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Adaptation as Parodic Critique: Jack Gold's *Man Friday*

Abstract: Over the centuries, Robinson Crusoe has created a long and wide path of controversial commentaries and multifarious approaches, from different critical interpretations of Defoe's novel to modern rewritings of the story. Hence the story's capacity for "metamorphosis," as well as the re-interpretation of the original text in relation to the context that produced it, possible source texts, and contemporary texts that imitated Defoe's novel. The modern, linear and historically embedded Crusoe has been remodelled into a non-linear and self-referential postmodern figure, who dances and has a good laugh at Friday's witty opinions. While mentioning different representations of Robinson in literature and cinema, I will focus mainly on Jack Gold's 1975 film, which adjusted to the postcolonial vogue in the academia of the 1970s. As far as the concept of "parody" is concerned, I will discuss the term in relation to Linda Hutcheon's and Simon Dentith's theoretical approaches to parody and I will look into the different means of narration used by Gold: linguistic and non-linguistic, visual, cultural, and filmic codes.

Key words: cinematic adaptation, subversive discourse, Robinsonades, narrative cinema, parody

When J. Paul Hunter declared that "No book comes into the world altogether naked, new, or alone" (ix), he made a very important point by projecting the birth of a book against both a contextual and an intertextual background. No book can be considered outside the context that produced it; no book exists without other books preceding it; and every book is pregnant with the books or other media that will follow. One such case of a text that has been discussed both inside its context and from a contemporary perspective, a text that used previous texts as source and, in turn, was used as a source for future writings and other media is Daniel Defoe's novel, *Robinson Crusoe*.

Much ink has been used in the various debates promoted by the literary critics over the status and the role that Daniel Defoe's novel, *Robinson Crusoe* played in literary history. Over the centuries, *Robinson Crusoe* has created a long and wide path of controversial commentaries and multifarious approaches, from different critical interpretations of Defoe's novel to modern rewritings of the story. Hence the story's capacity for "metamorphosis" (Stimpson xi) as well as the re-interpretation of the original text in relation to the context that produced it, possible source texts, and contemporary texts that have departed from Defoe's novel.

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It is true that "Any investigation of the Crusoe phenomenon must begin with the original book" (James 1), but all the different versions having Robinson Crusoe as the main protagonist of the story or using the castaway story as a background – be them literary, dramatic, musical, or cinematic – have become independent products. It should be noted that Defoe's novel created a legacy, but all the subsequent texts based on Defoe's novel are new and different texts. The concept of "text", as I will use it in this study, refers to the postmodern extension of "text" to all forms of cultural manifestation, according to Derrida's reading of the whole world as a text: "il n'y a pas de hors-texte," there is nothing that is not a text.² Therefore, when I speak of a "film text" I refer to the perception of a film as a signifying discourse, whose internal system can be analysed and whose sygnifying configurations can be closely studied (Aumont et al. 166).

The story of the castaway Crusoe was turned, for example, into a pantomime with music and dance, *Robinson Crusoe, or Harlequin Friday*, performed at the Drury Lane Theatre in 1781. It was also adapted by Jacques Offenbach into a comic opera in 1867. Ian Watt mentions the name of a popular restaurant in France called "Robinson" and adds another famous example to the Robinson legacy, which is the French employment of the term "un robinson" to designate a large umbrella (96).

Ever since 1719, when it was first published, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* has undergone hundreds of transformations, imitations, and reinterpretations. The desert-island type of stories generated by Defoe's book is usually referred to as "Robinsonades." According to Carl Fisher, the term "Robinsonade" "repeats the themes of *Robinson Crusoe*; usually it incorporates or adapts specific physical aspects of Crusoe's experience and is an obvious rewriting of the Crusoe's story. Other times it shares ideas or narrative style" (130) "Robinsonade" is a term invented by Hermann Ullrich in 1898. He titled his bibliographical study *Robinson und Robinsonaden*.³

Defoe's original book has been pirated in numerous editions. Accordingly, various abridgements have come out and many revisions and adaptations have turned Crusoe into *The New Robinson Crusoe*⁴ or *The Swiss Family Robinson*⁵, not to mention the translations into various languages, "so that the dividing line between something still recognizably Defoe's story and the many and various versions of it is often difficult to draw" (Blewett 12). There is a boy Crusoe, a girl Crusoe, *The Arctic Crusoe* (1854), *The Catholic Crusoe* (1862), or even *The Dog Crusoe* (1860) (Blewett 13). As early as 1720, William Rufus Chetwood published the first book of what was to be known as the tradition of the Robinsonade in Europe, *The Voyages, Dangerous Adventures, and Miraculous Escapes of Capt. Richard Falconer*. This title was shortly followed by the first American Robinsonade, part of the Puritan shipwreck narratives, *Ashton's Memorial*, written in 1725 by John Barnard.

