Footprints, Movement, and 'the Road We're Already On': From *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) to *Oryx and Crake* (2003)

AVRIL TYNAN

Abstract: In Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the protagonist's discovery of a single footprint on the beach of the island where he has been marooned for fifteen years is one of literature's most iconic scenes. Remarkable at once for its alterity and its singularity, the footprint refuses to take up position in a series that might help to identify either the origin or the destination of its maker. In Margaret Atwood's post-apocalyptic novel *Oryx and Crake* (2003), the protagonist's discovery of a trail of (human) footprints liberates the footprint as a trace of erstwhile existence and suggests the movement of what Tim Ingold terms human 'becoming'. Yet the ambiguity of the novel's conclusion draws an ambivalent reading of the path laid out by these footprints, which may not lead us towards moral and epistemological advance but rather to social and environmental catastrophe.

Keywords: Daniel Defoe, Margaret Atwood, Tim Ingold, post-apocalyptic fiction, speculative fiction

The footprint

In Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the protagonist's discovery of a single footprint on the beach of the island where he has been marooned for fifteen years is one of literature's most iconic scenes:

> It happen'd one Day about Noon going towards my Boat, I was exceedingly surpriz'd, with the Print of a Man's naked Foot on the Shore, which was very plain to be seen in the Sand: I stood like one Thunder-struck, or as if I had seen an Apparition; I listen'd, I look'd round me, I could hear nothing, nor see any Thing; I went up to a rising Ground to look farther; I went up the Shore and down the Shore, but it was all one, I could see no other Impression but that one. I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my Fancy; but there was no Room for that, for there was exactly the very Print of a Foot, Toes, Heel, and every Part of a Foot; how it came thither, I knew not, nor could in the least imagine. (Defoe 1975, 121)

Shattering his sense of safety and peaceful isolation, Crusoe decides that the footprint, which is too big to be his own, must be the mark of the Devil or of a savage, although further tangible traces of the latter he finds only two years later, and the narrative leaves open the conclusion of any definitive attribution (see Brown 2012, 147–180).

As the template for a host of castaway and post-apocalyptic narratives, the influence of *Robinson Crusoe* on literary production is not negligible. Christopher Palmer, in *Castaway Tales: From Robinson Crusoe to Life of Pi* (2016), discusses parodic revisions of the castaway trope in, for example, A. D. Hope's poem "Man Friday" (1985), Michel Tournier's *Friday, or, The Other Island* (1967), Jules Verne's *The Mysterious Island* (1875), Alex Garland's *The Beach* (1996), and Terry Pratchett's *Nation* (2009). Heather J. Hicks identifies the protagonist's attempts to remake civilization (albeit through a colonial lens and desire) in Defoe's novel as the precursor to post-apocalyptic novels that centre not only natural disaster but also man-made and biochemical catastrophe, including Cormac McCarthy's

Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics Vol. 47, No. 4, Winter 2024 [96-103]

The Road (2006) and Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* (2007). One of the works featured in Hicks' analysis of post-apocalyptic fiction is Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003), the first in the Canadian author's *MaddAdam* Trilogy, which recounts not only the post-apocalyptic survival of a handful of human and posthuman subjects but also, through flashbacks, the lengthy apocalyptic trajectory of genetic engineering and biomedical interference. Yet it is the iconic scene of the footprint's discovery in *Robinson Crusoe* as it is reimagined in *Oryx and Crake* that is of particular interest in this article. If the discovery of the footprint in *Robinson Crusoe* is peppered with incomprehension and a persistent lack of knowledge as to the ontological cause of the print, in *Oryx and Crake* a corresponding trail of footprints suggests a more ambivalent relationship to knowledge and progress, in which the trajectory of human life is left suspended in the novel's conclusion.

