

2017

"Novel" Biopolitics: Reading Defoe and Coetzee through Foucault, Derrida, and Esposito

Ben Cravens

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in [English](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Cravens, Ben, "'Novel' Biopolitics: Reading Defoe and Coetzee through Foucault, Derrida, and Esposito" (2017). *Masters Theses*. 2913.

<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/2913>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

The Graduate School



EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Thesis Maintenance and Reproduction Certificate

FOR: Graduate Candidates Completing Theses in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree
Graduate Faculty Advisors Directing the Theses

RE: Preservation, Reproduction, and Distribution of Thesis Research

Preserving, reproducing, and distributing thesis research is an important part of Booth Library's responsibility to provide access to scholarship. In order to further this goal, Booth Library makes all graduate theses completed as part of a degree program at Eastern Illinois University available for personal study, research, and other not-for-profit educational purposes. Under 17 U.S.C. § 108, the library may reproduce and distribute a copy without infringing on copyright; however, professional courtesy dictates that permission be requested from the author before doing so.

Your signatures affirm the following:

- The graduate candidate is the author of this thesis.
- The graduate candidate retains the copyright and intellectual property rights associated with the original research, creative activity, and intellectual or artistic content of the thesis.
- The graduate candidate certifies her/his compliance with federal copyright law (Title 17 of the U. S. Code) and her/his right to authorize reproduction and distribution of all copyrighted materials included in this thesis.
- The graduate candidate in consultation with the faculty advisor grants Booth Library the non-exclusive, perpetual right to make copies of the thesis freely and publicly available without restriction, by means of any current or successive technology, including by not limited to photocopying, microfilm, digitization, or internet.
- The graduate candidate acknowledges that by depositing her/his thesis with Booth Library, her/his work is available for viewing by the public and may be borrowed through the library's circulation and interlibrary loan departments, or accessed electronically.
- The graduate candidate waives the confidentiality provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U. S. C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) with respect to the contents of the thesis and with respect to information concerning authorship of the thesis, including name and status as a student at Eastern Illinois University.

I have conferred with my graduate faculty advisor. My signature below indicates that I have read and agree with the above statements, and hereby give my permission to allow Booth Library to reproduce and distribute my thesis. My adviser's signature indicates concurrence to reproduce and distribute the thesis.

Graduate Candidate Signature

Faculty Adviser Signature

Printed Name

English

Graduate Degree Program

Printed Name

8/17/2017

Date

Please submit in duplicate.

"Novel" Biopolitics: Reading DeFoe and
Coetzee through Foucault, Derrida, and Esposito

(TITLE)

BY
Ben Coakens

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

English

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2017

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

THESIS COMMITTEE CHAIR	<u>8-16-17</u> DATE	DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL CHAIR OR CHAIR'S DESIGNEE	<u>8/17/17</u> DATE
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER	<u>8-16-17</u> DATE	_____	_____
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER	<u>8/16/17</u> DATE	_____	_____

Introduction: The Evolution of (Modern) Biopolitical Analysis: An Overview

The early 18th century witnessed not only what Foucault deemed the “birth of biopolitics,” but also—as has been well regarded since at least the 1957 publication of Ian Watt’s famous study—*The Rise of the Novel*. Current trends in biopolitical literary analysis predominantly focus on contemporary literature, such as Arne De Boever’s *Narrative Care: Biopolitics and the Novel* (2013), Christopher Breu’s *Insistence of the Material: Literature in the Age of Biopolitics* (2014), and Michael R. Griffith’s *Biopolitics and Memory in Postcolonial Literature and Culture* (2015). Largely the result of the trauma that followed totalitarian regimes and two subsequent World Wars, the 20th century featured critically acclaimed dystopian works, such as Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell’s *1984* (1949), and Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), that clearly, though hyperbolically, illustrate biopolitical thought in terms of population management and regulative, disciplinary control.

A striking example of the latent dangers of what Foucault termed “biopower”—“*numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations*” (*The History of Sexuality Vol. 1* 140)—dystopian literature marketed to young adults (YA literature) has exploded in popularity over the past decade, most of which has been successfully adapted to high-grossing films that speak to audiences of all ages, particularly regarding common feelings of existential anxiety, frustration at radically skewed power relations, and the chaos that will inevitably ensue if

society's globally destructive course does not change.¹ But how can we expand our understanding of the biopolitical aspects of literary studies? In my thesis, I show, through Roberto Esposito's formulations, how *modern* biopolitical logic was solidified as early as Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), roughly 100 years before Foucault's postulation, as well as the ways in which the novel emerged from and critiques biopolitics.

I argue that we can learn in depth the ways in which Foucauldian biopolitics and the novel are rooted in the same regulatory logic by focusing more on contemporaneous literature written during its development—particularly the writings of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke—in tandem with the evolving genre of the novel. In what Daniel Defoe presents as an *authentic autobiographical* account of the *Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719), considered the first English novel, Defoe clearly shows the influence of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) and John Locke's "Two Treatises" (1689), the combination of which, as I will show in Chapters One and Two, forms the basis of biopolitical governance in terms of the gradual integration of sovereign rule with more individualistic notions of property rights and liberties guided by "Enlightenment" ideals, which, as Roberto Esposito, Jacques Derrida, J.M. Coetzee, and, to some extent, Giorgio Agamben point out, are guided by problematic, (self-negating) "immunitary" logic.

¹ One can even say that the genre of science fiction itself emerged from the anxieties of an increasingly regulated world where *intruders* often threaten the very fabric of existence. Zombies, vampires, and monsters of all sorts, one can argue, also spring from a common notion of fear—of the "other's" contagion, of shameful exclusion, and of the horrifying results of technological advancement fueled by intellectual hubris, as in Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*.

Defoe's biopolitical critique of England's preventive measures during the plague of 1665, as well as its counterproductive, forced quarantine of people in their homes illustrates the necessity of preventive measures for all, not just those with the (monetary) means of survival. And, in *Foe* and "He and His Man," J.M. Coetzee's critiques of authorial representation—specifically regarding Defoe's style of vicariously assuming the identity of Robinson Crusoe—represents the biopolitical aspects of the novel in terms of the regulative management (scripting) of subjects (characters) who, in the case of Defoe's timeless tale, take on a mythologically laden life of their own.

"Biopolitics" is undoubtedly a thriving field of investigation in the twenty-first century, though it has a much longer history. In 1911, G.W. Harris first used the term in an inflammatory essay, appearing in *The New Age*, aimed at European States' duty to address various issues of population management and general blunders of democratic leadership. Harris defined "bio-politics" as "a policy which should consider two aspects of the nation...[:] the increase of population and competition...[and] the individual attributes of the men who are available for filling places of responsibility in the State" (197). Harris suggests exterminating the "lunatics," criminal or otherwise, in the "State Lethal Chamber" whom experimentation fails to remedy and was a steadfast advocate for abortion, as is evident in the following passage, presented in its entirety:

[T]he absurd procedure adopted at the present time in the case of the production of abortion should be abandoned. If a woman is with child and does not want it, it is impossible to see why, when at her request a doctor undertakes an operation at present called illegal, he should not only be permitted but actually empowered to do so. The production of illegitimate

children is one of those phenomena which will always occur so long as the law stands as it is, and there can be little doubt that bastardy is not only a great hindrance in life, but is also liable to swell the numbers of those who, for want of something better to do, turn their hands to crime and other ignoble pursuits. (197)

Harris' "solutions" to a disorderly nation—promoting doctor-empowered abortion in an attempt to limit criminality and his suggestion to eradicate the mentally unfit, including the asymmetrical influx of "hysterical" women to any general populace—exemplify Foucault's notion of biopower, which he viewed as "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power" (*Security, Territory, Population* 16).

Biopower operates within a disciplinary apparatus that ensures the management of populations in both scientific and political terms, "as a biological problem and as power's problem," and Foucault traces its emergence "not at the level of political theory, but rather at the level of [interrelated] mechanisms, techniques, and technologies of power" (*Society Must Be Defended* 252). According to Foucault, a disciplinary apparatus of controlling individuals within society (the "anatomo-politics of the human body") merged with the self-subjectivizing "biopolitics of the population," as the Sovereign right to "take life" or "let live" was not replaced, but integrated with biopower, which "foster[s] life or disallow[s] it to the point of death" (*The History of Sexuality Vol. 1* 138). In other words,

Power would no longer be dealing with legal subjects over whom the ultimate dominion was death, but with living beings, and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level

of life itself: it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gave power its access even to the body. (*The History of Sexuality Vol 1* 142-43)

Rather than inherently oppressive, disciplinary techniques are ultimately used as a means of optimizing the collective life of a population, as Foucault explains: modern biopower “exerts a powerful influence over life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations” (*The History of Sexuality Vol. 1* 135).

In contrast to biopolitical governance, Hobbes noted the absurdity of a Sovereign regulating the corporeal subjectivity of a populace, “For if wee take Liberty in the proper sense, for corporall Liberty; that is to say, freedome from chains, and prison, and it were very absurd for men to clamor as they doe, for the Liberty they so manifestly enjoy” (*Leviathan* 264). Hobbes assumes “corporall Liberty” for all who abide by the Sovereign’s juridico-legal power to kill, so long as the Sovereign honors the obligation of security. The subject’s liberty resides, for Hobbes, “only in those things, which in regulating their actions, the Sovereign hath praetermitted: such as is the Liberty to buy, and sell, and otherwise contract with one another; to choose their own aboad, their own diet, their own trade of life, and institute their children as they themselves think fit: & the like” (*Leviathan* 264). Hobbes never imagined one’s home, diet, and care of oneself and one’s family would or could be regulated—nor would be of any interest—to the Sovereign. Contrary to sovereignty, biopower works through norms rather than laws and is programmatically dispersed throughout society rather than located in a single governing body.

A series of important thinkers—Jacques Derrida, Roberto Esposito, Giorgio Agamben, Agnes Heller, and Donna Haraway to name a few—have expanded on Foucault’s analysis, such that we now witness a burgeoning interest in the relationships between contemporary literature and biopolitics. However, the so-called *first* novel, *Robinson Crusoe* highlights the immunitary logic that forms the basis of utopian ideals, later sensationalized in contemporary dystopian novels to show the ways in which, as Derrida shows in *The Beast and the Sovereign*, fear and violence are the bedrock of governance, however veiled by platitudinous rhetoric. The “bio-political” implications in the work of Locke, Foucault, Esposito, Agamben, and Derrida have particularly helped further expose the consequences of ideologically fusing the political with the biological that have resulted in preemptive attempts to localize perceived dangers to (what is delimited to become) the homogenous social body.²

In his lecture series at the College de France, Foucault first mentioned biopower and biopolitics in *Society Must Be Defended* (1975-76) and, in 1978-79, further identified a “birth of biopolitics” taking place in the early 18th century (1740s), though these lectures remained unpublished in English until 2008. The steadily increasing breadth of work that has since elaborated on Foucault’s research illustrates the relevance of biopolitical analysis to numerous fields of inquiry, including political science and philosophy, history, economics, and of course, literary studies, which incorporates cultural, gender, ethnic, and postcolonial analyses, to name a few. Foucault hypothesized

² The ideological fusion of the biological and political is evident in words like “body politic,” “head of state,” “corporation,” “the motherland/fatherland,” and of course, “immunity.” Esposito and Derrida’s immunological analyses, as well as Rene Girard’s anthropological investigation into sacrificial rights, is essential for deconstructing the paradoxically self-destructive nature of communities.

that a new government rationality (governmentality), whose “objection is no longer to the abuse of sovereignty but to excessive government,” was developed throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. The gradual integration of sovereignty (rule by the sword) to governmentality (rule by veridiction) was made possible by “political economy,” a “form of rationality that made possible the self-limitation of governmental reason,” and in a broader sense, “includes any method of government that can procure the nation’s prosperity” (13).

Giorgio Agamben’s analysis consists of examining the “ex-ceptional” way in which sovereignty operates on the same principle as “*homo sacer*” (sacred man). Agamben’s central thesis in *Homo Sacer* (1998) rests upon an obscure example of Ancient Roman law, wherein a person who committed a particularly atrocious crime could be stripped of citizenship, barred from society, and killed but not ritualistically sacrificed, hence reduced to *homo sacer* (sacred man). The inception of law dictated the necessity to decide who is included in the political order, thus able to attain *bios* (a politically qualified life) and who may, at any time, be reduced to *zoe* (those who are excluded from the juridical order: due process, a hearing, legal representation, the right to protest), or what Agamben, borrowing the term from Walter Benjamin, calls “bare life.”

Just as the structure of sovereignty is the exception—“the ‘originary’ structure in which law refers to life and includes it in itself by suspending it” (28)—the “sacred man” is *included* in the law by way of his trial, sentence, and exclusion from sacrifice, while at the same time *purged* from society, stripped of citizenship, and deemed juridically killable. Agamben uses Jean-Luc Nancy’s term, “ban” to refer to the “relation of exception[,]” in which the law maintains itself “in its own privation...to apply in no

longer applying” (28). Those who are banned, Agamben suggests, are “abandoned” by the law on the indistinguishable threshold between life and law, so much so that it is unclear whether the banned are inside or outside of the juridical order. Agamben posits that since the emergence of totalitarian regimes in the 20th century, the state of exception is steadily becoming the rule, as “exception and example are correlative concepts that are ultimately indistinguishable” (22) and become especially complicated when designating the commonality of individuals—that is, who is considered inside (politically qualified with citizenship, personhood, and the legalized right to live) as opposed to outside (devoid of a politically qualified identity) and vice versa.

Although Derrida harshly critiqued the methodology of biopolitical thought, specifically Agamben’s theoretic split between *zoe* and *bios*, his later research reveals “iterable” traces of an originary nature within the logic of biopolitics. In the context of 9/11, Derrida discusses the autoimmunitary nature of democracy and nation-states, which sheds light on my analysis of *Robinson Crusoe*; as Defoe’s *homo economicus*, Crusoe views everything in terms of production value, risk, and fear-induced protection, the capitalist-based logic of reasoned bookkeeping imprinted in his psyche, even regarding spiritual conundrums. The principle of autoimmunity mirrors the paradox of the *pharmakon* (paralleling Rene Girard’s notion of a “sacrificial crisis” and Esposito’s, of an “immunitary crisis”) at once both poison and cure, the concept of which Derrida explores in his deconstructive reading of Plato’s *Phaedrus* in “Plato’s Pharmacy.” Destroying one’s self (including one’s protective measures) in the name of self-protection is the essence of autoimmunity—a “quasi-suicidal” act.

For Derrida, democracy has both beneficial and self-destructive patterns inherently marked in their very logic, representing futurity, a “democracy to come,” meaning it functions upon the notion of “perfectability” and is guided by international law and institutions; it is not rational to think our idealistic depictions of absolute equality, morality, and the like will ever come to fruition—all idealizations are in a constant state of what Derrida calls *disinterrance*, that is, destined to err, wander, never to be realized. However, inherent in the very notion of quixotic tenets of democracy, there exists the terror of the threat of what is *to come*, evident in the wake of a tragic event such as 9/11. Derrida shows the ways in which the unforeseeable nature of elusively anonymous threats to what are justified as socio-culturally superior notions of ethical perspectives fuels the paranoia which targets everyone as a potential threat. When the power of sovereignty is threatened, it doubles its retaliatory efforts, and in the case of an unforeseeable force, further extends its regulative measures on its own populace.

