



THE ROMANTICIZATION OF CLOSE READING: COLERIDGE, CRUSOE AND THE CASE OF THE MISSING COMMA

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THE romanticist imagination claims to guarantee the truth of what that imagination uncovers. The young John Keats never doubted the «holiness of the heart's affections and that what the imagination seizes as beauty should be true». So powerful was this Keatsian ability that truth uncovered might be not just an affirmation of existing knowledge or the recovery of something overseen but creatively the discovery of an entirely new truth «whether it existed before or not».¹ In criticism, too, romanticists could establish new truths about old texts, as they did with canonical writers from Plato to Shakespeare. Whether or not he was aware, when Samuel Taylor Coleridge through his creative powers discovered new truths to grievously misunderstood texts, he was setting a critical standard for much twentieth and twenty-first century literary criticism; in the aspiration that a scholarly close reading should reveal for the first time the true value of a text. Armed with Edward Young's seminal essay, *Conjectures on Original Composition*, the keen-eyed romantic critic could reveal the romantic core of a work or within a writer's *œuvre*, and throughout the following romantically-inflected centuries similar close-read discoveries have continued. David Thorburn, for example, while not denying the proto-modernism of a writer like Joseph Conrad, could still find in Conrad a «stoic romanticism grounded in a sense of human sharing» and, along with a story-telling mode based on romantic *Bildung*, a «decisive allegiance to the century of Wordsworth».² Since we have

¹ JOHN KEATS, *Negative Capability letter to George and Tom Keats, 21 December 1817*, cited in W. J. BATE, *Keat's 'negative capability' and the imagination* (1963), in JOHN SPENCER HILL, *The Romantic Imagination*, London-Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1977, pp. 196-210: p. 196.

² DAVID THORBURN, *Conrad's Romanticism: self-consciousness and community*, in David Thorburn, Geoffrey Hartman (eds), *Romanticism: Vistas, Instances, Continuities*, Ithaca-London, Cornell, 1973 pp. 221-254: pp. 224, 254.



no trouble accepting that for romanticists Shakespeare's lack of decorum was outweighed by his natural originality and that Shakespeare was for Coleridge the ultimate romantic poet, then we should also be able to accept Coleridge's judgement on Daniel Defoe, particularly for his meditation on *Robinson Crusoe*, as a genius worthy of Shakespeare. Perhaps Coleridge is right and if we too could see with 'love's rare wit' we, too, would recognise that *Crusoe* with its isolated hero in lonely communion with nature is born of a great romantic imagination.

Obviously the choice is not bipolar, but the problem for contemporary criticism is whether critical close readings themselves are indeed a variation on the theme of romantic endeavour or whether, at least for scholars oriented to the sociology of the text and the socialization of the text, a duty is owed more to histories of the text's brute matter and to successive accounts of what readers – both professional and non-professional – made of the matter they encountered. The relationship between a reader and her text may be articulated in a close reading (as it should be); and in the first section of this essay I will narrate such a relationship in readings of *Crusoe* created by romantics like Charles Lamb, Walter Wilson, William Wordsworth and Coleridge, as well as readers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Walter Scott. However, there have been other readers, and the radical difference of their other readings is matched only by the plethora of *Crusoe* editions at the reader's disposal. Such a spread of both editions and readers opens up the possibility for another story, the focus of this essay's second section, and which narrates not a relationship between a reader and her text, but one between editions and between readers. The choice of which story to tell is an open one, as I will argue, but as existentialism teaches us the choice is not only obligatory but has consequences.

1. THE ROMANTICIZATION OF *CRUSOE*

At first glance, Daniel Defoe's ponderous tale of his mercantile globe-trotter hardly satisfies the requirements of romantic fiction. The plot involves Crusoe's arrival in London from York. During a trading adventure, he is then captured off the coast of Africa and made an Arab slave. He escapes to Brazil and becomes a successful plantation owner. During a subsequent slave-trading mission to Africa, he is shipwrecked and stranded on an island at the mouth of the Orinoco, where he meets Friday, his 'manservant', Friday's father and a



Spaniard. After twenty eight years of island adventure, Crusoe leaves the island with Friday to return to Europe. They travel to Lisbon then continue via France – including two Pyrenean episodes involving fights with wolves and a bear – to England where Crusoe marries and plans a new journey to the East Indies, escapades from which are described in part two, *The Farther Adventures* [...] (1719). For literary historiography, the work has its lineage in Puritan journey narratives, such as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), in Quixotic fiction, and in the tradition of picaresque *pikaresk/gavtyve fortællinger* that themselves can be traced to the anonymous *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554-1555), potentially back to Chaucer, Boccaccio and even to the *Satyricon*. The *Crusoe* narrative also displays heavy traces of mercantile thought, evidenced in the repeated use of trading as a rationale that drives the narrative forward. Written before Physiocratic *laissez-fair* reconceived economics as a bodily circulation that merely wished to be left alone, Defoe's writing exhibits a strong mercantilism that understood economics as stores of wealth: economic life being governed consequently by opportunities for increasing it or avoiding its loss. So suitable was *Crusoe* for describing economic behaviour that economists from Marx to Marshal have ubiquitously used the *Crusoe* figure as a motif for *homo-æconomicus*.¹

However, concealed within its picaresque mercantile ramblings, there was a genius in *Crusoe* that was left to romantic vision to reveal. As Pat Rogers observed, «Strangely – as some may think – it was the romantic movement which lifted prosaic old Daniel Defoe, controversialist and compiler, to the status of major artist» and in examining the socialization of the text we find that by the early nineteenth century *Robinson Crusoe* could satisfy enough romantic criteria to be convincingly applauded.²

The publication entitled *The Life and Strange Surprizing adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Ifland on the Coast of America, near the Mouth*

¹ KARL MARX, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, Chicago, Charles Kerr 1921, pp. 88-91; and ALFRED MARSHALL, *Principles of Economics*, 1920, Library of Economics and Liberty, [accessed: 25 April 2012], <http://www.econlib.org/library/Marshall/marP31.html>; IDEM, *Principles of Economics*, London, Macmillan, 1920 [1890], bk. v, iv, § 26.

² PAT ROGERS, *Robinson Crusoe*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1979, p. 141; IDEM, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, London, Routledge, 1972, pp. 12-18.



of the Great River of Oronoques Having been cast on shore by Shipwreck, where-in all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as Ftrangely deliver'd by Pyrates. Written by Himself [Robinson Crusoe] was published by bookseller-publisher William Taylor of Paternoster Row, London, on 25 April 1719. The first print run was for around 1,000 copies, in this case called an «edition», with a total of six reprintings or 'editions' of around 1,000 copies each within less than a year, making it comparable in instant popularity to Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.¹ The first printings, intended for a London audience, were joined in the same year by a serialisation in the *Original London Post*, by an abridged London piracy issued by T. Cox from the Amsterdam Coffee House and yet another piracy, the 'O' edition, spelling the hero Robeson Cruso. That year, too, saw a Dublin piracy. For early readers, then, the range of printings available for audiences to engage with was already opening up intriguing possibilities. To further expand the possible encounters between reader and text (let alone the dimensions of what might constitute *Robinson Crusoe* the work), Defoe produced a *Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* [...] foreseen in the closing paragraphs of Part I, published only four months later in August 1719, and a third part, *Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* [...] published in August of the following year.