Drawing on Tim Ingold's explorations of lines, traces, and footprints, I argue that *Oryx and Crake* stages a mediation of the human being in active evolution. If Defoe's depiction of the unattributed footprint at the centre of *Robinson Crusoe* instigated the protagonist's disarray in part because of its singularity and the "obscurity of its origins," refusing to fit "into a series of prints, coming before or after another" from which could be traced an identity or source (Brown 2012, 163), the trail of prints in *Oryx and Crake* illustrates the work in progress of human evolution, eluding a beginning or end but instead a constant adaptive movement through which knowledge is acquired. The shift from the orientation towards the past in Crusoe's attempts to attribute origin to the print, and the potentially redemptive future orientation of the discovery of human footprints in *Oryx and Crake* liberates the footprint as a trace from ideas of erstwhile existence to instigate new thinking around the movement of human "becoming" (Ingold 2011, 72; 2013, 8). Yet the ambiguity of the novel's conclusion inflects the reader's interpretation of these prints. The action of following in the footsteps of another gestures to the endless circulation of knowledge between subjects, but the assumption that presupposes all knowledge as beneficial can be overstated. In the constant evolutionary movements of human becomings, activity often leads not to progress but to catastrophe, a warning parodied in Atwood's twenty-first-century iteration of social tragedy.

Traces and paths

In *Lines: A Brief History*, social anthropologist Tim Ingold distinguishes between what he considers to be the two main types of line: the thread and the trace (2007, 41–44). While the thread is a three-dimensional, textured filament that can be entangled or knotted with other threads or suspended between two points, the trace *endures*, marked *upon* a surface rather than having a surface of its own. He further distinguishes between two types of trace: the additive and the reductive. If the traces left by writing are additive, in that they overlay the existing surface with a new one, the traces left by the movements of animals and humans are, for the most part, reductive, in that they imprint the surface of the world, leaving an impression that corresponds to existence. Among the trails and tracks of humans and animals, Ingold elaborates, in "Footprints Through the Weather-world: Walking, Breathing, Knowing," on the footprint as a reductive trace of the ways in which human beings become knowledgeable (2010). While he acknowledges the slipperiness of this taxonomy, and the relative ease with which traces may transform into threads and threads into traces, he proposes that it is according to these transformations that the surfaces of our world come into, and fall out of, being.

It is this entangled, symbiotic development of both the human being and their surroundings that contributes to Ingold's further development of life as a meshwork of living beings, themselves composed as a knot of interwoven lines (see 2011, 63–94; 2015, 3–8 and 13–17; 2016). Yet the reductive trace is of particular interest here for the ways in which it intersects with the world, depicting a mark of the movements that embed the human body into the earth's surfaces. As Ingold argues, human beings do not perceive their environment through sight, sound, or touch alone but "with the whole body," and "it is surely through our feet, in contact with the ground (albeit mediated by footwear), that we are most fundamentally and continually 'in touch' with our surroundings" (2011, 45). Through

our feet, and the prints they make upon the surface of the world, Ingold insists on movement as critical to evolution, which does not simplistically describe the ascension of a species from primitive to ideal, as if a final blueprint were realised at some point in history (all environmental and contextual conditions being favourable) but as an ongoing and endless "life process" (2013, 6). "Wherever there is life there is movement," he writes, but it is a movement of "renewal along a path" that is a generative motion of "becoming rather than being" (Ingold 2011, 72). Human beings – or indeed any beings, human or non-human – may therefore be more accurately described as human *becomings*, "that is, not as discrete and pre-formed entities but as trajectories of movement and growth" (Ingold 2013, 8). Human becomings forge paths along which they continually travel and which others may follow along too, creating a "work in progress" (Ingold 2013, 8) that is never finished. This view of evolution, which "*grounds* human beings within the continuum of life" (Ingold 2011, 49–50 emphasis in original), also emphasises the role of the foot and the print it makes as a sign of the interaction between the world and the human becoming.