² As Crusoe's legacy goes beyond the literary text, employing the term "text" in an enlarged, Derridaean sense will be helpful in the present study, which is concerned with both the written and the visual texts of *Robinson Crusoe*.

³ See Phillips 1997, p. 170.

⁴ The author of this book is Joachim Heinrich Campe and the original title is *Robinson der Jüngere*. The book was first published in English in 1788.

⁵ Johann David Wyss, *Der Schweizerische Robinson*, 1812.

Being a text that has been constantly reinvented and rewritten, *Robinson Crusoe* has achieved the status of myth and its character "a modern Western mythological figure" (Kreitzer 31). Ian Watt considers Robinson Crusoe one of the greatest myths of Western individualism, along with Faust, Don Quixote and Don Juan and explains his choice by characterising all of them as "a single-minded pursuit by the protagonist of one of the characteristic aspirations of Western man" (ix). The main point that Watt touches upon in framing this picture is individualism, which is related to modernity and the Western literary canon, concepts that came to life only in the nineteenth century.⁶

However, one of the problems in the reception of Defoe's novel is the fact that contemporary analysis threatens to disregard the social, cultural, political, and religious context that surrounded the story, and to interpret Defoe's text in the light of contemporary circumstances.⁷ The original text has been valued for different reasons by twentieth century interpreters of the novel, most of whom have considered the novel in economic and Marxist terms. For example, Virginia Woolf considers Defoe's novel a "masterpiece" (21) which dwells on realistic and pragmatic images and depicts a world in which "Nothing exists except an earthenware pot" (22). Similarly, James Sutherland praises Crusoe as a "self-made man" who represents the "sober industrious Englishman" (27). The novel has been interpreted in colonial terms as well, on the basis of Defoe's proposal to colonise Guiana for the benefit of the Englishmen (Downie 24-5).

Postcolonial writings have changed Crusoe's singular perspective by subverting the original plot and endowing Friday with power and a strong voice. V. S. Naipaul sees *Robinson Crusoe* as "the dream of total power" (206), while Derek Walcott's Crusoe becomes the slave and Friday "the boss" (Jones 225). The story of Crusoe has been adapted according to particular societies and contexts, which has eventually shifted the focus away from Crusoe and towards Friday. In his novel *Foe* (1986), Coetzee replaces Defoe the author with Susan, the narrator, which obviously subverts the whole text, not just in gender terms but in terms of the narrator's authority. Daniel Defoe becomes a character in the novel and no boundaries can be traced between fact and fiction, which is one of the main features of postmodernist readings of classical texts. All these textual and narrative devices which deconstruct the Crusoe myth put forward a new critical reading upon the canonical texts.

Indeed, the story of Robinson Crusoe has gone through various transformations in the process of adaptation, having been translated to different media: painting, lithography, philately, pottery, photography, and cinema. In addition to contemporary novelistic

⁶ Pat Rogers rightly observes that, as part of the literary canon, "Defoe the great novelist is an invention of the nineteenth century" (4), since in his time he was a controversial figure, though his writings enjoyed popularity. It was not until the twentieth century that Defoe's book was acknowledged as myth, paradigm, and included in the literary canon by Harold Bloom, as part of the Aristocratic Age (1994). The book's mythical status has been recognised by scholars and promoted as a phenomenon that has generated new forms: "Myth is transference, adaptation, passage through language" (Stimpson x).

⁷ Louis James, for instance, looks at Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* from a contemporary perspective and defines the novel according to the current literary theory as "a mixed form of narrative, in turn pseudo-autobiography, marvellous traveller's tale, religious diary and do-it-yourself manual" (1). Considering that "autobiography" is an invention of the late eighteenth-century (Treadwell 3) and "do-it-yourself manual" is a recent device, we can conclude, then, that Defoe's Crusoe has been labelled according to an *avant-la-lettre* fashion.

adaptations, such as Muriel Spark's *Robinson* (1958), Michel Tournier's *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique* (1967), J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986), or dramatic texts such as Adrian Mitchell's screenplay *Man Friday* (1975), and Derek Walcott's play *Pantomime* (1978), various screen adaptations have used the story of Robinson Crusoe as a basis for their plots.

