

# Converted Spaces, Contained Places: *Robinson Crusoe*'s Monologic World

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## Summary

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* ([1719]1985) is primarily defined by a mythic conversion experience as the novel's core narrative structure traces the hero's transition from social isolation and disconnection to self-actualisation and social reintegration. This conversion process is exemplified by Crusoe's appropriation of the island, as this space becomes the site onto which all of his anxieties and aspirations are inscribed and which is consequently "transformed" from untamed wilderness into a cultivated "paradise" that bears testament to both Enlightenment rectitude and Western accomplishment. Thus, *Robinson Crusoe* constructs a concrete cultural space that represents a social totality in an imaginatively accessible and appealing manner. Such a cultural space, though imaginary, naturalises constructions of "home" and "empire" by interpreting the unknown in terms of the known. Crusoe's island is thereby transformed into a utopia of eighteenth century British, middle-class values. Defoe therefore managed to naturalise and normalise constructions of space which before had been unfamiliar to his eighteenth century readership.

This article will examine how Crusoe's conversion of an unknown, marginal and ambiguous geographical locale into a prototypical British colony is defined by various processes of spatial conversion and cultural inscription. In the process, the island space is recast as a monologic world, a *place* that stands oblivious to the various ambiguities and contradictions contained within its representation.

## Opsomming

*Robinson Crusoe* deur Daniel Defoe ([1719]1985) bestaan hoofsaaklik uit 'n mitiese omkeringservaring deurdat die teks se sentrale narratiewe struktuur die held se oorgang van 'n toestand van maatskaplike isolasie en diskonneksie na selfverwensliking en sosiale herintegrasie beskryf. Hierdie omkeringsproses word vergestalt in die wyse waarop Crusoe die eiland vir homself toeëien, aangesien hierdie ruimte die terrein word waarbinne al sy angste en aspirasies opgeneem word. Gevolglik word die eiland getransformeer van ongetemde "wildernis" tot gekultiveerde "paradys" wat getuig van sowel die morele korrektheid van die Verligtingsera as Westerse bekwaamheid. Sodoende stel *Robinson Crusoe* 'n konkrete kulturele ruimte daar wat 'n sosiale totaliteit op 'n toeganklike en aantreklike wyse uitbeeld. Hoewel denkbeeldig, stel hierdie kulturele ruimte konstruksies van "vaderland" en "empire" as natuurlik voor deur die onbekende in terme van die bekende uit te druk. Crusoe

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se eiland word sodoende getransformeer tot 'n utopie van agtiende-eeuse, Britse middelklaswaardes. Defoe slaag dus daarin om konstruksies van ruimte wat voorheen vreemd was vir die agtiende-eeuse leserspubliek, te naturaliseer en normaliseer.

Hierdie artikel ondersoek die wyse waarop Crusoe se omwerking van 'n onbekende, marginale en dubbelsinnige geografiese plek tot 'n prototipiese Britse kolonie gedefinieer word deur verskillende prosesse van ruimtelike omkering en kulturele inskripsie. In dié proses word die eilandruimte herskep tot 'n monologiese wêreld, 'n plek waarbinne die dubbelsinnighede en weersprekings wat die representasie daarvan behels, verswyg word.

## Introduction and Contextualisation

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* ([1719]1985) is primarily defined by a mythic conversion experience as the novel's core narrative structure traces the hero's transition from social isolation and disconnection to self-actualisation and social reintegration. As sole survivor of a shipwreck, Crusoe has to survive in, and adapt to a space which he initially experiences as alien and threatening, and he gradually begins to transform himself along with his environment. By the time he leaves the island 28 years later, he has become a resourceful and capable ruler over an economically viable cultural monopoly.

