two texts is thus represented by her very name.

Intertextuality is a foundational principle of *Crusoe's Daughter*. Polly is obsessed with *Robinson Crusoe* from a very young age. She often compares and contrasts Crusoe's situation with her own, elevates the character to the status of a real person (whilst still being aware of his fictionality), and frequently cites passages from the novel. *Treasure Island*, in turn, is threaded through the narrative in a more implicit manner. Though Stevenson's novel is not referred to directly, Polly's surname and the name of her father ensure that *Treasure Island* has a constant presence within



*Crusoe's Daughter*. Just as her name symbolises the merging of the two textual legacies, Polly herself becomes an embodiment of their interconnection. Towards the end of the novel's concluding dialogue, Crusoe observes that "when my wife died, there were children. There was a daughter. We don't hear about the daughter. What became of her?" (309). This statement, coupled with the novel's title, constructs Polly as a figurative version of this daughter (the significant temporal difference between the texts prevents her from being his actual daughter). Simultaneously, she is also a figurative daughter of Stevenson's Captain Flint (metaphor is again at play due both to the time difference between the novels and the fact that Gardam's Flint, though a sailor, is not a pirate). The use of parrot names adds a further dimension to the tale, as it brings to mind the reputation parrots have for repeating human speech. Repetition, this suggests, is key to *Crusoe's Daughter*. On the other hand, Gardam's overall storyline—which is quite different to the earlier novels—indicates the evolving nature of these legacies. Though the island remains present, it does so only in a metaphorical sense. "Gardam substitutes," as Beer phrases it, "the yellow house in which her heroine lives from youth to extreme old age for Crusoe's island" ("Discourses" 16). *Crusoe's Daughter* highlights replication and adaptation: the echo of the preceding stories and that echo's distortion. A similar point can also be made regarding *Treasure Island*. Stevenson engages with the text's literary past but also creates something new: his novel offers a distorted echo of *Robinson Crusoe* and the nineteenth-century Robinsonades.

### **The Presence of Treasure and the Absence of an Island Home**

*Treasure Island* is a very specific type of empire story. Published in the late nineteenth century, it reflects significant changes in the concerns, interests, and

actions of the British Empire. The height of the Victorian Robinsonade had passed, and the age of *Treasure Island* had begun. Loxley argues that, at the time of the novel's publication, "colonial territory, rather than being settled, was rapidly carved up in the intoxicated pursuit of new sources of raw material that would yield financial profit" and so "geographical space ... was no longer so much the signifier of permanent settlement as that of temporary and often personal wealth" (167). As a result of the political and social climate in which it was written and published, *Treasure Island* prioritises the financial business of empire over the establishment of a colony. The eponymous island of the story is valued for its treasure and not for its colonial possibilities. In a significant deviation from the Robinsonades of the nineteenth century, the majority of Stevenson's characters do not attempt to turn the island into a new home—this insular location is temporary for most of its visitors.

The length of time characters spend on the island raises questions concerning its status as a place. Tuan examines the manner in which time is linked to the process of space/place transformation: "time," he posits, can be seen as "motion or flow and place as a pause in the temporal current" (*Space* 179). Another "approach," he contends, is to see "attachment to place as a function of time, captured in the phrase, 'it takes time to know a place'" (179). In this sense, Jim does not have the opportunity to understand the island in a place-based manner: his "pause" in the locale is simply not long enough. This is in stark contrast to the characters of Defoe, Wyss, Marryat, and Ballantyne, who are all trapped on their islands for long periods of time. It takes island entrapment, therefore, for characters to appreciate and relate to their surroundings as familiar places. *Treasure Island*, however, functions as a different kind of setting for different characters: though Jim and his companions spend little time on its shores, other characters (most notably Ben Gunn) do spend a longer period

of time there and are thus able to cultivate a familiar attitude towards the island. For the reader, the island is familiar ground as he/she is introduced to it long before Jim arrives on its shores. In a narrative sense, it is not unknown ground as it has a history, a name, a map, and even a “stockade” built at an earlier point in time (85). These aspects make it a place because space, as cited in the last chapter, “becomes place as we get to know it better” (Tuan *Space* 6). Simultaneously, however, the island is perceived to be a hostile and threatening space that is useful only for its resources. This tension between space and place causes Jim to experience his island in a vastly different manner than his castaway predecessors: there is no domesticity to buffer the terror of violence, no peace to balance out the action, no comforts of colonialism to temper the adrenaline of adventure. Stevenson’s novel is ultimately a story of island treasure, and not of island domesticity.

This treasure—composed of “nearly every variety of money in the world” (187)—is integral to *Treasure Island*’s motivations. Financial gain, acquisition, and exploitation are the organising principles of the story. Gubar, however, goes against the grain of most scholarship on the novel by contending that it “depicts the project of draining foreign lands of riches as terrifying, traumatizing, and ethically problematic” and therefore does not “[encourage] youngsters to seek out wealth and glory overseas” (70). There is certainly a level of criticism regarding the imperial project present in *Treasure Island* that is not apparent in the Robinsonades discussed in chapter two. Jim offers, for instance, a description of the treasure that, according to Gubar, “attests not to the romance of money but to the terrible human cost involved in its accumulation” (73). Seeing the treasure for the first time, Jim muses that it “had cost already the lives of seventeen men from the *Hispaniola*. How many it had cost in the amassing, what blood and sorrow, what good ships scuttled on the deep, what

brave men walking the plank blindfold, what shot of cannon, what shame and lies and cruelty, perhaps no man alive could tell” (185). Gubar’s reading of this passage, however, does not take its next sentence into account: “Yet there were still three upon that island—Silver, and old Morgan, and Ben Gunn—who had each taken his share in these crimes” (185). The exploitative actions of Jim and his companions are not criticised or brought into question: Jim’s sorrow is thus a specific response to the barbaric manner in which the treasure was collected by the pirates, rather than being a general criticism of imperial treasure-hunting. Jim’s objections are not to the pursuits of empire, but rather to the “crimes” of the pirates.

The split between the pirates and Jim’s group (that is, the honest Englishmen) is both emphasised and blurred within the novel as a whole. The story features two parallel treasure-hunting quests: one undertaken by Jim and his friends, and the other by the pirates. Loxley describes the former as “authorised” and the latter as “unauthorised,” and identifies a “tension” between the two as the treasure creates “a problem for the text’s negotiation of the distinction between barbarity and civilisation” (160). The novel addresses this tension, writes Loxley, “by showing how [Jim’s group] are not really in pursuit of riches at all, but are spurred on instead by the vision of living through the *experience* of adventure” (161). As Squire Trelawney declares, “Hang the treasure! It’s the glory of the sea that has turned my head” (38). However, the line between greedy pirates and honest adventurers is not quite as clear as Loxley suggests. Dr. Livesey and Trelawney discuss, very early in the novel, the fact that Jim might have discovered, and passed on to them, information concerning the treasure of Captain Flint. “Supposing I have here in my pocket some clue to where Flint buried his treasure, will that treasure amount to much?” asks Livesey, to which Trelawney replies, “Amount, sir! ... It will amount to this; if we have the clue you talk

about, I fit out a ship in Bristol dock, and take you and Hawkins here along, and I'll have that treasure if I search a year" (32). Later in the conversation, Trelawney exclaims that the treasure will bring them "money to eat—to roll in—to play duck and drake with ever after" (34). The monetary attraction of the treasure cannot be discounted. Their desire for adventure is clear, but so too is their desire for financial gain.

*Treasure Island* thus presents a blatant and honest account of imperial motivations: Stevenson acknowledges some similarities between the pirates and the adventurers, but does not depict this as ethically concerning. Robert Fraser considers the island to be "the place where you can be your pre-moral, piratical self" (27). It would be taking the point too far to say that Jim and his friends *become* pirates as, after all, the novel both separates and draws together the two groups. Instead, one can contend that *Treasure Island* allows the adventurers to enter the world of the pirates and to engage in imperialistic behaviours without sanitising and moralising such actions. Thus, Jim is able to enjoy the treasure—"I think I never had more pleasure than in sorting [the coins]" (187)—despite knowing of the death, grief, and terror that surrounds it. This thesis therefore takes an approach somewhere between that of Loxley and Gubar by arguing that, although *Treasure Island* is an imperialistic text, the novel's raw and unsanitised depiction of exploitation causes it to appear somewhat ambivalent on the topic of empire. There are no happy families on this island, no domesticated hearths (so to speak), and no empty lands patiently awaiting colonisation. *Treasure Island* suggests that imperialistic exploitation is both an adventurous and a bloody affair that rewards deserving imperialists. The balance between these two elements—boyish adventure and deadly danger—is achieved through a complex representation of setting. The island is intrinsic to the novel's

agenda. Characters can travel to a faraway and dangerous land, engage in their adventure, and then return to the safety of their own home. Naive notions of adventure allow the Englishmen and Jim to travel to the island, whilst the murderous state of affairs on the island ensures that their visit is very short. Expected adventure and dangerous reality thus combine to create a location that can be profitably exploited in a relatively short timeframe.

### **Island Expectations: The Power of the Map**

The eponymous Treasure Island lies at the heart of Stevenson's novel. The text's title foregrounds this emphasis on setting before the story even begins, as is the case with *The Coral Island* and, to a lesser extent, *Robinson Crusoe* (the full title mentions its insular location) and some editions of *The Swiss Family Robinson* (which refer to the setting in their full titles). *Treasure Island* is an imperial adventure tale that expressly highlights its reliance on setting. Telling the island story is, as Jim makes clear from the outset, the very purpose of the narrative: "Squire Trelawney, Dr Livesey, and the rest of these gentlemen having asked me to write down the whole particulars about Treasure Island from the beginning to the end, keeping nothing back but the bearings of the island, and that only because there is still treasure not yet lifted, I take up my pen" (1). Read in relation to these opening words, the entire novel becomes a story about the island—the novel encapsulates "the whole particulars" of the place. The action of the story, in this context, thus becomes a property of the setting. *Treasure Island* as a text is the result of Treasure Island as a (fictional) location, and all elements of the story that occur in other locations—such as the Admiral Benbow Inn—are significant primarily through their association with the island and what it symbolises. As with *Robinson Crusoe* and the Robinsonades, this is a tale of human

interactions with geography: the reader only knows the island's story insofar as it relates to the tale of piracy, treasure, and exploitation.

The importance of setting is further emphasised through the inclusion of a map labelled "Treasure Island." In some respects, the map has a similar function to the epigraph, as both situate the tale (one in space, the other in time and genre) and give it an air of legitimacy. Michael Irwin explores the role of maps within fiction, and argues that "Any fictional map is a statement of intent, proclaiming that in some sense 'place' will be of importance in the narrative concerned" (25). The general "expectation," explains Irwin, is that such maps will "clarify" details of the location and "will verify—authenticating the reality of a real-life locale or the pseudo-reality of a fictional one" (25-26). The map of Treasure Island, then, can be seen as a "statement" telling the reader that setting is not merely a backdrop to the tale but is instead a foundational and influential element of it. It also strengthens the story's verisimilitude by giving the island a physical presence. Irwin goes on to suggest that "There are curious ambiguities in most such maps, of a kind to confirm that Place is far from being an unproblematic aspect of story" (26). Such ambiguities arise in *Treasure Island*, I argue, through the juxtaposition of what the map first symbolises (adventure, excitement, and thrilling danger) and what it later comes to represent (violence, greed, and death). This juxtaposition contributes to the novel's complex representation of its setting, as characters experience a very different island to the one they expected. Their expectations, moreover, sharpen the trauma of reality on the island, as the characters (particularly Jim) must alter their concept of the location. Jim's subsequent negative attitude towards the island—which will be discussed at length later in this chapter—acts as a kind of overcompensation to the situation: the setting evolves from a place of naive adventure to a space of terrifying trauma.

The relationship between cartography and reality is foundational to *Treasure Island*. Both are components of a larger concept: the map and the insular setting are interconnected and function as two elements of a broader island image. This relationship can best be understood through an application of performativity theory. Fletcher notes that “From the perspective of performativity theory ‘reality’ and ‘representation’ become like two sides of a sheet of paper: it is impossible to separate them” (19). The map and the island that it represents illustrate this argument, as they function in relation to one another. When considering the story as a whole, it becomes impossible to extricate the physical island from its cartographical representation, and vice versa. Both inform the novel’s island image, and combine to create an overarching and ambivalent island entity. The representation (a map) is just as influential to the narrative as the thing being represented (an island). Moreover, as Fletcher continues, “human encounters with physical space are always already managed by our position in linguistic and cultural systems of representation” (19). The same can be said for the diegetic world of Stevenson’s novel: Jim and his friends view the island through the map before they come to “see” it in actuality, and the former experience shapes their expectations of the latter experience. As characters, they themselves exist in a world built on “linguistic and cultural systems of representation,” to borrow Fletcher’s phrase, and it is these systems that inform their expectations of *Treasure Island*. The concept of the island within Stevenson’s novel is thus multi-faceted: the insular map and the insular setting dovetail into one another to create the island experienced by both the reader and the characters.

The fusion of map and reality is also apparent in the history of the text’s production. The novel came into existence as a result of Stevenson and his stepson



drawing a map of the island. Stevenson's discussion of the process from map to story highlights the interconnectedness of the two and the power of representation:

No child but must remember laying his head in the grass, staring into the infinitesimal forest and seeing it grow populous with fairy armies. Somewhat in this way, as I paused upon my map of "Treasure Island," the future character of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods; and their brown faces and bright weapons peeped out upon me from unexpected quarters, as they passed to and fro, fighting and hunting treasure, on these few square inches of a flat projection. ("My First Book" 194)

The relationship between map and narrative was complicated by Stevenson's original map being lost during the editing process. He was forced to use his own story as a template for the new map<sup>8</sup>, thus strengthening the ties between story and cartographic representation. This new map is the one that is printed at the novel's beginning; to complicate the matter even further, however, the printed map is labelled a "facsimile" of the one found by Jim, with certain details "struck out by J. Hawkins." From the original map's inception to this final map's printing within the novel, cartography and narrative are inextricably linked—spatiality lies at the very core of the tale.

All of these maps recall the adventure tradition by reinforcing a standard set of expectations regarding islands and adventures. The map within the novel also functions, at least initially, as a cartographic adventure tale through the manner in which Jim reads it. The boy avidly devours the map from a safe distance, just as *Treasure Island* is read from the safety of the reader's own life. The map allows the possibility of both distance and imagined proximity. Novels like *Treasure Island* "establish a particular relation," writes Nicholas Daly, "between the domestic reader and imperial space," as the "maps that appear in these narratives of imaginary

mobility rearticulate the known space of the metropolitan subject and—from the point of view of the metropolis—the abstract and invisible space of Britain’s colonial possessions” (26). Stevenson’s novel creates a relationship between real readers and fictional geographies of empire. The map, in turn, creates a similar dynamic for Jim, as his initial consumption of it situates him in relation to the imagined imperial space of the island. These representations become tools that allow figurative access to far-flung regions of the British Empire, all from the safety of the known and domestic metropolis.

Furthermore, the map also helps to place *Treasure Island* within its historical time period. It constructs the island as a space rife with danger: a map that features labels like “Graves,” “Spyeglass Hill,” and “Skeleton Island” does not, after all, conjure up a sense of home and safety. This makes it representative of Loxley’s point, as cited earlier, concerning the novel’s position in the history of the British Empire. Published towards the end of the nineteenth century, *Treasure Island* offers a setting governed by the ideologies of its time. This island is a space of transient imperialism: the point is not to engage in long-term domestication but to instead make short-term use of the island for financial gain. The map’s inclusion in the text also increases the novel’s adventurous atmosphere in light of its publication date. In his discussion of *Treasure Island* and other key “treasure hunt” narratives, Daly theorises that, as European imperialism progressed and

the adventure of empire came to seem more and more like a well-organized business, officially uncharted territories assumed a new importance in the European imagination. The clumsily made treasure map ... is thus a composite icon of imperial power, representing the exotic territory as at once mysterious

and remote and yet ultimately knowable. The “blank spaces of the map,” then, are precisely what the adventure novel maps. (54)

Treasure maps thus provided mystery and intrigue in an age when imperialistic adventure risked becoming a bland and monotonous pursuit in the eyes of the colonising people. The map, in short, becomes a tool with which to address the very specific preoccupations and concerns of late imperialism.

Maps, then, can be said to give access to far-away spaces and to symbolise the possibility of knowing and possessing that terrain. The interplay of familiar and unfamiliar ground becomes particularly important in the process, as gestured to by Daly. Stevenson provides his readers with a particularly convoluted situation in which the island is already known by some characters (the pirate Captain Flint and his crew) before the novel begins. Jim and his friends, however, can only begin to know the island after the discovery of a map amongst the possessions of a deceased pirate at the Admiral Benbow Inn. The island is “mysterious” and “ultimately knowable,” to use Daly’s words, but it is also, and simultaneously, a zone of familiarity for the pirates. Again, this indicates the tense relationship between space and place within *Treasure Island*: the insular setting is both “mysterious” (which is suggestive of space) and already known (suggestive of place). It is the pirates who initially map the island and thereby exhibit a heightened sense of familiarity with, and knowledge of, the location, but it is the Englishmen who benefit the most from this dynamic: the “imperial power” symbolised by the map lies with Jim and his friends, and not with the pirates.

The importance of maps within the spatiality of adventure fiction is clear. Phillips points out that “Generations of adventure writers, heroes and readers have been inspired by sketchy maps, both real and imaginary, which seem to invite their geographical fantasies” (1). Authors, characters, and readers are tied together through

a shared fascination for adventurous cartographies, which in turn lead to new narratives. The maps found within such novels often act as “chart spaces in which anything seems possible and adventure seems inevitable” and, to further quote Phillips, “In these malleable spaces, writers and readers of adventure stories dream of the world(s) they might find, the adventures they might have, the kinds of men and women they might become” (3). Maps are paradoxical, in that they both anchor setting to reality (and thus turn space into place by making it knowable and defined) and offer the freedom, excitement, and possibility of space. Moreover, like the novels from which they come, these maps also allow readers to inhabit a world of adventure. This gains a further dimension in the case of *Treasure Island*, where the map is not just an appendix to the tale but is instead a part of the text’s diegesis, thereby giving characters themselves the opportunity to dream of “the adventures they might have.” These opportunities then foster expectations and imaginings of what such adventures should look like. Unlike the novel’s readers, Stevenson’s characters are able to travel to their map’s depicted island, only to discover that the expectations garnered from the cartographic document are, in fact, at odds with reality.

The map found by Jim in *Treasure Island* is an integral part of the narrative. Furthermore, it comes to function as a text in itself within the diegesis. J. B. Harley offers insight when he proposes that real-world maps should be considered “texts” rather than “mirrors” (35). He writes that “The usual perception of the nature of maps is that they are a mirror, a graphic representation, of some aspect of the real world,” before then arguing that “Far from holding up a simple mirror of nature that is true or false, maps describe the world—like any other document—in terms of relations of power and of cultural practices, preferences, and priorities” (35). Harley’s argument is equally applicable to fictional maps as they “describe” both the fictional world in

which they belong and the real world from which they have come. In contrast to Harley, however, I argue that the map can be both a “graphic representation” and a “text.” The two are not mutually exclusive, for a representation need not be static. Indeed, speech act theory and theories of performativity reason that speech and words, key forms of representation, are an act. “To say something is to *do* something” (94) argues J. L. Austin, to which Judith Butler replies that performativity is “bound up with a question of transitivity. What does it mean for a word not only to name, but also in some sense to perform and, in particular, to perform what it names?” (43). This process is also at work with the cartographic form of representation. The map of Treasure Island performs the same function that Jim believes the island itself will do: it acts as a space of adventure and glorious exploration.

The map, therefore, does more than simply present a two-dimensional image. It is dynamic and powerful. Jim, one of its key readers, falls into a flight of “fancy” soon after seeing it for the first time. Recalling the days spent waiting in the lead up to their departure, the older Jim says of his younger self that he was

full of sea-dreams and the most charming anticipations of strange islands and adventures. I brooded by the hour together over the map, all the details of which I well remembered. Sitting by the fire in the house-keeper’s room, I approached that island in my fancy, from every possible direction; I explored every acre of its surface; I climbed a thousand times to that tall hill they call the Spy-glass, and from the top enjoyed the most wonderful and changing prospects. Sometimes the isle was thick with savages, with whom we fought; sometimes full of dangerous animals that hunted us. (36)

The map thus triggers “sea-dreams” and “charming anticipations” of a style very similar to those described by Stevenson upon looking at his map. Jim’s imaginings are

located very firmly within the cultures of both character and author (Jim as narrator writes in the year “17—” [1]; Stevenson begins writing *Treasure Island* in 1881). The content of these “fancies” is reminiscent of the types of stories referred to in the epigraph: Jim is yearning for his own island adventure story. Kathleen Blake argues that Stevenson’s novel is the “fulfillment” of Jim’s fantasies (165) and that “*Treasure Island* is the dream come true in the full-bodied glory of verisimilitude, which had belonged to tradition since Crusoe ... and which allows Jim Hawkins to dream his island and to go there, returning with real pieces of eight” (167). *Treasure Island*, however, is less a dream come true than it is a dream pursued but not attained. Gubar responds to the first of these two quotations by arguing that “every single aspect of Jim’s fantasy fails to come true, thus invalidating the common critical claim [made by Blake]” (74). Jim desires the island experience of his Robinsonade predecessors, but is instead subjected to far more: his island is one of imperialism without colonialism, adventure without domesticity. His is a nightmare, and not a dream.

This clash between expectations and reality is made apparent to the reader early in the narrative through the device of the older Jim as narrator. His expectations of what an island adventure should constitute are unfavourably juxtaposed against the real island experience. Directly after the above description of his “sea-dreams,” Jim admits that “in all my fancies nothing occurred to me so strange and tragic as our actual adventures” (36). Though he imagines himself fighting with savages and being hunted by dangerous animals, these situations of danger and tragedy pale in comparison to the “actual adventures” that were to come. The map offers Jim the thrill of danger and excitement, but it also offers the safety of distance: “real” danger is not involved. The boy has had ample exposure to danger and fear at this early stage of the narrative—his dreams have been “haunted” by the “seafaring man with one leg” (3),

he has been terrified by the “horrible, soft-spoken, eyeless creature” known as Pew (16), and, worst of all, he and his mother have had to flee for their lives on the night that the Admiral Benbow Inn is ransacked by the pirates—and yet these dangers and fears are forgotten in the face of the map. Phillips describes the map as “an alluring and ambiguous geographical suggestion” (3), while Daly writes that the maps of both H. Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885) and Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* work “to produce the empire as an imaginary space for the investment of desire” (60). The unknown but alluded to is thus crucial—the cartographic text is more an imagining than a reality. The power of the map, then, lies primarily in its fictionality: the thrill of imaginary danger displaces any fear of actual danger in Jim’s mind, thereby allowing him to view the island space as a site not of horror and terror but of expected adventure, desire, and excitement.

Simultaneously, the map also works, for much of the novel, as a kind of reassurance that possession of the treasure will follow: whoever has the map, believes that they have the upper hand. Harley likens maps to guns and warships, in that they too have been used as “weapons of imperialism” (57). “Insofar as maps were used in colonial promotion,” he writes, “and lands claimed on paper before they were effectively occupied, maps anticipated empire” (57). In an era when land was valued less for its colonisable potential and more for its resources, the emphasis is on exploitation rather than occupation. Jim and his friends claim the island as theirs to exploit by possession of the treasure map. Cartographic representation and “real” location are thus, yet again, brought into dialogue with one another: the map functions as a key aspect of spatial negotiation within Stevenson’s novel. The location is considered valuable only for its treasure, and is defined by its status as a *treasure* island—without the treasure, it would not be Treasure Island. This aligns Stevenson’s

novel with the earlier colonial island narratives, as all of these texts depict their islands as valuable only through their usefulness to humankind. Thus, Jim does not tell the reader exactly where the island is located “because there is still treasure not yet lifted” (1); once the treasure is gone, however, it will not matter what happens to the island. The site and its treasure are synonymous in the minds of the characters, and possession of the former is directly related to possession of the latter.

The manner in which characters use the map, moreover, highlights a crucial difference between the two groups of treasure-hunters. Discussing *King Solomon's Mines* and *Treasure Island*, Daly argues that “The ability to map the exotic territory leads directly to the discovery of its treasures” (60). In the case of *Treasure Island*, however, I contend that it is the “ability” to *read* the map and *interpret* reality that allows for the discovery of the treasure. The relationship between map and setting is, of course, particularly important to this dynamic. The cartographical document turns out to be an empty signifier: not only is the island not the “adventure playground” dreamed of by Jim, but Ben has moved the treasure during his three-year entrapment. The map becomes a false symbol as it represents an island of romanticised adventure and the certain location of treasure, both of which prove to be misleading. Even as a false symbol, however, the map is, to return to Harley's terminology, a “[weapon] of imperialism.” Jim's friends discover the treasure's real location and use the map to trick the pirates, thereby ensuring their own access to the treasure. The pirates, on the other hand, take the map at face value and are unable to read the truth behind it: they know how to follow the map, but do not know how to interpret the changes in their surroundings. The island may be the place of the pirates—a zone in which, to return to Fraser's words, one can be one's “piratical self”—but it is the honest Englishmen who are able to exploit the location. The map enables this exploitation: it is a powerful



component of *Treasure Island*, and a driving force behind the story's successful imperialistic outcome.

### **Constructions of Terror: Accessing the Island beneath the Fear**

Treasure Island as a map or adventurous idea is the source of boyish delight and desire. Treasure Island as a geographical and topographical entity, however, is represented as the source of sheer terror. It appears on the horizon just after Jim, fortuitously hidden in an apple barrel, overhears Silver and other members of the crew discussing their plans to overthrow and kill the rest of the ship's party. The boy is still crouching in his hiding place when the call of "Land ho!" is given, and his subsequent view of the island is clouded by the horror of what he has just heard (62-63). This point in the story marks the beginning of his difficulty in separating the island from the negative events that occur there. The reader, of course, already knows about the trauma of the treasure-hunting expedition through the device of the older narrator. Silver and Jim have, until this moment, shared a close bond. Unaware that his subterfuge has been discovered, Silver continues to act in a jovial and fatherly manner towards Jim: as they look out over the distant island, the pirate tells the young boy that "this here is a sweet spot, this island—a sweet spot for a lad to go ashore on. You'll bathe, and you'll climb trees, and you'll hunt goats, you will; and you'll get aloft on them hills like a goat yourself ... When you want to go a bit of exploring, you just ask old John, and he'll put up a snack for you to take along" (64). Silver tries to build up the island as a site of boyish dreams but, whilst he is doing this, Jim is experiencing it as a nightmare. Silver's positive construction of the environment becomes hollow, thereby further undermining the novel's earlier suggestion of the island space as a site of glorious and enjoyable adventure.

Jim's tendency to see the island through the pain of his experience skews the depiction of the location, though he is, at times, sufficiently self-aware to realise this himself. His first close-up view of the island, occurring the morning after its form was sighted on the horizon, instils him with a sense of loathing for it: "I hated the very thought of Treasure Island" (68). He muses that this hatred was perhaps caused by "the look of the island, with its grey, melancholy woods, and wild stone spires, and the surf that we could both see and hear foaming and thundering on the steep beach" (68). His description paints a picture of desolation and daunting wilderness: this is an island of fear and tarnished dreams. Jim, however, immediately weakens the credibility of this bleak description by saying that "although the sun shone bright and hot, and the shore birds were fishing and crying all around us, and you would have thought that anyone would have been glad to get to land after being so long at sea, my heart sank, as the saying is, into my boots" (68-69). He brings into question the very image that he has created by suggesting that he should have been pleased with the prospect of spending time on shore, in the sunshine, with the birds. This implies that there is nothing inherently foreboding about the island after all, and that Jim has merely imagined it into being evil and wild. The physical island thus operates on multiple levels within the novel: there is the real, underlying island and then there is Jim's perception of it. By bringing his own perception into doubt, Jim proves himself capable of comprehending the existence of both these levels—what he does not seem to realise, however, is that the second level is created by his fear of the pirates. Jim's terror is displaced onto his physical surroundings, which causes a fractured kind of island to appear within the text.

