

INVERTED CRUSOEISM

Deliberately marooning yourself on an island

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ABSTRACT: This article introduces the concept of Inverted Crusoeism to research into island cultures. The concept derives from the works of J.G. Ballard and provides a reason as to why people would deliberately maroon themselves on a remote island. An analogy is drawn between the concept of Inverted Crusoeism and the choice of David Glasheen to live in isolation on Restoration (Ma’alpiku) Island in Far North Queensland, Australia. Therefore, whereas *islandness* and *aislamiento* define the concept of an island and sets its boundaries, this article extends the conceptual framework of the concept of *shima*, proposing Inverted Crusoeism as a reason why people would choose to subject themselves to a life of isolation on a remote island.

KEYWORDS: Inverted Crusoeism, castaway, J.G. Ballard, David Glasheen, Restoration/Ma’alpiku Island

Introduction

The island, it seems, is not just his home, a matter of survival - it is his identity. (Chenery, 2012: online)

In 1997, after a few turbulent years of personal and professional life in Sydney, David Glasheen left all behind for an isolated life on the remote Restoration Island (known as Ma’alpiku by its traditional owners, the Kuuku Ya’u clan), in Far North Queensland, Australia. By drawing analogies from Glasheen’s experience on Restoration Island and J.G. Ballard’s notion of ‘Inverted Crusoeism’, we provide an ontological contribution to research into island cultures as a justification as to why people would choose to become castaways on remote islands.

The concept of *shima* as a cultural landscape produced by social use of space (Suwa, 2007) is a key to exploring the idea of islands as embedded in cultural formations and encompasses more than the standard definition of islands, expanding the idea of *islandness* (Conkling, 2007). Anderson (2016) and Suwa (2007) both argue that *islandness* is more than the clear technicalities of cartography and geography, having deep social roots and foundations. When discussing the effects of isolation, Anderson (2016) presents the concept of *aislamiento*, which refers to the effects of being on a landform surrounded by water as well as the social effect of being or feeling isolated. Previous studies published in this journal have proposed a typology of insularities (Taglioni, 2011) and quantitative

analysis of social and demographic determinants of migration in small islands (Guan and McElroy, 2012). Life on islands has also been examined in this journal and this builds an argument about the concept of *islandness* (eg Royle, 2008; Grydehøj, 2008; Amoamo, 2011). The concepts of *islandness* and *aislamiento* enable researchers to identify the territory and boundaries of the study of *shima* and the concept of Inverted Crusoeism merits attention as a plausible justification as to why people would choose to isolate themselves in such a territory. As Hayward (2016) points out, the journal *Shima* has paid particular attention to the analysis of the representation of islands and *islandness* in cultural media, hence this article contributes to this project as it brings the literary work of J.G. Ballard to the debate about insularity.

Living on an island is often linked to limited natural and human resources, which leads to dependence on external resources (Amoamo, 2011). The choice of an isolated life, limiting access to external resources, thus leads to a more precarious lifestyle. Reis (2012) investigates the role a remote island destination plays in the experience of people as visitors or tourists. This article differs from Reis' work (2012) as it looks for an answer as to *why* people would isolate themselves, with no particular focus on *where* or *how*. While it is understandable that there may be practical reasons as to why people would move to remote islands, this article focuses on what would attract people to live in insularity on a remote island instead of remaining somewhere else on the mainland. Why would people maroon themselves, choosing a life as a castaway?

This article adds the works of Ballard to the pantheon of literature examined through the lens of Island Studies (eg Brinklow, 2012, 2016; Van Duzer, 2006; Fletcher, 2011). In order to address Glasheen's experience, this article draws on publicly available material prepared by people who had contact with him, quotes from their interviews, and his published autobiography titled *The Millionaire Castaway* (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019).¹ The news articles used were published in *The Telegraph* (Pearlman, 2012), *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Chenery, 2012), *VICE* (Morgans, 2014), *Wild* (Unattributed, 2014) and News.com.au (Young, 2017a, 2017b). In addition to news items, this article draws from posts on a blog related to Restoration Island (Unattributed, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c) and blog posts made by Alvaro Cerezo narrating his experience living with castaways (Cerezo, 2017a, 2017b, 2018). To ensure the accuracy of our account, a draft version of this article was sent to Glasheen, who found it "very interesting and encompassing" (pc 28.09.19). Multiple attempts were made to gain feedback from the trustee of the Kuuku Ya'u Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC to no avail.