What is apparent from the digressive three-part work is how little attention is paid, if any, to either decorum or to Aristotelian unity. That was never the aim. Only the first part, *The Life and Strange Surprising adventures of [...]*, RC1, can be said to go some way to eschewing episodic cohesion for unified coherence, and then chiefly within the island episode. Even the classicist Alexander Pope who regarded Defoe as a literary anathema wrote, «The first part of Robinson Crusoe is very good. Defoe wrote a vast many things; none bad, though none excellent».² In retrospect, however, the very distance from clas-

¹ KEITH IAN DESMOND MASLEN, *Edition Quantities for Robinson Crusoe, 1719*, «The Library», 24, 1969, pp. 145-150: p. 147. Prior to Maslen, the standard work for this was HENRY CLINTON HUTCHINS, *Robinson Crusoe and its Printing, 1719-1731*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1925: see IDEM, pp. 52-96. For the 'O' edition see in ALFRED W. POLLARD, *Robeson Cruso*, «The Library», ser. 3, IV, 14, 1913, pp. 204-220.

² Alexander Pope, quoted by JOSEPH SPENCE, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters, of Books and Men*, ed. by Samuel Weller, London, Singer 1820, pp. 258-259, cited in MICHAEL SHINAGEL, *Robinson Crusoe*, London-New York, W.W. Norton & Co., p. 261.

sical discipline may have been one of *Crusoe's* chief recommendations to romantic sensibility.

Limiting ourselves to *Crusoe* RC1 in the search for a romantic core, it becomes apparent that the narrative draws on traditions of what Paul Hunter has identified, correctly I believe, as providence literature, spiritual biography and spiritual guide books – forms that would have been recognisable to Defoe's fellow Calvinist dissenters, detailing Godly intervention in human activity.¹ From grand shipwrecks to small misfortunes, any number of turns in fortune both good and bad could be explained as Godly providence. Walter Scott noted that Defoe's narrative was made to «depend upon lucky hits and accidents, which, as [Defoe] is often at some pains to explain, ought rather to be termed providential occurrences».² When the logic of God's natural providence was worked out over an individual's lifetime, its revelation could be given in a spiritual biography. These biographical records of a person's spiritual successes and failures exposed a pattern to the individual's life. When packaged, the experience could be passed on in a spiritual guide book, often given as advice to the young. While only reminiscent of *Bildung's* home-away-home structure, the characteristic cycles of fall and redemption experienced during the young adventurer's travels is paralleled by the adventurer's (in)ability to listen to the world's providential nature – a collusion with informative nature that is a romantic gesture ahead of its time: «...How incongruous and irrational the common Temper of Mankind is, especially of youth, to that Reason which ought to guide them...» (13).³

In a complicated formal mix of memoir, first-person narrative and journal, *Robinson Crusoe* involves an «original sin» (41) in Crusoe disobeying his father by going to sea. A terrifying storm makes him vow to return home, but a night's drunkenness «drowned all my thoughts of repentance» (8). The pattern of defiance, consequence and resignation to natural (and paternal) law, before yet more defiance, is repeated and amplified. From London, Crusoe undertakes a trading voyage to Guinea, «deaf to all good advice» and filled with «those as-

¹ J. PAUL HUNTER, *The Reluctant Pilgrim*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966, pp. 44-50.

² Scott cited in P. ROGERS, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, p. 77.

³ Page numbers for *Crusoe* RC1 provided in brackets refer to Michael Shinegal (ed.), *Robinson Crusoe*, New York-London, W. W. Norton & Co., 1994.

piring Thoughts which have since so completed my Ruin» (13 and 14). After further cycles of success and disaster, from affluence to slavery, Crusoe arrives in Brazil where he «lived just like a man cast away upon some desolate island» (27). Four diligent years as a plantation owner, though, reward Crusoe with a degree of wealth, but tantalisingly not enough, and the ensuing battle over Crusoe is waged between his obstinacy and generous nature:

[W]ilful agent of all my own miseries; and particularly, to increase my fault, and double the reflections upon myself, which in my future sorrows I should have leisure to make, all these miscarriages were procured by my apparent obstinate adhering to my foolish inclination . . . in contradiction to the clearest views of doing myself good in a fair and plain pursuit of those prospects, and those measures of life, which nature and Providence concurred to present me with . . . (29)

Crusoe's further plan «of rising faster than the Nature of the Thing admitted» (29) again brings disaster and he is shipwrecked on the desert island where the process begins anew. Key to the turning point for his solitary life on the island is Crusoe's submission to the «Justice of so arbitrary a disposition of things» (152), to what «the Nature and Experience of Things dictated to me upon just reflection» (94), or what in romantic terms is a submission to the uncorrupted nature of nature. When Crusoe miraculously discovers rice and barley seeds, the narrator writes,

I dug up a Piece of Ground [...] and dividing it into two parts, I sow'd my Grain; but as I was sowing, it casually occur'd to my Thoughts, that I would not sow it all at first [...]. Finding my first seed did not grow [...] I sought for a moister Piece of Ground to make another trial [...] and sow'd the rest of my Seed in February. [...] and this sprung up very pleasantly, and yielded a good crop (77).

The miracle of apparently 'arbitrary disposition' not only provided Crusoe with the seeds but also made pause for thought (note the passive «occur'd to my Thoughts», rather than 'I' actively thinking), and in pausing (or is he paused by nature) Crusoe discovers the intelligence secretly ordering the natural world. «This touched my heart a little, and brought tears out of my eyes, and I began to bless myself that such a prodigy of nature should happen upon my account» (58). The reward for Crusoe is not one but two harvests *per annum* (77-78), bringing bread and with it the capacity for labour necessary to achieve an un-

corrupted civilisation. For each attention he pays to divine nature, Crusoe is rewarded with advancements from hunter-gather, to agriculturalist, and eventually imperialist (no politically-incorrect thing from Defoe's perspective) when finally on a populated island he becomes the legal Lord of «my new Colony in the Island» (219). Crusoe, eventually rescued, returns to London a wealthy man, having learnt that «So little do we see before us [...]» (182) and of the «secret hand of Providence governing the World» (203).

