

# Vocal Configurations of Friday: Six Audiobook Versions of *Robinson Crusoe*

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## Abstract

*Robinson Crusoe* is a novel obsessed with voice. Shipwrecked on his island, Crusoe teaches a parrot to speak and engages in silent conversations with God and himself and, when he finally meets Friday, he communicates in the discourses of master, educator, and companion. In silent reading of the print text, the reader subvocalises and dramatises the grammar, syntax, and pronunciation of Friday's speech and more or less unconsciously creates a cohesive whole out of the dialogue sections and the passages narrated by Crusoe. In audiobook narration this process is externalised in the actual vocalisation of the text. The performing narrator has to make conscious choices depending on how he construes the Crusoe-Friday relationship and in what genre conventions he places it. Moreover, since Friday does not appear until two thirds into the text, the performing narrator needs to fit the last third into the overall vocal profile to produce a cohesive effect. This article focuses on the vocal configurations of Friday as manifest in six audiobook recordings of the novel. Material voice characteristics, such as quality, rhythm, and diction, as well as contextualising aspects of ethnicity, age, and nationality are taken into account. The rhetorical situation in which the performing narrator intensifies intentionality is also foregrounded.

Keywords: vocality and orality; audiobook; performing narrator *heteroglossia*; genre

I did not make you speak broken *English*, to represent you as a Blockhead, incapable of learning to speak it better, but merely for the Variety of Stile, to intermix some broken *English* to make my Lie go down the more glibly with the Vulgar Reader. (Gildon 1719: 9)

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Commenting on the passage featuring the slumbering Friday in the cave, Rivka Swenson states that ‘we could eat Friday up’ (2018: 19) and implies that cannibalism is metaphorically passed on to the readers of *Robinson Crusoe*. A ‘vivid palette’ (Swenson 2018: 18) is used to portray ‘Friday’s gemlike body’ (Swenson 2018: 23) and in addition to making a strong visual impact: the passage activates—directly or indirectly—the senses of touch, taste, and smell through references to Friday’s ‘sweetness and softness’ (Defoe 1985: 208). Swenson writes that ‘in his caramel “tawny” “sweetness”, he resembles sugar’ (2018: 19), a colonial commodity in which the senses fuse. What is interesting about this colourful portrayal is that it stands out from ‘the general plainness of *Crusoe*’s things and spaces’ (Swenson 2018: 18), thus breaking with the representational norm in the novel. Moreover, the multi-sensuous filter manages to almost gloss over the ‘othering’ of Friday by enumerating all the undesired non-European features that are not to be found in his appearance.

However, in the ‘vivid palette’ of Friday’s features, there is one which has been successfully filtered out: his voice. For all its sensuous impact, the description is devoid of sound; Friday is a ‘silent presence’ (Pritchard 2019: 164). At this point in the narrative, the ‘creature’ in the cave has neither been named by Crusoe nor taught to speak English. As such, he makes no sense within the semantic and oral signifying system that is the English language. This partly explains the suppression of sound but not quite. For sound is not merely a matter of semantics and orality but also comprises vocal utterances produced by the articulatory apparatus. Adriana Cavarero (2005) clarifies the difference between the concepts of orality and vocality by citing Paul Zumthor, who refers to orality as ‘the functioning of the voice as the bearer of language’ and vocality as ‘the whole of the activities and values that belong to the voice as such, independently of language’ (Zumthor 2000: vii in Cavarero 2005: 12). According to Cavarero, the ‘sonorous materiality’ (2005: 1) of vocality cannot be limited to the meaning of speech but exceeds it (2005: 13). Thus, although vocality is activated as a qualifying element in the uttering of speech, it exists in its own right separated from the semantic element of orality.

Similarly, the ‘grain’ of the voice, as theorised by Roland Barthes (1977), is closely associated with the materiality of the body and brings out the uniqueness of voice in a singer. It is a kind of free agent in a semiotic system; it is not to be defined by the production of a ‘message’

but ‘by the very friction between the music and something else, which something else is the particular language (and nowise the message)’ (1977: 185). In the visually overloaded passage portraying the sweetness of the sleeping ‘creature’, friction is seemingly suppressed but is felt in what is not to be seen, the verbalised absence of the ‘other’: the ‘fierce and surly aspect’, hair ‘curled like wool’, skin ‘quite black’ (Defoe 1985: 208). This friction will manifest itself in auditory terms once Friday starts to speak in broken English.

The friction caused by the existence of a plurality of voices referred to as *heteroglossia* (Bakhtin 1981) is a defining feature of the novel: ‘Diversity of voices and heteroglossia enter the novel and organize themselves within it into a structured artistic system. This constitutes the distinguishing feature of the novel as a genre’ (Bakhtin 1981: 300). One way in which heteroglossia is produced is through the language of characters. The character’s ‘sphere of influence’ is not restricted to dialogue, though, but ‘extends—and often quite far—beyond the boundaries of the direct discourse allotted to him’ (Bakhtin 1981: 320). The language of a character refracts the language of other characters with their respective ‘spheres of influence’ as well as the language of the author and the narrator. Thus, the language of characters refracts mimetically in the form of dialogue as well as diegetically in passages of narrated prose. Another means of producing *heteroglossia* is ‘through the incorporation of various genres, both artistic [...] and extra-artistic’ (Bakhtin 1981: 320). In the refraction of characters’ language and genres the ‘double-voiced discourse’ (Bakhtin 1981: 324) of *heteroglossia* is produced.