While, in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault proposes the advent of biopolitical rationality, with neoliberalism at its root, arising approximately in the late 17th to mid-18th centuries, Esposito posits the emergence of modern biopolitics roughly 100 years earlier with “the immunizing features of sovereignty, property, and liberty as they emerge in the writings of Hobbes and Locke” (*Bios* viii), showing the ways in which the preoccupation with self-protection inherent in all societies and individuals—“with respect to environmental or interhuman contamination” (Esposito Interview 51)—peaked during the late 16th to early 17th century with the decline of sovereign rule. Deconstructing the etymological root of “community” through the lens of “immunity,” Esposito highlights the inherent antinomic tension of society in terms of individuality versus a collective

identity by showing how immunity (in both the juridical and medical sense of protection or exemption from the law and infection, respectively) both protects and negates life. Illustrating that *immunitas* generally has a negative connotation, while *communitas* is considered positive, Esposito points out that both *immunitas* and *communitas* derive from the term, *munus*, which in Latin signifies “gift,” “office,” and “obligation” to highlight the ways in which

what safeguards the individual and social body is also what impedes its development, and beyond a certain point risks destroying it...He is immune who is safe from obligations or dangers that concern everyone else, from the moment that giving something in and of itself implies a diminishment of one’s own goods and in the ultimate analysis, also of oneself. (Esposito Interview 51)

Like Agamben, Esposito uses Walter Benjamin’s concept of “bare life” to show the ways in which immunity paradoxically negates life to protect it: “The excessive immunization of life leads to the “the sacrifice of the living, that is, of every qualified form of life, motivated by simple survival: the reduction of life to its simple biological layer” (51). But unlike Agamben, the anti-statist, or Derrida, who focuses on the self-destructive aspects of immunity, Esposito envisions a positive transference of negative forms of societal immunization to a de-biologized form of political ideals that evoke, as Timothy Campbell describes it, a “radically ‘communitized’ life” (*Bios Intro*: xiii). While such a transformation may be unattainable, Esposito’s analysis highlights the merits of investigating the biopolitical aspects of the 18th century English novel. My thesis shows the ways in which Defoe’s works, particularly *Robinson Crusoe*, *Serious Reflections*, and

A Journal of the Plague Year highlight the germs of Foucauldian biopolitics and what Esposito calls the immunitary paradigm.

The politicization of the body in the form of property is the focus of Chapter One, where I explicate *Robinson Crusoe* through the lens of Locke's conception of property, showing the ways in which Crusoe's self-regulated project of "improvement" illustrates Roberto Esposito's immunological critique of Lockean property rights. In Chapter Two, I show how Crusoe's proprietary logic reflects Esposito's and Derrida's theorizations of immunity and autoimmunity—the self-negating principles of protection that permeate the logic of *security*. In Chapter Three, I show the ways in which Foucault's theorizations about the bedrock of "Liberal," biopolitical governance (governmentality, veridiction, and competitive optimization) are crystallized in *Robinson Crusoe* and *A Journal of the Plague Year*, both of which Defoe boasts as authentic narratives. While *Robinson Crusoe* is a symbolic representation of solitude and imprisonment, merely loosely based on Alexander Selkirk's experience marooned on an island, *A Journal of the Plague Year* convincingly merges fact and fiction, as much of the substance of Defoe's tale has been authenticated by historians, both of statistical facts and into the nature of humanity in times of mass panic and death.

Chapter One: Crusoe's Biopolitical Project: Proprietary Sovereignty in/of the Person

"The first working, enclosing, or, in general, transforming of a piece of land can furnish no title of acquisition to it..."—Immanuel Kant

I now turn to an analysis of *Robinson Crusoe* through the lens of Locke's "On Property" to illustrate the biopolitical basis of Defoe's novel. Widely regarded as the first English novel, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* was published in 1719, just thirty years after John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*. In his highly acclaimed works *The Rise of the Novel* and "Robinson Crusoe as Myth," Ian Watt references *Robinson Crusoe* in terms of Crusoe's emulation of a Lockean, individualist nature nurtured through an empirical method of both capitalistic enterprise and Calvinistic spiritual fulfillment. Watt significantly connects "improvement" (that is, the cultivation of common land) with labor in terms of ownership, illustrating how "the extent of Crusoe's concern with labor, and that of the whole ideology of our culture, is certainly unprecedented," as "wherever he looks he sees acres that cry out for improvement," engaging "not with noble savagery, but purposive possession" ("Robinson Crusoe as Myth" 319, 316). However, Watt—as well as other analyses—fails to mention the ways in which Crusoe's time marooned on the island embodies Locke's notion of property as a biological extension. Enriching Watt's observation, biopolitical theorist Roberto Esposito illustrates the ways in which "the complex relation between subjectivity and property emerges with Locke's concept of property." Guided by the biopolitical analyses of Foucault, Esposito, and Derrida, this chapter not only shows how *Robinson Crusoe* reflects Locke's conceptual link between work (as an extension of the autonomous self) and property, but also the ways in which

Crusoe's ruminations concerning bloodshed demonstrate the logic of "immunity" (and "auto-immunity"), ingrained in the very notion of community.

Locke reasoned that because "every man has a property in his own person" anything one works on becomes her/his property (Locke Sec. 27).³ Thus, "it is labor...that puts the difference of value on everything" (Sec. 40). Crusoe realizes that he has been shipwrecked on "what must be part of America" (86), hence his struggle not only to survive, but to thrive represents Locke's ideal project of American "improvement." According to the OED, to "improve" was to "enclose and cultivate wasteland or unoccupied land in order to make it profitable; to undertake or carry out the improvement of land or property." Locke dichotomizes European agriculture with the unimproved land of the Americas, arguing that, by comparison, land of the same intrinsic value is exponentially increased in value when cultivated, "for all...the straw, bran, bread, of that acre of wheat...is all the effect of labor" (Sec. 43). Thus, the essence of Locke's often-quoted phrase, "In the beginning, all was America" (Sec. 49), simultaneously guides Crusoe's quest of "improving" "wasteland"—property that is equally available ("common") to all—while clearly representing how his methods of improvement represent the evolution of property rights from a centralized influence instituted out of necessity, to a self-empowered, biologically-centered act of individuality, secured by concentrated labor and validated by contractual ownership.

³ One can see the connection of property to personhood as early as the 13th century in the phrase, *in (one's) proper person* [after post-classical Latin *in propria persona* (frequently 1214-1350 in British sources); compare Anglo-Norman and Middle French *en propre personne* (1309 in Old French in plural as *en propres personnes*; French *en (so) propre personne*): in one's own person. † proper thing *n. Obs.* One's own thing, a property (OED). However, Locke revolutionized the notion of personhood by declaring bodily autonomy in the form of programmed, economic relations contingent on acquisition through labor.

Defoe places Crusoe, one might speculate, into an imaginative situation drawn from the pages of Locke's "Two Treatises" to illustrate Crusoe's gradual transformation of "wasteland" into property.

As the embodiment of a Lockean proprietary subject, Crusoe's main methods of improvement on the island include domestication protected and sustained by fortification and enclosure. Just as property cannot be instituted without means of protection from what is common to all, Crusoe must first establish impassable enclosures not only to curb his ever-present dread, but also to ensure the safety needed to raise crops and domesticate animals. After finding himself on a supposedly deserted island after a shipwreck, Crusoe considers his only remedy "a thick bushy Tree like a Fir, but thorny...where [he] resolv'd to sit all Night, and consider the next Day what Death [he] should dye" (39). Defoe's subtle inclusion of the Fir tree's thorniness highlights Crusoe's concern for defensive measures in the unfathomable wild where death seems certain. As Crusoe's thoughts are often "wholly employed about securing [himself] against...Savages...and wild Beasts" (47), he resolves to live upon a virtually impenetrable "Little plain on the side of a rising hill" (48), complete with a cave-like opening that he enlarges to make room to sleep, cook, and safely stockpile his massive cache of acquired materials. Crusoe later names this initial home his "Castle," aptly named for the tried-and-true method of fortified entrenchment he uses for each of his subsequent encampments: Using two rows of stakes driven into the earth and layered with cables in a semi-circle (which steadily grows so dense as to conceal all traces of human habitation) Crusoe then fashions a ladder rather than a door for entry, temporarily relieved that he now is "so completely fenc'd in, and fortified, as I thought, from all the World" (52).

Of course, Crusoe first had to attain the materials needed for enclosure and fortification. Immediately upon awakening on his first morning in his new home, he discovers the tide has driven the wrecked ship to an accessible point, and after several trips, not only does he secure enough supplies to ensure his survival, but also everything needed to establish a temporarily comfortable existence contingent upon experimental labor (trial and error) guided by explicit goals, explaining that “by squaring everything by reason...every man may be in time Master of every mechanic Art” (55). Crusoe’s success on the island is due to the capital that becomes his property through labor. He uses an iron crow (a jack) to break free and transport products as diverse as lumber, canvas from sails, cables, kegs of gunpowder, etc. The contents of the ship, as well as the components of the ship itself (i.e., lumber, canvas, and cables) are the property of others until Crusoe appropriates them, later using his fortunate finds for sheltered tents made primarily of canvas and enclosures fashioned from strategically arranged stakes and rigging.

Upon discovering money on the ship, Crusoe notes the futility of currency in his isolated situation, yet still decides to take the monies. Most atypically, Defoe rhetorically uses theatrical language to express Crusoe’s ambivalence, with logic reminiscent of Locke’s viewpoint on currency:

O Drug!...Thou art not worth to me...what art though good for?...One of those Knives is worth all this Heap; I have no manner of use for thee, e’en remain where thou art, and go to the Bottom as a Creature whose Life is not worth saving. However, upon second thoughts I took it away... (47)

Crusoe cannot resist the urge to take that which could easily guarantee his passage, or substantially enlarge his capital, back to what he deems advanced civilization. Praising the advent of currency in relation to increasing one's property, Locke notes the following:

Find out something that hath the use and value of money amongst his neighbors, you shall see the same man will begin presently to *enlarge his possessions*. But since gold and silver, being little useful to the life of man in proportion to food, raiment and carriage, has its value only from the consent of men...[although it may] be hoarded up without injury to any one; these metals not spoiling or decaying in the hands of the possessor.
(my emphasis Sec. 49-50)⁴

Because money or anything “that hath the use and value of money” is useless without means of trade, Crusoe can only hoard his treasure after transporting it (with some difficulty) to shore.

While it is not money, but “infinite labor” (*Robinson Crusoe* 120) that allows Crusoe to both attain all the things needed to survive—with modest amenities such as a chair, table, ink for writing, bowls, wicker baskets, and the occasional draught of rum—he later transports his unspoiled treasure back to England, presenting a large portion to trusted friends (the Widow and the Ship Captain), both of whom, although presuming

⁴ Esposito discusses the ways in which the arrival of currency disrupts Locke's proprietary logic. Locke praised the development of currency, noting how it allowed one to “enlarge his [or her] possessions” (Sec. 50) due to the stimulating effects of trade, prompted by the enclosure of land and guided by private ownership. Esposito argues that as the replacement of goods with currency left much less in common for others, property became distanced from the body, taking on a “purely juridical stamp,” embedding one's subjectivity within the thing possessed, while that which is possessed takes on the figuratively juridical identity of the “owner” (68). In other words, because one can *juridically* achieve any form of property via capital, one's self and proprietary relationships are forged in the law, thus politicizing the populace.

him dead, serendipitously saw to his financial affairs. Despite his efforts to achieve autonomy and financial success through carefully conceived labor, Crusoe's economic triumph hinged entirely upon the goodness of others who selflessly aid his cause, mirroring Locke's logic in terms of counting upon the altruism of others regarding equal apportionment and overall fair business dealings ("On Property," Sec. 51). Thus, Crusoe's commercial success contradicts the notion of the *invisible hand* of capitalism; circumstances demanded that he place undivided attention upon his own survival (sustained through biopolitical "improvement" of the land), while others selflessly maintained his fortune.

In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault describes the *invisible hand* as the principle of governing less by letting things take their natural course in business dealings—that is, only when avoiding altruism by worrying only about one's own business does capital collectively flourish (279). In the words of Adam Smith, "I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the publick good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants" (*The Wealth of Nations* IV.2). Regarding Smith's notion of the *invisible hand*, Foucault maintains, "He is speaking of those people who, without really knowing why or how, pursue their own interest and this ends up benefiting everyone. Each only thinks of his own gain and, in the end, the whole of industry benefits...[.] The collective good must not be an objective...because it cannot be calculated, at least, not within an economic strategy" (279). Defoe's notion of Providence is ultimately a one-sided form of Smith's conception of the *invisible hand*. Watt goes so far as to suggest that Crusoe does not seem to enjoy labor at all, and that, "What [Crusoe]

[truly] wanted (and later obtained) were unearned increments from the labor of others...regard[ing] his little profits on the island as only a consolation prize” (323).

As he explores the island, Crusoe finds temporary relief from his fears as he stumbles upon a place that heavily contrasts with his favored “Castle” on the hill.

Although, like the sunken treasure, he considers it “a Right of Possession,” Crusoe’s tone shifts radically when describing this Edenic vale:

[T]he country appeared so fresh, so green, so flourishing, everything being in a constant Verdure, or flourish of *Spring*, that it looked like a planted garden (original emphasis). I descended a little on the Side of that delicious Vale, surveying it with a secret Kind of Pleasure (though mixed with my other afflicting thoughts) to think that this was all my own, that I was King and Lord of all this country indefeasibly, *and had a Right of Possession*; and if I could convey it, I might have it in Inheritance, as completely as any Lord of a Manor in England. (my emphasis 80)

The words “fresh,” “delicious,” “green,” “flourish,” “verdure,” and “pleasure” invoke all that is untainted on the island, all of which makes the self-proclaimed Sovereign (with a “Right of Possession”) “so enamored of this place” that he decided to remain for a time, and, just as before, “construct a kind of Bower, and surround it at a distance with a strong fence, being a double hedge, as high as [he] could reach, well stak’d, and filled in between with brushwood” (81). But unlike his first dwelling, Crusoe realizes “to enclose [himself here in the vale,] among the Hills and Woods, in the Center of the Island, was to anticipate [his] bondage...” (81). Crusoe significantly names the structure he builds in his new paradise his “Bower,” later dubbing the surrounding area his “County Seat,” where

he later keeps and tends to goats. Bowers signify “a pleasant shady place under trees or climbing plants in a garden or wood,” as well as to “shade or enclose (a place or person).” Crusoe’s aptly named *Bower* and *Castle* (the latter term seemingly conflicting with the pleasant image of a *Bower*) connote staunch fortification of one’s property in the face of threat, while also, in Crusoe’s case, encouraging autonomous domestic cultivation driven by profitable self-governance. The significance of preserving one’s property (as a biological extension of one’s self) cannot be missed.

