

LITERARY GEOGRAPHIES

Mapping *Robinson Crusoe* for the Twenty-First Century: The Psycho-spatiality of the Marooned

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Abstract:

This article explores the mapping of *Robinson Crusoe* in three distinct ways relating to cartographic change over time: through absolute, real-world and literary maps of the eighteenth century; by an integrated visual-verbal interpretation enabled by the generation of digital maps (topological graphs that are a literal map of the text); and through the immersive experience of reading and playing in a scale-map of the literary world made in the gaming platform, Minecraft. These interrelate and bear upon each other to enrich spatial understanding and interpretation in new ways for the 21st Century. The first section sets the context for exploring spatiality in *Robinson Crusoe* through the two maps presented alongside early editions of the text. The middle section combines a reading of Crusoe's own psycho-spatial identification with the island with a reading of chronotopic (time-space) maps generated out of the coded text in digital space. The state of 'being marooned' results in a network of tropes that is repeated and re-enacted through the form of later Robinsonades across the nineteenth century and beyond. These tropes articulate a strong affective geography that the relative mapping of Crusoe's Ur-narrative brings fully into focus. The final section of the paper explores the innate suitability of *Robinson Crusoe* and the Robinsonade for an immersive educational experience (*Litcraft*) that links reading and play using the Minecraft game-world.

Keywords: Literary Mapping; Robinson Crusoe; topology; Minecraft; spatial.

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Robinson Crusoe on his island, deprived of the help of his fellow-men and the instruments of the arts, yet providing for his subsistence and self-preservation, and even procuring a kind of happiness – there is an object of interest to persons of every age, and there are a thousand ways of making it agreeable to children. (Rousseau [1762] (1916: 162)

One can hardly imagine a more boring novel, and it is sad to see children still reading it today. (Deleuze [1953] 1974: 12)¹

This paper explores spatial meaning in relation to acts of literary mapping for Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) in three interrelated ways: through early cartographic visualisations appearing alongside the text; in terms of core tropes and topoi on the island that function psycho-spatially and can be mapped relationally using digital tools; as a first person survival game that draws in the child-reader through immersive, experiential play using Minecraft.²

Mapping Crusoe's Island in the Eighteenth Century

After ignoring repeated warnings and signs that he should not go to sea, as well as the advice of his father, Crusoe is finally shipwrecked and washed up on a remote island off the North East coast of South America. He is trapped on it for twenty eight years (far longer than any real individual had been marooned) before being rescued and returned to the world. Core issues for literary mapping are immediately raised by the appearance of two different kinds of map (to the world [1719]; of the island [1720]) alongside early editions of *Robinson Crusoe*, a work which also happens to have a strong claim to being the first novel in the English language. The title of the book locates Crusoe's island specifically with reference to recently-discovered geographic places: 'on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque'.³ Thus, the question of whether a literary work should or should not be mapped onto actual geographical place, or whether this creates a false correlation between real and imaginary space and place, is immediately posed by Defoe's attempt to manipulate readerly understanding by presenting the novel as 'a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it' ('Preface'). When a world map is added to the fourth edition of *Robinson Crusoe* (still in 1719) this further serves to further reinforce the idea that this is a true story with a real-world setting.

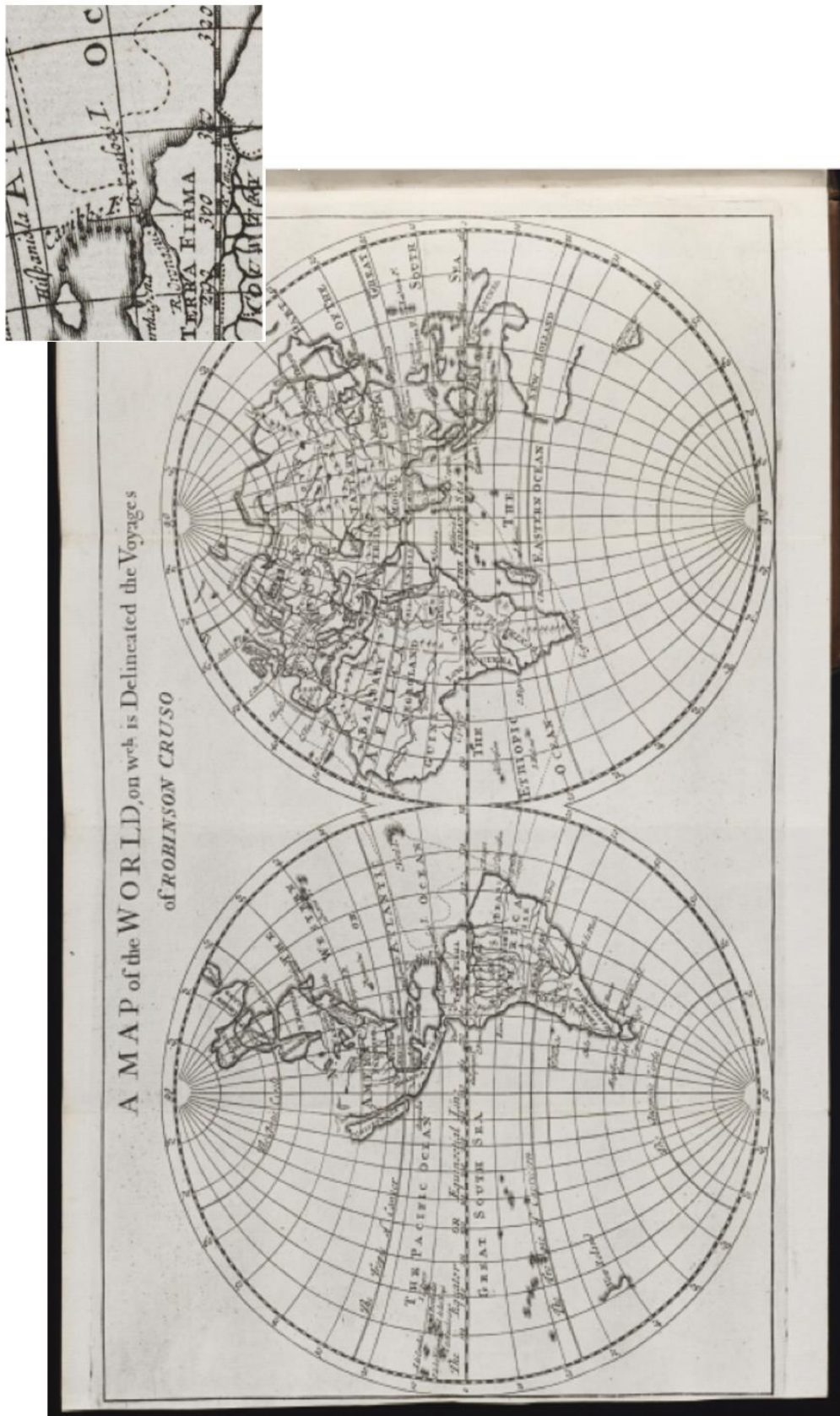


Figure 1.