The divide between the island as a site of expected adventure and one of graphic trauma also adds to the fracturing of the setting. This is made apparent, for

instance, on the morning of their arrival. The pirates no longer put an effort into maintaining their façade as honest sailors, despite Silver's desperate attempts to keep them in line. Captain Smollett grants the crew shore leave, hoping that Silver will use the opportunity to defuse the situation: both Silver and Smollett desire nothing more than to postpone the inevitable conflict. Jim, acting on a split-second decision, stows away in one of the gigs; arriving ashore, he gives the pirates the "slip" and disappears into the undergrowth (73). Once alone, he is briefly able to enjoy himself as though nothing is wrong. He gazes at his surroundings with great interest, describes in detail what kinds of trees grow there, delights in "flowering plants, unknown to me," and sees snakes (73). All of what he discovers, including the snakes, fills him with happiness as he "[feels] for the first time the joy of exploration" (73). This joy is predicated on leaving his fears and his foes behind, as though they cannot possibly reach him whilst he is adventuring. "The isle was uninhabited," he says, "my shipmates I had left behind, and nothing lived in front of me but dumb brutes and fowls" (73). Jim's joyful description of the island is thus linked to an active rejection of his reality: spatial perceptions become artificial constructs that have little to do with the actual place. Negative events lead to a negative island image, whilst positive events create a positive image. Jim's excursion sees him attempt to explore the space as though it were the kind of adventure island that he'd dreamed of and desired or, to be more precise, as though it were the ur-island of those adventurous settings: an island where one could be as alone as Crusoe himself was. In Gubar's words, he now "seems poised to follow in [Crusoe's] footsteps" (74). To experience Crusoe's island, he must take on Crusoe's role.

Jim, however, is not alone. He soon comes across Silver in deep discussion with one of the few remaining honest crewmembers, a man by the name of Tom.

Silver, we discover, is attempting to corrupt Tom and, when this proves unsuccessful, brutally murders him instead. Jim, hidden in the vegetation, witnesses Silver's callous behaviour and faints as a result. His desired island of adventure is shattered: "the whole world swam away from before me in a whirling mist; Silver and the birds, and the tall Spy-glass hill-top, going round and round and topsy-turvy before my eyes ... When I came again to myself, the monster had pulled himself together" (76). The "monster" in question is Silver: his brutal actions dehumanise him in the eyes of Jim, and cause the boy to perceive their surroundings through a fog of incomprehension. The juxtaposition of adventure and terror is brought to a climax: Jim initially pursues an island of adventure, but loses access to that world when he links the island to the monstrous act he witnesses. Gubar writes that, within this scene, "the landscape he dreams of conquering overpowers him" (74), but I would rephrase this to say that he *feels* as though the landscape has overpowered him. He sees the island through his emotional state; his emotions, in turn, are the product of his circumstances. Jim's view of the island, then, is distorted by Silver's actions.

The validity of a particular aspect of the island's negative representation, however, cannot be denied: certain parts of the setting foster disease, as is pointed out repeatedly in the story. "A peculiar stagnant smell hung over the anchorage," narrates Jim, "a smell of sodden leaves and rotting tree trunks. I observed the doctor sniffing and sniffing, like someone tasting a bad egg" (70). "I don't know about treasure," Livesey then says, "But I'll stake my wig there's fever here" (70). The doctor returns to the topic a little later, noting that "if ever a man smelt fever and dysentery, it was in that abominable anchorage" (84). The identity of the pirates is soon brought out into the open and, once this happens, the two parties engage in hostilities before retreating to different parts of the island: the pirates camp by the marsh, while Jim and his group

seek shelter in the stockade. The marsh, it turns out, is the unhealthiest spot on the island, as several of the pirates quickly fall ill with malaria. Even the stockade, with its Union Jack flying proudly from its roof, is not entirely free of disease: watching Silver's approach in the early morning, Jim notices that "where Silver stood with his lieutenant all was still in shadow, and they waded knee deep in a low, white vapour, that had crawled during the night out of the morass. The chill and the vapour taken together told a poor tale of the island. It was plainly a damp, feverish, unhealthy spot" (104). This depiction of Treasure Island as a site of disease places the novel within a wider discourse for as Edmond points out, "There is a long tradition of imagining islands as places of disease" ("Abject" 133). Edmond goes on to discuss the practice of confining lepers to island colonies, and writes that "In time these places of custody and banishment became identified with the bodies they enclosed" (145). Stevenson's novel takes this a step further by describing an island that causes healthy bodies to become diseased.

Reading *Treasure Island* through Edmond's discussion of islands and the bodies they "enclose" adds a new layer of interpretation and understanding to the text. The pirates and Jim (taken as a hostage) eventually travel across the island in search of the treasure. They come across "a most pleasant portion of the island" filled with "heavy-scented broom and many flowering shrubs" (172). "Thickets of green nutmeg trees," Jim tells the reader, "were dotted here and there with the red columns and the broad shadow of the pines; and the first mingled their spice with the aroma of the others" (172). This moment is reminiscent of exploration scenes in earlier colonial island narratives, in which characters stumble across lush valleys or beautifully wooded mountainsides. Gubar dubs these scenes "purple passages" and maintains that they are entirely absent from *Treasure Island* (75). I contend, however, that they are

not only present within the novel, but that they heighten the terror of negative island depictions. As with the expectations versus reality issue, it is the tension between the two aspects—in this case, beautiful and horrific scenery—that creates the power of the island image. The picturesque scene described above is quickly contrasted with a gruesome discovery: “At the foot of a pretty big pine, and involved in a green creeper, which had even partly lifted some of the smaller bones, a human skeleton lay, with a few shreds of clothing, on the ground” (173). The decaying skeleton—discovered to have been a pirate most likely killed by Captain Flint when the treasure was initially buried—appears all the more gruesome in contrast to the preceding scene of beauty. It is also a primal image, with the description almost suggesting that the island is actively absorbing the pirate into itself. This is strengthened by Jim observing “some disarray” of the bones which was “the work, perhaps of the birds that had fed upon him, or of the slow-growing creeper that had gradually enveloped his remains” (173). It is a haunting image that draws striking parallels with the graves in *The Coral Island* and *Masterman Ready*: the remains of a deceased Crusoe figure, however, have been exchanged for those of a pirate.

The scene can be read as a metaphor of Edmond’s point. The island, quite literally, “encloses” the remains of the pirate. As discussed previously, Jim strongly identifies the setting with the events of his island visit. He repeatedly conflates the two into one and is, as a result, fearful of both the pirates and the island. His description of the skeleton is imbued with this process: the bones appear as though they are being drawn into the earth. The constructed link between pirate and setting is further emphasised by Jim’s declaration that “I believe a chill struck for a moment to every heart” (173). The discovery “chills” the group just as the climate does. Jim’s description of the entire scene gives the island agency and an eerie physical power,

much like his earlier portrayal of the vapour as having “crawled ... out of the morass” (104). It is a tactic similar to that used in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*: by displacing the cause of his fear onto his surroundings, Jim creates an island that appears, erroneously, to have an inherent identity akin to that of the pirates. The island takes on the taint of the fearsome characters, and becomes their territory. Just as the graves of the figurative Crusoes mark those islands as zones of a particular moment in the history of the British Empire, so too do the bones of the pirate.

However, *Treasure Island* also allows a glimpse into another construction of the setting. Ben occupies a position somewhere between the pirates and the Englishmen. Jim calls him the “man of the island” (78) and, to some extent, he seems almost to be a part of the setting: he even “rifled” the skeleton at a point prior to Jim’s arrival on the island (183), as though he were just another bird or creeper interfering with the bones. Ben’s experience of the island is very different to Jim’s, as he has had the opportunity of turning it into a long-term home. His character is thus able to understand the island in a way that others cannot. Jim first meets him after witnessing the nightmarish scene of Silver murdering Tom by the marsh. After experiencing his physical surroundings as “topsy-turvy” (76), Jim recovers from his fainting episode and flees to “the more open portion of the wood” (77). Fear apparently makes him claustrophobic, and escaping Silver becomes linked to escaping the marsh. Finding himself on a part of the island where the trees “grew more widely apart,” he notices that “The air, too, smelt more freshly than down beside the marsh” (77). It is here, in this healthy island spot, that he discovers Ben, and it is here that Ben spends much of his time (99). Although he is uneducated, the man knows and understands the island, and can therefore make sound decisions that help keep him healthy whilst living there: he chooses, for instance, to live in a cave that “was a large, airy place, with a little

spring and a pool of clear water, overhung with ferns” (185). Ben allows the reader insight into the island without the presence of Jim’s fear: there is more to this location than simply death and disease.

The maroon not only provides a more genuine experience of the island, he also harks back to the figure of Crusoe. The novel has him dressed in “tatters of old ship’s canvas and old sea cloth ... held together by ... fastenings, brass buttons, bits of stick, and loops of tarry gaskin” and topped with “an old brass-buckled leather belt” (79). However, the original serialised version of the novel, as published in *Young Folks*, paints a rather different picture of his outfit: “his dress, if it could be called a dress, was a kilt of goatskin, bound about his waist with an old brass-buckled leather belt, a case or waistcoat of the same about his body, and a round, pointed cap upon his head, with the long hair hanging over his eyes. He had no weapon, and, except the belt, no mark of civilization” (qtd. in Letley “Explanatory Notes” 206). Ben, therefore, began his existence as a character clad similarly to Crusoe. This similarity, moreover, was pointed out to Stevenson in a letter from his father: “I object to the goatskin dress and hat which is merely R. Crusoe ... I want you to make a real point of his breaking away from home and this should be a kind of religious tract and should be fully done but all in the Defoe style” (qtd. in Letley “Explanatory Notes” 206). Though the costume is different in the novel, the character nonetheless remains aligned to Crusoe through this concept of home and religion: he speaks of his “pious mother” and declares that “it were Providence that put me here” (80). Indeed, his first words within the novel, as he is introducing himself to Jim, express a desire for, and affinity with, Christianity: “Ben Gunn ... I’m poor Ben Gunn, I am; and I haven’t spoken with a Christian these three years” (79). This creates strong parallels with Crusoe, for whom religion is of great importance.



Unlike Crusoe, however, Ben is a farcical character. His initial reference to Christianity is soon brought down to a base level: “my heart is sore for Christian diet,” he says to Jim, “You mightn’t happen to have a piece of cheese about you, now? No? Well, many’s the long night I’ve dreamed of cheese—toasted, mostly—and woke up again, and here I were” (79). His subsequent comment concerning piety—“I’ve thought it all out in this here lonely island, and I’m back on piety” (80)—is thus undermined, as cheese holds just as important a position in his mind as piety does. Ben equates the spiritual realm with cheese, and in so doing serves to mock, rather than promote, Christianity. His strangeness makes an impression on Jim: after voicing his doubts concerning Ben’s sanity, Jim is told by Livesey that “A man who has been three years biting his nails on a desert island, Jim, can’t expect to appear as sane as you or me” (102). Ben, according to Livesey, is therefore a victim of island entrapment: islands, particularly isolated and uninhabited ones, are not deemed hospitable for humans. In this respect, the island functions as a symbol of isolation. The insular geography, Livesey is suggesting, inevitably affects those humans who reside on it for a longer period of time.

The island, then, is blamed for Ben’s peculiarity. Livesey’s reflections, moreover, cause the setting to take on characteristics of a wilderness. Casey discusses the history of this term, positing that it can mean a “kind of place or region (land or sea) in which one readily loses one’s way, goes astray, and becomes literally bewildered. In this aberrant action, one loses contact with one’s home-place” (229). As a geographical space tied to the loss of human reason and coherence, the island becomes a wilderness. It is an alien space far from home: even Ben, though he turns the island into a temporary home, asks Jim for “passage” (81) to his true home of England. The notion of the island as a wilderness, however, is a construct—it is not

that the island itself influences the cognitive processes of its visitors, but rather that those visitors ascribe such influential power to the island. Stevenson's depiction of Livesey undermines the doctor's attitude towards the island. Upon finding out that Ben craves cheese, Livesey suddenly admits that he keeps a piece of Parmesan cheese in his snuffbox and that he would like to give this cheese to Ben (102). He divulges this information to Jim as though it were perfectly rational to keep such an item in his snuffbox. This creates a similarity between the doctor and the maroon, as both exhibit a peculiar obsession with cheese. Livesey's claim that the island has impaired Ben's sanity is thereby brought into question: if Livesey and Ben share a peculiarity, and Livesey has not been trapped on an isolated island, then the setting cannot be the reason for Ben's strangeness. Indeed, the comments of Ben's ex-shipmates suggest that he has always had a somewhat unflattering reputation: "nobody minds Ben Gunn ... dead or alive, nobody minds him" (178). It is not the island, then, that is the cause for Ben's apparent strangeness, despite Livesey's suggestions to the contrary. This allows for a positive representation of the island: the characters portray the setting as being at fault, but other aspects of the novel acknowledge the falsity of this.

The representation of Ben as peculiar also undermines the ur-characters of Crusoe and Friday, as Ben comes to represent both of these figures. Describing his first meeting with Ben, Jim explains that "as soon as I began to move in [the man's] direction he reappeared and took a step to meet me. Then he hesitated, drew back, came forward again and, at last, to my wonder and confusion, threw himself on his knees and held out his clasped hands in supplication" (79). The moment is reminiscent of Friday's initial meeting with Crusoe, as Friday "came a little way, then stopp'd again, and then a little further, and stopp'd again ... I beckon'd him again to come to me ... and he came nearer and nearer ... at length he came close to me, and

then he kneel'd down again, kiss'd the Ground, and laid his Head upon the Ground, and taking me by the Foot, set my Foot upon his head" (147). Ben is both a figure of island survival (as Crusoe is) and one of submission and supplication (as is Friday's depiction within Defoe's novel). This conflation of Crusoe and Friday within the character of Ben casts Defoe's characters in a new light. Ben plays an extremely important role in the novel, for it is he who leads Jim's friends to the treasure and he who ensures Jim's escape from the pirates by tricking them: when Jim is told the story of Ben's involvement, however, he states that "Ben Gunn, the half-idiot maroon, was the hero from beginning to end" (183). He is able to admit that Ben was "the hero" of that particular story, but he cannot help but describe him as a "half-idiot maroon." This undermines and even negates the man's status as a hero. Jim, it seems, has no use for Crusoe, nor can he allow Friday to rise to great heights.

*Treasure Island's* imperial agenda, like those of its Robinsonade predecessors, is made apparent through a setting tailored to its specific moment in history: the staged island domesticity of novels like *The Coral Island* has been replaced with a setting built on transient exploitation. The figure of Friday has been silenced—even worse, he has been merged with his "master" and has lost his identity. Ultimately, the story belongs to Jim, and the final words lie with him. Those words irrevocably taint the island and tie it to the pirates: "Oxen and wain-ropes would not bring me back again to that accursed island; and the worst dreams that ever I have are when I hear the surf booming about its coasts, or start upright in bed, with the sharp voice of Captain Flint still ringing in my ears: 'Pieces of eight! pieces of eight!'" (191). The island has been "cursed," and has been painted as a "repository" of human treachery and deceit. Blame is deflected onto the terrain throughout the novel, which causes the island to appear almost as though it is at fault for the human evil that occurs on its

shores. Human idiosyncrasies and weaknesses, therefore, become a perceived product of the space. The novel as a whole, however, indicates the falsity of this process: *Treasure Island* thus acts as a powerful treatise on negative human relationships with island environments.

## Chapter Four

### Reinscribing Crusoe's "Kingdom" in the Twentieth Century

Thus far, this thesis has focused on *Robinson Crusoe* and its legacy in the nineteenth century. This chapter shifts discussion to the twentieth century through the examination of two literary rewritings of Defoe's novel: Tournier's *Friday*<sup>9</sup> and Coetzee's *Foe*. These novels engage with their urtext in a critical manner by attempting to overturn its imperial content and message. They belong to a category of texts that speak back to their colonial predecessor from a postcolonial stance. As Phillips asserts, *Robinson Crusoe*'s popularity with "critics as well as champions of empire" has led to the "[emergence of] a counter-tradition of critical Robinsons and Robinsonades" (143). Both *Friday* and *Foe* attempt to rescript the traditional Crusoe island: Coetzee takes this even further than Tournier does, as his novel interrogates both the traditional Crusoe island genre and the very process of telling the Crusoe story. According to Phillips, novels like these "re-enter the narrative space of *Robinson Crusoe* and ... unmap the space itself, destabilising the terrain on which its particular masculinist, racist, imperialist vision was constructed" (144). The idea that novels can "unmap" and "destabilise" Defoe's textual terrain provides a useful path into *Friday* and *Foe*, particularly when considered in relation to setting.

This chapter contends that the process of "unmapping" becomes far more convoluted—and its success far less clear—than Phillips argues, if scholarly analysis of these novels takes into consideration the representation of island geography. *Friday* does not effectively interrogate and "unmap" the image of the colonial island, as its main protagonist is driven by unchallenged imperial ideologies. Phillips posits that "Critical writers appropriate and subvert language and narratives, producing counter-

currents of resistance to discursive authority” (143). *Friday*, I argue, uses its source text to extend upon and strengthen (rather than subvert) imperial ideologies of island conquest. The reader is presented with a character who learns, by behaving like a colonist, how to use the island in new ways. This Crusoe figure actively constructs his island as a location to be used and abused. *Foe*, on the other hand, is able to critique the established stereotypical castaway story by, paradoxically, highlighting the near impossibility of achieving its goal. Two concerns lie at the heart of the novel: the juxtaposition of expectations and reality (reminiscent of *Treasure Island*), and the ethical problem of speaking for someone who has been silenced. These issues are addressed through a critique of the generic castaway tale, thereby making Coetzee’s novel (unlike Tournier’s) a successful “unmapping” of *Robinson Crusoe*.

The island plays a core role in the political agenda of both *Friday* and *Foe*. These novels offer islands that are, or become, European. Peter Conrad muses, in his discussion of *Robinson Crusoe*, that “An empty island is the nucleus for a world we create in our own image” (97). His words resonate powerfully with both *Friday* and *Foe*, as each novel presents the reader with a European figure residing on a European island. These settings are reflections of their castaways, and vice versa. There are, moreover, individual differences between the texts that further illustrate the notion of setting as an “image” of its inhabitant. Tournier’s Crusoe is obsessed with sex and sexuality and, consequently, transforms his island into a sexual being. Coetzee’s Crusoe figure and his island, in turn, are depicted as dull and monotonous when in fact they are interesting and unusual. The islands are thus constructed both as generic European places and as sites shaped for specific castaways: even such shaping, however, is informed by an understanding of the Crusoe legacy and its stereotypes. As

with the nineteenth-century texts described earlier, these novels adapt the past to suit their present. Such adaptation, however, always occurs in relation to the earlier texts.

Simultaneously, the islands are also turned into European property. Although both texts draw attention to their Friday figures, it becomes painfully obvious that the castaway myth belongs to Crusoe, and not to Friday. Tournier concludes his novel with the arrival of a ship called the *Whitebird*, which takes away Friday (who departs voluntarily) but leaves behind a European boy. The child has “red hair” (223), freckles (224), “light blue eyes,” and “pale albino lashes” (233). His fair description, coupled with the ship’s name, clearly constructs him as a white replacement of Friday. *Foe*, in turn, offers an African Friday, thereby adding an extra element to the Crusoe story. Despite Tournier’s Friday being described as a “*half-caste, a South American Indian crossed with Negro*” (138), the novel predominantly identifies him as the former race through constant use of the label “Araucanian.” Coetzee’s Friday, on the other hand, is clearly identified as African throughout the novel, and his island experience is contextualised in relation to the slave trade of the Middle Passage. Though he is granted a certain amount of freedom and independence on the island, his life there is fundamentally one of slavery. Crusoe, and not Friday, has authority in Coetzee’s insular setting: the Englishman is the master of both Friday and the island.

*Foe*’s successful unmapping of the Crusoe island, this chapter contends, stems from its self-conscious didacticism. The novel is highly self-reflexive: as Derek Attridge emphasises, it explores “the processes of authorship, empowerment, validation, and silencing” whilst simultaneously being “constantly aware of the problems inherent in its own acts of representation” (87). Such “awareness” is integral to the narrative and its agenda, and functions as a “part of the reader’s experience” (87). This gives the novel a postcolonial depth not present in *Friday*, as Tournier’s

novel, by contrast, promotes the very ideologies it is purportedly criticising. “Critical adventures,” writes Phillips, “are not just negative exercises in erasing established constructions of geography and identity. They use the geography of adventure stories as a point of departure to get somewhere new, to invent new stories and construct new geographies and identities, to write new literatures” (160). This chapter contends that *Friday* is not a new story. Whilst it does adapt Defoe’s novel, it nonetheless offers a narrative anchored in the imperialistic ideologies of its predecessor. This is achieved through character engagement with spatiality: *Friday* does not construct a new geography. *Foe*, on the other hand, although it harks back to the past in a highly explicit manner, constructs a present from which one can conceivably see an altered future. That future draws its strength from spatiality: it is a vision in which the island is reshaped and is not the conquest of Robinson Crusoe, but instead becomes the adopted home of Friday.

### **Using, Abusing, and Loving the Island in *Friday***

Tournier’s novel follows the castaway experience of Robinson Crusoe (known as Robinson for most of the text), who is shipwrecked on an uninhabited and uncharted Pacific island. Tournier positions the novel to be read in relation to *Robinson Crusoe* through his use of key details from the source text including the character’s name, hometown, and date of shipwreck (early on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September—though Tournier’s castaway is shipwrecked one hundred years later than his forerunner). Both characters give their islands similar names: Crusoe’s becomes “*the Island of Despair*” (52) and Robinson’s “the Island of Desolation” (20). Tournier’s castaway, like Crusoe, eventually learns to appreciate his surroundings and to overcome isolation, before being joined by Friday. As Susan Petit points out, the novel also borrows from the



experiences of Alexander Selkirk: the island is, for instance, located in Chilean waters near the island where Selkirk was marooned, and not in the Caribbean (20).<sup>10</sup> The fictional novel is interspersed with factual details—*Robinson Crusoe* acts as a foundation for the story, but there are moments (as in the location of the island) when Selkirk's experiences seem almost to force their way into the narrative. Tension between fact and fiction arises, as with the non-fiction texts discussed in this thesis' introduction. Moreover, Petit also argues that Tournier “[includes] events which one supposes would have happened, but which Defoe did not write about. Robinson's sexuality is the most obvious example: surely a man marooned alone on an island would suffer, at least at first, from sexual frustrations. Defoe's Crusoe does not; Tournier's Robinson does” (20). Despite these deviations from the urtext, however, *Friday* remains very much a Crusoe story: it is the tale of a European castaway who forces his needs onto his environment. The addition of events concerning Robinson's sexuality merely serves to reinforce such themes of dominance and conquest.

The novel, it must be said, opens with the possibility of narratological change; as the following analysis makes apparent, however, that change does not eventuate. The reader is faced with an apparently weak imperialist in the character of Robinson: he is unstable and unwilling to become a colonist. Unlike most of the nineteenth-century colonial characters who are cast away before him, he does not immediately see his dire situation as having potential imperial or colonial benefits. The trauma of finding himself shipwrecked, though felt by most of his predecessors, affects him to a far greater extent than it does the earlier castaways. His subsequent actions are driven not by resilience, resourcefulness, and a need to domesticate the island, but by an inability to accept that rescue may not be imminent. He briefly acknowledges the importance of salvaging stores from the shipwreck, but delays acting on this thought

as “he felt an overwhelming reluctance to undertake any kind of work which would suggest that he was settling down on the island” (22).<sup>11</sup> Robinson’s attitude is driven by a rejection of the island. He establishes several rescue signals in his near vicinity and then remains on the beach, staring at the ocean “With his back turned obstinately to the land” as an uncounted amount of days “or weeks or months” passed by (23-24). The “fear of madness” arising from his being hypnotised by strange thoughts concerning his surroundings eventually scares him out of this passivity (24). Setting thus plays a role in his transformation from an unlikely to an active colonist. The process, however, is not yet complete at this stage: though he is driven to act, his actions remain predicated on departure. He salvages items from the wreck not for the purpose of improving his long-term castaway situation, but to build a boat in which he can flee the island. This boat, once finished, proves too big for him to launch; ironically, he cannot escape in the vessel he has christened the *Escape*.

His inability to launch the boat triggers a severe psychological breakdown. This emotional response is aligned with a particular part of the island: its marsh, or mire. Robinson casts himself into this murky water, and exists there in a kind of primordial state for a long period of time. He becomes a part of the mire’s ecosystem, so to speak, and is introduced within that location directly after a description of pigs and their habits both in and out of the mire. “Then a human form, like a statue of clay,” Tournier writes, “rose *in its turn* and made its way through the reeds” (40; emphasis added). He is thus represented as just another creature in a line of creatures, one component of a broader system. Despite the movement described in this sentence, however, Robinson is a largely immobile presence in the mire—unlike the pigs, he does not have a regular routine of departing the murky waters at sunset. The contrast between the pigs and the man is evident: they exist in families, whilst he, who should

also be with his own kind, is alone. His isolation is the cause of his immobility: “Exiled from the mass of his fellows, who had sustained him as a part of humanity without his realizing it, he felt that he no longer had the strength to stand on his own feet” (40). In this state of isolation, he comes to realise that “man resembles a person injured in a street riot, who can only stay upright while the crowd packed densely around him continues to prop him up” (40). The mire replaces the “mass of his fellows,” as Robinson immerses himself within it and so attempts to become a part of its system. He does not, however, belong in the mire: it is not a locale of life for him, but rather one of death and submission. He sustains himself poorly on “unmentionable foods” and “relieved himself where he lay, and rarely failed to roll in the damp warmth of his own excrement. He moved less and less” (40). His time in the mire is marked by a lack of care for his own health and well-being.

This bleak period, however, leads to self-awareness and a kind of salvation. While his body is immersed in the setting, his mind sinks into a “cloudy meditation” of his childhood as he engages in philosophical ramblings concerning the past:

Here, in its warm coverlet of slime, his body lost all weight, while the toxic emanations of the stagnant water drugged his mind. Only his eyes, nose, and mouth were active, alert for edible weed and toad spawn drifting on the surface. Rid of all terrestrial bonds, his thoughts in a half stupor pursued vestiges of memory which emerged like phantoms from the past to dance in the blue gaps between the motionless foliage. (40-41)

His meditation takes him away from the island and into his childhood, but this mental departure is linked back to the setting. The novel constructs the island, specifically the mire, as a trigger for these ramblings: “The mire, by demonstrating his capacity for turning inward upon himself and withdrawing from the external world, had shown

him that he had inherited more than he thought from [his father]" (41). The island thus appears to be responsible for uncovering an unknown aspect of Robinson's personality. This is a first step in a long journey of self-discovery that constantly refers back to the island, and foreshadows many instances in the novel when the island is constructed as a tool in the development of Robinson's sense of self and sense of imperialistic mastery.