For the first time since his arrival on what he considers a “prison” (77), Crusoe “began to enjoy [himself]” (81), relishing in the simple joys of harvesting grapes, raisins, lemons, and limes. Crusoe’s act of appropriating that which requires no tools, such as lemons, grapes, and limes, harkens back to Locke’s proclamation that because “[h]e that is nourished by the acorns he picked under an oak, or the apples he gathered from the trees in the wood, has certainly taken them to himself...labor put a distinction between them and common, and so they became his private right” (Sec. 28). Crusoe considers his self-conceived “right of possession”—later extended beyond the unclaimed goods of nature to an indigenous servant and captive/stranded Spaniards—worthy of “inheriting” money just as a Lord (that is, a landowner or owner of any property measured by purchasing power) of a Manor in England (80).

After realizing that his stock of gunpowder is rapidly diminishing after years of hunting game, Crusoe encloses land for taming wild goats. First using food to gain their trust (those he inadvertently starves), he then “enclose[s] five several Pieces of Ground to feed them in, with little Pens to drive them into, to take them as [he] wanted, and Gates out of one Piece of Ground to another” (116), after realizing that he “must keep the tame

from the wild” (115). Having no previous experience with manual labor—what Defoe calls “mechanic art” (55)—Crusoe muses that he first sought to make the enclosure miles longer than feasible for both building the wall and tending to his flock, and that “those who understand such enclosures will think I had very little Contrivance,” and would “smile at my forecast” (115). After careful consideration, working with “courage” and “prudence,” Crusoe goes to “an inconceivable deal of Pains to fence and enclose this ground,” for fear of their escape, and “*with infinite labor* . . . stuck the outside of the hedge so full of small stakes . . . that it was rather a Pale than a Hedge [and] indeed stronger than any Wall” (my emphasis 120). Heavily influenced by Locke’s proprietary postulations, Defoe illustrates the advantages of domesticating both land and animals by detailing the added comforts Crusoe gains for his troubles, as the latter “not only had goat’s flesh to feed on when [he] pleased,” but is now able to pump his own milk, of which he indulges up to two gallons a day, from which he makes cheese and butter—“an agreeable Surprise” (116).

In the spirit of Locke’s ideological vision of American improvement, Crusoe not only appropriates the fruits of nature, but also the land needed to properly enclose and increase his stock as needed, although Locke argued that even

ten thousand or an hundred thousand acres of excellent land, ready cultivated and well stocked, too, with cattle, in the middle of the inland parts of America, where [there are] no hopes of commerce with other parts of the world, to draw money . . . by the sale of the product. . . *would not be worth the enclosing*, and we should see [one such as Crusoe] give up again

to the wild common of Nature whatever was more than would supply the conveniences of life, to be had there for him and his family. (Sec. 48)

Defoe sidestepped a problematic depiction of outright “gentrification” by creating an uninhabited island for Crusoe to claim. Because the island has no inhabitants, Defoe seems to say, Crusoe is merely accessing land that is ultimately common, especially considering the great lengths he took in terms of calculated labor. Before Crusoe departs from the island, he teaches the marooned Spaniards, just as he taught Friday, all he has learned from increasing the production value of “wasteland”; when the island is finally inhabited, and fueled by trade, it is as if every “subject” has their very own copy of the Lockean manifesto of property that is *Robinson Crusoe* to guide their cause of starting fresh in the Americas. However, when viewed through the eyes of Indigenous Peoples of America—whom Locke referred to as “rich in land and poor in all the comforts of life... for want of improving it by labour” (Sec. 41)—Crusoe’s project reflects the Eurocentric origins of property rights, guaranteed by Divine Agency and protected by one’s immunity from that which is “common” in terms of appropriating inhabited, uncultivated land in the name of commercial “improvement.”⁵

⁵ Thomas Jefferson notably changed Locke’s “property” to “the pursuit of happiness,” thus conflating life and liberty with property, that which is necessary to achieve happiness, or, in other words, a “politically qualified” life as a recognized citizen. It is no conjecture to say Locke’s conception of property has been instrumental in forging American individualism, the notion of inalienable rights, and promoting Manifest Destiny by “prosthethically” extending “civilization” into space through advanced technologies.

Chapter Two: Crusoe's Originary (Auto)immunitary Logic

"And the terror of the autoimmune itself must risk its closure within the comfort of a possible narrative of mastery"—Alice Andrews

Immunity

In this chapter, I investigate the ways in which Crusoe's tactic of excessive fortification and enclosure illustrate Esposito's notion of (auto)immunity as it relates to the former's quest of "improvement." In his research, Esposito focuses on the notion of "immunity," which he views as the fundamental concept of biopolitical governance. While medical immunity denotes the body's defense system against harmful antigens and pathogens, juridical immunity entails legal protection from the law, such as diplomatic immunity, absolute immunity, or qualified immunity. Interestingly, the clinical notion of immunity was borrowed from legal terminology and was only later applied to the field of medicine: "immunity" is from the Latin *immunitas*, meaning exemption from taxes or public duties. For example, "a Roman magistrate owed *munus* [connoting a service, favor gift, burden, duty, obligation, spectacle, public show] in the form of periodic games and feasts to those he governed" (J. Hillis Miller 221).

And as these obligatory rituals owed to the community are rooted in sacrificial logic (illustrated by Rene Girard's research in *Violence and the Sacred* (1972), to which I will return later), the notion of community has within its logic humanity's originary compulsion to purge its self-destructive, retaliatory nature (that remains "the hidden center of the familiar") by some means of mythologically veiled, ritualistic sacrifice. As W. J. T. Mitchell points out, "The whole theory of the immune system and the discipline

of immunology is riddled with images drawn from the sociopolitical sphere—of invaders and defenders, hosts and parasites, natives and aliens, and of borders and identities that must be maintained” (282). Esposito reasons that Locke’s theoretical split between “one’s own” and that which is “common” disrupts sovereign rule, which indisputably placed the collective power of a community into a Sovereign, an extension of the people, who must be obeyed for order to prevail. Locke’s property rights undermine sovereignty by fusing the biological (owning one’s own body and the rights thereto) with the political act of claiming property for one’s self, justified by the presupposition that because one owns one’s body, property is an extension of work, as work is a biological extension of the self.

To reiterate, juridical immunity is usually tied to the concept of protection by law from the law itself. Esposito, on the other hand, notes (through his analysis of Hobbes and Locke), the ways in which Lockean proprietary logic illustrates the precondition of juridical immunity—that is, how Locke’s biological conception of property exemplifies the ideological transition from a community’s need for protection from continued struggle in a Hobbesian state of nature, to subjects’ realization of the necessity to individually immunize (that is, to protect and empower) themselves from a centralized power of governance via Locke’s biopolitical theorization of property rights. Esposito identifies in Lockean property rights the immunitary logic through which bodily autonomy unites property and work, thus paradoxically securing one’s individualized identity/property from what is common to all, while simultaneously compromising one’s subjectivity.

Esposito establishes the influence of Locke’s theory of property by juxtaposing it with Hobbes’ notion of sovereign rule in *Leviathan* (1651). While Hobbes noted that

collective society willfully instituted a sovereign power out of an instinctive need for preservation, the existence of property and subjective life, according to Esposito's analysis of Locke, are interdependent. Esposito reasons that, for Hobbes, "immunization" signifies humanity's inherent need for obedience to a supreme power (a Sovereign) in the name of collective preservation. The negative characteristic of immunization (the conflict between collective- and self-preservation) signifies the process by which subjects willfully appoint a sovereign power, out of necessity, that transcends their control. Sovereignty, in this sense, precedes the subject insofar as communities must first institute ways of immunizing the populace from both internal and external threats.

Esposito, on the other hand, notes the ways in which, according to Locke's premise, property precedes sovereignty and social organization because of its inseparability from the biological body in the form of acquired labor: as Esposito says of the relationship between life and property, being and having, person and thing: "the one becomes the content and container of the other" (*Bios* 64). Lockean property rights ironically constitute subjectivity itself; just as the property of an owner can only be identified as such by classifying it as an extension of the possessor's body, theoretically, the owner's identity is biologically contingent upon that which he or she appropriates out of necessity and desire (67).

Esposito's work on immunity highlights the proprietary logic underlying Crusoe's designation of "one's own" in relation to what is "common." Dialectically approaching the relationship between immunity and community, Esposito reasons that each term is reciprocally inscribed in the other in the same way Locke's concept of life and property

results in “the one becoming the content and container of the other” (64).⁶ The notion of community indicates the “public in opposition to ‘private’ or ‘general’ (but also ‘collective’) in contrast to particular” (*Communitas* 3). Crusoe’s obsession with concealment and tedious toiling are grounded in his ultimate state of ambivalence regarding an isolated yet omnipotent existence as opposed to a life of social connectivity. Crusoe both desires and dreads the thought of human contact, evident after he discovers the mysterious footprint:

How strange a Chequer-Work of Providence is the Life of Man...that to have seen one of my own Species, would have seem’d to me...the greatest Blessing that Heaven itself, next to the supreme Blessing of Salvation, could bestow...that I should now tremble at the very Apprehensions of seeing a Man, and was ready to sink into the Ground at but the Shadow or silent Appearance of a Man’s having set his Foot in the Island. (123)

Crusoe cowers in fear at the first sign of unknown threats, yet empowers himself by improving his lot through rigorous labor vindicated by appropriative logic, both in terms of land and castaways on (and Carib visitors to) the island. In fact, Crusoe’s mentality merges Hobbesian and Lockean thought as he ponders the wisest ways both to ensure political stability through a centralized form of consensual authority and an individualized method of proprietary ownership contingent upon improved goods,

⁶ Esposito explicates the etymological basis of “community,” the Latin *munus*, which has three meanings: *onus*, *officium*, and *donum*. *Onus* and *officium* refer to obligation and office, while *donum* paradoxically refers to “a category of gift that requires, even demands, an exchange in return” (*Bios introduction* Campbell). In *Communitas* Esposito notes that “Once one has accepted the *munus*, one is obliged to return the *onus*, in the form of either goods or services [*officium*]. The “original *munus* that constitutes us and makes us destitute in our moral finiteness” (8) refers to the endless cycle of one’s civic responsibility to “give” in society that shadows individuality with an obligatory sense of unreciprocated duty.

respectively. Only after considering the heinous offence of cannibalism, before the island was under his control, does Crusoe's "immunitary" fear transform into a murderous, "autoimmunitary" impulse, eventually checked by reason.

On several occasions, Crusoe somewhat ironically proclaims himself Sovereign ruler of his eventually "peopled" island, yet he simultaneously considers himself a prisoner of his domain: "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" (77); "It was the sixth of *November*, in the sixth year of my Reign, or my Captivity, which you please..." (108); "How can he sweeten the bitterest Providences, and give us Cause to praise him for Dungeons and Prisons...there was my Majesty the Prince and Lord of the whole island...I could hang, draw, give Liberty, and take it away, and no Rebels among all my subjects" (116); and finally, Crusoe's isolated desolation gives way to mastery over himself and others once he establishes the right to rule as King, not Prince, via honored contractual agreements: "My island was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in Subjects; and it was a merry Reflection which I frequently made, How like a King I look'd" (188).

In the vein of Locke's vision of religious tolerance, the Sovereign Crusoe "allows Liberty of Conscience throughout [his] Dominions" (188), granting freedom of religion and immunity for Friday, "a Protestant," his Father..., a *Pagan* and a *Cannibal*, and the [marooned] *Spaniard*... [,] a *Papist*" (188). However, this immunity is contingent on his subjects being "perfectly subjected[,] ready to kill or be killed "*if there had been Occasion of it...*" (original emphasis 188). Viewing Crusoe's dominion through the lens of Esposito's immunitary paradigm, the subject's,

protection is the negation of life, in the sense that such a protection, when pushed beyond a certain limit, forces life into a sort of prison or armoring in which what we lose is not only freedom, but also the real sense of individual and collective existence... [.] [W]hat safeguards the individual and political body is also what impedes its development, and beyond a certain point risks destroying it.” (Esposito “Interview with Timothy Campbell”)

In this sense, Crusoe is the “imprisoned” subject, constantly fortifying his territory, optimizing his labor, and dreading death at all turns, and expressing this self-destructive logic only after discovering he *may* no longer be the only human being (in complete control) on the island.

Autoimmunity

Crusoe one day happens upon a solitary human footprint, or as J.M. Coetzee articulates it—“a print, therefore...a sign of a foot of a man [.]” which also, more significantly signified the following maddening realization: “You are not alone... [.] No matter how far you sail, no matter where you hide, you will be searched out” (“He and His Man”). Driven by dread at the thought of unknown *trespassers* into his isolated existence, Crusoe combines his pride in cultivation with his immunitarian fear of the “other,” as he considers “throw[ing] down my Enclosures... [.] turning all my tame Cattle into the woods... [.] Digging up my two Corn Fields; then to demolish my Bower, and Tent,” *to leave no trace* for the mysterious visitor(s) to discover, fearing they would “still be prompted to look farther in order to find out the Persons inhabiting” (my emphasis 125). Crusoe’s self-destructive logic represents the ways in which immunity

can become autoimmunity (which, like immunity, conceptually relates to the clinical notion of the term), as it refers to peoples' or collective society's paradoxical destruction of their/its own defensive measures, and eventually themselves/itself. Even if Crusoe survived after destroying his means of subsistence and confronting the mysterious visitor(s), he would be once again obliged to use his remaining supplies to rebuild his utopian community of one.⁷

Defoe's depiction of Crusoe's self-destructive impulse illustrates Derrida's theoretical observations of autoimmunity, on which he dedicated much of his time in his later works; one can see how Crusoe's obsessive project of fortification and concealment, in short, his autoimmunitary fear of certain death, reveals Derrida's logic "of a threat that is still worse and still to come" (*Rogues* 104). Similarly, to Esposito's use of the term, Derrida uses the metaphorical notion of medical autoimmunity (the body's attack on its own defense mechanisms in the attempt to target a disease) "to define an absolutely universal condition of any political order or community" (J. Hillis Miller 221):

[N]o community is possible that would not cultivate its own auto-immunity, a principle of sacrificial self-destruction ruining the principle of self-protection...and this in some sort of invisible and spectral sur-vival. This self-contesting attestation keeps the auto-immune community alive,

⁷ Defoe depicts Crusoe's ideal form of governing what he considered suitable subjects, in the form of animals, long before the landing of the Caribs or Spaniards: Pol, his parrot, an unnamed dog, several cats, and goats: "Then to see how like a King I din'd too all alone, attended by my servants; Poll, as if he had been my Favorite, was the only *Person* permitted to Talk to me...My dog sat always at my Right Hand, and two cats, one on Side of the Table, and one on the other, expecting now and then a Bit from my Hand, as a Mark of Special Favour" (117 my emphasis). The way in which Defoe describes Crusoe's fully compliant animal "servants," whether it is intended as irony or not, bares a disturbing similarity to Friday's self-subjugated pledge to Crusoe.

which is to say, open to something other and *more than itself*: the other, the future, death, freedom, the coming or love of the other... (Derrida "Faith and Knowledge" 82 my emphasis)

A deconstructive reading of the logic of language structures reveals the paradoxical notion of inclusive inclusion that comprises the foundation of a community's inherent self-destructive (autoimmunitary) instinct—ironically contingent on “some sort of invisible and spectral [compulsion for] sur-vival.”⁸ The prefix, “sur” (above or beyond) combined with the Latin infinitive *vivere*, (to live) literally translates, “to live beyond.” Hence, a community's “self-contesting attestation” (the self-contradictory logic on which societies function) operates based on a principle of “living beyond” itself—that is, the current state of things—opening a space from which to continue striving to reach the “classic emancipatory ideal”: the basis of a model civilization.⁹

Crusoe's “auto-immunitary” reaction to possible danger reflects Esposito's critique of Locke, as Crusoe associates his newly individualistic sovereign identity with property in terms of excessive means of self-preservation. Crusoe is, in a sense, a prototypical democratic representation of the precarious balance of sovereignty and governmentality, as he must dictate how best to delegate responsibility (to himself, then his “subjects,” first animal, then human) in a state of continual dread by projecting

⁸ Agamben crystallizes this contradictory logic by illustrating the similar, paradoxically conceptual structure of language and sovereignty, both of which operate based on the logic of inclusive exclusion in a “state of exception.” See *Homo Sacer* (19-21).