In this evolutionary movement, it is the journey, rather than the destination, that is important. Distinguishing between transport and wayfaring, Ingold argues that transport, an increasingly mechanised form of transfer between two points, is concerned with the locations of departure and destination and the conclusion of a passage between the two in the quickest time possible. Wayfaring, on the other hand, "has no beginning or end" (Ingold 2007, 81):

> The wayfarer is a being who, in following a path of life, negotiates or improvises a passage as he goes *along*. In his movement as in life, his concern is to seek a way through: not to reach a specific destination or terminus but to keep on going. Though he may pause to rest, even returning repeatedly and circuitously to the same place to do so, every period of rest punctuates an ongoing movement. For wherever he is, and so long as life goes on, there is somewhere further he can go. Along the way, events take place, observations are made, and life unfolds. (Ingold 2010, 126 emphasis in original)

Wayfaring, Ingold proposes, is a means of acquiring understanding and knowledge of the world and of the self through unending interaction between the two. "Moving *is* knowing," writes Ingold, and the wayfarer acquires knowledge as he goes: "Proceeding on his way, his life unfolds: he grows older and wiser. Thus the growth of his knowledge is equivalent to the maturation of his own person, and like the latter it continues throughout life" (2010, 134 emphasis in original). The footprint is thus a reductive trace of the wayfarer's passage *through* the world, a typically ephemeral impression left behind by the movements of both body and ground. Footprints are a trace of the interactions between the human being and the world in which they make their passage, a mark not only of the human being's impression upon the world, but of the ways in which the world informs the passage of human beings.

These mediations on the footprint as a reductive trace of evolutionary movements and of the actions of human becomings, that is, the human being reconsidered in terms "not of what they *are*, but of what they *do*" (Ingold 2013, 8 emphasis in original), create a jarring rift in the analysis of *Robinson Crusoe*. The singular print and the protagonist's concerns with its maker stall examination of activity or movement and interrupt a consideration of evolutionary understanding and progress. Indeed, Crusoe's discovery of a single print in the sand complicates the notion of the footprint as a trace of the wayfarer's meandering path that weaves together life and knowledge without end. The singularity of this print, its lack of origins, and its impression as a reminder that the protagonist is not alone echo the colonial overtones of the novel. As an iconic literary scene of man's confrontation with the Other, the footprint has become what Maximillian E. Novak describes as, "a symbol of the real and of human presence, but most importantly, it has become a symbol of reaction to otherness, to the strange feeling of anxiety and even hostility we feel toward what is alien to us" (2014, 102). Crusoe, who has crafted for himself a replica of agricultural England on the territory of an exotic island, finds himself in disarray at the knowledge that Others may exist in competition for his land. In its remarkable singularity, the print in *Robinson Crusoe* resonates more with authorial artistic

license than with any correlation to reason: one footprint, perfectly preserved, even days later when Crusoe returns to measure his own foot against the one in the sand, has no grounding in logic. The illegibility of this single print without accompanying traces leaves the protagonist – and the reader – in a state of discombobulation.

Ingold reminds us that a footprint is a multidirectional indexical sign of cause and effect, "yielding information about a creature that has gone before, and a direction to follow" (2022, 339). Yet Crusoe's footprint, which has no further marks of a trail preceding or following from it, is a sign of inertia rather than movement. Illogically singular, Crusoe cannot establish a causal link yielding information of the past, nor can he infer a future direction to follow. It is precisely the print's "insubstantiality" as a minimal conservative trace of human existence that ignites the imagination and the horror of uncertainty just as much as, or perhaps more than, any physical evidence ever could (Tillyard 1969, 69). Rather than forming a path to follow, the "haunting trace of an other […] has the effect of closing down Crusoe's sense of future" (Curkpatrick 2002, 248–249; see also Palmer 2016, 4). Crusoe's imaginings travel to the desire to establish the "being" of the print, the need to identify who or what caused the impression rather than concern himself with mediations of what the print's maker may have been doing at that time. In this respect, the singular print is reminiscent more of Ingold's stamp (2010, 129), an impression imposed from above with a permanency and intention that the meandering wayfarer's prints cannot replicate:

