Castaway and Cast Away: Colonial, Imperial, and Religious Discourses in Daniel Defoe and Robert Zemeckis

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Abstract
In Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory, Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman offer a useful distinction between "colonialism, the conquest and direct control of other people's land" and "imperialism - the globalization of the capitalist mode of production, its penetration of previously non-capitalist regions of the world, and destruction of pre- or non-capitalist forms of social organization." Two works, one early and one recent, encapsulate this distinction. Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe positions its protagonist as a colonizer - a man who defies his father's exhortation to live modestly, instead embarking on a sea venture in the hopes of amassing significant wealth from participation in the slave trade. Lost in the Caribbean, Crusoe redirects his spirit of acquisition to transform his island, and its eventual inhabitants, into a British colony, with himself as its governor. Robert Zemeckis's film Cast Away, clearly based on Defoe's novel, refigures that foundational cultural story, featuring a central character, Chuck Noland, whose job at Federal Express involves overseeing the company's expansion into new markets. While Defoe may seem, at times, ambivalent toward Crusoe's self-satisfied rapaciousness, Zemeckis is more clearly critical of the capitalist system that controls every aspect of Noland's thought and life; when a plane crash strands Noland on a deserted island much like Crusoe's, his life-myth turns out to be empty, not quite sufficient to prevent him from reverting to the kind of primitivism and barbarism that constitutes Crusoe's worst fears. Noland can make little of the flotsam and jetsam of his civilization, including its secular forms of spirituality. The Christianity that endorses Crusoe's sense of self is replaced by a company logo of angel wings and an overvaluation of his girlfriend Kelly, suggesting the emptiness of Noland's life. Yet, while offering a critique of both his culture's imperialist greed and spiritual hollowness, Zemeckis is, in the final analysis, unable to offer viable alternatives.

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In their introduction to *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman begin by offering a useful distinction between "colonialism, the conquest and direct control of other people's land" and "imperialism. The globalization of the capitalist mode of production, its penetration of previously non-capitalist regions of the world, and destruction of pre- or non-capitalist forms of social organization."¹ Two works, one early and one recent, encapsulate this distinction. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* positions its protagonist as a colonizer—a man who defies his father's exhortation to live modestly, instead embarking on a sea venture in the hopes of amassing significant wealth from participation in the slave trade.

Robert Zemeckis's film *Cast Away* (2000), owing an unacknowledged debt to Defoe's novel,² refigures that foundational cultural story in intriguing ways. When a plane crash strands the film's Chuck Noland on a deserted island much like Crusoe's, his life-myth turns out to be empty, not quite sufficient to prevent him from reverting to the kind of primitivism and barbarism that constitutes Crusoe's worst fears. Zemeckis, unlike Defoe, is critical of the imperialist imperatives of his culture, yet similar to Defoe, offers no alternative paradigm. Interrogating the parallels and divergences between the two works allows audiences to perceive the continuity and disconnect between the colonial past and imperialist present, between a God-centered world and failed efforts at
secular substitutes, between the eighteenth-century author and the post-modern one, and it is to such an exploration that this paper is devoted.

Brett McInelly asserts that "the colonial elements of Robinson Crusoe have not been as thoroughly treated as we might expect in either eighteenth-century studies or postcolonial theory and criticism." McInelly himself believes that "British colonialism informs nearly every feature of Daniel Defoe's first novel," mainly through the mental processes traced within its central character. "Crusoe," writes McInelly, "gradually learns how to assert himself over land and people…as he comes to recognize the unique place he occupies as a British Protestant in a world in which he is surrounded by religious and cultural Others…Crusoe's self-image enlarges the farther he travels from England. This is precisely the type of mindset that colonialism would require. Clearly, for a country on its way to controlling over a quarter of the globe, such an enlarged sense of self was crucial to obtaining and maintaining the Empire." So, although Crusoe is alone for the bulk of the novel, his mental development prepares him for his final destiny—spitting the Spanish by planting a British colony within their domains.

