

**Between Text and Stage:
The Theatrical Adaptations of J.M. Coetzee's *Foe***

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Abstract

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This thesis will critically analyse two theatrical adaptations of J.M Coetzee's *Foe* (1986). Primarily, this thesis will be seeking to understand the complex relationship of the primary text to its adaptations more closely, regarding them not only as second-order versions or interpretations of the novel, but also to consider the way they may retrospectively construct new readings and understandings of the source text. This thesis will not only consider the way in which *Foe* is used in the adaptations but also how *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) influenced the adaptors and adaptive process. Theories of adaptation will be discussed, drawing extensively on work by Linda Hutcheon (2006) and Robert Stam (2005). One of the key ideas in adaptation theory is that adaptive fidelity to the source text is neither possible nor desirable, but that adaptation is a more complex, multi-layered intertextual and intermedial interplay of fictional material.

One of the aims of this thesis is to ask whether or not *Foe* can be successfully transposed to the stage. This thesis will serve as a close analysis of the two theatrical adaptations, focusing on the beginning and endings of the respective adaptations. This research will contribute a new approach to Coetzee studies and to *Foe* in particular by exploring how these texts can lead to a broader understanding of Coetzee's work and the way it crosses into different media.

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Key Words

J.M. Coetzee

Glazer, Peter

Wheatley, Mark

Foe

Robinson Crusoe

Theatre

Adaptation

Fidelity

Concretization

Didascalia



Declaration

I hereby declare that *Between Text and Stage: The Theatrical Adaptations of J.M. Coetzee's Foe* is my own work, that it has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Kareesha Naidoo

Date: _____

Signature: _____



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Chapter One

Introduction

“*Foe* is a story about telling stories

It is about whose story to tell and who has the power to tell it.

It is about having a voice.” – Mark Wheatley (1996)

1.1 Overview

J. M Coetzee’s *Foe* was published in 1986, attracting a large volume of critical scholarship. There have been many articles, theses, book chapters and even a special issue of *Journal of Literary Studies*¹ devoted to the novel, particularly in the field of postcolonial studies, postmodernism and feminist criticism. *Foe* is a re-imagined version of the iconic novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by Daniel Defoe. The novel tells the story of a woman named Susan Barton who is searching for her lost daughter and becomes marooned on an island where she meets Robinson Crusoe (Coetzee drops the ‘e’ of ‘Crusoe’) and Friday.

Little attention has been given to the two theatrical adaptations of the novel. This thesis will explore how these texts can lead to new understandings of Coetzee’s work by looking comparatively at two theatrical adaptations of the novel, one by Mark Wheatley in 1996 and the other by Peter Glazer in 2003. This will be a comparative study with a cross-medial approach offering a new approach to Coetzee’s *Foe*, and potential for new critical insights. Throughout this thesis it is imperative to know that this is a textual study and not a performativity study. This thesis will not act as a review of the performance, but is rather a textual and interpretive study that looks at the two adaptations in relation to adaptation studies, as well as extending Coetzee studies in the field of intermediality and adaptation.

¹ Issue 5 volume 2, June 1989.

However, this thesis will make use of the reviews of the respective plays available in order to supplement the respective texts with information about their staging.

Coetzee's novel is a story which, as will be seen, poses formidable challenges to an adaptation, and it is surprising that not just one but two autonomous adaptations have been created. Not much attention has been placed on adaptations, despite the fact that Coetzee's work has seen multiple adaptations; for example, the well-known film of *Disgrace* (2008), directed by Steve Jacobs, and an earlier film version of *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), titled *Dust* (1985), directed by Marion Hänsel in 1984. *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) was adapted twice for film as seen in the two films scripts, one by Hollywood scriptwriter Walter B Newman, and another by Coetzee himself – both films unrealised. Apart from film, there has been a growing volume of theatrical adaptations of his work as seen in Russian director Alexander Marine's stage adaptation of *Waiting for the Barbarians*, performed in 2012 at the Baxter theatre in Cape Town, as well as an operatic adaptation scored to music by Phillip Glass. There were two stage adaptations of *Disgrace* performed in Europe in 2012, one by Hungarian director and producer Kornél Mundruczó and another by Toneelgroep, a theatre company of the Stadsschouwburg in Amsterdam (Lindsay: online). There was also a stage version of *In the Heart of the Country*, titled "Hinterland" which was performed by Jeannette Ginslov at the 1998 Grahamstown Arts Festival, and another version, titled "Writing with Stones", was staged at the 2006 Arts Alive Festival in Johannesburg (Wittenberg: 16). As one can see, there is a large amount of interest shown in adapting Coetzee's works, even by Coetzee himself.

In John Christoffel Kannemeyer's recent biography, titled *JM Coetzee: A Life in Writing* (2012) there is only brief mention of the stage adaptations of *Foe*:

In March 1996 the Théâtre de Complicité performed an adaptation of *Foe* by Mark Wheatley in the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds and afterwards toured the UK, but the actors found it difficult to bring to life in theatrical terms such a multi-levelled play. More successful was the adaptation that Peter Glazer produced in October 2003 at the University of California at Berkeley. (411)

Apart from Kannemeyer's brief account, not much attention has been given to these two theatrical adaptations. His summary shows no research as a basis for his judgement that the Glazer adaptation was more 'successful'.

As is evident from the summary above, adaptations on Coetzee's works are popular, yet there has been relatively little scholarship on his adaptations. One of the aims of this research is to broaden Coetzee studies, and provide insight into the theatrical adaptations of *Foe*. This thesis will therefore attempt to answer the following question: to what extent are they successful adaptations of Coetzee's work, and how can a careful analysis of these plays allow us to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of the novel? Furthermore, the thesis will explore questions around the stage-ability of Coetzee's text, and to what extent the stage is able to articulate its key ideas. Since these questions revolve around the crossing of genre and media boundaries, a large part of my thesis, seen in chapter two, will discuss adaptation theory, and the complex questions that arise when a novelistic text is adapted to the stage and meanings are generated that exceed the information on the printed page.

In theatrical performance, language, mostly conveyed through dialogue, is important, but is completed by a range of other ways of transmitting meaning. According to Mark Fleishman (1997), "[t]he physical body forms part of the meaning making process of almost all theatre where human performers appear live in front of an audience" (201). He further explains that "[t]he body provides secondary meaning, often quite unintentional and unplanned. The written text is given life when it is raised from the page and set inside the body of the actor" (ibid.). It is hoped that the thesis will develop not only insight to the

adaptations and their relationship to the original source text, but may also allow us to re-read Coetzee's novel retrospectively, through the lens of the two plays, allowing us to make new sense of the text. As Fleishmann observes, new meaning can arise when the novel is transposed to the stage, which utilises the body rather than only relying on the process of adapting the written to the spoken word. This thesis will thus explore how the physical embodiment of the text, as well as other devices of theatre (for example lighting, stage design, music) can indeed allow a richer understanding into a novel that may not be accessible in any other way.

Complicité and Mark Wheatley

The first stage adaptation considered in this thesis was written by the UK theatre producer Mark Wheatley. The version of Wheatley's play used for analysis in this thesis is an early pre-production draft which was sent by Wheatley to Coetzee for authorial approval, prior to the performance in 1996. It is labelled as a "second draft" and is available, together with several other play and film scripts, at The National English Literary Museum (NELM) in Grahamstown. Coetzee deposited the material at NELM in 2001, prior to his emigration to Australia. The final play script was published in a small print run by Methuen Publishing Limited in 1996, but this version was not available for the purposes of this study. The NELM version is, however, interesting since it contains pencilled in marginalia by Coetzee, reflecting his comments on Wheatley's adaptation. Additionally I used research material provided by Complicité which contained images taken during play rehearsals and the performance itself. The material also contained various theatre reviews and programme notes giving behind-the-scenes information regarding the adaptation.

In 1996, Complicité, formally known as Theatre de Complicité, produced Wheatley's stage version, co-directed by Annie Castledine and Marcello Magni. Wheatley explains, "[f]or me, the remarkable thing about *Foe* is its even handedness. I found I had to go back

time and time again to the novel to rediscover the weight of each of the main character's stories – Friday, Crusoe and Foe – and above all, Susan Barton" (1). It is evident that Wheatley wished to place emphasis on the characters themselves, wanting to tell their stories, much like the way Susan wants to tell Friday's story. For Wheatley, the novel as a whole is about story-telling and a critical interrogation of stories, which is why Coetzee "returns not to Defoe's book but to the Alexander Selkirk story on which Defoe based his book – a going back to origins" (ibid.). As we will see, Wheatley's adaption incorporates even more elements of Defoe's novel than those that Coetzee worked into his fiction, thus taking questions of narrative and origin very seriously. Wheatley met Coetzee in 1978 and told Coetzee that he enjoyed his novels because "it did [not] deal in the details of South African politics – a project necessary and difficult enough – but spoke about the wider concerns that they raised, race, language, culture, history" (ibid). For Wheatley, adapting *Foe* was attractive precisely because the novel raised larger questions about power, history and the role of stories to shape our sense of the past. In his adaptation, as we shall see, the primary historical trauma that we are confronted with is the submerged story of slavery, an issue which Coetzee's novel deals with, but perhaps in a less direct manner. As a director concerned with the performance and staging of stories, Wheatley also notes that what he enjoys most about Coetzee's work is that "[...] it will take listening. Listening, as has been observed about this novel before, not just to each other's stories, but to each other's silences" (ibid.).

According to the co-director, Marcello Magni, the adaptation of the novel was a complex and challenging endeavour which stretched *Complicité* in new directions:

Complicité often work by throwing up physical images. Moments and short scenes that capture themes and emotions close to the subject of the show. This work is sometimes tangential and indirect. The performers discover their own texts. *Foe* demands a completely different practical approach from us, we have another task: a text written by Mark Wheatley that presents a very specific journey that is remarkably intricate and profound. Through deep and rigorous work analysing the text we want to

understand and respect the meaning and the implications presented in the world of FOE. When we have done this we will discover how to wed the text and the visual images and the words and movement vibrantly together. (21)

It is evident that Magni, Castledine and Wheatley wanted to keep the integrity of a *Complicité* production by incorporating their highly physical style of performance, but needed to integrate this with a highly complex and textually rich novel. Their main principal of work is "seeing what is most alive, integrating text, music, image and action to create surprising, disruptive theatre" (Knapper: n.pag). As will be made evident throughout this thesis, the directors stayed true to *Complicities'* style by carefully incorporating their main principles into their adaptation of *Foe* while also attempting to bring Coetzee's text to the stage. Magni also acknowledges the multiple layers this text encompasses. Not only did they have to consider the narrative structure of Coetzee's novel, they also had to consider to what extent *Robinson Crusoe* would influence their play. He also acknowledges that the adaptation process, by working through these multiple layers, attempts to seamlessly combine "text, visual images and the words and movement" (ibid.) to create a successful adaptation on stage. Altogether, Wheatley's version uses much less of the novel's text than Glazer's version and attempts to convey the book's meaning through visual and other performative means.

Peter Glazer and *Foe*

The second adaptation this thesis will be studying was written by Peter Glazer at the University of Berkley, California. The textual version which this thesis is working with is an undated script provided by Peter Glazer, evidently compiled and revised after the initial performance in 2003, as it contains a series of images taken of the performance. Glazer's play takes the same title as the novel. The play script provided begins with a cover page and the title of the staged adaptation, '*Foe*', adapted by Peter Glazer. It is followed by a few pages of images of the actual performance with captions referring to various characters and act and

scene numbers. Glazer has then added an epigraph which is Adrienne Rich's poem *Diving into the Wreck* (1971). Rich's poem often comes up when studying *Foe*, as they both have very similar themes and imagery, especially when reading *Foe*'s final chapter. Both texts are lyrical and deal with a shipwreck of some sort.

Glazer wrote and directed the play which was performed at the university by the UC Berkley's Department of Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies at the campus's Zellerbach Playhouse in October of that year. Coincidentally, Coetzee won his Nobel Prize one day before the opening of the play. Glazer worked on the play for nearly six years. When asked about why he chose to adapt *Foe* for the stage he said:

[*Foe*] caught me right away. [Coetzee's] language is just so remarkable. He's a brilliant writer, but this is a very unique book... That first paragraph was exciting to me as a writer, but even more, I could hear that language coming from the stage and I really loved that [Coetzee] was playing with such a huge icon of international culture, that being *Robinson Crusoe* [...] With *Foe* [I am] writing alongside the audience's expectations and using them to some extent, which is fascinating because *Crusoe* has such resonance. (Kathleen Maclay: online)

It is clear that Glazer recognised *Foe*'s stage potential. He not only looked at *Foe* in its novel form, but envisioned the story on a stage. Similarly to Wheatley, the novel's relationship with *Robinson Crusoe* intrigued him. He acknowledges the relationship the audience might have with the various intertextual references and he incorporates that into his adaptation, but overall we shall see that Glazer's version attempts to bring much more of Coetzee's novel to the stage in the form of extensive extracts from dialogue and other narrative sections.

1.2 Introduction to Adaptation Theory

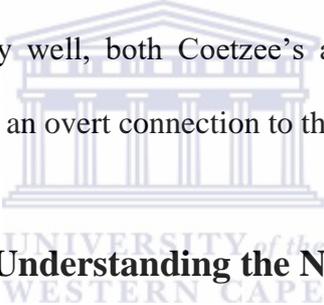
The approach to the plays will be framed by adaptation theory, which will inform the questions that I will be seeking to raise in the study. Primarily, I will be seeking to understand the complex relationship of the primary text to its adaptations more closely, regarding them not only as second-order versions or interpretations of the novel, but also consider the way they may retrospectively construct new readings and understandings of the source text. The second chapter of my thesis will therefore discuss adaptation theory, and one of the key ideas in adaptation theory is that adaptive fidelity to the source text is neither possible nor desirable, but that adaptation is a more complex, multi-layered intertextual and intermedial interplay of fictional material. No adaptation can reproduce every aspect of the original text; the adapter has to think of a way of turning the novel into a two hour stage production. The thesis will thus evaluate whether or not the respective scripts are the basis of successful adaptations or not, both in terms of staged performances in themselves as well as in relation to the source text.

Adaptation theory has focused almost exclusively on adapting novels to films and there is comparatively little scholarship on theatrical adaptation. Theories of film adaptation can be used to evaluate other forms of adaptation, and therefore I will be referring to critics such as Julie Sanders (2006), Robert Stam (2005) and Brian McFarlane (1996). One of the leading scholars on adaptation theory is Linda Hutcheon, whose book, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), explores the idea of adaptation and compares various mediums such as film, theatre, video games and many more. She highlights the advantages and disadvantages of various media, whilst integrating various examples that act as case studies.

Hutcheon also discusses fidelity, a highly controversial idea in adaptation theory. In adaptation theory, the idea of fidelity is a core concept, but has mostly only been discussed in

relation to the novel / film debate. This thesis attempts to discuss the idea of fidelity in a new way by applying it to a stage production. Theatre and film are exceedingly different media, although film adaptation to, some extent historically emerged out of theatre. As a result they pose very different challenges to the task of adapting a novel. This thesis will seek to shed light on the challenges the writers faced when adapting *Foe* for the stage.

The question of fidelity invariably looms large when reading Wheatley's or Glazer's scripts: it is impossible not to compare them to *Foe*. Moreover, these adaptations are more complex as the scripts do not only show the influence of *Foe* but also *Robinson Crusoe*. And *Foe* in itself may be thought to be an adaptation of Defoe's famous novel. Audiences then would not have attended the theatre to see a new play; they would be seeing another version of texts they possibly know very well, both Coetzee's and Defoe's novels. In the stage productions of *Foe* there is indeed an overt connection to the prior text.



1.3 Understanding the Novel

Coetzee's novel *Foe* is made up of four sections. The first section deals with Susan's experiences on the island. The second takes the form of an epistolary novel as it contains Susan's letters to Mr Foe. The first two sections are written from Susan's point of view as she is the narrator. Each paragraph opens with a quotation mark, indicating that Susan is addressing someone; however the quotations marks only come to a close once the entire section has ended. The third and fourth section is told from the perspective of unknown narrators as they investigate the bodies they see before them.

The novel begins with Susan's narration: "At last I could row no further. My hands were blistered. My back was burned, my body ached. With a sigh making barely a splash, I slipped overboard." (5). Susan's story, which we later find out is narrated to Mr Foe, does not

start from the traditional ‘beginning’ - she starts in the middle, recounting events which have a much longer history, a history of which we only hear fragments. Susan is speaking to Mr Foe, a well-known writer, as she wants him to write her story of her island experience. Jane Poyner, author of *J.M Coetzee and the Paradox of Post-colonial Authorship* (2009), states that “[Susan] recognizes that she lacks the art of storytelling, which is the reason she turns to Foe” (98). Nevertheless, Susan Van Zanten Gallagher (1991) points out that Susan has a great interest in storytelling. She states, “[Susan’s] narration of the novel is only one of a number of times that she acts as a storyteller” (173). Similarly, Lewis MacLeod (2006) explains, “[Susan] wants the discursive authority narrative provides. From the outset, she is preoccupied with the production and consumption of narrative. She [does not] directly identify with her environment as Crusoe seems to, but rather thinks in terms of the templates provided” (56). The template being *Robinson Crusoe*, Susan believes her real life was “dull” (81) on the island, which is why she wants a ‘writer’ to write *her* story, and a “dash of colour” (40) and interest to a rather tedious and unexciting experience.

After Susan’s arduous swim toward the “strange island” (ibid.), she lies on the shore, dazed and confused until a man hovers above her. Here, Coetzee introduces the character of Friday; Susan says, “A dark shadow fell upon me, not of a cloud but of a man with a dazzling halo about him” (5). At first, Susan believes that Friday is a cannibal, “[h]e reached out and with the back of his hand touched my arm. He is trying at my flesh, I thought” (6). Susan is afraid of him but when she cannot walk Friday carries her on his back and takes her to his master. Susan says, “I presented myself to Robinson Crusoe” (11). This is the first time in the novel the reader realises that *Foe* has a connection to *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe. That connection becomes more evident as the novel progresses. During Susan’s stay on the island, she comes to get to know its two strange inhabitants more closely and soon realises that life on the island is sterile and without progress. Unlike the hero of Defoe’s novel, Susan finds

that Crusoe has not tried to escape the island in the years he has been there, asking, “Why [...] have you not built a boat and made your escape from this island?” (13). In Coetzee’s version, Crusoe is lazy, does not keep a journal, and makes no effort to improve himself and the island, nor does he seek any adventure. To Crusoe, writing is not important, and Susan wonders if he would

not regret it that you could not bring back with you some record of your years of ship wreck, so that that you have passed though shall not die from memory? [...] would you not wish for a memorial... whoever they maybe, may read and learn about us, and perhaps shed a tear? (16-17)

In the above quote Susan questions Crusoe as to why he never kept a journal or a record of his experiences. This is an intertextual rebuttal of Defoe as *Robinson Crusoe* is a realist novel in which ‘Crusoe’ captures every single moment on the island, unlike Coetzee’s Crusoe who does not believe in keeping a journal and documenting his time on the island. This is the first glimpse of Susan’s obsession with writing and asserting oneself with the act of writing. In this passage we see that Susan believes if there is no written evidence she was on the island then no one can ever prove she was ever there. Crusoe’s response to Susan’s ramblings about journal keeping is simple: “Nothing I have forgotten is worth remembering” (17).

Van Zanten Gallagher believes that section one of *Foe* has an “oral quality [as] it appears to be an unmediated record of a voice in the first person” (186). This oral-like quality is seen throughout the first section of the novel. Susan always addresses her ‘listener’ Mr Foe. This is seen multiple times in section one:

“I have told you how Crusoe was dressed; now let me tell you of his habitation” (9)

“This lettuce, with fish and birds’ eggs, formed our sole diet on the island, as you shall hear.” (9)

“I would gladly now recount to you the history of this singular Crusoe, as I heard it from his own lips” (11)

Later in section one, Susan shifts her focus to Friday: “[m]y first thought was that Friday was like a dog that heeds but one master, yet it was not so” (21). Susan wonders why Friday never speaks. According to Cruso, Friday’s tongue was cut out which is the reason for his silence and his inability to speak. Friday’s silence is one of the themes in *Foe* and his lack of speech is what drives Susan to obsess over him. Susan asks Cruso how many words Friday knows and he answers, “As many as he needs, this is not English, we have no need of a great stock of words” (ibid.). This conversation between them parodies *Robinson Crusoe*’s use of realist narrative techniques, as every little detail is explained Defoe’s novel. As *Foe* progresses we find many instances where Coetzee parodies *Robinson Crusoe*. The section ends with Susan revealing that she is in fact addressing Mr Foe, the writer, “[d]o you think of me, Mr Foe, as Mrs Cruso or as a bold adventuress? [...] as it is I who have disposal of all that Cruso leaves behind, which is the story of his island” (45). The section ends with a final closing quotation mark indicating that Susan’s narrative has ended.