Figure 2.

Christina Ljungberg, in her discussion of the two maps, points out that this ‘pretends to be a “scientific” map in keeping with a new and modern era’ (Ljungberg 2012: 62) in direct imitation of that published in William Dampier’s *A New Voyage around the World* (1697) which was made by the same famous map-maker, Hermann Moll.⁴ The map is highly unusual in the context of literary mapping in presenting a double hemisphere image of the known world with lines of latitude and longitude. However, where Moll’s map for Dampier had a clearly visible wavy line across the middle to indicate his route around the world, the route for *Robinson Crusoe* is marked in a tiny dotted line and extremely hard to read (see Figure 1).⁵ As Peter Doherty notes:

Instead of providing a clear matrix by which to structure a reading of the map, the graticule actually obscures the landscape it claims to represent and organise . . . the line that traces Crusoe’s voyage is barely discernible . . . (Doherty 2017: 92).

Crusoe’s island can just about be located at the point where three dotted lines converge off the coast of Brazil (see Figure 1: detail). At the same time, the island of Juan Fernandez, off the South West coast of Chile on which the real-life Scottish sailor Alexander Selkirk (a major source and model for Crusoe) was marooned for four years is represented prominently on the map, despite its geographical insignificance. This suggests that eighteenth-century printers *expected* readers to already know of Selkirk’s discovery in recent accounts of voyages and sought to position Crusoe’s story as *another* – even more wonderful (yet true) – account.⁶ Here, then, there is a perceived need to conflate real world and imaginary geographies in order to validate the latter as the former – since the concept

of fictional literary space and place does not yet exist (although this in turn leaves the author open to the charge of fraudulently presenting imaginative geography as real).

The second Crusoe map, published in the sequel volume of 1720, is of the fictional island itself (see Figure 2).⁷ This map primarily represents key events which occur across the novel in a compressed way as: ‘a synoptic version of Crusoe’s verbal narrative’ (Ljungberg 2012: 60) that is ‘part map, part picture’ (Wyatt 2013: 43). Since Crusoe’s spatial model is actually one of gradual enlargement, the simultaneity of the map visualisation immediately proves problematic in relation to the sequentiality of the narrative. For example, the ship in which he was wrecked at the start of the narrative is in the centre of the frame but the ship in which he is rescued at the end of the novel also appears close by, to the right. This problem is offset by the fact that it appears in the sequel volume, but might explain why the map was never later resituated alongside the first text. The rather clumsy shape of the island stems from the way it is mapped verbally within the narrative, with Crusoe unable to make a survey of the coastline and tending to provide detailed, localised accounts of different parts, without fully relating these to each other, or to the island as a whole. This base map provides a referential layer (corresponding to literary place rather than real-world geography) for the digital forms (topological graphs as maps and the virtual Minecraft world-build) discussed below.

Eighteenth-century visualisation tools are crude but effective, and here they work in two different ways for the same text. The first map presents literary place and space as having a direct correspondence to the known world in a form of absolute mapping that purports to present another popular voyage account. The second map begins to move the mapping of literary place and space towards relative space since it presents a self-contained isolated totality. Consciously or otherwise, then, the maps point towards two core psycho-spatial states that are in tension within the novel: macro-spatial shifts that concern the individual’s self-positioning and inner state in relation to the outside world; the giving up of the self to the island, mapped out through core tropes and topoi of a psycho-spatial network.

A Psycho-spatiality of the Marooned

In his essay on ‘Desert Islands’ Gilles Deleuze asserts the distinctiveness of the island space as a place of rebirth:

The deserted island is the origin, but a second origin. From it everything begins anew. The island is the necessary minimum for this re-beginning, the material that survives the first origin, the radiating seed or egg that must be sufficient to reproduce everything. (Deleuze [1953] 1974: 13)

Deleuze’s disgust with *Robinson Crusoe* (as expressed in the epigraph to this article) is grounded in the fact that ‘Everything is taken from the ship. Nothing is invented’ (11) and that Crusoe behaves as a proto-capitalist/imperialist – destroying rather than embracing

the mythological and imaginative identity of the island-as-island which precedes and exceeds him. This interpretation anticipates the many post-colonial readings of the novel that see Crusoe as a proto-imperialist playing out the colonial dream. Such accounts originally sought to challenge literary authority by offering ‘contrapuntal’ (Said 1993: 78) readings that uncover the inherent colonial discourse present from the very origins of the canon, as Edward Said’s comment on *Robinson Crusoe* at the start of *Culture and Imperialism* makes explicit: ‘The prototypical modern realistic novel is Robinson Crusoe, and certainly not accidentally it is about a European who creates a fiefdom for himself on a distant, non-European island’ (xiii). More recent studies however, allow for deeper complexities in terms of revisionary readings of global spatiality, tending towards the ‘transnational’ and ‘bidirectional hybridisations’ (Fallon 2011: 22, 23).

Phenomenologically, the survival narrative, and even the arc-bifurcation of island identity in terms of ‘island as paradise, island as prison’ (Hay 2006: 3) is a negation of the authenticity of the desert island because it is predicated on a link to the outside. Thus, Deleuze’s account is focused on the nature of the desert island *itself*, whereas *Robinson Crusoe* and subsequent Robinsonades take as their primary focus the emergence of a psychospatiality of the marooned, which intertwines self and island, inner and outer, through narrative. As Ljungberg suggests: ‘The charting of his new habitat that Crusoe undertakes demonstrates how both textual and cartographic mapping serve to produce new space’ (55). Such narratives are always concerned with the *need* to map (literally and metaphorically) because they are about losing and finding the self. Knowing or not knowing *where* you are (in the world; on the island) affects knowing or not knowing *who* you are.

As this suggests, self and place become one in the intense world of the marooned. In *Theorising Literary Islands* Ian Kinane (2017) argues for a ‘symbiosis between the individual and the island as a site of oneness’ so that: ‘the island motif is representative of the metaphoric return of the individual to a greater sense of egoic completion, whereby “island” and “ego” become symbiotically entwined with one another’ (18).⁸ Whilst Kinane still reads this in terms of Crusoe projecting himself onto the world around him as a kind of ‘colonial filling’ (81) we find that the larger spatial paradigm shifts that Crusoe also undergoes across the narrative suggest that the island space continues to assert itself powerfully upon *him*, rather than simply allowing him take possession of it. We argue that a tension remains between the island’s assertion over the marooned individual and the individual’s possession and appropriation of the island. It is in this play of power between island and castaway that spatial trajectories are formed, that stories pertain to sites and that geographical terrain is converted into lived place.