Perhaps the most marked, and often remarked upon, element of Crusoe's colonalist mindset is his participation in the slave trade and his obsessive desire to amass great wealth from the labor of others. Eschewing the "middle station" endorsed by his father (5), Crusoe, as many younger sons did, embarks on a
maritime venture to the African coast. On a subsequent voyage, after being captured and enslaved by Moorish pirates, Crusoe escapes with a "Maresco" boy, Xury, whom he promises to make "a great Man" (19), but whom he promptly sells for "60 Pieces of Eight" (26) to the Portuguese captain who rescues them both. Though professing himself "loath to sell the poor Boy's Liberty, who had assisted me so faithfully in procuring my own" (26), Crusoe will repeat this pattern of enslaving cultural or racial others throughout his travels. Later setting up as a plantation owner in Brazil, "the first thing" Crusoe does is to buy "a Negro Slave" (29), and, later still, perceiving Amerindians land on his Caribbean island, Crusoe quickly thinks he could capture one, two, or three "so as to make them entirely Slaves to me, to do whatever I should direct them" (145). When Crusoe shoots the Caribs pursuing the man he will rename Friday, Crusoe interprets Friday's gesture of fear and submission according to his own lights: "he.laid his Head upon the Ground, and taking me by the Foot, set my Foot upon his Head; this it seems was in token of swearing to be my Slave for ever" (147). In the face of cultural difference and linguistic barrier, Crusoe "reads" Friday in the way that best suits himself, as a willing and submissive slave. The motive for Crusoe's will to dominate, throughout, is rightly identified and acknowledged by him as his pursuit of an "immoderate Desire of rising faster than the Nature of the Thing admitted" (29). This phrase encapsulates the core of England's purposes in colonizing, a hunger for "getting rich quick" that could actually be satisfied through the risky and
dangerous path of dominance. The fabulous wealth amassed by the British in the West Indies, and later in the East Indies, was gathered by exploiting the "free" labor of others, by the enslavement and oppression that Crusoe's patterns of thought and behavior begin to suggest.

Crusoe's "immoderate Desire of rising faster than the Nature of the Thing admitted," like the colonial enterprise at large, comes with personal costs: it is his decision to travel himself to the Coast of Guinea to purchase slaves "for the Service of the Brasils" (30), to avoid the high fees imposed by the middlemen of the slave trade, that dooms Crusoe to his isolation in the Caribbean. Alexander calls this hunger Crusoe's "'original sin' in that it leads him to take risks that result in misfortune, the worst of which is his being shipwrecked on the island."9 Similarly, in Cast Away, Chuck Noland's drive to be successful in corporate culture causes him to undergo the flight, on Christmas Eve and in bad weather, that maroons him. Alexander draws the parallel between the two men:

.both works feature a protagonist who is presented as a kind of representative economic man, and whose flaws are very much tied to economic concerns. The nature of the economic world each man reflects is different, of course. Crusoe represents the colonial economy of the early eighteenth century, a world peopled by merchants, traders, and small landholders. Chuck Noland represents the corporate capitalism of our times. He is the ambitious corporate executive, marching briskly and confidently through a life framed by the imperatives of the global economy. Even his name-Noland-suggests a world where transnational corporations like Fed Ex have replaced any distinct sense of place.10
Although offering a helpful starting point, Alexander doesn't go quite far enough. For Noland doesn't merely "represent corporate capitalism," he embodies a particular type of capitalism, the sort that the United States imports to all corners of the world. Noland is the ideal American imperialist.