This conversion process is exemplified by Crusoe's appropriation of the island, as this space becomes the site onto which all of his anxieties and aspirations are inscribed. Consequently, the island is "transformed" from untamed wilderness into a cultivated "paradise" that bears testament to both Enlightenment rectitude and Western accomplishment. As such, the central aim of this article is to examine how Crusoe's conversion of an unknown, marginal and ambiguous geographical locale into a prototypical British colony establishes a monologic world order on the island that defines identity as fixed and the island space as contained. In the Bakhtinian sense, a monologic world is closed, static, and limiting in the way in which it denies the Other. In *Robinson Crusoe*, a monologic world view is manifested by Crusoe's experience of and adaptation to space as well as processes of identity formation. In this regard, Crusoe's relation to space emulates processes of colonisation, as illustrated by his appropriation and domestication of the island. Furthermore, Crusoe's relation to space also reveals his identity to adhere to an unyielding and codified structure of hierarchy and authority. Crusoe recreates this monologic structure on the island by appointing himself as master over the island's animal and human residents.

According to Phillips (1997: 12), adventure stories – such as *Robinson Crusoe* – construct a concrete cultural space that represents a social totality in an imaginatively accessible and appealing manner. Such a cultural space, though imaginary, naturalises constructions of "home" and empire by interpreting the unknown in terms of the known. Crusoe's island is thereby

transformed into a utopia of eighteenth-century, British, middle-class values. However, the concept of utopia is ambiguous since utopia is a non-place in the sense that it exists only as a literary invention. Such an idealised setting, as well as the values it exemplifies, could therefore only truly exist in the reader's imagination. Nevertheless, Defoe's portrayal of a remote island still manages to naturalise and normalise constructions of space which previously had been unfamiliar to Defoe's eighteenth-century readership. In the process, the island space is reconfigured as a monologic world, a *place* that stands oblivious to the various ambiguities, inversions and contradictions contained within its representation.

## Crusoe's Eighteenth-century Contexts

The Augustan period, also referred to as the Enlightenment, can broadly be characterised as a time of colonial expansion, social upheaval, scientific progress and the rise of the middle class. Eighteenth-century attitudes and thought were mainly informed by notions of order, reason and rectitude. Also closed, unyielding, resistant to change and conservative, the eighteenth-century social context reflected a monologic world order that provided the theoretical basis on which the imperialist drive depended.

The Enlightenment refers to an eighteenth-century intellectual movement and a cultural mood defined by a firm belief in a universal and uniform human reason as the most adequate means of solving crucial problems in society and establishing the essential norms in life (Abrams 2005: 80). Enlightenment ideals were centred on concepts of social progress and self-improvement. Accordingly, literature of the time placed great emphasis on the importance of rationalism and moral righteousness and dealt with themes that showed the importance of conforming to socially acceptable ideals for the sake of achieving self-actualisation. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Enlightenment ideals are articulated by the novel's compounding theme of individual advancement from a primitive state to a productive, ordered and purposeful existence. After four years on the island, Crusoe ([1917]1985: 140)<sup>1</sup> reflects on the way in which his situation has enabled him to improve himself by encouraging a righteous and pious way of life:

I was removed from all the wickedness of the world here. I had neither the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life*. I had nothing to covet; for I had all that I was now capable of enjoying; I was lord of the whole manor; or if I pleased, I might call my self king or emperor over the whole country which I had possession of ... I possessed infinitely more than I knew what to do with.

(p. 140)

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1. All subsequent references to *Robinson Crusoe* are indicated by page number(s) only.

In this extract, the Enlightenment ideals of self-advancement and progress are articulated by Crusoe's perception of himself as "lord", "king" and "emperor". Throughout the novel, Crusoe's sense of security and well-being are related to the state of his possessions such as tools, food and most importantly, land. The narrative parallels his monarchical possession of land,<sup>2</sup> food and supplies to the concept of self-actualisation based on an Enlightenment vision which defined progress in terms of spiritual fulfilment and personal contentment.