Section two begins with Friday and Susan taking residence in Mr Foe’s house after being rescued by a ship and transported to London. Susan begins writing letters to Mr Foe, explaining the details she would like in *her* story, giving him a possible title, “The female castaway, Being a True Account of a Year Spent on a Desert Island, With Many Strange Circumstances Never Hitherto Related” (67). Susan’s title parodies Defoe’s long title of *Robinson Crusoe* being a castaway. By the title Susan provides it seems that she is aware that a story about an island adventure holds a great cultural authority. This is another way in which Coetzee has referenced *Robinson Crusoe*’s wider popular success as a book: Susan similarly wants her female castaway story to be a best-seller. As the weeks go by Susan continues to write letters to Mr Foe. She speaks about the book she wishes to write and says “[w]hen I reflect on my story I seem to exist only as the one who came, the one who witnessed, the one who longed to be gone: a being without substance, a ghost beside the true

body of Cruso [...] I was as much a body as Cruso” (51). *Foe* emphasises the body, the idea of an actual body existing in the world. According to Barbra Eckstein (1996), “Barton fears that as a storyteller she is part of the story and not a being with a *substance*. Closing her eyes she tried to send Foe a vision of the island which is ‘a substantial body’ (*Foe* 53) and entreats him to return her substance to her” (qtd in Poyner 98). Susan fears that Foe wants to distort and twist her narrative.

A central problem for Susan’s story-telling is the question of Friday’s silence. She attempts to unlock his story through visual means: “I brought out my second sketch. Again there was depicted little Friday, his arms stretched behind him, his mouth wide open; but now the man with the knife was a slave-trader, a tall black man” (69). She draws pictures of Friday and slave – traders, hoping Friday will somehow ‘tell’ her how he lost his tongue. She hopes he will tell her his history. Susan tells Mr Foe:

“I came to be marooned (told by myself to Cruso) and of Cruso's shipwreck and early years on the island (told by Cruso to myself), as well as the story of Friday, which is properly not a story but a puzzle or hole in the narrative (I picture it as a buttonhole, carefully cross-stitched around, but empty, waiting for the button).” (121)

Susan’s narrative is incomplete because she needs Friday’s history and the time he spent on the island with Cruso to complete it. She becomes frustrated as she cannot access his silence and sees his silence as the ‘hole’ in her story, therefore the hole represents the enigma that is Friday. Friday becomes the absence that haunts her story.

Another central problem in the novel’s third section is the uncanny emergence of a young girl who introduces herself as Susan’s long lost daughter, also called ‘Susan Barton’. Coetzee’s use of having a second Susan in the novel appears very uncanny, evidence of intertextuality, where some of Defoe’s other fictions flow into Coetzee’s recasting of *Robinson Crusoe*. According to Spivak, “[i]t is as if the margins of bound books are

themselves dissolved into a general textuality. Coetzee makes the final episode of Defoe's novel *Roxana* flow into this citation of *Robinson Crusoe*. Coetzee's Susan Barton is also Defoe's Roxana, whose first name is Susan. There are other incidental similarities.”(8). It is evident that Coetzee ‘borrows’ yet another character from Defoe, as Susan is inspired from the novel *Roxana* (1724). Coetzee thus plays with the boundaries of textuality by making use of intertextual references to Defoe’s other works.

In section three Susan and Mr Foe both try to deal with the problem of Friday’s silence, and instead of speech, writing suggests itself as an alternate mode of uncovering Friday’s story. Susan recounts that she “drew a ship in full sail, and made him write *ship*, and then began to teach him *Africa*. Africa I represented as a row of palm trees with a lion roaming among them. Was my Africa the Africa whose memory Friday bore within him?” (146). Susan recreates an image of Africa that she knows (probably from travel narratives) and tries to impose it on Friday because she assumes naively that he is from Africa and would like to return ‘home’. According to Richard Begam (1994), Susan’s drawings are “clichés of colonial exoticism” (121). The image of the palm tree and lion is a classic European stereotype of Africa as seen in *Robinson Crusoe*. Coetzee draws explicitly from Defoe's description of the Africa episode in *Robinson Crusoe*. Evidence can be seen in the following extract from the novel: “But all this while I made no allowance for the dangers of such an undertaking, and how I might fall into the hands of savages, and perhaps such as I might have reason to think far worse than the lions and tigers of Africa” (79). Crusoe makes a comparison between the savage creatures in Africa and cannibals. Coetzee makes it explicitly clear that Susan has a colonial voice throughout the novel. Since the novel deals with issues of colonialism, Coetzee plays with the idea of representing Africa as an exoticised ‘other’, as opposed to Europe. He presents them as binary oppositions, in which Africa, through the figure of Friday, is associated with darkness, shadows, muteness, and Europe is associated

with knowledge, power, and enlightenment. M.A Brown (1994) believes “it is as if Friday refuses to be colonised by Susan and Foe, his oppressors” (254) by remaining silent. Susan’s attempts to solve the enigma of Friday through drawing and writing ultimately yields no satisfactory results: “[l]ong and hard I stared at him, till he lowered his eyelids and shut his eyes. Was it possible for anyone, however benighted by a lifetime of dumb servitude, to be as stupid as Friday seemed? Could it be that somewhere within him he was laughing at my efforts to bring him nearer to a state of speech?” (146). Later on Friday shows evidence of resistance when he begins writing on a slate:

“While Foe and I spoke, Friday had settled himself on his mat with the slate. Glancing over his shoulder, I saw he was filling it with a design of, as it seemed, leaves and flowers. But when I came closer I saw the leaves were eyes, open eyes, each set upon a human foot: row upon row of eyes upon feet: walking eyes. I reached out to take the slate, to show it to Foe, but Friday held tight to it. 'Give! Give me the slate, Friday!' I commanded. Whereupon, instead of obeying me, Friday put three fingers into his mouth and wet them with spittle and rubbed the slate clean”. (147)

Reiterating what Brown suggested earlier, Friday shows resistance to Susan as he disobeys her order. Susan is depicted as the oppressor here as she attempts to command Friday and his actions, however Friday denies her access to his writing. Chapter three ends with Susan telling Mr Foe that Friday is “writing, after a fashion...He is writing the letter *o*” and Mr Foe replies with “It is a beginning [...] tomorrow you must teach him *a*” (152).

The final, fourth part of the novel begins by repeating the beginning of the third section: the by now eerily familiar line “The staircase is dark and mean” (153). There are numerous other repetitions and variations in this section, creating a sense of a circular narrative. Coetzee takes the narrative back to the island, but the island no longer looks the same. There is a shift in tone as the ending is represented using dark, gothic-like language. Coetzee introduces the reader with a completely new narrator. This will be explored in depth in Chapter four.

1.3.1 Coetzee and Defoe

In order to ground my analysis of the two adaptations, it is important to contextualise the novel and its critical reception. In 2003 J.M Coetzee won the Nobel Prize for Literature, and in his Nobel lecture he used the most significant occasion of his literary career to return to Defoe. In his speech titled ‘He and His Man’ he spoke about his childhood fascination for the story of *Robinson Crusoe* and explains in great detail how he first heard of Daniel Defoe:

I was a boy of eight or nine reading for the first time a book called *Robinson Crusoe*... I read with the fullest attention this story the story of the dessert island that is turned into an island kingdom. Robinson Crusoe became a figure in my imagination, so I was puzzled when some months later I came across a statement in the children’s encyclopaedia to the effect that someone else besides Robinson Crusoe and Friday was part of the island story, a man with a wig named Daniel Defoe. What was not clear from the children’s encyclopaedia was how exactly this man fitted into the story. The encyclopaedia referred to the man as the author of *Robinson Crusoe* but this made no sense since it said on the very page of *Robinson Crusoe* that Robinson Crusoe told the story himself. (Coetzee, 2003)

It is evident that Defoe has exerted a significant influence on Coetzee’s imagination from an early age. Not only did the novel have an impact on him, the literary aspects behind it resonated with him. Coetzee developed an admiration for Defoe and his narrative method. David Attwell writes in his most recent book, *J.M Coetzee and the Life of Writing* (2015), that “[t]he empirical directness of the eighteenth-century style appeals to Coetzee, but it represents an irrevocable innocence, a mode of nostalgia” (152). Similarly, Kannemeyer (2012) notes,

Coetzee’s appropriation of the tale of an old castaway as the matrix of his new novel can be traced back to his childhood reading of the novel and to his fascination with the journals of early travellers at the Cape that he had discovered in his years in London [...] Even at school, according to *Boyhood*, Coetzee was enthralled by Johann David Wyss’s *The Swiss Family Robinson*, a tale following in the tracks of Defoe’s. (401)

The nature of adventure stories and ship wrecks fascinated Coetzee and form the basic narrative building blocks of *Foe* - however reshaped and reimagined under the sign of a critical postmodern scepticism of the truth value of language, and a postcolonial critique of a history of western violence. Coetzee's interest in the Crusoe narrative did not end with *Foe* but continued. Apart from his Nobel lecture, referred to above, he also wrote the foreword to an Oxford edition of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* published in 1991. In this introduction Coetzee observes "Robinson Crusoe with his parrot and umbrella has become a figure in the collective consciousness of the West, transcending, imitations, and adaptations [...] having pretended once to belong to history, he finds himself in the sphere of myth" (vii). The "myth" which Robinson Crusoe represents is that of the 'modern' man of the Enlightenment Era, who is also a figure critiqued in Coetzee's book, *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (1988). This idea is further substantiated by Lewis Nkosi, a well-known South African novelist and critic, who sees *Robinson Crusoe* as a central cultural text for the myth of superiority of Western European civilization (qtd in Kannemeyer 401). Crusoe, who claims to be the author of *Robinson Crusoe, The Life and Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York Mariner*, symbolises the Western Man of the Enlightenment Era because he created structure, laws and religion on an island where cannibals and chaos reigned. James Joyce (1957) described Crusoe as "[t]he true symbol of the British conquest... cast away on a desert island, in his pocket a knife and a pipe, becomes an architect, a knife-grinder, an astronomer, a baker, a shipwright, a potter, a saddler, a farmer, a tailor, an umbrella-maker, and a clergyman. He is the true prototype of the British colonist" (Joyce online). Coetzee's interest in Robinson Crusoe is partly a deconstruction of the colonial myth, but also an interest in his style.

1.3.2 Setting and Realism

It is important to consider Coetzee's narrative method in more detail, and how his setting and style both mimics but also departs from Defoe's original novel. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe creates an ideal tropical island, as is evident from the abundance of rich vegetation, fresh running water and fruit trees: "I found different fruits, and particularly I found melons upon the ground in great abundance, and grapes upon the trees, the vines had spread indeed over the trees, and the clusters of grapes were now just in their prime, very ripe and rich. [...] I saw here abundance of cocoa trees, oranges and lemon, and citron trees" (64). Crusoe also did not have a problem finding fresh water, "I found after I came about two miles up, that the tide did not flow any higher, and that it was no more than a little brook of running water, very fresh and good" or stumbling upon plants that he could harvest, "I found a great deal of tobacco, green, and growing to a great and very strong stalk [...] I saw large plants of aloes, but did not understand them. I saw several sugar-canes, but wild, and, for want of cultivation, imperfect" (63). Coetzee's island on the other hand is dry, flat and lifeless; this shows that Coetzee rejects the tropical idealised island setting. Evidence of Coetzee's island can be seen in Susan's first description:

[...] this island on which I was cast away was quite another place; a great rocky hill with a flat top, rising sharply from the sea on all side except one, dotted with drab bushes that never flowered and never shed their leaves. Off the island grew beds of brown seaweed which, borne ashore by the waves, gave off a noisome stench and sported swarms of large pale fleas. (7)

As illustrated above, Coetzee creates an island with a reduced tropicity that is less than ideal. Although there are non-realist elements in the novel, particularly in the later sections, the island itself is written according to realist conventions. According to Ian Watt (1957) the origins of realism can be traced back to the 17th century. Literary realism is the representation of the ordinary life, particularly those of the middle class, presenting every

banal detail of their lives. Mulder (2012) defines realism as “a mode of writing that gives the impression of recording or ‘reflecting’ faithfully an actual way of life ... with close attention to the details of physical setting and to the complexities of social life” (16).

Coetzee’s detailed construction of the setting follows a mode of ‘realism’ that he discovered in Defoe’s writing. In an interview with Joanna Scott (1997) Coetzee said, “[Defoe invested] just as much energy into faking *Robinson Crusoe*” (87). Therefore Defoe had never seen Robinson Crusoe’s island, but yet could “fake” it as a realistic setting, convincing readers of its geographic actuality.

Foe does not emphasise setting, place, and landscape descriptions like in Defoe’s novel. His space is highly detailed as he provides rich descriptions of his surroundings, thoughts and actions. Susan’s representation of the island is also highly descriptive: as the novel progresses the realist elements seem to decrease until the end of the novel contains mere fragments of a realistic novel. Defoe’s fictional technique was described as follows in Elizabeth Costello (2003):

Supply the particulars, allow the significations to emerge of themselves. A procedure pioneered by Daniel Defoe. Robinson Crusoe, cast up on the beach, looks around for his shipmates. But there are none. ‘I never saw them afterwards, or any sign of them,’ says he, ‘except three of their hats, one cap, and two shoes that were not fellows.’ Two shoes, not fellows: by not being fellows, the shoes have ceased to be footwear and become proofs of death, torn by the foaming seas off the feet of drowning men and tossed ashore. No large words, no despair, just hats and caps and shoes. (13)

Coetzee’s method follows Defoe’s compositional technique closely by inserting concrete “particulars” or small details into the narrative so as to create the effect of verisimilitude. Susan describes the island the way Crusoe describes his:

I saw no snakes, but lizards came out in the heat of the day to sun themselves, some small and agile, others large and clumsy, with blue ruffs about their gills which they would flare out when alarmed, and hiss, and glare. I caught one of them in a bag and tried to tame it, feeding it flies; but it would not take dead meat, so at last I set it free.

Also there were apes (of whom I will say more later) and birds, birds everywhere: not only flocks of sparrows (or so I called them) that flitted all day chirruping from bush to bush, but on the cliffs above the sea great tribes of gulls and mews and gannets and cormorants, the rocks were white with their droppings. (7-8)

She describes her surroundings in great detail. While Coetzee incorporates a realist approach to the representation of the island he also parodies Crusoe's island when Susan reveals: "[f]or readers reared on travellers' tales, the words *desert isle* may conjure up a place of soft sands and shady trees where brooks run to quench the castaway's thirst and ripe fruit falls into his hand, where no more is asked of him than to drowse the days away till a ship calls to fetch him home. But the island on which I was cast away was quite another place" (7).

It is however also interesting to note that Coetzee's island conjures imagery of parts of South Africa, where Coetzee grew up and lived a large portion of this life. His island is in this sense less fictional, being uncharacteristic of a typical travel adventure novel, but possibly strongly rooted in biography. Attwell explains that Coetzee "imagined setting the novel on a rocky island of the coast off Namibia; then he cajoled himself into imagining the island as the Cape Point Nature Reserve, just south of Cape Town" (153). Ultimately though, the actual island setting is unknown, the way Coetzee wanted it to be. There was undoubtedly pressure put on him to set his novels in South Africa, given the country's political state at the time. Coetzee explains: "[t]hey wanted me to be a realist. They wanted my books to be about, specifically, to be about South Africa, about social relations in that country. They check my text against what they have picked up in the popular media about SA" (qtd in Attwell: 158). Coetzee clearly resisted this notion of direct political relevance, remarking that he has "always written best from an [adversarial] position" (qtd in Attwell: 158). The choice to set *Foe* in a remote (an overtly fictional) location far removed from South Africa, but also bearing some traces of its landscape, was thus intentional on Coetzee's part.

1.3. 3 The Novel and History

In his book, *J.M Coetzee: South Africa and the Politics of Writing* (1993) Attwell discusses Coetzee's work in great detail. In chapter four: Writing in 'the Cauldron of History', Attwell discusses how *Foe* was placed within South African history. Similarly to MacLeod, Atwell claims that in Coetzee's later fictions he "turns to the situation of writing itself" (88). Thus Coetzee is more interested in writing about writing, which is evident in *Foe*. Begam validates this idea as he says "[*Foe*] becomes... an exploration of *écriture*: a piece of writing which is in itself as a piece of writing" (114). *Foe*, the novel, is based on another novel and within *Foe* there are a few stories taking place, namely that of Susan's, Friday's story, Mr Foe's and the final chapter where we are introduced to an unknown narrator who picks up another story. It is clear that *Foe* is made up of frames that are woven into one another.

It is important to consider the time in which Coetzee wrote *Foe*. In the mid-1980s, South Africa was at the height of Apartheid and a year before its publication, in 1986, "P.W Botha proclaimed a state of emergency in parts of South Africa" (Kannemeyer: 400). According to Van Zanten Gallagher, "[w]hile many reviewers praise his work for its universal themes, Coetzee's academic critics often manifest an underlying uneasiness about his works' political implications that usually can be traced to their presuppositions about the relationship of literature and life" (11). Coetzee had just previously published *Life & Times of Michael K* (1984), a novel that was marked by realism and an explicit engagement with the deteriorating political situation in South Africa, though ultimately avoiding taking a direct political stance. Kannemeyer suggests that for "Coetzee, having been accused by Gordimer and other commentators of a lack of political commitment in *Life & Times of Michael K*, now to produce an abstruse and even more elusive novel, which on the face of it had no explicit

bearing on South African problems, could be seen as grist to the mill of his critics” (400-1). *Foe* appears to have no connection to Apartheid or South African history. Attwell somewhat debunks this notion when he concludes that “Michael K presents us, finally with an image to resistance in the open-endedness of writing, and it chooses as its field of operation not the transcendental framework of the making or unmaking of history but the social exchange of literature within a particular cultural context” (103). Coetzee does this similarly with *Foe* as he takes a novel with a momentous cultural history and turns it on its head. Coetzee wrote *Foe* when most other South African writers, for example Gordimer, wrote about South African history and the political struggle. Coetzee did something with *Foe* that no other novel of its time did; he looked back in time and made a European novel about colonialism and adventure relevant to South African history. According to Attwell, “Coetzee positions *Foe* in the discursive field of postcoloniality, but he does so in peculiarly South African terms” (103).

But many prominent writers at the time criticized Coetzee for his choice of subject matter for his novels. According to Gillian Dooley, author of *J.M. Coetzee and the Power of Narrative* (2010), “[i]n the 1980s, when it seemed that the situation in South Africa would never improve, debate raged about responsibility of South African novelists to act as witnesses to and opponents of Apartheid” (7). When Nadine Gordimer, a prominent South African novelist, reviewed *Life & Times of Michael K* in the *New York Review* she said “While it is implicitly and highly political, Coetzee’s heroes are those who ignore history, not make it” (8). Coetzee responded by saying “One writes the books one wants to write” (8). Coetzee further elaborated on this in his address in 1987 titled *The Novel Today*. He says, “in South Africa the colonisation of the novel by the discourse of history is proceeding with alarming rapidity [owing to the] intense ideological pressure [of the time]” (9). When asked by Tony Morphet (1987) whether *Foe* is a retreat from “the South African situation”, Coetzee

admits that “*Foe* is a retreat from the South African situation, but only from the situation in a narrow temporal perspective. It is not a retreat from the subject of colonialism or from the questions of power” (462). There are no direct connections one can make from the novel to South Africa, the novel has similar themes woven between the pages. Coetzee subtly incorporates the themes such as power and colonialism within the novel. He does this by not directly referencing South Africa and its turbulent time, but by taking a literary European hero and finding similar themes, such as power struggles, loss of voice and colonialism.

However, it could also be argued that the silencing of the black subject could refer more directly to South Africa, where during Apartheid many black people were marginalised from public life, or were victims of state oppression such as imprisonment, banning or censorship. Similarly, Poyner has said “[i]n *Foe* it is the silence of Friday’s tongue that gradually overwhelms the narrative. The novel was penned at the height of Apartheid oppression [...] so Friday’s muteness readily associates itself with the silencing of South Africa’s black peoples who not least were denied the rights of free citizens and a voice in matters of the state” (104). Coetzee could be understood to comment on this issue by depicting Friday without a voice. Likewise, Van Zanten Gallagher notes that, “[*Foe* was] written at a time when black South Africans were not permitted to write their own lives – either politically, socially, or fictionally – *Foe* speaks to the realities of that silencing in its revision of the legendary story of *Robinson Crusoe* [...]” (169). Neville Alexander, a freedom fighter during Apartheid, has said that “[t]he apparent inaccessibility of Friday’s world to the Europeans in this story is an artist’s devastating judgement of the crippling anti-humanist consequence of colonialism and racism on the self-confident white world” (qtd in Poyner: 108). Although Coetzee has never admitted to this, one can draw connections between the mute Friday and oppressed black people of South Africa.