The self-awareness apparently garnered from the mire peaks when Robinson, placidly "browsing on watercress," sees and hears a ship passing the island (41). In a sudden and frenzied display of movement and energy, he leaps from the mire and frantically attempts to draw the attention of those onboard. He lights his signal fires, puts on his clothes, and runs along the beach parallel to the ship's course until he encounters lagoons blocking his path. He dives into the water and, in his frenzy, almost drowns before the waves cast him back onto the shore. The promise of rescue having departed, he is thus wrecked on the island yet again: "Had the sea flung him a second time on the same stretch of beach?" (43). Recovering from the ordeal, Robinson realises that he has just experienced a hallucination—the ship cannot have been real, as one of its passengers was his deceased sister. This moment, described by Watt as "a turning point" for the castaway (*Myths* 257), causes him to actively face his situation. His loss of reason and reality, coupled with the fear of falling into "the depths of madness," lead him to decide that "He must once again take his life in hand. He must work" (44). The decision functions as a rejection of apathy and his obsession with rescue: "Turning his back on the ocean, he picked his way up the slope of rubble, overgrown with silvery thistles, that led to the center of the island" (44). This intentional privileging of the island's interior over the beach indicates that Robinson is even more determined to accept his situation than Defoe's Crusoe: Crusoe, of

course, favours his island's coast over its interior due to the higher likelihood of being rescued whilst in the proximity of the ocean. The anguish of Robinson's early days on the island shows him that he must embrace his situation with extreme determination, if he is to remain alive and sane.

The process of Robinson's transformation sees him become a successful imperialist: the island setting thus gives the castaway the strength of mind needed to become an insular colonist. Robinson's emergence from the mire marks a shift in his island life as he goes from overwhelming misery to an obsession with order, discipline, and dominance over himself and his surroundings. He "[makes] a methodical survey of the island," "[takes] stock of its resources," and salvages everything that he can from the wreck (46). He also draws a map of the island and symbolically renames it "Speranza," or "the Island of Hope" (47). This mapping is a statement of power and causes the island to "change," as Jane Kathryn Stribling explains, "from an uncharted, abstract female space to the catalogued female property of a new male master" (63). Robinson takes possession of his island, and treats it accordingly. Many of these early actions are reminiscent of Crusoe's engagement with his own island (though Crusoe sees his island as non-gendered property). Robinson cultivates plants, domesticates goats, and builds a variety of structures. This process of exploring and taming his surroundings allows him to dominate the island, and runs parallel to the exploration of his own sense of self and his attempts at controlling his thoughts and desires.

Robinson's rediscovery of writing is integral to this process of development. Like Defoe's Crusoe, he is able to keep a journal; unlike his predecessor's journal, however, his is not used to record practicalities, achievements, and actions, but is instead used primarily as a space in which to philosophise. Symbolically, the journals

come to represent the different ways in which the two characters perceive their islands. The original Crusoe views his island through a lens of practicality—though he undergoes spiritual development on the island, his location is strongly depicted as a physical and tangible site. Tournier’s Robinson, on the other hand, learns to view his island through a lens of spirituality and philosophy, which influences his perception of the location. “Unlike Defoe’s Crusoe,” Petit writes, “Robinson suffers more from psychological than technological problems; he must find not so much a way to survive physically as a way to forget his emotional isolation” (5). The physical domination of Robinson’s surroundings remains important to him, but it is one step in a broader agenda of physical and mental domination—a vital step, but not a final goal in itself. In this respect, *Friday* functions as an extension of *Robinson Crusoe*: whilst I contend that Tournier’s novel is not a new story in the postcolonial sense, it does extend the urtext. It builds upon the past; novels like Coetzee’s *Foe*, by contrast, *rebuild* the past.

*Friday* thus offers a character who both engages in, and deviates from, typical castaway behaviours. Such deviations, however, remain rooted in the past, as domination is key to this novel’s concerns. Robinson’s approach to the island is based on power and conquest. The setting is considered a submissive female very early in the story: studying the map he has drawn, Robinson notes that “the island resembled a female body, headless but nevertheless a woman, seated with her legs drawn up beneath her in an attitude wherein submission, fear, and simple abandonment were inextricably mingled” (47-48). As Stribling asserts, such imagery forces Speranza into the “subservient role of female sex object destined to give in to her new male master” (63). This blatant and explicit feminising of the island is a core element of the novel, and enables the castaway to assume a dominant masculine role. It serves, I argue, as an extension of Crusoe’s behaviour in *Robinson Crusoe*. Both characters exhibit

similar psychological attitudes towards their surroundings, as they seek to overpower and control their respective islands. Robinson develops new ways of dominating his island that are centred on sexuality, but these methods are derived from, and share ideologies with, the more traditional imperial castaway methods of island conquest. His behaviour is strongly informed by that of his predecessor.

Robinson's journal is symbolic of this relationship between the old and the new. It is composed of washed out pages of books salvaged from the shipwreck and is therefore, as Colin Davis points out, a "palimpsest" (10). Robinson's quill, in turn, is a vulture's feather and his ink is extracted from the skin of the porcupine fish. Writing allows Robinson to regain his humanity: "In performing the sacred act of writing it seemed to him that he had half-retrieved himself from the abyss of animalism into which he had sunk, and returned to the world of the spirit" (46). Despite this emphasis on return, the journal symbolises a new kind of existence: written texts taken from the world of culture and supposed civilisation are re-inscribed with raw island materials. At their foundation, however, are words—washed out, but nevertheless having once existed—that haunt this new text. In a similar sense, Robinson's attitude towards his island is haunted by Crusoe's engagement with his surroundings: regardless of whether Tournier's character replicates or deviates from his predecessor's actions, the ultimate result is based on similar ideologies of conquest and domination. The journal thus symbolises the novel's broader depiction of setting—the past lies at the heart of its present.

Robinson's taming of the island during his period as a colonist is a lengthy process that is deeply linked to his psychological development. The behaviour of vampire bats, squids, and other creatures causes him to feel alienated and disgusted, and eventually sends him back to the mire. Afterwards, he writes in his journal "*That*

*is where Speranza drives me when she grows evil and shows me her animal face. The mire is my defeat, my vice. My victory is the moral order I must impose on Speranza against her natural order, which is but another name for total disorder*" (51-52). The act of conquering the island is about controlling both the setting and the self. Conquest over the mire is a significant success: having converted the island's marshlands into a rice paddy, Robinson notes that this paddy "represented the taming of the mire, a decisive victory over everything most primitive and disturbing in Speranza" (117). Civilising his situation becomes an obsession, and he writes in his journal "*I shall not be content until this opaque and impenetrable place, filled with secret ferments and malignant stirrings, has been transformed into a rational structure, visible and intelligible to its very depths!*" (66). The desperate man goes to comical extremes in his pursuit of order and civilisation: he creates a charter and a penal code for life on the island, carries out elaborate governmental rituals in his role as Governor of Speranza, and constructs an "official Residence," a "Pavilion of Weights and Measures," "a Palace of Justice," a "Meeting Hall," and numerous fortifications (75-76). With each day that passes, the island is further brought into his control and power.

His command over nature even extends to time, and it is this mastery that enables him to slowly transition to the next stage of his island life. He constructs a "water clock" that allows him to mark the passing of time through the dripping of water. Now, he felt "that he had regulated and mastered time" (65). This clock requires daily filling, and as a result ceases to function when Robinson forgets to fill it one evening. Waking up to the ensuing "silence" the following morning, he believes that he has "stopped" time itself (89). This is seen as affecting both himself and his surroundings. The island is suddenly free and unconstrained: "It was as though in



ceasing to be related to each other according to their use—and their abuse—things had returned to their own essence, were flowering in their own right and existing simply for their own sakes, seeking no other warrant than their own fulfillment” (90). “Radiance” and “happiness” abound and, in this state of euphoria, Robinson “seemed to discern *another island* behind the one where he had labored so long in solitude” (90). This first emergence of the “other island” is very brief, but it gives the castaway an indication of what is to come later in the tale. It is a moment of deep spiritual awareness—by seeing the island in this different manner, Robinson himself changes. “Unquestionably he had advanced another step in the transformation that was at work deep within him” (90), Tournier writes. Thus, even the apparent freeing of the island is most valued for the manner in which it alters Robinson’s attitude. Perceived changes in the island gain value through their influence on the castaway.

Furthermore, it soon becomes clear that the island’s “use” and “abuse” is not over. The narrative insists that the setting is now “no longer a territory to be exploited” but instead “a being, unquestionably feminine, toward whom [Robinson] directed not only his philosophical speculations, but also the new needs arising in his heart and flesh” (97). Those “needs,” however, are simply a different form of abusing and exploiting the island. Robinson explores his castaway sexuality by forcing himself onto the island’s terrain. This reflects the theme of transformation that runs through the novel for, as Stribling (66-69) and Petit (5-7) suggest, Robinson progresses through various stages of sexual development. His journey of sexual self-discovery sees him enter a narrow tunnel leading deep into the earth of Speranza. Having “[rubbed] his body with ... milk” to make movement easier, he slips through the “narrow vertical chimney” which leads to a cave, or “crypt” (101). The cave contains a number of intimately described geological formations: “stony nipples and

protuberances,” “papillae,” and “a big mineral flower” that gives off “a damp metallic smell ... comforting in its acidity, with a trace of sugared tartness” (101). Robinson soon discovers a womblike cavity seemingly designed specifically for his body. He creeps into the cavity and, completely losing any sense of the present, gives himself over to the uterine experience: “Speranza was a fruit ripening in the sun whose white and naked seed, embedded in a thousand thicknesses of skin and husk and rind, bore the name of Robinson” (102). He becomes a part of the island: a “seed,” located deep within “her” body. Discussing the etymology of the term “island,” Beer observes that “the word ... has a peculiar force in English which emphasizes its connection with individualism. The sounded ‘I’ at the beginning of the word creates a habituating consonance between the ego and the island” (“Discourses” 15). Robinson’s behaviour emphasises this identification between the self and the insular environment. Such identification is one example of the broader notion of Robinson’s union with the island, which is acted out in various ways throughout the novel.

The focus on Robinson’s tranquillity infuses this scene with peace and harmony. The imagery of the man fighting his way into the centre of the island, however, disrupts that atmosphere, as do phrases like “had he not been forced to rub his body with milk in order to penetrate to this depth?” (102). An overlap in the stages of his sexual development thus becomes apparent. Robinson desires motherly love but cannot separate it from sexual love. This is explicitly illustrated in a later visit to the island’s “womb,” when Robinson unintentionally ejaculates whilst lying in the cavity. He explains, in his diary, that he is able to prevent the semen from entering “*the narrow crevice ... at the very bottom of the womb of Speranza,*” but that he is still deeply horrified: “*What hideous ripening might not that living seed have produced in the dark, vast warmth of the cave?*” (109). His body enacts Oedipal desire, whilst his

mind abhors the turn of events. Kate Soper discusses the manner in which nature has been represented as “female” over time, and points to the conflicting ideas of nature “as either a powerful maternal force, the womb of all human production, or as the site of sexual enticement and ultimate seduction” (103). Soper gestures to the Oedipal ramifications of this, and posits that the depiction of nature as “both mother and maid ... reflects a genuine tension between the impulse to dominate and the impulse to be nurtured” (106). Furthermore, she argues, “Feminized nature is not ... emblematic simply of mastered nature, but also of regrets and guilts over the mastering itself; of nostalgias felt for what is lost or defiled in the very act of possession” (107). This is highly applicable to Robinson whilst he is in his womb-phase. He feels uneasy about his visits to the island’s interior, even before the ejaculation episode, as he fears that “Speranza herself was being exhausted by the monstrous maternal role he had imposed on her” (109). The overlapping planes of his desire thus indicate a certain ambivalence to the island setting: Robinson is conflicted.

This ambivalence could see Robinson begin to question and reject the imperial notion of dominating his surroundings. However, this does not occur—instead, the castaway addresses his guilt by progressing to the next stage in his development of self and sexuality. He explores new ways in which he can fulfil his sexual needs without visiting the maternal regions of the island. He returns to the status of an adult—“*I am a man in the fullness of life and I should accept the role of manhood*” (109)—and the terrain consequently changes from mother to lover. This allows him to pass beyond Oedipal desire.<sup>12</sup> His first attempt at adult sexuality with the island, however, ends in failure. Finding a tree trunk that resembles “parted thighs,” he spends several days giving it “sidelong glances” before then “[thrusting]” his penis into its “mossy crevice” (115). He frequently visits the tree over “several happy

months,” but their “liaison” abruptly ends when he is bitten on the penis by a spider (116). He associates this event with venereal disease, and abandons the tree. Robinson’s next sexual act is precipitated by his second experience of seeing “that *other island*” (120), which suggests that this new form of lovemaking is more spiritually charged than his tree fornications. Having fallen asleep in a short valley, or “coomb,” he awakens to the altered island and, “Lying with arms outstretched, his loins in turmoil, he embraced that great body scorched all day by the sun ... his sex burrowed like a plowshare into the earth, and overflowed in immense compassion for all created things. A strange wedlock, consummated in the vast solitude of the Pacific!” (120). He becomes, in his own mind, “the man who had married the earth” (120). Having first experimented with the “womb” and then with the tree, Robinson now finds himself in a mature pseudo-relationship with the island.

The two aboveground sexual acts, then, are portrayed in vastly different manners. The first is tainted with “venereal disease” and the second is pure with “compassion” and “wedlock.” In both cases, the participant(s) are the same, and in both cases the island is ascribed responsibility: it carries the venereal disease, and it presents itself to Robinson as a pure sensual being. Such agency, however, is merely a manifestation of the castaway’s mind, as is the case with Jim Hawkins and his surroundings in *Treasure Island*. The island of *Friday*, though perceived as a subject by Robinson, has no agency in itself: it is not inherently tainted or pure but is instead imagined as such by the man. Representations of the island evolve according to the castaway’s needs and desires. Gilles Deleuze argues that “The isle is as much the hero of the novel as Robinson or Friday. It changes shape in the course of a series of divisions, no less than Robinson himself changes his form in the course of a series of metamorphoses. Robinson’s subjective series is inseparable from the series of the

states of the island” (342). While it is certainly true that Robinson and the island are linked, it would be more apt to write that the *representation* of the island (rather than the island itself) changes shape, and that it is this evolving representation that is “inseparable” from Robinson’s shifting state of mind. Any changes in the island’s “form” are products of the castaway’s mind, tools used to enable his existence and transformation.

In this new phase of Robinson’s island life, the setting acts as a companion to the lonely Englishman. Their relationship is initially one of marital bliss. They “converse” with one another through scripture, and the man frequently visits the coomb to have intercourse with the terrain. Over time, young mandrake plants spring up in this location. Robinson considers them to be offspring of his union with the island, and is delighted by their presence. His peaceful state of mind, however, is shattered by the arrival of Friday, a young boy who is to be sacrificed on the island by a visiting group of “Araucanians.” Robinson inadvertently saves the boy, names him Friday, and assumes the role of master for himself. Several conflicts arise between the characters, the most dramatic being Robinson’s discovery of Friday having intercourse with the coomb (the boy’s sexual acts result in the growth of a new type of mandrake plant). “Speranza sullied!” thinks Robinson to himself, before beating Friday to near-death (167). Consulting the bible a little later, he is faced with the apparent realisation that it was his “wife,” and not the boy, who was at fault: “The Book of Books had spoken, and it was Speranza who stood condemned!” (168). This condemnation is quickly translated into the terms of Robinson’s journey of self-transformation, and the castaway determines that “the period of the island-wife—following the period of the island-mother—was now at an end, and ... some new development was approaching, utterly strange and unpredictable” (171). Robinson

thus interprets his situation in the context of his setting. His flexible perception of the island gives meaning to the events of his castaway life and allows him to adapt to any changes in his circumstances.

This next period, anticipated after the bible's condemnation of the island, arrives when Friday accidentally destroys Robinson's buildings and stores. Though Friday is to blame for this incident, he is not punished by the older man: instead, Robinson realises that, "having released him from his earthly bonds, Friday would now show him the way to *something else* ... a new Robinson was sloughing off his old skin, fully prepared to accept the decay of his cultivated island and, at the heels of an unthinking guide, enter upon an unknown road" (180). His new way of life is based on a solar fixation, and involves a fundamental openness to the natural world. He rises with the sun, appreciates the beauty of natural life, and is open to the elements. Friday is an essential guide in achieving this state. David Platten acknowledges the "temptation" of reading Friday and Robinson as, respectively, the "emblematic incarnations of Nature and Culture," but posits that Friday should instead be read as a figure who "mediates between Robinson and Nature" (51). In this sense, therefore, Friday teaches Robinson how to live peacefully on the island. Such a lesson, of course, requires a specific location: this "new" Robinson, like all of his other transformations throughout the novel, is anchored to the island setting.

The arrival of the new Robinson, coupled with Platten's references to nature, suggests a positive and enlightened subtext within the novel. Crusoe has learnt to live in harmony with his surroundings. Soper explains that, although "nature" can refer to "an 'external' spatial domain," it can also refer to "that totality of being of which we in some sense conceive ourselves as forming a part" (21). "We have thought, that is," writes Soper, "of humanity as being a component of nature even as we have

conceptualized nature as absolute otherness to humanity” (21). *Friday* ends with Robinson having progressed from seeing nature as “other” to seeing himself at one with it. He becomes, to borrow a phrase used by Neil Evernden, an “individual-in-environment” (defined as “the individual as a component of, not something distinct from, the rest of the environment” [18]). Robinson has come full-circle from his first phase of dwelling in the mire—he is once more part of a larger ecosystem. This time, however, he is able to remain healthy, and his union with nature is now one of contentment and life. It is this dynamic, perhaps, that leads Redfield to proclaim that:

In Tournier’s version [of *Robinson Crusoe*] the master still seeks to impose his will on land and servant, but this time the free laughter of his companion emerges triumphant. Robinson loses his hoard of salvaged order, finds love in the soil of the island, and slowly turns to the open sky ... Elegant and thoughtful, Tournier’s *Robinsonade* gives us another human figure to consider: a universal subject who, freed from the desire to control space, learns to live in place. (257)

Redfield’s words highlight an apparently positive message within the text—Robinson rejects control and conquest so as to embrace love, harmony, and openness.

However, though Robinson has learnt to live amongst nature, his reasons for doing so are anything but harmonious. He cares about the island only in as much as it is useful to him. A ship—the *Whitebird*—appears towards the end of the novel. Its sailors plunder the island: they hunt goats, cut coconuts, and set fire to grassland. Robinson watches their actions and “[reflects], not without pride, on the acute distress it would have caused him in the days of the cultivated island to see it pillaged in this fashion. It was not so much the senseless mutilation of the trees or the heedless slaughter of the animals that now troubled him, but the coarse and avaricious bearing

of these men” (219). His lack of concern for the island is self-evident. Moreover, his desire to turn Speranza into a sentient being does nothing to empower the land, for he represents “her” as a passive female who cannot escape his will. Essentially, Tournier’s novel remains a metaphoric retelling of the same story that Defoe first offered in 1719: a story wherein a master forces himself upon an island and uses, or abuses, the land for his own gain.

### ***Foe*: The Near Impossibility of Telling a New Island Story**

Coetzee’s *Foe*, like Tournier’s *Friday*, engages with Crusoe’s island story. The novel begins in the style of a generic castaway narrative: a person is washed ashore on the beach of a desert island. The person in question, however, is not a shipwrecked Robinson Crusoe, but instead a woman named Susan Barton. Susan is travelling on board a ship from Brazil to England, when the crew mutiny and set her adrift in a small boat within sight of the island. She first rows, and then swims, towards the land until she is cast on its shore. Her situation blurs the line between maroon and castaway: she is left behind by the mutineers (in the style of a marooning), but is cast to the shore by the waves (in the style of a castaway). The novel itself uses the words interchangeably: thus, Susan can both label herself a “castaway” (5) and talk of her “marooning” (19). She discovers, almost immediately, that an aged man called Cruso and his mute servant Friday inhabit the island. The reader is never given a definitive reason for Friday’s muteness: Cruso claims that the slave traders were responsible for cutting out his tongue (“Perhaps they wanted to prevent him from ever telling his story” [23]), whilst Susan suspects Cruso himself of this atrocity. She explains her own story and history to Cruso, which largely centre on her search for a lost daughter.<sup>13</sup> The act is neither appreciated nor returned: as Susan explains, “It was as



though he wished his story to begin with his arrival on the island, and mine to begin with my arrival, and the story of us together to end on the island too” (34). His desire is reminiscent of the manner in which Defoe’s *Crusoe* has been mythologised and turned into a castaway figure with no life beyond the insular setting. This Cruso(e), like his mythical contemporary, belongs on his island—and only on his island.

Susan’s time as a castaway/maroon spans over a year in length, and draws to a close with the arrival of a ship. The vessel appears by the island the day after Cruso falls ill with a fever so severe that Susan believes he is dying. The reader is hereby encouraged to see a link between the man and the island. Such a link is underscored through Susan’s response to the situation: the timing of the two events, she notes, makes it seem “as if the spell of Cruso’s gaze on the waters had been broken” (38). Though her comment is not intended as a literal cause-and-effect statement, it nevertheless indicates an underlying attitude to the location and its long-term castaway inhabitant. The island’s isolation almost becomes a product, in Susan’s eyes, of Cruso’s mind and solitary nature: it can only be bridged if the castaway is at the edge of death. As with the other texts examined in this thesis, the island visitor thus sees the location through a skewed lens; an objective depiction of the island is impossible within this spatially configured dynamic. Furthermore, the use of a non-*Crusoe* narrator heightens the parallel between the island and Cruso(e). The reader can only access the setting and the character through the figure of Susan; consequently, both are tarnished by her subjectivity. Simultaneously, however, it becomes clear that Susan’s skewed outlook also extends beyond the borders of the island, as the outside world comes to represent death when related back to the insular setting.

The ship’s arrival heralds a new phase in the narrative. Susan decides to travel to England on the boat, and forces Cruso and Friday (both of whom do not want to

leave the island) to accompany her on this voyage. Crusoe dies before the ship reaches its destination, and Friday, upon arrival, suffers severe and ongoing psychological distress at finding himself in such a cold and foreign place as England. The rest of the novel is devoted to Susan's search for, and interactions with, Mr. Daniel Foe (who is to write the story of her castaway experience), her concern for Friday, her memories of Crusoe and the island, and her desperate desire to untangle the web of confusion surrounding her lost daughter. Thus, although the character of Crusoe lives a mythical Crusoe existence, his tale, like that of Defoe's Crusoe, is set within a broader narrative. Phillips goes so far as to argue that Coetzee "rewrites Defoe's whole trilogy" as "The island adventure ends one-third of the way into the book, just as it ended one-third of the way into Defoe's trilogy" (159). Regardless of whether one compares the novel to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* or to his trilogy as a whole, the fact remains that the concept of a framing narrative is vital to *Foe*. This is a story *about* a castaway story. Furthermore, analysis thereof offers great insight into the manner in which islands operate within such stories: to rescript this textual tradition, one must also renegotiate the ground on which it is set.

*Foe* is also about the telling of that castaway story, and is consequently fixated on this act and process. It is broken into four sections which, as Patrick Corcoran observes, "offer a developing commentary on the nature and status of the activity of story-telling/story-writing" (257). Susan narrates the first three sections, whilst an unknown speaker narrates the final segment. *Foe* begins with an account of Susan's time on the island. This is produced within quotation marks, is written as a kind of memoir, and is clearly addressed to a specific reader: Foe. The next section, also enclosed by quotation marks, deals with Susan's time in England whilst Foe is hiding from bailiffs, and is related via letters from Susan to Foe—some sent to their

destination, others kept back due to a lack of address. The use of framing punctuation, Attridge remarks, “[reminds] us constantly that this is not the mysterious immaterial language most fiction uses as its medium, nor even a representation of speech, but a representation *in writing of writing*” (73). This section is followed by another period in England, told in a straightforward past tense, in which Foe is present. Finally, the novel concludes with an abstract and nightmarish sequence that shifts to the present tense and combines both locations: the island and England. At the heart of the text’s “commentary” (to return to Corcoran’s terminology) lie the island and the story that it represents: Cruso(e)’s domain haunts this novel, just as it haunts the nineteenth-century Robinsonades discussed earlier.

Unlike these previous texts, however, *Foe*’s agenda is of a postcolonial nature. Coetzee takes up the figure of Crusoe and turns it into something new: the landscape is still haunted by the colonial figure, but that haunting is now used to effect change. Tiffin argues that Coetzee is not “simply ‘writing back’ to an English canonical text, but to the whole of the discursive field within which such a text operated and continues to operate in post-colonial worlds” (23). Tiffin labels this approach “*canonical counter-discourse*” and defines it as “one in which a post-colonial writer takes up a character or characters, or the basic assumptions of a British canonical text, and unveils those assumptions, subverting the text for post-colonial purposes” (22). Novels placed in this category can thus be said to engage with the past for the sake of the present and future. There must be a positive ideological purpose behind such engagement—the canon must be remapped and renegotiated so as to create a new type of story. The nineteenth-century Robinsonades re-enter *Robinson Crusoe*, but do not remap it; this is hardly surprising, of course, given their time of publication. What is surprising, however, is the lack of renegotiation and remapping in *Friday*, as

described earlier in this chapter. *Foe*, by comparison, manages to actively critique its urtext: this is achieved, I argue, through attention to the very difficulty of its goal. Coetzee actively highlights the near impossibility of retelling the *Robinson Crusoe* story. Key to that narratological struggle are two factors: the incongruity of expectations and reality, and the realisation that one cannot presume to tell the story of another who has been forcibly silenced.

Susan is cast onto the island with a preconceived notion of what to expect from such surroundings. As Corcoran succinctly states, “[her] arrival on the island is an occasion for reflection on fictional stereotypes and how they compare with ‘reality’” (257). This, of course, parallels Jim’s expectations in *Treasure Island*. Moreover, when relating her story to *Foe*, Susan emphasises that she is not alone in these thoughts. Expectations such as hers (and Jim’s) are largely the result of adventure narratives: “For readers reared on travellers’ tales,” writes Susan, “the words *desert isle* may conjure up a place of soft sands and shady trees where brooks run to quench the castaway’s thirst and ripe fruit falls into his hand, where no more is asked of him than to drowse the days away till a ship calls to fetch him home” (7). She then continues by contrasting this ideal image with the reality of her own experience, explaining that “the island on which I was cast away was quite another place: a great rocky hill with a flat top, rising sharply from the sea on all sides except one, dotted with drab bushes that never flowered and never shed their leaves.” The real island is compared, unfavourably, to the expected island—just as it is in *Treasure Island*. In this case, however, the island is not depicted as terrible but, instead, as monotonous and dreary. Cruso’s island does not have a chance: it cannot possibly be anything but dull, for Susan and her peers expect it to be a paradisaical Eden. The

actuality of the island is far too real to compete with the fantastical realm of fiction and the accompanying insular expectations.

The island is not the only aspect of the castaway situation that disappoints Susan: Cruso himself does not act according to stereotype. He does not salvage items from the wreck of the ship that brought him to the island, nor does he build a boat in which to escape, keep a journal, record the passing of time, or put much thought into his diet. Cruso's behaviour prompts Attridge to theorise that "the figure of bourgeois resourcefulness we are familiar with ... has, by his isolation from culture, lost touch with its founding narratives and need for narrative" (76). Attridge's words point to the complex dynamic at play in *Foe*: castaway expectations operate both within the text and in the world outside of the text. Readers know, as Susan does, what to expect of Cruso—and, by extension, what to expect of the island. It is telling that the apparent loss of a connection to the "founding narratives and need for narrative," to use Attridge's phraseology, centres on the castaway's engagement with insular spatiality. Setting, again, becomes a narratological tool, a means by which Coetzee can reflect back on the urtext. Cruso's primary occupation on the island is tied to the physicality of the terrain, and is largely depicted as a pointless and even illogical pursuit: he spends his days moving rocks, clearing land, and building terraces. These terraces are intended for agricultural purposes yet, as Cruso proclaims, "The planting is not for us ... We have nothing to plant—that is our misfortune ... The planting is reserved for those who come after us and who have the foresight to bring seed. I only clear the ground for them" (33). Attridge astutely highlights the farcical nature of the scene, labelling it a "parodic version of the canonic castaway's taming of nature" (76). Cruso's building of the terraces mocks the behaviour of his predecessor, as his project seems empty and doomed to fail.