⁹ Miller expands on Derrida's faith in the “classical emancipatory ideal”: the Enlightenment ideals that led to [America's] Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights, that is, the ideal of an egalitarian democracy that would be government of the people, by the people, and for the people” (215).

strength, establishing verbal contracts, and allowing his island inhabitants free reign in his absence after imparting onto them all he has learned of commercial “improvement.” Derrida’s analysis of the “worst to come,” the foundation of sovereignty and law, as well as his reading trauma through the lens of the “death drive,” highlights the inherent dread that dictates Crusoe’s indecisive thought process (as both sovereign and “masterless” subject) and eventually motivates his self-justified reaction to perceived threats, including his interpretation of Providence.

In *Rogues*, Derrida argues that distinguishable sovereign powers (such as the US and Russia during the Cold War periods) once “held in check by a reasoned game theory that calculated the risks of escalation so as to exclude, in principle and according to the greatest probability, any suicidal operation[,]” have been truncated by globalization (*mondialisation*) and forced to rely on “rogue” measures—that is, transcending the law in order to quell what are perceived as global, especially terroristic, threats. Crusoe’s initial irresolution regarding the Caribs This *want* of sovereign power—“sovereignty in general but, more visibly, more decipherably, indivisible nation-state sovereignty” (142)—exacerbates the inherent autoimmunitary nature of centralized powers. What “loses its pertinence” in the process, Derrida continues,

is the concept of war, and thus of world war, of enemy and even of terrorism, along with the distinction between civilian and military or between army, police, and militia. What is called just as obscurely “September 11” will have neither created nor revealed this new situation, although it will have surely media-theatricalized it. (154)

The politically charged labels of “terrorist” and “rogue state” have further blurred the line between ally and foe, extending the punitive powers of the State, exercised domestically and abroad, under the guise of “patriotic” unity. Ironically, the democratic nature of the US made it possible for the Saudi (Saudi Arabia is notably an economic ally of the US) hijackers to acquire the skills and funding they needed to carry out a full-fledged attack on American soil. After all, as Derrida emphasizes, they “trained on the sovereign soil of the United States, under the nose of the CIA and the FBI, perhaps not without some autoimmune consent on the part of an administration with at once more and less foresight than one tends to think when it is faced with what is claimed to be a major, unforeseeable event” (40).

The exception of the event of 9/11, argues Derrida, lies in the terror of “the worst to come”—“a nuclear attack that threatens to destroy the state apparatus of the United States, that democratic state whose hegemony is as obvious as it is precarious, in crisis, a state assumed to be the guarantor, the sole and ultimate guardian, of world order for all legitimate, sovereign states” (105). The trauma of such a monumentalizing event,

consist[s] not, as is too often believed of trauma in general, in an effect, in a wound produced by what had effectively *already* happened, what had just actually happened, and risked being repeated one more time, *but in the undeniable fear or apprehension of a threat that is worse and still to come*. The trauma remains traumatizing and incurable because it comes from the future. For the virtual can also traumatize. (my emphasis *Rogues* 104)

Expanding Freud's notion of the "death drive" (to explore what is "beyond the pleasure principle") through an autoimmunitary lens, Derrida proposes that "trauma takes place when one is wounded by a wound that has not yet taken place, in an effective fashion, in a way other than by the sign of its announcement" (104-05).

Derrida favors Freud's translation of *mimesis* as "repetition" rather than the Aristotelian notion of "imitation," thereby linking his notion of "iterability" with the *drive* to suffer (by repeatedly beholding/experiencing the traumatic event), instead of the unconscious repression of an *event* that has already plagued the mind, as Freud proposed (Krell 24-25). The continually looped, visual representation of the trauma that brought the world's paradigm of democratic ideals to its knees (that is, the planes colliding with the Twin Towers: what Derrida calls the "media-theatricalization" of the *event*), combined with the typically xenophobic castigation of anything considered socio-ethno-culturally other, in this case, un-American—"If you're not with us, you're against us"—inflicted the American populace with the contagious dread of still-worse future calamities committed by anyone not ideologically aligned to Western (and typically, not unironically, "Christianized") ideals of democracy.

Further shedding light on Crusoe's autoimmunitary logic, Derrida shows, through an analysis of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, the ways in which the reciprocal relationship of fear, terror, obedience, and obligation between subject and sovereign is the foundation of sovereignty and the law. Derrida proposes that fear is the correlate to terror,

fear as it is defined by the Leviathan [which is] the animal-machine designed to cause fear or of a prosthetic and state *organon*, a state as prosthesis, the organ of a state prosthesis... which runs on fear and reigns

by fear. The correlate on the side of the passions, the central affect of the law, is fear. And as there is no law without sovereignty, we shall have to say that sovereignty calls for, presupposes, provokes fear, as its condition of possibility but also as its main effect. Sovereignty causes fear, and fear makes the sovereign. (*The Beast and the Sovereign Vol I.* 40)

Hence, Derrida's reading of Hobbes validates Esposito's immunitary analysis by accentuating the ways in which the exceedingly intensified defensive measures of societies are contingent on the fear "which exceeds corporeal presence... [,] making it the passion correlative to law... [,] both the origin of the law and of the transgression of the law, the origin of both law and crime" (41). Crusoe's precarious sovereignty provokes his fear of a future threat. Traces of his autoimmunitary logic, as I continue to show, reflect Derrida's theory of trauma—the inevitable terror of a worse situation "to come" continually plagues his island existence. One can see the ways in which Crusoe's incessant dread of human contact prompts his excessive means of fortification, forever torturing his mind with thoughts of inevitable death. Crusoe will use any means necessary to justify conquering his fear, which for him signifies deliverance from his imprisoned mode of sovereignty, wherein he both creates and vehemently justifies his "lawful" duty to protect himself by any means necessary, to the extent of intricately planning the destruction of his defensive measures, signaling his own demise.

After discovering that Caribs (native to a nearby island) visit his newly claimed home to sacrificially cannibalize enemy combatants (a discovery significantly taking place near his paradisiacal "Bower"), Crusoe "[e]xpects [he] should One day fall into the hands of those Merciless creatures" (138) and is reduced to a panic-stricken state of

anxiety for two full years, though he later realizes they sporadically (and briefly) visit the island only to sacrifice enemy combatants. Crusoe details the lengths to which the fear of the unknown “enemy” drive him:

I believe the Reader of this will not think Strange, if I confess that these Anxieties, these constant Dangers I liv'd in, and the Concern that was now upon me, put an End to all Invention, and to all the Contrivances that I had laid for my future Accommodations and Conveniences. I had the care of my Safety more now than upon my hands, than that of Food. I car'd not to drive a Nail, or chop a Stick of Wood now, for fear the Noise I make should be heard. (138)

Crusoe also abstains from lighting open fires and firing his guns, retreating to his “Apartment in the woods,” where he finds “to his unspeakable Consolation,” a deep recess in a naturally hollowed-out cave where he burrows deeply (later storing munitions), yearning for “nothing so much as a safe Retreat” (138). Crusoe reasonably concludes that men take “ridiculous resolution[s]...when possessed by fear,” which “is ten thousand times more terrifying than Danger it self, when apparent to the Eyes” (126).

Although he finds himself spending “most of my Hours, which should have been better employed...in a Murthering humour” (planning how best to attack his adversaries), Crusoe seems to pinpoint what Esposito termed the “immunitary crisis” that would inevitably follow, “if I kill'd one Party, suppose Ten, or a Dozen, I was still the next Day, or Week, or Month, to kill another...*ad infinitum*, till I should be at length no less a Murtherer than they were in being Man-eaters; and perhaps much more so” (144). Despite Crusoe’s revelation, at times he thinks he has no choice but to systematically

slaughter all the “cannibals” he can with the help of his newfound “subject,” Friday, as “sacrificial violence is the hidden foundation on which society is founded,” according to Rene Girard.¹⁰ Expanding upon this notion, Roberto Esposito observes,

All of the stories that tell of the founding crime, the collective crime, the ritual assassination, the sacrificial victim featured in the history of civilization don't do anything else except evoke metaphorically the *delinquere* [crime] that keeps us together, in the technical sense of ‘to lack’ and ‘to be wanting’; the breach, the trauma, the lacuna out of which we originate. Not the origin but its absence, its withdrawal. It is the original *munus* that constitutes us and makes us destitute in our moral finiteness. (8)

Highlighting the sacrificial violence inherent in Locke’s logic of property rights, Esposito notes how the asymmetrical relationship of the individual’s biological acquisition of property “causes a progressive decrease in the goods that are at the disposition of others,” resulting in “internecine conflict.” The act of removing this inevitable struggle from within the proprietary universe—that is, from within the confines of the community into “the formless space of non-property” (*Bios* 68)—is essential to exorcize the seeds of, in Girardian terminology, “mimetic contagion” that could result in a “sacrificial crisis.” Defoe exaggeratedly “others” the natives by relying on popular travel narratives of the

¹⁰ For Girard, all desire is mimetic, and the “hidden center of the familiar,” the origins of which can be seen in sacrificial rites throughout history, is mimetic violence: “all the dissensions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels within the community that the sacrificial rights are designed to repress” (8). Interestingly, Freud translated mimesis as “repetition” rather than “imitation,” shedding light on Derrida’s notion of “iterability.”

day that marked Caribs as cannibals, vividly marking the grotesqueness of their acts with a disturbing depiction of the macabre remains of their sacrificial victims.

The frightening scene of death rekindles Crusoe's violent impulse, illustrating the sacrificial logic at the heart of his appropriative biopolitical project of "improvement" as undisputed "Governor" of his land: "The Blood, the Bones, and part of the Flesh of humane Bodies...so filled [him] with Indignation...that I began now to premeditate the Destruction of the next that I saw there, let them be who or how many soever" (143). Esposito, genealogically tracing the juridico-political foundation of personhood forged in Ancient Rome, notes "What is most distant from us—this is equally true on the temporal register—is the hidden center of the familiar, such that the archaic is so often profoundly connected to the contemporary world that it constitutes its most conspicuous feature" ("The *Dispositif* of the Person" 27). Crusoe's (and by extension, the colonizing forces of Europe) sacrificial logic is the "hidden center of the familiar" that marks immunity's excess—that is, the need to separate (both ideologically and biologically) the "race(s)"¹¹ (in the Foucauldian sense), which must be eradicated for the sake of purifying the nationalized populace or life itself, respectively. Hobbes, Foucault, Esposito, Derrida, Agamben, and Girard all explore the iterably elusive "connection between community

¹¹ Foucault's analysis of racial conflict in *Society Must Be Defended* is based upon humanity's warlike instinct that he proposed evolved into "State racism," which involves separating (or scapegoating, if you will) those ultimately deemed biologically inferior and *contagious* to the body politic, and later, by extension, to the supposed "master race" itself, as evident in Esposito and Agamben's analyses of the Nazi thanatopolitical regime, wherein not only those deemed ethnically inferior were "cleansed," but whoever, including "ethnically pure" Germans, plagued life itself with what were deemed contagious maladies of any kind.

and violence that is seen [not only] as essential and necessary, [but also] dependent on fear and the law of the sovereign exception” (*Terms of the Political* 123).

Girard considers the modern judicial process a systematized form of retribution that serves to stifle the outbreak of murderous revenge within and without a society. Before the advent of judiciary systems, Girard notes, “If men wish to prevent an interminable outbreak of vengeance (just as today we wish to prevent nuclear war), it is not enough to convince their fellows that violence is detestable—for it is precisely because they detest violence that men make a duty of vengeance” (15). In other words, vengeance threatened to eliminate entire societies if reciprocal violence was not exorcised through the sacrifice of a scapegoat victim(s), either within or outside of the community—the *pharmakos/oi* of ancient Greek religion. Crusoe’s thoughts validate Girard’s notion of detesting, while ironically justifying, perpetually reciprocated slaughter in the name of vengeance, as Crusoe considers the blood he will inevitably have to shed—the price of “acquiring” a “Savage”:

I had greatly scrupled the Lawfulness of it to me; and my Heart trembled at the thoughts of shedding so much Blood, tho’ it was for my Deliverance. . . those Men were Enemies to my Life, and would devour me, if they could; that it was *Self-preservation in the highest degree, to Deliver my self from this Death of a Life, and was acting in my own Defence, as much as if they were actually assaulting me, and the like.* (my emphasis 156)

Crusoe’s urge to fall victim to a “sacrificial/immunitary crisis” to escape what he considers “this Death of a Life” on the island underscores his confusion of his own

position as sovereign or prisoner, master or slave. To attain sovereignty, Crusoe must first conquer his fear not only of the “other,” who could reduce him to a slave, or worse, a meal, but also the island itself, which has the power to eventually transform him into that which so many European explorers dreaded the most—one reduced to a “primitive” state after being psychologically stripped of civilization’s merits. Crusoe maintains his sanity by “reasoned” employment seasoned with heavily laden didacticism.¹² Defoe scripts a silver lining (sovereign and subject peacefully and productively subsisting together) to the *inevitable* violent encounter that occurs due to Crusoe’s desire for deliverance—which would have happened regardless of Friday’s assistance, as the former’s escape was eventually effected not by Friday, but by mutinied Spaniards.