1.3.4 Gender Revisionism

In *Foe*, Coetzee then knowingly re-writes a foundational Western narrative, and by destabilising the original he engages in historical revisionism. Coetzee looks back into the textual origins of a culturally significant and canonical novel and questions the nature of the novel and its claims to be ‘true’ fiction. Similarly Smit-Marais (2012) argues that,

[i]n *Foe*, various textual boundaries - most notably the boundary between history and fiction - are gradually dissolved, thereby altering the shape and form of the castaway novel. Coetzee achieves this result by inserting and foregrounding the stories of characters Defoe either omitted or suppressed in his definitive castaway text, namely a female castaway Susan Barton, and the mute, morose slave Friday. (100)

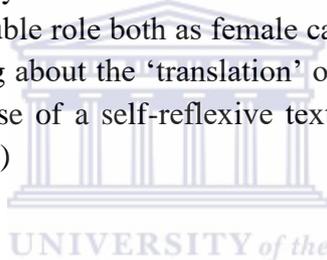
This sets up the first major change Coetzee makes to *Foe*. Unlike *Robinson Crusoe*, *Foe* has a female protagonist named Susan Barton. Women only play a minute role in *Robinson Crusoe*. It is an extremely masculine text. According to Smit-Marais,

Defoe employs various writing strategies that serve to highlight the novel’s masculinist and imperialist underpinnings. An overtly masculinist text, the story portrays how one man gains power and control over other men by gaining power and control over a geographical locale. Women are mostly absent and when they do feature in the story, they are peripheral, such as Crusoe’s mother, the widow, and even his own wife. (32)

Evidence of this can be seen in the final paragraph of the final chapter of the novel when Crusoe says: “...I married, and that not either to my disadvantage or dissatisfaction; and had three children, two sons and one daughter: but my wife dying, and my nephew coming home with good success from a voyage to Spain, my inclination to go abroad, and his importunity, prevailed and engaged me to go in his ship” (298). The fact that he married is not much of importance to him as he merely states it in passing. We learn about the marriage to his wife and her death in one single sentence. Similarly Spivak says, “[*Robinson Crusoe*]

had no room for women. There was the typecast mother; the benevolent widow whose role it was to play the benevolent widow; the nameless wife who was married and died in the conditional mode in one sentence so that Crusoe could leave for the East Indies” (7). The lack of a female voice is clear and Spivak raises the question in relation to *Foe*: “[w]ho is this female narrator of *Robinson Crusoe*?” (ibid.). She then points out that when Susan Barton assumes the role of the narrator, “Coetzee's focus is on gender” (ibid.), unlike *Robinson Crusoe*. Ina Gräbe (1989) draws attention to the fact that Susan is the primary focalizer of *Foe*:

This female castaway who is simultaneously participant in the events and focalizer of the fictional world provides a means whereby the historical fictional world may be invaded and the basic story thus transformed into a newly focalized narrative. In this regard Susan Barton's double role both as female castaway and as a feminist focalizer is instrumental in bringing about the 'translation' of a traditional 'travellers' tale into the contemporary discourse of a self-reflexive text, where readers' expectations are continually undercut. (152)



Similarly to Smit-Marais, Gräbe believes that adding the character of Susan into this masculine text and genre (travellers' tales) gradually dissolves the line between history and fiction of the classic castaway novel. Readers are faced with a re-envisioned genre when Susan is first introduced as the focalizer. Not only does Susan become the focalizer but Crusoe the male figure of the novel is cast aside, as Poyner illustrates:

Shipwrecked on a desolate and unidentified island inhabited only by Crusoe and Friday. Barton is designated the main narrator of *Foe* [...] Whilst Crusoe, the essential colonizer in *Robinson Crusoe*, is relegated to the margins of Coetzee's story: not only is he supplanted by Barton as narrator and author of the adventure, he also dies in the early stages of the narrative, never making the ideologically all-important journey home. (92)

Likewise, Van Zanten Gallagher points out that Susan has been written out of *Robinson Crusoe* in the same way that women have been written out of literary history, but in Coetzee's fictional world she appears and relates her own story (186).

1.3.5 *Foe* and Metafiction

According to Richard Begam, Coetzee writes *Foe* "by adopting postmodern strategies, which he has then used for postcolonial purposes" (112). Coetzee uses the technique of metafiction to write a novel that looks at the issues of post-colonialism using Friday as his central figure and at the same time creating a parody of not only the actual novel of *Robinson Crusoe* but of Crusoe himself. Just as Coetzee's novel allows us to see the occlusion of gender in Defoe's novel, *Foe* also allows us insight into the distorted racial relationships in the source text. Several critics such as Attwell and Smit-Marais have drawn attention to the way Coetzee critiques settler - native relationships, and the assumptions around whiteness and Western civilizational superiority. Poyner notes,

As in Defoe's version, Friday is Crusoe's slave, but the nature of this colonial encounter departs from its source in a number of important ways. *Robinson Crusoe* provides us with the colonial encounter [...] Friday famously subjects himself by placing his head under Crusoe's foot. When Barton arrives on the island in *Foe* Friday is by now enslaved, colonial violence already done, with the effect, problematically, of essentializing Friday as a slave because we know nothing of his life before. Choosing to do away with the myth of beginnings, Coetzee refocuses the story on the silences that envelop Friday. (93)

Friday is represented as the slave figure by Susan. Throughout the novel she imposes her authority over him and wants to know his story. Susan wants to take him home to 'Africa' but she also wants to write an adventure novel about her time spent on the island. Susan takes over the role of 'colonialist' by asserting her power on him.

J. M Coetzee's *Foe* looks at the relation between fact and fiction by taking a well-known text such as *Robinson Crusoe* and creates another story which draws attention to the connection between fiction and reality. The reader is made aware of a story within a story. As Patricia Waugh (1984) points out "[c]ontemporary metafiction draws attention to the fact that life, as well as novels, is constructed through frames, and that it is finally impossible to know where one frame ends and another begins" (29). Through adaptations, as I will show in this thesis, additional frames are added, further adding complexity to Coetzee's metafictional experimentation. *Foe* was created on the basis of *Robinson Crusoe* and the two adaptations were created on the basis of *Foe*. It creates a complex situation with multiple layers. Similarly Lewis Macleod (2006) states that: "[a] novel such as *Foe*, for example, [is not] always a story; of its own so much as a metafictional critique of narrative practise itself and one that forces the reader to consider how fiction (a collection of made-up sentences describing events that never happened) might comment on the truth of real (political, social, psychological, emotional) life" (1). I agree with Macleod as the novel is indeed a critique of narrative practise. Susan wishes to create a 'best-selling' adventure story, she does not want to write one. The ending of *Foe* is also a critique on narrative practice. A traditional novel has a beginning, middle and an end. In the traditional, realist novel the end must provide the reader with a sense, of solace or knowing. In addition, it must also make sense which *Foe*'s end does not. The novel, ends with questions; the end is disjointed from the rest of the novel forcing the reader to go back and reread and find their own conclusion and derive their own meaning. Coetzee has a resistance to closure which is why *Foe* has a circular narrative.

The two theatre adaptations, I would suggest, yield a different response from its viewers. Similarly to a novel, a play has a beginning, middle and end. With that said, how would a director and playwright adapt a novel that makes use of a circular narrative? In the subsequent chapters, I will be analysing the scripts and discuss how Glazer and Wheatley

dealt with the circular narrative and how they represented the final chapter of the novel on stage.

1.4 Chapter Outline

The second chapter of this thesis is titled 'Theatre and Adaptation'. This chapter will be discussing adaptation theory with a focus on theatrical adaptation. It will be discussing various concepts and ideas such as the relationship between adaptation and the on-going debate on fidelity. This chapter will also look at the constraints of both novel and stage; the discussion will take a more theoretical approach whereas the subsequent chapters will take a more interpretive approach. Chapter three is titled 'Introduction to the Adaptations'. This chapter will be introducing the two adaptations this thesis will be studying. I will be identifying and discussing various terms such as didascalía. I will also be discussing the adaptation's theatre styles and doing an in-depth textual analysis on the opening of each play. The chapter will also comprise of a discussion on the stage directions and how each adaptor interpreted the locale of *Foe*.

Chapter four will be a critical analysis of both the novel and the adaptations respective endings. It will begin with a discussion on the ending of the novel and lead into a discussion on the adaptation's endings. It will be making use of close analyses of extracts from the endings and also apply the adaptive processes identified in chapter two. Chapter five will serve as the conclusion, providing a synopsis of the overall thesis. It will highlight the main points made in previous chapters by discussing the findings and final thoughts on adaptation theory and the two theatrical adaptations of *Foe*.

Chapter Two Theatre and Adaptation

2.1. Overview of Chapter

This chapter will be exploring adaptation theory with a focus on theatre adaptation. It will begin with a brief discussion on theatre and how this medium poses particular challenges to adaptation of prose works. This chapter will then move to a discussion on adaptation theory by discussing how adaptation studies as a field of literary-cultural criticism has recently evolved. While it will take more of a theoretical approach, unlike the chapters to follow which will be more of a close reading and analyses of the adaptations and novel, it will also be drawing connections between adaptation theory and the two adaptations which this thesis is based on namely Glazer's and Wheatley's. I will be consulting work by Marisa Keuris (1996), Linda Hutcheon (2006), Brian McFarlane (1996), Robert Stam (2005), Jean Mitry (1971) and Julie Sanders (2006) as my primary sources but also refer to the work of Thomas Leitch (2003), and Bert Cardullo (2012). Thereafter this chapter will be discussing the concept of time and space within adaptation, particularly how time and space is used when adapting a novel to the stage.

2.2 An Introduction to Theatre

Marisa Keuris, author of *The Play* (1996), suggests that “the reader of a play is always aware of being confronted with a text that has been written for another medium [...] in other words, one that has been written to be performed. This characteristic of a play may be called ‘performance orientation’ and is an aspect that influences all elements of a play” (ix). The performance orientation is something that needs to be kept in mind when analysing a theatre script. According to Yvette Hutchison & Kole Omotoso:

Drama is fundamentally different from other genres because it is not exclusively focussed on the word, but is a performing art: it is a living medium. Thus it requires a particular kind of reading. Many of the significant elements of the form are visual and aural as well as verbal, and include the décor, costume, props, lighting, tone of voice, pace of dialogue, extraneous noise or music, gesture, use of space and movement and silence. The effect of these elements are not explicitly described in the play text, but must be actively and imaginatively constructed by the reader of the play. (95)

It is clear from the above that theatre can be interpreted in two different ways. The first way is reading the play script and the second is being a part of the audience and watching the play. Keuris explains that “[a] reader of the written play has more control over his reception of the text (the reading process) and can also make a closer study of all the literary allusions found in it” (80). She further states that a close relationship between the text and the performance exists: “The text precedes the performance and can be studied as an autonomous text” (ibid.). This study is primarily a textual study and not based on any analysis of live performance. However, my reading of the script certainly will attempt to engage with its potentiality as a performance. Reading and analysing the play as a written script yields different insights than watching a live performance. Both forms of engagement with theatrical works have strengths: reading the text closely and carefully allows critical insights that may not emerge in the performance of the work. Conversely, the staged experience brings multiple other aspects into play, including lighting, music, acting and stage design.

Likewise, Keuris reminds us that “[w]hile the reader of a text receives and interprets words (verbal signs) only when reading a written play, the reception of a performance by a spectator is more complex” (76). Hutchison and Omotoso also argue that a play is a total experience as there are many elements that make up a theatre production:

[t]he spectator sees the actor who is representing the character (with his or her costume, facial expression and gestures etc.) as well as the set and lighting techniques,

and any other aspect which is visually presented on stage. All the aspects that the spectator sees and interprets are called *visual signs*. The spectator also hears things all the time, for example the dialogue of the characters, and any sound effects used during the performance. All the aspects that the spectator hears and interprets are called *auditive signs*. (76)

There is thus a vital difference between watching a play and reading a play. The textual analysis will be entirely different to the analysis of a performance. Especially when one adds the element of an adaptation, there is essentially a third ‘invisible’ level of interpretation. While watching the performance of such a play, the viewer would also have in mind the reading experience of the novel, and evaluate the play in terms of his/her prior knowledge of the text. This third level essentially deals with the process of adaptation, the shift that occurs from the ‘original’ to the adaptation.



2.3 Adaptation Theory

Linda Hutcheon (2006) calls the phenomenon of adaptation “ubiquitous” (xvi) which means that adaptations are everywhere and they are essentially omnipresent in contemporary culture. Many films, series, theatrical productions, musicals and other artworks are re-imaginings of previously published texts, re-working often familiar stories in new genres and media. ‘To adapt’ is not a new cultural phenomenon; adaptations have existed for centuries.

Adaptation theory has focused almost exclusively on adapting novels to film and there is comparatively little scholarship on theatrical adaptation. Hutcheon describes adaptation as “[a]n acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works” (8). Glazer and Wheatley openly acknowledge their adaptations as an adaptation of Coetzee’s *Foe*, as they use the same title and follow the plot closely. Furthermore, Hutcheon describes adaptations as “[a] creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging and [a]n extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work” (ibid.). Hutcheon’s perspective is useful here although

both plays engage more in appropriation and intertextual engagement rather than a form of salvaging. Both Glazer's and Wheatley's works are in Hutcheon's terms "deliberate, announced, and extended revisitations of prior works" (xiv). One must also be mindful given the creative shifts which both Glazer and Wheatley work with as they are not simply replications or reproductions, but rather "repetitions with variation" (Lieblein 2).

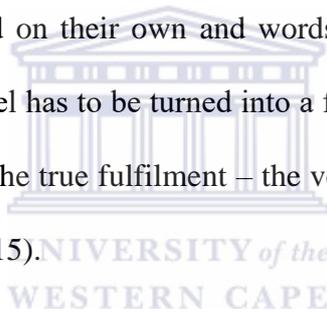
It is important to note where an adaptation originates. Hutcheon elaborates by saying:

If we know that prior text, we always feel its presence shadowing the one we are experiencing directly. When we call a work an adaptation, we openly announce its overt relationship to another work or works. It is what Gérard Genette would call a text in the "second degree" (1982: 5), created and then received in relation to a prior text. This is why adaptation studies are so often comparative. (6)

An adaptation will therefore always have a relationship with the 'original' but the extent of that relationship depends on the adaptor. Both Glazer and Wheatley's adaptation will always have the shadow of Coetzee's canonical work hanging over them, however they 'openly announce' their relationship with Coetzee's *Foe* and therefore embrace "the shadow" as opposed to treating it as an ominous expectation that controls and determines the reception of the adaptation. By acknowledging the relationship between *Foe* and the stage versions, both Glazer and Wheatley do not allow Coetzee's work, as Hutcheon says, "to haunt their adaptation" (ibid.).

Much of adaptation theory has engaged with film, but several of the key ideas involved in cinematic adaptation can be applied to theatrical adaptation. Brian McFarlane's book, titled *Novel to Film* (1996) concerns itself exclusively with film adaptation. He suggests that "[a]s soon as the cinema began to see itself as a narrative entertainment, the idea of ransacking the novel [...] for source material got underway, and the process has continued more or less unabated for ninety years" (7). The novel has inspired film for decades, producing a sometimes complex and uneasy relationship between these two media. Similarly

Hutcheon notes that Virginia Woolf, as early as 1926, commented on the fact that a literary art work can be transposed to “a new visual medium” (qtd in Hutcheon: 3), but also called cinema a “parasite’ and literature its ‘prey’ and ‘victim’” (ibid.). McFarlane would possibly agree with Woolf in her negative assessment of film adaptation as he argues that “literature will always have axiomatic superiority over any adaptation of it because of its seniority as an art form” (4). It is evident that the advancement of cinema was not always received positively, particularly when novels began to form the basis of films, but Greg Jenkins (1997) has suggested that “adaptation is a presence that is woven into the very fabric of film culture” (qtd in Bane: vii). Once a novel has been adapted for the cinema it seems to gain recognition and validation. Similarly to Woolf, Anthony Burgess (1975) critiques this validation as he believes that novels should stand on their own and words should retain their meaning. He says that “[e]very bestselling novel has to be turned into a film, the assumption being that the book itself whets an appetite for the true fulfilment – the verbal shadow turned into light, the word made flesh” (qtd in Elliott: 15).



Burgess mocks the notion that once a novel has been adapted for the cinema it gains popularity that would not be possible without the film adaptations. The book is the starting point and a film version is regarded as the end goal; however, this is a skewed way to view novels as they should be an autonomous work without a film version shadowing over it. Similarly Robert Stam (2005) expresses a related view on the relationship between novel and film, pointing out that “[f]ilmic embodiment is seen as making literature obsolescent, retroactively revealing mere words as somehow weak and spectral and insubstantial” (4). It is clear that once a novel has been adapted for film it may lose its prestige as a written text but may gain an entirely new type of popularity. The novel is seen as a ‘shadow’ that looms above the film as it increases in popularity and eventually the novel loses its prestige. Surprisingly, Hutcheon points out that 85 percent of all Oscar-winning Best Pictures are

indeed adaptations (4). Most notable films that were adapted from novels that won Oscars are *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy written by J. R. R. Tolkien winning a total seventeen Oscars. Other notable literary classics adapted for the screen include *The English Patient* (1992) by Michael Ondaatje in 1996, *The Great Gatsby* (1925) by F. Scott Fitzgerald which was adapted in 1974 and again more recently in 2013. On the other hand, Hutcheon believes that film adaptation has a bad reputation, explaining that fans want their films to be an exact copy of their favourite and beloved novels; she refers to this as “thwarted expectations” (4). People can be disillusioned by the adaptation process and not realise that adapting a novel to a film is a highly complex enterprise.

Adaptation as a process

Hutcheon identifies three “perspectives” that adaptations can be looked at. Firstly, she notes that an adaptation is “an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works” (7). She further states that this “‘transcoding’ can involve a shift of medium (a poem to a film) or genre (an epic to a novel), or a change of frame and therefore context: telling the same story from a different point of view, for instance, can create a manifestly different interpretation” (7-8). This idea that Hutcheon raises is an important one. It is imperative to know that adaptation involves a ‘shift’. An adaptation may look at the same text but when the medium changes, that entire meaning of the text will inevitably change. The notion of creating a different interpretation is imperative to this study as I will investigate whether or not the two stage versions of *Foe* do indeed provide various interpretations of the novel.

Secondly, Hutcheon notes that: “as *a process of creation*, the act of adaptation always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation” (8). Throughout her book, Hutcheon emphasises the fact that the act of adaptation is a process. An adaptation has to go through numerous steps in order to be called an ‘adaptation’. The first step which Hutcheon points out

is that the adaptor has to re-interpret the original (in his or her chosen medium) and once that is done, the process of re-creation can begin. When the process of adaptation occurs, the adaptor is essentially re-creating something new out of something old. She further states, “[t]o interpret an adaptation *as an adaptation* is, in a sense, to treat it as what Roland Barthes calls, not a ‘work,’ but a ‘text,’ a plural ‘stereophony of echoes, citations, references’ (qtd. in Hutcheon 160). Although adaptations are also aesthetic objects in their own right, it is only as inherently double or multilaminated works that they can be theorized *as adaptations*” (ibid.). Therefore the definition of an adaptation is complex and involves complex intertextual relations.

Hutcheon’s third ‘perspective’ involves the “process of reception” (ibid.). She suggests that “adaptation is a form of Intertextuality: we experience adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation” (ibid.). Hutcheon is fundamentally saying that all our knowledge (of everything we have ever read, watched, listened to or learned about) will be activated when we encounter an adaptation. For instance, when one reads Coetzee’s *Foe* for the first time we immediately think of *Robinson Crusoe*, because of the ‘Robinsonade’ culture. At the same time that an adaptation is a form of intertextuality, various people will receive the adaptation differently depending on their knowledge of the world. If someone came across a copy of *Foe*, but had never read *Robinson Crusoe* or encountered the cultural history surrounding *Robinson Crusoe*, that person would in fact read and interpret the novel very differently from one who has knowledge of *Robinson Crusoe*. It would largely depend on the individual, however I agree with Hutcheon’s notion that adaptation is indeed a form of intertextuality.

Fidelity

Since adaptation studies are a relatively new field of study one must consider the way in which one can analyse an adaptation. What criteria are used to judge the adaptation? To what extent do we compare the adaptive work to its original work? If so, how would one do this? These are just a few of the many questions that arise when one embarks on creating an adaptation. Fidelity is a concept often used in adaptation studies and can often help answer some of the above questions. In adaptation theory, fidelity is a controversial topic that has widely been critiqued as a limited way to understand the complex relationship between ‘original’ and transposition. The question nevertheless remains: how can one study an adaptation, if one does not consider fidelity? In short, fidelity deals with the ‘originality’ and ‘faithfulness’ of an adaptation.

McFarlane suggests that “[d]iscussion on adaptation theory has been bedevilled by the fidelity issue, no doubt ascribable in part to the novel’s coming first, in part to the ingrained sense of literature’s greater responsibility in traditional critical circles” (8). This idea of fidelity and whether or not a film or theatre production should remain faithful to its original work (the novel) is debateable amongst many scholars. McFarlane points to questions which are often asked, such as “Is it really ‘Jamesian’? Is it ‘true to Lawrence? Does it capture Dickens?” (8). These are often questions one asks when referring to an adaptation of any kind, and in this case we could ask ‘is this play true to J.M Coetzee?’ ‘Does it remain faithful to *Foe*?’. But these questions also possibly indicate a limiting approach to adaptation, hence the contentiousness of the idea of fidelity in adaptation theory. Fidelity assumes an unproblematic idea or ideal of originality and faithfulness. Should the adaptations be replicas of the original or should they rather be understood as attempted re-imaginings?