In the present article, I shall focus on one of the screen versions of the story of Robinson Crusoe, Jack Gold's *Man Friday*. Cinematic Robinsonades have been the least discussed media in connection with the Crusoe myth. Some of these cinematic versions, such as Jack Gold's *Man Friday* or Caleb Deschanel's *Crusoe*, investigate the novel they adapt from a critical perspective, and even turn against Defoe's text, thus using the film version as a vehicle for a critique of the ideological positions associated with the text or of contemporary aesthetics and politics.

Starting with the first silent screening of the novel in 1902, *Robinson Crusoe* (*Les Aventures de Robinson Crusoe*) directed by Georges Méliès, filmmakers have rediscovered, rewritten, and reinterpreted the Robinson Crusoe story. It seems that in the early twentieth century, the craze for the cinematic Robinsonade proliferated. In 1913, Otis Turner directed a silent version of *Robinson Crusoe*, to be shortly followed by George F. Marion's *Robinson Crusoe* (1916), and Robert Z. Leonard's version in 1917. Edward F. Cline's *Little Robinson Crusoe* came out as a comedy in 1924, and in the same year Bryan Foy directed another comedy about the Robinson Crusoe story. Walter Lantz directed the 1925 animation film *Robinson Crusoe* and in 1927 M. A. Wetherell wrote the script for and directed another silent film version of *Robinson Crusoe*.⁸

Despite the impressive number of filmic versions of the Crusoe story,⁹ there are very few critical studies about them. Anne Hutta Colvin's PhD dissertation, *The Celluloid Crusoe: A Study of Cinematic Robinsonades* is the only serious study of the cinematic Crusoe I am aware of, but since 1989, when she wrote her thesis, other films inspired by the Crusoe story have come out. As a consequence, there is a need of more studies to cover the latest film releases.

Like other film adaptations of eighteenth-century texts, all these Robinson Crusoe filmic versions are difficult to classify in terms of film genre. Robert Mayer identifies the main issues at stake when it comes to the critical or ideological questions raised by the motion pictures. According to Mayer, apart from the problem of 'fidelity' to a text, the nature of a film is determined by "the culture in which the adaptation is produced, the aims and values of filmmakers, the demands of a studio or network, and the standing of a particular literary

⁸ Unfortunately, I have not been able to find these early films, nor could I trace any valuable information regarding their fate.

⁹ The films that are available and I could view are Edward Sutherland's *Mr. Robinson Crusoe* (1932), Frank Moser's *Robinson Crusoe* (1933), Aleksandr Andriyevsky's Russian version, *Robinson Crusoe* (*Robinzon Kruzo*, 1946) Luis Buñuel's *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (*Las Aventuras de Robinson Crusoe*, 1952), René Cardona Jr.'s *Robinson Crusoe and the Tiger* (1970), Stanislav Govorukhin's *Life and Amazing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (*Zhizn i udivitelnye priklucheniya Robinzona Kruzo*), which was released in Finland in 1972, Jack Gold's *Man Friday* (1975), Rod Hardy and George Miller's adaptation, starring Pierce Brosnan as Robinson Crusoe (*Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe*, 1997), Caleb Deschanel's *Crusoe* (1989), and Robert Zemeckis's *Cast Away* (2000), featuring Tom Hanks as the protagonist. The list can be indefinitely prolonged with TV mini-series and series, documentaries, reality shows, and other less known versions of *Robinson Crusoe*.

work or artist" (2). According to him, one must also take into account "the ambition or artistic will to power" of a movie star or a director, which becomes a dominant issue in the whole process of moving from fiction to cinema (2).

My intention is to explore one of the most emblematic filmic versions of *Robinson Crusoe* in order to examine the relation between a paradigmatic literary character (Robinson Crusoe), ideology, film *écriture* and those narrative elements and themes that are common to all Robinsonades. As such, I will focus on how the notions of subjectivity and point of view have been constructed in Jack Gold's *Man Friday* and describe the different patterns found in the levels of narration proposed by this cinematic Robinsonade.

Jack Gold's *Man Friday* (1975) is a film which reflects an important cultural context in the twentieth century. Gold's 1975 film adjusts to the postcolonial vogue in the academia of the 1970s. It is based on Adrian Mitchell's play, *Man Friday* (1973), which, in its turn is a dramatic adaptation of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Gold's adaptation of an adaptation pictures the story against a multicultural background, in which the old colonial order is turned upside down. Friday, played by an African-American actor, Richard Roundtree makes important decisions and a new institution, the tribal assembly is employed in order to decide whether they accept an Englishman into their tribe or not. My concern is not the differences of genre (novel and film), as this debate has been going on for a long time in cinema studies. Considering that the main feature all the filmmakers have preserved in their adaptation of *Robinson Crusoe* is the character's subjectivity, I would rather investigate the various strategies employed by Jack Gold in the manipulation of the cinematic point of view and explore the notion of "multiple subjects" (Branigan 3) which can turn the character into both narrator and narratee at the same time (Branigan 12).