Nevertheless, there is more at play than simply mockery. Susan's description of Crusoe's terraces, it must be said, ridicule both the task and his justification thereof: "When I ... saw this man, no longer young, labouring in the heat of the day ... while he waited year after year for some saviour castaway to arrive in a boat with a sack of corn at his feet, I found it a foolish kind of agriculture" (34). Her understanding of Crusoe's behaviour is, however, misguided. As Laura Di Michele argues, Susan

fails to realise that the "useless" work ... is, in Crusoe's mind, a necessary activity in constructing a basic "text" on which others can inscribe their "signs," their "alphabet," and thereby "write" a meaningful story. On this circumscribed and clearly identifiable text, his compatriots who follow can engrave their story and plant their seeds brought from the mother country; seeds that will bind this little island to the great island of England in an invisible, but highly resistant, umbilical cord. (163)

Extrapolating on Di Michele's point, I contend that Crusoe's behaviour is also to be expected when read in the context of nineteenth-century Robinsonades. He is transforming the island as best he can with what he has: "Clearing ground and piling stones is little enough, but it is better than sitting in idleness," he says to Susan (33). He himself may not have use for the terraces, but his attitude indicates a concern for future castaways: just as the Seagraves from *Masterman Ready* leave behind some of their livestock, Crusoe leaves behind a labour of rock and soil ready to be planted. Contextualised within the Crusoe tradition, Coetzee's Crusoe thus acts more to stereotype than first imagined. He does, however, vary in one important detail: his care for future castaways is hypothetical. Unlike his predecessors, Crusoe does not cherish the notion of sharing his empire with other colonists: Susan's arrival on the island is a disruption. This makes him a very ineffectual colonist.

Susan, of course, sees a clear disparity between the expected and the real island experience. This causes her concern regarding the reception that the island and its story will receive in the outer world. The idea of the island as dreary, and the associated notion that a reading public would not find the castaway story interesting, are threaded through the text. “Let it not by any means come to pass that Cruso is saved,” Susan thinks to herself whilst on the island, “for the world expects stories from its adventurers, better stories than tallies of how many stones they moved in fifteen years, and from where, and to where” (34). Later in the novel, during their journey to England, she asks her dying companion “why was it that so little of the island could be called extraordinary? Why were there no strange fruits, no serpents, no lions? Why did the cannibals never come? What will we tell folk in England when they ask us to divert them?” (43). Telling an acceptable story becomes a duty of the returned castaway: it is not enough to have been shipwrecked, one must also be able to give an acceptable account of the experience. Simultaneously, however, the pre-conceived notions of what an island, and an island story, *should* look like act as obstacles in the telling of that tale. Rather than exploring the originality of certain island elements that could infuse the story with the desired excitement, the text focuses on those aspects that are missing: Susan’s narration prioritises the lack of the familiar over the novelty of the unanticipated. The expectations themselves, therefore, prevent the story from being told.

The generic image of a *Robinson Crusoe* island thus overpowers the reality of the actual island. Simultaneously, Susan’s attitude also prioritises the concept of an abstract and stereotypical Crusoe over the actual Cruso whom she encounters. The tension between these comparisons—that is, the expected and the real in relation both to the setting and to the character—is heightened through that very interplay. As

Susan muses, again whilst on the island, “Cruso rescued will be a deep disappointment to the world; the idea of a Cruso on his island is a better thing than the true Cruso tight-lipped and sullen in an alien England” (34-35). Susan’s imagery brings character and location together: regardless of where Cruso is, she can only imagine him in relation to his physical surroundings. Those surroundings, in turn, run parallel to her understanding of the man. Place and person are seen to be reflective of one another, with the island functioning as the appropriate location for Cruso. The island is “his,” to use Susan’s words, whilst England is the place where he does not belong: it is “alien.” Her words, furthermore, suggest that the “idea” of a Cruso(e) castaway already exists in the wider world, and that it does so in the form of an exciting idea that can only be contaminated by reality. That idea is predicated on an island setting.

Whilst *Foe* insists on the dull nature of both the island and Susan’s experiences there, it also provides glimpses of a very different underlying island. Susan observes, early in her insular experience, that “Cruso’s island is no bad place to be cast away ... if one must be cast away” (20). She later yearns for the island once she has left it, and admits in a letter to Foe that “You will not understand this longing, after all I have said of the tedium of our life there. Perhaps I should have written more about the pleasure I took walking barefoot in the cool sand of the compound, more about the birds” (51). There is a beautiful and interesting island beneath the dull image constructed by Susan—an island filled with birds, apes, sea-lions, and wild plants. Susan’s contrary depiction of the place hinges on the figure of Cruso: after explaining her longing for the island to Foe, she comes to the conclusion that “Who but Cruso, who is no more, could truly tell you Cruso’s story? I should have said less about him, more about myself” (51). The island is constructed in the “image” of the



castaway (to return to Conrad's phraseology), and both are considered unexpectedly monotonous. Cruso's attitude is deemed dull and dreary, and as a result the island itself takes on these attributes—just as Tournier's island is sexualised because its castaway is obsessed with sexuality, and just as Stevenson's island becomes terrifying because Jim is terrified.

The tension between the island mould and the real island experience is clearly apparent within the novel, and is focalised through Susan's perceptions and attitude. Whilst still on the island, she determinedly and repeatedly attempts to persuade Cruso to keep a journal. As she explains to him:

Seen from too remote a vantage, life begins to lose its particularity. All shipwrecks become the same shipwreck, all castaways the same castaway, sunburnt, lonely, clad in the skins of the beasts he has slain. The truth that makes your story yours alone, that sets you apart from the old mariner by the fireside spinning yarns of sea-monsters and mermaids, resides in a thousand touches which today may seem of no importance. (18)

These "touches" of everyday island life, Susan goes on to explain to Cruso, "will one day persuade your countrymen that it is all true, every word, there was indeed once an island in the middle of the ocean where the wind blew and the gulls cried from the cliffs and a man named Cruso paced about in his apeskin clothes, scanning the horizon for a sail" (18). Susan constructs the island as breaking stereotypes but, simultaneously, realises that originality is necessary for a story to be successful. To differentiate himself from the other lonely shipwrecked men of the world, Cruso needs to provide his audience with the details of his experience. As Susan discovers, however, he is not at all interested in detailing his life in such a manner: his focus is

on himself and the island. The concept of life beyond the island is irrelevant to his lifestyle—he, unlike Susan, does not care about the telling of the castaway story.

Thus, whilst Cruso wishes to control the island and the island experience, it is Susan who attempts to control the island narrative. Seen in this context, the ability to control the story leads to a certain level of control over the island and its inhabitants. Narration and power are inextricably bound to one another: as Susan says after the death of Cruso, “it was I who shared Cruso’s bed and closed Cruso’s eyes, as it is I who have disposal of all that Cruso leaves behind, which is the story of his island” (45). It is significant that Friday’s past, present, and future are bound to that story—even after the death of Cruso, the slave is narratologically bound to his master. Susan takes it upon herself to tell Foe the story of Cruso and, in as far as she can, the story of Friday. Susan has her own story to narrate, yet she constantly returns her focus to the two men. This minimises her own experiences and downplays her presence on the island: “When I reflect on my story I seem to exist only as the one who came, the one who witnessed, the one who longed to be gone” (51). She becomes a passive ghost at the edge of the narrative, someone who has intruded into a narrative that is not her own. Her self-proclaimed position on the outskirts of the island story underscores *Foe*’s status as a Crusoe-inspired text. Having arrived back in England, for instance, she tells Foe that “I am new-returned from far-off parts. I have been a castaway on a desert island. And there I was the companion of a singular man” (48). Her time on the island is thus both personally understood and publically shaped through her relationship to the true castaway, namely Cruso(e). She has entered the urtext, so to speak, and has met the castaway himself.

Foe eventually suggests that they should frame Susan’s tale with an account of the search for her lost daughter. “The island is not a story in itself,” he explains, “We

can bring it to life only by setting it within a larger story ... The island lacks light and shade. It is too much the same throughout” (117). His words conflate castaway and setting, thereby foregrounding the link between the two—a tale about the island and Cruso(e) is a tale about the island. His suggested book structure, furthermore, is reminiscent of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*: whilst there is no lost daughter in the urtext, there is, of course, a framing narrative concerning the personal life of the castaway. Spatiality, it seems, can only become a story if it is enhanced through human experience—an island by itself is no story. Foe’s attitude is paradoxical, given his conflation of setting and character: the island story in question, according to Foe’s interpretation, is *always* bound to the castaway. Susan, however, rejects the idea of tailoring the story to reflect her own life. She concedes that there is a problem in the narrative, but tells Foe that “The shadow whose lack you feel is there: it is the loss of Friday’s tongue” (117). This positioning of Susan and Friday’s stories in opposition to one another suggests that they cannot be narrated simultaneously. Indeed, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues this point in her discussion of the novel’s untold “mother-daughter subplot” when she theorises that “feminism” and “anticolonialism” cannot coexist in “a continuous (narrative) space” (168). Susan desperately searches for a story that is not hers to tell, and in so doing neglects and marginalises her own sense of self and history.

*Foe* thus engages with complex issues of ideology and discourse through the character of Susan. Jane Poyner succinctly writes that, by prioritising Friday’s story over her own, Susan “inadvertently chooses the myth of the colonial encounter as the framing device of her story. By staging the process of the privileging, the text traces her gradual realization that the project she has engaged Foe to write simply reproduces colonialist doxa” (Poyner 94). This prioritisation, coupled with Susan’s

growing awareness of the situation, marks the novel as a tale of “writing back” and “counter-discourse” (to return to the earlier discussion of Tiffin’s analysis of the text). Coetzee clearly engages with the fictional world of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and the traumatically real world of slavery and the Middle Passage so as to present the reader with a new kind of castaway tale that challenges its own literary roots. Susan enters apparently familiar territory, only to discover that her expectations are not met: this is not the island experience that she expected. It is not only the experience itself that defies her expectations, but also the very telling of that experience: the story that Susan wants to tell—that is, Friday’s story—lies beyond her grasp. Coetzee’s novel thus charts the development of her postcolonial awareness, whilst simultaneously highlighting her own complicity in the situation.

This tense dynamic leads to the second issue at the heart of *Foe*: the problem of telling the story of someone who cannot speak for themselves. The question of Friday’s history is threaded through the novel. Susan admits that “The story of Friday’s tongue is a story unable to be told, or unable to be told by me. That is to say, many stories can be told of Friday’s tongue, but the true story is buried within Friday, who is mute. The true story will not be heard till by art we have found a means of giving voice to Friday” (118). Under the guidance of Foe, she later attempts to teach Friday how to read and write. Drawing a “row of palm trees with a lion roaming among them” and then writing “Africa,” however, causes her to think “Was my Africa the Africa whose memory Friday bore with him? I doubted it” (146). Her words cannot convey the experiences of Friday. Silenced by a history of slavery, he is symbolic of the oppressed: a figure who cannot speak his own story. He “[*embodies*] precisely that material history of suffering that the narrative is unable to *represent*” (Durrant 26). *Foe* attempts to tell a narrative that can never be known, and in so doing

painfully brings to light both the importance and the dangers of this pursuit. As Dominic Head succinctly states, the novel exists as a “double bind” wherein “Friday must remain silent, his story untold, unless it is to be appropriated by the novelist tarnished with the brush of cultural imperialism” (65). His history should not be marginalised or silenced, but neither should it be appropriated or forced out of him by a colonising power. Coetzee’s novel thus raises the very impossibility of giving Friday a voice.

### **An Absence of Crusoe**

*Foe* concludes with an abstract scene in the style of a nightmarish dream-sequence. An unnamed narrator twice enters the house where Foe hid from the bailiffs, before then diving from the house into a shipwreck lying in the lagoon by Crusoe’s island. Friday, Susan, Foe, and Susan’s supposed daughter are seen in the house, whilst Friday, Susan, and the ship’s captain lie in the wreck. The narrator prises Friday’s clenched teeth open during the first visit to the house, and discovers that “From his mouth, without a breath, issue the sounds of the island” (154). Friday’s language exists as a personal and internal narrative that can only be accessed through intrusion. It is the language of the island, the “the roar of the waves[,] ... the whine of the wind and the cry of a bird” (154). The moment is steeped in empowerment, loss, and violation: empowerment because Friday is, at last, able to have his own voice heard; loss because all that remains of his story is the island which is not his home; and violation because the narrator has forced Friday to share his voice with the outer world. This ethically problematic act of enforced vocalisation is repeated in the wreck. The narrator approaches Friday and forces his mouth open. A “slow stream” then “flows” out of Friday’s body and “passes through the cabin, through the wreck;

washing the cliffs and shores of the island, it runs northward and southward to the ends of the earth” (157). Again there is severe violation, but there is also hope: Friday’s voice, in defiance of its silencing, travels beyond the wreck, beyond the island, and out into the world.

The wreck can be read as the dark and submerged territory of the Middle Passage. It is “a place where bodies are their own signs. It is the home of Friday” (157). Friday’s language might be that of the island, but his body is relegated to the ocean. His is the watery grave of the Middle Passage. Though Friday, Susan, and the ship’s captain all share the same physical fate—that is, to be cast to the bottom of the ocean in a shipwreck—they are not represented as equals. Friday lies “half buried in sand” that is “soft, dank, [and] slimy,” while Susan and the captain “float like stars against the low roof” with “their hands ... held out in blessing” (156-57). The characters are segregated into two levels: one of submission, and the other of pseudo-benevolent authority. Those in authority are here through the misfortunate accident of shipwreck and thus are not anchored to the location. Friday, by contrast, is forced into a despondent and submissive position in the lower recesses of the ship’s cabin. This dynamic, however, is brought into question the very moment that it is created: Susan and the captain are ridiculed through imagery. Though they “float” above Friday, they are “fat as pigs in their white nightclothes,” with their apparently benevolent hands “puckered from long immersion” (157). Coetzee describes a segregated scene of authority and powerlessness, but simultaneously undermines the imperial figures and, by association, the power that they represent.

A glaring absence exists in this fourth section of the novel: there is no Cruso. The reader is left to wonder if he has remained on the island—the sole castaway—or if he is still in the depths of the open ocean, having been buried at sea after his death

on the voyage to England. If the island is empty, then there is a chance for Friday to reinscribe it with a new story: the story of a transplanted life (for the island is not, of course, his home), but also a story wherein a new kind of belonging can be cultivated. After all, the setting is no more inherently Crusoe's home than it is the home of any other character. Coetzee himself suggests this lack of island ownership early in the novel, through Susan's assertion that "in truth the island no more belonged to Crusoe than to the King of Portugal or indeed Friday or the cannibals of Africa" (26). The island is open to anyone. Such a reading, of course, can only be theoretical at best. The dream-like lack of reality within the concluding passages of the story makes it impossible to know who is on the island, who is speaking, and where Crusoe is now located. Nonetheless, the idea of an unoccupied and unpossessed island is certainly supported by Susan's earlier statement. Moreover, Friday's island language, sweeping so eloquently over the location at the novel's end, suggests an affinity between the man and the setting that goes beyond a sense of entrapment towards one of connection and a newly found home. Coetzee's novel ends with a possibility of hope: the reader can imagine a future in which Friday, unlike Tournier's Robinson, will be able to exist on the island in harmony with his surroundings.

## Chapter Five

### From Triumph to Terror: Tainted Robinsonade Terrain

A second type of twentieth-century text to look back to *Robinson Crusoe* is the group castaway narrative. These are tales, like the earlier group narratives of the nineteenth century, in which multiple people find themselves simultaneously cast away on an island. Interplay between characters becomes important in such a context: spatiality is navigated in the company of other human beings. This chapter examines three novels of this kind: Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Wiggins's *John Dollar*, and Spark's *Robinson*. Unlike *Friday* and *Foe*, these texts do not seek to directly retell *Robinson Crusoe* and, consequently, do not follow the narrative set down by their urtext. In this respect, they engage with Defoe's novel through a similar methodology to the nineteenth-century Robinsonades. This is particularly clear in *Lord of the Flies* and *John Dollar*, as the castaways of these stories find themselves trapped on uninhabited islands. *Robinson* is a little different: its castaways are wrecked on an inhabited island owned by Miles Mary Robinson. Of the three novels, *Robinson* offers the most explicit Crusoe character—that is, the island's owner—but this figure is far less of a direct Crusoe than his contemporaries in *Friday* and *Foe*. His given names, history, and situation differ too substantially from those of his predecessor for him to be understood as an explicit reconstruction of Defoe's Crusoe.

Textual legacy remains key to the three novels being discussed in this chapter. *Lord of the Flies* revisits Ballantyne's *The Coral Island*: as Phillips explains, "Golding re-entered [its] narrative space" so as to "[subvert] the story and [unmap] its vision of British manliness, re-evaluating what it meant to be (white, male and) British in the context of British imperial decline" (144). *Lord of the Flies* relocates the



imperial island to a later moment in the history of the British Empire. One of the novel's castaway boys proclaims that "My father's in the Navy. He said that there aren't any unknown islands left. He says the Queen has a big room full of maps and all the islands in the world are drawn there. So the Queen's got a picture of this island ... And sooner or later a ship will put in here" (36). His prediction proves to be correct: their island is located in the path of wartime activity and is, in the end, visited by a naval ship. This use of a fictionally mapped and insular setting aligns *Lord of the Flies* with *Treasure Island*. Golding replaces the unknown with the known, and in so doing creates a setting that is located after (rather than parallel to) the nineteenth-century Robinsonade islands. Golding's castaways, who are all boys, initially assume the role of their imperial forerunners. Even when their mastery over the island begins to disintegrate, they instinctively fall back on their heritage to set things right: "we're not savages. We're English; and the English are best at everything. So we've got to do the right thing" (42). Their subsequent failure, however, causes their rescuer (a Naval officer who appears at the novel's end) to admonish them with the words "I should have thought that a pack of British boys—you're all British, aren't you?—would have been able to put up a better show than that" (224). The violent behaviour of the novel's warring adults undermines the credibility of this reprimand. Golding questions and critiques the very ideals of the novel's textual history: Ballantyne's imperial characters are destabilised, and their attitude stripped of its success, self-confidence, and righteousness.

The final two novels of this chapter can be read in relation both to *Lord of the Flies* and to the nineteenth-century Robinsonades. Like Golding's novel, *John Dollar* focuses primarily on children—castaway boys are, however, replaced by castaway girls. Wiggins herself was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying that her re-reading

of Golding's novel led her to write "a kind of female 'Lord of the Flies'" (qtd. in Stead 3). There is a greater adult presence in this novel than in Golding's text, but such figures are generally ineffective and powerless. Indeed, the eponymous adult of the novel—John Dollar—is eventually killed by two of the children. Spark's *Robinson* has a looser connection to *Lord of the Flies* and the nineteenth-century castaway tales, given its inhabited setting and older castaways. A connection nonetheless exists: Patrick Parrinder considers it a "Robinsonade" (27) and Green suggests that "Spark was inspired by some features of [Golding's] story" (*Robinson Crusoe* 181). I contend that the novel can be read as an adult-centric *Lord of the Flies*. Its violence and group castaway dynamic echo Golding's novel, whilst the ages of its castaways infuse the story with adult concerns. Moreover, although the castaways are adults, the insular setting inhabited, and the level of violence and human evil lower than that found in *Lord of the Flies* and *John Dollar*, attitudes towards the physical environment remain similar: all three texts offer an island that is apparently implicated in the pain and suffering that unfolds on its shores.

This chapter examines the manner in which characters within these novels define their islands through the human cruelties that occur there. It first explores *Lord of the Flies* and *John Dollar* (given their close relationship) before then concluding with *Robinson*. It returns to, and extends upon, the earlier discussion of *Treasure Island* by arguing that the characters of *Lord of the Flies*, *John Dollar*, and *Robinson* all engage with their insular environments through trauma and fear. This chapter acknowledges that long-term island inhabitation does not always allow its characters to cultivate a healthy relationship with their surroundings. These castaways remain on their islands for significantly longer periods of time than Jim and his friends, yet their terror still taints their perception of reality. In the case of *Lord of the Flies*, the false

and misguided notion of a pre-existing evil that is almost embedded in the terrain becomes a crutch for the characters, a means of displacing guilt. The characters of both *Lord of the Flies* and *John Dollar* imagine their islands into terrifying geographies of wilderness; once imagined as such, the locations take on false culpability for the actions of the humans trapped on their shores. This external placement of blame is drawn to its full conclusion in *Robinson*: the island itself, shaped like a person, is named “Robinson” after its inhabitant. Spark’s novel, though it was published prior to *John Dollar*, thus provides a useful conclusion to this chapter. As in *Treasure Island*, malevolence becomes a “property” (to return to Leach’s terminology) of all three island settings. Analysing *Lord of the Flies*, *John Dollar*, and *Robinson* gives further insight into negative castaway interactions with insular environments. Such representations are just as important to the agendas of these novels as homely and domesticated islands are within *Robinson Crusoe* and its nineteenth-century successors: setting, yet again, proves indispensable to the acting out of the ideologies behind castaway fiction.

### **The “Good Island” Made Evil in *Lord of the Flies***

Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, like the Robinsonades and Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, presents the reader with an island that is initially associated with adventure and excitement. The story opens moments after an English evacuation plane has been attacked and sent down from the sky in flames. A large number of boys survive the attack and, in its aftermath, find themselves on a coral island with no adult supervision. They are well versed in the fiction of island adventures and soon compare their situation to the stories that they have read. “It’s like in a book” says Ralph, their elected leader, to which the others excitedly reply “Treasure Island,”

“Swallows and Amazons,” and “Coral Island” (33). The novel situates itself in direct relation to children’s adventure stories, both those published in the nineteenth century and, as indicated by the reference to Arthur Ransome’s *Swallows and Amazons* (1930), those written in the early twentieth century. *Treasure Island*, *The Coral Island*, and *Swallows and Amazons* all feature children who enact—or, in the case of *Treasure Island*, attempt to enact—the glories and excitements of fiction. To begin with, Golding’s boys engage with their physical surroundings through this legacy of adventure: the island is considered to be “the imagined but never fully realized place leaping into real life” (10). Being cast away in this distant and insular setting instantly creates expectations of adventure and excitement for the young castaways—like Stevenson’s Jim and Coetzee’s Susan, these boys have strong ideas about what to expect in an island scenario. Ralph and his friends know this location, in an abstract and generic sense, because it has held an important position in their imagination.

This positive perception of the island, however, disintegrates as the novel progresses. Though the atmosphere among the children is initially one of adventure, camaraderie, and resourcefulness, life soon develops into a nightmare of anarchy and terror. The castaways eventually divide into two opposing factions, with the larger group being led by Ralph’s adversary, an intimidating older boy called Jack. Three children die over the course of the story, two of whom are brutally murdered: the sickly and misunderstood Simon, and the greatly bullied Piggy. Characters’ perceptions of the island change in direct relation to the horrendous events that unfold on its shores. Gillis posits that “Islands evoke a greater range of emotions than any other land form. We project onto them our most intense desires, but they are also the locus of our greatest fears” (3). This tension, I argue, is acted out on Golding’s island: the desire for adventure is projected onto the location, only to then become fear as the

experience turns into a nightmare. The “adventure playground” of Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island* disappears, and all that is left is the terror of *Treasure Island*. *Lord of the Flies*, however, takes this terror even further than *Treasure Island*: whereas Jim is able to exploit his nightmarish island, Ralph and his companions remain entirely at the mercy of theirs. The irony is, of course, that this terror is the result of human behaviour and, as in *Treasure Island*, is not a product of the setting itself.

The desire for adventure initially drives the children’s behaviour. Soon after the plane crash, three of the boys (Ralph, Simon, and Jack) set out to determine if they are indeed on an island. Whilst all of the children are still, at this point, an essentially cohesive group, tension already exists between Ralph and Jack due to the first boy having been elected as leader over the second. The excitement and “glamour” of the trip, however, draws the trio together and unites them through the game of being “explorers” (22). Their subsequent camaraderie directly echoes that of *The Coral Island*. This is blatantly apparent in their walking formation: “If Simon walks in the middle of us ... then we can talk over his head” (21) says Golding’s Ralph, while Ralph of *The Coral Island* explains that “Jack, being the tallest, walked next to the sea, and Peterkin marched between us, as by this arrangement either of us could talk to him or he to us, while if Jack and I happened to wish to converse together we could conveniently do so over Peterkin’s head” (77). Golding’s boys eventually arrive on the mountaintop where they discover that they are on an island ringed by a coral reef. This realisation is preceded by an apparently inherent knowledge of the insularity of their surroundings. “They had guessed before that this was an island: clambering among the pink rocks, with the sea on either side, and the crystal heights of air, they had known by some instinct that the sea lay on every side” (26). Unlike Wyss’s Swiss family Robinson, however, Golding’s boys need irrefutable evidence before they can

truly embrace their belief: “there seemed something more fitting in leaving the last word till they stood on the top, and could see a circular horizon of water” (26). They feel as though they are on an island, but do not accept this as proof in itself. Visual evidence is required to confirm the assumption.

The excursion is one of mastery and conquest. The view from the mountaintop leads Ralph to proclaim that “This belongs to us” (26). His words indicate the power of the moment: as Weaver-Hightower asserts, monarch-of-all-I-survey scenes represent a “visual [appropriation]” of island territory (xviii). This appropriation is constructed as an act of adventure and enjoyment. “Eyes shining, mouths open, triumphant,” Golding writes, “they savoured the right of domination” (27). Even the climb itself becomes a task of mastery. The boys take their time in reaching the mountaintop, with the journey being just as important as the destination. Their path is steep, uneven, and blocked by vegetation, but the climbers relish the task. “Wacco,” “Wizard,” and “Smashing,” they say with “shining eyes” (23-24). They discover a giant rock along the way, and decide to interrupt “the assault on the summit” while they “accepted this challenge” (25). The setting is actively constructed as an ideal space to be mastered through the presence of this rock: the boys are given ample opportunity to act out their fantasy. They combine forces and, with much gusto and enthusiasm, send the giant rock hurtling down the mountainside. Their relationship with the island is perceived, at this point, to be one of successful mastery and dominance; the space submits to their will. The island terrain thus plays a crucial role in enabling the boys to master their situation—Ralph, Jack, and Simon access and enact the adventurous textual past of castaway fiction *through* the very setting itself.

The consequence of this enacting, in turn, comes to symbolise the underlying trauma, destruction, and painful implications of such mastery. The rock smashes

through the forest “like a bomb,” disturbing birds and tearing the canopy (25). This physical damaging of the island is followed soon after by a forest fire, which in turn foreshadows the island’s fate at the end of the novel: it becomes a zone of destruction, burnt by a raging fire and akin to a bombsite. The island thus suffers at the hands of the boys. Furthermore, the falling rock also foreshadows Piggy’s death towards the end of the novel, as he is killed when a boulder is intentionally dropped on him. It also echoes the very reason why the children are on the island: “Didn’t you hear what the pilot said?” asks Piggy earlier in the story, “About the atom bomb? They’re all dead” (9). The boys become castaways, then, as a direct result of war. In the world of the children, the act of dropping the rock “like a bomb” is seen as masculine play, and is accompanied by shouts of “Wacco!” and “Whee-aa-oo!” (25). War functions as a game of conquest for the young castaways, something that they can act out in the microcosm of the island—it is a game that eventually turns the peaceful island into a locale of death and terror. Golding thus critiques dominant constructs of imperial masculinity: playful mastery is symbolic of real-world war, and both are shown to be traumatic and empty pursuits. Furthermore, the enacting of war is proven to be just as destructive as its real-world counterpart: there is no difference between island life in *Lord of the Flies* and the world beyond.