As we will see in subsequent chapters, both Wheatley's and Glazer's adaptations are versions that orient themselves towards the source text, but they also make several changes which alter the original: Glazer, for example, puts three distinct Susans on stage, thereby triplicating Coetzee's central character and foregrounding her centrality (but possibly also alluding to the doubleness of Susan Barton in the novel); similarly Wheatley adds dialogue and scenes to his play that are not found in the novel.

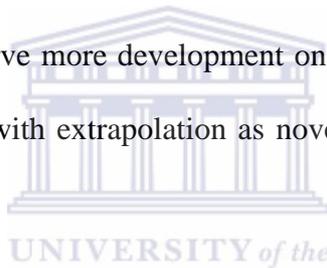
A simplistic notion of fidelity, as espoused by Thomas Leitch (2003), is not always the most effective way to judge an adaptation. Leitch believes, somewhat problematically, that fidelity is the most effective way to judge or analyse adaptations: "[f]idelity is the most appropriate criterion to use in [analysing] adaptations" (161). He develops this claim by saying that even if the adaptations are a remake in the same medium, their most careful attempts to replicate the original will always be an 'inferior' version. However, in recent scholarship, fidelity has increasingly been seen as controversial. The idea of fidelity is fast becoming obsolete; with the increase of adaptation scholarship, it is clear that fidelity is not the only way to view an adaptation. Julie Sanders (2006), for example, argues one should not study an adaptation and judge it according to its faithfulness to the original. "The sheer possibility of testing fidelity in any tangible way is surely also in question when we are dealing with labile texts [for example] a Shakespeare play" (20). She proposes that "[a]daptation studies are, then, not about making polarized value judgments, but about analysing process, ideology and methodology" (ibid.). According to Stam (2000), "[i]t is important to move beyond the moralistic and judgemental ideal of 'fidelity'. At the same time, we have to acknowledge at the outset that 'fidelity', however discredited theoretically, does retain a grain of experiential truth" (4).

In a subsequent study, Stam (2005) proposes another way of dealing with adaptation; instead of using an unproblematised idea of fidelity, it is preferable to see adaptation "as a

matter of the source novel's hypotext being transformed by a complex series of operations: selection, amplification, concretization, actualization, critique, extrapolation, analogization, popularization and reculturization (19). It is useful to look at Stam's ideas more carefully, showing what these terms mean, and what their specific implications for the adaptation enterprise are. The process of *selection* is imperative for adaptation studies as it allows the adaptor to emphasise certain parts of the original work, but also ignore other parts. The process of selection would largely depend on both the adaptor and the medium into which he is adapting. The limitations of the medium would also play a role in the selection process. *Amplification* means that some parts are exaggerated or highlighted; it can also mean that some parts are made weaker. Again, this would largely depend on the medium the adaptor is working with. *Concretization* means that certain elements in the novel are left just as ideas and they are not necessarily important, but others need to be made concrete. This is especially true in theatrical terms, as ideas are visible and actualised on the stage. In a novel, small details such as conveying a character's emotions are easily described; on stage it is not as easy without the character's actually saying 'I am sad', therefore a dramatization needs to take place. These details are given concrete specificity on the stage. One of the key ways in which speech is concretized on stage is intonation. According to J.L Styan (1960), "[w]ords that possess any degree of feeling, lose some of their force if spoken without intonation. The movement of the voice is as restless and as meaningful as the movement of the emotions, and is inseparable from them" (86). If the novel's dialogue is read by the reader, the way that reader interprets the text is signalled by the language or verbal signifiers. In theatre the dialogue is spoken by the actor and therefore "if the actor does not listen for the exact intonations supplied by the particular arrangement of the text, he will easily be disloyal to his

author²” (87). The audience will be able to sense the tone of the dialogue using the actor’s intonation as an auidial cue.

As Stam also suggests, adaptation can serve as a *critique* of a novel, and though neither Wheatley nor Glazer’s plays are critical or revisionist adaptations of Coetzee’s novel. *Foe* is in itself already readable as a critique of an original text, namely *Robinson Crusoe*. As has been discussed previously, Coetzee’s novel is a critique of *Robinson Crusoe*, appropriating it at the same time as creating a new novel. Stam’s concept of *extrapolation* alerts us to the ways in which various elements within a novel might serve as a point of departure to move into new areas that are only maybe hinted at in the novel. This would again depend on the medium of adaptation. For theatre this is important as the adaptor can choose which sections in the novel deserve more development on stage. The limitations of both the novel and stage are highlighted with extrapolation as novels can achieve certain things that the stage cannot, and vice versa.



Stam also refers to a process in adaptation that he calls *analogization*. This means that the adaptor chooses themes/elements in the novel and finds equivalents for the adaptation. For example, a theme that runs throughout the novel might not work as well on stage. Therefore the adaptor finds an equivalent that would work effectively for the stage medium³. The last term that Stam highlights is *popularization*, which means that through the adaptation a more complex and possibly inaccessible literary text is made accessible to a general audience.

Similarly to Stam, Sanders believes that “[a]daptation can be a transpositional practice, casting a specific genre into another generic mode, an act of re-vision in itself. It can

² ‘Author’ here, would refer to the author of the adaptation (Glazer or Wheatley) and not the author of the original text (Coetzee).

³ Stam’s idea of analogization is discussed in greater detail in chapter three and four of this thesis, when it is applied to both Glazer and Wheatley’s adaptation.

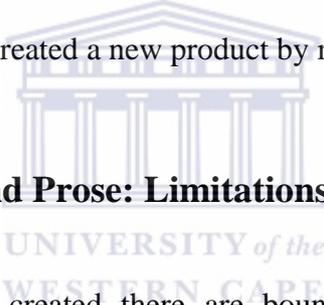
parallel editorial practise in some respects, indulging the exercise of trimming and pruning; yet it can also be an amplificatory procedure engaged in addition, expansion, accretion and interpolation” (18). She elicits many of the same ideas that Stam introduced earlier. She goes on to say that

Adaptation is frequently involved in offering commentary on a source text. This is achieved most often by offering a revised point of view from the ‘original’, adding hypothetical, motivation, or voicing the silenced and marginalised. Yet adaptation can also constitute a simpler attempt to make texts ‘relevant’ or easily comprehensible to new audiences and readerships via the processes of approximation and updating. (19)

Sanders highlight the fact that an adaptation can offer ‘commentary on the source text’, which both Glazer and Wheatley do in their adaptations. Their editorial practices reflect their commentary. Sanders also suggests that adaptations can make texts ‘relevant’. This is an interesting way of making sense of the adaptations. Wheatley’s adaptation was shown eleven years after *Foe* was published and Glazer’s was shown seventeen years after the novel was published. In adapting an iconic work of South African literature, that was, as we have seen, criticised for not being responsive enough to its political context in the Apartheid mid-1980s, the narrow question of relevance is given a much wider, universal value by the stage adaptations. It is doubtful that Coetzee’s novel would have been attractive to Wheatley or Glazer if it had narrowly concerned itself with Apartheid. Its indirect reference to the South African political situation, then seen as its weakness, has, with a passage of time, become its strength, allowing the text to become relevant to new audiences and different contexts that could not have been anticipated at the time of writing. The adaptations would therefore have introduced new readers to Coetzee’s work. Ironically, *Foe* is about ‘voicing the silenced and marginalised’, therefore Sanders quote above can be taken quite literally to refer more widely to the way in which imperialism has rendered non-western subjects powerless and invisible.

The stage version of *Foe* can highlight and concretize ideas that were seemingly ‘marginalised’ in the novel.

At the same time Margherita Laera (2014) notes that “[so]me theatre artists and scholars prefer the term ‘appropriation’ to define their work because adaptation is perceived to be too linked to literary practices and text-based theatre, or because it suggests an idea of a derivative endeavour lesser value than the ‘original’ work” (5). This idea of appropriation is also important to look at whilst conducting a study of two theatrical adaptations. Sanders notes that adaptation does signal a relationship to its ‘original’ but on the other hand “appropriation frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain” (26). *Foe* is in this sense an appropriation of *Robinson Crusoe* as Coetzee has created a new product by re-envisioning Defoe’s work(s).



2.4 Fiction and Prose: Limitations of the Media

When any adaptation is created there are bound to be certain constraints and limitations that the adaptor is faced with. Each medium consists of its very own set of constraints, for example if one were to adapt a poem to a painting, the limitations would be far different than adapting a novel to the stage. The adaptor would have to carefully research both mediums and first identify the constraints and limitations s/he will face. Jean Mitry argues in ‘Remarks on the Problem of Cinematic Adaptation’ (1971), that adaptation “is not a translation from one language to another but a passing from one form to another, a matter of transposing, or reconstruction” (1). Adapting a novel to the stage is entirely different to adapting the same novel to the screen, since both media bring their own set of limitations that the adapter has to deal with carefully: theatre is performed live on a stage whereas cinema is a recorded experience that usually requires an extensive process of editing before it can be

showed to the public. Emphasis will be placed on the *form* of the adaptation i.e. theatrical adaptations contrasted with cinematic adaptations.

Time and Space

Time is an essential element the adaptor has to consider. Audiences cannot sit and watch a play that goes on for many hours with numerous acts. Audiences may lose interest if the play goes on for too long, therefore making the adaptation a failure. The process of selection, as highlighted by Stam, is of utmost importance when analysing time in the theatre. The adaptor will go through a process where he/she will cut and edit the original to make it fit within the restrictions of the chosen medium. Glazer and Wheatley had to consider what they wanted to show audiences and what to omit from *Foe*. They also had to consider what they wanted to amplify and concretise on stage. The play needed to be of an acceptable time for audiences to grasp the main ideas the play is trying to portray, even more so with an adaptation. As Keuris points out, the “length of a play inevitably has consequences for various aspects of a play, such as the number of characters and the structuring of events” (7). When one reads a novel, time is not a factor, since novels have no time limit in which the reader is able to read and absorb the novel. This is one of the advantages of a novel: the reader can read it at their leisure and read it over days, weeks, months or even years. The readers then have time to think about the novel and analyse every little detail by essentially ‘pausing’ the novel. However, with a play the audiences only have that time in the theatre in which to absorb as much as possible, as the action is continuous and cannot be paused.

According to Hutcheon, “[t]he camera, like the stage, is said to be all presence and immediacy [...] Prose fiction alone, by this logic, has the flexibility of time-lines and the ability to shift in a few words to the past or the future, and these abilities are always assumed to have no real equivalents in performance or interactive media” (66). In theatre, the action is live and in real time, and there is no way for the director to rewind or the actors to do more

than one take at that moment. However, actors can make changes after their first performance, correcting any mistakes, though unlike film or a novel, the audience cannot go back and re-watch or re-read a scene. Likewise, Bruce Morrisette (1985) notes that in literature the phrases that indicate time changes such as ‘meanwhile’, ‘elsewhere’ and ‘later’ find their equivalent in the filmic dissolve, as one image fades in as another fades out and time merges with space in a more immediate way than is possible with words (18-19). These ‘phrases’ can however also be seen in the theatre with devices such as set changes, costume, performance and lighting. There can even be two scenes unfolding on one stage, with one part of the stage dark and one side illuminated, and action on stage shifting between these two sections on stage therefore forcing the audiences to shift their focus between the two sections. This is something that a novel cannot do and it is unusual for more than one ‘action’ to be happening on a page at a time.

In film, the scenes are mediated and manipulated to produce an image which the film makers wish to portray to their audiences. The *mise-en-scène* is thought out carefully to use the space effectively for the necessary scene, and the editor will then take all the raw material filmed and stitch the scenes together with all the essential elements such as sound, voiceover etc. Hutcheon observes that

Unlike a live performance on stage that occurs in real time and in which sounds and images are correlated exactly, in a film the relation between sound and image is a constructed one. Visual frames and different soundtracks (dialogue, voice-overs, music, noises) can be combined, as the film editor manipulates time and space relations. (64).

The constructed image needs to be carefully crafted with the help of the *mise-en-scène* of the play. *Mise-en-scène* is a term often associated with film; in French *mise-en-scène* means ‘staging’. According to William Philips (2002) “*mise-en-scène* originally meant a director’s staging of a play. Often in film studies the term refers to everything put before the cameras in preparation for filming” (9). Philips further explains that “*mise-en-scène* consists

of the major aspects of filmmaking that are also components of staging a play: the setting, the subjects being filmed, usually actors people as themselves; and the composition, the arrangement of the settings. Lighting and subjects” (9). *Mise-en-scène* is a very important aspect of studying an adaptation as the setting of a novel needs to translate live on stage or behind film cameras; it is therefore an essential element of any adaptation.

The setting of a play can pose as a constraint to the adaptors. The action of a novel can shift its locale with a turn of a page; likewise, in cinema the location can change between different countries within a second. Unlike theatre, the space is constant and is exposed to the audience. Author, Bert Cardullo (2012) explains,

The movies can take us anywhere in time and space, in terms of either fantasy or realism, and make us believe it. Thanks to the camera, here is a magical carpet that really flies. The stage, on the other hand –once it moves out of an interior set – is pathetically earth-bound. And off course when it comes to production design or scenic effects, there is no comparison. The effort of will and imagination needed to pretend that stage settings are more than canvas and papier-mâché necessary a millennium ago, should not be required of the audience of today. (159)

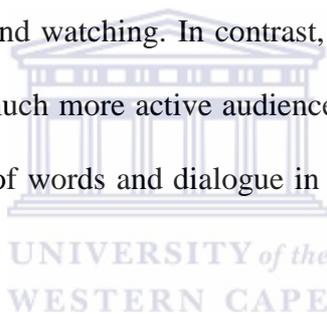
Cardullo approaches this issue of space in the theatre in a skewed manner. He is correct in saying that the cinema can ‘take us anywhere’ (ibid.), however his view on comparing the cinema and the theatre is limited as adaptation from a novel to film and theatre differ in so many ways due to their unique mediums. One cannot compare mediums in terms of which are ‘better’ because they both have different functions. They each have their own set of restrictions and one cannot base the entire adaptation on what it cannot do or achieve.

There are two spaces that are important in a performance, namely the space of the actors (stage) and the space of the spectators (auditorium). These two spaces are placed “adjacent” to each other – an interesting aspect not found in written genres, such as poetry or prose. We often find references in a play to this spatial aspect – again an explicit indication of

the performance orientation of a play. The physical nature of the stage as a particular space, of course, implies certain limitations for the representation of fictional spaces on that stage. Coetzee's *Foe* is largely set on an island. Through the use of sound, lighting, theatre style, effective didascalia and set design I argue later in this thesis that both Glazer and Wheatley have effectively translated the island milieu to the stage (see chapter three).

The dialogue and actions in the theatre should also be considered when creating an adaptation. Cardullo argues that, “[t]he movies, being basically a visual art form, give the audience more work to do, and consequently more scope for the imagination. The theatre since it must rely almost solely on dialogue, subjects the audience to a constant and unnatural flow of words, words, words. If people talked as much in real life as they do on the stage, we would all go out of our minds.” (161). Once again Cardullo takes a narrow view this time on dialogue as he forgets the importance of performance on a stage. Mitry contends that “[t]he dialogue of the theat[re] is so much more irreducible to the cinema because it explains everything, while the dialogue of film, on the other hand, tends towards a manner of expression which is colloquial, contingent and disengaged from all transcendence” (2). Therefore the theatre presents a different type of representation that is much more complex than film. This is especially true for an adaptation from novel to stage, because in a novel everything is carefully written in such a way that the author may use two pages just to describe one action or movement of a character; this needs to be translated on stage in one moment in such a way that the audience picks up on the magnitude of that one simple movement. Mitry illustrates: “[in film] the hero who informs us of his fatigue tells us nothing which his face, his aspect, his bearing doesn't already tell us-except that it adds a few seconds to the signification of something already signified” (ibid.). In theatre the ‘hero’s body language and the manner in which he speaks can be the signifier for his fatigue. This is especially true for the two adaptations of *Foe*, because the character of Friday does not speak

at all, yet remains one of the most powerful characters of the novel. Friday's character is all about 'the body' and not about the speech, therefore his movements throughout the two adaptations are imperative to study as it may provide new insight into Coetzee's Friday. Mitry goes to the say that, "[o]ne cannot signify with images what one signifies with words - and *vice versa*. In addition, while time in the theatre is a time of words, time in the cinema has its basis in the process of perception; it is *not* the 'time of the action' as people sometimes say. Theatrical reality is *understood*; cinematic reality is *perceived*" (3). Mitry's argument convinces that there is a more conscious thought process happening when one is watching a play as opposed to watching a film, due to the fact that the camera is essentially performing the role of the narrator. Whilst watching a film the audience cannot participate in any way other than just passively sitting and watching. In contrast, a play offers an entirely different experience than film, requiring much more active audience engagement in meaning making. Mitry highlights the importance of words and dialogue in the theatre, which are much more central to the stage than in film.



One of the key elements of the novelistic source text that find themselves directly reused in adaptations is dialogue. Of all aspects of a film or stage adaptation, dialogue is the one element that can be taken from the novel without any changes. Since dialogue is much more important in theatre than in film, theatre is potentially a medium that allows the novelistic source text to be adapted more.

Chapter Three

The Adaptations of *Foe* - Beginnings

3.1 Overview

This chapter will serve as an introduction to a more detailed analysis of the two adaptations. It will begin with a short discussion on the style of the plays, followed by an examination of their didascalia – a term used to describe everything the script contains that is not dialogue. This is imperative as this is a textual study and in order to contextualise each of the adaptations it is vital to know the prefatory and introductory material of each play as this contains important information. Thereafter the character lists of the plays will be discussed, comparing these with the novel, and highlighting the differences and similarities. This chapter will then examine the staging of an island setting carefully, arguing that Coetzee reduces the fully fledged realist description of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, making the island much more of a minimalist space. The stage versions, as I will show, then pick up and develop this idea, even further reducing Coetzee's pared down realist description of the setting, and making the island more of an idea than a real place. The final section of the chapter will then undertake a comparative analysis of the different texts' respective beginnings, as these critical initial sections set the tone for the novel and the plays as a whole.

3.2 Theatre Style

When studying any piece of text it is important to discuss the 'style' of the text, especially when dealing with a play script. "The term style refers to the way in which a play is written, produced and acted. Dramatists choose the style of language and action they feel

best expresses their ideas” (Schanker, H & Ommaney, K: 288). In order to identify the style of the adaptations it is important to highlight the two most significant styles of theatre.

Most plays are representational, a style sometimes referred to as ‘fourth wall’ theatre. The play is performed as if the audience were watching the action though an imaginary fourth wall. The characters onstage are not aware of the audience. The presentational style, on the other hand, acknowledges that an audience is present. Characters may address the audience and “some action may even take place in the seating area” (288). I argue below that Wheatley’s adaptation makes use of representational style and Glazer incorporates presentational style into his adaptation.

Wheatley’s adaptation incorporates representational style as there is no evidence to suggest that his characters ever turn to the audience and address them directly. According to Leeny Del Seamonds (1996), “[t]he ‘fourth wall’ is a theatre term referring to the imaginary line, or wall, between the actors on the stage and the audience. The audience observes, or witnesses, the action of the play (the storyline) as it unfolds. It's as if the fourth wall of a set [...] were cut open and removed, allowing the audience to watch what's going on in the play” (1). Wheatley’s characters remain in character for the entire script; they do not engage with the audience. The actors on stage speak to one another, and interact with each other, while the audience merely observes them. The actors do not turn to the audience and personally draw them into the action of the play by making direct eye contact. (ibid.). The characters always face one another when they are speaking, for example in the following extract:

[Susan] weeps

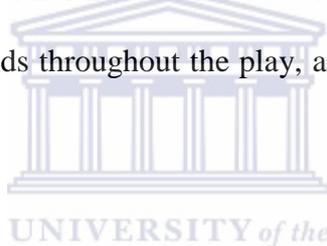
Cruso looks at her dispassionately

Friday stands further away and watched from a distance (6)

Wheatley does not call the characters to address the audience or turn towards them. There is a definite fourth wall within his adaptation. Wheatley uses it to tell a story that does not rely on the audience to engage in the action of the play.

Along with the implementation of the 'fourth wall' style, Wheatley's adaptation also appears to be free from postmodern theatrical devices. The play relies strongly on the dialogue taken from the novel, and presenting the narrative questions that Coetzee raises in *Foe*. He does not set out to recreate *Foe*, but rather takes this novel as a point of departure to engage more closely with its intertextual relationship with Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. The stage version incorporates material from Defoe's novel that is not referenced by Coetzee.