Defoe vividly portrays Crusoe’s psychological vacillation regarding the latter’s inevitable encounter with the Caribs. Shortly after considering his initial thoughts of condemnation toward the mysterious visitors, Crusoe compares their shadowy sacrificial practices to that of Christian conquest, realizing that

they think it no more a crime to kill a Captive taken in War, than we do to kill an Ox; nor to eat humane Flesh than we do to eat Mutton... [...] I was certainly in the wrong... [...] [T]hese people were not Murtherers, in the Sense that I had before condemn’d them...any more than those Christians

¹² Defoe portrays Crusoe’s salvation as the sole work of neither Providence nor his own wisdom. Rather, his sanity seems to rely on staying constantly preoccupied with projects and journalistically authoring his own life of seclusion (which Defoe is essentially doing, allegorically: more on this in Chapter III) by a rigorous regimen of sustained management and productivity, guided by the essential principle of bookkeeping: judiciously weighing the good against the bad).

were Murtherers, who often put to Death the Prisoners taken in Battle.

(134)

Crusoe accepts that “these people”—notably the only time Defoe/Crusoe refers to the Caribs as “people”—are not criminally nor spiritually liable for their sacrificial rites though he finds just cause to use them as needed, whatever the cost, to further his ends.

While Crusoe tempers his temporary bloodlust with careful reasoning, he later fully justifies a preemptive encounter that results in bloodshed, as he

was not at first so careful to shun the sight of these Savages, and avoid being seen by them, as I was now eager to be upon them. Besides, I fancied my self able to manage One, nay, Two or Three Savages, if I had them, so as to make them entirely Slaves to me, to do whatever I should direct them, and to prevent their being able at any time to do my any Hurt.

(156)

On his Brazilian plantation, Crusoe greedily desired slaves to quickly increase profits that, as he later notes to himself, grow simply by the management of his partner, but now he justifies killing and enslaving the visiting islanders to free himself from his “imprisoned” existence and ensure his self-preservation. It seems odd that here (and elsewhere) Crusoe expresses desire for slaves, but once “Friday” is rescued, named, and guaranteed to faithfully serve, Crusoe refers to him as his servant, sometimes prefaced by, in the customary English fashion, “Man.” Friday has seemingly graduated from slave to servant only because he agreed to abstain from cannibalism and mimic Crusoe’s way of life.

Although Crusoe initially balances his urge to kill the Caribs with careful reasoning, he refrains from doing so only because he considers it unjust to destroy them if his presence remains unknown:

that this would justify the Conduct of the Spaniards in all their Barbarities practic'd in *America*, where they destroyed Millions of these People, who however they were Idolaters and Barbarians, and had several bloody and barbarous Rites in their Customs, such as sacrificing human bodies to their idols, were yet, as to the *Spaniards*, very innocent People... (134)

If the Caribs happened to spot Crusoe at any point in time, we can assume he would once again justify swift “retaliatory” action with a diligence driven by the cold logic and unflinching tenacity that fuels his domestic endeavors. Crusoe ultimately concludes the “only Way to go about an Attempt for an Escape, was, if possible, to get a Savage in my possession,” and “that it was impossible to affect this, without attacking a whole Caravan of them, and killing them all” (155). Thus, Crusoe’s Lockean revelation about the merits of and tolerance due to the mysterious visitors’ religiosity, as well as his acknowledgment of the millions of innocent victims of Spanish rule, eventually succumbs to his perceived duty to wholly eliminate them from his path of freedom.

Certain of nothing but his imminent demise, Crusoe can only ponder “what Death [he] should dye” from his first moment on the island (39). However, after diligently dedicating himself to unbending labor in the vein of Locke’s biopolitical discourse of “improvement,” Crusoe moves from a fatalistic position of certain doom to a hyper-productive master of “improvement.” Defoe alludes to the rewards one can reap from intensive mental and physical engagement through Crusoe’s successful cultivation of the

island, and ultimately, his very survival. And with the help of an ample (and incredibly convenient) stock of goods acquired from two wrecked ships, Crusoe is also able to craft the “creature comforts,” such as a table, chair, canoe, and earthenware, that allow him to help sustain his plight. However, after a deconstructive analysis of Locke’s concept of property rights, the spirit of which flows in Crusoe’s veins, Locke’s proprietary ideology is like the heavenly depiction of George Bailey’s triumph over the evils of Mr. Potter’s avarice in *It’s a Wonderful Life*—both are trite ideals which cloud the exploitative factors at the root cause of Mr. Potter’s economic conquest and Crusoe’s commercialized vision of coldly calculated customs for his island (which have since become gradually normalized).

Crusoe’s project is only possible through commercialism sponsored by exploitative capital, the immunitary logic of which, as shown by Esposito’s research, is expressed in Locke’s concept of property.¹³ Witnessing the incredible influence of Locke’s proprietary ideology in what is considered the first English novel, and juxtaposing it with the perspectives of colonized peoples on a habited island, reveals the dark legacy of the “Enlightenment.” As the Western world became more confident in “civilized” humanity’s ability to forge its own destiny, standards of both individuality and a collective, nationalized identity were established based upon norms dictated by institutions and enforced by disciplinary techniques (from the ground up, such as

¹³ Brian Fawcett notes the ways in which the logic of franchise capitalism spawned the “discovery” of the “new world”: Queen Isabella did not send Christopher Columbus on a voyage of discovery; she gave him a franchise that demanded that he exploit what he discovered for the mercantile gain of the franchise owner. In the new world, God would reward wealth, not understanding. [The Americas] [were] exploited before [they] [were] ever explored” (58).

performance evaluation, and from the top down, such as incarceration) that, as Foucault shows, “guarantee...the submission of forces and bodies... [and] constitute...the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties... [.] ‘The Enlightenment,’ which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines” (*Discipline and Punish* 222).

To alleviate his deep-seated fear of confrontation, Crusoe gains self-control through domination, spurred by the perceived terror “to come” and vindicated by Eurocentric notions of “reasoned” socio-cultural superiority. Crusoe’s battle with doubt, escalated by fear, is his biggest stumbling block to attaining the right to govern the island—a battle he ultimately “wins” through firm industrious regimentation enforced by an advantage of arms and sustained by a stealthy existence, though Defoe depicts it more as faith sustained by reason.

Any system of civil society that fails to judiciously weigh divergent perspectives, relying solely upon self-righteous rhetoric to further its Manichean point of view, seems doomed to succumb to an increase of its own defense mechanisms to the point of attacking the conceptual foundation upon which it stands. Esposito’s diagnosis of society’s combative reflex to immunize itself from contagions arising both within (domestic) and without (foreign) combined with Derrida’s analysis of Western democracy’s autoimmunitary nature (in terms of fear as the basis of sovereign law), sheds light on Defoe’s depiction of Crusoe’s paradoxically imprisoned mode of sovereignty. Those who both make and are immune from the law have the most to fear; dreading the usurpation of power, they must quell their dread of revolution through either exclusionary domination or obligatory contract, contingent on the sovereign (or State’s) protection and the subjects’ obedience.

Chapter III: Which the Author, and Which ‘His Man?’: The Bio-politics of ‘life-writing’

“All things are words of some strange tongue, in thrall to Someone, Something, who both day and night proceeds in endless gibberish to write the history of the world. In that dark scrawl Rome is set down, and Carthage, I, you, all, and this my being which escapes me quite, my anguished life that’s cryptic, recondite, and garbled as the tongues of Babel’s fall.”—Jorge Luis Borges

Much has been speculated about the nature of “origin,” “history” and “narrative.” Indeed, stories themselves, especially myths, are a product of our insatiable obsession with etiological examinations of life and death,¹⁴ their narratives shifting with our own—to update Heraclitus’ famous aphorism, “No one ever [reads the same story] twice, for it is not the same [story] and they are not the same person.” In a passage reminiscent of Foucault’s “What is an Author,” Watt rightly states that “It is not an author but a society that metamorphoses a story into a myth, by retaining only what its unconscious needs dictate and forgetting everything else” (“Robinson Crusoe as Myth” 314). Watt was speaking of *Robinson Crusoe*’s power to enter the social consciousness in a way reminiscent of the epics that paved the way for the birth of the English novel (in the late 17th-early 18th century), which featured a more particularized look at the psyche of characters in relation to a world stripped of singularity through which they must navigate.

¹⁴ In the words of Italo Calvino, “The ultimate meaning to which all stories refer has two faces: the continuity of life, the inevitability of death” (*If On a Winter’s Night a Traveler?* 259).

Marina Mackay notes, “Right from ‘the start’—what the canonical narrative designates as the start—the English novel has created mysteries around parental origins” (*The Cambridge Introduction to the Novel* 29).¹⁵ Edward Said, ideological following Watt’s analysis, traces the novel’s (in the Western world) concurrent theme of origin with the emergence of the bourgeoisie in the late 17th century, which is why, he continues, “for its first century, the novel is all about birth, possible orphanhood, the discovery of roots, and the creation of a new world, a career and society. *Robinson Crusoe*. *Tom Jones*. *Tristram Shandy*.” (*On Late Style* 4). Said, who was diagnosed with leukemia in 1991, shifted his earlier focus on “origin” to “lateness”—“the continuity that occurs after birth, the exfoliation from a beginning” (3). Noting “the relationship between bodily condition and aesthetic style[,]” Said uses Francois Jacob’s phrase, *la logique du vivant* (the logic of the living), subtly revealing the novel’s complicity and critique of biopolitics.

For Said, consciousness is the precursor that allows us to “constantly think... about and mak[e] something of our *lives*, self-making being one of the bases of history” (3), and the novel provides “the Western aesthetic form that offers the largest and most complex image of ourselves that we have” (5). Postmodernist literature mirrors Said’s notion of a “late style that involves a non-harmonious, nonserene tension, and above all, a sort of deliberately unproductive productiveness going *against...*” (*On Late Style* 7), which Arne De Boever views as “the novel’s resistance against its biopolitical origins” (*Narrative Care* 10). This chapter explores the ways in which Defoe most clearly

¹⁵ According to J.M. Coetzee, “[A] novel is ultimately nothing but a prose fiction of a certain length. It has no formal requirements to satisfy; to that extent, the question of whether X or Y is “really” a novel can’t be very interesting” (“Voice and Trajectory” 88). What is interesting is the ways in which the supposed origin of the English novel coincides with the foundation of (Foucauldian) biopolitical governance.

expressed the biopolitical nature of the English novel in *A Journal of the Plague Year* and *Robinson Crusoe*, as well as the “deliberately unproductive productiveness” of Coetzee’s narrative style. In *Foe* and “He and His Man,” Coetzee offers a leveling critique of the biopolitical dimensions of the 18th century English novel, specifically through a postmodernist rewriting of the Robinson Crusoe myth.

The “life-writing” (*zoographein*) of characters allows authors and their readers to question truth claims to experiment—individually and collectively—with what Foucault termed “technologies of the self,” (or the “arts of living”). As Q.D. Leavis maintains, rather than reading commercialized fiction merely for entertainment, readers should instead read novels to “obtain assistance in the business of living” and “enrich the quality of living by extending, deepening, refining, coordinating experience” (*Fiction and the Reading Public* 48). In *Narrative Care*, De Boever explores the biopolitical aspects of authorship, most notably Foucauldian governmentality and care (*caritas*), to explore “the novel as a form of life-writing, a kind of aesthetic care of the self and of others” (8).

But how is care connected with Foucault’s notion of governmentality, biopolitics, and “technologies of the self” in the interconnected relationship among subjects and sovereigns, characters and authors? De Boever rightly insists that J.M. Coetzee’s writings focus primarily on “the issue of character-being, in which all of us become one[,]” rather than simply postcolonial critique of subjective ‘othering’... [.] [T]he character—familiar, yet at the same time utterly strange; *uncanny*—is one of fiction’s greatest mysteries” (47 original emphasis). Sympathy, a sense of sameness, seems to be what attracts us to our literary counterparts. And yet difference is what public intellectuals such as Foucault, Derrida, Coetzee and Said wish to highlight—that is, in a nutshell, a move away from

coherence and certainty toward “intransigence, difficulty, and unresolved tension” (*On Late Style* 7). This resulting tension of readers’ contradictory position as both subject and object of interconnected matrices of power relations resembles Foucault’s notion of governmentality in the age of biopolitics:

[T]he situation of the character can be said to allegorize the modern, biopolitical condition...*from above*—we all enjoy being authors, being in the position of government, and seeing how character-lives unfold within the novel’s programmed regulations; and...*from below*—we identify with characters, we recognize in their governed lives our own biopolitical condition. [Thus,] the novel enables us...to experience the essentially modern experience of both being the subject of and being subjected to.
(De Boever 47)

Although De Boever study focuses on contemporary texts, he chooses Coetzee’s *Slow Man* and Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*, loose adaptations of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Frankenstein*, both of which appear at the time when, according to Foucault, a “birth of biopolitics” was emerging.

Defoe’s fictions received canonized status, because, as Watt observes, “they are the first considerable narratives which embody all the elements of formal realism” (*The Rise of the Novel* 104). Since the *modern* novel’s inception in late 17th/early 18th century, in England (contemporaneous with Foucauldian biopower and governmentality), novelists have found that readers appeal to claims of truth, especially when reading about exceptional circumstances involving incomparable characters, such as Robinson Crusoe.

Working for several publications and publishing dozens of pamphlets throughout his life, Defoe was “resolv’d to commit [his ideas] to Paper...and leave, at least, a testimony of good Will to [his] Fellow Creatures” (qtd. in Preface *A Journal of the Plague Year*).

Defoe uniquely channeled his journalistic flair toward his novels, presenting them as either written by the protagonists or carefully compiled from historical evidence. In fact, historians continue to validate much of the information presented in *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), a “fictionalized” account of H.F.’s (presumably Defoe’s uncle, Henry Foe) experience with the outbreak of the Bubonic Plague (1665) in London.

Scripted in journalistic fashion, Defoe heartily argued the veracity of *A Journal of a Plague Year* and *Robinson Crusoe*, which piqued the interest of readers so much that, as Coetzee notes, “[T]here are people all over the world who believe that Robinson Crusoe was written by Robinson Crusoe[,]” due to the monumental effort Defoe exerted “into making the reader believe that the Journal of the Plague Year was written in the 1660s...” and that Robinson Crusoe represented historical fact (“Voice and Trajectory” 87).¹⁶ Elaborating on the precarious division of history and fiction, Coetzee shows how, “when the crunch comes, the relation between history and fiction is still a rivalrous one...

¹⁶ The historicity granted to Defoe’s works reflect Edward Said’s concern for young students [who] are slowly imbued with the sense that the history, or tradition, or great books that they study in school are The history, The tradition, The books, and that what they don’t get or don’t find out about till much later is, in their view, likely to be somehow hostile, or barbaric, or perhaps even inferior. That has been the problem with Eurocentrism whose ravages include such spoliations of human history as slavery, colonialism, Orientalism and racism” (“The Book, Critical Performance, and the Future of Education” (17).

[;] [h]istorians are debating not only what should be an appropriate subject for history, but how to represent the past as well” (“Voice and Trajectory” 101).