I argue that the *heteroglossia* encapsulated in *Robinson Crusoe* is foregrounded when activated through the performing voice of the audiobook narrator. The main focus of this essay is the representation of Friday through the auditory network of speech, vocality, and the ‘grain’ of the voice. I will study this topic through the voice of six different audiobook versions of the novel. As Iben Have and Birgitte Stougaard Pedersen (2016) claim, the audiobook is an apt medium for exploring how orality and vocality interact; in the voice performance we hear both ‘a narrative that is audibly performed for us’ and ‘the unique quality of this performing voice – its tone as well as its sense of rhythm and diction’ (85). Thus, while the performing narrator may reduce the complexity of the text and cause ‘hermeneutic closure’, they make us hear new things in a

familiar text due to a fresh pattern of refraction that breaks with our silent reading habits.

While the oral/vocal configuration of Friday is my main object of study, it cannot be discussed in isolation from the overall auditory profile of the novel, which is well in place when he makes his appearance two thirds into the novel. My argument is based on the notion that it is through this profile that the auditory configuration of Friday is produced. The oral/vocal profile, which is unique for each performing narrator, is a result of choices made in the rhetorical situation. The performing narrator of *Robinson Crusoe* has a great many such rhetorical choices to make, for example in relation to Defoe's long sentences and complex punctuation, to the different forms of speech (interior monologue, monologue spoken aloud, dialogue between characters, and reported speech), and to genre aspects (adventure story, spiritual autobiography, journal). These choices have a bearing on tempo, phrasing, pitch, and volume.

In this article topics that have long been raised in critical discussions of *Robinson Crusoe* will be revisited through the lens of the performing audiobook voice. In addition to the question of genre mentioned above, such interrelated aspects as episodic and fragmented narration, the use of narrative supplements and replicas, and the tension between temporality and spatiality will be addressed. As will be discussed below, these aspects are also germane to issues or affordances related to audiobook narration. In the concluding section the six audiobook versions of *Robinson Crusoe* will be studied with the use of Have and Stougaard Pedersen's (2016: 87) model for analysing intensified intentionality in the performing audiobook narrator.

#### *Auditory aspects of Robinson Crusoe*

In *Defoe and Fictional Time* Paul Alkon (1979) argues that the activation of the aural imagination is of key importance for understanding *Robinson Crusoe*. Defoe relies as much on the reader's capacity for hearing as for seeing and, in particular, for doing so simultaneously: 'he does make us hear—but only if we can "listen" while silently reading—or if we are willing to read him aloud' (Alkon 1979: 202). According to Alkon, eighteenth-century readers of 'good taste' (1979: 205) would be intuitively attuned to the inherent pacing of all parts of the text and not only to passages containing speech. Similarly, Abigail Williams discusses the juxtaposition of sound and silence in eighteenth-century reading practice

and argues that while silent reading became increasingly widespread, ‘at the same time there was a near obsession with learning to read out loud: this was the great age of elocution’ (2017: 11).

Few readers of *Robinson Crusoe* today are likely to have this kind of auditory technique built into the reading process. They are further removed from a purely oral culture and take the technology of the printed book for granted. Being firmly inscribed in a culture of secondary orality (Ong 1982), these digitally literate readers are used to accessing fiction in remediated form as, for example, through the audiobook. Have and Stougaard Pedersen define the audiobook as a combination of the auditory and semiotic levels (2016: 47); it ‘resurrect[s] the sound of language’ (Bednar 2010: 80 in Have and Stougaard Pedersen 2016: 44) and ‘remind[s] us of the sound of literature’ (Birkerts 1994: 149 in Have and Stougaard Pedersen 2016: 44). Due to the fact that the auditory dimension is lodged within a performing narrator’s voice, it may be argued that the audiobook technology externalises the process which, according to Alkon, was internalised in the eighteenth-century silent reading process.

As argued above, one of the main differences between the internal process of silent reading as compared to that in which the voice is externalised in the performing narrator is that the latter tends not only to create but also to disturb meaning, thus causing friction. A similar effect seems not to be considered by either Alkon or Williams in their discussion of the eighteenth-century practices of reading the print text aloud. By contrast, Alkon refers to the ‘mimetic theory of pronunciation’ (1979: 205) advocated by Lord Kames (1785), Alkon’s main source for the technique of vocalising print text. In a chapter significantly entitled ‘Beauty of Language’, Kames stresses the importance of adhering to conventional rules regarding, for instance, pitch, stress, and tempo. On the whole, Lord Kames’s technique appears to allow few individual initiatives. In fact, as Alkon claims (1979: 206), ‘neither he nor, as far as I know, any eighteenth-century critic doubted that the art of pronunciation is mainly a matter of matching the pace (and tone) of what is spoken to that first perceived while silently reading’. Thus, the mimetic technique advocated by Lord Kames and his contemporaries seems not to have had the intention of disturbing meaning. Williams seems to draw the same kind of conclusion from her study of eighteenth-century elocution guides and states that ‘one of the features of the elocution movement was its common insistence that there was a right way to do things—and many wrong ways’ (2017: 29).