I. Islands and Inverted Crusoeism

Throughout time, many people have lived on remote islands as 'true-life' Robinson Crusoes (Simmons, 1998). While some of the documented castaways like Alexander Selkirk and Charles H. Barnard did not choose to maroon themselves on a remote island, others, such as David Glasheen, Masafumi Nagasaki, Gerald Kingsland, Lucy Irvine, and E.J. Banfield, chose a life of isolation on a remote island (Kingsland, 1986; Cerezo, 2018; Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019; Irvine, 2011; Banfield, 1908). The media have also explored people's choice of a rough and harsh lifestyle on remote islands. For example, BBC television produced *Castaway 2000* (2000), a reality program where a group of about 30 people had to build a self-sufficient community on Taransay island in Scotland's Outer

¹ The Australian Channel 10 series *Revealed* also has an episode on Glasheen titled 'Castaway', available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmZ6quGYBvU> – accessed 24th September 2019.

Hebrides (Dunn, 2006). The text accompanying the application form for the program asked potential participants: “Have you ever dreamed of living on an isolated island?” (ibid: 187). The reality show launched the television career of Ben Fogle who became interested in acquiring an island himself (Fogle, 2007).

Small, remote islands seem particularly alluring to visitors (Baldacchino, 2012; Gillis, 2007) and many people have succumbed to the attraction of the remote island to the point of choosing to maroon themselves on it. As Baldacchino (2007: 166) states, “[s]omething about the insular beckons alluringly.” Nonetheless, the accidental castaway should be differentiated from the intentionally marooned. Why would people maroon themselves on a remote island, choosing a life as a castaway?

With regards to the work of Ballard (1930–2009), an answer to this question is provided by Simon Sellars (2012). Ballard was an English novelist, short story writer, and essayist, and his work has such a unique style that the *Collins English Dictionary* has an entry for the term ‘Ballardian’ as “resembling or suggestive of the conditions described in Ballard’s novels and stories, especially dystopian modernity, bleak man-made landscapes, and the psychological effects of technological, social or environmental developments” (nd: online). Ballard’s narratives often examine what happens to people when their connection with the outside world is broken and what the alternate options people create for themselves are (Sivyer, 2016; Sellars, 2012). One of the many features discussed by Sellars regarding the Ballardian universe is Inverted Crusoeism:

The Crusoe metaphor, the potency of being cut off from civilization (wilfully, in the Ballardian universe), testing reserves of inner strength in order to build a new world of the senses, is a motif he [Ballard] would return to repeatedly.
(2012: 232)

The term ‘Inverted Crusoeism’ derives from *Robinson Crusoe*,² a novel by Daniel Defoe, first published in 1719, where the protagonist is a castaway who spends about three decades on a remote tropical desert island before, ultimately, being rescued. The paradigm of Robinson Crusoe has been a recurring topic in Ballard’s work (see Sellars, 2012). Whereas the original Robinson Crusoe became a castaway against his own will, Ballard’s protagonists often choose to maroon themselves; hence Inverted Crusoeism (eg Ballard, 1962, 1974). In Ballard’s work, becoming a castaway is as much a healing and empowering process as an entrapping one, enabling people to discover a more meaningful and vital existence (Brown, 2016; Sivyer, 2016).

It has been argued that colonialism is embedded in both the novel *Robinson Crusoe* and the lure of the island in general. For instance, the material ownership of an island can lead to the impression of control over its habitat and habitants (Baldacchino, 2007) and British colonialism is considered a pervasive feature in Defoe’s novel (McInelly, 2003; Marzec, 2002). Times may have changed, but the issue of colonialist attitudes and islands remains:

In the West there has been a tendency to think archipelagically, to focus on the parts and ignore the whole. Other cultures pay much more attention to that which connects than to that which divides... The same happened in the Caribbean when colonialism divided up its archipelagos, severing the islands

² Originally published as *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner*.

from one another and from their prior history. The empires are now gone, but Western tourists still come looking for the kind of splendid isolation and aura of timelessness that islanders now struggle to escape from. (Gillis, 2007: 276-277)

Inevitably, Inverted Crusoeism is also reminiscent of colonialism, as:

[e]choing Crusoe's colonialist attitude, Ballard also suggests that at a 'deeper level' of this fantasy lies 'the need to dominate the island, and transform its anonymous terrain into an extension of our minds'. (Sivyer, 2016: 74)