> Whereas the stamp connotes immobility and omnipresence, footprints register emplaced movement. Far from staking a claim, the indigenous inhabitant leaves footprints in the ground as clues to his whereabouts and intentions, and for others to follow. While a trained eye and touch can read much from a single footprint, even more can be read from a series of prints. (2010, 129)

If movement is not, as Ingold argues, ancillary to knowing but is synchronic with the process of becoming knowledgeable, then the immobility of this print and the fleeting potential for interaction and understanding parody the colonial oppression Crusoe delivered upon this island. Its reluctance to yield information relating to its origins, activities, or intentions, or even seemingly to be altered by the elements is channelled through the eyes of the colonial subject, who views the print of the Other as a mark of his infinite alterity.

Yet the print, reduced to a signifier that erases racial difference, is also a reminder of the arbitrariness of the binaries between self and Other or civilized and savage (McCarty 2021). Persuaded that the print must be his own, Crusoe returns to the site of the unidentified print three days later to measure it against his own foot. Realising that the print is not in a location corresponding to his own disembarkation on the island, and that it is far larger than his own, Crusoe nonetheless demonstrates the enduring similarities between self and Other. For Dianne Armstrong, the footprint is a reminder of the commonalities Crusoe shares with other men like himself. In the encounter with the footprint, Armstrong argues, the reader witnesses "Crusoe's unfolding recognition that he is implicated in mankind's crimes against humanity, his awareness that he is not an egocentric or exceptional existence but one joined in empathy to the human community" (1992, 218). Although Crusoe dismissively conflates the print's alterity with savagery, for Armstrong and for McCarty, it is not the appearance of otherness that so frightens Crusoe, but the glaring knowledge of enduring similarity between human beings.

The path that is created in *Robinson Crusoe* does not connote directionality and movement but, in stamping his foot into the ground alongside the existing print, Crusoe indicates inertia, insularity, and repetition. Yet, if it is the lack of accompanying footprints that unravel the possibility for a reading of human becoming in *Robinson Crusoe*, the re-envisioning of the castaway's encounter with prints in the sand, several centuries later, in Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, hardly vindicates the quest for progress. On the contrary, in this later revision, the trail of footprints has apocalyptic implications. In the post-apocalyptic wasteland of *Oryx and Crake*, the action of following in the

footprints of another opens up an ambivalence towards the human 'work in progress' that may be inflected with redemption or regression.

Continuing down the road we're already on

Oryx and Crake, published in 2003, is the first novel in what became Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, followed by *The Year of the Flood* in 2009 and *MaddAddam* in 2013. Unlike some of Atwood's other works, and particularly the now infamous *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986), *Oryx and Crake* is concerned less with themes of feminism and post-feminism and more with themes of humanism and posthumanism, and the effects of unchecked scientific advancement and environmental damage and misuse.[1] The novel itself is split over two different future timeframes. The first is a near-future, characterised by the determined concentration of scientific advances that are not unknown to us today, and the second is a more distant post-apocalyptic future. The novel opens after the apocalypse, where the protagonist, Snowman, is seemingly the sole human survivor of a viral plague that has wiped out humanity.[2] As the novel continues along its two temporal frames, we discover that Snowman used to be Jimmy, and that the apocalypse was the planned outcome of a biomedical disaster designed by his erstwhile best friend and scientific genius Crake, who used to be Glenn.

From the post-apocalyptic future, the reader discovers anachronistically that Crake developed a pill – named euphemistically the BlyssPluss pill – ostensibly designed to protect the user against all sexually transmitted diseases, to improve libido and a sense of well-being, and to prolong youth (Atwood 2013, 346). The Pill is part of a broader research project on immortality, designed to function by eliminating "the external causes of death […]. War, which is to say misplaced sexual energy […]. Contagious diseases, especially sexually transmitted ones. Overpopulation, leading […] to environmental degradation and poor nutrition" (345). It has a subversive side effect, however, that is never publicly disclosed: the pill is also engineered to sterilise the user – against his or her knowledge – in order to fulfil Crake's apparently altruistic plan to limit the number of human beings on Earth and thus reduce the growing pressure on natural resources. As he explains, the human race is perched on the edge of a "sink or swim" catastrophe:

> Such a pill, he said, would confer large-scale benefits, not only on individual users […] but on society as a whole; and not only on society, but on the planet. […] There was no downside at all. […] As a species we're in deep trouble, worse than anyone's saying. They're afraid to release the stats because people might just give up, but take it from me, we're running out of space-time. Demand for resources has exceeded supply for decades in marginal geopolitical areas, hence the famines and droughts; but very soon, demand is going to exceed supply *for everyone*. With the BlyssPluss Pill the human race will have a better chance of swimming. (347, emphasis in original)

Sinister though this appears already, Crake ultimately plans to eliminate the human species. Marketed worldwide, the pill harbours a deadly airborne haemorrhagic virus that takes effect several months after initial distribution and brings humanity to extinction.

Where the novel begins, in this post-apocalyptic wasteland, Jimmy-Snowman is not alone in the world but accompanied by a posthuman species, the Crakers. Developed by Crake in the once-optimistically named Paradice Compound, the Crakers are broadly human in appearance, "black, yellow, white, brown, all available skin colours. Each individual was exquisite" (Atwood 2013, 355). Developed from human embryos, the Crakers have been modified to eliminate potentially detrimental human traits: they have no emotions or sexual desires, or any capacity for abstract thought or reasoning; their susceptibility to infectious disease has been almost completely eliminated; they "drop dead" (356) aged thirty, avoiding the anxieties of old age; and their dietary requirements – eating roughage, grass, and leaves, and their own processed faeces – means that they are not reliant upon natural resources. This post-apocalyptic future uncomfortably warns the reader of the threat of scientific, technological, and ecological disaster, but also of the potentiality of re-beginning in a posthuman world in which present human attributes have been modified for optimal survival. Yet,

this post-apocalyptic future only becomes truly intelligible and comprehensible to the reader thanks to the uncanny familiarity of the pre-apocalyptic world that posits the dystopian potential as a realisable future. In other words, the novel does not ask us to imagine anything that we do not already perceive to be real and actual today, but rather to develop a "double consciousness with respect both to the fictionality of the world portrayed and to its potential as our own world's future" that enables us to see "the imagined future in our actual present and also recognize the difference between now and the future-as-imagined" (Snyder 2011, 470).

Although presented within the confines of fictional imagination, many of the elements of *Oryx and Crake*'s pre-apocalyptic world are apparent in our own contemporary environment. Today, we are already familiar with the genetic modification of plants and animals for economic and commercial profit, with the social division of an intellectual and economic elite from the rudimentary world of "asymmetries, deformities" (Atwood 2013, 339), with intense surveillance of political and personal ideologies, and even with commercially driven ideals that readily exploit our reliance upon the industrial production of medicines, food, and other commodities. Although Crake's biomedical apocalypse is presented as an extraordinary deformation of contemporary life, the resultant elimination of humanity and realisation of a posthuman species is little more than a perverse modification of current knowledge, ideology, and situation in a world in which there are no legal, ethical, or moral limitations upon the applications of our contemporary reality.

In the final, brief chapter, "Footprint," Atwood parodies the infamous scene of the footprint in *Robinson Crusoe*. Alerted by the Crakers to the presence of "others like you" (Atwood 2013, 423), Snowman arrives at the beach to find a trail of human footprints in the sand:

> Here's a human footprint, in the sand. Then another one. They aren't sharp-edged, because the sand here is dry, but there's no mistaking them. And now here's a whole trail of them, leading down to the sea. Several different sizes. Where the sand turns damp he can see them better. What were these people doing? Swimming, fishing? Washing themselves?
>
> They were wearing shoes, or sandals. Here's where they took them off, here's where they put them on again. He stamps his own good foot [the other foot is injured] into the wet sand, beside the biggest footprint: a signature of a kind. As soon as he lifts his foot away the imprint fills with water. (431)

Unlike the print Crusoe finds, the one Snowman finds is less defined and the print makers less mysterious. From these footprints, Snowman gleans an extraordinary amount of information, including details about their footwear; their heterogeneity, corresponding to three different individuals; their direction onto and away from the beach; and he is more concerned with their activities – "What were these people doing?" – than with their origins.