Defoe's tale relates the monologic world view of his time and like his contemporaries Locke and Newton, his ideas were defined by Enlightenment values of tolerance, reason and practical work. Living in an age that placed great emphasis on empirical observation of both material circumstance and social reality, Defoe believed that anything which was filtered through the mind, seen, thought, desired, feared and recorded, was describable and knowable (Seidel 1991: 6). He was able to integrate this belief with his writing, which was concerned with relaying existential certainties based on universal ideas derived from empirical observation and objective representation. This ideal is enacted by Crusoe's belief that the application of reason has the power to deliver him from the darkness of superstition and barbarity, or "blood-guiltiness" (p. 179) that continuously threatens his isolated existence. Defoe's writing – specifically *Robinson Crusoe* – therefore foregrounds the rationalist dominant and as such, the tale of *Robinson Crusoe* compounds only a single ontological level that places that which is white, male, Christian and English as the rational norm to which everything else, including foreign spaces and foreign identities, must submit.

## The Significance of the Island as Wilderness

Traditionally, stories of shipwrecks and castaways involve a physical journey across vast oceans, which is brought to an abrupt halt when disaster strikes and the seafarer becomes stuck on an unknown shore. The castaway then sets off on a spiritual journey – a rite of passage that explores the parameters of existence and becomes symbolic of spiritual insight and transcendence. As such, representations of the castaway's plight often functions as a vehicle for spiritual and moral exploration.

According to Seidel (1991: 37), islands conjure up a double image of sea and land. On the one hand, the island offers protection and shelter against the onslaughts of the sea and climatic conditions. On the other hand, the island often stands as a geographically remote piece of land surrounded by an ocean that separates the castaway from his homeland. As such, the island also encompasses the castaway's isolation and estrangement and is often represented as a site related to man's most primal fears and apprehensions.

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2. Also refer to the extract on page 108.

In the context of the castaway novel, these fears usually relate to onslaughts from unknown and unpredictable forces – whether from man, beast or hunger. Upon first seeing the island onto which he will shortly be shipwrecked, Crusoe describes it to be “more frightful than the Sea” (p. 64). Marzec (2002: 130) suggests that as a “nonsymbolizable, meaningless presence”, the island unsettles Crusoe’s sensibility in the sense that he no longer experiences the world as interpretable, familiar and ordered. A liminal space, the island instead lies at the margins of survival and demise; of civilisation and civilised behaviour.

The remote island wilderness often also functions as an idyllic or a utopian space in adventure stories as islands, whether real or allegorical, and represents the ideal playground for adventurous pursuits and imperial ideals. Loxley (1990: 3) contends that in literature, the island is a space in which all historical and political contradictions are eliminated, as the desert island is not subject to normal political, social and cultural interference. The island therefore offers the ideal setting in which the major themes of colonialism and imperialism can be articulated, as Defoe’s novel so clearly illustrates. Since mastering the surrounding ocean would be an impossible feat, the island becomes the only terrain on which the castaway can attempt to leave his mark. This urge to appropriate, inscribe, and claim, exemplifies the imperialist drive towards geographical and economic expansion. However, even in the most naive of adventure stories, the island always maintains a level of ambiguity, as the impenetrable wilderness remains a threatening presence – both physically and psychologically – that must be kept at bay.

Popular eighteenth-century opinion regarded the castaway’s predicament as a condition of spiritual disconnection. As a result, the castaway had to overcome the limitations of material life to become spiritually enlightened. Crusoe’s interaction with the island setting reveals how one man redeems himself from a condition of spiritual abandonment by investing the island with all the supports of civilised life. Integral to Crusoe’s integration of such “supports” with his environment are notions of craft and ingenuity, and also power. Control over island space is therefore a central motif in *Robinson Crusoe* that is suggestive of the way in which the adventure novel of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries established a marked relation between Western identity formation and the colonisation of space. In this regard, *Robinson Crusoe* represents many aspects of Britain or “home” in relation to the island by perpetuating an ideology that placed Britain at the centre and colonies like the island at the margins. Phillips (1997: i) refers to this process as “mapping” as it “charts colonies and empires, projecting European geographical fantasies onto non-European, real geographies”. Mapping is not only applicable to representations of space and place, but also to constructions of race, class, gender, religion and language. As Defoe’s novel illustrates, mapping enables the imaginative and material possession of the island by means of spatial conversion and cultural inscription. The island is thereby transformed from an unchartered and

impenetrable wilderness into a cultivated paradise – a space arranged into a structure of enclosures, fortifications and plantations.