Concrete Island (Ballard, 1974) is an example of Ballard's work where the lost lands below a highway become the raw natural environment of an island in which the protagonist is marooned (Paddy, 2015; McCarthy, 1997; Sellars, 2012). While Robinson Crusoe seeks to ward off the threats posed to his life on the island, Ballard's protagonist in *Concrete Island* goes through a far more complex experience (Cord, 2017). Based on contemporary discussions of Inverted Crusoeism, three stages can be drawn from the complex experience of isolation on a remote island. First, there is the entrapping experience, followed by the healing experience and then the empowering experience. These three stages are drawn from an interpretation of the Ballardian universe, derived from the narrative of *Concrete Island* (Ballard, 1974). An analogy can be drawn from management literature that examines what an empowering experience consists of and its antecedents (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Considering the requirement of marooning yourself on a remote island, the entrapping experience is a *sine qua non*, but it is uncertain whether the healing and empowering experience should happen in sequential order or concomitantly. In *Concrete Island*, the protagonist goes through each stage, suggesting a sequence among these experiences, leading to the ultimate statement "I am the island", which concludes the novel.

With regards to the **entrapping experience**, for Ballard, globalisation produces a paradoxical effect that gives the illusion of connectedness, when, in fact, it creates a withdrawal and a regression into disparate and private worlds (Sellars, 2012: 239). Through the perspective of Island Studies, the remoteness of islands implies not only a spatial distance, but a remoteness in time, "beyond the normal flow of historical time" as well (Gillis, 2007: 280). Such remoteness can lead to a paradoxical feeling, as an island "can be both paradise and prison, both heaven and hell" (Baldacchino, 2007: 165). By isolating themselves, individuals can avoid the overwhelming override of globalisation (Sellars, 2012; Amoamo, 2011) and the landscape of the island happens to stimulate the protagonists to develop a new kind of existence (Sivyer, 2016). The entrapping experience suggests that Ballard's protagonists can rediscover a more authentic version of themselves only by leaving behind their previous life (ibid) and becoming subject to a life where the "rhythms of tides, wind, and storms determine what you do and will not do" (Conkling, 2007: 199).

As for the **healing experience**, Ballard uses the raw natural environment of the island as a metaphor for the mind and a representation of the contemporary urban experience (Brown, 2016). Islands offer the castaway a chance of the discovery of "one's soul, one's mission, or one's self, rather than of buried material treasure" (Baldacchino, 2007: 169). The island "becomes a space where social relations can begin again, where the social order is decommissioned, recombined, reconstructed and reshaped in ways that subvert dominant systems of thought" (Sellars, 2009: 53). It is worth noting that, throughout

history, islands have been regarded as places of penance, purification, rebirth, pilgrimage and miraculous happenings (Gillis, 2007).

As a reflection on Defoe's novel, McNelly states:

Another advantage of the island setting is that it provides the ideal conditions for Crusoe to make himself the object of his own reflections, a process that teaches Crusoe how to master himself and prepares him to master his native companion, Friday. (2003: 14)

Therefore, becoming entrapped on a remote island not only enables the healing experience but also enables the **empowering experience**. Castaways are often examined in the literature through the lens of resilience against the raw natural environment (Paddy, 2015) and the story of Robinson Crusoe is an example in which an individual ultimately triumphs over this raw natural environment (McCarthy, 1997; Van Duzer, 2006):

The challenges of surviving on an island were a milieu for demonstrating the power of a resourceful and educated individual to control his environment and to create from raw materials everything necessary for existence, to conquer the world through human labour and science, which is very well suited to modern western individualism. (Van Duzer, 2006: 154)

By the end of his adventures, Robinson Crusoe is "filled with a sense of his own self-importance" (McNelly, 2003: 4). Similarly, Ballard's protagonists often go through a process of habituation with the raw natural environment of the island in which they find their freedom whilst paradoxically confined on the island (Brown, 2016; Cord, 2017). As Ballard's protagonists gradually familiarise themselves with the raw natural environment, these three stages enable the inverted Crusoe to have a meaningful and vital experience, as marooned life provides a new world of the senses (Sellars, 2012). For instance, referring to *Concrete Island*, Sivyver (2016) suggests that Ballard's protagonist discovers a more meaningful and more vital existence during his exile on a concrete island due to his struggle for survival in the harsh conditions. Ballard's protagonists find in isolation a space to reconnect with both their and others' humanity (ibid).