Zemeckis introduces his central character in a telling way. Viewers watch men taking down a plaque of Lenin outside a restaurant in Russia, signaling the opening of this once Communist country to Western market forces. Chuck Noland is a potent arm of these forces; his job at Federal Express involves overseeing the company's expansion into just such new global markets. In Russia, Noland must indoctrinate his culturally diverse staff with the American values of efficiency, timeliness, and avarice, intoning to unconvinced workers that "Time rules over us without mercy. We live or we die by the clock. We never allow ourselves the sin of losing track of time." In Noland's fully secular worldview, the only "sin" he can perceive is contributing to corporate inefficiency. The boy, Nicolai, who brings Noland the clock he sent to himself from Memphis gets bribed with Snickers bars, a portable cd player, and one of Elvis Presley's discs, the material goodies that the United States teaches the world to want. The 87 hours travel time recorded by the clock sends Noland into a fit: "87 hours is a shameful outrage. What if it had been your paycheck, or fresh boysenberries, or adoption papers?" Noland's Russian translator adds, "What do they expect from a man who, when his truck broke down,
he stole a boy's bicycle to make his deliveries." This editorializing suggests a different system of value that remains opaque to Noland, who insists that the key point of that story is that he completed his deliveries. The Russians, he says, must learn to do the same, to "do whatever it takes" to meet corporate standards. That there could be another, different, perhaps more valuable set of standards, Noland cannot yet perceive.

One of the things that separates Crusoe and Noland, however, is their creators' attitudes toward them. Zemeckis is clearly critical of the pressure-cooker capitalist system that controls every aspect of Noland's thought and life—he blames the culture rather than the individual who is part of that culture. Unlike Crusoe, Noland does not seem singularly possessive or obsessed with amassing wealth—his apartment is handsome, but not excessively opulent. His clothing is dowdy, and he seems to be supporting his girlfriend, Kelly, while she finishes her graduate studies. Noland is also not unique in his driven, constant devotion to work, which again signals that Zemeckis critique does not center on the man himself. Kelly, for example, is not found at home either—Noland leaves messages on the answering machine and, when the couple compare calendars, hers seems as booked as his. The crew of the airplane that takes him away on Christmas Eve is also flying on that holiday. In short, the problem of Noland's workaholism is cultural and systemic, rather than individual.
It is, then, a telling and intentional irony of the film that, when Noland is stranded, he is forced, in order to stay alive, to betray his fidelity to the job he has devoted himself to with such single-minded zeal. Ironies accumulate, for the packages he had so ferociously insisted must arrive in 24 hours prove to be filled with frivolities or inessentials, things that typically would not be missed, or could be easily replaced, if they did not arrive at all: videotapes, divorce papers, volleyball, figure skates, and a designer dress. Unable to make direct use of this flotsam and jetsam of his civilization that has washed ashore—except, perhaps, the cardboard of the boxes themselves, which help him create a temporary bed—Noland must discover ways to transform such objects of contemporary leisure into tools and materials for survival. The ice skates, for example, become knife, hatchet, scissors, and surgical tool. The transformation of the seemingly worthless into the worthwhile becomes a central motif of *Cast Away*: it certainly can be no accident that Noland's rescue is accomplished by means of fragments of a portable toilet from Bakersfield—valueless and valued exchange places several times within the film, on a literal level, and at the spiritual. Leisure, for example, seems pointless to Noland when he is immersed in corporate life, excessive when he is alone on the island and has nothing else, and essential to a well-rounded existence when he reenters civilization and tries to put the personal and professional into better balance. Human relationships move from peripheral to central in the course of
Noland's ordeal. What is missing, however, and remains a blank throughout the film, is any sense of relationship to God.

Zemeckis seems to be criticizing America's contribution to the world when he emphasizes that neither Noland's highly specialized skills (his service-related and managerial abilities) nor his culture's technology—the watch and pager that have been all-important to him before the crash—are of any use on an island. Transformed from a plump, heavily dressed businessman into a thin, unshaven primitive in a loincloth, Noland lives the savagery that Crusoe fears and that this earlier protagonist is saved from by the providential care of his creator—both Defoe, in his desire to focus on the commercial strengths of his nation, and God, in whom Crusoe believes with a fervency that preserves his mental wellbeing. When Crusoe washes up on his island, his ship washes up close by, connecting Crusoe to civilization and enabling his ongoing relationship with his culture. "The ship," writes Frank Donoghue, "is Crusoe's umbilical cord" to Europe. Timber, guns, shot, gunpowder, and the "Toys" collected for his "Trade with the Negroes" such as "Knives, Scissars, Hatchets, and the like" (31), rendered back to their use value, become the barrier between Crusoe and barbarity. Crusoe muses,