Relative Mapping in Digital Space













It is our contention that we can explore these spatial trajectories most fully by analysing them both verbally and visually. In her analysis of the two maps published with early editions of *Robinson Crusoe* Christina Ljungberg (2012) argues for their ‘diagrammatic

function' in relation to the text: 'diagrams enable us to trace an imaginary journey on a map. By interacting with the written text, the diagram can thus convey information that would elude us if we simply read the text' (52). Where Ljungberg adopts a Peircean iconographic approach that is essentially semiotic and readerly (centred on internal and external referents for language), we have preferred to use a Bakhtinian model.⁹ The primary reason for this is the usefulness of a combined 'time-space' or chronotopic approach in dealing with the complexity of generating a digital mapping model for both space and time in literature. Twenty-first century digital tools allow us to fully explore such ideas through the generation of a visualisation of the coded text. This can be layered onto an absolute map, a non-absolute map or considered entirely in terms of a self-connected topology. We call the graph topologies 'maps' because they are generated directly from the text to which they correspond and thus they do *literally* function as a map of that text (a spatial visualisation of verbal meaning and narrative form). These maps are inherently subjective rather than objective, reliant on the relative perspectives of both narrator and coder.

A full account of the topological mapping model developed by the *Chronotopic Cartographies* project that informs this section of the paper can be found elsewhere (see Bushell et al. 2022a, 2022b).¹⁰ For the purposes of *this* paper – where it is presented comparatively alongside other ways of mapping – we need to make three things clear: that the model is concerned with mapping *relative* rather than absolute place; that it is centred upon 'chronotopes' or 'time-spaces' as connected nodes mapping the spatial within and across a text; that the visualisation is generated directly out of manually marked-up text. Using a bespoke spatial schema, applied manually, core nodes (topoi) are given a chronotopic identity (e.g. road, encounter, threshold) derived from Mikhail Bakhtin's famous essay on this subject, as well as a geographic/locational one.¹¹ These nodal zones (essentially chunks of text) are then linked by edges (connections) that show different kinds of movement across the narrative (e.g. direct; indirect; jump).¹² A third feature is the sub-naming of places and features within a node by means of 'toporefs' (e.g. the wood; the top of the hill; England). A key feature of the visualisations as analysed here, in relation to psycho-spatiality in *Robinson Crusoe*, is the distinction between physical (outer) and mental (inner) spatial connections which, on our maps, are represented by purple and orange connections respectively. Conventional techniques and tools such as *ArcGIS* would not be able to map any of these points, and this is the key methodological difference between our relative mapping of imaginary literary space-time as opposed to georeferenced mapping approaches. The use of graphs in this way – as relational-based topologies – allows new ways of reading texts spatially.

It is also important to note that in our model the text generates not a single map but a *map series* that immediately allows us to respond to the spatio-temporal meanings held within the text in a range of ways.¹³ This aligns it to more recent developments in 'post-representational' mapping derived from the field of Critical Cartography. Such an approach de-prioritises the relationship between lived and represented spaces so that the map is viewed not as secondary to the world but as 'always in a state of becoming' (Kitchin, Perkins and Dodge 2009: 17) and as an active creator of knowledge. Such a description

Table 1. Chronotopic Symbols and Descriptions

Symbol	Name	Description
	Encounter	An unexpected happening, sudden shift, any meeting. Can occur anywhere, but frequently on the road.
	Road	Paths, travel, journey, options, coming and going, wandering.
	Castle	Confinement, imprisonment, stasis, discomfort, dark, visible traces of the past.
	Idyll	Familiarity, comfort, happiness, pleasure, peace, respite, self-contained, unified, stable, homely, known.
	Idyllic Wilderness	The wild, openness, freedom, untouched, the earth, the natural world, unity.
	Anti-Idyll	Dystopias, post-apocalyptic settings, mechanical, the idyll destroyed, invaded, or made alien. Can be exterior or interior.
	Threshold	The hall, the corridor, the staircase, the street, docks, stations, liminal spaces, emotionally charged, intense, sublime, excess, a place of contrasts.
	Parlour	Interior, room, defined, bounded, hosting guests, where the public and private merge, where dialogues happen, a site of political and commercial intrigue.
	Provincial Town	Community, locality, rustic, petty-bourgeois, specific locales, quaint little houses and rooms of the town, sleepy streets.
	Public Square	Dynamic, crowd, forum, metropolitan, the internal externalized (the private/intimate becomes public), theatrical (place of the clown, the rogue, the fool).
	Distortion	Elsewhere, miraculous, bewitched, dreams, hallucinations.
	Metanarrative	For sections of text without a concrete sense of space, which could be internal (e.g. commentary, direct address to the reader) or external (e.g. glosses, framing statements, contained texts; authorial/editorial notes, etc) to the narrative. See metatextual / paratextual / intratextual connection types.

partly allows for the sequentiality of the text as opposed to the simultaneity of the map. This open, multiple and subjective approach to maps focuses on what they *do* as much as what they represent in ways which our project respects: through the map series (there is no single absolute and authoritative origin map); through the iterative visual-verbal interpretative model; in the idea of generating sub-maps to pursue readings further through a repeated return.

Inner and Outer Mapping: Shipwreck Tropes and Paradigm Shifts

It is time to try and use digital literary mapping methods to draw out fully the ‘geographic terrain of attachment’ (Hay 2006: 32) that we argue acts in two directions (man acting upon island and island upon man) by moving between visual and verbal analysis. Crusoe’s cautious enlargement of spatial knowledge over time maps out key tropes and sites that all subsequent Robinsonades draw upon to structure the narrative: the landing point; the wreck; the secure base; the highest point; the secondary base; circumnavigation, the ‘other’ side of the island.

For the survivor of the shipwreck, the place of arrival is both traumatic and salvatory. In *Robinson Crusoe*, when he is finally flung up onshore by a huge wave he is almost overcome by his reaction:

I was now landed, and safe on Shore, and began to look up and thank God that my Life was sav’d in a Case wherein there was some Minutes before scarce any room to hope. I believe it is impossible to express to the Life what the Extasies and Transports of the Soul are, when it is so sav’d, as I may say, out of the very Grave . . . (35)

The landing point is located, naturally enough at the point where land and sea meet. As many critics have noted, the shore has a particular identity as a liminal boundary space.¹⁴ It encourages the gaze outward and backward with a temporality of ‘Before’ that is always unsettling. As Pete Hay succinctly puts it: ‘edges are “edgy”’ (2006, 23). Within sight of this location, the presence of the wreck, as long as it lasts, is a second important spatial trope for the castaway narrative. In the act of ‘stripping the wreck’ – the individual labours to rescue everything possible from the last link to civilisation in order to help him establish himself in his new life. Crusoe does this with great thoroughness and labour, going back and forth between ship and land and stating in the end that ‘I had brought away all that one Pair of Hands could well be suppos’d capable to bring, tho’ I believe verily, had the calm Weather held, I should have brought away the whole Ship Piece by Piece’ (43). Yet, at the same time, the shipwreck site remains a last link to the outside world which disturbs as much as it reassures.