Glazer's adaptation on the other hand makes use of the presentational style of theatre. There are many examples one finds throughout the play, and an illustrative extract is quoted below (my highlights):



THIRD SUSAN

[First looking at FRIDAY, **then turning to address the audience**, moving from inner monologue to narration in a few lines. This move exemplifies the different narrative positions the choral Susans can take – in this case, experiencing the scene as it happens and then describing it to the audience.] (9)

[*FIRST SUSAN* **addresses the audience**, and herself, unsettled, thoughtful, searching.] (34)

SECOND SUSAN

[moving out of the hut **towards the audience**] (40)

[*SECOND SUSAN* moves to him, taking her place, helps him to his feet, and leads him up on deck to the upcoming burial scene, while FIRST SUSAN **delivers her narration directly to the audience...**] (47)

[**FIRST SUSAN holds her gaze on the audience**. THIRD SUSAN writes, her pen audibly scratching across the rough paper. The sound of the ocean rises. FRIDAY plays his six notes over and over on his flute] (48)

It is clear that the characters are aware of the audience and it is their intention to gaze upon them or address them directly. Seamonds states that such intimacy with the audience is crucial in telling a story: “In storytelling, the teller looks into the eyes of the audience and together they tell the story. Without this intimacy, there would be no story. As the story unfolds, there is no fourth wall when the narrator looks at the audience to include them, letting them in on what's happening and sharing the excitement of the story” (2). The last scene of the play (which will be discussed in depth in the following chapter) is where this adaptation emphasises its theatrical style most overtly. Glazer writes in the stage direction of the final scene:

“...the staging and lighting should highlight the various scenes as they are discovered by the dreamer/narrator, as though the audience were being led into and through these rooms, spaces and experiences... The slide of text remains visible only briefly, perhaps just during the transition into the scene. It is fading or gone by the time the narration begins, but visible long enough for the audience to recognize it when intoned by the ACTOR. (100)



It is clear that Glazer wants to address the audience directly; he also uses visual and auditive signs to draw the audience into the action of the play. Towards the end of the play, which is the most dramatic moment, Glazer amplifies the presentational style:

[FRIDAY rises from the bed and **faces the audience, our final narrator**. Were he wiggled for his role, as he was in the premiere, he would now remove the wig, drawing a distinction between the character and the actor. **He speaks in his own voice. The rest of the cast, with the exception of the narrators, are spread around the stage at his feet. He speaks directly to the audience.**] (105)

The moment that Glazer gives Friday a voice, he also breaks the boundaries of the novel, showing what theatre can do for a novel like *Foe*.

As stated above, Wheatley’s adaptation is a much more traditional production, less overtly marked by postmodern self-referentiality. This could be because it was produced in 1996 and less digital technology was available. Glazer’s production is much more

technologically advanced, with sophisticated and innovative lighting techniques, as well as the use of a screen projection throughout the play. In the opening of the play, for example, the audience is shown a projection of a “[...] piece of sail hanging over the stage, the frontispiece of the original book *Robinson Crusoe*” (7). Instead of Glazer working this into his play via dialogue, he has used visual theatrical techniques to convey meaning, acknowledging the ‘father’ text and integrating it into his play. Glazer uses these projections to act as a quasi-omniscient narrator, allowing him to stage multiple voices within the play. It is not the conventional omniscient narrator one would find in a novel, but a narrator nonetheless. Glazer makes use of this to ‘speak’ to the audience.

3.3 Didascalia

In order to interpret the two adaptations and the respective play scripts, it is necessary to refer to the didascalia of each text. Didascalia is a term which “refers to everything in the play which is not dialogue, in other words the title, character list, foreword, prologue, epilogue, stage directions, and so on” (Keuris: 64). Whilst doing an analysis of the two adaptations, it is important to study the didascalia as these are two distinctly different adaptations and their interpretation of the novel begins from the very first page of their adaptation. The non-dialogue elements of the plays are the area in which most significant adaptive departures from the novel are apparent. Both plays draw much of their dialogue directly from the novel; it is thus primarily in the didascalia elements of the scripts that the stage versions show their distinctive differences.

It is also important to consider the cast list envisaged for the production, and compare this with the characters that Coetzee employs in the novel. In Coetzee’s *Foe* there are very few characters: Susan Barton, Friday, Cruso, the young girl who calls herself ‘Susan Barton’,

the captain who rescues Susan and Friday, Jack (Mr Foe's servant boy) and finally Mr Foe. Friday and Susan are the main characters and the novel centres on their journey. Cruso dies in the first section of the novel, rendering him a mere shadow alongside Susan and Friday's journey. Though Mr Foe first appears briefly in the second section, his presence is felt throughout the novel as we know that Susan is speaking to him as she narrates the story of the island. Keuris states that "the function of the list of characters is to give names to the various characters in the fictional dramatic world. The identification of the various characters though their names often goes hand in hand with bits of information about each of them" (65).

Wheatley's character list is simple and similar to *Foe*:

Characters:

SUSAN: castaway

CRUSO: ruler of his island

FRIDAY: his manservant

FOE: a writer

JACK: Foe's servant

GIRL: Susan Barton, daughter of a brewer



The list is directly adapted from *Foe*, providing little sense of any adaptive transpositions or changes. On the other hand, Glazer's character list is much more extensive and elaborate, showing his interpretive licence with the novel, and immediately revealing an adaptive approach that is not constrained by a simplistic notion of fidelity:

Cast of Characters

Three actresses share the role of Susan Barton, the central character and narrator of J. M. Coetzee's novel and this play. In each act, one of the three actresses takes the lead, living in the time and world of scenes more than the other two Susans, who act as narrators or a kind of Chorus. Each of the three Susans takes this lead role in successive acts – FIRST SUSAN is the castaway on Cruso's island in Act I, SECOND SUSAN pursues Mr. Foe in England with

FRIDAY in Act II, and THIRD SUSAN confronts Foe in his lodgings in Act III

Women

FIRST SUSAN – *a British woman in her late 20s or early 30s; incisive, educated, persistent, her ideals intact*

SECOND SUSAN – *the same; a bit more mature, cynical, on edge*

THIRD SUSAN – *the same; more suspicious, stubborn; both more vulnerable and manipulative.*

THE GIRL/SAILOR/NARRATOR – *The Girl is a mysterious child of 12 to 15 who claims to be Susan's daughter; cheerful, unflappable, willful.*

Men

CRUSO – *a British man in his 50s, decades away from civilization; resourceful, sullen, gaunt, stolid, private.*

FRIDAY – *an African man in his 20s or early 30s; mute, serious, distant.*

MR. FOE – *Daniel (De)Foe, mid-50s; brilliant, worldly, elusive.*

CAPTAIN SMITH/NARRATOR

DEAD CAPTAIN/SAILOR – *also assists with costume changes, prop hand-offs, etc.*

What is immediately striking is Glazer's triplication of the central Susan character. All three Susans are present simultaneously on stage, not only re-enforcing the importance and centrality of the character, but also clearly signalling Glazer's break with naturalistic realism. The device of a three-partite Susan is also a significant departure from Coetzee's novel, although each of the Susans represent one particular phase or iteration of the character, as she changes and matures through the development of the novel. Coetzee created Susan to have a complex personality as is evident throughout the novel, and Glazer's adaptation amplifies this notion. Glazer's split of Susan into three separate characters can possibly be understood to emphasise Susan's multi-faceted subjectivity. Susan Barton is an important character in *Foe* as she acts as the narrator for the first three parts; she is also the driving force behind all the events that occur in the novel. Susan does not appear in *Robinson Crusoe*, which is one of the most significant changes Coetzee makes to *his* story, and the fact that Glazer stages three Susans in the play makes her character therefore even more central and

important in the story. This choice of staging shows Glazer adopting a more complex approach to adaptation than mere reproductive fidelity.

In the following section I will argue that although having three separate actresses portray one ‘character’ on stage may appear unconventional, it is an informed choice Glazer makes and it may alter the way we read the novel as a whole. I contend below that it was a successful addition to his adaptation. The triplication of Susan leads to an even stronger female presence in the play, emphasising Coetzee’s gender-critical theme in his novel. In Act II titled *Seeking Foe*, Susan thinks back to the time spent on the island:

SECOND SUSAN

Dubiously I thought: Are these enough strange circumstances to make a story of?
How long before I am driven to invent new and stranger circumstances:

[As **SECOND SUSAN** writes, **THIRD** and **FIRST SUSAN** get very caught up in these images, portraying them playfully and melodramatically. They move to **SECOND SUSAN** at the desk.]

THIRD SUSAN

the salvage of tools and muskets from Cruso's ship;

FIRST SUSAN

the building of a boat, or at least a skiff, and a venture to sail to the mainland;

THIRD SUSAN

a landing by cannibals on the island,

FIRST SUSAN

[*collapsing across the desk*]

followed by a skirmish and many bloody deaths;

THIRD SUSAN

[*pretending to be the “golden haired stranger”*]

and at last, the coming of a golden-haired stranger with a sack of corn,
and the planting of the terraces.

SECOND SUSAN

Alas, will the day arrive when we can make a story without strange circumstances?’

ALL SUSANS

‘June 1st.

SECOND SUSAN

I write my letters, seal them, I drop them in the box.

FIRST SUSAN

One day when we are departed you will tip them out and glance through them.

THIRD SUSAN

[*imitating a man*]

“Better had there been only Cruso and Friday,”

SECOND SUSAN

you will murmur to yourself:

THIRD SUSAN

“Better without the woman.”

ALL SUSANS

Yet where would you be without the woman?

FIRST SUSAN

Could you have made up Crusoe and Friday and the island with its fleas and apes and lizards?

ALL SUSANS

I think not.

SECOND SUSAN

Many strengths you have, but invention is not one of them.’

[*Lights adjust. Transition.*] (63-64)

In the above extract Second Susan assumes the main role (indicated by the asterisks) and begins making “a list of all the strange circumstances of the year [she] could remember” (62). While Second Susan is writing at the desk, First Susan and Third Susan “get very caught up in these images, portraying them playfully and melodramatically” (63). The second and third Susans reference fragments from the world of Robinson Crusoe, acting them out on the stage, thereby directly illustrating on stage what is happening in First Susan’s mind. The theatrical version of *Foe* can in this way provide new insight into the novel by portraying Susan’s thoughts in a more elaborated and visualised manner. The moment where all three Susans speak in unison, saying “Yet where would you be without the woman?” emphasises the question’s salience, in this way amplifying Coetzee’s feminist critique of the patriarchal ideology of Defoe’s novel.

The fact that there are three Susans also adds another layer of meaning as each Susan represents a facet of her personality. Throughout the play each one of the three Susans takes over one of the main roles and the other two provide support and portray what the main Susan is thinking or narrating, thereby making visible internal conscious or unconscious subjective processes. In the above scene Susan begins to think about her story and her time

on the island and how Mr Foe will interpret them. The dialogue is exactly the same in the novel - however the way in which the audience would interpret is likely to be different.

The extract below is taken from Act three titled 'Foe's Refuge', scene one, is titled: 'Silences':

[In this next sequence, ***THIRD SUSAN***'s speeches and argument are shared among the three SUSANS. **FOE's [sic]** is never aware of the trio as such. At first, his focus remains on ***THIRD SUSAN***, even if one of the others is speaking. As the scene progresses and the argument builds, **FIRST** and **SECOND SUSAN** take ***THIRD SUSAN***'s chair or place on the stage, and **FOE** focuses on them as though they were the same as ***THIRD SUSAN*** (which, in fact, they are!). Therefore the secondary SUSANS become, periodically, primary.]

...

THIRD SUSAN

[more urgency]

"The story I desire to be known by is the story of the island. 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. Now you propose to reduce the island to an episode in the history of a woman in search of a lost daughter. This I reject!"

MR FOE

"Susan . . ."

SECOND SUSAN and ***THIRD SUSAN***

"You err most tellingly in failing to distinguish

SECOND SUSAN

between my silences and the silences of a being such as Friday. Friday has no command of words and therefore no defense against being re-shaped day by day in conformity with the desires of others. I say he is a cannibal and he becomes a cannibal; I say he is a laundryman and he becomes a laundryman. You will respond: these are mere names, he is a substantial body, he is himself, Friday is Friday. But that is not so. (86-87)



Figure 1: Act III Scene 1 – Silences

In the above scene the three Susans share the main role and Foe is never aware that Susan is in fact portrayed by three separate woman; his focus remains on the Third Susan (pictured above). Similarly to the previous scene, the dialogue is exactly the same as the novel but the interpretation of the scene changes due to the tripartite of Susan on stage. The splitting of Susan needs to read as a device that distinguishes between the words that are heard by Mr Foe (the words of Third Susan), and her inner thoughts which are not shared with Foe but allow us to get a sense of her true feelings. In the novel, there is no such distinction: the entire speech of Susan is directed at Foe. The play version thus introduces considerable dynamism and complexity into the dialogue, allowing us to see even more clearly how the power relations play out, and how Susan's voice is marginalised, literally silenced on the stage. Coetzee's feminist stance, as articulated in the novel, becomes even more clearly articulated in Glazer's stage version. Susan, through her Second and Third Susan alter egos on the stage, effectively overcomes her silencing.

In terms of characters, Glazer also made the addition of the 'captain' who also plays the narrator and the 'dead captain' for certain sections. These additions illustrate his adaptive

skills as these are minor and forgettable characters in *Foe*. Glazer makes them prominent on stage and gives them a role to play. This choice is strictly for theatrical reasons as they assist with costume changes, prop hand-offs. Evidence of this technique can be seen in the final scene of the play:

The SUSANS, MR FOE, FRIDAY, CRUSO, THE GIRL and THE DEAD CAPTAIN are all characters in the forthcoming scene. The text, reproduced here from the novel almost in its entirety, will be spoken by the two actors who played the smallest roles so far: CAPTAIN SMITH and THE GIRL. The actors, stripped of these characters, take on this new and all but anonymous 'I'. (100)

Glazer has used the same two characters (Captain Smith and The Girl) but they take on completely new personas. The role of the 'dead captain' will be looked at more closely in Chapter four.

Despite the obvious changes in characters that Glazer brings to Coetzee's novel, it is evident that overall, he attempts to be as faithful as he possibly can to the original text. This is evident when we consider the following remarks. Below is an extract from a description of the use of quotations marks throughout the play script:

Stage directions "*in quotation marks*" are taken directly from the novel. Indented lines indicate the beginning of paragraphs in Coetzee's book, when appropriate. "Double quotation marks" denote dialogue, as opposed to narration. 'Single quotation marks' are used to set off SUSAN's letters to MR FOE. The layout of the dialogue on the page is meant to support both the rhythm of Coetzee's language and sometimes the way the stories and ideas make meaning through the language. This layout is a suggestion, not an edict. (unpaginated)

In the above didascalia Glazer is highly conscious and attentive to the question of fidelity, because he trying to remain as faithful as possible to Coetzee's text, and allowing readers of the play script a detailed insight into the extent of his use of original source material. Glazer respects Coetzee's writing and tries to incorporate it as much as possible throughout the play.

3.4 Creating an island

An examination of the didascalia related to set-construction allows us insight into the way both plays create the distinctive and difficult to stage island setting of the story. Glazer and Wheatley chose very different paths when adapting the island location. The following section will be discussing the way in which Glazer and Wheatley have translated Coetzee's island to the stage. Below is an extract from the didascalia in which Glazer describes the staging of the play:

An open space, hopefully configured as a thrust or in the round. A stage of angled, raked surfaces might evoke the rocky, dry island of Act I which then haunts the successive acts. A ribbed structure upstage can serve as Cruso's hut [...] evocative of the ribs of a sunken ship or the skeleton of a whale. (1)

Harry H. Schanker and Katherine Anne Ommanney (1989) illustrate open-space techniques in the theatre: "the thrust stage [is a] a low platform stage that projects into the audience. Since the audience surrounds the thrust stage on three sides, conventional scenery should be placed deep on the stage to avoid blocking the audience's view" (411-412). On the other hand "[a]rena stages (theat[re]-in-the-round) use a different approach. Since the audience completely surrounds the stage, scenery will undoubtedly block the view of at least some of the spectators" (412). Glazer has used a combination of these two staging techniques. The raked surfaces may jut out at the audience evoking the feeling of the cliffs of Coetzee's island. Careful consideration has been placed on the symbolism of the stage design and props. Glazer illustrates: "[a] ribbed structure upstage can serve as Cruso's hut [...] evocative of the ribs of a sunken ship or the skeleton of a whale" (1). Glazer incorporates various props and stage design elements have multiple uses. The 'ribbed structure' which conjures imagery of a sunken ship can also be understood to prefigure the ending with its imagery of a sunken slave ship. The stage (space) is open and consists of "angled, raked surfaces" (ibid.) which are

which takes them to London (Cruso dies en route). Lastly, the final section of the novel partly takes place underwater. Through close analyses I will show how the adaptors use sound to bring the ocean to the stage. I contend that by using sound the adaptors are able to successfully translate the ocean locale of the novel to the stage.

The challenge of representing the ocean on stage would be a formidable one, which Glazer addressed through the use of sound. The opening of the play begins, “Utter darkness and sounds of ocean” (7). Glazer immediately transports his audience from their seats to the island. As they sit in complete darkness all they can hear is ocean sounds. Glazer does not specify what ‘ocean sounds’ he would have used, but one can imagine waves crashing, wind blowing and water sloshing from one end to another. As the light slowly fades in, the audience is now focused on the action on stage. All three Susans are on stage and they take turns to speak; we are then told, “[t]hey now lie prone on three benches, face down, swimming, desperately” (ibid.) Not only does Glazer use sound to capture the island locale, the characters on stage make movements mimicking various activities associated with water such as paddling, swimming and rowing.

The didascalía can once again be used to analyse the adaptations use of ‘water’. Later, act 1.6, titled ‘Friday’, begins as follows, “[w]hen lights restore *first Susan* kneels at the stove; Friday and Cruso stare at the sea” (25). This is another way Glazer incorporates the ocean onto the stage, by having the characters from time to time stare off into the vast distance. The stage is representative of the island and the ocean is where the audience sit. Again in act 1.8, ‘Petals’, “Cruso enters...with one of his shoes in hand, sits to look at the ocean and repair the shoes with his needle” (36). Later in the same act, First Susan asks where Cruso’s ship had gone down and “Cruso nods vaguely towards the water” (ibid.) The characters make subtle movements to indicate they are surrounded by water. These movements, coupled with the background sound of the sea, bring the ocean setting to the

theatre. In the rescue scene (act 1.11 'Rescue') we read as follows: "First Susan rushed out of the hut to the edge overlooking the water and falls to her knees" (40). This is another movement made by 'Susan' to show she is overlooking the ocean as she sees a ship. Glazer then indicates a change on set, when "[sailors] lift the weak Cruso on [a stretcher] and carry him to the part of the stage which will now represent the ship" (41). Glazer makes it clear that they are no longer on the island and they have been rescued after being shipwrecked there for a year.

As Susan and Friday 'climb aboard' the ship there is a quick set change, "[t]he sailors' cross with Cruso initiates a transition to establish the ship. Two chairs and a table are brought on to an area which will become the Captain's cabin, and the benches are rearranged into a bed for Cruso on another part of the stage" (ibid.). As Susan shows Friday where his master now lies, sounds are slowly being played. As Glazer imagines it, "[s]ounds begin, or have already begun, of a ship at sea, creaking of timbers, water on the hull, wind. These sounds could gradually become more and more surreal as the scene progresses, or turn into music, creating more of an emotional than realist world" (43). The sounds appear to be more intense this time as 'Susan' and Friday are now on a moving ship and these sounds represent that movement. When Susan and Friday are on the rescue ship it is the last time of the act that the audience hear sounds of the ocean. The next time they hear ocean sounds is in the final scene of the play. Overall Glazer's use of ocean sounds to recreate the ocean locale to this adaptation can be considered to be successful. It is evident in the didascalia that through the use of sound and subtle glances from the characters the ocean locale is constantly sensed by the audience.

On the other hand, Wheatley's adaptation addresses the challenge of the ocean and island very differently. As has been indicated earlier, Wheatley's theatrical style is considerably different to Glazer's. Wheatley's style of theatre is representational whereas

Glazer's is presentational. Wheatley's adaptation does make use of sound to provide ambiance to the play, and is also used to indicate 'location' changes. Indeed, in the closing scene the use of sound is critical in the final moments of the play. Sounds of waves are heard occasionally in the beginning, but there is no emphasis placed on this in the stage directions. Rather, in keeping with the physical theatre style of *Complicité*, Wheatley uses large volumes of actual, physical water in his staging. The use of water on stage can be seen in a photograph taken by Simon Annand⁴ at one of the play's performances:



Figure 3: Friday (Patrice Naiambana), Crusoe (Hannes Flaschberger) and Susan (Kathryn Hunter).