II. Castaway by Choice

During the 1980s. David Glasheen was the chairman of Carpenters Investment Trading Co. Ltd, a Sydney-based company that specialised in gold mining in Papua New Guinea. He invested in luxury real estate along Sydney Harbour and amassed a fortune that peaked at around US\$ 28.4 million (Young, 2017a; Morgans, 2014). However, in the stock market crash of October 1987, Glasheen lost most of his money (Unattributed, 2011b; Chenery, 2012; Unattributed, 2014), about \$7.25 million in a single day (Morgans, 2014; Young, 2017a). His whole lifestyle fell apart, rendering him "effectively homeless, penniless and [his] marriage was over" (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 28). These turbulent years of personal and professional life took their toll, with Glasheen stating, "I was drinking more, I was irritable and I was distant... [n]ot the symptoms of good mental or financial health" (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 26). Glasheen identified the necessity of change as "I was what you'd classify as clinically depressed and made the decision not to get back into the stress of the mainstream when a new lady friend and I started talking about how an island is supposed to be the most non-stressful place to live" (Unattributed, 2014: 42).

Glasheen first visited Restoration/Ma'alpiku Island³ (Figure 1) in 1993, he acquired an interest in the island with his remaining money in 1994, and moved there permanently in 1997 with his “lady friend” (Unattributed, 2011b; Chenery, 2012). Restoration Island is a 64-acre island off the east coast of Cape Weymouth, on the tip of Australia's Cape York located at Latitude: 12° 37' 0 S, Longitude: 143° 26' 60 E, 1,928 km northwest of Brisbane. The island falls within what was initially gazetted as Restoration Island National Park in 1989,⁴ along with an offshore reef and rock to its immediate south. It takes 40 km of rough track plus a 10-15 minute boat ride to reach Restoration Island from the settlement of Lockhart River (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019). Glasheen's “lady friend” grew tired of their remote lifestyle as the “novelty of island life soon wore off” and she left the island (Unattributed, 2014; Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 100).



Figure 1 – Map of Restoration Island's position within Australia
(source: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3804954/australian-castaway-david-glasheen-20-years-could-be-thrown-off-island/>)

Glasheen subleases a portion of Restoration Island from Restoration Island Pty Ltd, which holds a 50-year lease on one-third of the island that is valid until 2039 (Unattributed, 2014; Chenery, 2012).⁵ The remaining two-thirds of Restoration Island comprises Ma'alpiku Island National Park (Unattributed, 2014). The lease contract stated Glasheen and his business partners should develop tourist accommodation and fishing facilities valued at least at AUD\$ 200,000 on Restoration Island (Pearlman, 2012; Chenery, 2012).

³ Henceforth predominantly referred to as Restoration Island in line with Glasheen's usage and that of the various journalists and commentators who have referred to his residence on it.

⁴ The area was renamed Ma'alpiku Island National Park in 2009 following the Kuuku Ya'u clan's successful application for native title over the area.

⁵ Information regarding the sublease and other legal issues is available through the court case Restoration Island Pty Ltd v Longboat Investments Pty Ltd & Anor (2012).

Glasheen and his business partners did not visit, consult, or pay respects to the traditional owners of the land, the Kuuku Ya'u people, during the early stages of the project.⁶ As Glasheen fully acknowledges in his autobiography; “[a]ll the time that we’d been plotting and planning, the Kuuku Ya’u people kept their counsel, waiting to be consulted... [t]hat invite never came” (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 56). The disregard for the traditional owners of the land and Lockhart River community was clear as Glasheen says that they “had been so wrapped up in [their] own agenda that [they] didn’t even spare the time to set foot there” (ibid: 59). Unsurprisingly, by the time Glasheen started visiting the community he met with a cold reception with locals muttering expletives towards him (ibid: 70). The Kuuku Ya’u clan, who gained native title over the area in 2009, opposed a large-scale project on Ma’alpiku (Morgans, 2014; Chenery, 2012) and the project stalled, with Glasheen saying, “I didn’t want to be the bastard arguing against the land rights of Indigenous people” (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 57). He also asserted that his business partners were aiming to develop a large-scale project on Restoration Island (Morgans, 2014) but he had a different plan:

They got approval for a 60-bed resort, which is ridiculous. I envisage a 12-bed, possibly donation-based, healing retreat for people who are looking for breathing space and seeking the wild, the kinds of people who are now travelling to places like Nepal or Peru looking for another dimension to their life. (Unattributed, 2014: 42)

Looking back on that experience, Glasheen wondered in his autobiography, “[h]ow the hell had we completely overlooked the thoughts, feelings and dignity of the people who truly owned Restoration Island” (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 56).