Another core trope of the Robinsonade is to seek out the highest point. Crusoe does this very early on, even before he has chosen a place to live. This is because he needs to

determine two things which will affect all his subsequent decision-making: whether he is on an island or not and whether there is land nearby or within reach:

I travell'd for Discovery up to the Top of that Hill, where after I had with great Labour and Difficulty got 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, except some Rocks which lay a great Way off, and two small Islands less than this, which lay about three Leagues to the West. (40)

Seeking out the highest point enables an aerial view and also brings with it a sense of dominion – ‘Master of all I survey’ – as Crusoe visually takes possession of this (new) world within a world in a way that appears to reinforce a colonial, masculine reading.¹⁵ Again, the site has both a practical geographic and a deep emotional significance. This doubled identity makes it both part of his new world in the present and a link to the past and possible future (the look-out point for a rescue ship).

Once the survivor is safe from the sea he must make himself secure on land. The choice of shelter and the positioning of it is naturally determined by physical factors – proximity to fresh water; a view of the sea in case of rescue; natural defence. Crusoe enumerates these for the reader and ensures that his first choice of residence meet all these criteria. While the castaway's secure base has a strong affective charge as the new ‘home from home’, Crusoe's establishment of it goes much further. In fact, as Kinane and others point out, he deliberately imprisons himself: ‘Crusoe counteracts his feelings of confinement . . . by further enclosing himself within smaller spaces upon the island’ (79). It is only when Crusoe reaches the point of maximum self-imprisonment (in a cave – that almost buries him alive – and from which he is unable to move through illness) that the first macro-paradigm shift in his relationship to the island world occurs. This is the realisation that:

for tho' I was indeed at large in the Place, yet the Island was certainly a Prison to me, and that in the worst Sense in the World; but now I learn'd to take it in another Sense; Now I look'd back upon my past Life with such Horrour, and my Sins appear'd so dreadful, that my Soul sought nothing of God, but Deliverance from the Load of Guilt that bore down all my Comfort: As for my solitary Life it was nothing . . . (71)

In a paradox that is characteristic of the conversion narrative, but taken to a physical extreme here, Crusoe can only be made free by being confined (allowing spiritual deliverance to replace the desire for physical deliverance).

Only once he has firmly established a secure base does Crusoe feel confident enough to explore more widely: ‘I had been now in this unhappy Island above 10 Months. . . . Having now secur'd my Habitation, as I thought, fully to my Mind, I had a great Desire to make a more perfect Discovery of the Island’ (72). Crusoe travels up the brook that runs

past his home and follows this inland up a deep valley until he finds a pleasant interior where he establishes a secondary base in the form of his 'country seat' or 'Bower' (marked at the top of the 1720 island map). However, even though he finds it more attractive than his primary base, he determines not to relocate there. In part this is because 'as I was fix'd in my Habitation, it became natural to me' (81) but also because 'to enclose my self among the Hills and Woods, in the Center of the Island, was to anticipate my Bondage, and to render such an Affair not only Improbable but Impossible' (74-5). The need to remain near the shoreline and place of arrival with the possibility of rescue remains a determining factor in where he chooses to live. To move inland is both to abandon the place in which one was saved and to give up on being rescued. Again, we see this strong psycho-spatial trope replayed over and over in later Robinsonades. As recently as 2004-10 in the TV Series *Lost*, the first major argument between characters concerns those who want to set up home on the beach of the original crash site and those who move inland to be close to the water source.¹⁶ In *The Swiss Family Robinson* the Father wishes to 'remain here, where Providence seems to have conducted us' (Wyss [1816] 2007: 109) whilst his wife wants to move to the safety of the giant tree-house. The underlying pull – between a desire to be found and escape from the island, and a sense of having created a home in a better world than the one that has been left – is always present.

Finally, after about four years on the island, Crusoe attempts to construct a boat and circumnavigate the isle. To make a boat, either to explore the coast of the island or in an attempt to sail elsewhere, is always a risk for the shipwreck survivor. It represents a return to the sea (which cast you away) and departure from the island (which saved you). Again then, it is a deeply loaded psycho-spatial act – a kind of betrayal of the island. More practically, however, the sea needs to be mapped and known just as much as the land. Without a sea-chart and knowledge of tides and currents there are risks of foundering on hidden rocks or shoals, or being caught up in a current, as Crusoe is. He quickly realises this: 'And now I saw how easy it was for the Providence of God to make the most miserable Condition Mankind could be in *worse*. Now I look'd back upon my desolate solitary Island, as the most pleasant Place in the World' (101).

We can begin to see then that the psycho-spatiality of the marooned sailor suggests a duality concerned with whether he/she faces inward or outward and this functions at both a literal (geographical/spatial) level and psychologically. To what extent does mapping and visualising the text confirm or deny this duality? We can start by looking at the Topoi Map of *Robinson Crusoe* that prioritises key locations (Figure 4). Here the visual form is generated out of the spatial topoi and chronotopes as they occur sequentially across the text and connect to each other. These are presented simultaneously, mirroring the representational priorities of the second Crusoe map (1720). Thus the map strongly represents the key shipwreck tropes discussed above – Robinson's camp site; top of the hill; the bower – although without the sense of gradual enlargement enabled by the sequential unfolding of the retrospective narrative. At the same time, the Toporefs (place names within each of these sites) draw out the ways in which an affective geography accrues around them.

What a relative map of literary time-space can represent, that a standard map cannot, is internal spaces (largely in orange) as well as external (purple). What emerges strikingly here for the Topoi Map is the fact that the most important and connected point by far is that of the ‘account outside of specific space and time’. This abstract chronotopic space corresponds to significant sections of the text that describe Robinson's interior thought and development as he adapts to the situation or reflects upon his own past to aid him in the present and future. Thus, despite the novel being famous for Crusoe's practicality and its detailed and realist depiction of survival on the island, the visualisation powerfully makes explicit how much of the novel's spatiality is internal.

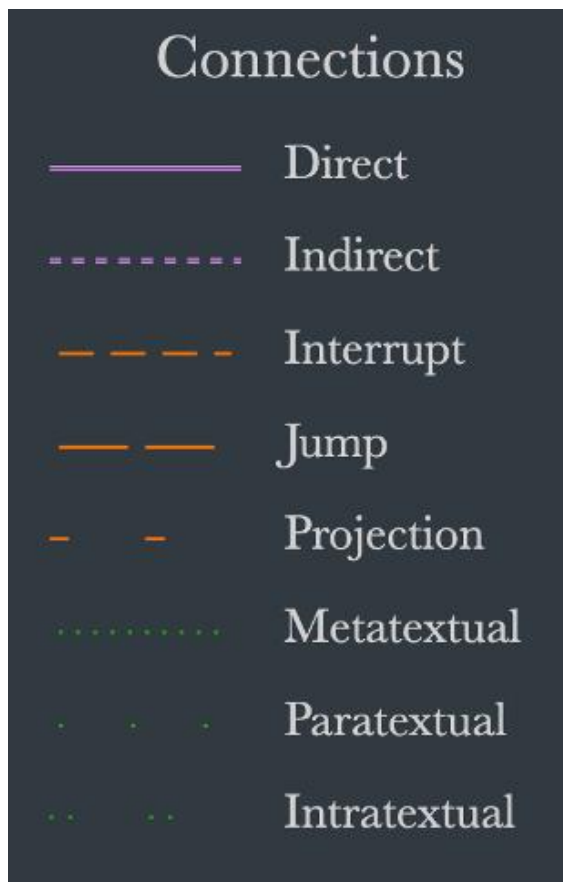


Figure 3.