A purely mimetic technique for the reproduction of speech is, however, parodied when the parrot Poll mimics Crusoe's speech: 'Poor Robin Crusoe! And how did I come here? And where had I been?' (Defoe 1985: 152). Drawing on Jacques Derrida's argument (2011: 86), Christopher Peterson points out that Poll functions as a 'prosthetic apparatus' (2014: 87) and that 'clearly Robinson takes pleasure in the apparently mechanical repetition and prosthetic vocalization by virtue of which "his" words and name return to him' (2014: 86–87). The pleasure experienced by Crusoe is thus a consequence of his belief that human beings represent 'linguistic sovereignty' (Peterson 2014: 84) and the mere doubt that this might not be so would be disastrous for Crusoe's sense of self. Peterson writes that 'this originary division of linguistic sovereignty is precisely what Robinson's interpretation of the parrot's words seek to deny' (2014: 86); such a split would be too uncanny for Crusoe to consider.

The fact that the parrot mimics Crusoe's speech is interesting as such; what makes the phenomenon even more intriguing is that Poll's reproduction of Crusoe's utterance foregrounds the vocal dimension. 'Vocalization' is commonly referred to as the 'speech' of animals and the word is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'a call or other sound produced in the vocal tract by a bird, mammal, etc'. Poll has learnt to mechanically reproduce the oral features of Crusoe's utterance, which may be reason enough, as Peterson argues, for Crusoe to experience uncanniness. I would suggest, though, that the main reason for the startling effect that Poll produces in Crusoe is due to the unexpected impact of vocality, for while the speech is faithfully reproduced, the vocal profile is distorted. Moreover, since the parrot mimics utterances made over an extended period of time, Crusoe hears his own voice as defamiliarised. Thus, as Michael Seidel observes, Poll is 'a time capsule of sorts' (2008: 194) and makes Crusoe hear himself as 'other'. The sense of 'othering' that the parrot scene evokes foreshadows the representation of Friday as 'other'. In silent reading, readers may choose to evoke the otherness of Poll's vocality by imagining the parrot's mimicking of Crusoe's 'bemoaning language' (Defoe 1985: 152) or they may prefer to smooth it out to make it conform to Crusoe's own vocal profile. The performing narrator, who in a sense may be seen as a 'prosthetic apparatus' in relation to the voice of the silent text, is faced with the same choice but has to actually produce the sounds.

*Genre aspects*

The question of genre is a complex one in relation to *Robinson Crusoe*. Drawing attention to the novel's non-fictional or semi-fictional features, John Richetti observes that 'it can be located at the intersection of popular and democratic journalism [...] and the serious philosophical essay' (2005: 203). J. Paul Hunter suggests that the term genre be replaced by that of 'textual traditions': 'This term, however inelegant and unmusical, has the virtue of being neutral across the privilege/popular divide. It more easily applies to new or newly identified categories of writing and is friendly to expansion' (2018: 4). Hunter, whose approach to genre is reminiscent of Bakhtin's inclusive stance, has identified around thirty 'textual traditions' to which *Robinson Crusoe* may in some sense be said to belong and lists ten of them. While the average reader today would most likely be able to identify the diary and the spiritual autobiography, it is doubtful whether they would be familiar with the textual tradition of 'stories of sinners', accounts of observations of natural phenomena, captivity or fear-of-captivity narratives.

As stated above, genre is associated with auditory features such as tempo and, therefore, has a great impact on audiobook narration. Genre expectations of imaginary listeners are one of the factors forming the performing audiobook narrator's oral/vocal profile. The most popular audiobook genre (Independent publisher 2013 in Have and Stougaard Pedersen 2016: 105) is the 'mystery/thriller/suspense' one. This is a fast-paced genre with an emphasis on plot development comprising the adventure story, a genre with which the general reader is likely to primarily associate *Robinson Crusoe*, given the word 'adventure' in the novel's title. The element of adventure is also foregrounded in the many abridged versions of the novel. Vocally this genre is characterised by a sense of general drive, quick tempo, and lack of monotony.

A challenge for the performing narrator of *Robinson Crusoe* is to make the 'adventure voice' co-exist vocally with the more character-based textual traditions listed by Hunter. It is little surprising that these textual traditions are not to be found in the list of preferred genres for audiobook listening, which uses more general and conventional genre labels. Interestingly, though, *Robinson Crusoe* may be fitted into quite a few of the listed genres such as 'biography/memoir', 'literary fiction', 'inspirational, faith-based', 'self-help/careers' and 'travel'. In these categories—with the possible exception of the 'travel' category and the

more form- and less content-oriented ‘literary fiction’—there is an element of personal reflection belonging to character-based prose with a less pronounced linear development which tends to be rendered at a slower pace. The ‘typical’ audiobook listener finds such character-based narration less appealing than the fast-paced and plot-centered kind. However, while the avid listener, who sees mobility and multitasking as the audiobook’s main affordance (Have and Stougaard Pedersen 2016: 101), prefers plot-driven linear narration, the average audiobook listener has a more balanced reading approach and is also a frequent reader of printed literature (Have and Stougaard Pedersen 2016: 100). Readers belonging to this latter category may thus be used to moving at ease between stories driven by plot, character, and personality and, as listeners, they may expect to hear the refraction of genres and voices in the vocalisation of *Robinson Crusoe*. ‘Personalized expressivity’, Richetti argues, is a key element in *Robinson Crusoe* and exists in a Bakhtinian dialogic relationship with ‘older forms of “objective” discourse’ (2005: 203). The task of a performing narrator, expressed in Bakhtinian terms, is thus to vocally refract the ‘verbal energies and accents’ (Richetti 2005: 203) pertaining to the character’s psychology and the more ‘objective’ tone.