Figure 2 – Aerial shot of Restoration Island viewed from the north east (with Restoration Rock at top centre left of image)

(Source: <http://restoration-island.blogspot.com/2011/01/history-of-restoration-island.html>)

⁶ Information regarding the Kuuku Ya’u Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC is available at: <https://www.nativetitle.org.au/find/pbc/7193> - accessed 23rd September 2019

The project never started due to the disagreements between Glasheen and his business partners and the traditional owners of the land (Morgans, 2014). The disagreements reached the Supreme Court of Queensland as *Restoration Island Pty Ltd v Longboat Investments Pty Ltd & Anor* [2012] QSC 208, which decided that Glasheen should be evicted and the land repossessed (Pearlman, 2012; Chenery, 2012; Unattributed, 2014). Therefore, Glasheen's current status on the island can be identified as that of a 'squatter' (Cerezo, 2017b). Commenting on the decision, Glasheen has stated, "I'm probably going to stay... I'm sick of the courts" (Pearlman, 2012: online). This may be possible given that the disagreements between Glasheen and the Kuuku Ya'u people of Lockhart have been consigned to the past and, nowadays, Glasheen's presence is tolerated by the community (Cerezo, 2017a; Chenery, 2012; Unattributed, 2014). As Glasheen recalls, it took 10 years to "heal the wounds from our thoughtless early actions" as he attempted to persuade the Kuuku Ya'a community that his "intentions were in their best interests" (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 207).

Glasheen lives in a renovated World War II outpost on Restoration Island with solar-powered internet access and a mobile phone. He also has a small boat for reaching the mainland whenever necessary and several times a year he makes a trip to the mainland for groceries. He gathers bananas and coconuts from the island, catches crabs, fish, and oysters and has a fruit and vegetable garden. He also brews his own beer, which he barter with passing fishermen in return for goods such as crayfish and prawns.⁷

While living on Restoration Island, Glasheen has received many illustrious visitors including Australian entrepreneur Dick Smith, adventurer Ben Fogle, actor Russel Crowe, entertainer Rolf Harris, and the former chairman of McDonald's, Fred Turner. Glasheen also hosts volunteers, known as "woofers", who are willing to work on the island's fruit and vegetable garden. These volunteers come through the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) network where he is listed as an organic farmer (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019). He says of his lifestyle, "I see myself as a social hermit, and I've played host to all sorts of interesting people from all over the world here" (Unattributed, 2011b: online). Anecdotal evidence from people who have visited Glasheen on Restoration Island is that he is happy with his life (Cerezo, 2017b). He was very materialistic in the past and now sees money as "part of the illness in our society" (Young, 2017a, 2017b). The experience on Restoration Island has allowed him to revisit what he values in life, and his current opinion is:

It is a fabulous place, I am a lucky bloke to be there, I have learnt a huge amount. I started to value what is really important. Trust, honesty, respect – simple things. (Pearlman, 2012: online).

When asked about the likelihood of being evicted from Restoration Island, Glasheen simply said, "I have no idea. I live on now. Tomorrow I might be dead" (Pearlman, 2012: online).

⁷ Information collated from Cerezo (2017a), Chenery (2012), Morgans (2014), Pearlman (2012), Unattributed (2014) and Young (2017a).

III. Analysis and Discussion

Glasheen chose to maroon himself and live as a castaway on Restoration Island. He is a living example of Ballard's concept of Inverted Crusoeism. Ballard's work is often framed as focussing on dystopian futures and devolution, decay, dissolution and entropy. This article, however, follows Stephenson (1985) in depicting a more humanistic side within the Ballardian universe, where a person searches for a more meaningful and vital experience. There is a neo-colonial aspect to the Restoration Island experience as Glasheen and his business partners had plans for the island but had no concerns about the traditional owners of the land and the Lockhart River community; the island was seen as a property detached from the mainland and the local community. The island is addressed by the name it was given by William Bligh in 1660 and the landscape is wholly characterised by "white fella" names. Only after members of the Lockhart River community stood up to the project in Restoration Island did Glasheen and his business partners understand the need for engaging with the Kuuku Ya'u people. Glasheen had to adapt and understand the traditional owners of the land and engage with the community, and it took him 10 years to receive any degree of acceptance from the indigenous community.