This learning process to Crusoe's communicative exchange with nature is prescient. Coleridge's advice to a would-be poet is that rather than «echo the conceit» of established artifice the poet would do better to have

«stretch'd his limbs / Besides a brook in mossy dell ... Surrendering his spirit ... and so his song / should make all nature lovelier, and itself / Be lov'd, like nature...».¹ A French engraving for *Crusoe* from 1840, too, as exotic as any setting from Delacroix's Morocco, seems to echo this sentiment, as its caste-away poet stretches his limbs and surrenders his spirit (FIG. 1). This dialectic between mind and nature is a focal point to much post-wWII romanticism, as of Abrams, who in his textbook summary describes the experience of nature and the romantic mind that is «something which is at once projective and capable of receiving back the fused product of what it gives and what is given to it».² Equating Höderlin's call to unite ourselves with nature into one

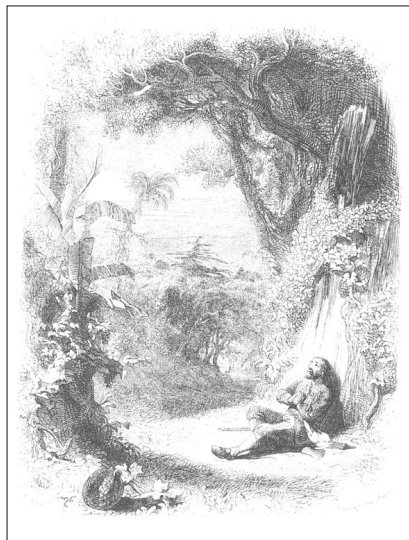


FIG. 1. Dialectic between nature and imagination, facing p. 108 of *Aventures de Robinson Crusoe... Edition illustrée par Grandville*, Paris, H. Fournier, and London, Robert Tyas, 1840 (British Library).

¹ SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, *The Nightingale* (1798), in Kathleen Raine (ed.), *Coleridge: Poems and Prose*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1957, p. 81.

² HOWARD MEYER ABRAMS, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, London-Oxford (NY), Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 67.

boundless whole with Wordsworth's conception of the relationship between nature and consciousness as something more mutually constitutive than the poet's mere projection of nature within onto nature without, Klaus Peter Mortensen writes of Wordsworth's deeply private «profounder understanding of the power of nature and the imagination».¹ The synthesis of exchange between subject and powerful nature arrived at through solitary poetic reflection, which was how a certain critical strain understood romanticism, can with creative effort be read from both *Robinson Crusoe* and the authorial mind composing it, expressed nowhere more clearly than in John Forster's mid nineteenth-century comment on *Crusoe* that «It is the romance of solitude ... written by a man whose life had for the most part been passed in the independence of unaided thought ... not afraid at any time to find himself Alone, in communion with nature and with God».² It is no wonder that Foster could re-define Defoe in a similar manner as the romantics had when they saw Shakespeare's originality surpassing the ancients. Of *Crusoe*, Forster wrote «neither the *Illiad* nor the *Odyssey*, in much longer course of ages, has incited so many to enterprise, or to reliance on their own powers and capacities».³

ROUSSEAU'S *CRUSOE*

By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, a flood of adaptations and abridgements of *Robinson Crusoe* were available. The first French translation, *La Vie et les Aventures Surprenantes de Robinson Crusoe [...]*, was published in Amsterdam by L'Honoré and Chatelain in 1720, the first Danish translation no later than 1744, and by 1800 translations could be found in most European languages, with later translations into Turkish, Russian and Hebrew. In terms of textual stability, any hope of an international copyright guarding the integrity of the author's text would have to wait until the Berne Convention in 1886 (but which still left the United States and its publishers of *Crusoe* excluded from international agreement). So what readers encountered across Europe, the Americas, Africa, India and Australia was print that related the intangible story of a castaway named Robinson, often focussing

¹ KLAUS PETER MORTENSEN, *The Time of Unrememberable Being*, Copenhagen, MTP, 1998, pp. 11, 18-19.

² JOHN FOSTER, *Daniel De Foe and Charles Churchill*, London, 1855, cited in P. ROGERS, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 135.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 136.

on the island episode, and more often than not exchanging Taylor's text for one's better suited to the translators' and abridgers' agendas.

In the heart of the eighteenth century, which Walter Pater described as «pre-eminently a classical age», it was «[...] in one of its central if not most and characteristic figures, in Rousseau – that the modern or French romanticism really originates».¹ Harold Bloom and Lionel Trilling marked Rousseau as the central man of Romantic tradition,² so it is only appropriate to learn of Jean-Jacques's enthusiasm for *Crusoe*. Ian Watt provides two excellent commentaries on Rousseau's near obsession with the story in *Myths of Modern Individualism* (1996) and in «Essays in Criticism: A Quarterly Journal of Literary Criticism» (1951). Rousseau «probably read it in the 1720 translation, or rather in the free adaptation to French literary tastes, written by Saint Hyacinthe and Justus Van Effen».³

Rousseau had considered writing a translation of *Crusoe*, or more likely an adaptation from available French editions and references to *Crusoe* can be found in a number of his works. In 1762, Rousseau wrote his influential pedagogic work *Emile*. In it Rousseau proposed a revolutionary education for the fictional boy Emile. In the third book (when Emile has reached fourteen), Rousseau wrote, «I hate books; they only teach people to talk about what they don't understand». Unimpressed by Western intellectual tradition, he reasoned

since we must have books, there is already one which, in my opinion, already affords a complete treatise on natural education. This book shall be the first Emilius shall read. ... You ask impatiently, what is the title of this wonderful book? Is it Aristotle, Pliny or Buffon? No. It is Robinson Crusoe [...] The most certain method for him to raise himself above vulgar prejudices and to form his judgement on the actual relations of things, is to take on himself the character of such a solitary adventurer, and to judge of everything about him, as a man in such circumstances would, by utility.⁴

¹ WALTER PATER, *Appreciations. With an Essay on Style*, London-New York, Macmillan and Co., 1889, p. 253.

² HAROLD BLOOM, LIONEL TRILLING, *Romantic Poetry and Prose*, New York-London, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 5.