#### *Refraction and coherence*

Dialogised narration acknowledges the existence of a plurality of voices in the novel. In performing the text vocally, the narrator needs to communicate its heterogeneous, refracted character and yet frame it all in a unifying tone. One of the affordances of the audiobook—if the performing narrator is susceptible to the combination of heterogeneity and unity—is such sense of tonal coherence, which often remains embodied in the audiobook listener as an emotion compensating for the failure to map out the temporal sequence of events on completion of the narrative. This audiobook affordance is of significance in relation to *Robinson Crusoe*. In a silent reading of the novel, it is not always easy to move seamlessly from episode to episode especially if they are inscribed in different genres or textual traditions. Page layout and typography may even reinforce the sense of fragmentation. According to Abigail Williams, the novel’s episodic character may not have presented a problem to Defoe’s contemporaries, though, since ‘there is plenty of evidence to suggest that eighteenth-century readers read fiction occasionally and partially’ (2017: 231). However, for the audiobook narrator performing the whole text some

kind of unifying principle is called for due to the novel's episodic character. Richetti finds that principle in Crusoe's personality and in his 'retrospective thoughtfulness' (2005: 204). Implicit in this argument is the idea that Crusoe expresses his thoughts when talking to himself, God, and imaginary interlocutors. Significantly, this thoughtfulness, rendered in monologue and dialogue, spills over onto events. Richetti quotes Bakhtin:

Through this concrete consciousness embodied in the living voice of an integral person, the logical relation becomes part of the unity of a represented event. Thought, drawn into an event, becomes itself part of the event and takes on that special quality of an 'idea-feeling,' an 'idea-force,' which is responsible for the unique peculiarity of the 'idea'. (Bakhtin 1984: 9–10 in Richetti 2005: 204)

The important point made by Richetti in citing Bakhtin is that Crusoe's consciousness as embodied and expressed in the material form of his 'living voice' makes a coherent whole out of events that may come across as isolated. Transferring Richetti's Bakhtinian argument to an audiobook context entails that the voice is literally rather than metaphorically embodied and, as such, gives tonal coherence to the vocal performance.

The impression that events are presented in a fragmentary fashion is partly compensated for by the fact that some of them are repeated or supplemented. As Seidel observes, 'Crusoe's imagination generates many more fictions than the one he experiences' (2008: 182). Returning to events already told or producing counterfactual information disrupts the linear sequencing of the adventure story and makes it difficult for the reader to remember at what point in the reading process a particular event took place. This circular movement forward is contrasted with Crusoe's obsessive recording of the linear passing of time. Seidel argues that Defoe's innovative method of repeating and supplementing events 'becomes a kind of primer on the new art of realistic novel writing in the period' (2008: 186) implying that Crusoe's psychology is at the centre of the narration. Alkon also comments on the 'cumulative method': 'There he goes over an episode from several view-points to build a more nearly complete picture of events in the reader's memory than exists in any one version of it on the novel's pages', and adds that 'Crusoe remains the author of each version, however; and the variations are in temporal viewpoint, not persons telling about the same events' (1979: 156–157).

As Seidel notes, Crusoe is not only the writer of these variations but also 'the most fertile reader' (2008: 182) of his own story. For the reader

of the overall story who wishes to place events in a timeline, the cumulative structure may present problems, though. The fact that the novel lacks chapter divisions further complicates the act of memorising the sequence of events. On the other hand, if the reader in retrospect prefers to recall a sense of coherence and emotional depth rather than chronologically mapped out events, the circular movement is rewarding. For Alkon, the lack of chapter divisions contributes to this effect (1979: 114) as does the method of repeated scenes. In his discussion of the cumulative method, Alkon identifies in its impact on the reader the same 'affordance' that is generally associated with audiobook listening: a sense of tonal coherence is created at the expense of the memorisation of isolated events.

Such coherence is not incontestably positive, though. A case in point is the consonance created through Crusoe's continuous conversation with himself and his imaginary interlocutors. If this conversation lends unison to the overall experience of events and setting, Friday is also subsumed under that influence. This stance is the one represented in the cave passage as discussed in the introductory paragraphs of this article. I then commented that the muting of sound in the portrayal of the slumbering Friday was a consequence of his exclusion, at that point in the narrative, from the semiotic sphere of orality. Reflecting on that passage now, it may be added that this state of things makes sense from the point of view of Crusoe's consciousness as an overriding tonal factor. In Bakhtinian terms, we are within the 'sphere of influence' (1981: 320) of the narrator's language. However, once Friday has been named and the teaching of English has started, their voices refract. This verbal interaction is communicated through direct and reported speech as well as in the narrator's diegetic passages.