Then it occurr'd to me again, how well I was furnish'd for my Subsistence, and what would have been my Case if it had not happen'd Which was an Hundred Thousand to one, that the Ship floated from the Place where she
first struck and was driven so near to the Shore that I had time to get all these Things out of her? What would have been my Case, if I had been to have liv'd in the Condition in which I at first came on Shore, without Necessaries of Life, or Necessaries to supply and procure them? Particularly, said I aloud, (tho' to myself) what should I ha' done without a Gun, without Ammunition, without any Tools to make any thing, or to work with, without Clothes, Bedding, a Tent, or any manner of Covering? (47).

Later, again, Crusoe compares

"my present Condition with what it would certainly have been, if the good Providence of God had not wonderfully order'd the Ship to be cast up nearer to the Shore..I spent whole Hours, I may say whole Days, in representing to my self in the most lively Colours, how I must have acted, if I had got nothing out of the Ship. How I could not have so much as got any Food, except Fish and Turtles..That I should have liv'd, if I had not perish'd, like a meer Savage. That if I had kill'd a Goat, or a Fowl, by any Contrivance, I had no way to flea or open them, or part the Flesh from the Skin, and the Bowels, or to cut it up: but must know it with my Teeth, and pull it with my Claws like a Beast" (95).

These images that horrify Crusoe are precisely those we see of Noland, spear fishing and tearing apart the raw creature with his teeth. While Crusoe's cave is furnished, with table and chair and shelves of tools and supplies, "so ready at my Hand, that it was a great Pleasure to me to see all my Goods in such Order" (51), Noland's cave is bare and barren, his few possessions scattered about haphazardly.

In this instance, more than resembling his literary forebear, Noland, now truly of "no land" and "cast away," as the spacing of the film's title implies, rather than "castaway," looks like the wretches on whom Defoe's fiction may have been based. Alexander Selkirk, left behind for four years and four months on Juan
Fernandez Island and rescued in 1709, grew, according to Richard Steele's account, "dejected, languid, and melancholy, scarce able to refrain from doing himself Violence." Leslie Stephen said of Selkirk, "He had almost forgotten to talk; he had learnt to catch goats by running on foot; and he had acquired the exceedingly difficult art of making fire by rubbing two sticks. In other words, his whole mind was absorbed in providing a few physical necessities, and he was rapidly becoming a savage." Ian Watt, identifying other potential written sources for Defoe's material, writes, "what actually happened to the castaways was at best uninspiring. At worst, harassed by fear and dogged by ecological degradation, they sank more and more to the level of animals, lost the use of speech, went mad, or died of inanition." Lacking the Deus ex machina of a fully-intact store of goods, not as competently individualistic as his fictional ancestor, Noland in his regression and misery resembles these less fortunate historical figures. Bereft of a Friday, Noland, nearly mad, speaks to "Wilson," a volleyball with a dark face painted in Noland's own blood.

While Crusoe conquers his island, Noland's island conquers him. When each man is first marooned, his initial response is to climb a hill to assess his situation. Crusoe's description of his endeavor is an exact match to the cinematic images of Noland: ".I travell'd for Discovery up to the Top of that Hill, where after I had with great Labour and Difficulty go to the Top, I saw my Fate to my great
Affliction, (viz.) that I was in an Island environ'd every Way with the Sea, no Land to be seen."(40). After his own painful climb, Noland's point-of-view is captured by the camera of Cast Away, which pans over a wide and desolate stretch of ocean. A second hill climbing, however, firmly separates the two men: a desperate, half-insane Noland climbs the same hill again with the thought of committing suicide, while Crusoe surveys his lower ground thinking "that this was all my own, that I was King and Lord of all this Country indefeasibly, and had a Right of Possession; and if I could convey it, I might have it in Inheritance, as compleatly as any Lord of a Mannor in England" (73). Crusoe redirects his spirit of acquisition to transform his island, to reconstruct it through his labor into a small-scale model of his homeland. While Noland acquires only the most limited physical skills, Crusoe, creating his own grindstone, taming goats, farming barley and rice, drying grapes, forming baskets and kiln-dried clay pots, hollowing out canoes, concludes that "every Man may be in time Master of every mechanick Art" (51).  