³ IAN WATT, *Myths of Modern Individualism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 173

⁴ JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, *Emilius and Sophia: or, a New System of Education*, transl. by William Kenrick, ???, ???, 1762, vol. 2, pp. 58-66, cited in M. Shinagel (1994), 262. *Puisqu'il nous faut absolument des livres, il en existe un qui fournit, à mon gré, le plus heureux*



What Rousseau saw in *Crusoe* was an opportunity for a man to act from a primordial state pre-dating the exploitations of civilisation when «the vast forests were transformed into pleasant fields which had to be watered by the sweat of men, and in which slavery and misery were soon to germinate and flourish with the crops.»¹ (that in rebuilding his experimental New Europe Crusoe simply replicated the imperialism of the old can be put aside momentarily since, for now, Emile was to live amongst uncorrupted nature and acquire knowledge freed from societal conceit). Emile would «personate the hero of the tale». «Let us hasten therefore, to establish him in this imaginary isle [...]».²

Rousseau's primitive, pre-societal Crusoe is only possible with the island section before the arrival of Friday. Once Crusoe has company – at first Friday but then Friday's father and, later, a Spanish mariner – he establishes the rights of fealty and property, and he can progress from the manual arts to «the arts of industry, the exercise of which requires the concurrence of many».³ Unlike poetry (or a critical close reading), civilisation is a social venture requiring the hands of many, and with many hands the primordial island slips from view taking with it any romanticist exploration of the relationship between the individual and nature.⁴

Rousseau had wanted for Emile a version of *Robinson Crusoe* that was «cleared of all its rubbish [...] beginning with his shipwreck on the island, and ending with the arrival of the vessel that brought him away»,⁵ thus removing many of the sequential picaresque elements

traité d'éducation naturelle. Ce livre sera le premier que lira mon Émile; ... Quel est donc ce merveilleux livre? Est-ce Aristote? est-ce Pline? est-ce Buffon? Non; c'est Robinson Crusoe ... Le plus sûr moyen de s'élever au-dessus des préjugés et d'ordonner ses jugements sur les vrais rapports des choses, est de se mettre à la place d'un homme isolé, et de juger de tout comme cet homme en doit juger lui-même, eu égard à sa propre utilité.

¹ JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, *A Discourse on Inequality*, transl. by Maurice Cranston, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984, p. 40. <NB xxx French originals needed??>

² J.-J. ROUSSEAU, *Emilius* (1762), in M. Shinagel (ed.), *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 263.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 263.

⁴ Echoing Mary Poovey's reading of MARY'S SHELLEY'S *Frankenstein* as a critique of masculine romanticism's 'un-natural' separation from the regulating give-and-take of domestic and social relationships. See MARY POOVEY, *The Proper lady and the Woman Writer* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp. 121-131.

⁵ J.-J. ROUSSEAU, *Emilius* (1762), in M. Shinagel (ed.), *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 263.



that undermined a more unified construction. As an astute reader, Rousseau recognised the heart to Defoe's work, and in response to Rousseau's critical assessment, Johann Heinrich Campe, a headmaster at a Philanthropium in Dessau, set about scripting *Robinson Der Jüngere* [...], or *The New Robinson Crusoe*, referring to Rousseau's clearance project in his introduction.

Campe restructured his *New Robinson Crusoe* into three new parts. «The Old Robinson had plenty of tools and instruments, which he saves from the ship; whereas the New Robinson Crusoe has nothing but his head and his hands». ¹ In the first part Crusoe is, «alone without any European tool or instrument». In the second part, Crusoe is given the company of Friday, «to show how much a man's station may be bettered by taking even this single step towards society». Thirdly, Crusoe has European equipment brought in a convenient shipwreck so that, «the young reader may see how valuable many things are of which we are accustomed to make very little account».

The success of Campe's *Robinson* was enormous, superseding in Germany and France the 'old' *Robinson Crusoe*. ² This best-seller was followed by other versions, eventually inspiring an entire species of desert island tale known, in French, as *Robinsonnades*, in German, as *Robinsonaden*, culminating in the mind-boggling *Swiss Family Robinson* (1812) by Bern philosopher Johann Rudolf Wyss, which further romanticized Defoe's fiction by extrapolating from Rousseau a set of guidelines applicable to not just individuals but families.

Many agreed about the importance of Crusoe's island section: writers and readers alike. Jane Austen wrote to her sister, Cassandra, of wishing to obtain books for an unnamed convalescent but «Unfortunately he has read the first volume of Robinson Crusoe». ³ Hartley

¹ ANONYMOUS, *The New Robinson Crusoe, an instructive and entertaining story for the use of children* [...]. Translated from the French [...], transl. anon., London, John Stockdale, 1789, p. 14; [the preface mentions J. H. Campe as the author].

² The prestige of Campe's version is attested in IAN WATT, *Robinson Crusoe as a Myth*, «Essays in Criticism: A Quarterly Journal of Literary Criticism», 1, 2, April 1951, pp. 95-119: p. 108. For German Robinsonnaden see ULLRICH HERMAN, *Robinson Und Robinsonaden*, Weimar, 1898, and for Robinsonnades see PAUL DOTTIN, *Daniel De Foe et ses Romans*, Paris-London, PUF-Oxford University Press, 1924, pp. 318-324.

³ Jane Austen, Deirdre LeFaye (eds.), *Jane Austen's Letters*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 1995, p. 95, http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=10368, [accessed: 13 December 2011].

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor's son, and himself a romantic poet and essayist, endorsed the preference of Austen's patient: Robert Southey noted that Hartley «never has read, nor will read, beyond Robinson's departure from the island».¹ But such preferences for the island section bring with them a number of critical choices. One is that we regard the preferences as an incentive to textual crime that encouraged numerous abridgers to corrupt Defoe's text through the promise of new markets. Another is that we regard the various readings from Rousseau to Hartley Coleridge as evidence of a common analysis that reveals the essential romanticist value of Defoe's work. When done well, what else is abridgement other than the successful implementation of criticism?

Notable of Rousseau's *Emile* and of many *Crusoe* abridgements was that the gold they textually mined from Defoe's work was a literature suitable for children. Among all the attempts to embed the intangible story of *Robinson Crusoe* into culturally receptive forms, the needs of children especially sanctioned no end of textual liberties in the name of producing a narrative that would display the work's greatest value most readily to its readers. Of all the many children's version produced in the early nineteenth century, one not untypical edition was from 1811, entitled generically *The New Robinson Crusoe* [...]. It was a story narrated by «a Gentleman of the name of Billingsley», who «resided some years ago at Twickenham». Also present were Mrs. Billingsley, Mr. Rose and Mr. Meredith, «two intimates of the family», and being read to were George, Harriet, Richard, Edward and Charlotte. Following the opening paragraphs, the text assumes the format of a play (with occasional authorial comment).

Mr Billingsley. Well my dear children, I have a book for your entertainment this evening that contains a very extraordinary story. ...

George. Ah! But do not let it be too melancholy, papa.

Harriet. No, my dear papa, not too melancholy ...

Richard. Hold your tongues; papa knows what to read, I warrant you.

Mr Bill. Do not be uneasy, my dears. I will take care ... There lived in the town of Exeter a person by the name Crusoe ...²

¹ DUNCAN WU, *Wordsworth's Reading 1800-1815*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1995, p. 72, http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=1731, [accessed: 13 December 2011].

² ANONYMOUS, *The New Robinson Crusoe [...] Translated from the French [...] Embellished with thirty two beautiful cuts by Berwick [...]. New Edition*, London, John Stockdale, 1811, p. 6.