The problem of narration, of who says something and how this gets said is essential for both literature and cinema. Film narratology relies greatly on literary models (Branigan 1984; Wilson 1986; Stam and Raengo 2005a), but this fact does not indicate the superiority of literature over cinema. Film theory has emerged mostly out of the theoretical legacy of such disciplines as literary studies and linguistics, and so, most of the narrative codes that apply to film analysis have been imported from the literary field: "Film [...] is a form of writing that borrows from other forms of writing" (Stam 2005a, 1). However, the fact that film borrows from previous media, such as literature, should not be perceived in a derogatory manner, as, for instance Seymour Chatman does, considering that the descriptive voice-over narration in films is an "uncinematic" technique because it is literary (Chatman 128).

Adaptation theory involves a change of context, of character personality, a shift in the cultural perspective, point of view, and even a change of medium. The question of fidelity to the source text is not worth addressing,¹⁰ despite the huge number of studies dedicated to this issue. Robert Stam makes a very simple and logical point when he explains the impossibility of fidelity in adaptation, because "Filmmaking generally, and adaptation in particular, involves thousands of choices, concerning performers, budget, locale, format, props, and so forth" (2005a, 17).

¹⁰ Most of the critical studies devoted to the debate whether literature is far superior to film ignored what has been achieved in the process of adaptation, focussing only on "an elegiac discourse of loss, lamenting what has been "lost" in the transition from novel to film" (Stam 2005a, 3).

Jack Gold's filmic adaptation reverses the eighteenth-century paradigmatic polarity of the colonizer/colonized and displays a subversive playful Friday, who tries to convert Crusoe to the values of his tribe, makes him sing and dance, and eventually takes on the role of the master by buying the house Crusoe built on the island. There is a single point of view available in this film, which is Friday's. He is now the narrator in the film, and not Crusoe, which means that the story of the relationship between the castaway and "the other" is completely rewritten. This shifting perspective in Jack Gold's film sets it apart from all the other cinematic Robinsonades. As far as the concept of "parody" is concerned, I will discuss the term in relation to Linda Hutcheon's and Simon Dentith's theoretical approaches to parody and I will look into the different means of narration used by Gold: linguistic and non-linguistic, visual, cultural, and filmic codes.

Few studies have been concerned with Jack Gold 1975 adaptation, *Man Friday*.¹¹ Apart from very few references to the film in some cinema articles and some critical studies devoted to the Crusoe story, not much attention has been devoted to Jack Gold's *Man Friday*.

Gold's film is based on a literary adaptation of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Adrian Mitchell's *Man Friday: A Play*, first presented on BBC1's *Play for Today* on October 30th 1972. Mitchell's play departs from Defoe's canonical text, but it becomes an anti-canonical text, a parody which disrupts conventions, which will influence Gold's adaptation to a great extent. What turns the canonical source text into an anti-canonical adaptation is mainly the change in point of view. In both Mitchell and Gold's rewritings of the Crusoe story, the narrative perspective shifts from Crusoe to Friday. This shift in perspective changes completely the implications of Defoe's novel, thus deconstructing and subverting the Crusoe myth.

Adrian Mitchell is an English contemporary writer, who worked as a reporter and a journalist after graduating at Oxford. His work includes poetry and short stories for children, translations and adaptations of novels, plays, and libretti. He wrote plays adapted from Defoe, Dickens, Calderon, Ibsen, and Gogol, and some versions of well-known books for children, such as *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1998), *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* (2001). As the writer himself explains, *Man Friday* was initially a TV play commissioned by BBC1's *Play for Today* and it was directed by James MacTaggart. Robinson Crusoe was played by Colin Blakely and Ram John Holder played Friday (Mitchell 6). It is interesting to notice that such a broadcasting corporation as the BBC, which expressed its non-involvement in politics, commissioned a play that was overtly an attack at the United Kingdom and its colonial enterprise in the Caribbean, South and North Atlantic Ocean, etc.