Interestingly, moving through the print text, the performing narrator is confronted with a great deal of freedom in vocalising this refraction. The dialogues between Crusoe and Friday are mostly rendered in the running text of a paragraph and not set off from it. An exception to this practice is the dialogue in which 'Master' asks 'Friday' about the customs of his nation. However, this conversation, or interrogation, rendered in the form of a dialogue grows out of reported speech in the preceding paragraph which then turns into a dialogue still placed in the paragraph but with direct speech indicated through the use of inverted commas:

[...] I asked him whether the nation that he belonged to never conquered in battle; at which he smiled, and said, 'Yes, yes, we always fight the better'; that is, he meant always get the better in fight; and so we began the following discourse: 'You always fight the better,' said I, 'how came you to be taken prisoner then, Friday?'

*Friday.* My nation beat much, for all that.

*Master.* How beat? If your nation beat them, how came you to be taken? (Defoe 1985: 216)

As this passage shows, the boundaries between speech types are fairly fluid, which may affect the way in which the performing narrator adds for example dramatic intensity or changes in tempo or pitch. The typographical style in the above passage is the one used in the first edition of the novel with the exception of a few features such as the use of inverted commas instead of italics for speech, alterations that were incorporated in the third edition. However, the Second Norton Critical Edition (Defoe 1994), which is more faithful to the first edition in using italics for direct speech, does not do so in this particular passage. The complicated textual history of Defoe's novel is not a topic I will explore in the present article; my main reason for making this brief comment is to show that typographical varieties and inconsistencies may be considered an affordance for the performing narrator and that the decisions made have an impact on the pattern of refraction as produced vocally.

What immediately strikes the reader of *Robinson Crusoe* is the detailed focus on material objects enumerated and listed meticulously—a feature famously referred to by Ian Watt as the 'largely referential use of language' (1979: 35). Moreover, things are often described by the use of 'verbal doubling' and 'paired phrases' (Seidel 2008: 191), a stylistic device which is intimately associated with Crusoe's psychological condition. The urge to always define a thing in as varied a way as possible (a cave being also a kitchen etc.) has the tendency to reduce the reading tempo; the reader moves as if in circles around the object to be defined. Crusoe is at pains to capture what Penny Pritchard calls 'the vivid immediacy of sense-impressions experienced by the narrator' (2019: 145). This indecision on the narrator's part is a kind of hedging. The average reader may find this phenomenon an obstacle if they want to move forward at a fast pace.

In vocalising 'verbal doubling', the performing narrator must find ways of dealing with the rhetorical situation of 'hovering' over words by

working with phrasing and rhythm to balance the loss of pace. What should be conveyed are the sense impressions as perceived by Crusoe. In this respect, as scholars have observed, Defoe is more of a ‘nominalist’ than a ‘realist’. Richetti, referring to the distinction between the terms made by John Locke in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), writes that ‘when we apply the notion “realism” to Defoe’s narratives, perhaps “nominalism” is more accurate, since his focus on things, on facts and phenomena as they are experienced, implicitly denies the comforting reality of universals’” (2005: 191). Similarly, Pritchard comments on Crusoe’s ‘constant refinement’ and ‘approximation’ (2019: 146) in describing material objects as being in keeping with the nominalist emphasis on sense impressions.

Pritchard argues that Friday is dealt with as any other object in this respect: ‘Friday is an entity comprised, like the other objects which Crusoe refashions into his property, from the raw materials available on the island’ (2019: 148). Applying Pritchard’s argument to the description of the sleeping Friday in the cave, I would claim that Crusoe in this situation is sizing him up as if he were a set of raw materials for him to use. What is lacking at that stage, though, is the oral material, which he himself will provide later when he teaches Friday to speak English. The vocal raw material is too raw, so to speak, for Crusoe. This idea aligns with Pritchard’s claim that Crusoe desires a companion but fears the ‘other’ because such contact implies the Other’s—rather than his own—will in the form of competing interests (2019: 148). Central to Pritchard’s line of reasoning is the notion that Crusoe’s first-person narrative is ‘authoritative’ (151) because soon after they leave the island, it internalises and silences Friday’s voice. Thus, continues Pritchard, Friday is not like the goat-skin cap, the umbrella and the parrot, which due to ‘their external nature and distance from the body of Crusoe’ (157) are ‘reliques’. In order to decide what Friday’s voice represents, I will now turn to a consideration of the six audiobook versions of the novel.

#### *Analysis of six audiobook versions of Robinson Crusoe*

The model designed by Have and Stougaard Pedersen (2016: 86–87) for analysing the voice of the performing audiobook narrator takes both oral and vocal aspects into account, but by placing particular emphasis on the materiality of the sounding voice, it foregrounds vocality in line with Cavarero (2012). In developing their model, Have and Stougaard Pedersen

were inspired by ideas about the singing voice as presented by Simon Frith (1998) and the dramaturgical voice as theorised by Don Ihde (2007).

The first step relates to the actual technology of recording the voice, for example if the sound is waxing or waning or if background noise from the recording situation is heard. Musical framing also belongs to the first step. Quite a common atmosphere-creating device is to play a short sequence of instrumental music before the narration begins or to make the music and voice overlap for a short while before the music fades into the background and then stops.

In the second step the quality of the performing voice is considered in its materiality, its 'grain'. Voice quality is defined in relation to a number of parameters on a scale between two poles: tense/lax, loud/soft, high/low, rough/smooth, breathy/non-breathy, vibrato/plain, and nasal/non-nasal (Van Leeuwen 2009: 75). The combination of these features is important for categorising the voice in terms of intimacy and distance. The aspects of rhythm and auditory diction are also dealt with in the second step.