## Spatial Conversion

In the context of *Robinson Crusoe*, conversion involves the reorganisation of space by subdividing it according to proportions and rational divisions, which implies an improvement of rather than a return to nature. Crusoe achieves this by means of appropriation and containment or enclosure of the island space.

The conversion of space has a psychological aspect that is manifested by the way in which Crusoe interacts with the island. His initial distress and anxiety after being shipwrecked are motivated by his fear of being attacked and eaten by wild animals (or wild men), or dying from hunger (p. 66). He attempts to curtail these fears firstly by securing himself physically; thereby also calming himself psychologically. After salvaging what he can from the ship, he sets out to explore his surroundings. He then goes in search of food and a suitable place for his “habitation” (p. 71). Crusoe takes the first step towards converting the island: space, or at least part of it, is contained and becomes place as he erects a kind of fortress or enclosure that shelters him from savages, wild beasts and the elements. This fortress consists of a tent, stakes and cables salvaged from the ship, which he fashions up against a hollowed-out rock. Upon finishing this task, a relieved Crusoe remarks that he was “completely fenced in, and fortify’d ... from all the world” (p. 77). Seidel (1991: 58) notes that Crusoe’s humble fortress “miniaturizes” what will later be his relation to the island at large. Crusoe’s behaviour foreshadows his future interaction with the island as he manages his initial situation by setting clear boundaries between the outside (the unknown wilderness) and the inside (his habitation), in the process defining margin and centre. Space, albeit only a small area, has been contained and now becomes an extension of Crusoe himself. Interestingly, during the course of the novel, the geographical area covered by wilderness (margin) becomes increasingly smaller in relation to the expansion of the various domesticated spaces (centre) on the island. Crusoe is therefore able to ease his psychological dread during his 28 years on the island by spending his time cultivating the land and setting up a series of enclosures in the form of several habitations, fences and plantations that structure the landscape and assign meaning to it.

Crusoe’s appropriation of the primitive setting is defined by the way in which the island becomes a site for organising experience. Having first thought the island to be barren, he gradually discovers that the island is in fact densely vegetated in some parts. To his observant colonialist gaze, the island’s untamed expanses of forest, scrubland and mountain present an ideal opportunity for cultivation and domestication. During one of his

explorations of the island, Crusoe compares the beauty of the natural setting to that of a planted garden and he relishes the thought of claiming possession of all the natural splendour that surrounds him (pp. 113-114):

[T]he country appeared so fresh, so green, so flourishing, every thing being in a constant verdure or flourish of spring, that it looked like a planted garden.

I descended a little on the side of that delicious vale, surveying it with a secret kind of pleasure ... to think 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 completely as any lord of a manor in England.

(pp. 113-114)

This valley also becomes the setting for his second residence, or as he later refers to it, his “country-house”. He therefore articulates the unspoiled natural scenery in terms usually associated with the English landscape such as “garden”, “vale” and “manor” and in the process, he organises his experience and imaginatively appropriates space through language. No longer part of the dense, unnameable space which confronted Crusoe when he first arrived on the island, chaotic nature becomes comfortably familiar through its association with words denoting order and Western refinement. Only once the island space has been familiarised by no longer being associated with an unknown wilderness, can Crusoe begin to convert it. Space is colonised and becomes place as illustrated by Crusoe’s claim of ownership.