Snowman hesitates, pondering his next move: does he befriend the other survivors of the biomedical apocalypse, making peace with them and co-operating to survive? Or does he kill them, thus protecting the Crakers and himself from strangers? The novel leaves this conclusion open, alerting the reader only to Snowman's intention to move – "Time to go" (433) – without specifying the direction of this movement towards or away from the other human survivors.[3] Yet the expectation of movement, in which Snowman will either follow the path that has been laid down or diverge from it, is precisely what augments the ambivalence of this final scene. In Hicks' discussion of *Oryx and Crake* as a post-apocalyptic re-envisioning of *Robinson Crusoe*, she argues that, following in the footprints of Crusoe, Snowman's discovery of the traces of other humans who have survived the man-made apocalypse repeats cycles of colonial violence and environmental destruction. Yet Hicks also identifies, in the novel's conclusion, the possibility of breaking away from this apocalyptic trajectory. Hicks proposes that Atwood fashions in Snowman "a Crusoe with a difference" (2016, 53), one who knows the tragic fate of his own kind and the catastrophic consequences of the former world and who "resets the clock and opens the door for a new era to begin" (2016, 53). There is, then, in Hicks' more positive reading, a resonance with Ingold's notion of wayfaring, casting Snowman as

the traveller who has acquired knowledge through the exceptional experiences of his pre- and post-apocalyptic lives and who adapts to these observations and events. As a wayfarer, Snowman's passage is one of renewal, of negotiation, and of improvisation along a path that continues always towards an undefined future.

Oryx and Crake is, in Atwood's own words, a "speculative fiction" rather than science fiction or classic dystopia, because the parallels with the contemporary world are designed to draw us into an imaginative space where what we read is no more than an extension of reality today:

> *Oryx and Crake* is a speculative fiction, not a science fiction proper. It contains no intergalactic space travel, no teleportation, no Martians. […] It invents nothing we haven't already invented or started to invent. Every novel begins with a *what if*, and then sets forth its axioms. The *what if* of *Oryx and Crake* is simply, *What if we continue down the road we're already on? How slippery is the slope? What are our saving graces? Who's got the will to stop us?* (Atwood 2005, 285–286, emphasis in original)

The notion that we are advancing along a path echoes Ingold's descriptions of the wayfarer and of the footprint as a reductive trace of human presence as it interacts with the world, a mark of evolutionary acquisition of knowledge and of human 'becoming' as an endless life process. Indeed, although vastly unlike the posthuman Crakers, Snowman may more accurately be described precisely as a human becoming, rather than a human being, one who is defined by the trajectory of his movement and growth and will have to adapt to survive. Yet the novel's post-apocalyptic setting radically resists any such redemptive or consolatory reading.

The closing chapter repeats, verbatim, several sentences from the opening sequence of the novel (Atwood 2013, 3 and 429), and the novel's final words echo, with only minimal modification, a short passage from the third paragraph of the first chapter. If the direction of Snowman's movement is ambiguous for the reader, the repetition of these opening and closing passages seems to suggest that the protagonist will indeed follow along this path that has been forged by the other survivors. Although we do not know if Snowman continues down their path or not, the narrative circularity of the novel looms over the possibility of any interpretation that might imply the bifurcation of Snowman's evolutionary path. For Denise Dillon, Snowman's post-apocalyptic awareness lends itself not to an alternative future but to a resignation that "time has indeed run out" (2018, 61). In Marta Korbel's reading, which interprets in the novel's conclusion Snowman's decision to approach the strangers and thus to seek companionship amongst fellow humans rather than risk the security of isolation among the posthuman Crakers, the ending is far from hopeful: "Humans are thus unwilling to consider alternative paths represented by the posthuman species, rejecting alterity and turning back towards what is familiar" (2023, 292).