As one can clearly see a pool of water on the stage, and Susan's wet costume. There is also evidence of rocky edges as seen in the photograph which is reminiscent of Coetzee's "... great rocky hill with a flat top..." (7). It is unknown at what point in the play this photograph was taken; however, a reviewer, Paul Taylor (1996), recalls a scene from the play that illustrates the dramatic potential of water on the stage: "Susan, demented by the noise of the

⁴ *Complicité*. "Notes". Unpublished, Undated. Source: *Complicité* achieve.

wind, dips her head into a pool of water and all the sound suddenly switches off, creating, in a work preoccupied by silence, silence of dizzying intensity” (online).

Although the approach of having an actual pool of water on stage might suggest that Wheatley’s adaptation employs a realist representational mode, it evident that his is a minimalist staging, not interested in verisimilitude. Similarly to Coetzee’s novel, which also eschews realism, Wheatley’s staging of later scenes appear to be non-realistic, as can be seen in the didascalia below: “Part two: London. There should be no attempt to represent realistically the London of circa 1720. So dress, etc., should avoid sharp definitions of period. The rooms – a lodging, FOE’s house, FOE’s retreat are made as required” (33). While Wheatley makes use of a more representational style of theatre, it does not make this play any less effective than Glazer’s presentational style.



3.5 Comparing Opening Scenes of the Plays

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Wheatley’s adaptation begins with complete darkness. The opening of the play reads as follows:

The sounds of the body, interior sounds: the beat of pulse, the run of blood, faint but rising. With these, underwater sounds, the muffled, heavy echoes heard under the sea. Light grows very slowly on the falling body of SUSAN. She is drowning. As she falls, the sounds of conversation rise- distant, indistant. A figure appears, dimly discernable. Then another and another, until the space below SUSAN appears to hold a waiting crowd. Some are more substantial than others, some are mere shadows. They move little then very slowly. The conversing voices are theirs – disembodied. This is the space of death, the place before birth, the storing of memories. Among them is FOE but we are unable to distinguish him yet. (1)

As seen in the above didascalia, Wheatley describes the space as the “place of death” (ibid.), eliciting images associated with an ‘underworld’. However, we cannot yet get a sense

of what the stage looks like. Wheatley uses voice initially to fill the stage. The description is musical; it grows from a rhythmical faintness to a stifled almost suffocating deafness where “underwater sounds” are “muffled”. The imagery described is reminiscent of the final chapter of *Foe*; it is foreboding and uncanny. The description foreshadows the end of the novel as it evokes similar imagery and tones: darkness, under water sounds, shadowy figures, the beat of a pulse, images of drowning and places of trauma and death. Wheatley also used lighting as a key device to create an evocative and rich mise-en-scène, which sets the tone for the entire play. Similarly to Glazer, lighting is important in this adaptation, vital to tell this story. Wheatley has moved away from the realist description of Coetzee’s opening section of the novel (Susan’s swim to the island) and provides a suggestive and allusive first scene which, already at the start, reinforces the story’s circular and retrospective structure.

The dialogue begins with three disembodied voices:

Voice 1: I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York. My father being a foreigner of Bremen. I was called Robinson Kreutznaer. But by the usual corruption of words in England, we are now called Crusoe...Robinson Crusoe

Voice 2: Being shipwrecked, I came on shore –

Voice 3: From the ship I took two or three bags full of nails and spike. (1)

The opening lines do not occur in Coetzee’s novel, but are shorted versions of various descriptions in Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. Wheatley has said that, “[i]n some ways Coetzee returns not to Defoe’s book but to the Alexander Selkirk story on which Defoe based his book – a going back to the origins...” (11). Wheatley essentially does the same with this adaptation; he returns not only to *Foe* but to *Robinson Crusoe*, the ‘original’ text.

The play goes on with the voice uttering single sentences:

Voice 2: Upon the sides of a square post I cut everyday a notch with my knife...

Voice 1: Robinson Crusoe, so my companions always call’d me-

[Another carries a journal and writes in it with a quill]

Voice2: ...and every seventh notch was as long again as the rest [...] (1)

The 'Crusoe' voiced here shows characteristics of Defoe's Crusoe and not Coetzee's, as Coetzee's Cruso did not believe in journals and writing down his island experiences. He was also an idle man and did not carry a knife around. It is evident from the very beginning of the adaptation that Wheatley makes the intertextual web of connections and meaning making much more explicit than *Foe*. The more overt connections to *Robinson Crusoe* are made explicit with Crusoe's voice incorporated into an adaptation of Coetzee's *Foe*. Wheatley is clearly not constrained by adaptive fidelity as he does not only use *Foe* as the primary text for this play, but he also looks back at Defoe's story for inspiration. It is at this point in the play that Susan Barton makes her appearance:

Susan: [As if underwater] My name is Susan Barton.... (3)

Susan makes her presence known, but we still hear voices speak after her:

Voice 4: I was exceedingly surpriz'd with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore. (3)

This is of course the iconic image associated with *Robinson Crusoe*, as the foot print belongs to Friday. The dialogue is exactly the same as *Robinson Crusoe*: "I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore" (98). Wheatley once again makes the intertextual connection between *Foe* and *Robinson Crusoe* overtly clear. By incorporating this image into his adaptation Wheatley is not necessarily faithful to Defoe at the expense of Coetzee, but acknowledges the influence of *Robinson Crusoe* on *Foe* even more strongly than Coetzee's novel might suggest.

In the first interaction between Susan and Foe, Wheatley also illustrates the tension between her story, and the fictionalising distortions that the author will seek to make. The

extract shows how Susan voices her story, but Foe ignores her, preferring to listen to another voice and imagines sounds from an island. This voice, perhaps imaginable as Foe's inner thought processes, utters words which we can recognise as being part of *Robinson Crusoe*:

Susan: My name is Susan Barton. You have not heard a story like mine.

[FOE is revealed, listening to the voices]

Voice 2: And now it was when I began to keep a journal –

[hammering and swing again]

Susan: [To FOE] I have just returned from a far off place – I have been castaway on a desert island... My name is Susan Barton... Mr Foe, I will say in plain terms what can be said and leave unsaid what cannot be said...I will not have lies told about me. I would rather be the author of my own story than have lies told about me. (4)

In his staging Wheatley is drawing attention to the marginalisation of Susan's story, and the way an authorial imagination uses her story as a springboard for a fictionalisation that ultimately writes her out of its central concerns. The theme of authority and metafiction can therefore be identified in the opening scene of the play and the audience is made aware that they are watching an adaptation of a novel and that the problematic act of writing and re-writing is being addressed. The 'voice' we hear is the voice of Robinson Crusoe, a ghostly, disembodied figure on the stage, but as Wheatley suggests, becoming "materialised" as a character in Defoe's novel. In presenting the following fragments, Wheatley allows us to see Defoe's imagination at work, creating the setting and character of his novel:

Voice 2: December fourteenth. I carried everything into the cave [...] December the seventeenth. From this day to the twentieth I placed shelves, and knocked up nails...

[Hammering]

Voice 4: I began to speak to Friday and teach him to speak to me [...] I let him into the mystery of gun powder and bullet and taught him how to shoot.

Voice 2: And now I began to be in some order within doors. Also I made me another table.

Voice 3: From the ship I took two or three bags full of nails and spikes. (2-3)

The ‘voices’ are a clear representation of Defoe’s Crusoe, inventing an island within his own imagination – which is also distinct from Susan’s account. The voices seem to fade in and out amongst Susan’s words, distracting Foe from listening to her. Robinson Crusoe, we read in Defoe’s novel, was obsessed with writing and the constant need to jot every detail down, and in Wheatley’s play Defoe’s authorial inventiveness is shown, emerging fiction out of voices. Wheatley’s stage adaptation therefore concretises the intertextuality of *Foe* much more clearly: presenting multiple voices on the stage as heard by Defoe / Foe which drown out Susan’s story, the play heightens our awareness of the intertextual relations which are foundational to Coetzee’s novel.

In the following extract, it is clear that Susan is increasingly desperate to tell her “true history” of the island, in which Foe is clearly not interested. The struggle over truth and story is particularly dramatic in the novel’s second and third sections, but in Wheatley’s play, this contest over narrative and authorial authority is foregrounded, and already staged in the opening scene:

SUSAN: This is the true history of our time on the island. But it is not yet a story. You will know how to set it right.

[FOE turns to go. SUSAN is desperate now. Rain is falling on her. There is water under her feet]

SUSAN: They killed the captain and cast me away in a boat with his corpse beside me.

.... I was set adrift in sight of this island – I was shaking in terror – Remos, they shouted Remos – My palms were soon blistered but I dared not rest. At last I could row no further.

[Sound of rowing stops]. (5)

It is significant here how Wheatley stages Foe’s lack of engagement with Susan’s “true history” by having the actor turning “to go”, leaving Susan “desperate” and alone on the stage with her unacknowledged story.

Lastly, it is important to also look at the way Wheatley's play introduces the character of Friday:

Silence

Underwater sound. Faint body sounds.

The lights blaze, out at the audience. FRIDAY stands, facing out, casting a deep shadow, a mattock in his hand.

We are on the island. The terraces. Rock and scrub. The sounds of the terraces – the sounds of mattock and spade on the hard earth and stones – rise. This is the central ritual of the island, which the two men repeat endlessly.

Slowly, the lights soften and FRIDAY is revealed. He wears rough drawers.

Sound of a body panicking for want of air, the swollen pumping heart, bursting lungs – until it suddenly emerges in a rush, gasping from the sand beneath FRIDAY'S feet – SUSAN. Her dress is torn and hanging off her. She has a shift underneath, which she will wear on the island. She is exhausted. (5)

The sound and light create a highly evocative atmosphere. The sound is faint yet the audience can still hear it, as if it is coming from a faraway land. The "lights blaze" (ibid.) as if to blind the audience who by now would have been used to soft stage lighting. As Friday stands with a mattock in hand casting a shadow, he becomes the central figure on stage. His stance represents him as a powerful primal being, holding a mattock shows that he is capable of great power as it is a versatile tool similar to an axe. This is the first image of Friday that Wheatley wishes to show the audience an image that is not directly derived from Coetzee's novel, but can be understood to adapt some of the elements of the opening section where Susan, lying on the beach, is "filled with the orange blaze of the sun" until a "dark shadow fell upon [her], not of a cloud but of a man with a dazzling halo about him" (7). The scene effectively stages Susan's initial fear of Friday, as is also evident in the extract below:

Sound of wind.

Sensing FRIDAY behind her. SUSAN starts in fear, and turns to face him.

FRIDAY moves, not in fear, but the better to watch her, as if watching an animal.

She looks at FRIDAY'S feet. Her gaze travels to his head, taking in the mattock he is holding.

She opens her mouth, nothing comes out. She opens her mouth again. Nothing.(5)

The staging of the characters in this scene is similar to Coetzee's as Friday is seen as powerful and Susan is cast as a weak, fearful, 'animal'- like creature. The imagery is also evocative of Susan drowning as she appears to be almost suffocating. In *Foe*, Susan is similarly scared of Friday and fears that he is a cannibal: "[h]e reached out and with the back of his hand touched my arm. He is trying my flesh, I thought" (6). In the above scene Susan is frightened but she cannot speak. She is rendered speechless, her mouth opens yet no words come out. The scene can also be read as evidence of a role reversal as Susan becomes the 'speechless' body and Friday assumes the role of the powerful body. Susan's silence in this moment of the play is paying homage to the Friday in *Foe* and perhaps the silent Friday at the end of the play. As we have seen, Wheatly disrupts the narrative sequence of Coetzee's novel by selecting to begin his adaptation with a new composite scene that is different to the way Coetzee's *Foe* begins, but nevertheless incorporates the novel's key ideas and themes.

Glazer's opening

Glazer's adaptation begins with a pre-show or prologue titled 'Cruso's Island'. Below is an extract from the didascalia of the opening of the play:

... [W]e hear music, perhaps music of the period, and/or sounds of the island. Projected on a piece of sail hanging over the stage is the frontispiece of the original book *Robinson Crusoe*. The fabric and the lettering give it a weathered, tenuous feeling. It may be rippling and drifting, very slowly and unpredictably, as if in a breeze. Throughout the pre-show, an old copy of *Robinson Crusoe* is laying open center stage on a low book stand in a pool of light. As the house lights go to half, the three Susans enter with some urgency, gather around the book and stare at it. One kneels down and turns a page. It unsettles them. They look up at the sail. After a moment, it falls to the floor as the lights fade. (7)

Like Wheatley, Glazer also immediately acknowledges the intertextual connection between *Foe* and *Robinson Crusoe*, though using different devices. Wheatley addresses intertextuality in a less tangible way as he uses the voice of Crusoe by weaving dialogue from Defoe's novel into the opening of his adaptation. Glazer introduces it in a much more literal way by projecting the frontispiece of the novel (pictured below), drawing the audience's attention to the link. By displaying an image of the novel centre stage, Glazer pays homage to Defoe and emphasises the intertextual connection between *Foe* and his theatrical adaptation of *Foe*, confirming that his adaptation can be seen as an extended revisitation of prior works. It is evident that Glazer is paying tribute to *Robinson Crusoe* as the three Susans kneel down beside the open book, projected on to the surface of a canvas sail. The Susans are unsettled as if they are being watched by the shadow of *Robinson Crusoe* as the book looms over them. It is uncertain whether this sail is there for the entire play, but it is clear that Glazer wants the intertextual reference to be known throughout this play. Moreover, this is the first evidence of the theme of writing and fiction integrated into Glazer's play, concretising the novel's themes and ideas in the form of the projection of the facsimile frontispiece.

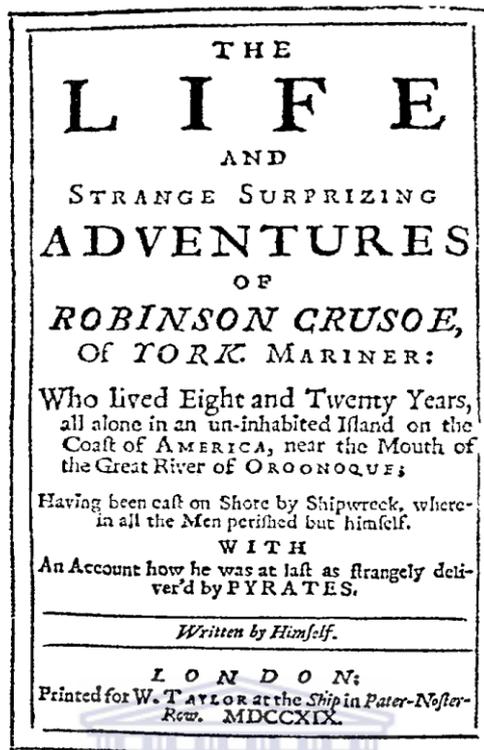


Figure 4: Frontispiece that hangs above the stage

After the pre-show the performance begins with the three Susans 'rowing':

Act 1 titled 'Arrival' begins:

[Utter darkness and sounds of the ocean. Lights gradually establish on the three Susans, spread around the stage on benches, rowing in unison with great effort. Their voices speak as one, then begin to define themselves individually.]

FIRST SUSAN

My hands were blistered,

SECOND SUSAN

my back was burned,

THIRD SUSAN

my body ached.

FIRST SUSAN

With a sigh,

SECOND SUSAN

making barely a splash,

ALL SUSANS

I slipped overboard. (ibid.)

The first few lines of the play are exactly the same as the novel, announcing, from the start, Glazer's commitment to close adaptive fidelity, except for the device of splitting Coetzee's main character into three. It slowly becomes evident that the three female figures on the stage are all portraying 'one' character, by them speaking one after the other. The dialogue carries on until, "[t]hey roll from the benches onto the floor of the stage, now lying on their backs, exhausted. Lights build to the brightness of the island" (8). First Susan, who assumes the 'main role' in this act speaks: "[t]here I lay sprawled on the hot sand, my head filled with the orange blaze of the sun, my petticoat (which was all I had escaped with) baking dry upon me, grateful, like all the saved" (ibid.). Although there are three women portraying one 'character' on stage, the Susans speak as if she is just one person; this is seen with the use of personal pronouns such as 'my' and 'me'. Glazer has split Susan Barton in three women all of which portray different sides and also stages of her personality. As 'Susan' lies on the bright 'island' Glazer introduces the character of Friday:

[FRIDAY enters and moves across the space towards **FIRST SUSAN**. He wears weathered pants and carries a fishing spear.]

SECOND SUSAN

A dark shadow fell upon me,
not of a
cloud
but of a
man with a dazzling halo about him.

FIRST SUSAN

“Castaway,”

SECOND SUSAN

. . . my thick dry tongue.

FIRST SUSAN

“I am cast away. I am all alone.”

SECOND SUSAN

I held out my sore hands. (8-9)

Unlike Wheatley’s first scene, the appearance of Friday is exactly the same as *Foe*. The dialogue, and the way Susan describes Friday is also the same. Glazer has chosen to represent Friday the exact same way as Coetzee does, unlike Wheatley who represents Friday in a more symbolic manner: he is portrayed as a powerful figure who renders Susan silent. If we compare the first scenes of the two respective plays, it is clear that they stage the novelistic source material and its themes and motifs differently, though both adaptors focus on the intertextual references between *Foe* and *Robinson Crusoe*.

Glazer’s adaptation is, despite its seemingly direct transposition, much more complex and involves processes of selection, foregrounding and amplification. As Stam suggested earlier, a process of amplification is a strategy sometimes used to highlight aspects which are less important in the novel. One example of such a strategy of amplification occurs when Glazer uses Susan’s dream:

I dreamed of the murdered ship's-master. In my dream I saw him floating southward in his puny boat with the oars crossed on his breast and the ugly spike sticking out of his eye. The sea was tossed with huge waves, the wind howled, the rain beat down; yet the boat did not sink, but drifted slowly on toward the province of the iceberg, and would drift there, it seemed to me, caked in ice, till the day of our resurrection. He was a kindly man - let me say so now, lest I forget - who deserved a better end. (19)

It is a short paragraph that is not emphasised in the novel but this dream can be interpreted as a foreshadow of the ending of the novel where we find a dead “captain fat as pigs [...] float[ing] like stars against the low roof” (157). Glazer takes this short paragraph

and amplifies it on the stage, making it concrete. Susan could have merely narrated the dream to the audience; however, Glazer chose to have it visible and actualised on the stage:

I.3 Dream of the Dead Captain

[This is the first scene that is either a dream or dream-like. Transitions into these scenes are marked by a different physicality. Murky light establishes on the **THREE SUSANS** lying face up in a loose, broken circle on the stage, having rolled and tumbled there from their positions in the previous scene. At center lies a man with a bloodied face, motionless, a spike driven into his eye, the **DEAD CAPTAIN** with whom **SUSAN** was set adrift. Haunting music underscores, and/or the sound of wind and rain are heightened as they might be in a dream. For the Susans, the dream is real.]

FIRST SUSAN

I dreamed of the murdered ship's-master.

SECOND SUSAN

I saw him floating southward in his puny boat

THIRD SUSAN

with the oars crossed on his breast and the ugly spike sticking out of his eye.

FIRST SUSAN

The sea was tossed with huge waves,

SECOND SUSAN

the wind howled, the rain beat down; yet the boat did not sink,

THIRD SUSAN

but drifted slowly on toward the province of the iceberg,

FIRST SUSAN

and would drift there, it seemed to me, caked in ice,
till the day of our resurrection.

SECOND SUSAN

He was a kindly man –

let me say so now, lest I forget –

who deserved a better end.

FIRST SUSAN

I dreamed of the murdered ship's-master. (19)

Glazer has chosen to keep the same words but through the use of murky lighting, haunting music and the heightened sound of wind and rain he has amplified the scene giving it a more heightened dramatic importance on the stage. The scene is visually striking as a man lies in the centre of the stage with a “bloodied face, motionless, a spike driven into this eye” (ibid.). The action of the play is paused as ‘Susan’ experiences this dream with the

audience. In the novel, readers are merely reading the dream as Susan explains it, but on stage the audience are almost voyeurs as they are given a vivid picture of Susan's mind.

Analogization, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is a process where the adaptor chooses themes/elements in the novel and finds equivalents for the adaptation. For example a theme that runs throughout the novel might not work as well on stage. Therefore the adaptor finds an equivalent that would work effectively for the stage medium. In Glazer's *Foe* there is evidence of an analogization taking place with the character of Friday who is represented as the mute black slave who Susan wishes would speak. Critics have argued that Friday is the most powerful character in the novel. His speechlessness is where he holds his power. According to MacLeod,

Friday's silence prevents him from becoming raw materials of someone else's narrative. Given the proper amount of source material, *Foe* overwhelms Susan and takes over her story, but Friday's silence is finally impenetrable, and , at the end of the novel, nobody has 'spoken the unspoken' (141) because no one can locate Friday well enough to manipulate him. (6)

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In the novel, Friday is a character from the first page; he has a strong presence throughout the narrative, even though he never utters a single word. What on the page might read as a mute black slave, on stage could be given a whole new meaning as he is represented as a physical 'body'. In the novel, Friday is persistently figured as an absence, even a "hole"; however, on stage he is present. Evidence of this can be seen near the end of the novel when Susan tells Foe: "...the story of Friday, which is properly not a story but a puzzle or hole in the narrative" (121). Throughout the novel Friday is moved from one space to the next by Susan, who wants to take him 'home to Africa'. He never speaks, therefore it is up to the surrounding characters to give him meaning, and we as the readers cannot see him as we cannot 'get into his head'. In the novel, Friday as a character works very differently to Susan, who is the narrator, and her thoughts and her voice is continuously presented to readers. In

both the stage versions, however, Friday is embodied live on the stage, allowing the audience direct access to his subjectivity, unmediated by Susan's narration. The other characters do not have to give him meaning as he now does so himself. This is one of the differences between the text and stage: theatre provides the platform for characters to be seen in a whole new light and they are given new meaning.