Enclosure is central to Crusoe’s conversion of space and entails a form of cultural inscription. These physical structures, such as fences, hedges, plantations and his various dwellings, invest the island space with cultural meaning so that it becomes metaphorically and metonymically linked to Crusoe’s identity as a white, middle-class, Christian, British man. Structures – specifically those that demarcate and enclose and which Crusoe associates with his homeland – are therefore transplanted to the island, thereby shaping it into an image of Britain and the British Empire. In this regard, Marzec (2002: 138) provides a concise description of the way in which enclosures contain space:

Enclosure involves the meticulous measurement of a piece of land followed by the surrounding land with barriers designed to close off the free passage of people and animals: Large “open” fields formerly devoid of physical territorial boundaries are brought into a system in which land is held “in severalty” (by individuals) through the erection of “stone walls, fences, ditches and hedges that separate one person’s land from one’s neighbours”

(Marzec 2002: 138)

Crusoe constructs enclosures not only for the practical purpose of providing refuge or storage, but also to demarcate “civilized” space, domestic space

and chaotic nature. However, his “country-house” (p. 115), or bower in the valley, contrasts with his initial fortifications, since he constructs it simply for pleasure as he was “enamoured of the place” (p. 115). The bower therefore marks an important psychological turning point for Crusoe, as he no longer only relates spatial containment to survival, but also to self-fulfilment and “pleasantness” (p. 115). The containment of space thus not only transforms space physically, but also ontologically, or as Marzec contends, “commands the full range of Being” (2002: 144). The way in which space is transformed on the island is a physical manifestation of Crusoe’s monologic world view. Accordingly, as the following section of this article will show, containment defines Crusoe’s monologic relation to time and space, the Other, consciousness and religious experience.<sup>3</sup>

Crusoe’s obsession with orientating himself in space and time is revealed by his exact recording of each passing day, his journal entries as well as his calculations of the latitude and longitude at which the island is located (p. 81). He furthermore structures time in terms of his daily tasks and activities, such as his “times of work”, “time of sleep” and “time of diversion” (p. 88). Space and time are furthermore contained through his neurotic preoccupation with counting and measuring. He tends not to denote space in general terms, but instead quantifies space with a surveyor’s precision; for example, the plain on which he pitches his tent is not large, but rather a “hundred yards broad, and about twice as long” (p. 77). Domestic space is structured through the almost compulsive way in which his goods and work areas are compartmentalised. The interior of his cave, for example, consists of a “warehouse or magazine, a kitchen, a dining-room, and a cellar” (p. 91). No longer merely a cave providing shelter, space has now been domesticated and can be utilised as such – space has become place by being lived in, demarcated and named. The exacting precision with which Crusoe keeps track of time and organises space enables him to rationalise – and in the process also master – his condition as well as his environment.

Crusoe’s containment of time and space extends to the way in which he relates to the Other. He saves a native islander from hostile cannibals and names him Friday; a name that identifies him with nature (which the God of Genesis created before Adam and Eve, on a Saturday). In being associated with nature, Friday’s inferiority to Crusoe is immediately established – like the island and its animal inhabitants, Friday is marginalised and imaginatively colonised. As self-appointed “Master” (p. 209), his interaction with Friday is enclosed in a fixed pattern of subjugation and domination, as Friday submits not only his identity to Crusoe, but also his entire culture. Crusoe on the other hand perceives only his own monologic and subjective world view in the character of Friday. As Marzec (2002: 147) points out, the potential for alterity and newness that Friday’s presence might have brought

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3. Adapted from Marzec (2002: 145), who differentiates the different types or modes of *enclosure* on the basis of these categories.



to Crusoe's world is never explored. Interestingly, this is not the case with M. Tournier's *Vendredi* (1967), in English translated as "Friday", and J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986). Both these novels rewrite the story of Robinson Crusoe from a postcolonial perspective, and both novels engage with Defoe's master text on various ontological levels. As such, Tournier and Coetzee problematise Friday's "otherness" by contesting and reinventing some of the masculinist, racist and imperialist constructions of identity in *Robinson Crusoe*.