In Figure 4, another map from the first series, the Deep Chronotope Map, displays the percentage of the whole text devoted to each chronotope and highlights the importance of three key forms: distortion; threshold; metafiction. Distortion is by far the most prominent as we would expect from the Topoi Map and it confirms again that much of the text is centred on internal rather than external place or on the effects of the latter upon the former. In terms of physical threshold, as we have seen, the text enacts a series of gradual spatial enlargements over time as Crusoe moves from self-imposed imprisonment into larger knowledge and experience – crossing first the substantial threshold of the ‘Rows of strong stakes’ (44) and ‘Wall’ (50) around his home and then

moving beyond. But the dominance of the threshold is also significant since it stands between outer and inner worlds. Finally, the ‘metanarrative’ chronotope signals the self-conscious editorial frame narration (outside the first person narrative of Crusoe himself) that is easily overlooked, but important. This concerns Defoe’s presentation of the narrative as reliable ‘fact’ when he knows it is not: ‘The Wonders of this Man’s Life exceed all that (he thinks) is to be found extant; the Life of one Man being scarce capable of a greater Variety’ (‘The Preface’ 3). As important as the linkage of inner and outer worlds on the island for Crusoe, is the connecting of the reader to that world convincingly and authentically.

As well as the acts of physical self-location and gradual enlargement of geographical knowledge, Crusoe also undergoes three major paradigm shifts during his life as a marooned sailor: his turn to God after nearly dying (discussed above); his realisation that he is not alone due to the footprint in the sand; his life with a companion in Friday. Crusoe’s avoidance of the south west part of the island allows for the second major paradigm shift of the footprint which the text explicitly registers: ‘But now I come to a new Scene of my Life’ (111). The finding of the indexical footprint in the sand (an object, event, micro-place and affective site) on the south west of the island makes this region ‘other’ for Crusoe through the revelation that he is not alone.¹⁷ Kinane suggests that ‘islands are linked to the Freudian notion of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* spaces’ (2017: 89) which leads him to argue that ‘the coloniser must make out an *unheimlich* space within the island into which the fears of the threatening Other can continue to be projected’ (90).¹⁸ Psychospatially the island has ceased to be whole, with the ‘home’ of the south east ‘unhomed’ by the south west. In a sense though, this could be read in terms of the underlying tension between the island’s own nature and Crusoe’s will, since an island is both alone and yet necessarily connected (through underlying topography; by wind and bird and current; through trade and exchange). As Gillian Beer puts it: ‘Islands inhabited by humans are never enclosures only: they are crossroads, markets for exchange . . . essential and frequent stopping-off points’ (Beer 2003, 33).

The final paradigm shift for Crusoe occurs when he saves Friday from his fellow cannibals and then lives for the last three years on the island with a companion.¹⁹ Of their first year together he comments that ‘This was the pleasantest Year of all the Life I led in this Place’ (154) and he later summarises:

I was now entred [sic] on the seven and twentieth Year of my Captivity in this Place; though the three last Years that I had this Creature with me, ought rather to be left out of the Account, my Habitation being quite of another kind than in all the rest of the Time. (165)

The extreme solitude of his life *before* Friday is replaced by a radically changed experience once he is sharing the island with someone else.

The initial digital map series described above, emphasised the interconnectedness of internal and external place and space on the island. However, in an iterative method of

reading and mapping that moves between text and map, the first map series often provides a base level of mapping that requires a *second* series to fully explore the complexities of human spatiality. In the case of *Robinson Crusoe*, therefore we generated a second series of sub-maps for each section of the text corresponding to the major paradigm shifts described above, in order to delve deeper into the evolving psycho-spatial tensions between man and island.²⁰

In the first Topoi map of this second series, that visualises Crusoe's initial state before his spiritual awakening (Figure 6) we see a balance between external geography and internal spatiality. Crusoe's exploration of his new world (in purple) is constrained with only a few key sites featuring: the wreck; the shore; the campsite. At the same time, inner space reaches out in different directions as he thinks back to England in his 'dream of home' and reflects spiritually in 'religious musings'.

The second sub-map (Figure 7) corresponds to the section of the text between first and second paradigm shifts as Crusoe comes to terms with his isolated state. His internal condition becomes even more dominant which reflects the way in which his growing spirituality colours his entire existence. His altered subjective state makes his marooned condition and physical environment bearable for the first time and this is reflected in enlarged exploration of the physical space. Purple connections to the left now enlarge beyond the familiar to 'the bower', 'the opposite shore' and in a direct vertical line down his disastrous attempt to move offshore in 'a great depth of water' – an attempt to break free from the island that ultimately ends in him re-embracing it more fully.

The third map (Figure 8) corresponds to the section of text after the discovery of the footprint before saving Friday, when Crusoe reverts to a state of extreme paranoia. The visualisation is dramatically distinctive since the previously balanced inner and outer relations are wildly thrown off. The campsite base becomes central again and at the same time his inner state now serves to negate his spatial experience as anxieties are projected directly onto the world around him, with orange lines linking to 'the footprint' 'the south west point' and so on. There is much greater crossover of physical and mental connections as Crusoe's pastoral existence changes to one of constant awareness that ensures his ability to monitor key sites from various vantage points. (These worries are likewise reflected in the emerging centrality of 'anti-idyll' in the corresponding Deep Chronotope Map for this phase, not given here). Finally, the fourth map (Figure 9) is generated out of the marked-up text after the third paradigm shift that occurs when Crusoe has rescued Friday. This looks more like the first map, as inner and outer states re-harmonize. Now, the purple lines of external spatiality are far more wide-ranging – 'further along the creek'; 'deeper into the woods' – as his secure state is reflected in external exploration. Notably it is also at this point that the proto-colonial Crusoe emerges most strongly.