16 Ian Watt argues that "Defoe was certainly aware of how the increasing economic specialisation which was a feature of the life of his time had made most of the 'mechanic arts' alien to the experience of his readers" and that Defoe is purposely "set[ting] back the economic clock" in allowing "an absolute equivalence between individual effort and individual reward."  

17 Endowing Crusoe with carpentry, farming, and scientific knowledge and skills seems, however, precisely of a piece with the attitude of "self-importance" and "British self-assurance" that Crusoe
embodies and that McInelly identifies as the colonizer's central thought processes.\textsuperscript{18} "The enlarging self that typifies Crusoe's response to his experiences compensates in many ways for the actual precariousness of his situation...Crusoe's tendency to imagine himself in grandiose terms replicates something of what was occurring in the culture at large."\textsuperscript{19}

While Crusoe's labor functions in direct proportion to his physical wellbeing and amassing of goods, and psychological wellbeing in his personal satisfaction and sense of self, labor in \textit{Cast Away} is largely alienated from human comfort and happiness in every instance but one: that of the artist who begins and ends the film. If, as Watt argues, "the Puritan conception of the dignity of labour"\textsuperscript{20} is a touchstone of \textit{Robinson Crusoe}, the corollary in \textit{Cast Away} are the shipments of artistry by Bettina Peterson. Happy in her work, engaged by it, she seems to represent the movie's muse and model. Her box, marked with Bettina's personal logo of angel's wings, is the one item Noland refuses to open. Kathleen Streater sees this refusal to open the box as a turning away from the drive to know and control and a move toward faith and hope. Noland traces the wings with reverence because he is intrigued by the fact that someone has imposed a sense of themselves on this pre-printed, pre-made, ready for delivery box. It is like the voice of another person and Noland is beginning to recognize that human contact is what he needs to survive. He doesn't need what is in the box as much as he needs the strength of
individual spirit the artistic expression represents; he needs the faith of spiritual deliverance represented through the art itself; and finally, he needs to hope that someday he will be able to deliver that package back to its owner. Indeed, after his rescue, Noland does attempt to return the box to its sender, writing on it "this package saved my life." Angel wings become a symbol of hope to Noland, the image he paints on his makeshift sail as he risks all to leave the island.

Watching the trajectory of the angel wing image threading its way through the film of *Cast Away*, one is tempted to compare it to the sense of Providential rescue that informs Crusoe's conversion, his sense of "the distinguishing Goodness of the Hand which had preserv'd me, and had singled me out to be preserv'd when all the rest were destroy'd" (66). Indeed, Streater implies such a comparison when she uses and reuses the words "faith" and "spiritual deliverance" to describe what the wings represent. Yet, for all their seeming profundity, in the final analysis, the angel wings appear an ultimately empty symbol, religion as it might be seen by an atheist, devoid of any real content or truth value apart from its power to provide personal comfort-in short, akin to Marx's "opium of the people." The image is, after all, a secular logo, a reference to a person and to artistic expression, as Streater indicates, but not, finally, a reference to God; indeed, the image of angel wings and Noland's valuing of human connection seem of a piece with his overvaluing of his girlfriend Kelly as the only source of strength and sustenance available to him in
his isolation. As Diane Ravitch expresses it, "Chuck Noland is truly a man of our times, lacking any inner life, having little to think about other than a lost love. He has no sense of religion and is utterly incapable of seeking meaning in his experiences or his life." 22