Chapter Four The Adaptation of *Foe* - Endings

4.1 A Critical Reading of *Foe*'s Ending

Robinson Crusoe has a conventional ending, providing the reader with sufficient narrative closure though also, in the final lines, foreshadowing a possible sequel: “[...] all these things, with some very surprizing incidents in some new adventures of my own, for ten years more, I may perhaps give a farther account of hereafter” (299). However, *Foe* does not offer such a traditional ending, as it presents the reader with three endings. This indicates a circular, open-ended narrative rather than the linear ending which Defoe presents us with. The following sections will discuss Coetzee’s multiple endings and how the novel resists closure; thereafter I will illustrate through close analyse how Wheatley and Glazer stage their endings.

Already in the closing stages of the third section, Coetzee provides material that could be construed as an ending to this story. The first ending concludes with Friday sitting at Mr Foe’s writing table, “[i]n his hand, poised over Foe’s papers, he held a quill with a drop of black ink glistening at its tip” (151). Susan is alarmed at what she sees and springs forward to grab the quill. Foe stops her and the two of them sit down beside Friday and talk. The section finally ends as Mr Foe asks Susan “[i]s Friday writing?” To which Susan replies, “[h]e is writing, after a fashion he is writing the letter *o*” (ibid.). The novel closes with Mr Foe: “[i]t is a beginning, tomorrow you must teach him a” (ibid.). Brian Macaskill and Jeanne Colleran (1992) believe that “[t]hese words constitute an extraordinary ending; so fine in orchestration, so adept in execution, this act of closure seems to gratify all previous desires, Susan’s gloom is lifted, she no longer feels suspended or subjected [...] Friday’s future seems assured, and assured in such a way” (450). This first ending closes on a hopeful note, as Foe

indicates towards 'a tomorrow', and this is similar to the way *Robinson Crusoe* ends as he opens up the possibility of a sequel. Coetzee could possibly be paying homage to that very novel; however, soon his own novel takes a drastic turn as the readers are confronted with two other endings in the novel's last section. This fourth section seems supplementary, and Macaskill and Colleran refer to this ending as "mistakenly attached" (450) as it is vastly different to the first three sections.

A new narrator is introduced at the beginning of section four and we know that it is not Susan as this narrator refers to Susan by name. The place is dark as the new narrator navigates by the light of a match, stumbling over a body. The narrator finds Friday: "I find the man Friday stretched at full length on his back" (154). Susan often calls Friday by name, and the words 'the man Friday' indicates distance from Friday which means the narrator does not know Friday personally. This is also a reference to *Robinson Crusoe* as it was Crusoe who referred to Friday as 'the man Friday'. Later the narrator says "...as she said" (ibid.) and refers to an earlier conversation between Susan and Mr Foe. Susan then said: "It is for us to open Friday's mouth and hear what it holds: silence, perhaps, or a roar, like the roar of a seashell held to the ear" (142). When the unknown narrator makes reference to Susan's conversation it is clear that this is neither Susan nor Friday. The narrator is an omniscient presence who is familiar with Susan and Friday's island experience. This second ending seems peculiar as readers do not know who the narrator is or what is happening. As the narrator puts an ear close to Friday's mouth we are told: "From his mouth, without a breath, issue the sounds of the island" (ibid.). Section four shifts the tone, narrator and story setting.

The third ending begins with another narrator, this time entering the house of author Daniel Defoe, as signified with a blue plaque bolted on the wall. We do not know who this narrator is but we do know that he/she has been in this room before and he/she knows the characters of Susan and Friday:

“The room is darker than before” (155)

“About his neck- I had not observed this before – is a scar like a necklace...” (155)

The quotation above is reminiscent of an earlier conversation Susan has with Foe. This refers possibly to the cord Susan ties around Friday earlier in the novel when she puts a sign around his neck: “[I] have written a deed granting Friday his freedom and signed it in Cruso’s name. This I have sewn into a little bag and hung on a cord around Friday’s neck” (99). Susan wishes to grant Friday his freedom but ironically she hangs a note around his neck which evokes images of a noose or chains around a slave’s neck to restrict their movement. In granting Friday freedom she unknowingly asserts her power over him.

The narrator then finds a manuscript lying on a table amongst “two dusty plates and a pitcher” (155). The narrator finds the dispatch box that Susan has been depositing her letters in, opens it and reads the documents. S/he then brings a candle nearer to read the first page of the script: “Dear Mr Foe, At last I could row no further.’ With a sigh, making barely a splash, I slip overboard [...] Around me on the waters are the petals cast by Friday.” (ibid.) It is clear that this is Susan’s story. Attwell refers to it as “...enter[ing] The Female Castaway where Susan had begun” (116), taking readers back [in time] to the first page of the novel as the line is similar, the only change is the addition of ‘Dear Mr Foe’. But the narrative, though circular in appearance, soon shifts as the reader is transported under water: “But this is not a place of words. Each syllable, as it comes out, is caught and filled with water and diffused. This is a place where bodies are their own signs. It is the home of Friday” (ibid.).

The narrator has entered a place where speech no longer is possible and words are useless. One cannot talk under water and this ship wreck is the original place that stands as Friday’s home, not Africa, as Susan mistakenly thinks. In ‘Susan’s narrative’ bodies i.e. Friday’s body stands for many things: mutilation, silence, blackness, African, but under water

his body is *his* body, associated with the trauma of slavery. In an interview conducted by Attwell (1992), Coetzee makes a rare comment upon the ending of *Foe*: “Friday is mute, but Friday does not disappear, because Friday is body” (48). Coetzee is suggesting that because Friday cannot talk it does not mean he disappears; he holds a great power in his silence. Phillip Wood (1991) argues that the final ending “[is] a tomb of fiction” (191). This idea of the end being a ‘fictional tomb’ is possible as words and stories have no longer any importance in Friday’s home. Begam believes that, “[w]e have entered into a prelinguistic Eden, a world in which meaning has grown so luminously transparent that words themselves have become superfluous....” (126). Begam approaches this ending with a romantic notion as he paints a picture of paradise and bliss. He has misinterpreted this ending as he suggests the final place of the novel represents Eden which conjures up imagery of a utopian paradise which is in complete contrast to this ending. It is not luminous; it is dark and murky because it is a slave ship, a place of violence and horror, where chained slaves met their death when the ship sank. Begam’s idea seems to be more fitting with Robinson Crusoe’s island, the birthplace of enlightenment. Coetzee on the other hand is burying the Western dream of enlightenment in this ending by resisting the idea of enlightenment, both literally and figuratively.

The significance of words is no longer necessary where Friday ‘lives’. By making *Foe* about Friday and not Cruso Coetzee makes a bold statement about narrative authority and history. The colonial voice is no longer the loudest or strongest; it is the presence of the unrepresented, the voice of Friday, even though it cannot speak. Earlier in the novel a conversation takes place between Foe and Susan which foreshadows the ‘final’ ending. Foe argues that:

“We must make Friday’s silence speak, as well as the silence surrounding Friday” To which Susan asks “But who will do it? It is easy enough to lie in bed and say what must be done, but who will dive into the wreck? On the island I told Cruso it should

be Friday, with a rope around his middle for safety. But if Friday cannot tell us what he sees, is Friday in my story any more than a figuring (or pre-figuring) of another diver?

Foe made no reply. (142)

The image of diving into a wreck is evident in their discussion. Susan's obsession with Friday's lack of speech is seen once again as she wonders how he will 'tell' her what he sees. Yet she also mentions 'another diver', which possibly alludes to the final, unknown diver. The silence 'surrounding' Friday is then finally articulated in the last lines of the novel:

From inside him comes a slow 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 imagery projected by these final lines evokes a great power. This great force that comes out of Friday has a strength behind it which seems unstoppable. No one can touch it or define it, and it cannot be represented by anyone. According to Macaskill and Colleran, "[w]hat issues forth is a breathless stream – a scream of no sound from deep within Friday- which passes uninterrupted through the wreck [...] In these final moments of the narrative, Coetzee positions a new narrative voice, displacing Susan's voice. This shifts all previously established authorities. In its place he offers a substance and a silence" (451). Similarly, Ina Gräbe (1989) notes,

The true power of speech seemingly emerges as silence, which explains why Friday is in the end the only means whereby the 'truth' of story-telling may perhaps eventually be experienced. It also explains why the story of the island never gets told in the present text, since Friday's private voice represents sounds of the island, which are beyond understanding of the focalizer and exceed the power of human speech. (178-179).

The novel closes forcefully and, as Attwell argues, "Friday's home is the body: his existence is a facticity that simply asserts its own priorities. The trials of marginal authorship

are irrelevant to Friday [...] The final image is an act of renunciation before the overwhelming authority, the force, of the body politic now emergent in history” (116).

Questions of power and history are key to making sense of Coetzee’s enigmatic ending. Already at the end of section three, Foe suddenly starts speaking to Susan about an imaginary situation in which Friday is sent to Crusoe’s sunken ship while they were on the island. He tells Susan:

Well, then: picture the hundreds of his fellow-slaves – or their skeletons – still chained in the wreck, the gay little fish (that you spoke of) flitting through their eye - sockets and the hollow cases that held their hearts. Picture Friday above, staring down upon them, casting buds and petals that float a brief while, then sink to settle among the bones of the dead. (141)

Foe paints a grotesque picture of Friday casting petals in a sacramental manner, paying his respects to his dead fellow slaves. Foe describes Friday as an angel- like figure as he looks down at the ‘bones of the dead’. This image sounds eerily familiar to the final ending when Friday lies at the bottom of the ocean, now again part of the drowned community of slaves, and the unknown narrator approaches him. The repetition of words and images of deceased bodies as they lay in a sunken ship invokes feelings of apprehension and dread.

There have been many interpretations of the end of *Foe*. The final ending of *Foe* echoes the poem *Diving into the Wreck* (1978) by Adrienne Rich, which Glazer also uses as his epigraph, and in the actual staging of Act 4. The poem is about a diver who dives into an abandoned ship wreck looking for any remnants or fragments to piece together a puzzle about the people who were once on the ship: “I came to explore the wreck. / The words are purposes. / The words are maps. / I came to see the damage that was done and the treasures that prevail” (l 52-56). This resonates with the final ending of *Foe* which conjures images of the thousands of slaves that died on the ships of the trans- Atlantic slave trade. As Mr Foe

describes it to Susan, these slaves would be still “chained to the wreck” (141). Coetzee may account for those who lost their lives and Friday the mute slave represents those who once had voices but could not speak. When they were alive they were “silenced” by the condition of slavery; dead, they are lost to history, but resurfaced through fiction. As seen above, the final section of *Foe* is an extremely complex one and to adapt this section on stage the adaptors would really be exposing their interpretation of the entire novel.

4.2 Wheatley’s Ending

This section will examine Wheatley’s ending, showing through close analyses of the text that his ending evokes similar imagery to Coetzee’s and also focuses strongly on the historical trauma of slavery. In addition I argue that while Wheatley’s ending is much shorter than Glazer’s (which will become evident in the next section), it provides the audience with sufficient closure while at the same time providing Friday with a great power. Below is Wheatley’s version of *Foe*’s final scene:

SUSAN’S voice: With a sigh making barely a splash I slipped overboard.

VOICES: With a sigh making barely a splash I slipped overboard.

[The voices repeat as petals fall.]

JACK climbs down seaweed. Petals fall around him.

JACK finds the wreck, we see the timbers, the broken hulk the backs of sand, the hole in the side. The wreck is huge. JACK goes into the wreck. He carries a candle.

JACK finds FRIDAY drawn up, his knees to his chin, A chain hangs above him, JACK’s voice is distorted]

JACK: Friday, what is this ship?

VOICES: What is this ship?

[FRIDAY turns and turns until he lies full length.

FRIDAY turns and turns.

Light fades until the only light is on FRIDAY's mouth. JACK's finger passes across FRIDAY's teeth. His mouth opens. A slow stream of sound replaces all other sound.

JACK is washed away, as of by a wave. Endless breath/water/sound – effortless. It washes over everything, clearing everything, until only it is left. It continues. Light fades

There is only FRIDAY's mouth]

[END] (68)

Wheatley's ending begins with a phrase found in the first paragraph of *Foe*, "With a sigh making barely a splash I slipped overboard" (ibid.). The phrase is once again repeated this time not by Susan's voice but by Voices. These voices act as a chorus throughout the adaptation. The use of repetition is a theme that runs throughout *Foe* as we often read the same phrase, words or sentence, said by different narrators at different stages of the novel. The repetition creates an uncanny feeling as the audience is transported back to the island. We are not quite sure where the next scene takes place; we just know that Susan has now become just a voice and no longer a physical body on stage. We know that Coetzee resists closure and the use of repetition allows readers to read the same phrase repeatedly, but draw different conclusions each time. In this sense, Wheatley pays homage to Coetzee's style and he also incorporates repetition in his adaptation. The phrase is once again repeated: "as petals fall" (ibid.) The falling petals echo a scene earlier in the novel where Susan watches as Friday scatters petals in the sea. The scattering of petals is another theme, associated with slavery and death that runs throughout the novel as Susan mentions it multiple times. She writes to Mr Foe as she wonders about Friday's petals:

And then there is the final mystery: What were you about when you paddled out to sea upon your log and scattered petals on the water? I will tell you what I have concluded: that you scattered the petals over the place where your ship went down, and scattered them in memory of some person who perished in the wreck, perhaps a father or a mother or a sister or a brother, or perhaps a whole family, or perhaps a dear friend. (86-87)

Susan acknowledges the fact that Friday's act of scattering petals has a sacramental and deeper meaning. She believes it is where his slave ship sunk and he is casting petals in remembrance of his family. Susan's words above also echoes the final images of the novel. Wheatley uses the image of the falling petals, indicating to the audience that there is a 'location' change. The petals symbolise the first chapter which took place on the island.

After the petals fall, "JACK finds the wreck, we see the timbers, the broken hulk, the backs of sand, the hole in the side. The wreck is huge. JACK goes into the wreck. He carries a candle" (ibid.). The audience is now aware of the shipwreck and the underwater feel it gives to the stage. From the script one can assume the wreck is open at the side as Jack enters holding a candle. Jack finds Friday in a foetal position and "a chain hangs above him" (ibid.). The candle that Jack holds appears to be the only source of light as the script does not indicate a lighting change. Theatrically, a candle is a very basic and simple lighting device: it creates shadows and distorts the light as one walks, this reiterates the shadowy atmosphere present in the novel's final scenes. The use of a candle 'underwater' in this scene reinforces the sense that Coetzee's last section in particular cannot be read and understood within the framework of realism. Wheatley emphasises this shift away from realism with the underwater use of the candle. Rather than a "real" candle, it can be read as symbolic of enlightenment, shining a weak, insubstantial light on to the dark side of Western history. Wheatley's staging therefore makes it explicit that the adaptation addresses the universal issue of slavery within the novel. He allows viewers to 'zoom in' on the trauma of slavery by emphasising this dark and traumatic side of colonial history.

As Jack moves around the wreck he finds Friday: "drawn up, his knees to his chin, A chain hangs above him..." (ibid.). The chain symbolises torture and enslavement, reiterating the theme of slavery seen throughout the novel. Chains can also signify torment and suffering. Friday's body language suggests that he is traumatised and childlike. Similarly,

Francis Spufford (1996), a reviewer writes, “[w]ith the play’s last image, *Complicité* makes explicit what the novel only hints at – Friday is shown in chains. For him there is no homeland, slavery has cast him away. The myth of *Crusoe* conceals the profits of slavery” (36). Wheatley’s adaptation clearly concretizes the idea of a ship-wrecked slave ship that Coetzee only hints at at the end of the novel. As Jack asks Friday “what is this ship?”, his voice is distorted. His voice is distorted, because he is under water and not able to speak, and therefore his words become muffled. From the novel we know what that the following scene takes place underwater and his distorted voice is evidence of this. Finding Friday underwater is paramount to the final ending as it is Friday’s oceanic home.

As the play draws to a close the lighting changes: “[l]ight fades until the only light is on FRIDAY’S mouth” (ibid.). The stage is getting darker and Friday’s mouth becomes the focal point. Wheatley wants to acknowledge Friday’s character and the power he holds with his silence. The stage indeed becomes Friday’s home. Ina Gräbe (1989) suggests that “[t]he true power of speech seemingly emerges as silence, which explains why Friday is in the end the only means whereby the ‘truth’ of story-telling may perhaps eventually be experienced” (180). This echoes Philip Woods’ notion of a ‘fictional tomb’, as “Friday’s private voice presents the sounds of the island, which are beyond the understanding of the focalizer and exceed the power of human speech” (Gräbe: 180). The speech and writing contrast is also highlighted as Coetzee presents us with a mute character that does not ‘speak’ but is still able to tell his (a) story.

According to Wheatley’s stage directions, “Light fades. There is only FRIDAY’S mouth” (ibid.). This could be read as a spotlight that finally focuses on Friday’s mouth. Even though Friday does not utter a word (unlike in Glazer’s version) Friday is given an immense power in this final scene drawing the focus and attention of the audience to him. The final moments of the play are accompanied by “a slow stream of sound...” (ibid.). We are not told

exactly what type of sounds this is or the instrument that is making this sound, but we are told that the “sound replaces all other sound” (ibid.). This sound takes over the entire stage as “JACK is washed away, as of by a wave. Endless breath/water/sound – effortless. It washes over everything, clearing everything, until only it is left” (ibid.). Friday’s mouth and the uninterrupted sound therefore becomes the focal point of the final moments of the play. According to reviewers Spufford and Manet, the “slow steam of sound” (ibid.) is a scream which emanates from Friday’s mouth. Manet writes, “[c]hained and spent from a ritual dance of death, the misery of his displacement finds expression in a chilling silent scream” (n.pag.) and Spufford recalls, “[a]t the end, Friday’s long mute presence makes his climactic scream all the more moving” (36).

This staging can be read as an example of Stam's idea of concretization. In the final lines of the novel we read that “Friday’s mouth opens. From inside him comes a slow stream, without breath, without interruption” (157). Wheatley has concretized this final scene for Friday to ‘scream’ on stage. It is difficult to interpret exactly what Spufford and Manet are referring to as it would appear that Friday opens his mouth and the audience then hears a sound: “Endless breath/water/ sound – effortless” (68), suggesting that Wheatley would have used a synthetic, recorded sound coming from speakers, aptly symbolising the final images of *Foe*: “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 powerful image that closes the novel is similar to the final image in Wheatley’s adaptation: “[i]t washes over everything, clearing everything, until only it is left. It continues. Light fades. There is only FRIDAY’s mouth] (68). This does indeed provide the audience with a concrete ending as the entire play rests on Friday’s immense power. For audience members familiar with the novel, this ending would reiterate Coetzee’s ending by allowing Friday’s silence to become the

play's final image. We can only assume this sound lasts until the lights fade and the play ends. According to co-director Marcello Magni,

The silence of Friday also shows the silence and the eloquence of his body. The body is the home of Friday: he is never alarmed by his silence, by being mute. He is in a space where bodies are their own signs, it's not the place for words, in Friday's body there is the right to speak. The place where Friday's body speaks in the wreck of a slave ship at the end of the play. Finally, we are forced to face the reality of history, and accept the reality of hundreds of years of slavery. We confront with our own eyes the very thing that Susan ultimately didn't have the courage to face to confess to. (21)

These ideas are concretised in the adaptation as Friday becomes the focalizer of the ending. The play sharpens the idea of Coetzee's novel being concerned with history and issues of oppression – which the novel, at the time of its publication, was accused of evading. Magni places emphasis on the idea that Friday is in a wreck of a slave ship. Therefore, Wheatley's staging confirms a political interpretation of the novel, making the text relevant to a wider history of racial oppression. In the draft version used for this thesis, Coetzee has commented on this final scene with a marginal, pencilled in note: "last pages [are] good", in interviews, Coetzee has been relatively silent about this ending and never explicitly gives an analysis on the imagery of this final section. Thus his one comment indicates that Wheatley's interpretation is an adaptation that is congruent with authorial intention.

4.3 Glazer's Ending

Glazer's ending begins with a familiar line taken from the novel, "[t]he staircase is dark and mean" (101). The 'Actor' (Captain Smith) is now the new narrator which Glazer calls "an identifiable voice" (100). The line is familiar, because it is similar to the opening sentence of section three and four of the novel *Foe*. Glazer has merely changed the tense of the sentence from past to present. The final sequence of Glazer's ending is lengthy, full of

music, light changes and many screen projections until the final few moments of the play where Friday's character rises from a bed, faces the audience and becomes the *final* narrator.