In Mitchell's play, as well as in Gold's adaptation, the story is told by Man Friday to his tribe and at the end, the audience is requested to decide whether Crusoe should be accepted among the tribesmen or left alone on the island. Mitchell attaches political and ideological connotations to his play and introduces Crusoe as a liberal (6). The events in the play are told from Friday's perspective and he becomes the narrator of the entire story, laughing at and parodying Puritanism and the English society.

Robert Mayer considers that Gold's filmic adaptation has no connection whatsoever with the original eighteenth-century novel, as the adaptation introduces a completely new

¹¹ Jack Gold was nominated for the Palme D'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for *Man Friday* in 1975.

negative character. According to Mayer, Gold's Crusoe has nothing in common with Defoe's Crusoe:

Man Friday does not so much refigure the Crusoe myth as discard the figure of Crusoe, identifying the character as one that cannot be reformed or recuperated but that instead has to be rejected [...] *Man Friday* refuses to "collaborate" with *Robinson Crusoe*; it refigures Defoe's protagonist in a wholly negative way (44-5).

Asserting the principle according to which *Man Friday* estranges from its source, Mayer misses the fact that the director Jack Gold intended his film to be an adaptation of Adrian Mitchell's play and a parodic re-interpretation of the canonical Defoe. And certainly, any parody necessarily starts from an original text in order to turn its subject matter upside down and mock at it. Dan Harries defines parody as "the process of recontextualizing a target or source text through the transformation of its textual (and contextual) elements, thus creating a new text" (6). From an etymological point of view, parody comes from the Greek prefix "para," which means "counter-" or "against," and so, as a "counter-text," parody has been understood "as a mode that essentially ridicules another text by mimicking and mocking it" (5). The prefix "para" has a second connotation, that of "close to," and both meanings suggest that parody is similar to, different from, and critical of, the original text (Hutcheon 60).

Mitchell's and Gold's reversal of Defoe's story reminds of Simon Dentith's definition of parody, as something which involves "the imitation and transformation of another's words [...] for we can do no more than parrot another's word as it comes to be our turn to speak it" (3). By mocking a previous text, the new text announces its self-referentiality, its autonomous existence (Rose 1992), which supports a post-structuralist position regarding the death of the author as the origin of something original (see chapter one of the dissertation). Linda Hutcheon attaches a new meaning to parody, besides its auto-referentiality: its "ideological implications" (28).

As far as Mitchell's play and Gold's cinematic adaptation are concerned, there are plenty of ideological implications that criticise Defoe's text from a postcolonial point of view - "it comes to be our turn to speak it" - as an example of British colonial and imperialistic power, which brought about serious consequences for the former colonial countries. In Mitchell's play, the tribe, including Friday, "wear jeans, bare feet, and lengths of lightweight flame-orange material draped over their shoulders," while Crusoe "wears the traditional goatskin breeks, long hair, goatskin jacket, and goatskin sunshade" (Mitchell 7).

Gold's adaptation was filmed on location in Mexico, after a screenplay written by Adrian Mitchell. The film was produced by David Korda, Peter O'Toole played the role of Robinson Crusoe, and Richard Roundtree played the role of Friday, the tribe's storyteller. In this adaptation, it is Crusoe who becomes the marginal character and a negative figure. Friday becomes, as Stam puts it, "the 'ebony saint,' the therapist and healer who ministers to the unhappy consciousness of the white man" (2005b, 91). Friday takes on the role of the knowledgeable teacher who, little by little, deconstructs all the theories and principles that Crusoe tries to impose on him, by playfully teaching Crusoe how to enjoy life.

Jack Gold's adaptation deserves special attention and separate treatment because, unlike the other cinematic Robinsonades, it changes completely Defoe's text and turns Crusoe into

an absolutely distasteful, unconstructive, and unbearable character. In the introductory quotation to this chapter, Robert Mayer argues that Gold's film does not allow the viewers to perceive Crusoe as a positive character, nor to identify with him. This might be the reason why Gold's film did not enjoy popularity and why it failed at the box office as well. Mitchell's play did not receive a favourable critical reaction on the part of the literary critics, either. The fact that Crusoe is presented as a negative character, as "the obsessive, neurotic, white stranger cast up on the island" (James 5) has influenced both the film's and the play's critical reception to a great extent.

In Gold's adaptation, there is no place for Crusoe's solitude and the film "makes essentially no use of Crusoe's individual experience at sea or on the island" (Mayer 42). In a post-Defoe world, there is no reference to Crusoe's ability and creativity to transform the island space into an inhabitable place, there are few irrelevant mocking references to his relationship with divinity, and no allusion to Crusoe's rationality or moral superiority. As Robert Mayer rightly observes,

The only real reference to Crusoe's technical mastery [...] is his use of an elaborately and vaguely absurd contraption worthy of Rube Goldberg that functions as a ladder into his stockade. Crusoe's dwelling, furthermore, is so elaborate as to seem somehow suburban and as a result similarly ridiculous (42).