Crusoe's reading of the Bible and conversion experience seem to save him in more ways than one—both spiritually for a heavenly future and in preserving his sense of purpose in the here-and-now. Crusoe sees in everything—both in the misadventure of his shipwreck and isolation, and in the blessing of his health and abundance of resources—the hand of God, and therefore everything is imbued with meaning and significance. His marooning is a punishment for his many and manifest sins ("God's Justice has overtaken me," 67), while his discoveries of good things, like the small bits of seed he accidentally and thoughtlessly empties from a bag that grow up into grain, are signals of God's care in his redemption ("it was really the Work of Providence as to me, that should order or appoint, that 10 or 12 Grains of Corn should remain unspoil'd," 58). By contrast, the angel wings, while of some value in connecting Noland to another, imagined person, do not link him to any larger transcendence, any sense of meaning apart from the immediate present. In short, they cannot help him see the Deistic plan and purpose in suffering that constitutes Crusoe's stability. As Gregory Benoit perceives, this leaves Noland dependent on seeing his life as merely the product of fate, "an impersonal,
mysterious force, as mutable and as unpredictable as the ocean”; such a view leads Noland toward his suicidal despair, for he "has no way of knowing what will come next on the tide, whether it will be good or evil or, worst of all, nothing at all, and he has no hope whatsoever that there is any intelligent being who is responsible for what comes in.” Secular forms of spirituality and the focus on human relationships do not, in other words, offer sufficient spiritual sustenance in *Cast Away* to preserve the mind and soul of the film's protagonist; yet, as in his treatment of economic concerns, Zemeckis articulates the problem with great profundity, yet seems incapable of proffering any solutions.

Not only does the image of angel's wings fail to satisfy the spiritual hunger alluded to within the film, but also, finally, the artistry associated with the image does not resolve the human difficulties associated with capitalist production. Gradually, the artistic labor associated with the wings is itself called into question: the marker over the gate of the Texas ranch that houses Bettina's studio initially reads "Dick” and "Bettina." Her first Fed Ex shipment, in the sequence that opens the film, travels to Russia, where it is delivered to a "cowboy" who is clearly sleeping with another woman. At the end of *Cast Away*, the "Dick” has been torn from above the gate, suggesting that Bettina has been engaged in another, covert form of labor less savory than her overt artistry: marriage to an
undesirable partner who may have been paying the bills that creative endeavor could not meet.

When Crusoe is given passage back to England by the ship's captain he has aided, his reentry into European society "is one pleasant surprise after another."24 "Upon his return," writes Donoghue, "Crusoe is astounded by the remarkable capacity of the economic system to include him as a member even while he has been physically absent from his own property."25 Owning a plantation kept in repair, functioning and planted by the "Slaves there were upon it" (204), Crusoe discovers "I was now Master, all on a Sudden, of above 5000. l. Sterling in Money, and had an Estate, as I might well call it, in the Brasils, of above a thousand Pounds a Year" (205). Although Crusoe claims "I was in a Condition which I scarce knew how to understand," he has an answer ready to hand for this phenomenon: "the latter End of Job was better than the Beginning" (205). Crusoe's "economic self-interest and religious interest dovetail" for the "economic self-interest is ordained by God."26 McInelly asks, "what better way to validate the ugliness of grandiose possession than to construct it as being authorized by God?"27 If Noland's version of religion is empty, Crusoe's is too full, merging as it does with his economic self-interest and will to power over others. Providential intervention, for Crusoe, sanctions all his actions as God-given, including the capture and conversion of
Friday, the slaughtering of 21 "heathen" Caribs, the ownership of slaves in Brazil, and the one-sided contractual relationship with his Spanish and English "colonists."