The edition is divided into episodes of one evening's duration each. The children are told of a rash young man who disobeyed his father. «*Richard*. I do not like this Mr Robinson Crusoe». ¹ Throughout the subsequent thirty evenings, the children interrupt helpfully with questions about geography, maritime practise, religion and parenting. On the thirty-first evening, Robinson is rescued with his barrel of gold then shipwrecked again, off Plymouth, losing everything. «*Mr Bill*. He is now exactly as rich as when he formerly set sail. Perhaps Providence has permitted this, to prevent any rash young person being dazzled by Robinson's example». The narrative closes as Robinson greets his father, whereby patriarchal order is restored. This new Robinson narrated by Mr Billingsley may be many stages removed from the text published by William Taylor in 1719, but its deployment of the young adventurer's trials and travel remains faithful to *Bildung's* narrative mode. Its use of providence literature combined with spiritual biography and their application as a guidebook for the young returns to the heart of dissenting literary tradition. Mr Billingsley may not have been faithful to Defoe's letter but he was to its spirit.

A similar essentialist argument can be mounted for the process of translation: that the textual discrepancies introduced through translation might be viewed not as further corruptions of the text but as imaginative creations undertaken to signify correctly in new lingual, cultural contexts. Possibly the first English edition of Campe's *New Crusoe* had appeared in 1789 for John Stockdale, entitled *An Abridgement of The New Robinson [...]. Translated from the French [...]*. Campe wrote and published in German. The English preface contains not only extracts from Campe's preface, but extracts from the French translator's note *and* a worrying note from the English translator, who very possibly translated from the French.

It only remains for the English translator to request the indulgence of the Public, in account of deviations which he has taken the liberty to make from the original. Many passages he has found himself obliged either to omit entirely, or throw into a new form, according as the differences in national manners and characters seemed absolutely to require it. ²

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

² ANONYMOUS, *The New Robinson Crusoe [...]*, London, John Stockdale, 1789, p. 22.

Eva Hemmungs Wirtén has written about a process of transediting – a legitimate extension of translation – by which national cultural signifiers in any piece of fiction are amended into the national cultural terms of the target language that should, in the new context, produce the required effect. The process is one in which translators and editors re-write texts in line with the internalized cultural values of the local market that imports a given cultural production. The process is «a systematic adaptation that sometimes result[s] in the construction of a totally new text». Transediting thereby becomes «a mode of re-writing, creating something new, or [even] blatant interfering and tempering with the text».¹ Again, to what extent should the English *New Robinson* be considered an unreliable corruption of Campe's German text, and to what extent might it be regarded as a text that has simply undergone a heavy process of transediting? Early eighteenth-century Edinburgh, Dublin and us editions of *Crusoe* can easily be recognised as editions of *Crusoe* but they had also carried out similar processes of transediting – not only in abridgement but in spelling, typesetting, in decisions about layout, paper and volume size, volume number and not least the significance of price, which would have been governed in part by national cultural standards. That these Anglo-American early eighteenth-century versions were 'transeditions' would merely remain obscured by their common use of English. Transediting in itself is no proof that a great violation of the work has been committed, and may instead be viewed as cultural adjustment to ensure that the work signifies as it should. Transediting simply highlights what is important about the text in its new context. In this light, then, not only the edition but the abridgement, too, can be thought of as an applied close reading.

For a certain school of British romantic criticism, the essential qualities of *Robinson Crusoe* were never in doubt. Rousseau had begun the

¹ Cited in CLAIRE SQUIRES, *The Global Market 1970-2000*, in Simon Eliot, Jonathan Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book*, Oxford, Blackwell 2007, pp. 416-418: p. 409. For a full treatment of transediting see EVA HEMMUNGS WIRTÉN, *Transediting: the Global Market Made Local*, in EADEM, *Global Infatuation*, Uppsala, Uppsala University - Section for Sociology of Literature at the Department of Literature, ????, pp. 121-154.

process of critical reinstatement of Defoe from the comparative neglect that followed Defoe's death – Pat Rogers describes how in the 1780s British writers for magazines such as the «Gentleman's Magazine» and «Monthly Review» were either ignorant of Defoe's writings besides *Crusoe* or attributed *Crusoe* to other authors.¹ George Chalmers's 1785 *The Life of Daniel De Foe* began the British re-evaluation, although more from missionary zeal than existing demand, leaving it to Walter Scott to establish Defoe's literary pre-eminence. Perhaps encouraged by his involvement with a twelve-volume Balantyne edition of Defoe's works for which he wrote an introduction, Scott's enthusiasm was based on «the extraordinary plausibility of Defoe's imaginative flights».² Far from a simple fictionalisation made from accounts of marooning, Defoe had according to Scott traced *Crusoe's* thoughts and preoccupations so distinctly «that the course of the work embraces a far wider circle of investigation into human nature...».³ In a strategy reminiscent of what Aidan day calls «Wordsworth's manner of finding eternal significance in the most mundane of actions and object»,⁴ Scott believed Defoe's genius was in placing Robinson *Crusoe* «in a condition where it was natural that the slightest event should make an impression on him; and Defoe was not an author who would leave the slightest event untold».⁵

Rogers claims that Defoe's reputation climbed rapidly after 1800, which she supports through the assessment of Charles Lamb and writers like him that Defoe was «a Romantic born before his time».⁶ Picturing Defoe as a profound chronicler of guilt and isolation, Lamb's Defoe was «an educator at heart, a Wordsworthian teacher who imparts morality through the exploration of feeling».⁷ Lamb's 1829 comment that «the narrative manner of De Foe has a naturalness about it beyond that of any other novel or romance writer»,⁸ echoes

¹ P. ROGERS, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, pp. 14-15.

² IDEM, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 142.

³ WALTER SCOTT, *The Miscellaneous Works of Sir Walter Scott*, Edinburgh, 1834, in P. ROGERS, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, pp. 66-79: p. 77.

⁴ DAY AIDAN, *Romanticism*, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 170.

⁵ W. SCOTT, *Miscellaneous Works* (1834), cited in P. ROGERS, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, p. 77.

⁶ P. ROGERS, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, p. 18.

⁷ IDEM, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 143.