A chronotopic reading also allows for the same site to change its identity across the text and we see this clearly in relation to two of the most loaded sites for Crusoe: his campsite home and the top of the hill that provides his lookout point. The top of the hill moves through the chronotopic identities of: wilderness – idyll – threshold – encounter. Where the point of view it provides gives him a sense of surveillant control and power

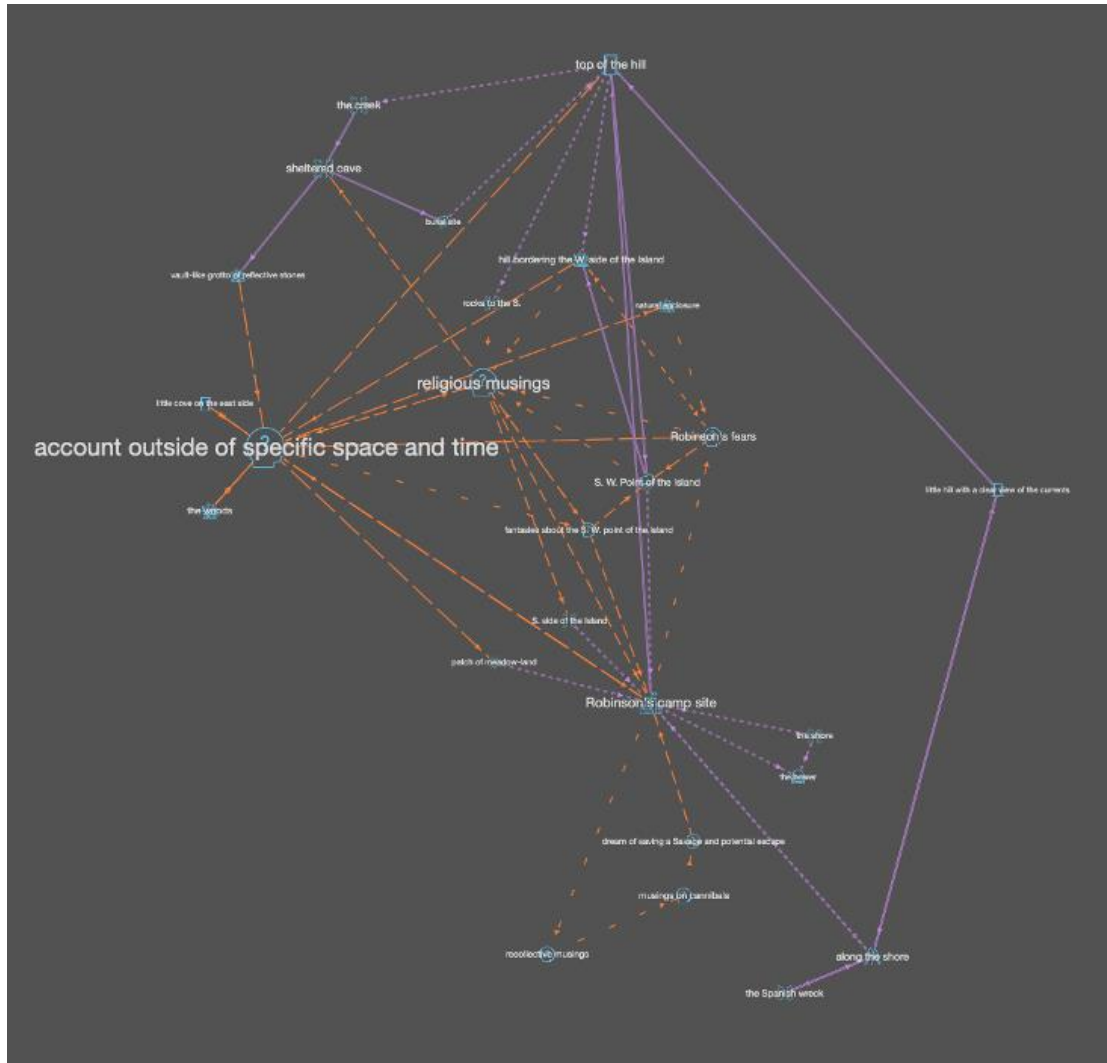


Figure 8.

when he is alone, this shifts into fear of exposure when he knows this is no longer the case. The chronotopic identity of the campsite starts off as wilderness, becomes a parlour (as he secures and accepts his new home) but then morphs to that of a castle (explicitly described in such terms by Crusoe himself) as fear dominates his mind, before returning to a parlour state once he relaxes and enjoys companionship.

The graph topologies show shifting relative meanings across the whole and strongly reinforce the symbiotic but evolving nature of the psycho-spatial condition of the marooned. The two acts of reading visually and verbally enrich each other to achieve a holistic understanding of the spatiality of the text.

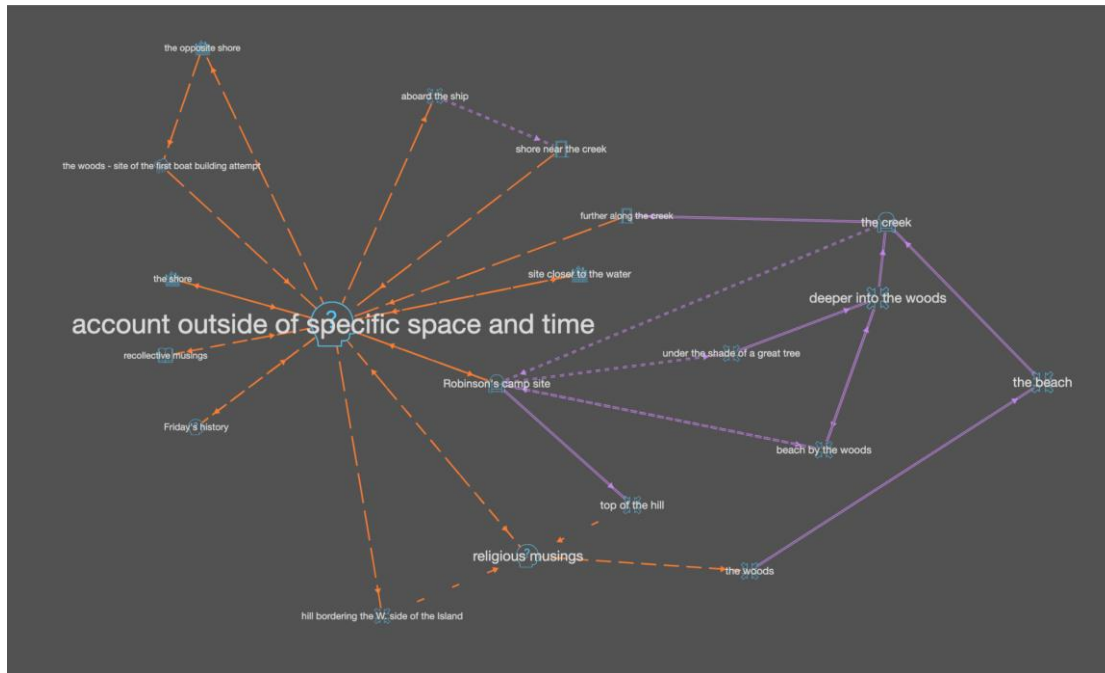


Figure 9.