The third step deals with the rhetorical situation and the way in which the performing narrator interprets the text by, for example, dramatising speech and making characters come alive through the use of unique intonation patterns, accents, and tempo. In this step of the model the text's intentionality may be intensified.

The fourth step foregrounds the enunciation and 'concerns the narrator's position in relation to the text' (Have and Stougaard Pedersen 2016: 87). The greatest complexity for the enunciation step is achieved if the author is the same person as the performing narrator. For this reason, the fourth step will not be of significance for the voice performances discussed in the present study.

Finally, the fifth step takes into consideration 'the ethnicity, age, nationality and gender of the performing narrator' and the significance of these factors for placing the narration in a particular context. If there is too great a discrepancy between the print text and its performance, it may have a negative impact on its ethos.

Although each step provides different kinds of information, there is an overlap when the model is applied in a concrete case of analysing voice performance. For example, the material aspects of the voice tend to fuse with the features belonging to the rhetorical situation, as will become evident in the brief presentation given below of the six performing narrators included in the present study. The main purpose of providing the

reader with these vocal profiles is to position them in relation to the act of narration, the reader and genres/textual traditions. In describing the voices of the performing narrators, I take a phenomenological stance and draw on my own perception and interpretation of the vocal features. Like most classics, *Robinson Crusoe* exists in a number of audio recordings and new interpretations keep being produced. Thus, considering the limited scope of the present study, a few criteria for selection had to be applied, one of which was that the recordings were unabridged. On the Audible UK website, which was used as the main portal, some twenty unabridged versions were accessible when the study was initiated. A second criterion was that the versions were performed in British English by a single narrator and not by a full cast. Other criteria were that the voice recordings had been produced at some intervals in time, that they reflected an awareness of genre conventions and that they displayed as wide a range of vocal features as possible. Although famous actors and award-winning audiobook narrators are represented among those that fit the above criteria, critical recognition or preconceived ideas of high quality as such did not constitute a principle of selection. Thus, when narrators had a similar vocal profile, listener ratings on the Audible UK website were consulted as a final criterion for selection.

The version with Duncan Carse (2009) as performing narrator has a strong vintage character. His voice comes across as a 1950s radio voice and the recording is likely to have been made then and digitalised later. The sound tends to wane slightly on a few occasions. In his reading Carse includes the Preface to the novel which states that 'the story is told with modesty, with seriousness, and with a religious application of events' (Defoe 1985: n.p.). Carse thus implicitly positions his reading against this description. He reads with great seriousness, emphasised by a touch of vibrato in his voice. The recording technology creates a sense of distance to the listener, an impression reinforced by Carse's enunciation with a clearly marked "r" sound as the most prominent feature in an even but not very musical rhythm. He reads in a fairly loud voice, which contributes to a general impression of a public rather than intimate narrating situation. This impression is tempered somewhat by Carse's soft voice in the reading of passages of a more emotional character. While Carse sounds like a man mature in years, his voice does not signify life experience.

Gordon Griffin's (2016) narration is preceded by a short sequence of instrumental music. The most foregrounded instrument appears to be a

Celtic harp and the music has a quick tempo, features which frame the act of narration within the genre of adventure story and historical fiction. Griffin has a clear and quite sonorous voice. He seems to follow the text closely and makes brief pauses at the end of a sentence. A rising intonation pattern creates a predictable rhythm and gives the impression of a generally positive outlook on life, which lends tonal coherence to the narration. A quickened pace signals agitation.

Ron Keith (1991) reads with an urgency in his voice. His narration is fairly slow-paced with drawn out diphthongs but the pace quickens when there is suspense. He makes long pauses both within and between paragraphs and stresses almost every syllable in an undulating but staccato rhythm thus creating a general impression of a good-humoured Crusoe who takes an interest in almost everything. The rising intonation creates a certain timbre, which has the effect of making the voice come across as young rather than old.

John Lee (2008) has a deep, sonorous voice with a nasal touch. His phrasing is musical and his tendency to exaggerate the voiced 's' reinforces that effect. The tempo is slow rather than fast but mainly moderate. He comes across as a relaxed and laid-back raconteur almost as if he is making up the story as he is telling it, which foregrounds the autobiographical aspect in terms of events but less so in terms of Crusoe's spiritual development. Lee's voice is fairly low-pitched, mature, but is devoid of the roughness of life experience.

Simon Vance (2008) has a soft, smooth voice with a slight Northern accent, which adds a sense of authenticity. There are almost no pauses between paragraphs. His narration is fast-paced but due to good phrasing, it is easy to follow and he slows down when he engages in important reflections. Throughout the narration, he speaks with an urgency which is addressed as much to himself as to the reader, and his voice performance is thus connected to both spiritual autobiography and adventure story. His voice lacks the roughness of a hard life and is neither young nor old.

David Warner (2007) speaks in a sonorous and deep voice. His narration is very rhythmical and the pronunciation of the voiced 's' and long vowels, especially the long 'a' creates a certain timbre that colours the narration throughout the story. The pacing covers the whole range from slow to extremely fast. The tempo is quickened in passages of great intensity of both action and feeling (especially pertaining to religious matters). He can move from soft to loud in just a few seconds. Warner thus

moves at ease between vocal moods. His voice at times comes across as rough and sounds mature and experienced throughout.