⁸ CHARLES LAMB, *The Works of Charles Lamb* (1903-1905), cited in P. ROGERS, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, pp. 86-88: p. 88.

a similar ancient-surpassing assessment by Carlyle in 1828: «Homer surpasses all men ... but strangely enough at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe».¹

By 1830, therefore, Walter Wilson in his *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel Defoe* was able to declare that «Crusoe is strictly a child of nature ... His attention is fixed by one artless chain of natural incidents, such as may happen to any individual in a similar situation».² The precedent for this claim came from no less a critic than Coleridge. Always one to illuminate the merits of a text rather than its defects,³ Coleridge read *Crusoe* for its easy passage from the specific to the universal: «Crusoe is merely a representative of humanity on general» with an unexceptional middle-degree of intellectual and moral capacity. For Coleridge, reading *Crusoe* makes «me forget my specific class, character and circumstances, [and] raises me into the universal man. Now this is Defoe's excellence».⁴ Such comments about Crusoe as a universal figure coincide perfectly with an understanding of romanticism from the post-wwii period that conceived Coleridge's poetics as utterly Platonic, where «physical appearances are the shadows of ideas, projected upon the transient flux of nature».⁵

The assessments from Rousseau to Coleridge provided here are merely given as reasons for accepting a selective reading of *Crusoe* as romantic: not that *Crusoe* is in some sense romantic but that it plausibly can be read as such. If romanticism is the reconciliation between consciousness and nature, or, as for literary critic Harold Bloom, a process whereby «nature is made thought and thought nature»,⁶ then in his solitary communion with providential nature Crusoe takes part in a romantic project. Admittedly this reconciliation only takes place in the hero's character development and in his fictionalised experience. Defoe's prose offers none of the use of symbol and poetic rec-

¹ THOMAS CARLYLE, *The Works of Thomas Carlyle* (1896-1901), cited in P. ROGERS, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, p. 89.

² WALTER WILSON, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel De Foe* (1830), in P. ROGERS, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, pp. 90-106: pp. 90-91.

³ KATHLEEN RAINE, *Introduction to Coleridge: Poems and Prose*, ed. by Eadem, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1957, pp. 9-18: p. 14.

⁴ S. T. COLERIDGE, *Miscellaneous Criticism* (1936), cited in P. ROGERS, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, pp. 80-85: pp. 80, 81.

⁵ K. RAINE, *Introduction to Coleridge*, p. 14.

⁶ D. AYDAN, *Romanticism*, p. 111.

conciliation highlighted in Coleridge's poetry by post-war romantic criticism. But, nevertheless, the dramatisation of reconciliation has sufficient affinity with romanticism for the critic who has the imagination to find it.

Not content with finding genius in generality, Coleridge found it in *Crusoe's* smallest detail. Describing Defoe's use of punctuation, Coleridge turns to the episode where Crusoe hesitates to take money from the Spanish wreck.

"O Drug! Said I aloud, what art thou good for? Thou art not worth to me, no not the taking off the Ground; one of those Knives is worth all this Heap;[...] go to the bottom as a creature whose life is not worth saving. However, upon second Thoughts, I took it away; and wrapping all this in a Piece of Canvas, I began to think [...]" (43)

The impeccable realisation that the storm has robbed money of its very value is in Coleridge's estimation «Worthy of Shakespeare». But even more «exquisite and masterlike» is «the simple semi-colon after [away], the instant passing on without the least pause of reflex consciousness ... A meaner writer, a Marmontel, would have put an '!' after 'away', and have commenced a new paragraph!». ¹ What Coleridge reveals is two components of irony – the useless money and the decision to take it – welded into a single unit of meaning and allowed to flow into the next sentence without any self-impressed congratulations such as an exclamation mark. In extension of Defoe's worthiness of Shakespeare, Coleridge grants Defoe a further ticket to the English (romantic) canon by writing "Shakespeare! Milton! Fuller! Defoe! Hogarth! ... these are unique". ²

2. RELATIONS BETWEEN EDITIONS AND BETWEEN READERS

The trouble for anyone interested in the history of reading and material texts is that the sentence that so excited Coleridge into granting Defoe Shakespearean (and thus ultimate romantic) status is one hundred and sixty nine words long and involves the narration of attempting to make a raft, bad weather, swimming to shore, and a storm. Where were these components in the single unit of meaning?

¹ S. T. COLERIDGE, *Miscellaneous Criticism* (1936), in P. ROGERS, *Defoe: the Critical Heritage*, p. 82.

² *Ibidem*, p. 85.

Coleridge does not say. What is more, Coleridge was reading an 1812 edition of *Crusoe*. Taylor's 1719 edition does not have a semi-colon but a comma in the place Coleridge indicates. Defoe's genius worthy of Shakespeare depends less on arrangements of typographical material and more on the powers of critical close reading that creates meanings from the material of its text. That there are materials and that these materials in their variations have significance is overlooked.

No amount of interrogation of Coleridge's or any other one reader's close reading will reveal the relationships that exist between editions, or between readers. What were the forces that introduced changes between Taylor's 1719 edition and the 1812 edition that Coleridge read? Diachronically, to what are those forces most readily linked: the socio-political development of public-sphere discourse; the history of formalist aesthetic developments; the technological and juridical advances that affected publishing, the economic viability of its outputs, and its access to new readers' markets? Even if we were to write the macro narratives of these discourses, we would still have to account for how these power/knowledge relations have interacted with the micro-histories of individual predilection. Even synchronously focussing on a few decades around and after the Napoleonic Wars and on the huge technological changes that enabled the industrialisation of literature in Britain, we would still find large disparity among readers at the time. Educated readers with access to expensive first editions would respond very differently to less-advantaged readers, who might be reading for the first time fifth, six and seventh editions of works that first appeared a century or two earlier.¹ To gain some idea of the meaningful potential of such relations, a second story needs to be told.

From the outset, *Crusoe* had been pirated and abridged in many forms. Throughout the eighteenth century and early nineteenth before industrialization changed the structures of print's affordability, labouring readers were as likely to encounter their literature in the form of a broadsheet nailed to the wall of an inn as they were in the

¹ For relationships between price and readerships in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see ST CLAIR, ST CLAIR, *The Political Economy of Reading* (2005), John Coffin Memorial Lecture in the History of the Book, London, Institute of English Studies publication (Creative Commons), available online at <http://ies.sas.ac.uk/Publications/johncoffin/stclair.pdf>, p. 6, [accessed: Jan. 2012].

form of a bound volume. One of the many bearers of working-class literature and folklore were chapbooks, which were small paper books or pamphlets, often produced on an ad hoc basis and hawked by colporteurs, which followed very different distribution and reception circuits to the volume literature of established bookseller-publishers. Taylor's first printing of *Crusoe* of around 1,000 copies compared well with the mid-eighteenth century figure of 1,000 and 1,500 for first editions of bookseller-publisher's volume literature, although some publications greatly exceeded this figure. Ephemeral publications such as chapbooks, however, especially popular ones, were regularly printed in runs of up to 10,000.¹ A typical chapbook (FIG. 2) could reduce Defoe's work to what in essence is a twenty-four page plot summary, and these were the 'Crusoes' that was available to the bulk of the British working class. An 1816 Chapbook from London, *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, for example, advertised itself as «A New and Correct Edition» but it is only thirty-six pages long.²