Experiential and Educational Mapping in Minecraft

The final part of this paper turns in a future direction for literary mapping through virtual gaming environments. Our focus here is on the *Litcraft* resource created by Bushell and Butler in 2018 and its educational potential in allowing for experiential play in an immersive world that corresponds to the text.²¹ *Litcraft* draws upon the popular Minecraft gaming platform created in 2011 by Swedish company, Mojang, with 141 million users worldwide as of 2022. The educational potential of Minecraft across a range of subjects and for children of different ages is considerable (with Minecraft Education Edition providing these in an accessible international platform).²² This is partly because of the nature of the game itself which is extremely open-ended, co-creative and participatory: ‘the *Minecraft* interface has great potential as a relatively simple platform that makes it possible for a wide range of people and players to map their imaginations of the material world’ (Bashandy 2020; see also Delaney 2019).

One major reason for *Robinson Crusoe*’s popularity across the nineteenth century was its approval as recommended reading for the child by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his highly influential educational treatise: *Émile, or on Education* (1762). Famously, Rousseau nominated *Robinson Crusoe* as the only text that his ideal pupil, Émile, was permitted to read. In so doing he both validated it as a book for children and initiated *Robinson Crusoe*’s remarkable second life across the nineteenth century, with an estimate of 500 Robinsonades published between 1788 and 1910 at a rate of two a year, (Phillips 1997: 24-5; Kinane 2017: 33). Rousseau’s valuing of *Robinson Crusoe* in terms of self-reliance and a need to return to a state of nature in which man learns from direct experience (Rousseau’s

core pedagogic model) is well known. What has *not* been explored as fully, however, is the way in which Rousseau goes on to envisage in some detail the nature of *Émile's imaginative engagement* with the text:

I would have his head turned by the tale. Let him be entirely taken up with his castle, his goats, and his plantations; let him learn in detail, not from books but from things, all that a man in such a situation would be bound to know. Let him think he is Crusoe himself . . . What opportunities does such a pretence afford to an able tutor who has encouraged it only with a view to utilizing it! The pupil, eager to furnish a store for his island, would be more ready to learn than his tutor to teach. ([1762] 2019, 169)

Here, Rousseau emphasises a combination of ‘work and play’ at the heart of the learning experience but also a level of creative engagement in the child – ‘his head turned by the tale’ – and imitative power ‘Let him think he is Crusoe himself’ ([1762] 2019, 169).²³ Diane Loxley (one critic who *does* attend to these aspects) sums Rousseau up for us here:

Much of the attraction of the desert island genre is said to be derived precisely from the fact that the reader (particularly the child reader) is, in a classic case of underdistanciation, “drawn into” the fabric of the fiction, made to “identify” personally with the predicament of the major characters. (Loxley 1990: 10)

Loxley goes so far as to claim that ‘Rousseau’s own use of *Robinson Crusoe* is based entirely upon this apparent potential for intense reader identification’ (1990: 10).

Minecraft is inherently Rousseauvian in its structures and means of mining and building to survive but also in the way it allows for the kinds of imaginative self-identification between reader and character, described above. It functions as a survival game in which one is dropped into an unknown environment and required to create tools and any other items by ‘crafting’ together the necessary elements from raw materials.²⁴ The self-reliant nature of the survival narrative translates directly into first person game-play and lends itself to using the game world to create tasks that encourage players to make such decisions for themselves in the virtual environment. So, for example, to make a stone pick axe one must first acquire wood from a tree by felling it; craft a simple wooden axe (using a crafting table); locate stone to mine and then combine the two to create the stronger axe.

The educational use of Minecraft has been developed less for literature than for the sciences, so that there is relatively little research on Minecraft and literacy, which is an emerging area (see Bailey (2016), Burnett and Bailey (2014); Dezuanni (2018)). Since 2018, Bushell and Butler have worked together as Minecraft creators, making accurate scale-models of literary islands in Minecraft for free use in schools and libraries to enable an immersive experience that links reading with play. It is popular with all child-readers but extremely effective with ‘reluctant’ readers for whom it works to remotivate them and to reassociate reading with pleasure.²⁵ Part of that motivation is created by the immersive

experience of ‘mapping’ the text experientially by moving through a Minecraft version of it and thus of re-experiencing the narrative individually. By building a scale model of the island of *Robinson Crusoe* in Minecraft based upon the 1720 map, (see Figures 2 and 10), with key sites represented on it at appropriate points, children can play at survival in a safe virtual space that is equivalent to the text. For the ‘reluctant’ reader who struggles (for a complex range of reasons) to engage fully with the act of reading and may never have achieved the pleasurable flow state that constitutes ‘being lost in a book’ this in-game re-enactment is particularly powerful since a context is given and experienced through the digital medium.

As a linked multimodal resource, *Litcraft* always begins with the text, outside the game world. Within a context of whole-class reading, an extract is read and focussed comprehension work undertaken first. Then children go into the game world and re-enact events or activities in the narrative for themselves mimetically, using the literary map to help them negotiate the game world on the ground (or where necessary adopting a literal ‘bird’s eye view since one can fly in Creative mode). Finally they come back out and undertake a follow-up reading or writing activity out of game that draws on their own experience or relates it to the character in the narrative. The psycho-spatial tropes of both *Crusoe* and subsequent *Robinsonades*, as outlined in the first half of the paper, provide a simple template of activities situated around the island at the sites of key shipwreck tropes, for pre-reading comprehension and in-game challenges in Minecraft. These follow the model of gradual expansion and exploration that the text narrates, relating chosen extracts and key scenes to activities enacted on the island.

In fact *Litcraft: Robinson Crusoe* is a double build which contains scale models of the maps from the most famous *Robinsonade* (*Swiss Family Robinson*) as well as *Robinson Crusoe* and moves between the two islands.²⁶ The double build allows for comparison between the condition of being stranded as part of a group or alone, as well as for comparable extracts from the texts.²⁷ Within the Minecraft world then, both islands contain the same points corresponding to core spatial tropes outlined above. Each lesson plan and session is centred around these as follows: Stripping the Wreck; Place-naming; A Home from Home; Making a Boat; Mini-Island Adventure; exploring the value of each place. So, after reading comparative passages of the account of being shipwrecked and stripping the wreck, the children’s first task is to find their way out of the submerged cabin, locate a rowing boat and row to shore. They then have to move items rescued from the wreck by the family from ‘Tent House’ on the shoreline up to the main Tree House base, whilst also rounding up animals that have swum ashore and penning them safely in. In the ‘Home from Home’ task children travel across to *Crusoe*’s island and, after locating his primary base, then find the site for his summer house and build this. In the next task they read the extract about *Crusoe*’s disastrous boat-making and circumnavigation before finding his canoe and navigating back to the other island by sea. Thus, in-game tasks allow children to directly re-enact core events from the narrative and experience them for themselves within the virtual environment both mimetically and creatively – since they also have their own unique experience in that world. The interaction of reading, mapping and moving between

fictional and immersive spaces works extremely effectively to motivate reading through play. The power and effectiveness of the resource comes from the new form of multimodal reading that it enables.