As the above presentation shows, the vocal profiles of the six performing narrators bring out genre-specific traits in the story; yet they do so in different ways and degrees. As for pacing, all narrators conform to the conventional pattern of quickening the pace in plot-driven narration and to some extent slow down the pace in passages detailing Crusoe's reflections. However, as has been pointed out above, *Robinson Crusoe* contains a wealth of textual traditions. In the journal, for example, the listing of matter-of-fact events recorded day by day as they occur is soon interspersed with long passages of retrospective narration focusing on Crusoe's physical, emotional and psychological situation. Thus, performing narrators have to vocalise both 'objective discourse' and 'personalized expressivity', to use Richetti's terms. One approach is to subsume these features under a 'retrospective thoughtfulness', another of Richetti's concepts, which tends to bridge the gap between thoughts and events. Transferred to an auditory context of performing narrators, the rather conventional distinction between fast pace for plot-based narration, on the one hand, and slow pace for character-based narration, on the other, is challenged.

The conventional pacing pattern is negotiated most drastically by Warner who chooses a very fast pace for passages detailing Crusoe's status in worldly matters, for example when providing business details towards the end of the novel. Here fast pace signals superficial interest in career-related secular aspects. Interestingly, the passion in Crusoe's spiritual and religious musings is rendered in just as quick a pace and is combined with great intensity and volume. Paradoxically, like Warner, Vance has the tendency to draw the reader in by appearing not to consider an audience other than himself. Both also manage to render a nominalist approach to objects in an auditory manner. By giving the impression of exploring while narrating, they foreground the process of learning about things through their senses instead of resorting to universals. This tentative approach also applies to the vocalisation of 'verbal doubling'. While the other four performing narrators create a similar effect in parts of their narration, it is not as pervasive, which is primarily due to less flexibility in phrasing and rhythm in these readings.

Thus, genres refract differently in the six vocal performances of *Robinson Crusoe*. The same can be said about the way in which oral and

vocal features refract in direct, indirect and reported speech. The discussion of this form of refraction will reconnect to the arguments made previously in this study relating to the vocal configuration of Friday in a context of *heteroglossia* and the ‘grain’ of the voice. The vocal performance of four passages will be studied in detail: the scene in which Poll mimics Crusoe’s voice, the first dialogue between Crusoe and Friday, their conversation about religion, and, finally, the ‘bear scene’.

The friction between the oral and vocal dimensions in Friday’s speech is anticipated by the parrot’s reproduction of Crusoe’s voice. In vocalising ‘Poor Robin Crusoe! And how did I come here? And where had I been?’, the performing narrator has to decide whether this utterance should be dramatised and, if so, how. In Lee’s reading of the passage, there is no dramatisation and little, if any, vocal difference between the parrot’s utterance and the narration generally. Griffin and Carse read the whole utterance in a loud, high-pitched, and shrill voice, thus indicating the ‘otherness’ of the parrot. Vance reads the whole utterance louder and in a slightly higher pitch as compared to the preceding sentence. Keith vocalises the exclamation in much the same way but reads the two questions without dramatisation. Warner starts out in the same pitch and volume as in the preceding sentence but lowers the pitch in his reading of the two sentences whose musical rhythm brings out a note of deep self-reflection. Judging from the vocalisation of the scene, only two of the performing narrators appear to consider the parrot as a vocal ‘other’ in relation to Crusoe and in Warner’s interpretation all traces of mechanical reproduction have been totally replaced by a sense of vocal authenticity. It may therefore be concluded that Crusoe experiences Poll’s utterance as pleasurable rather than uncanny.

The study of the auditory representation of Friday is not limited to one utterance but is a much more complex matter. As has been mentioned above, this representation is associated with how character language is manifest and refracts in direct and indirect speech as well as in diegetic prose. In performing the first dialogue between Crusoe and Friday, the narrator has to decide how similar or different the two interlocutors should be. Friday speaks pidgin English, which affects both oral and vocal features. In the print text, we see the difference in writing but we do not necessarily hear it. The performing narrator has to fix the text in this respect. Carse is the only narrator who renders Friday’s speech in pronounced pidgin and also reinforces the impression of ‘othering’ by a

staccato rhythm. Griffin combines a mild pidgin English with a clear staccato rhythm. Lee speaks a very mild pidgin in a non-staccato rhythm and chooses not to read the 'Mister' and 'Friday' at the beginning of their respective lines, thus reducing a binary impression. Keith and Vance use no pidgin but add a staccato rhythm (Vance less so). Warner's reading has neither pidgin nor staccato rhythm; interestingly, though, he adds a kind of vocal shadow of 'othering' when reading 'Friday' at the beginning of his lines in a low, whispering tone suggesting something uncanny. Thus, all narrators introduce vocal 'othering' in some degree.

The dialogue between Friday and Crusoe is more of an interrogation than a conversation. Friday's answers are fairly short, which accounts for the staccato rhythm. However, when they engage in a conversation about religion as reported a few pages later, Friday takes a more active role and does not merely answer but also asks questions. Unlike the first dialogue, this conversation is wholly integrated in a diegetic passage and direct speech alternates with Crusoe's reflections. The performing narrators may have found it difficult to move between direct speech and Crusoe's reflections and therefore adjust Friday's vocal profile to Crusoe's. The impression created is that Crusoe internalises Friday's comments and observations and that the performing narrators consciously or unconsciously reduce the 'othering' in the process.