Coetzee argues the merits of narrative as opposed to “discursive models in the human sciences [,]” as “fictional narratives have the power to “abandon...the support that comes with a certain institutional voice, the voice of the historian or sociologist or whatever...[, and]...entails no longer being an expert, no longer being master of your discourse” (“Voice and Trajectory” 101). Coetzee considers the use of narrative models in anthropology and archeology as progressive, “[b]ut these instances don’t persuade me that the grand discourses have yet been abandoned in favor of narrative, narrative with all its implications understood and embraced and appreciated...” (101). In other words, novels have the capacity to genealogically critique, even deconstruct, “grand narratives” of history by questioning the frequently attributed a priori status of institutionalized knowledge—i.e., truth claims and norms.

For Foucault, biopolitics was anticipated by the overarching problem of government, which “must be allowed the very broad meaning it had in the sixteenth century”:

‘Government’ did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather, it designated the way in which the *conduct* of individuals or of groups might be directed—the government of children, of souls, of communities, of the sick ... *To govern, in this sense, is to control the possible field of action of others.* (“The Subject and Power” 790)

The word “governmentality” connotes both the act of governing and the mentality of government/ing—i.e., pondering the evolutionary nature of governing. Thus, it provides the methodological tools needed to analyze government as both a *practice* and a *rationality* from which to evaluate the various ways in which *subjectivity* is formed through *institutionalized norms*.

As De Boever illustrates in *Narrative Care*, Foucault’s analysis offers an insightful lens from which to investigate the governmental relationship between author, character, and reader, as readers can’t help but to “identify with characters...and recognize in their governed lives our own biopolitical condition” (47). Just as governmentality concerns governing the lives of the masses and “program[ming] their freedom of movement” (45) by regulating biological concerns, such as health and reproduction, authors reflectively administer the lives of their characters based on a (sub)conscious reflection of biopolitical governance—the rift that occurs in “our essentially modern condition of being the subject of and being subjected to” (47). Crusoe’s status as both prisoner and Sovereign shows Defoe’s awareness of the precarious balance between Sovereignty and governmentality, a theme which Coetzee applies to authorship by disrupting the power relations between author and authored as a means of questioning the sovereignty of authorship.

Rather than the nature of power relations, as is commonly supposed, “[Foucault’s] objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (“The Subject and Power” 777). Foucault’s suppositions interestingly apply to the supposed origins of the novel, as early authors seemingly mirrored the emerging mentality of government in 18th-century England, by

determining the best ways to imitate provincial life, along with the various options with which to govern disparate characters' every possible field of action (in the process revealing the various disciplinary modes of normalization) using veridiction (judiciously weighing possible truth claims) rather than objective claims of "Truth." The English novel not only allowed writers to entertain readers by staging various relatable passions, but also by critiquing biopolitical logic through characters who subjectively navigate their respective worlds equipped with little more than empirical reasoning. The "Odysseused" Crusoe has no Athena, only willful invocations to Providence that demand self-disciplined penance. He must script his own *tabula rasa* in isolation through a delicate balance between reasoned reflection, perpetual labor, and creature comforts attained through "technologies of the self," such as keeping a journal.

Foucault's work is, in his words, the culmination of his efforts "to analyze these so-called sciences [economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology] as very specific 'truth games' related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves" ("Technologies of the Self" 17-18). In light of our inevitable socio-cultural subjectivization, his last years were devoted to examining the philosophical evolution of "care of the self" (*epimeleia heautou*), a familiar expression of ancient Greece and Rome. Foucault conceptually uses the term "technology," significantly highlighting its etymological root, *techne* (craft, art), the term ancient Greeks used to denote the knowledge and tangible methods used to accomplish an objective. Because philosophy for the ancient Greeks was understood as the *craft* of constructing a virtuous life, the self,

in this context, is the work of *art* to be perfected;¹⁷ Foucault considered Socrates one who championed philosophy as a technology of living (*techne tou biou*), which is contingent upon the care of the self. For the ancient Greeks, *Poiesis* (from the ancient Greek term ποιέω, meaning “to make”) signified creative production. Hence, when examined biopolitically, the novel is the resulting *poiesis*, created via the (*techne*) necessary to produce (and optimize) a mimetic form of *living art*.

But how does the notion of the biopolitical governance of nationalized populaces relate to authors’ notion of care? As Defoe said in *Serious Reflections*, “But what can kings, or queens, or parliaments do? Laws and proclamations are weak and useless things, unless some secret influence can affect the practices of those whom no laws can reach” (26). Defoe’s “secret influence” may very well point to his notion of the novel, as fiction can help readers negotiate their own truth with hyperbolic examples of allegorical merit. Writers such as Defoe pondered the “technologies of the self” by scripting characters who sought to (re)make themselves in a balance between Providence, Fortune and Reason, and perhaps most important of all, *Economy*.¹⁸ Although Robinson Crusoe—the paradigm of Lockean property rights—relies on reasoned judgment (using acquired technology from sunken ships) to manage madness in solitude, he praises Providence. The biopolitical logic of his historical milieu ultimately directs his course of action—the germs of consumer capitalism are reflected in his continual trial and error method of

¹⁷ Virtue, for the ancient Greeks, was generally synonymous with beauty, goodness, and truth, all of which can be attained through dedication to knowledge and care of the self.

¹⁸ Crusoe embodies what Foucault considers “‘economism’ in the theory of power [,] [meaning he regards] power...as a right which can be possessed in the way one possesses a commodity... [,] The constitution of political power is therefore...modeled on a juridical operation similar to an exchange of contracts [,] [revealing] an obvious analogy between power and commodities, between power and wealth” (*Society Must Be Defended* 13).

negotiating loss versus gain, or as he articulates, “*on the Credit Side of the Account*” (54).

Capitalism, according to Foucault, “would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes” (140-41). And capitalism, as Marx points out, thrives on excess, demanding growth. The competitive drive to continuously produce more goods and capital to meet the desires of the consumer ultimately relies on a power capable of fostering, optimizing, and regulating life rather than death (*The History of Sexuality: Vol. I* 141). In short, an economic rationale operating on the notion of *governing less* within programmed relations, what Foucault called “a certain ‘freedom of movement (*laissez passer*), in the sense of “letting things take their course’” became, according to Foucault, the rationality of governance at the dawn of the 18th century (De Boever 37).

Reflecting this logic by establishing a thriving economic model (as well as a modest fortune) based on the foundations of the *invisible hand* of *laissez faire* capitalism, Crusoe, as a prototypical *homo economicus*, applies the commercial method of bookkeeping (determining loss vs. gain, or in his words, “Good” vs. “Evil”) to every decision, no matter how trivial.¹⁹

Upon the whole, here was an undoubted Testimony, that there was scarce any Condition in the World so miserable, but there was something

¹⁹ Derrida observes, “Robinson Crusoe is not only a model of education, but is still today an information manual and novel of education for students of political economy, on the origin of exchange and use value, on labor, on stock raising, etc” (*The Beast and The Sovereign* 378-79). See M. V. White’s “Robinson Crusoe” in *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*.

Negative or something *Positive* to be thankful for in it...[.] [We] may always find in [miserable conditions] something to comfort our selves from, and to set in the *Description of Good and Evil, on the Credit Side of the Accompt.*” (my emphasis 54)

Defoe notably blends his notion of regimented survival with economic and religious phrasing. Rather than a treatise of sheer faith in Providence to attain hope in the midst of desperation, Crusoe’s journal, along with Defoe’s prolific collection of works, represent Foucault’s view of “[w]riting[’s]...importan[ce] in the culture of taking care of oneself...[.] [T]aking care involved taking notes on oneself to be reread, writing treatises and letters to friends to help them, and keeping notebooks in order to reactivate for oneself the truths one needed” (“Technologies of the Self” 27). Crusoe’s journal lies within the larger chronicle of *Robinson Crusoe*—a journal within a journal—the latter an extended form of the mainly objective reflections/recordings of the former. One could say that *Robinson Crusoe* is Defoe’s “novel” form of “caring for the self”—both economically, as a dissenting author who was in constant fear of debtor’s prison, as well as philosophically, as a reflectively “reasoned” treatise on the merits and spiritual confines of solitude.

Defoe, eponymously writing *as* Robinson Crusoe, who he has defend the moralistic merits of *his* allegorical exploits, distinguishes *Robinson Crusoe* and *Serious Reflections* from satire, arguing,

The selling or writing a parable, or an illusive allegoric history, is quite a different case, and is always distinguished from this other jesting with truth, that it is designed and effectually turned for instructive and upright

ends, and has its moral justly applied. Such are the historical parables in the Holy Scripture, such ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress,’ and such, in a word, the adventures of your fugitive friend, ‘Robinson Crusoe.’ (*Serious Reflections*)

It seems that Defoe wanted his writings to set an *example* through the notion of an *exception*: Crusoe’s and H.F.’s cases are exceptional—willed and sustained efficiency in absolute isolation and an unshakable determination to withstand and report on an epidemic, respectively. Authors must be imaginative enough to allow readers to vicariously experience the sometimes-desperate condition of often peerless characters, which allows them to sympathize with the restraints and advantages of biopolitical regimentation. Coetzee illustrates this necessity for the sympathetic imagination in “He and His Man” when Crusoe, author of desolate characters like himself (including Defoe), writes that,

a visitation by illness may be figured as a visitation by the devil, or by a dog figuring the devil, and vice versa, the visitation figured as an illness, as in the saddler’s history of the plague; and therefore that no one who writes stories of either, the devil or the plague, should forthwith be dismissed as a forger or a thief.

While novelists undoubtedly incorporate “Surprising” (exaggerated for *sympathetic affect*) elements in their texts, fictions allow us to differentiate what Defoe calls a story’s “application” from its “relation.”

Defoe divides “moral” from “fable” (“application” from “relation”) in the preface to *Moll Flanders* (1722) and even claims to have written *Serious Reflections*, the concluding treatise in the *Robinson Crusoe* trilogy, as the moral from which the fable (*Robinson Crusoe*) sprung. Vehemently defending the status of *Robinson Crusoe* from critics who deemed it superfluous “romance,” as well as from inept imitators, Defoe famously responded that “it is as reasonable to represent one kind of imprisonment by another, as it is to represent anything that really exists by that which exists not” (“Robinson Crusoe’s Preface” *Serious Reflections*), signifying an argument for, as Maximillian E. Novak observes, “a serious type of fiction sustained by a vivid method of representation,” achieved by using literary hybridity to establish an augmented form of narrative that blurs the line between fact and fiction (538). Defoe viewed allegory (or what today we would more generally term “symbolic representation”) as the foundational merit of *Robinson Crusoe*, alluding to all the ways in which Crusoe’s plight represented the developmental care of oneself through a labored acquisition of property.

Ever the outspoken, moralizing writer—despite being jailed several times for what was then, under sovereignty, considered seditious libel²⁰—Defoe was often charged by authorities and critics alike with propagating rumor. *A Journal of the Plague Year*

²⁰ Showing how the notion of authorship emerged from (and still functions as) a logic of appropriation based on prohibition and exclusion, Foucault argues in “What is an Author” that because books or texts with authors...are objects of appropriation... [,] [their] status as property is historically secondary to the penal code controlling [their] appropriation. Speeches and books were assigned real authors, other than mythical or important religious figures, only when the author became subject to punishment and to the extent that [her or] his discourse was considered transgressive. (124) Defoe knew all too well the punitive risk his political writings carried. He was imprisoned several times both for debt and, in one case, for seditious libel by the Tory Ministry after publishing the satirical pamphlet, *The Shortest-Way with the Dissenters; Or, Proposals for the Establishment of the Church* that was, at first, ironically taken seriously and lauded by the Ministry.

begins with Defoe's wry confession that in 1665, "We had no such things as printed News Papers...to spread Rumors and Reports of Things; and to Improve them by the Invention of Men, as I have liv'd to see practis'd since" (5).²¹ Driven by what seems to be his journalistic duty, H.F. chooses to remain amid plague-ridden England, erring on the side of natural explanations for the pestilence rather than divine punishment, as was all too common throughout the 17th-18th centuries.

While Crusoe claims that all he can say to that which puzzles him is "to describe the Fact[s]" and "[I]et the Naturalists [those that believe that all phenomena have natural causes] explain these things, and the Reason and Manner of them" (147), H.F. confidently asserts that "as a Distemper arising from natural Causes, we must consider [the Plague] as it was really propagated by natural Means, nor is it at all less a Judgment for its being under the Conduct of humane Causes and Effects" (153). Defoe does not neglect to mention "Providence," but still insists on empirically forming educated hypotheses based on careful observation and reflection:

Tho' Providence seem'd to direct my Conduct to be otherwise; yet it is my opinion...*that the best Physick against the Plague is to run away from it.* I know People encourage themselves, by saying, God is able to keep up us in the midst of Danger...; and this kept Thousands in the Town, whose Carcasses went into the great Pits by Cart Loads. [But] were this very Fundamental only duly considered...on any future occasion of this, or the like Nature, I am persuaded it would put them upon quite different

²¹ See Blakey Vermeule's *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters* for a provocative analysis of rumor, a seemingly innate human response to others that reflects our curiously imitative nature; see also Coetzee's *Slow Man* (135-36).

Measures for managing the People, from those that they took in 1665...in a Word, they would consider of separating the People into smaller bodies, and removing them in time farther from one another. (156)

Defoe continues his judicious critique of England's administrative follies in regulating the populace, especially the poor, arguing the importance of establishing preventive biopolitical "Measures for managing the People":

Surely never City, at least, of this Bulk and Magnitude, was taken in a Condition so perfectly unprepar'd for such a dreadful Visitation... [.] The Lord Mayor and Sheriffs had made no Provisions as Magistrates for [the enforcement of] the Regulations which were to be observed... The Citizens had no publick Magazines, or Store-Houses for Corn, or Meal, for the Subsistence of the Poor; which, if they had provided themselves, as in such Cases is done abroad, many miserable Families, who were now reduc'd to the utmost Distress, would have been reliev'd, and that in a better Manner, than now could be done. (77)

As in the above passage, Defoe frequently offers objective guidance for future calamities of immense implication (*Journal* 156), while at the same time praising London's managerial capacities, as "Every thing was managed with so must care...that *London* may be a Pattern to all the Cities in the World for the good Government and excellent Order that was everywhere kept..." (156).

Forever attempting to balance objectivity with hardened subjective analysis, H.F. praises “the Prudence of the Magistrates” for “[t]he Moderation which they used in the great and difficult work of shutting up of Houses” though he later reveals,

that the shutting up of Houses thus by force, and restraining, or rather imprisoning people in their own Houses...was of little or no service in the Whole; nay, ...it was rather hurtful, having forc'd those desperate People to wander abroad with the Plague upon them, who would otherwise have died quietly in their beds. (61)

Presenting a character who is both subjective and objective, of the past (1665) and the present (1722), Defoe relies on fiction to script a plea toward vigilance in the event of another epidemic like that of the plague or the great fire that ravaged London only a year later, in 1666—a plea for the biopolitical optimization of life (especially of the poor) rather than hardened disciplinary manners.²² Rather than merely writing to attain care of the self, Defoe seemed to view the novel as a hybridized form of fictionalized facts from which to spread objective scrutiny for all readers.