In her work on the creative nature of digital reading, Anna Craft identifies four core aspects of learning: ‘pluralities, possibilities, playfulness and participation’ (Craft 2011: 2012). *Litcraft* takes the singularity of the linear narrative and allows for creative personalisation and re-engagement with it in Minecraft in experiential ways that embrace the ‘4Ps’ above and embodies Craft’s account of ‘enacted imagination, or imagination brought into action’ (181).

Such an account seems to match the way in which the children’s experience of literary space was made more pleasurable by the multimodal experience of it with the effect of increasing motivation. One-to-one interviews with pupils directly attested to this: ‘It made me wonder what was happening next. Being in the world made you think about what was going to happen in the book.’ (Year 6 pupil). Feedback also showed that the linked resource significantly increased their empathetic engagement with characters within the text: ‘I really liked it because you can read and think a certain way and then you get someone else’s vision. Playing the game made a big difference; it made me think how he felt’ (Year 6 pupil). The immersive resource thus maximized the innate imitative power of *Robinson Crusoe* by allowing children to be literally ‘put in his shoes’ while also experiencing their own role-play adventure in the virtual world. The Minecraft mapping of *Robinson Crusoe* can bring the text to life in new ways for the twenty-first century reader in a direct continuation of centuries of spatially-led engagement with this text.



Figure 10.



Figure 11.

Notes

¹ The Deleuze essay was written, but not published, in the 1950s as ‘Causes et raisons des îles desertes’ and republished as the title essay of *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-74* in 2004.

² Research relating to digital mapping was supported by funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK). Award number: AH/P00895X/1. The core research team on this project were: Sally Bushell (PI); James Butler, Duncan Hay and Rebecca Hutcheon.

³ Ian Kinane, in *Theorising Literary Islands* (2017) references Elizabeth Deloughrey (2010). She describes the ways in which real-world geography immediately becomes confused with fictional in the conflation of the fictional location off the East coast with the real-world location of Alexander Selkirk off the West coast on Juan Fernandez. This is further compounded when the latter is renamed ‘Robinson Crusoe Isle’; (2, 12).

⁴ (Ljungberg 2012: 62). See also Phillips (1997) who describes it as ‘geographical realism’ (15).

⁵ Ljungberg (2012) discusses this map as an example of how ‘Crusoe, as the prototypical *homo economicus*, puts his mark on the world, leaving traces of his travels and appropriating it’ (64).

⁶ Detailed accounts of Selkirk's discovery and rescue were given in Edward Cooke's *A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World* and Captain Woodes Rogers's *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1708-11) as well as Richard Steele's article in *The Englishman* (1713) based on an interview with Selkirk

⁷ The first sequel, also published in 1719, was called *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: Being the Second and Last Part of His Life and of the Strange Surprising Accounts of his Travels Round three Parts of the Globe* (William Taylor: London, 1719); the second sequel (largely a collection of reflective passages) was published in 1720: *Serious Reflections During the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: With his Vision of the Angelic World* (William Taylor: London, 1720).

⁸ See also Stimpson (1996) who argues that the island functions metonymically to stand for the self.

⁹ See Bushell and Hutcheon (2023) for a full account of the Bakhtinian underpinnings.

¹⁰ For many examples of the maps generated go to: <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/chronotopic-cartographies/>

¹¹ See Bakhtin (1981: 84-258). The core chronotopes (largely derived from Bakhtin and retaining his terminology) are: Encounter; Road; Castle; Idyll; Wilderness; Anti-idyll; Threshold; Parlour; Provincial Town; Public Square; Distortion; Metanarrative. See Table 1.

¹² The connections are identified in terms of: Direct; Indirect; Projection; Interrupt; Jump; Metatextual; Paratextual; Intratextual. See Figure 3.

¹³ The full map series consists of: Complete Map; Topoi Map; Syuzhet (order of tale as told) and Fabula (chronological order of events) constructed out of Syuzhet; Topoi and Chronotopic Archetypes Map; Deep Chronotope Map.

¹⁴ See also Gillian Beer's description in terms of a 'shifting liminality as the tide recedes and reclaims the land' (2003): 33; and Greg Dening's account of the shore as 'double-edged' (2004: 16).

¹⁵ See Pratt (1992: 8) and Weaver Hightower (2007: 201). In the TV series *Lost* it is only the character of Sayid (the Iraqi ex-communications officer) who try out the highest point in an attempt to triangulate. Astonishingly the characters do not even try to establish that they are on an island.

¹⁶ In *Lost* many of the core tropes of the Robinsonade are in play but, for the most part, the 21st Century maroon is shown to be corrupted by modernity – wasteful of the wreck; unable to work collaboratively; not making a secure base. In part this is because, in a global culture where everywhere is known, they assume there can be no true desert island and that they will be rescued.

¹⁷ See Ljungberg (2012) for a discussion of indexicality in relation to the footprint (55-56).

¹⁸ Later island narratives such as Verne's *The Mysterious Isle* and the TV series *Lost* take the idea of the 'other' much further by giving agency, or the appearance of it, to the island itself.

¹⁹ In Freudian terms this is another 'unheimlich' occurrence since Crusoe dreams of rescuing a cannibal and then does so (Freud 1954: 244).

²⁰ To be clear, each of these sub-maps is also one of a series – but since we wish to use them comparatively across the text we primarily discuss the same map from each series (the Topoi map).

²¹ *Litcraft* was created in 2018 by two academics at Lancaster University, UK: Sally Bushell and James Butler. Other *Litcraft* island resources have been made for: *Treasure Island* and *Kensuke's Kingdom*. These are all available for free download at: <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/chronotopic-cartographies/litcraft/>

²² <https://education.minecraft.net/en-us>

²³ For further consideration of the relationship between Robinson Crusoe and the child see: Campbell 2018: 191-206; and O'Malley, 2012.

²⁴ There are two main game modes for Minecraft: 'Survival' in which nothing is given and the player can die; and 'Creative' in which everything is given and there is no threat.

²⁵ The term 'reluctant reader' encompasses different forms of reluctance for different underlying reasons (including low reading age; language comprehension; special needs; lack of motivation (see Clark and Osborne 2007; Dierking 2015: 407-416).

²⁶ The map for *Swiss Family Robinson* has a multiple history as does the text. The first version of *Der Schweizerische Robinson* was written by Johann David Wyss in German but edited and prepared by his son Johann Rudolf Wyss (1812). It was translated into French by Baroness de Montolieu (1814) and into English by William and Mary Jane Godwin (1814). The first edition had a map presented as if part of a larger landmass but this was later separated and shown as a detached island.

²⁷ Since the language of the texts is quite challenging for reluctant readers, short extracts from them were used in conjunction with abridged Puffin versions of the text and *Resolve* graphic novel versions of the texts.

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