Crusoe's containment of Friday's identity links up with his containment of consciousness: his sense of well-being depends on his ability to sustain himself efficiently, unhindered from outside influence. He devises a mechanical instrument to sharpen his tools, without ever having "seen such a thing in England" (p. 98) and invents a kiln for his pottery even though he has "no notion of a kiln" (p. 133). He reinvents himself as a completely original thinker, which Marzec (2002: 145) refers to as "a Cartesian act of enclosure at the depth of consciousness", and thereby the island space is gradually rid of all ambiguity – though only on a superficial level. Even so, Crusoe's extensive reliance on rational thought and methodical behaviour to survive and thrive enables him to develop a firm and unchanging knowledge of himself and his world, to the extent that he deems himself to have become "naturalized to the place, and to the manner of living" (p. 185) on the island. However, despite the physical signs of enclosure, the wildness of the land is only *contained*, not eradicated. This notion, which is incompatible with the monologic world view of Defoe and his hero, points to the precarious nature of Crusoe's ontological certainty as it is dependent on the monologic world order that he establishes on the island.

As another aspect of Crusoe's monologic world, religious experience is also contained. This is illustrated by his throwing away of the husks of corn. To his astonishment, these husks grow into fertile corn stalks, and he comes to the conclusion that "God had miraculously caused this grain to grow without any help of seed sown, and that it was so directed purely for my sustenance" (p. 94). By attributing this incident to Providence, or a "secret power" that "guides and governs ... all" (p. 107), Crusoe commits himself to a spiritual cause that would redeem him and, by extension, also the island. Aided by Providence, he sustains himself comfortably on the island through the continuous cultivation of the land. In the process, he achieves deliverance, not only from the island prison, but also from his existential condition:

[M]y soul sought nothing of God but deliverance from the load of guilt that bore down all my comfort: as for my solitary life, it was nothing; I did not so much pray to be delivered from it ... it was all of no consideration in comparison to this. And I add this part here, to hint to whoever shall read it ... they will find deliverance from sin a much greater blessing than deliverance from affliction.

(p. 109)

The single-mindedness with which Crusoe cultivates the island becomes a way in which he attempts to atone for his sinful past. This suggests Crusoe's intention of returning the island to its true providential foundation (Marzec 2002: 145), or (re)claiming the island from the wilderness and converting it into a "paradise" of Christian civilisation. He does this by entitling the island to himself and, by extension, to England. As Crusoe defines his sense of displacement in religious and spiritual terms, existential anxiety is paralleled with colonial anxiety and resolved through spiritual transformation and the containment of land. Thereby, spatial conversion acquires a metaphysical dimension whereby Crusoe mediates his colonisation of the island.

Crusoe's conversion of space is a subliminal expression of his neurosis over having his "kingdom" infiltrated by outside forces. Accordingly, the rationalist and monologic world order that Crusoe has established on the island is destabilised when he stumbles upon a mysterious footprint in the sand.

The discovery of the footprint calls the sustainability and legitimacy of Crusoe's island sovereignty into question. A definitive spatial marker, the footprint becomes a symbol not only of presence, but also of absence and loss. The footprint foremost is a physical imprint that alludes to the threatening presence of another, whose foot turns out to be bigger than his own when he measures the footprint against his own. After much deliberation, Crusoe decides that the footprint must belong to "some more dangerous creature" than the devil, "viz. that it must be some of the savages of the main land" (p. 163). The size of the savage's footprint invests it with a power that contrasts with the "self-diminishment" (Seidel 1991: 66) Crusoe experiences on discovering the ominous print in the sand. The monologic order that Crusoe's appropriation and domestication of the island has established up to this point, is contradicted by the suggestion that he may not be the only human being with a claim to ownership of the island. In this way, the footprint also becomes a symbol of Crusoe's sense of loss in terms of his authority and stature on the island as he is no longer assured that the island will remain his "kingdom". The footprint also delineates the absence of a social support system that defines his marginal, and therefore also vulnerable, life on the island. Consequently, he comes to realise the paradoxical nature of his situation:

[F]or I whose only affliction was, that I seemed banished from human society, that I was alone, circumscribed by the boundless ocean, cut off from mankind, and condemned to what I called silent life; that I was as one who Heaven thought not worthy to be numbered among the living, or to appear among the rest of His creatures; that to have seen one of my own species would have seemed to me a raising from death to life, and the greatest blessing that Heaven it self, next to the supreme blessing of my salvation, could bestow; I say, that I should now tremble at the very apprehensions of

seeing a man, and was ready to sink into the ground at but the shadow or silent appearance of man's having set his foot in the island.