Vocalising these slightly more extended utterances, there are still traces of pidgin English but the staccato rhythm is almost smoothed out. This is also the case with Carse whose reading of the first dialogue gives the most polarised impression. In the conversation about religion, the 'othering' is primarily heard in the 'grain' and in the timbre of Friday's voice. Griffin, for example, uses a hoarse voice and Keith a dark timbre and the effect in both instances is that Friday appears older and more experienced, which is interesting since, as a direct result of Friday's questions, Crusoe reflects on the discrepancy between age in terms of years and age in terms of intellectual and emotional maturity: 'I was strangely surprised at his question, and after all, tho' I was now an old man, yet I was but a young doctor, and ill enough qualified for a casuist' (Defoe 1985: 220). Thus, when dissociated from pidgin English and the staccato rhythm, 'grain' features may take on a different—even opposite—signification. Support for such an interpretation may be found in Maximilian Novak's discussion of the relationship between Crusoe and Friday as a reversal of roles:

The descriptions of the two companions show Crusoe in a grotesque 'Sketch', in his shaggy goat skins and with a long Turkish mustache. Friday, on the other hand, is given a description that shows him as an almost classical figure. (2001: 546)

Here Crusoe is depicted as the 'other'. In line with this argument, Novak goes on to claim that 'Friday seems capable of probing more deeply into the problems of religion than Crusoe, and he shows just the kind of emotion that the suspicious and alienated Crusoe cannot express' (2001: 548). Seen against this background, the partial suppression of Friday's vocal otherness when conversing on religious matters seems logical. Crusoe's 'sphere of influence' in diegetic narration extends to Friday's direct speech. Moreover, not only is Friday's otherness reduced vocally in this passage but it is passed on to Crusoe, who occasionally takes on the staccato rhythm of Friday's speech: 'Well,' says Friday, 'but you say, God is so strong, so great, is He not much strong, much might as the devil? 'Yes, yes,' says I, Friday [...]' (Defoe 1985: 220, emphasis added). What the refraction of character language seems to suggest in the passage in which Friday and Crusoe converse about religion is that while Crusoe's sphere of influence is extensive, the positions of 'one' and 'other' are being negotiated.

Such negotiation is considerably reduced towards the end of the novel in the recounting of the bear scene. As Watt (1957: 76) has remarked, it is strange that Friday still speaks pidgin English after so many years on the island and Pritchard notes that while 'Friday's presence vacillates between aspects of self-recognition and aspects of strangeness, alter ego, the Other', his "Otherness" is emphasised through a sustained use of dialect' (2019: 164). Thus, the vacillation does not apply to vocality and Pritchard goes on to state that the reader is particularly reminded of his 'alien origins' (2019: 164) in the episode with the bear.

What should be taken into consideration is that prior to leaving the island, Crusoe and Friday have met and talked to a number of people, which has partly redefined their relationship. In the performance of Carse and Vance, no traces of this development are to be found, though. In the reading of both Griffin and Lee, Crusoe and the Europeans on the island are represented in similar ways vocally, and Griffin, in particular, makes Friday come across as 'other' in this context. Keith and Warner to some extent establish a vocal hierarchy in terms of class (e.g. in relation to the sailors) but Friday is difficult to fit in there and remains 'other'.

The overall impression conveyed by the performing narrators is that Friday's 'otherness' is reinforced in the bear episode. With the exception of Vance, the pidgin dialect is strong, especially in Friday's many exclamations such as 'O! O! O!' (Defoe 1985: 288) where loudness and hoarseness add to his 'otherness'. Combined with a fast tempo, these vocal features stress the comic element in the situation. Although, this effect is somewhat tempered towards the end of the episode, the farcical impression remains. I agree with Pritchard that, since after leaving the island, Friday has been 'silenced' and 'internalised' (2019: 165) by Crusoe, the bear episode is of great relevance for illustrating 'Friday's agency in Crusoe's development' (2019: 164). However, considering the vocal configuration of the Friday-Crusoe relationship, it may be argued that Crusoe has effectively internalised only those aspects of Friday that strengthen his own spiritual development. What becomes clear 'at Crusoe's moment of triumph' (2019: 165) is that only the vocal waste of 'otherness' is lodged in Friday.

#### *Concluding remarks*

This article has shown that audiobook narration is an apt medium for reinforcing the sense of Crusoe as the central consciousness of the novel. Features that may present problems for readers of the print text, such as genre clashes, repetition of events, and a wealth of objects to be explored, are subsumed under a 'retrospective thoughtfulness' that quite literally lends a tonal coherence to the narrative through, for example, pacing and timbre. This tonal coherence reaches a climactic point in the portrayal of the slumbering Friday in the cave. However, once Friday starts to speak, the oral smoothness is disrupted by the excess produced by his vocalicity. As my study of the vocalisation of key passages has revealed, friction is not merely caused by the use of pidgin, a staccato rhythm, the 'grain' of hoarseness, or a dark timbre, but by the seemingly random and unpredictable combination or sudden absence of these features in the refraction of language.

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