Living on Restoration Island since 1997, Glasheen's autobiography stresses the extent to which he has adapted to living on a small, remote island and it could be argued that, over time, he has acquired the qualities of *islanderness* (cf Conkling, 2007). However, the same cannot be said for some of the visitors that he receives, mostly during the dry season. Different from island residents, visitors are often attracted to the image of the island, not the island itself (Gillis, 2007). Throughout his autobiography, Glasheen has examples of visitors who came to Restoration Island with "brand-new suitcases on wheels" which were clearly unsuitable for the terrain, wearing "high heels", or being careless about the water supply and expecting to have "ten showers a day" (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 4, 88, 164). It is interesting to note the gap between people who have grown accustomed to a rougher and harsher lifestyle and those who have not. Glasheen illustrates this, stating:

you get people who are not used to danger and they may react, things can get ugly very quickly, you start to realise you're a bit vulnerable, but you've got to do things rationally here. You have to learn to be calm and think, but it's not easy when people are getting emotional around you, when you have to deal with a big guy who wants to dong you⁸ because he won't do as he's told. (Young, 2017a: online)

Glasheen has some technology available on Restoration Island, such as solar-powered internet access and a mobile phone, but it is evident that life is rougher and harsher on a small, remote island in Far North Queensland than in the city. As Glasheen acknowledges in his autobiography, most visitors come during the dry season (roughly May to October), when the days are warm and nights are cool with low humidity. Few people venture onto Restoration Island during the wet season (roughly November to April) when days and nights are hot and there are frequent torrential rains. While most visitors confirm that Glasheen is happy with his life in Restoration Island, it seems as if the isolation and long periods of solitude might take their toll. When German kayaker Freya Hoffmeister did a stopover on Restoration Island during her Australian journey she met Dave and reportedly accepted "one glass of wine under persistent pressure" (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 292).

⁸ 'Dong' is an Australian colloquial term for striking, as in a fist fight.

But recalling this event, Hoffmeister reportedly “found him to be a bit of a sad sack” (Glickman, 2012).

There is evidence of Glasheen’s **entrapping experience** as he left behind a life of luxury in Sydney to immerse himself in a lifestyle where he exists with very little on Restoration Island (Cerezo, 2017b). Queensland’s far north is also an obvious choice for people who want to isolate themselves (Chenery, 2012). The entrapping experience for Glasheen can also be seen as he juxtaposes his current lifestyle with his past:

I never knew anything about anything when I lived in the city when I think back on it, it was all a big blur and a lot of noise going on. Here, there is no noise; there is only nature. (Chenery, 2012: online)

Living on a small, remote island, Glasheen is now subject to the raw natural elements, as “The weather often dictates the pace of the day and the direction that it takes” (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 178). While he has contact with the raw natural environment, he lacks daily social contact as there are “not many people you can communicate with in this area, there’s nothing to talk about, that’s really hard, probably the hardest thing” (Young, 2017a: online).

Susan Chenery succinctly expresses the entrapping experience when discussing Glasheen’s lifestyle on Restoration Island:

With no appointments or places to be, you can see how, for Glasheen, days turned into weeks, weeks into years, years into decades in a kind of a dream. The island seems to hold him in its embrace: he can’t imagine himself anywhere else. (2012: online)

This entrapping experience enables a **healing experience**. Reflecting on his life, Glasheen states:

A lot of people, men in particular, feel lost in their societies, stuck in a rut chasing the ‘holy grail’, and deep down they want to run away and have a bit of freedom; then they come somewhere like this where you can reflect on it all and realise how crazy you’ve been. (Unattributed, 2014: 43)

Thinking back on the 1987 crash, Glasheen evokes the healing process:

Best thing that ever happened to me, if I think back on it. I wouldn’t be here otherwise. I was pretty stressed, I was overweight. It was a great release for me here. All of a sudden you are at peace with yourself. When you sit down in the middle of woop woop⁹ you start accepting everything around you. I knew there had to be more to life than money. (Chenery, 2012: online).