Before his ending begins Glazer provides an extensive explanation and stage directions of what is to come. One thing we know about *Foe's* ending is that it destabilizes the conventional narrative structure by its enigmatic double (even triple) ending. To translate that sense from the novel to the stage was a challenge. The adaptors are limited in terms of time and there are also constraints of space as we know that parts of the ending occur under water. The choice of projecting images onto the stage is one way to create a certain type of ambiance, for the obvious reason that the play cannot take place underwater and therefore Glazer uses sound, lighting and a projection of an image to create that underwater feel. It is easy to transport readers under water. On a stage it is more challenging.

Glazer's final act begins with an epilogue titled 'Diving Into The Wreck' – a reference to Rich's poem. The title also conjures imagery of Rich's poem which served as Glazer's epigraph. The images associated with the act of diving into an abandoned shipwreck and digging around are integral to *Foe's* 'final' ending. Glazer begins the ending with a lengthy explanation of the setting of the scene in his 'stage directions':

Almost the entire novel *Foe* has been in quotation marks until now, but in Part IV, they are gone, and with them an identifiable narrative voice. Part IV of Coetzee's *Foe* introduces an entirely new narrator, unnamed, who, speaking in the first person, seems to be exploring the landscape of the book from the perspective of some kind of dream-like future, or perhaps from the reader's own present, or from the perspective of Coetzee's himself. This section of the book might be seen as the author's own dream of his characters and landscapes, mediated and transformed by his subconscious, changing each time he dreams them. The epilogue destabilizes the now familiar narrative presence created by Susan, and, as a result, the world of the reader. The conventions of traditional fiction, already unsettled by the book in both, form and content, are now further complicated and exposed (100).

Glazer acknowledges the fact that the final section of *Foe* defies the conventions of the traditional narrative and suggests that this section “may be from the perspective of Coetzee” (ibid.). Throughout the entire play the three Susans have been the driving force in terms of narration, and the play is almost moulded around everything they do and say. Glazer acknowledges that the narrative now shifts in terms of narrative presence as the audience is introduced to an entirely new narrator: an unknown person who has no ties to the story but is given an enormous task of ‘finishing off the story’. Glazer also recognises that this ending appears to be a ‘dream-like’ setting, as seen in an extract from the didascalia below:

The **SUSANS, MR FOE, FRIDAY, CRUSO, THE GIRL** and **THE DEAD CAPTAIN** are all characters in the forthcoming scene. The text, reproduced here from the novel almost in its entirety, will be spoken by the two actors who played the smallest roles so far: **CAPTAIN SMITH** and **THE GIRL**. The actors, stripped of these characters, take on this new and all but anonymous “I”. The others enact the dream-like scenes the new narrators describe, edging closer to some kind of revelation, cryptic though it may be. As in a dream, the dreamer is not seen. (100)

Glazer does not ignore the original text; he embraces it and incorporates it into his adaptation. He further elaborates that this scene will now feel like a ‘dream’ and that the ‘dreamer’ (narrator) is not the focalizer of this scene, and the identity of the narrator is secondary to what is presented on the stage. As seen in the didascalia below, the lighting is soft and diffused so as to mimic the lighting “of the bottom of the sea” (100):

The stage is dimly lit, the bottom of the sea. The company, barely visible, surrounds the space. A projected text unexpectedly appears briefly out of the darkness, floating. It is a page from the novel *Foe*, page 153, the first page of Part IV, beginning “The staircase is dark and mean.” The text is marked over with a pencil and there are marks in the margin, perhaps indicating who might speak certain sections. He is no longer in period clothes, but something simple and dark; contemporary but innocuous. He begins the narration – perhaps in his own voice or in Standard English – which he will soon share with the **ACTRESS** who played **THE GIRL**. As he begins to speak, we realize that his words are those of the projected text, and the marks show where this original text has been slightly cut for the purposes of the stage adaptation. (ibid.)

This scene makes use of projection technology, a technique Glazer used in the beginning of the play when he projected a page from *Robinson Crusoe* on a sail. Glazer projects the first page of section four and emphasises the phrase ‘the staircase is dark and mean’, the first phrase from section three and four of the novel. *Foe* is a novel that deals with the act of writing, according to Richard Begam, “[*Foe*] becomes [...] an exploration of *écriture*: a piece of writing which is about itself as a piece of writing” (114). Glazer explores this idea by projecting pages of *Foe* onto the stage with pencil marks over it and having one of the characters reading it out, he also cuts off the original text “for the purposes of the stage adaptation” (ibid.). He is acknowledging that *this* is an adaptation of a novel just as Coetzee makes it known that *Foe* is a novel about a novel. The theme of writing and narrative structure is evident here as Glazer goes back to the novel by incorporating it in his adaptation. By reproducing the pages of *Foe* (seen again at the very end of the play) on his stage, Glazer pays homage to *Foe* and acknowledges the novel’s complex ending. Unlike Wheatley, who only uses parts of the novel’s ending, Glazer chooses to adapt *Foe*’s entire ending, using most of its dialogue verbatim. As Glazer states: “[t]he text, reproduced here from the novel almost in its entirety” (ibid.). Glazer’s fidelity to the source text is however complicated by his use of minor characters to voice the final section. He changes the clothes and their accents to allow them to take on a new role. The ‘captain’ now shares the narrator role with the ‘girl’ who also takes on a new character.

The use of lighting in this final chapter is important as Glazer wishes to create a certain type of ambiance in the theatre, highlight various parts of the stage at certain times and have the lighting guide the viewers. In the epilogue he notes, “...lighting should highlight the various scenes as they are discovered by the dreamer/narrator, as though the audience were being led into and through these rooms, spaces and experiences (ibid.). Therefore, the lighting in this scene acts as a camera lens would in a film, a ‘guiding light’ for the audience.

In order for Glazer to create a 'deep under water' stage setting he uses the lighting to dim the stage, "[t]he stage is dimly lit, the bottom of the sea. The company, barely visible, surrounds the space" (ibid.). The light creates an almost stifled feel on stage, mimicking the feeling of being underwater or trapped in a small space. Later in the same section we learn that "[a] light rises on the ACTOR who played CAPTAIN SMITH" (ibid.). The light then guides the viewers to focus on the actor who will now be the narrator. When the first image (first page of *Foe*) is projected the lighting changes:

The slide of text remains visible only briefly, perhaps just during the transition into the scene. It is fading or gone by the time the narration begins, but visible long enough for the audience to recognize it when intoned by the ACTOR. The lighting in this scene should highlight the vignettes being described, and move across the stage with the different scenes to give the sense that the narrator, the "I," is moving through them and witnessing them just as the text describes. (101-102)

The lighting is used to indicate when the scene will begin as the page is seen just long enough for the audience to see it and it does not suddenly disappear but slowly fades away – adding to the mysteriousness of the scene. When the actual scene begins, "[t]he light is mottled, and somewhat disturbing" (101). The light throughout this scene changes repeatedly but focuses on the actors on stage. Later on in the next 'dream like' sequence, the "[l]ights might begin to swirl slowly, giving the feel of deep water on the stage" (103). Glazer then uses lighting here to create the underwater setting to the stage and make the audience feel trapped as if they were underwater. Glazer's stage direction ends with the following paragraph:

As they tell the story, members of the company move to the stage and perform what he describes in a somewhat stylized manner. Music plays through the scene, rich, mysterious. The slide of text remains visible only briefly, perhaps just during the transition into the scene. It is fading or gone by the time the narration begins, but visible long enough for the audience to recognize it when intoned by the ACTOR. [...] The narration in this section should have urgency, fuelled by the desire on the part of the narrators/dreamers to know what will happen in the dream, the real suspense of not knowing what will be discovered around the next dark corner, and the

belief that some kind of chilling revelation awaits that they must confront. The light is mottled, and somewhat disturbing.] (100)

The 'actor' investigates the space as he "stumbles over a body" (101). He finds Susan: "...her feet drawn up inside a long grey dress. Her face wrapped in a grey woollen scarf" (ibid.) as he begins to unwrap it, the scarf seems to be endless. "FIRST SUSAN, still lifeless, lifts and rotates her head, as though the scarf were being unrolled" (ibid.). As seen in the stage direction, the movements made in this scene are ominous and very rhythmic, which is the mood that Glazer wants to represent. The 'actor' continues exploring the room and he finds Susan (third) and Mr Foe lying side by side on a bed [*lights fade on the couple. They remain in place*]. As stated above, the dialogue and images projected are identical to the novel, ending the 'scene' where Friday opens "his mouth fully. From his mouth, without a breath, issue the sounds of the island" (102).

As seen above, Glazer's ending is very similar to *Foe's* – the dialogue and actions of the characters remain faithful to Coetzee's work. However, Glazer's ending departs radically from the novel version, when, in the final moments of the play, it appears that Friday himself is now given power to speak. Below is an extract from the didascalia and dialogue:

ACTOR

His mouth opens.

[**FRIDAY** rises from the bed and faces the audience, our final narrator. Were he wigged for his role, as he was in the premiere, he would now remove the wig, drawing a distinction between the character and the actor. He speaks in his own voice. The rest of the cast, with the exception of the narrators, are spread around the stage at his feet. He speaks directly to the audience.]

FRIDAY

From inside comes a slow stream, without breath, without interruption.

FRIDAY and ACTOR and ACTRESS

It flows up through his body and out upon me;

FRIDAY and ACTRESS

it passes through the cabin, through the wreck;

FRIDAY and ACTOR

washing the cliffs and shores of the island, it runs northward and southward to the ends of the earth.

FRIDAY

Soft and cold, dark and unending, it beats against my eyelids, against the skin of **my** face.

Friday plays a significant role in this ending as he speaks the final words of the play.

For those who are familiar with the novel the choice to have Friday speak may be puzzling, and even seen as a travesty of Coetzee's book.

One of the reasons why he does not speak in Coetzee's novel, is not only because Susan thinks he cannot (though it is never confirmed that his tongue was cut out), but also because he represents the 'unrepresented', voiceless and marginalised subjects of history. By making *Foe* about Friday and not Crusoe, Coetzee is making a bold statement about narrative authority and history. The colonial voice is no longer the loudest or strongest; it is the voice of the unrepresented, the voice of Friday, even though it cannot speak. By making Friday speak at the end Glazer has chosen to ignore the novel and thereby appears to give the character of Friday a whole new meaning. In this world (Glazer's) Friday has chosen to represent himself with words. He is no longer the oppressed and disenfranchised, but powerful and is given the final word of the performance. The final words spoken by Friday are as follows:

"FRIDAY: Soft and cold, dark and unending, it beats against **my** eyelids, against the skin of **my** face" (106).

Here Friday assumes the role of the narrator and takes ownership of that final sentence. Glazer not only gives him the responsibility of the final lines by allowing him to speak, but also by using the pronoun of 'my' to give him narrative accountability. It ultimately becomes his words, and his narrative.

It is easy to understand why Glazer goes against Coetzee's novel, and gives Friday the power of speech, since speech, in the novel, is symbolic of power, agency and individuality. But Glazer's choice to allow Friday speech can also be understood to subvert the power of silence, which is key to Coetzee's Friday. I do not think that giving Friday the power to speak was effective in this stage production as the entire play has been very similar to *Foe* in dialogue and action and to make a very major change right at the end of the play undermines the novel. The play is in danger of losing the sense of complexity that the novel possesses. It is also possible to understand Friday's speech not as a travesty of Coetzee's book, but as a postmodern theatrical moment where Glazer plays with a split between actor and character. In the didascalia, we note that "FRIDAY rises from the bed and faces the audience" and that "he would now remove the wig, drawing a distinction between the character and the actor" (ibid.). When Glazer therefore states that he "speaks in his own voice" we need to take into account that the speaker / narrator here is not primarily Friday, but the actor, who has stepped out of his role and addresses the audience directly "out of character". In this sense, Glazer has it both ways: Friday does speak, but he also remains silent, merely voiced by his actor. This scene is reminiscent of the final scene in Athol Fugard's *The Island* (1972), where Winston removes his wig, and no longer speaks as Antigone, but as himself, addressing the audience.

The puzzle over the unrepresented stories of people's lives will perhaps never be solved which I believe is why Coetzee has written an end to *Foe* that remains elusive and unsolvable. The final image of the novel of the great 'stream' that comes out of Friday's mouth is powerful. The power projects an image akin to waves. Waves in the ocean possess a great force which one cannot capture much like Friday's power. It cannot be captured by mere words, and may be better understood as representing a metaphoric voice that signifies the lost histories of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the countless numbers of slaves that were captured and forced into silence. Their voices were never heard and the novel's ending

could be read as Coetzee's attempt at acknowledging their existence and their place in history. The play then comes to a close, and Glazer explains what happens next:

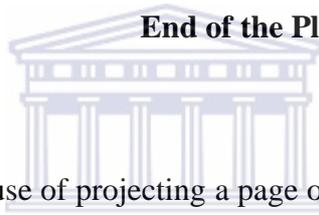
[A final series of projections appear, in rapid succession, again floating in the **darkness** over the stage. No image is up for more than a few seconds except perhaps the last. They show the last page of Coetzee's text, page 157. First the full page appears, then, as though the magnification were increasing rapidly, we see a blow-up of the final paragraph on that page, which starts "His mouth opens . . ." Then the magnification increases yet again and we see only a portion of that paragraph. The letters grow larger with each image as the focus pulls into the page, showing fewer and fewer words. One can begin to see the rough texture of the print itself. The penultimate slide pulls in to reveal only two phrases on two lines: "the ends of the earth" and "dark and unending." Finally, we see only the word "the" from "the ends of the earth" and "end" from "dark and unending." The screen now reads:

the

end

It holds there for a few seconds, and then the slide goes out, leaving us in darkness.]

End of the Play

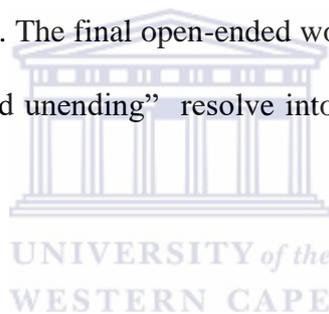


Glazer once again makes use of projecting a page of *Foe* onto the stage's background. He reiterates the importance of the novel's final words as they appear on the stage for the audience to not only hear from Friday's mouth but also for them to read it themselves as if they had just read the entire novel. It is unclear which images are shown "in rapid succession" (106), possibly more pages from the novel. Glazer wishes to emphasize the words 'ends of the earth', 'dark' and 'unending' – all these words project an image of something that is eternal and shadowy.

As stated earlier, plays need to provide its viewers with an ending; the audience cannot leave with a sense of confusion and open-endedness, unlike a novel. This is one of the many differences between the media. Coetzee contests the idea of narrative closure in *Foe*. In the traditional, realist novel the ending should provide the reader with a sense of solace or knowing; in addition, the story must also make sense – which *Foe*'s ending does not. The novel ends with questions; the end is disjointed from the rest of the novel, forcing the reader

to go back and reread and find their own conclusion and derive their own meaning. By destabilising an iconic and well-known text such as *Robinson Crusoe* and taking it into an unfamiliar direction, Coetzee has created a circular narrative and resisted closure. This circular narrative unsettles readers; similarly letting Cruso die in the early parts of the novel is also unsettling and unfamiliar. Readers expect answers and Coetzee asks questions. *Foe* is an unsettling novel which demands to be re-read in order for the reader to create meaning. I believe that Coetzee wants readers to know that closure is not always provided, like Friday's story/history, we will never know his story and we have to accept this.

Glazer emphasises the lack of closure by raising more questions regarding Friday's voice, and drawing attention to the circular nature of Coetzee's narrative, but ultimately does provide his audience with closure. The final open-ended words, taken from the novel, namely "the ends of the earth", "dark and unending" resolve into closure as the screen now reads: "the end" (106).



Chapter Five

Conclusion

This thesis set out to critically engage with the two theatrical adaptations of J.M Coetzee's *Foe*. One of the main aims was to determine to what extent *Foe* is a 'stageable' novel and to what extent the adaptations were successful, both on the stage and as readings of the novel.

As we have seen, both of the adaptors have approached the staging of *Foe* in different ways, as seen in the analysis of the didascalia, which was detailed in chapters three and four. The staging of the novel poses challenges to Wheatley and Glazer but both of the plays address these challenges in different but ultimately successful ways. Both Wheatley and Glazer highlight the intertextuality of Coetzee's novel. Wheatley concretizes *Foe*'s intertextual connection to *Robinson Crusoe*, as is particularly evident through the use of off-stage voices (representing Defoe's authorship) and Susan's on-stage dialogue. The dramatic tension between Susan's story and the voices makes Coetzee's critical engagements with Defoe more concrete and visible. Similarly, Glazer's play also highlights intertextuality by literally bringing Defoe's and Coetzee's books on to the stage, through repeated projections of pages from both *Robinson Crusoe* and *Foe*.

This thesis also set out to discuss fidelity and the relationship adaptations have to its source text. Glazer incorporates a marked degree of *Foe*'s dialogue, making it faithful to Coetzee's novel; however, the play is not constrained by a simplistic notion of fidelity as it makes use of non-realist elements such as the triplication of Susan Barton's character. Furthermore, Glazer's staging of the final scene showcases his interpretive licence with the novel when he gives a voice to Friday, whereas Wheatley develops *Foe*'s relationship with its inter-text, *Robinson Crusoe* more strongly.

As stated earlier, when the novel was published in 1986, it came under critique for its apparent total lack of comment on South Africa's oppressive political situation in the 1980s. Many critics believed that Coetzee avoided the subject of Apartheid and ignored his role as a South African novelist by writing an escapist novel that seemingly had no connection to South Africa. The question of relevance was raised by critics, as *Foe* appeared to be irrelevant to South Africa at the time and this was seen as *Foe's* greatest weakness. However, it was precisely the novel's avoidance of narrow political relevance that makes it adaptable on global stages. The semi-detachment to South Africa's situation is the novel's greatest strength as it raises wider, more universal issues that are relevant today. It is for this reason that *Foe* is a stageable novel, for if it were a narrowly written response to the political crisis of the 1980s it may have become dated, and perhaps irrelevant for staging today. One of Coetzee's previous novels, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) was similarly not restricted to the South African situation, and has also been adapted in numerous ways, both as theatre and as an opera. The subsequent novel, *Age of Iron* (1990), was by contrast, steeped in South African history, and arguably appeared less attractive to film makers and theatre producers. *Foe* raises concerns wider than the South African context. As Coetzee put it in an interview with Morphet, the novel is "not a retreat from the subject of colonialism or from questions of power" (462). Questions of power are particularly emphasised in Wheatley's adaptation, which foregrounds the historical trauma of slavery and the gendered nature of the power of authorship.

It is evident that the plays allow us to reinterpret or sharpen our focus by making sense of the novel in particular ways. Wheatley's staging refocuses our sense of the novel's engagement with questions of authorship, fiction and storytelling. As seen in the epigraph of chapter one, Wheatley is interested in telling a story: "*Foe* is a story about telling stories. It is about whose story to tell and who has the power to tell it. It is about having a voice" (11). He

is interested in power and the voice which not only reveals gendered asymmetries, but is also central to the idea of slavery and the silencing of the black subject during the slave trade. Glazer's play, on the other hand, emphasises Coetzee's postmodern textuality more strongly, presenting a staging in which fictions, truth, dreaming and the endlessly open, intertextual world of fiction and the imagination is foregrounded. Glazer does not really focus on the question of oppression and silencing.

This thesis grounded itself in adaptation theory, which was discussed in chapter two. In the light of adaptation theory, it is evident that both Glazer and Wheatley pay homage to Coetzee and *Foe*. They also openly acknowledge their adaptations as an adaptation of Coetzee's *Foe*. Several critics, among them Stam, propose the idea that adaptation is a complex process, and Stam's outline of various adaptive practices such as "selection, amplification, concretization, critique, extrapolation, analogization and popularization" (19) have proved productive for this thesis. Many of these practices can be identified in the respective play scripts; both Wheatley and Glazer, for example, implement the process of concretization and amplification. They have also gone through a process of selection as their plays do not adapt the entire novel, but instead they have chosen key scenes in the novel that highlight and amplify the themes and motifs that they want to showcase.

The thesis also set out to analyse the ending of the novel and the way the respective plays interpret it. *Foe's* ending has been a greatly discussed topic among scholars and critics. Both Glazer and Wheatley's staging of the ending is very different; however, their staging is equally successful. They both incorporate their theatre style and mould it to create an ending that embodies their entire conception of the entire play, as is evident in the discussion in chapter four. With the use of sound effects, music, screen projections and lighting both adaptors have successfully staged the ending of a novel that is seemingly 'unstageable'.

Overall then, it is clear that the respective play versions are not reduced, cut down and therefore inferior versions of the novel, but that they have staged the story in rich and complex ways that allow viewers and readers a broader sense of Coetzee's creative imagination.



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