The hell found on the island is, as in *Treasure Island*, created by human beings and then displaced onto the setting. The desperate desire to externally locate human evil is a crucial theme of Golding’s novel. Early evidence of this desire arises when several of the boys begin to see a “beastie” or “snake-thing” (34). The first child to see the creature says that it “came in the dark” and “wanted to eat him,” and that “in the morning it turned into them things like rope in the trees and hung in the branches” (35). The creature is perceived as a part of the island, almost as though the island

itself can transform into a beast. Immediately after their mountain conquest, Ralph proclaims that “This is our island. It’s a good island. Until the grown-ups come to fetch us we’ll have fun” (33). However, the children’s fear of the beast subsequently makes them question whether the island really is “good.” “They talk and scream. The littluns. Even some of the others. As if—” says Ralph, at which point Simon interrupts him with “As if it wasn’t a good island ... As if ... the beastie, the beastie or the snake-thing, was real” (53). The apparent presence of a beast thus negates the island’s inherently “good” status—the two are mutually exclusive. This suggests that the boys’ conquest of the island is grounded in their belief that the island is already, to a certain degree, tamed and domesticated. Their fear of this supposed creature therefore also marks the point at which they begin to realise that the island is not what they expected: it is a “reality” and not a storybook fiction. This is an island that will not, in their minds, conform to expectations.

The perceived beast is vital to the representation of setting in *Lord of the Flies*. It occupies an unknown and threatening space, and is a fundamental element of the island’s representation as malevolent. Even Jack hesitantly admits that, when “hunting” within the forest, “sometimes you catch yourself feeling as if— ... There’s nothing in it of course. Just a feeling. But you can feel as if you’re not hunting, but—being hunted; as if something’s behind you all the time in the jungle” (53). Jack’s need to relate the beast back to the jungle is telling: his apprehension is constructed as a product of the island’s spatiality. The feared beast, apparently existing in the dark periphery of island existence, contributes greatly to the construction of the island as a wilderness. Garrard writes that “The word ‘wilderness’ derives from the Anglo-Saxon ‘wilddeoren,’ where ‘deoren’ or beasts existed beyond the boundaries of cultivation” (67), and Nash argues something similar when he writes that “the Old English ‘dēor’



(animal) was prefixed with wild to denote creatures not under the control of man ... Etymologically, the term means ‘wild-dēor-ness,’ the place of wild beasts” (1-2). The imagined presence of the beast constructs the island as a “wilderness,” though the word itself does not occur in the text. The island is a wilderness, because it houses an uncontrolled and threatening beast—the beast, however, is imaginary. The setting is therefore only a wilderness because it is constructed as such by the castaways.

Representations of the island are dependent on the novel’s action: the further the children slide into chaos and disorder, the more they perceive the island as monstrous and terrifying. As John S. Whitley writes, “When one of the characters observes his surroundings his view is coloured by his mood” (17). Ralph eventually calls a meeting to discuss the group’s slide from order to disorder and to suggest that the problem is their fear of an imaginary beast. The meeting is fraught with fear and uncertainty. One of the younger boys claims that the beast “comes out of the sea” (94) and, a little later, discussion turns to the possibility of ghosts. By this point, night-time has arrived and the setting itself has become ghostly: the “pale beach” is all that can be seen in the darkness, while the palm trees “talk” in “a flurry of wind” and “two grey trunks rubbed each other with an evil squeaking” (96-97). The island is personified through their fear. Jack, an emphatic disbeliever of the beast, suddenly entertains the notion of its existence at the meeting’s end. He stirs most of the boys into a frenzy by shouting “We’re strong—we hunt! If there’s a beast, we’ll hunt it down! We’ll close in and beat and beat and beat—!” (99). His sudden change in attitude concerning the beast’s existence, following as it does after the discussion of ocean creatures and ghosts, links the beast back to the island and indicates his active reclaiming of dominance and mastery. The beast is defined through the island, which makes it conquerable: though Jack admits that its existence is possible, his version of

the beast is one that can be hunted and beaten. It is not an ocean-dwelling monster, nor a supernatural ghost, but a tangible land beast over which Jack can exercise dominance. By the novel's end, it is the children and the island itself that are attacked and "beaten" by Jack and his group of hunters. These victims—characters and setting—come to stand in for the imaginary beast.

The children are victims but they are also, in a collective sense, perpetrators. As Simon suggests during the meeting: "maybe [the beast is] only us" (96). He thus realises that the beast does not exist and that, by extension, the island is not to blame for their situation. The fault, instead, lies with the children. Simon, however, is the only character able to express, understand, and fully accept this sentiment. Samuel Hynes astutely theorises that "the meaning of the book depends on the meaning of the beast" (176). Whilst Hynes's argument functions in relation to human evil and truth, I posit that the relationship between the island and the beast is also crucial to our understanding of the beast and hence our understanding of the novel as a whole. The chaos of the meeting's end leaves Ralph doubting himself. He asks Piggy why ghosts or beasts cannot exist, and Piggy replies "'Cos things wouldn't make sense. Houses an' streets, an'—TV—they wouldn't work" (100). He thus attempts to place the island in the broader world, to situate it in relation to the life that he has known thus far. His reliance on "houses" and "streets" is particularly striking—Piggy turns to familiar spatiality so as to lessen the alienation of unfamiliar spatiality. The boys are scared of Jack by this point and are beginning to realise what he is capable of, yet Ralph responds by saying "But s'pose they don't make sense? Not here, on this island? Supposing things are watching us and waiting?" (100). The island, rather than Jack, is blamed for the situation: it is deemed to exist outside of civilisation—belonging to a world devoid of houses, streets, and so on—and is therefore considered

dangerous and nonsensical. In fact, the real danger, of course, lies with civilisation and not with the island: the island is made inhospitable by humankind.

The boys initially attempt to transplant the rules of their old lives onto their new surroundings. This aligns them with their imperial predecessors: characters like Crusoe, Wyss's Swiss family, and the boys of *The Coral Island* all attempt such transplantation of cultural norms. These earlier characters are, of course, successful in their attempts (which run parallel to their imperialistically appropriate negotiation of the island territory). Golding's boys, however, do not appear to be successful: the rules by which they try to live on the island disintegrate very quickly. Nash continues his discussion of "wilderness" and its historical roots by explaining that "The idea of a habitat of wild beasts implied the absence of men, and the wilderness was conceived as a region where a person was likely to get into a disordered, confused, or 'wild' condition ... The image is that of a man in an alien environment where the civilization that normally orders and controls his life is absent" (2). *Lord of the Flies* offers an island that appears to be such a wilderness—that is, the novel charts the progress of its characters from confident and "civilised" English boys to wild "savages." One of the most cruel of all the children, Roger, is for instance initially prevented from throwing stones at a younger child because of the "taboo of the old life" (65) but later murders Piggy by levering a large boulder onto the boy "with delirious abandonment" (200). Freed from civilisation, the boys lead a wild and base existence; freed from civilisation, they become "beasts" themselves.

The predicament in which the boys find themselves suggests that a wild life without civilisation leads to moral decline. The novel, however, emphasises that the very civilisation that has abandoned the boys is itself destructive and murderous. The outside world is engaged in war while the children battle on their island. Indeed, the

most tangible evidence that they find for a “beastie” is, unbeknownst to them at the time, actually the body of a pilot killed during a battle above the island. One can argue, therefore, that the boys have indeed brought their cultural norms to the island—what they have left behind is, in fact, the façade that hid and distorted the true brutality of these norms. It is not, therefore, the wilderness that is to blame for the events of the novel, but instead humankind. The children, however, cannot cope with this concept and instead seek to blame the “beast” for their trials and anarchy on the island. Lawrence S. Friedman writes: “Too immature to account for the enemy within, the boys project their irrational fears onto the outside world. The first of these projections takes the shape of a snakelike ‘beastie’” (21). The island, through its sheer otherness and isolation, functions as an easy scapegoat. External to the human psyche, it is a physical site onto which the less humane qualities of humankind can be projected.

As a result, very few of the children have a healthy relationship with their insular environment. Most of the boys associate the beast with the island; only Simon explicitly and actively associates it with humankind. Ralph is somewhat aware of the beast’s true nature, but spends most of the novel in denial. Drawing this to its full conclusion, one can argue that only Simon is able to see the island for what it is: an island, and not a hellish beast. His is an ideal human-nature relationship, as he is the only one who does not construct nature as something that it is not. When he is murdered by the other children, it is nature that treats his body with tenderness and respect: “The tide swelled in over the rain-pitted sand and smoothed everything with a layer of silver. Now it touched the first of the stains that seeped from the broken body... Softly ... Simon’s dead body moved out towards the open sea” (170). Even in this moment of peace, however, it is the ocean and not the island that draws Simon’s

body to itself. The island has become too tainted to offer solace or harmony: peace can only be found by leaving its shores.

*Robinson Crusoe* and most of the subsequent nineteenth-century Robinsonades depict empty islands that are remade into domestic European places by their colonists. Tuan argues that “Consciousness sets man apart from nature, enabling him to observe and eventually shape it to reflect his own image” (*Man* 45). *Lord of the Flies* depicts an island that first appears to be empty, but that seems to gradually take on a supposedly inherent evil. A few of the children realise their mistake—namely, that the evil resides within themselves and not in their surroundings—but the mistake has to be made before this realisation can occur. This island, like its nineteenth-century textual predecessors, is shaped into the image of its temporary inhabitants, but the result is very different: by the novel’s end it is a terrifying site of destruction. Jack and the other children set the forest on fire as they hunt and attempt to murder Ralph, and the island soon comes to resemble a war-torn world. The realisation that they themselves are at fault comes too late: three children have died by the time that the castaways are rescued and the island itself is “scorched up like dead wood” (224). For the island it has perhaps always been too late, as suggested by the “long scar smashed” into it the moment the children arrive (1). *Lord of the Flies* suggests that humans cannot live harmoniously with a wild island, or even with one another.

### ***John Dollar and Its Constructed Island of Inhumanity***

Wiggins’s *John Dollar* describes the plight of eight girls and two adults who are shipwrecked on an island near Rangoon. In a significant deviation from the generic castaway story, they visit the island as part of a larger group before they are

shipwrecked. This indicates the merging of the novel's two core preoccupations: the Crusoe myth, and the re-enacting of colonial history and appropriation in the early twentieth century. *John Dollar* is, like Golding's novel, both aware of its place within a textual chain and intent on disrupting the known formula. "We have the thrill of recognizing the familiar fiction [of *Robinson Crusoe* and the Robinsonades]," writes Fallon, "and yet at the same time the fiction is defamiliarized" (106). The novel insists on the connection between itself and the earlier texts through references to *Robinson Crusoe*, but eventually undermines any genre expectations that might accompany such references. Wiggins's island is a location where respected British men are, within sight of their daughters, roasted and devoured by native cannibals. It also becomes a setting in which privileged British girls learn from these actions and take on the role of cannibals themselves. Although the girls "go native," the novel is not a tool of imperialistic propaganda cautioning colonists on the dangers of being drawn into a foreign culture: the story insists that it is the cannibalistic girls, and not their native counterparts, who are the monsters of the text. Consequently, the novel can be said to engage with its urtext through the act of "writing back"—like *Foe* and, indeed, *Lord of the Flies*, *John Dollar* speaks back to the past so as to upturn an imperialistic status quo.

The trip to the island is arranged when the loyal British subjects of Rangoon decide to rename one of the local islands as a birthday present for King George. Their island of choice is "L'Isola dei nostri sogni proscritti," or "The Island of Our Outlawed Dreams." As the novel explains, "Its size was seemly as gift-islands go ... and the name was begging to be changed" (58). A large group of adults and children travel to the island in a convoy of three boats so as to "consecrate the ground for King and Country" (63). They plan for their return voyage, again in convoy, to occur three

days later. Events, however, do not unfold as desired. By the third day, most of the parents have returned to Rangoon, the boys and several of the men have been murdered (possibly by native cannibals), and the girls, together with their teacher (Charlotte) and her lover (John Dollar), are violently cast onto the island by a tsunami. The wave tears the remaining ships to pieces, leaves John temporarily comatose and permanently paralysed from the waist down, and temporarily blinds Charlotte. The adults are swept ashore on a different part of the island than the girls are. It takes the children some time to find John and, although they catch sight of Charlotte, they mistake her for some kind of animal or apparition and do not discover her actual identity until the conclusion of the novel. The girls do not have consistent parental supervision during their time as castaways. Though John, upon his recovery from the coma, does attempt to look after and direct them, his injury lessens his effectiveness. This is brought to a climax when he contracts severe malaria: the illness makes him helpless and fully reliant on the young castaways. Like the boys of *Lord of the Flies*, Wiggins's girls are therefore left to run rampant on the island—a situation that leads to much trauma and many deaths.

As with Golding's novel, Wiggins's tale is one in which children are taken out of a "civilised" world and placed into an island wilderness that is apparently conducive to the loss of reason, empathy, and even humanity itself. The tsunami enables this transition as it heralds a new period in the lives of the young castaways. This trauma is described as though it were a natural next step in their development: "Theirs was a not-life, a state of nonbeing, a coma from which they were waking, a stage in the life of a worm" (111). Being cast away becomes an unavoidable and inevitable "stage," or development, in their lives. Moreover, the girls already know how they *should* behave after being shipwrecked. Lying half-dazed on the beach in

the aftermath of the tsunami, one of the girls, Nolly, sees in her mind that they have “gathered wood,” “found clear water,” “constructed their houses,” “made fabric, invented the wheel, [and] minted money” (114). She imagines, in short, that they are living a kind of *Crusoe* existence. The girls are depicted as inherent colonists (through the island consecration) and inherent castaways (through their knowledge and the apparent inevitability of their situation). However, Nolly’s imagining is not real. Though the girls know what needs to be done, they are not efficient castaways and their predicament soon affects their cognitive function. *John Dollar* thus charts the progress of inherent colonists/castaways as they fall from success to failure.

References to *Robinson Crusoe* are threaded throughout the narrative. Most overtly, Defoe’s novel grounds the experiences of the colonists when they first set foot on The Island of Our Outlawed Dreams (prior to the tsunami). This moment clearly situates *Robinson Crusoe* in relation to colonial re-enactment: “Everyone who stepped ashore that day (except the bearers),” writes Wiggins, “had either read or heard the story of *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* so there was that, that sense of exhilaration which comes when one’s life bears a likeness to the fictions that one’s dreamed” (69). This echoes the description of Golding’s island as the “imagined but never fully realized place leaping into real life” (10). Reality is experienced through fiction, with characters interpreting events through the foundational texts of empire. Fallon suggests that “Stepping ashore is participating in a textual act, living in fiction. Wiggins’s re-enactment of this seminal colonial scene reconnects the reader to the British colonists; everyone (including us) experience [sic] the thrill of recognition in fiction” (105). Through this “thrill,” reader and character alike are implicated in the colonial reality behind the fiction. As in *Lord of the Flies*, the expected text is quickly



destabilised and its disturbing reality exposed: it soon becomes clear that this will not be a stereotypical tale of British triumph.

The beach is a particularly important space for this disruption of the imperial dream. As Denning writes, “A beach from the sea, from a ship, from a camera lens is full of fiction. The beach itself, however, is a much more marginal space, where neither otherness nor familiarity holds sway, where there is much invention and blending of old and new” (*Mr Bligh's* 179). Crusoe's tale merges with that of the newcomers, and a different story is created as a result. The intertidal zone is an even more contested space than the beach as whole. Beer theorises, generally speaking, that “the bounds of the island” are not “quite defined: the shore and the sea coexist in a shifting liminality as the tide recedes and reclaims the land” (“Island Bounds” 33). The tide-line of an island, therefore, becomes important in the defining of the location—where does land begin, and ocean end? *John Dollar* engages with this question in a complex manner. Upon arriving at the island, the colonists decide that the servants should take the supplies ashore and the rest of the group should dress themselves for the naming ceremony. This causes a problem as one of the British men insists that “the first footprints set upon the sand by anybody of this expedition ought to consecrate the ground for King and Country” (63). Compromise is found when John suggests that the servants and the supplies could be deposited below the high-water mark: “this was thought to be a sound and passable idea, unassuming in support of royalty because, as everybody thought they knew, a shore at ebb tide isn't actually any sort of nameable *land* ...” (63; ellipsis in orig.). The ominously knowing tone of this comment suggests that their assumption was wrong, and that what appeared to be inconsequential non-land was actually a firm part of the island. The beach, in a way,

comes to symbolise the island in its entirety: this locale is a bounded territory of “outlawed dreams” and illicit behaviour.

Atrocity is, nonetheless, amplified on the island’s beach. Two of the most disturbing events to occur within the story happen in this locale. The men of the party work themselves into a frenzy and senselessly slaughter countless turtles laying their eggs—this event is clearly described as a scene of depravity through the responses of other characters. Later in the novel, cannibals bring some of the children’s fathers back to the beach during the castaway phase of the narrative to roast and eat them. The graphic brutality associated with the beach strongly echoes *Robinson Crusoe*: as Alain Corbin writes, “The sand [within Defoe’s novel] bears the imprint of the wild threatening forces that symbolize desire. This is where cannibals indulge in their orgies, as Robinson watches, fascinated, a voyeur” (15). The shipwrecked girls of *John Dollar* also become voyeurs when they witness their fathers being roasted and eaten by the cannibals: “[The girls],” writes Wiggins, “watched their fathers writhe and pop and as they watched, the wind brought an aroma to them on the hill. Their eyes watered but they watched because they couldn’t stop their eyes from watching” (183). Unlike Crusoe, however, the girls do not show a fear of the cannibals. Most of them are horrified by the act but are not scared of the people committing it, who are described as “tiny naked people, other children” (182). A parallel is thus created between the children and the cannibals. This becomes particularly significant as two of the girls, Amanda and Nolly, eventually eat John. This cannibalisation, moreover, occurs on a cliff within sight of the beach—even here, the relationship to the beach remains important.

The disruption of the island’s consecration (symbolised by the marginality of the tidal zone) undermines the imperial act. That is not to say that the island becomes

the property of other nationalities, but rather that the behaviour of the English characters is exposed as depraved. The island, as a whole, remains tied to England (and, in a broader sense, to Britain). As one of the men says earlier in the narrative, “It’s the blood, sir. Sons of England. In the blood, sir. *Island* people” (62). Some of the native cannibals “[shake] their fists at [the jungle]” (185) after finishing their meal: this somewhat perplexing act can be read as a sign of the island’s Englishness. The insular location functions as a place other to the native cannibals. Two of the girls, Ruby (known as Oopi by the children) and Jane, eat the sand as a coping mechanism whilst their fathers are being roasted: the sand acts as a comforting neutraliser, a way to keep horror and revulsion at bay. If the island acts as an English figure, then the sand-eating scene also foreshadows the cannibalistic acts of Nolly and Amanda. Weaver-Hightower argues that, rather than “rejecting the cannibalism they saw” as one would assume they would do, the girls “discover the same incorporative impulses in themselves” (122). Amanda and Nolly’s version of cannibalism is far more terrifying than that of the native cannibals: their consumption of the paralysed John stretches out over many nights and occurs whilst he is still alive. To quote Weaver-Hightower, they “exceed the cannibal behaviour they witnessed” (122). Their cannibalistic actions—and thus their incorporation of the island and John—taint the island and turn it into a nightmarish locale, just as the setting of *Lord of the Flies* becomes hellish through the murderous acts carried out by the boys.

*John Dollar*’s beach is the site of unfathomable human brutality and comes to symbolise the dark core of the novel. Perhaps most disturbing of all, the beach also becomes a traumatic site of education. It is on the beach that the girls witness the brutality of humankind—their fathers slaughtering turtles, the cannibals slaughtering their fathers—and so learn their own cannibalistic and brutal behaviours. The children

are taught through trauma. This is an education based on the interpreting of events as performances and, later, the enacting of events witnessed. Watching their fathers being roasted alive, the children find it difficult to accept what is happening: “They couldn’t make themselves believe that what they saw was true” (184). As Gabriele Schwab argues, “Their vision ... derealizes the event, placing it at a safe distance of a theatrical performance in which the cannibals appear as ‘children’ at play. Oversized puppets, the fathers are roasted on the stake, props in a fairy world” (101). The scene on the beach becomes a performance, a “derealised” event with very real consequences. As Denning explains, “Beaches will push performances to extremes” (*Beach* 31). Wiggins’s description of the native cannibals as “other children” (182) gives the girls access to what is happening: the events are both unreal and translatable into their own world. Race allows them to take on their fathers’ imperialistic roles, whilst a skewed construction of age allows them to become the cannibals.

The beach location thus plays a vital role in the transformation of the girls. Spatiality is a cornerstone of their development: their experiences are tied to the land. Denning goes on to theorise that “Beaches are *limen*, thresholds to some other place, some other time, some other condition” and that “Writing a beach will always be stories of defining moments” (*Beach* 31). The times that the girls witness atrocious acts are defining moments: they re-shape the identities of the children and lead them into a new condition of being. Visiting the site of their fathers’ deaths, the girls discover mounds of faeces—digested remnants of their fathers—left by the cannibals after their feast. They cover their bodies with the excrement, they roll in it, they eat it, and they use it to paint themselves: in Wiggins’s own words, “When there is nothing left to do within one’s understanding of the world one does what can’t be understood” (187). Finally, they create “a kind of totem” on the beach, a pile of bones contained by

a line in the sand (187). The girls are “different now ... changed, contaminated, beyond grief, ecstatic” (187-88), and the spot on the beach—at this point linked to the cannibals but, later in the novel, also linked to the earlier turtle-slaughter (213)—becomes a site of taboo and a disturbing reminder of loss, trauma, and incomprehensible brutality.

The jungle further inland, on the other hand, offers a hidden and relatively safe sanctuary in the form of a small waterfall and freshwater stream. Charlotte, temporarily blinded by the shipwreck, spends most of her time as a castaway hidden in this beautiful spot, and Menaka—a half-caste child who is called Monkey by the other characters—finds shelter there when the murderous Amanda and Nolly chase her. Charlotte, too, is saved by the place for, as John’s plight makes clear, injured adults do not fare well in this community of castaways. As in *Lord of the Flies*, however, the representation of terrain is strongly tied to the perceptions of individual characters. Charlotte’s blindness, present for most of the novel, impacts on her spatial knowledge and reasoning: to her mind, the peaceful haven is overwhelming and sinister. Once her sight returns, however, she realises that she has imagined her surroundings to be more ominous than they really are: the birds that she’d “heard ... ’round her head as if they were about the prey on her,” for instance, turn out to be “tiny, harmless things of untold delicacy and beauty in the brightest colors” (210) and the waterfall that she’d imagined to be “the size of a glacier as big as Victoria Falls, as powerful,” is actually “approximately her own height” (210). Discovering that “Everything is smaller than she thought it was when she was blind,” Charlotte muses that perhaps, “in blindness, her mind had reverted to an old remembered ratio, a previous proportion, the relation of a child’s sense of herself, the relation of a young

girl to an enormous world” (210). Wrecked on the island, she takes on the role of a frightened child and perceives her surroundings accordingly.

Her incorrect perception of the area, though it infuses her days with fear, serves as a kind of coping mechanism. Her distorted engagement with spatiality is a result of physical and psychological needs—she survives because of her false understanding of the location. With her vision restored, for instance, she searches for the “mudfish that have nourished her” only to discover, to her disgust, that they are in fact maggots (211). Impaired sight has protected her from the reality of her existence—blindness has shielded her from the truth. Her imaginings, furthermore, serve to reassure her. Upon regaining her sight, she realises that she is entirely alone and not, as she had feared, invisible to other people: “Now she sees that there are no others and the fear she’d had of having been invisible, of wandering about from place to place unseen ... had been a creation of her mind, a product of imagination, an optimism in the guise of fear” (211). She thus accesses hope and optimism through fear—the thought of being invisible, though it scares her, is preferable to isolation. Her wording, furthermore, explicitly ties place to people, as spatiality is contextualised in relation to human activity. People (or, at least, the possibility of people) become a property of the overall spatial image. Charlotte aligns her blinded perspective with authenticity, even though she can of course see that her spatial perception was incorrect: “In her mind she’d made a different landscape,” writes Wiggins, “this one seems less real, somehow, a geography in miniature” (211). The feared island that looms large is, to her way of thinking, the “real” island.

This prioritisation of Charlotte’s constructed island image is representative of castaway engagement with insular terrain in general: the island as described by castaways is often at odds with its reality. Characters become tools within these

spatial constructions—the family of Wyss’s novel, for instance, actively imagine their location as an island (without feeling the need to prove the validity of such an imagining). Charlotte’s blindness thus allows her to function within a textual legacy: she can fulfil her needs by negotiating her surroundings through a constructed spatial understanding. Like Golding’s boys and, indeed, Stevenson’s Jim, Charlotte is able to relocate and reconfigure the trauma of her situation by turning the insular terrain into a zone of fear. The character of Menaka (who, in this respect, plays a similar role to Golding’s Simon), in turn, provides the reader with a means of moving beyond the castaway’s skewed perspective. Menaka describes the glade as though it were an oasis in a desert, and not a disproportionately large terrain of terror: there is “a sparkling stream of sunlit water,” a “misty glade ... over which there hung a sort of spray and dozens of small rainbows,” and the air is filled with parrots that “darted like bright ribbons through the trees” (198-99). She, like Simon, is thus able to see the situation for what it is: the glade is not, when seen through her eyes, made culpable for, or tainted by, human evil. Charlotte’s apprehension, then, has been deeply misplaced: the older castaway has been concerned with what she perceived to be her monstrous surroundings, when in reality there was much more cause to be afraid of the monstrous people with whom she was sharing the island.

### **Imagined Evil in *Robinson*: Accountability and the Island**

Spark’s *Robinson* tells the story of three castaways—January Marlow, Jimmie Waterford, and Tom Wells—who are stranded on an island after their plane crashes en route to the Azores. They are rescued and cared for by the island’s owner, Robinson, who lives there in the company of a young boy, Miguel, and a cat. It is a narrative borne of the castaway tradition: as Peter Kemp points out, “Most of the

customary features of the castaway-survival genre are on duty in the book” (30). The camaraderie of the earlier novels, however, is almost as lacking in *Robinson* as it turns out to be in *Lord of the Flies* and *John Dollar*: in Kemp’s words, “Far from banding together into thankful companionship against the threat of the unknown, they view each other, through long days of convalescence and monotony, with dislike and irritation” (31). Their time on the island is rife with tension and intrigue; this tension takes on a murderous tone when Robinson disappears under bloody and suspicious circumstances a little over halfway through the novel. The castaways turn on one another in his absence, but just when a violent end seems inevitable, Robinson reappears and in so doing defuses the situation—a situation that he himself was guilty of igniting in the first place. A pomegranate boat, scheduled to visit the island every three months, arrives soon after and brings with it the communication tools needed to organise a rescue. January, Jimmie, and Tom leave the next day, and take Robinson’s cat Bluebell with them; Miguel’s imminent departure for boarding school means that Robinson will soon be alone on the island. At the novel’s end, however, the reader discovers that Robinson must also leave the island as it is “sinking” due to volcanic activity (174). As in *Lord of the Flies* and *John Dollar*, the reader is presented with an island that is first tainted by human action and then subsequently abandoned.

Moreover, this island is clearly marked as the possession and domain of its inhabitant. Robinson and his island are deeply entwined, so much so that the island is called “Robinson” after its owner and is shaped like a human body. Naming of topography, often a reflection of key moments in castaway narratives, is corporeal in this case: there are the North and South Arms, the North and West Legs, the North Knee and, of course, the Headlands. Insular spatiality and human physicality become almost synonymous—the human body is linguistically etched into the terrain.