The life in isolation on Restoration Island appears to have given Glasheen the peace he sought. As he says, “Restoration Island is a good name, it’s restored me personally, in every

⁹ ‘Woop Woop’ (usually rendered with capitals commencing the repeated word) is an Australian colloquialism referring to a small, isolated settlement understood as being effectively “in the middle of nowhere”.

which way” (Morgans, 2014: online) and “I felt invigorated on Resto. I had room to breathe, space to think, freedom to feel human again” (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 89).

In addition to the healing experience, there is also the **empowering experience**. Alvaro Cerezo admits that living alone on a small remote island is challenging, “I wouldn’t recommend this kind of life to everyone... I have met so many people that one day decided to live on a private island, but after a year they gave up” (Young, 2017b: online). It is obvious that the isolated life has led to a rougher and harsher lifestyle for Glasheen, “I have learnt that you can do things with very little. You soon learn in the bush to survive. If you don’t you die pretty quickly” (Pearlman, 2012: online). Another quote from Glasheen on the same matter is that “there’s no mediocrity here; it’s either extremely beautiful or extremely horrible, but that’s what keeps it interesting” (Unattributed, 2014: 43). Therefore, overcoming the raw, natural environment becomes an empowering experience, as he says, “I’ve never regretted moving here but it’s not all beer and skittles,¹⁰ it’s character building” (Unattributed, 2014: 42). Glasheen says that one must be prepared for the unexpected because:

you’ve got to work with the elements. People assume you turn the tap on and the water comes out. You start to realise it’s not like that. You’re in charge of all that here. (Young, 2017a: online)

What should happen if Glasheen is evicted from Restoration Island? Similar disputes have on occasion led to unilateral declarations of independence, eg the Principality of Hutt River (Castro and Kober, 2018), Ladonia (Castro and Kober, 2019), and Achzivland (Hayward, 2019). While most unilateral declarations of independence lead to perennial legal disputes with the host country, Achzivland is an example where a solution was found. After a series of unsuccessful attempts by the Israeli government to evict Eli and Rina Avivi from the land they occupied in Israel’s far north coast, the matter was resolved by the government granting them a 99-year lease (Hayward, 2019). Considering how Australia is a hotspot for micronations,¹¹ it would be unsurprising if something similar happens on Restoration Island in the case of an eviction order being enforced. However, one should not ignore the entitlements of the traditional owners of the land. When some residents on an island in southern Moreton Bay, Queensland suggested declaring a micronation, for instance, they were received with scepticism and a pinch of sarcasm by the indigenous community:

Maybe these non-indigenous Australians need to take in to account that this Island and the rest of Australia was originally inhabited for the last 60,000 years by indigenous Australians. I am sure if they were asked, they would say the original European settlers should go back to where they came from if they aren’t happy in my country! Fair dinkum. (Danijo in Hayward, 2014: 99)

¹⁰ An English colloquialism originally referring to repeated indulgence in the pleasure of public drinking houses but now more commonly used to refer to hedonism more generally.

¹¹ Examples of micronational initiatives in Australia include the Principality of Hutt River in Western Australia (Castro and Kober, 2018), the Empire of Atlantium in New South Wales (Giuffre, 2015), the defunct Gay and Lesbian Kingdom of the Coral Sea Islands on a group of uninhabited islets east of the Great Barrier Reef (Lattas, 2014) and Lamb Island in Queensland (Hayward, 2014).

Although the statement above refers to the short-lived secessionist impulse on Lamb Island in 2013, it could also apply to Restoration Island in Far North Queensland or the Principality of Hutt River in the Western Australia outback.

Glasheen's experience, living as a castaway by choice, conveys an overarching message that people are not necessarily trapped in a pre-fabricated world but have the choice to create their own lifestyle. This does not mean everybody who is unhappy with their life should become a Robinson Crusoe and live shirtless alone on a small, remote island, but people should understand that they have a choice. This is not necessarily a matter of an anti-consumerism lifestyle, it is a matter of understanding that people have a broader set of life choices beyond the standard options society has imposed upon them. As Glasheen summarises in the epilogue of his autobiography:

There is so much island life can teach us all about living in harmony with nature. There are limited resources here, and there is no option but to make the most efficient use of them. The same goes for our planet – our resources are finite. So, do we really need that bigger car, or the holiday home? Too many of us chase our tails in the exhausting effort to earn more and more money to maintain such extravagances. I learned what is and what isn't important in this life the hard way. The answer isn't for everyone to run off to live on an island, of course. You need a rare kind of resilience to pull this off.
(Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 317)