A more recognisable bound codex edition, again from 1816, printed in Derby, entitled *The Life and Most Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe ...*, makes little mention of abridgements or alterations and ap-

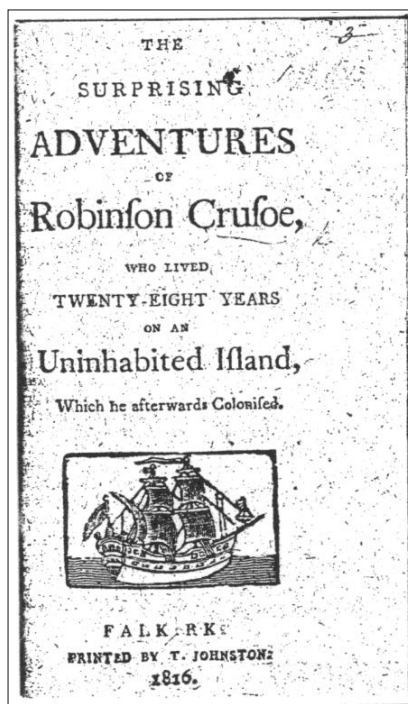


FIG. 2. A typical chapbook, *The Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe [...] on an uninhabited island which he afterwards colonised*, [chapbook], Falkirk, J. Johnstons, 1816, BL Shelfmark 1076.l.13.(3.).

¹ Feather, John, *A History of British Publishing* (London, Routledge 1988), p. 94.

² *The Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe [...] on an uninhabited island which he afterwards colonised*, [chapbook], Falkirk, J. Johnstons, 1816, BL Shelfmark 1076.l.13.(3.); *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, Embellished with four copper plates: a new and correct edition*. [chapbook], London, Anonymous [printed for the booksellers], BL Shelfmark 12202.aa.27.

pears as though it were the authoritative original. But the approximately 110,000 words of Taylor's original publication were cut to around 77,000 words of significantly altered text. Most striking is the change in narrative technique. Defoe uses narrative summary, summarised or reported speech and incidental historical detail to achieve an effect of journalistic realism. The Derby version uses direct speech, speech submerged into action, and scenic manner or action described.

He call'd me One morning into his chamber [narrative summary], where he was confined by the Gout [historical detail], and expostulated very warmly with me upon this Subject [summary]: He ask'd me what Reasons [...] I had for leaving my father's house [reported speech]. [The colon denotes connection between co-ordinate blocks of information] (4)

One morning my father expostulated very warmly with me [scenic manner]: What reason, says he, have you to leave your native country [direct speech].¹ [The colon dramatises a semantic change from a sub-ordinate form, scene, to major form, direct linguistic action.]

The key event of the footprint, in *Crusoe*, is delivered with all the historic force of reportage.

It happened one day [...] I was exceedingly surpriz'd with the Print of a Man's naked Foot [...] I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition, I listen'd, I look'd round me, I could hear nothing [...] (112)

The Derby version uses of scenic manner, descriptive action and dramatic metaphor.

One day it happened, [...] I saw the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, [...] as the toes, heel, and every part of it – Had I seen an apparition of the most frightful shape, I could not have been more confounded. My willing ears gave the strictest attention."²

In 1719, it happened, and we are told when (narrative summary). In the 1816 Derby version, first it is day, then it happens (a scenic presentation), whereupon the dramatic development of the foot ensues, culminating in the ears with a will of their own. The change in narrative technique is away from journalistic *reportage* to the dramatic presentation of a scene conceived from an authorial imagination.

¹ *The Life and Most Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* [...], Derby, Henry Mozley 1816, p. 5.

² *Ibidem*, p. 72.

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We might rush to link this shift to a formalist trajectory into the romantic age similar to that suggested by Ian Watt and others for the rise of the novel (still the standard student text), with its progression from the pseudo-authentic prose reports of human experience to formal-realist narrative fiction. We might even be successful in linking that trajectory to romanticism – as long as we found some way of including the many other editions of the time such as chap-books that followed other trajectories. But important for my second story is that there are inter-textual relationships for the same work, *Crusoe*, created both diachronically and synchronously between editions, each in their own way instantiating their editor's close reading. Equally important is that the readers of these many varied editions include disadvantaged labourers reading both a second-hand reprint of Taylor's 1719 original or an 1816 thirty-six page chap-book, as well as Coleridge with his new 1812 edition with its missing comma.

The significant potential inter-edition relationships becomes apparent when considering a *Crusoe* reader such as Joseph Barker (b. 1806), a soldier's son, who was entirely unaware of the concept of fiction and read all literature (including the Bible) as though it were factual history or journalism:

«My impression was, that the whole was literal and true ... I was naturally a firm believer in all that was gravely spoken or printed ... I had no idea at the time I read *Robinson Crusoe*, that there were such things as novels, works of fiction, in existence».¹ Rather than a factual history, Samuel Bamford (b. 1788), son of a muslin weaver, read «that ever-exciting day dream of boys» *Crusoe* as a fantasy for its «descriptions of sea-dangers, shipwrecks, and lone islands with savages, and far-off countries teeming with riches and plenty».² Thomas Carter (b. 1792), a non-agricultural labourer read to ward off grinding tedium: «In this way I beguiled many a tedious hour at the time I am now referring to ... towards the close of which I thus contrived to read *Robinson Crusoe* and a brief *History of England*, with some other books whose

¹ JONATHAN ROSE, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, New Haven, Yale University Press 2001, pp. 95-96, http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=1938, [accessed: 23 February 2012].

² SAMUEL BAMFORD, *Early Days*, London, 1849, pp. 94-95, http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=7314, [accessed: 23 February 2012].



titles I do not now remember».¹ Christopher Thomsen (b. 1799), a Methodist apprentice ship builder, read because of a fierce desire to read. That he read *Crusoe* was an accident of availability: «I now became anxious to read all that came in any way, and ... felt a deep interest in the reading of *Robinson Crusoe*, *Philip Quarll*, Boyle's *Travels*, and other such books as our school library contained».² Charles Shaw, from around the same time, also read whatever «just happened to fall into my hands». *Crusoe* was read in paratextual context with «*Rollin's Ancient History* ... *Dick's Christian Philosopher* ... *Pollock's Course on Time* ... *Gilfin's Bards of the Bible* ... a strange assortment for a boy of fourteen or fifteen to read...».³ Buried in the archival complexity lies a patterning to such reading experiences. A bounded scope of appreciation was established by romantic readings of *Crusoe*. Were there similar boundaries to the readings of Barker, Bamford, Thomsen and Shaw? What part of their readings were solely the effects of the text? Did their readings (as with Coleridge or in Rousseau's proposal) result from the effects of bibliographic textual variation?