This circular, repetitive movement implied in the protagonist's continuation down the path he is already on conflicts with the idea that the reductive trace is a mark of the progressive acquisition of knowledge. The footprints depict the continued unfolding of life after the apocalypse, but their relationship to knowledge and to the application of knowledge is ambivalent. As evidenced by the wasteland in which these footprints take shape, movement, and the acquisition of knowledge inherent in the work of human becoming, does not intrinsically equate to moral and epistemological improvement but may be wielded with power and violence, yielding devastating results. In a comparative reading of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Oryx and Crake* there is, in Snowman's discovery of a trail of footprints, a recognition of the continuity between human beings that was absent from Crusoe's earlier discovery; yet, if Snowman, who has witnessed the destruction of the former world, does merely carry on down the path laid out for him, the novel leaves us with nothing but the realisation of an inevitable fate that we are already too late, or too lazy, to avert.

University of Turku, Finland

Notes

[1] Tolan (2007), however, offers an excellent postfeminist reading of the novel.
[2] In the final pages of the novel, and in the two subsequent novels, the reader discovers other survivors of the apocalypse.
[3] From the subsequent publication of *The Year of the Flood*, we establish that Snowman does, in the end, leave these other survivors unharmed.

Works Cited

Armstrong, Dianne. "The Myth of Cronus: Cannibal and Sign in *Robinson Crusoe*." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 4.3 (1992): 207–220.
Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake* [2003]. London: Virago, 2013.
—. *Writing with Intent: Essays, Reviews, Personal Prose 1983-2005.* New York: Carroll and Graf, 2005.
Brown, Tony C. *The Primitive, the Aesthetic, and the Savage: An Enlightenment Problematic*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.
Curkpatrick, Stephen. "The Footprint in the Sand: Providence, Invention and Alterity in *Robinson Crusoe*." *Pacifica* 15.3 (2002): 247–265.
Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe* [1719]. New York: Norton, 1975.
Dillon, Denise B. "'Footprint': The Apocalyptic Imprint of End as Immanent in Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*." *eTropic* 17.2 (2018): 52–61.
Hicks, Heather J. *The Post-Apocalyptic Novel in the Twenty-First Century: Modernity Beyond Salvage*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
Ingold, Tim. *Lines: A Brief History*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2007.
—. "Footprints Through the Weather-world: Walking, Breathing, Knowing." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 16 (2010): 121–139.
—. *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.
—. "Prospect." In *Biosocial Becomings*: *Integrating Social and Biological Anthropology*. Ed Tim Ingold and Gísli Pálsson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 1–21.
—. *The Life of Lines*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015.
—. "On Human Correspondence" *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 23 (2016): 9–27.
—. *Imagining for Real: Essays on Creation, Attention and Correspondence*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2022.
Korbel, Marta. "'What a Splendid World we Ruined': The Precarious Presents and Posthuman Futures of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and Dmitry Glukhovsky's *Metro 2033*." *Ilha do Desterro* 76.2 (2023): 275–293.
McCarty, Brian. "Finding Oneself in Print: *Robinson Crusoe*, Metonymy, and the Ideologically Constructed Self." *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 54.2 (2021): 99–120.
Novak, Maximillian E. *Transformations, Ideology and the Real in Defoe's* Robinson Crusoe *and Other Narratives: Finding "the Thing Itself".* Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2014.
Palmer, Christopher. *Castaway Tales: From* Robinson Crusoe *to* Life of Pi. Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 2016.
Snyder, Katherine. "'Time to go': The Post-apocalyptic and the Post-traumatic in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*." *Studies in the Novel* 43.4 (2011): 470–489.
Tillyard, E. M. W. "Defoe." In *Twentieth Century Interpretations of* Robinson Crusoe*: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Frank H. Ellis. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall. 1969. 62–78.
Tolan, Fiona. *Margaret Atwood: Feminism and Fiction*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007.