Despite largely dissenting against the norms by which they are governed, early novels could not escape the stereotypical truth claims that dominated the “Enlightened” period from which they emerged, i.e., the dominant position of subjective generalizations governed by “objective” empirical reasoning. Throughout his works, Coetzee exposes the

²² Like Dr. Rieux in Camus' *The Plague*, H.F. “resolved to compile this chronicle, so that he should not be one of those who hold their peace but should bear witness in favor of those plague stricken people; so that some memorial of the injustice and outrage done them might endure; and to state quite simply what we learn in time of pestilence: that there are more things to admire in men than to despise” (Camus 308).

ways in which our subconscious desires must be exposed to the ways in which reason fails, which he “dictates” through an often-uncomfortable literary experience that portrays characters as living ironies in ill-ended attempts at achieving *substance*. In *Foe*, Coetzee displaces 18th-century truth claims²³ by presenting Susan Barton’s tale of finding herself on a deserted island with Cruso²⁴ and Friday as anterior to Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*: “Better had there been only Cruso and Friday,’ you will murmur to yourself: Better without the woman” (72). Susan’s fear that Foe will cut her out of her own narrative is realized by the fact that she does not appear in *Robinson Crusoe*, though the blueprint for Defoe’s tale is contained in one of her many letters to Foe. Foe’s appropriation of Susan’s tale, and what appears to be Susan’s bouts of “madness,” challenges the notion of verifiable historical narratives that dominate and tend to silence the stories of those exploited and scapegoated in the name of competitive commercialized expansion—or more plainly, book sales!

In *Foe*, Susan Barton, the source of (De)Foe’s legendary tale, convinces Foe to write her story (as she lacks the artistic flair, and, as an unknown woman, the same means as Foe to be a successful novelist) with two concerns in mind—her urgent sense of responsibility to discover “a means of giving voice to Friday” and for Foe to imaginatively “return to me the substance I have lost...[.] For though my story gives the truth, it does not give the substance of the truth” (51). The notion of agency in *Foe* is interesting when compared to writing a novel, as the prominent “people” Susan

²³ Coetzee’s fascination with 18th-century prose (Defoe, Swift, Newton, and Gibbon) is especially evident in three linguistic essays, *The Agentless Sentence as Rhetorical Device* (1980), *The Rhetoric of the Passive in English* (1980), and *Newton and the Ideal of a Transparent Scientific Language* (1982).

²⁴ “Cruso” and “Foe” are both Coetzee’s spelling.

encounters are all, like her, fictional characters whose “substance” is not only determined by Defoe, but also the various readers who have interpreted their plight since their literary birth, just as she considers Friday’s life contingent upon his knowledge of the *spoken* word. Coetzee essentially critiques the biopolitics of authorship (and more specifically, of 18th century claims of objective historicity) by authoring Susan, who, in an attempt to validate her existence, both narrative and “actual,” fruitlessly tries to authorially “optimize”—seemingly for his own good—Friday into a “civilized” being in England, endowed with speech, and eventually, by Foe’s suggestion, writing. Susan’s obsessive quest for a “true” narrative remains futile; the various questions she asks to “decipher”²⁵ the mysteries surrounding her island existence remain unanswered.²⁶ As Foe, alluding to the sovereignty of language, inquires of Susan, “as it was a slaver’s stratagem to rob Friday of his tongue, may it not be a slaver’s stratagem to hold him in subjection while we cavil over words in a dispute we know to be endless” (150).

Mirroring Defoe’s situation as both a novelist and seeker of truth, Coetzee vividly depicts “author” Susan’s conundrum of producing a new brand of formal realism that

²⁵ Interestingly, an antiquated definition of “cipher” is “zero,” a concept Coetzee thematically plays with throughout *Foe* regarding Susan and Foe’s attempts to “decode” Friday. While Susan, who views “[l]etters [as] the mirror of words” (142), values speech over the written word, Foe, in a manner that Derrida would certainly applaud, argues that, “Writing is not doomed to be the shadow of speech...[.] Speech is but a means through which the word may be uttered, it is not the word itself.” (142-43). And Friday, not unintelligent, but simply seemingly unhindered enough in his sense of self, appeals to the language of the body, that is, auditory and visual perception, by periodically playing a rudimental tune on his flute, dancing to unheard melodies, and drawing pictures of feet covered with eyes.

²⁶ “What was the meaning of the terraces?” “How did Friday lose his tongue?” “Why did Friday submit to Cruso?” “Why did neither Cruso nor Friday desire her?” “What was the meaning of Friday’s act of scattering petals on the water near the site where she imagines they were shipwrecked?”

must also sell, which seems to be why she sought out Foe in the first place. Susan wonders, after relating her year of “strange circumstances” on the island,

how long before I am driven to invent new and stranger circumstances...[,] [such as] the salvaging of tools and muskets from Crusoe’s ship; the building of a boat, or at least a skiff, and a venture to sail to the mainland; a landing by cannibals on the island, followed by a skirmish and many bloody deaths; and, at last, the coming of a golden-haired stranger with a sack of corn, and the planting of the terraces? Alas, will the day ever arrive when we can make a story without strange circumstances? (67)

Susan’s examples of exaggeration for the sake of entertainment, of course, humorously match the main events of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, leaving readers to ponder the shadowy concept of narrative origins—who narrated whom into life.

Largely a critique of the novel’s complicity with biopolitical regimentation, Coetzee’s works demonstrate poststructuralist conceptions of authorship and language exemplified by what Barthes calls *scriptable* (or “writerly” forms of fiction), a democratic means of displacing the authorial imbalance between author and reader. In writerly novels, Marina Mackay notes, “meaning is never self-evident but something you have to labor to produce, with no expectation that the meaning you derive is anything like the meanings made by other readers... [.] [Thus,] all texts are *by definition* intertextual, fundamentally citational” (153). *Foe* is a paradigm of the novel’s capability of offering resistance (immunity, if you will) against its biopolitical origins—that is, its complicity

with dominant historical narratives, such as Crusoe's project of authoring his own historicized tale of colonial (self)-"improvement." Barthes illustrates how authorship is not an autonomous force of creation, but relies primarily on readers, who interpret texts anew (depending on socio-cultural circumstance, environs, state of mind, and so on) with each reading. The author, for Barthes, is merely a "scripter" whose "authority" is limited to the many meanings assigned by a multiplicity of readers. For Barthes, the origin of a text "is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" ("The Death of the Author" 146). Coetzee exposes authors' control of their characters not by showing textual unity, but by exposing characters' desire for objectivity and corporeality—an ontologically (rather than merely historically) meaningful existence unhindered by linguistic and phenomenological barriers of living *in* and being *of* a world where Cartesian certainty has "returned to" existential doubt.

With his use of Crusoe in *Foe* and in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in Literature, "He and His Man," J.M. Coetzee explores the concept of authoring life by exposing the surreal link between author and character. Crusoe is, in a sense, Defoe's "man" in the same way that Friday is Crusoe's, and to illustrate this point, Coetzee prefaces his reading with the following quote from *Robinson Crusoe*:

But to return to my new companion. I was greatly delighted with him, and made it my business to teach him everything that was proper to make him useful, handy, and helpful; but especially to make him speak, and understand me when I spoke; and he was the aptest scholar there ever was.
(164)

Defoe depicts Friday as a wholly subservient servant who passively allows Crusoe to endow him with a rudimentary language of acquiescence, just as Crusoe and Friday, as fictional characters, are at the whim of Defoe's imagination.

Coetzee dislocates the authority of canonical history, exemplified in world-renowned novels like *Robinson Crusoe*, which appropriate the ultimately "colonized" narratives of those marginalized by Eurocentric colonial discourse (in what Derrida calls the phallogocentric tradition of Western discourse), such as Friday (a Carib) and Susan (a woman). Susan, as both subject of her own *substance* and subjected to the whims of Foe's literary imagination, never fails to give up the fight for control of her story. Similarly, Friday's silence remains his source of power, only accessible in the form of a dream wherein an unnamed narrator metaphorically "slip[s] overboard" (155) into what may be perceived to be Susan's narrative in an attempt to find Friday's missing voice. Susan's refusal to acknowledge the young Susan Barton, who she labels "father-born" (91), indicating that she is a product of (De)Foe's imagination, and the ways in which she gains temporary power through a sexualized portrayal of gender reversal, challenges the biopolitical regulation of "authorized" historical voices.

Coetzee demonstrates the power of narrative to re-contextualize the ways in which history writes us into life, notably through the eyes of a *female* castaway whose origins remain unknown. Coetzee's novels are filled with the motif of authorship as birth, regeneration, and the continuity of life in general. Susan wishes to *father* her own story, evident when Susan revels at "tak[ing] out a clean sheet of paper and dip[ping] it in [Foe's] ink—your pen, your ink[,] feeling as if "the pen becomes [hers] as [she] write[s] with it, as though growing out of [her] hand—and wr[iting] at the head" (67). Susan

battles to *birth* her own narrative using the phallic image of Foe's pen; but (De)Foe, Susan's foe for an authoritative voice of authenticity, favors the elusive Cruso(e) as protagonist of "his" tale. In a desperate attempt to ensure she maintains some semblance of control over the rights of her story, Susan mounts Foe "(which he did not seem easy with, in a woman)" (139), claiming the status of a Muse, who "must do whatever lies in her power to father her offspring" (140); after which, Foe, lamenting his status as an author of second-hand tales, labels himself as "an old whore who should ply her trade only in the dark" (151). Susan goes so far as to refer to Foe as her "mistress" and "wife" (152), indicating she has not given up the rights to her "offspring," her story.

The novel mimics our inherent desire to validate truth claims through competing perspectives that all vie for positions of power. As both subjects and objects of power relations that determine our subjectivity, we must actively navigate and create our own "substance." Although, as Coetzee illustrates, this self-realization often occurs by exploitative means that stifle the continuity of life freed from prescribed (normalized) standards of being. Through Susan's desperation for substance, Coetzee metafictionally exposes the complex nature of his literary inventions, who, though they are products of Defoe's imagination, seem content with their lot: Susan's supposed daughter (Susan Barton, Jr.) and Amy, the housekeeper, are lifted from Defoe's *Roxana* (1724); the young pickpocket at Foe's service is the young Captain Jack (from *Colonel Jack* 1722); even Mrs. Veal, the apparition from Defoe's famous "apparition narrative," *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal*, is referenced by Susan, who reads the moralistic tale in *Foe to Friday*. Unlike her fictional counterparts, Susan feels her story is incomplete (hence rendering her into a

spectral presence). Susan obsesses over the desires of Friday, whom she feels compelled to care for and equip with speech:

The story I desire to be known by is the story of the island. You call it an episode, but I call it a story in its own right. It commences with my being cast away there and concludes with the death of Crusoe and the return of Friday and myself to England, full of new hope. Within this larger story are inset the stories of how I came to be marooned (told by myself to Crusoe) and of Crusoe's shipwreck and early years on the island (told by Crusoe to myself), as well as the story of Friday which is properly not a story but a puzzle or hole in the narrative. (121)

Susan uses a “practical” approach (similar to that of Crusoe and Crusoe) to fill Friday’s narrative *gap*, which, as she admits, is primarily to substantiate her island narrative (which, as a literary character, means her existence): “The true story will not be heard till by art we have found a means of giving voice to Friday” (118)—that is, through regular speech and writing lessons.

Elizabeth Costello—Coetzee’s recurring literary alter-ego—seems to embody Foe’s attitude toward novel-writing as, in his words, a “rambling . . . occupation” similar to “conjuring” (135), comparing Susan’s island narrative to “a loaf of bread . . . [that] will keep us alive, certainly, if we are starved of reading; but who would prefer it when there are tastier confections and pastries to be had” (117)? Costello explains to Paul Rayment, the protagonist of her latest novel, that “[she] couldn’t care less if [he] tell[s] [her] made-up stories. Our lies reveal as much about us as our truths” (*Slow Man* 203)—to which Paul responds, “If truth and lies are the same, then speech and silence may as well be the

same too” (203). Friday’s silence is a *figure* for the “truth” that Susan futilely seeks for (and of) herself, of which language is helpless to decipher. Her insistence that Foe place the island as the central event is honored at the expense of her absence from the novel. It seems that Foe regards Susan’s narrative unmarketable if it is not centered on her search for her lost daughter, with the island episode, as Foe sees it, “properly the second part of the middle[,]” serving as a climax for “the reversal in which the daughter takes up the quest abandoned by her mother” (117).

Susan willfully “endeavors to be father to [her] story” (123), and her rejection of young Susan as her daughter—along with Amy and Jack as no more than Foe’s “actors”—reflects her refusal of Defoe’s suggested narrative. The question as to whose narrative is truthful remains unanswered, as there are no reliable narrators in *Foe*, save for Friday’s undecipherable voice that gets the final word, emitting a

stream without breath without interruption. It flows up through his body and out upon me; it passes through the cabin, through the wreck; washing the cliffs and shores of the island, it runs northward and southward to the ends of the earth. Soft and cold, dark and unending, it beats against my eyelids, against the skin of my face. (157)

The surreal ending to *Foe* favors Friday’s inaccessible voice over the contending authorial voices of Foe and Susan—a voice of the “body” that seems to evoke, at least in the unnamed narrator of the ethereal world of the abyss, not a rationalized but a corporeal response of tears that “beat... against my eyelids, against the skin of my face” (157).

Stretching from his island existence “to the ends of the earth” (Susan’s supposed missing

link of “truth”), Friday’s narrative emotionally overpowers the appropriative authority of language itself in favor of a candid diffusion of inexpressible truth.

Coetzee illustrates the paradox of using “dead letters” as mediums from which to experiment with the project of creating literary life. Writers as varied as Derrida, Foucault, Borges, and Coetzee all reflect the ways in which language refers back to its own absence in an attempt to escape its own finitude, often symbolized in Coetzee’s novels as a God-shaped hole signifying the absence of purpose or sense of being whole. Susan Barton vividly articulates the conundrum of substantializing oneself into being through an authentic narrative, a project she obsessively practices on Friday. Despite her tireless attempt to decipher the substantiality of the illusory world she inhabits, Susan metamorphoses into “doubt itself”:

[A]ll my life grows to be story and there is nothing of my own left to me. I thought I was myself and this girl a creature of another order speaking words you made up for her... [.] I am doubt itself. *Who is speaking me? Am I a phantom too? To what order do I belong? And you? Who are you?*
(133)

Ever ambiguous about her own existence, Susan’s questions are directed not only to Foe, but also outside the text to Coetzee—himself subjected to supervisory societal structures—who “scripts” her into a narrative inhabited by Defoe’s fictional characters, all of whom, while seemingly fictional in *Foe*, nevertheless are substantial: “We are all

alive, we are all substantial, we are all in the same world” (152).²⁷ It seems that Susan’s realization spawns from her acknowledgment of her own existence—and the culmination of that which she considers “spectral”—as bearing historical materiality. In *Foe*, Coetzee challenges the Western world’s classical foundation of reason-based objectivity with a *cipher*, a narrative of pure metaphor, bereft of signification, “where bodies [in this instance, textual “bodies”] are their own signs” (*Foe* 157).