Indeed, the two key words that Mayer uses in order to convey the impression of a parodic representation of Crusoe's island are "absurd" and "ridiculous." They emphasize the imperialistic attitude of Crusoe's behaviour on the island and, once again, these words attach a negative meaning to whatever Defoe's Crusoe achieves on the island.

In order to discuss the cinematic point of view in Jack Gold's film, I shall look into the various cinematic and rhetorical strategies that Gold uses to construct multiple images of the Robinson Crusoe story. According to Robert Stam, "Each and every filmic track and procedure – camera angle, focal length, music, performance, *mise-en-scène*, and costume – can convey a point of view" (2005a, 39). Therefore, I will consider all cinematic techniques as well as techniques drawn from the editing process in my analysis of the way multiple points of view are constructed in these films and the ways in which they produce meaning.

Gold applies the literary device of the framing narrative, the story-within-the story or *mise-en-abyme* to his film and has Friday tell the story of his encounter with Crusoe to a tribal assembly. The purpose of this device is to serve as an example to Crusoe, the character who is placed out of the main narrative. Gold's film is divided into a main or inner narrative, the story Friday tells the assembly about his encounter with Crusoe, which frames the secondary or outer narrative, Friday and Crusoe's experience and relationship. The outer narrative is recalled in flashbacks, which points out Friday's subjective first-person narration, turning him into an unreliable narrator who offers a limited perspective upon the story.

Narrative is usually defined as a sequence of events which are connected and ordered in a logical way. Narrative cinema includes the strategies, codes and conventions employed to organise a story (Hayward 282). The narrators, characters, and narratees of a film interact and what is generally called "point of view" cannot be conceived without any of these narrative types. Branigan defines point of view as a "function of the position of the

hypothetical observer who stands in for the viewer of a painting or movie" (6). This implies a double identification, which is a function of point of view. On the one hand, the spectators identify with the camera, while on the other hand, they identify with the characters. The spectators perceive the narration from the same point of view as the character does, and so, "The very notion of point of view seems to imply a kind of sharing of position, a mutuality of vision" (Maltby 347).

In narrative film, it is necessary to distinguish between "screen time," which refers to the duration of film and "diegetic time," which is the real duration within the fictional universe. The film space is also divided into onscreen or "screen space," which is the only visible space, and offscreen, or "diegetic space," which includes those less visible elements (characters, settings) that are nonetheless connected in the spectator's imagination. Diegetic space and time define the film as a diegesis, which means that the film story is told by a narrator or implied author. A narrator is a necessary figure in the organisation of the diegesis, along with the organisation of time, space, and sound, which, in film, are focused in relation to a specific point in space. As a proof of this, Inez Hedges¹² brings into discussion film techniques such as long shot, close up, and medium shot for the image track, as well as background and foreground sound for the soundtrack. These techniques are closely related to the levels of narration and cinematic point of view.

Gold's film opens in Crusoe's voice-over narration reciting from King James's version of the Bible (Genesis 1) against the image of the earth filmed from above, then the camera zooms in and the voice-over continues the story, this time against the background of the sea. As the voice goes on, Crusoe (Peter O'Toole) appears on the screen in medium long shot, sitting on the shore, dressed in goatskin garments, Bible in hand, and reading in the most accurate English language. The passage from the Genesis introduces Crusoe as the first man on earth, all alone, but not troubled by his loneliness:

And God called the firmament Heaven/And God said, let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear [...] And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them/And God said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: *and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth* (Genesis 1, emphasis mine)

Crusoe's reading of the Genesis is more informative, rather than religious and while he approvingly repeats the last line, the viewer understands that that this version of the story criticises Crusoe's arrogant imperialism. He is interrupted by an extra-diegetic sound, the sound of a ring bell, as if somebody off screen would indicate he should be ready for the next sequence. Crusoe reaches for his watch, an object not present in Defoe's book. The sound, which mixes the onscreen and off screen space seems to signify a complete break with both the past and Defoe's book. Crusoe closes the Bible, stands up, cheerfully admits

¹² Inez Hedges mentions Étienne Souriau as the first critic to discuss the diegetic dimension of cinematic time and space, in his "La structure de l'univers filmique et le vocabulaire de la filmologie," *Revue internationale de filmologie*, 7-8 (1951), pp. 231-40. See Inez Hedges's article "Form and Meaning in the French Film, I: Time and Space," *The French Review*, 54. 1 (Oct. 1980), pp. 28-36.

that domination over the earth is not an impossible thing, and starts walking along the shore, singing some joyful song to himself, looking more like a tourist than a troubled man.