Furthermore, the island territory can be seen as a twentieth-century example of Weaver-Hightower's argument concerning colonial castaway narratives. As discussed earlier in this thesis, Weaver-Hightower posits that, contrary to the more commonly held belief that landscape was depicted as feminine, nineteenth-century castaway narratives in fact offered an "imperial fantasy" of "controlling the land [not] as one would *another's female* body, but ... as one would one's *own male* body" (xvi). Such control is made explicit in *Robinson*, and extends to both the island and the island experience: as January explains, "I felt that Robinson was determined to keep control. He was fixed on controlling himself, us, and his island" (47). Robinson's need for control causes him to tell the castaways where they are allowed to go, how they should interact with one another, what they should be thinking, and how they should be spending their time. January's words indicate the strong tie between self, place, and visitors—by conflating these three subjects, she highlights the all-encompassing nature of the man's domain.

The island/self relationship in *Robinson*, however, is not quite as straightforward as those found in the earlier texts studied by Weaver-Hightower: the island exists both as an extension (or replication) of Robinson and as an external being that he can love, control, and harbour jealousy over. Gregory Woods writes that, "Before there is company or society ... isolated castaways may have to project their sexual needs on to the landscape itself" (129). While a definitive example of such a projection is, of course, Tournier's *Friday*, Spark's *Robinson* also engages with this issue (albeit in a far more subtle manner). There is a personal connection between the man and the island that manifests itself in a knowledge rich in intimacy and affection; this knowledge, in turn, causes the setting to appear as though it has an element of subjectivity. Speaking of the island's volcano, for instance, Robinson tells January

that it “gives out a sort of scream” when something is thrown into it, and that “sometimes . . . without provocation, it sighs” (74-75). He has an extensive knowledge of the island’s topography and landscape, most of which he shares with the castaways, and he encourages January to explore and write about her surroundings: “there are so many curious things on the island—the moths, have you noticed? And those very long lizards, the trees, those miniature junipers in the stunted part of the mountain, the ferns” (76). With Robinson’s love for the island, however, comes the jealousy of not wanting to share its more intimate places. He endeavours to keep the island’s intricate tunnel and cave system (again, a link to Tournier’s *Friday*) a secret from his guests. It is almost as though he does not want the core of the island exposed to the outside world. This strengthens the comparison between character and setting, as Robinson is also determined to keep his own internal self private and hidden from other people.

Robinson’s knowledge of the island extends to its history, something which he shares with the castaways. It is a chequered and, at times, contradictory history of mythical proportions: the island housed fourteenth-century hermits who were murdered by pirates, was “always privately owned” and had “passed through the hands of a line of Portuguese,” was used as a base by pirates and smugglers, was visited by Vasco da Gama (87), was once “the southernmost part of Atlantis,” had its still functioning pomegranate orchards “planted by King Arthur,” was the setting for the tragic tale of “a beautiful northern princess . . . carried there by a half-human demon” and, lastly, was featured as “the home of the Greek Hesperus” (131-32). Robinson sees sufficient value in these stories that he chooses to share them with his guests but does not seem to consider the actual physical evidence of past island inhabitants—gardens and so on—as particularly important. Living primarily on tinned food, he does little to tend the island: in Conrad’s words, “He shares none of his

namesake's economic concerns" (112). This state of affairs greatly dismays January, who not only feels "a sort of outrage" that the "work [of his predecessors] was falling to waste" (36) but also objects on the basis of aesthetics: "It was not simply that it offended some instinct for economy and reproduction. It was more; it offended my aesthetic sense. If you choose the sort of life which has no conventional pattern you have to try to make an art of it, or it is a mess" (84). The dynamic between the two characters thus shares similarities with that between Crusoe and Susan from *Foe*. There is, in January's mind, a correct and an incorrect way of living on a desert island, and Robinson is definitely living the latter style of life.

Despite January's criticism, however, Robinson leads a life that is extremely ordered: it only becomes a "mess" with the arrival of the castaways. His attempts to control the visitors function as a means of keeping perceived chaos at bay. Robinson disappears mysteriously a month-and-a-half after the arrival of his unexpected guests, having apparently become the victim of a gruesome murder. He acts as an enforcer of civilisation whilst he is still present; his absence, therefore, also represents the absence of civilisation. As Michael Giffin points out, "ultimately, things fall apart on the island only after Robinson absents himself from the plateau unannounced" (731). The tension becomes unbearable in his absence and true natures come to the surface. Tom attempts to murder January, and Jimmie retaliates by almost murdering Tom. Robinson then reappears and the reader learns that he had, in fact, staged his own murder. "Normally, my life is regulated, it is a system. It was disrupted by your arrival," he explains, "Things mount up inside one, and then one has to perpetrate an outrage" (162). Robinson has a system to life on the island, and visitors simply do not have a place within it. In this respect, the three castaways occupy the same role as

Coetzee's Susan does: they are outsiders, taking on the role of neither Crusoe nor Friday.

The staged murder scene is bound to the terrain. All that January and her companions find upon searching for Robinson is a long and gory trail of blood smears and stained clothing. His apparent death is thus written, in blood, on the very island itself. Fear runs rampant in the minds of those left behind: January wonders if there might be “another inhabitant of the island – someone we don't know about” (103), Tom suggests that “A supernatural force ... had done away with Robinson” and tells the others that “There's an evil force on this island” (107), and all three castaways begin to suspect one another of murder. This fear that the island might be hiding an unknown person or creature is reminiscent of Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and, to a lesser extent, *John Dollar*; simultaneously, the adults also (in line with the children) begin to see their surroundings in a new light. The terror of following the trail of blood tarnishes the terrain as the island seems to absorb the unknown horror: “the volcano chuckled, and gave out its red vapours, as if that too were a sort of blood” (104) writes Spark and, a little later, “It was a boulder-strewn landscape which, if one half-closed one's eyes, resembled a battle-field newly deserted” (115). Despite the earlier conflation of Robinson and the island, these descriptions suggest a perceived rift between inhabitant and location: the island is malevolently “chuckling” at Robinson's demise, and the battlefield seems cold and uncaring. This is, however, juxtaposed against the image of a wounded island as, next to the clothes “scattered bloodily down the slope,” January also sees “a clear streak of torn-up vegetation, revealing the raw-red earth” (104). Spark thus creates a tense interplay between island-as-self and island-as-enemy: the location is perceived as both a victim (like Robinson) and a perpetrator (like the presumed murderer).

The notion of the island as a victim, however, is largely undermined as the setting is held partially responsible for the castaways' responses to the apparent death. January describes the place as having had a strange effect on her from the very beginning, with her "perceptions" during the island sojourn having been "touched with a pre-ancestral quality": "there was an enchantment, a primitive blood-force which probably moved us all" (9). January, a Christian, recalls having been "disturbed" by a pagan desire, a "sweet and dreadful urge towards the moon," and tells the reader that she is, even now, "a little intoxicated with the memory of my sudden wanting to worship the moon among the tall blue gums and sleeping bougainvillaea, with the sea at my ears" (8-9). January even blames the island, and the island experience, when she starts to grow fond of Jimmie: "I was becoming rather attached to Jimmie," she admits, "mostly because of our situation on the island, and the qualities of the island, the colours and the atmospherics and mists, that sort of thing" (65). In the case of Robinson's disappearance, however, the island takes on a less whimsical atmosphere. Thinking back on the bloody scene of the staged death, January explains that "Owing to the strangeness of our predicament, the touchiness of our minds, the qualities of the island, and perhaps the shock of our plane accident, we did not for a moment suspect what had really happened. The blood was lying about everywhere. Our minds were on the blood" (162). Again, the reader is invited to consider that the island is somehow responsible, at least partially, for the thoughts of the castaways: it can, apparently, influence those people who are cast on its shores. This is particularly pertinent given the novel's depiction of the island as both an unknown spatial enemy and Robinson himself; the setting is able to simultaneously represent its own power (and perceived culpability) and that of its inhabitant. The island, the man, and the terror of the situation are thus inextricably linked.

The airplane crash, of course, also plays an important role in the trauma of the situation, and the event significantly contributes to the characters' perceptions of their location. "Throughout my stay on the island," explains January prior to the narration of Robinson's disappearance, "I was more observant of my surroundings than I had ever been before, or have been since" (32). Her heightened sense of observation is centred on survival as "Instinctively I looked for routes of escape, positions of concealment, protective rocks; instinctively I looked for edible vegetation ... I found myself now noting the practical shelter to be obtained from small craters and gulches and lava caverns" (32). She has no need to search for food or shelter at this point in the narrative, nor does she have anything to fear. Nonetheless, she "instinctively" surveys the area as though she is in danger and does not have the benefit of Robinson's hospitality. Attention to setting becomes second nature through the act of being cast away. She cannot, therefore, escape generic castaway behaviours, even when such behaviour is unnecessary. Later in the story, the trauma of the crash is conflated with that of Robinson's disappearance: lying in bed on the eve of the bloodied trail, January feels

as if, from the time of the crash up to this day I had been a vacuum waiting only for the swift delayed rush of horror to enter in ... as if, really, the getting away with a mere concussion and a broken arm, my luck in falling into Robinson's hands, my easy recovery, and the normal life of Robinson's household, were not to have been trusted; and as if the proper consequence of the plane disaster were now upon us. (102)

Her thoughts bring the novel further into line with nightmarish castaway narratives like *Lord of the Flies*: the relative ease of life in Robinson's house fades to unreality, and one is left instead with a trail of blood across the island.

Being cast away must therefore be followed by terror, or at the very least by hard work and resourcefulness; it cannot, January implies, be followed by banal normality. Moreover, just as the horror of Robinson's staged death is written on the terrain, so too is the plane-wreck. It is another element reminiscent of Golding's novel: instead of a "scar" smashed into the forest, we have "the wreck of the plane, reclining on its grassy slope, and still, after eight weeks, giving off a smell of burning" and, nearby, a "burial ground" for the twenty-six passengers and crew who did not survive the accident (67-68). The catastrophic event has had a very tangible, physical, and long-lasting impact on the landscape: it has been incorporated into the island image through smell, sight, and the disposal of the dead bodies. By being cast away, January and her companions cause the island to change. Both the wreckage and the burial site are labelled on the island map provided at the novel's beginning, as are various landmarks such as Robinson's house and the volcano. This creates a paradoxical situation in which the changes to the terrain appear to be established components of the setting—the static nature of the map ensures that temporality cannot be accessed. It is impossible to know that the wreck and the graveyard are new additions to the scenery. The castaway experience is thus marked as an inherent feature of the island.

Despite January's many descriptions of the setting, however, the novel ends with an admission of her inability to fully translate the place into words. "I have impressions of the island of which I have not told you, and could not entirely if I had a hundred tongues," she says, "the mustard field staring at me with its yellow eye, the blue and green lake seeing in me a hard turquoise stone, the goat's blood observing me red, guilty, all red" (175). *Robinson* thus acts as an extension to texts like *Treasure Island* and *Lord of the Flies*: January lays blame on the island, only to perceive the

island as throwing that blame straight back at her. Spark's novel offers a character who is able to locate the guilt of human weaknesses within herself. As Jennifer Randisi eloquently states in her discussion of the novel,

What saves January is the same perception that saves [Joseph] Conrad's narrator [in *Heart of Darkness*]: a recognition that the heart of darkness is not in the other (the Congo, the island) but in the self ... In the last paragraph of the novel, January connects herself with all she has witnessed: she is held accountable by faith ("the mustard field staring at me with its yellow eye"), redemption ("the goat's blood observing me red, guilty, all red"), and memory ("the blue and green lake seeing in me a hard turquoise stone"). (74)

Her new self-awareness is not, however, as straightforward as Randisi suggests: the knowledge may be in her mind, but she struggles to express it.

January's sense of guilt marks her as a kind of "everyman" figure within the text, as she herself is not overly culpable for any of the serious transgressions that occur on the island. The main causes and/or instigators of violence within the novel are Robinson and Tom. January may not be guilty of anything significant, but she is nonetheless swept along in the drama, and is thus a part of it. Early in the narrative, Jimmie makes use of the well-worn John Donne quotation "No man is an island," whereupon January replies, "Some are ... Their only ground of meeting is concealed under the sea. If words mean anything, and islands exist, then some people are islands" (22). Her reply contradicts itself, for an underwater meeting is, of course, still a connecting point. As Randisi argues, "the island is itself an image of complete detachment and intimate involvement. Above water, it is isolate, separate; under water, it is connected, unified" (74). The interconnectedness of islands and, by extension, people, works to explain January's culpability. Indeed, Conrad muses in his



discussion of the novel that “The peaks of the Azores are the summits of drowned mountains; they might also be the tips of Freudian icebergs, and if you follow them to their base you discover their interconnection – a sign of our complicity, like a stain spreading through the water” (113). January feels complicit because she is human: she is a part of all the human drama that occurs on the island.

January’s burden is heavy for one person to carry, which is, perhaps, why the island becomes “a place of the mind ... an apocryphal island” (175) at the novel’s end. January herself suggests something similar when she muses that this transformation from reality to myth “may be a trick of the mind to sink one’s past fear and exasperation in the waters of memory” (174-75.) Simultaneously, the island also comes to “[resemble] a locality of childhood, both dangerous and lyrical” (175); the phrase instantly brings to mind the childhood world of *Treasure Island*. Despite all the terror that the island represents, it ultimately acts as a token of childhood and youthful re-invigoration: “sometimes when I am walking down the King’s Road or sipping my espresso in the morning – feeling, not old exactly, but fussy and adult – and chance to remember the island, immediately all things are possible” (174). These, the very last words of the novel, clearly illustrate the place of the island: though it has instilled some sense of guilt and responsibility in January, its most powerful effect is that of strengthening her sense of possibility and adventure. Of the three novels discussed in this chapter, *Robinson* draws the strongest correlation between characters and setting in terms of negative behaviours/representations: this island is shaped like a person and named after the very castaway who is responsible for the drama and violence that unfolds over the course of the story. For January, however, trauma fades and guilt becomes almost a spectacle, one aspect of a broader notion of adventure. *Robinson* may illustrate in a literal manner what *Lord of the Flies* and *John Dollar*

suggest, but it also evidences a nostalgic yearning for the adventurous islands of childhood. Even a dark and troubled castaway story, therefore, can have difficulty avoiding the mythical image of the island as a locale of adventure and excitement.

## Chapter Six

### Escaping Reality in Castaway Popular Romance Fiction

The texts discussed in the previous chapters offer islands as sites of adventure, education, conquest, and anarchy. Insular settings are presented as imperial, colonial, and sometimes postcolonial spaces/places. As evidenced by *Friday*, sexuality and sexual acts can be powerful weapons with which to gain mastery and dominance over the castaway situation. They can, however, also pave the way for a different kind of dynamic when situated within the broader notion of romantic love between people. Islands have long been considered places of romantic desire in Western culture. Such desire, however, has been late to arrive within the context of castaway fiction: sexual intimacy and desire are blatantly absent from *Robinson Crusoe* and its nineteenth-century successors. The latter half of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century have seen this absence addressed in popular romance fiction<sup>14</sup>: a plethora of castaway narratives now concern themselves with sexuality and, related to this topic, feature sexual intercourse on the tide-line, in the lagoon, in the jungle, and beneath waterfalls. This chapter highlights the widespread relevance of arguments discussed earlier in this thesis through its investigation of castaway tales located in the genre of popular romance fiction. It contends that analysis of these novels gives original insight into the evolution of *Robinson Crusoe*'s legacy—the sheer number of texts in this category indicates their cultural significance to the Crusoe legacy. Setting remains pivotal to these castaway stories: the imperial island is taken up and transformed into a locale of love and sexuality. This transformation occurs through character engagement with space—spatiality becomes a tool in the renegotiation of imperial ideologies. The figure of Crusoe, furthermore, continues to haunt that spatiality.

Popular romance fiction and adventure fiction are closely related to one another. Both fall under the overall heading of romance. This over-arching category has a complex history that reaches far back to the Middle Ages. In broad terms, romance is a genre of fantasy and desire: as Northrop Frye writes, “The romance is nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfilment dream” (*Anatomy* 186). Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* is too closely linked to reality to be labelled an outright romance: Frye labels it a “parody-romance” as texts like it “use much the same general structure as romance, but adapt that structure to a demand for greater conformity to ordinary experience” (*Secular* 38-39). The adventure tales spawned by Defoe’s novel, however, are a different matter. Offering less of the “ordinary [experiences]” found in *Robinson Crusoe*, they instead provide their readers with the action and excitement of imperial adventure, glory, and power. Beer offers a succinct explanation of the difference between the two categories. “The novel is more preoccupied with representing and interpreting a known world,” she writes, “the romance with making apparent the hidden dreams of that world” (*Romance* 12). Romances thus deal with the driving desires and fantasies that lie hidden beneath reality.

Love is not integral to this broad definition of romance. In Scott McCracken’s words, “the only clear element that unites all romance narratives is their concern with desire and the prospect of its satisfaction” (76). Nonetheless, as McCracken admits, “the most common manifestation [of the romance form] is the love story” (76). The characters of popular romance fiction—that is, romance in its more commonly understood definition relating to love, sensuality, and sexuality—are generally driven by a desire that is fixated on courtship, infatuation, and sexual intimacy. Fantasy is crucial to the plots of these novels. Fredric Jameson elaborates on Frye’s analysis of romance in its broad definition, arguing that “Romance is for [Frye] a wish fulfillment

or utopian fantasy, which aims at the transfiguration of the world of everyday reality, whether in an effort to restore it to the condition of some lost Eden or to inaugurate and usher in some new and ultimate realm” (138). Kathleen Gilles Seidel, in turn, makes the related point that “fantasy is the most important element in the appeal of popular fiction” (159). The novels discussed in this chapter thus exist in a fantasy-driven genre (popular romance) that is categorised under an even broader fantasy-driven term (romance). Escapist fantasy is the motivating force of castaway popular romance fiction. Moreover, as Seidel continues, “The plot of a [popular] romance novel—especially its happy ending—sets up fantasies about the way the world ought to work” (160). This “ought to work” becomes a textual reality as “A happy ending is necessary, inevitable” (160). Romance in general, and popular romance in particular, centres on the creation of an ideal world.

Setting plays an inevitable role in this process. The pursuit of an ideal world is grounded in the physicality of location. Lynne Pearce writes that “the exotic locations of popular romance fiction (Mills and Boon/Harlequin) are commonly seen as part of their escapist appeal” (“Another Time” 101), and Seidel posits that “the first function of the setting of a [popular] romance novel is to be Other, to transport the reader to somewhere else” (165). Their comments suggest that the importance of setting relates more to readers than to characters, and that the split between ideal world and reality is the split between book and reader. This would imply that the text features a unified setting that is not split into ideal and reality. This is supported in Beer’s assertion that romance (in its broad definition) is typically “preoccupied with the everyday paraphernalia of the world it creates. The descriptions of clothes and feasts, the little dogs and the clean towels, give body to its ideal world ... it frees us from our inhibitions and preoccupations by drawing us entirely into its own world” (*Romance*

3). Castaway popular romance fiction, however, functions a little differently: the island is always a location split from reality, a place that gains its influential power through this separation from the rest of the novel's diegetic world. Typically, the island acts as an "other" for the protagonists, a place where they can nourish or recreate themselves before either returning to the real world and refashioning their lives to suit their personal developments or, in very rare cases, staying on the island and living happier lives there. The castaway experience is about the shaping of identity. As Françoise Péron argues, "An island is always a place where identity is created ... going to an island means seeking to rediscover and rebuild oneself as an individual" (335). Castaway popular romance fiction, therefore, acts out the two narrative avenues referred to in Jameson's discussion of Frye's work: a reversion to Eden or a bringing in of a new world. In many texts, both options occur—the island becomes an Eden (and is often described as such by the castaways), which gives the characters strength to, eventually, return to the real world and live a changed life.

These islands exist at the intersection of two cultural legacies: Crusoe, and the European history of romanticising and sexualising island settings. Edmond provides an in-depth and insightful examination of early European representations (in both culture and history) of South Pacific islands, and points to the "stereotype of the Pacific as a heterosexual paradise" (*Representing* 69).<sup>15</sup> In his discussion of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Friday*, Tournier writes that "a myth is a story that everybody already knows" (*Wind Spirit* 157). The story of Crusoe is a myth; his tale is well known. So too is the popular tale of the romantic island paradise, as exemplified, for instance, in the myriad of twentieth-century films and novels that tell the story of the HMS *Bounty* and its crew's mutiny after visiting Tahiti.<sup>16</sup> Through phrasing reminiscent of Tournier's, Pearce argues that "romance" in the form of category fiction "is a 'story'

that everyone knows” (“Popular Romance” 521). This is equally true of castaway popular romance fiction as a whole, as these texts are all part of a “‘story’ that everyone knows.” More specifically, they are a part of two stories: the sexually charged island setting, and the tale of *Crusoe*. Brought together in the context of castaway fiction, these stories create a narrative centred on healing and self-discovery rather than the expansion of empire. Imperial castaways learn how to be successful imperialists on their islands; popular romance castaways, on the other hand, learn how to overcome their past and embrace their future through the love they find on insular shores.

This chapter examines a selection of twentieth- and twenty-first-century castaway popular romance texts. As with the rest of this thesis, island representations and characters’ engagements with setting remain central to analysis. Despite their focus on romantic love and sex, these novels share similarities with their imperial adventure forerunners: islands remain, or are expected to be, idyllic tropical paradises, generic places to be dealt with through pre-conceived ideas of what the castaway experience should be like. Analysis logically divides these texts into three groups—category romance, historical romance, and single-title traditional contemporary romance—but this divide is as much a thematic decision as it is genre related.<sup>17</sup> The category novels clearly indicate the influence of insular settings upon castaways, the historical novels allow analysis of the island as a non-colonist classroom, and the final section highlights the role of the romantic island in the twenty-first century. Each of these sections thus expands upon this thesis’ overall discussion, and in so doing emphasises the broad impact of *Robinson Crusoe* on the cultural understanding of islands. Spatiality and the manner in which it is negotiated by characters, this chapter argues, continue to form the crux of the castaway narrative even in its popular

romance form. The agenda of these texts is built into the human/island relationship, so much so that romantic love and sexual acts are often reflective of island scenery, and vice versa. Love, in short, is achieved through character and narratological attention to setting.

Castaway popular romance stories thus take on the tropes of their predecessors but use them for their own purposes. Awareness of intertextuality, exhibited through frequent references to *Crusoe*, is important to that dynamic. Readers are encouraged to see the novels as being connected to a cultural legacy through the figure of the mythical castaway. Somewhat paradoxically, however, that legacy is frozen into a static cultural image: unlike their postcolonial contemporaries, castaway popular romance fictions tend not to be interested in challenging the colonial past. Furthermore, imperial ideologies, though they remain active, are rarely contextualised in the history of the British Empire; one can go so far as to say that, in many cases, they become ahistorical. This silencing of history minimises the chance of insight into these ideologies, thereby also negating the possibility of moving beyond them. Consequently, these texts cannot be said to “write back” to *Robinson Crusoe*, at least not in the sense of the term as used by Tiffin, as there is no active challenging of the past so as to better the future. Those stories that do attend to history—historical romances, of course, being the obvious example—engage with matters of empire only in so far as such engagement furthers their central purpose of popular romance. Overall, popular romance fiction thus (mis)appropriates the tropes of a traumatic colonial legacy.

Postcolonial critique is therefore not central to these castaway narratives, despite their having been published in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries—that is, during the time period in which other novels like Golding’s *Lord of*



*the Flies* and Coetzee's *Foe* were actively challenging the imperial castaway image. Weaver-Hightower discusses a similar phenomenon with regards to US filmic and televisual texts like *Survivor* and *Cast Away*: "What should we make of contemporary filmed or televised adaptations that don't seem to be challenging the castaway story to subvert its power ... so much as borrowing the genre for a related contemporary purpose?" (207). In the case of most of the novels being discussed in this chapter, however, that purpose nonetheless has a somewhat redeeming quality. Despite a general lack of critical engagement with their ethically problematic history of empire, castaway popular romance novels do achieve a positive result. Their islands are places of opportunity and second-chances for castaways, havens where emotional wounds can be healed, class distinctions can be bridged, and eccentric characters can find peace and harmony with one another. A conflicted situation thus arises: though characters operate within the parameters of an unchallenged imperial legacy, their behaviour leads to an ideologically positive outcome. The island setting lies at the heart of this tension.

### **The Influential Power of the Island**

Violet Winspear's *Beloved Castaway* (1968) tells the story of Morvenna who, like Spark's January, is shipwrecked on an inhabited island. This island, located in Brazil, is ruled over by Roque de Braz Ferro—a man who slowly develops into Morvenna's love interest. Roque is linked to the setting through an imperial heritage: "Long ago," he explains, "an ancestor of mine discovered the island when his ship came to its shores searching for fresh fruit and water. He was a *conquistador* sailing under letter of *marque* for booty he shared with the crown" (16). His attitude is based on a benevolent kind of imperialism, wherein the local islanders or "people of the rain

forest” are considered a “part of the wild life of the island” (24). “I would no more try to tame them,” he tells Morvenna, “than I would attempt to tame a jaguar, or shoot the shadow-spots off a fawn” (24). Whilst the islanders are ascribed an island identity, Roque’s patronising tone ensures that that identity is given less status than the usual island/human connection within castaway fiction—the people are objectified and placed in the same category as wildlife. Furthermore, though Roque states that the native islanders do not consider him their leader, his power is apparent: in times of conflict, rare though they are, he always emerges victorious. Winspear’s novel is a little different to other castaway popular romances set in this time period, as it does engage explicitly with the history of imperial expansion. This engagement, however, is not intended as a postcolonial critique. Roque’s imperial ancestry merely serves to construct him as an exotic and powerful masculine figure. He is attractive, in the world of the novel, because of his power and dominance. Though it engages with empire, therefore, *Beloved Castaway* achieves the same result as its contemporaries: the form of the castaway narrative is taken up and rescripted for the specific purposes of popular romance.

Roque’s imperial situation, moreover, is quite removed from those of his textual predecessors. His island, like Crusoe’s, is not fully domesticated: “There are untamed regions, and a rain forest at its heart where the Indians live almost as wildly as in the days when El Draque, my ancestor, discovered the island” (24). There is an “other” here, just as there is on Crusoe’s island. Crucially, however, Crusoe always remains at a distance from his “other.” Consequently, the presence of the cannibals allows him to see himself as separate from, and superior to, the wildness of the island and its visitors. Roque’s identity, on the other hand, is far more ambivalent than Crusoe’s: not being British, he himself appears as a kind of “other” against the British

castaways. Of Morvenna's first encounter with Roque, Winspear writes "He had stepped out of the bush as though out of some old pagan legend ... so must the Eagle Knights of the Aztecs have looked ... she thought it possible that in his blood ran an exotic whisper from the lips of an Aztec princess" (19). Morvenna and the two other castaways with whom she is shipwrecked represent an outer world, a different kind of "civilisation." Roque is not one of the native islanders, yet is able to step into their world—as its master—with relative ease. "I belong here" he says, "for generations my family has lived here, and the pulse of the place beats in me" (144). The man and the island become one through the imagery of a life-giving pulse: the island belongs to Roque but, simultaneously, Roque belongs to it. The topic of island identities is thus raised once more—while the islanders are linked to wildlife, Roque is linked to the very lifeblood of the place. The place is his reality: the only one he knows, and the only one he can deal with and be content in.