It is worth noting Glasheen's choice of a lifestyle on an idyllic Queensland island is not unique. In 1897, exactly 100 years before Glasheen moved to Restoration Island, the British naturalist E.J. Banfield moved with his wife to Dunk Island, in north Queensland. Banfield's experience of living on a deserted tropical island is detailed in his book, *The Confessions of a Beachcomber* (1908). Couple Gerald Kingsland and Lucy Irvine followed in the steps of E.J. Banfield and marooned themselves on Tuin (Barney) island, an uninhabited island to the south-west of Moa, in the Torres Strait, in the early 1980s. Both published accounts of their experience on Tuin Island in *The Islander* (Kingsland, 1986) and *Castaway* (Irvine, 2011).

Kingsland and Irvine stayed for a relatively short period marooned on Tuin while E.J. Banfield spent the last 23 years of his life on Dunk Island (McMahon, 2016). A contemporary of Glasheen's is Masafumi Nagasaki, who lived for 29 years on Sotobanari, a deserted islet off the coast of Iriomote island in Japan's Yaeyama archipelago. He stayed there until he was 82 years old when he was removed by the authorities due to concerns regarding his health (Cerezo, 2018). It seems as though the plans of the Japanese castaway included staying on the island for the term of his natural life, with him reportedly declaring that "there isn't a better place in the world to die than this" (Cerezo, 2018: online). Aware of Nagasaki's removal from 'his' island, Glasheen has considered his future on Restoration Island as his health deteriorates. However, he is adamant about not leaving the place, stating, "[i]magine sacrificing a daily sundowner at the beach shack for a weekly bridge tournament. It's not going to happen" (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 306).

Banfield, Nagasaki and Glasheen appear to have fused their identities with their islands; their paradise and prison, their heaven and hell (Baldacchino, 2007: 165). It is not evident whether the protagonist of *Concrete Island* (Ballard, 1974) chose to remain on the island for the term of his natural life or not. However, an example comes from the novel *Sweetland* (Crummey, 2015), which depicts the protagonist Moses Sweetland, who is the

last person living on a depopulated island. By the end of the novel the identity of man and island fuse, as Brinklow (2016) explains:

Instead of dying alone on the island, Sweetland becomes part of the weave of life and death; a face in the ghostly crowd of ancestors that walks silently to the edge, where land meets sea, and wait for the light. Moses is absorbed into the mirror that is the island. (2016: 142)

Conclusion

The concepts of *islandness* and *aislamiento* have been established in this journal and, thanks to such concepts, the territory and boundaries of the study of *shima* have been clearly identified. However, until now, there has been a lack of exploration as to why people would choose to isolate themselves on a remote island. This article provides an ontological contribution to the research into Island Cultures by introducing Inverted Crusoeism as a justification as to why people would choose to become a castaway on a remote island. By doing so, this article contributes to the literature concerning *shima* as it brings forward the literary work of Ballard to the debate about insularity. This article also shows that Inverted Crusoeism on an actual inhabited island – rather than a fictional or figurative one – involves complex issues of right of presence and, often, the enactment of neo-colonial claims of possession that need to be addressed in the critical literature.

In this article, we draw analogies from the experience of Glasheen on Restoration Island, as documented in his autobiography and news articles, and Ballard's concept of Inverted Crusoeism, as presented on contemporary studies about the Ballardian universe. It is suggested that an inverted Crusoe undergoes an entrapping experience, followed by a healing experience and an empowering experience, and such a process enables the castaway to discover a more meaningful and vital existence. While Inverted Crusoeism is unable to explain all the reasons why people choose to isolate themselves on islands, it does provide reasons relating to people seeking out a remote island for a more meaningful and vital existence. People who intentionally maroon themselves might display quite different behaviours; Glasheen states that “[r]outine is the enemy of the castaway” (Glasheen and Bramwell, 2019: 179), but it has been reported that Masafumi Nagasaki would get extremely upset with even a 5 minutes delay in his daily schedule (Cerezo, 2018). Further research should examine how other intentional castaways (eg Nagasaki, Kingsland, Irvine, Banfield, etc.) have experienced their entrapping, healing, and empowering experiences. The experience of being marooned should not be confused with being alone and away from others. Crusoe experienced contact with others and, in a similar fashion, Ballard's protagonists find and interact with other residents of the territory during their castaway experiences. Therefore, the insularity experienced in Inverted Crusoeism should not be confused with absolute social isolation.

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