The sequence of the footprint in the sand reveals a Crusoe who is frightened and surprised at the same time. Suddenly, his face, shown in a point/glance shot, is gripped by anguish. The point/object shot then shows us what he is looking at: a footprint in the sand. The camera zooms in on him and alternatively shows Crusoe in extreme close-up and a close-up of the footprint. This is an instance of point-of-view-editing, when, instead of tracing the trajectory from Crusoe's gaze to the footprint, the camera movement between the gaze and the target (the footprint) is deleted (Carroll, 128). Noël Carroll defines the "perceptual behaviour" as a natural conduct which occurs "in situations where we are gathering information about our environment" (130). Knowing the cause of Crusoe's emotional state means we can identify his specific emotion.

Thus, point-of-view editing becomes a medium of communication through which Crusoe both tries to understand and explain what he sees and transmit his emotion to the audience. Robert Stam notices that this scene is somehow humorous because it derives from the disproportion between the signifier – a mere footprint – and the overwhelming horrible signification which the thunder-struck Crusoe attributes to it" (2005b, 88).

The astonishment etched on Crusoe's face is not simply surprise and curiosity; it is a mixture of bewilderment and fear of the unknown. Crusoe kneels on the sand and starts praying, while flames rise from the footprint, embodying a tribesman who attempts to kill him with his spear. Crusoe mumbles: "Oh, God, deliver me from the barbarian," but it seems it is too late. The point of view shifts from Crusoe to other people, including Friday, and the sequence moves in a straight cut to a tribal dance on an island.

This sequence introduces completely new features that are not present in Defoe's book: music, dance, laughter, and Friday as a narrator, who advises his people to close their eyes and see the story. By singing the introduction to his story and insisting on the visual aspect of the story, Friday focuses on primitive modes of narration, those existing before civilization: the oral transmission of culture and the importance of the image, rather than the written word. These new features challenge the book's Puritanical views and belief in Providence, they dismiss the civilization and rationality promoted by Defoe's belief in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and they introduce the idea of playfulness, which draws the film near postmodernism and parody. The film parodies Defoe's book, Puritanism, cannibalism, Defoe's belief in Providence, the Enlightenment idea of rationality, and Rousseau's "noble savage."

Friday's story is intended as a lesson to teach Crusoe the pleasure of doing things without engaging in a competition or respecting some rules. Friday's discourse describes Crusoe as a barbarian, inhuman Englishman who is too rational to enjoy simple life. Friday wants to teach Crusoe that he can emigrate from the ordinariness of everyday life into an atemporal and ahistorical moment. Friday's intention reminds us of Johan Huizinga's description of "play" as an interlude in our real life, as a space which, just like the island, is situated outside norms and morality:

Play lies outside the antithesis of wisdom and folly, and equally outside those of truth and falsehood, good and evil. Although it is a non-material activity it has no moral function. The valuations of vice and virtue do not apply here (6).

However, unlike Huizinga's interlude, Friday's playfulness is politically biased. He accuses Crusoe of his imperialistic attitude and, in fact, he stands for all Britain's former colonies, which demand apologies from Crusoe, as the representative of the British power. The film is obviously critical of Eurocentrism and Friday's anti-establishment views and beliefs remind of the Sexual Revolution in the 1960s. Friday does not believe in Crusoe's God, he is the promoter of sexual liberation, peace, and does not understand such things as private property and ownership, anticipating the socialist idea of collective property. He describes the English to the assembly as "a tribe of people who go about saying 'this is mine; this is yours,'" and his characterization provokes laughter and amazement on the part of the tribal assembly.

The story is told by Friday in the voice-over narration, which at times, is interrupted by Crusoe's interventions. His voice is passionate and angry at remembering how Crusoe killed his friends, thinking that this way he saved Friday from cannibals. Cannibalism is a good practice according to Friday, who explains that they were eating one of their own because "we could take some of the spirit of that man whom we loved into the future with us." Crusoe interrupts the feast and kills Friday's three friends, one by one, in the name of God, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, which is purposely intended in the film as an anti-Christian behaviour. Friday's voice-over tells how everything happens, but when it comes for Crusoe to speak, Friday's voice-over narration is replaced by Crusoe's direct speech, in order to show how arrogant and cruel Crusoe can be: "I have come to rescue you from these foul cannibals. Here, follow me. I have saved your life. And what is more, I shall attempt to save your benighted soul." Crusoe appears as a cold-blood killer, unable to understand other people's cultural practices.