The novel ends with Morvenna remaining on the island as Roque's loving wife. This is rare for castaway narratives of any kind, with the bounded island not usually being a place of permanent habitation. As Beer observes, "Castaways come and go: the triumph of most island fiction is, after all is said and done, to leave the island" ("Island Bounds" 42). Roque is not a castaway—he is on the island by choice, and his departure is unthinkable. Morvenna, though a castaway, is similarly tied to the setting. The novel opens with a vivid description of the island. In the space of half a page, the reader is told that tropical birds fly "above the dense green masses of trees and giant-fronded ferns," monkeys leap "within the heart of the forest," "gay green parakeets" watch "as through the green shadows crept yard upon yard of speckled snake" and "on the shore, where the sands were as tawny as the pelt of a jaguar, lay a girl. She lay very still, her torn dress shimmering with dried sea-salt, and bound round

her body like the scales of a mermaid” (5). Morvenna, the girl in question, is introduced as though she is a part of the setting. This foreshadows Roque’s love for her—loving Morvenna becomes an extension of loving the island. In a similar fashion, Morvenna’s attraction to Roque runs parallel to her intoxication with her new surroundings. Standing in the forest near an Indian village, she comes to realise that “she had grown to love all this, the sense of freedom, the unutterable beauty, the scents and sounds. They had penetrated her pores, and she knew that a part of herself would be left behind when she left the island” (174). Moments later, she finds herself overwhelmed with feelings for Roque: in an echo of Spark’s *Robinson*, Winspear writes “It was this pagan place that aroused this awareness of him” (175). The island, particularly in its “wild” state, is given an influential power. It becomes a causal factor in the novel’s “Happily Ever After” ending (to apply terminology taken from the field of popular romance study). Setting makes the romance of the novel possible.

The island of Margery Hilton’s *Girl Crusoe* (1969) is also ascribed an influential role within its story. Jan, a freelance photographer whose work takes her throughout the world, is en route to her home city of London, England when a plane crash casts her and the pilot, Nick, onto an uninhabited island they soon dub “Eden.” A tempestuous romantic relationship develops between the two. They are eventually rescued, but their departure is tinged with sorrow at what they are leaving behind. Away from the island, they see each other in a new light—a common trope in castaway popular romance fiction—and a falling out occurs. Jan doubts the authenticity of their love. “Don’t you see ... there was bound to be a drawing together, an acceptance of each other. There wasn’t anyone else,” she tells Nick (180). “There’s a very old word for it, Nick; propinquity,” she continues, “We were forced into each other’s company, all day and every day, where we would probably have met and

passed on at any other time or place” (180). She depicts the island situation as being responsible for their attraction: the confined boundary of their location casts them into one another’s company. Though the power of the castaway experience is clear, Jan’s fears for their future prove unfounded. Nick and Jan overcome their conflict, and commit to a lifetime together. The memory of the island remains strong even in this new stage of their relationship: Nick tells Jan that “I’ve enough [money] to buy a special licence, my darling little Crusoe—and a toothbrush. That’s all you’ll need for the moment. And a honeymoon trip back to Eden!” (188). Their love, a product of their castaway experience, perseveres beyond their island entrapment but nonetheless remains connected to the island and their status as ex-castaways.

Whilst on the island, the pair continuously understand their island experience through expectations gleaned from culture. Drinking coconuts, for instance, are described as “traditional desert nectar” (43) and, in an echo of the earlier Robinsonades, “coconut ‘lemonade’” (49). Recalling childhood stories, Jan half-jokingly points out that “There always seemed to be a plentiful supply of trees that grew everything the castaways needed” (43). A little later, she admits to herself that “If she had ever given it serious thought—which she hadn’t—she would automatically have assumed that castaways on desert islands, if they weren’t fleeing for their lives, spent their days in an idyllic round of swimming, sun-bathing and sleeping” (60). Like Coetzee’s *Foe*, *Girl Crusoe* offers insight into the wider castaway narrative tradition in which it is situated. The island fulfils societal expectations: “the scene ... would make the perfect setting for a picture postcard ... feathery fronds fringed the sky and hung over the focal point without which no postcard could be complete; a lapis lazuli sea and shimmering silver sands” (61-62). *Girl Crusoe*, again like the later *Foe*, is different from its imperial predecessors as it acknowledges the fact that some islands

do not match this image. “What a heavenly white beach!” exclaims Jan, “I’d always pictured coral islands with beaches like this and waving palms and all the rest of it, and I was so disappointed at the first one I saw” (51). Not all coral islands conform to the stereotype but, as Jan, continues, “I suppose we all have these preconceived notions of what a place should be like” (51). Unlike *Foe*, however, this insight into the genre does not serve a postcolonial agenda. Eden conforms to stereotype, just as *Girl Crusoe* conforms to genre-driven expectations: this is first and foremost a story about an island romance.

The novel opens with Jan planning to exchange her adventurous life in the open world for one of comfort in London with the “solidly safe” Roger (12). She is haunted both by her last photographic assignment—which involved great danger—and by a heartbreaking sexual encounter with an ex-mentor six years prior to the novel’s present. Roger represents physical and emotional safety. Jan’s decision to settle in London, however, places her in a position of self-negation: taking up a life with Roger means abandoning all that she has held important thus far. “She had to cut clean some time, before she lost the magic, before she slowed and started repeating herself, before it was too late to build something for the years ahead ... Your future would be safe with Roger, *heart-safe*,” she tells herself (22). To “cut clean” is to give up her career, settle in London, raise a family with Roger, and have a future. Her decision is thus just as much about people as it is about spatiality—to live with Roger, she must tie herself to the city of London. Her life of adventure, which sees her experiencing a wide variety of different places, is not deemed appropriate for the long-term. “You can’t have your cake and eat it,” she tells herself (22). Having a partner and a family, and yet remaining herself in the process, appears not to be an option.

However, her thinking changes as a result of being cast away on the island—by being trapped in one place, ironically, she is able to avoid being trapped in another place, and lifestyle, in the years to come. The insular setting functions as a sanctuary where she can, in the company of her male companion, reclaim herself and embrace a different kind of future. “Do you think you’ll ever be able to settle down after this? Marry this architect fellow and stagnate in an English suburb? No, I can’t believe it” Nick tells Jan (177). She is forced to confront the pain of her past by being wrecked on the island and, in so doing, is able to realise the true nature of her desires. She is empowered through a rediscovered sense of self—a process that is anchored to location. As Hilton writes, “the island had wrought a change in her outlook, in her way of thinking. No matter what the future might hold her life could never be as it had been before—or rather she could never be as before, she corrected herself ... Eden had given her everything” (159-60). The setting is imbued with an influential power, as though it is capable of affecting human thoughts and emotions. “I’m beginning to think,” says Nick to Jan, “I’m not the only one on whom the island is working its spell” (92). The island recreates the castaways: they are able to adjust their worldviews, and thus embrace love with one another, because they have been cast away on insular shores.

GINNA GRAY’S *Always* (1994), like Hilton’s novel, uses the insular setting as a means of driving two characters together. Meghan is haunted by memories of her first romantic entanglement, which left her broken-hearted. Years after the event, she is marooned on an island with Rhys, the object of that past affection. The bounded nature of the location forces the pair to confront their past, and a relationship soon develops. Their confinement and isolation (which prevents any outside interference) allows the island romance to unfold. A sexual relationship is deemed inevitable. As

Rhys says, “You might as well face it, Meghan. I’m a man and you’re a woman, and we’re alone on this island, just the two of us. Maybe for years. Maybe for the rest of our lives. We will become lovers” (148). His statement suggests that intimacy between the two would not involve deeper emotions but would simply be, as Meghan fears, a shallow product of “propinquity” (149). Rhys, however, elaborates a little later: “Call it fate. Call it destiny. Call it any damned thing you want. We were meant to be together, you and I. Eight years ago we had a chance and messed it up, but this time we’re going to get it right” (148-49). The island’s bounded nature—that is the “propinquity” of the situation—may be responsible for their being brought together again, but the notion of fate prevents their reunion from becoming meaningless. The experience, to put it bluntly, was meant to happen. The island becomes their new beginning, a place in which wrongs can be righted and love can be embraced yet again—this time in a more mature and healthy manner than it had been in their past.

Sexual intercourse, when it inevitably happens, is described as pure, untainted, and true. “It was a rhythm as old as time,” writes Gray, “the rhythm of love, the rhythm of life itself” (181). Their relationship is purified through the notion of the island as an Eden. They become “a modern-day Adam and Eve,” living a harmonious life in which

There was fruit and fish and game in plentiful supply. There were no pressures, no worries, no restrictions—just the sensual, pagan freedom of a man and woman alone in an island paradise. They soaked up the sun, swam in the surf and the placid lagoon, took long walks on the beach, explored the island together and frolicked on the sand ... and they made love with joyous abandon. (177; ellipsis in original)



Their story is a tale of Eden told in reverse. Meghan and Rhys, like many popular romance castaways, are cast out of the world and into the Garden. After a little time on the island, Meghan describes Rhys as now having “an untamed look about him—savage almost—as though he had shaken off the fetters of civilization and allowed that wildness she had now and then glimpsed to break free” (106). Later, she muses that “The urbane sophisticate had vanished and the savage had emerged. He looked wild and wicked ... and so handsome it took her breath away” (148; ellipsis in original). Their new appearances are equated with their true selves. Meghan realises that Rhys’s “urban polish had been a veneer” (126) and her own veneer also crumbles as her skin develops freckles, her makeup runs out, and her hair and nails are no longer styled and cared for. Desire is strongly linked to the experience of being castaways. The longer they are marooned, the wilder their appearances become and, simultaneously, the more they attract one another. The island experience causes the pair to revert to a truer and less superficial state of being which, in turn, enables them to be attracted to one another.

### **Romantic Insular Classrooms: Discovering Intimacy and Love**

Julie Tetel Andresen’s *Swept Away* (1989) is set in 1688—not long after Defoe’s Crusoe leaves his own island—and follows the plight of the aptly named Eve and Adam. After their ship sinks, the pair (who are not companions at this stage) find themselves the sole occupants of a longboat. They drift aimlessly for a night and a day, before coming across a Caribbean island. As in *Beloved Castaway*, the island is populated by “Indians”; unlike Winspear’s novel, however, *Swept Away* does not provide the reader with a “civilised” outpost. There is no plantation on this island, and there is no ferry linking the location, however occasionally, to a mainland. Most

importantly, there is no figure to mediate between the new arrivals and the local inhabitants: there is no Roque in *Swept Away*. Adam and Eve must navigate the situation on their own, just as Defoe's Crusoe confronts the cannibals on his island using only his own intuition and knowledge. *Swept Away*, however, offers a far more harmonious result to this cross-cultural engagement: though the relationship between castaways and islanders is initially tense, it eventually develops into close friendship. That friendship, in turn, is linked to the island as people and place become, yet again, bound to one another.

The initial tension between the new arrivals and the islanders is the result of Adam's concerns that the islanders could be "Caribales" (Caribs), a cannibalistic tribe of Indians said to live in the Lower Antilles (62). Adam and Eve's fear reaches its height when, during a celebratory feast on the eve of their arrival, they are forced to their knees as part of a welcoming ritual. Eve misinterprets the event and believes they are about to be killed: eyes shut "against the hot, heavy, foreign night," she paints a picture of "snowy London nights" in her mind (65). She replaces an unfamiliar, exotic, and feared environment with one that is, to her mind, infused with beauty, calmness, and familiarity. Realising that she has misjudged the situation and that the Indians are, in fact, Arawaks, Eve opens her eyes and sees things in a very different light: "It seemed to me, in the split second that had bridged certain death into life, that the night had blossomed. The sky was no longer foreign and oppressive but very, very beautiful" (67). Setting is closely linked to event and, as in *Lord of the Flies*, physical surroundings become coloured by experiences. The reshaping of identity, moreover, is strongly tied to the island. Though Eve sees her soul, her sense of self, in relation to the land she has left behind ("In that one very beautiful moment of life, I felt my pinched Northern soul expand, just a little" [67]), the island is given

the power to change that soul. Her new location, rather than being responsible for the end of her life, actually leads to self-growth.

The reshaping of Eve's principles, spread throughout the text, drives much of the narrative. She begins the tale as a prim and proper character. Her propriety is focused particularly on sexuality and nudity: she is shocked that some of the female Indians are topless—"this *unseemly* mode of undress" (100)—and is scandalised by a large statue at the centre of the village, the bottom half of which she "did not care to contemplate" (54). She hatches several plans to "improve" the village and the moral conduct of the villagers, most of which involve covering female breasts and the "obscene" statue (101, 116, 152). As the novel progresses, however, Eve relaxes her sense of propriety. This is most obvious in her relationship with Adam. To begin with, she does not see him as a love interest: she notes that his "hard, muscular physique" is of benefit to their survival, but deems the question "Was he handsome?" to be irrelevant (43). Finding herself in a compromising situation approximately half-way through the novel, Eve says that "We are just two people who have been, by an accident of fate, thrown together ... I feel rather strongly that we should take a care to observe in the strictest fashion the moral tone a man and woman would in England!" (158). Her words are typical to her character but are soon followed by an action that is not: their conversation ends with a long and passionate kiss, the first of their relationship. "It was so very, very natural," narrates Eve, "that I did not once stop to think of my wanton behaviour in kissing a man so deeply and thoroughly—a half-naked man to whom I was not married, to whom I was neither betrothed nor had any immediate possibility of being pledged to" (164). It is a turning point for the widow, who was "so often *disappointed* (any woman will know what I mean)" by her dull husband (224), a chance to embrace life, love, and happiness.

Setting plays a crucial role in Eve's sexual development. The island allows her to engage in behaviour not deemed suitable in the "civilised" world of England. In the lead-up to the kiss, Eve protests that Adam's "sensibilities may have been strangely affected by ... these *unseemly* surroundings" (159). Her use of the word "unseemly" echoes her description of the islanders' clothing and suggests that she is referring more to the people than to the island. As Adam points out, however, the society is not built for "unseemly" conduct: strict gender segregation occurs in the daytime and there are firm rules governing male/female interactions. Indeed, Adam and Eve are strongly scolded for their inappropriately intimate actions. It is not the Arawak society, then, that encourages Adam and Eve's sexual behaviour; instead, I argue, the key lies in the relationship between castaways and setting. Eve continues her discussion of that first kiss by saying that she did not think of her "wanton behaviour" but instead "savoured the strange Caribbean elixir foaming through my veins" (164). It is an "elixir" made up of spatiality: "an intoxicating mix of gentle trade winds scented with salt and cedar, miraculously soft sunlight and deep pastels, the taste of papaya on a man's lips ... the grainy, gritty feel of sand underfoot, the strange squalling and calling of birds and the sweet chirp of tree frogs" (164). The island is thus synonymous with sexual intimacy—so powerful is that link, furthermore, that Adam and Eve feel they have been transported back to the island upon resuming their sexual relationship in London. The island works as a metaphor for sexual intercourse: foreplay becomes relaxed exploration of the location, after which "Together, we sped along in the wide street of swiftly moving water. We were heading not for the tranquil lagoon where we first stepped out onto Arawak Island, but to the rocks at the turning of the land where the mountain thrust its spur into the sea" (298). Sex becomes a way of remembering a time and place where they were both happy and content.

This scene in London also raises an important linguistic point. Describing their sexual climax, Eve says that “the water’s movement as it broke on the shore was complicated and chaotic and savage and satisfying” (299). “Savage” gains a dual meaning within *Swept Away*: it can be linked to a “natural” and consuming sexual intimacy that is based on love and anchored in physical surroundings and actions, or it can be used to describe the “savage” Carib/Caribale Indians who are deemed inhuman (63) or bestial (174). The Arawak Indians, on the other hand, are considered human but not savage, with the implication being that they are good, but rather bland, people: they are somehow not living life to the fullest. The concept of Caribs versus Arawaks has a long history within Caribbean colonisation. As Mimi Sheller points out, “The original narrative of Caribbean cannibalism in Columbus’s journals rested on a distinction between those who would work docilely for European colonisers, and those ‘cannibals’ who staged resistance and could thus be enslaved or killed” (148). Sheller goes on to explain that writers of the sixteenth century “contrasted an Arcadian vision of the Americas (inhabited by ‘peaceful’ Arawaks) against the ignoble savagery of the cannibal Caribs” (148). Andresen’s use of the term “savage,” therefore, links Adam and Eve to the Caribs; seen in this light, their sexual relationship becomes a kind of resistance towards society. The “inhuman” Caribs and the docile Arawaks fare poorly in history. *Swept Away* seems to suggest that only characters like Adam and Eve are able to learn how to be successfully “savage.” They can act as “savages” because they, unlike the Caribs, are able to temper their behaviour with a “civilised” and humane code of conduct. Such a lesson can only be learnt in the ethically problematic world of an imperialistic island setting. Historical engagement becomes a means to a happy end: spatial discourse is used to ensure that romantic love, and not postcolonial critique, is the agenda of this novel.

Penelope Neri's *No Sweeter Paradise* (1993), set in 1790, charts an island castaway experience that is both healing and educative for its key protagonists, Nathan and Mariah. A convict ship travelling from England to Australia sinks during a fierce storm, and many survivors are subsequently washed ashore on a nearby island. They quickly break into two groups: passengers, morally sound officers and crew, and innocent/repentant convicts on one side (led by Nathan), and dishonest, murderous, and/or morally weak convicts, officers, and crew on the other (led by "Bloody Ruskin"). The behaviour of those in the second group creates a parallel to *Treasure Island*. Like Silver and his pirates, they choose to camp near a pestilent swamp and engage in drunken revelry: "Right now, they're after celebrating their deliverance as might be expected of that wicked sort ... rollin' drunk, t' the very last footpad an' bawd" (61). By contrast, Nathan and his companions (including Mariah) engage in sensible castaway behaviour. They camp in a healthy spot, find fresh water, and look after one another. References to pirates are scattered throughout the text, but they are not always used in a negative manner. Pirates can be alluring, attractive, and seductive, just as they can be dangerous, unattractive, and repulsive. Thus, the honourable Nathan can be described as a pirate—"clad only in his battered leather waistcoat and ragged breeches, a strip of red cloth wound pirate-fashion about his head, and a gleaming cutlass gripped in his fist" (260)—as can the dishonourable and vile Ruskin—"In his ragged blue coat and thigh-high boots, his rusty cutlass brandished above his head, he looked like a crazy old pirate as he thundered down the beach towards them" (282)—with both descriptions producing a very different effect. The pitting of group against group in conflict also gives the novel *Lord of the Flies* undertones. *No Sweeter Paradise's* genre, however, means that it must end on a positive note: good triumphs over evil, and the reader's faith in humankind is restored.

Conflict, sorrow, and despair are threaded through the narrative, but so too are hope, strength, and love. The island gives Mariah and Nathan space in which to begin a healing process, for both have been badly damaged by their past. Nathan's pain involves a wrongful murder charge, which saw him sentenced to transportation. Mariah, tricked into marrying a cruel and psychologically unstable man, bears the emotional scars of repeated violent sexual abuse by her husband (who is absent, and incorrectly assumed deceased, for most of the novel). At twenty years of age, she has known only violent, degrading, and cruel sexual intimacy and is, as a result, terrified of sex. She is determined, however, to overcome this terror. More to the point, she is determined to do so whilst on the island, as she does not believe that they will be rescued: "Damn it! ... Before she died, she wanted to know what it was like to be gently loved by a man" (74). The possibility of death associated with the castaway experience prompts her to confront her deepest fear. She appeals to Nathan for help and practical education, and a sexual relationship between the two soon follows. The island helps her regain what was lost through the abuse: "The daily struggles of life on the island, the knowledge that death lay coiled but a step away ... had increased her self-reliance and her independence, had honed her courage to a keen edge. Jonathan's tender love-making had restored her female confidence and had cured her, she hoped, of her fears where men and intimacy were concerned" (383). In a paradox not unusual for castaway romances, the island is both an "Eden" (46) and a zone of danger. This combination, paired with Nathan's presence, enables Mariah's growth in self-confidence and allows her to confront and overcome her past. The castaways endure several difficult and dangerous situations, both on the island and post-rescue, but their relationship emerges victorious. At the story's end, a pregnant Mariah and Nathan are in Australia, happily dreaming of their future together.

This Happily Ever After conclusion is a direct result of the shipwreck and subsequent time on the island. The experience teaches Mariah how to accept, and engage in, sexual intimacy: the setting becomes a romantic classroom, just as Defoe's island is an imperial classroom. Mariah's personal growth is strongly aligned with nature. As Nathan himself puts it, "From a shadow of a woman who'd feared and loathed all men, she'd become the passionate lover of his dreams, glorious and sensual as nature had intended" (291). As is often the case in castaway popular romance fiction, moments of sexual intimacy are strongly tied to the insular setting. In a scene at the beach, the reader is told that "At the edge of the sand, where the waves could yet ripple over them in their race up the shore, he lowered her, opened her, took her ... his thrusts partnered the incoming surges of the sea, until she knew not where one ended and the other began" (209). A sexual encounter underneath a waterfall, in turn, features the phrases "as the fiery hardness of him filled her, she tore her mouth from his and arched backwards, uttering a silvery, trilling cry that soared above the waterfall's roar" (219) and "like his, her exultant cries were swallowed up by the rushing song of the falls that cascaded, dream-like, all about them" (220). The languages of spatiality and sex become inextricably linked, thereby allowing the reader to negotiate the island setting through the parameters of the novel's genre. Simultaneously, the reader is also able to understand the genre through the discourse of castaway fiction. Sexual intimacy, furthermore, is paired with the island's beauty—descriptions of setting and sex are entwined and mutually defining. This extends to the relevant characters' bodies even when they are not engaged in sexual acts: "with those flowers in your hair and that shell for a sceptre," says Nathan to Mariah, "you're a castaway queen—and one of surpassing beauty" (215). Mariah—the castaway queen—rediscovers herself and her sexuality through the natural island setting.



Islands of popular romance can also give heroines a less physical education. Donna Simpson's *Lady Savage* (2005), set in the Regency period, is a case in point. Its key protagonist, Savina, is marooned on an island between Jamaica and England in the company of her fiancé (Lord Gaston-Reade) and various family members, maids, and Gaston-Reade's secretary (Tony). Savina, like many popular romance heroines, is eccentric for her time. She is independent, intelligent, and little used to the customs of English society, having moved to Jamaica as a child. Her principles, however, are considered unusual even in Jamaica: she believes in racial equality, and abhors slavery. Upon being marooned, several members of the group attempt to replicate British society on the island; *Lady Savage*, however, is no nineteenth-century Robinsonade, and this group of people struggle to function as successful colonists. Though Gaston-Reade warns Tony not to think "that the hideous situation in which we find ourselves means that the divisions of our various positions will be lowered. We are civilized British people, not natives and not savages" (49), their transplanted Britain is not successful on the island. That is not to say that the scenario critiques British society in a postcolonial *Lord of the Flies* manner, but rather that the disintegration of the stifling societal norms represented by Gaston-Reade enables Savina to pursue her non-conformist sense of self.

The island is a place where Savina's ideologies can be nurtured and she can take charge of her own future by getting to know her fellow castaways better. She initially enters into her engagement with Gaston-Reade because she believes that he shares her views, despite making use of slave labour on his plantation. She eventually discovers, however, that he is a strong supporter of slavery and that he has no intention to free the slaves; moreover, the humane improvements on the plantation (which were integral to Savina's judgement of his character) are in fact due to Tony.

Savina realises that their island sojourn has allowed her a reprieve from the dreadful future towards which she was unwittingly sailing, namely life as the wife of a “slave-owner” and the “[comprise of] every guiding principle of her life” (119). Despite her horror at discovering Gaston-Reade’s true self, however, she does not call off the engagement immediately. Instead, she believes that their marooning is a gift and that “At the end of it, if they were rescued and safe, she would know if she could marry Lord Gaston-Reade, or if it was worth damaging her reputation and risking her father’s deep unhappiness to break the engagement” (119). Savina is thus not so much of a free spirit that she would let herself be guided solely by her principles. She needs the island, so separate from the rest of the world, to give her the strength of mind and confidence to break free from the society she sees as so flawed. Insular isolation allows Savina to find her true self.

The island setting, as in many other castaway tales of popular romance, becomes synonymous with a “natural” kind of love and sexuality. Savina and Tony gradually discover that they are attracted to one another. Alone on a walk one day, they marvel at the beauty of the island whilst conversing freely and, occasionally, helping each other over the rough terrain. There is an undercurrent of sexual electricity whenever their hands touch, and yet there is an element of calm beauty in the scene: “Somehow, he never let go of her hand and Savina didn’t mind; while they were alone they were just two children of nature, a part of the beauty that surrounded them” (143). They are one with the island when they are together, and their togetherness is deemed natural, beautiful, and innocent. They soon succumb to their desires and, holding one another intimately, share kisses with a passion new to both of them. Savina subsequently attempts to understand her feelings for Tony: “Was that something the island was doing to them, or would the same forbidden desires be

tugging at her in a London drawing room?” (147-48). She shows insight into their situation: deep love draws the two together, a love that could only develop through time spent in close proximity. Distance from England also means that members of two different classes—like Savina and Tony—have the freedom of closer contact. The island provides what London could not have and, in so doing, changes the castaways: “[Savina] knew that her life would never be the same for having lived there” (187). The insular setting reshapes the characters, thereby opening a new path of love for Savina. She is educated through the castaway experience, and is able to connect with her true feelings so as not to abandon her principles.

It takes some time for their island love to be translated into something equally beautiful once they return to England. Considering the possibility of rescue, Savina admits to herself that “she would miss much of their life on the island for what she had discovered about herself, and would have to deny once she was constrained again by stays and societal expectations” (179-80). Both Savina and Tony engage in such denial upon their return to England. Their expected personas are taken up and they become almost unrecognisable to one another. As with most popular castaway romances, the task of replicating a fantastical world within the context of everyday life proves to be difficult. The island and England are very different locales: “their time on the island had been time out of mind, a step away from real life” (231). Romance, however, triumphs over societal expectations, and Savina and Tony eventually succumb to passion. Their subsequent intimacy transports them back to a world in which they were more themselves than they can ever be in England: “It was as if her clothes tattered and the sound of the waves on the shore filled her ears. The scent of sea and jasmine blossoms drifted around her and the tropical heat filled her frigid form” (249). As in *Swept Away*, sexual intimacy is directly linked to the island:

intimate acts conjure up island places. These places become refuges, sites from which to draw strength when the real world becomes too difficult.

Darlene Marshall's *Castaway Dreams* (2012), set in 1817, also uses its island as a zone in which to transcend class barriers. It follows the unfolding relationship between Alexander and Daphne, both of whom are of very different backgrounds. Alexander is a serious-minded surgeon who has spent most of his life with the Royal Navy—his finances are limited and his class position is low. Daphne, on the other hand, is a very feminine and somewhat flighty child of a wealthy man and consequently belongs to the high society of London. Both are bound for England on the *Magpie* when the novel opens. Their ship is crippled by a ferocious storm, and Alexander and Daphne find themselves (like Adam and Eve of *Swept Away*) alone in a ship's boat. They endure exposure, thirst, and hunger on the open ocean, before being cast ashore on an uninhabited island. Trapped in each other's company for a month, they learn to respect, understand, and even love one another. Daphne is already the subject of a scandal (having run away to Jamaica with a man who then passed away), and any impropriety with Alexander would make her situation even worse upon arrival in London. Nonetheless, a tentative kind of relationship arises between the two characters. The island houses an uninhabited plantation, and the castaways are consequently provided both with a hut and a vegetable garden. They also discover a hoard of treasure, and it is this treasure that eventually draws their rescuers (who are pirates) back to the island. This setting, therefore, is a combination of the castaway island and the treasure island—*Castaway Dreams* calls up both the Robinsonade tradition and Stevenson's novel. Alexander and Daphne return to England onboard this pirate vessel, where they then overcome several problems before being married.

Their relationship would not have been possible in a different location: the island is a necessity to their Happily Ever After ending. *Castaway Dreams* offers a setting built on fantasy and desire, a locale where events can occur that would not be permitted or pursued elsewhere. It is a setting of possibilities. As Alexander says to Daphne, “We are in a strange bubble out of time and place here” (172). Marshall’s island is a classic example of the castaway popular romance setting: it is a world far away from reality. The relationship between the two castaways does not progress to sexual intercourse until they are on the ship, but the island nonetheless educates them in matters of the heart. They discover their affection for one another through the insular setting. Furthermore, their onboard sexual relations function as an extension of their island experience. Sex becomes a way of keeping their island memories alive. During a particularly intimate evening on the ship, for instance, Alexander pays great attention to increasing Daphne’s sexual pleasure: he “[wanted] to make this as perfect as possible for her” as “Their castaway dreams were ending, and they’d soon return to civilization and their former lives. Their proper lives. If he could not hold Daphne forever in his arms, he needed to imprint himself on her, make these memories so strong that she would never forget their magical time together” (256). Sexual intercourse acts as a powerful tool that, Alexander hopes, will later elicit memories in Daphne’s mind of himself and their shared time as castaways. However, this proves to be unnecessary as the island sojourn has changed both characters: it has taught them the meaning of romance so that they can eventually embrace one another as valid partners. As in other castaway popular romance narratives, the island becomes an enabler, and a powerful symbol, of the love and happiness shared between two castaways. Daphne and Alexander’s future is shaped by their island experience.

