

Ian Kinane (2016) *Theorising literary islands: The island trope in contemporary Robinsonade narratives*, London and New York, Rowman & Littlefield International. 247pp, ISBN: 978-1-78348-806-3. \$125.

Theorizing literary islands, which is one of the first two volumes in Rowman & Littlefield International's 'Rethinking the island' book series, makes an important contribution to the analysis of the rewriting of the myth of *Robinson Crusoe* by bringing the discussion of Defoe's novel into the present day. A number of other studies have already traced the lineage of Defoe's influential novel. These include Martin Green's *The Robinson Crusoe story* and Michael Seidel's *Robinson Crusoe: Island myths and the novel*, both published in 1991 and surprisingly absent from Kinane's bibliography. His book is closer in its aims to Ann Marie Fallon's *Global Crusoe: Comparative literature, postcolonial theory and transnational aesthetics* (2011) in its focus on revisions of *Robinson Crusoe* from the second half of the twentieth century to the beginning of the twenty-first, as well as on the intertextual and metatextual relationships between Defoe's novel and its reiterations. But while Fallon reads these texts in the context of transnationalism, Kinane concentrates on the trope of the island in contemporary culture and considers how it has been reused and reinterpreted in different media.

The book offers a reflection on the culturally constructed trope of the island and its evolution from the colonial context of the eighteenth century to contemporary Western culture. Indeed, the desert island is a favourite topos of popular culture, as can be seen in the abundance of island narratives across diverse media. Kinane describes the trope of the island as an "over-determined metaphor." He explores a vast corpus of popular texts, films, and television shows in this ambitious study, including fictions by Stacpoole, Lawrence, Golding, Tournier, Sage, Garland, and Martel; films such as *Mutiny on the Bounty*; series including *Gilligan's Island*, *Fantasy Island*, and *Lost*; and even reality shows like *Survivor*. Some readers may think that Kinane has taken on too much and that his aims would have been better served by a narrower scope, but it is precisely this breadth and diversity which makes his book stand out and which advances understanding of the popular dimension of the island topos. The concept of the deserted island has been constructed by generations of Robinsonades that reiterated, reformulated and renewed it. Kinane's book shows how and why, while theorizing the concept of the Island (which he capitalizes to differentiate it from the geographical entity).

After an introduction outlining his aims, Kinane devotes five chapters to more or less famous Robinsonades and comes back to the original *Robinson Crusoe* in Chapter 1 that draws a history of British imperial expansion into the Pacific region in the eighteenth century; he also comes back to Defoe's model now and then in the following chapters when he wants to compare the original and the rewritten motif. The book's diachronic perspective might have been enhanced by the inclusion of at least one chapter focused on Defoe's novel, which would have provided a reference point for the chapters to follow. Chapter 2 is devoted to the status of the geo-imaginary Island ("islands are both geophysical locations and imaginative topoi") and Kinane describes the space of the island as "a malleable space." Drawing on Foucault's concept of 'heterotopia', he deals with several techniques used in the invention of imaginary places, such as ekphrasis and hypotyposis, two ways of describing the place in a vivid way. In the third chapter, he tackles the symbiosis between the island and the individual, the interconnectedness between island and I-land (seeing the island as a space of individual self-realization). Here, Kinane might have come back more extensively to Defoe's hero and how the latter appropriates and transforms the island, how he encloses space and how he gives agency to the island which transforms Robinson in return.

Then, in Chapter 4, Kinane deals with the dichotomous dimension of the island that can either be a utopian or dystopian place: the chapter analyses how the idea of the island as a metaphor for paradise has been built, thus making islands a most popular destination among

tourists and travellers nowadays. Finally, the attention given to remediation (the representation of one medium in another) enables Kinane to see the island both as a geographical reality and an imaginary entity, and examining the passage from verbal to visual media helps him tackle the reimagination of the island motif. The fifth chapter is metatextual in that it shows how the different media comment on one another and how one medium gives meaning to another. In my view, this fifth chapter is the most original thanks to its focus on new material that enables the author to articulate the concepts of reality and imagination particularly well. The focus on some very popular media like television shows or series is new compared to the previous studies on Robinsonades, whose corpuses were constituted of texts, and, more recently, movies. The book ends with an afterword that provides a synthetic conclusion, followed by a useful bibliography and index.

Theorising literary islands deals with a lot of material in 220 pages and it may sometimes be difficult for the reader to follow the transitions as Kinane's discussion jumps from one text or one medium to another. But these challenges are inevitable when the scope of the book is so great, and they do not lessen the quality of this lively volume. All in all, this literary and cultural study makes an important contribution to island studies by analyzing the hypertextual lineage of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in a timely 'geocritical' way, although Kinane does not use this term: instead of focusing on the experience of Robinson, he adopts a more geographically oriented approach as he zooms in on the island itself and on the European and American fascination with the Pacific region to understand the persistence of the trope of the desert island in our imaginations.

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