Textual and paratextual variations to *Crusoe* continued throughout the nineteenth century. Each edition foregrounded the editor's reading, and invited fresh readings from each new reader who encountered the work. Some of those editions took *Crusoe* into regions unimaginable to its early eighteenth-century origins – as far as national romanticism and even abject imperialism. A monumental edition was produced in 1840 (FIG. 3),⁴ for example, published in both France and England that was, as David Blewett describes, «a magnificent creation, extensively illustrated with full page engravings and vignettes, and a notable instance of what Wordsworth feared, the grad-

¹ THOMAS CARTER, *Memoirs of a Working Man*, London, 1845, pp. 25-26, http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=7388, [accessed: 23 February 2012].

² CHRISTOPHER THOMSON, *Autobiography of an artisan*, London, 1847, p. 65, http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=8164, [accessed: 23 February 2012].

³ VINCENT DAVID, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Autobiography*, London, 1981, pp. 119-120, http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=8224, [accessed: 23 February 2012].

⁴ DANIEL DEFOE, JEAN IGNACE ISIDORE GÉRARD [called GRANDVILLE], *Aventures de Robinson Crusoe, Traduction nouvelle, Edition illustree par Grandville*, Paris, H. Fournier; London, R. Tyas, 1840.

ual overwhelming of the text by illustration». ¹ Its frontispiece was a wood engraving, set on Robinson's island, now a civilized domain, which showed a crowd gazing at a massive statue of Crusoe the founding father, replete with parrot, dog, gun and various iconography of the new nation. Against the background of new imperialism, by 1877 (FIG. 4), an edition could appear with a steel engraving of Crusoe the imperial master: muscular and naked save for a lion's skin, he stands as Hercules holding a sword in one hand, an orb in the other, one foot placed on the head of a vanquished supine Indian. ²

Defoe's work known as *Crusoe*, and the editions that instantiate it, can be regarded as a resource from which numerous readings

are taken. The task of hermeneutic interpretation conducted on a specific scholarly edition of the text is and should remain the task of comparative literature. But there are other comparisons to undertake. The romantics were able to closely read a particular meaning from *Crusoe*. But for the history of reading and the material text, a wealth of other relations has occurred. Especially when we consider, as Mellissa Free has convincingly demonstrated through her collations in the archive, that for most of its history, certainly until the First World War, *Crusoe* the trilogy was sold overwhelmingly as a combination of RC1 and RC2 and often together with RC3: *The Life and Strange Surprising adventures*



FIG. 3. The founding father, frontispiece of *Aventures de Robinson Crusoe... Edition illustrée par Grandville*. Paris H. Fournier, and London, Robert Tyas, 1840 (British Library).

¹ DAVID BLEWETT, *The Illustrations of Robinson Crusoe, 1719-1920*, Gerard's Cross, ???, Oxford University Press, 1995 («Colin Smythe Publications»), p. 79.

² *Etranges aventures de Robinson Crusoe Traduction de l'édition princeps, 1719, avec une étude sur l'auteur par Battier, Frontispice et sept planches dessinées et gravées par Jules Fesquet*, Legenisel, Paris Jules Bonnassies, 1877.



FIG. 4. Imperial Robinson
(Frontispiece, *Etrange Aventures
de Robinson Crusoe*, Paris,
Jules Bonnassies 1877, steel engraving,
Jules Fresquet (British Library).

were sold and read together with *Farther Adventures*... and often with *Serious Reflections*...¹ RC2 and RC3 were only effectively removed from the market in the twentieth century. For literary studies the reduction of RC1 to the island episode and the effective erasure of both RC2 and RC3 began with Rousseau. But for almost two-hundred years, other readers of *Robinson Crusoe* read a sequential episodic tale of an adventurer called Robinson. His island adventures formed only the central section of the first part, which otherwise included trips to Africa and Brazil, slavery off the coast of Morocco, and fights with wild animals in the Pyrenees. But in RC2, following the death of Friday and the massacre of a village in Madagascar, those readers could imaginatively travel with Crusoe and his new side-kick Will

Aitkin (the frontispiece to an 1883 edition depicted Aitkin and his wife),² for serial adventures in the Bay of Bengal, the Malay Archipelago, China, Peking, Tartary and Russia. As Free describes, the sights of Crusoe being ejected from his nephew's ships, of him destroying an idol, decimating a village, spewing invectives against the Chinese, running out of unexplored land and paling in comparison to a Russian noble are all part of the narrative mix: «[i]t is the thriving East, above all, that is erased from the modern Crusoe ... newly emerging as a powerful counter – a conceivable threat – to the West».³

¹ MELISA FREE, *Un-Erasing Crusoe Farther Adventures in the Nineteenth Century*, «Book History», 9, 2006, pp. 89-130.

² *Ibidem*, p. 103.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 114-115. Given the emerging BRIC-nation economies, close readings of RC2 might be timely.

3. CONCLUSION

Contemporary textual studies tackle the question of what text(s) from among the bibliographical evidence comprises the work. The work as a social phenomenon, by contrast, is defined by power, and there are many, including Foucault and Bourdieu, who will tell us how those power relations work. Once we have a work and its text(s), close readings can reveal their meaning and comparative literature discuss the reading's pertinence. But while there may be relations between a text and its reader that the close reading reveals, there are also relations between readers and between the editions they have read: a dialectic, if you will, between reader and text, but also between readers. In addition to what the meaning of a text might be, a further question may be to ask whether there are patterns to the various instantiations of the work and whether relations between readers of those instantiations are organised and if so in what way? The omission seems to provide one profitable avenue along which comparative literature might proceed. Patrick Bratlinger, in *Crusoe's Footprints*, has put the case succinctly. Crusoe's island isolation is shattered when he finds the famous footprint, and Crusoe is haunted for two years by its mental image. Paradoxically, «the discovery of the footprint doesn't end his isolation; it only underscores it». The image of the print is «pressed into [Crusoe's] thoughts like the original footprint in the sand. He possesses it; it possesses him. It becomes the inescapable image of the Other – of all others – whom he in his isolation has left behind...». When the Other does appear in the figure of a willing friend, Crusoe does not learn from him. Crusoe does not learn the Other's language or learn how the Other reads. He merely names the Other Friday and creates him in his own image. What Bratlinger suggests is that «in order to understand ourselves, the discourses of 'the Other' – of all others – is that which we most urgently need to hear».¹ For similar reasons, literary studies should be clear about the choices it makes. It should be clear about differences between a close reading with its potential for breath-taking subtlety attained in a romantic exposition such as

¹ PATRICK BRATLINGER, *Crusoe's Footprints: Cultural Studies in Britain and America*, New York-London, Routledge 1990), pp. 1-2, p. 3.



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Coleridge's, on the one hand, and on the other the willingness to look at textual material that others have found valuable and at how those materials have been read.