## **Twenty-First-Century Popular Romance Castaways and Their Islands**

Jill Shalvis's *The Trouble with Paradise* (2007) puts a modern spin on the island romance. Set in the twenty-first century, it follows the adventure of Dorie who, bored and unhappy with her life, suddenly wins a singles cruise through the islands of Fiji. Her trip, however, does not go as planned: the boat is crippled (as a result, she discovers much later, of sabotage) during a violent storm and Dorie becomes trapped on a tropical island with "a baseball stud, a hyperactive artist, a stripper—er, *dancer*, a laid-back captain, an unflappable chef, the gorgeous grumpy doctor ... and oh, a missing attitude-ridden boat hand" (145). As the novel's blurb tells the reader, "A deserted island would be the perfect setting for a steamy romance, if something sinister wasn't lurking." The sinister element of the situation, however, is not inherent to the island: it is not lurking there, but is, instead, brought with them. Bobby, the missing boat hand, is murdered during the storm; the murderer remains unknown for most of the novel, thus causing much fear and suspicion in the group. The mystery/crime element of *The Trouble with Paradise* is reminiscent of Spark's *Robinson* and also echoes Golding's *Lord of the Flies*—"New society, new rules, Dorie thought. Or maybe no rules at all..." (195; ellipsis in original). This aspect of the plot, however, is secondary to the novel's core mission of romance. The text is, first and foremost, a castaway popular romance novel and, as such, prioritises the love story of Dorie and the ship's doctor Christian. Contrary to the book's blurb, the island does indeed function as "the perfect setting for a steamy romance." Dorie and Christian find themselves in various "steamy" situations on the island; these encounters set in motion a relationship that leads to marriage and a Happily Ever After conclusion to the story.

*The Trouble with Paradise* is rife with intertextuality, particularly with regards to contemporary televisual texts. Scattered throughout the novel are sub-headings and chapter epigraphs like “Still Day One, still waiting for Ashton Kutcher to jump out and yell, ‘Punk’d!’” (147), “First night on deserted island—Where’s Jeff Probst<sup>18</sup> when you need him” (161), and “Afternoon of Day Three—So how does a girl get voted off the island?” (230). The references to reality television shows suggest that the castaways are living a fake reality: *The Trouble with Paradise*, like most castaway fictions, features an island that is separate from the rest of the world. However, the novel is strongly preoccupied with comparing “adventure” and its related texts to “reality” and finding a significant discrepancy. As Shalvis writes in another chapter epigraph, “Night Two on deserted island without modern conveniences, which sounds much more romantic than it really is” (209). Islands have long held the reputation of being paradisaical sites: Sheller points out that “contemporary views of tropical island landscapes are highly over-determined by the long history of literary and visual representations of the tropical island as paradise (37). Shalvis’s novel ridicules the image of islands as idyllic spaces: paradise does not conform to expectations, as Dorie quickly realises. Nonetheless, *The Trouble with Paradise* is not sufficiently oppositional to be a satire. The island may be described as a “big, craggy, rough, inhospitable rock” (140) but it still has “sensuous greens” (142) by its beach, “lush” vegetation (140), and, hidden in the rainforest, a waterfall and “natural pool” which “looked like heaven on earth” (168). Like the islands of other castaway popular romance novels, this island remains a place of love, sexuality, and personal growth.

The experience of being shipwrecked and subsequently trapped on the island proves to be a life-changing event for Dorie, who considers herself to be socially inept with men. The time spent away from her everyday life makes her realise that she has

to take control of her own future: she decides to stop “waiting for life to happen” and instead to “*make it happen*” (165). She acts on her resolution by going for an evening walk with Christian, whom she is greatly attracted to. They discover the waterfall and pool during this stroll—such a discovery is a common trope in castaway popular romance fiction, wherein the environment is intimately tied to sexual encounters. *The Trouble with Paradise* is no exception. Christian and Dorie marvel at the beauty of their surroundings, before making love passionately at the water’s edge. Shalvis describes the area as beautifully romantic—“Lit by the moon, the water shimmered like live crystals, but the pool, shadowed by all the lush growth, lay still as smooth, black marble” (168)—and alive with the sound of insects and birds. Sex seems inevitable, as “Coming in all around them was the damp, warm night air, making everything seem too close. Too intimate” (168). The setting thus foreshadows the imminent sexual encounter. In the aftermath of their passionate act, the island’s spatiality remains intimate: “Christian didn’t know how long he and Dorie clung to each other by the lagoon, breathing like crazy, serenaded by the island, which pulsed with life around them” (174). It is as though the island awakens Dorie and Christian, kindles a fire in their hearts, and opens their eyes to passion. Neither castaway has experienced intimacy with such intensity before. The island gives them, to use Dorie’s phrase, “yummy, wild, island sex” (226) and, in so doing, also gives them a new outlook on life: by being trapped on the island, they are psychologically set free.

The island sojourns of popular romance fiction, unlike Jim’s experience in *Treasure Island*, can have emotionally positive effects on characters even when they occur over a very short period of time. Kandy Shepherd’s *The Castaway Bride* (2011) features a contemporary island that plays host to a life-changing sexual relationship between two protagonists, Cristy and Matt. Cristy is preparing for her wedding on an



island in Queensland when she discovers the groom and bridesmaid passionately kissing one another. She flees the wedding (and the waiting guests), but cannot escape far due to her insular location. Matt, whom she has never met before, comes to her rescue when he offers to take her back to the mainland in his yacht. They leave the island but do not make it to their intended destination as a fearsome storm wrecks the boat and casts them ashore on a different island. The place is uninhabited, but features a “surveyor’s hut” or “survival shack” (ch. 4). Once in the shack, the castaways unpack the “panic bag” brought with them from the boat: while opening it, Matt jokingly claims that it contains “Everything a castaway might need” (ch. 5). Unbeknownst to him, however, the last person to pack the bag complemented the traditional “Swiss Army knife” and “matches” with “an assortment of different-sized chocolate bars—and an equal number of brightly-colored condom packets.” The island is now suitably stocked for popular romance castaways. A serious relationship quickly develops between the two characters, although they are only wrecked on the island for a few days. They are soon rescued and, as in most castaway popular romance texts, a period of conflict arises post-rescue. This is fuelled, in part, by Cristy’s shock at discovering that Matt is a rich property developer who owns the island on which they were wrecked (this notion of island ownership, of course, creates a strong parallel to Spark’s *Robinson*). Their conflict is, however, quickly overcome: the relationship built in their short time on the island is strong enough to carry them through this trouble, and the novel ends with their decision to marry one another.

Matt and Cristy both have strong ideals and principles concerning sex. Nonetheless, although neither is the type to pursue casual intimacy, sexual desire courses through the narrative. Their first sexual interaction occurs moments after reaching the island. The ship is wrecked near the coastline, and Matt and Cristy are

forced to battle the waves so as to reach the shore. Once there, they collapse in the shallow water by the beach and hold each other for comfort; their embrace, initially innocent, quickly becomes sexually charged as they urgently kiss and straddle one another. Their movements push them backwards into deeper water and a large wave dashes over them and brings them out of their frenzy before their intimacy develops any further. Both characters are scandalised at this turn of events, and Matt tries to persuade himself that “His passion had been a natural reaction to fear ... Some kind of basic instinct. Survival and sex, they went together” (ch. 4). This event is followed, the next morning, by another sexual encounter that is, this time, interrupted by a fall and the arrival of a dragon lizard. The delayed promise of sex works to stretch time out on the island, making it appear as though Cristy and Matt spend more time there than they actually do. Simultaneously, the short span of their time as castaways shows how powerful the experience can be. Though both characters have emotional issues concerning sexual intimacy, it does not take long for them to become seriously involved with one another and to engage in sex.

Location is synonymous with this lovemaking. Matt tells Cristy he wants to take her to a “special place” and, when Cristy interprets this to mean an orgasm, Matt says “I don’t mean that special place. Well I do. Hell, c’mon, I’ll take you there” (ch. 7). He then leads her to a beautiful pool in the middle of the forest, complete with a waterfall and “lush” vegetation. They make love in the water, and “as their bodies joined, [Matt] felt that they became one not just with each other but with this perfect place; that their rhythm was one with the ripples of the water and the rushing of the wind in the treetops.” So involved is he with both the island and Cristy that, upon climax, “he expected to see the water froth and boil around them as their cries of fulfillment echoed around their own, private paradise.” Intercourse thus becomes as

beautiful as the island itself, thereby allowing both characters to put aside their fears surrounding sex. Moreover, in a moment similar to Nathan's description of Mariah as a "castaway queen" in *No Sweeter Paradise*, Matt compares Cristy's beauty to their physical surroundings: "Standing there with the waterfall behind her, her beauty was as much of the scene as the spectacular display of nature. With her wild blond hair tumbling over her beautiful, rounded breasts she was his mermaid fantasy come true." They thus become characters of the island: figures who belong in the setting, and who can rediscover their confidence in love through their location.

Tracey Garvis Graves's *On the Island* (2011)<sup>19</sup> charts a somewhat different castaway experience. The story is, unusually for a castaway popular romance, told through two alternating narrators: T. J. and Anna. Both characters are a little lost in their lives. T. J. begins the novel as a sixteen-year-old boy three months into cancer remission, and Anna as a thirty-year-old teacher languishing in a long-term and stagnating relationship. The pair are travelling to the Maldives, Anna as T. J.'s tutor, when their plane crashes into the Indian Ocean. T. J. and Anna survive and are able to make their way to a lonely island. In an echo of *The Coral Island*, the only sign of prior human habitation is a deserted hut and, tucked away in a cave, a lonely human skeleton (85). The two castaways begin their island life in poor shape: dehydrated, wounded, and suffering from exposure, they have minimal energy to carry out essential castaway tasks like gathering food and water, and making fire. Their situation gradually improves as supplies from the wreck drift to shore. They slowly recover from the trauma of the accident, and adapt to their new environment. As Anna says, "It's not like we had a choice ... We either figured it out or we died" (75). Their time as castaways is never easy: illness and injury are recurring problems, and the hard life takes its toll on their minds and bodies. Graves thus presents the reader with

a castaway experience that is far more authentic than those found in most castaway fictions. *On the Island* is a novel filled with anguish. However, that anguish is endured true to the novel's genre: it is made tolerable through companionship. T. J. realises that "The sound of [Anna's] voice, her smile, *her* – those were the things that made living on the island bearable" (119) and Anna tells T. J. that "I can only handle being here because you're with me" (149). As T. J. grows older, he and Anna fall deeply in love and the island becomes a place of sex as well as survival.

Their first sexual encounter, as is often the case in castaway popular romances, reflects their life on the island. There is no freshwater pool and waterfall involved, and no lush, green, sensuous vegetation. Instead, the encounter takes place in the aftermath of a scene of mastery and survival. T. J. and Anna have lost their ocean lagoon—a prime fishing and washing locale—to a large and aggressive tiger shark. They manage to kill this shark, but almost lose their lives in the process. They feast on shark meat that evening and, afterwards, make love for the first time. Sex becomes a celebration of their mastery over the island, a celebration of their ability to survive even in harsh conditions. The parallel between sex and life on the island extends to pregnancy, or lack thereof. Anna and T. J. regularly sleep together from this point onwards and, when Anna experiences intense nausea, T. J. asks her if she could be pregnant. Such a turn of events would not, in the context of the genre, be unusual: Meghan of *Always*, Eve of *Swept Away*, and Mariah of *No Sweeter Paradise* all fall pregnant on their islands. Anna, however, says that it is "probably impossible" due to her island-related poor health and T. J.'s pre-existing health problems. T. J. perseveres on the topic of her falling pregnant on the island, whereupon Anna becomes upset: "Don't say that. Not here. Not on the island. The baby would have horrible odds for survival" (188). The island, then, is not a place of new life.

It is, however, dislocated from the real world and, as such, provides the pair with the opportunity to start a relationship. As T. J. muses, “If we were in Chicago, I wouldn’t stand a chance with her. But I was starting to wonder if, here on the island, I might” (139). They are rescued several years after the plane crash, by which time they cannot cope without one another and find it very difficult to adjust to the outside world. The common castaway romance trope of post-rescue relationship difficulties is amplified through T. J.’s age and Anna’s role as a teacher. Although T. J. was almost nineteen, and thus a consenting adult, when he and Anna started sleeping together, there is a great uproar when their relationship is made public. Furthermore, their respective ages of twenty and thirty-three are not easily compatible in the everyday world. After several months of heartbreak and misery, however, they decide that nothing matters but one another: “let’s make our own [world],” says T. J., “we’ve done it before” (330). Three years later, they are happily married with 11-month old twins and another baby on the way, and Anna tells the reader that they will, one day, “tell [the kids] that this house, and the property that surrounds it, is our island. And that T. J. and I are finally home” (346). Even the most gruelling castaway experience can therefore change a character’s life for the better: the island brings two lost characters together and allows them to find peace in each other’s company.

### **The Crusoe Fantasy and the Healing Island**

Crusoe and his island are a myth, but they have also become a sexually romantic fantasy. As *The Castaway Bride*’s Matt says of Cristy: “With her breasts swelling lushly out of the top and her long legs slender beneath the short, ragged skirt, she looked like some Robinson Crusoe fantasy come true. And she was his” (ch. 7). No longer just an icon of adventure and self-reliability, the image of Crusoe has expanded

to include notions of love, sexuality, and partnership. Moreover, when seen collectively, castaway popular romance fiction offers a setting that is both familiar and somewhat altered. Crusoe's island, and his island attitudes, have been taken up and remodelled into something different. Imperial tropes are reused and reshaped to suit the agenda of this alternate style of castaway narrative. Islands are, within *Robinson Crusoe* and its nineteenth-century successors, generally places where castaways can find themselves as colonists and/or imperialists. Popular romance texts, on the other hand, construct their islands as sites where castaways can find themselves as lovers. Insular locations act as places of healing and psychological growth: they are distant and safe havens of desire and empowerment. Seeing her island for the first time, for instance, Eve of *Swept Away* tells the reader that "My first impression of the island was that it was resting like a water lily on the swelling bosom of the waters ... I fancied that here nothing withered; things were only warmed into life" (32-33). The positive nature of such island representations, however, is lessened by their being grounded in an imperial textual past. *Robinson Crusoe* provides castaway popular romance fiction with an imperial foundation on which to build a different type of story. Historicity is often lost or minimised in this process, but the legacy remains clear: these stories may use their insular settings in an enlightened manner, but they nonetheless remain a product of imperial island narratives. This failure to engage in postcolonial critique detracts from their enlightened nature, as the colonial past is misappropriated. Ultimately, islands remain zones to be understood through a framework of imperialistic ideologies.

## Conclusion: Negotiating Spatiality

Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* has left us with a multi-faceted legacy. The story is etched into our psyche, both in its own right and through the many island narratives that came in its wake. These stories, as discussed in this thesis, include the adventurous Robinsonades and Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, the direct rewritings of Tournier and Coetzee, the ominous geographies of Golding, Wiggins, and Spark, and the love havens of castaway popular romance fiction. At the heart of all these tales lies the imperial island; narratological agendas are fulfilled through attention to spatiality. Character engagement with insular terrain combines with spatial language so as to present very specific island images to the reader. Furthermore, even those texts that turn to the island setting so as to subvert imperial tropes and ideologies (like *Foe* and *Lord of the Flies*) or those that use it for other purposes (like the popular romance texts) rely on the imperial roots of the island to achieve their goal. Setting drives Defoe's novel and its successors. There would be no Crusoe, no Crusoe myth, and no Crusoe legacy without the island. Moreover, this thesis argues, characters are defined through setting: the subjectivities of Crusoe and his descendents are tied to their islands. Castaway fiction links people to place—both in the realm of fiction and, as shown by the map-making competition held through *The Boy's Own Paper*, in the minds of the readers. This link also allows the parallel development of characters and setting, which is particularly apparent in the earlier texts that see their characters become colonists in direct relation to the domestication of their islands.

Castaway texts and related stories give insight into the cultural construction of islands. Studying *Robinson Crusoe* and its legacy allows us to better understand the manner in which insular locations (both in a specific and in a representative sense) are

thought of and imagined in Western culture. The literary analysis of island fiction thus holds great value for the broader study of islands. It is unfortunate, therefore, that scholars within island studies tend to prioritise “real” islands over fictional ones (as discussed in the introduction to this thesis). Hay, for instance, believes that the field “should ... concern itself with the reality of islands” (30). His stance, however, is tempered by the belief that “There is one important manner in which metaphorical senses of islandness *are* the appropriate substance of island studies. This is when metaphoric transcriptions of islands rebound upon *real* islands and influence life there” (30). I contend that fictional islands always “rebound” onto real islands, in the sense that they contribute to a generic island image that informs real-world attitudes and behaviours. Every new story adds to overarching ideologies and cultural constructs concerning islands in general. As a result, armchair island experiences are just as important as real-world island experiences, for both add to our collective cultural understanding of islands. To return to an earlier quotation from Fletcher, “scholarship can only ever apprehend the meaning of place through language” (26). Human interactions with, and experiences of, the world are tied to texts, so much so that we cannot know our surroundings as neutral spaces devoid of stories: even the most pristine and untouched location can only be known through a human presence. In short, we negotiate the world through text, and we negotiate the island world through castaway fiction.

The novels examined over the course of this thesis provide valuable insight into that island world. *Island Fictions: Castaways and Imperialism* charts the evolution of the Crusoe myth and legacy from the urtext—*Robinson Crusoe*—through nineteenth-century imperialistic Robinsonades and related texts, to rewritings (both literary and popular) of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Analysis of *Robinson*



*Crusoe* provides foundational insight into the roots of the castaway legacy—spatial language and imagery is brought to the forefront so as to better understand the text’s mode of operation. The binaries of space/place and landscape/wilderness, this chapter argues, allow Crusoe to develop into a successful colonist: the island experience teaches him how to succeed within a framework of empire building. *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *Masterman Ready*, and *The Coral Island* hark back to Defoe’s text through character engagement with space. Characters interact with, understand, and shape their islands through the implicit and/or explicit memory of Crusoe—insular terrain, these novels suggest, can only be lived on in relation to the earlier castaway. The blatant imperialistic messages of these texts develop into those of Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, with the domestic island giving way to a temporarily experienced zone of terror and financial gain. Insular spatiality is fractured by the concepts of expectations versus reality, as young Jim Hawkins anticipates the joyful adventures he will have on the island only to instead be confronted by trauma. That trauma is then negotiated through attention to space—spatial manipulation, in short, allows Jim to displace his fear and thus gain from the situation.

Chapters five and six of this thesis, in turn, examine the manner in which literary twentieth-century texts have engaged with the imperial myth of *Robinson Crusoe* and its aftermath. *Friday*, I argue, fails to engage critically with its colonial source text—Tournier offers a tale that is grounded in the same imperialistic ideologies as its predecessor. This novel remains a conquest narrative, a story in which the island is explicitly used and abused by the castaway. Coetzee, by contrast, achieves a critical “writing back” narrative in *Foe* through clear attention to issues of trauma, storytelling, and overturned spatiality: by acknowledging the difficulty of addressing the traumatic history of colonisation, Coetzee is able to create a new kind

of castaway story. The Crusoe figure has disappeared by the novel's end, and the reader is left to hope that perhaps Friday and, indeed, the island itself may now be free. Following on from this discussion, the thesis then examines the manner in which island settings have been used to develop the notions of displaced guilt and fear. The spatial discourse and insular representations of *Treasure Island* are taken up and expanded upon, so much so that the island is, in Spark's novel, shaped like a person and known as Robinson. This underscores the crucial point at the heart of the dynamic: whilst insular locations are made to appear terrifyingly inhospitable, such depictions are a product of humankind. Islands are made to be zones of danger, yet these novels explicitly show that it is, in fact, the people (rather than the places) that are at fault.

Finally, the thesis concludes with a broad overview of twentieth- and twenty-first century castaway popular romance fiction. The range of texts in this category underscores the broad reach and cultural impact of the castaway narrative: Crusoe is not just a myth for children, postcolonialists, or literary authors. Popular romance has embraced the castaway tale, and has altered it to suit the very specific needs of this genre. Islands become places of love, romance, and sexual acts—life lessons are learnt regarding these topics, and characters are able to move beyond their insecurities and personal problems so as to enter into a Happily Ever After ending. Such a use of the island setting, though it is positive in the sense that characters experience self-growth and healing through spatiality, is ultimately problematic given that historical contexts are minimised and imperial tropes are decontextualized. As a result, the trauma of the castaway myth is forgotten: characters learn to love themselves and one another at the expense of the Fridays and the islands of the colonial past.

*Island Fictions: Castaways and Imperialism* examines the spatial links, disruptions, and implications of the Crusoe myth and legacy. The popularity of the castaway story—and its ability to transcend genre divisions—clearly indicates the extent to which it is entrenched in Western culture. Furthermore, the network of Crusoe texts does not stop with the novels discussed in this thesis. Kevin Carpenter’s bibliography, for instance, lists five hundred and five children’s island stories that were published between 1788 and 1910. The castaway narrative has also, as Weaver-Hightower discusses, successfully crossed mediums to the filmic and televisual screens (205-23). Nor is the castaway tale restricted to realism: as texts like Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726), Jules Verne’s *The Mysterious Island* (1874), and Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi* (2001) indicate, the island is also a space of metaphor, science fiction, and fantasy. Overall, this vast array of narratives forms a self-referential network that has Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* at its core. Green writes that the story “became a literary archetype, at the back of every reader’s mind, that writers could play upon” (*Robinson Crusoe* 2). That archetype still remains active today: Defoe’s Crusoe and his island haunt contemporary island narratives. This haunting is achieved through spatial language and character behaviour: islands are—explicitly or implicitly—navigated through the memory of Crusoe. Furthermore, whilst this argument is applicable to all Crusoe texts, it is particularly relevant to those under examination in this thesis: from the Robinsonades and *Treasure Island* to the literary and popular texts of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, spatiality is navigated through the memory of Crusoe. That memory is built on the ethically problematic ideologies of empire. The castaway island is trapped in an imperialistic spatial discourse, and will continue to be held there unless it is critically examined. Spatial analysis, this thesis argues, provides *the* avenue into that vital process of examination.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The full title of Defoe's novel is *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who Lived Eight and Twenty Years, All Alone in an Un-Inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoke; Having Been Cast on Shore by Shipwreck, Wherein All the Men Perished but Himself. With an Account How He Was at Last as Strangely Deliver'd by Pyrates.*

<sup>2</sup> Examples include *The Arctic Crusoe, a Tale of the Polar Sea: Or, Arctic Adventures on the Sea of Ice* by Percy B. St. John (1875), Roy J. Snell's *An Eskimo Robinson Crusoe* (1917), and, more recently, John Smelcer's *Edge of Nowhere* (2010).

<sup>3</sup> The origin of this term is generally attributed to Johann G. Schnabel, the author of a *Robinson Crusoe* style narrative entitled *Die Insel Felsenburg* (1731-43). See Green for a discussion of this novel and the etymology of the term "Robinsonade" (*Robinson Crusoe* 14, 43-45, 51).

<sup>4</sup> As is clarified in an editorial footnote within the text, "humane" can be read as "human" throughout the story (19).

<sup>5</sup> Whilst it is not strictly relevant to this thesis, it is worth noting that William Cowper used the term "monarch of all I survey" in his 1782 poem entitled "Verses, Supposed to be Written by Alexander Selkirk, During his Solitary Abode in the Island of Juan Fernandez." The opening lines of the poem read "I am monarch of all I survey, / My right there is none to dispute" (403).

<sup>6</sup> One could argue, in fact, that there has been more engagement with the question of *The Swiss Family Robinson's* supposedly insular setting in fictional, rather than scholarly, responses to the novel. Two "sequels" to Wyss's story—Adrien Paul's *Willis the Pilot* (1855) and Jules Verne's two-volume *Their Island Home* (1900) and *The Castaways of the Flag* (1900)—both acknowledge that *The Swiss Family Robinson's* castaways do not fully explore or view their surroundings and thus cannot know if they are on an island or a continent.

<sup>7</sup> This is further evidenced by Ballantyne's *The Gorilla Hunters* (1862), which follows the boys through new adventures in Africa.

<sup>8</sup> This creates a link to the map-making competition in *The Boy's Own Paper*, wherein Stevenson takes on the role, figuratively speaking, of both Defoe and the competition entrants.

<sup>9</sup> The edition of Tournier's *Friday* being used in this analysis is a translation from the French. There are two such translations in existence, but this version is the most faithful to the original (see Petit 180).

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Most *Friday* scholarship refers to the French edition: unavoidably, the majority of *Friday* scholarship discussed in this chapter therefore takes the original (and not the translation) as its text of analysis.

<sup>10</sup> Other scholars, including Watt (*Myths* 256), also discuss Tournier's relocation of Crusoe's island.

<sup>11</sup> *The Coral Island* offers a similar statement when Ralph admits that "[setting] energetically about preparations for a permanent residence seemed so like making up our minds to saying adieu to home and friends forever, that we tacitly shrank from it" (50). However, the boys' attitude does not negate enjoyment of the island but instead reflects, as discussed earlier, their perception of the setting as a kind of holiday home.

<sup>12</sup> Such a reading is in direct contrast to Petit: "Robinson is ... fulfilling childish Oedipal desires ... Rather than finding maturity through resolving an Oedipus complex, he is developing a new, unprecedented, and guilt-free psychology based not on repressing but on expressing his Oedipal desires" (7). Petit's reading does not take into account Robinson's self-proclaimed return to adulthood, nor does it consider the development of the island from a mother to a partner.

<sup>13</sup> Susan's name and key aspects of her life (not including the island episode) indicate a second source text for *Foe*: Defoe's *Roxana* (1724). See Spivak for a discussion of this intertextuality.

<sup>14</sup> H. De Vere Stacpoole's *The Blue Lagoon* (1908) and, to a lesser extent, its sequels *The Garden of God* (1923) and *The Gates of Morning* (1925) provide an earlier example of sexuality entering the castaway tale. However, these novels are more in line with nineteenth-century Robinsonades than with twentieth-century popular romance fiction. Though they add sexuality to the tale, they do so with subtlety: sexuality does not become the core concern of the story until its later filmic adaptations, of which *The Blue Lagoon* (1980) and *Return to the Blue Lagoon* (1991) are the most well known.

<sup>15</sup> Edmond clarifies in his discussion of Tahiti that, although "Sexual exchange across the beach must also have taken a variety of forms," the emphasis in representation has generally been on heterosexuality (*Representing* 69). This raises a question that, although beyond the scope of this thesis, is worth noting: namely, what is the role of the more marginalised sexualities within the pages of island stories?

<sup>16</sup> See Edmond (*Representing* 64-83) and Dening (*Mr Bligh's*) for extended analyses of the HMS *Bounty* mutiny.

<sup>17</sup> Kristin Ramsdell provides detailed definitions of these terms: see category (51-52), historical (185-91), and traditional contemporary (50-51).

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<sup>18</sup> Jeff Probst is the host of the CBS television series *Survivor* (2000-).

<sup>19</sup> This novel is followed by Graves's *Uncharted: An On the Island Novella* (2013), which sees several characters willingly return to the island for a short visit.

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