By presenting a seamless joining between Crusoe's religious faith and his economic greed (if one does good, one does well), Defoe appears to endorse the colonizing system of which he, as a merchant, was a part. Zemeckis, by contrast, wants to indict American imperialism, the unquestioning acceptance and exportation of capitalist corporate culture. By turning his source on its head, Zemeckis calls into question the aims and values of modern life: Crusoe, absent from England for 35 years, "returns to find everything in order, the world seemingly waiting for his reentry," 28 and is satisfied to discover "all my Wealth about me" (205). Noland, gone for only four years "has been wiped out, 29 declared dead, and finds that "it takes a lot of paperwork to bring back a man." Yet, Zemeckis's critique remains incomplete because, finally, he can see no "outside" to capitalism, can develop no other model or method of work/production; he also finds no way to disassociate Crusoe's religious impulses from his colonizing ones to depict a humbler, ministering modern Christianity. Alexander concludes that "the film is actually more hopeful than the novel on which it is based about the possibility of resisting the influence of the market." 30 But the market remains, even if Noland, upon his return, no longer believes in it, and eschews the language of community-"the Fed Ex family"-that veils and disguises the exploitations brought about by
greed. In the end, Chuck Noland's chuck-it-all, free-to-choose, at-the-crossroads leisure depends, for financial solvency, upon an unspoken Fed Ex payoff—his newfound cynicism about the company does not stop Noland from reaping its benefits. While Crusoe's status and estimation of himself are elevated by his island life, Noland's are diffused—delivering a package again, following the hollow sign of angel wings toward a potential new girlfriend who lives at an isolated ranch (almost itself another island, surrounded by "a whole lotta nothin' all the way to Canada"), in the last moments, Noland, and Zemeckis's Cast Away with him, still seem adrift.


2 Andrew Alexander comments, "Though it is possible that no allusion to the Crusoe story was ever intended, it seems to me inconceivable that a story about a man stranded for years on a deserted island could not be referring, however obliquely, to Robinson Crusoe"—"Castaways Old and New: The Robinson Crusoe Story in Our Times." Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Northern Plains Conference on Earlier British Literature, ed. Barbara Olive and David Sprunger (Moorhead, MN: Concordia College, 2002), 79.


4 McInelly, 1

5 McInelly, 2, 3, 14.

6 Peter Hulme notes that "the only uninhabited land in America tended to be uninhabitable: the Amerindians would certainly not have ignored Crusoe's remarkably fertile island unless they had been driven off by the European competition for Caribbean land which was in full swing by 1659"—Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797 (New York: Routledge, 1986), 186.

7 Tracing the varying depictions of racial and cultural otherness within the text, Roxann Wheeler notes that "The novel is caught in the cataclysmic shift from a subsistence-based to profit-oriented

8 Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, ed. Michael Shinagel (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994). All quotations are from this edition and are cited parenthetically within the body of this paper.

9 Here (p. 81), Alexander echoes the seminal reading of Ian Watt, who, in an oft-quoted passage, insists, "Crusoe's 'original sin' is really the dynamic tendency of capitalism itself, whose aim is never merely to maintain the status quo, but to transform it incessantly" - The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 65.

10 Alexander, 83.

11 Noland jokes during the Christmas Eve dinner that he wears his pager to bed. He gives a pager, journal, and hand towels to Kelly as holiday gifts before departing on his flight. When he hands her the engagement ring, Noland mentions that the towels were a joke, which implies that the pager wasn't. A pager is the first thing Noland looks at when he comes to his senses on the island, and is one of the items buried with the empty coffin his friends mourn over when they think Noland permanently lost.


13 Richard Steele, from The Englishman, No. 26 (Thursday, 3 December 1713), reprinted in the Norton edition of Robinson Crusoe, 236.


15 Watt, 88.

16 Diane Ravitch notes that "Chuck is far inferior to Robinson in ingenuity and enterprise. Chuck survives mainly on fish and coconuts, and gets very excited when he succeeds in making fire, an accomplishment that Robinson takes for granted. Robinson, alone for 28 years, teaches himself to grow crops, raise animals, make pots, fashion a canoe and otherwise recreate a modicum of civilization" - "Tom Hanks, You're No Robinson Crusoe," The Wall Street Journal (9 January 2001): A.22. Reprinted from ProQuest, 2.

17 Watt, 72.

18 McInelly, 3.

19 McInelly, 3, 4.

20 Watt, 74.

22 Ravitch, 2.


24 Alexander, 85.

25 Donoghue, 2. Hulme says something similar, that the textual moment of Crusoe's discovery of his wealth "marks the discovery of the secret of capital itself, that it accumulates in magical independence from the labour of its owner ... plantations built on the violently-extracted labour-power of slaves" (219-20, 222).


27 McInelly, 11.


29 Johnson, 8.

30 Alexander, 86.