(p. 164)

For the first few years on the island, Crusoe is deeply affected by his isolation and longs for the sense of community with others from his "own species" (p. 164) that he has lost since becoming a castaway. To cope with his condition, he begins to interpret his singular existence as a kind of providential entitlement to ownership. Consequently, he begins to adapt to – and even cherish – his isolation, as he is aware that his situation does provide him with the opportunity to develop himself on various levels. This fosters in him a fear of incursion of his island kingdom.

After discovering the footprint, the consolation he derives from his aloneness is replaced by despair. The ensuing fear of being discovered and at the mercy of cannibals drives him to near madness. Seidel (1991: 67) also posits that the footprint even causes Crusoe to change the essential nature of his exile, ascribing it no longer to a providential design, instead regarding it as a form of barbaric isolation. As a spatial marker, the footprint has a significant impact on the process of spatial conversion: Crusoe (p. 168) intensifies the setting up of fortifications and other enclosures even further:

I resolved to draw me a second fortification, in the same manner of a semicircle, at a distance from my wall just where I had planted a couple row of trees about twelve year before ...

Thus in two years time I had a wood before my dwelling, growing so monstrous thick and strong, that it was indeed perfectly impassable; and no men of what kind soever would ever imagine that there was any thing beyond it, much less a habitation.

(p. 68)

Crusoe also finds another piece of land of about three acres which he relays to be "so surrounded with woods that it was almost an enclosure by nature" (p. 170). This establishes an ambiguity in his relation to the wilderness. Whereas he previously strove to contain and restrain wild nature in an effort to maintain the semblances of civilisation on the island, now the wilderness acquires a different meaning. He now utilises nature as a means of fortification that will keep him and his livestock safe by hiding them from view. By hiding the signs of civilisation which he has so carefully established on the island, Crusoe's character shows signs of yielding to the wilderness within himself as embodied by his fears, or what he refers to as the "burthen of anxiety" (p. 167) and "discomposures of the mind" (p. 171).

Eventually, reason calms his anxiety and he is able to return to a semblance of life as it was before his discovery, though he now exercises caution in firing his gun, lighting fires or roaming the island. The looming fear of incursion therefore turns his beloved island from a place of emotional and psychological refuge into a mere fortress.

The arrival of Friday almost five years later again reverts his situation, as Friday's inherent docility enables Crusoe to re-establish a monologic kingdom by appointing himself as "master", in control of his own fate as well as the fate of the native Other. He therefore reintegrates himself, along with his newly converted subject, with his reclaimed island kingdom. The footprint therefore introduces an important turn in the narrative, as it marks – physically and structurally – the inception and culmination of the final phase in the conversion of space, namely the establishment of a colony.

Throughout the novel Crusoe attempts to restructure the untamed, chaotic nature of the island space into a meaningful site that resembles his homeland. His appropriation and containment of space enable him to construct a new home – a converted or transformed space that bears testament to the extent to which the physical and psychological colonisation of space defined Western identity as being at the centre.

As an extension of Crusoe's identity, the island stands as triumph of Western industry and Enlightenment ideals. However, like Defoe's tale, Crusoe's authority over the island is only imagined, as spatial conversion depends on the fragile interplay between Crusoe's sense of self-importance, his imagination and the arbitrary nature of language. This is indicated by the naive way in which he attempts to establish a meaningful connection between place and the only language available to him to describe it. The ambivalent nature of the island becomes even more pronounced when one considers how easily the physical signs of Crusoe's inner autonomous self can be erased from the landscape. The static nature of the monologic world order that Crusoe establishes on the island also reveals it as a site that resists renewal and lacks authenticity: Crusoe and his island become mere embodiments of an Enlightenment vision of progress and rational design in the sense that his *being*, as well as Friday's, is enclosed within an imperialist, masculinist and racist construction of space.

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