It is obvious that the film goes too far refiguring even the perception of cannibalism, which is dismissive of the whole process of Western civilization, showing that Mitchell's and by extension, Gold's sociology "is a bit too cut and dried" (Gow 38). The film's position differs completely from Defoe's views on cannibalism. Defoe's Crusoe calls the cannibals "savage wretches," "monsters," "barbarians," and other similar appellations. Unlike Gold's Crusoe, Defoe's Crusoe chooses not to attack the cannibals because "they are so blind that they do not consider cannibalism a crime" (Boucher 125).

The *mise-en-scène* creates the impression that there is no relationship between Defoe's implications in the novel and Jack Gold's intention in the film. The island and the sea seem to be endowed with no emotional meaning whatsoever and, unlike Buñuel's depiction of Crusoe, troubled by his loneliness and always questioning his situation in connection with the environment, Gold's Crusoe does not look at the sea for possible answers, nor does he adjust the island to his own purposes. The island is not as significant as it is in either Defoe or Buñuel and it does not have any symbolic meaning. It does not signify "paradise regained in the New World" (Nagib 8) and it is not endowed with any utopian quality, as we can find in the Brazilian cinema, which abounds in significant sea images.¹³ The sea is not related to Crusoe's solitude, because, as Gordon Gow puts it, "there is little time wasted on Crusoe's preliminary solitude" (39).

¹³ For a detailed study on the images of sea and the signification of islands in Brazilian cinema, see Lúcia Nagib, *Brazil on Screen: Cinema Novo, New Cinema, Utopia*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2007.

The camera focuses on competitive moments between Crusoe and Friday, such as when Crusoe tries to teach Friday what sport is, both engaging in a race. Once again, the intention is to prove that Crusoe's rules and principle are not valid. Crusoe tells Friday that "The important thing is how you play," and they start running on the shore. Crusoe wins but he complains that Friday did not do his best to defeat him. Friday replies that as long as the essential thing was how to play, he did not care about winning: "I ran very beautifully, enjoyed every step along the sand. You did not seem to enjoy the running. Your body was jerking and unhappy." Throughout all the competitions – racing, swimming, and dancing - Friday's playful laughter and giggling could be heard as a strong articulation of his beliefs. In addition, African polyrhythms subversively alternate with Britain's national anthem, "God Save the King." The main difference between Friday and Crusoe is that between nature and culture. Friday believes in magic, superstitions, and a life free of any responsibilities, while Crusoe's rationality rejects such behaviour.

The question of point of view is crucial and more complex than it appears to be. The granting of point-of-view shots to Friday does not promise an anti-colonialist perspective, although this is exactly what the director intends to do. The film grants Friday a number of subjective shots as he teaches Crusoe his beliefs, which the latter refuses as irrational. The film also attempts to focalise on Friday as the main protagonist, but eventually, the viewers sympathise and identify with Crusoe. The film fails to promote Friday as the protagonist and truth deliverer, and despite the fact that he is the narrator who also takes the decision whether to leave Crusoe on the island or not, he cannot convince the audience to identify with him.

At the end of the film, instead of sailing together to England, Crusoe and Friday go to Friday's island. Friday introduces Crusoe to the tribe and Crusoe's declaration sounds like an apology on the part of the British Empire for the abuse and subjection exerted over the former colonies: "I know I have wronged your tribe in the past, but it was simply because I didn't understand." Friday is concerned about the negative influence Crusoe can have upon the tribe and he convinces the assembly not to allow Crusoe to join the tribe, because "the only thing he teaches is fear." Consequently, Crusoe kills himself, a decision which turns Gold's film into the most pessimistic Robinsonade that has ever been filmed.

Rewritings of canonical texts, and by extension, cinematic adaptations of literary texts have been perceived by both literary and film criticism as a challenge to the canon, understood as either mimetic approach to the source text, or as a critical response to it. Gold's film breaks with the source text in an absolute way, mocking at eighteenth-century Puritan religiosity, middle-class lifestyle, and colonial attitude. As such, the film becomes more interested in contemporary issues, rather than in the context that accommodated the source novel. Gold's adaptation completely turns the plot upside down and rewrites Defoe's story from an anti-colonialist perspective.

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