Just as Coetzee, in *Foe*, inverted the authorial power between Susan and Foe, and ultimately, between himself and Defoe, he challenges the supposed sovereignty of authorship in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, “He and His Man” by displacing the author/character relationship between Defoe and Crusoe. Defoe, “His [Crusoe’s] Man”—“that dapper little man with the quick step and the mole upon his chin”—busily sends reports to “He,” presented by Coetzee as an aged, world-weary Robinson Crusoe living in England. Crusoe creates characters in desperate situations comparable to his crushing isolation on the island. And although he is certainly morose, “the writing of his adventures has put him in the habit of writing, it is a pleasant enough recreation. In the evening by candlelight he will take out his papers and sharpen his quills and write a page or two of his man...this busy man of his.”

While “Poor Crusoe” prefers silence and isolation to speech and company, he practices “technologies of the self” when he biopolitically negotiates the fate of the “characters” related to him by “His Man”:

²⁷ Susan’s supposed daughter and Amy, the housekeeper, are lifted from Defoe’s *Roxana* (1724), the young pickpocket at Foe’s service is the young Captain Jack (from *Colonel Jack* 1722); even Mrs. Veal, the apparition from Defoe’s famous “apparition narrative,” *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal*, is referenced by Susan, who reads the moralistic tale in *Foe* to Friday.

A man of business, he thinks to himself. Let him be a man of business, a grain merchant or a leather merchant, let us say; or a manufacturer and purveyor of roof tiles somewhere where clay is plentiful... Make him prosperous... [,] give him a reasonable happiness; then bring his happiness suddenly to an end... [:] he is ruined, this man of his, debtors descend upon him like flies or like crows, he has to flee his home, his wife, his children, and seek hiding in the most wretched of quarters in Beggars Lane under a false name and in disguise.

Crusoe's "Man" not only reflects Defoe's struggles with, and desires to overcome, his constant struggles with debt, but also to, more generally, what Paul Rayment—the protagonist of Coetzee's *Slow Man*—refers to as a "biologico-literary experiment" (114) in relation to Elizabeth Costello's (his "author's") unusual form of *caritas*. It seems that, unlike Paul, neither Defoe nor Crusoe can escape their dreams of meeting their respective "authors," though they have symbolically authored one another through their narrativized visions of sympathetic longing.

Coetzee presents Crusoe's "Man" (Defoe) as one who inhabits and reports on scenes and existential scenarios from the best-known canonical stories of Daniel Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe* and *A Journal of a Plague Year*. As "His Man" navigates the streets of London during the plague of 1665 (now representing the protagonist of *A Journal of a Plague Year*, H.F.), he reports of a woman who perceives a cloud as, "*an angel in white brandishing a flaming sword!*... [.] *It is an allegory!*" cries the woman in the street; but he can see no allegory for the life of him. Thus in his report." It is up to Crusoe to unearth

the allegorical merit of “Defoe’s” tales of woe:²⁸ as a bystander declares in a narrative plucked from *Robinson Crusoe*,

And all of this – the wave of water, the ruin, the flight, the pennilessness, the tatters, the solitude – let all of this be a figure of the shipwreck and the island where he, poor Robin, was secluded from the world for twenty-six years, till he almost went mad (and indeed, who is to say he did not, in some measure?)

Everything related between Crusoe and Defoe is symbolic of their own suffering. “He” (Crusoe)—the authored author—inspired by the existentially leveling reports of “His Man” (Defoe), whom “He” equips with speech, attempts to mend the dissected self, seeking wholeness via written reflections of our (often universal) existential conundrums. Crusoe describes the plague as “a figure for life itself, the whole of life. Due preparation. We should make due preparation for death, or else be struck down where we stand.” To “make due preparation for death” (a predictable part of life) means not only to face, but also analyze its inevitability from a pragmatic standpoint that programmatically calculates both statistical facts and introspective awareness—resembling a subject’s journey through the biopolitical web of programmed relations that seek to optimize (and immunize) the life of a population.

²⁸ Coetzee explicitly argues that “Allegory is not, of course, about everywhere: it’s just about somewhere else. I’ve always been slightly bemused by the description of me as an allegorist, but maybe I know less than other people do (“Voice and Trajectory” 97). If his messages are about *everywhere*, then objectivity seems to be the goal, but not in the sense of *certainty*, but *questioning* our subjectivity/supposed objectivity to displace our concretized belief systems, our avowal of the immutable self and its canonized narratives of mastery.

Coetzee's "He" (Crusoe) illustrates the contagiously, self-reflective nature of which novels are capable, writing, seemingly to himself, that,

When I defended myself against the cannibals, who sought to strike me down and roast me and devour me, he wrote, I thought I defended myself against the thing itself. Little did I guess, he wrote, that these cannibals were but figures of a more devilish voracity, that would gnaw at the very substance of truth." (original emphasis)

"The thing itself" remains shrouded in symbolic speculation, concealed by *figures*. Defoe's characters—as an extension of his drive to set didactic examples through formalized realism—ponder life and death with the utmost intensity, attaining life of their own that often ironically surpasses the status of their "author." But although Crusoe "writes as well or better than his master," his man's reports claim that "[o]nly when he yields himself up to this man of his do such words come" (6), leaving us to wonder, "How are they to be figured, this man and he? As master and slave? As brothers, twin brothers? As comrades in arms? Or as enemies, foes?" (8). Coetzee's questions challenge the notion of authorial origin, "offer[ing] a challenge to the hierarchical binaries of a master-slave dynamic and...[resembling] the poststructuralist notion of the writer as a *scripter* who is spoken by tradition and discourse itself" (Lucy Graham my emphasis 225)—"scripters" who, in an attempt to challenge the stifling contradictions to ethical objectivity (in the sense of the interconnectedness of all life) that *instrumental* reason justifies, must invoke the "sympathetic imagination" through a deferral of reason in favor of a vicarious sense of mediated passion—what "civilized" society is apt to label as bordering madness, hysteria, or at the very least, abnormality.

In “The Lives of Animals,” a passionate diatribe against humanity’s insistence on *instrumental reason*—that is, regarding and training animals based on humans’ conception of scientifically-based reason as opposed to empathetic, emotional awareness—Elizabeth Costello ironically illustrates one may only deconstruct humanity’s justification of anthropocentric reason by “using a process of careful reasoning” (Head 111). Costello proposes, “[R]ather than the flowering of a faculty that allows access to the secrets of the universe, might not humanity’s concept of itself as images of God [indicate] the specialism of a rather narrow self-regenerating intellectual tradition whose forte is reasoning” (69).

Through the “life-writing” of his literary alter-ego, Elizabeth Costello, Coetzee highlights the contradiction in “the desire to promote the sympathetic capacity... [,] for the sympathetic faculty, which the literary effect can promote, is identified by dint of intellectual effort” (Head 111). Costello makes a passionate case for emotional understanding through the powers of the heart, “the seat of... *sympathy*... that allows us at times to empathize with other forms of life, not just humans” (79). Writers such as Ted Hughes, explains Costello, bypass rationalistic (*instrumental*) classification with “poetic invention” to “show... us how to bring the living body into being with ourselves” (98), which allows us to “think ourselves into the being of another... [,] any being with whom [we] share the substrate of life” (80).

Coetzee’s oeuvre illustrates a distancing of authorial objectivity, and as a result, empirical certainty, in favor of a deconstructive examination of narrative play, wherein the notion of the “author” is replaced with “medium,” a mediator of conflicting narratives—one who must acknowledge the futility of bypassing relativity in favor of

“truth,” which Coetzee demonstrates by honoring without appropriating the voices of the “Other.” In “At the Gate,” a Kafkaesque depiction of Elizabeth Costello’s final judgment, Costello must convince a panel of judges that she believes in something. Costello shapes her identity as an author, claiming she holds no beliefs and is a “secretary for the invisible,” a term she “borrowed from a secretary of the higher order, Czeslaw Milosz, a poet...to whom it was dictated years ago” (199) : “When I claim to be a secretary clean of belief I refer to my ideal self, a self capable of holding opinions and prejudices at bay while the world which it is her function to conduct passes through her” (200). The notable shift from first- to third-person indicates Susan’s relinquishment of an authorial voice so she may “be a secretary *clean* of belief[,]” unhindered by unilateral affirmations, having (an albeit wavering) faith only in her conviction of being “open to all voices, not just the voices of the murdered and violated...[.] I will not close my ears to them, I will not judge them” (204). Costello’s status as a medium interestingly connotes those who communicate with spiritual presences, which relates to Barton’s doubt in the “substance” of her “spectral” existence in relation to Foe’s authorial power.

Coetzee’s works illustrate the lack of an author’s sovereignty over narrative, and this symbolic “death of the author” resembles Foucault’s beheaded sovereign king, an image he figuratively used to signify Sovereignty’s integration into disciplinary techniques that determine subjectivity via the goal of enhancing (by “securing”) life itself. The 18th-century novel’s emergence opened a space for novelists to aesthetically and philosophically “play” with the notion of governmentality and care using characters that are reflections of the societal constraints of a “brave new world,” where the politicization of life itself in the age of “governing less” was taking hold on social

consciousness. Complementing Barthes' reader-centered approach to authorship, Foucault's notion of governmentality's allowance of a "certain 'freedom of movement' (*laisser passer*)" reflects the novelist's biopolitical project of "scripting" the fate of characters who, though their narratives are far from unilaterally interpreted, are nonetheless *governed* by the "staged passions" of their "authors."

Though they should not be perceived as writers' autonomous creations, fictional characters begin as psychological projections of their authors but remain mutable constructions reflective of various perspectives that inevitably transform with time, place, and circumstance. Crusoe's isolated biopolitical project of immunological improvement and H.F.'s resilience and editorial objectivity in the face of imminent *death* are ultimately reflections of being subjects of and subjected to (authors of and authored from) the inevitably frequent vicissitudes of *life itself* that have the power to help readers "recognize in their governed lives our own biopolitical condition" (De Boever 47).

Works Cited

- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford UP, 1998.
- Andrews, Alice. "Autoimmune Illness as a Death-Drive: An Autobiography of Defence." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, vol. 44, no. 3, Sept. 2011, pp. 189-203. EBSCOhost, proxy.library.eiu.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=65958151&site=ehost-live.
- Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." Translated by Stephen Heath. *Image / Music / Text*. Fontana Press, 1977, pp. 142-47.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "Compass." Translated by Richard Wilbur, *New and Collected Poems*. Harvest Books, 1989.
- Calvino, Italo. *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler?* Translated by William Weaver, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.
- Coetzee, J.M. *Foe*. Penguin, 1986.
- . "At the Gate." *Elizabeth Costello*, Penguin, 2003.
- . "He and his Man." The Nobel Prize in Literature Lecture, 7 December 2003, Swedish Academy, Stockholm. Lecture.
- . *Slow Man*. Penguin, 2005.
- . *Voice and Trajectory: An Interview with J.M. Coetzee*, By Joanna Scott, *Salmagundi*, no. 114/115, 1997, pp. 82-102. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40548963.

Defoe, Daniel. *A Journal of the Plague Year*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1992.

---. *Robinson Crusoe*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1975.

---. *Serious Reflections*. J.M. Dent & Company, 1899.

Derrida, Jacques. "Rogues: Two Essays on Reason." Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford UP, 2005.

---. *The Beast and the Sovereign, Vol. I*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago UP, 2008.

---. "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida." In *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*. Edited by Giovanna Borradori. Chicago UP, 2003. pp. 85–136.

Esposito, Roberto. *Terms of the Political*. Translated by Rhiannon Noel Welch. Fordham UP, 2012.

---. "Dispositif of the Person." *Law, Culture and the Humanities* vol. 8, no. 1, 2012, pp. 17–30. *Ebscohost*, doi:10.1177/1743872111403104.

---. *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*. Translated by Timothy C. Campbell. Minnesota UP, 2008.

---. 2006. Interview with Anna Papparcone. *Diacritics*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 49-56.

---. Interview with Timothy Campbell. *Diacritics*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2006, pp. 49-56.

---. *Terms of the Political*. Translated by Rhiannon Noel Welch. Fordham UP, 2012.

Fawcett, Brian. "Universal Chicken." *Cambodia: A Book for People Who Find Television Too Slow*, edited by Brian Fawcett, Grove Press, 1988, pp. 57-68.

Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-1979*. Edited by Michel Senellart. Translated by Graham Burchell, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

---. *Discipline and Punish*. Translated by Alan Sheridan, Vintage, 1995.

---. *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Vintage, 1990.

---. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France 1977-1978*. Edited by Michel Senellart. Translated by Graham Burchell, Picador, 2009.

---. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-1976*. Edited by Arnold I. Davidson. Translated by David Macey, Picador, 2001.

---. "The Subject and Power." *Critical Inquiry*. vol. 8, no. 4, 1982, pp. 777-795. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1343197.

---. "Technologies of the Self." Edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton, pp. 16-49. Massachusetts UP, 1988.

---. "What is an Author." *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews with Michel Foucault*. Edited by Donald F. Bouchard, Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. pp. 113-138. Cornell UP, 1977.

Girard, Rene. *Violence and the Sacred*. Translated by Robert Patrick, Johns Hopkins UP, 1979.

- Head, Dominic. "A Belief in Frogs: J.M. Coetzee's Enduring Faith in Fiction." *J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*, edited by Jane Poyner, Ohio UP, 2006.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Penguin, 1986.
- Kant, Immanuel. *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated and Edited by Mary Gregor, Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Krell, David Farrell. "Pulling Strings Wins No Wisdom." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, vol. 44, no. 3, Sept. 2011, pp. 15-42. *EBSCOhost*,
proxy.library.eiu.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=65958141&site=ehost-live.
- Locke, John. "Two Treatises of Government." Filiquarian Publishing, LLC., 2007.
- McKay, Marina. "Novel and Anti-novel: The Rise of Metafiction." *The Cambridge Introduction to the Novel*, edited by Marina McKay, Cambridge UP, 2011.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. "Picturing Terror: Derrida's Autoimmunity." "Critical Inquiry." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 33, no. 2, (Winter 2007), pp. 277-290. *JSTOR*,
www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/511494.
- Said, Edward. *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*. Pantheon, 2006
- Novak, Maximillian E. *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions: His Life and Ideas*. Oxford UP, 2003.

Scott, Joanna, and J.M. Coetzee. "Voice and Trajectory: An Interview with J.M.

Coetzee." *Salmagundi*, no. 114/115, 1997, pp. 82–102,

www.jstor.org/stable/40548963.

Vermeule, Blakey. *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?* Johns Hopkins UP, 2009.

Watt, Ian. "Robinson Crusoe as a Myth." *Robinson Crusoe*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1975, pp. 311-322.

---. *The Rise of the Novel*. California UP, 2001.